

laughing voices – the door gives a terrific slam – someone calls excitedly – ‘Toots!’)

*Toots:* (calling) In the morning room! (She runs to the door but it is opened. Duncan and Philip enter in big coats and caps, pulling off their gloves. Their noses are red with the cold wind. Duncan stuffs his gloves and cap into his pocket, comes forward and takes Toots by the elbows. Bends and kisses her. Pip looks on with merry eyes.)

*Duncan:* My dear little Mater!

*Toots:* My dear Duncan – welcome to our hearth! How splendid you are looking and how cold – you poor huge creature. Such a day to arrive! (She leads him forward.) Bee dear, here he is. Duncan, this is my old friend Miss Wing.

*Duncan:* (very cordial) How do you do, Miss Wing. I’m delighted!

*Pip:* (runs forward. He is bursting with laughter and keeps shaking his head as though he had just come out of the sea.) Here, let me give you a hand with your coat – may I? (To Toots) You haven’t got an idea of what the weather is like on the wharf my dear! It’s simply too awful – isn’t it?

*Duncan:* It certainly is one of the roughest days I’ve ever struck.

*Pip:* (laughing all the while) And if you’d only seen the poor old Pa-man staggering along the railway lines with me holding on his hat with the crook of his umbrella. I told him to tie his handkerchief over his hat and fasten it in a neat knot under his chin – but he wouldn’t hear of it. And when we got to the place where the lighter should have been – the wind simply playing the fiddle with his sciatic nerves – and when the lighter did come and we watched it going up and down – but going *up and down* – my dear . . . and I thought that in two T’s we’d be going up and down with it I never felt so sorry for anyone in all my life. But of course he stuck to it like a Trojan and all the way out to the ship he pretended he liked it and said he used to go fishing down the Sounds in just that kind of weather.

*Toots:* Poor old darling. I hope he has a good nip of brandy when he gets back to the office. I’ve a great mind to phone and tell him to.

*Pip:* No, of course don’t do anything of the kind, silly. He’d be furious with me. (Duncan and Bee have been talking together. They raise their voices.)

*Bee:* But what on earth can she have done it for?

*Duncan:* That’s what puzzled me. It really did seem too dangerous a thing to do for the mere fun of it. I thought there must be some Prince Charming on board but I had a good look round and nobody appeared to be signalling. (Turns to Toots) As I was telling Miss Wing, Mater – While we were waiting for the lighter I was looking through my glasses at the shore and I saw a girl walking along a stone embankment by the edge of the sea. A frightfully dangerous place it looked! She was