

~~Kingdom for the~~

Vulture

~~THE INTERCOM (ORIGINAL DRAFT)~~

~~ORIGINAL NOTES FOR:~~

~~THE INTERCOM~~

~~DADDY WON'T BUY ME A BOW-WOW~~

~~desert~~

~~AN UNIDENTIFIED PLAY~~

~~Characters:~~

~~CAPT. HAZLETT~~

~~HUSSAIN~~

~~BAKER~~

A KINGDOM FOR THE VULTURES.

A Play in Four Acts

by

Maurice Rowdon.

CHARACTERS.

PHILIP HAZLITT, a Captain.

HUSSEIN AL SHABAR, a landowner.

BAKER, the Captain's servant.

SHINGLETON, manager of the oil-camp.

LEONORA FRIEDMANN, employee of the oil-camp.

BADIA AL SHABAR, Hussein's wife.

MOHAMMED, a doctor.

FIRST ACT.

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SCENE: a flat sun-roof. On the right the top branches of a palm tree can be seen, and under them a garden bench, shaded. Beyond the house is open desert. It is a bright morning.

CAPTAIN HAZLITT and HUSSEIN AL SHABAR are discovered. HAZLITT is just raising a shot-gun to the level of his eyes. He takes aim slowly at something beyond the house.

Suddenly there is a flutter of wings. He raises his gun briefly with the flight of the bird, then fires. The fluttering ceases, and he draws himself up again.

HUSSEIN: You're a fine shot, Captain!

HAZLITT takes out the discharged magazine and hands the gun to HUSSEIN.

HUSSEIN: Tell your servant to go and bring it in, or the vultures are going to get there before you.

HAZLITT: I'll call him now. (Goes to the door leading down into the house) Baker!

HUSSEIN: He's European, then?

HAZLITT: Yes.

HUSSEIN: A soldier?

HAZLITT: One of my own men, the best servant I've had.

BAKER enters. He brings them lemon tea in glasses.

HAZLITT: Thank you, Baker. Look - (pointing out) I've

shot a partridge. Just bring it in before the vultures get it.

BAKER: Very well, sir.

He leaves.

HAZLITT: You've been very kind to me since I came here. That wine you sent me yesterday was excellent, and this morning more food came from your wife. Will you thank her?

HUSSEIN: I'll do more, Captain. I'll introduce you to her. She's a beautiful woman, and I know she wants to meet you. None of my own countrymen are allowed to see her. But you are European, therefore you are honourable.

HAZLITT: I shall be honoured to meet her.

HUSSEIN: And we shall go hunting together, eh? Would you like that: pig-hunting?

HAZLITT: I could try it.

HUSSEIN: In the hills, where there are flowers. I used to be the finest horseman in the country, Captain, until I started drinking. I could pick up a handkerchief off the ground going at full gallop. I couldn't do it now. It takes all my strength to aim a gun.

HAZLITT: I'll make you try it again. We'll go riding together.

HUSSEIN: One day I shall take you into the hills and show you my tribesmen. I shall show you how they bow their heads in front of me and kiss my hand. We're going to be friends, you and I. For you I'm Hussein, Must Hussein. Not Prince Hussein or Al Shabar.

HAZLITT: You are a prince?

HUSSEIN: You've heard nothing about me, then?

HAZLITT: No, nothing.

Armen: Two years? So young, and
parted so long!

Haylett: She left Europe to come
here about 2 years ago, just after
I was drafted into the army.

Armen: But is it really a
coincidence that you shd. have
been sent here?

Haylett: No....

HUSSEIN: Yes, Captain, I'm a prince. Miss Friedmann may be able to tell you something about me. Is she coming here tonight?

HAZLITT: Yes, for dinner.

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HUSSEIN: That's ^{will} going to be very exciting for you. How long is it since you saw her? ^{each other}

HAZLITT: ^{Nearly two years.} At least five years.

HUSSEIN: ^{Two} Five years! ^{She's young and parted so long!} When you are only friends? Get

HAZLITT: Close friends, yes.

HUSSEIN: You knew each other in Europe?

HAZLITT: Yes. It was five years ago that she left Europe to come here.

HUSSEIN: What a coincidence, then, that you should have been sent here too!

HAZLITT: No, I applied to come here. I put in my first application a year ago.

HUSSEIN: Ah, you applied...

HAZLITT: Do you know her?

HUSSEIN: I've often seen her, and I believe there's no woman to compare with her in the country. She has such a composure, Captain, such an air of nobility! I've seen her from afar, and loved her!

HAZLITT: I remember her as a beautiful young woman.

HUSSEIN: She is still. But I've never spoken to her. The only women I speak to apart from my wife are those I sleep with, - ^{only a few words.} the whores. But I want my children to grow up worthy of people like Miss Friedmann. I don't want them to be greedy for things as I am, ^{like me,} greedy for drink and women. One day you'll come to my house and see the clothes my children sleep in: you'll see their beds, their toys, the kind of

food they eat. You'll see for yourself that they're growing up like Europeans. Look, - my shirt, my jacket, my wrist-watch, even my handkerchief, - they're all from Europe. And I don't do it like a slave. I do it because I believe my people can only survive with the help of Europe. I'm lucky, Captain, I was brought up by European nurses, so I can set all the others an example here. Do you wonder I drink in this place? Wouldn't any man drink condemned to a stifling tomb like this, a tomb full of whores and spies?

*That's how
counts with me.*

HAZLITT: Yet I think I shall be happy here.

HUSSEIN: Happy to be out of Europe? ^{How} Can a European say such a thing?

HAZLITT: But I'm free here. I command the station. ^{I'm} ~~There is no one to give me orders. There is a captain, I've~~ alone, when I'm not on duty I can wear just what I like. ~~I feel happier in the clothes~~ *(indicating his clothes)* you see me in.

HUSSEIN (with a smile) ~~You would like to be a civilian again, wouldn't you? You'd like to be a soldier, wouldn't you?~~

HAZLITT: ~~Yes, in six months I shall be free!~~ ~~At my last post everything was regimental this or regimental that. All our dinners were together, in full dress, every evening. I used to wonder whether I was fitted for a life which left me no privacy at all, hardly a single moment alone or out of my uniform.~~ ^{And} ~~But now, with people like yourself and Miss Friedmann, I know I shall be happy, There'll be plenty of leisure, I shall go for rides early in the morning across the desert, in these clothes and without the eyes of a regiment on me. I shall go hunting.~~ ^{here} ~~for a less glorious last 6 weeks.~~

I shall have my friends to dinner, ^{learn to speak} ~~not other~~
^{the language fluently.} ~~officers and their wives.~~ And sometimes I
 shall go with you into the hills and meet the
 tribal chiefs.

HUSSEIN: The tribal chiefs?

HAZLITT: Why not?

HUSSEIN: But a European officer! ^{People aren't used to}

HAZLITT: ^{that here, my friend.} ~~Yes, you're surprised,~~ (He looks out at the
^{with a smile} ~~desert)~~ ^{It's strange,} I've come here as a
 soldier, and I even regret killing that bird.

~~I felt sorry and a deep shame when I saw a~~
~~bird.~~ Yet you are a warrior: you've killed
 thousands of these birds, perhaps even men.
 I've never killed a man. Yet I'm here as a
 soldier, feared by many of your people.

Perhaps I can change all that.

HUSSEIN: You want to change it, Captain? Might not
 that be dangerous?

HAZLITT: Why?

HUSSEIN: ^(after a pause) Do you know anything about Miss Friedmann's
 activities here?

HAZLITT: No, nothing. ^{All I know is that she is a} ~~I only know she has a job at~~
^{doctor at the} ~~the oil camp.~~ ^{local hospital.}

HUSSEIN: Well, then, it might not be so dangerous.

You mean just to exchange cordialities with
 the chiefs? Yes, a good idea, ^{especially since you}

HAZLITT: What are those 'activities'? ^{Speak no language}

HUSSEIN: Let her tell you about them herself, if she
 wants to. I'm no spy. ^{fluently.}

HAZLITT: But are they dangerous?

HUSSEIN: Let her tell you herself, Captain.

HAZLITT: Will she do that?

HUSSEIN: In time you'll learn everything about us.

My ambition has always
been to settle in a country
just like this. So I'm
not likely to feel the same
as the Captains before me.

In time all the Europeans want to leave us as if they were escaping a death-sentence. We need someone to put our faith in, Captain, someone who won't go away!

HAZLITT: Did the officers before me want to leave?

HUSSEIN: Sooner than anyone else.

HAZLITT: But I specially asked to come here. ~~How many of my predecessors did that?~~ I want to be here. ~~I'm proud of having a house like this. That's something.~~

Here says that his criticism is different from other officers

HUSSEIN: Look at the desert, Captain. A European must always be a stranger to that. Even the men who were born here are half-dead with boredom. When I drink I'm trying to drink that boredom away. You say you're alone here. But I don't want to be alone, Captain, ^{and} ~~very~~ ^{very} soon, when the heat begins, you are going to say the same. This place may be good for cockroaches, and scorpions, and rats, and ^{lizards,} ~~snakes,~~ but it's no good for a man who has seen Europe.

HAZLITT: Miss Friedmann didn't leave you. She has been here ^{nearly} ~~five~~ years.

HUSSEIN: True, she belongs to us more than any other European I know. But there's a reason for that. She has Mohammed the doctor, you see.

HAZLITT: Mohammed?

HUSSEIN: He's a surgeon at the local hospital, a man I detest. ~~She's like a wife to him, so they say.~~ We can talk freely, you and I?

HAZLITT: Of course.

HUSSEIN: He takes her into the hills. They go by aeroplane. What I mean is, Captain, she isn't

No, I don't say it.
But they're lovers,
70.

alone as you or any other officer would be.
He takes her among the people. They talk to
her as one of their own.

HAZLITT: Would they not do so to me?

HUSSEIN: That isn't likely, Captain. And it's going
to be the loneliness which will drive you away
from us.

HAZLITT: You detest this man, you say?

HUSSEIN: I do, Captain, and I wish you could use your
influence on Miss Friedmann -

HAZLITT: They are lovers? Did you say they were lovers?
HUSSEIN (after a pause, during which he looks into HAZLITT's
eyes): Yes, they are lovers, Captain.

The bell rings at the door below.

HUSSEIN: You've another visitor. I'll find my own way
out,

HAZLITT: You've been very kind to me.

HUSSEIN: If you need anything more, send your servant
across. Don't hesitate. We are only fifty
yards from each other.

There is a knock on the door and BAKER enters.

BAKER: Mr. Shingleton is waiting, sir.

HAZLITT: Who's that?

BAKER: From the ^{engineering} ~~off~~ camp, sir.

~~HUSSEIN: He's a very good engineer.~~

HAZLITT: Ah, yes. Show him up.

BAKER leaves.

HUSSEIN: Will you come and dine with me one day?

HAZLITT: I should be delighted.

HUSSEIN: In your uniform?

HAZLITT (with surprise) If you wish.

HUSSEIN: Excellent! Good bye, Captain.

They shake hands, and HUSSEIN leaves. HAZLITT

Shingletū : Are you fluent? ←

Haylitt : As much as we can be,
I suppose, without having lived among
them.

Shingletū : Well, I shall be able to
help you a little. I also can
speak the language, & I know
these inhabitants fairly well.

goes to the parapet and stares out across the desert.

SHINGLETON enters silently. He watches HAZLITT, whose back is turned towards him. A pause.

SHINGLETON: Good morning, Captain Hazlitt.

HAZLITT (turning): Ah, Mr. Shingleton, of the oil-camp? *engineer camp?*

SHINGLETON: Yes. Headquarters told me you'd arrived.

HAZLITT: Please sit down. It's shady here.

SHINGLETON: Miss Friedmann already knows you, I believe?

HAZLITT: Yes, we're old friends.

SHINGLETON: You're lucky to find an old friend in a post like this, Captain.

HAZLITT: No, I applied to come here.

SHINGLETON (with a glance at him): Oh, you did. Well, I trust your decision ^{to come here} was wise. Most people

where have you been?
are you here?
regret ~~coming here~~. But I can help you a little. I know these inhabitants fairly well,

and I can ^{also} speak the language. ~~So I~~

hope we shall always work together. Did your Headquarters give you some idea of your tasks here?

Shingleton: On the same sort of work?
Shingleton: You're not on special draft a regular soldier, I believe?

HAZLITT: They told me you wanted ^{needed more} guards on the ~~oil~~ camp. *how was it?*

HAZLITT: *Yes: I took up Arabic 4 yrs ago, - that's why I'm here.*

SHINGLETON: There are two things to remember: first that there has to be a sentry at the gate of the oil-camp both day and night, with bayonet fixed; ^{have to be sentries, at least 4 at a time, along the stretch of road now under construction: naturally this point will move further north as time goes on,} secondly, that you have to deploy your troops ^{ultimately after 6 weeks, when we are due to round the camp if there is any trouble. I finish the whole project, you will have to lead out find this house a little far away, Captain.}

Shingleton: Are you fluent in Arabic? How much can you speak?
HAZLITT: I can speak Arabic, but I don't know the dialect of this country. I can see.

Is that safe? I mean, you've ^{had some training,} & military ~~man~~ so you are in a position to know, but I just wonder if it's safe.

Shingleton: You're not a regular soldier, are you?
HAZLITT: Yes. It's a new idea, a good one. I think to officer these places with men who know the tongue.

HAZLITT: I can keep in touch by telephone. And I've arranged for a green Verrey light to be shot with men who know the tongue.

if I'm needed at the barracks urgently.

SHINGLETON: Well, think the matter over. There's always a danger - no, I should say possibility - of

~~your being cut off from the camp by the rebels, and that would be the end of us all.~~ ^{road} ~~But their only real line of attack would be along the road, you'd see, and that would be the end of us all.~~

HAZLITT: Still, I prefer to risk it.

SHINGLETON: ~~Are you keeping your barracks on the other side of the town?~~ ^{Shingleton looks at him in astonishment.}

HAZLITT: ~~Yes, and the last thing I want to do is to take a billet close to my troops.~~ ^{I'm not anxious}

SHINGLETON: ^(after a pause) Very well. All I can do is to give you advice, and so long as you know the dangers of being here, well and good.

HAZLITT: Is there likely to be trouble?

SHINGLETON: Not at all. But ^{that} to a great extent it depends on you.

HAZLITT: How?

SHINGLETON: That ~~all camp~~ ^{road} is a European concern, and your only job here is to protect it. That's understood. But clearly a rebel government is not in our interests. So you have to be very vigilant, you have to nip a rebellion in the bud if possible. It will save you a lot of trouble later on. That's where I can help you. I know every political figure of any note in this country, Captain, and I can usually give you some warning of trouble ahead.

HAZLITT: Now does one nip such a thing in the bud?

SHINGLETON: Not by shooting the leaders or putting them in prison. But by making a show of strength. Just show your strength. You'll be quite within your rights. (A pause.) Are you very friendly with Al Shabar?

