

THE COUNTRY HOUSE SALE

A BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY HOUSE, IN A PARK.  
ALL LOOKS STILL AND SERENE IN SPRING  
SUNSHINE AS WE APPROACH.. A SCENE OF  
RURAL, TIMELESS DIGNITY.

THE DRIVE WINDS, FLANKED BY CATTLE  
FENCING. ONE OR TWO HORSES GRAZE.

THE FRONT OF THE HOUSE. THE CALM IS SHATTERED  
BY A BOY WHO COMES AROUND A CORNER  
OF THE HOUSE, WHISTLING. A WINDOW OPENS  
ABOVE AND A MIDDLE-AGED HOUSEKEEPER  
LEANS OUT AND PUTS HER FINGER TO HER LIPS.  
HE REMEMBERS, AND CLAPS HIS HAND TO HIS  
MOUTH.

AT THE FRONT OF THE HOUSE A HUMBER DRAWS  
UP AND A DIGNIFIED MAN, WITH A DOCTOR'S  
BAG, GETS OUT. THE FRONT DOOR OPENS AND  
THE BUTLER, OLD AND CRONKY, COMES DOWN THE  
STEPS TO GREET HIM.. THE DOCTOR SAVES  
HIM FROM A NASTY FALL.

DOCTOR: Any change, Mould?

THE BUTLER SHAKES HIS OLD HEAD SADLY.

PORTOBELLO ROAD ON A SATURDAY MORNING.  
THE AIR IS FILLED WITH RAUCOUS BUZZ, TOPPED  
BY TWO CONFLICTING STREET MUSICIANS, A  
WOMAN WITH A PIERCING VOICE INTONING A  
FROEST SONG, AND A WASHBOARD GROUP. SOME  
OF THE STALLS ARE SELLING CLOTHES,

THERE ARE ARGUMENTS WITH POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS, ONE STALL HOLDER IS STOLIDLY EATING A BUN, PAUSING ONLY TO SLAP THE WRIST OF A CUSTOMER WHO IS HANDLING THE GOODS.

ALONG THE SHOPS. WE GO INTO ONE, DARK AND SMALL. FROM WITHIN WE SEE A MAN WHO STICKS HIS HEAD IN THE DOOR, BLOTTING OUT THE LIGHT.

ARTHUR: (AT THE DOOR) Anything?

OWNER: (WE DON'T SEE HIM) Nothing to sell Tosh.

ARTHUR LIFTS HIS HEAD IN DISAPPOINTMENT AND GOES. WE FOLLOW HIM TO THE NEXT SHOP, WHERE THE OWNER COMES OUT BRISKLY AND TRIES TO SELL HIM A DOZY SOFA ON THE PAVEMENT, A GREAT BIG UGLY PIECE. HE SNEERS AND MOVES ON. AT THE THIRD SHOP HE IS GREETED BY A BIG-BOTTOMED WOMAN, WHO STANDS IN THE DOOR.

WOMAN: You're too late Arthur. The Aussies been round this morning, they ad everything worth shifting. There's no stuff about.

ARTHUR: We could do with your old man on the job.

WOMAN: Yeah, well, only another eight months.

HE PATS HER ON THE SHOULDER , AND MOVES ON, CROSSING WESTBOURNE PARK ROAD. PUTS HIS NOSE INTO A GRANDLOOKING SHOP.

OWNER: (ELDERLY AND POSH) Out.

HE MOVES ON. HE COMES OUT OF THE NEXT SHOP WITH A MUSICAL BOX PLAYING UNDER HIS ARM. AND INTO ANOTHER SHOP, WHERE HE WAITS WHILE THE OWNER DOES A BIT OF SELLING, LOOKING AROUND AND MISSING NOTHING.

OWNER: (TO YOUNG COUPLE) Belonged to Pauline Borghese, that chaise longue. Sister of Napoleon.

YOUNG MAN: I'll believe you.

OWNER: The only reason it's fifty instead of five hundred is because it's pinched, so I should make your mind up before Sergeant Brown looks in. Go on, buy it, it'll give you ideas.

GIRL: He doesn't need any.

OWNER: Like that, is it? Hullo Arthur, I've got nothing for you, there, aren't I mean, no... those chairs you've seen, terrible aren't they, I'll sell them to you these two for twopence, I wouldn't land you dears, you two must have beautiful things.. I'll say anything for a sale..... buy it.. it's such a lewd piece....you'll not regret it.

YOUNG MAN: Thirtyfive.

OWNER: Done, take it away yourself, my van's got a hernia..... make it out to cash dear and write 'please pay cash' all over it, you don't happen to have the money? No, well, never mind, I shall need Fantastic identity. What's this.. last demand for rates, well, we can't fault you for style..Arthur dear, if you could be back in, say, half an hour... Bobby and Terry are helping move somebody in..(THEY EXCHANGE A QUICK GLANCE)  
.. you never know.....

ARTHUR: OK Vera, I'll be back.

VERA: It won't be much I dare say. (HE SHRUGS) There's nothing about, you know, very dead. What we want is a nice country house sale.

FURTHER UP THE ROAD, BEYOND THE SHOPS, ARE SOME LITTLE, DUFFED -UP TERRACED HOUSES. SOMEONE IS JUST MOVING IN. A VAN IS PARKED OUTSIDE AND A YOUNGISH COUPLE, KNIGHTSBRIDGE STYLE, ARE SUPERVISING THE TWO YOUNG MEN WHO ARE DOING THE MOVING. THE WOMAN IS BEING SWEET, BUT IS ON THE EDGE OF NERVES, THE MAN IS UNDISGUISEDLY POMPOUS AND BOSSY. THE TWO YOUNG MEN GO ABOUT THEIR WORK SILENTLY AND COMPETENTLY, CARRYING IN THE FURNITURE AND DEPOSITING IT ACCORDING TO MADAM'S DEMANDS. THEY CARRY IN A SMALL KNEEHOLE DESK, AT A MOMENT WHEN HER ATTENTION IS DISTRACTED..AND NOD BRIEFLY TO EACH OTHER. THIS PIECE IS CARRIED STRAIGHT THROUGH THE HOUSE, DOWN THE PATH AND OUT OF THE BACK GATE ONTO A SMALL OPEN TRUCK WHICH DRIVES OFF SO SMARTLY THAT THEY ONLY JUST MANAGE TO GET IT ABOARD. NOT A WORD IS SPOKEN.

AT THE FRONT OF THE HOUSE THE NEW HOUSEHOLDERS ARE GETTING WEARY. TWO FRIENDS DRIVE UP, PARK AND APPROACH.

WOMAN2: Darlings.... how are you getting on, we've come to help.

WOMAN1; I'm exhausted! Trying to get Anything done!

MAN 1: I say, why don't we go and have a drink?

WOMAN 1: Do you think it's all right?

BOBBY: (THE REMOVAL BOY) Don't worry. We'll keep an eye on things, won't we Terry?

TERRY: (SOFT AND GRAVE FACED) Sure..

WOMAN 2: I'd adore a poke round the shops. Such a fascinating area.... you ARE lucky!

THEY SAUNTER OFF, WATCHED BY THE BOYS. WHO DON'T SAY A WORD, BUT UNLOAD WITH RENEWED VIGOUR, TAKING THE STUFF STRAIGHT THROUGH. THE VAN SWOOSHES UP TO GREET THEM AS THEY WADDLE, ARMS FULL, DOWN THE GARDEN PATH.

THE FOUR SNOBS WALKING DOWN PORTOBELLO ROAD LOOKING IN WINDOWS AND AT THE STUFF ON THE PAVEMENTS. THEY REACH VERA'S SHOP. WOMAN I LOOKS IN AND GIVES A SCREAM.

WOMAN I: Darling, look! A little desk Exactly like mine...the exact image!

THEY CROWD ROUND THE WINDOW.

WOMAN I: How extraordinary, it's a complete facsimile...I wonder how much they want for it?

MAN I: No harm in asking.  
THEY GO INTO THE SHOP.

OUTSIDE THE SNOBS' HOUSE. THE LITTLE OPEN TRUCK ZOOMS UP, WITH THE DESK IN THE BACK, JUST AS THE FOURSOME, SCROLLING HAPPILY, REACH THE HOUSE. VERA JUMPS OUT AND HELPS THE TWO MEN LIFT DOWN THE DESK AND CARRY IT INSIDE WITH REVERENTIAL CARE. THE TWO WOMEN WATCH WITH PLEASURE AND PRIDE.

WOMAN 2: What a marvellous piece of luck. They'll be worth So much more.. having the pair.

WOMAN I: I Know! It's going to be SO easy to pick Up things!

VERA, EMERGING, GIVES HER A WARM SMILE AS HE GOES.

INSIDE THE COUNTRY HOUSE. WE SEE, OR

HALF SEE, THE INTERIOR OF A GRAND  
 BEDROOM WITH A FOUR POSTER BED AS THE  
 DOCTOR EMERGES. HE CLOSES THE DOOR VERY  
 QUIETLY. THE BUTLER LOOKS AT HIM.  
 HE SHAKES HIS HEAD WITH A KIND, SAD  
 GLANCE. THE BUTLER USHERS HIM DOWN THE  
 STAIRS, SHAKING HIS HEAD.

A GRAND LONDON SALEROOM, JUST BEFORE A  
 SALE. THE ROOM IS FILLING. SOME  
 DEALERS ARE ALREADY SEATED AT THE CENTRE  
 TABLE. ONE IS ADJUSTING HIS HEARING AID,  
 TWO POSE OVER A CATALOGUE. A WOMAN  
 BREATHES ON HER GLASSES AND POLISHES THEM  
 ASSIDUOUSLY. A MAN WITH A SMALL BEARD  
 GLARES ROUND..WARNING OFF COMPETITION.

