

Intercom
Earlier Version
of
GENES

THE INTERCOM

A Comedy

by

Maurice Rowdon

CHARACTERS

ARTHUR CUTLASS

PEGGY CUTLASS

PAMELA

NORMAN PILLINGER.

MARTIN FYFFE.

DAN SUTTON

NANCY.

TWO CHILDREN (BARRY AND RACHEL),
A SECRETARY (MISS WILLIAMS), AN
OFFICE BOY (TOM), A CHAUFFEUR ETC.

1.

THE INTERCOM

MS OF A WEALTHY, DETACHED AND NOT HANDSOME MANSION ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF A NORTHERN TOWN, PERHAPS HARROGATE. PUSH IN VERY SLOWLY AS THE TITLES ROLL UP SO THAT WHEN THEY ARE FINISHED NORMAN PILLINGER IS JUST TURNING INTO THE FRONT GARDEN. HE WALKS UP THE OVER-GRAND STEPS. TRACK AFTER HIM INTO THE HALL WITH ITS FITTED CARPET, CONCEALED LIGHTING AND ABSTRACTS ON THE WALL. THERE IS A PLACE FOR UMBRELLAS AND COATS IN THE CORNER NOT UNLIKE THE CLOAKROOM OF A THEATRE FOYER. HE GOES THERE AND TAKES OFF HIS COAT, PUTS ON A DIRTY LABORATORY SMOCK WHICH WAS ORIGINALLY COLOURED WHITE. AND THEN HE WALKS UP THE---AGAIN OVER-GRAND---STAIRCASE.

CUT TO HIM ENTERING THE DRAWING ROOM ON THE FIRST FLOOR WHICH GIVES MUCH THE SAME EFFECT OF DELIBERATE AIMLESSLY SPACIOUS MODERNITY AS THE HALL DOWNSTAIRS. TRACK BEHIND HIM AS HE WALKS ACROSS THE ROOM.

SUDDENLY THERE IS A SOUND---A SQUEAK OR PERHAPS A SQUEAL--- WHICH MAKES HIM START AND STOP. HE LOOKS ROUND WITH TIRED, WORRIED EYES. THEN HE NOTICES SOMETHING ON THE WALL WHICH WAS EVIDENTLY NOT THERE BEFORE: THE INTERCOM APPARATUS-----A SET OF THREE SWITCHES, MARKED 'RELAY', 'RECEIVE' AND 'OFF'.. A SHOT OF THIS AND THEN PULL BACK OVER HIS SHOULDERS AS HIS HAND GOES UP TO TOUCH THE SWITCH LIGHTLY. AGAIN THERE IS THE SQUEAK OR SQUEAL AND AGAIN HE LOOKS ROUND. THEN HE SEEMS TO MAKE A DECISION, GOES MARCHING OFF TO THE FARTHER DOOR AND THERE COLLIDES WITH PAMELA HIS WIFE.

NORMAN: Do you see all this?

PAMELA: What?

HE POINTS TO THE INTERCOM.

PAMELA: Oh.

NORMAN: Is that your mother's latest damn-fool idea?

PAMELA: I think so yes. It's to link us all together. If the children cry we can hear them in every room.

NORMAN: So that's what it is! I thought one of my rats was loose. And how does she know we want the kids screaming in our ears all day?

PAMELA: Oh it's too much bother trying to stop her. You look tired.

NORMAN: I was up all night.

PAMELA: I know.

NORMAN: I know you know. But you don't know this: I've lost my job.

PAMELA: What?

NORMAN: Somebody tipped me off at the lab. We were discussing it all night.

PAMELA (ALMOST TO HERSELF) Thank God then.

NORMAN: Thank God?

PAMELA: I thought you might be with her---!

NORMAN: Oh go to hell, why do you always have to be so personal about everything? I tell you one thing, I'm not going back to the old life, with your father cutting off the month's allowance every time I say something true. I remember the time I said saccherine was a cancer agent and he slammed the door in my face and then the money didn't come through for ten days, we couldn't even feed the kids. Oh! (SUBSIDING INTO AN ABSTRACT LOOKING CHAIR) I felt so good having a job.

PAMELA: So good you spent two months with another woman.

NORMAN: Yes, all right.

PAMELA: So it starts all over again. Me going to the bank to see if the money's come, and always being frightened, and trying to bring them round again after you've said something awful.

NORMAN: Something true.

ANOTHER SQUEAK OR SQUEAL.

NORMAN: There, you heard it. Isn't it my rats?

PAMELA: It's the children! She's put microphones just by their pillows!

NORMAN: Listen, whatever else you do don't tell her I've lost my job. You know how success-mad she is. Let me get another one first and we'll say I needed a change of air. Not that I've got the money to get to the interviews. When you're in debt you're like a man limping, you can't even reach the startline. By the way, they wouldn't even give me a reference.

PAMELA: And why not for God's sake?

NORMAN: She was fired too, you'll be glad to hear.

PAMELA: Your girlfriend?

NORMAN: Oh don't always call her that. She's got her name. Anyway, I told you before, it's just gone dead on me, I mean the marriage, I've had ten years of it after all.

PAMELA: It's because you've gone dead, not the marriage.

NORMAN: I suppose so.

PAMELA: And I have to keep the children alive.

NORMAN: Yes you do, because I can't. There's something fishy about me getting the sack like that, I wouldn't mind betting your father's behind it, he found out about the girlfriend----

PAMELA: Sssh! (RUSHING TO THE INTERCOM SWITCHES) It might be on Relay! (CLOSING HER EYES WITH RELIEF) Thank God.

NORMAN: Off?

PAMELA: Yes. So it's started already. Me playing the diplomat

and you hiding behind me.

NORMAN: They're queer cusses aren't they? When I've got a job they slip fifty a month into our account, and when I don't it's hell to get twenty-five. Or are all rich people like that?

PAMELA: Norman---they must have given you a month's notice. You're not lying are you? You're quite capable of having me on, just to see what it looks like. What about your contract, how did they get round that?

NORMAN: I never had a contract.

PAMELA: You told me you signed one!

NORMAN: Of course I did, your mother was in the room. It worked too. She coughed up a washing machine and a trip to Majorca. That was an awful trip, by the way.

PAMELA: Because you were alone with me.

NORMAN: Well you don't think there was any other reason do you?

PAMELA: Anyway I'm going shopping, with the last of the money.

NORMAN (AS SHE GOES TO THE DOOR) They wouldn't even give me back my rats. I contributed a dozen when I took the job. I'm particularly sorry to have lost Murphy and Mrs. Gormsby Taylor, or Hilda as she sometimes let me call her.

PAMELA: Did you ask for them?

NORMAN: Well I could hardly bring them home: Murphy has cancer of the tongue and Hilda's womb is several yards away from her, though technically still her own of course.

PAMELA: That's another dreadful thing you do, day after day---and you talk about how you're being tortured!

NORMAN: Oh they're both eating well. Murphy might even have a new tongue by Monday.

PEGGY (OVER THE INTERCOM) Pamela, Pamela, are you anywhere in the house?

NORMAN (JUMPING UP) Good God she's been there all the time! She always seems to know when

we're having a row---she goes round the house with a Geiger counter, picking up emotions!

PAMELA: But it's off!

NORMAN (GOING TO THE INTERCOM SWITCHES) It's on Receive!

PAMELA: Does that mean she heard us?

NORMAN: Of course it---!

PEGGY (OVER THE INTERCOM) Pamela! Is there anyone else in the house can help me? I'm looking for my daughter!

PAMELA (PULLING THE SWITCHES UP AND DOWN) How do you work it?

NORMAN: Put it on Relay. Why, you don't want to talk to her do you?

PAMELA: Come on!

SHE PUTS IT ON RELAY.

PAMELA: I'm in the second drawing room mummy.

PEGGY (OVER THE INTERCOM) Pamela, your voice is so clear! Isn't it marvellous?

PAMELA: Yes!

PEGGY (OVER THE INTERCOM) I'll meet you on the stairs.

NORMAN LOCKS ROUND IN PANIC FOR A MEANS OF ESCAPE.

PEGGY (OVER THE INTERCOM) I want you to see a new dress of mine!

PAMELA: Yes mummy.

SHE SWITCHES OFF.

NORMAN: For God's sake take her one floor up until I've made my getaway!

PAMELA (GOING OUT) Oh you!

CUT TO THE STAIRCASE WITH PAMELA GOING DOWN AND PEGGY COMING UP IN A GLITTERING NEW DRESS DOWN TO HER FEET. WHEN SHE SEES PAMELA SHE STOPS AND MAKES A SORT OF FASHION-MODEL POSE.

PAMELA: It's lovely.

PEGGY: I knew you'd like it.

PAMELA: Let's go to the drawing room further up.

PEGGY: No it's all upside down, they're still fitting the microphones.

PAMELA: Well let's go down to the nursery, Norman's brought home a few experimental rats and he's still in the second drawing room.

PEGGY (RETREATING AT ONCE WITH HORROR ON HER FACE) What? I wish he wouldn't. But I suppose that's science! Let's go down to the kitchen, quick!

SHE RUSHES DOWN, ALMOST TRIPPING OVER HER DRESS, AS IF THE RATS WERE AFTER HER..

CUT TO THE KITCHEN WHERE EVERYTHING IS BRIGHT AND STREAMLINED. THE MOMENT PEGGY AND PAMELA HAVE CLOSED THE DOOR BEHIND THEM PEGGY TALKS, IN AN UNDERTONE..

PEGGY: You've been crying.

PAMELA: No I haven't.

PEGGY: Then you've been peeling onions..

PAMELA: Yes..

PEGGY: The children must never have onions-----

PAMELA: I had them!

PEGGY: Raw?

PAMELA: No! (WITH A GREAT SIGH) Norman lost his job.

PEGGY: Then you have been crying. People are like open books to me, my dear. What do you mean he's lost his job? Norman! What? Do you mean he's got no money? What's he going to do, I mean what-----

A CHILD CRIES OVER THE INTERCOM.

PEGGY: It's Barry! He must have those injections, he's got such a cough and he hasn't been for two days-----

ARTHUR (OVER THE INTERCOM) Peggy are you upstairs?

PEGGY (ALL GLEE) That's your father. Isn't it fun?

SHE HURRIES ROUND THE ROOM LOOKING FOR THE INTERCOM SWITCHES.

PEGGY: Now where are they?

PAMELA (POINTING) They're over here.

PEGGY (RUSHING THERE) Quickly, switch it to Relay before he goes, Arthur, Arthur, Arthur!

ARTHUR (OVER THE INTERCOM) All right there's no need to scream.

PEGGY: Come down here at once. I'm in the kitchen with Pam. You've woken the children by the way.

ARTHUR (OVER THE INTERCOM) Well what about it, it's teatime!

A RESOUNDING CLICK AS HE SWITCHES OFF.

PEGGY: Isn't it wonderful? He'd never have found me otherwise.

ARTHUR PUSHES OPEN THE KITCHEN DOOR.

ARTHUR: Hullo all. (WITH A LOOK AT PEGGY WHO HAS SUDDENLY PUT ON A DRAMATICALLY WORRIED FACE) What's the matter now?

PEGGY: It couldn't be worse.

ARTHUR: It never can be. Every time I come in a room it seems to touch off something ghastly. Well keep this one to yourself, I want my tea---

PEGGY: Norman!

ARTHUR: I don't want to hear! Now get that bad cook of ours, what's her name, Nancy, and tell her to get my tea! (SUBSIDING INTO A ROCKING CHAIR BY THE STOVE)

PEGGY: Jump up! Jump up at once!

ARTHUR (AS HE SPRINGS UP) What the hell's the matter?

PEGGY: It's new. You know how you go through everything. I've had all the chairs upstairs reinforced but I naturally never expect you to come to the kitchen.

ARTHUR: You called me here!

PEGGY: Sssh! The children!

ARTHUR: As for reinforcing the chairs you've taken half of them

away-----

PEGGY: Only in the Japanese room!

ARTHUR: Japanese my arse! Even they sit down don't they?

PEGGY: Yes, on the floor.

ARTHUR: What, are you going to put my business guests on the floor?

PEGGY: You can get twice as many people on the floor than you can on those four-legged thrones as Jocelyn calls them.

ARTHUR: Blast Jocelyn. He did those flick-and-drip things in the hall didn't he?

PEGGY (QUIETLY) It takes time and patience to break through the nineteenth century. What you don't realise, Arthur, is that we're not kings and queens any more, so why should we sit on thrones?

ARTHUR: Oh do shut up. I'll never forget that lavatory pan spraying itself with eau de cologne every time you went. That got a bit expensive though didn't it? And I love the way the bedroom windows open and close all night according to the temperature, except that the thermostat's gone wrong and they won't close any more. It cost me seventy-five quid to fix it last month, now they say they'll have to take the windows away for a bit, that'll be cosy.

PEGGY: She's been crying her eyes out.

ARTHUR: Who has?

PEGGY: Your daughter.

ARTHUR: Has he gone off with another woman again?

PEGGY: No. He's walked out of his job. For bringing his rats home with him!

ARTHUR: What, bringing them home? And those creatures have got every disease under the sun! I read about a chap once, turned a lab full of experimental monkeys loose, riddled with typhus!

PAMELA: Oh!

CRYING WITH ANGER PAMELA DASHES OUT OF THE ROOM, SLAMMING THE DOOR.

PEGGY: There, now you've done it.

ARTHUR: What have I done? Norman did it! He lost his job!

PEGGY: Anyway you'd better talk to her.

ARTHUR: But what about? I want my tea!

PEGGY: For one thing the hospital accounts have just arrived and they're enormous.

ARTHUR: That's because you take the kids there all the time, as private patients!

PEGGY: It's for the Gynaecological department! I don't take children to the Gynaecological department!

ARTHUR: Well you've taken yourself then!

PEGGY: I haven't been near the Gynaecological department for months! And there's only one other female in this house.

ARTHUR: What, Pamela you mean? Why shouldn't she?

PEGGY: Oh! Because she's been going once a week, and we only go once a week if we're having a baby or trying not to have one!

ARTHUR: Well what about it!? She's allowed to have babies isn't she? She's married!

PEGGY: Ask her about it, that's all. We can't go on spending money like that, without explanations.

A LOUD BUZZ.

ARTHUR: What the hell's that?

PEGGY: It must be a fuse!

ARTHUR: A fuse?

PEGGY (DASHING TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM) It's the intercom. (PULLING AT ALL THE SWITCHES HAPHAZARDLY UNTIL SHE GETS THE RIGHT ONE) Yes, yes? Hullo hullo hullo!

ARTHUR: Oh God...

CUT TO THE NURSERY WHERE NANCY, LOOKING JUST LIKE HER VOICE, IS SPEAKING AT THE INTERCOM ON THE

WALL.

NANCY: I seen your Pamela mum.
She's crying.

INTERCUT PEGGY AND NANCY TALKING
AT THE INTERCOM.

PEGGY: Don't call me mum and she
isn't crying, she's been peeling
onions.

NANCY: They must be very fresh
then because she's streaming.

PEGGY: By the way if you took my
bracelet this morning put it back.

NANCY: I didn't.

PEGGY: I'm not saying you did.
Just put it back, that's all. And
I don't know why you have to call
me mum, it isn't the nineteenth
century. I'll talk to the little
boy, is he there?

NANCY: Yes mum?

PEGGY: Not you---Barry!

NANCY: He's on his pot.

PEGGY: Oh I'm especially glad
about that, after the trouble he
had last night.

NANCY (MAKING A WRY FACE IN THE
DIRECTION OF BARRY) He's not
having trouble now, by the looks
of it.

CUT BACK TO PEGGY WHO HAS SWITCHED
NANCY OFF AND IS VERY MUCH ON RELAY.

PEGGY: Pamela! Pamela! Where
are you?

CUT TO PAMELA IN THE SITTING ROOM
AGAIN ANSWERING THE INTERCOM.

PAMELA (TEARFULLY) I'm here.

INTERCUT PEGGY AND PAMELA SPEAKING
TO EACH OTHER OVER THE INTERCOM.

PEGGY: So Barry went then?

PAMELA: Went where?

PEGGY: Went, went! I wish you
wouldn't be so dreamy---(AS AN ASIDE
TO ARTHUR, WHO IS BOWED IN A CHAIR)
She's so dreamy. (TO PAMELA:)
That tablet worked then.

PAMELA: What, you gave him a tablet? But he's running---

PEGGY: He can't be, he ^{was} blocked---

PAMELA: He's running I tell you, and Norman says he was only blocked because you gave him an opium drug and it just paralyses the intestines, he says charcoal is much better.

PEGGY: I won't have the children in this house eating coal and that's that. Your father's coming up to see you.

ARTHUR: Oh God!

PEGGY: He wants a word. I'm only glad he can spare you a minute. He's terribly rushed. Where are you?

PAMELA: In the first sitting room.

PEGGY: He's on his way.

ARTHUR RISES RESIGNEDLY AND, SWEEPING UP THE HOSPITAL BILLS WITH AN I'LL-GET-YOU GESTURE, WALKS OUT OF THE KITCHEN THROUGH THE SWINGING DOOR SO THAT IT SWINGS VIOLENTLY AFTER HIM.

PEGGY: I say you're not having another baby are you?

PAMELA: Oh dear!

PEGGY: It's funny, I was thinking of when you were born only this morning. There was a pine forest near the clinic and your father had a boil on his neck. Your grandfather on my side fitted five hundred and seven new watersystems in four hotels in eastern Rumania that year, which was why we were there. They weren't scented of course. But they flushed.

PAMELA (AS ARTHUR COMES INTO THE ROOM CARRYING THE HOSPITAL BILLS)
Well daddy's here.

PEGGY: All right darling, now don't raise your voices.

SHE SWITCHES TO RECEIVE AND REMAINS AT THE WALL LISTENING.

ARTHUR'S VOICE OVER THE INTERCOM:
Well (WITH A SIGH AS HE SITS DOWN)
we're always in trouble it seems.

SHOW PEGGY SETTLING DOWN TO LISTEN.

CUT TO THE SITTING ROOM WITH
ARTHUR AND PAMELA.

ARTHUR: And I'm not getting any
younger.

PAMELA: Oh nonsense, you look
all right.

ARTHUR: I hear you're getting all
the furniture out of the Japanese
room. As I see it you and Norman
are only two behinds, and you have
plenty of chairs downstairs anyway,
whereas me and Peggy plus our guessts
are sometimes fifty. And she's
going to park fifty behinds on the
floor!

PAMELA: That's right.

ARTHUR: When I entered your mother's
little world twenty-eight years ago
I had to accept a lot of things I
thought funny----

CUT TO PEGGY ABOUT TO SHOUT INTO
THE INTERCOM, IN REMONSTRANCE, BUT
SUBSIDING WHEN SHE HEARS ARTHUR'S
NEXT SENTENCE.

ARTHUR (VOICE OVER) But I bet we'll
see sense in having no chairs to sit
on, in the end.

CUT BACK TO THE SITTING ROOM.

PAMELA (ALL STEEL) I hope so.

ARTHUR: So why did he do it?

PAMELA: Who do what?

ARTHUR: Your husband, let his
rats loose. Of course they're
going to sack him if he does that.

PAMELA: He didn't let his rats
loose!

ARTHUR: But you said he did!

PAMELA: No I didn't!

ARTHUR (BEYOND THE POINT OF NO
RETURN NOW) Oh yes you did! I'd
have cleared him out of this house
long ago if it hadn't been for
her----!

CUT TO PEGGY GETTING ALARMED IN THE
KITCHEN. SHE SWITCHES TO RELAY.

PEGGY: Now then, now then! I
asked you not to raise your voices!

ARTHUR (VOICE OVER, BELLOWING INTO
THE INTERCOM) And I'm having this

damned broadcasting system torn out of the walls!

PEGGY: Oh!

CUT TO THE SITTING ROOM WHERE ARTHUR IS JUST STORMING OUT, THE HOSPITAL BILLS STILL IN HIS HAND.

PEGGY (OVER THE INTERCOM) Pamela, Pamela, has your father gone?

PAMELA (SHOUTING AT THE WALL) Find out for yourself!

CUT BACK TO PEGGY IN THE KITCHEN.

PEGGY: Arthur, Arthur! Get Mr Cutlass, Nancy! Nancy!

ARTHUR BURSTS INTO THE KITCHEN, REPEATING HIS VIOLENT SWINGING DOOR TRICK.

ARTHUR: Why do we have to have these blasted speakers all over the house?

NANCY (OVER THE INTERCOM) Yes mym?

PEGGY (DIVIDED BETWEEN ARTHUR AND NANCY) Don't call me mum!

SHE SWITCHES TO OFF BEFORE NANCY CAN GET HER ANSWER IN.

ARTHUR: She said he didn't loose his rats at all!

PEGGY: He did! She told me herself!

ARTHUR: That's just what I said!

PEGGY SWITCHES THE INTERCOM TO RELAY.

PEGGY: Pamela, Pamela! Do come down to the kitchen. Your father didn't mean to raise his voice-----

ARTHUR (BACK IN THE CHAIR, BOWED) Oh yes he did.

PAMELA (OVER THE INTERCOM) I'm just outside the kitchen.

PEGGY: Well come in you silly girl! (TO ARTHUR:) She's just outside.

ARTHUR: What, have you put speakers in the corridors as well?

PAMELA COMES IN.

PEGGY: Your father wants another

word with you. (AS SHE LEAVES)
And for goodness sake do shed some
light on how a man deliberately lets
his experimental rats loose on his
own colleagues!

PAMELA: I said---!

BUT PEGGY HAS GONE, WITH THE DOOR
SWINGING AFTER HER.

ARTHUR: You know what your mother's
like. You'd better tell me every-
thing for the sake of peace.

PAMELA: He was sacked. Now I've
told you everything I know.

ARTHUR: Then I've no more to say.

PAMELA: But I don't know any more!

ARTHUR: What, a man sets his rats
loose without a reason! Don't talk
bosh!

PAMELA: But he didn't, he didn't!

ARTHUR: You're just damned obstin-
ate.. Anyway, I'm in a hurry.
(FISHING OUT THE HOSPITAL BILLS)
The accounts came this morning.
Here, perhaps you can throw some
light on that little lot.

PAMELA: What little lot?

ARTHUR: A hundred and fourteen
injections ordered by your mother,
that's all right, but what about
these two fifteen-guinea consult-
ations for you? What's wrong with
you?

