

DOUGLAS is found sitting at the end of the sofa, a glass of wine in hand, looking relaxed and content. FELICITY'S voice is heard off-stage.

FELICITY

(Off.)

Oh, don't be silly, the pleasure was all ours. I only wish you could have stayed longer.

(Beat.)

Oh, how sweet! But it was nothing really – just a little something I threw together at the last minute.

(Beat.)

Yes, and you too – both of you. Safe travels!

(The sound of a door closing is heard and presently FELICITY appears through the door R.)

FELICITY

Christ, can't they take a bloody hint?

DOUGLAS

Safe travels?

FELICITY

Could I have been less subtle – short of forcing them out at gunpoint?

DOUGLAS

Safe travels?

FELICITY

How could you do that to me?

DOUGLAS

They're only walking next door.

FELICITY

Do you really hate me that much?

DOUGLAS

How dangerous could it be?

FELICITY

That was one of the most malicious things you've ever done.

DOUGLAS

Unless you've buried a few landmines amongst the aspidistras?

FELICITY

How a person could inflict *that* on anyone, let alone their own wife, is utterly beyond the realm of comprehension.

DOUGLAS

If I hear a couple of loud bangs I'll assume it's them, shall I?

FELICITY

(Slumping into the armchair.)

That's it – I'm shattered. Exhausted. I've nothing more to give.

DOUGLAS

Another G&T?

FELICITY

Scotch – big.

DOUGLAS

(As he crosses to the drinks cabinet.)

I don't know why you're making such a fuss – I found them rather charming.

FELICITY

(Incredulous.)

Charming?

DOUGLAS

Yes...in their own way.

FELICITY

Have you completely lost your mind? No...no, I don't think you have. I think this is it. This *is* it, isn't it?

DOUGLAS

Is what?

FELICITY

The end – of us - our marriage. It's finally unravelled. Fallen apart. We've clearly nothing more in common.

(Beat.)

How sad.

(Beat.)

How pathetic.

Soda?  
DOUGLAS

No.  
FELICITY

Water?  
DOUGLAS

Straight.  
(Beat.)  
I've seen it coming for years, of course. I suppose I just...didn't want to face up to it. I'm sorry, Douglas.

Uh oh.  
DOUGLAS

What?  
FELICITY

When you start calling me by my name it always spells trouble. Did you really find them such a bore?  
DOUGLAS

A bore? If it were simply a matter of boredom I'd have glided through the evening on autopilot. Without wishing to sound immodest, seventeen years of marriage to you has turned me into something of an Olympian at coping with boredom.  
FELICITY

Frankly I surprised you still remember it.  
DOUGLAS

But it was all the rest of it. I mean, really...where does one begin?  
FELICITY

Rather touching, actually – in a dislocated sort of way.  
DOUGLAS

Aside from the fact that they were both as dull as dishwater, they were wearing matching ugly sweaters, their manners were rudimentary at best, his voice had an irritating nasal twang, she obviously believes that less is more when it comes to hair care, their persistent attempts at humour made my throat sore from having to continually employ my professional laugh, he kept picking at something at the base

FELICITY (Cont'd.)

of his scalp that I'd rather not contemplate, she kept pushing her hair back behind her ears as if she were about to be photographed at any second, and when I asked them if they liked the vol-au-vent his eyes glazed over and she looked at me as if I were speaking Swahili.

DOUGLAS

So you didn't like them?

FELICITY

It's not a matter of liking or disliking, Douglas, it's a matter of being...*our* people.

DOUGLAS

I wasn't aware that we had any.

FELICITY

And they're clearly not.

DOUGLAS

Unless you spawned in secret.

FELICITY

They just don't belong.

DOUGLAS

Only wish you'd told me sooner.

FELICITY

I'm sure they have good hearts but I'm afraid they're just not up to snuff.

DOUGLAS

Bit rough finding out like this.

FELICITY

Are you listening to me?

DOUGLAS

Perhaps I might've been a father figure to them – guided them somehow.

FELICITY

Are you?

DOUGLAS

Part of me...somewhere.

FELICITY

I just don't understand why you would've invited people like that into this house.

DOUGLAS

Because they're our new neighbours.

FELICITY

(Exasperated.)  
So what! Who cares?

DOUGLAS

I was just being neighbourly. That's what neighbours do.

FELICITY

No they don't!

DOUGLAS

Unless you live in some isolated farmhouse in the middle of nowhere, I suppose.

FELICITY

You screen them first.

DOUGLAS

Or in some sort of homeless peoples shelter where you don't really have much choice since they're already there.

FELICITY

Assess their compatibility and worth. Gauge whether knowing them will enhance and add value to your lifestyle or simply become an annoyance.

DOUGLAS

Anyway, this isn't a farmhouse or a homeless shelter so I thought it would be a nice gesture.

FELICITY

In this case the latter.

DOUGLAS

A hand of friendship.

FELICITY

And how can people like that possibly afford to buy a place identical to ours? It makes me feel cheap and underprivileged.

DOUGLAS

A little welcoming committee.

FELICITY

If there's one thing I can't stand it's social climbers.

DOUGLAS

And I'm glad I did – they seemed very appreciative.

FELICITY

It's going to take me weeks to alienate them.

DOUGLAS

Genuinely touched.

FELICITY

God forbid they should invite us over *there* in the meantime.

DOUGLAS

Especially Dick.

(Beat.)

FELICITY

Yes! Yes, I meant to address that. What was all that about?

DOUGLAS

All what?

FELICITY

Dick?

DOUGLAS

That's his name.

FELICITY

No it isn't, it's Richard. He introduced himself as Richard. And before he'd hardly stepped through the door you were "Dick" this and "Dick" that and "Dick" all over the place.

DOUGLAS

I was just being chummy.

FELICITY

What were you thinking of?