

## Act 1

### Scene 1

*A day in early September. Gordon staggers in with a large packing case. There are a number of boxes and a flipchart on stage already. Marion enters.*

Marion: Oh Gordon, you haven't taken your shoes off. I thought we'd agreed: no footwear on the new carpet.

*Gordon goes to put the box down.*

Don't put that box down it might be dirty.

Gordon: Err...

*He removes one shoe but can't get the other off. Thinks it would be better to stand on socked foot. Swaps feet so shoe in the air, without putting the box down.*

Marion: Wait there while I get a dust sheet.

*Gordon balances on one leg still holding box, wobbling and hopping about. Marion comes back in with a dustsheet.*

Here we are.

*Gordon hops to put box down. Takes his other shoe off.*

Oh, look at all this shading! This carpet was supposed to be footprint-free.

Gordon: We could Hoover backing-out the door.

Marion: No, we'd better smooth the carpet fibres by hand so they don't settle incorrectly. *(Marion gets down on her knees and smooths the carpet)* I want all the swirls going in the right direction. Teal to the left and Azure to the right... Well, don't just stand there. *(Gordon gets down on his knees and Marion starts indicating)* That whirl to the left; no left; left, right, left.

Approach it like a military campaign!

*Gordon gives a mock salute.*

Gordon: Aye aye, cap'ain.

Marion: Don't be so infantile.

Gordon: Just trying to lighten the mood.

Marion: Moving house is stressful enough without your unfunny jokes.

*Pause. Gordon carries on swirling*

Gordon: I'm beginning to have trouble telling my teals from my a-zures. *(Gordon deliberately pronounces this word as a-zures)*

*Pause*

Marion: *(Putting a hand on his shoulder)* Sorry for snapping... didn't get much sleep. I used to love the sound of gulls when mummy and daddy took me to the coast; but last night was like trying to sleep through Hitchcock's 'The Birds'.

Gordon: I found their calls very soothing.

Marion: Yes, I noticed.

Gordon: Did I snore?

Marion: I'm not going to grace that with an answer!

Gordon: I'll take that as a yes then.

Marion: Let's just say I missed my 'roll-away zone' in the super-king at Highbank House.

Gordon: Just couldn't get it through the door.

Marion: Along with the rest of our lovely furniture.

*(Beat)*

Gordon: Sorry about all this old girl.

Marion: There is no need to keep apologising Gordon. Those private estates can be lonely places. I used to spend most days waiting for you to come home. This little bungalow will give us more time together. I'm looking forward to actually using our National Trust cards.

Gordon: I'm looking forward to their cream teas! *(Marion purses her lips in disapproval)*

Marion: Right, we must stay on schedule. Being able to lay the carpet and decorate after exchange has given us a head-start so we must now march forward. You keep swirling while I consult the flipchart *(goes and gets pointer)* Now when the new furniture *finally* arrives/

Gordon: I got onto FDP yesterday. They said they're having problems with their supplier/ but they'll be in

Marion: Oh honestly! FDP stands for 'Furniture Delivered Posthumously.'

Gordon: No. No, I think it stands for 'Furniture Design Partners'... or was it 'Furniture Delivered Prontoissimo'?

Marion: I don't care what it stands for Gordon! We're going to be watching television perched on boxes – and you know how I suffer with my back.

Gordon: I'll get onto them tomorrow.

Marion: Make sure you do. And threaten them with the sofa ombudsman!

*Marion uses the pointer.*

Now, *if* the three-piece arrives before we die, it will be going here, here and here; the pouffe there. Read me the labels on the boxes and I'll indicate their location.

Gordon: Aye ... *(She gives him a withering look. Gordon takes out his marker pen and reads the box labels)* Glassware.

Marion: *(pointing)* Dining room, Position 2

Gordon: *(He marks the boxes accordingly)* Books.

Marion: In here, Position 3

Gordon: Pig collection – Loft.

Marion: Loft?! I haven't spent a lifetime collecting 473 pigs, large *and* small, not to give them pride of place!

Gordon: Downsizing means decluttering.