-movement - and it is a bad rebel-movement, I assure you - is even better than no rebel-movement at all, that I've never taken steps to get rid of Miss Friedmann. She's the most useful member of my staff. Mohammed is a very decent and charming young man, but inclined to be hysterical. So long as the rebel-movement is under the sway of people like himself, we are safe. Now listen, Captain: when Miss Friedmann comes here to dinner tonight and sees you for the first time in ~~two~~ ^{two} years, she will perhaps try to influence you.

HAZLITT: How?

SHINGLETON: She will suggest to you that by protecting the ^{new road} ~~oil-camp~~ you are condoning the terrible starvation and disease in this country.

HAZLITT: Have I an argument against that?

SHINGLETON: Yes. ^{Well, the argument is obvious.} ~~Your argument is that~~ It doesn't matter to you how many rebellions there are provided only that they don't interfere with the ^{road} ~~oil-camp~~. ^{hastily, Captain,} And I must warn you that Miss Friedmann's conversation with you tonight will not be spontaneous.

That road is for the benefit of the country. It will increase trade here by at least half.

HAZLITT: Why not?

SHINGLETON: Because her friend Mohammed will be behind it. I only want you to have your eyes open.

A pause.

HAZLITT: ~~Has she laid a kind of trap for me, then?~~ I can't imagine such a thing!

Dr. Shingleton says oil firm keeps sheikhs rich and selfish. Shd. be nationalised

Shingleton -> Dupont?

Set?

SHINGLETON: She's under his thumb, Captain.

HAZLITT: How can you know?

SHINGLETON: Let me be frank with you. I have spies everywhere in the town. Gossip travels fast, and this isn't even gossip, Captain.

HAZLITT: She will be his instrument?

SHINGLETON: Now I don't want you to take these things too seriously, ~~Captain~~. These local melodramatics never come to anything. Afterwards one laughs about them. But one has to be warned of their coming.

HAZLITT: You are sure, then...

SHINGLETON: I know, Captain, I know. (He rises) Now as time goes on you may find this place affecting your mind and nerves. After nearly ten years here I've attained a kind of balance, so let's keep in touch with each other. The heat is going to start beating up very soon. So let's keep in touch with each other.

A pause.

SHINGLETON: Eh? What do you say to that?

HAZLITT (collecting himself): Of course. You were kind to warn me.

SHINGLETON (leaving): You know my 'phone number.

HAZLITT: Yes.

SHINGLETON: And for God's sake don't play into their hands! Good bye.

They shake hands. Just as SHINGLETON is about to turn away, the harsh call-to-prayer sounds out from the minaret nearby. The loudspeaker blares and deafens. HAZLITT's mouth opens in utter astonishment.

SHINGLETON laughs to see his face, and during the first pause in the prayer, he shouts across to him:

SHINGLETON: It's from the mosque! They call the faith-
ful to prayer by loudspeaker ~~nowadays!~~ ^{every day!}

He leaves. HAZLITT continues to stare across
the desert as the deafening yell begins again and the
CURTAIN slowly falls.

SCENE: a drawing room downstairs during the evening of the same day. It is dusk. On the right there is a door leading out into the garden, and on the left another door leading further into the house.

HAZLITT and BAKER are discovered. BAKER is laying the table for dinner: there are two places.

HAZLITT: You can light the candles now, Baker.

BAKER: Yes, sir.

He does this while HAZLITT goes about tidying the room.

BAKER: It's airless tonight, sir.

HAZLITT: Yes. I'll open the door.

HAZLITT opens the door leading into the garden and stands for a moment looking out.

HAZLITT: Did you find some ice after all?

BAKER: Yes, ^{low} sir. I went to ~~the~~ next house.

HAZLITT: To Hussein Al Shabar's?

BAKER: Yes, sir. He gave me these flowers. He said they were for the lady.

HAZLITT: Ah, yes!

BAKER: Do you need anything more for the table?

HAZLITT: No, Baker. Just be ready with the drink.

BAKER leaves and HAZLITT goes to the table. He begins carefully re-arranging the flowers.

^{Dr. Friedmann} LEONORA FRIEDMANN appears in the garden, then in the doorway. She watches HAZLITT at the table. A pause. SHE enters the room.

LEONORA: Philip.

He turns round swiftly.

Consciously

HAZLITT: ~~Nora!~~ (~~Running to her and taking her hands~~)
~~How wonderful you look!~~ But I thought you
 were coming by car. I heard nothing!

LEONORA: No. I sent the driver back at the edge of
 the town. I wanted to walk. (~~They gaze~~
~~at each other~~) It's ^{like} ~~so lovely~~ seeing you
 again, Philip.

HAZLITT: Was I right to come ?

LEONORA: Yes!

HAZLITT: You told me not to in your letters.

LEONORA: I was afraid. But you're here now. Let me
 look at you. (~~He draws her closer to him~~)
 You haven't changed! Thank God!

HAZLITT: Did you expect me to?

LEONORA: I was ~~so~~ afraid on my way up here. I thought
 you might have become -

A pause.

HAZLITT: What?

LEONORA (With a smile) Oh, you know: ^{hard} merciless... It
 sounds silly now that you're here before me.

HAZLITT: But suppose I ^{hard} am merciless? How could you
 tell so soon?

LEONORA: I can tell because your eyes are the same,
 because your smile is the same. There's
 hardly a wrinkle more on your face. (I remem-
 ber standing with you just like this five years
 ago. It's a terrible thing, to be separated
 from someone for five years.)

HAZLITT: ~~And~~ you were happy the moment you saw me just
 now?

LEONORA: Yes.

HAZLITT: And you forgive me?

LEONORA: Why 'forgive'?

HAZLITT: Well, I always felt I'd committed a most ~~dreadful~~ crime in your eyes... But am I allowed to kiss you? (With a laugh) I feel shy, you see! Suppose you ~~married~~ without letting me know? Suppose you ~~have~~ a child? After all, five years - ?

They kiss.

HAZLITT: Come, sit down. (He pulls out a chair for her. Lying across it is his riding-whip. They see it and glance at each other for a moment) Do you know what that is for, ~~darling?~~ (He takes it up) It's for beating my ~~soldiers~~ ^{men} with! (He laughs and playfully pushes a lock of her hair across her face) You haven't got over it yet. You never will perhaps.

LEONORA: (sitting down): I shall try.

HAZLITT: But it seems to me so childish! I can hardly believe you stayed away for five years just because of that. What a terrible will you have, Leonora! It advances slowly, like a huge iron monster, and nothing can stop it. I arrive here and find you don't hate me, - you don't even want to hate me! Yet your will made you stay away from me, and if I hadn't come here perhaps we should never have seen each other again. (He stares at her for a moment) Leonora, it's true that you don't hate me, - I mean... (Touching her face) You aren't lying to me about your feelings?

LEONORA: Why should I want to lie to you?

HAZLITT: You see, we hardly know each other yet. How dark those five years have been! those hours of yearning just to have you in front of me like this! Suppose I had never written to you again? Would you have been able to forget me?

LEONORA: I tried to, often.

HAZLITT: And you always failed?

LEONORA: Yes.

A pause.

HAZLITT: Who is Mohammed?

S She glances at him.

LEONORA: Has Shingleton been here?

HAZLITT: Yes, - this morning.

LEONORA: Mohammed is my best friend here.

HAZLITT: Is it true what Shingleton told me: that Mohammed planned your visit here this evening, and told you what to say? Did he help you rehearse the kiss you gave me just now? No, I can't believe it!

LEONORA: You shouldn't listen to these other people, Philip.

HAZLITT: But is it true? If it is, then you're the merciless one, not me.

LEONORA: I agreed to tell you what people think of Captains here. But there was nothing sinister in that. We didn't make a plan. Shingleton hates us both, and he always tried to show us up in a sinister light.

HAZLITT: You are sure, Leonora -

LEONORA: Look into my eyes, Philip. Am I lying? No,

don't turn away. Am I?

HAZLITT: No.

LEONORA: I feel so different now that I'm face to face with you. I expected to find you in uniform. I even thought I should just look in the doorway and then want to run back to Mohammed at once.

HAZLITT: Then your thinking brain told you wrong? Did you find there was something in you hidden from the mighty brain, Nora? You found the brain was not God? I wish I could have proved that to you five years ago! For five years you've been carrying this love for me round with you and trying to deny it! I knew I was right. I knew it. But now we're together, and we needn't worry about the past. I've managed to get champagne, darling. It's on the ice now.

HAZLITT goes to the door and calls for Baker.

LEONORA: What lovely flowers, Philip! They're from the hills, surely?

HAZLITT: Yes. Hussein Al Shabar sent them across by my servant. He said they were for the lady. That means for you.

LEONORA: Is he the man who drinks, - the rich landowner?

HAZLITT: Yes. You must have heard of him. He adores you.

LEONORA: But he adores anything European, Philip.

There is a knock on the door. BAKER enters.

HE places the champagne on the table, then leaves.

LEONORA: Is he one of your soldiers?

HAZLITT: Yes.

LEONORA: Reliable?

HAZLITT: What do you mean?

LEONORA: Oh, there are so many spies here.

HAZLITT pours champagne into two glasses. They drink.

HAZLITT: Five years ago you would have drunk my health. ~~I remember you used to drink my health when you were in the army~~
Smile. You haven't really smiled yet.
(Lifting the corners of her mouth into a smile) There. Now you look exactly as I remember you.

LEONORA: This is a sad place, darling. I've been here too long.

HAZLITT: But I intend to be happier here than I've ever been before. (Watching her) You don't believe in that, do you?

LEONORA: It's this country, Philip.

HAZLITT: But why can't we keep the country outside, beyond that door?

LEONORA: It can't be done.

HAZLITT: Is your will on my side?

LEONORA: I love you; that has nothing to do with the will.

HAZLITT: I'm still an officer of the colonial army. You can't forget that, can you?

LEONORA: No. But I can still love you. You say you are going to be happy. Five years ago I should have loved to hear you say that. But I know you can only be happy here at the expense of other people. Therefore I want to cringe when I hear you say that. I want to drink your health, Philip's health, - but not Captain Hazlitt's.

HAZLITT: Why can I only be happy at the expense of

other people?

LEONORA: Oh, let's not talk about the villages, and the death-rate in them. You must have heard about that.

HAZLITT: Is your conscience going to drive us away from each other again, Nora? You couldn't stay with the person you loved five years ago because he joined the colonial army. You made yourself bleed, just to serve this damnable conscience of yours. Is that going to happen again?

LEONORA: We won't talk about it now, Philip. We -

HAZLITT: No. I want you to be frank with me. What about these villages?

LEONORA: You yourself were born among poor people. And here everyone identifies you with the richest and most corrupt landowners. I only want to be proud of you. They detest you, detest you! How can I be proud of that?

HAZLITT: I shall prove myself different.

LEONORA: You think you're a newcomer, my dear, but these people have seen you a thousand times before! You're infinite, you Captains. Only your names are different.

HAZLITT: But look at me, Nora, look at me! Don't turn me into a monster just because I sometimes wear a uniform -

LEONORA: I remember these officers well enough as a child!

HAZLITT: But you said the army would change me. You were wrong; you confessed it yourself. I

I haven't changed at all, and I won't change in this country either.

LEONORA: You're only a cipher here. Your only job is obey orders.

HAZLITT: I can go out and meet the villagers.

LEONORA: But your job is to shoot them down if they start any trouble!

HAZLITT: My job is to defend the oil-camp, nothing else.

LEONORA: Do you think there can be a real revolt while you are here, then? Why, the landowners play a hundred children away to the grave every night over a pack of cards! Have you come here to defend that, you whose childhood was made ignominious by the same people?

HAZLITT: All I know is that I was sent here by Headquarters at my own request, that I have a comfortable house here where I can entertain my friends, and that at last I can see you and speak to you again. These are the facts. What's the use of letting the brain go off on these excursions into my childhood and the suffering of other people? It makes me feel quite giddy.

LEONORA: It's because I know this country better than you do, ^{my} dear. You and I are really enemies in the eyes of the world. x

HAZLITT: Because of your work with the rebels?

LEONORA: My work and Mohammed's. He and I have made children outside, Philip. They are like children, waiting for us, people who are diseased and starving. x

HAZLITT (turning on her angrily) But you didn't make a real child, you and Mohammed, did you? You wouldn't

risk that, would you? A real child would suck at your breasts and be claiming you all the time; it wouldn't let you be a thinking ghost! I suppose it saves a lot of trouble being a thinking ghost. It means you never have to feel anything, never make a mistake, never have a quarrel, never suffer! Have you managed to keep your conscience even here, in this vultures' kingdom where the sun is so cruel?

LEONORA: If I wanted to be a thinking ghost I should have stayed with Mohammed. But I choose to be here, in love with you.

HAZLITT: I shall make you proud of me. I shall turn this into an adventure. That's what I joined the colonial army for. There's still mystery in this place, - do you see what I mean? There's still suffering. It's not safe here. I saw a man hit his servant in the face today, and the servant kissed his hand for it. Things like that come to my mind: and I've seen women walking behind their husbands like slaves. I was tired of being a European citizen, Leonora. And even if your rebels curse me to the grave, I shall at least feel I've done more in life than obey a few safe laws.

LEONORA: No. You must do your job here, nothing more. You mustn't look for enemies in a place like this.

HAZLITT: And you? Are you going to stay with the rebels?

LEONORA: No.

HAZLITT: Mohammed will call you a traitor.

LEONORA: I shall have to accept that.

HAZLITT: Won't it be a long struggle?

LEONORA: Yes, and in a place like this one can never say what the result will be.

HAZLITT (with a laugh) A struggle between me and Mohammed, - that's what it is! ~~Two more glasses of champagne~~
~~And now we'll forget riding-whips and uniforms, - we'll -~~ But I shall win. I'm going to bring back that old Leonora who was so light and strong!

HAZLITT pours two more glasses of champagne.

HAZLITT: There, let's invoke that magnificent, light, happy girl with champagne! Drink, go on!
(They touch glasses and drink) And now we'll forget riding-whips and uniforms, - we'll -

There is a knock on the door leading into the garden. HAZLITT calls out, 'Come in!' and the door is flung open by HUSSEIN AL SHABAR. He has clearly been drinking. He sways in the doorway, staring at them, then comes towards the table.

HAZLITT: This is Hussein Al Shabar, Leonora.

LEONORA: How do you do?

HUSSEIN kisses his^s own hand and raises it to his brow, in profound homage.

HUSSEIN: We are poor people here, Miss Friedmann. We are humble. We have nothing to give you but the darkness of our shame, and too much heat, and the silence. (He points to the bottle on the table) Is that champagne, Captain?

HAZLITT: Yes. May I give you some?

HUSSEIN: I've just escaped from my wife. Let me have a glass, please.

HAZLITT pours a third glass of champagne, but when

he offers it to HUSSEIN the latter holds up his hand.

HUSSEIN (seating himself) Could I ask you to do something

before I drink? Just draw the curtains.

This is a city of eyes, and a prince is supposed

never to drink in our country. I'm afraid

even my servants

[spg...]

spy on me. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

HAZLITT goes to the window and draws the curtains.
It is already night.

