

DR. BRADMAN. I'm sure I should be charmed.

MADAME ARCATI. Goodnight, everyone. Next time we must really put our backs into it!

(With a comprehensive smile and a wave of the hand, she goes out, followed by CHARLES.)
(RUTH sinks down into the sofa, laughing helplessly. MRS. BRADMAN comes and sits left of the armchair. DR. BRADMAN picks up the séance table and puts the desk chair back upstage right, then comes back and puts the pouffe back in position downstage right. He then returns to left center.)

RUTH. Oh dear! ...oh dear!

MRS. BRADMAN. (Beginning to laugh too.) Be careful, Mrs. Condomine; she might hear you.

RUTH. I can't help it. I really can't. I've been holding this in for ages.

MRS. BRADMAN. She certainly put you in your place, George, and serve you right.

RUTH. She's raving mad, of course; mad as a hatter.

MRS. BRADMAN. But do you really think she believes?

DR. BRADMAN. Of course not. The whole thing's a put-up job. I must say, though, she shoots a more original line than they generally do.

RUTH. I should think that she's probably half convinced herself by now.

DR. BRADMAN. Possibly. The trance was genuine enough; but that, of course, is easily accounted for.

RUTH. Hysteria?

DR. BRADMAN. Yes - a form of hysteria, I should imagine.

MRS. BRADMAN. I do hope Mr. Condomine got all the atmosphere he wanted for his book.

RUTH. He might have got a great deal more if he hadn't spoiled everything by showing off... I'm really very cross with him.

(At this moment ELVIRA comes in through the French windows. She is charmingly dressed in a sort of *négligée*. Everything about her is grey; hair, skin, dress, hands, so we must accept the fact that she is not quite of this world. She passes between DR. and MRS. BRADMAN and RUTH while they are talking. None of them see her. She moves the fireplace, then comes round the sofa to below the piano, where she leans. She regards them with interest, a slight smile on her face.)

I suddenly felt a draught - there must be a window open.

DR. BRADMAN. (Looking.) No - they're shut.

MRS. BRADMAN. (Laughing.) Perhaps it was one of those what you may call 'ems that Madame Arcati was talking about.

DR. BRADMAN. Elementals.

RUTH. (Also laughing again.) Oh no, it couldn't be. She distinctly said that it was the wrong time of the year for Elementals.

(CHARLES comes in and moves to the armchair center.)

CHARLES. Well, the old girl's gone pedalling off down the drive at the hell of a speed. We had a bit of trouble lighting her lamp.

MRS. BRADMAN. Poor thing.

CHARLES. I've got a theory about her, you know. I believe she is completely sincere.

RUTH. Charles! How could she be?

CHARLES. Wouldn't it be possible, Doctor? Some form of self-hypnotism?

DR. BRADMAN. It might be. As I was explaining to your wife just now, there are certain types of hysterical subjects...

MRS. BRADMAN. George, dear, it's getting terribly late, we really must go home. You have to get up so early in the morning.

DR. BRADMAN. You see? The moment I begin to talk about anything that really interests me, my wife interrupts me.

MRS. BRADMAN. You know I'm right, darling - it's past eleven.

DR. BRADMAN. (Moves to CHARLES center.) I'll do a little reading up on the whole business; just for the fun of it.

CHARLES. You must have a drink before you go.

DR. BRADMAN. No, really, thank you. Violet's quite right, I'm afraid. I have got to get up abominably early tomorrow. I have a patient being operated on in Canterbury.

(MRS. BRADMAN goes to RUTH, below the sofa. RUTH rises.)

MRS. BRADMAN. It has been a thrilling evening. I shall never forget it. It was sweet of you to include us.

DR. BRADMAN. Goodnight, Mrs. Condomine. Thank you so much.

CHARLES. You're sure about the drink?

DR. BRADMAN. Quite sure, thanks.

RUTH. We'll let you know if we find any poltergeists whirling about.

DR. BRADMAN. I should never forgive you if you didn't.

MRS. BRADMAN. Come along, darling.

(The BRADMANS exeunt, followed by CHARLES.) (RUTH crosses to the piano, leans over ELVIRA and gets a cigarette and lights it, then crosses back to the fireplace as CHARLES comes back into the room.)

RUTH. Well, darling?

CHARLES. (Left end of the sofa. Absently.) Well?

RUTH. Would you say the evening had been profitable?