Marion: Your nodding dogs were clutter; my pigs are not.

Gordon: *(Alarmed)* Were?

Marion: The Partially-Sighted Society have them in the window.... The toilet-roll-doll is in the bargain bucket.

Gordon: My mother knitted that!

Marion: Your mother knitted that horrible green cardigan, which has met a similar fate.

Gordon: I loved that cardigan.

Marion: You looked like a mound of moss in it!

*Gordon starts to complain.*

*(Marion uses pointer to indicate descending shelves)* Now, the pigs will be going along our new shelves here, here and here, then over onto the mantelpiece. The large ones can go either side of the fireplace, and my special ones in our display cabinet, Position 5.

Gordon: What about my bowls trophies?

Marion: Position 8.

Gordon: Where's that?

Marion: Under the stairs. *(Gordon looks glum)* Now, I'm going to make a nice cup of tea while you get on with things.

Gordon: Throw in a couple of biscuits - I'm starving.

Marion: You're supposed to be on a diet. *(Gordon looks haunted, Marion relents)* Oh, all right, but the doctor said no sweet things, or this diabetes won't be pre, it'll be post... mortem!

Gordon: Two little biscuits won't hurt.

Marion: I'll bring you six nutritious almonds.

Gordon: Make it eight, old girl.

Marion: At this rate you're never going to lose **that** *(stabs him in the middle with the pointer; then shows genuine concern)* You know very well how I worry about you.

Gordon: Don't fret Marion. You can't get rid of me that easily.

Marion: I don't want to get rid of you. I just want less of you.

*Marion exits. He starts to take the pigs out of the box and puts the large golden pig by the fireplace when the doorbell rings. There are murmurs offstage. He looks at the other grotesque pigs, decides he can't face them, quickly replaces them and closes the box again. Marion enters with Gina.*

Marion: *(To Gina)* Do you want to take your shoes off?

Gina: I'd feel absolutely naked without them. *(Gordon looks round, rather interested)*

Marion: Oh.... um Gordon, this is Gina who... lives in our cul-de-sac.

Gordon: Really?

Gina: Yes, right opposite. So, don't do anything naughty because I'll be watching!

Marion: I'm just about to make tea. Would you like a cup?

Gina: Thank you. That would be lovely.

*Marion exits.*

Gordon: *(Awkwardly)* Ah, well....

Gina: I've been doing the cul-de-sac 'curtain twitch', watching you *manfully* lifting all those heavy boxes, so I thought I'd bring you a little something to keep your strength up. *(She produces a large chocolate cake from a bag)*

Gordon: Chocolate cake? Terrific! I was about to get eight nuts if I was lucky; six if I wasn't.

Gina: I believe in feeding my men; don't like them too puny.

Gordon: *(Laughs)* No chance of that. *(Patting his stomach)*

Gina: I'm sure it's all muscle.

Gordon: After lugging these boxes around, it damned well ought to be.

*Gina laughs. Beat.*

So, uh, how long have you lived in Finchurch-on-Sea?

Gina: Twelve interminable years. The tide comes in, it goes out, and another shop closes.

Gordon: That sounds bleak.

Gina: It is.

Gordon: My wife's always dreamt of living by the coast, but I prefer trees to water. Still, we've done green, so time for blue. Although, so far it's been grey skies and grey seas. *(Sadly)* Everything is grey.

Gina: Where was your last 'abode'?

Gordon: Bagshot.

Gina: From rich commuter belt to deprived seaside town? Bit of a come-down.

Gordon: *(Flippantly)* I'm afraid that's what happens when you lose your job at my age.

Gina: *(Embarrassed)* Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to pry.

Gordon: That's all right. Usual story. Had to make five of my staff redundant, then was seen off the premises myself; clutching the regulation plant and box.

Gina: *(Shocked)* How perfectly beastly for you.

Gordon: Yes, it was rather. *(He attempts a light laugh).*

Gina: *(Thoughtfully)* You should have indulged in a little light revenge - hid a decomposing bird in the filing cabinet, or listed their company on eBay.

