

There is a ring at the front door

Bernard What's that?

Robert It sounds like the front doorbell!

Bernard Yes, I know. I heard it.

Robert I wonder who it is?

Bernard Well, we'll know when I open the door, won't we?

Robert Yes.

Bernard opens the front door

Brigit 2 enters. She is wearing a mink coat and carries a little Gucci valise. She is beautifully dressed and very pretty

Brigit 2 Well, hello!

Bernard Darling!

Brigit 2 Good evening.

Seeing Robert, she drops her valise and throws herself into his arms.

My darling! *(Forcing him on to the sofa)* My treasure! Precious! You're here! *(She kisses him)*

Robert I say . . .

Bernard All right, all right. No need to overdo things—

Brigit 2 *(rising)* But this is Robert, isn't it?

Bernard Yes, yes, that's Robert. But you can calm down, my wife's not here . . .

Brigit 2 *(looking round)* Oh, fine. *(To Robert)* I'm sorry if I startled you.

Robert Not at all. Think nothing of it . . .

Brigit 2 goes to Bernard to embrace him

Brigit 2 My darling! My precious! Isn't this wonderfully exciting; so marvellously dangerous. . . ?

Bernard Rather more dangerous than you think. My wife isn't here, but she's around *(To Robert)* What do you think, old man?

Robert I think she's sensational.

Bernard No—do you think she'll do as the temporary?

Robert The new maid?

Bernard Why not?

Robert Doesn't quite look the part.

Bernard Then she'll have to act it.

Brigit 2 What are you two plotting?

Bernard We wouldn't have to plot if you hadn't been so late.

Brigit 2 I missed the train.

Bernard *(taking her coat off)* That was very careless—it means all the plans have to be changed.

Brigit 2 In what way?

Bernard *(putting the coat on the stool)* No time to explain all that. The essential thing is you're no longer his mistress.

Brigit 2 I'm not?

Bernard No definitely not.

Brigit 2 What am I, then?

Bernard Well—it's like this, darling, you're going to have to be . . .

Jacqueline enters briskly from the kitchen and sees Brigit 2

Jacqueline Ah, there you are and about time too.

Brigit 2 Excuse me . . .

Jacqueline I can't think why—do you know what time it is?

Brigit 2 But . . .

Bernard She's just been explaining that she unfortunately missed the . . .

Well, to cut a long story short, she missed the bus.

Robert Yes, missed it completely. Missed it by hours. Didn't even see it.

Jacqueline But the agency assured me . . .

Brigit 2 The agency?

Bernard Yes, the employment agency. Domestic staff and all that . . .

Brigit 2 Domestic staff?

Jacqueline Who else would we have consulted?

Bernard Now, darling, let's not make too much of a hullabaloo. The young lady is certainly late, but there's no need for you to work yourself up into a passion about it.

Brigit 2 I'm frightfully sorry.

Bernard You see, she's frightfully sorry. Now why don't we all make the best of things and reassure her that we're frightfully glad to see her, even though she did miss the train?

Robert The bus.

Bernard What?

Robert Actually, old man, it was the bus. You said it was the bus.

Jacqueline (*seeing the mink coat*) Who does that mink belong to? (*To Brigit 2*) Is it yours?

Bernard (*leaping in*) No, no. Not hers. It belongs to Brigit, doesn't it, Robert?

Robert Yes, yes, it belongs to Brigit.

Bernard (*to Brigit 2*) Yes. Because the lady friend. That is to say the—er—the fiancée of this gentleman, by a curious coincidence is called Brigit.

Robert Yes. Astonishing, isn't it? She's also called Brigit.

Jacqueline But I didn't notice it before.

Robert Oh no—she's always been called Brigit.

Jacqueline I meant the coat! The mink! This!

Robert Oh, it must have slipped off the back of the sofa. Fallen off, isn't that so, Bernard?

Bernard Yes, yes, she must have draped it over there when she came in.

Robert That's it, that's what she did. Draped it, then it must have just—slipped.

Bernard And I saw it lying there and picked it up just before you came in.

(*Robert mimes handing Bernard the mink*) Thank you.

Jacqueline But it's a beautiful coat.

Bernard Should be at that price. Isn't that what you said to me, Robert, old man?

Robert Well, I don't remember exactly . . .