

opens letting in a bright light from the hall. Duncan enters – hesitates. Laura goes up to him and says in a shy soft voice: ‘Good evening. I am Laura. And you’re my new brother-in-law Duncan, aren’t you.’ She puts out her hand and as he clasps hers and is about to speak she says with a strong American accent: ‘*Pleased* to meet you, Mr Henderson.’ And walks out.)

Quick curtain.
End of Act I.

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Act II⁹

The Morning Room as before. Mr Brandon lies on the leather sofa against the back wall to the right of the door. Pip sprawls over the table cutting open and tearing the wrappers from a big packet of new English and American magazines. He wears white flannel trousers white boots and a white flannel shirt open at the throat, and sleeves rolled up above the elbows. Mrs Brandon walks about the room – now giving herself a glance in the mirror over the mantelpiece, now pulling the blinds half an inch lower, now bending over the back of Pip’s chair and looking at the pictures with him. She is dressed in black muslin with a grey ostrich feather scarf dropping from her shoulders. Mr Brandon’s hands are folded over his belly – he has spread his handkerchief over his face and very occasionally he gives a loud beatific sounding snore. Although the blinds are more than half way down one realises it is an exquisite, hot Sunday afternoon.

Pip: I can’t think why it is but I always feel the need of a sweet toothful on Sunday afternoons – do you? Have you got a chocolate button tucked away in the drawer of the sewing machine or do you think there is by any chance an odd, rather *gritty* jujube at the bottom of your work bag, darling?

Toots: No, I know there isn’t. There’s nothing except a chip of that awful liquorice the Pa-man bought for his cold mixed up with the sealing wax in the pen tray. Any good?

Pip: (shudders and says in a hollow voice) No good! Come here, Toots. Don’t you think that girl is awfully pretty.

Toots: Lovely! What a tragedy it is that actresses so often look like Princesses and Princesses so seldom look like actresses. (She bends over him smelling his hair.) How delicious your hair smells, child – like fresh pineapple.

Pip: (leans against her smiling with half shut eyes.) Oh, *Mother* . . . Do you ever get a feeling for no reason at all, just out of the blue – a feeling of such terrific happiness that it’s almost unbearable. You feel that it’s all bottled up here (puts his hand on his breast) and that if you