HUSSEIN: ~~He told me this morning you were only friends,~~
~~Miss Friedmann. (He chuckles)~~ But even a
~~drunkard has eyes!~~ Well, (raising his glass)
a blessing on both of you! (Drinks, then
speaks to LEONORA) I've heard about your
visits to Masudi. I deeply admire you for
that.

HAZLITT: Who is Masudi?

HUSSEIN: The rebel leader in the hills, Captain. An
exile, a man with a price on his head.

~~HAZLITT (to LEONORA) Then everyone here knows about your~~
~~visits?~~
HAZLITT: Then everyone knows you work with the rebels!
(to LEONORA)

HUSSEIN: Your thoughts, your lovers, your most closely
guarded secrets are common knowledge here,
Captain! The police see into every car that
passes them on the street, ~~and~~ they stare inside
to see what new friends you have. By dawn
tomorrow everybody will know at what time Miss
Friedmann left this house. You ^{would} be well
advised to draw your curtains after [^]dusk every
evening, Captain.

LEONORA: ~~you see, Philip, it's difficult to be alone~~
~~here.~~
It's true. One can't be alone here.

HUSSEIN: Masudi has made one fatal mistake, Miss Fried-
mann. He does not believe in Europe. But
in Europe lies our only hope. He hates
Europe; I aspire to Europe. But you agree
with him? ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

LEONORA: Yes.

HUSSEIN: Yet you are a European.

LEONORA: This country must one day be quite free of Europe.

HUSSEIN: Then where will Masudi get his arms? Who will work his factories? He believes in equality and independence. These are European ideas.

LEONORA: I can't think. I'm sorry. (Rising) It's so hot tonight.

HUSSEIN: The poor shall inherit the earth. The day of the overlords - our day, Captain - is finished.

^{Haylitt}
~~LEONORA~~ ^{HELEN} (to HAZLITT as she goes towards the door) ~~you,~~

an overlord: you see?

She opens the door and looks outside.

HUSSEIN: The heat will come earlier this year. Your health, Captain.

They touch glasses.

LEONORA: Philip, I think there's someone outside.

HAZLITT: It must be the sentry.

LEONORA: No, I think it's a woman.

HUSSEIN: Then it's my wife.

HAZLITT goes to the door.

HUSSEIN: Is it my wife?

HAZLITT (calling into the garden) Who's there?

HUSSEIN joins them at the door.

HUSSEIN (peering into the darkness) Badia? Badia?

(With a laugh) Are you a spy or something?

Go back to the house, woman. (As she appears)

Now why don't you stay in the house?

BADIA: Because you shan't disgrace me! Why do you worry these people?

HAZLITT: No, no, come in.

BADIA: But, Captain -

HAZLITT: No, you've both been so kind. Drink a glass of champagne with us.

He ushers BADIA AL SHABAR into the room, and the others follow.

BADIA: I came to stop him drinking, Captain. I have to watch him wherever he goes.

HUSSEIN: Why do you worry, woman?

BADIA: Because you weren't invited here, and if you were sober you would never dare to come. These people have a private party.

HUSSEIN: Am I wanted or not, Captain?

HAZLITT: Please stay, both of you. Will you sit down? Champagne, Mrs - ?

HUSSEIN: Call her Badia, Captain. Let's keep the veil for outside. How free it feels, just to sit here!

BADIA: Very little, Captain. And you shouldn't give my husband any more.

HAZLITT: Only one more glass, to celebrate.

BADIA: But that can make the difference between a peaceful night and hell itself!

HUSSEIN: Be quiet, woman! (Holding up his glass)
The Captain and I understand each other.

BADIA: Every night I have to look after him as if he were a child. Last week he thought he saw a man outside and started firing his revolver through the ^{window} ~~glass~~ . He's jealous of every man who comes near the house.

HUSSEIN: Am I jealous of the Captain? No, because the Captain is an honourable man. But the men you are talking about - my countrymen -

they're a pack of wolves.

BADIA: Every time I go out in the car he must have a detailed account of the journey from my driver.

HUSSEIN: But your worries are over, Badia. The Captain and Miss Friedmann will keep you entertained.

BADIA: ~~My~~ Perhaps they don't want to come to my house and see you drunk every evening. (To Leonora) But perhaps we could have tea together sometimes, Miss Friedmann.

HUSSEIN: All the gossip in this city begins in the harem. Beware of those tea-parties, Miss Friedmann.

BADIA: Am I to be robbed of my tea-parties, then? You keep me locked up in the house all day and you even begrudge me the company of women!

HUSSEIN: Do you wonder I drink, Captain? I drink to forget the indignity of my marriage. Be careful of her, Miss Friedmann. She will put her coils round your little life.

He drinks.

BADIA: The doctors have told you often enough: you're drinking yourself to death.

HUSSEIN: Look at her, Captain: a beautiful woman. To sleep with her is like a feast. But she has no right even to sit in the same room as Miss Friedmann, because she lacks honour. If I let her go free she'd become a whore in a fortnight. She thinks like a whore and she has the tongue of a whore. You can hear for yourself.

LEONORA (to BADIA): Do you never go out, then?

BADIA: I'm allowed an evening drive in the car. I go up the main street and back again. I

wonder if you've ever realised how envious we women are when we see you walking freely in the streets? You are a wonderful symbol for us.

HUSSEIN: Yes and at their tea-parties they strip you down to a carcase with their vile talk. They pay their servants to spy on you. Shall I tell you one of their stories? They say a guard came across you lying in a ditch with Mohammed the doctor. That's the kind of symbol you represent for them! A symbol of their own lechery!

BADIA: You shame me!

HUSSEIN: Everything must be underhand here. Any crime, any perversion, may be practised in secret. But anything truly innocent they'll befoul. (TO HAZLITT) But you and I are going to alter all that.

BADIA: Free your women^e first, then the gossip will stop.

HUSSEIN: Is he going to treat us like slaves, your old friend here, Miss Friedmann?

LEONORA: I've never known him do that.

HUSSEIN: No. How could it be so? He's an old friend of yours. This morning you said you wanted to see the tribal chiefs, Captain. Well, that can be arranged.

BADIA: He has ~~mad~~^{wild} schemes, Captain. They never come to anything.

HUSSEIN: We have to learn from Europe. And the Captain is in a position to teach us.

LEONORA: He can only obey his orders.

HUSSEIN: There's a way to everything, Miss Friedmann. Are you our friend, Captain?

HAZLITT: Of course.

HUSSEIN: Sympathy is what we require: an active sympathy, Captain. And in return for your sympathy I can hold out for you a most wonderful life. You will be able to turn this sad life of the outpost into a crusade, you will have the marvellous countryside in the north at your disposal, you will have mountains and streams, and flowers like endless carpets at your feet. You will hold daily court with your leaders, you will be praised wherever you go and loved; all your days will be full and free, with hunting and riding and banquetting. It will be a life worthy of a man, not the cramped, careful life of an officer commanding an out-post, where there's no prowess, no anger, no dignity, only a slow and gradual degradation of your powers. I may be a drunkard and my wife may be a whore, but there's something in what I say, isn't there?

BADIA: Your head is swollen with dreams because you drink too much. Come and see him at five o'clock tomorrow morning, Captain, when he is holding his stomach and groaning in my arms: then you will see what a warrior we have!

HUSSEIN: Am I not a warrior, then? You, a woman, say that? (Looks round) Am I to prove myself then? (Jumps up, laughing) Let's see how you like this!

He walks unsteadily across to the wall and pulls

Revised

down HAZLITT's revolver-holster.

BADIA: Hussein!

She jumps up as he takes out the revolver. With a laugh he pushes her away, and breaks the revolver open. HAZLITT rises.

HAZLITT: Don't be an idiot. Put it away.

HUSSEIN looks at the bullet-chamber.

HUSSEIN: Four bullets, Captain.

BADIA (trying to grasp hold of him) Stop him, Captain!

He'll do away with his life!

HAZLITT: Do you want me to throw you out?

HUSSEIN holds BADIA away and, slowly lowering the revolver, looks at HAZLITT with a smile.

HUSSEIN: Now, Captain, we are honourable men. If I wish to kill myself, let me. We are all alone. You are my brother. Sit down.

HAZLITT: All right. Do what you like.

HUSSEIN closes the revolver, sets the chamber rolling and points the barrel at his right temple.

BADIA: Hussein! I love you, Hussein!

She draws back in horror as it becomes clear that he is determined to pull the trigger. Staring into her eyes, swaying drunkenly, he does so. There is a light click, and BADIA bursts into tears.

HUSSEIN: So I'm not a warrior at five o'clock in the morning. I'm a dreamer. Isn't that what you said? (Calmly replacing the revolver) Go back to your seat, woman, and keep a hold on your tongue. The Captain and I are going to work together. Keep your nose out of our business, you understand!

BADIA returns to her seat. She slumps in her

chair, reaches slowly for the bottle and pours herself a full glass. As she begins to drink the CURTAIN slowly falls.

SECOND ACT.

SCENE: the same a few weeks later. It is afternoon. The room is much brighter than formerly, and furnished more in the Eastern style. There are brightly coloured rugs, cushions and table-covers.

HUSSEIN AL SHABAR is discovered. He is standing in the middle of the room. He looks about him, then sees Hazlitt's military cap hanging near the door. He takes it down and goes to the mirror. There he tries it on, staring at himself with a stern expression. He glances quickly at the window and takes up Hazlitt's riding stick. He strides about the room in a military fashion, with the stick under his left arm, his chin thrust forward pugaciously. He suddenly stands to attention and seems to confront someone smaller than himself.

HUSSEIN (between his teeth): Come on! Come on!

He shakes the whip in a threatening way at the imaginary figure.

HUSSEIN: Well, what do you want, man? Do you usually stand like that in front of an officer?

Footsteps are heard at the door, and he quickly throws the stick to one side and replaces the cap on its hook.

HAZLITT enters. He sits down wearily on the divan and begins unclipping his belt with the revolver holster. HUSSEIN goes to the sideboard and pours him a drink. On his way past the window he stops suddenly and draws the curtains, though it is bright outside. At first HAZLITT refuses the drink, but HUSSEIN insists.

HUSSEIN: Drink it, my friend.

HAZLITT drinks.

HUSSEIN: What did you find?

HAZLITT: We found Masudi. They opened fire on us along

one of the gorges. They're mad, like all mountain people. They'd shoot at a cloud if it came near enough. Not that they'd hit it.

He takes his revolver out of its case and begins cleaning it angrily.

HUSSEIN: But you saw Masudi?

HAZLITT: Yes. I sent a scout forward with a white handkerchief. They love that kind of silly melodrama.

HUSSEIN: Did he agree to your terms?

HAZLITT: He asked for time.

HUSSEIN: How much?

HAZLITT: Two months.

HUSSEIN: But that's far too long! There were two incidents here while you were away. A crowd threw stones at one of the embassies, and the Public Prosecutor got a bullet through the wind-screen of his car. There are extra police in the streets. Does Masudi think he can wait even a fortnight, let alone ^e two months? He must act now, or people are going to lose interest, especially now that the heat is coming.

HAZLITT: All Masudi wants is time to get round the tribes and test their loyalty.

HUSSEIN: Did he trust you?

HAZLITT: No.

HUSSEIN: But he had heard of you?

HAZLITT: Yes. ^{it is} ~~but~~ you he doesn't trust. He says you are a landowner, and far too friendly with Europeans.

HUSSEIN chuckles.

HUSSEIN: How does he look?

HAZLITT: Tall, with a huge golden beard. I don't like his harsh voice, and the way he pushes his belly

into you when he addresses you. I was on tenterhooks the whole time, especially at night when they got drunk and practised shooting at the stars. You want these gangsters to form a new government? You must be off your head! Well, I suppose you are, being one of them.

HUSSEIN: I'm going to make use of Masudi. He's a fine warrior, but he's an idiot. I'll make good use of him when the time comes, Captain.

HAZLITT: If he doesn't put a knife in your back before that.

HUSSEIN: So he opened fire on you. That was his fun, for he knew you were coming.

HAZLITT: But he put a bullet through my sergeant's hand. How do I explain that? It's bad enough to be absent from my post for a week, let alone have my sergeant wounded quite inexplicably.

HUSSEIN: You must keep an eye on Shingleton.

HAZLITT: I no longer believe in this rebellion. You are all children playing ~~with~~ with pistols, all you mountain people. You think of nothing but killing. Night after night that Masudi man would sit in front of me and tell me the same story about how five years ago he was gored by a wild pig. He used to stretch himself out on the carpet ~~for~~ every evening while one of his followers bent down and snorted like a pig and theⁿ gored him while he groaned and writhed about. Imagine that great buffalo with his golden beard writhing all over the floor!

HUSSEIN: This country is on the brink of revolution, Captain. Even children playing with pistols can frighten adults like yourself. You can't desert us now.

HAZLITT: Did I say I intended to?

HUSSEIN: Tell me, what terms did you and Masudi agree on?

HAZLITT: I said I'd give him arms and ammunition; secondly, that I'd order my men not to open fire in the case of rioting. I promised these things on one condition: namely, that he left the ~~oil camp~~ ^{engineering camp} alone and did not so much as put a picket near its gates. He agreed immediately, and promised that any man who entered the ~~oil camp~~ ^{engineering camp} or did violence to any European there would be executed on the spot.

HUSSEIN: What an idiot he is! We'll surround the police headquarters, incite the army to lay down arms, march on the House of Assembly, and by dawn next day there'll be a new government under one of my friends, and Masudi will be back in his mountains shooting at clouds. Meanwhile, ~~work will go on at the oil camp just as before,~~ ^{on the new word will continue} under European management. You've done excellently, Captain. May I have the honour of inviting you to my house tomorrow? With Miss Friedmann of course? (Looks about him) She has certainly made many changes here. (He lifts up one of the corners of the table-cover) You are learning how to live like one of the people. (He lets the cover go thoughtfully) But you are a European, Captain. Therefore you are the equivalent of a prince for my people.

HAZLITT: What do you mean?

HUSSEIN: Well, these garish things... They are for the poor, the low-born.

HAZLITT: They belong to Miss Friedmann.

HUSSEIN: Europeans are cleaner than we are. They are gentlemen. But these are cheap, hand-made things.

HAZLITT: I'm tired, Hussein. I want to rest.

HUSSEIN: I'm sorry, Captain: only I want everyone to look up to you in our country. Before I go tell me where your wounded sergeant is. I can get him to a private doctor.

HAZLITT: I sent him along to Mohammed at the local hospital.

HUSSEIN: To Mohammed? You can trust him?

HAZLITT: Of course.

HUSSEIN: I think you are wrong, Captain. I think you are wrong not to keep an eye on Miss Friedmann.

HAZLITT: What has Miss Friedmann got to do with it?

HUSSEIN: Have you any idea where she is now?

HAZLITT: No. At the oil-camp, perhaps.

HUSSEIN: Suppose she's sleeping with someone else?

HAZLITT: I say it's unlikely. (Staring at HUSSEIN)
Are you trying to tell me something?

