

The Father/Miss Julia/Easter

*'Love between the sexes is a battle'*

The plays in this volume focus on the tumultuous relationships between men and women, whether they are father and daughter, brother and sister, or lovers. *Miss Julia* is a ruthlessly realistic depiction of an upper-class woman's seduction of a servant, emphasizing the differences and the antagonism between them. In *The Father* a man is brought to madness and driven out of his home by the suspicion that his daughter is not his own child, while *Easter* centres on a family in need of redemption for its sins and suffering, and finding forgiveness at a season of rebirth. Strindberg's acute psychological analysis and his dramatization of naked emotion within a naturalistic domestic setting make him one of the great innovators of the modern theatre.

Peter Watts's powerful translation is accompanied by an introduction and a preface to each of the dramas, which place the plays in the context of Strindberg's life.

The most modern of the moderns' EUGENE O'NEILL

Translated with an Introduction by PETER WATTS

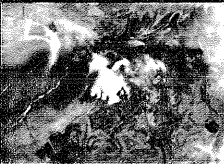
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Cover: Detail from *A Portrait of Miss Law* (1885) by Anders Zorn, in the Zornmuseum, Mora, Sweden (photo: AKG London)



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AUGUST STRINDBERG

*Three Plays*

In *Miss Julia*, writing the year after *The Father*, when his separation from Siri von Essen was less raw, Strindberg could deal more objectively with the struggle between the sexes. Here he has added to it another battle that was continually raging within himself – that of the aristocratic blood inherited from his father, warring against ‘the blood of the slave’ that came from his adored mother. He had had ample chance of observing the ways of servants and their relations with their masters, for even when his family was at its poorest, Strindberg’s father insisted on keeping two servants in the overcrowded household – who, he tells us, were not allowed to clean their master’s boots unless they wore gloves!

He gained further experience of servants in his last year at school, when poverty drove him to spend his summer holidays as a tutor to a Baron’s sons on a country estate. Here the family patronized him, and the servants were insolent to him, making it very clear that they thought him no better than themselves. He spent *Midsummer Night* of 1862 there, and the impudent ‘Jean’, with his Frenchified name, may well have been suggested by one of the staff. (Incidentally, Strindberg’s own first name was Johann.) In the grounds too, he may have seen just such an exotic little earth-closet as he has put into this play, and that must seem so strange to an English audience, and even English actors, that many of them probably miss the point of it altogether.

An incident two years later, in 1864, shows how violently the two inheritances fought within him. He was living comfortably (for once) as tutor in a rich and cultured Jewish family, when one night during dinner some political demonstrators passed the window. When someone explained to a foreign visitor that they were ‘only the mob’, Strindberg jumped up from the table and rushed out of the house, feeling that he was a deserter from his own (or at least his mother’s) people.

Strindberg wrote a long preface to this play, setting out his ideas on naturalism in drama. Much of it seems rather obvious to us in these days when out theatre is only just beginning to emerge from a period of excessive naturalism, but in 1888 it was exciting and revolutionary. We must remember that Strindberg’s audience was accustomed to seeing such things as the kitchen dresser and its utensils merely painted on the backcloth. It would have been fresh and exciting to them not only to hear the players speaking everyday language, but also to see

an actress moving naturally about the kitchen, tidying up dishes; though nowadays, in production, Kristin’s long bit of ‘business’ is usually whittled down to as little as will suggest the necessary lapse of time. To us, too, it seems odd that Strindberg should specially mention that she should even turn her back ‘when necessary’, and we must remember that even in the West End of London in the 1920s Sir John Martin-Harvey could reproach an actress of the younger school in his company, saying: ‘You must never turn your back on the audience’.

The play’s action is continuous; Strindberg was developing a theory, later discarded, that the division of the play into acts, with the necessary fall of the curtain, shattered the illusion. His complaint that intervals were only an excuse for the bars to make money sounds topical even today. However, he has not been entirely successful in dealing with the unity of time, and ingenious as Kristin’s ‘business’ and the incursion of the peasants may be as technical tricks, in practice they interrupt the action quite as much as would the fall of a curtain.

. . . . .

*This translation of Miss Julia was originally made for the British Broadcasting Corporation, with whose consent it has been used here.*

MISS JULIA

CHARACTERS

MISS JULIA, aged 25  
'JEAN', a footman, aged 30  
KRISTIN, a cook

*The action takes place in the Count's kitchen, on  
Midsummer Eve*

[A large kitchen, with the ceiling and side-walls masked by draperies. The back-wall runs diagonally across the stage from down left to up right. On this wall to the left are two shelves, decorated with scalloped paper, and filled with copper, iron, and tin utensils. Rather to the right, most of a big arched outer doorway is visible; it has two glass doors, through which are seen a fountain with a Cupid, lilacs in flower, and tall poplar trees. To the left is the corner of a big tiled stove, with part of its hood showing. From the right, the end of a pine-wood kitchen-table sticks out, with a chair or two. The stove is decorated with bunches of birch-twigs, and the floor is strewn with juniper. On the table-end is a big Japanese ginger-jar of lilac. There is also an ice-box, a dresser, and a sink.]

*Over the door, a big old-fashioned bell hangs on a spring, and the mouthpiece of a speaking-tube is visible to the left of the door.*

KRISTIN is standing at the stove, cooking in a frying-pan. She is wearing an apron over her light cotton dress. JEAN comes in — he is in livery, and carries a pair of big riding-boots with spurs, which he puts down where they can be seen.]

JEAN: Miss Julia's mad again tonight — completely mad.

KRISTIN: Oh, so you're back, are you?

JEAN: I took the Count to the station, and on the way back by

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the barn I looked in and joined the dancing. Well, there was Miss Julia — and leading the dance, with the gamekeeper of all people! The minute she saw me, she rushed right up and asked me to dance the ladies' waltz with her. And how she waltzed, too; I've never known anything like it! She's off her head.

KRISTIN: That's nothing new! But she's been carrying on worse than ever this last fortnight — since her engagement was broken off. . . .

JEAN: And what a story that was! He seemed a decent sort of fellow, too — not much money, though. But you know what they are once they get an idea in their heads. [He sits down at the end of the table.] Queer, isn't it, for a young lady — ahem — to want to stay here with the servants — rather than go with her father to see her cousins.

KRISTIN: She's probably ashamed to face them after the to-do with her young man.

JEAN: I shouldn't wonder. He knew how to stand up to her, that fellow. D'you know what happened, Kristin? I saw the whole thing — though I pretended not to notice.

KRISTIN: What? You saw it?

JEAN: I certainly did. They were down in the stable-yard, and she was 'training' him — as she called it. And what do you think she was doing? She was making him jump over her riding-whip — just like teaching a dog tricks. He jumped it twice, and each time she caught him a stinger with the whip. And then the third time, he wrenched it out of her hand, broke it in pieces, and then cleared out.

KRISTIN: Did he, though? Well, I never!

JEAN: Yes; so that was the end of that! Got anything nice to eat for me, Kristin?

KRISTIN [raising something from the frying-pan and putting it in front of JEAN]: Just a scrap of kidney — I cut it out of the joint for you.

JEAN [smelling it]: Lovely! — That's just *ce que j'adore!* [Feels the

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plate.] Here, you might have warned the plate, though!

KRISTIN: You're faddier than the Count, even, once you start.

[She strokes his hair tenderly.]

JEAN [irritably]: Hey, you'd better leave me alone — you know how easily I get worked up.

KRISTIN: All right — only I do love you, you know.

[JEAN eats. KRISTIN gets out a bottle of beer.]

JEAN: What, beer on Midsummer Eve? No thanks! I can do better than that myself. [He opens a drawer and takes out a bottle of red wine with a gold seal.] There, you see — Gold Seal! Give me a glass — a wine-glass of course — since I'm having it neat.

KRISTIN [putting a small saucepan on the stove]: Heaven help the woman that gets you for a husband; I never knew such a fusspot.

JEAN: Nonsense, you'd be glad enough to get me; it's even done you a bit of good to be known as the sweetheart of a smart chap like me. [Tastes the wine.] This is excellent — excellent. Might be just a shade warmer. [He warms the glass between his hands.] We bought this in Dijon — four francs a litre, from the wood — and then the duty on top of that. What's that you're cooking? It stinks the place out.

KRISTIN: Oh, it's some devil's brew that Miss Julia wants, it's for Diana.

JEAN: You ought to watch your language, Kristin. Anyway, why should you be cooking for a blasted dog — on a holiday, too! Is it ill?

KRISTIN: She's ill all right. She's been running round with the dog at the lodge, and now she's got herself into trouble. My lady won't stand for that, you know.

JEAN: My lady's finicky enough over some things, a pity she isn't over others. Just like the Countess when she was alive! She was most at home in the kitchen or the cowsheds — but she'd never drive with only one horse. She'd have dirty cuffs, but the buttons had to have the coronet on them. And now here's Miss Julia; she doesn't keep her clothes clean either —

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or herself, for that matter. Not refined, if you ask me. Why, out in the barn just now, the gamekeeper was dancing with Anna, and she comes up and grabs him and asks him to dance with her. We'd never do a thing like that. But that's what happens when the gentry go slumming — they get slummy. She's a fine-looking girl, though; fine — a good pair of shoulders — and so on.