PAMELA: Nothing. I just feel a
bit gunny/sometimes that's all.

ARTHUR: Well if there's anything
wrong of that sort you'd better
tell your mother.

PAMELA: I'm having another child.

ARTHUR: Good God. That's quick
work. HE's only just got back
from Switzerland---you didn't see
him for a year----

PAMELA (FIXING HIM WITH HER EYES)
I'm three months gone.

ARTHUR: He wasn't here three
months ago.

PAMELA: I know.

CUT TO PEGGY LISTENING TO THE
INTERCOM IN THE CORRIDOR OUTSIDE,

IN ASTONISHMENT.

CUT BACK TO THE KITCHEN.

ARTHUR: Of course he was here---
wasn't he? I mean, otherwise
how could he---? He was here,
surely?

PAMELA: No.

ARTHUR: He slipped over for a
week or so----

PAMELA: He was living in Switzer-
land with another woman for a whole
year, I thought you knew that.

ARTHUR (DESPARATELY) But he paid
you a visit!

PAMELA: He didn't!

ARTHUR: But say he did! At least
say it! Good God, do you mean---?
You're not saying---is this some-
body else's child?

PAMELA: Yes, yes! And I don't
care if it is!

ARTHUR: What? Oh no! PEGGY,
PEGGY!!

PEGGY SWINGS HER WAY THROUGH THE
KITCHEN AT ONCE.

PEGGY: I'm here. There's no
reason to shout. (TO PAMELA:)
I thought you looked pale. How
far gone are you?

PAMELA: Three months, didn't you
hear that as well?

ARTHUR: I only hope to God Nancy
didn't get all this (PEERING AT
THE INTERCOM APPARATUS) Well
well well! we live and learn!

PEGGY (TO PAMELA) When did Norman
Leave? for Switzerland?

PAMELA: Oh about a year ago.
And he hasn't been back a month.

PEGGY: Well I think it's very
foolish of you.

PAMELA: I thought you'd say that!
My husband walks out on me and I'm
supposed to stay indoors knitting!

PEGGY (QUITE DEAF TO HER) If we
can bring the birth on a month or
so it might be all right.

ARTHUR: Listen, we'd better get

a master switch or something for this damned machine, so we can switch the whole house off if necessary.

PEGGY (TO PAMELA) Does he know?

PAMELA: Who?

PEGGY: Well Norman of course!

PAMELA: I expect so. He deals in wombs and things all day. He hasn't said anything though.

PEGGY: I don't think the hardest creature in the world could deny a newborn child, though of course it won't have the advantage, from his point of view, of being a rat.

ARTHUR: Still, I should hate to be Norman now, with another man's seed in his wife's body.

PEGGY: Oh don't be sentimental! He doesn't have to know about it.

ARTHUR: Oh well he deserves it. He did a bunk on her after all.

NORMAN (OVER THE INTERCOM) Hullo!

THEY ALL JUMP OUT OF THEIR WITS. ARTHUR GETS CLEAR AWAY FROM THE SWITCHES AND PEGGY FLURRIES ABOUT UNTIL FINALLY PAMELA WALKS OVER TO THE SPEAKER AND SAYS SOMETHING.

PAMELA: Yes? We're in the kitchen.

NORMAN (OVER THE INTERCOM) Nancy said there was trouble.

ARTHUR: There, I said she'd heard.

PEGGY (SWOOPING ON TO THE SPEAKER) Do come down Norman, we're having such a pleasant chat down here.

CUT TO NORMAN IN THE LABORATORY DOWNSTAIRS, WHITE RATS IN CAGES BEHIND HIM, TALKING INTO A SPEAKER ON THE WALL.

NORMAN: OK I'll be up.

HE TAKES OFF HIS SOILED WHITE LABORATORY COAT AND PUTS HIS JACKET ON, THEN LEAVES. TRACK AFTER HIM UP THE STAIRS TO THE GROUND FLOOR. MIX TO THE KITCHEN WITH HIM COMING IN.

PEGGY (STAGING CHARM) Do come in Norman.

NORMAN (STOPPING, WITH A LOOK AT PAMELA) Are you ill?

PAMELA: I'm all right.

NORMAN (TO PEGGY) I suppose she told you?

PEGGY: Well---yes, she did.

ARTHUR (TO PEGGY) He means about the job!

NORMAN: And what's the verdict on my character?

PAMELA: It wasn't about you at all! I'm having a child!

ARTHUR: Oh god, why does everybody have to blurt things out?

NORMAN: I thought it was something awful, from the way she said you were having a pleasant chat.

PAMELA: Awful, me having a baby?

NORMAN: Well it looks awful, to judge from your face. And why tell them first? You're having my baby and you break the news to mummy and daddy first!

PAMELA: Because it isn't your baby!

ARTHUR: Oh no!

NORMAN: And that's just what I thought!

PEGGY: It's all a mistake and the dates have been mixed up!

NORMAN: Yes~~!~~, trust you to want to get round the truth!

ARTHUR: You can talk about the truth! You haven't even got a job, you don't even own the shirt you sweat in!

NORMAN: What about her (MEANING PEGGY)---she never earned a penny---her father made lavatory pans!

PEGGY: Water systems we called them, and it was my grandfather.

ARTHUR: And as I said to Pamela you can clear out of my house as soon as you like!

PEGGY: He's not leaving this house while my daughter's pregnant, and that's that!

ARTHUR: He won't leave anyway, don't worry about that. He only left last time because he had some money in his pocket.

PEGGY: You'd better take Norman to see the furniture from the Japanese room darling.

PAMELA (TO NORMAN:) Come on. (AS NORMAN IS ABOUT TO ANSWER ARTHUR WITH SOMETHING RUDE) Oh do come on!

SHE DRAGS NORMAN OUT OF THE KITCHEN.

PEGGY: Of course the baby's his. You know how vague they both are. They make love so much, these young people, it's like smoking for them: try fixing down which cigarette you smoked when!

ARTHUR: My only worry is the Fyffes finding out.

PEGGY: Oh there aren't scandals nowadays, everybody has one.

ARTHUR: Are you sure? I mean there must be some respectability somewhere. And what about Martin Fyffes newspapers? They're covered with scandal. He thrives on it: I mean, it must be unusual for some people. And he is our trustee.

PEGGY: She doesn't show yet.

ARTHUR: She does to people with eyes. Martin Fyffe was a doctor once. Anyway, I've got a meeting. No tea again.

PEGGY: Well don't talk with your face.

ARTHUR (STOPPING ON HIS WAY TO THE DOOR) What?

PEGGY: I mean don't show you're worried. In the meantime I'll see what's true and what isn't. I think I know my daughter. She wouldn't sleep with anybody. Anyway, I saw every one of her movements while he was away in Switzerland. She was with the Fyffe family nearly the whole time. Otherwise she hardly went out.

ARTHUR: It might be someone she met through them. You never know where these things lead. I mean, I do like to keep a clean front.

PEGGY: Sometimes I wake up at night and listen in case he's moving round the house----

ARTHUR: Who?

PEGGY: Norman! That's really why I had these loudspeakers fixed up, I had a nightmare he was experimenting with little Barry and Rachel-----

ARTHUR: Oh do shut up.

PEGGY: I think we ought to get him more rats, to sort of siphon off his interests, you know that horrible laboratory of his in the basement is the only thing that interests him. Otherwise you never know, he might get violent!

ARTHUR (GOING) See you later.

PEGGY: I get so frightened sometimes. I knew something was in the air today!

BUT ALL THE ANSWER SHE GETS IS THE DOOR SWINGING AFTER ARTHUR'S EXIT. FADE ON THE DOOR.

OPEN AGAIN ON THE FRONT DOORSTEPS NEXT MORNING. THE FRONT DOOR OPENS AND ARTHUR EMERGES DEEP IN CONVERSATION WITH MARTIN FYFFE. THEY ARE IN ALMOST CRUELLY SMART OFFICE CLOTHES, WITH HOMBURG HATS. MARTIN HAS A THICK CANE. BACKTRACK AS THEY WALK DOWN THE STEPS, STOPPING, FACING EACH OTHER, OUT OF EARSHOT. PAN TO TAKE IN A LONG BUT NOT UNDEMOCRATICALLY ASSERTIVE CAR WAITING FOR THEM AT THE KERB, ITS CHAUFFEUR---TO WHOM THE SAME DESCRIPTION APPLIES---HOLDING OPEN A DOOR FOR THEM IN A CASUAL AND FRIENDLY WAY. PULL BACK AS THEY GET IN. THEN THE CAR DRIVES AWAY WITH A DEVASTATING SMOOTHNESS THAT BELIES ITS UNASSERTIVE APPEARANCE.

CUT TO THEM WALKING THROUGH THE CORRIDORS OF ARTHUR'S OFFICE BLOCK. THEY ARE SALUTED WITH FRIENDLY SMILES BY PASSERS BY.

CUT TO ARTHUR'S LARGE OFFICE WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN FURNISHED BY PEGGY. THEY ARE COMING IN. ARTHUR PUTS HIS HAT AND COAT UP ON A PEG. BUT MARTIN REMAINS STANDING, ON HIS WAY SOMEWHERE ELSE.

~~FYFFE~~: WELL anyway, you sleep on it.

ARTHUR: Shepley Fine Consols went down two points yesterday, too. Nearly had heart failure when I saw it.

FYFEE (AFTER A GLANCE AT THE DOOR)
You'd make a couple of hundred doing the transfer alone, crossing two borders, I reckon. Still, you sleep on it Arthur.

ARTHUR (SETTLING INTO THE ARMCHAIR KEPT FOR CLIENTS) Remember the palmy days of 1945 when you could treble the stake by travelling your money from Switzerland to the starving Rhineland and back to Switzerland again? We had a little group. I never learned German so fast in all my life.

FYFEE: Know what I bought last week?

ARTHUR: No?

FYFEE: A haberdasher's.

ARTHUR: What the hell for?

FYFEE: In fact, five of them. I reckon there's never been a slump yet when women didn't buy knickers and bras and suspender belts. In fact you could say that civilisation's held up by elastic. That could save my life. Never did like investments.

ARTHUR: I've got my brilliant son in law to look after me in case of trouble. I could fetch sixpence a head for his rats. I suppose you know he lost his job?

FYFEE: Who, Pillinger?

ARTHUR: Yes. They didn't even give him a reference. For being a commie.

FYFEE: Crap. They're all commies in that lab. You can't get sacked for that. This isn't the United States.

ARTHUR: I wish to God it was.
(PRESSING A BELL AT THE TABLE) I get so damned frustrated in that house. I mean it isn't as if I don't like him, he's all right, he's just round the bend, that's all.

AN EFFICIENT AND NOT GIRLISH SECRETARY PUTS HER HEAD ROUND THE DOOR.

ARTHUR: Whistle us up a couple of coffees will you?

FYFEE: Listen Arthur I've got to push off----

BUT ARTHUR WAVES HER OFF ON HER MISSION AND SHE DISAPPEARS.

ARTHUR: Sometimes you know I envy those American boys in the Far East: I'd like to lay my hands on somebody, that's how I feel sometimes, to get rid of a sort of load. Funny isn't it? I'm the mildest chap in the world but what couldn't I do with a Schmeizer.

FYFEE: Bloody frightening rate of fire, that.

ARTHUR: You're telling me. Sloane used one in that book Midsummer Night's Scream: where the hell he got the bullets I can't imagine, seeing they're not produced any more. That's the sort of detail I'd have the author clear up.

FYFEE: Mind you, the Americans have got commies on the brain.

MARTIN: That's better than having them on your property, like me.

FYFEE: And how. Oh Dan Sutton should be flying over in a few days. Do you know how much he earns? Less than eighty thousand dollars a year.

ARTHUR: What?

FYFEE: Yes.

ARTHUR: And he sits on a firm worth fifty million at the least! I take my hat off to him.

FYFEE: I bet you wouldn't mind him for a son in law.

ARTHUR: Dan's got the whole pharmaceutical industry in the western hemisphere beat, and he don't say a word about it. But this son in law of mine's on the yap yap yap all the bloody day as if he owned the world. He tried to tell me saccherine was a carcinagent.

FYFEE: What the hell's that?

ARTHUR: Gives you cancer. If you take a truck load of it for about fifty years. I just looked at him. But don't imagine he gives a damn if you or I get cancer. Not a bit of it! This bloke's a scientist! He enjoys the idea. He says it with that little glint in his eye! I mean, some young-

sters are worried about the state of the world. Not him! He enjoys it!

THE DOOR OPENS AND A BOY BRINGS IN TWO COFFEES OF THE ESPRESSO TYPE ON A TRAY.

ARTHUR: Morning Tom.

TOM: Morning Mr Cutlass.

TOM DEPOSITS THE TRAY AND LEAVES AGAIN.

FYFFE (AS HE TAKES HIS COFFEE AND BEGINS SUGARING VIGOROUSLY) Is that what he does to his rats----- gives them cancer?

ARTHUR: That and womb-transfers. A rat under Pillinger never knows if its kids are its own, or even where its womb is.

FYFFE: Fascinating though.

ARTHUR: Yes but I wish he'd keep his mouth shut. Ever since he set foot in my house he's been talking. About how car-fumes overdevelop bones and bring on sterility and how an H-bomb can go off any minute because we have two hundred thousand nuclear flights overhead every year, and how we're going to get flu plagues in the big cities through tinned foodstuffs and deep freezes, and all kinds of cheerful junk like that, just to show what a big brain he's got. He knows I can't stand people talking, not when they look as if they're never going to stop anyway. And every time he sees me it seems to switch the gas on. I suppose I've got a listening face. Some people have. If he was earning eighty thousand dollars a year it wouldn't be so bad.

FYFFE DOWNS HIS COFFEE IN ONE OR TWO FULLBODIED GULPS.

FYFFE: Of course your trouble is you're soft with him. How much are you spending on him by the way?

ARTHUR: A thousand a year---oh don't worry, I don't let him hurt me, it comes off tax and it looks after his kids, whom I adore.

FYFFE: Still, he's not adding to the family glory or fortunes, is he?

ARTHUR: Oh he's not so bad. He's sincere. Anyway I make damned sure no important contact of mine meets him or even hears of his existence.

FYFFE IS ON HIS WAY TO THE DOOR BUT STOPS.

FYFFE: Suppose you give your promised reception for Dan Sutton, going to throw your son in law out of the house for that night?

ARTHUR: Oh well he can stay for that.

FYFFE: Soft, like I said. He's quite capable of taking Dan aside and telling him you're bankrupt. He'd be quite sincere too. Remember the old Arab saying, Arthur---a friend can turn into a thousand enemies.

ARTHUR: Yes you always say that.

FYFFE: If Dan Sutton thought for a minute that your morale was low he might start mistrusting your judgements, then he'd pull out a few contracts, which are my bread and butter too.

ARTHUR: I could pull out my shares, see if he liked that.

FYFFE: He wouldn't give a damn. Plenty of buyers for Dutton Pharmacies. I'll talk to Peggy about it. She usually sees your point of view before you do.

ARTHUR (GETTING UP AND STROLLING OVER TOWARDS HIS DESK) What am I supposed to do, put a pill in his tea?

FYFFE: Find him a job. Get him out of this damned research stunt, it's too near our line of business.

ARTHUR: He'd get himself the boot just the same, or sleep with the female staff. But that's your speciality, isn't it?

FYFFE: If a woman enjoys herself with me that's all right. I never enter a bargain without settling the terms beforehand.

ARTHUR: Oh go home, you're talking like one of your newspapers.

FYFFE: As I've often said to you before, Arthur, I've never been a day under forty in my life. If you wrap up at the end and die, do you mean to tell me it matters a tinker's cuss how many women

you've slept with, or whether you've been good, bad or indifferent?

ARTHUR: My wife wouldn't like to hear you say that. She thinks she's a liberal.

FYFFE: My wife has 'em all down for the week-end---my brilliant editorial staff, and she thinks it's their brains she likes. So she would if they carried them in their trousers. Don't you worry, she gets some thrills.

ARTHUR (SEEING HIM TO THE DOOR)
That's how babies are born.

FYFFE: It keeps her young though.

ARTHUR: My wife keeps young spending. Remember the heated floors? It melted the soles of your boots-- I was wearing rubber that night, found I was stuck to the floor. That cost a couple of thousand, well night

FYFFE: Well I'm not staying here to get dyspepsia---I've told you the state of your finances and you'll be eating into your capital soon my boy.

ARTHUR: OK, OK.

FYFFE LEAVES AND CLOSES THE DOOR AFTER HIM. ARTHUR IS JUST WANDERING BACK TO HIS DESK WHEN HE REMEMBERS SOMETHING AND RETURNS TO THE DOOR.

ARTHUR (CALLING DOWN THE CORRIDOR)
Here---Martin!

SHOT OF MARTIN TURNING IN THE CORRIDOR.

ARTHUR: There's a news flash from the Stock Exchange.

CUT TO MARTIN COMING INTO THE OFFICE AGAIN AND ARTHUR CLOSING THE DOOR CAREFULLY.

ARTHUR: No, I just wanted to show you that throw.

FYFFE: All right.

ARTHUR: Over in two seconds.

HE DOES A JU-JITSU THROW AND FYFFE LANDS EXPERTLY ON HIS FEET.

AS HE DOES SO THE DOOR PUSHES OPEN AND THE SECRETARY PRESENTS HERSELF.

ARTHUR (TO THE SECRETARY) Half a minute.

HE HANGS HIS ARMS BEFORE HIM AND 'SHAKES OUT' THE TENSION.

ARTHUR: New one, that. (TO FYFFE:) Not bad eh?

FYFFE: I've seen better.

ARTHUR:: Nothing's good enough for you. (TO THE SECRETARY:) Yes?

SECRETARY:: It's your wife sir, she's on her way up.

ARTHUR: What? It's only ten to nine, she can't be in trouble yet!

FYFFE (ON HIS WAY TO THE DOOR) Here I'm off.

PEGGY (OUTSIDE IN THE CORRIDOR) Arthur! Arthur!

CUT TO THE CORRIDOR WHERE SHE IS STRUGGLING TO PUSH OPEN THE DOOR AS BOTH FYFFE AND THE SECRETARY TRY TO GET OUT.

CUT BACK TO THE OFFICE AS SHE GETS IN, CUTTING OFF THE ESCAPE OF FYFFE AND THE SECRETARY.

PEGGY:: There you are! I've been calling on the intercom, I didn't know you'd left. Martin you must come as well, you used to be a doctor and you simply must comfort Pamela.

FYFFE: Comfort her?

ARTHUR: What's up now for God's sake?

PEGGY:: We'll have to call Dr Blore.

ARTHUR: We call him every day.

PEGGY: Barry's up to 104. And that idiot won't allow another injection!

ARTHUR: What idiot? Blore?

PEGGY: No, Norman! He wants that fat doctor with his ears sticking out----

ARTHUR: A doctor can't help his ears-----

PEGGY: He's wearing nappies again, it's so bad----

ARTHUR: Nappies? Who?

PEGGY: Barry, Barry, your grandson!

FYFFE: All right, calm down Peggy.

PEGGY: And this Pillinger keeps saying how a quite ordinary anti-flu injection caused it all---I'm frightened and something's got to be done----these injections are quite harmless, and he says it widens the arterilleries----

ARTHUR: The What?

FYFFE: She means arteries.

PEGGY: And all sorts of nineteenth century superstitions! And the nasty way he looks at me!

ARTHUR (TO THE SECRETARY) You'd better call the car round.

THE SECRETARY LEAVES.

PEGGY: Pamela's in tears, and this son in law's raging, raging all over the house---

ARTHUR (TO FYFFE) Can you come too?

FYFFE: I shppose I shall have to.

ARTHUR (HURRIEDLY GETTING HIS HAT AND COAT DOWN FROM THE PEG AGAIN) Now just keep your hat on, that's all!

PEGGY: I've haven't got a hat on!

ARTHUR (AS THEY ALL LEAVE) Sssh!

MIX TO THE STREET BELOW. PEGGY IS RUNNING TO HER BADLY PARKED SPORTS CAR WHILE ARTHUR AND FYFFE WALK IN A RELATIVELY CALM WAY (THAT IS, RELATIVE TO HER) TOWARDS THE WAITING CAR AND CHAUFFEUR.

CUT TO THE INTERIOR OF THE SALOON CAR WITH FYFFE AND ARTHUR INSIDE, AND THE CHAUFFEUR JUST GETTING IN. THEY ALL SIT AND WATCH THE PERFORMANCE IN FRONT OF THEM AS PEGGY'S CAR LEAPS AWAY FROM THE KERB, SCREAMS TO A HALT AGAIN AS SHE SUDDENLY REMEMBERS TO LOOK OUT FOR PASSING TRAFFIC, WOBBLER IN TOO HIGH A GEAR TOWARDS THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD AS IF UNDER REMOTE CONTROL AND THEN WITH A KIND OF COMPENSATING

FURY DASHES OFF STILL IN THE MIDDLE ROARING LIKE AN AEROPLANE.

ARTHUR (SOFTLY, TO THE CHAUFFEUR)
All right George, take her away.
But keep your distance.

THE CAR DRAWS AWAY SOFTLY AND PEGGY'S VEHICLE IS LOST TO SIGHT.

CUT TO THE INTERIOR OF ARTHUR'S CAR IN A TRAFFIC JAM, A BACKTRACKING SHOT. ARTHUR AND FYFFE ARE LOOKING DROWSILY OUT OF THEIR WINDOWS.

FYFFE: Here, I saw a gadget the other day, walking stick with a slip-knife and a torch at the end: zuk (PRESSING AN IMAGINARY BUTTON ON HIS OWN WALKING STICK), just like a slip-knife, only it's the size of a sword.

ARTHUR: Heavy though.

FYFFE: Not a bit. Transistor torch, light as a feather.

ARTHUR: We had a scream at the office the other day, you know old Charlie Burns, well he lives next door to a nuclear station, or at least his week-end place, anyway he comes in the office and says, Look, they've developed a pocket-sized atom bomb, here it is (TAKES SMALL OBJECT FROM HIS WAISTCOAT POCKET), unscrew the top (UNSCREWS AN IMAGINARY TOP), drop that in your neighbour's garden and wait for the bang, and he goes like this (AS IF TO DROP IT) and he had us all shouting 'Watch out!'. Crafty old bugger, Charles.