TO ONE SIDE STAND THE FULLIAM RING, A  
 SMALL GROUP OF MEN, DOMINATED BY  
 RALPHIE RAY, THEIR OSTENSIBLE LEADER...  
 (BEHIND RALPH IS A MR. BIG). HE IS TALL,  
 RATHER FINE LOOKING ABOUT THE HEAD,  
 STILL YOUNG, THOUGH HIS HAIR IS BEGINNING  
 TO RECEDE. HIS LOOKS ARE MARRED BY HIS  
 JERKY MOVEMENTS, THE TWISTING HEAD OF  
 THE DEALER. AND HE WEARS SMOKED GLASSES,  
 WHICH MAKE HIM LOOK AS SINISTER AS HE IS.

WE MOVE ALONG TO THE CARPET MEN, ALL SMALL  
 AND LEBANESE LOOKING. THEY ARE BENDING  
 OVER THE CARPETS AND LOOK UP AS MR.  
 CRITCH, THE AUCTIONEER, CORRECT IN DARK  
 SUIT AND ETONIAN TIE APPROACHES.

CRITCH: (VERY GRAND ACCENT) Morning  
 Farouk, morning Herman, morning Saleem.

THEY NOD.

HERMAN: Very nice morning. What you  
 got for us this morning Mr. Critch?

CRITCH: One or two very nice rugs. Rather  
 a lot of carpets today.. I shall need  
 your help.

FAROUK: What are we here for? (HE HAS A SOFT, SIGHING PERSIAN VOICE) We help things along, that's business.

CRITCH: Much obliged to you. By the way, lot 42 is a nice Aubusson.. came out of the Belgian Embassy.

HERMAN: Thank you Mr. Critch. Saleem was a little diappointed in the silk carpet.

CRITCH: Yes, I'm sorry about that. Not very often our boys make a mistake.

SALEEM: Was a bad carpet.. you was wrong.

HERMAN: We thought it wasn't right.. but, you know, the boys think if Mr. Critch says it's a right one. We all make mistakes. The Aubusson is good?

CRITCH HESITATES, VERY SLIGHTLY.

CRITCHH: As far as I know. I'll have a word with the clerk.

HE GOES..WATCHED BY THE CARPET MEN.

SALEEM: (HISSES) Aubusson is mended.. is Darned!

HERMAN: (READS HIS CATALOGUE ALOUD, RAPIDLY) Lot 42, Aubusson carpet, 20 feet by 14, centre medallion in lemon and cerise, with roses and azure banding on turquoise background - bordered - darned?

SALEEM: (QUITE LOUD) Darned!

CRITCH LOOKS AT THEM SHARPLY. HE HAS CLIMBED ONTO HIS ROSTRUM AND LEANS DOWN FOR A WORD WITH HIS SHARP-EYED CLERK; WHO COMES OVER TO THE CARPET BOYS.

CLERK: Mr. Critch has asked me to point out to you, gentlemen, that lot 42 has been darned in several places. he felt

CLERK: (CONT.) that you would like to know.

HERMAN: Thank Mr. Critch please.

THE AUCTIONEER IS WAITING TO START. HE LOOKS AT THE CLOCK BEHIND HIM ON THE WALL AND THEN AT HIS WATCH. HE LEANS DOWN TO THE CLERK.

CRITCH: Weinstock not here?

CLERK: There's nothing for him till Lot ninety. They'll be here....I should get started.

CRITCH: Ye-es<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> I'll run the Fulham mob up a bit, they'll think they're on a good thing before he shows, we might as well have some of it (RUNS STRAIGHT ON BUT HIS VOICE TAKES ON A CLERICAL, CHILLY FORMALITY) ..good-morning ladies and gentlemen. May we have the first lot please.. as in your catalogue... khelim rug, six feet by three, and a small prayer rug.....

LATER IN THE SALEROOM.

.... seventy-five guineas, all Done at seventy-five..... Chepstow Mill Antiques.

HEADS TURN AS MR. WEINSTOCK ARRIVES. HE IS MASSIVE, TALL, HEAVY AND ELDERLY, AND DRAGS HIS FEET SLIGHTLY. HE IS SUPPORTED BY HIS SONS JACK AND MAURICE, AND SEVERAL OTHERS OF HIS RING. THEY ALL WEAR GOOD DARK OVERCOATS WITH VELVET COLLARS. THEY LOOK LIKE MOBSTERS. THERE IS AN SLIGHT PRISON AS THEY ENTER, AND THE FULHAM MOB THROW KNIFY GLANCES.

WEINSTOCK: (TO RALPH RAY) Good morning Ralph.

RAY: Morning Mr. Weinstock. You're late this morning.



WINSTOCK: I am, my boy, I am. Not getting any younger.

EVERYTHING WAITS WHILE MAURICE GIVES HIM A SPOONFUL OF MEDICINE FROM A BOTTLE, MOPPING HIM UP WITH A SPECIAL RAG. HE THEN OFFERS THE OLD MAN A TABLET, WHICH HE SUCKS NOISILY. WEINSTOCK NODS, THE SALE CONTINUES.

CRITCH: Lot ninety. Important bureau bookcase in banded mahogany, with original crystal and ivory handles to bureau drawers, cross-banded....

HIS VOICE FADES AS WE APPROACH FULHAM.

RAY'S HENCHMAN: It's catalogued a bit early. What do you think?

RAY: I don't know. We'll see if the old man wants it. If he does we'll get it. We'll go by him.

FRIEND: I don't see why they've put it in so early. There's something funny.

RAY: (IRRITABLE) OK.. if he leaves it alone, WE leave it alone.

CRITCH: ... what am I bid? Who'll start me at fifty guineas.... fifty guineas sir...fifty-five...

THE BIDDING RUNS UP, SOME BIDDERS NODDING, SOME WAVING A HAND, OTHER TOUCHING THEIR GLASSES, OR THEIR EYEBROWS, OR PATTING THEIR CHESTS... A REAL MUSIC HALL ACT. WEINSTOCK DOESN'T STIR. RAY WATCHES HIM.

CRITCH: ...seven thousand Eight hundred guineas.... seven thousand, Nine hundred guineas $\frac{1}{2}$ ... who'll give me eight thousand..

A PAUSE. SILENCE.

WEINSTOCK: (CONTEMPTUOUS WITH THIS DALLYING) Ten thousand sir.

HEADS TURN.

CRITCH: (NOT A FLICKER) Ten thousand guineas...I am bid ten thousand...at ten thousand for this beautiful bureau bookcase, the most important we have seen in this saleroom for some time...

RAY'S FACE IS WORKING.

2ND. FRIEND: It's a fiddle. He's letting him have it... they've got together on this.

RAY LIFTS HIS ARM IN A SORT OF NAZI SALUTE.

CRITCH: (ACKNOWLEDGING THIS) Ten thousand, five hundred.

WEINSTOCK TURNS, HIS FACE BLACK. HE NODS TO CRITCH, RAY SALUTES, AND THE BIDDING RUNS UP TO FOURTEEN FIVE.

WEINSTOCK: (WITH AN AIR OF FINALITY) Fifteen thousand. (HE TURNS AND SNEERS AT RAY)

RAY: (SOFT) And five.

WEINSTOCK SCOWLS, AND GLARES AT RAY.

CRITCH: Against you sir. The bid is with the gentleman on my right. I am bid fifteen thousand, five hundred for this important bureau bookcase...any more sir?

WEINSTOCK, ARMS FOLDED, GLARES AT THE FLOOR, SHAKING HIS HEAD.

CRITCH: Fifteen thousand five hundred, fifteen thousand five hundred, is there any advance....HE BANGS THE GAVEL... Churchill Antiques.

J. Winston

THE FULHAM MOB SMILE AND EXPAND.

MAURICE: (TO HIS FATHER) What did you do that for?

WEINSTOCK: Shut up and look miserable.

MAURICE: Do you want a tablet? It might make you feel better.

WEINSTOCK: My boy, sometimes I wonder if I did right bring<sup>g</sup>ing you into the trade.

THE BUREAU BOOKCASE IS MANHANDLED INTO A MAYFAIR WINDOW, WATCHED BY RAY. HE DIRECTS ITS PLACEMENT, GOES OUTSIDE AND NODS HIS SATISFACTION, PAUSING FOR A MOMENT TO ADMIRE HIS SPOILS. HE GOES INSIDE AND LOOKS AT IT...AND THEN LOOKS OUT OF THE WINDOW, WHERE A VERY SMALL, DARK MAN, IN A LONG DARK OVERCOAT WITH A VELVET COLLAR, IS LOOKING IN. RAY'S FACE FALTERS. WE CANNOT SEE THE FACE OF THE MAN LOOKING IN, BUT RAY IS OBVIOUSLY NOT REASSURED. HE SHAKES HIS HEAD IN ENQUIRY. AND THE MAN LOOKING IN SHAKES HIS HEAD FROM SIDE TO SIDE, SLOWLY. RAY IS AGHAST. AND THEN HIS FACE SHOWS FRIGHTENING RAGE. HE REALISES THAT HE HAS BEEN THE VICTIM OF A PUTUP JOB. HE SHOWS FEAR AS THE LITTLE MAN WALKS INTO THE SHOP.

IN A COSY PUB WEINSTOCK SITS WITH HIS SONS AND ASSOCIATES. THE WAITRESS BRINGS THEIR SHEPHERDS' PIE AND THE OLD MAN PINCHES HER BOTTOM. HE IS IN FINE FETTER.

THEY LAUGH, AND HE SLAPS HIS KNEE.

