

ANNIE #4

HENRY (moving down c) Ah, coffee! Where's your mother?  
JACKY (rising and crossing to the sofa) In the study, checking the  
invitations. (She puts her cup on the tray, sits on the sofa and pours  
coffee for Henry)

HENRY. That's right. Everything carries on as normal, just  
as if that woman never came.

NICHOLAS (rising and crossing to the fireplace) Here we go again.  
HENRY. We are not going again. But I don't want this family  
to be disrupted by that woman's visit. The poor creature was  
probably . . . (He taps his head) Anyhow, she at last admitted her  
mistake and left.

NICHOLAS. She admitted it—er—handsomely—so let's forget  
her, and on with the nuptials.

JACKY (rising and taking the cup of coffee to Henry) What's Victor's  
father coming here for?

HENRY (taking the coffee) On business. I have to glance through  
the final deeds of partnership.

(The front door bell rings. JACKY and PAMELA react)

Ah, that's probably them now. (He moves up c) A little early, but  
all the better. (He moves down c) Now, remember, not a word.

END

NICHOLAS. Our lips are sealed.

HENRY. Good! Stephen and I will go into the study, you, too,  
Nicholas, as Junior Partner. (To Pamela) No doubt you and your  
mother can find something to do elsewhere. (Jocularly) I expect  
Jacky and Victor have plenty to talk about; I mean their future.  
And a very bright future it's going to be. Annie's a long time  
opening that door. (He moves behind the easy chair lc) See what's  
happened, Nicholas.

(JACKY and PAMELA move up r. NICHOLAS crosses to the doors  
up c and looks into the hall)

ANNIE

NICHOLAS. Nobody there.

HENRY (moving to the fireplace) That's funny. I could have  
sworn I heard the bell.

START

NICHOLAS (calling) Annie. Annie.

(ANNIE enters up c)  
Annie, who was that at the front door a moment ago?

ANNIE. Her!

HENRY (moving up lc) Who?

ANNIE. Her, sir.

HENRY. You don't mean . . . ?

ANNIE. Yes, sir, I do.

PAMELA. Mrs Puffin? Where is she?

ANNIE. Gone, miss.

JACKY. What did she want?

ANNIE. To see the family, miss.

NICHOLAS. And what did you say?

ANNIE. No. I said it was more than my job was worth.

HENRY. Quite right, too. Then what did she say?

ANNIE. "What is to be, will be. You can't escape fate," sir.

HENRY. I'm very pleased with you, Annie. Don't let her in  
if she comes back. Good heavens, she mustn't meet the Parkers.

(He crosses to the fireplace)

NICHOLAS (solemnly) "What is to be, will be. You can't escape  
fate."

HENRY. This is no time for levity.

(The front door bell rings)

NICHOLAS. Now, who is that? Puffin or the Parkers?

HENRY. Go and see, Annie.

(ANNIE exits up c. The others wait expectantly)

NICHOLAS (after a moment's silence) "There's a breathless 'ush  
in the Close tonight . . ."

(ANNIE enters up c)

ANNIE. It's her again, sir.

HENRY (moving about the easy chair lc) Get rid of her, Annie,  
get rid of her.

ANNIE. I've closed the door, sir. I can't do more.

HENRY. Oh, she's gone?

ANNIE. No, she isn't. She's parked herself on the doorstep,  
and she says she's going to stay there, and if you want to get rid  
of her you'll have to shift her yourself. I'm going back to the  
kitchen.

HENRY. Take a week's notice.

ANNIE. Too late! I've just given it.

(ANNIE exits up c)

NICHOLAS. What a carry on!

HENRY. The Parkers will be here in ten minutes. Nicholas,  
go out to her.

NICHOLAS (crossing down r) Oh, no! Not me. You go.

JACKY (moving to the door up c) I'll go.

HENRY. No, Jacky, I forbid it.

JACKY (as she exits) Too late. I've gone.

(JACKY exits up c)

END

PAMELA. Now what will happen? (She moves to Nicholas) Oh  
Nick, you should have gone.

NICHOLAS. I like that! It's nothing to do with me. Anywa,  
I'm pro-Puffin.

HENRY. You are nothing of the sort. (He moves to the fireplace)