KRISTIN: Oh, she isn't all that fine; Clara dresses her, and you ought to hear what she says.

JEAN: Clara? Pooh, you women are always jealous. I've been out riding with her — and I've seen her dance.

KRISTIN: Jean, will you dance with me, when I've finished this?

JEAN: Of course.

KRISTIN: Promise?

JEAN: Why? If I say I'll do a thing, I do it. [Rising.] Anyhow — thanks for the supper, it was very tasty.

[He corks the bottle again.]

MISS JULIA [she appears in the door, talking to someone outside]: I'll be back in a minute — don't wait for me.

[JEAN slips the bottle in the table drawer, and rises respectfully.]

MISS JULIA [coming in — she goes over to KRISTIN who is at the mirror]: Well, is it ready yet?

[KRISTIN signs to her that JEAN is there.]

JEAN [gallantly]: Do you ladies want to talk secrets?

MISS JULIA [flipping him in the face with her handkerchief]: It's no business of yours.

JEAN: What a lovely scent of violets!

MISS JULIA [coquettish]: Impertinence! So you know about scent too? You certainly know how to dance, don't you. Now, go away; you're not to peep —

JEAN [impudent without being rude]: I suppose it's the sort of witch's brew that ladies cook up on Midsummer Night — something to tell fortunes with, and show you the face of your future husband.

MISS JULIA

MISS JULIA: [*sharply*]: You'd need good eyes to see that. [To KRISTIN:] Put it in a bottle, and cork it properly. Now then, Jean, come out again and dance the schottische with me.

JEAN [*doubtfully*]: Well — no offence, but I promised this one to Kristin.

MISS JULIA: Oh, she can dance with you any time — can't you, Kristin? You don't mind lending him to me, do you?

KRISTIN: I know my place, my lady. If you're so kind, it isn't for Jean to say no. [Turns] Get along with you, Jean, you ought to be honoured.

JEAN: Well, I don't want to speak out of turn — but, to put it plainly, would it be quite the thing for my lady to dance with the same partner twice running? You know how people round here talk —

MISS JULIA [*flaring up*]: Talk? Why should they talk? What do you mean?

JEAN [*respectfully*]: Well, Miss Julia, if you won't see what I mean . . . To put it bluntly, it wouldn't do to go out of your way to favour one of your servants, when all the rest are expecting you to honour them.

MISS JULIA: Favour? I've never heard of such a thing. I'm the mistress here, and if I condescend to go to the servants' ball when I feel like dancing, I shall dance with someone who can lead, and not make me look ridiculous.

JEAN: As you say, Miss Julia — I'm at your service.

MISS JULIA [*softly*]: You mustn't take it as an order; it's a holiday tonight — everyone ought to enjoy themselves — not think about rank. Give me your arm. Don't worry, Kristin — I'm not going to steal your young man.

[JEAN gives her his arm and leads her out.]

[*The following stage-business should be played as if the actress were really alone in the room. When it is natural for her to turn her back on the audience she must do so; she must not look out into the auditorium, nor should she hurry as if she were afraid the public might grow impatient.*]

MISS JULIA

KRISTIN is alone. A violin is heard faintly in the distance playing a schottische, and KRISTIN hums the tune while she clears up after JEAN, washing the plate at the sink, wiping it, and putting it away in a cupboard. Then she takes off her apron, and, bringing out a little mirror from one of the drawers in the table, she props it against the jar of lilac on the table. Then, lighting a tallow candle, she heats a hairpin and curls her fringe with it.

Then she goes to the door and stands listening. As she comes back to the table, she notices the handkerchief which MISS JULIA has left. She picks it up and smells it, then she spreads it out reflectively, smooths it, and folds it in four, and so on.]

JEAN [*coming in alone*]: She really must be mad, to go dancing like that — with everyone getting behind the doors and grinning at her. Don't you think so, Kristin?

KRISTIN: Well, you know how it is — she's always a bit queer at these times. What about our dance now?

JEAN: You didn't mind me going off like that? — Leaving you in the lurch.

KRISTIN: What was there to mind? Besides, I know my place.

JEAN [*slipping an arm around her waist*]: You're a sensible girl, Kristin — you'll make a good wife.

MISS JULIA [*enters. She is hurt and angry, but she speaks with a forced gaiety*]: Well, you're a fine escort! Running off and leaving your partner like that!

JEAN: On the contrary, Miss Julia, you see I've come running back to the partner I'd deserted.

MISS JULIA [*changing her tactics*]: You know, there's no one here can dance like you. But why are you wearing your livery?

It's a holiday — go and change it at once.

JEAN: Then I must ask you to leave me a minute, my best coat's on that hook there.

[*He points to it, and goes over to the right.*]

MISS JULIA: Are you so bashful you can't even change your

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coat in front of me? All right, go to your room and do it. Or stay here, and I'll turn my back!

JEAN: If you'll excuse me, Miss Julia —

[*He goes off right, but we see his arm as he changes the coat.*]

MISS JULIA: Well, Kristin, you seem very friendly with Jean — is he your sweetheart?

KRISTIN: Sweetheart! Yes, I suppose you could call it that.

MISS JULIA: You 'suppose'?

KRISTIN: Well, you know how it is, Miss Julia; after all, you were —

MISS JULIA: I was properly engaged.

KRISTIN: Still, it didn't come to anything, did it?

[*Jean returns, in a black morning coat and a bowler hat.*]

MISS JULIA: *Tres gentil, Monsieur Jean, tres gentil!*

JEAN: *Vous voulez plaiser, madam!*

MISS JULIA: *Et vous voulez parler francais?* Where did you pick that up?

JEAN: In Switzerland; I was a waiter in one of the best hotels in Lucerne.

MISS JULIA: You look quite a gentleman in that coat — *charmant!*

[*She sits at the table.*]

JEAN: You flatter me.

MISS JULIA [hurrl]: Flatter — you?

JEAN: My natural modesty forbids me to believe such a compliment to a man in my station. So I can only suppose that you are exaggerating — or, in other words, flattering.

MISS JULIA: Where did you learn to talk like that? Are you a great theatre-goer?

JEAN: Oh, yes, I've been about a bit, you know.

MISS JULIA: But you were born here, weren't you?

JEAN: My father was a farm-hand on the County Attorney's estate here. I used to see you when you were little; you never noticed me, though.

MISS JULIA: Really?

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JEAN: Yes, I remember one time in particular — but I can't tell you about that.

MISS JULIA: Oh, do. Come on — I want you to.

JEAN: No, I couldn't possibly. Some other time, perhaps.

MISS JULIA: What's the use of 'some other time'? Was it as bad as all that?

JEAN: Not bad — I'd sooner not, that's all. Oh, look at her!

[*He points to Kristin, who has dropped off to sleep in a chair by the stove.*]

MISS JULIA: A nice sort of wife she'll make; she probably snores, too.

JEAN: No, but she talks in her sleep.

MISS JULIA [*critically*]: How do you know?

JEAN [*boldly*]: I've heard her.

MISS JULIA [*their eyes meet for a moment*]: Why don't you sit down?

JEAN: I wouldn't take the liberty — not in your presence.

MISS JULIA: Supposing I order you?

JEAN: Then I'd obey.

MISS JULIA: Sit down, then. Wait a minute, though — can't you give me something to drink first?

JEAN: I don't know what there is in the ice-box — probably only beer.

MISS JULIA: 'Only' beer? I have very simple tastes — I'd rather have beer than wine.

[*He takes a bottle of beer from the ice-box, and opens it. He looks in the cupboard for a glass, and for a plate to serve it on.*]

JEAN: Allow me.

MISS JULIA: Thank you. Won't you have one too?

JEAN: I don't care much for beer, but if you tell me to —

MISS JULIA: Tell you! Surely a gentleman should keep a lady company.

JEAN: Yes, you're quite right.

[*He fetches a glass, and opens another bottle.*]

MISS JULIA: Now drink my health. [*Jean hesitates.*] Don't tell me a big fellow like you is shy?

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JEAN [*he kneels with mock-gallantry, and raises his glass*]: To my lady's health!

MISS JULIA: Bravo! Now you must kiss my shoe, to complete the picture. [JEAN hesitates a moment, then boldly grasps her foot, which he kisses lightly.] Well done! You should have been on the stage.

JEAN [*getting up*]: We can't go on like this, Miss Julia — suppose someone came in and saw us.

MISS JULIA: What would that matter?

JEAN: People talk, that's all! If you knew how their tongues were wagging up there just now —

MISS JULIA: What were they saying? Tell me. And sit down again.

JEAN [*sitting*]: Well, I don't want to speak out of turn, but they used expressions — that hinted that — well, you're not a child, you know what I mean. And when a lady drinks with a man — and a servant, at that — alone at night — then . . .

MISS JULIA: Then what? Besides, we aren't alone, Kristin's here.

JEAN: Yes, asleep.

MISS JULIA: I'll wake her, then. [*Getting up*]: Kristin, are you asleep?

KRISTIN [*mumbles*]: — mm — mm —

MISS JULIA: Kristin! She can certainly sleep!

KRISTIN [*in her sleep*]: The Count's boots are done — mus' put on the coffee — just coming — my — pff . . .