WEINSTOCK: Just the same, we bought very little. Five hundred to come from Critch is not enough....that's not a morning's work.

JACK: (HIS OLDER SON) Everything's so short, Daddy (HE IS A WORRIED FAMILY MAN) .. The Australians, the Italians, they're buying Everything! The Greeks take all the decorated stuff...all the Victorian's going to Denmark. And there's nothing coming in from the country.

FRIEND: There hasn't been a good country house sale for...I can't remember when.. can you Maurry?

MAURRY, HIS FACE ROUND A CRISP BREAD ROLL, SHAKES HIS HEAD IN A FLURRY OF CRUMBS.

JACK: They all go abroad to die now... Nassau, Malta...

FRIEND: Well, it stands to reason. You can't afford to die here, it's so costly!

WEINSTOCK: It's a great pity for our trade we don't see him no more... the English gentleman. He was a good sport, that type.. we was rubbish to him, and he would come running whenever he needed the money. ~~W~~ Their stuff meant nothing to them..they never worked for it. Those were the days...I've cleared out mansions. And, you know, if he says he will do it, he will do it, ~~even~~ if it is against his advantage ~~xxxxxxx~~ the bloody fool. ~~xxx~~ You knew where you were, they kept their word..well, it makes for solid structure, ~~that xxxxxxxxxx~~ ~~xxxxxxx~~ I was corporal to a gentleman, during the war, the Great War, the real war. He was a sporty boy, miserable bastard <sup>of course,</sup> brought up by servants.. but very good with horses. Laddie, we used to call him. Well, I suppose he's dead now, maybe.

so spiteful

A MAID RUNS ALONG A CORRIDOR. SHE RAPS ON A DOOR, URGENTLY.

MAID: Your ladyship... your ladyship, are you awake?

A NURSE STICKS HER HEAD OUT OF THE INVALID'S ROOM, IN ALARM. A WOMAN, THIRTY-FIVISH, IN A SENSIBLE DRESSING GOWN, COMES RUNNING.

WOMAN: My mother's coming.

WE SEE THE DYING MAN, PROPPED UP AGAINST THE PILLOWS. HE IS NEAR TO DEATH, HIS THIN OLD HEAD EXHAUSTED, HIS EYES CLOSED. IS HE DEAD ALREADY? But suddenly HIS EYES OPEN, BULGING AND PALE, AND HE LIFTS HIS HEAD. HE LIFTS AN ARM AND POINTS A FINGER AT THE DOOR, WHERE THE BUTLER IS HOVERING.

LORD LADDIE LLOUDON: Two pounds each way on Last Trump!

AND HE FALLS DEAD. HIS OTHER HAND CLUTCHES A COPY OF SPORTING LIFE. THE NURSE CLOSES HIS EYES.

MARGARET: (HIS DAUGHTER, IN THE DRESSING GOWN) Well, that's that. Poor Daddy. He was so awful. I must go and tell Mummy.

THE BUTLER APPROACHES SADLY. HE STANDS REVERENTLY BY THE BED.

BUTLER: It was just as well he went, then. That horse won't do anything. The trouble with his Lordship was that he always liked dodgy odds.

THE NURSE COMPRESSES HER LIPS. AS THE BUTLER LEAVES HE NOTICES THE OLD MAN'S CUFF LINKS.. AND SWEEPS THEM ABSENTLY INTO HIS POCKET WITH A SWIFT MOVEMENT.

THE NURSE SMILES IRRITABLY AS THE DOOR SLAMS, AND THEN REALISES THAT IT DOESN'T MATTER ANY MORE. SHE STARTS TO CLEAR UP. THE OLD BOY'S TEETH ARE IN A GLASS ON THE BEDSIDE TABLE. SHE PICKS UP THE GLASS, THEN LOOKS AT THE TEETH, FISHES THEM OUT, SEES THE GLINT OF GOLD, AND SLIPS THE TEETH IN HER POCKET.

THE NEWS PERMEATES THE HOUSE. THE HOUSEKEEPER DOES A JIG IN THE HALL.. THE BOY COMES ROUND THE SAME CORNER OF THE HOUSE, A WINDOW FLIES UP AND HE LOOKS UP. HE SINGS 'HAPPY DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN'. <sup>HEY JUDE</sup> ~~REPERISE~~ FROM THE KITCHEN WIDMOW THERE IS A BLAST OF JAZZ. TWO DOGS PLAY... ROUND AND ROUND ON THE TERRACE. ONLY A HORSE, IN THE CORNER OF A FIELD, DROOPS HIS NECK, AS IF IN SORROW.

LADY ~~ALODD~~ DON SITTING UP IN BED. SHE IS ELDERLY BUT SPRY. SHE WEARS A PRETTY BEDJACKET AND A LACE NOBCAP. HER HANDS ARE POISED OVER A LARGE BREAKFAST TRAY, HER EYES ARE ALIGHT WITH ANTICIPATION. WE SEE THE MAID, HEAD BENT OVER AN OCCASIONAL TABLE. VERY NICE FURNITURE.. WE GET A QUICK FLASH AT EACH PIECE, ALL BEAUTIFUL POLISHED, ALL VERY GOOD ANTIQUE PEICES. BUT WE MUSTN'T STARE. MOLLY, THE MAID, IS WINDING UP AN OLD GRAMOPHONE. IT PLAYS AN OLD RECORDING OF LET YOURSELF GO. LADY ~~AL~~ SINGS CRACKILY TO THE MUSIC. HER DAUGHTER, STILL IN SENSIBLE MAN'S DRESSING GOWN, ENTERS, AGHAIST AT THE NOISE.

MARGARET: What's come over everybody? Mother, honestly! Molly, turn it off! Honestly!

MOLLY DOES SO AND SCUTTLES OFF, WITH A LITTLE SKIP AT THE DOOR.

MARGARET: Honestly. I don't know what's got into you. All morning you 've been...

MARGARET: well, I don't like to say it...

LADY LL: Go on darling, I don't mind.

MARGARET: And you're eating breakfast! You haven't eaten breakfast for twenty years.

LADY L: Only because Laddy couldn't bear the smell of food in the mornings.. or the afternoons, or the evenings come to that. I got out of the habit.

MARGARET: Eggs, bacon, mushrooms... sausages? It's indecent! Where are your liver salts and lemon juice?

LADY L: I don't think I shall be needing them. (SHE EATS UP WITH RELISH) Poor Laddy! You know in spite of everything it's awful to think of him lying there. You'd better ring the vet.

MARGARET: The vet?

LADY L: (PICKING UP HER ANCIENT PEKINESE) I told you Pooty wasn't feeling well. I'm quite worried about her. <sup>Oh</sup> And, by the way, ring the undertaker for me, we can't leave Laddy lying about all over the place.

MARGARET GETS UP FROM THE END OF THE BED..SHE IS USED TO DOING EVERYTHING.

Oh and darling... I've been thinking... you'd better ring up Stoatie Warren..

MARGARET: Stoatie?

LADY L: On second thoughts I'd ~~never~~ do it myself.

MARGARET: What do we want him for?

LADY L: To sell up. (SHE LAVISHES MARMALADE ON HER TOAST) We'll never be able to stay here. It won't be possible darling.

*Stoatie  
Warren*

MARGARET'S FACE IS LOST.

LADY L: (CONT) We'll go on the jaunt.  
Never know, we may find you a husband.

MARGARET: Not much chance of that.

LADY L: Don't you be so sure. A nice  
ginger hairpiece and some of those Mary  
Quant boots.

MARGARET: I doubt if they come in size  
eight.

SHE GOES. LADY L LIES BACK ON THE  
PILLOW AND HUMS..

LADY L: Da-da da, da-da da da-da da,  
da-da da dah, da-da de dah, da da da,  
da-de-da dah.....

~~XXXXXXXX~~ CAFE IN THE VILLAGE CLOSE BY.  
ERIC AND YVONNE HAVING A COFFEE. SHE  
LOOKS VERY GLUM. AND PREGNANT.

ERIC: Our Mum says we can live with  
her.

YVONNE: I knows why..cos she do want  
the haby..ever since your Ernie went  
to school..well, she've had ten she'm  
not having this one.

ERIC: At least she's offered us the  
front room it's more than what your  
Mum's done, she don't want to know. Every  
time I do see your Dad ee'its me.

YVONNE: Well what do you expect?

SILENCE.

ERIC: (WITH A CAREFUL LOOK) There's  
old Toddy's place.

YVONNE: (A SCREECH) What? I'm not  
having my baby in a old rathole like  
that. It's running with damp, there's



YVONNE: (CONT) all snails up the walls.

ERIC: We could clean it up... put some new paint on.

YVONNE: Yeah, I can see you. Anyway, it would cost a fortune.

ERIC: There's four rooms. And a kitchen.

YVONNE: And where's the lavvo, at least in our house we can piddle indoors. We'll aff to get a furnished place. We'll aff to! Anyways, I'd rather be in the village.

ERIC: Not near that bloody coffee bar you ain't. Look, I'm taking on this baby, you knows damnwell you got no idea whether it's mine or not..all right. 'Tisn't everybody would do it. My mates think I'm daft.

YVONNE: (MUTTERS) You do as you like.  
(BUT SHE IS WORRIED)

ERIC: (PRESSING HIS ADVANTAGE) Mum says she'll help pay for the ~~xxxxx~~ dress, and the shoes, and she'd like to give you the veil as a little present. We'll have a nice proper little old wedding.

YVONNE: With bridesmaids?

ERIC: Well, I suppose so.

YVONNE: I'll have to have the three.. there's Carol, and we'll have to have your Dawn, and Cilla's already asked me. She says she'll pay for herself.