Gordon: Print's a dying industry - nobody would've bid for it! *(Gina laughs. Pause)*

So... what does one do for 'fun in Finchurch'?

Gina: My 'pleasure' is drama.

Gordon: Oh. Have you played many parts?

Gina: Some bigger than others! ..... I'm currently rehearsing the siren Elvira in 'Blithe Spirit'.

Gordon: *(Enthusiastically)* Really? I think I saw the film. Didn't Margaret Rutherford play the mad medium?

Gina: That's right. Ours is sleeping with the director.

Gordon: Good lord!

Gina: They're married.

Gordon: Oh, I see.

Gina: And Leonard Babbington-Smythe, local solicitor, is the lead. He's a head on legs - delivers the lines as if he's reciting contract law. That's *if* he remembers them.

Gordon: *(Laughs)* We'd love to come and see you..

Gina: Here's a leaflet with all the details. *(She produces it as if by magic!)*

Gordon: Ah. *(A touch of bitterness)* A good old word template.

Gina: Yes. *(Proudly)* I found it myself.

Gordon: Well, I take my hat off to anyone brave enough to go on stage. But if you need any help behind the scenes, I 'm pretty handy with a drill.

Gina: Oh, that would be absolutely wonderful. We're always looking for stage crew who can tell a nut from a screw. Our last set for 'Calendar Girls' was a complete disaster. Bill hired a wind machine to create an exotic effect for the photography scene. On opening night he put it on full; blew away most of the set, and dead-headed my sunflowers... *(eyeing him flirtatiously)* I'll leave the rest to your imagination.

*Marion enters with a tea tray and passes a saucer of eight almonds to Gordon.*

Marion: Here we are.

Gina: I was rather hoping to share a bit of my Devil's Food Cake with you both.

Marion: Oh! (*Marion eyes it suspiciously*) I really don't think...

Gina: Let's have three *large* pieces.

Marion: (*Reluctantly*) I'll go and get some plates.

*Marion exits.*

Gordon: Well done. I'm going to wolf down these almonds while we're waiting. Like one?

Gina: Why not? (*Takes one*) And in return (*Gina takes a sweep of the icing onto her almond and offers it to Gordon*) you're going to love my ganache. (*Gordon eats both icing and nut*)

Gordon: Now that is totally yum.

Marion: (*Returning*) Plates and knife.

Gina: Allow me. (*She cuts the cake and puts it on plates*)

Marion: (*Pouring tea*) Milk?

Gina: No thank you.

Marion: Please ignore the mess but it takes so long to decide where everything should go, and how to decorate.

Gina: I've never been in here before. Old Mrs Peters kept very much to herself. I had no idea she had such hideous taste in carpet. You must both be aching to pull it up and put something plain in its place.

Marion: This carpet goes all the way through the house/and I...

Gina: Good lord, Mrs. Peters must have died to get away from it!

Marion: And I chose it to reflect the sea.

Gina: (*Pause*) Oh... Yes... Inspired. Was the green wallpaper your idea too?

Marion: (*Proudly*) Yes.

Gina: Thought so.

Marion: I took an interior design course in preparation for our move. The swirls represent rhythmic patterns created by light as it passes through water.

*Gordon has eaten his piece of cake and has started on Marion's. Marion goes to get her cake.*

Gordon!

Gordon: Sorry, couldn't help myself. Lovely cake Gina. Rare treat.

Marion: Not that rare! (*To Gina*) If Gordon gets some of this unpacking done, his reward will be a picnic on the beach tomorrow.

*Gina pushes some of her cake surreptitiously towards Gordon.*

Gina: Really?

Gordon: (*Enthusiastically*) We're going to have ham sandwiches, sausage rolls and pork pies. Pork... three ways.

Gina: That'll make the seagulls very happy.

Marion: They're not for the seagulls; they're for us.

Gina: Try telling the seagulls that.

*Gordon is now eating Gina's cake.*

Gordon: I'll pop them with my air rifle if they dive-bomb our grub.

Marion: Food, Gordon, not grub.

Gina: Can't do that I'm afraid. The little perishers are protected.