FYFFE: I tell you what, there could have been an impregnable frontier of H bombs sunk in the earth all the way from the Baltic down to the Black Sea, only somebody in Germany spilled it to the press, so Dan Sutton was telling me last year. Well, I remember I had to print it myself. All the others did anyway.

ARTHUR (AS THE CAR DRAWS AWAY)
Be careful, you might get knighted one day for printing the truth.

FYFFE: Well I don't mind telling you the idea's been abroad. If it happens I'll have 'President of the Fyffe Newspaper Holdings' spread across our notepaper in bloody great characters. I only wish we could carry swords.

ARTHUR: You should buy that one you were telling me about.

FYFFE: I did. This is it. (POINTING HIS STICK INTO ARTHUR'S TUMMY) If I like to press a lever under the handle the knife springs out and slits your tummy up. Hand over all your money.

ARTHUR (GAZING MOODILY OUT OF HIS WINDOW) I did, long ago.

FYFFE: You can make a man die of heart failure---no mess---no explosion, with one of those little chemical guns, did you know that? Tiny darts, can't hardly see them.

ARTHUR (LEANING FORWARD TO THE DOOR AS THE CAR DRAWS UP OUTSIDE THE HOUSE) Here it comes. Stand to. Sentries out.

CUT TO A SHOT OF THE CAR AS THEY GET OUT.. TRACK AFTER THEM UP THE STEPS AS PEGGY OPENS THE DOOR AND THEY ALL WALK ACROSS THE FOYER.

PEGGY: God knows I can't help loving my own daughter, and wanting my grandchildren happy, but he won't let me have views about either.

ARTHUR (TAKING OFF HIS HAT AND COAT AGAIN) Barry'll get the injection don't worry. Now just calm down (AS HE GOES TO ONE OF THE INTERCOM SPEAKERS), I'm connecting to Relay.

FYFFE: What the hell's that?

PEGGY (TO FYFFE) Isn't it marvellous?

ARTHUR (INTO THE INTERCOM) Is Pamela anywhere? Pamela! Pamela!

NANCY (OVER THE INTERCOM, AFTER SOME ATMOSPHERIC) That you mum?

ARTHUR: Mum my aunt Fanny, get me Pamela!

PAMELA (OVER THE INTERCOM) Yes, did you want me?

ARTHUR: Is that Pamela?

PAMELA: Yes..

ARTHUR: I'll see you in the Japanese room in just half a jiffy.

HE CLOSSES THE INTERCOM TO OFF BEFORE SHE HAS TIME TO REPLY AND TURNS TO FYFFE.

ARTHUR: You go up to the nursery and give Barry that injection.

FYFFE: What about syringe, cotton wool and all that?

ARTHUR (TO PEGGY) Is it all ready?

PEGGY: Of course it is.

ARTHUR (TO FYFFE) And I'll keep Pamela occupied in the Japanese room, which is as far from the nursery as you can get in this house.

FYFFE (MAKING FOR THE STAIRS) It's as good as done.

ARTHUR (TO PEGGY AS THEY ALSO MOUNT THE STAIRS) I've half a mind to get him arrested, stopping a doctor's treatment-----

A CHILD'S CRYING COMES OVER THE INTERCOM BRIEFLY.

PEGGY: Listen!

CUT TO THE JAPANESE ROOMS WHICH HAS ORIENTAL-TYPE TAPESTRIES ON THE WALL AND NUMBERLESS MATS ON THE FLOOR, WITH SLIDING WOOD SECTIONS TO REPLACE THE DOOR. PAMELA IS WAITING. ARTHUR STRIDES IN WITH PEGGY BEHIND HIM.

ARTHUR: He's got to have that injection! You can see your mother!

PAMELA: But he's had five in nearly a week! Norman says---

ARTHUR: To hell with Norman!

MORE CHILDISH CRYING OVER THE INTERCOM.

ARTHUR: There, you hear that! Are you heartless?

PAMELA: Norman says the injections actually give him 'flu, that's why he's crying, it's terribly dangerous!

FYFFE (OVER THE INTERCOM) Pamela, that's quite untrue-----

PAMELA: Who's that?

ARTHUR: It's Martin. Martin Fyffe.

FYFFE (OVER THE INTERCOM) I gave our little girl half a dozen of these tubes at various times and she didn't even show a rough tongue.

PEGGY: You see?

PAMELA IS FOR SOME REASON
SPEECHLESS.

FYFFE (OVER THE INTERCOM) Come
on where's the syringe?

FYFFE MURMURS AWAY FROM THE SPEAKER
AND THERE IS A CONFUSION OF NANCY'S
AND HIS AND THE CHILDREN'S VOICES.

PEGGY: Thank God for somebody with
sense.

ARTHUR (TO PAMELA) I won't have
that rat-catcher interfering in our
business any more!

PEGGY: Sssh!

ARTHUR (TURNING ON PEGGY) And
what's this idea I heard last
night, giving him three hundred new
rats for his stink-hole in the
basement?

PEGGY: He's on a new discovery---
so she says!

ARTHUR: Like hell he is. He's
found out they've got tails, I
suppose. And you go and give him
a whole rat kingdom. He's got
the basement crawling with them---
I can't go down and get a bottle of
burgundy any more---they seem to be
squeaking for my blood!

THERE ARE CONTINUING SOUNDS FROM
THE NURSERY.

FYFFE (OVER THE INTERCOM, ADDRESS-
ING NANCY) Hold him on his tummy
that's right.

A BRIEF MOMENT OF SILENCE IS FOLL-
OWED BY THE DETERMINED YELL OF A
CHILD IN PAIN.

ARTHUR: For God's sake! The
clumsy bugger's caught him on a
nerve---!

PAMELA: Oh!

CONFUSED SHOUTING. FRANTIC RUNNING
UP THE STAIRS OUTSIDE.

ARTHUR: What the hell?

NORMAN DASHES IN, DRESSED IN HIS
LABORATORY COAT.

NORMAN: Where is he? Barry!
Barry!

PEGGY: It's only the injection,
Norman!

ARTHUR: Caught him on the nerve!

NORMAN (AS IF ABOUT TO WRING PEGGY'S
NECK) Have you been at it again?
I've told you not to touch my child!
You could cripple him for life with
those 'flu injections, he'll get
pneumonia you bitch (MAKING FOR HER)!

PEGGY: Oh!

NORMAN HAS HIS FINGERS ROUND PEGGY'S
THROAT.

ARTHUR: Look out!

PEGGY: Stop him! Stop him!

HER YELLS JOIN THOSE OF THE CHILD
OVER THE INTERCOM.

NANCY (OVER THE INTERCOM) You all
right mum?

NORMAN: I knew you'd do it behind
my back---he's got no more bacteria---
no resistance left, you poor fool---
I told you he's got to be pumped with
lactobacillus for at least a month!

PEGGY: Norman!

IT GROWS INTO A RATHER PATHETIC
STRUGGLE BETWEEN HIM AND ARTHUR.

PAMELA: Norman!

NORMAN (TURNING ON HER) You're
letting them kill my child!

PAMELA (ROUSED) Leave my mother
alone! Leave her alone!

FYFFE (OVER THE INTERCOM) Anything
wrong up there?

NANCY (OVER THE INTERCOM) Are you
all right mum?

PEGGY (TURNING ON THE INTERCOM) Oh
shut up with your mum!

NORMAN (TO PAMELA) What did you
marry me for? She should wear the
ring---that snake!

PAMELA: I'll have to lie down.

FYFFE (OVER THE INTERCOM) Well I'll
be pushing off. Arthur! Arthur!

ARTHUR (ABRUPTLY SWITCHING THE INTER-
COM OFF) That damned box!

NORMAN (DASHING OUT) I'll give him Arthur!

PEGGY (TO PAMELA) You see what he did to me I suppose?

PAMELA: I don't feel well.

ARTHUR: For God's sake stop crying, both of you.

PEGGY: He put his fingers round my throat!

ARTHUR (TO PAMELA) I don't know how you could have married such a bloke---(SUDDENLY PEERING AT THE APPARATUS ON THE WALL) Are we really unplugged, for Relay asxwell I mean?

PEGGY (TO ARTHUR) You should have hit him!

ARTHUR: I was holding him back!

PEGGY: I felt it when I first set eyes on him---a strangler!

ARTHUR: Oh do come off it.

PEGGY: I selected those rats so carefully. There wasn't a blemish on any one of them. (SUDDENLY TURNING ON PAMELA) All right, you can have your bastard child!

PAMELA: Oh! Don't you dare say that!

ARTHUR (TO PAMELA) And don't you shout at your mother! If you want that child you can get out and find a hospital on your own account because I'm not going to help you!

PEGGY: Don't be silly---of course you are!

PAMELA (CRYING) Please oh please!

ARTHUR: Oh no, don't turn the water taps on again!

PAMELA: He's made some big discovery---(THROUGH HER TEARS)---about cyclopic rats---he's produced a whole cyclopic litter. I know you hate him---but he worked all night---there was a premature birth this morning---and nobody to tell his good newsto!

ARTHUR: Oh all right, all right.

PEGGY (TO PAMELA) You're as frightened of him as his rats are!

ARTHUR: I see he does nothing

about bringing your child off. That means he's got no self-respect. How are you going to face Martin Fyffe after this? and all the Fyffe children?

PEGGY: He'll drag us all down, our reputations.

ARTHUR: And that child of yours is going to grow up knowing he doesn't belong. His brother and sister downstairs are going to make that plain. Children can be very cruel.

PAMELA: All they need is love.

ARTHUR: You could quite easily go away for a bit, have the child if you must but give it away, there's a routine for these things, you don't even see the child, they get first-class parents, people who need a bonny baby and can't have one of their own. Can't he see this, that husband of yours? What's the matter with him?

PAMELA: The child's mine.

ARTHUR: You'll regret it all your life, and I'll tell you why, because decent people like Martin Fyffe and Dan Sutton----

PAMELA: Oh please stop talking about Martin Fyffe!

PEGGY: They're going to look at you very funny whenever that child comes into the room, and you're not going to love that child because of it. I know a bit about human nature!

PAMELA (ALMOST TO HERSELF) I wish he'd hate me for it. But he doesn't. I wish he'd beat me up!

ARTHUR: No, he thinks he's sitting pretty. But just wait until he's my age---he'll go through the mill--- and you'll be the one to put him through it, like she (MEANING PEGGY) did with me!

PEGGY: Arthur!

ARTHUR: Every time he doesn't buy you a new dress or his coat stinks of rats you'll tell him he's the father of a bastard----

PAMELA: No I won't.

ARTHUR: He'll live to suspect that all his children are bastards,

even Barry and Rachel----!

PAMELA: I can't bear any more of this---I'll be sick!

SHE TOO DASHES OUT.

ARTHUR: All this'll play into Martin Fyffe's hands, I know it will---!

PEGGY: Oh don't be silly!

ARTHUR: God knows what I mean myself. but I know it. I try to look on the bright side, always keep the talk on a certain level but--- (SUDDENLY TURNING ON HER AGAIN) Do you think I couldn't see what you were up to twenty-eight years ago? Did you think I thought he was interested in my stocks?

PEGGY (HURRYING TO SEE THAT THE INTERCOM IS SWITCHED OFF) Please!

ARTHUR: But you didn't just deceive me---or your first husband---you deceived Martin Fyffe as well! That's why I like him---I knew it when I married you---when I had him as best man! You told him Pamela was mine.

PEGGY: She was! She was!

FYFFE (OUTSIDE IN THE CORRIDOR) Arthur are you there?

PEGGY: It's Martin.

ARTHUR (GOING TO THE JAPANESE ENTRANCE) Come in Martin.

FYFFE WALKS IN STILL IN HIS OVERCOAT AND CARRYING HIS STICK.

FYFFE: Thought I'd break the glad news. Phoned my office just this minute. Dan Sutton's this side of the water!

ARTHUR: Oh, oh!

FYFFE: Invited us all to dinner. And then a club. American ambassador might be there.

PEGGY: I have nothing to wear, so that's out.

ARTHUR: What? You've got a wall full of gowns, and forty-nine pairs of unworn evening shoes!

PEGGY: Not if the ambassador is going to be there.

ARTHUR: I suppose I'll have to fork out a couple of hundred quid for something you'll never wear after the first night. But I'll do it. Because I'm going to give the biggest reception this house has ever seen. There won't be a couple of butlers on hire like last time but a dozen.

FYFFE: He's got a cool four million dollars to get rid of in research grants, believe it or not. Well I'm late.

PEGGY: Thanks so much for helping us Martin. I'm sure the injection did good. (ACCOMPANYING HIM TO THE EXIT)

FYFFE: He's asleep now, poor little chap.

FYFFE GOES.

ARTHUR: Just wait until that reception, I'll show you what I can do. Just for once I'm going to try and present a clean front to the world, a glittering one, because my front is clean, it really is.

PEGGY: Oh please don't go on. You know how it only eats your nerves away. And you're late for the office.

ARTHUR (AS HE GOES TOWARDS THE EXIT) Nerves! I haven't got any left. All I get is blows---one dull blow after the other---sometimes between the eyes, sometimes at the back, and that's why I seem lazy in the evening....

HE YAWNS. BACKTRACK IN FRONT OF THEM AS THEY LEAVE.

PEGGY (STOPPING) I wish we could be a happy family. Couldn't we try? Suppose we made a fuss of Norman? It's only frustration on his part, it makes him wild. Couldn't we buy him a new dinner jacket?

ARTHUR: A new one? He hasn't even got an old one.

PEGGY: And then invite him to meet Dan. And put everything on a proper level. Our son in law, sort of thing. Suppose we all went up to town this week and did some shopping and then a show in the evening? All four of us? We can't let things go on like this!

ARTHUR: Every time I shout I feel a strand going. Some people get relief that way but it makes me feel I'm saying good bye. My father never raised his voice.

PEGGY: Neither ~~did~~ mine.

ARTHUR: What? He never did anything else! Goodbye.

HE STALKS OFF. FADE ON A CLOSE UP OF PEGGY DITHERING, WONDERING AND BLINKINGLY THINKING.

OPEN AGAIN ON PEGGY GOING FROM ROOM TO ROOM IN THE HOUSE, PEEPING INSIDE. SILENCE. TRACK AFTER HER. SHE COMES TO A DOOR ON WHICH SHE KNOCKS LIGHTLY. NO REPLY. SHE OPENS IT GINGERLY AND PEEPS. DARKNESS INSIDE. SHE ADVANCES, PEEPS AGAIN. CUT TO THE INSIDE OF THE ROOM, THE CURTAINS DRAWN, FURNITURE ONLY VISIBLE IN OUTLINES. THE LIGHT FROM THE SLOWLY OPENING DOOR SHOWS CLEAR. PEGGY IS SILHOUETTED. A VOICE FROM A DIVAN IN THE CORNER TURNS OUT TO BE PAMELA'S.

PAMELA: Who is it?

PEGGY ENTERS QUICKLY AND CLOSES THE DOOR WITHOUT A SOUND. WE ARE BACK IN DARKNESS AGAIN.

PEGGY:(IN A WHISPER) It's only me.

PAMELA: Draw the curtains. I had a headache.

PEGGY'S FIGURE DIMLY GOING TO THE CURTAINS. SHE DRAWS THEM, WITH SOME INEVITABLE STICKING AND STUMBLING. PAN OVER TO PAMELA LYING UNDER A BLANKET ON THE DIVAN.

PEGGY: Darling, I want you to tell me who the father is.

PAMELA: I can't.

PEGGY: I'll never say a word. And I'll see everything's all right for Norman. I mean, there won't be any fuss about having it. I mean you can have it. I mean you can't expect our cooperation if you don't give yours.

PAMELA: I can't. I really can't.

PEGGY: Why not?

PAMELA: It's just impossible---
for everybody.

PEGGY: Then we know him.

PAMELA: No.

PEGGY: It's obvious we do.
And I'll find out. So you may
as well say.

PAMELA: I wish you'd let me
alone.

PEGGY: I must know who the father
is. Otherwise Arthur wants you
out of the house.

PAMELA: He's so cruel!

PEGGY: No he isn't. But he has
to know who his enemies are. He
has a big position to keep up,
you must realise that. And the
town's very small when it comes to
gossip.

PAMELA: I've got to think of the
other person too!

PEGGY: Who?

PAMELA: The father. He has a
position too.

PEGGY: Pamela, tell me who he is.
I'm beginning to guess.

PAMELA: Oh---

PEGGY: Tell me Pamela.

PAMELA: It's Martin Fyffe!

PEGGY: Mar---? Martin Fyffe?
Mar---? Oh my God! are you
mad? It isn't true! You
couldn't have done! Pamela! Pamela!

PAMELA: It's him!

PEGGY: But you weren't alone with
him!!

PAMELA: I was at their house
nearly every day!!

PEGGY (BACKING OUT OF THE ROOM)
You fool! You fool! Do you
know what you've done? You've
ruined your father! You've
ruined him! Arthur! (DASHING
OUT INTO THE CORRIDOR) For God's
sake Arthur!

CUT TO THE STREET BELOW AS PEGGY
DASHES TO HER ILL-PARKED SPORTS
CAR. SHE JUMPS IN AND THE CAR

SKIDS, SWERVES, ROARS ITS WAY
TOWARDS ARTHUR'S OFFICE IN THE
MIDDLE OF THE ROAD.

OUT FOR SHOCK TO THE GLITTER OF
A GRAND RECEPTION IN THE JAPANESE
ROOM. THERE ARE GUESTS KNEELING,
LEANING AND HALF-LYING ON THE FLOOR
JAPANESE-STYLE (IF IT IS JAPANESE
STYLE), HOLDING THEIR DRINKS AS
BEST THEY CAN WHILE IN IMMINENT
DANGER OF BEING TRAMPLED ON.
PUSH IN AMONG GUESTS, PAST VEHEMENT-
LY WHITE COLLARS UNDER FLUSHED AND
WELL FED CHEEKS, TAKING IN TALK
WHERE ONLY THE CASUAL TONE IS
RECOGNISED. PAN DOWN TO A YOUNG
MAN SITTING AMONG CUSHIONS AND
WATCHING A MALE TROUSER LEG CLOSE
TO HIS DRINK WITH APPREHENSION AS
HE TRIES TO MAKE POLITE TALK WITH
A YOUNG WOMAN. THE LEG DOES A
QUICK BACKSTEP AMID LAUGHTER FROM
ABOVE AND THE DRINK SPILLS, BRING-
ING THE LEG A VENOMOUS GLARE FROM
THE YOUNG MAN. CONTINUE TRACKING
TO TAKE IN ARTHUR (IN A MALE GROUP),
QUITE A DOZEN BUTLERS AND PEGGY
IN THE MOST STUPENDOUS FULL-LENGTH
GILT AND BROCADE AFFAIR THAT SHOWS
HER TO BE AN ATTRACTIVE---BUT FOR
THE GRACE OF GODS, BEAUTIFUL---
WOMAN IN HER LATE MATURITY. JUST
BEYOND HER, WITH ANOTHER GROUP,
IS NORMAN IN A BRAND-NEW SMOKING
JACKET. PAMELA DRINK IN HAND
SWANS PAST LOOKING FOR A GROUP TO
SETTLE ON. PUSH IN TO HER IN
CLOSE UP. SHE HAS A LOW DRESS
AND AS IN THE CASE OF PEGGY THERE
IS ROBUST ATTRACTION THAT FALLS
SHORT OF BEAUTY BECAUSE OF HER
LIMITED EMOTIONAL OBJECTIVES.
AS SHE PASSES BEHIND NORMAN'S
SHOULDER HE NOTICES HER AND ADDRESS-
ES HER, HIS MOUTH CLOSE TO HER EAR.

NORMAN: He wants a talk with me.

PAMELA:: Who?

NORMAN: Your father.

PAMELA: Don't shout at each other
for God's sake---not tonight.

NORMAN: I'll tell him I want
that child!

PAMELA: You want Fyffe's child?
You're an idiot, pervert!

NORMAN: The idea excites me.

PAMELA (PASSING ON) Every idea
excites you!

NORMAN LEANS TO THE WOMAN STANDING

NEXT TO HIM AND ADDRESSES AN
'EXCUSE ME I HAVE TO SLIP DOWN-
STAIRS' SORT OF REMARK TO HER,
THEN MOVES TOWARDS THE JAPANESE
EXIT. TAKE IN ARTHUR EYEING HIM.
AFTER SOME JUDICIOUS NODS AND SMILES
TO THE REMARKS HE ISN'T HEARING,
ARTHUR MOVES TOWARDS THE EXIT TOO.

CUT TO ARTHUR AND NORMAN WALKING
DOWN THE STAIRS IN SILENCE.

CUT TO THEM ENTERING THE SITTING
ROOM DOWNSTAIRS. ARTHUR GOES
STRAIGHT TO THE SIDEBOARD AND
POURS TWO DRINKS WHILE NORMAN SITS
DOWN.

ARTHUR (TAKING NORMAN'S DRINK
ACROSS TO HIM) Here, get this
down you. Handsome smoking
jacket.

NORMAN (TAKING THE DRINK) Hand-
some price too.

ARTHUR (ALMOST TO HIMSELF AS HE
PREPARES TO SIT DOWN) Still you
didn't pay for it. (SINKING INTO
THE ARMCHAIR) Ah! Thank God for
chairs. My heart goes out to the
Japanese. Oo! (NURSING HIS ANKLES)
Standing in the same spot for half
an hour isn't my idea of fun.

NORMAN: When is he due?

ARTHUR: Who?

NORMAN: Well there's only one man
of real substance coming tonight.
Compared with him you're all men of
straw.

ARTHUR (SOURLY) Ha, ha, ha.
You mean Dan Sutton.

NORMAN: That's right. The
American pharmaceutical industry.
Generous of you to let me stay and
meet him. I bet he doesn't even
know you've got a son in law.

ARTHUR: Well you bet wrong.
He knows Pam's married.

NORMAN: That's different.

ARTHUR: Listen Norman, Peggys
been having sleepless nights over
this child.

NORMAN: Which child?

ARTHUR: The one Pamela's having.
I'll tell you the facts. We're
scared of the possible outcome.

I mean, everybody's going to know it's not yours. I mean you can't want people to know you've been fooled.

NORMAN: Why not?

ARTHUR: You may think so now but people are going to---well, I won't say laugh at you but anyway, that's not the point, but the chap who gave her this child, I mean he's always in the world to tell the story----

NORMAN: Martin Fyffe? He's not going to breathe a word, surely?