ERIC: All right. Look, if we took old Toddy's place Dad says he'll help do it up. You'd have your own front door, nice little garden to put the baby out in. We could paint it up really pretty, that's all it wants, nice yellow window frames, you could

ERIC: (CONT) choose the wallpaper.  
Better than some old flat.

YVONNE: We ain't got no furniture.

ERIC: Buy it on the HP! Everybody  
else does.

YVONNE: Could we get a bedroom suite?

ERIC: Yeah, anything you like! You  
don't have to pay nothing...we can  
get a settee, armchairs, washing machine,  
telly....

YVONNE: Our Ma's only got two rooms,  
the cow.

STOATIE WARREN IN HIS OFFICE, WITH TWO  
ELDERLY CLIENTS.

STOATIE: (SWEET AS SILK, SLIGHTLY RUSTIC  
ACCENT, MATCHING THEIRS) I don't think  
you'll regret it. I say it myself, that's  
a property I've had my eye on. If I  
could persuade the wife to move.. I'd give  
a lot for that garden. Little bit of  
work on it, you could open it to the  
public as a showplace. I mean, it's  
not large, but it's showy... all those  
trees.. beautiful.

MAN: We sha[ll] need some help of course..  
(HE INDICATES HIS STICK) ..my wife and  
I don't enjoy the best of health.

STOATIE: Oh no trouble..no trouble at  
all. All the help you need in this  
part of the world, that'll be the least  
of your troubles.

HIS GIRL GIVES HIM A WARNING LOOK.  
HE GETS UP BLANDLY.

MAN: You were going to put us in touch  
with your colleague, about a damp course.

STOATIE: All in hand. I've had a word  
~~with him. He's a~~

STOATY: (CONT) with him. He'll be in touch, sir.

WIFE: Well, we mustn't take up your time, Mr. Warren.

SHE HELPS HER HUSBAND TO HIS FEET..  
STOATY IS JUST TOO LATE. HE ESCORTS THEM TO THE DOOR.

WIFE: So long as it isn't Damp, Mr. Warren. We don't want the expense of a survey, as you say, if it isn't necessary...

STOATY: Take my word for it, madam, you'll be as snug as a bug in a rug. Goodbye then, for the present. We shall look forward to receiving the balance...quite an exciting day, isn't it?

MAN AND WIFE: Goodbye.

THEY SHAKE HANDS AND TODDLE OFF.

STOATY: Joan.... scrap the bumf on the bog hut. It's in the bag. The old ginks will take it.

HE LETS OUT A BELCH OF SATISFACTION.  
THE TELEPHONE RINGS.

Whoever it is, I'm out.. I deserve a drink after that.

~~JOAN~~! Warren and Partners..oh yes, who is calling? (TO STOATY) It's lady Doddon, shall I tell her you're -

WITH A GLARE HE SNATCHES THE PHONE FROM HER HAND. SHE IS QUITE USED TO THIS AND DOESN'T REACT. HIS ACCENT CHANGES TO AN AUTHENTIC SOUNDING LADEDA.

STOATY: Oh good morning Lady Doddon, Ronald Warren hah. Oh vay well, vay well. What? (HE AGITATES TO JOAN WHO GIVES HIM PEN AND PAPER..HE GLEAMS 'GOOD NEWS' AT HER AND CAN HARDLY CONTAIN

HIS EXCITEMENT) Oh I'm Taibly sorry to hear that.. we knew his Lordship wasn't in the best of health of course.. (JOAN REGISTERS GLEE).. he'll be taibly missed, taibly missed in the county..oh..... oh? (FEIGNING SURPRISE) Oh be vay glad to give any advice I can. No, no, not at all, vay wise... yais..yais... yais... mmm.. well....Yais... but of course, no trouble at all. Of course....a taible shock.. no, no, I think it's a vay sound idea. Our experience is that there's absolutely no point in sending up to town nowadays... you get Much better prices with a good couñtry house sale. Oh absolutely, I couldn't agræe with you more. And you know (LOWERING HIS VOICE) between ourselves, some of these London salerooms take a devil of a time to pay up. A|l vay well, but you know... one wants to know where one is, eh? Absolutely, I couldn't agree more.

HE AGITATES AN ARM. JOAN GOES TO A CUPBOARD AND GETS OUT THE WHISKY. SHE POURS HIM A STIFF ONE AND WITH GOOD GRACE HE WAVES HER TO HELP HERSELF. THIS DOES SURPRISE HER. SHE GOES BACK TO HER TYPEWRITER, MARVELLING.

A PORTER, OUTSIDE A LONDON HOTEL. NEXT TO THE HOTEL A SMART MIDDLE-AGED COUPLE EMERGE FROM A DISCREET HOUSE. A CHAUFFEUR DRIVEN BENTLEY AWAITS THEM AND THE BAGS ARE PUT EFFICIENTLY IN THE BOOT. THE PORTER APPROACHES AND TOUCHES HIS CAP.

PORTER: Can I help Sir?

MAN: Oh good mornígg, Tom, lovely mornng. Just my wife's bag. Thanks awfully.

THE WIFE SMILES AND GETS IN.

PORTER: Have a nice tr p sir. Going

PORTER: (CONT) abroad?

MAN: Yes, a couple of weeks in the Swiss Alps. My wife likes to see the flowers.. it makes a breath of fresh air.

PORTER: Very nice sir. I hope you have good weather. Oh, thank you sir, much obliged. HE CLOSSES THE DOOR RESPECTFULLY, POKETS THE TIP, AND SLIPS INTO THE TELEPHONE BOOTH IN THE HOTEL LOBBY.

THE PORTER, NOW WEARING AN IMPRESSIVE SHINY MAC, FOR IT IS RAINING, SHELTERS A GROUP OF PEOPLE WITH HIS UMBRELLA AS THEY LEAVE THE HOTEL AND ENTER A CAB. A LARGE FURNITURE VAN DRAWS UP OUTSIDE THE HOUSE NEXT DOOR. THE PORTER, ALERT, LOOKS UP AND DOWN THE STREET.

LATER. TWO MEN IN WHITE COATS EMERGE FROM THE HOUSE CARRYING A BEAUTIFUL CARLTON HOUSE DESK. THE PORTER LOOKS OUT, AS IF TO ASSESS THE RAIN, AND GOES IN AGAIN. THE VAN DOORS ARE CLOSED, AND IT MAKES OFF .. PAST THE HOTEL, GIVING A LIGHT TOOT-TOOT. THE PORTER HUMS A LITTLE TUNE. THEN GOES TO THE PHONE.

EVA LONDON AND MARGARET HAVING BREAKFAST ON THE TERRACE.

EVA: Will you read the rest for me?  
SHE HANDS OVER THE LETTERS, RETAINING AN OPENED LETTER IN HER HAND.

Stoaty wants to put up a marquee.... for the outside effects he says. Well, goodness knows there are enough of them. I don't know. I wonder if we're doing the right thing.

MARGARET: But you've been so sure.

EVA: I know. I bought this place for ~~My~~ ~~family~~ and it's been a prison to me. But you were born here - it is your home. There's still time for us to change our minds. What would you really like?

MARGARET'S FACE WORKS.

Never mind darling .. SHE LEANS OVER AND PATS HER HAND... It's going to be much better, I promise. We're going to have a lot of fun, I haven't lost the knack. We'll go to dear old Monte.

MARGARET: I believe it's rather changed since you were there.

EVA: That darling old Aga...what times we had. Yes, I expect it has. Never mind. You wait and see.

MARGARET: I shall miss the garden.

EVA: The trouble with the English is that they garden when they should be having sex. You'll love it.

MARGARET: I wonder. Oh, do listen to this.... 'Dear Aunt Eva, So sorry to hear about darling Pootie, it must have been a terrible loss, did she.. what? Suffer much...I'm desperately sorry to tell you that we lost Jethro. He was ..what?.. oh, crushed, unfortunately ~~by~~ Daddy, with the..something...and...I can't read this... something about bad paws I think, anyway, it..Grew? And Mr. Tucker said to have him put down. Daddy shot him, something for the best, how you will miss Pootie. Roger was here at the weekend, his leg no better, they think it may have to come off..what? I can't read it. So sorry to hear about the geese, and most of all about poor dear Pootie, it is never the same, is it..Your affectionate niece, Rosemary. PS So sorry to hear about

MARGARET: (CONT) Uncle.

EVA: She never forgave him for running her over. Shall we go in. Steaty's coming this morning, I must see he doesn't steal the silver.

MARGARET: He's an awful rogue.

EVA: And I'm a fool. Not much in it really. I can't be bothered. I rather think the world is for those who can.

STOATY: (FEET ON DESK) No, no, Miss Bellingham, I shouldn't do that. Look, the plates in those books alone are worth twice your bid. Yes.. right, well, we haven't lotted them up yet, of course but I think we might manage that. I'll see that you get a catalogue smartly... right..so shall we say... twenty for the Coppards... twenty five for the Arnold Bennett and forty..fifty for the other first editions. Well, we may be lucky. I'll keep in close touch, must look after my specialists....and to you...

HE RINGS OFF AND DIALS ANOTHER NUMBER.

STOATY: Major Warren here, Mr. Fielden please. Hullo, Jack, Ron here...I've been talking to Annie... she'll go fifty...well, you're laughing, aren't you. No, no, she won't do no more.... she's stretched as it is....I've lotted up so's she can take the rubbish at the end, she'll do that she likes to take something home...ha-ha, what was that, Dustbin Annie... that's a good phrase, I must remember that...keep in touch...

