

HAZEL: Conjurer of romance?

STRAFOREL: Some call me: the Love Guru.

EDNA: Guru?

STRAFOREL: Verily.

EDNA: How did you come to be on my property to hear the children talking?

STRAFOREL: A minor detail, Madam, that we can quibble about at a later date. But at the moment, it appears that you have a problem.

EDNA: Yes, I suppose I do. My name is Edna. Edna Kru—

STRAFOREL: (*Interrupting and crossing quickly over to EDNA.*) Lovely to make your acquaintance, my dear. (*STRAFOREL takes EDNA'S hand and kisses it.*) Charmed, I'm sure.

EDNA: (*Giggling.*) Allow me to introduce you to my friend, Hazel.

STRAFOREL: (*Bowing.*) Madam!

EDNA: Guru, do you really think that such a plan might work as well as we hope?

STRAFOREL: It will. It is most simple.

EDNA: You must act quickly, you understand?

STRAFOREL: And say nothing!

EDNA: A make-believe abduction and stage-fight.

STRAFOREL: I understand perfectly.

EDNA: You must have skillful actors—I can't have my boy hurt. He is my only child!

STRAFOREL: I will duel the young valiant myself.

EDNA: Good. In that case, I shall fear nothing.

HAZEL: And take care to not harm my daughter in the least. She's supposed to be the mother of our future grandchildren!

STRAFOREL: Of course, Madam. You need not fear anything.

HAZEL: (*To EDNA.*) Ask him the price?

EDNA: For an abduction, good Guru, how much do you charge?

STRAFOREL: That depends, Madam, on the kind you wish; we have them at all prices. In an affair of this kind however, nothing should be spared.

If I were in your place, I should have a first-class abduction.

EDNA: (*Surprised.*) Then you have many classes?

STRAFOREL: Indeed I have. (STRAFOREL *pulls out a notebook, flipping through it as he begins making things up, ticking them off on his fingers.*)

I have the ordinary vulgar abduction in a cab, with two men dressed in black—that's rarely used; the daylight abduction, the midnight abduction; the pompous abduction in a limousine, with chauffeurs—brass buttons are extra—with mutes, brigands, gangsters, politicians, anything you like! The abduction in a post-chaise, with two, three, four, five, cars or cycles, is usually ad libbed; the discreet and quiet abduction, in a small foreign car—that one's rather lugubrious; the rollicking abduction, in which the victim is carried away in a sack; the romantic abduction in a boat—but a lake is necessary!—the Venetian abduction, in a gondola—ah, you have no lagoon! Moonlight abduction, or the abduction on a dark and starless night—those moonlight abductions are quite the style, though they are a little tricky to time!—Besides these, there is the abduction by torch-light, with cries and screams, and the report of gunfire; the brutal abduction, the polite abduction; the classical one with masks; the gallant abduction to the accompaniment of music; but the latest, most stylish of all, is the *alien* abduction!

EDNA: (*Scratches her head and turns to HAZEL.*) Well, what do you think?

HAZEL: Hm, what do you?

EDNA: I think that we should do everything in the best possible way, no expense spared. Let us give our young romancers something they'll not soon forget. Let's have it with everything!

STRAFOREL: (*Stopping in his tracks, a look of horror on his face.*) E—e—everything?

HAZEL: Of course!

STRAFOREL: (*Taking notes, his voice shaking.*) A first-class, then, with all the extras.

EDNA: That's it.

STRAFOREL: I shall return soon. (*To HAZEL.*) Remember, Madam, to leave open the door of your yard.

HAZEL: Very well, Guru, it shall be done.

STRAFOREL: (*Turning to go.*) A first-class abduction—with all the extras.

(STRAFOREL *exits SL, crying to himself.*)

HAZEL: What an honest man, he went without telling us the price!

EDNA: Everything is arranged. Now we'll live together, after demolishing the wall.

HAZEL: And in winter we'll have but one hearth and home!

EDNA: Our dearest wishes are about to be realized!

HAZEL: And we'll grow old together!

EDNA: Dear little Hazel!

HAZEL: Dear old Edna! *(They attempt to embrace over the wall.)* Oh! I almost forgot! I found the recipe to my baked apple pie.

EDNA: I have my recipe for my peach pie for you, too!

HAZEL: I have it here. *(Attempts to hand the paper over the wall, but EDNA cannot quite reach it.)* The thing to remember about this recipe is—

(KATHERINE and EDWARD enter from each side of the stage and see their mothers attempting to exchange recipes.)

KATHERINE: Oh!

EDNA: *(To HAZEL.)* Your daughter!

EDWARD: Oh!

HAZEL: *(To EDNA.)* Your son!

EDNA: *(To HAZEL.)* We must pretend to fight! *(Their exchange is transformed into a struggle. As EDNA struggles to reach the top of the wall, she drops the recipe she wrote for HAZEL.)* Ninny!

HAZEL: *(Dropping her recipe as well.)* Fool!

KATHERINE: *(Attempts pulling HAZEL away from the wall.)* Mother!

EDWARD: *(Attempts pulling EDNA away from the wall.)* Mother!

EDNA: Let us be!

HAZEL: She insulted me!

EDNA: She struck me!

HAZEL: Coward!

KATHERINE: Mother!

EDNA: Thief!

EDWARD: Mother!

HAZEL: Bandit!

KATHERINE: Mother!!

(KATHERINE and EDWARD succeed in separating the mothers.)

EDWARD: *(Dragging EDNA away)* Go in now, it's late.

