

Bernard I don't know what you're talking about. (*To Robert*) Do you know what she's talking about?

Jacqueline Oh, he knows what I'm talking about. Only he doesn't give gorgeous, gorgeous coats to his mistresses—do you, Robert?

Robert Now, Jacqueline—

Jacqueline He gives rotten pairs of gloves.

Robert They were jolly nice gloves!

Bernard What have gloves got to do with it?

Robert Er . . . nothing.

Bernard (*to Jacqueline*) And what did you mean just now when you said I should know the truth about you?

Jacqueline Well, my darling—

Robert Now, Jacqueline—

Bernard Quiet, you.

Jacqueline Haven't we always said that marriage is an equal partnership?

Bernard Yes, of course.

Jacqueline Therefore—if you were to have a mistress, it's only fair that I should have a lover.

Robert Jacqueline—

Bernard Quiet, you.

Jacqueline Isn't it?

Bernard Well—I suppose if it were true that I had a mistress . . .

Jacqueline Yes?

Bernard As a purely hypothetical situation . . .

Jacqueline Of course.

Bernard Then I suppose in that case . . .

Jacqueline Well?

Bernard It might conceivably be said that you could theoretically claim the purely academic right to have a figurative lover.

Jacqueline Thank you.

Robert Jacqueline—

Jacqueline Quiet, you! (*To Bernard*) So, since, as I said, I know all about your mythical mistress, it's only right that you should know about my illustrious lover.

Bernard You mean you *have* got a lover!

Jacqueline (*beaming*) Yes.

Bernard Who is he? I'll kill him!

Jacqueline Promise?

Robert Please, Jacqueline.

Bernard I'll castrate him!

Jacqueline Jolly good.

Robert (*almost in tears*) Please, Jacqueline.

Bernard Who is it?

Jacqueline Ummm . . .

Pregnant pause. Jacqueline keeps Robert in petrified suspense until her finger finally comes to rest in his direction

Him.

Robert Oh God.

Bernard Him?

Jacqueline Yes.

Bernard Robert?

Jacqueline Exactly.

Bernard (*to Robert*) Is this true?

Robert Nonsense.

Bernard (*advancing on him with the ice-tongs*) Is it possible?

Robert (*backing away*) Absolutely not.

Bernard Because if it is—

Robert It isn't. And even if it was, you wouldn't. And even if you did, it wouldn't be fair. You're just as bad as I am . . . if I was . . . which I'm not.

Bernard (*waving the tongs, chasing him round the furniture*) Pickled and pinned in the piggery!

Robert Now, Bernard—

The doorbell rings loudly. They all freeze. Pause

Bernard Who's that?

Jacqueline How do I know?

Bernard (*to Robert*) Do you know?

Robert No, but I'm very glad to see them.

Bernard I'll get it.

Bernard goes towards the front door. Robert tip-toes towards the kitchen.

Bernard points the tongs

Stay where you are, you!

Robert freezes. Bernard opens the front door

George stands there. He is big

George I've come to take her home.

Bernard Who?

George The cook.

Bernard Ah. Er . . .

George (*coming in*) Has she finished?

Jacqueline The cook?

George Yes.

Jacqueline I thought she was staying the night.

George Why should she do that?

Jacqueline Well, it was so late, and—

George I always fetch her. That way she can't get into any trouble—know what I mean?

Jacqueline Oh, yes—quite.

George Course, if she's not ready, I'm quite happy to wait . . . (*he looks at the scattered drinks*) as you seem to be celebrating.

Jacqueline May we ask who you are exactly?

George I'm George.

Jacqueline George?

George Her husband.
 Bernard | (*together*) Oh my God!
 Robert | (*to Jacqueline*) I work as a chef too, you see.
 Jacqueline How fascinating.
 George And when I've finished, I come along to see if Suzy's finished. Is she finished?
 Robert I think we're all finished.
 George What?
 Jacqueline Yes, she's just about finished.
 George Good. Are you the mistress?
 Jacqueline It depends what you mean exactly.
 George Of the house?
 Jacqueline Yes, I'm the mistress of the house. And also the mistress of him. (*She indicates Robert*) And also the wife of him. (*She indicates Bernard*)
 George (*bemused*) Very cosy.
 Jacqueline (*sweetly*) Yes, isn't it?
 George (*to Bernard*) I don't know how you put up with that.
 Bernard What?
 George Having your wife's lover in the house.
 Bernard Neither do I.
 George If it were me, I'd kill him.
 Bernard I was just about to actually.
 George (*flexing his muscles*) Do you want any help?
 Bernard Thank you. I'll let you know if I do.
 George Right.
 Robert Oh God!
 George (*to Jacqueline*) Well if she's finished, where is she?
 Jacqueline I'm not sure. Where is she, Bernard?
 Bernard Er—who?
 Jacqueline Suzy of course!
 Bernard I, er . . . she's gone.
 Jacqueline Gone?
 Bernard Left.
 Jacqueline Why?
 Bernard Well, she'd er . . . finished. So she left. (*To Robert*) Right? Left.
 Robert (*nodding furiously*) Left. Right. Left.
 George She wouldn't have left.
 Bernard Why not?
 George She knew I was coming.
 Bernard Perhaps that's why she left.
 George (*dangerously*) I beg your pardon?
 Bernard (*hastily*) I meant, perhaps she left to meet you on the way.
 George She never leaves when I'm coming. She must be here.
 Jacqueline Perhaps she's upstairs.
 George (*suspiciously*) Upstairs?
 Jacqueline (*calling up the stairs*) Suzy!
 George (*to the men*) What would she be doing upstairs?