MOIRA AND JOHN AT DINNER. THEY ARE BUSINESS LANDOCRACY, NEIGHBOURS OF THE LODDONS. THEY EAT IN SILENCE. HE GETS UP FROM TIME TO TIME TO FETCH STUFF FROM THE SIDEBOARD. SHE REFUSES A LOT. SHE LOOKS MENOPAUSAL AND UNHAPPY. NOW AND THEN SHE LOOKS UP AT HIM. OCCASIONALLY HE LOOKS AT HER, AS IF ABOUT TO SAY SOMETHING. BUT THEY NEVER CLICK.

JOHN: (AT LAST) You hear about Laddy Loddon?

MOIRA: Yes. I've written to Eva.

JOHN: She's selling up.

MOIRA: Yes. Pity.

JOHN: No point in keeping it on. They don't farm or breed. The land's wasted.

MOIRA: It's such a nice old place. Restful.

JOHN: Oh they're finished, that sort of gentry. There's no room for amateurs any more. Somebody's got to care enough about this country to keep it from going broke. These people use land as a social appurtenance. Land is for making money.

MOIRA: Not if it destroys beauty, and calm.

JOHN: Beauty for who, calm for how many? You're a romantic, Moira. You women will read Jane Austen...country estates and the lord of the manor and all that stuff. It's self indulgent as I see it...self indulgent.

SHE GIVES HIM A LITTLE GLARE OF HATE. HE LIFTS HIS HEAD AS SHE LOWERS HER AND LOOKS AT HER WITH CONTEMPT.

JOHN: How have you been feeling today?

MOIRA: Better.



JOHN: Well, anyway, you used to like sales. We'll probably pick up a few things from "addy's place. I wonder if she'll sell off his wine. He had some very nice binoculars, I remember.

MOIRA LOOKS AT HIM WITH HORROR AND HE CATCHES HER AT IT.

Well what's the point of being soft? She needs the money. He was a washed up old drunk who never made an honest penny in his life. If you do go to the sell-up, I'd be obliged if you'd bid for the binoculars.

HE THROWS DOWN HIS NAPKIN AND GOES TO THE SIDEBOARD FOR A DRINK. MOIRA CRUMBLES BREAD WITH A SHAKING HAND.

BRIGHTON, SMART AND BUSY, SPARKLING IN THE SUN.

DOWN THE LANES. THE ANTIQUE SHOPS LOOK ~~WHISKY, VERY VERY VERY VERY VERY~~ GOOD, THE CLEVERLY PRESERVED SHOPFRONTS ENHANCING THE MERE ~~WINE~~ MERCHANDISE WITHIN.

AT THE END OF AN INTERESTING ROW OF SMALL ANTIQUE SHOPS, IN A LITTLE POKY CORNER, IS AN OPEN DOOR, AND A FLIGHT OF WHITEWASHED STEPS CURVING DOWN OUT OF SIGHT. THE SOUND OF MUSIC.

WE DESCEND TO A SMALL BAR, BEYOND WHICH ARE TABLES AND A TINY OVAL STAGE. A GIRL IS STRIPPING TO THE MUSIC. NO-ONE IS TAKING A BLIND BIT OF NOTICE OF HER ... SHE FLIPS HER GLOVES NONCHALANTLY, CHEWING GUM.

THE BRIGHTON BOYS ARE DRINKING AT THE BAR. THE UNIQUE THING ABOUT THEM IS THEIR YOUTH. TWO ARE SKINNERS, ONE IS DRESSED LIKE JIMI (JIMMI?) HENDRIX, BUT MUTED, THE OTHER TWO ARE DANDIES IN CRUSHED VELVET.

BERT: (PALE, PALE HAired AND EFFETE, UNTIL  
 HER SPEAKS. HIS PALE LISSOMNESS IS  
 ENTIRELY BELIED BY HIS CUTLER STREET  
 ACCENT) I hear Stoaty Warren's got  
 something coming up.

JIMMI: (SHARP BUTTON EYES AND AM NERVOUS  
 MANNER) Private house?

1ST SKIN: The one in Dorset?

BERT: How did you get to hear of it?

2ND. SKIN: Same way as you cock.

ROGER: (second beau, eton accent) I hear  
 there isn't much to it.

THERE IS A SILENCE. THEY ASSESS ONE  
 ANOTHER.

1ST. SKIN: I hear there's Georgian,  
~~silver~~, pictures, books, carpets,  
 flatware, the lot.

ROGER: Seen Farouk lately?

BERT: He's probably heard about it.  
 Bloody carpet boys, they don't miss much.

JIMMI: What sort of silver?

1ST. SKIN: (TOO QUICK) Silver? I never  
 said silver. What's silver? You'll be  
 lucky.

2ND. SKIN: Anyway, he'd get it off them  
 private. Our Stoaty.

ROGER: Trotter's ruin. I've seen Stoaty  
 Warren take a set of chairs up to  
 fifty quid -

BERT: Yeah and then say 'Who'll give me  
 ten bob, then?'

2ND. SKIN: Yeah. Deal music hall turn.

BERT: We had him last time though.

JIMMI: Oh?

BERT: Big sale near Exmouth. (HE COMBS HIS HAIR CASUALLY) You was on holiday.

JIMMI: I heard about it.

ROGER: You didn't miss much.

THE SKINS NOD AGREEMENT.

BERT: Nah, there wasn't much in the house it was all brought in, lot of rubbish and bent pieces. He had about five bureau bookcases, place was like a public library, you know what a weakness he's got for them.

ROGER: Stoaty's dream of respectability.

BERT: Well there was one good one. All written up in the catalogue. Anyway (HE LAUGHS AT THE 1ST. SKIN)..Snouty here bought a packet of labels and did a bit of messing around, I mean, it was very crude my old man would have laughed his head off still it confused them, din it... Stoaty knew which was the goodun, so did we, but everybody else, all the porters, they all got put about...what did we get it for? They was all put right off... they thought there was something funny going on..

1ST. SKIN: Seventy-five.

2ND. SKIN: We knocked it out for four hundred.

BERT: Stoaty's printing his own tickets now. Nice big red numbers.

IST. SKIN: Like the time Dodgy Baker switched them Worcester plates.. They never knew, you know. Old Rowbothan fell out with his porter, little Jimmy, stopped him taking bread for letting us have a look, he goes off to pub in a huff, leaves cross-eyes, the daft one. We gives him a quid to look at the stuff late, after they puts it all out ready for the morning..it wasn't handled again ... we done very well out of that. Serves them right for mixing up the dud and the real to fudge the marks.

2ND. SKIN: Yeah.. they never knew. We nearly caught Weinstock.

ROGER: (IMPRESSED) No, really?

IST. SKIN: Woulda done, he'd been over the stuff with his nose, but Dodgy overdone it, bought him a drink in the pub just before, put him right on his guard, he never put in a bid. You taking the big van?

ROGER: Probably.

THEY ARE STARTING TO FENCE FOR POSITION AGAIN. THEY LOOK AT JIMMI.

JIMMI: I'll drive down.

2ND. SKIN: Night before?

JIMMI: Yeah..it's a big sale.

IST. SKIN: We was thinking of hiring a car.

SILENCE.

JIMMI: Come down with me. You might as well.

SILENCE.

IST. SKIN: OK cock.

BERT: He's looking after his tyres.

2ND. SKIN: We wouldn't do that... not to Ian.

1ST. SKIN: Nah.

ROGER: We'll stick together then.

1ST SKIN: Yeh.

2ND. SKIN: Sure.

THEY LOOK AT ONE ANOTHER APPRAISINGLY.

A SMALL CHEMIST'S SHOP. YOUNG MAN COMES OUT, CALLS TO AN OLDER MAN.

YOUNG MAN: Want a laugh?

THEY GO INTO THE DARK ROOM. HANGING UP TO DRY ARE YVONNE'S AND ERIC'S WEDDING PRINTS. SHE IS ENORMOUSLY PREGNANT, THE BULGE SHINING IN WHITE SATIN. SHE CLUTCHES A SAGGING BUNCH OF ROSES AND LILIES WHICH COMPLEMENT HER CONDITION. ERIC LOOKS ALL WRONG IN HIS BEST SUIT.

STOATY, IN HIS JAGUAR, DRIVING UP TOTTEHAM COURT ROAD, IS STOPPED BY TRAFFIC OUTSIDE HABITAT. HE SCOWLS.

STOATY: Bloody new stuff, pinching the business!

HE DRIVES ON. WE SEE HIM NEXT IN THE BACK STREETS OF CAMDEN TOWN. HE PARKS OUTSIDE HIGH, ANONYMOUS WOODEN GATES. THERE IS A SMALL DOOR. HE RINGS A BELL ON THE WALL, FIVE SHORT RINGS. HE WAITS. A SLOT OPENS AND A FACE PEERS. HE IS LET IN.

INSIDE IS A COURTYARD FLANKED BY WORKSHOPS. THE SOUND OF SAWS AND A SMALL MOTOR. FURNITURE EVERYWHERE.... NEW AND OLD. A LARGE LORRY, WITH BRAITHWAITE'S ANTIQUES ON THE SIDE, IS THE ONE WE SAW DRIVE UP OUTSIDE THE HOTEL. STOATY GOES INTO THE OFFICE.

STOATY AND THE FAKER IN THE MAIN WORKSHOP. THIS IS WHERE THE NEW STUFF IS BEING 'AGED'. A MAN IS SMASHING CHAIRS IN ORDER TO MEND THEM. THEY WATCH.

FAKER: Look, George, don't always smash them in the same place..use your imagination.

THEY WATCH MEDIEVAL STATUES BEING AGED, DITTO CORNER CUPBOARDS, AND, TO STOATY'S OBVIOUS SURPRISE, NICELY SHAPED VICTORIAN ARMCHAIRS.