HUSSEIN: No. I just believe that a man should know where his woman goes, and with whom, and for what purpose. Miss Friedmann sees just as much of Mohammed the doctor as she did in the old days. And I tell you something bad will come of that. There's no love in Mohammed for you, my friend. Beware of that lackey, Are you sure he knows nothing about these patrols of yours?

HAZLITT: Nothing.

HUSSEIN: And you tell Miss Friedmann nothing?

HAZLITT: I tell her that they are part of my duties

here.

HUSSEIN: Is she working for Mohammed?

HAZLITT: For God's sake! I trust him. I'm in love with her! What else can I do?

HUSSEIN: Forbid her to see him.

HAZLITT: Just because you hate him? Are you jealous of his hours alone with her? I tell Miss Friedmann nothing, and she seldom asks a question. Now will you let me rest?

HUSSEIN: Come to me tomorrow night. Forgive me. I'm a little suspicious. But we have to be careful at the early stages. He is low-born, this Mohammed, the son of servants. Such people have to be watched. Good bye, Captain.

HAZLITT: Good bye.

The moment HUSSEIN is gone HAZLITT goes to the other door, opens it and calls out, "Baker!" Then he returns to the divan and begins taking off his muddy boots.

BAKER enters.

BAKER: I expected you yesterday, sir.

HAZLITT: Yes, we were held up, Baker. Did anything happen?

BAKER: No, sir.

HAZLITT: The Sergeant Major didn't telephone?

BAKER: No, sir. But I think Headquarters spoke to him on the office-telephone several times.

HAZLITT: What about?

BAKER: I couldn't find out, sir.

HAZLITT hands him the muddy boots.

BAKER: These are wet through. You must have been a long way, sir.

HAZLITT: Yes, it was raining in the hills. And much cooler. I enjoy these patrols.

BAKER: Will you be in for dinner tonight, sir?

HAZLITT: Yes.

BAKER: One or two places?

HAZLITT: Two.

BAKER: And can I make you coffee now? You look worn-out, sir.

HAZLITT: Yes, get me coffee. You're sure nothing happened?

BAKER: Quite sure, sir.

BAKER leaves. HAZLITT waits for the door to close, then goes to the telephone.

HAZLITT: Captain Hazlitt here... Give me the Sergeant Major... (He puts the receiver down for a moment and goes hurriedly to the window. He looks outside, then returns.) Hullo, Sergeant-Major... Has everything been all right? Tell me, did Headquarters ring up for anything? ... They didn't? I mean, Headquarters didn't ring you with any queries?... None at all... I see. Well, thank you, Sergeant-Major. Good bye.

He replaces the receiver and stands by it thoughtfully. There is a knock on the door.

He admits LEONORA and MOHAMMED.

LEONORA: I came over yesterday, but you weren't back, darling. You look so tired.

She kisses him.
Hazlitt: Hullo, Mohammed! Come & sit down.

MOHAMMED: I've just been treating one of your soldiers, Philip.

HAZLITT: At the hospital?

MOHAMMED: Yes.

HAZLITT: One of my sergeants? Yes, I sent him over.

MOHAMMED: Why? Usually they go to the military First Aid post.

Haylitt greets Mohammed: who asks after his journey: Haylitt tells him that he can hardly understand the hill-dialect, and that he admires... how the poor gave up their last rice & tea for him as a guest. ^{It is now that Mohammed attacks him for unauticism.}
HAZLITT: Oh, this was only a scratch, a pebble or something, so I sent him straight to you.

MOHAMMED: But there was a bullet in his hand.

HAZLITT: No. I looked at that hand pretty closely, and there was nothing in the flesh.

MOHAMMED: But there was a bullet in the palm, Philip. I've got it in my pocket.

HAZLITT: Well, he must have been fooling about with a ~~gun~~ revolver. He never told me.

MOHAMMED: Not that I minded. But I just wondered. That's why I came here with Leonora.

LEONORA: Shingleton was making enquiries while you were away. Mohammed was in the office and heard him telephone your Sergeant Major.

HAZLITT: What about?

LEONORA: About what you were doing in the hills, About your reasons for leaving the post.

HAZLITT: But these are my orders, to patrol the hills. ? revise

LEONORA: Well, there were two incidents while you were away. And ~~so~~ Shingleton found that your men had no orders whatsoever. ↓

HAZLITT: I command this post. I get too much interference, too much advice, from you and everybody else. I'm alone. How many times have I got to repeat that? I'm alone.

LEONORA: All I say is that Shingleton's a dangerous enemy.

MOHAMMED: And, in any case, Philip, you can't make an island for yourself. The world doesn't allow it.

LEONORA: Exactly. You were a fool ever to have come to a place like this.

HAZLITT: Well, then, I defy the world. I'm sick of Europe, I tell you. I'm finished with Europe!

F. hemson : ^{reminiscing} ^{quietly}.

Maglitt tells them how much hospitality
he received in the villages: how they
were amazed to hear of him, speak
their own language, came and kissed
his shoes and constantly tried to him.

The 3 hours he spent eating with
them and drinking tea behind me
of their huts, while they told me
how little food their landowners left
them, what diseases their children
suffered from, how bereft of all hope
their lives were: but these people
were not defeated, their eyes were
keen, they were lithe and agile,
they had not some of the cowed

look of a beaten people. Eclipse of
the ~~sun~~ sun while I was there, and the

~~Woman had been listening~~
woman wrapped themselves in their
cloaks and said that the God
was showing his anger by hiding
the earth from his gaze. Their
looks were chastened and ^{guilty}.
~~Extraordinary for me to hear ^{sun} ~~was~~ ^{same}~~

(It is during this conversation that Mohammed lays down his belief that the country will only be happy when it is free of Europe, that every European is a spy, a danger. — even, ^{Leonora} must eventually, as she herself knows. We must learn the technique of self-government & then apply it ourselves. But Europe has only betrayed us, again and again,

and now we are all suspicion. I'm afraid for me every European is a spy: no matter what he says or even what he does. But Leonora? M: She is a European: she must belong to Europe — that is my right, we each have our country.

It's full of people with minds, pale people withdrawn from each other: even if they fight, in a war they don't seem to hate, they just pull triggers and make mathematical calculations! The cities of Europe are full of men who long ago lost their virility and their honour, full of women who are half-men, clever and childless! ~~My men here are slaves to me because I am a man on an island.~~ ^{What beloved} All right, you surround my island, and I perish. It's a fate I accept. ^{But} You're not going to buy me out. Even if I die a mere gentleman, or an imperialist, or a freak and senile Christian, an apostle of dead creeds, then I will gladly die as such, on my lonely island, whatever names you like to give me. Death is one way of evading all your wretched names.

LEONORA: I don't understand you when you talk like that.

HAZLITT: I just want to be left alone.

MOHAMMED: But why sneer at people with minds? I went to an American university. I helped to build the city hospital here. How do you think I could deal with cancer and malaria and tuberculosis and rickets and syphilis unless people with minds had been at work?

HAZLITT: Yes, of course, you are right for yourself.

MOHAMMED: I suppose you would like me to go back to the religion of my childhood, to be nodding over a prayer-book instead of standing at the operating table?

HAZLITT: I like religious people. That's true.

MOHAMMED: And what is your religion?

and said Allah is angry.

Mohammed has been listening in
silence to Philips. He asks Haylett, are
these people merely decorative for you, merely
a romantic legend? Has it not occurred
to you that the religion which makes them
say Allah is angry & hide their heads
is what makes them hide their heads
from their landlords. Religion in my
country goes hand in hand with corruption
and disease. ~~But for you it is~~

~~romantic, colorful, and for every European.~~
Haylett: ~~Religion~~ They believe in something.
would you want to deny them the consolation
of having God watching over them as well
as food and clothing? It's not romantic
for me, it is strange, yes, but they are
real people for me, their pain is real to
me.

Mohammed: But you say they are not covered
of course they are covered. Regularly their
landlord strips them of their grain, their
rice, their dates, ~~their~~ — and all they do
is to sit inside their huts smoking hashish
and complaining to Allah and watching

HAZLITT: I told you, my friend, we Europeans are lost.

MOHAMMED: You look on religion as a pleasant drug, Philip. But for us it is lethal: the Muslim religion goes hand in hand with disease, poverty and corruption. Come and live as half my patients ~~do~~ live, and then you'll see which you prefer: devout Muslims or city-hospitals.

HAZLITT: Do I look to you like a landowner? Do I talk like one?

MOHAMMED: Oh, I may shake hands with you, Philip, we may be friends personally, but you can't gainsay your uniform. And look at that (pointing at Hazlitt's revolver-holster), is that for purposes of decoration? Those ^{bullets} are meant to kill human beings, my friend.

HAZLITT: I shall prove to you that I am different.

MOHAMMED: How? Just how?

HAZLITT: That must be left to me.

MOHAMMED: You ask me to judge you freely, apart from your uniform. But if I violated the curfew in a time of riot you'd be able to put me into prison and you would have the right to shoot me dead. If tomorrow morning I walked into the oil-camp without showing my card your sentry could also shoot me dead. Yet I was born and bred in this province. These are my people. The ground your oil-camp stands on is my country.

HAZLITT: I only have the right to shoot you if you

for me to come and nurse their wounds.
They kissed your feet? Of course they
kiss your feet: you are the arch-
-landowner, the prince, — the European —
they are flattered that you a European
had want to visit their filthy
huts: they would feel much better
about ^{it} — & they wd. expect it more —
if you gave them a kick in the backside
or ~~knocked~~ ^{knocked} their mud-huts down just to
show them that life cd. be even harder
than they thought. And when they heard
you ~~that must always be so.~~ ~~He must~~
~~be free.~~ speak their language they were
astounded & delighted that you a prince
and a European should wish to soil
your tongue with their poor, vulgar
language. Do you think they treat
their landlords any different? No, they
sit & complain for hours & hours until the
sun goes down, but when the landlord
prepares them a visit, which he rarely does,
they kiss his feet, they go down on
their hands and knees to him, — &

break the law.

MOHAMMED: But whose law? Not our laws made by us in our country, but your law, made in your country by you. We are free provided we don't disobey your laws. What sort of freedom is that? I want to build more hospitals, to put a medical officer in every one of the malarial villages, to stop the doctors treating the rich and not the poor, to make the dry land fertile with a national irrigation scheme. I am sick of my country just as you are sick of Europe. I am sick of the endless wastes of sand, of the fly-blown wounds I have to stare at every day, of the people who are so loyal and resigned. We may be very romantic to you, as we are to many other visiting Europeans, but I'll give you the Kuran, I'll give you Arab honour and hospitality, I'll give you all the sentimental camouflage for hospitals, drains, DDT spray in the streets, equality of women with men, and decent schools in every village.

HAZLITT: Your own people are corrupt, your own landlords, your own House of Assembly, even your own doctors.

MOHAMMED: But while you are here, with that revolver-holster of yours on the wall, the landlords are going to feel safe ^{in their corruption.} Don't you realise that?

HAZLITT: I'm so tired. Leonora, can't he talk about this tomorrow?

MOHAMMED: But people like you, with bullets in their pouches, have got to be told the truth. And since we are friends, this is a good chance to let you know the truth.

when he hits somebody in the mouth for speaking out of turn the men kiss the very hand that struck him. Bowed down, — my God, how they are bowed down!

It is all very well for you to be flattered by their attentions — but you are with the landlords. While you & your men defend the oil-camp these landlords will continue to feel safe. No, no, we & Europeans are different: we can never understand each other. The only thing → for Europeans to help set up hosp. — like Kenora here — & then leave.

He asks Haylitt if he has seen Masoudi.

Haylitt looks at him for a moment.
Haylitt: No. I did not see Masoudi.
Mohammed (searching his eyes) Yet somehow I don't trust you. Your face is honest. I like you. It is not your fault you were sent here to do this kind of work. I realize you wanted to see Kenora, & accepted anything. But still I am capable of believing that you have

LEONORA: He's tired, Mohammed.

MOHAMMED: Can he tell me why he is tired? Can he tell me why he has been away from his post for a week? To practise shooting down rebels in the hills. To practise ambushing and spying and all the other crimes a man in his position has got to perpetrate.

HAZLITT: That's not true.

MOHAMMED: Then what were you doing in the hills?

HAZLITT: My task is to protect the oil-camp. I have nothing to do with your bad sanitation.

MOHAMMED: As an officer - .

HAZLITT: I, alone, Philip Hazlitt, have nothing to do with it. All right, I'm on an island.

MOHAMMED: But behind you are laws. And I'm a prisoner to those laws. So yours is a very safe island.

HAZLITT: Safe? Shall I tell you what I have been doing in the hills? Shall I tell you?

They stare at each other. A pause.

MOHAMMED: Well?

HAZLITT turns away, glancing at LEONORA.

MOHAMMED: Go on, prove to me that you're not like all the others.

They wait for him to speak.

HAZLITT: No. I am like all the others. I shall resist the rebels.

He sits down heavily on the divan and covers his face in his hands.

HAZLITT: Now go away.

They watch him.

~~MOHAMMED: Very slowly we are breaking him, Leonora. We shall break him.~~

MOHAMMED: Very slowly we are breaking him, Leonora. We shall break him.

LEONORA: You'd like to see him broken?

trying to spot rebel printers in the hills,
and plotting against them and even —
I have been brought up to mistrust
Europeans. Even when they are outwardly
most helpful I am not suspicious of them.
Haylitt: ~~How can you get no help under~~
those terms?

DeLamond: But still I can't believe that
a European can slip us good. Knowledge,
medical supplies ^{yes}: like herora. But
not sympathy in ~~the~~ ^{any other} sense than the
romantic. I am so sure of what I
say about these people, Philip, because
I myself have felt the very same things:
I have struggled against it day after
day, struggled against my respect for
Europeans, so that I may be free. I am
herora's friend, your friend. And I think
it still fetters me a little that you consider
me worthy of your friendship. Even now
the sound of English spoken makes me feel

MOHAMMED (with a shrug): I take the side of my people.

They are starving and diseased.

He goes to the door.

MOHAMMED: Look after him. I go on duty in ten minutes time.

He leaves the room. LEONORA sits at HAZLITT's side and puts her hand on his shoulder. There is a knock on the inner door. BAKER enters with coffee. He places the tray on the dining table. HAZLITT still has his head bowed.

BAKER: Your coffee is ready, sir.

LEONORA: Could you bring it to him here? I don't think he's well.

BAKER: Your coffee is ready, sir. Shall I bring it to you?

HAZLITT: Please, Baker.

BAKER(taking the coffee to HAZLITT's side): Can I get you some aspirins, sir?

HAZLITT: No, thank you.

BAKER leaves the room. HAZLITT raises his head and kisses LEONORA on the cheek.

HAZLITT: I was thinking of you all the way back, Nora. Did you miss me?

LEONORA: Yes. I kept coming here, just to look at the room.

HAZLITT: It was so wonderfully cool in the hills. I kept thinking to myself, even if I plunge myself into disgrace, even if I'm killed, well, that's a fair price to pay. (Touching her) It's worth death, it's worth any risk, having you here.

LEONORA: Why do you have to risk anything?

