

Auntie  
Nigel  
Bruce  
Cecily  
Mavis 4

*(She enters quickly, speaking to the group quietly.)*

→ **AUNTIE LOO-LOO.** Such a nice man!

*(She stands to one side and BRUCE enters.)*

Now this – this is the sitting room!

*(BRUCE turns to CECILY.)*

**BRUCE.** I'm awfully sorry, I got kind of tired waiting in the taxi –

**CECILY.** Bruce, you shouldn't have –

**AUNTIE LOO-LOO.** *(Puzzled.)* Bruce?

**MAVIS.** Are you Bruce Lovell?

**BRUCE.** That's me.

**NIGEL.** What the Hell!

**AUNTIE LOO-LOO.** But who? D'you mean to say that –?  
I thought Harrods? How dare you! How dare you set foot in this flat?

**CECILY.** Auntie Loo-Loo!

**AUNTIE LOO-LOO.** Be quiet, Cecily! I must deal with this!

*(She rounds on BRUCE.)*

I'd have you know that I am Cecily's only relation and as such her guardian, and I insist, I have the right to insist, upon an explanation.

**BRUCE.** An explanation of what, er – er – Miss Harrington?

**AUNTIE LOO-LOO.** My name is Garrard. Here's this poor boy come all the way from the Sudan to find himself jilted. There's no other word for it – jilted, by my niece and it's all your fault.

**MAVIS.** Please, Miss Garrard!

**AUNTIE LOO-LOO.** It's no good, leave me alone, and don't interfere –

*(She catches BRUCE's arm and turns him.)*

Who are you? What are you? Who are your people? The only Lovells I ever knew were the Shropshire Lovells – who drank!

**BRUCE.** Miss Garrard, please believe me, I do understand your anxiety.

**AUNTIE LOO-LOO.** Hold your tongue!

**CECILY.** Really, this is too much. Mavis, take her away.

**AUNTIE LOO-LOO.** If there's anything to be said it's for –

**NIGEL.** If there's anything to be said I think I'd better say it.

**MAVIS.** Nigel's quite right, Miss Garrard, it would be much better if we went. We'll go for a little walk.

**AUNTIE LOO-LOO.** Walk! After I've been subjected to this revolting scene?

**MAVIS.** Very well, then, we'll take a taxi and go and have tea somewhere.

**AUNTIE LOO-LOO.** Tea! I couldn't touch it.

*(MAVIS starts gathering her things.)*

**MAVIS.** I'll take you to Gunter's.

**AUNTIE LOO-LOO.** *(Considering.)* Well – very well, then, but under protest.

*(She turns to CECILY.)*

You've disgraced your mother's name. If your poor dear father had been alive things might have been very different – however, I've done my best; one can't do more. Well, you've made your bed and you'll have to –

*(She becomes confused over what she has said and exits quickly.)*

**MAVIS.** All I've got to say, Cecily, is that –

*(She pauses, confronting BRUCE and looking at him with no apparent friendliness.)*

– but no, perhaps this isn't the moment.

*(She exits.)*

**NIGEL.** Well, thank God she's got rid of your Aunt.

*(AUNTIE LOO-LOO enters, annoyed at spoiling her exit.)*

**AUNTIE LOO-LOO.** My bag!

*(She collects her bag from the sofa with extreme dignity and exits again in stony silence. There is a pause, then NIGEL approaches BRUCE.)*

**NIGEL.** Now, look here, Lovell, you've gathered by now, if you didn't know before, who I am.

**BRUCE.** I have, and I want to tell you here and now that I'm sorry - not sorry for what I've done, but because I realise that you must be feeling pretty sore.

**NIGEL.** You know, do you, that we've been engaged for a long time?

**BRUCE.** Too long a time. She was asking you for a postponement before she met me.

**CECILY.** You know that's true, Nigel.

**NIGEL.** Yes, but now I've agreed to the postponement.

**CECILY.** But you see - since then -

**BRUCE.** See here, this discussion isn't going to do anybody any good - except the taxi driver ticking up outside.

**NIGEL.** You can say what you like, I'm going to have this out here and now.

**BRUCE.** It rests between you and Cecily. My position, to say the least of it, is embarrassing. We'd arranged to go to Kew and as far as I'm concerned it's still on. How about you, Cecily?

*(CECILY nods.)*

I admit you're entitled to your say. I'm darned if I'm going to sit in that draughty taxi any longer, so if you'll excuse me I'll go and wait in the dining room, there's a picture there that rather fascinates me.

*(He exits into the dining room.)*

**NIGEL.** *(Frantically.)* For God's sake, Cecily, you can't do this! Think what you're doing!

**CECILY.** *(Sincerely.)* My dear, I have thought, I've thought of nothing else for weeks.

**NIGEL.** I suppose a woman gets a kick out of a couple of men fighting over her.

**CECILY.** Nigel! What's the use of talking like that!

**NIGEL.** But think, Cecily, think how well we've always got on together. The grand times we've had – the understanding – we've been so terribly fond of each other.

**CECILY.** But, Nigel, I still am fond of you. My feelings haven't changed for you, it's just that I've found out they're not strong enough.

**NIGEL.** I see exactly what has happened. I've been a "standby", an escape from your office. Now you've got your money you don't need me.

**CECILY.** You're entitled to think that. I thought for one awful moment this morning that it might be, but I know now my feelings for you were, and are, perfectly genuine. It's just that something stronger has come into my life. I may have lost my head, it may come to nothing, but there it is.

*(There is a thoughtful pause that is finally broken by NIGEL.)*

**NIGEL.** All right. I'm not going to bother you any more now. I don't say I shan't try to influence you during the next few weeks – I shall. I shall do my damndest, but I can see it's no use at the moment. Besides I only lose my head and say bitter things and I can't bear doing that because, whatever happens, whatever you may do, I love you and I always shall.

*(There is a slight pause.)*

I mean that, don't forget.

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*(He exits. CECILY watches him, genuinely moved. After a pause BRUCE enters. He regards her for a second.)*

**BRUCE.** I'm afraid it's been a bit tough for you. I'm sorry.

*(CECILY turns, recovering herself.)*