ARTHUR: Good God, you know who it is! You know---? Good God! And who told you about it, in the Lord's name?

NORMAN: Pamela of course. She tells me everything. If she kept anything secret she'd have to solve her own problems and she couldn't do that.

ARTHUR: And aren't you jealous?

NORMAN: No.

ARTHUR: I mean, you're not even wild?---you don't want to wring his neck---you don't hate him because he's rich and influential and dirtied your bed?

NORMAN: He didn't dirty anything. He gave her a child. And I want the child.

ARTHUR: You're lying of course.

NORMAN: Why should I lie? My attitude is let's have everything in the open, let's all know who's sleeping with who.

ARTHUR: You surely don't think Martin'd stand for that, do you?

NORMAN: All right then---let's keep quiet about it: so we're back where we started---a third child in the family, and mine. So where's the worry?

ARTHUR: The worry's him---every time I look at that child I'm going to think of Fyffe---oozing his way into my family---sleeping with my daughter when he's nearly twice her age---the dirty, two-faced slime! And it doesn't worry you! Good God, where's your character?

NORMAN: My character's in my work!

CUT TO THE JAPANESE PARTY UPSTAIRS AND PUSH IN TO PEGGY'S GROUP WHO ARE SMILE- MAKING. LOUD VOICES COME OVER THE INTERCOM.

ARTHUR (OVER THE INTERCOM) Character in your work? Your work?

NORMAN (OVER THE INTERCOM) Yes my work!

THE PARTY BEGINS TO REGISTER AWARENESS OF THE VOICES . PEOPLE LOOK ROUND WHILE CONTINUING TO TALK TO EACH OTHER. CLOSE UP OF PEGGY WITH CONCERN AND IRRITATION GNAWING THROUGH HER SMILE.

ARTHUR (OVER THE INTERCOM) I didn't know you did any work!

PEGGY BREAKS FREE OF HER GROUP, UPSETTING A FEW DRINKS (AND THEIR OWNERS). SHE DASHES THROUGH THE JAPANESE EXIT AND WE TRACK AFTER HER TO THE NEAREST INTERCOM APPARATUS IN THE CORRIDOR OUTSIDE.

NORMAN (OVER THE INTERCOM) Listen I've had just about enough---

PEGGY (TEARING AT THE SWITCHES AND SOMEHOW ACHIEVING RELAY) Arthur! Arthur! Are you shouting?

SHOT OF ASTONISHED GUESTS CLUSTERED IN THE JAPANESE EXIT STARING AT PEGGY AS SHE TALKS TO THE WALL.

ARTHUR (OVER THE INTERCOM) Damn that bloody apparatus! (BAWLING DOWN IT) What do you want now?

PEGGY: Stop shouting!

ARTHUR (OVER THE INTERCOM) I'll unplug if you don't go away, I'll cut the master cable!

PEGGY: Oh please don't do that. I'm only thinking of the children.

ARTHUR (OVER THE INTERCOM) Oh yes, I'm sorry. (AS HE DRIFTS AWAY FROM THE INTERCOM) We've got to keep our voices down.

CUT BACK TO THE SITTING ROOM WITH ARTHUR SITTING DOWN AGAIN.

NORMAN: It was you who started shouting not me.

ARTHUR: Well anyway, what's your attitude about all this free love sort of thing.

NORMAN: My attitude is this: there are some people who do all right together in marriage, like you and Peggy, but the rest of us, who marry badly, just have to howl in the woods like wolves and get what they can by way of love.

ARTHUR: We're men not wolves, though sometimes one wouldn't think so.

NORMAN: I like the danger, the unpredictability of having someone else's child---everything being mixed up in a cauldron of impulses---do you see what I mean?---a hulking great business man getting into my marriage bed with his boots on---!

ARTHUR: Boots on? (HOLDING HIS HEAD) I only have to talk to you for a couple of minutes and I feel off keel.

NORMAN: Partly it's because I'm so poor. You see---!

ARTHUR: All right all right, we don't want that bloody class struggle stuff, not at cocktail time! Anyway your dad's chairman of one of the biggest finance companies in the land. Only he happens to have disowned you.

NORMAN: What I mean is having no money prepares you for the worst in life---no lines of escape---the sheer emptiness of poverty paralyses you--- I'm sure that's how a mouse feels when a snake sucks his head into his mouth---have you ever seen that?---

ARTHUR: Listen, let me enjoy this drink will you?

NORMAN: The sucking goes on with a terrible relentless calm, until finally hind legs and tail disappear.

ARTHUR: All I ask is don't start distressing people tonight. That's all I really wanted to say. Let's have a holiday. Just this once.

PEGGY (OVER THE INTERCOM) Arthur!

ARTHUR (GOING TO THE WALL) Yes?

PEGGY (OVER THE INTERCOM) Martin's just arrived.

ARTHUR: Oh God! (TO NORMAN:) It's Fyffe! (TO PEGGY:) Give him a drink, I'll be up. I'd like to spit in his face!

CUT TO PEGGY UPSTAIRS AT THE CORRIDOR WALL SHOWING HORROR AT ARTHUR'S

REMARK..

CUT BACK TO ARTHUR AND NORMAN.

ARTHUR (DRIFTING AWAY FROM THE INTERCOM APPARATUS) It seems all my life when I go to bed I pull back the sheets and find it full of worms. I pull the sheets back so hopefully and then----

NORMAN: Learn to live with them. You're going to live with them for thousands, millions of years anyway, when your body has returned to dust.

ARTHUR: Trust you to put that point of view.

NORMAN: Every man makes his own worms. In the last war you did a bunk and found yourself useful war work in the United States and that's how you met Dan Sutton and became a rich man. Now all that's worms. And you expect to find a clean bed.

ARTHUR: You'll talk about my war-time appointment once too often----

NORMAN: You looked down your nose at Vichy France in the last war but you've made a Vichy England---you sold out to the Americans like the Vichy people did to the Germans---!

ARTHUR: Listen I---!

NORMAN: Look at your guest tonight, the biggest pharmaceutical bully in the world---!

ARTHUR: I thought you'd want a go at him!

NORMAN: He bolsters up your world, that's why you love him! Otherwise you'd have to think up some new ideas. I'll tell you something, you don't want people big on this side of the Atlantic, it doesn't suit you any more, you keep England static, you've been holding back gifted people for twenty years---!

ARTHUR (WITH A HAUNTED GLANCE AT THE INTERCOM) Now shut up!

CUT BACK TO THE JAPANESE PARTY WITH REALLY ALARMED GLANCES BEING THROWN ABOUT THE CEILING BY ALL THE GUESTS AS NORMAN'S SPEECH CONTINUES. MARTIN FYFFE IS STANDING WITH PEGGY AND IS SCOWLING OPENLY WHILE SHE IS TRYING TO DO A KIND OF HOPELESS CAMOUFLAGING CHARM.

NORMAN (OVER THE INTERCOM) I'm

one of the gifted ones so I know!

ARTHUR (OVER THE INTERCOM) You!
You're good for female lab assist-
ants, getting between their legs!

A GUEST:: Oh Lord!

NORMAN (OVER THE INTERCOM) Why
you---!

ARTHUR (OVER THE INTERCOM) Look
out!

NORMAN (OVER THE INTERCOM) Ouff!

ARTHUR (OVER THE INTERCOM) Stop
for God's sake!

THUDS AND ATMOSPHERIC SHOW THAT THEY
ARE HAVING A SCRAP. PEGGY'S CAM-
OUBLAGE FALLS IN A FLASH AND MARTIN
FYFFE WITH A LOOK OF DETERMINATION
STRIDES BETWEEN THE GUESTS TO THE
JAPANESE EXIT.

CUT BACK TO THE SITTING ROOM WHERE
THE SCRAP IS GOING ON WITH CUSIONS.
THEY ARE BOTH HOPELESS AT PHYSICAL
AGGRESSION. THEY TAKE LITTLE DABS
AT EACH OTHER WITH THEIR HANDS AND
YELL AT THE LOOK OF THE DAB BEFORE
ANYTHING PHYSICAL HAS REACHED THEM.
IN THE MIDDLE OF ALL THIS MARTIN
FYFFE ENTERS.

FYFFE (TO NORMAN) Put your hands
down man!

ARTHUR (ALSO TO NORMAN) And get out
of my house!

NORMAN: And leave you with this
chap's babies?

FYFFE: What's that? What?

HE IS TOO STAGGERED TO OFFER IMMED-
IATE ASSAULT.

PEGGY DASHES IN, HAVING TROUBLE WITH
THE TAIL OF HER KIMONO.

PEGGY: Oh God!

NORMAN (TURNING ON HER) And thanks
for the dinner jacket! Oh you've
got what money can buy but nothing
else!

PEGGY (TO MARTIN FYFFE) I shouldn't
have left them alone!

NORMAN (TEARING OFF HIS DINNER JACK-
ET AND FLINGING IT HAPHAZARDLY TO-
WARDS THEM) Go to hell the lot of
you!

HE STALKS OUT.

FYFFE: I'd have screwed his neck if he'd gone on.

PEGGY. (PICKING UP THE SMOKING JACKET) And where's he off to, not upstairs I hope!

ARTHUR: I threw him out of the house!

PEGGY: Don't be silly! Dan Sutton's just arrived.

ARTHUR: What? Why the hell didn't you say so?

PEGGY: I've just said so.

FYFFE. (HURRYING TO THE SIDEBOARD) Anyway, slip upstairs and keep him in talk Peggy. I'll look after Arthur.

PEGGY: Don't be long!

SHE LEAVES AND FYFFE HANDS ARTHUR, WHO IS SMOOTHING HIS HAIR AND BRUSHING HIMSELF OFF, A DRINK.

FYFFE: Here. I told you not to let your son in law in for this do, didn't I? He drinks a lemonade and his liver runs riot.

ARTHUR: I'd like to take a fist-full of Dr Blore's red pills and stuff them down my throat and say good bye and damn the lot of you!

FYFFE: Oh shut up.

ARTHUR: Well we're all in it now, including you. He'll go and shoot his mouth off.

FYFFE: About what?

ARTHUR: Oh come on, don't try and look innocent, it makes you ugly. Listen, I never thought you'd pull a dirty trick like that. I wouldn't lay a hand on your wife, you---!

FYFFE: Suppose she laid a hand on you?

ARTHUR: You're not telling me---!

FYFFE: That's exactly how it was. And I knew she wasn't really yours, not really your daughter---if she'd been yours in blood I'd have laid off, insisted, struggled, that sort of thing. But I knew she was Harley Johnson's child.

ARTHUR: Harley---?

FYFFE: And I never did care for Harley Johnson. He's like his supermarkets---all strip lighting, show. Pam didn't take after him thank God.

ARTHUR: Well. You seem to know more about me than I know myself. (IN AN OUTBURST) All right, you've got me by the curlies! You're inside my bed again---

FYFFE: Again?

ARTHUR: I don't know daughters from wives---children from children's children---who's they all are God alone knows and I don't care any more. Perhaps he's right, that rat-catcher in the basement---we've got to rub our hands in it, have the gore up to our elbows and revel in it like he does! But I can't, I know that. I wish I could stop caring. I like to settle down by the fire at night with a book and the wife sitting on the other side---some hope!

FYFFE: Listen (GRASPING ARTHUR'S ARM ROUGHLY) you use me to do your dirty work, I sack your dud employees for you, I break their hearts, I keep them on a string for months until they're cringing, all for you and that money-spending wife of yours! You'd tear half this town to make a carpark if you had your way, you even got me to argue the case with the local council, while your wife was advocating a nice little recreation ground in the same place! You don't give a damn who's in the way as long as you aren't there to see him pushed over! Well that's all right. I don't give a damn either! But don't be moral about it. Don't go round whining for peace all the time, when you haven't got it inside you. I sat up half the night and she called for more at dawn, and I cried when that second lot was over!

ARTHUR (GAPING AT HIM): What? I think you must have a cruel mind or something, to say that to me, about my own daughter---not just forget the whole thing and say you're a swine and leave it at that!

FYFFE: You can't face a thing can you? And that's the kind of man a woman weaves her little plots round. I'll tell you something about women----

ARTHUR: I wish to God people'd

stop telling me things and just get on with the pleasureable business of living. I mean, it is pleasureable. A nice drink--- there's Dan Sutton upstairs---we've got a dinner party later this evening---I don't know...I've a constitution meant for another age, I suppose.

EYFEE: Yes I don't think! I'd like to have seen you in the age of Britain's commercial empire, with Victoria and her German prince setting the pace, you'd have been a tank of lechery and sloth! Why, you forget to answer your letters, you make a decision one minute and fail to check it the next---!

ARTHUR (DRIFTING OFF) I'll go up and find Dan, he's normal at least---

EYFEE: What---Dan Sutton?

ARTHUR (STOPPING) Oh don't destroy that illusion for me, for God's sake.

EYFEE (JOINING HIM) Never mind Arthur, we all love you.

BACKTRACK IN FRONT OF THEM AS THEY WALK TOWARDS THE STAIRS.

ARTHUR: I wouldn't mind if a certain tone could be kept up, do you know what I mean, kidding apart? He wants your child by his own wife, he wants it, says he likes the variety! Now surely to God that's affectation isn't it?

EMFFE: No---because he can't give Pamela what she wants and a man like me can. He's out to wreck where he can't build--- she as good as told me Arthur, it was pitiful, she said---!

ARTHUR: All right, don't go into details! You know, I'll never be able to think the same of you again. I used to like you, I mean I felt safe with you, I thought you kept a certain sort of skeleton order in your life, with your family and all that, I thought you applied a sort of French intelligence on these subjects and kept your mistresses away from your hearth and home.

EYFEE: You say that once a year. The fact is you invent me for your own purposes and blame me when the picture doesn't fit. You've lost faith in me at least a dozen times

before.

CUT TO THE JAPANESE PARTY WITH THE GUESTS IN MORE BLEARY AND UNCARING POSSESSION OF THE FLOOR-SPACE THAN BEFORE. PUSH IN TO THE TALL DAN SUTTON WHO HAS JUST ARRIVED. HAVING CONCENTRATED FOR FORTY OR FIFTY YEARS ON THE EXTERNAL MAN, DAN SUTTON HAS LEFT HIMSELF WITH VERY LITTLE ELSE. HE GLITTERS AND GLEAMS WITH THE FALSE MAGNANIMITY OF ABSOLUTE HEARTLESS POWER.. NOTHING HE SAYS OR DOES FAILS TO SUGGEST TOO MUCH MONEY. HE IS BEING LED ROUND THE ROOM BY PEGGY FOR INTRODUCTIONS, AND HIS EXTERNAL MAN IS WORKING OVERTIME. SHE USHERS HIM ROUND LIKE THE CROWN JEWELS. PUSH IN SLOWLY AS HE SHAKES HANDS MORE FAMILIARLY WITH PAMELA.

SUTTON: Why hullo there Pamela!
A long time eh?

PAMELA: Would you like to see the children? They're waiting up specially.

SUTTON: Why that's a compliment. I'd like nothing better. (TO PEGGY:) Is Arthur around?

PEGGY: He's on the wire to New York. He won't be a moment.

SUTTON: Oh yes.

CUT TO THE NURSERY WITH PAMELA. COMING IN AND DAN SUTTON BEHIND HER. BARRY AND RACHEL ARE IN PYJAMAS AND DRESSING GOWNS, ROMPING ROUND A PLACID CENTRE---NANCY.

NANCY: Hullo mum.

PAMELA: This is Mr Sutton Nancy.

NANCY (NOT EVEN GETTING UP) Hullo.

SUTTON: I remember Nancy. Well look there, how are you two charming people?

BARRY AND RACHEL STAND AND LOOK UP AT HIM WITH FLATTERED DELIGHT, WITH THEIR MOTHER FIXING THEIR SMILES SO TO SPEAK FROM JUST BEHIND DAN SUTTON'S SHOULDER. SUTTON ADVANCES AND SITS DOWN ON ONE OF THE CHILDREN'S BEDS: HE CLEARLY HAS CHILDREN OF HIS OWN AND FOR THE MOMENT THE MENACE OF POWER HAS SLIPPED FROM HIM. THE CHILDREN ARE QUITE UNINTIMIDATED BY HIM AND GO TO HIS KNEES PLAYFULLY.

SUTTON (TO PAMELA) Don't you think

it's about time I met the man responsible for these folk?

PAMELA: The man----responsible?

SUTTON (SPARRING WITH BARRY) Your husband.

PAMELA: Oh, yes I'll get him. I didn't know you hadn't met. I'll call him on the intercom.

SHE GOES OVER TO THE WALL WHERE THE SPEAKER LIES.

SUTTON (WATCHING HER) The what?

PAMELA: The intercom (SWITCHING TO RELAY). It connects us up to all the rooms. Norman! Norman! Can you come to the lower sitting room!

CUT TO THE JAPANESE PARTY WITH GUESTS LOOKING UP WITH RENEWED ASTONISHMENT AS PAMELA'S VOICE ECHOES ABOVE THEIR HEADS: 'Norman! Where are you? Norman!' PUSH IN AS ARTHUR COMES IN WITH MARTIN FYFEE AND THEY BOTH SCOWLINGLY ACKNOWLEDGE THE EXISTENCE OF THE INTERCOM. PEGGY ZOOMS UP TO THEM WITH FULL CHARM-POWER WHICH FAILS TO WORK ON THEM.

CUT BACK TO THE NURSERY WHERE PAMELA IS STILL AT THE WALL.

PAMELA: Are you in the lab Norman?

SUTTON: You know, a friend of mine did that, kept him awake all night---you know, the kids snoring and that---and he tore the whole lot out of the walls.

PAMELA: We find it useful for calling each other.

SUTTON: It's a big house isn't it?

PAMELA (TO THE CHILDREN) Now jump into bed. (TO SUTTON:) He's probably downstairs with his rats.

~~SUTTON~~: Who?

PAMELA: My husband.

SUTTON (WITH SOME HORROR) You have rats?

PAMELA (AS SHE AND NANCY TUCK THE CHILDREN IN) Oh no! He's a geneticist.

SUTTON: Your husband? A

geneticist?! Now nobody told me that.

PAMELA: I'll find him for you at once.

SHE RETURNS TO THE WALL.

PAMELA: Norman, Norman, are you---?

NORMAN (OVER THE INTERCOM) All right, all right, I heard you the first time!

SUTTON REGISTERS ASTONISHMENT.

CUT TO THE JAPANESE PARTY WITH THE GUESTS, INCLUDING ARTHUR AND MARTIN, CRANING UPWARDS AS NORMAN'S VOICE ECHOES ACROSS THE CEILING.

NORMAN: I'm down in the rat kingdom!

CUT BACK TO THE NURSERY. PAMELA HAS GONE OFF. NANCY IS SEEING TO THE CHILDREN. CLOSE UP OF DAN SUTTON IN MUSING CALCULATION.

CUT TO THE DARK STAIRCASE LEADING DOWN TO THE RAT KINGDOM IN THE BASEMENT. PAMELA IS ON HER WAY DOWN HURRIEDLY. CUT TO THE LABORATORY WITH HER COMING IN. NORMAN IS WORKING AT THE BENCH, WITH THE NUMBERLESS CAGES BEFORE HIM.

PAMELA: Oh no! you haven't gone back into that bloodstained outfit have you? Why do you always mess things up? He's asking to see you!

NORMAN: I've just had a row with him!

PAMELA: What? He hasn't met you!

NORMAN: What are you talking about?

PAMELA: Dan Sutton. He's in the nursery! He's wanting to meet you.

NORMAN: Oh... (TURNING HIS FULL ATTENTION ON HER) You've got quite a flush. Power means such a lot to you doesn't it? And what do I want to see him for? That's the question.

PAMELA: To speak to somebody. To be human.

NORMAN: Oh come off it, are you really so struck on the human creature? I never noticed it! If Dan Sutton was a tramp or even a clerk at your father's office do you think you'd page me all over the house to meet him? You're interested in power, power---like your mother and father! It sticks out of your eyes and ears, it's all you talk! I want to meet people, not pharmaceutical interests! My rats have more humanity than you lot. At least they don't smell out how much power a chap's got before they lick his hand.

PAMELA: All right don't see him! And I'll be scrounging your coffee money tomorrow morning like I always do, draining my blood!

NORMAN: What's coffee money got to do with me meeting Dan Sutton? (GAZING AT HER FOR A MOMENT) Pamela, what's in your mind, your humanity apart?

PAMELA: He was amazed to hear you were a geneticist, that's all.

NORMAN: You told him?

PAMELA: Yes.

NORMAN: And he was amazed?

PAMELA: He said 'Oh nobody told me!' He seemed fascinated. He's got millions of dollars to dispose of in research grants (NORMAN SHOWS QUICKENED ATTENTION). Norman, tell him about your cyclopic rats!

NORMAN: The trouble with me is I can work as long as you like but I can't stand talking about it. You see, Pamela, I see death everywhere---I always have done. And I can't stand talking as if the work was life, when I know it's all death! If I see somebody young I think of them as old. And that's why I come down here. That's why I'm a scientist! The moment they plonked a dead rabbit down in front of me at school I was fascinated: not because it was a rabbit but because it was dead. When I saw that rabbit as a circulation system governed by a heart and a liver and a couple of kidneys I was happy! That's why I work, to get to that happiness all the time!

PAMELA: Are all these poor rats dead for you then?

NORMAN: I see them as their diseases, yes.

PAMELA: And what about me, and your children, we're bodies too--- we have hearts and kidneys and livers---!

NORMAN: I'm not happy with you. I just jog along. I'm happy down here.

PAMELA: And it shows in your eyes.

NORMAN: The death, you mean.

PAMELA: I shouldn't say it but it does! As if---you've never really seen the light, or wanted it! And what's it got to do with getting a job?

NORMAN: That I horrify people when I talk about my work. Your father's shocked. My father was. So what's the use?

PAMELA: But Sutton's in the same line of business, that's the use! Isn't he in death, like you---in torture? And he's got millions of dollars to help you go on dying and torturing!

NORMAN: You're talking almost intelligently.

PAMELA: All you do is play with these little animals. You torture them and use their love for each other for your horrible little experiments, just like the nazis used to do with people! If you can watch an animal suffering every day and plant tumours in them and cut their wombs out you could do it to human beings too!

NORMAN: Oh don't start crying for God's sake!

PAMELA: If people knew what you were really like they wouldn't place you higher than a dog.