MISS JULIA [*pulling her nose*]: Wake up.

JEAN [*sternly*]: Don't disturb her.

MISS JULIA [*sharply*]: What do you mean?

JEAN: She's been standing over the stove all day, of course she's tired by now. You ought to consider her a bit.

MISS JULIA [*changing her tone*]: That's a very kind thought — of course you're right — thank you. [*During the next few speeches, KRISTIN wakes, and still half dazed, goes off to the right to bed.*] Let's go out and you can pick me some lilac.

MISS JULIA

JEAN: Go out together, Miss Julia?

MISS JULIA: Of course.

JEAN: That wouldn't do at all. Never.

MISS JULIA: I don't see why not. You surely didn't imagine — JEAN: Me? No — but the others'd think —

MISS JULIA: What? That I'm in love with a footman?

JEAN: Well, don't think I'm conceited, but it has been known to happen. And nothing's sacred to those people.

MISS JULIA: I do believe you're an aristocrat!

JEAN: Yes, I am.

MISS JULIA: Well, if I choose to step down —

JEAN: Don't, Miss Julia; no one'll ever believe you stepped down, they'll say you fell.

MISS JULIA: I've a better opinion of people than you have. Come and see if I'm not right. Come on.

[*She challenges him with her eyes.*]

JEAN: You're a queer one, you know.

MISS JULIA: Perhaps — so are you, if it comes to that. Anyhow, everything's queer — life, humanity, everything. It's just scum floating round and round on the top of the water — till it finally sinks. There's a dream I have every now and again, and this reminds me of it. I seem to have climbed to the top of a high pillar, and I sit there not knowing how to get down. If I look down it makes me dizzy, but I know I've got to get down somehow. I don't have the courage to jump. I can't hold on, though, and I wish I could fall, but I don't fall. Yet I know I won't get any peace or rest till I'm on the ground — right down on the ground. And I know that if I were down, I should want to go deeper and deeper into the earth. Do you ever feel like that?

JEAN: No — in my dream, I'm in a dark wood, lying under a tall tree. I want to get up — right to the top, where I can see out over the country in the sunlight. I want to rob the nest that holds the golden egg. And I climb and climb, but the trunk's so smooth and thick, and the lowest branch is so far out of

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reach. I know, though, that if I could only get hold of it, I could climb to the top as easy as up a ladder. I haven't got hold of it yet, but I will one day – even if it's only in a dream.

MISS JULIA: Here I am chattering to you about dreams! Come on – only as far as the park.

[*She gives him her arm, and they start to go.*]

JEAN: We ought to sleep on nine midsummer flowers tonight, Miss Julia, and then our dreams'd come true.

[*They turn as they reach the door. JEAN puts his hand up to one eye.*]

MISS JULIA: Something in your eye? Let me look.

JEAN: It's nothing – just a bit of dust. It'll be all right in a minute.

MISS JULIA: I must have flicked it with my sleeve. Sit down and I'll get it out for you. [*She takes his arm, and makes him sit down, then, gripping his head she bends it back, and tries to get out the bit of dust with a corner of her handkerchief.*] Now keep still. Still, I said! [*She slaps him on the hand.*] Now will you do as I tell you? I believe you're trembling – a big strong fellow like you. [*She feels his muscle.*] And with such arms!

JEAN [*with a note of warning*]: Miss Julia!

MISS JULIA: Yes, Monsieur Jean?

JEAN: *Attention, je ne suis qu'un homme!*

MISS JULIA: *Will* you sit still. There, that's out. Kiss my hand and say thank you!

JEAN [*rising*]: Miss Julia, listen, Kristin's gone to bed now.

Won't you listen to what I say?

MISS JULIA: Kiss my hand first.

JEAN: Listen to me.

MISS JULIA: Kiss my hand first.

JEAN: All right – but you'll only have yourself to blame.

MISS JULIA: What for?

JEAN: 'What for'? You're not a child, you're twenty-five; don't you know it's dangerous to play with fire?

MISS JULIA: Not for me – I'm insured!

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JEAN [*boldly*]: Oh no you're not – and even if you were, there's lots of inflammable stuff about.

MISS JULIA: Meaning yourself?

JEAN: Yes. Not because it's me, but because I'm young –

MISS JULIA: – and handsome! Aren't you conceited! I suppose you're a Don Juan! Or a Joseph! Yes, that's it, believe you're a Joseph.

JEAN: Do you?

MISS JULIA: I'm beginning to be afraid you are. [*JEAN goes boldly up to her, and putting his arm round her waist, tries to give her a kiss. Slapping his face*] Hands off, now!

JEAN: Did you mean that, or are you playing with me?

MISS JULIA: I meant it.

JEAN: Then you meant what happened just before, too. You're taking the game much too seriously, and that's dangerous. Well, I'm tired of playing – if you'll excuse me, I'll get on with my work. It's long past midnight, and I have the Count's boots to do.

MISS JULIA: Put those boots down.

JEAN: No, that's my job, and I'm going to do it; it's no part of my duty to be a playmate for you, and I never will be, I've too much self-respect for that.

MISS JULIA: You're proud, aren't you.

JEAN: In some ways. Not in others.

MISS JULIA: Have you ever been in love?

JEAN: Well, we don't put it like that. I've been keen on lots of girls. Once, I was quite ill because I couldn't have the one I wanted – like the princes in the Arabian Nights who were so lovesick they couldn't eat or drink.

MISS JULIA: Who was she? [*JEAN is silent.*] Who was she?

JEAN: You'll never make me tell you.

MISS JULIA: Not if I ask you as an equal – as a friend? Who was she?

JEAN: You.

MISS JULIA [*sitting down again*]: That's a fine thing!

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JEAN: Yes, if you like – quite ridiculous. That was the story I wouldn't tell you a few minutes ago – but now I'm going to. You don't know how the world looks from down below, do you? No – of course you don't, any more than hawks or eagles do; and we don't see their backs, because they're nearly always soaring up over our heads. I used to live in a hovel with seven brothers and sisters and a pig; out on the waste land where there wasn't even a tree. But the window used to look out on the wall of your father's park, and I could see the apple trees over it. I used to think it was the Garden of Eden, with all the fierce angels guarding it with fiery swords. All the same, the other boys and I found our way to the Tree of Life. I suppose you despise me.

MISS JULIA: Oh, all boys steal apples.

JEAN: You say that now, but you *do* despise me. Not that I care. Anyhow, one day my mother took me into the garden – it was to weed the onion-beds. Near the kitchen-garden there was a Turkish pavilion under the jasmine bushes, with honeysuckle growing over it. I didn't know what it could be used for, but it was the finest building I'd ever seen. People went in and out, and once, one of them came out and left the door open. I peeped in. The walls were covered with pictures of kings and emperors, and there were red curtains, with tassels, at the windows. You realize now the place I mean? Well, I – [*He breaks off a sprig of lilac, and holds it under her nose.*] I'd never been inside the castle – never been anywhere except the church, and this was much finer. Try as I might, I couldn't get it out of my mind, – that certain place, and bit by bit I got an overwhelming desire to know, just once, the full luxury of – *Enfin*, I sneaked in, and saw, and marvelled! Then I heard someone coming. There was only one way out for the gentry, of course, but for me there was another – and there was nothing for it but to use that. [*MISS JULIA, who has taken the lilac sprig, lets it fall on the table.*] Once I'd crawled out, I started to run; I crashed through the raspberry canes, ran over

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a strawberry patch and out into the rose garden. There I caught sight of a pink dress, and a pair of white stockings – it was you! I crawled under a pile of weeds – right into it; you can imagine what it was like, sharp thistles and wet stinking soil. And I watched you walking among the rose trees. And I thought, 'If it's true that a thief could go to paradise and live with the angels, it's odd that, here on God's earth, a poor farm lad like me can't go into the castle grounds and play with the Count's daughter'.

MISS JULIA [*sentimentally*]: Do you think all poor children would have felt like that?

JEAN [*hesitating at first, then with certainty*]: All poor . . . ? Yes, of course, of course.

MISS JULIA: It must be terrible to be poor.

JEAN [*much moved, and with great emphasis*]: Oh, Miss Julia – a dog can lie on her ladyship's sofa, a horse can have his nose stroked by a young lady's hand, but a servant . . . (*in a different tone*) – Oh, now and then you find one with enough push to work his way up in the world, but how often does that happen? Anyhow, do you know what I did then? I jumped into the mill-stream with all my clothes on, and they fished me out and gave me a thrashing. But the next Sunday, when my father and everyone else at home were going over to my grandmother's, I managed it so that I stayed behind. I scrubbed myself with soap and hot water, and put my best clothes on, and went to church so as to catch a glimpse of you. I saw you, and made up my mind to go home and die. Only I wanted to die some beautiful, pleasant way, with no pain. Then I remembered that it was dangerous to sleep under an elder-tree. We had a big one in full bloom, so I pulled all the flowers off and put them in the oat-bin and made a bed for myself. Have you ever noticed how smooth oats are – it's like touching human skin. Well, I pulled the lid down and shut my eyes and went to sleep – only I didn't die, as you can see, but I woke up feeling very ill. I don't know what it was I wanted,

MISS JULIA

really; there wasn't the slightest hope of winning you, of course; but you stood for the utter hopelessness of ever rising out of the class where I was born.