HAZLITT: I don't know. One gets afraid if one is too

I want to bow my head. So we must free ourselves from Europe not because we hate her - we do feel hatred, it is true - but because we love her so much. All my ideas, my sense of hygiene, my job, I have learned from Europe. Now we must become free, so that we may cease either to hate or love, but treat as equal. I want you to be my equals, & that can only be so if our country is free. Forgive me for talking so much. Have I offended you with my talk? ^{Lenora has} ^{then heard} ^{me at it} ^{before}

Haylitt asks Lenora whether he has been a romantic. I can't tell him

more. We must simply suffer this;

Lenora: Did you see Masudi?

Haylitt: Yes.

Is it so that they kissed my hand as Europeans would -? or because I was first to show interest in them? Hussein adven Europe - is it only a kind of snobbery that makes him come to me?

No, I shall try not to believe it. But we begin to doubt everything here.

Anything might happen.

happy.

LEONORA: You look tired and sad, darling: anything but happy.

HAZLITT: I mean happy with you, only with you.

(Staring into her eyes) ^{We must make an} ~~How are we going to~~
^{island for ourselves here} ~~keep this shelter we've made for ourselves?~~

Oh, those endless words, endless, endless words, dinning into my brain! Can't we stop them? They're breaking in ^A all the

[Time...

~~Haylett tells her that just by visiting the
villagers has shown him how much power
he has: Mohammed wrong. I can find
out about it: I can send in reports...
Who else is there to do it here? You
are powerless. Shingleton is on the
other side.~~

Haylett says, ^{yes,} /wance, - that is the way
a country gets hold of one. It isn't
just that one wants to give them food
& clothing: (I want to stay here)... ?? ???
She feels they ought to go before too late...
This is where my work lies: I can lay
a good basis for my work: I can write
reports, or in the end of 6 months have substantial
report: will make use of these last 6 months,
instead of merely being an officer. I can at
least... put these 6 months to use.

they are breaking in!
time. We must stay close together, Leonora, we must never - ! We must keep out other people. But yet, my God, it must come to an end. It can't be eternal. Yet it feels eternal.

LEONORA: We need only keep out Hussein and Mohammed. Only they can interfere with us.

~~HAZLITT: Shall we go on alone, without these endless words?~~

~~LEONORA: Yes!~~

HAZLITT: You say that, when -.

LEONORA: I can give up my ^{work} job at the ^{hospital} ~~oil camp~~. I ^{hardly} never think of my work now. ~~I realise I've been sick all these years, sick with being away from you~~

HAZLITT: ~~It's like being in a cave and seeing the world through a gap.~~ I wish we could live in this love-cave for ever, Leonora, I want to die in it. We must blind our eyes. We must see only each other.

LEONORA: ~~But~~ There is only one way of saving ourselves, Philip. Do you know what that is?

HAZLITT: No.

LEONORA: We ^{could go} ~~must~~ get away from here. We must go back to Europe.

HAZLITT: They would never allow me.

LEONORA: But you could try! ~~AAAAAAAAAAAA~~

HAZLITT: They'd refuse. I'm certain they'd refuse.

LEONORA: But won't you even try?

HAZLITT: It's hopeless.

LEONORA: ~~But you know how you always achieve what you really want to achieve.~~ Try, Philip, for my sake.

A pause.

He asks about Shingleton: will he try to interfere with me?

Leonora: Yes, he will try.

Haylitt: It would be fascinating, to go from village to village, laying the basis for my work afterwards: a report, every conversation reported, supplies of food to every village, the living-quarters, a massive document... There could be no harm in that. Tell me, has Shingleton much power here? What are these spies of his?

Leonora: There is a legend told about him that all his spies are deliberately placed by other people, and that a revolt would happen under his nose the rebels could burn down the oil-camp under his nose and he would be shouting: "I do not take this seriously." He is all combat. He has no more spies than anyone else. He sees everyone in conspiracy against him, then proceeds to say he does not take them seriously. They say he is an

LEONORA: Well?

HAZLITT does not reply.

LEONORA: You don't want to go back, do you? Really you don't want to save yourself, do you?

HAZLITT: I should always blame myself afterwards.

LEONORA: Why?

HAZLITT: I should blame myself for cowardice.

LEONORA: Then you want to be a hero? It can't be done in this country.

HAZLITT: But already I'm beginning to feel I belong to these people.

LEONORA: They'll take us away from each other. Only in Europe will we be allowed our dreams.

HAZLITT: I want to teach them that I'm not afraid. I want to teach them that I can transcend my uniform without disobeying orders. Above all I want to teach them mercy.

LEONORA: And will you have any mercy for me? Very well. I shall stay at the oil-camp. We shall go through with this ghastly summer. Hussein and Mohammed will go on coming to this house.

HAZLITT: And suppose I succeed? Then we shall have the best of all those worlds. Look, you see the sentry out there? He's a sign of my fear. I shall send him away. I shall prove to everybody that I'm not afraid. I shall prove it to Mohammed, to my own men, to Baker.

He gets up from the divan.

LEONORA: What are you going to do? Perhaps they'll just think you mad, like all the other Europeans

Excellent manager, but he likes to think of himself as an authority on the country. He thinks he is moving among the people because he has a few school-teachers to tea now and then. He tells everyone that he speaks the language, but Mohammed will tell you he ~~speaks~~ is hardly comprehensible. Singleton is a joke, Philip, but still beware of him. Officially he has the power to advise you, & he can send in reports about you.

Haylitt here tells her that Headquarters have been phoning Sergeant-Major: his men are 52 beginning to talk about — terrified that something will be discovered???. He tells her not to tell Muhammad anything. — tells her that he has been here to here who succumb to the heat. the hills. Does not

HAZLITT: No. I shall have all that Hussein promised me — do you remember how he spoke, on our first evening together? — I shall have it all ~~and~~ if I prove to them that I'm not afraid. They love prowess in a man. So I shall send that sentry away. That will be my first step. He goes to the inner door and calls out for BAKER.

LEONORA: Even Hussein has a guard on his house, Philip. There are thieves in this country, apart from rebels.

BAKER enters.

HAZLITT: Go ^{to} the sentry, Baker, and tell him to report back to barracks immediately. Tell him that sentries are no longer required here.

BAKER: But—)

HAZLITT: Hurry!

BAKER: Yes, sir.

BAKER goes out into the garden. HAZLITT watches him from the door.

LEONORA: They'll call it bravado. And that's what it is.

HAZLITT: Bravado? Listen, — do you know what they do in the hills when there's a battle? They tie ^{up} one leg with a piece of cloth so that they won't be able to run away when the time comes even if they want to. With precisely the same motive I am dismissing my guard. What use would bravado be in a derelict waste like this? It requires an audience, Leonora.

BAKER returns.

want to tell her more. Muhammad fixed on us. Li: But you saw him? 1) Will show that he isn't afraid; 2) tells Baker of her presence. I shall live as if the army did not exist.

They have to keep the world they have made. He fears that his men will discover. She must keep all his movements secret. In future he must not take any of his men with him. She must never tell Mohammed anything, even tho' he thinks she is a traitor. And he himself will not talk about what he is doing: "I am only trying to find out things: seeing for myself, - the people of the villages."

where LEONORA is standing.

Leonora: Well, no harm can

HAZLITT: Do you know who this is, Baker? *come of that.*

BAKER: No, sir. *He says secrecy essential*

HAZLITT: But you have seen her before? *here since gossip is so terrible.*

BAKER: Yes, sir. *Nothing, not a word of news, must get beyond this room.*

HAZLITT: Her name is Miss Friedmann, Baker. She has often slept here, as I expect you know. Soon she will live here all the time.

BAKER stares at him in astonishment.

BAKER: Yes, sir.

HAZLITT: This house will be a happy house, Baker. We are in a wonderful country. That wilderness outside, I want you to turn it into a garden. I want you to lay lawns, to grow spring-flowers, to bring in trees, to dig irrigation canals, to make a shaded summer-house. Go into the town tomorrow morning and find the labour. We shall have the best food and the best wine. Everybody else is miserable here. That's why our neighbour is drunk every evening. But we are going to be a happy house in their midst.

BAKER: Yes, sir.

HAZLITT: Miss Friedmann is going to be your mistress. In future you won't disregard her orders, as I remember you did this afternoon.

BAKER: I'm sorry, sir.

HAZLITT: You can go, then. Thank you.

BAKER leaves.

LEONORA: He thinks you're mad.

HAZLITT: Perhaps.

LEONORA: You want to teach these people mercy, like a priest. Yet you come here in uniform. That's

what I don't understand.

HAZLITT:

But perhaps I don't understand myself.

Shall we sit down to coffee, as used to in Europe? (As he goes to the door) From

now on you're going to be a silent spectator, my dear. Mohammed also. No more words,

thank God! (Opening the door and calling out) Baker, bring another cup!

CURTAIN.

~~He last says that above all he must show these people that he is not afraid. He sends away!~~

He sends away the sentry as the guards that every coming and going is watched and noted and gossiped about at the barracks. ~~He doesn't know his own very well.~~ then you will be able to come and live here. Baker! can trust: so I will let him into the situation vis-à-vis you. I shall do that now. I shall begin from now. We shall live here quietly: no more words, drinking into our brain. "Baker, bring another cup!"

Kenya asks, are we not trying to live as
an island by doing this, so that we
have touch with the outside & it rises up
in the future & overwhelms us? It
frightens me. This country is beginning
to frighten me: now that I see less of
Mohammed, now that we have made a
kind of European atmosphere in this corner,
away from the rest of the country.
Sometimes I feel terribly frightened,
Philip.

He says, no, we will teach them that
we can be relied on. We must make our
own world here, not be drawn into the other.
We must keep our tone, & people will learn
to love our island because it does them no
harm. It will be all right, Kenya!
Kenya it will! (He jumps up, calls for cups)

THIRD ACT.

SCENE: the same, one afternoon several weeks later.

As the curtain rises there is the sound of a small reconnaissance aircraft passing low overhead. LEONORA and MOHAMMED are standing in the garden looking up. When the sound of the 'plane dies away they come into the room and close the door.

LEONORA: How far away is the air-port?

MOHAMMED: About ten miles south of here.

LEONORA: Then he'll be arriving soon.

She goes to the mirror and paints her lips.

LEONORA: Do I look haggard? It's so hot!

MOHAMMED: No, just excited. Whose aeroplane is he using?

LEONORA: I think it belongs to one of the landowners.

MOHAMMED: Has Hussein had a hand in it?

LEONORA: I don't know. Philip hardly speaks to me about his work nowadays. These are just routine patrols, part of his duty here.

MOHAMMED: You're quite a changed person, Leonora! Are you happy to let him lead you to your doom?

LEONORA: I feel sure of him at last. I belong to him.

MOHAMMED: Did he take any of his soldiers with him?

LEONORA: Not this time.

MOHAMMED: How long has he been away?

LEONORA: Three or four days.

MOHAMMED: He's doomed, Leonora. ^(A pause) You ^{never go} ~~haven't~~ ~~The world has no time~~ ~~for lonely men on islands.~~ We live in an ~~epoch of science, and it will sweep such~~

~~once been to~~ the village ^{now} ~~since he came here.~~ I don't see ^{you} at the hospital more than once a week now.

creatures away, intelligent and brave though they may be. I'm only asking you to leave a sinking ship. He belongs to the past, but your work belongs to the future.

LEONORA: I belong to him, Mohammed. I've no will.

MOHAMMED: You confess that to me, you who were once so proud? He came like an evil spirit. You were happy enough with ^{me} ~~me~~ before he came, weren't you?

LEONORA: Yes, happy enough.

MOHAMMED: With me you were at least² safe. But with Philip -! He might get himself killed tomorrow, and you with him.

LEONORA: Then I'll have to go down with him.

She goes to the inner door and calls out 'Baker!'

He comes almost at once.

LEONORA: The Captain will be here in about ten minutes, Baker. We saw his 'plane go over just now.

BAKER: Very good, Madam.

LEONORA: Are the chickens plucked and cleaned?

BAKER: I've just done it, Madam.

LEONORA: That's all, then.

BAKER leaves.

LEONORA: There, Mohammed, you see how much a wife I am. In three months my character has changed completely.

MOHAMMED: I tell you I'm certain that one of his men has killed Masudi. Had it not been for you, Leonora, I would have shown my piece of evidence to Shingleton long before now.

LEONORA: What is this piece of evidence?

MOHAMMED: You saw it yourself two months ago: the bullet I extracted from the sergeant's hand. Philip

told me the man had been playing with a revolver or something. But he was telling a lie. The bullet belongs to an automatic gun which is obsolete now and which only Masudi's men have in great number. Now this surely is absolute proof, Leonora, that he must have had a skirmish with the rebels. And I believe that Masudi was killed during that skirmish. I believe that Philip set out quite deliberately from this place to murder Masudi. I believe that he has been lying to you and everyone else. I believe that he is using you and even Hussein Al Shabar quite coldly. I believe, Leonora, that he is a first-class actor with an infinite power to charm other people, as he has charmed you and me.

LEONORA: There might have been a skirmish. You know how light-headed Masudi is.

MOHAMMED: But Masudi has not been seen or heard of again since the day Philip first went to the hills.

LEONORA: Why have you waited all this time, then, if you were so sure?

MOHAMMED: Because only yesterday did I hear that Masudi is missing. Of course, there had been rumours before.

LEONORA: Philip couldn't. He couldn't.

MOHAMMED: In ~~the~~ other words he has charmed you, as I confess he ~~has~~ charmed me. He went to Hussein for help, you see, and Hussein thought he'd at last got a powerful European on Masudi's side. But all the time he was being tricked.

~~Mohammed insists that Haytill
not being a soldier by career
does not know what he is doing.
he is playing with great issues
which he does not understand.~~

Leona asks Mohammed: He could
not suddenly change: I have known
Philip for three years, he has never
been to this country before, he is
here to see me, nothing else: he
is not a soldier by career, do you
think any government is stupid
enough to give a special mission
to a love-lost young man with 2
years' ^{compulsory} service in the army.

Mohammed: Have you never heard of
men in the intelligence service whose
wives & children do not know?

L... But she says
But Mohammed, how ridiculous

He is a romantic, Leonora.
Leonora: *I can't endanger his position by going to the hills. He's only a few months more in office. We shall go back to Europe, or take a job here. Then we shall be free. But*

LEONORA: Are you jealous of Philip? *forgive me until then.*

MOHAMMED: This is how I stand: I want to get you away from him because I love you. I don't ask you to ~~come back to me~~ *and love me;* I only ask you to save yourself. ~~Do you think his own government is going to approve of what he has done? Do you think Shingleton is going to support him?~~ Philip is damned, Leonora, and I'm not going to let you be damned with him. I'm going to tell Shingleton everything I know about ~~Philip~~ *him.* I shall show him the bullet, for one thing.

LEONORA: Philip is obeying orders. Your evidence will mean nothing. *If he's a traitor, then so am*

Where did you get this idea that he is doing harm? You always had it. Yes, it is an idea that obscures me. And there comes... bullet... L: If he's a traitor, then...