Marion: Seagulls! Protected!!!?

Gina: You can beat your wife or kick your dog, but if you kill a wild bird the full weight of the law is upon you.

Marion: Even a pigeon?

*Gina nods.*

It's outrageous that our taxes should be used to protect klepto-parasites.

Gina: Klepto what?

Marion: Surely they could be culled?

Gina: EU laws prevent that.

Marion: Say no more!

Gina: Personally I admire their competitive spirit; their... fearlessness and aggression. If they were human they'd be leaders of men.

Marion: You can hardly compare seagulls to us!

Gina: Oh I don't know. They love a tippie, so they scavenge alcohol from our local brewery and stagger drunkenly along the seafront before vomiting it all up. Sounds pretty human to me! (*Marion looks uncomfortable, Gordon laughs, then chokes on cake*)

Marion: Gordon, you've eaten Gina's cake!

Gina: It looks as if he'll be working it off later.

Marion: You can forget the sausage rolls tomorrow. Honestly, what am I going to do with you? You need to take some responsibility for your health instead of having me nag you all the time.

Gordon: You know you enjoy it.

*Doorbell rings.*

Marion: Who can that be?

Gordon: Only one way to find out, old girl.

Marion: Time to work off a few calories – go and answer it.

Gordon: On my way.

*Gordon exits. Awkward pause.*

Gina: Let me help you with these tea things.

*She starts to pick them up*

Marion: That's quite all right. The kitchen isn't ready for public viewing yet.

Gina: How fortunate this room is.

*Marion exits. Noises off stage.*

Oh God, it's Tony. I just know he's going to embarrass me.

*Tony enters followed by Gordon.*

Tony: Ah, there you are darlin'. Just wan'ed you to know - fixed the Dyson.

Gina: Pity.

Gordon: What was wrong with it? Just had to mend ours.

Tony: Valve spigot bust. 'ad to rustle up a new part.

Gordon: You *made* a new part? Now I *am* impressed. Mine was blocked with fluff from this new carpet. Had to fish it out with a bent coat hanger.

*Marion enters.*

Gina: Wonderful news Tony. Gordon might be persuaded to help backstage.

Tony: Mate, that'd be great. (*Claps him on the shoulder*) I'm inventin' ways of making stuff fly round for the ghost scene.

Gordon: That sounds tremendous fun. I'd love to get involved.

Marion: (*Alarmed*) You won't have time for anything like that. You need to get the house finished first.

Gordon: (*Deflating*) Ah, yes, there is that I suppose.

Gina: All work and no play/

Marion: Would you like a piece of cake Tony?

Gordon: Yes, let's all have another bit. I'm starving!

Marion: Gordon!

Tony: No thanks. Gotta... see a man about a dog.

Gordon: (*Crestfallen*) Yes, yes, of course. Better deal with these boxes. Got a lot of pigs to sort out.

Gina: Pigs?

Marion: (*Proudly*) 473.

Gordon: Large *and* small.

Marion: A lifetime of collecting.

Gina: And they're *all* going on display?

Marion: (*Looking meaningfully at Gordon*) Yes.

Gina: They'll tone wonderfully with your aquatic theme!

Tony: New carpet?

Marion: (*Proudly*) Yes, it swirls all the way through the house.

Tony: Pretty mind- bending; but least it won't show the dirt eh.

Marion: (*Brittle smile*) Yes, well, it's been lovely to meet you both. Thank you *so* much for the cake Gina. (*Pointedly*) We can all see how much Gordon enjoyed it.

Tony: Tell you what, mate. If you're free tomorrow pop over (number 7, opposite) 'bout 2ish, and 'ave a shuftly at me workshop and inventions.

Gordon: That'd be great. Looking forward to it already.

Marion: I'll see you both out!

Tony: Yeah. Uh, noticed the old drive was car-less. Me' auto business's just off th' High Street. Got a smashin' little Panda come in. One owner, elderly lady, low mileage. Might suit ya...Dirt cheap. (*Taps nose*) Mates rates.

Marion: Aren't they too miniscule for Gordon's girth?