Bernard Can't imagine.
 Robert Haven't the foggiest.
Suzanne comes down the stairs, also wearing a sexy negligé
 Jacqueline Yes, here she is . . . (*To Bernard*) Why did you say she'd left?
 Bernard Er . . . I meant left to go upstairs.
 Jacqueline And she's changed.
 Bernard In order to change.
 Jacqueline (*to Suzanne*) Well—there was no need.
 Suzanne There wasn't?
 Jacqueline Look who's here. (*She indicates George*)
 Suzanne (*staring*) Who?
 Jacqueline George. He's come to take you home.
Pause
 Suzanne Take me home?
 Jacqueline Yes.
 Suzanne What for?
 Jacqueline (*puzzled*) Well . . .
 George Who's this?
 Jacqueline Who does it look like?
 George Don't ask me.
 Jacqueline It's your wife.
 George My wife?
 Jacqueline Your wife, the cook.
 George She's certainly not my wife. And she doesn't look much like a cook.
 Robert Oh God!
 George I certainly wouldn't let my wife do the cooking dressed like that!
 Suzanne Are you objecting?
 George Not at all—very nice.
 Suzanne Thank you.
 George If you like your beef rare. But are you the cook?
 Suzanne On and off.
 George Then where's Suzy?
 Jacqueline This is Suzy.
 George Not my Suzy.
 Jacqueline (*puzzled*) Really?
 Bernard (*hastily*) Perhaps you've come to the wrong house.
 George I came to the right house to drop her off. Are you telling me I can't tell one house from another now it's time to pick her up?
 Bernard No, no.
 George So where is she?
 Bernard She's not here.
 Robert Definitely not here.
 Jacqueline It's true there is another Suzy here—
 George Aha!
 Jacqueline But she can't be your Suzy.
 George Why not?

Jacqueline Firstly, she's not a cook, she's an actress.
 Bernard That's right.
 Jacqueline Secondly, she's this gentleman's niece.
 Robert That's right.
 Jacqueline And thirdly, she's my husband's mistress.
 Bernard That's r—— Oh God!
 George *Very cosy!* Quite a ménage you have here.
 Jacqueline Yes, isn't it?
 Suzanne Yes, isn't it?
 George Well, that certainly can't be my Suzy.
 Bernard I can't?
 George Oh no. My Suzy is definitely a cook, not an actress. I know all her uncles. And if she was anybody's mistress I'd have killed them both long ago.
 Robert Oh golly!
 Bernard What?
 Robert I've run out of ways of saying oh God.
 George Funny though.
 Bernard What?
 George That you should have two Suzys here.
 Suzanne *(to Bernard)* Yes—explain that one.
 Bernard Oh, it's a very common name, Suzy.
 George Is it?
 Robert We know hundreds of Suzys.
 George You do?
 Bernard Especially round here.
 George Round here?
 Bernard They breed Suzys like flies round here.
 George *(demonstrating)* My Suzy is about this high, and about this wide, with a long black skirt and a high white blouse.
 Bernard Ah no—our Suzy is taller than that, I think . . .
 Robert And considerably thinner . . .
 Bernard With a very short skirt . . .
 Robert And a very low top.
 George No, that can't be my Suzy. If she dressed like that I'd kill her.
 Bernard }
 Robert } *(together)* It's definitely not your Suzy!
Together, they manhandle him towards the front door
 Bernard I should try the other houses.
 Robert There are lots round here like this.
 Bernard Dinner parties going on all over the place.
 Robert People gorging themselves in all directions.
 George Right.
They get him to the front door, and open it
 Suzanne comes out of the kitchen
 Suzanne Well, that's finished that lot. Anything else?

The three men freeze in the doorway
 George *(turning)* Suzy!
 Suzanne George!
 Robert }
 Bernard } *(together)* Oh God!
George and Suzy rush into each others arms
 George I knew you were here!
 Suzanne Of course I'm here, flower!
 George I knew you wouldn't have gone.
 Suzanne Gone where?
 George These people seemed to think . . . They told me that . . . Hold on a minute. *(He glowers round the room)*
 Robert *(to Bernard)* Here we go.
 George First of all they said you'd left . . .
 Suzanne No, I'm still here.
 George Then they said you were upstairs . . .
 Suzanne No, I was in there.
 George Then they said you were in another house doing another dinner . . .
 Suzanne No, this house.
 George *(to Bernard)* So what was all that nonsense in aid of?
 Bernard Well, you see, er . . .
 George *(to Robert)* Eh?
 Robert Well, you see, er . . .
 George And what is more . . .
 Suzanne What?
 George *(indicating Jacqueline)* She told me you were an actress . . .
 Suzanne Course not, I'm a cook.
 George She also told me you were this man's niece . . .
 Suzanne Don't be silly, flower.
 George She also told me you were *this* man's mistress!
 Suzanne How ridiculous!
 George Is it?
 Suzanne Of course it is.
 George Then what are you dressed like that for?
 Suzanne Ah. Well, it's a long story . . .
 George *(increasingly angry)* And what are they all dressed like that for?
 Bernard Well, you see, old chap—
 George Don't you old chap me! I knew there was something funny about you lot. Upstairs and downstairs, with mistresses and lovers all over the blooming place! *(Roaring)* There's a ruddy orgy going on here, isn't there?
 Bernard No, no . . .
 George With my Suzy in the middle of it!
 Robert *(hiding behind Bernard)* You don't understand . . .
 George I understand all right! *(With rage)* Ahhhh!
He takes a wild swing at Bernard, who ducks. Robert catches it instead, and goes head over heels over the sofa. Bernard gets the next one and goes over the