

CLARISSA. Henry, is anything the matter?

HENRY. Well, yes, in a way.

CLARISSA. Something wrong? Miranda?

HENRY. No, no, nothing wrong. I should say quite the contrary. Yes, quite the contrary.

(CLARISSA speaks with affection and very faint ridicule.)

CLARISSA. Darling, do I perceive behind the impenetrable Foreign Office façade a certain human excitement?

HENRY. Well, it is rather exciting in a way. As it happens there's a slight fog in London.

CLARISSA. Is that exciting?

HENRY. No, no, not the fog, of course.

CLARISSA. Well?

(HENRY looks quickly around, then moves beside CLARISSA.)

HENRY. You'll have to keep this to yourself, Clarissa.

CLARISSA. *(Hopefully.)* Yes?

HENRY. It's really very secret. Nobody's supposed to know. Actually, you'll have to know.

CLARISSA. Well, come on, tell me.

(HENRY looks around again.)

HENRY. It's all very hush-hush. Kalendorff is flying to London for a conference tomorrow.

CLARISSA. *(Unimpressed.)* Yes, I know.

HENRY. *(Startled.)* What do you mean, you know?

CLARISSA. I read it in the paper last Sunday.

HENRY. I can't think why you want to read these low-class papers. Anyway, the papers couldn't possibly know that Kalendorff was coming over. It's top secret.

CLARISSA. My poor sweet. Top secret indeed. The things you high-ups believe.

HENRY. *(Worried.)* Oh dear, there must have been some leak.

CLARISSA. I should have thought that by now you'd know there always *is* a leak. I should have thought you'd all be prepared for it.

HENRY. The news was only released officially tonight. Kalendorff's plane is due at Heathrow at eight forty, but actually...

(He looks doubtfully at CLARISSA.)

Now, Clarissa, can I trust you to be discreet?

CLARISSA. I'm much more discreet than any Sunday newspaper.

HENRY. The conference is tomorrow, but it would be a great advantage if a conversation could take place first between Sir John himself and Kalendorff. Now, naturally the reporters are all waiting at Heathrow and the moment the plane arrives, Kalendorff's movements are more or less public property. But fortunately, this incipient fog has played into our hands.

CLARISSA. Go on. I'm thrilled.

HENRY. The plane, at the last moment, will find it inadvisable to land at Heathrow. It will be diverted, as is usual on these occasions...

CLARISSA. *(Interrupting.)* To Bindley Heath. That's just fifteen miles from here. I see.

HENRY. You're always very quick, Clarissa. Yes, I shall go off there now to the aerodrome in the car, meet Kalendorff and bring him here. Sir John is motoring down here directly from London. Twenty minutes will be ample for what they have to discuss, and Kalendorff will go back to London with Sir John.

(He hesitates, suddenly rather disarming.)

You know, Clarissa, this may be of very great value to me in my career. I mean, they're reposing a lot of trust in me having this meeting here.

CLARISSA. So they should. Henry, darling, I think it's all *wonderful*.

(She flings her arms around him.)