I. My brain doesn't work any more. I remember the work I did with you, and I'm still loyal to it, but my brain says nothing to me any more. ~~And that's because I'm having a child by him, Mohammed.~~

MOHAMMED: A child?

LEONORA: You mustn't try to hurt Philip. I've got to stay with him ~~whatever he does~~ *now.*

MOHAMMED goes towards her in quiet astonishment.

MOHAMMED: Are you sure?

LEONORA: Yes.

MOHAMMED: Why didn't you tell me before?

LEONORA: I don't know.

MOHAMMED: What about the gossip? And where are you going to have the child?

LEONORA: I was relying on you for that.

MOHAMMED: On me? Yet you stay with Philip...

LEONORA: If you want to get him killed by someone, then I'll have to suffer it. I'm helpless. But

60
She tells him that these visits to the hills are quite harmless. He is trying to find out all the cases.
Mohammed: What about the women, then?
Leonora: Oh, there are always women here. I can't leave him.

MOHAMMED: And suppose there are riots? Suppose they surround this house? Is it going to be very safe for your child?

LEONORA (putting her hand to her brow): I want you to do your best for me.

MOHAMMED: Has it occurred to you that there is another solution?

A pause.

LEONORA: What?

MOHAMMED: You'd no longer feel helpless then. Your brain would work again. You'd be free. You realise that it's almost impossible to keep such a thing secret from the women here? They have the intuitions of sewer-rats.

LEONORA: I'll never leave the house.

MOHAMMED: Why not be wise and have the child brought off? It could be done quietly and efficiently. I can do it myself. No one need know.

LEONORA: How horrible...

MOHAMMED: Not so horrible as your own death by rebel bullets.

LEONORA: Yes, far more horrible, far, far more horrible! All you're aware of is a speechless little embryo. But it belongs to Philip and me together. It's alive. Your hands are for cancers and tumours, not for living things. Do you want a world of old people?

MOHAMMED: I want you to be safe.

LEONORA: How you could ask me to do such a thing...

MOHAMMED (with a shrug): ~~Very well then: you shall have your child. You shall have all the help I can give you.~~ Very well then: you shall have your child. You shall have all the help I can give you.

Leonora: Whose have you got this idea that Philip is 61
 doing hand here?
 Mohammed: It is an idea that began to dress me over a
 month ago. And the rumors confirm it. He speaks fluent
 Arabic, people say he has been sent on a special mission -
 believe that. In some, Leonora.

LEONORA (looking about her) I'd quite forgotten he was
 on his way home! You've made this place feel
 quite dark. I was so happy before. I feel
 happy the instant Philip enters my head!

MOHAMMED: Yes, and you daren't look into the future.

LEONORA: But I do dare. I see you going to see
 Shingleton, for instance. I see him laughing
 in your face. I see Philip coming back in
 a few minutes and your shaking hands with him
 like an old friend. I see one day leading
 into another, full of the usual routines.
 I see a riot - ofcourse there will be a riot -
 and I see the stones being thrown at an Embassy
 window and the students dispersing after
 twelve hours with nothing settled. Our talk
 is daring, Mohammed. But only our talk.

MOHAMMED: You don't see Philip as a murderer? or your-
 self as a traitor?

LEONORA: No, or perhaps I do. But I don't care. ^{refuse to get him} into trouble.

MOHAMMED: And ^{suppose} ~~shall I care~~ when I betray ^{him?} Philip?

LEONORA: You wouldn't do it.

MOHAMMED: When he comes into this room I shall shake hands
 with him. I may even smile at him. But after
 that I shall betray him.

LEONORA: And Shingleton will laugh in your face.

MOHAMMED: Then I will go to someone who doesn't. You
 shall have your child, Leonora, but you shan't
 keep Philip. You are going to see for yourself
 if I'm just a talker, just a surgeon at the local
 hospital who pets frightened children on the
 head. Now you've given me the chance to prove
 myself. And I am going to seize that chance.

LEONORA goes towards him with a smile and puts her

silk scarf playfully round his head, making a turban of it. He stands there looking into her eyes, quite unable to smile.

LEONORA: There, betray whom you like. You look such a baby. All men, even the broad ones, can be made to look like babies in a moment. Your eyes are so mournful, Mohammed. Very well, go and betray Philip. Go and have your little game. But I tell you everything is going to come out all right. I know this because I'm a woman, because there is not the vestige of an ominous warning inside me about the future, because I'm calm and perfectly reassured, even by your stupid eyes.

She leaves him and goes towards the gramophone. He is just about to take down the scarf when she turns round and runs back to him with a laugh.

LEONORA: No, no, you must leave it!

She re-arranges it, then returns to the gramophone and puts on a quick waltz. She takes hold of him gaily. She begins to turn him round and round in the dance. At first he moves heavily and sadly, watching her with an expression of pity. But soon he is forced to smile: he takes her more firmly, and at last they begin to dance swiftly round the room.

The front door opens suddenly and HUSSEIN appears. He looks at the couple with astonishment and steps back. They stop, and MOHAMMED quickly pulls the silk scarf from his head. The three of them stand quite still, until LEONORA goes to the gramophone and takes the record off.

HUSSEIN: I am looking for the Captain. I saw his 'plane go over.

LEONORA: He should be here in a few minutes. Why not stay, Hussein?

HUSSEIN simply stands at the open door staring at Mohammed.

HUSSEIN: Have you any right to visit the Captain's house ^h while he is away?

MOHAMMED: Any right?

HUSSEIN: I ask by what right you are here.

MOHAMMED: I am here because Captain Hazlitt invited me to come.

HUSSEIN(to LEONORA): Is this true?

LEONORA: Why shouldn't it be true?

HUSSEIN: Then all the more shameful for me. I happen to be the Captain's closest friend here, - and, I had hoped, yours too.

LEONORA: I don't understand you.

HUSSEIN: I shall visit the Captain when he's alone.

He leaves, slamming the door. MOHAMMED goes to the window and watches him return to his own house.

MOHAMMED: What a buffoon he is! Look, he's trembling with rage! He calls himself prince, and he really believes he's a prince, though no one else here does, including the shoe-shine boys. He hates me because he thought he saw me smiling at his wife one day! No wonder he played so well into your Captain's hands. (He turns from the window) You look a little sadder now.

LEONORA: He quite frightened me.

MOHAMMED: You look chastened. Things happen very suddenly in this country, you see. In a moment we pass from gaiety to fear. Sometimes we have no warning at all of the most terrifying events, even the women among us with their marvellous intuitions of the future.

There is a knock on the front door.

LEONORA: Is that Philip?

MOHAMMED looks out of the window.

MOHAMMED: No, it's a woman. I think it's Hussein's wife. Do you want me to go?

LEONORA: Why should you?

She goes to the door and admits BADIA AL SHABAR.

BADIA: Hussein came^e back just now in such a rage!

LEONORA: But nothing was wrong. He saw Mohammed and I dancing together, that's all. We're waiting for Philip to come back.

BADIA: Mohammed? Ah, the doctor. Then I understand.

MOHAMMED: Will you excuse me?

He starts to leave the room.

LEONORA: Why?

MOHAMMED: Oh, it's the convention here. I don't want to give cause for jealousy. I'll wait in the garden.

He leaves, and BADIA draws LEONORA away from the door.

BADIA: Do you know what these men have been planning together?

LEONORA: Which men ?

BADIA: Hussein and the Captain.

LEONORA closes the door swiftly.

BADIA: But you must surely know.

LEONORA: I know nothing.

BADIA: Does the Captain never confide in you?

LEONORA: Not now.

BADIA: I hear everything from Hussein when he is drunk. But we'll keep his secret. Men are helpless without us.

LEONORA: What did he tell you?

BADIA: First of all the Captain has been taking patrols into the hills.

LEONORA: I know that.

BADIA: Secondly, he made contact with Masudi on his first patrol six weeks ago.

LEONORA: To kill him?

BADIA: Why, - to kill him? To negotiate with him. To lay down plans for the rebellion of our people.

LEONORA: But Masudi has disappeared!

BADIA: Only as part of the plan. Actually he is massing his men in the hills, ready for an assault on this town. And your Captain has just flown back from making the final arrangements with him.

LEONORA: With whom?

BADIA: With Masudi.

LEONORA: But he did not kill Masudi...

BADIA: He sees Masudi again and again, my dear. Why should he want to kill him? (She looks closely at Leonora) What is the matter with you, my dear? You look ill today. How long have you been like this?

She takes LEONORA by the arm and leads her to the divan.

LEONORA: The Captain will support Masudi?

BADIA: That's the secret you and I have to keep. But you ought to be excited! And look at you, - like a child!

LEONORA: Why excited?

BADIA: Because this is a triumph for you, and for everybody else who has worked for the rebels. It is a triumph that at last we have a European officer on our side.

LEONORA: And what about the European officer himself?

BADIA: You are lucky to have him, my dear. My own husband is a wild bear in comparison. Yet I think more highly of my husband now. Masudi always used to call him a clown. But I wonder what he calls him now?

LEONORA: Hussein should have kept out of this house!

BADIA: Why?

LEONORA: It was he who influenced Philip! Don't you understand that Philip has plunged himself into disgrace, that he has committed an act of treason? Do you expect me to sit here and listen to what you are saying and be excited? Drunk fools like Hussein have robbed my Philip of his life!

She bursts into tears, but BADIA makes little effort to comfort her.

BADIA: But it was you who influenced the Captain, not Hussein. Hussein told me himself ~~that~~ how helpful it was to have you in this house.

LEONORA: I have said nothing to influence him, not since our first evening together.

BADIA: Are you sure?

LEONORA: It was Hussein, all the time!

BADIA: Shall we ask him when he comes, then?

LEONORA: Ask who?

BADIA: The Captain. Shall we ask him whether it was Hussein or you who really caused him to help the rebels?

LEONORA: I knew this country would suck him into its horrible swamp! And you, - with your tongue!

BADIA: You're sick, my dear.

LEONORA: Sick! Aren't you sick with the filthy washing you take in from other people all the time?

BADIA: Is that why you don't come to see me?
 LEONORA: Yes, because I detest your quick tongue!
 BADIA: And my quick eyes? Because they see every-
 thing you do, because they ^{see} how you got the
 Captain in your power, because they see how
 you turned my husband's head? Because they
 see you all too well, my friend, - in your
 true colours!

A faint welcoming cry, 'Mohammed!' is heard and
 Badia leaps to her feet.

BADIA: It's the Captain. Get up and powder your
 face.

LEONORA rises listlessly and goes to the mirror,
 where she wipes the tears away from her eyes. After a
 pause HAZLITT opens the door and leads MOHAMMED in by the
 hand.

HAZLITT: He was outside because of the harem! Badia,
 how are you?

He kisses her hand gaily, then goes across to
 LEONORA and embraces her. BADIA and MOHAMMED stand look-
 ing on shyly. HAZLITT turns and notices them.

HAZLITT (with a laugh): Haven't you seen a man kiss ^{the woman} ~~me~~
^{he loves} ~~me~~ before? Look! I'll show you again!

He takes LEONORA in his arms, holds back her head
 and kisses her on the lips.

HAZLITT: You see? So much for your dark shames!
 So much for your precious harem, eh, Badia?
 Oh, we're going to blow a fine new wind across
 those dark shames of yours! Ah, Leonora, I
 feel so ^{happy!} ~~healthy and light~~ I'm active again!
~~I'm absorbed every minute of the day! How~~
~~wonderful that is! (I'm ~~happy~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~~~
~~scrutinising, no conscience stuff in a fetid~~
~~room! To do something and to feel the conscience~~



~~free! So she believes in me at last, Mohamm-~~
~~ed. Did she tell you that?~~

~~MOHAMMED~~ ^{He} ~~needs~~ ~~to~~ goes and lifts ^{Mohammed's} ~~his~~ chin.

up playfully with his fist.

HAZLITT: ~~But~~ ^{But} you don't ^{believe in me yet,} eh?

MOHAMMED: Will you excuse me if I go now, Philip? I reckoned on your coming back earlier. I should have been at the hospital long ago.

HAZLITT (to LEONORA): Have you given him tea?

LEONORA: We had some at the oil-camp.

HAZLITT: Go, then. But have dinner with me tonight.

MOHAMMED: Tomorrow night, Philip. I'm on duty tonight.

HAZLITT: Tomorrow night? (He laughs) I think you may be required at the hospital tomorrow night also.

MOHAMMED: Why?

HAZLITT looks from to the other of them as they stand facing him in silence.

HAZLITT: What are you all looking so solemn about?

LEONORA: Why is Mohammed going to be required at the hospital tomorrow night?

HAZLITT: Oh - ! Some celebration... Some brawl - at the House of Assembly, - I was joking. A few friendly dagger-blows perhaps.

BADIA: Have you seen Hussein?

HAZLITT (looking at her closely): Why should I have seen Hussein?

BADIA: I wondered...

MOHAMMED: I'll leave you, then. Good bye, Philip.

HAZLITT: Good bye. I just wanted to see your face.

MOHAMMED bows slightly to the two women and goes out.

LEONORA: I want to know where you've been, Philip.

HAZLITT (turning on her sharply): ~~These trips are part of~~ ^{I told you long ago what}

~~these trips were for!~~
~~my duties here. They have nothing what-~~
~~soever to do with you.~~

LEONORA: Shall I put on one of those black veils, then? But you are dealing with a European woman, my friend. You may bristle with revolvers and machine-guns, but I have eyes in my head, and they tell me I have a dirty liar before me.

A pause.

HAZLITT: Badia. Do you know what she is talking about?

BADIA: Be honest with her. She's not a fool.

HAZLITT: Both of you think you know something. What is it you think you know?

LEONORA: That you have just come back from negotiating with Masudi; that you are hand-in-glove with the rebels; that you will one day be put to death for treason; that you have plunged your name into disgrace; that you have ruined me, and anything that is born of me. That you are the dupe of a drunkard.

HAZLITT walks to the window and looks out. He goes to the inner door and opens it. He looks into the corridor, and closes it again.

HAZLITT: Who told you? Badia?

LEONORA (almost in tears): Yes.

HAZLITT: ~~How strange to hear~~
~~Now you talking to me about treason and dis-~~
~~grace, you who more than any other European~~
~~alive has helped men like Masudi to power. So~~
~~the ghosts have quite departed now, have they?~~
~~But you don't realise, my dear, how much on~~
~~the edge of victory we are.~~ (To BADIA) How did you get to know all this?

BADIA: I've a right to know.

HAZLITT: I asked you how you got to know it.

BADIA: I'm a reliable person. People ~~know~~ they can

rely on my tact when they tell me things.

HAZLITT: Ah, forgive me. Your tact.

BADIA: I can keep a secret. I saw Masudi once.

HAZLITT: And you had a serious political discussion?

BADIA: He knows and trusts me.

HAZLITT: Did his big hairy hands wander?

BADIA: Did - ?

HAZLITT seizes her by the throat and pulls her roughly to and fro.

BADIA: Leonora! Leonora!

HAZLITT: Come on! Come on! Who told you?

She says something inaudible. HAZLITT bends to listen to her.

HAZLITT: What? What? (She repeats it) Ah, Hussein, Hussein. I might have guessed.

