

BRIAN *exits.*

ELEANOR I dread to think what position that is.

ELEANOR *exits, closing the front door.*

*The bank buzzer sounds.*

FRANCES *comes running out of the bedroom, still dressing, and goes to the bank buzzer.*

FRANCES Hello... Who is it?

GIRL'S VOICE (*offstage*) Is the manager there with you, Mrs Hunter?

FRANCES No, he isn't.

GIRL'S VOICE (*offstage*) Oh, dear, he's disappeared and I've got Head Office on.

FRANCES I've got hardly anything on. Good-bye.

FRANCES *exits to the bedroom. There is a pounding offset in the passage and PETER comes rocketing in the front door, closing it.*

PETER Frances! Darling! Are you there?

FRANCES *enters.*

FRANCES Yes.

PETER You haven't been out yet, have you?

FRANCES No, I've been doing the letter.

PETER What a relief! Where's the cheque?

FRANCES In the letter.

PETER Well, where's the letter?

FRANCES In the post, I expect.

PETER In the post? But you said you haven't been out.

FRANCES I know. Eleanor took it for me. Don't worry I told her to Express it.

PETER Oh, my God, we've had it.

FRANCES Had it? What are you talking about?

PETER That cheque you posted, it was the wrong one. I gave you the wrong one by mistake. Four hundred and fifty.

FRANCES Four hundred and fifty what?

PETER Pounds. We've just sent those sex merchants four hundred and fifty pounds of somebody else's money.

FRANCES How did we do that?

PETER It was the wages cheque from Jordan Electrics and Jordans have just drawn the money!

FRANCES But can't you stop the cheque?

PETER No, I can't, I'd have to tell Mr Bromhead.

FRANCES Mr Bromhead? Why?

PETER Because Jordans have their account at his branch, that's why.

FRANCES Then why are they cashing cheques here?

PETER They have a special arrangement—for their wages. That's why it was a cash cheque. I can't possibly tell Mr Bromhead I've sent their cheque to somebody else, you know what he's like.

FRANCES But this is terrible.

PETER Terrible? It's a disaster. I could lose my job. We've got to get that cheque back. Where did you send it? What's the address? Frances, we're all right—what have you done with the label?

FRANCES I tore it—and I put it down the waste disposal.

**PETER** The waste disposal! But can't you remember the address?

**FRANCES** I can't—I can't remember. Your mother was talking all the time, perhaps she noticed.

**PETER** Mother.

*The front door opens and ELEANOR sweeps in brightly carrying a new bunch of flowers with only the stems wrapped.*

**ELEANOR** Hello, Frances, oh, Peter, I was lucky: there was hardly anyone in the post office, except—Mr Bromhead! *(Turning back)* Do come in, please, Mr Bromhead! *(Giving FRANCES the flowers)* Here we are, Frances, I hope these last a little longer.

*PETER is rooted to the spot as Leslie BROMHEAD enters. He is in his mid-fifties, distinguished and smooth. BROMHEAD is the senior manager in the area and professionally expects the highest standards from his staff. Socially, he has all the graces.*

**BROMHEAD** Thank you. Good morning, Frances—Peter. Everything all right downstairs?

**PETER** Oh, yes—er, fine, thank you, Mr Bromhead, yes.

**BROMHEAD** Good, liking your new home, Frances?

**FRANCES** *(laying ELEANOR's flowers on top of the kitchen counter)* Very much indeed, thank you, Mr Bromhead. Would you like some coffee?

**BROMHEAD** Thank you. Before you go downstairs, Peter, I want to warn you about Arnold Needham, one of our bank inspectors. Apparently he's just finished up at Twickenham and I've heard you may be next on his list.

**PETER** *(aghast)* Next on his list? For an inspection, sir?

**BROMHEAD** Well, I don't think he'll be calling just to cash a cheque, old chap. *(He smiles)* Now I know Needham of