FAKER: It's a question of what people expect to find. They don't Expect to pick up Georgian piecrust any more, you can't do it.. but they still look for Vicky armchairs, the women like them. That's taken off an original, nice work you know. Fits right into the kidneys the back of that chair, you don't get design like that now, it's all for sex and show-off now. Course the way they used to eat, you needed to sit comfy.

STOATY: (POINTING AT A BUNCH OF CLUB FENDERS) I could do those.

FAKER: Yeah, so could everybody else, sorry, Ron, they're for my regulars.

STOATY: Keep me in mind.

FAKER: Course they're much too small. Everybody wants club fenders, well, they're handy.. cosy looking things. The real ones was all made to order, for bloody great fireplaces. Still, this is the size that sells, nobody ever works it out.

STOATY: Still doing the Sheraton sideboards?

FAKER: Yeah, mostly for older snobs.

STOATY: I might shift a couple.

FAKER: They still go. This is what we're doing for the young hurrays.

STOATY: Yes..oak does very well with us now.

THEY LOOK AT SEVERAL VAST OLD OAK PIECES WHICH LOOK LIKE PROPS FROM ALFRED THE GREAT.

FAKER: Three, four hundred pounds a piece these fetch.... seventeenth century..(HE LAUGHS). We're getting the wood from the chapels..now that piece, that's not made up, that's an altar table, come out of a chapel in Pfestiniog.. course we took all the carving off the legs, roughed it up a bit, what about a Chesterfield?

STOATY: No-o, they can get them new for the same price, it's over.

FAKER: Yes. You don't want anything doubtful, nice sale like you got. You want something special. Come round the back.

THEY GO ROUND AND HE OPENS A DOOR WITH A KEY FROM HIS CHAIN. A MAN LOOKS AT THEM AND AWAY. THE INNER ROOM IS A TREASURE CHEST. EVEN STOATY IS SURPRISED.

STOATY: You're very well stocked.

FAKER: (DRY) Yes. What about the Carlton House desk?

STOATY: (WITH A GOOD LOOK OVER) It's had some work done on it.

FAKER: Needed it. "etch you thoudands, that piece.

STOATY IS TEMPTED, BUT NERVOUS.

FAKER: There's no trouble about it. Came out of a house in Scotland. Executors got rid of everything a bit quick, couldn't give a damn. Upset the family, still, there it is.

STOATY BLOWS THROUGH HIS CHEEKS WITH TENSION.

FAKER: Eight or nine thousand..at least. Done your catalogue yet?

STOATY: There's still time to put it in.

FAKER: Tell you what, I'll make you up a load..bit of this, bit of ~~that~~<sup>that</sup>..it'll flesh you out nicely.

STOATY: Beautiful desk.

FAKER: Needs a good sale to fetch its price.x That's the piece for you,Ron, shouldn't be surprised if Weinstock has it off you.

STOATY: Why hasn't he seen it?

FAKER: Ah, I'm fed up with him. These big rings, they think they can cut you down, do as they like. I've got a nice clean business here, we're going to keep it that way.

THEY EMERGE, AND HE LOCKS THE DOOR WITH CARE. PAUSES BY A GROUP OF FAKE NUBIAN BOYS.

FAKERX: Couple of spades?

STOATY NODS. A MAN TOUCHES THE FAKER'S



ARM AND SHOWS HIM THE OPEN DRAWER OF A VERY NICE CHEST OF DRAWERS. IT IS INCISED 10, DOWNING STREET. THE FAKER PUTS HIS FOREFINGER ON THE SPACE BEFORE THE FIRST FIGURE.

FAKER: Cut in another one there. Change of address.

A COUNTRY ROAD, BUCOLIC. AN OLD VAN BOWLS INTO VIEW AND CAREERS OFF DOWN THE WINDING ROAD.

THE VAN, SEEN ALMOST HEAD ON. WE SEE THAT THERE ARE THREE PEOPLE.

INSIDE THE VAN. JIM IS DRIVING. HE IS A DARK, BURLY MAN, SOMEWHERE BETWEEN FORTY AND FIFTY. A GREEDY, MERRY FACE. NEXT TO HIM IS TED, SMALL AND SPARE, OLDER AND IMMOBILE. HE IS THINKING ABOUT NOTHING. BY THE WINDOW IS JIM'S SON, KEITH, KNOWN AS KEEF. DARK AND GANGLING, HE HAS HIS FATHER'S HOT EYES. THE RADIO IS ON, PLAYING A DOLOROUS LOVESONG, VERY BAD OF ITS TYPE, JIM'S FACE SHOWS PAIN. HE SWITCHES OFF THE SET, A CRACKLY PORTABLE.

KEITH: 'ere!

JIM: (AFFABLY) You listen to all that, don't you son, morning noon and night.

KEITH: What's wrong with it?

TED: He don't know no better.

JIM TAKES A CORNER WITH PANACHE.

JIM: Don't get him nowhere. He's not a bit of good.

---

KEITH: Speak for yourself.

JIM: Ere, give us the map, Ted.

HE SLEWS TO A HALT, CONSULTS THE MAP.

TED: Where we meeting the doc, at the house?

JIM: No. His pãace. He's cleaned her out.

JIM SLAPS THE MAP BACK, TURNS THE CAR IN THE TINY LANE, AND THEY RETRACE THEIR STEPS. ON THE SIDE OF THE VAN IS PAINTED JAMES HOWELL, ANTIQUES, OBJECTS D'ART AND BRIC2A-BRAC.

A SMALL, DEAD WELSH VILLAGE. THE VAN HALTS BEFORE A DUSTY JUNK SHOP. JIM CLANGS THE BELL. A WITCHY OLD WOMAN, ALL CHIN, COMES TO THE DOOR AND STICKS OUT HER HEAD. THE THREE ENTER, PUSHING PAST HER. SHE GLARES.

JIM: Hullo, Mrs. Evans, got you up, have we? Is the doctor about?

WOMAN: Nooh.

JIM: Not arrived yet? In that new car of his? I thought he'd do better than that

WOMAN: What do you want him for?

JIM: Din he say we was coming? We're supposed to meet him here. You remember me, Mrs. Evans, four poster bed, Chinese vase and that parrot cage. All rusted through under the paint that cage was, by the way. I's a job to get rid of it.

WOMAN: Well that's all right, you din give nothing for it, did you?

JIM: Bit nippy out, we been on the road all night, any chance of a cup of tea, Ma?

KEETH HAS BEEN PROWLING ROUND THE SHOP.

---

HE LIFTS A JUG, PUTS IT DOWN AGAIN, THEN KNOCKS A SMALL TABLE..BOTH SIGNS PICKED UP BY HIS FATHER.

WOMAN: That table's not for sale.

SHE GOES INTO THE ROOM AT THE BACK AND PUTS THE KETTLE ON.

JIM: (CALLS) How long's he going to be?

WOMAN: (EMERGING FAST.. SHE DOESN'T WANT TO LEAVE THEM ALONE IN HER SHOP) He'll be in for his dinner soon.

JIM: Nothing in the way of china.. jewellery?

WOMAN: Jewellery is it?

JIM: Do very well. I bought a lot of garnets the other day.. paid a bit...

WOMAN: Was those off the Cantrells?

JIM: Yeah<sup>1</sup>

WOMAN: You paid too much.

SHE MAKES THE TEA.

TED: Is he coming?

WOMAN: My son has patients to see to. He can't be bothered with riff-raff all hours of the day and night.

KEITH: (WITH THE JUG) What do you want for this?

WOMAN: I'm not open. I don't open of a Wednesday.

THE MEN STAND THERE SMILING. BUT THERE IS MENACE.. IT IS BROKEN BY THE DOORBELL AS THE DOCTOR ENTERS. HE IS YOUNG, FLESHY, QUICK-EYED.

DOC: Hullo, Mam. Mornin', Mr. Berry, nice to see you.

JIM: Hullo doc, we just got here.

WOMAN: Tea Mervyn?

DOC: Thanks.

JIM AND THE DOCTOR ASIDE.

JIM: What's the old lady got?

DOC: Nothing of much value but there's a lot of it. Set of chairs.. ropeback.

JIM: How many?

DOC: Five and a carver, near match. Big bureau, French library chair, there might be some age to that, I'm keeping that...few bits of Meissen, broken of course, a lot of glass, bit of pewter, brass, steel fender, bedside tables.. lot of small oriental stuff, they was in India.

JIM: Where is it?

JIM AND THE DOC GO INTO THE BACK YARD.  
THE WOMAN WATCHES AS THEY OPEN THE GARAGE.

LATER. IN THE YARD JIM AND THE DOC SEEM TO BE HAVING AN ARGUMENT.

LATER. THE DOC TRIES TO GET BACK INTO HIS HOUSE, HE HAS HAD ENOUGH. BUT JIM TURNS HIM ROUND AND CUFFS HIM ONE.

JIM: Now come on Mervyn, see sense.

TED: Yeah, you shouldn't of said that, Doc. Jim couldn't let you say a thing like that, now, could he?

THE DOC HOLDS HIS SINGING HEAD. HE LOOKS SNAKY.

KEITH: After all, you took it off the old girl. I bet you didn't give her much. I bet you give her a couple of hundred the lot.. you told us she's gone daft.

---

THE DOC AND HIS MOTHER EXCHANGE A LOOK.  
KEITH HAS HIT IT.

KEITH: Yeah.. see their faces? I got  
it right, din I?

JIM: You do all right, don't you Merv?  
Nice new car, you 've got..I'd like a  
car like that.

DOC: That was left to me.