MISS JULIA: You know, you tell it very well — did you ever go to school?

JEAN: For a while. But I've read a lot of novels, and I go to the theatre. Besides, I've listened to better-class people talking — that's where I've learnt the most.

MISS JULIA: Do you stand there listening to what we say?

JEAN: Of course! And I've heard a lot, too — when I've been on the box of the carriage, or rowing the boat. I once heard you, Miss, and one of your young lady friends —

MISS JULIA: Oh! What did you hear?

JEAN: Well, I wouldn't like to tell you. But it was a bit of an eye-opener; I couldn't think where you'd learnt such words.

Perhaps, after all, there isn't as much difference as they think between your class and mine.

MISS JULIA: You ought to be ashamed of yourself. We do at least behave ourselves when we're engaged.

JEAN [*looking her in the eye*]: Are you quite sure? There's no point in my lady playing the innocent with me.

MISS JULIA: The man I was in love with was a beast.

JEAN: That's what you all say — afterwards.

MISS JULIA: All?

JEAN: So it seems. Anyhow, I've heard plenty of girls say it — at times like that.

MISS JULIA: What times?

JEAN: The kind we're talking about. Let's see — the last time —

MISS JULIA [*getting up*]: Stop! I won't hear any more.

JEAN: She wouldn't, either. How odd! Well, if you'll excuse me, I'll go to bed.

MISS JULIA [*softly*]: What, go to bed on Midsummer Night?

JEAN: Yes, dancing with that crowd out there really doesn't amuse me.

MISS JULIA: Then get the key of the boathouse and row me out

MISS JULIA

on the lake. I want to see the sunrise.

JEAN: Would that be wise?

MISS JULIA: You seem very careful about your reputation.

JEAN: What if I am? I don't want to be made to look a fool — or be thrown out without a reference; you see, I mean to get on in the world. Besides, I feel I ought to think of Kristin.

MISS JULIA: Oh, so it's Kristin now!

JEAN: Yes, but I'm thinking of you too. If you take my advice, you'll go to bed.

MISS JULIA: Do you think I'm going to be ordered about by you?

JEAN: Just this once — it's for your own good. Please! It's getting very late, and you can lose your head with sleepiness just as much as with wine. Do go to bed. Besides — listen — that sounds as if the others are coming to look for me. If they find us together, you're done for.

[*The song of the villagers is heard approaching.*]

VOICES: A lady walked in the wood so true —

Sing fol dol derry dol day-oh —

And in the wood she . . . lost her shoe!

Singing fol dol derry dol day.

'Oh, wed me soon', the maid did say —

Sing fol dol derry dol day-oh —

'Tis half a year since we did stray —'

Singing fol dol derry dol day.

'This snowy wreath', her love replied —

Sing fol dol derry dol day-oh —

'Last week bestowed I on my bride.'

Singing fol dol derry dol day.

MISS JULIA: I know my people. I love them, and they love me.

Let them come in, and you'll see.

JEAN: No, Miss Julia, they don't love you. They take the food you give them, but as soon as your back's turned, they spit! That's the truth. Listen — can't you hear what they're singing? No, don't listen to them.

MISS JULIA

MISS JULIA [*listening*]: What is it?

JEAN: It's a dirty song — about you and me.

MISS JULIA: How disgusting! The filthy cowards.

JEAN: The rabble are always cowards. The only way to fight them is to run away.

MISS JULIA: But where? We can't get out now — and we can't go to Kristin's room.

JEAN: Well then, into mine — there's nothing else for it. You can trust me; I'm your friend, and I shall respect you — honestly I will.

MISS JULIA: But . . . suppose they looked for you there?

JEAN: I'll bolt the door, and if they try to break it down, I'll shoot. [*on his knees*] Do come, I beg you!

MISS JULIA [*significantly*]: And you promise me —

JEAN: I swear it.

[*MISS JULIA hurries off to the right, JEAN follows her eagerly.*]  
 THE PEASANTS enter, led by a fiddler. They are in holiday clothes, with flowers in their hats. They have a barrel of small-ale and a keg of rough brandy, both wreathed with leaves, that they put on the table. They fetch glasses, and, when they have drunk, they take hands and dance round in a circle, singing 'A lady walked in the wood . . .' At the end, they dance out still singing.

MISS JULIA comes in alone. When she first sees the disorder in the kitchen, she clasps her hands. Then she takes out a powder puff and powders her face.

JEAN [*entering — exultant*]: There, you see? And you've heard for yourself now — do you still think we can stay here now?

MISS JULIA: No, you're right — but what are we to do?

JEAN: Run away. Travel abroad — far from here.

MISS JULIA: Abroad? But where?

JEAN: Switzerland — or the Italian Lakes — you've never been there?

MISS JULIA: No, is it beautiful there?

JEAN: It's always summer — orange trees — laurels . . . ah!

MISS JULIA: But what should we do there?

MISS JULIA

JEAN: I'll start a hotel — a good one, for high-class visitors.

MISS JULIA: A hotel?

JEAN: Yes, There's a life for you! New faces all the time — new languages — no time to brood or get irritable — no wondering what to do next, there's always a job to hand: night and day there are bells to answer, trains to meet, and buses coming and going, and the gold rolling into the till all the time. Yes, there's a life for you!

MISS JULIA: A life for you, but what about me?

JEAN: But you'd be the mistress of the house — you'd be a great asset to the firm with your looks and your style. Why, we couldn't fail — not possibly! You'd sit in the office like a queen, and one touch on the electric bell'd bring all your slaves running. The visitors would file past your throne, and timidly lay their wealth on your desk — you've no idea how meek people are when they have a bill in their hands. And I'd cook the bills, too, and you'd sugar them with your sweetest smiles. Yes, let's get away from here — [*he pulls a time-table from his pocket*] now — by the next train. Yes, we could be in Malmo by 6.30, Hamburg by 8.40 tomorrow. Frankfurt — and on to Basle the same day, then by the St Gothard to Como in — let's see — three days. Only three days!

MISS JULIA: It sounds wonderful. But you must give me the courage, Jean — put your arms round me and say you love me.

JEAN [*hesitantly*]: I'd like to, but I daren't — not in this house, not again. I do love you, though — truly — you believe that, don't you, Miss Julia?

MISS JULIA [*with becoming shyness*]: 'Miss'? Call me Julia. There are no barriers between us now. Call me Julia.

JEAN [*troubled*]: I can't. There'll always be barriers between us as long as we're in this house; I can't forget what I've been. And there's the Count — I've never met anyone I respect like him. I've only got to see his gloves on a chair, and I feel small; if his bell up there rings, I jump like a frightened horse. Why, when I look at his boots standing there, all stiff and proud, I

MISS JULIA

feel I want to bow and scrape. [*He kicks the boots over.*] It's nothing but superstition — a tradition that's been dinned into us from childhood — it takes time to get over that. But if you'll only come abroad — to a country where there's a republic, and then they'll bow and scrape to my porters' livery — they shall go on their knees, you'll see. But I won't, I'm not meant for that sort of thing, I've got more in me — I've got character; and once I get hold of that first branch, you'll see me climb right to the top. I'm a servant now, but by next year I'll own a hotel; in ten years, I'll make enough to retire. Then I'll go to Rumania, and I'll let them pin decorations on me, and I may — mind you, I say *may* — finish up as a Count.

MISS JULIA: Good — good!

JEAN: Yes, you can buy a title in Rumania — so you'll be a Countess after all — *my* Countess.

MISS JULIA: What do I care about that? I'm finished with all that sort of thing — only tell me you love me, then I don't care what I am.

JEAN: I'll tell you so all day — later on, but not here. It's most important that we don't get sentimental, or we shall spoil everything. We must do it all cold-bloodedly, like sensible people. [*He takes a cigar, cuts the end, and lights it.*] Now you sit there, and I'll sit here, then we can talk it over just as if nothing had happened.

MISS JULIA [*desperately*]: My God, how can you be so callous!

JEAN: Me? Nobody's more soft-hearted than me — only I've got self-control, that's all.

MISS JULIA: And a little while ago you could kiss my shoe!

JEAN [*brusquely*]: A little while ago, yes; we've got something else to think about now.

MISS JULIA: How can you be so cruel?

JEAN: It's only common sense. We've made fools of ourselves once, why do it again? The Count may come back at any moment now — we've got to settle everything before he

MISS JULIA

comes. Now, what do you think of my plans — do you agree?

MISS JULIA: They seem all right. There's only one thing: a big venture like that'd need a lot of capital — have you got it?

JEAN [*biting his cigar*]: Me? Of course I have; I'm a skilled man; I've got my years of experience, and my languages. The way I look at it, that's the sort of capital that counts.

MISS JULIA: But it won't buy you a railway ticket.

JEAN: That's true — that's why I need a backer who can put up the money.

MISS JULIA: Where will you find one — at such short notice?

JEAN: I leave that to you — if you want to come in with me.

MISS JULIA: But I can't, I haven't a penny of my own.

JEAN [*after a pause*]: Then it's all off.

MISS JULIA: But . . . ?

JEAN: We're back where we were.