NORMAN: But instead they use me! And they place me higher than business men and politicians! Because they see the death too! Yes by God! They need me as much as I need them! Perhaps more!

HE GETS UP.

PAMELA: Where are you going?

HE WALKS UP THE STAIRS, TOO OCCUPIED WITH HIS THOUGHTS TO HEAR HER. TRACK AFTER HIM TO THE STAIRS AND STOP. HE DISAPPEARS AT THE TOP.

PAMELA: Norman, your smoking jacket!

SHE APPEARS AT THE SIDE OF THE FRAME. SHE LEANS AGAINST THE WALL, GAZING AFTER HIM UP THE STAIRS.

MIX THROUGH TO THE PARTY. ARTHUR AND MARTIN HAVE NOW MET UP WITH DAN SUTTON AND THE THREE OF THEM ARE STANDING TOGETHER, LAUGHING AND TOUCHING GLASSES. MARTIN AND ARTHUR TEND TO BEHAVE LIKE OVER-EXCITED SCHOOLBOYS. PAN ACROSS THE ROOM TO THE ENTRANCE AND STAY THERE UNTIL NORMAN COMES IN SLOWLY, STILL DRESSED IN HIS GORY LAB COAT. GUESTS TURN, AND PEGGY, WHO IS STANDING NEAR BY, CATCHES SIGHT OF HIM AND GOES OVER TO HIM WITH DELIBERATE CHARM, MEANING TO OOZE HIM OUT AGAIN. BUT HE WALKS PAST HER AND DOESN'T EVEN GLANCE IN HER DIRECTION. HIS EYES ARE FIXED ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ROOM WHERE DAN SUTTON IS PRACTISING RATHER BORED BONHOMIE. TRACK AFTER NORMAN. MARTIN FYFFE IS THE FIRST TO SEE HIM AND ADVANCES TOWARDS HIM WITH WHAT HE THINKS IS CHARM ON HIS FACE BUT IT IS AN UNHEALTHILY SET GRIN.

FYFFE: Well Norman---!

NORMAN (UNDER HIS BREATH) Go to hell!

FYFFE STARES AFTER HIM AS HE CONTINUES TO ADVANCE TOWARDS SUTTON. ARTHUR TOO CATCHES SIGHT OF HIM AND AFTER APPEARING TO LOSE THE LOWER PART OF HIS FACE FOR A MOMENT HE RECOVERS FOR WHAT IS TO HIM, DESPITE HIMSELF, THE REAL PLEASURE OF INTRODUCING HIS SON IN LAW TO SUTTON. HE TAKES SUTTON'S ARM CONFIDENTIALLY AND WE SEE NORMAN AND SUTTON SHAKE HANDS.

CUT TO A CLOSE UP OF MARTIN FYFFE AND PEGGY IN HISSING CONVERSATION.

PEGGY: You should have ~~have~~ torn that coat off his back!

FYFFE: May I say that of the two men you married I can never decide which is the bigger bloody fool!

HE STALKS OFF BUT RETURNS.

FYFFE: I told him to keep the bat-catcher out of here tonight!

HE STALKS OFF AGAIN.

CUT TO THE BASEMENT LABORATORY WHERE PAMELA STRODLIS TO NORMAN'S WORKBENCH AND SITS DOWN. SHE GAZES BEFORE HER IN THOUGHT. AND APPARENTLY THE THOUGHT IS PLEASANT.

CUT BACK TO THE JAPANESE PARTY. PUSH THROUGH TO DAN SUTTON, ARTHUR AND NORMAN. SUTTON AND NORMAN ARE IN CLOSE AND EARNEST CONVERSATION WHILE ARTHUR IS RATHER OUT OF IT.

ARTHUR: Well---I'll leave you two to talk shop! Bit above my head!

AFTER GIVING NORMAN A CONFIDENTIAL FAMILY TWINKLE HE SLIPS AWAY ALMOST UNNOTICED. PEGGY CLUTCHES HIM AS SOON AS HE IS FREE. PUSH IN TO MORE HISSING CONVERSATION.

PEGGY: Don't leave them alone!

ARTHUR: He's offered him a job!

PEGGY: What? Oh! Oh I see!

ARTHUR: It was dead easy. All Norman had to say was something about cyclopic rats. Said he'd invented one! You know that mad way he's got of talking. Well apparently that's how scientists talk, if the look in Dan Sutton's eye was anything to go by. And you needn't think a cyclopic rat's a rat with one eye, it's something we wouldn't even notice. At least, they're talking complete gibberish as far as I'm concerned.

PEGGY: But don't you see darling, it means Norman really is a scientist, if Dan talks to him and you don't understand a word? That's what science is! (RADIANTLY TURNING) Pamela! Pamela!

SHE REELS HER WAY TOWARDS THE OTHER EXIT.

MIX THROUGH TO THE STAIRCASE LEADING DOWN TO THE BASEMENT RAT KINGDOM. MARTIN FYFFE HURRIES DOWN IT. CUT TO THE LAB BELOW WITH PAMELA STILL SITTING THERE. MARTIN FYFFE COMES IN, CATCHES SIGHT OF HER.

FYFFE: Oh there you are, I've been looking for you everywhere. What the hell does he do that for---dress like a butcher? He's up there now, talking to Dan Sutton! He looks like a chap just in from the slaughter yard! You'll have to come up and stop him!

PAMELA: Dan Sutton wanted to see him!

FYFFE: He did? Did he by God?
OH! (SUBSIDING ON TO A BENCH)
Let's hope for the best. By the way Norman wants my child.

PAMELA: That's right.

FYFFE: And who the devil told them it was mine?

PAMELA: I did.

FYFFE: Why?

PAMELA: I can't remember. We're always playing sort of chess in this house. It seemed a good move. I don't know why.

FYFFE: Your father gave me one of his disappointed-dog looks. I've had that look about twenty times in my life. He'll forget. A man of pleasure never retains anything, he's thinking of the toast and caviar he's going to have when he pops up to bed, not that it'd be real caviar, if I know your father's tastes.

PAMELA: Does he know yours?

FYFFE: Of course not. He doesn't know I'm in love with you! He thinks it was just a night out!

PAMELA: Don't talk like that!

FYFFE: You remember my offer?

PAMELA: Yes and the answer's no.

FYFFE: But you need a man like me! I'm like a rock. You need an older man. You can get right away from Norman. From all this whining for pocket money every day. Did you get the fifty quid?

PAMELA: I found it in my purse.

FYFFE: I thought it might make you say no, and you have said no. But just the same I couldn't stand the idea of you being without cash. I know we've hit something off, you and me, Pam. All the husbands and wives in the world haven't got what you and I give each other.

HE GETS UP AND COMES TOWARDS HER.
SHE TOO GETS UP BUT SELF-PROTECTIVELY.

PAMELA: What about the child?

FYFFE: I told you I'll start a damned scandal if you like and tell Jean everything, and then I'll take the child---!

PAMELA: You say 'damned scandal'--- you know it makes you angry, the thought of the child.

FYFFE: No it doesn't. But what's the good of wrecking my wife and getting all those wets upstairs talking---for what exactly? And apart from that, your father's spending above his income, or she is---- you'll need every bit of help you can get. They're the two most reckless creatures alive, you know that. She'll sign a cheque for ten quid to save herself a walk up the road and then spend three hours substituting sixty-watt' bulbs for a hundred-and-twenty, because it saves sixpence a week.

PAMELA: Yes all right!

FYFFE: They've been swindled out of thousands while my back was turned. God knows why I ever took their affairs on. This house'll be on the market soon if they're not careful. I've got my own assets to think about.

PAMELA: That's their charm, to be reckless. Or in your case Peggy's charm.

FYFFE (SEARCHING HER FACE) What do you mean by that?

PAMELA: Oh leave me alone please, I don't want to think, I'd like to try and patch this up, between Norman and me. It's hopeless I know. Perhaps it's all finished...

FYFFE: This house is your responsibility as well. The cost of upkeep is getting bigger every week----!

PAMELA (WALKING OFF) Oh please!

FYFFE (PURSUING HER) And I'm not going to keep it all together just to----!

PAMELA: Shut up!

FYFFE (STOPPING HER ON HER WAY TO THE STAIRCASE) Look I gave you an offer, damn you, a flat and an income in any town you like, and a job---- top executive, where you can throw your weight/about----and you look down your nose at it!

PAMELA: I said no, that's all!

FYFFE: What did you mean just now about your mother?

PAMELA (BREAKING FREE AS HE TRIED TO TOUCH HER) Don't!

FYFFE: Pamela!

SHE ESCAPES AND RUNS UP THE STAIRS.

PAMELA: Norman! Norman!

CUT TO THE JAPANESE PARTY AND PUSH IN TO SUTTON AS HE DRAWS ARTHUR AWAY FROM ANOTHER GROUP FOR A CONFIDENTIAL CHAT.

SUTTON: Well Arthur I hope something comes of this., I'm not promising anything but I'd like to see your son in law fixed up.

ARTHUR: Yes, quite, ex⁷actly.

SUTTON: Of course it's a shrewd plan (DIGGING HIM PLAYFULLY, WITH A GLANCE ROUND TO SEE IF THEY CAN BE HEARD) to get you back in the States. Why, if you and Peg came over and joined your son in law----

ARTHUR: What? you've found him a job over there?

SUTTON: Well it's a possibility. And if you came over we could use your talents too.

ARTHUR: That just means you want to buy me out. All right, I'm not unwilling but I become somebody's carpet don't I, to wipe his feet on? At least I'm independent now but I won't be when I'm took-over.

SUTTON: Depends how you look at it. You substitute security---- and about twice the income---for this state of very risky independence.

ARTHUR: I'd need a big incentive to turn myself into a carpet.

SUTTON: We might give you that. I'll start by fixing up your son in law with the kind of job even you wouldn't be ashamed to have. How's that?

ARTHUR: That bit's all right. But you'll have to talk the rest over with Martin Fyffe.

SUTTON: I already have.

Listen Arthur, why don't you do a quick trip over to the States next month, it needn't be with Peggy, anyway I hear she doesn't like flying. As a matter of fact she was telling me about a trip she made across to New York in 1938---

ARTHUR: Oh yes?

SUTTON: On the Queen Mary.

ARTHUR: On the Queen Mary, in 1938?

SUTTON: That's right. Listen, I want to tell you something, Arthur, every time your wife talks about the States her eyes light up----

ARTHUR: They do?

SUTTON: And so do yours!

ARTHUR: But I feel English Dan!

SUTTON: Feel English in the States! Lots of people do. In fact, as far as I can see there are more real genuine English people like they used to be in the States than there are over here.

ARTHUR: Her eyes lit up did they?

ARTHUR BEGINS TO MOVE AWAY, WITH SOMETHING CLEARLY ON HIS MIND.

SUTTON: What's that?

ARTHUR: Did you say 1938?

SUTTON: 1938?

ARTHUR WALKS OFF WITH THOUGHTFUL DETERMINATION. CLOSE UP OF SUTTON STARING AFTER HIM.

CUT TO PEGGY LOOKING FOR PAMELA ON THE STAIRS. SHE HURRIES DOWN AND CALLS INTO THE NEAREST INTERCOM APPARATUS, SITUATED ON THE WALL AT THE FOOT OF THE STAIRS.

PEGGY (INTO THE INTERCOM) Pamela!
Pamela!

SHE PEEPS INTO THE SITTING ROOM.

ARTHUR (OVER THE INTERCOM) Anybody seen my wife?

CUT TO ARTHUR TALKING INTO THE INTERCOM APPARATUS IN THE CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THE JAPANESE ROOM.

ARTHUR: Where's my wife? Peggy!

A SHOT OF SUTTON AT THE ENTRANCE

OF THE JAPANESE ROOM DRINK IN HAND,
WATCHING ARTHUR WITH RAPT ATTENTION.

ARTHUR: . Peggy! Peggy!

CUT TO PEGGY STUMBLING TOWARDS THE
INTERCOM APPARATUS IN THE SITTING
ROOM AS ARTHUR'S VOICE COMES OVER.

PEGGY: I'm here! In the lower
sitting room!

CUT BACK TO THE JAPANESE PARTY.
EVERYONE CRANES UP AS ARTHUR'S VOICE
COMES OVER THE INTERCOM THOUGH THEY
ARE GETTING USED TO THE PRACTISE
NOW.

ARTHUR (OVER THE INTERCOM) I'll
give you lower sitting room!

CUT TO THE LOWER SITTING ROOM WITH
PEGGY STILL AT THE INTERCOM AND
PAMELA JUST COMING IN.

PAMELA: Daddy's calling for you.

PEGGY: It's you I want. I've
been looking for you everywhere!
Isn't it marvellous, the news?

PAMELA: What news?

PEGGY: Norman's got a job! To do
with American rats!

PAMELA: American rats?

PEGGY: And he's stalking gibberish
with Dan Sutton now! It's so
wonderful! You see you were right.
About his cycling rats!

ARTHUR DASHES IN.

ARTHUR (TO PAMELA) Just give me
a few minutes alone with your
mother!

PEGGY: What's the matter?

PAMELA: I won't be talked to like
that!

ARTHUR (TO PEGGY) Were you on the
Queen Mary in 1938?

PEGGY: What? What are you talk-
ing about?

ARTHUR RUSHES TO HER AND GRIPS HER
ARM.

ARTHUR: Give me an answer!

PEGGY: Let me go! I'll scream!

PAMELA: Daddy!

CUT TO THE JAPANESE PARTY. THE VOICES OVER THE INTERCOM ARE NOW TOO GOOD FOR THE GUESTS TO MISS. THEY ALL CRANE UP WITHOUT EMBARRASSMENT. CLOSE UP OF SUTTON STANDING ALONE LISTENING TO THE VOICES WITH A CERTAIN AWE.

ARTHUR (OVER THE INTERCOM) I'll get an answer first!

PEGGY (OVER THE INTERCOM) You're killing yourself! You're deathly pale!

CUT BACK TO THE LOWER SITTING ROOM.

PEGGY: I've never known a queen Mary, now shut up!

ARTHUR: Answer that bloody question!

PEGGY: My arm. oh my arm!

ARTHUR: You went to the States. on the Queen Mary, didn't you, in 1938?

CUT TO A CLOSE UP OF SUTTON AT THE JAPANESE PARTY STILL LISTENING AS THE WORD '1938' ECHOES AWAY.

ARTHUR (OVER THE INTERCOM) That's what you told Dan Sutton isn't it?

DAN SUTTON GAPES AS HIS NAME IS MENTIONED.

CUT BACK TO THE LOWER SITTING ROOM WITH FEATHERS NOW REALLY FLYING.

PEGGY: You've spoiled my dress! Let me go! I've got such a headache!

PAMELA (TRYING HOPELESSLY TO RESTRAIN ARTHUR) Daddy!

ARTHUR: Did you go to the States in 1938?

PEGGY: I'll scream! I'll call for Martin Fyffe!

CUT TO MARTIN FYFFE AS HE EMERGES FROM THE LABORATORY STAIRCASE GAPING AT THE MENTION OF HIS NAME AND STARING UP AT THE INTERCOM APPARATUS IN THE HALL. CUT TO SITTING ROOM.

ARTHUR: You bloody slut, you've called for Martin Fyffe enough----that's his child----you slut!

PEGGY (SCREAMING AS NEAR TO THE INTERCOM AS POSSIBLE) Ah! Ah!

CUT TO A SHOT OF THE GUESTS SHOWING

REAL ALARM AS THE SCREECHING ECHOES OVERHEAD.

CUT TO MARTIN FYFFE IN THE HALL BELOW LISTENING TO THE SHRIEKS WITH ALARM AND NOT KNOWING WHERE TO TURN, UPSTAIRS OR DOWNSTAIRS OR SIDEWAYS.

CUT TO THE LOWER SITTING ROOM. PAMELA IS PUMPELLING ARTHUR'S BACK WITH HER FISTS.

ARTHUR (ALARMED SUDDENLY FOR HIS REPUTATION) For God's sake keep your voice down!

PAMELA (PUMPELLING): Leave her alone!

ARTHUR (TURNING ON HER WITH SUDDEN RENEWED FURY AS THE LITTLE FEMALE FISTS BEGIN TO HURT) That's right, you take her part! It's like you, isn't it? You've got his face, Mrs Fyffe, you've got his sort of bunched-up eyes and his monkey-mouth and his cabbage ears and his hair that sprouts like corn-on-the-cob--- I used to joke about it---I used to pull his leg---called him Mr Maize--- (PULLING PAMELA'S HAIR) it's the same nasty blonde stragglng lying hair---

CUT TO THE HALL WHERE FYFFE, ON HIS WAY UP, IS REGISTERING THESE WORDS WITH IRRITATION.

PAMELA (SCREAMING, OVER INTERCOM)Ah!

CUT TO THE JAPANESE PARTY WHERE ALARM IS BEGINNING TO TAKE THE FORM OF ACTION AS PAMELA'S SCREAMS COME ECHOING ACROSS.

CUT TO THE STAIRCASE WHERE FYFFE IS HALTED BY PAMELA'S SCREAMS AND TURN S UNDECIDED AGAIN.

CUT BACK TO THE LOWER SITTING ROOM.

PEGGY: Arthur! Arthur!

NANCY (OVER THE INTERCOM) Is everything all right mum? I'm afraid you'll wake up the little ones!

PEGGY (RUSHING TO THE INTERCOM) Yes yes, it's all right, we're playing a game, now go to bed---

NANCY (AT THE INTERCOM) I'm mixing drinks in the kitchen mum.

PEGGY: Well go one mixing! I only hope to God he didn't hear!

ARTHUR: Who's he? which ~~of the~~

of the men----the one you've been opening your heart to upstairs about a trip to the States, which you never told me about in all the twenty-eight years we've been together, or the one you opened your legs to---old corn-on-the-cob?

CUT TO MARTIN FYFFE ON THE STAIRS SHOWING ANGER AS WELL AS ALARM AS THIS REFERENCE TO HIMSELF POURS OVER THE ETHER.

CUT BACK TO THE LOWER SITTING ROOM.

PAMELA: You pulled my hair!

ARTHUR: Damn your hair!

PAMELA: And damn you too! You're not my father!

CUT TO A CLOSE UP OF SUTTON AT THE JAPANESE PARTY GAPING AT THIS LATEST NEWS.

CUT BACK TO THE LOWER SITTING ROOM.

ARTHUR: I know. I'm not---I've just find out who is though! And it's not Harley Johnson the supermarket king either! My daughter, you haven't got the character to be my daughter, you're a low betraying whore married to a rat-catcher---

PAMELA: Oh!

PEGGY: Pamela!

PAMELA: Get out, get out of the house!

ARTHUR: I'll see you damned first, you breeder of bastards!

PAMELA IS ABOUT TO FALL AND BOTH PEGGY AND ARTHUR RUSH TO CATCH HER.

PEGGY: Don't you realise she's four months gone?

ARTHUR: Oh God!

THEY LAY HER ON ONE OF THE SETTEES.

PEGGY: Get some brandy.

ARTHUR: Where is it?

PEGGY: Oh upstairs, where do you think? Oh do hurry!

GUESTS INCLUDING SUTTON APPEAR AT THE DOOR AS ARTHUR HURRIES OUT.

SUTTON (AS ARTHUR PASSES) Everything OK Arthur?

ARTHUR: Yes, thanks. The heat got her down a bit. She's always like that.

SUTTON GAZES AFTER HIM WITH MILD ADMIRATION AS ARTHUR WALKS PAST THE MALL ON HIS WAY UPSTAIRS. MARTIN FYFFE APPEARS FROM THE STAIRS.

FYFFE: I think the best thing we can all do is to keep the party going. Come up and have a drink Dan.

SUTTON (AS FYFFE TAKES HIS ARM)
Don't mind if I do.

THE GUESTS DRIFT OFF BACK UPSTAIRS. SHOT OF THEM DOING SO AS ARTHUR WHIZZES DOWN PAST THEM WITH THE BRANDY BOTTLE IN HIS HAND.

CUT TO PEGGY AND PAMELA AT THE SETTEE.

PEGGY: We'll both leave. I'll take a degree of philosophy! (TEARFULLY) That'll show him!

ARTHUR DASHES IN WITH THE BRANDY.

CUT TO THE BASEMENT STAIRCASE WITH NORMAN WHISTLING PLEASANTLY TO HIMSELF AS HE RETURNS TO WORK IN THE RAT KING DOM.

CUT BACK TO THE LOWER SITTING ROOM. ARTHUR IS OFFERING PAMELA A DRINK OF BRANDY.

PAMELA: I don't need it.

ARTHUR: Oh come on.

PAMELA: No!

ARTHUR: Oh for God's sake, haven't you got a little bit of magnanimity? What an awful family!

PAMELA: I don't want it!

PEGGY: Oh drink it and let's have some peace and quiet!

PAMELA DRINKS.

ARTHUR: Dan Sutton said to me just now, 'Sounded like a dance going on downstairs.' I nearly said to him 'Dance of death'.

PEGGY: You started it!

ARTHUR: I think you started it in 1938, on board the Queen Mary!

PEGGY: Oh do stop talking about

queens all the time!

PAMELA (TO ARTHUR) I see what you mean about corn-on-the-cob now! And Mr Maize! You mean---you mean---!

SHE GAZES IN FRONT OF HER, ALARMED.

PEGGY: I wish I knew what he meant!

PAMELA:: You mean Martin Fyffe don't you---?

PEGGY:: Pamela!

ARTHUR (SENSING IMPLICATIONS HE IS UNWILLING TO PURSUE) What I mean is my own business, my own unhappiness! Sometimes I'm scared to wake up in the morning, I keep my eyes closed. Especially with her (INDICATING PEGGY) in the bed. She can never remember what she did a minute ago, she loses track, she never knows what debt she's going to find herself in---debt to life... She doesn't wake up in the morning like anybody else---she jumps!

PEGGY:: I'm not in debt!

PAMELA:: (LOOKING AT ARTHUR) I was born in January 1939.

ARTHUR: She went on the Queen Mary in April 1938.

PEGGY: If only I knew what you were saying!

PAMELA (TO ARTHUR) And what did she do?

ARTHUR: We weren't married then.

PAMELA:: She was married to my father.

ARTHUR: Harley Johnson wasn't on the boat. He wasn't in the States!

PAMELA:: Who was then? (WITH A SUDDEN VIOLENT GESTURE THROWING THE BRANDY IN HIS FACE) Don't say it! Don't say it!