He pushes her back so that she falls onto the divan.

HAZLITT: Did he tell you himself, or did you overhear it?

BADIA: He told me himself.

HAZLITT: When he was drunk?

BADIA: Yes.

HAZLITT: The idiot. If you utter a word of what Hussein told you to anyone outside this room, you'll get a knife in your back. Now. We are friends. The three of us: fellow-conspirators. I'm glad you both know, because things are beginning to move very fast. We need our women at such a time. Where's Hussein?

BADIA: In the house. He came to look for you after your plane went over, but you hadn't come.

HAZLITT: Ah, - the aeroplane! (To LEONORA) Did you see me wave?

LEONORA: Yes.

HAZLITT: Was that Mohammed I could see you with?

LEONORA: Yes.

HAZLITT: You've both made me feel quite nervous. (He begins striding about) I hate this waiting about! It's so hot! But nothing's wrong: I want you both to get that into your heads.

LEONORA: We ought to have gone back to Europe. I pleaded with you. ^{I stopped my work in the hills.} ~~I never went to the hills again. I stopped working at the oil-camp.~~ I've been living for no one but you. ~~All my work is gone.~~ And now - ! How this country has changed you!

The telephone bell rings. HAZLITT takes up the receiver.

HAZLITT: Hulho... Yes, Sergeant Major.

He listens carefully for some time then turns to LEONORA with his hand over the mouth-piece.

HAZLITT: Shingleton went to the Sergeant Major and ordered him to double up the sentries while I was away: because of the "local situation". He listens at the 'phone again.

HAZLITT: And what? Yes, yes, I see... Exactly.

He puts the receiver down and goes slowly to a chair.

HAZLITT: What does he mean, - the "local situation"? Do you think he knows anything?

LEONORA: He has spies planted everywhere.

HAZLITT: ~~My Sergeant Major no longer has the slightest respect for me. I can tell that from his tone. And he plays a double game. I asked him a few weeks ago whether Headquarters had ever phoned him in my absence, and he denied it. But Baker told me they had. And Baker says that the men are beginning to gossip about your presence in this house. They are slipping through my~~

Haylitt: But I've kept everything so quiet. I can't understand it. My men have always been reserved 72
~~Badia: No today. They know I'm here only because of my Arabic. But —~~

~~fingers, Leonora. They're deserting me.~~

LEONORA: You've given in to the daydreams of a drunk, Philip.

BADIA: Tell her, Captain. Tell her if it ^{was} my poor Hussein who led you to the rebels, or she herself.

LEONORA: Hussein made you feel proud to be with Masudi.

HAZLITT (after a pause) ~~No. I think I'm vindicating myself for you. No one led me to the rebels.~~

~~LEONORA: You accuse me now...~~ ^{went to them alone. Gradually I became involved ~~And...~~}

~~HAZLITT: I accuse you of nothing. I stand by what I~~

~~did.~~ ^{But} Just for the moment the meaning's gone. It's so hot here! I'm confused.

Tomorrow I shall be clear again. Everything will be clear and cheerful tomorrow, Leonora.

LEONORA: Well, I'm not going to daydream any longer.

She puts the silk scarf round her head as if she were going out.

HAZLITT: Where are you going?

LEONORA: I'm going to see Shingleton.

HAZLITT: Why?

LEONORA: To calm him down, and to find out what he knows. You can't afford to have him as your enemy.

HAZLITT: And I can't afford to let him know the truth.

LEONORA: But surely he knows everything.

HAZLITT: Not even Hussein knows.

LEONORA: What is the truth, then?

HAZLITT: But Shingleton must never know.

LEONORA: Very well. Tell me what the truth is.

HAZLITT: Masudi and I have agreed on a time.

LEONORA: A time?

HAZLITT: Masudi ^{reaches} ~~will reach~~ this town at dawn tomorrow morning.

LEONORA: For the rebellion?

HAZLITT: Yes.

LEONORA: Tomorrow! Then he's already on the move?
Oh, you fool! How do you think we can save
you now?

CURTAIN.

SCENE: the same, a little later. It is now evening. HAZLITT and BADIA AL SHABAR are discovered.

BADIA: If you went back to your country now, Captain, would they shoot you?

HAZLITT: Yes. I suppose they would.

BADIA: Will you ever be able to go back to your country?

HAZLITT: No. How strange: that had never occurred to me.

BADIA: You've courage. That's why. But just think: if Hussein had been a Captain and had betrayed his country, would I still love him?

HAZLITT: Have I betrayed my country?

BADIA: Your own people would say so.

HAZLITT: Masudi has agreed not to touch the oil-camp. That was my first condition.

BADIA: BUT Masudi is a liar.

HAZLITT: I feel so utterly alone. From now on no one can help me. Yet I've hardly been conscious of what I've done.

BADIA: You've been led astray by a very beautiful woman, Captain.

HAZLITT: Why do you say that?

BADIA: Because I don't want you to blame Hussein if anything goes wrong. Leonora played her part as well, remember; and a bigger part, too. Her intelligence frightens me, Captain. It has changed all of us. Without it we could all have been living peacefully together. Look at her effect on Hussein.

HAZLITT: What was her effect on Hussein?

BADIA: Don't you see that the man adores her? Haven't you noticed him when they're together? All

day he talks about her, and when he's lying in bed drunk he pulls his pillow about and calls it Leonora. For Hussein she is the highest type of European woman. Whereas I'm the whore.

HAZLITT: Are you jealous of her?

BADIA (with a shrug) Hussein goes to the brothel three or four times a week. How could I be jealous? He disgusts me. Whereas you are different.

HAZLITT: What did you mean when you said that we might be living peacefully together?

BADIA: She led you astray.

HAZLITT: I make my own decisions.

BADIA: But you've been working with Hussein. And do you think he would have moved a muscle without a woman like Leonora to guide him?

HAZLITT: Were they friends, then? before I came?

BADIA: No. But since you arrived he has always been trying to show off in front of her. These patrols he asked you to go on, they're all showing off for Leonora's benefit! Hussein needs only one incentive: a woman. He's like a wild beast where women are concerned. What kind of rebel ^{is it who gives all the} ~~do you think it is who tells~~ ^{secrets away to his wife? Rebel!} ~~his secrets which would compromise the lives of~~ ~~two thousand men?~~

HAZLITT: Did Leonora ever go to see him in private?

BADIA: Perhaps. She isn't unwilling to use her charms, Captain. Only this afternoon she and the doctor were dancing round this room, laughing and kissing each other.

HAZLITT: Kissing?

BADIA: Hussein said so. But he talks wildly. His

brain is soft with drink.

HAZLITT (putting his handkerchief to his brow): They are only friends, Mohammed and Leonora, *only friends.*

BADIA: Of course. But if I show that I admire you, if I say that of all the men who have come from Europe I think you are the finest, they call me a whore. But the precious Miss Friedmann can have her friendships.

HAZLITT: Only Hussein calls you ~~whore~~ ^{that.}

BADIA: No. You say the same, in your heart. Look at the way you pushed me about when Leonora was here. . . Would you do that to a European woman?

HAZLITT: It was because you lied to me.

BADIA: But it's the same judgement all the time, - that I'm just an appendage of Hussein's life, that I'm of no importance in myself and have got to be kept under lock and key. Oh, yes, I'm beautiful enough, but so are the girls in the brothels, so are the cabaret-girls! When I met Miss Friedmann for the first time I asked her to come and see me in my house. She came once. Once.

HAZLITT: Why was that?

BADIA: Because there is nothing romantic in my house, no men for one thing. Only magazines and tea. But there's no difference of intelligence between Miss Friedmann and me, Captain, nor any difference of beauty. There is only one difference: she is free and I'm ^{an} not. If I were free like her men would fall in love with me as well.

HAZLITT: But men surely do fall in love with you.

BADIA: And if I were free they wouldn't call me these things! And you would take my love as a gift, not pull me about as you did.

HAZLITT: Your love?

BADIA: I think about you every hour of the day. And the more I'm alone, the more do I think of you. I've envied Leonora more than any other woman I've know. Why are you looking at me like that?

HAZLITT: I'm astonished. Yes, this country has changed me...

BADIA: Are you thinking of me as a shameless creature? Does Hussein tell you all the time how I scream and stamp and curse like one? Be married to a drunkard who is sick over your silk dresses and carpets every night, then see if you'd scream or not!

HAZLITT: It wasn't in my head. I was just astonished.

BADIA: It's a pure feeling. Even you who receive it can't take away its purity.

HAZLITT: Does Hussein know?

BADIA: What do any of these people know about love? You can't eat love, you can't chop it up for fire-wood, you can't use it to kill mosquitoes with! Hussein feels an appetite, he gratifies it, then it's all finished! That's the limit of his love.

HAZLITT: You tell me all this, Badia, just a few hours before the rebellion...

BADIA: This is my first chance to see you alone. Tomorrow you are going to be a powerful man. Then you'll remember that I loved you at a time when you had no power. Are you so much

in love with her?

HAZLITT: ^{Yes} ~~I'm loyal to her. That first flush of feeling isn't over yet.~~

BADIA: But can you imagine sleeping with me, if only out of mercy?

HAZLITT: Yes.

BADIA: But no love? no love in the sense of this 'loyalty' you have for her?

HAZLITT (after a pause) No.

BADIA: So I'm beautiful, but only to touch, like an ornament, then to put away. ~~That's my destiny.~~
(Puts her hand up to her neck) You hurt me when you caught hold of my neck.

HAZLITT: I shall never treat you like that again.

BADIA: Feel. Is there a swelling?

She draws his hand along her neck and moves closer to him.

BADIA: Won't you kiss the bruise you've made?

He remains quite still, and at last she lowers her hand.

BADIA: Is she having a child?

HAZLITT: How do you know that?

BADIA: I only guessed. She looks ill. I would like to be with you every hour of the day, and for the rest of my life. (Looking about the room)
But she ~~was~~ ^{was} here before me. You can see her mark all over the room, whereas when I came here first it was simple and -

There is a light knock on the front door. HAZLITT opens it and HUSSEIN AL SHABAR steps into the room.

HUSSEIN: Ah, Captain, so you are back. I saw your plane go over this afternoon.

They shake hands, and HUSSEIN stares from HAZLITT to BADIA.

HUSSEIN (to BADIA): Go back to your house and stay there.

She does not move, but continues looking at

HAZLITT. Suddenly HUSSEIN makes as if to strike her.

HUSSEIN: Get out!

She flinches away, then leaves the room.

HUSSEIN: I want you to answer a question, Captain.

Am I your best friend in this country?

HAZLITT: Yes. What is the matter with you?

HUSSEIN: This: that I don't like some of your friends. They could easily interfere with our work.

HAZLITT: Are you talking about Mohammed?

HUSSEIN: When I came here this afternoon I saw Miss Friedmann and the doctor dancing round this room like lovers. Now that is very shameful to me: first, because you allow an enemy of mine to come to your house while you are away; and secondly because Miss Friedmann clearly prefers the company of the doctor to mine. That is to say, she prefers someone vulgar!

HAZLITT: He's the best surgeon in the country. And do you question his honour?

HUSSEIN: I do. To his face if necessary.

HAZLITT: And you never doubt your own? Is it an honourable man who tells his wife political secrets when he's drunk? ~~Who are you to put my life in danger just because you can't see~~
~~Look at you trembling there.~~ Look at you trembling there. All this stuff you talk about honour and pride, - it's ~~the~~ the after-effect of liquor!

HUSSEIN: Whatever my wife tells you is untrue.

BADIA: Then how does she know I've been negotiating

with Masudi?

HUSSEIN: Just a woman's talk.

HAZLITT: I had to force it out of her. I know when Badia is telling the truth. Yet I can trust Mohammed, you see.

A pause.

HUSSEIN: Did I tell her these things?

HAZLITT: How else could she know?

HUSSEIN: With a bottle in my hand I have no honour, no pride, no dignity. Sometimes she waits in the porch for me at night and beats me like a child when I'm drunk.

HAZLITT: You ~~must~~ ^{must} ~~get to~~ keep her mouth shut. Masudi and I have agreed on a time. That time is dawn tomorrow morning.

HUSSEIN: Tomorrow?

HAZLITT: You don't look excited or even interested. What ^{is} ~~is~~ the matter with you?

HUSSEIN looks at him in silence.

HUSSEIN: How long was Badia here alone?

HAZLITT: Perhaps a couple of hours. You idiot! ^{Do} ~~Do~~ you think I'm after her?

HUSSEIN (screwing up his face): It's all these strange people who come and go... As if from dark places. Everything suspicious. There should only be you and Miss Fræedmann here in this house. Nobody else. This Baker of yours: his eyes are strange. And Shingleton comes here sometimes. As well as Mohammed. And Badia is always longing to come over here, - I can feel her longing like a bitch on heat.

HAZLITT: Listen to ~~what I've got to tell you.~~ ^{me. Hussein, listen.} Tomorrow you must get through to the House of Assembly in time to meet Masudi at three o'clock in

80

in the afternoon. By that time he ~~will~~ ^{will probably} ~~have~~ the police headquarters and the barracks under control. Now go and get some sleep. You'll need all your strength tomorrow. And keep that woman's mouth shut.

HUSSEIN (moving closer to him): I saw a mark on her throat when I came in. You - !

He takes a step forward but HAZLITT instantly pulls out his revolver and points it at him.

HAZLITT: I order you to go and get some sleep.

There are footsteps outside and HAZLITT quickly replaces his revolver. LEONORA enters the room with SHINGLETON. The latter looks from HAZLITT to HUSSEIN closely. HUSSEIN makes a bow, but SHINGLETON disregards him.

HAZLITT: Please come in.

HUSSEIN watches them for a moment, then goes away.

SHINGLETON: I see you've no guard on the house, Captain.

HAZLITT: I sent him away some weeks ago.

SHINGLETON: That isn't wise in this country. You look less well than when I saw you first.

HAZLITT: Do I? Will you sit down?

SHINGLETON (seating himself) You're still thick with this Hussein, then? (With a smile) I hope he isn't leading you astray?

HAZLITT: No.

LEONORA: Don't you mean 'yes'?

HAZLITT: You shouldn't say that!

SHINGLETON: But she has a right to say that, Captain.
Because
Because it's true.

HAZLITT: ~~It's true that you've tried to interfere in the management of my own son.~~ By what right do you telephone my own Sergeant Major and

tell him what sentries to post?

SHINGLETON: Let me tell you, Captain: first because I am the manager of the ^{engineering camp,} ~~SIA-camp~~ and secondly because you are here to protect me.

HAZLITT: I do protect you.

SHINGLETON: But not when you are away, Captain. You're away quite often, aren't you? Look at Miss Friedmann here: she ^{is} terrified ^{that} you are going to make a fool of yourself, isn't she? That's why she came running to me this afternoon.

HAZLITT: I leave strict orders when I go away.

SHINGLETON: But I'm supposed to advise ^{you.} Can I do that when you're away?. No, I have to advise your Sergeant Major. That means giving him orders.

HAZLITT: Are you sure you know so much about this country?