MISS JULIA: Do you think I'm going to stay in this house as your mistress? And have them all whispering behind my back. How could I look my father in the face after this? No — take me away — I couldn't bear the scandal. Oh, God, what have I done? Oh God — Oh God!

[*She bursts into tears.*]

JEAN: Oh, so you're going to take that line, are you. What have you done? No more than plenty of other girls.

MISS JULIA: So you despise me now. [*Screaming hysterically*] I'm falling, I'm falling!

JEAN: Fall to my level, then, and I'll lift you up again.

MISS JULIA: What devil made me think you were attractive? Was it the attraction the weak feel for the strong — those who fall feel for those who are rising? Or was it love? Was that love? Do you know what love is?

JEAN: Me? You can take my word for it! — do you think I've never been there before?

MISS JULIA: That's no way to talk — you have a vulgar mind.

JEAN: That's the way I've been brought up — you must take me as I am. Now don't lose your head, and don't play the

MISS JULIA

fine lady with me — we're in the same boat now. Come on, my girl, and I'll treat you to something special.

[*Opening the drawer, he takes out the bottle of wine, and fills the two used glasses.*]

MISS JULIA: Where did you get that wine?

JEAN: The cellar.

MISS JULIA: My father's Burgundy.

JEAN: Well, can't his son-in-law drink it?

MISS JULIA: And I'm drinking beer!

JEAN: That only shows your tastes are lower than mine.

MISS JULIA: Thief!

JEAN: Are you going to start a hue and cry?

MISS JULIA: Oh! I've thrown in my lot with a thief! I must have been drunk — or walking in my sleep! On Midsummer Eve, the night of innocent fun —

JEAN: Innocent? Well!

MISS JULIA [*pacing up and down*]: Oh, was anyone on earth ever so miserable as I am now!

JEAN: What have you got to be miserable about? You've done very well for yourself. What about Kristin — how'd you think she'd feel?

MISS JULIA: I used to think servants had feelings, now I know they haven't; a servant's a servant.

JEAN: And a whore's a whore!

MISS JULIA [*falling on her knees and clasping her hands*]: Oh, God in Heaven, take my wretched life — lift me out of the filth I'm sinking into. Save me — oh, save me!

JEAN: I don't mind admitting I feel sorry for you. When I lay in the onion bed, that time, and saw you in the rose-garden, I tell you straight, I had the same dirty ideas as other boys.

MISS JULIA: And then you wanted to die for me?

JEAN: In the cat-bin? Oh, that was all talk.

MISS JULIA: Do you mean it was a lie?

JEAN [*beginning to feel sleepy*]: More or less. I once read something of the sort in a paper: a chimney-sweep who shut him-

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MISS JULIA

self in a chest full of elder-flowers — because he couldn't pay a maintenance order!

MISS JULIA: So that's the sort of man you are!

JEAN: Well, I had to think of something; women like that sort of talk.

MISS JULIA: Brute!

JEAN: *Merci!*

MISS JULIA: And now you've seen the back of the hawk!

JEAN: Well, not exactly its back!

MISS JULIA: So I had to be your lowest branch, did I?

JEAN: And the branch turned out to be rotten.

MISS JULIA: I'm to be the sign-board of your hotel —

JEAN: I'm the hotel, though.

MISS JULIA: — to sit in your office, attract your customers, and fake your bills.

JEAN: No, I'll see to that myself.

MISS JULIA: To think that a man could sink so low.

JEAN: You speak for yourself!

MISS JULIA: You servant! Lackey! Stand up when I speak to you!

JEAN: You servant's tart, you slut — shut your mouth and get out of here. You're a nice one to come nagging me about coarseness; no girl in my walk of life'd have made herself as cheap as you did tonight. Why even the meanest skivvy wouldn't throw herself at a man that way. Did you ever see a girl of my class carry on like that? I've never seen the like — except in the farmyard — or on the streets.

MISS JULIA [*crushed*]: That's right, hit me — trample on me — it's all I deserve — I'm dirt. But help me — help me out of it — if there is a way out!

JEAN [*more gently*]: I don't mind admitting my share of the honour of having seduced you — but do you think anyone in my position would have dared to as much as look at you unless you invited him? Why, even now I'm still amazed —

MISS JULIA: — and proud!

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MISS JULIA

JEAN: Well, why not? All the same, you were too easy to be really exciting.

MISS JULIA: Yes — hit me — hit me!

JEAN [rising]: No, I shouldn't have said that — I'm sorry. I don't hit anyone when they're down — least of all a lady. All the same, I'm glad I've found out that what dazzles us underrings is only tinsel, and the fine complexion's powder, and the polished nails are black-edged — and the handkerchief may be dirty in spite of its perfume. Still, I'm sorry to find that what I was striving for wasn't truer — more worth-while. It hurts me to see you fall so much lower than your own cook; it's like seeing the flowers beaten down into the mud by the autumn rains.

MISS JULIA: You talk as though you'd already risen above me!

JEAN: So I have. Don't you see, I could make you a Countess — you could never make me a Count.

MISS JULIA: I'm the child of a Count, which is more than you could ever be.

JEAN: That's right — but I might be the father of Counts, if . . .

MISS JULIA: But you're a thief — I'm not.

JEAN: There are worse things than being a thief — much worse. Besides, when I'm working in a house, I look on myself almost like part of the family — one of the children, almost. You don't call it thieving if the children pick a little fruit when the bushes are heavy with it. [With reawakening passion]: Miss Julia — you're a fine woman — much too good for the likes of me. You lost your head and were swept off your feet, and now you want to put things right by persuading yourself you were in love with me. But you weren't. You may have been attracted by my looks — if that's all, then your love's no better than mine. If all you wanted was the animal in me, that'd never do for me — when I can't get your love.

MISS JULIA: Are you sure of that?

JEAN: D'you mean that perhaps . . . ? I could love you, yes, I

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MISS JULIA

certainly could. You're beautiful, refined — [He goes to her and takes her hand] elegant — charming when you want to be. If you once set a man's heart on fire, it wouldn't be likely to go out. [Putting his arm round her waist] You're like hot wine with spices, and one kiss from you. . . .

[He tries to lead her away, but she gently frees herself.]

MISS JULIA: Let go of me — that's not the way to win me.

JEAN: Then how? 'That's not the way', eh? If you don't want kisses and pretty speeches — or someone who'll plan for you, and save you from degrading yourself — then how?

MISS JULIA: I don't know how; I've no idea. I hate you — as I'd hate a rat. But I can't free myself from you.

JEAN: Come away with me.

MISS JULIA [straightening her dress]: Away? Yes, of course, we'll run away. But I'm tired — give me a glass of wine. [While JEAN pours it out, she looks at her watch.] We must talk things over first — there's still time.

[She empties her glass and holds it out for more.]

JEAN: Don't drink so much, it'll go to your head.

MISS JULIA: What does it matter?

JEAN: What does it matter? It's vulgar to get drunk. What were you going to say?

MISS JULIA: We'll run away; but we must talk it over first. At least I must — so far you've done all the talking. You've told me all about your life — now I'm going to tell you mine. Then we'll know all about each other before we start on our travels together.

JEAN: Just a minute. Look, excuse me — but think it over before you tell me any secrets you'll be sorry for later.

MISS JULIA: Aren't you my friend?

JEAN: For the moment — but don't rely on me.

MISS JULIA: You don't mean that. Anyhow, everybody knows my secrets. My mother wasn't a noblewoman — her people were quite ordinary. She was brought up according to all the theories of her time about the equality and freedom of women

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MISS JULIA

and all that. She could never bear the thought of marriage; when my father proposed she swore that she would never be his wife, but she married him in the end. As far as I can make out, I was born against her wishes. Then she wanted to bring me up to lead what she used to call 'a child's natural life'; I was to learn everything a boy does—just to prove that a woman's as good as a man. I had to wear boy's clothes, and learn how to handle a horse—though I wasn't allowed in the dairy. I had to groom the horses, and harness them, and hunt; I even had to try to learn farm work. On our estate, the men were given women's work and the women men's—till everything went to pieces, and we were the laughing-stock of the whole neighbourhood. At last my father seemed to have woken up from his trance; he asserted himself at last, and things were run his way. My mother became ill; I don't know what was the matter with her, but she kept having convulsions. She used to hide herself in the attics or out in the grounds—sometimes she'd stay out all night. Then came the big fire—you must have heard about it. The house and the stables and the barns were all burnt down, and in a way that made it look as if it were started on purpose, because it happened the very day after the insurance expired, and the new premium that my father had sent was delayed through the messenger going astray, so it got there too late.

[*She fills her glass and drinks.*]

JEAN: Don't drink any more.

MISS JULIA: Oh, what does it matter? . . . We hadn't a roof over our heads, and we had to sleep in the carriages. My father didn't know where to get the money to rebuild. Then my mother advised him to try to borrow it from a friend she'd known all her life—a brick-manufacturer not far from here. My father got the loan—and to his great surprise, without any interest; so the house was rebuilt. [*She drinks again.*] Do you know who started the fire?

JEAN: Her ladyship—your mother.

MISS JULIA

MISS JULIA: And who do you think the brick-manufacturer was?

JEAN: Your mother's lover.

MISS JULIA: Do you know whose money it was?