JIM: Who by? Grateful patient? What  
was he grateful for.. being pushed off?  
We've come here to do a deal, mate. We've  
come a long way.

THEY ALL GO INTO THE HOUSE.

IN THE NARROW PASSAGE THEY ARE AT IT AGAIN.  
JIM AND THE DOC, WITH THE OLD WOMAN  
BELABOURING KEITH WITH A COPPER STICK.

IN THE BACK ROOM. IT IS CHAOTIC AND FILTHY,  
BUT THE SMALL, ROUND TABLE IS LAID UP FOR  
A SORT OF MEAL. THE OLD WOMAN SHOOS THE  
CAT OFF THE TABLE..IT HAS BEEN LICKING  
THE BUTTER.. AND THEY ALL SIT ROUND, ON  
THE ASSORTED RICKETY 'ANTIQUE' CHAIRS.  
THE DOCTOR AND JIM HAVE STICKING PLASTER  
ON THEIR FACES.

TED: Who's going to be mother?

A LUSCIOUS SPREAD OF GOLD FOOD ON A SIDE  
TABLE AT A POSH COUNTRY CLUB. MUSIC IN  
THE BACKGROUND. A BIT OF GAMING GOING ON.  
A MAN COMES UP TO THE MANAGER, WHO IS  
STANING WITH STOATY AND RALPH RAY.

MAN: Foreign coin in the fruit machine  
again, Guv.

BOSS: Oh Christ, not again.

MAN: It's Esselmont.

RAY: Who's he?

STOATY: Local MP. (HE IS ALL DRESSED UP IN A DINNER JACKET, FEELING UP IN THE WORLD)

BOSS: He does GO abroad. It could be a mistake. Again.

RAY: I'd like to meet him. What sort of a place has he got?

STOATY: Rubbish.

BOSS: He's in electronics. Buys his stuff from Maples.

THE MP APPROACHES.. A LARGE MAN.

BOSS: Sorry to hear you've been having trouble with one of our machines, Sir Geoffrey.

MP: Wah-wah, wah-wah, wah-wah.....  
goodnight.

THEY WATCH HIM GO.

BOSS: He never gets in the way. Likes his food.

RAY: Well, I must be going. (HE SHAKES STOATY'S HAND) Thanks for a very nice evening. I shall look forward to seeing your catalogue. And thanks for helping us out. We shan't forget it.

HE GOES. BOSS AND STOATY WATCH.

BOSS: I hope you know what you're doing.

STOATY: I don't get this sort of sale every week. I'm making the best of it.

HE LOOKS HUNGRILY AT A DISHY WOMAN AT THE ROULETTE TABLE. SHE IS ACCOMPANIED BY JOHN, MOIRA'S HUSBAND.

BOSS: (FOLLOWING HIS GAZE) Well, don't get too ambitious.

---

MOIRA AT HER DOCTOR'S. SHE LOOKS AT THE PRESCRIPTION HE HAS GIVEN HER.

MOIRA: What have you given me?

DOC: Pepper-uppers and calmer-downers. Don't fret, Moira. Get about.

MOIRA: I do. You'll be telling me to get a lover next.

DOC: Perhaps I will.

MOIRA: I wish I could find something. Oh I'm useful - I'm one of the most useful people I know, I hardly have a free moment. I have no pleasure in life.

DOC: This may get better. Try the pills. I hear Eva's selling up.

MOIRA: (THEY HAVE BOTH RISEN) Yes. I've been quite depressed about it.

DOC: Don't be. They can't wait to get out of the place.

MOIRA: She told me once she loved babies. ~~She~~ wanted lots of children, but Daddy was impotent. She tried to leave him, but he cried, and she hadn't got the heart. What do you do?

DOC: (EXTRICATING HIMSELF) You don't dwell on it. You get about and have a bit of fun. That's what Eva's going to do.

HE MAKES A FACE AFTER HER AS SHE LEAVES.

YVONNE AND ERIC LOOKING INTO A WINDOW FULL OF GHASTLY FURNITURE. SHE EGGS AND PULLS HIM INSIDE IN SPITE OF BEING SO PREGNANT THAT SHE CAN HARDLY WADDLE.

THE RACECOURSE. THE HORSES ARE COMING ROUND THE LAST BEND.

COMMENTATOR: They're into the straight and it's Leadbelly in the lead with Elemental on his wide outside followed by Sailo, Gay Lothario Gingerbell and Carew making ground on the rails, it's Leadbelly and Carew, Sailo holding on, there's nothing between these three.... I think Leadbelly...it's Carew, Carew hugging the rails has his nose in front and at the line it's Carew, I don't think the judge will call for a photo, there's no doubt about it, the outsider Carew has beaten Leadbelly on the line. The result of the Homage Stakes is first, Carew, ridden by Johnnie Breachdale, second Leadbelly, and third Sailo...I think Pathos ran on to take fourth place.

A GROUP OF MEN COME UP THE STEPS, IN THE CROWD, AWAY FROM THE STANDS ON THEIR WAY TO THE BAR. THERE IS A SOLEMN DIGNITY ABOUT THEM, AS OF MEN AT A STATESMAN'S FUNERAL. IT IS ARTHUR, VERA, BOBBY AND TERRY.

ARTHUR: That's torn it.

SORROWFULLY THEY MAKE THEIR WAY TO THE BAR. TERRY PUSHES AND SHOVES, AND MANAGES TO GET DRINKS.

BOBBY: We was doing so well.

VERA: Too well ducky. I should never have let you persuade me to go for the Yankee. We should have done the treble like I said.

ARTHUR: I wasn't too sure about that bleeder. He had bad legs last year.

BOBBY: Now you tell us.

ARTHUR: He won the George and Elizabeth.

TERRY: Slow time though.

VERA: Well, that's my last fling. And

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VERA: (CONT) we might as well all go home, there's nothing left to go sprauencing down to the country with..we couldn't buy a lavatory brush.

TERRY: It makes you feel all funny.. losing all that money.

ARTHUR: What are we going to do?

VERA: We could always flog your car, pussy.

BOBBY: What about the chests? The campaign chests in the van.

VERA: I've just sweated to get those for my Australians. I don't want to be punched.

BOBBY: Oh you can get some more, can't he Terry? They're turning them out by the barrowload.

ARTHUR: We could flog them on the way.. at least pay for our expenses..we can pay for Steaty's stuff with a cheque.  
THEY ALL LAUGH.

VERA: There's a lot to unload piecemeal. I don't want to run round, cap in hand, at my time of life.

TERRY: (SOFT) Hullo.....

RAY, IN HIS SMOKED GLASSES, HAS COME INTO THE BAR WITH HIS MATES. WHAT IS WORSE, THEY LOOK FESTIVE. THEY HAVE WON.

BOBBY: What are they doing down here?

ARTHUR: I'll soon find out, as if we don't know.

HE DRIFTS, SO QUIETLY, THROUGH THE CROWD UNTIL HE IS BEHIND THE FULHAM MOB.

RAY: Allright then. We miss the last race, cut across to the border tonight. We'll have to stop for food, it's a damn long drive.

FOR A SPLIT SECOND, HIS MATE LOOKS CONFUSED. THEN HE Catches on.

MATE: Yeah..and we got a long way to go past the Welsh border.

SHORTGUTS: And we don't want to stay in no fleapit..we want a decent hotel..that always takes time.. finding a decent place.

RAY: Can't remember when I was last in Wales. Not very often you get the smell of silver from south Wales. It isn't that sort of country..more your mining village, that sort of thing.

MATES: Yer, yer.

ARTHUR MELTS AWAY. RAY WATCHES HIM COLDLY.

RAY: Hope they have a nice drive.

SHORTIE: Want me to put a spud in?

MATE: What for?

SHORTIE: Well, then they'll think we seen em and want to keep them out of it.

RAY: They're too thick for that. You get too refined, Shortguts, that's why you never get anywhere. You must fit the style to the occasion. They're Cortobello rubbish.

THEY FINISH THEIR DRINKS AND WALK OFF.

BOBBY: Did they see you?

ARTHUR: Yes they saw me. Ralpie Ray put on quite a turn. Well, we know they ain't going to Wales. We're off to Wales,

ARTHUR: (CONT) ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ he says, hope we gets a good hot~~ed~~, good eats. They're probably putting a spud in our exhaust so's we think they've fallen down a silver mine in Taffland.

~~VERA XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~  
TERRY: Where are they going then?

VER A: As if we didn't know. Same place as us.

ARTHUR: Only they're not down two and a half thou. Got your funny hat, Vera?

VERA PUTS ON HIS HENRY HEATH HAT, AND WE ARE IN AN ANTIQUE SHOP IN A ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXXX~~ COUNTY TOWN. A WOMAN ENTERS, AFTER VERA.

VERA: (BEST VOICE) Oh..ah... do serve the lady .. I'm in no hurry.

THE PROPRIETOR GIVES HIM A PINCHED SMILE.

WOMAN: Oh I just want to know the price of the little chest in the window.. the bow front..

PROP: One hundred and twenty guineas, madam.

WOMAN: (FLUSTERED) Oh heavens - I'd no idea.. good heavens. (SHE RALLIES) My sister's got one just ~~like~~ it, I must tell her..it's rather nicer, better condition. Perhaps she would be prepared to sell it.

PROP: We are always interested in good quality furniture, madam. And do tell her to be sure that she has it properly insured, won't you? (HE BOWS HER TO THE DOOR)

And how sir, what did you wish to sell?

VERA: How on earth did you know? My~~neard~~.

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IT READS ' MAJOR KENNETH MACKENZIE,  
COURT LODGE, NEAR WINDLESHAM, SURREY.'