SHINGLETON: Far more than you. (With a chuckle) I don't think you realise how helpful I've been, Captain. One word from me to Headquarters and you would have been dismissed the service long ago.

HAZLITT: Why? Because I take reconnaissance patrols into the hills?

SHINGLETON: Yes. Because that ^{is} not one of your duties here. And in any [^] case these are hardly reconnaissance patrols, are they?

HAZLITT does not answer.

SHINGLETON: Are these reconnaissance patrols, Captain? I liked the look of your little aeroplane today.

HAZLITT: Oh, yes, your spies...

SHINGLETON: I know at what hour you landed in the hills five days ago, and at what hour you took off

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today.

HAZLITT: Then why didn't you pass word to Headquarters?

SHINGLETON: Because I think Miss Friedmann and this worthless drunkard of yours have an undue influence over you, Captain. Because I don't take Miss Friedmann seriously, or Hussein seriously, or lastly yourself seriously. So I shall just wait patiently until you have played out your little comic opera. You people are powerless. This Masudi has a golden beard, hasn't he?

HAZLITT: Should I know that?

SHINGLETON: You do know that, Captain, because you saw him to day. And that^{is} why Miss Friedmann came running to me, - to find out what steps I was taking. For God's sake come off your pedestal, man! It^{is} within my power to get you shipped off home on a treason charge.

LEONORA: Have you taken any steps?

SHINGLETON: No, but I shall only continue to take no steps on certain conditions. You realise how I compromise myself in this way?

HAZLITT: Why do it, then?

SHINGLETON: Ah, Captain, perhaps I've a little mercy after all. *The army is hardly your career. You have only 6 months of service. I must make allowances for that.*

HAZLITT: What are the conditions?

SHINGLETON: That you keep Hussein out of the house, that you cease your so-called patrols, that you wear your uniform like any other European officer, that you keep a permanent guard on this house and that you keep the kind of respectable company that officers here usually do keep.

A pause.

SHINGLETON: Do you agree?

HAZLITT: Yes. I agree.

SHINGLETON (giving him a sudden glance): Am I to believe that?

HAZLITT: You have your moments of comic opera too... Yes, you are to believe it. And I'll thank you never to interfere with my sentries again.

SHINGLETON: Why not simply thank me? Since you owe me your life? Because you're a damned ungrateful puppy! Because you're a helpless child! Because this bloody pest-hole is a real test of a man! And what have you done here? You've let a drunkard and a sentimental slip of a girl tell you how to conduct your life, how to betray your country, how to lie in your back teeth! Oh, yes, look at it all!

(Poking at the cushions, picking up the covers)

Very pretty! But it's what a woman would do. It's fickle, showy, spineless! Not like a man, least of all like a Captain.

LEONORA: Leave him alone.

SHINGLETON (looking from one to the other): ~~I'm not quite~~ human for either of you, am I? Has it never occurred to you, - that I have a mind too, and that I have ~~my~~ problems, even fears, quite as terrible as yours? Am I just 'Shingleton at the oil-camp'? 'The spy'? Don't you hate me, Captain?

HAZLITT: No. I only want you to keep away from my sentries.

SHINGLETON : You imagine you know a little about the people of this country, don't you? But you

haven't met them, Captain. You just haven't met them. You've met Hussein Al Shabar, and Mohammed the doctor, namely the two people in this country who speak English as if it was their mother tongue and who happen to have been sent as children to the same European school in Alexandria. They even look like Europeans. Mohammed is a little dark perhaps. But the others, the vast majority, they shun you. They hate your uniform, and one day they'll dispose of these friends of yours.

HAZLITT:

I have been among the villagers. They are my friends. Then I was right to go to the rebels.

SHINGLETON:

They would be quite happy to put a bullet between their eyes when they have finished with you. All you can do, Captain, is to give them arms and ammunition illegally, and certainly their leader. the benefit of your military knowledge.

Afterwards they would put a bullet between your eyes quite happily.

HAZLITT:

They trust me.

SHINGLETON:

Yes! You are ~~now~~ a legend in this country. Everybody has heard your name. You are even a kind of leader for them. But ~~still~~ you are not one of them. The fact is you're just a man who chose his ~~career~~ ^{job} and then funk'd its consequences.

HAZLITT:

No, I funk'd nothing, I -

SHINGLETON:

But your eyes are full of doubt! You're only just waking up to the truth, you see. You're just this moment realising what a dangerous game you have played. It's hot in this place. We Europeans lose touch here quickly. Who are we? After a week we don't know. We have bodies, yes, and names. But that silent core

of identity that was us in Europe dies: it dies, Captain. Even Miss Friedmann has changed. I can see that. Until now she has been my enemy. Are you my enemy now?

LEONORA: ~~I'm helpless.~~

She does not reply. She turns away laughingly.

SHINGLETON: You see, Captain? ~~This was the woman you shocked by joining the ~~British~~ army.~~ This was the woman who called Shingleton of the ~~class~~ ^{engineering} -camp the 'anti-rebel spy'.

LEONORA: I -

SHINGLETON: You deny it? I have a dozen witnesses! And here I am, the 'anti-rebel spy', with the lives of both of you in my hands. I'm not sentimental, but I just want you to realise that I have mercy. You always said I had no mercy.

LEONORA: To whom?

SHINGLETON: To Mohammed, to the Captain here, to the rebel leaders. Have I shown the Captain mercy?

LEONORA: *Hear Now listen to me, Captain. I want you*

SHINGLETON: What about the 'merciless class' to which I belong? Where is it now?

LEONORA: Those were my beliefs, nothing to do with you as a person.

SHINGLETON: But I've suffered from this word 'class'. A belief can hurt. It hurts when everything you say and do and feel is put down to class. When you are sad, - ah, but that is only because you have too much leisure. When you are guilty, - ah, that's the guilt of your class. When you are furious, - ah, that's the malevolence of the boss. When you are tender, - ah, that's the softness of your upbringing. Until finally you are afraid of sincerity, afraid to be sad, guilty, furious or tender,

~~Shang-tsun tells him, how to be wise.~~
to be wise.

↳ If you agree to my terms, I shall have nothing more to say. I told you at the beginning how easy it was in this country to fall into error. We need people like you here: people who speak the language fluently and within limits go out among the people. ~~One day~~ they ~~by all means~~ do that: but I forbid you to see Maoudi again. ~~Keep your sympathies until you are out of the army.~~ Keep your sympathies until you are out of the army. ~~What~~ Do you want a treason-charge on your head, man? What is the matter with him, Dick Friedmann? (Covers to Haylitt and takes him by the shoulder) Are you ill? Do you want a bit of sick-leave? Is the heat ~~getting~~ upsetting your nerves. (To Klenova)

*Cut and
lead off.*

afraid to say anything direct or with feeling. That's what makes you think us too cold, too rational and too clever, Captain. That's why so many of my class go over to the rebels: out of unholy terror! Why do you think I am here? Because among my own people I am a stranger, because there exist young men like you.

HAZLITT: You talk about your class. But I'm alone. I choose for myself alone. Why can't you be alone?

SHINGLETON: Because people like me hang together. And we see you pulling down the pillars of our temple. Alone, yes, that you are. But we built that temple. Did you think it was built from eternity? No, we built it. So you are pulling down our work. You must forgive us a lot, Hazlitt, we are mortally afraid, - both Miss Friedmann and I in our very different ways.

HAZLITT: And you will crucify me, out of your fear?

SHINGLETON: Perhaps we shall. Miss Friedmann tried very hard to. Then she relented, and provided you are sensible we shall be able to save you. But there are other chances in this detestable place.

HAZLITT (to LEONORA): You dragged me low with your conscience...

LEONORA: No. You used to sneer at my conscience. You told me to live in the present. I obeyed you, and now look what you've brought on us.

HAZLITT: I'll go to my doom alone, don't worry.

SHINGLETON: Why your doom? If there's the slightest danger of rebellion parade your tanks in front of the House of Assembly, man, and close your doors to Hussein, then you'll see what this rebel-

Could you admit him into the hospital for a few days?

Haylett: No, no, I'm well enough. I went to a village ... The first one. It made me angry. I thought there was no harm in seeing Maondi.

Singleton: If Headquarters got to hear of it, what then?

Haylett: Maondi is a good man. He will give them food, doctors. I couldn't see any harm in visiting him.

Singleton: But listen, my child, Maondi is a fool. He will give them neither food nor doctors. He wants power, nothing else. ... And now before I go ...

INSERT

~~Haylett: Did I make a fool of myself? He made~~

~~we feel so ashamed.~~
Haylett: He called me 'my child'. Strange, - I felt like a child. I don't know what I have done.

-movement's worth. But fail to do this and there's a two-fold doom in store for you. The first doom is that of treason. The second is that of being shot by your friends. Masudi would dispose of you the day after he set foot in the House of Assembly, perhaps even the first day.

stet

HAZLITT: But I agreed to your terms, didn't I?

SHINGLETON: Yes. You've saved yourself. Yet - (They gaze at each other for a moment) - you look like a man who has given up hope.

stet

HAZLITT: My illusions are gone, that's all.

SHINGLETON: Without illusions, Hazlitt, you should make a good officer. And now, before I go, I'm going to ask you to do something for me.

HAZLITT: Yes.

SHINGLETON: Please order a sentry to be mounted outside this house. Now.

HAZLITT goes slowly to the 'phone and picks it up.

HAZLITT: Give me the Sergeant Major... This is Captain Hazlitt... You will send a sentry to this house immediately. There will be a constant guard on this house from now on... Thank you.

He lays the receiver down.

SHINGLETON: That's sensible. Well, good bye. And don't forget, Captain, parade your tanks!

He leaves. HAZLITT goes to the door and stares into the darkness outside. A pause. He turns and looks at LEONORA:

HAZLITT: What did you tell him?

LEONORA: That you'd been negotiating with Masudi.

HAZLITT: Did you mention our plans for dawn tomorrow?

I went to Maundi. There seemed no harm
in it. Then — the revolt, tomorrow at
dawn. Shingleton ought to come to me.

Leonora: Come in, and rest, Philip.

Haytitt: What did you tell him?

... Are you?

Haytitt: I can't.

Leonora: But you agreed to his terms!

Haytitt: I should accuse myself of cowardice.

~~Every one is astonished that a
European officer should help the rebels.~~

I belong to this country.

H: But you said Shingleton was all Lombard.

L: But he can send in reports. What other

He doesn't know what he is doing. But

suppose the work suddenly turned & he did

send in a report! You've played into his

hands, Philip, so you must be careful.

LEONORA: No.

HAZLITT: Are you telling the truth?

LEONORA: I said nothing about tomorrow.

HAZLITT: He seems quite in the dark. His 'spies' let him down. ^{My} ~~Our~~ security was excellent, that's why.

LEONORA: Are you going to do what he asked?

A pause. HAZLITT again stares into the darkness outside.

LEONORA: Are you?

HAZLITT: I can't, Leonora.

LEONORA: But you agreed to his terms!

HAZLITT: ~~Every tribesman in the hills knows my name now.~~ Men fought each other this morning for the honour of kissing my hand.

LEONORA: And that flatters you?

HAZLITT: ~~No. But I love this country now. I never want to leave it. I shall learn the language, settle here.~~ I don't belong to this house, or to the colonial army. I shall take you into the hills, where everything is cool and fresh.

LEONORA: You agreed to his terms, Philip.

HAZLITT: ~~I've created a legend here, Leonora. I proved I was more than my uniform. And now I can't turn my back on them. They trust me now.~~

LEONORA: ~~Is this a conscience at last? You sneered at mine.~~

HAZLITT: ~~No. I love this country. I belong to it. That isn't conscience.~~

LEONORA: ~~Yet you said just now that it was I who dragged you in. How could I dare say that?~~

HAZLITT: Oh, I suddenly felt angry. It wasn't true.

~~I always asked you to leave me alone, and~~
~~yes!~~ We'll be feted, you and I, darling.

I can't think beyond that. I showed these people that I wasn't afraid, and they are going to reward me. How silent everything is...

(Looks about him suddenly) I must go to Hussein. We'd better sleep on the roof tonight. It will be safer. Tell Baker to take the mattresses up.

He turns to leave the room.

LEONORA: Then you are going to let Masudi through?

HAZLITT: Yes.

He leaves. LEONORA stands for a moment alone, then rushes to the door.

LEONORA: Philip, come back! Please come back!

He runs back to the door and she falls weeping into his arms.

LEONORA: Are you blind? (Shaking him by the shoulders)
Look at me! Look at me! How can I make you see?

HAZLITT: Leonora!

LEONORA: What about my child, Philip! You can't let them kill my child!

CURTAIN.

FOURTH ACT.

SCENE: the roof, during the evening of the following day.

Above the door leading down into the house there is a powerful electric light. The sky and the desert beyond the house are quite dark. The leaves of the palm tree can be seen, but the garden bench is now in obscurity. Leaning against the parapet are two mattresses, and blankets.

In the distance there is the sound of rifle and machine-gun fire. This is intermittent throughout the scene.

HUSSEIN AL SHABAR is discovered alone. He is standing under the electric bulb. He goes to the parapet and looks out into the darkness. He then takes from his pocket a hip-flask, unscrews its top, and drinks. He stands still for a moment, smacking his lips.

There is the long rumble of an explosion in the distance, and yellow flames begin to light up the sky. HUSSEIN starts. He watches the distant flames for a moment, then takes another drink. There is a noise on the stairs behind the door, and he quickly puts the flask away. A pause.

The door opens and a woman dressed in a black abba comes onto the roof. She has drawn the garment up over the lower part of her face. She is BADIA AL SHABAR.

HUSSEIN: Is that the ^{engineering} ~~oil~~ camp?

BADIA: Yes. What are you doing here alone?

HUSSEIN: Waiting for Hazlitt. Why do you worry about me?

BADIA: I don't like it when you prowl around. Do you want to be shot, standing up here with the light on?

HUSSEIN: Shot at our leader's house? We're winning. We've surrounded the police headquarters.

BADIA: Then why aren't you with Masudi?

HUSSEIN: I saw him this afternoon at the House of Assembly.

BADIA: But you should have stayed with him. He'll be picking his ministers in an hour's time.

HUSSEIN: He told me to come back home. He treated me like a servant, Badia.

BADIA: And you accepted that? You came meekly home with the tail between your legs?

HUSSEIN: I'm waiting for Hazlitt. I can rely on him for help. He^{is} the real leader, not Masudi at all. I couldn't bear the disgrace, Badia, of standing in that great Council chamber with everybody laughing at me. I^{am} a prince. These lackeys would stone a prince.

BADIA: And you believe that Hazlitt is the real leader?

HUSSEIN: He controls the arms and ammunition. He is our spokesman with Europe. He is also my friend, and in my friendship with him lies my strength. So I'm staying here.

BADIA: And the Captain is going to give you help...

HUSSEIN: Of course! Did you expect me to stay with those vagabonds, then? If I^{had} so much as opened my mouth they'd have cut me up like a dog. Do you expect me to stand in the Council chamber and wait for Masudi's guards to clap a pair of hand-cuffs on me?

BADIA: You didn't think of all this before, