

SUSAN Yes, and you're going to be all starkers in a minute—in the nuddy. We're going to give you a lovely time.

SUSAN and BARBARA seize NEEDHAM by the arms and push him towards his room, starting to take off his pyjama jacket at the same time.

NEEDHAM No, no, you mustn't! What're you doing? Let go of my jimmy jam-jams. Help! Please! Somebody help me...!

SUSAN and BARBARA exit with NEEDHAM into his room.

ELEANOR and BROMHEAD enter through the front door.

BROMHEAD I'm terribly sorry, my dear. I really had no idea it was going to be such a disgusting play.

ELEANOR It's quite all right, Leslie. I'm so glad you booked a box. At least we were able to leave early without jostling with the general public. Have you got a cigarette?

BROMHEAD Yes, of course. I must say it was good of you to take it so well.

ELEANOR Not at all. I still don't see how they can call it a virile, contemporary musical when it's full of effeminate Vikings.

BROMHEAD I don't think they were meant to be—er—like that, my dear: just rather unfortunate casting. I must say the first number—all of them prancing naked in the fjord—was enough for me.

ELEANOR And as for those lyrics! Nobody could say I'm not broadminded. But I'm sure they've never uttered words like those in your theatre before.

BROMHEAD I never thought I'd live to see the day when there was that sort of permissiveness in our lovely old theatre.

ELEANOR I'm sure you didn't. I know they call it the permissive society but nobody ever says who gave them permission. And for what? God alone knows, I don't. No wonder our theatres and cinemas have been closing for years. What

sort of people want to see such shows when they can enjoy simple, decent pleasures in their own homes?

There is a strangled male cry from BRIAN in the main bedroom.

What was that?

BROMHEAD What was what, my dear?

ELEANOR I thought I heard something. Anyway, it was a delightful dinner, Leslie. And the roast duckling was delicious.

BROMHEAD I'm glad you liked it.

ELEANOR You won't mention it to Peter and Frances, will you? They do love to pander to my vegetarian diet—and I'd hate to annoy them. I wonder where they are? They can't have gone to bed already, surely?

BROMHEAD Well, it would hardly be surprising considering...

ELEANOR Quite. Peter's always been one for a good night's sleep. And, of course, he does need it. He's so conscientious as you know. Would you care for a nice brandy?

BROMHEAD Thank you, my dear, that would be most agreeable.

ELEANOR I'll get it. Let me see. Ah, yes, I left it in the kitchen, didn't I? I was showing Frances how to make *crêpes Suzettes* at lunch-time. I always think they're such a useful standby, don't you? *(She goes into the kitchen)*

BROMHEAD *(going towards the bathroom)* Do you mind if I just wash my hands?

ELEANOR Not at all, Leslie, not at all. Do please make yourself completely at home.

BROMHEAD *disappears into the bathroom. The small bedroom door bursts open and NEEDHAM runs out, pyjamas flapping.*

NEEDHAM Let go of my jimmy jam-jams.