Tony: Plenty of room – like the tardis – big on the inside, small on the out. An' if it don't fit - got lots of others, guaranteed by 'Yours Truly'.

Gina: (*Pointedly*) Time to depart Tony and let these lovely people get on.

Tony: Also got a 12 reg. Skoda on me forecourt - 4999 - but you can 'ave it for 4 if you pay cash in hand by the end of the monf.

Gina: Come along Tony!

*Goodbyes etc Marion sees them to the door. Gordon nibbles bits of cake decoration.*

Marion: *(Entering)* What a terrible couple. I do hope they're not indicative of the riff-raff hereabouts.

Gordon: Oh, come on old girl, I thought they were rather interesting.

Marion: Really? Well, I don't share your enthusiasm. I forced myself to be pleasant to all your 'bowls buddies' in Bagshot, and I am not doing that again. *(Beat, then gently putting a hand on him)* We need to spend the time we've got left together.

Gordon: No man is an island.

Marion: You won't be an island. You've got me!

Gordon: *(Thoughtfully)* Yes.

*Doorbell rings.*

Marion: Oh, for goodness sake! Who now?

*Marion leaves. Noise at door. Meanwhile Gordon snaffles crumbs on plates, rubs crumbs round teeth like cocaine. Marion enters with Danny and Sam in running gear – a forced smile on her face.*

Marion: This is my husband Gordon, Gordon this is Danny and Sammy.

Sam: Sam.

Marion: Sorry... Sam. *(Mutual hellos)*

Sam: We've brought you a vegan cake. *(Sam offers it)*

Gordon: Cake! *(Gordon tries to take it but Marion gets there first)*

Marion: How kind. We'll save it for later.

Danny: Sam and I are about to do a run along the front. We'd love you to join us.

Marion: What a splendid idea.... I'll get your trainers. *(She exits)*

Gordon: *(Horrified and calling after her)* Those trainers are for gardening not running.

*Pause*

Sam: Did you know old Mrs. Peters?

Gordon: Who?

Sam: Mrs. Peters: the previous owner.

Danny: Lovely lady. *(Looks around and laughs)* Unlike her décor.

Gordon: Yes, um, so, how long have you lived here?

Danny: Three years. We tied the knot last June.

Gordon: To?

Sam: Each other.

Gordon: And you live?

Danny: Next door.

Marion: *(Entering)* Your trainers Gordon. *(Pointedly)* Time to run off that Devil's cake. *(Gordon reluctantly puts them on)*

Sam: Why don't you *both* join us for the Finchurch-on-Sea marathon in aid of/

Marion: Sadly, my back precludes my participation. But Gordon can represent us both, *and* raise money for your worthy cause... Which is?

Danny: Gay rights.

Marion: We *all* have the right to be gay.

Sam: We knew you'd understand.

Marion: Understand?

Danny: Our difference.

Marion: Difference...from?

Sam: Heterosexuals.

Marion: Are they... a cult?

*Danny and Sam look quizzically at each other.*

Danny: We'll be flexing outside. Join us when you're ready Gordon. *(They start to exit, confused)*

Gordon: *(Mournfully)* Be with you in a minute.

Marion: Run quickly so that you get back in time to put up that trophy shelf. I think we'd better leave unpacking the pigs until the furniture's in place to avoid breakages.

Gordon: I shall need to be hooked up to a ventilator after keeping up with those two.

Marion: Nonsense. It will do you good.

Gordon: What about a piece of cake to fortify me for this ordeal? *(Said more in hope than expectation)*

Marion: Certainly not. It's going in the bin!

*Gordon sighs and exits miserably, carrying the trainers. Marion picks up Gordon's shoes, rearranges the nap, and exits.*

## Scene 2

*The next day. Gordon enters wearing a light outer coat and cap carrying a picnic basket. He is weary from yesterday's run and today's walk. Marion follows also wearing a light mac.*

Marion: Gordon! Only you could come back from a nice walk along the front with something nasty down the back of your cap. Give it to me. *And you haven't taken your shoes off.*

Gordon: *(Gordon hops from foot to foot and removes his cap)* Ah, sorry. I'll leave them by the door.