ARTHUR (SPLUTTERING) You fool! You could blind me! I'll say it--- !

PAMELA (STOPPING UP HER EARS) Shut up! No, no! Shut up!

ARTHUR (REALISING SUDDENLY) Of course! Good God! You know what you've done now, don't you? You've---!

PAMELA (SCREAMING AND STRUGGLING UP

FROM THE SETTEE) Norman! I want Norman!

CUT TO THE JAPANESE PARTY UPSTAIRS WHERE THE GUESTS LOOK REALLY AGHAST AT THESE CLEARLY EARNEST SCREAMS.

CUT TO THE BASEMENT LABORATORY WITH NORMAN WORKING AT HIS BENCH. AS THE SCREAMS COME OVER THE WIRE. HE LOOKS UP, HIS MOUTH OPEN. THEN SUDDENLY HE JUMPS UP AND DASHES UPSTAIRS.

CUT BACK TO THE LOWER SITTING ROOM WITH PEGGY TRYING TO HOLD PAMELA.

PAMELA: Norman! Norman!

ARTHUR (TO PEGGY) I should never have talked to you in Martin Fyffe's office in 1939, that's where I met you wasn't it, just after he was back from the States!

PAMELA: No!

NORMAN DASHES IN.

NORMAN: What the hell's the trouble?

PAMELA: Take me away!

NORMAN: But what is it, for God's sake?

PAMELA: It's nothing to do with them! I'm unwell (BREAKING DOWN ON NORMAN), oh I'm unwell, unwell, Norman, Norman!

NORMAN: You'd better get to bed.

HE TAKES HER OUT. PEGGY AND ARTHUR ARE SUNKEN, QUIET. THEY SIT DOWN. ESTABLISH THE SILENCE.

PEGGY: Get me a drink.

HE DOES NOTHING, JUST LEANS FORWARD WITH HIS ELBOWS ON HIS KNEES, THINKING.

PEGGY: Get me a drink.

ARTHUR: Oh stop saying that!

PEGGY: Well get me one! I'm dying.

HE GETS UP AND GOES TO THE SIDEBOARD. HE TALKS TO HER WITH HIS BACK TURNED.

ARTHUR: I remember standing in his office, he talked about you. Always did---in a very objective way. As if you were potty. Which I suppose you are. Here (HE TURNS AND HANDS HER THE DRINK).

PEGGY: She'll probably lose that child after your mauling about. We're leaving. I hope you know that.

ARTHUR: Wouldn't it be better if she did lose it?

PEGGY: I want my grandchild!

ARTHUR: What a fool you are.

PEGGY: Is it unnatural to want one's grandchild?

ARTHUR: Martin Fyffe---he's Pamela's father isn't he? Don't stare at me like that. He is, isn't he?

PEGGY: I think we should sleep separately from now on.

ARTHUR: What are you talking about? You were on the Queen Mary with Martin Fyffe. You went across to the States together. You told Dan Sutton you were on the Queen Mary and I happened to remember Martin Fyffe was too. I was nearly his best friend at that time.

PEGGY: He works so hard for you.

ARTHUR: He probably pities me. In fact I can see now---so often, his eyes---the way they flicker at me---with pity you see. You were getting a divorce at that time.

PEGGY: I am divorced, yes. I've always been very frank about that. Harley Johnson was a good man. But he was no husband. He was married to his supermarkets.

ARTHUR: Oh do shut up.

PEGGY: As I say, we shouldn't sleep together. If that's how you feel, that I jump awake. I never knew I jumped.

ARTHUR: What do you think of me? What am I Peggy? Tell me that. What kind of man am I for you?

PEGGY: Someone I love.

ARTHUR: Just someone?

PEGGY: My husband. You're so different from the other one, he wasn't a husband really, I've often told you that. You have such an exciting way of doing things----!

ARTHUR: I don't want excitement.

PEGGY: Let's leave the party to look after itself, like we always used to. Do you remember, we often did that, in the old days, left a party in full swing and locked the bedroom door?

ARTHUR: We never did.

PEGGY: Let them look after themselves, we said.

ARTHUR: Well, it happened once.

PEGGY: Shall we?

SHE GOES TOWARDS THE DOOR IN HER VISIONARY SORT OF WAY AND HE RATHER SHAMBLES BEHIND HER. A SLOW FADE.

OPEN AGAIN ON ARTHUR'S OFFICE. MARTIN FYFFE, IN HIS OUTDOOR CLOTHES, HIS HOMBURG HAT ON HIS LAP AND ONE HAND OVER HIS STICK, SITS WAITING IN ONE OF THE ARMCHAIRS. HE LOOKS AT HIS WATCH, TAPS HIS FINGERS ON THE ARM OF THE CHAIR.

CUT TO THE STREET BELOW AS ARTHUR'S CAR ARRIVES. HE GETS OUT IN A HARRASSED, PREOCCUPIED WAY.

CUT BACK TO THE OFFICE WITH FYFFE STILL WAITING. THE DOOR OPENS AND ARTHUR COMES IN. HE HANGS UP HIS COAT, UNAWARE OF FYFFE. THEN HE TURNS AND JUMPS OUT OF HIS SKIN WHEN HE SEES HIM.

ARTHUR: Have you been here long?

FYFFE: Why---anything unusual? I've been coming at this hour every morning for the best part of ten years.

ARTHUR: I thought---

FYFFE: What the hell's the matter with you?

ARTHUR (GOING TO HIS DESK) Like a drink?

FYFFE: At this hour? Stop staring at me like that for God's sake.

ARTHUR: Nancy's gone.

FYFFE: Who's Nancy?

ARTHUR: The maid.

FYFFE: Is that what's troubling you?

ARTHUR: No. It's just that she's gone. Couldn't stand any more scandal. Don't blame her really.

FYFFE: What, that little slut you had in the nursery? She's just trying you on! She wants a higher screw! Anyway to hell with her. You've got worse things to worry about, believe me.

ARTHUR: You're not going to tell me something ghastly are you? I've had enough blows. I feel like a rabbit. What a terrible epoch to live in.. Do you remember that feeling we had about a year after the war was over, that it hadn't been worth it? At first when peace came it seemed like going back to the old world, where every man's life was his own. Then after about a year it dawned on us: the war hasn't been any use. (TAKING A BOTTLE AND GLASS OUT OF A NEAT SLIDING SHELF IN HIS DESK AND POURING HIMSELF A STIFF ONE) Do you remember how the sun used to shine before the war, and all the butterflies? You don't see many butterflies any more do you? And people became less sound. Before the war there was a sort of fibre in people, do you know what I mean? They were more thrilling. (DRINKS) Of course I didn't have a penny in my pocket, I was a solicitor's clerk going up to the Park with a girlfriend and sitting by the pond every evening holding her hand, a dance on Saturdays, lay-in Sunday mornings, a run out into the country on somebody's motor-bike. Then after the war, we thought it was coming back, and it didn't start, then after about a year it faded away. You didn't see butterflies any more. (HE DRINKS)

CLOSE UP OF FYFFE SHOWING CYNICAL IRRITATION.

ARTHUR: You didn't get that sort of pollen taste in the air. I noticed that. But my fortunes went up and up. I met you and we clicked.

FYFFE: That was before the war.

ARTHUR: Yes but we didn't make money until after. We weren't liberated before.

FYFFE: Weren't happy either.

ARTHUR: I wouldn't be so sure.

EYFFE: I am sure.

ARTHUR: I reckon if you can be happy in all this heap you've got to be a rascal----

FYFFE (ALERT) Meaning what?

ARTHUR: All right, all right. You're not a sergeant major any more.

FYFFE: No I'd just like you to explain.

ARTHUR: I was thinking of Norman Pillinger as a matter of fact, my gifted son in law. He's our picture of a happy man----(AS FYFFE REMONSTRATES SILENTLY) well I mean he does seem to thrive on it all. Liking other people's kids by his own wife and all that. Before the war he'd have been--- what? Certainly not what he is now.

FYFFE: Teacher.

ARTHUR: That's it. We used to have teachers like him at the tech. Very advanced. Said they didn't believe in God. What a revelation. Thought they were debauched if they drank a glass of sherry.

FYFFE: Anyway he isn't a teacher. He was with Dan Sutton again this morning.

ARTHUR: What?

FYFFE: You're jumpy.

ARTHUR: But where the hell is he? He's been out since the party. His rats are dying for want of grub. Peggy's been feeding them best underside of beef. They make a squealing noise. And they stink to hARRY because the trays haven't been changed.

FYFFE: All right, all right.

ARTHUR: And Pamela's gone too.

FYFFE: Gone?

ARTHUR: Your turn to be jumpy.

FYFFE: What about it?

ARTHUR: Why be jumpy about that, she's not your wife?

FYFFE: Is that what's at the back of your mind all the time? You

can't prove it's my child---that's only her conjecture!

ARTHUR: Nothing's at the back of my mind!

FYFFE: Don't shout. And calm down.

ARTHUR: You can talk. You're sweating under the collar.

FYFFE: Well where is she?

ARTHUR: I don't know.

FYFFE: You must!

ARTHUR: She went with her husband.

FYFFE: Well/why the hell didn't you say so? They went to town together I suppose. Lunched with Dan Sutton probably. He's landed himself a job in the States by the way.

ARTHUR: Who, my son in law? Is that definitely fixed?

FYFFE: Yes it is. Had you forgotten? God am I fed up with your family! You're getting just like Peggy, your mind's all over the shop!

ARTHUR: I get a bit confused sometimes that's all. And I do have some shocks.

FYFFE: Well hold tight for another one then. The Dow Jones average is down by several points. There's no buying. Blue Chips are down by ten percent: next week it might be twenty. Are you listening?

ARTHUR: Yes. Yes!

ARTHUR: Oh come on man---this concerns you. What do you think I'm here for? What happens on Wall Street happens to you!

ARTHUR: Are mine all right?

FYFFE: Yours, yours! I'm talking about the state of the market. Even the gilt-edged stuff is wobbly. It's the American war.

Du Pont was down yesterday by five and three-quarters, General Electric by three. We can't sell. We don't want to buy. Nobody does. So we're stuck. If you're thinking of pulling out of the American deal you can't. On the other hand will it get worse?

ARTHUR: Probably. What does Dan Sutton say?

FYFFE: To hell with Dan Sutton! He'll be a beggar before me, if the market gets any more ricketty!

ARTHUR: He's giving Pillinger a job quite definitely?

FYFFE: He saw that the chap was a born scientist in the first five seconds. Why the hell did you let him loose on that party?

ARTHUR: Who?

FYFFE: Pillinger, your son in law!

ARTHUR: Why not? why shouldn't he get a job like anybody else?

FYFFE: Because he might blow a gasket one day and leak a lot of stuff in Sutton's ears! We are in business with him you know, and he is a presbyterian.

ARTHUR: You're frightened for yourself.

FYFFE: It wasn't my fault, I've told you that. I never thought it would happen: turned nearly fifty---you don't fall in love at that age, not a hard bastard like me. So I thought.

ARTHUR: Your affairs are nothing to do with me!

FYFFE: Well if my affairs are nothing to do with you, your blasted shares are nothing to do with me! But I'm telling you this---you'd better keep that son in law of yours over here by hook or by crook or I'll ditch you and no mistake!

ARTHUR: Ditch?

FYFFE: There, that's what it feels like when people tell you your life's none of their business! We get tit for tat!

ARTHUR: All right, all right.

FYFFE: That'll be the last time you ever say that sort of thing to me---after a friendship lasting----

ARTHUR: Friendship?

FYFFE: What else is it? Haven't I been looking after your private affairs---?

ARTHUR: A damned sight too much, yes! And I don't mind being ditched because I can't fall any further than you've landed me already!

FYFFE: I've landed you! I come here to save your life----

ARTHUR: You know damned well what you've-----

FYFFE: What? Say it!

ARTHUR: Oh I don't know.

FYFFE: I told you before, I can't help what happened. It was something I couldn't have predicted, or wished for, or thought the smallest possibility, in a thousand years.

ARTHUR: Yes yes.

FYFFE: You aren't crying?

ARTHUR: No.

FYFFE: I know it's rough.

ARTHUR: Get on about the shares.

FYFFE: I just came to tell you, you'll have to sell up your house.

ARTHUR: Sell it up? You must be mad!

FYFFE: Take it or leave it Arthur. You know my advice has always worked out. The money tied up in that house happens to be all you've got on this side of the water. And it's producing nothing. You've got to have a source of income apart from what comes from across the water. It might turn out all right over there, but I don't like it. Of course Sutton's connected with defence and all that, but it's a situation you can't predict beyond the next hour. And I'm thinking of Peggy too.

ARTHUR: Without money she'd go off her head. I mean completely, instead of partially.

FYFFE: And you?

ARTHUR: So would I. I take that for granted.

FYFFE: Anyway, you've got my advice (GETTING UP). You spent your entire English fortune on that white elephant of a house and you know what I think about that. It's more like a factory, except that it produces no commodities. Of course it might convert very well into offices---there's your chance. You've got about fifteen bathrooms in the place---just to take care of Peggy's thing about armpits!

ARTHUR: Oh shut up.

FYFFE: Well what else are they for? I've never seen so many bathrooms in my life!

ARTHUR: We have a lot of guests.

FYFFE: But they don't all go to the bathroom at once!

ARTHUR: All right now for God's sake stop piling it on.

FYFFE: Is it true she gave a thousand quid for one of those suppurating canvases downstairs in the hall?

ARTHUR: Oh I suppose so.

FYFFE: But you don't know?

ARTHUR: I'm tired. And the only peace I get is in this office. Unless you pop in.

FYFFE: You won't even have this office if you don't do something pretty quick.

ARTHUR: But how the hell can I see that house Martin?

FYFFE: Hand me the deeds tomorrow and I'll fetch a decent price: in fact, if we do it right away, twice its value. (SEEING ARTHUR IN DOUBT) Are you going to live in that bloody quagmire all your life, slipping down every day, with the woman you love leading the way? Your affairs give me a headache.

HE LEAVES AND CLOSSES THE OFFICE DOOR WITH A BANG. CLOSE UP OF ARTHUR IN THOUGHT.

MIX THROUGH TO HIM IN HIS DRESSING ROOM THAT EVENING FIXING A BLACK

TIE. HIS DINNER JACKET IS ON A HANGER NEAR BY. A DOOR LEADS INTO THE MASTER BEDROOM. PEGGY PASSES TO AND FRO THERE, FIXING THE DETAILS OF HER EVENING DRESS. SHE STOPS AT THE DOOR.

PEGGY: Dan Sutton hasn't called us as he usually does.

ARTHUR: He has no reason to.

PEGGY: He always thanks you for a party, like clockwork, two days after.

ARTHUR: He's given my son in law a job. He probably thinks I'm pleased.

PEGGY: Well so you are. (COMING INTO THE ROOM AND PLANTING HERSELF BACK TURNED CLOSE TO HIM FOR HER ZIP TO BE FASTENED) But Arthur, it's like having a snake weaving its way among our dearest friends!

ARTHUR (HAVING ZIPPED HER UP, AND RECOILING FROM HER) Oh to hell with your snakes! You've had them on the brain ever since you got that idiotic lavatory chain shaped like a cobra!

PEGGY: He could edge us out of the firm.

ARTHUR: What---take our shares away? I'd like to see him!

PEGGY: He'll be over there all the time, which we won't. He could eat away ~~at~~ our reputation bit by bit. Just a word to Dan Sutton at the right time might persuade him that you and I are nothing.

ARTHUR: We are nothing.

PEGGY: Don't say that!

ARTHUR: You could have kept him away from the party easily enough: you have your methods!

PEGGY: I have no methods.

ARTHUR: Anyway we're sunk.

PEGGY: I can't stand this house sometimes. Martin's right, we should ~~sell~~ it, we should!

ARTHUR: That's right, you take near on ten years to build it, put in God knows how many bathrooms and spend close on a hundred thousand quid above the buying price---

PEGGY: I spent fifty!

ARTHUR: You don't know what you spent! You think you spent fifty, you think, think: that's all there is in this house, your thoughts! You try to make your life a safe little shell, and you succeed so miserably. You're such a frail creature Peggy, your little half-thoughts go round and round the house all day. You're such a frail little sprite.

PEGGY: Hot baths take the top fat off, that's why.

ARTHUR: And you really don't mind about selling the house do you?

PEGGY: No.

ARTHUR: You've no regrets? You've worked like a black for ten years: getting every damnfool device on the market and now you don't mind if we walk out of ~~xx~~ all these sliding doors that jam and the plateglass windows that always mist over because they're supposed not to and the three sets of lights in every room for reading, talking and eating, except that they fuse each other, and then of course your famous broadcasting system that broadcast all our private affairs to every business contact we have in the western world on the night of the party, you can walk out of it all and never give it a thought again! Have I stood these crises day after day for ten years over bulbs and locks and wires and buttons that give you electric shocks, for nothing? Just to keep your little mind from going into a spin, which it wouldn't come out of, because you're mad!

PEGGY: No!

ARTHUR: The house is mad! But it's mine too now. Every time I look it in the face I see me--- in the settee downstairs built to look like a big black leather bath, and the table that comes out of the floor except when you want it to, and the drinks that pour themselves out automatically especially when you haven't got any glasses ready-- it's my own face, ridiculous and puzzled. Did you hear what Martin said about the shares? They might be papertomorrow.

PEGGY: We could live in hotels for a bit. Rent a place by the sea.

ARTHUR: There you go again,
thoughts and dreams---!

THEY ARE INTERRUPTED BY PAMELA'S
VOICE OVER THE INTERCOM.

PAMELA (OVER THE INTERCOM) Mummy!
Are you in? We've just got back!

PEGGY (TO ARTHUR IN A WHISPER)
Answer it.

ARTHUR (ALSO IN A WHISPER) You!

PEGGY: She'll try and put us off
selling this house! You know how
she loves it!

ARTHUR: Close that door!

PEGGY: Sssh!

SHE TIPTOES TO THE DOOR OF THE
DRESSING ROOM AND CLOSES IT CARE-
FULLY.

PAMELA (OVER THE INTERCOM) Mummy!
Mummy!

THEY GET THE REST OF THEIR CLOTHES
QUICKLY, WITH MUCH RUSTLING AND TIP-
TOEING.

ARTHUR: Let's get out the back way!

PAMELA (OVER THE INTERCOM) Mummy,
we're back!

~~XXXXX~~ CUT TO THE BASEMENT LABORATORY
WHERE NORMAN IN HIS LAB COAT AGAIN
IS FEEDING THE RATS WITH QUICK, SELF-
ABSORBED MOVEMENTS. PAMELA'S VOICE
CONTINUES TO COME OVER THE INTERCOM.

PAMELA (OVER THE INTERCOM) Are you
in the house mummy?

CUT TO THE STREET OUTSIDE WITH
ARTHUR'S CAR WAITING AT THE KERB
AND THE CHAUFFEUR STANDING BY THE
BONNET. ARTHUR AND PEGGY RUN
ALONG THE PAVEMENT LIKE STEALTHY
CHILDREN, IN THEIR EVENING DRESS,
HAVING COME FROM THE BACK OF THE
HOUSE. THE CHAUFFEUR SEES THEM
WITH SOME SURPRISE AND RACES ROUND
TO THE REAR DOOR TO OPEN IT FOR
THEM. IN A MOMENT THEY ARE ALL
IN THE CAR AND IT SKIDS AWAY AND
IS GONE.

CUT TO THE BASEMENT LABORATORY
WITH NORMAN STILL FEEDING THE RATS.
PAMELA COMES DOWN THE STAIRS.

PAMELA: I could swear I heard
them. And didn't you hear the car?

NORMAN: No.

PAMELA (SITTING ON ONE OF THE BENCHES) I don't know why we had to come back. It was such a nice hotel.

NORMAN: I'm not blowing all the money before my contract's confirmed.

PAMELA: There's a safe streak in you isn't there, for all your talk?

NORMAN: About money perhaps.

PAMELA: That means about everything.

CUT TO ARTHUR'S CAR ARRIVING AT A PROMINENT HOTEL. THE CHAUFFEUR OPENS THE DOOR AND THEY WALK INSIDE.

CUT TO THE LOUNGE OF THE HOTEL--- SHINING WITH NORTH OF ENGLAND PROSPERITY---AS MARTIN FYFEE, ALSO IN EVENING DRESS, CLIMBS OUT OF A DEEP ARMCHAIR, PUTTING HIS NEWSPAPER ASIDE, TO GREET PEGGY AND ARTHUR.

MIX THROUGH TO THE KITCHEN OF ARTHUR'S HOUSE WHERE NANCY IS PUTTING THE LAST TOUCHES TO THE EVENING MEAL AND PAMELA IS HELPING HER. ONE OF THE CHILDREN CALL OVER THE INTERCOM.

RACHEL (OVER THE INTERCOM) Mummy! Where's granma and grandad?

PAMELA (GOING TO THE APPARATUS) You'll be seeing them tomorrow. Now go to sleep.

RACHEL (OVER THE INTERCOM) We heard them go out the back way. Grandad said damn!

PAMELA: All right now go to sleep.

NANCY: They must be whacked mum.

PAMELA: Is it ready?

NANCY: All bar the shouting.

PAMELA (PERPLEXED BY THIS COLLOQUIALISM) What?

SHE GOES TO THE INTERCOM APPARATUS.

PAMELA (CALLING OVER THE INTERCOM) Norman can you come up? And please don't wear that dirty old coat.

NORMAN (OVER THE INTERCOM) Oh come off it.

CUT TO THE HALL BELOW AS NORMAN EMERGES FROM THE BASEMENT STAIRCASE IN HIS LAB COAT. HE GOES TO THE

CLOAKROOM IN THE CORNER AND CHANGES THE GORY COAT FOR A DARK JACKET. THEN HE WALKS UP THE STAIRS.

CUT TO THE LOWER SITTING ROOM WHERE PAMELA IS PREPARING TWO DRINKS, SNIPPING OFF THE LEMON PIECES, AT THE SIDEBOARD. NORMAN COMES IN.

NORMAN (WATCHING HER) What the hell's this?

PAMELA: What's what?

NORMAN: The drinks---? You've never done that before. And look at your dress. We usually eat with the kids, and usually there's something spilled. (HE LAUGHS) What a difference it makes doesn't it, having a powerful job?