JEAN: Wait a minute. . . . No, I don't know that.

MISS JULIA: It was my mother's.

JEAN: In other words, the Count's—unless their estates were separate.

MISS JULIA: They were. My mother had some money of her own that she wouldn't let my father touch; she'd invested it—with the friend.

JEAN: . . . Who pinched it?

MISS JULIA: Exactly—he kept it. My father found out. He couldn't pay his wife's lover, he couldn't prove it was his wife's money. That was my mother's revenge, because he'd made himself master in his own house. For a time he felt like shooting himself—as a matter of fact, they say he tried to, and failed. Well, in the end, he lived it down and made my mother pay for what she'd done. You can guess what those first years were like for me! I was sorry for my father, but I sided with my mother—you see, I didn't know the true story then. She taught me to mistrust and hate men—I expect you've heard she hated the whole sex—and I swore to her that I'd never be a slave to any man.

JEAN: Yet you were engaged to the County Attorney.

MISS JULIA: Only to make him *my* slave.

JEAN: And he wouldn't be.

MISS JULIA: Oh, he would have been all right, if I'd let him, but I got tired of him.

JEAN: So I saw—in the stable-yard.

MISS JULIA: What did you see?

JEAN: That's what I saw! How he broke off the engagement.

MISS JULIA: That's a lie—I broke it off. Did he say he broke it?—The brute!

JEAN: I'm not so sure he was a brute. So you hate men, Miss Julia.

MISS JULIA

MISS JULIA: I do . . . but there are times when a woman is weak . . . and then . . .

JEAN: Do you hate me?

MISS JULIA: More than I can say! I'd willingly shoot you like an animal —

JEAN: — quick as a flash — the way they shoot a mad dog, eh?

MISS JULIA: Exactly.

JEAN: But you haven't got a gun — and there isn't a dog here — so what are we to do?

MISS JULIA: Go abroad . . .

JEAN: — and make life hell for each other for the rest of our days?

MISS JULIA: No, to enjoy ourselves. For a few days — a week — as long as we can — and then die.

JEAN: Die? That's silly. If you ask me, it'd be better to start the hotel.

MISS JULIA [*without listening to JEAN*]: By Lake Como, where the sun's always shining, and the oranges shine on the trees, and the laurels have fresh green leaves at Christmas-time.

JEAN: Lake Como is a rainy hole, and I never saw any oranges there except on fruit stalls. But it's full of tourists, and there are plenty of villas to rent to loving couples, and that's a paying game — you know why? Because they take a six months' lease, and then leave after three weeks.

MISS JULIA [*naïvely*]: Why after three weeks?

JEAN: Because they quarrel, of course. But they have to pay the rent just the same. Then you let the house again, and so it goes on; there's always plenty of lovers, even though they don't last.

MISS JULIA: Then you don't want to die with me.

JEAN: I don't want to die at all; I enjoy life. Besides, I think suicide's a sin against my Maker who gave us our life.

MISS JULIA: Do you mean to say you believe in God?

JEAN: Of course I do. And I go to church every other Sunday. Look, to tell you the truth, I'm tired of all this — I'm off to bed.

MISS JULIA

MISS JULIA: Oh, are you! Do you think I'm going to be content with that? Don't you know a man owes a woman something when he's dishonoured her?

JEAN [*faking out his purse and throwing a silver piece on the table*]: You're welcome! I'm sure I don't want to be in anyone's debt.

MISS JULIA [*pretending to ignore the insult*]: You know the legal penalty — ?

JEAN: Too bad there's no legal penalty for a woman who seduces a man!

MISS JULIA: What else is there for us but to go abroad — marry and then separate?

JEAN: And suppose I won't take on such a bad match.

MISS JULIA: A bad match?

JEAN: Yes, for me. My stock's better than yours — no one in my family ever committed arson.

MISS JULIA: How do you know?

JEAN: You can't prove otherwise, since we haven't any pedigree — except in the Parish records. But I've seen your family tree in a book on the drawing-room table. D'you know who founded your family? A miller, who let the king sleep with his wife one night in the Danish war. I haven't got that sort of ancestor, but I can found a family myself.

MISS JULIA: This is what I get for giving my heart to a wretch like you — for sacrificing my family honour —

JEAN: Dishonour. Well, I warned you; I told you not to drink or you'd say something you'd be sorry for. It doesn't do to talk too much.

MISS JULIA: Oh, I wish it hadn't happened — what can have made me do it? If only you loved me!

JEAN: Oh, for the last time — what do you expect me to do? Burst into tears? Jump over your hunting crop? Kiss you, and lure you down to Lake Como for three weeks — and all the rest of it? What do you expect? I've had just about enough of this — it's always the way if you get mixed up with women. Now



MISS JULIA

Look, Miss Julia — I can see you're unhappy, I know what you're going through — but I can't understand you. *We never carry on like this; we don't hate each other. With us, love's just a game — something to do in our time off; we haven't got all day and all night for it, like you. I believe you're ill — yes that's it, you must be ill.*

MISS JULIA: Oh, talk kindly to me — be human.

JEAN: You be human yourself, then; if you spit on me, you must expect me to wipe it off on you.

MISS JULIA: Help me — help me. Just tell me what to do — how to get out of this.

JEAN: Good God, if only I knew myself!

MISS JULIA: I've been a fool — out of my mind — but isn't there *some way out?*

JEAN: Stay here and keep your mouth shut — no one knows.

MISS JULIA: But they must! The farm people know — and Kristin knows.

JEAN: They don't know; and anyhow they'd never believe it.

MISS JULIA [*slowly*]: But — but it might happen again.

JEAN: That's true.

MISS JULIA: And — the consequences?

JEAN [*Frightened*]: The consequences! What a fool I was not to think of that! Well, there's only one thing to do — you must clear out — at once. I can't go with you, that would ruin everything; you must go by yourself — abroad — anywhere you like.

MISS JULIA: Alone? Where? *I can't!*

JEAN: You must. Before the Count comes back too. You know what'll happen if you stay: after the first step — well, the damage is done, so why not carry on! Then you get a bit careless — till in the end you're caught! No, you must get away. Then write to the Count and confess. Only don't go and mention my name — he'd never guess — I don't expect he'd be too keen to find out, anyway.

MISS JULIA: I'll go if you'll come too.

MISS JULIA

JEAN: Are you off your head, woman? Miss Julia running away with her footman? It'd be in all the papers the next day, and that'd finish the Count.

MISS JULIA: I can't go — I can't stay. Help me, I'm so tired — so terribly tired. Order me! That would start me off, but I can't do anything for myself — I can't even think any more.

JEAN: Now you see what you gentry are worth. Why should you strut about and turn up your noses as if you were the lords of creation? All right, you can take orders from me. Go up and get dressed — get some money for the journey — and then come down here.

MISS JULIA [*half-whispering*]: Come up with me!

JEAN: To your room? You're crazy! [*He hesitates a moment.*] No — get out. Quick.

[*He takes her by the hand and pulls her to the door.*]

MISS JULIA [*as she goes*]: You might speak nicely to me, Jean.

JEAN: An order always sounds cruel — now you know what it feels like.

[*JEAN, left alone, with a sigh of relief, sits at the table and takes out a notebook and pencil. Every now and then he reckons up aloud; apart from that, he continues in dumbshow till KRISTIN comes in, dressed for church. She has a white tie and a shirt-front in her hand.*]

KRISTIN: Good Lord, what a mess the place is in — what have you been up to?

JEAN: Oh, Miss Julia dragged a whole crowd in. You must have slept soundly — didn't you hear anything?

KRISTIN: I slept like a log.

JEAN: And you're dressed for church already!

KRISTIN: Yes — didn't you promise to go to Communion with me?

JEAN: Oh, yes, so I did. And you've brought my things. Give me a hand with them. [*He sits down. There is a pause, while KRISTIN helps him on with the false front and the tie.*]

JEAN [*sleepily*]: What's the lesson for today?

KRISTIN: The beheading of John the Baptist, I think.

MISS JULIA

JEAN: Oh, that'll go on for hours. Look out, you're choking me. Oh Lord, I'm sleepy!

KRISTIN: What have you been doing, up all night? You look ready to drop!

JEAN: I've been sitting here talking with Miss Julia.

KRISTIN: She doesn't know how to behave, *that* she doesn't!

JEAN [*pause*]: Look — Kristin —

KRISTIN: Well?

JEAN: It's funny when you come to think of it. . . Her!

KRISTIN: What's so funny?

JEAN: The whole thing. [*Pause*.]

KRISTIN [*looking at the half-empty glasses on the table*]: And have you been drinking together, too?

JEAN: Yes.

KRISTIN: For shame! Look me in the face.

JEAN: Yes.

KRISTIN: Oh, how could you! How could you?

JEAN [*after a moment*]: Well, there it is.

KRISTIN: Fugh, I'd never have thought it, *that* I wouldn't. Oh, for shame!

JEAN: You don't mean to say you're jealous of her?

KRISTIN: Not of her, no; if it had been Clara or Sophie I'd have scratched your eyes out. I don't know why, but that's the way it is. No, this really was disgusting!

JEAN: You're angry with her, then?

KRISTIN: I'm angry with you. Oh, it was wicked of you, downright wicked. That poor girl, I tell you, I'm not stopping here another day — not in a house where you can't respect your betters.

