

**CHARLES.** What was the old girl so cross about? She practically cut me dead.

**RUTH.** I told her the truth, about why we invited her the other night.

**CHARLES.** That was quite unnecessary and most unkind.

**RUTH.** She needed taking down a bit, she was blowing herself out like a pouter pigeon.

**CHARLES.** Why did you ask her to tea?

**ELVIRA.** (*Having moved over to above the armchair; leaning on the back.*) To get me exorcized, of course. Oh dear, I wish I could have a cucumber sandwich. I did love them so.

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**CHARLES.** Is that true, Ruth?

**RUTH.** Is what true?

**CHARLES.** What Elvira said.

**RUTH.** You know perfectly well I can't hear what Elvira says.

**CHARLES.** She said that you got Madame Arcati here to try to get her exorcized. Is that true?

**RUTH.** We discussed the possibilities.

**ELVIRA.** (*Sitting in the armchair, her legs over the left arm.*) There's a snake in the grass for you.

**CHARLES.** You had no right to do such a thing without consulting me.

**RUTH.** I have every right. This situation is absolutely impossible, and you know it.

**CHARLES.** If only you'd make an effort and try to be a little more friendly to Elvira we might all have quite a jolly time.

**RUTH.** I have no wish to have a jolly time with Elvira.

**ELVIRA.** She's certainly very bad tempered, isn't she? I can't think why you married her.

**CHARLES.** She's naturally a bit upset – we must make allowances.

**ELVIRA.** I was never bad tempered though, was I, darling? Not even when you were beastly to me.



**CHARLES.** I was never beastly to you.

**RUTH.** (*Exasperated.*) Where is Elvira at the moment?

**CHARLES.** In the chair by the table.

**RUTH.** (*Crossing and sitting at the left end of the sofa; pointing at ELVIRA.*) Now look here, Elvira – I shall have to call you Elvira, shan't I? I can't very well go on saying Mrs. Condomine all the time, it would sound too silly.

**ELVIRA.** I don't see why.

**RUTH.** Did she say anything?

**CHARLES.** She said she'd like nothing better.

**ELVIRA.** (*Giggling.*) You really are sweet, Charles darling. I worship you.

**RUTH.** I wish to be absolutely honest with you, Elvira –

**ELVIRA.** Hold on to your hats, boys!

**RUTH.** I admit I did ask Madame Arcati here with a view to getting you exorcized; and I think that if you were in my position you'd have done exactly the same thing – wouldn't you?

**ELVIRA.** I shouldn't have done it so obviously.

**RUTH.** What did she say?

**CHARLES.** Nothing. She just nodded and smiled.

**RUTH.** (*With a forced smile.*) Thank you, Elvira; that's generous of you. I really would so much rather that there were no misunderstandings between us.

**CHARLES.** That's very sensible, Ruth – I agree entirely.

**RUTH.** (*To ELVIRA.*) I want, before we go any further, to ask you a frank question. Why did you really come here? I don't see that you could have hoped to have achieved anything by it beyond the immediate joke of making Charles into a sort of astral bigamist.

**ELVIRA.** I came because the power of Charles's love tugged and tugged and tugged at me.

(**CHARLES** chuckles in self-satisfaction.)

Didn't it, my sweet?

**RUTH.** What did she say?

**CHARLES.** She said that she came because she wanted to see me again.

**RUTH.** Well, she's done that now, hasn't she?

**CHARLES.** We can't be inhospitable, Ruth.

**RUTH.** I have no wish to be inhospitable; but I should like to have just an idea of how long you intend to stay, Elvira?

**ELVIRA.** I don't know – I really don't know! (*She giggles.*) Isn't it awful?

**CHARLES.** She says she doesn't know.

**RUTH.** Surely that's a little inconsiderate?

**ELVIRA.** Didn't the old spiritualist have any constructive ideas about getting rid of me?

**CHARLES.** What did Madame Arcati say?

**RUTH.** She said she couldn't do a thing.

**ELVIRA.** (*Rising and crossing to the window.*) Hurray!

**CHARLES.** Don't be upset, Ruth dear – we shall soon adjust ourselves, you know. You must admit it's a unique experience. I can see no valid reason why we shouldn't get a great deal of fun out of it.

**RUTH.** Fun! Charles, how can you – you must be out of your mind!

**CHARLES.** (*Crossing below the sofa to the fireplace.*) Not at all – I thought I was at first – but now I must say I'm beginning to enjoy myself.

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**RUTH.** (*Bursting into tears.*) Oh, Charles – Charles –

**ELVIRA.** She's off again.

**CHARLES.** You really must not be so callous, Elvira. Try to see her point a little.

**RUTH.** I suppose she said something insulting.

**CHARLES.** No, dear, she didn't do anything of the sort.

**RUTH.** Now look here, Elvira...

**CHARLES.** She's over by the window now.

**RUTH.** Why the hell can't she stay in the same place?

**ELVIRA.** Temper again! My poor Charles, what a terrible life you must lead!