SHE TAKES HIM HIS DRINK PLACIDLY.

PAMELA: Rachel said they went out the back way.

NORMAN: Probably did a bunk. Afraid of the new order. Cheers.

PAMELA: Cheers.

NORMAN (BEFORE HE DRINKS) May we survive.

THEY DRINK.

PAMELA: What do you mean by that?

NORMAN: You'll see. I've been marvelling at you all day. A safe job produces a safe wife I suppose. Except that there's nothing safe about where we're going.

PAMELA: All right, don't spoil it before we start!

NORMAN: By God I played that hand well. I suddenly said to myself, 'Play their game, put yourself on their level, and they'll buy you at the price you quote.' In two minutes I had old Dan Sutton agog about my smog rats and my magnetic storms cage, I could see the astonishment explode all over his face. One doesn't struggle to get to the top, does one---you just walk up! Only very few people want to go. And suddenly I did. I was fed up with dirty shirts, and sitting down in the basement like a kitchen skivvy, frightened out of my wits every time your father gave me a sharp look. You see, I thought they had power over me. So they did have power

over me. I can see now it was always on the plate for me, like a new death---!

PAMELA: A new---?

NORMAN: Do you think you're going to heaven then? It(s hell, hell! That's why I chose it! It's an arms arsenal, the biggest there's ever been! That means there's a place for me. There's money for research. The bigger the arms programme the bigger my chances. You fool, do you think I just felt like having a job and buying a house in Texas with a swimming pool? Listen Pamela---!

PAMELA:: Oh please don't spoil it Norman, I've been so happy today--- !

NORMAN: Listen you fool! because you'll be there too! Things are going to happen in the next ten and twenty years. There are going to be increasing weather disasters all over the world, things are going to play into the hands of people like me more and more----!

PAMELA: Don't!

NORMAN: Do you realise we shall have the lives and happiness of every creature in the world at our disposal? just because every major experiment we start makes itself felt all over the world? Why do you think I've been experimenting with rats and radiation? People are the rats. The rats are the people! The new diseases---the new viruses that aren't susceptible to ordinary chemical disinfectants--- we've produced them with our drugs and our sprays and our intolerable technical conditions----and so we have to undo them, and that puts us at the centre of the circle, don't you realise that? I suddenly saw it, we're the most important people in the world, and that's why I walked up the stairs and talked to Dan Sutton! I don't give a damn about jobs and comfort and swimming pools!

PAMELA: And now can we have a quiet dinner?

NORMAN: Remember what I said about it being hell. Your children are going into it too! They'll get the gun-mania like Dan Sutton's children. Did you see his kids? They've got every sort of rifle and dagger and cap ammunition and

instrument of torture done up in plastic----!

PAMELA: But they're children, children!

NORMAN: The children of hell! Scalping instruments from Mexico, with dry blood on them. They imitate men screaming when they play! They have ferocious little tanks with red gleaming eyes that shoot out live flames---they burn up their plastic soldiers with them!

PAMELA: Oh God...

NORMAN: No Pamela, war used to be accident, even an adventure, but I'm talking about a destiny! And I belong to that destiny! Why do you think I went to Dan Sutton? He works in defence! That's where his millions of dollars for research come from! Defence made him rich. And it can make me rich too. I don't mean in a money way. I'll be free.

PAMELA: To work for war?

NORMAN: Science is war! I don't care about people any more. I used to but people don't seem valuable to me now! Less than rats in a way, because God has forsaken them.

HE GAZES IN FRONT OF HIM, ^EQUITER.
^

NORMAN: An Indian in the lab where I used to work told me that God lay in your heart, and you could hear him beating there if you listened. I didn't laugh at him but I listened to my heart beating when I got home, and I realised it was true, it was like hearing the universe beating inside me, and there was nothing I could do about it, it just beat on and on and I wanted to shout, 'Stop! Stop! Don't go on beating like that! Can't you see you're driving us mad?' And now I feel better. It's like suddenly realising that God is a fool. I believe in the destiny of war now too. I feel free.

PAMELA: To make more hell you mean?

NORMAN: Oh you needn't believe you're different! You'll trade anything for a house with ten rooms and two cars in the garage and a super highway into town---! As long as nobody tells you the

truth---!

HE IS INTERRUPTED BY THE BREATHLESS CALLING OF MARTIN FYFFE OVER THE INTERCOM.

FYFFE (OVER THE INTERCOM) Pamela! Are you in the house?!

PAMELA (JUMPING UP) I can't! I can't see him!

NORMAN: Who is it?

FYFFE (OVER THE INTERCOM) Pamela! Can I see you? Peggy said you were home! Pam!

NORMAN: Here's another bit of truth---!

PAMELA: I can't see him Norman! Go down and talk to him!

NORMAN (LEAVING THE ROOM) Talk to him yourself, you've got his baby after all!

HE HAS GONE. SHE LOOKS ROUND HER, TERRIFIED. THEN SHE RUNS.

CUT TO MARTIN FYFFE SPRINTING UP THE MAIN STAIRCASE, WITHOUT HIS OVERCOAT OR STICK, OUT OF BREATH. HE PEERS IN THE ROOMS, HURRIES ON.

CUT TO PAMELA RUNNING INTO THE CORRIDOR OUTSIDE ONE OF THE SITTING ROOMS. FYFFE IS JUST LEAPING UP THE STAIRS. THEY COLLIDE.

PAMELA: Oh!

FYFFE: Pamela!

PAMELA: Please go away!

FYFFE: It's something urgent. I've just seen your mother and father. I raced all the way. Listen---I'm buying this house. They're selling up. They've got to!

PAMELA: What!

FYFFE: I'll put you back here like a queen---I know you love this place---you can have it all! You can live here alone, with the children! You can let out a wing if you find it too big. I'll look after the rates and taxes.

PAMELA: No!

FYFFE: It's never happened to me before. For God's sake don't

tell---I mean, your husband either---
or if you should meet my wife. It's
an enormous sum I'm paying! Your
father's asking a staggering price!

PAMELA: But it's mad! They can't
sell to you!

FYFFE: They don't know it's to
me. Nobody does. God knows what
my accountant'd say. I'll have to
wangle it somehow, out of foreign
investments. I've been sweating
all the way here, talking to myself.
I've got to do it, that's the madness
of it darling---I shall have grey
hairs in five years but I only have
to pass you and catch your smell and
I go giddy! I don't care if you
never see me while you're living
here---I'll sign the whole place over
to you! I've never done anything
so reckless in my life! But don't
go away with him. He's going away
isn't he? to the States?

PAMELA: Yes.

FYFFE: Don't go with him Pam,
please!

PAMELA: Don't touch me!

FYFFE: Dan Sutton phoned me up
last night and asked for a testimonial
for Norman---I gave him one. I
told him he couldn't have a better
man. Norman's thwarted in this
country, I said. Because I want
him to leave, I can't stand him any
more---

PAMELA: I'm going with him.

FYFFE: But he'll give you a hell
of a life! He doesn't know how to
look after a woman, he doesn't even
have the sex--! You told me that
yourself!

PAMELA: Please!

FYFFE: I know it's hard for you
to say yes to me right away. We'll
let a few months go by while your
parents take a holiday over half the
world---they're going to travel.
I told them about Norman. They've
spoken to Dan Sutton or at least
they're phoning him up now to get
all the details. They might go to
the States themselves. That's
what they said. They---

PAMELA: Don't try and torment me,
please!

FYFFE: But why should I try to do
that, with my child inside you?

Why, why? Pamela, my darling!

PAMELA: Because---!

EYFFE: I'll stay away from this house, I'll only phone to see how you are. Nothing forced. Don't cry! I'm not mad like he is, I'm not cruel! I'll do anything for you, I've already spent a fortune on you---I seized the deeds of this house, they're mine, I told your mother and father I had a buyer and I signed the cheque right away, as if I was somebody else's agent! I've done it darling! You must take this house, I only did it for you!

PAMELA: I---I---!

EYFFE: You can have the children here too, you can put mine with his, they'll be happy---Pamela, you can't take my child to the States!

PAMELA: Don't you see? Don't you see---you're my father! You're my father!! Oh for God's sake go, go please! Let me die!

EYFFE: Your---! Your---!

HE CLUTCHES THE BANNISTERS TO STEADY HIMSELF.

PAMELA (SCREAMING) Norman! Norman!

EYFFE FALLS TO HIS KNEES IN A STRANGE SLOW COLLAPSE SO THAT HIS HEAD ENDS ON THE FIRST STEP OF THE STAIRS, GAZING DOWNWARDS.

PAMELA (RUNNING TO THE INTERCOM APPARATUS ON THE WALL) Norman! Norman!

NANCY (OVER THE INTERCOM) Are you all right mum?

PAMELA: NORMAN!

CUT TO THE HALL BELOW AS NORMAN, WHO HAS RETURNED TO HIS GORY LAB COAT, RUSHES UP FROM THE LABORATORY STAIRCASE.

PAMELA (OVER THE INTERCOM) Norman! Norman!

CUT TO THE STAIRCASE TWO FLOORS ABOVE, ACROSS EYFFE'S HALF-LYING, HALF-CROUCHING BODY, AS NORMAN DASHES UP THE STAIRS.

PAMELA: He---he fainted!

NORMAN (LIFTING FYFFE) Come on.

PAMELA GOES TO HELP HIM. NANCY APPEARS TOO..

NANCY: Oh my lord!

NORMAN: Stop holding your mouth and help!

THE THREE OF THEM SOMEHOW RAISE FYFFE AND GET HIM TOWARDS THE NEAREST BEDROOM. FADE.

OPEN AGAIN ON THE STREET OUTSIDE LATER THAT NIGHT. EVERYTHING IS QUIET, DESERTED.. ARTHUR'S CAR APPEARS, COMES TO A SMOOTH HALT OUTSIDE THE HOUSE AND THE LIGHT IS SWITCHED ON INSIDE, REVEALING ARTHUR AND PEGGY, RETURNING FROM THE HOTEL. THEY GET OUT AND THE CHAUFFEUR NODS GOOD NIGHT. TRACK AFTER THEM AS ARTHUR FIDDLES FOR HIS KEY AND THE CAR DRIVES OFF.

CUT TO THE HALL WITH THEM COMING IN VERY QUIETLY.. THEY STAND AND LISTEN.

PEGGY (WHISPERING) The children are back. I can smell them! Nancy too!

ARTHUR: Good God, do you mean to say she took Nancy off---?

PEGGY: Sssh! Remember he's got an important position in the States, he's not a ratcatcher any more. Don't use that word again! Do you hear?

ARTHUR (TAKING OFF HIS OVERCOAT) My God that was a cool sale tonight eh? I'm always falling but at least I fall on my feet.

PAMELA COMES DOWN THE STAIRS QUIETLY.

PEGGY (PREPARING TO DO A BIG-CHARM HULLO) Darling! You're back!

PAMELA (STANDING STILL, STILL ON THE STAIRS) Martin's had a heart attack.

ARTHUR (WALKING SWIFTLY ACROSS THE HALL) What? Where is he?

PAMELA: He's awake. You can see him.

ARTHUR WALKS UPSTAIRS WITH PAMELA, PEGGY BEHIND THEM IN DOUBT AND WONDERING.

CUT TO THE BEDROOM WHERE FYFFE

LIES, LEANING AGAINST THE PILLOWS BLINKING DROWSILY. HE LOOKS UP WITH TIRED RECOGNITION AS THE DOOR OPENS SOFTLY. SHOT OF ARTHUR AND PAMELA COMING IN FOLLOWED BY TREMULOUS PEGGY. ARTHUR GOES TO THE BED AND SITS DOWN CLOSE TO FYFFE.

ARTHUR (SOFTLY) And what happened to you for God's sake?

PAMELA: He fainted.

FYFFE: Ran all the way, broke the news, good sale---to Pam. (TOUCHING HIS BREAST) Ticker I suppose.

ARTHUR: Doctor been?

PAMELA: He won't have a doctor. Norman examined him.

ARTHUR (TURNING TO REMONSTRATE LOUDLY ABOUT THIS BUT THINKING BETTER OF IT) Oh. (TO ARTHUR:) Any pain?

FYFFE: No..

ARTHUR: Sight all right?

FYFFE: Yes.

ARTHUR: Move your limbs?

FYFFE: Think so.

ARTHUR (TO PAMELA) How do you know it's a heart attack then?

FYFFE (IN ALARM) A heart---?

PAMELA: I said he fainted!

ARTHUR: Oh, yes that's right. Well you'll stay the night of course Martin. (TO PAMELA:) Have you phoned Jean?

PAMELA: He didn't want me to.

ARTHUR (TO FYFFE) What, your own wife?

FYFFE: I wanted you to do it. Tell her we drank a bit too much and I'd better sleep it off, you know how.

ARTHUR: I'll see to that. Anything you need? (GUIDING FYFFE'S HAND TO THE BELL CHORD) Your bell's here.

PEGGY (INDICATING THE WALL APPARATUS) And the intercom's here--- just shout and we'll be here in a

moment..

ARTHUR: Shouldn't I really call Dr Blore?

EYFEE: If you do I'll kick him down the stairs, even if it kills me.

ARTHUR (GETTING UP) Oh well. You'd better sleep. Good night Martin. Don't go running any more. You're not a young man.

EYFFE (QUIETLY, CLOSING HIS EYES) Go to hell.

CUT TO ARTHUR'S DRESSING ROOM, ON THE DOOR. THE ROOM IS EXACTLY AS THEY LEFT IT A FEW HOURS BEFORE, WITH CLOTHES STREWN ABOUT. THE DOOR OPENS AND ARTHUR COMES IN. HE CALLS THROUGH TO THE BEDROOM.

ARTHUR: You there?

PEGGY:(FROM THE BEDROOM) Yes.

ARTHUR: Think he needs some brandy?

PEGGY (APPEARING AT THE BEDROOM DOOR) No I don't. He had enough before dinner. And why should he want to break the news to Pam in such a hurry?

ARTHUR: Oh God knows. You can't expect straight answers to anything nowadays.

PEGGY (CONFRONTING HIM WITH HER BACK AS BEFORE) Unzip me please.

HE DOES SO..

PEGGY (THEIR HEADS CLOSE TOGETHER) He's not on our side any more, I hope you realise that.

ARTHUR: What do you mean?

PEGGY: He doesn't want Pam to go to the States and we do!

ARTHUR: Well what about that?

PEGGY: It means he's working for her, not us. Can't you see it? It's in his eyes!

ARTHUR: Oh nonsense!

PEGGY: You know how he's always coming out with that Arab saying, about how a friend is worth a thousand enemies. That'd make about a hundred thousand, what with him and Norman. And if we're going to

buy more shares in the pharmacy business---

ARTHUR: Who said we are?

PEGGY: We must! It's obvious. We can't have less of a voice over there than Martin Fyffe or Norman.

ARTHUR: Norman hasn't got any shares!

PEGGY: But he's almost on the board! If we put half the money we got on this house into shares we'll have a thirty percent interest, second only to Dan Sutton's.

ARTHUR: But we ought to be buying real estate at a time like this, instead of which we're selling real estate!

PEGGY: And Dan Sutton might need your help.

ARTHUR: What as?

PEGGY: Well on the board, as a director.

ARTHUR: But the firm's in the States!

PEGGY: Oh don't be silly. We're going to the States. We've agreed on that!

ARTHUR: What?

PEGGY: Well suppose Norman takes it into his head to manouevre us out of the firm? Oh don't keep staring at me in that idiotic way. Texas is a lovely state, Dan always said we should settle there---!

ARTHUR: Yes. The States might be a breath of air. Like blowing the past away!

PEGGY: Why not phone Dan tonight?

ARTHUR: I'll do better than that. I'll drive to town in the morning and give him lunch, see what he says.

SHE GOES INTO THE BEDROOM TO GO ON WITH HER UNDRESSING. HE LOOSENS HIS COLLAR.

ARTHUR (CALLING OUT TO HER) It'll be a relief not facing Martin Fyffe every day. (THEN ALMOST TO HIMSELF:) But then of course I'll have to face Norman Pillinger every day. I wish every face didn't bring me some ghastly message.

CUT TO FYFFE'S BEDROOM, IN THE EARLY MORNING, THE OUTLINES DIM BEFORE THE CURTAINS ARE DRAWN. FYFFE SNORES. THE DOOR OPENS SOFTLY AND PAMELA IS SILHOUETTED AGAINST THE LIGHT FROM OUTSIDE FOR A MOMENT. SHE TIPTOES ACROSS AND DRAWS THE CURTAINS. THE SNORING CEASES. CLOSE UP OF FYFFE, HIS EYES FOLLOWING HER ROUND THE ROOM.

FYFFE: You're going to bring that child off.

PAMELA: I can't. I've been to the doctor. It might kill me.

FYFFE: Good God.

PAMELA: Anyway Norman wants to keep it.

FYFFE: Because he doesn't know the truth! Suppose it's a freak--- an imbecile!

PAMELA: Sssh!

SHE GOES TOWARDS THE DOOR.

FYFFE: I suppose Peggy started shooting her mouth off, how nice it was in bed with me---!

PAMELA: She told Dan Sutton she was on the Queen Mary in 1938, that's all. And he told Arthur.

FYFFE: And he put two and two together? My God that's amazing! He has smaller calculating powers *than* any man I've met. Not that I put two and two together. It just never occurred to me! Not once!

CUT TO THE KITCHEN WHERE PEGGY IS LAYING PLACES AT TABLE FOR TWO. NANCY IS HELPING IN HER HAPHAZARD WAY. THE SOUNDS OF CHILDREN DRIFT OVER THE INTERCOM. PAMELA COMES IN AND SEES ONLY TWO PLACES.

PAMELA: Has daddy gone then?

SHE SITS AT HER PLACE.

PEGGY: Yes.

PAMELA: To the office, already?

PEGGY: He's gone to town. He's lunching with Dan Sutton. You know we're coming to the States, don't you? To Dallas?

PAMELA: To Dallas?

PEGGY: Why? do you hate us so

much then? don't you want us with you?

PAMELA: But that was never the idea! It's Norman's got a job there, not you---!

PEGGY: We've sold up this house!

PAMELA: But why? why?

PEGGY: Because the situation's very tricky. Our shares are going down!

PAMELA: But what about daddy's work here? the office?

PEGGY: Martin's going to see to all that, as he's seen to everything else in our lives!

PAMELA: Oh do be quiet!

PEGGY: Besides, we have a destiny in the States. We can't stay here grovelling any more, and paying taxes for it. We were brought up---- at least I was----to expect a little power, and there we can have it, we shall have the entire fourteenth floor of one of the highest buildings in Dallas to ourselves. When we arrive we shall go straight to the showrooms and buy a Buick for the whole family, one of those where the engine is as big as a double bed, and we shall do a tour of the whole state of Texas, and you'll enjoy it too! They don't call it a new world for nothing, oh no! And really it was Martin Fyffe who gave us all this you know. He couldn't bear to see us---I think these were his own words---crouching down to get in every doorway, like we do here. He wanted to see the doors built to our size. And in the States they are. When he told us to sell this house it was an act of God, Martin was beyond himself, he seemed to me to have a beard and a light shone out of his hair, like a prophet in the Bible, we rushed to the real estate office and he told us, 'I have a buyer.' And he signed on behalf of this mysterious buyer, who we still don't know---that's another biblical feature----like the unknown pilgrim who calls in the night and bestows a little happiness and departs. All that money has made a new life possible. We can buy a splendid home on the outskirts of Dallas not ten minutes Buick ride from the centre, and Norman can have his laboratory again in the basement, I've already look-

ed into the matter of schools for Barry and Rachel.... Pamela why are you crying?

CUT TO THE BASEMENT LABORATORY WHERE NORMAN IS WORKING QUIETLY AT HIS BENCH. PUSH IN TO HIM. THERE IS A SOUND ON THE STAIRCASE AND HE TURNS.

NORMAN (STARING) You shouldn't be out of bed!

SHOT OF FYFFE AT THE FOOT OF THE STAIRCASE, NEATLY DRESSED.

FYFFE: I expect you're all keyed up for the States?

NORMAN: Yes.

FYFFE SITS DOWN ON A BENCH CALMLY, WATCHING NORMAN.

FYFFE: Want some advice? I know the States like the back of my hand. And I know Dan Sutton even better. Always follow the lolly. I mean go for the highest price, wherever it lies. Forget your ideas. They like originality but not the sort they can't use.

NORMAN: I think I know the black world I'm working for.

FYFFE: It's black all right but you have to seem white. Your slate has to look clean. And I reckon that with my child in your nursery it can't but look dirty!

NORMAN: Oh for God's sake---you people and your reputation!

FYFFE: I want that child removed! If it can't be brought off now then it has to go to an orphanage---!

NORMAN: It won't be removed! She can live with her sins, if she thinks they are sins! And if she doesn't think so, well, it's a child like any other.

FYFFE: You're very objective about it aren't you?

NORMAN: It's my job to be objective about everything.

FYFFE: Then be objective about this. I'm your wife's father.

NORMAN: You're my---? (HE STARES AT HIM) You're what!?

FYFFE (LEANING FORWARD) I've had

a child by my own daughter.

Peggy and I were on the Queen Mary together in 1938. I had overlooked that little affair. And last night she shoots her mouth off to Dan Sutton and it gets your father in law---I mean your apparent father in law---thinking.

NORMAN: You're fairly objective too aren't you?

FYFFE: More than you are, to judge by your face. In fact it's the first time I've seen you look appalled. What's appalling you---me or your wife, or the fact that you're now my son in law?

NORMAN: My wife! My wife!

FYFFE GETS UP.

FYFFE: I think you'll arrange to have the birth interrupted in some way. (HE GOES TO THE STAIRCASE) I've bought this house by the way.

NORMAN: You?

FYFFE: It's yours. I'm signing it over to my---daughter.

HE LEAVES. CLOSE UP OF NORMAN STARING AFTER HIM. SOUNDS OF CHILDREN OVER THE INTERCOM.

CUT TO THE KITCHEN WHERE PAMELA IS STILL AT HER PLACE THOUGH ALONE NOW. SHE IS GAZING DOWN AT THE TABLE, PLAYING WITH BREAD. THE DOOR BURSTS OPEN. IT IS NORMAN.

NORMAN: I've just heard! Well you can't come! You can't come to the States! My God even my rats are more sensible than that! Fancy sleeping with---with your own---

ALL THEY SEEM ABLE TO DO IS STARE AT EACH OTHER IN HORROR.

