

JESS. (*Off.*) I must say the outside looks like Forest Lawn.

WHIT. (*Off.*) I hope it has a bar.

RODNEY. (*Off.*) Are you all right, Mildred?

MILDRED. (*Off.*) I'm still queasy from that boat trip.

RODNEY. (*Off.*) That's something I've never been bothered with—a weak stomach.

MILDRED. (*Off.*) Well, bully for you.

BRAD. (*Off.*) In my books, they would have flown us over here in a helicopter.

(*They enter through the arch. In spite of themselves, they are all very excited at being in the actual room and rush from place to place, examining everything. BRAD goes to the sofa, JESS to the fireplace to inspect the stones, MILDRED to the R. of the desk and then beside it and searches the drawers, RODNEY to the French windows, and WHIT stays near the archway.*)

JESS. Mr. Summers was right. It is exactly the same.

WHIT. Exactly.

MILDRED. Incredible what set designers do, isn't it?

JESS. (*Feels the walls or the stones around the fireplace.*) These are real all right. No canvas.

MILDRED. I can create here. I feel it in my bones. This just calls for a corpse to be sprawled on it.

BRAD. I go for Danish modern myself. (*Bounces on sofa.*) This sofa feels like early Salvation Army.

RODNEY. (*Looking out French windows.*) It's a commanding view all right. I like this place. I fit right in here.

JESS. I wouldn't brag. (*Picks up a hideous piece of objet d'art from table above settee.*) Whit, look. This is exactly what your Aunt Jennie sent us for a wedding

present. Who would have thought there were two of them?

WHIT. I'm worried about the reception we got. That lovely child met us and then scampered away to the back door. Where is everybody? *(During above, GREGORY has rounded the arch from off L. and stands directly behind WHIT. WHIT turns and looks straight into the evil face.)* Ahhh!

BRAD. You must be Gregory.

GREGORY. That is correct.

BRAD. *(Moves to him.)* Mr. Summers told us you would be here. I am Brad—

GREGORY. I know who you are. I know who you all are.

JESS. And we know who you are, so we're even.

GREGORY. *(Steps into the room.)* What are your wishes?

WHIT. Isn't it cocktail time?

GREGORY. If you wish it to be, sir.

WHIT. I wish it to be desperately.

GREGORY. Then I shall prepare. *(JESS moves u. slightly. BRAD is standing directly in his way. He stops with his face right against BRAD.)* You will pardon me. *(With a weak smile, BRAD stands aside and GREGORY walks to the swinging door. The authors are surprised to note a door there, since it is the first time it has been used.)*

JESS. That's a creepy one, isn't it?

RODNEY. *(As MILDRED settles in the desk chair. RODNEY is all enthusiasm.)* The odd servant. Standard of my earlier works. I do hope he's Middle European. It's so beautifully nebulous.

WHIT. *(Crosses to below settee as he looks at portrait L.)* Do you suppose we're going to work with that looking down at us?

MILDRED. I believe that's a rather excellent painting.

RODNEY. *(Moves behind sofa and is about to scratch the painting.)* You can tell by scratching it with your fingernail.

JESS. *(Moves to WHIT.)* I don't think Mr. Summers would approve.

BRAD. *(At French windows.)* It's very barren here. I always thought the tropics were lush with lots of vegetation and palm trees.

JESS. You didn't write "Rain," did you?

WHIT. *(Ambles around the room, now crossing above desk toward closet.)* No, darling, that was Somerset Maugham.

MILDRED. *(Finishing her inspection of the drawers.)* There's nothing here but typing paper.

JESS. What did you expect, dear? A will to be read at midnight? *(Sits on bench.)*

MILDRED. I thought Mr. Summers might have left a note or something.

RODNEY. Strange he didn't meet us at the dock.

WHIT. If he's changing into black tie, I shall spit.

BRAD. He must be around somewhere.

RODNEY. But where?