PROP: Oh we become accustomed to these things, sir. What can I do for you?

VERA: Matter of fact I'm in a bit of a mess. I've got a nice sort of a chest in the back of the car, one of those military things..picked it up in a decent little shop in Town. I've just rung my wife to tell her the good news and she says it's too big for the space in our little cottage in the country... awful nuisance. I wondered if you'd be interested in buying it... of course I realise -

PROP: I shall be pleased to take a look.

VERA: I'm parked just round the corner.

THEY LEAVE. WE NOTICE THAT ALL OF THE STUFF IN THE SHOP IS MENDED, PATCHED UP.. WITH FAKE HANDLES, PLASTIC REPAIRS ON PLATES, CHIPS HERE, BODGE-UPS THERE. WE DON'T SEE A SINGLE CLEAN PIECE. THE TWO RETURN.

PROP: Of course the handles and corner pieces aren't contemporary.

VERA: I beg your pardon?

PROP: That is to say, they aren't original. The chest is probably ~~about~~ late Victorian..the handles I'm afraid are 1970 repro. I'm afraid you may have paid too much. What sort of a price were you asking?

VERA: Well of course I realise I shall have to take a loss. (HE SIGHS) If I could make forty pounds ....

THE PROPRIETOR SHAKES HIS HEAD SADLY.

VERA: Look here.. to be perfectly frank I should be glad to be rid of the ~~de~~ped

VERA: (CONT) thing. I believe you've sold one or two things to a friend of mine, General Worsley.

THE PROPRIETOR FROWNS.

PROP: Wouldn't it be better to take the piece back? I'm sure you could be credited.

VERA: Oh I can't very well do that, I'm more than halfway down to the cottage. Could you possibly make me an offer?

PROP: It's not the sort of stock we normally handle. ('NO', SAYS VERA'S SIDEWAYS LOOK, FLICKING AN EYE AT THE RUBBISH) If I gave you twenty pounds for it I might..I might make five, handing it on to the trade. There's nothing wrong with the chest as a piece of furniture, but of course, to me (WITH A SWEET SMILE) .. it isn't antique.

VERA: Oh it's sound enough, absolutely solid. Well, perhaps I'd better put it in an auction, it'll probably do rather well there. Just such a nuisance.

PROP: I'm afraid twenty's my best offer.

VERA: To be perfectly frank I paid seventy five for it.

PROP: (QUICK AS A FLASH) May I see the invoice?

VERA SEARCHES. THE PROP. WAITS, HIS SNEER SPREADING. JUST WHEN WE THINK VERA IS COMING OUT WITH THE EXCUSES HE PRODUCES A CRUMPLED PIECE OF PAPER.

VERA: Ah, here we are.

PROP: Ye-es..yes, I know the place.

VERA: I mean, if I could get, say, thirty-five back..too awful of course.

PROP: (POLISHING HIS GLASSES) Probably had turned wooden handles originally. What a pity they were removed. They had a charm of their own, you know. There's an awful lot of this sort of vandalism going on. Great pity.

VERA: There's no worm in it, that sort of thing.

THEY ARE GETTING READY TO TRADE.

PROP: Well, perhaps I'll come and take another look.

THE MONEY CHANGES HANDS, THIRTY POUNDS IN FIVERS.

THE PROPRIETOR ON THE TELEPHONE.

PROP: Hullo Bunny. Just thought I'd let you know there's a joker in a funny hat flogging campaign chests. I think he's one of the Portobello rubbish. Don't give him more than thirty, there's a dear boy. And don't buy more than one. We shall be seeing them everywhere.

THE VAN PULLS UP AT A BARN BEHIND A BEAUTIFUL SMALL COUNTRY HOUSE BEARING THE SMALL SIGN 'ANTIQUES'. ARTHUR AND VERA GET OUT AND TOLL A SHIP'S BELL. A FADED COUNTRY COUPLE, THE FRONTS, TO STEP FORWARD. FROM A BACK CURTAIN A FEARSOME HEAD EMERGES, AND THE TWO ARE SHOULDERED ASIDE. A GREAT HAIRY MAN EMERGES.

FRANK: Hullo hullo. What do you two want? How's my darling Vera..ah, she's lovely. HIS HUG IS NOT APPRECIATED. What you got?

ARTHUR: Campaign chests.

FRANK: How much?

ARTHUR: Forty quid, thirty if you have a bash.

FRANK: Let's have a look, mate.

BOBBY AND TERRY HAVE LET DOWN THE BACK OF THE PANTECHNICON. IT IS LOADED WITH CAMPAIGN CHESTS.

FRANK: All clean are they?

ARTHUR: Pheasant's workshop. He's doing a line.

FRANK: Coming down in the world, innee?

ARTHUR: Can't get the stuff Tosh.

FRANK: I'll ave alf a dozen, twenty-five nicker the piece.

ARTHUR: You won't you know.

FRANK: 'wenty-seven ten, last offer.

VERA: There are some good ones.

ARTHUR: Yeah, you can have a couple of good ones.

FRANK: I should bloody well hope so.  
(HE CALLS) Ken! Brian! Arnie! Den!

HIS FOUR BROTHERS, EACH ONE BIGGER AND HAIRIER THAN THE LAST, COME OUT IN SINGLE FILE, ROLLING UP THEIR SLEEVES.

FRANK: Fetch me down half a dozen of them chests.

THEY TAKE A CHEST APIECE ON THEIR BACKS AND MAKE OFF, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF DEN, WHO TAKES ONE IN EACH HAND.

KEN, CLOSE, LOWERS HIS BURDEN INTO THE BARN. AS IT REACHES THE GROUND IT CHANGES





ERIC AND YVONNE COMING UP THE PATH TO THEIR COTTAGE. SHE PAUSES.

ERIC: What's the matter?

YVONNE: I don't like all these trees.

ERIC: What's the matter with them?

YVONNE: I don't like them.

HE OPENS THE DOOR AND USHERS HER IN.. THEN WAVES HER BACK. HE TAKES THE BABY AND PUTS IT CAREFULL ON THE NEW SETTEE, BARRED IN BY THE SUITCASE. HE GOES BACK TO CARRY HER OVER THE THRESHOLD...SHE IS WAITING EXPECTANTLY. BUT SHE IS TOO HEAVY FOR HIM AND HE JUST CAN'T MAKE IT. HE HAS SEVERAL GOES, AND THEN THEY BOTH TUMBLE INTO THE ROOM...SPRAWLING OVER THE FLOOR. HE LAUGHS. BUT SHE IS NOT SO AMUSED.

SHE PICKS UP THE BABY, FLUSTERED, AND HE SHOWS HER ROUND. HE HAS BEEN WORKING HARD ON THE PLACE. SHE WALKS THROUGH, JOGGING THE BABY. BUT IN SPITE OF THE PEG-LEG SOFA, THE SIDE CHAIR, THE TELEVISION, AND THE THREE PIECE SUITE IN THE BEDROOM, THE COTTAGE IS WOEFULLY UNDERFURNISHED.

YVONNE: What am I going to put the baby's things in?

ERIC: Oh we'll get a little chest of drawers. I'll ask Dad. We could pick one up.

YVONNE: (MUTTERS) What with?

SHE SITS DOWN SUDDENLY ON THE NEW SOFA, HUGGING HER BABY. HER HEAD SINKS AND HE REALISES THAT SHE IS CRYING.

ERIC: Hey, what's the matter? Von, what's up? You're not crying, are you?

YVONNE: I want to go back to the hospital.

ON THE LAWN, AT THE SIDE OF THE COUNTRY HOUSE, THE VAST MARQUEE IS GOING UP. IT IS A REAL BOTCH UP. SHOUTS AND IMPRECATIONS. STOATY DODGES ABOUT, PAPERS UNDER ARM, GETTING IN THE WAY AND BECOMING IRRITABLE WITH EVERYONE. IT IS ALL GOING TO HIS HEAD.

JOHN AND HIS WOMAN, JEAN, HAVING A COSY EXTENSIVE LUNCH. HE IS TALKING. SHE IS LISTENING.

MOIRA, IN A DULL LITTLE TEASHOP, AT A TABLE BY HERSELF, CLOSE TO THE WINDOW. SHE STIRS HER TEA, LOOKS AT HER WATCH. SHE IS KILLING TIME. THE MIDDLE-AGED, HOMELY WAITRESS BRINGS HER A TOASTED TEACAKE.

MOIRA: Thanks, Phyllis. How's your husband?

PHYLL: Much better thanks. I'm ever so grateful for your help about the other business, Mrs. Coombe.

MOIRA: Not a bit. That's what the fund is for. It'll help them get on their feet.

PHYLL: They're up to their ears in HP! I've told them...go down to the local auction room, that's the place to get bargains. Then there's the big sale, there'll be a lot of pickings there.

MOIRA: When is it?

PHYLL: Next week! Would you like to see the catalogue.

MOIRA: Well -

BUT PHYLLIS IS AWAY. SHE RETURNS WITH THE CATALOGUE, WHICH IS VERY GRAND INDEED... IT APPEARS TO HAVE A COAT OF ARMS ON THE COVER. MOIRA FLICKS THROUGH, PAUSING TO LOOK AT THE GLOSSY PHOTOGRAPHS. PHYLLIS LOOKS OVER HER SHOULDER, EYES SHINING.

PHYLL: Will you be going?

MOIRA: Oh I shouldn't think so. There's nothing I need, really.

PHYLL: Oh I should go. Do you good.

SHE HAS SAID THE WRONG THING. MOIRA HANDS BACK THE CATALOGUE WITH A STRAINED SMILE. SHE SITS, STIRRING AND STIRRING HER TEA.