CUT TO ARTHUR'S OFFICE. MARTIN FYFFE IS WAITING IN HIS OVERCOAT AT THE CLIENTS' SETTEE, HOMBURG HAT ON HIS LAP, FINGERING HIS STICK. ARTHUR COMES IN BRISKLY.

ARTHUR: Hullo. I've got good news.

FYFFE: You're going to the States.

ARTHUR: Not just that. Dan's giving me a department. Over Norman Pillinger what is more (HANGING UP HIS COAT).

FYFFE: Norman Pillinger isn't going. Not unless he changes his mind pretty quick.

ARTHUR: What? Listen---is there more trouble? Here, let me get to my desk first. (HE SITS DOWN AT HIS DESK) I won't ask you if the news is bad---it always is after good---but just how bad is it?

FYFFE: All right for you, like it always is.

ARTHUR: Ah.

FYFFE: Rotten for your daughter. Except that she's inherited a house.

ARTHUR: A house?

FYFFE: Don't look so damned at sea! I'm leaving it to my daughter! Your house!

ARTHUR: ~~My~~ house, to your daughter?

FYFFE: I bought your house, and Pamela's my daughter!

ARTHUR: You bought---? What's Peggy going to say about all this?

FYFFE: Damn Peggy! You've got your money, now get out of that house quick! And out of my office too, which is here!

ARTHUR: All right all right! But who the hell are we going to the States with? The whole idea was to keep an eye on Norman Pillinger and stop him shooting his mouth off about us----!

FYFFE: You're going alone. And he's lost his job. (GETTING UP) Anyway what are you worrying about? You'll be in comfort for the rest of your life, which is all you've ever wanted, all you've dreamed about!

ARTHUR: Oh shut up for God's sake. You know I can't stand that high-flown sort of talk.

FYFFE (GOING TO THE DOOR) I'm seeing your son in law or rather mine at your house or rather mine this evening. So keep out of the way. Of the lower sitting room as you call it.

ARTHUR: Listen Martin I haven't even booked our passage yet!

FYFFE: Well do so! And don't forget we're having a farewell dinner tonight!

THE DOOR IS SLAMMED.

BUT FYFFE SUDDENLY COMES IN AGAIN.

FYFFE: Listen ring Dan Sutton and tell him your son in law isn't mentally reliable. Just those words. Tell him it's been on your mind a long time, and now (WITH AN IRONICAL SMILE), like the responsible man you are, you feel you must speak out. And since Dan Sutton's idea was only to get you over there as a dumb partner he'll get rid of Norman Pillinger like a shot.

ARTHUR: But Martin----

FYFFE: And should you not ring him I'll see that you don't get to the States either!

ANOTHER SLAM AND FYFFE HAS GONE. ARTHUR STARES, ANNOYED. THEN HE SITS BACK, YAWNS, GAZING BEFORE HIM. THEN HE TAKES UP THE PHONE.

ARTHUR: Miss Williams... Two one-way fares to New York, me and my wife, about Thursday next... That's right... Oh---first class.

HE PUTS THE PHONE DOWN AGAIN AND GIVES HIMSELF UP TO PLEASANT THOUGHTS. THEN HE PICKS IT UP AGAIN.

ARTHUR: Miss Williams, get me Mr Sutton... That's right. At his club.

HE WHISTLES TO HIMSELF, DRUMS HIS FINGERS, WAITING.

CUT TO THE LOWER SITTING ROOM AT ARTHUR'S HOUSE, THAT EVENING, ON FYFFE, WHO IS STILL IN HIS OUTDOOR CLOTHES AND IS ADDRESSING NORMAN.

NORMAN: But isn't she entitled to a little of God's mercy man? I've done a lot of awful things in my life and I look forward to forgiveness---I hope for it every time---so do we all---we're in the same boat and by God you're going to stay in the little boat you've made for yourself----!

NORMAN: You made it!

FYFFE: And now I'm undoing it, by ordering you to take her to the States, and to remove that child before you go there!

NORMAN: I won't do it! I won't do either! It's all your dirty work! And you can clear it up! I've got a job and I'm going to do it, I'm going all alone and that's

that!

FYFFE: You'll go if I say so!
Not if I don't!

NORMAN: What?

FYFFE: You haven't signed the
contract yet! Nor has Dan Sutton!

NORMAN: You swine!

FYFFE: Are you taking Pamela?

NORMAN: No! No I can't! It's
something I can't bear to think
of, I've tried to think of it
another way and see it as something
ordinary, just a mistake, but I
can't! The fact is I'm a scientist
and this is the kind of mistake I
can't excuse! Even a rat wouldn't
sleep with its own father, don't
you see that? She's committed a
genetical crime! Suppose she gives
birth to a monster---?

FYFFE: Just what I said! Now
get it removed! And go to the
States with a clean slate! Don't
you see it's for your good?

NORMAN: I'm going there alone.
I'm not living with her genetical
mistakes and that's that!

FYFFE: Is that your last word?

NORMAN: Yes.

FYFFE: Then you're a damned fool.
And a prig!

NORMAN: But I can't face her any
more, I can't!

FYFFE: You know what I'm going to
do don't you?

NORMAN: Let my job alone, that's
all I ask! You must let me go,
I won't be any good for Pamela if
she comes with me---!

FYFFE: I've already done the
necessary. I just wanted to give
you another chance. I'm going to
put you on the straight and narrow
path Norman. You're my son in
law now, horrifying though it may
be. And you're going to look after
my daughter.

NORMAN: So what have you done?

FYFFE: I've torn up my testim-
onial. I phoned Dan Sutton this
morning, said you were mentally

unreliable. And Arthur's done the same. You're out of a job again.

NORMAN: And what about you! Do you ever pay for your mistakes?

FYFFE: I've always been Pamela's guardian angel. I got you back here away from your girlfriend. You didn't know that did you? She pleaded with me to try and get you back to England, asked me to write you letters, but I knew a better way. I got your firm to bring you back. And to keep you in this house I---got you sacked!

NORMAN STARES AT HIM WITH HORROR AND ALMOST ADMIRATION.

NORMAN: I almost knew that too.

FYFFE: It was no great advantage to me having you back here as I was then in love with her, foolishly and against all natural laws as it turned out. But I wanted to see her happy. And I've always, cynically enough, preferred young women with husbands and no problems to young women with problems and no husbands. So I got you back. And now I'm thinking of her happiness again. I'm forgiving her the genetical mistake she made. And I'm getting you sacked a second time.

CUT TO ARTHUR'S DRESSING ROOM WHERE HE IS SITTING BEFORE THE MIRROR FIXING HIS BLACK TIE FOR THE EVENING, IN SHIRT SLEEVES, WHILE PEGGY PASSES TO AND FRO ACROSS THE DOORWAY IN EVENING DRESS. CUT TO HER IN THE MASTER BEDROOM FIXING A NECKLACE. THERE ARE THREE LARGE SUITCASES ON THE FLOOR IN A STATE OF NEAR READINESS FOR A LONG AND FINAL JOURNEY.

CUT BACK TO THE DRESSING ROOM. PEGGY APPEARS IN THE DOORWAY.

PEGGY: He must have switched the intercom off. I can't hear a thing.

ARTHUR: Who?

PEGGY: Martin. And I was so looking forward to hearing it.

ARTHUR: Somebody else's private conversation? You can't catch old Martin. He asked me where the off switch was.

PEGGY: And like a fool you tell him!

CUT BACK TO THE LOWER SITTING ROOM.

EYFFE: You're trembling man!

NORMAN: Because I can't go back to that life! down in that laboratory with her coming in and out in evening dress and calling everybody on the intercom----!

EYFFE: Who?

NORMAN: Peggy!

EYFFE: Peggy's going to the States! With Arthur! They've got a job in Dallas---

NORMAN: They've got a job---- got a----??

EYFFE: And I've bought this house. I'm signing it over to your wife.

NORMAN: This house?

EYFFE: You'll have a wonderful life! You can keep your squealing, halfstarved rats. You can work day and night in your dirty white coat and dismantle the intercom network. And you'll have Nancy to look after you. You'll have the income I'm going to give you!

NORMAN: The income? to live with her? with a wife I can't stand?

EYFFE: You'll let about a year go by and then you'll have another child, one of your own if you don't mind, that is after you've put the present one in an orphanage, since I understand from Pamela it might kill her to bring it off at this stage.

NORMAN: But I can't! I'll be a prisoner, a prisoner!

EYFFE: And when she's had your child we'll review the situation, there might be a job for you in the States. Perhaps you'll be reconciled to your wife by that time. A third child will have hidden my face a little, removed it so to speak from your marriage bed---

NORMAN: There is no marriage bed!

EYFFE: And if you leave this house, if you should happen to get yourself a job, I'll search every lab in the country for you, I'll have the police on to it, I'll get you sacked even if I have to buy up this country's entire bloody pharmaceutical industry!

NORMAN (DASHING OFF FRANTICALLY)
I'll leave this house---I'll leave
it tonight!

FYFFE (CALLING AFTER HIM) Your
rats'll bring you back! I know you
better than you know yourself!
(TRACK AFTER HIM AS HE RUNS TO THE
STAIRS, CALLING DOWN) You've got
how much money? Enough to buy
yourself dinner at the station
buffet! You'll be back! And
when you're back you'll stay!

CUT TO NORMAN RACING DOWN THE
STAIRS TO THE LABORATORY STILL
IN FRENZY.

CUT TO THE DRESSING ROOM AGAIN
WITH ARTHUR PUTTING ON HIS EVENING
JACKET.

ARTHUR: Caviar and Veuve Cliquot
tonight, you'll see. I love it
when Martin orders. It makes me
feel young again.

PEGGY COMES IN AND PRESENTS HIM
HER BACK.

PEGGY: Could you zip me up?

CUT TO THE LABORATORY WITH NORMAN
DASHING IN.

NORMAN: I'll give you rats!
I'll give you----!

HE RUSHES TO THE CAGES AND BEGINS
TEARING OPEN THE DOORS WITH THE
RESULT THAT THE RATS LOOK BEWILD-
ERED AND EMBARRASSED AT THIS SUDDEN
AND UNSOLICITED OFFER OF FREEDOM.

NORMAN: Rats! Rats!

CUT TO FYFFE WALKING ACROSS THE
HALL TO THE STREET DOOR, PUTTING
HIS HAT ON AND TIGHTENING HIS
SCARF. THE STREET DOOR CLOSES
BEHIND HIM.

CUT TO NORMAN IN THE LABORATORY.
HAVING DONE HIS WORK OF LIBERATION
HE IS DASHING TO THE INTERCOM APP-
ARATUS ON THE ~~WALL~~, FRANTICALLY
TEARING AT THE SWITCHES UNTIL HE
GETS THE ON SOUND OF ATMOSPHERIC.

NORMAN (SCREAMING DOWN THE INTER-
COM) I'll give you rats! You
can have them for keeps!

CUT TO THE DRESSING ROOM WHERE
ARTHUR AND PEGGY ARE STANDING
IN FIXED ASTONISHMENT JUST AFTER
THE ZIPPING UP OPERATION, AS THE
VOICE BELLOWS OVER THE INTERCOM.

NORMAN (OVER THE INTERCOM) But I'll get there just the same! I won't be kept a prisoner, I won't be watched! You can have your rats! They're the finest in the land but you can have them back---!

CUT TO THE HALL WHERE ONE OR TWO WHITE RATS ARE MAKING THEIR APPEARANCE, TASTING THEIR FIRST FREEDOM FROM SCIENCE.

CUT BACK TO THE DRESSING ROOM WHERE ARTHUR AND PEGGY ARE STILL LISTENING IN RAPT WONDER.

NORMAN (OVER THE INTERCOM) They're white and pure---their diseases were going---I was nearly there---after two years research---!

CUT TO THE KITCHEN WHERE NANCY IS WORKING QUITE UNDISTURBED BY THE SCREAMING VOICE. PAMELA DASHES IN.

PAMELA (SHOUTING ABOVE THE VOICE) Where is he?

SHOT OF NANCY ABOUT TO ANSWER BUT THEN LOOKING TOWARDS PAMELA'S FEET WITH WIDE-EYED HORROR. SHE LETS OUT A QUITE UNEARTHLY SCREAM.

NANCY: Mum! Mum!

PAMELA LOOKS DOWN AT HER OWN FEET AND SEES THE PURE WHITE RAT CLOSE TO THEM, WHEREUPON SHE ALSO GIVES VOICE.

CUT TO THE DRESSING ROOM WHERE ARTHUR AND PEGGY ARE CLUTCHING EACH OTHER WITH FEAR AS THE TWO SCREAMS FORM A BACKGROUND TO NORMAN'S CONTINUING SPEECH.

NORMAN (OVER THE INTERCOM) In the end we'll rule the world! We're going to upset the weather more and more! You people don't count any more! You're just spectators! We're going to send our rockets up and explode our bombs and you're going to feel the temperature drop, you'll have floods all over the world and there's going to be terrible winds and summer at Christmas---!

CUT TO NORMAN YELLING INTO THE LABORATORY INTERCOM WITH TEARS OF INDIGNATION POURING DOWN HIS FACE.

NORMAN: Everybody's at our beck and call! We'll make you radioactive----!

CUT TO THE KITCHEN WHERE PAMELA AND NANCY ARE NOW CLUTCHING PARTLY EACH OTHER AND PARTLY THEIR SKIRTS STANDING ON THE KITCHEN TABLE AMONG THE PLATES GIVING FULL VENT.

CUT BACK TO THE DRESSING ROOM WHERE ARTHUR AND PEGGY ARE NOW LIKE ONE COMPOSITE PICTURE OF THE FIRST DAWN OF ASTONISHMENT ON THE HUMAN FACE.

NORMAN (OVER THE INTERCOM) You think you have lives of your own but all we have to do is press our buttons and all your silly summer holidays and your pretty gardens go up in smoke, and you planned them so cosily didn't you, a holiday in the sun, you think the world's still turned by God but we do the turning, we're twisting God's tail!

CUT TO A CLOSE-UP OF A RAT'S TAIL AS IT SUSPICIOUSLY EXPLORES THE KITCHEN FLOOR. PAN UP TO FOUR FEMALE LEGS ON THE TABLE.

RACHEL: (OVER THE INTERCOM) Mummy, mummy, we've got one of daddy's rats! It's ever so nice!

CUT BACK TO THE DRESSING ROOM AS PEGGY SEPARATES HERSELF FROM ARTHUR. SHE GOES INTO THE BEDROOM.

PEGGY: Has he gone mad? has he--- ?

HER OWN UNEARTHLY SCREAM SEIZES THE WORDS FROM HER OWN MOUTH. ARTHUR STARTS, LOOKS FORLORN, SEEMS TO SWAY.

PEGGY: Arthur, Arthur! A-----
-----it's-----a-----a-----! Arthur!

ARTHUR DASHES TO THE BEDROOM. CUT TO PEGGY'S WIDE-EYED FACE OF HORROR. CUT TO WHITE RAT FINDING THE CONTENTS OF ONE OF THE SUITCASE'S ON THE FLOOR INTERESTING.

ARTHUR: Come in here, quick!
Close the suitcase! Close the case go on!

PEGGY (RUNNING) You!

ARTHUR (CLUTCHING HIS TROUSERS) Look out! (DANCING UP AND DOWN ON THE SAME SPOT) Close the lid! Close the lid!

BUT HE MAKES NO ATTEMPT TO GO NEAR THE SUITCASE. PEGGY SLAMS THE DRESSING ROOM DOOR WITH HERSELF ON THE OTHER SIDE.

ARTHUR (FRANTICALLY) Peggy!
Peggy!

HE BANGS ON THE DRESSING ROOM DOOR. SHE SUDDENLY OPENS IT AND HE FALLS INTO THE ROOM IN PANIC.

ARTHUR: Shut it! Shut it quick! There are legions of them!

CUT TO THE DRESSING ROOM WHERE THEY FRANTICALLY LOCK BOTH DOORS, LOOK UNDER THE BED AND DRESSING TABLE, CLUTCHING SKIRTS AND TROUSERS.

CUT TO THE NURSERY WHERE RACHEL AND BARRY ARE SITTING QUIETLY SIDE BY SIDE FONDLING ONE OF THE RATS, WHILE OTHER RATS ARE ON THE BED.

CUT TO THE DRESSING ROOM WHERE ARTHUR AND PEGGY ARE NOW STUFFING SHIRTS ETC UNDER THE TWO DOORS, AGAINST ANY RODENT INCURSIONS. THE SCREAMS OF THE TWO WOMEN IN THE KITCHEN CONTINUE OVER THE INTERCOM.

ARTHUR: He's mad! Get him on the intercom! Tell him we're dining with Martin Fyffe.

PEGGY: Martin Fyffe? He's the reason we've got rats next door!

ARTHUR (CRAMMING HARD) Fine thing! Besieged in your own dressing room, no food or drink! And I was so looking forward to that caviar!

PEGGY: Oh do be quiet about caviar! I'd just like to be free of rats! I've always hated and feared them!

ARTHUR: Well why did you give him three hundred then?

CUT TO THE STAIRCASE AND NORMAN COMING UP FUMING.

NORMAN (UNDER HIS BREATH) I'll give you rats!

AS HE REACHED THE TOP OF THE STAIRS A WHITE RAT COMES INTO VIEW ON THE BANNISTER, QUITE HAPPY.

CUT TO THE NURSERY WHERE RACHEL AND BARRY ARE STILL FONDLING THE RAT. THE DOOR BURSTS OPEN. THEY LOOK UP.

BARRY: Hullo daddy!

NORMAN: Where's your mother? (STOPPING) What have you got there?

HE ADVANCES INTO THE ROOM.

RACHEL: Why are mummy and Nancy screaming daddy?

BARRY (CONFIDENTIALLY) They don't

like rats!

NORMAN (PEERING AT THE RAT) It's Murphy! You've got Murphy! Do you realise---? Here, can he walk?

RACHEL: Yes he's lovely!

NORMAN: He can---! Good God! He had cancer of the tongue not a week ago, or so I thought! Here, give him here. Good God---do you realise, he's cured? And I don't know how! Or of what! I just don't know!

RACHEL: Can we keep these other two daddy?

NORMAN (ON HIS WAY TO THE DOOR WITH MURPHY) I just don't know...

PEGGY (OVER THE INTERCOM) Norman! Norman!

CUT TO THE STAIRS FROM BELOW, WITH NORMAN COMING DOWN, RAT IN HAND, STILL ABSORBED IN THOUGHT.

PEGGY (OVER THE INTERCOM) Norman please help! There's a rat in my suitcase! We can't take it to the States, we simply can't!

ARTHUR (OVER THE INTERCOM) Oh don't talk rubbish. Tell him to put them all back!

PEGGY (OVER THE INTERCOM) What, three hundred of them?

BACKTRACK IN FRONT OF NORMAN DURING THIS EXCHANGE, AS HE MAKES HIS WAY TOWARDS THE LABORATORY STAIRCASE, STILL IN THOUGHT. THE SCREAMS FROM THE KITCHEN HAVE CEASED.

CUT TO THE KITCHEN WHERE PAMELA AND NANCY HAVE FLOWN. PAN TO THE WINDOW WHICH IS OPEN AT THE BOTTOM. A WHITE RAT AMBLES ALONG THE SILL.

PEGGY (OVER THE INTERCOM) Norman! We're having dinner in half an hour with Mar---!

ARTHUR (OVER THE INTERCOM) Shut up you fool! Tell him some sort of scientist---a famous geneticist---

PEGGY (OVER THE INTERCOM) With a famous genexide man----

ARTHUR (OVER THE INTERCOM) Who might have a job in the States for him---

PEGGY (OVER THE INTERCOM) He has a job for you I think, in

Dallas.

ARTHUR (GROANING, OVER THE INTERCOM) Not Dallas! We're going there, and he hates our guts!

PEGGY (OVER THE INTERCOM) Not Dallas.

CUT TO THE BASEMENT LABORATORY. THERE IS NOT A RAT TO BE SEEN. THE CAGE DOORS HANG OPEN. PAN TO THE STAIRCASE AS NORMAN COMES DOWN STILL WITH MURPHY..

ARTHUR (OVER THE INTERCOM) We'll have to do something, I'm getting hungry.

NORMAN POPS MURPHY INTO A CAGE AND CLOSES THE CAGE-DOOR. HE SETTLES DOWN AT HIS BENCH AND TAKES DOWN HIS NOTEBOOKS AND CHARTS. IN A MOMENT HE IS STUDYING MURPHY. THEY ARE ON MUCH THE SAME LEVEL. PENCIL IN MOUTH, NORMAN IS IN DEEP THOUGHT.

PEGGY (OVER THE INTERCOM) Norman please! Remember all the nice things we've done for you, not the nasty ones! These rats have typhus, the one in the suitcase limps---! Oh dear!

ARTHUR (OVER THE INTERCOM) Norman!
CUT TO THE DRESSING ROOM WHERE ARTHUR IS STANDING BEFORE THE INTERCOM APPARATUS IN A MARTIAL WAY WHILE PEGGY IS WEEPING IN A CHAIR.

ARTHUR (OVER THE INTERCOM) Norman, Peggy's crying, I can't have this!

PEGGY (to herself) Three hundred rats! Loose!

ARTHUR (TURNING TO HER) What, he let the whole lot out?

PEGGY: Well you don't think he let out just one or two do you, being the man he is?

ARTHUR (SUBSIDING INTO A CHAIR AGAIN) The only comfort is it's somebody else's house.

PEGGY: Exactly! It's his!

ARTHUR: What?

PEGGY: Oh do stop saying what!

CUT TO THE LABORATORY WHERE NORMAN CONTINUES IN THOUGHT.

BARRY (OVER THE INTERCOM) Daddy, we've got fifteen now!

PEGGY (OVER THE INTERCOM) Are you there Pamela? Where are you Pamela? There are one or two rats loose.

CUT TO A SHOT OF THE OPEN KITCHEN WINDOW, THE CURTAINS STIRRED BY A NORTHERN WIND FROM OUTSIDE.

CUT TO THE LABORATORY. NORMAN BEGINS TO WRITE.

PEGGY (OVER THE INTERCOM) Norman! Norman! You mustn't believe everything Martin Fyffe says! Norman, Norman!

NORMAN WRITES AND WRITES AS THE CREDIT TITLES COME UP.

THE END.