Marion: You should have done that in the first place.

*Gordon exits. Marion examines his cap.*

Ugh, it's covered in guano!

Gordon: *(From off)* What?

Marion: *(Shouts)* Excrement *(beat)* Bird poo!

Gordon: *(Entering)* Don't tell me they've eaten my food *and* shat on me.

Marion: Language!

Gordon Those seagulls are like trained terrorists on black ops: I was left holding a crust and dribble of jelly.

Marion: *(Critically)* You defended your ham sandwich with great gusto I noticed.

Gordon: Yes. I'm rather pleased about that. Flapping my arms and screeching like a hawk was very effective.

*Marion suddenly ducks down by the French door and waves at him.*

Marion: *(Hisses)* Gordon! Gordon!

Gordon: Eh?

Marion: *(Her head is down; her arm is raised and pointing)* Intruder!

Gordon: What?

Marion: In the garden!

Gordon: Where?

Marion: There.

Gordon: Where?

Marion: Over there... Get down before he sees you. *(She pulls him down.)*

Gordon: What do you think we should do?

Marion: Go out there and arrest him.

Gordon: *(Appalled by this suggestion)* Can't we just phone the police?

Marion: No time. You'll have to perform a citizen's arrest. Fetch your air rifle on the way out.

Gordon: *(Unenthusiastically)* Right.

*Gordon stretches out on the floor in S.A.S style.*

Marion: Mind the nap— stick to the teal. *(Gordon moves slowly)* Hurry up! Pretend it's the bird that beaked your lunch.

*Gordon, inspired by this thought, crawls off faster. Marion keeps dipping her head up and down to look out of the window.*

Marion: *(Hissing)* Quickly, he's heading for the fence. Be careful Gordon he could be armed. Stand sideways and pull your stomach in - you'll be less of a target.

Gordon: *(off)* Halt. Who goes there?

*The gun accidentally goes off. There is a noise of screaming and crashing.*

Marion: *(Shouts triumphantly and stands)* You've winged him – now get out there and finish the job.

*Sound of scuffling and shouting.*

That's it Gordon. Beat him senseless with the butt of your rifle!

*(Marion runs to the flipchart and grabs the pointer ready to use it as a weapon.)*

Gordon: *(offstage)* Let me carry your bag.

Joy: Get your hands off it.

Marion: *(Advances with the pointer as Joy enters)* Hand over our booty!

Gordon: *(Enters holding the gun)* I'm dreadfully sorry. I thought you were a burglar.

Joy: Don't be ridiculous. I'm your next-door neighbour, Miss Joy Parker.

Gordon: *(Holding out his hand which Joy refuses.)* Pleased to meet you Miss Parker. This is my wife Marion. We were only saying, the other day, how we're looking forward to meeting our neighbours.

Marion: Please stop waving that gun around Gordon or you'll shoot me as well. Do sit down Miss Parker, er, on this box.

Gordon: Let me get something to bathe that arm of yours.

Marion: I'll get it; you'll only slop water everywhere. I hope you don't mind me asking but, would you remove your shoes they're rather muddy.

*She exits. Joy doesn't take her shoes off.*

Joy: You're both mad.

Gordon: (*Gesticulating with the rifle*) I saw you out there and, having been attacked by a seagull earlier/ I

Joy: Decided to shoot me.

Gordon: Nothing to worry about. It's only a flesh-wound.

Joy: Only!! Give me that rifle (*makes a grab for it*) and hold out your arm. See how you like it. (*They tussle over the rifle*)

*Marion re-enters with bowl of water and cloth.*

Marion: Here we are.

Gordon: Now let's not make a mountain out of a molehill. (*Gordon gets the gun*)

Joy: It's unacceptable going round firing weapons at people in unprovoked attacks. I've a good mind to call the police.

Marion: Excuse me. I think you'll find it's equally 'unacceptable' to roam round other people's gardens. Correct me if I'm wrong but, I think *that's* called *trespassing*.

