

Act 3, sc.2 - Edith, Madame Arcati & Charles

MADAME ARCATI. Come here, child.

EDITH . Oh! *(She looks anxiously at Charles)*

CHARLES *(moving up to L of EDITH, who comes c, L of Madame Arcati)* Go on! Go to Madame Arcati - it's quite all right!

MADAME ARCATI. Whom do you see in this room, child?

EDITH. Oh dear

MADAME ARCATI. Answer, please.

EDITH *(falteringly)* You, Madame - *(She stops)*

MADAME ARCATI. Go on.

EDITH. The master.

MADAME ARCATI. Anyone else?

EDITH. Oh, no, Madame . . .

MADAME ARCATI *(inflexibly)* Look again.

EDITH *(imploringly, to Charles)* I don't understand, sir - I -

MADAME ARCATI. Come, child - don't beat about the bush. Look again. *(ELVIRA moves across to the fireplace below the sofa, almost as though she were being pulled. RUTH follows. Both stand at the fire. ELVIRA up stage. EDITH follows them with her eyes)* Do you see anyone else now?

EDITH *(slyly)* Oh, no, Madame.

MADAME ARCATI. She's lying.

EDITH. Oh, Madame!

MADAME ARCATI. They always do.

CHARLES. They?

MADAME ARCATI *(sharply)* Where are they now?

EDITH. By the fireplace - oh!

CHARLES. She can see them - do you mean she can see them?

MADAME ARCATI. Probably not very clearly - but enough -

EDITH *(bursting into tears)* Let me go! I haven't done nothing nor seen nobody! Let me go back to bed!

MADAME ARCATI. Give her a sandwich. *(CHARLES goes to the table and gets a sandwich for Edith)*

EDITH *(drawing away)* I don't want a sandwich. I want to get back to bed!

CHARLES *(handing Edith the plate)* Here, Edith.

MADAME ARCATI. Nonsense! A big healthy girl like you saying no to a delicious sandwich! I never heard of such a thing! Sit down!

EDITH *(to Charles)* Please, sir, I. ..

CHARLES. Please do as Madame Arcati says, Edith.

EDITH *(sitting down on the arm of the armchair and sniffing)* I haven't done nothing wrong.

CHARLES. It's all right - nobody said you had.

RUTH. If she's been the cause of all this unpleasantness I'll give her a week's notice tomorrow.

ELVIRA. You may not be here tomorrow.

MADAME ARCATI. Look at me, Edith. (*EDITH obediently does so*) Cuckoo - - cuckoo -cuckoo

EDITH (*jumping*) Oh dear - what's the matter with her? Is she barmy?

MADAME ARCATI. Here, Edith - this is my finger. Look! (*She waggles it*) Have you ever seen such a long, long, long finger? Look, now it's on the right - now it's on the left - backwards and forwards it goes - see - very quietly backwards and forwards tic - toc - tic - toc - tic - toc.

(*MADAME ARCATI whistles a little tune close to Edith's face. Then she snaps her fingers. EDITH looks stolidly in front of her without flinching. MADAME ARCATI stands back*)