JEAN: Why should you respect them?

KRISTIN: Yes, you may well ask that, Mr. Clever. But you wouldn't go working for people who don't know how to behave. It'd be degrading if you ask me!

JEAN: You ought to be proud to know they're no better than us.

KRISTIN: Well, I'm not. What's the use of trying to better

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MISS JULIA

yourself if they're no better after all? Besides, what about the Count? Think of all he's had to put up with in his time! No, I don't stay in this house another day. And with a fellow like you, too! If it had been the County Attorney — someone a bit better —

JEAN: Here, wait a minute —

KRISTIN: Oh, you're all right in your way, but class is class all the same; that's a thing I never forget. My Lady was always so proud, too; so off-hand with men, that you'd never think she'd go and give herself . . . and to a man like you! Why, she wanted to have poor Diana shot for going with the porter's mongrel! Well, there it is. I'm not staying here — on the 24th of October, I leave.

JEAN: And then?

KRISTIN: Yes, come to think of it, it's high time you looked for another place, too, since we're going to get married.

JEAN: But what kind of work? I couldn't get a place like this if I was married.

KRISTIN: Of course not, but you could get a job as a porter — or a commissionaire in some Government building. You won't get fat on Government pay, but it's regular — and there's a pension for the widow and children.

JEAN [*with a wry face*]: That's all very fine, but I've no intention of dying for my wife and children just yet. I don't mind telling you I've got a little more ambition than that.

KRISTIN: You may have ambition, but you've got your duty too, and don't you forget it.

JEAN: I know all about my duty without you nagging me. [*He is listening for something off-stage.*] Still, we've got plenty of time to think about that later. Go and get ready, and then we'll go to church.

KRISTIN: Who's that moving about upstairs?

JEAN: I don't know — probably Clara.

KRISTIN [*going*]: Do you think the Count could have come home without us hearing him?

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MISS JULIA

JEAN [*frightened*]: The Count? No, it couldn't be, he'd have rung.

KRISTIN [*as she goes*]: God help us! I've never seen the like of this.

[*The sun has risen now lighting the tops of the trees in the park. The light moves gradually, till it slants through the window. JEAN goes to the door and makes a sign.*]

MISS JULIA [*comes in; she is in travelling clothes, and carries a small birdcage, covered with a napkin, which she puts on a chair*]: I'm all ready.

JEAN: Ssh, Kristin's awake.

MISS JULIA [*she is extremely nervous throughout this scene*]: Does she suspect?

JEAN: Not a thing. My God, you look a sight.

MISS JULIA: Why, what's the matter?

JEAN: You're as pale as a ghost — and if you don't mind me saying so, your face is dirty.

MISS JULIA: Let me wash it, then. Here. [*She goes to the basin and washes her face and hands.*] Give me a towel. Oh, there's the sun!

JEAN: And all the goblins vanish!

MISS JULIA: Yes, there were certainly goblins about last night.

Listen Jean, come with me; I've got the money now.

JEAN [*doubtfully*]: Enough?

MISS JULIA: Enough to start with. Come with me, I can't travel alone today. Think of it — Midsummer Day in a stuffy train, jammed in with a lot of staring people; stuck in stations when you're longing to be moving. . . . No, I can't do it, I can't. I should remember other Midsummer Days — Midsummer Days when I was a child, and the church was all hung with birch and lilac; the dinner-table decorated for all our friends and relations; music and dancing in the park after dinner, and flowers and games. Oh, however far you run away, your memories follow in the luggage van — and regret and remorse, too!

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MISS JULIA

JEAN: I'll come with you — but now, at once, before it's too late. We must go this minute.

MISS JULIA: Get ready, then.

[*She picks up the cage.*]

JEAN: No luggage, though — that'd only give us away.

MISS JULIA: No, no luggage — only what we can take in the compartment with us.

JEAN [*fetching his hat*]: What's that? What on earth have you got there?

MISS JULIA: Only my greenfinch, I couldn't bear to leave him behind.

JEAN: Oh, for goodness sake! Have we got to drag a birdcage round with us? You're off your head. Put it down.

MISS JULIA: He's the only thing I want to take; he's the only living creature that loves me, now Diana's deserted me. Don't be so cruel — let me take him with me!

JEAN: Put it down, I tell you. And don't talk so loud or Kristin'll hear.

MISS JULIA: I can't leave him here with no one to look after him; I'd rather you killed him.

JEAN: All right, give me the little beast, I'll wring its neck.

MISS JULIA: Don't hurt him, will you? Don't — Oh, I can't!

JEAN: Well, I can — let's have it.

[*She takes the bird out of the cage and kisses it.*]

MISS JULIA: My poor little Greenie! Have you got to die because of your mistress, then?

JEAN: Oh, for goodness sake don't make a scene: your whole future's in the balance — the rest of your life. Hurry up! [*She snatches the bird from her, and, picking up a chopper, takes it over to the block. MISS JULIA turns away.*] You ought to have learnt to kill chickens, instead of revolver-shooting. . . . [*Brings down the chopper*] — then you wouldn't faint at a drop of blood.

MISS JULIA [*shrieking*]: Kill me — kill me too, if you can kill an innocent creature like that without turning a hair. I hate you!

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MISS JULIA

Now I hate you! There's blood between us! I wish to God I'd never seen you — I wish to God I'd never been born.

MISS JULIA [*going to the chopping-block as if she were drawn there against her will*]: No, I won't go yet — I can't — I must see. Hush, there's a carriage outside . . . [*She seems to listen, but she never takes her eyes from the block and the chopper*]. So you think I can't stand the sight of blood? You think I'm so weak? How I'd love to see your blood, and your brains, on a chopping-block! I'd like to see your whole sex swimming in a sea of blood, like this creature here. I think I could drink out of your skull, dabble my feet in your chest, and eat your heart roasted whole. You think I'm weak, you think I love you, just because something in me cried out for your seed! Do you think I want to carry your spawn under my heart, and nourish it with my blood — bear your child and take your name? Incidentally, what is your name? I've never heard your surname — if you've got one. I'm to be Mrs Doorkeeper or Madame Dustheap, I suppose! You dog, with my collar round your neck, you lackey with my crest on your buttons; I'm to share you with my cook, am I, and be the rival of my own servant? Oh . . . h! You think I'm a coward — you think I'll run away! No, I'm staying here, even if the heavens fall! My father'll come home, he'll find his desk broken open and his money gone. Then he'll ring — that bell there — two rings for the footman. Then he'll send for the police, and I shall tell him everything — everything! And thank God that'll be the end of it — if there is an end. He'll have a stroke and die, and that'll be the finish of all of us. And then there'll be peace — quiet — everlasting rest. They'll break his escutcheon over his coffin, his noble line'll be extinct. But the lackey's stock will go on — in a foundling hospital — he'll win his spurs in the gutter, and end in a gaol.

JEAN: There's the royal blood speaking — well done, my lady! Cram the miller back in his sack.

[*KRISTIN comes in, dressed for church, with a hymn-book in her hand.*]

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MISS JULIA

MISS JULIA [*running to her arms, as if for protection*]: Help me! Help me against this man!

KRISTIN [*cold and unmoved*]: This is a pretty sight for a Sunday morning. [*She sees the chopping-block.*] And what's all this mess you've made here? What does it all mean — all this shouting and screaming?

MISS JULIA: Kristin, you're a woman, you're my friend. Don't trust this man, he's a scoundrel.

JEAN [*somewhat shamefacedly*]: If you ladies are going to argue the point, I'll go and shave.

[*He slips out to the right.*]

MISS JULIA: Listen to me, Kristin, you must listen — you'll understand.

KRISTIN: I certainly don't understand this sort of behaviour! And where are you off to — you're dressed for a journey, and he had his hat on? What does it all mean?

MISS JULIA: Listen, Kristin, listen to me and I'll tell you everything.

KRISTIN: I don't want to hear anything about it.

MISS JULIA: You must listen.

KRISTIN: What is it, then? — Do you mean your carrying on with Jean? That doesn't worry me, it's none of my business. But if you're planning to take him away with you, I'll soon put paid to that!

MISS JULIA [*overwrought*]: Try to be reasonable, Kristin, and listen to me. I can't stay here — neither can Jean — so we must go abroad.

KRISTIN: Oh?

MISS JULIA [*suddenly*]: Here's an idea, though; suppose we all three go — abroad — to Switzerland. We'll start a hotel together, I've got money. Jean and I'll look after everything, and I thought you'd take over the kitchen. Wouldn't that be fine? Say you'll come, then that'll settle everything. Do say you'll come, dear Kristin.

[*She throws her arms round Kristin and strokes her.*]

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MISS JULIA

KRISTIN [*receiving the idea coolly*]: Well . . .