Joy: Mrs. Peters asked me to feed her cat.

Marion: Mrs. Peters has been dead six months!

Joy: I've been keeping an eye on the place since then.

Marion: Snooping more like.

Gordon: Ladies, ladies. Let's all calm down shall we?

Marion: *She* started it by skulking round our garden.

Joy: Your husband started it by shooting me.

Gordon (*Shouts*) Ladies please!... Miss Parker, it's only a minor injury but if you'd like to go to A&E I'd be more than happy to pay for an Uber. Unfortunately, I no longer have a car or I'd drive you myself.

Joy: Just as I thought. Downsizers!

Marion Why are you telling her our business, Gordon?

Joy: I'm interested.

Marion: (*Under her breath*) I'll bet you are, Miss Nosey Parker.

Gordon: Marion! Now, would you like me to call that Uber?

Joy: And have me sit in A&E for twelve hours after being propositioned by a strange man in a car?

Marion: I should think you're perfectly safe on that front!

Joy: I am going home now to take photographs of my wound and file a police report.

Gordon: Let me see you to the door.

*He tries to give her a helping hand as she starts to leave but she shakes him off.*

Joy: I can manage perfectly well by myself thank you.

*She leaves.*

Marion: (*Examining the carpet*) And she never even took her shoes off!

### Scene 3

*The next day. Tony comes in with a box of props. Gina carries a catapult. Tony goes to put the box on the carpet.*

Gina: Don't let Marion catch you putting those props on her ghastly carpet (*Tony goes to put it on the pig box*) or her precious pigs. (*Tony looks around helplessly*) Try... Glassware.

Tony: Right (*Places box, then dips into it and pulls out a couple of conkers and a hideous vase in a cardboard box.*) Pass us me catapult.

Gina: Are you planning to murder the catatonic Condomine with it?

Tony: (*Vehemently*) I'd love t' plink 'im. I should've got the part - could've pushed up.

Gina: Your skills lie elsewhere darling. So, if not intended for Leonard's demise/what then?

Tony: I'm gonna take this vase down the garden and blast it with some conkers. Smash it up a bit, then glue it back together.

Gina: You're a grown man Tony not a child. On second thoughts...

Tony: All part of me cunning plan Gina m' love. When it crashes on the grate it'll break where it's weak. Gordon and me'll glue it back together each night. Clever huh?

Gina: I love it. I'll give it a jolly good wallop on 'Hypnotism my foot!' Give that pouter-pigeon Dorothy something to scream about! (*She laughs maliciously*)

Tony: Where's them bloomin' plans? Thought I'd stuck 'em in with the props.

Gina: Last I saw they were on our dining table.

Tony: Oh, rubber duck!

Gina: As you're in my good books I'll pop back and get them. Meanwhile you can have fun catapulting that hideous vase.

Tony: Wedding present from Auntie Mave. Knew it'd come in 'andy one day. (*They both laugh*)

*Gina and Tony exit through French doors. Gordon enters wearing a boiler suit and carrying a toolbox. Marion following. They speak sotto-voce.*

Marion: You didn't tell me you'd invited *them* over.

Gordon: If I had, you'd have stopped me. So, I thought a 'fat accomplice' best.

Marion: (*Instinctively correcting him*) Fâit Acompli (*Plaintively*) And I thought we'd decided to keep outsiders at bay.

Gordon: You decided that. I didn't.

Marion: (*Bossily*) You are *not* to get involved in this ridiculous play of theirs!

Gordon: Listen Marion. There are just so many pointless walks I can take along that pointless seafront, listening to those equally pointless seagulls. So, this meeting is going ahead whether you like it or not, and it would be very nice if you could make them feel welcome.

Marion: This is my house/ and...

Gordon: *Our* house! Now, slap on a smile old girl and we'll discuss this later. (*Tony enters from the garden with the broken vase in the cardboard box, and the catapult*) Ah, Tony, if you give me a hand with these boxes we can use them as a table to work on.

Tony: Just smashed the vase up (*shows a piece to Gordon*) ready for gluein'.

Gordon: Good one... mate.