EDNA: *(Trying to go to the wall again)* I can't control myself. Just let me—! *(EDWARD takes her by the arm and holds her back.)*

HAZEL: *(Also trying to return to the wall)* Glass!

EDNA: *(Being dragged backwards by EDWARD.)* All along the top of the wall!

KATHERINE: *(Dragging HAZEL out.)* The air is so damp! Think of your rheumatism!

(KATHERINE and EDWARD succeed in leading EDNA and HAZEL off-stage. KATHERINE enters SR and notices the recipe on the ground. She crosses to the recipe and picks it up, reading it.)

KATHERINE: What's this? *(KATHERINE begins reading out loud.)* "To my dearest friend, I am most anxious to see our children married and together. I know that your daughter will enjoy this recipe. The thing to remember is— *(Smiling.)* What is this?"

(KATHERINE continues reading to herself, and her smile slowly dies away. EDWARD enters SL and peers over the wall at KATHERINE.)

EDWARD: You remember not long ago, you said our story should be put into a poem?

KATHERINE: *(Dropping the recipe in surprise.)* Oh! *(KATHERINE turns and sees that it is EDWARD.)* It's you. Yes, I do remember.

EDWARD: Well, I have occasionally written verses.

KATHERINE: Are you going to write our story?

EDWARD: I am! Listen to this; I thought it out when I was walking. "The Mothers who are Mortal Enemies." Ahem! "On a dark and stormy night, when the stars were not too bright—"

KATHERINE: *(Frustrated.)* Oh!

EDWARD: *(Cutting short his speech.)* Er—

KATHERINE: *(Angrily.)* Oh!

EDWARD: What is the matter?

KATHERINE: I imagine I am too happy—that is—I'm nervous—I don't feel well. *(KATHERINE bursts into tears.)* I'll be well in a moment. Oh, let me be!

(KATHERINE turns her back and hides her face in a handkerchief.)

EDWARD: *(Surprised.)* I—I'll leave you for a moment then. *(EDWARD shuffles his feet for a moment, and then sees the recipe from HAZEL on the ground, takes a pencil from his pocket, and sits down.)* I'll just record our romantic story on this paper. *(EDWARD picks up the recipe, and starts to write; after a moment he notices the writing on the other side and reads aloud.)* "To my dearest friend, I am most anxious to see

our children married and together. I know that your son will enjoy this recipe. The thing to remember is— (*Smiling.*) What is this?

(EDWARD *continues reading to himself, and his smile slowly dies away.*)

KATHERINE: (*Wiping her eyes.*) Dear Edward would fall from the clouds if he knew! I must be careful!

EDWARD: (*Rising.*) Well, well, well!

KATHERINE: (*Stepping up to the wall.*) What is it?

EDWARD: (*Hiding the recipe.*) Nothing.

KATHERINE: You've said nothing about my dress today?

EDWARD: (*Looking over the wall.*) That color is not becoming. I always prefer you in pink.

KATHERINE: (*To herself.*) What is the matter? Can he have found out?

EDWARD: What did you say?

KATHERINE: Nothing. Now let me hear your poem.

EDWARD: No.

KATHERINE: Please?

EDWARD: No.

KATHERINE: But I want to hear it.

EDWARD: The verses are not good.

KATHERINE: But just a moment ago—

EDWARD: You are irritating.

KATHERINE: Oh, you are impossible lately!

EDWARD: And you sound like your mother.

KATHERINE: (*Gasping.*) How dare you!

EDWARD: It's hard to hear the truth, isn't it?

KATHERINE: Not as hard as knowing that this whole foolish affair was orchestrated by our mothers!

EDWARD: (*Shocked.*) How did you know that?

KATHERINE: (*Holding up the recipe.*) This!

EDWARD: (*Holding up the other recipe.*) And here also!

KATHERINE: So, the truth is out.

EDWARD: Yes.

KATHERINE: And all is lost.

EDWARD: Unless we were meant to find them and this is some sort of test.

KATHERINE: Or trick!

EDWARD: Precisely.

KATHERINE: So our love is safe?

EDWARD: (*Throwing the recipe to the ground.*) Hardly! They know our weakness now and will exploit it further shall I remain.

KATHERINE: What do you mean, “shall you remain?”

EDWARD: Don’t you see? Already they have set us at odds with one another and I find my love lessening by the second the more you speak.

KATHERINE: Because our mothers don’t hate each other?

EDWARD: (*Frustrated.*) What good is true love if there is no adversity to overcome with it? Tell me!

KATHERINE: Stop being childish!

EDWARD: I am not!

KATHERINE: Yes, you are. You’re—you’re an immature romantic!

EDWARD: I am not!

KATHERINE: Yes, you are.

EDWARD: Am not! And that’s final!

(EDWARD *sticks his tongue out at KATHERINE.*)

KATHERINE: Oh, very mature. You’re face is going to freeze that way.

EDWARD: (*Exasperated.*) I’m going away. Here I am treated like a child.

I shall have my revenge. I am going to seek my romance—true romance: love-affairs, duels, and—I will elope with actresses!

(EDWARD *rushes off SL.*) Yahaaaaaa!

KATHERINE: I shall forget you in a moment’s passing, Edward. (KATHERINE *closes her eyes and looks as though she is concentrating very hard. After a few moments, she opens her eyes in frustration.*) I was afraid of this. It’s not as easy as it looks in plays. I shall have to keep trying.

(Lights down/Curtain close.)