MISS JULIA [*urgently*]: You've never been abroad, Kristin — you ought to get out and see the world. You've no idea what fun it is, travelling by train — always seeing new people — new countries. When we get to Hamburg, we'll go to the zoo on our way through — you'll enjoy that; and we'll go to theatres and the Opera. And when we get to Munich, there'll be the museums: there are Raphaels and Rubens — the great painters, you know. You've heard of Munich, where King Ludwig lived — the king who went mad, you know; we'll go over his castles — there are still castles of his, furnished like a fairy-tale. And it's not far from there to Switzerland — and the Alps — think of the Alps, with snow on them in mid-summer; and oranges grow there, and laurels that are green all the year round. . . . [*JEAN is visible in the wings at the right; he is stropping his razor, holding the strap between his teeth and his left hand. He listens with amusement to what she says, now and then nodding approval. Still more urgently*]: And then we'll have a hotel — I shall sit in the office, while Jean stands and receives the guests, does the shopping, writes letters. There's a life for you! Trains to meet, and buses calling, bells to answer — upstairs and down in the restaurant — I'd make out the bills — I know how to cook them too. You've no idea how meek travellers are when it comes to paying bills. And you — you'll sit and run the kitchen — no standing at the stove, of course. You'll have to dress smartly, when you meet the visitors — you with your looks — no, I mean it — you'll soon get yourself a husband — a rich Englishman, probably — they're easy to catch. [*Getting slower*]: And then we'll get rich, and we'll build a villa on Lake Como; . . . of course it rains there now and then, [*dully*] . . . but there's sure to be sunshine too, even if there are clouds. And then. . . . Then we can come home again . . . here . . . or somewhere else —

KRISTIN: Now listen, Miss, do you really believe all that?

MISS JULIA [*crushed*]: Do I believe — ?

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MISS JULIA

KRISTIN: Yes.

MISS JULIA: I don't know — I don't believe anything any longer. [*She sinks down on the bench, and drops her head on to her arms as they lie on the table.*] Nothing — nothing at all.

KRISTIN [*looking to the right where JEAN is standing*]: Well, well, so you are going to run away?

JEAN [*shamefacedly, putting his razor on the table*]: Run away? Well, I wouldn't put it like that. You heard what Miss Julia suggests; she's tired now, because she's been up all night, but it's a good scheme and it might work.

KRISTIN: Now you listen to me! If you think I'm going to cook for that . . .

JEAN: You keep a civil tongue in your head when you talk about your mistress — d'you hear?

KRISTIN: Mistress!

JEAN: Yes, mistress.

KRISTIN: Well, well, listen to him!

JEAN: You'd better listen yourself for a change, and don't talk so much. Miss Julia's your mistress. And if it comes to that, who are you to turn up your nose at her for what she did?

KRISTIN: I've got too much self-respect to —

JEAN: — to be able to respect anyone else!

KRISTIN: — to go below my station! You can't say the Count's cook ever had anything to do with the groom or the swine-herd; you can't say that.

JEAN: No, you got yourself a nice steady chap — lucky for you.

KRISTIN: So steady that he sells the oats from the Count's stable.

JEAN: Who are you to talk? You get a commission on the groceries, to say nothing of bribes from the butcher.

KRISTIN: I don't know what you mean!

JEAN: So you can't respect your mistress any more! You indeed!

KRISTIN: Are you coming to church with me? After what you've been up to, you need a good sermon.

JEAN: No, I'm not going to church today. You go by yourself and confess your sins.

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MISS JULIA

KRISTIN: All right, I will, and I'll bring back enough forgiveness for you, too. Our Lord suffered and died on the Cross for our sins, and if we go to Him with faith and a contrite heart, He will take all our guilt on Himself.

MISS JULIA: Do you believe that, Kristin?

KRISTIN: I've believed it all my life, as sure as I stand here. I learnt it when I was little, and I've always believed it, Miss Julia. 'Where sin aboundeth, there grace aboundeth also.'

MISS JULIA: If only I had your faith — if only —

KRISTIN: That doesn't come without God's special grace, and that isn't given to everyone —

MISS JULIA: Who has it, then?

KRISTIN: That's the great secret of the Kingdom of Heaven, Miss Julia. God is no respecter of persons; the Last shall be First —

MISS JULIA: Then He must respect the Last.

KRISTIN [*continuing*]: — It is easier for a camel to pass through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Yes, that's how it is, Miss Julia. Well, I'm going now, by myself. And on my way, I'll tell the stable-boy not to let any horses out, in case anyone should want to get away before the Count comes back. Goodbye.

[*She goes.*]

JEAN: What a spitfire! And all because of a wretched bird!

MISS JULIA [*dully*]: Never mind the bird. Can you see any way out of this? Any end to it?

JEAN [*thinking*]: I can't.

MISS JULIA: What would you do in my place?

JEAN: In your place? Let me think. . . . A woman of your class, who's gone wrong. . . . I don't know. Yes, I do, though.

MISS JULIA [*she picks up the razor, and makes a significant gesture*]: Like this?

JEAN: Yes. But I wouldn't do it, mind you — that's the difference between us.

MISS JULIA

MISS JULIA: Because you're a man and I'm a woman? What difference does that make?

JEAN: Just the difference that there is between man and woman.

MISS JULIA [*with the razor in her hand*]: I wish I could. . . . I can't do it, though — any more than my father could — that time when he should have done it.

JEAN: No, he shouldn't: he had to have his revenge first.

MISS JULIA: And now my mother gets her revenge — through me.

JEAN: Haven't you ever loved your father, Miss Julia?

MISS JULIA: Yes — very much. But I must have hated him, too; I must have been hating him without realizing it. You see he taught me to despise my own sex — to be half woman and half man. Who's to blame for all this — my father, or my mother, or myself? Myself? I haven't a self; I haven't a thought that I don't get from my father, nor an emotion that I don't get from my mother. Even this last idea that all human beings are equal — that came from my fiancé — and then I call him a beast for his pains. How can I be to blame? Am I to put all the blame on Jesus, like Kristin? No, I'm too proud to do that — and too sensible, thanks to my father's teaching. As for the rich man not going to heaven, that's a lie; Kristin, with money in her savings bank, wouldn't get in. But who's to blame? Still, what does that matter? I'm the one who has to bear the blame and take the consequences.

JEAN: Yes, but — [*There are two sharp rings on the bell. Miss Julia leaps to her feet — Jean slips on his other coat.*] That's the Count — he's home! [*Going*] Suppose Kristin has . . .

[*He goes to the speaking-tube, taps on it, and listens.*]

MISS JULIA: Has he been to his desk yet?

JEAN: It's Jean, my lord. [*He listens, but the audience do not hear the Count's reply.*] Yes, my lord. [*Listens*] Yes, my lord, at once.

[*Listens*] Very well, my lord — in half an hour.

MISS JULIA [*quite distraught*]: What did he say? Oh, God, what did he say?

MISS JULIA

JEAN: He wants his boots and his coffee in half an hour.

MISS JULIA: Half an hour! Oh, I'm so tired; I can't do anything: I can't repent, I can't run away, I can't stay; I can't live, I can't die. Help me now! Order me, and I'll obey you like a dog. Do this last thing for me: save my honour, save my name. You know what I ought to do if only I had the will-power. *Will* me to do it – and command me to obey you.

JEAN: I don't know – I can't, now, either – I don't know why. It's just as if this coat stopped me. I can't order you now – not since the Count spoke to me – I can't explain it, it must be this livery I've put on my back. I really believe if the Count were to come down here now and order me to cut my throat, I'd do it on the spot.

MISS JULIA: Then pretend you're the Count and I'm you! You could play the part quite well just now, when you were on your knees; you were the aristocrat then all right. Oh, haven't you ever seen a hypnotist on the stage? [JEAN nods.] He says to his subject, 'Take that broom', and he takes it. Then he says, 'Sweep', and he sweeps.

JEAN: He has to be in a trance, though.

MISS JULIA [excited]: I'm asleep already. The whole room seems full of smoke – you look to me like an iron furnace – a furnace that's like a man dressed in black, with a tall hat. Your eyes are glowing like coals when the fire sinks down, and your face is a white blur like ashes. [The sunlight has reached the floor, and is now falling on JEAN.] Oh, it's warm and lovely – [she rubs her hands together as if she were warming them at a fire] and so light – and so peaceful.

JEAN [taking the razor and putting it into her hand]: That's your broom. It's daylight now – go out into the barn and . . .

[whispers in her ear.]

MISS JULIA [rousing herself]: Thank you – now I'm going to have peace at last. But before I go, tell me that the First can receive the gift of grace, too. Say it, even if you don't believe it.

JEAN: The First can have . . . No, I can't say that! Wait, though,

MISS JULIA

Miss Julia, I've got it! You're not the First any longer – you're among the Last!

MISS JULIA: That's true; I'm among the very Last – I am the Last. Oh, but now I can't go. Tell me to go – tell me again!

JEAN: I can't either, now – I can't!

MISS JULIA: 'And the First shall be Last' –

JEAN: Don't think – don't think. You're taking away my strength and making me a coward. What's that! I thought the bell moved. No – let's stuff it with paper. Fancy being so afraid of a bell! Yes, but it's something more than just a bell – there's someone behind it – a hand that sets it moving – and something else that moves the hand. Stop your ears then – simply stop your ears! But then it rings more than ever; it rings and rings till you answer it – and then it's too late. The police come . . . and then . . . [Two sharp rings from the bell. JEAN shrinks for a moment, and then straightens himself.] It's horrible – but there's no other way out. Go . . .

[With a firm step, MISS JULIA goes out through the door.]

CURTAIN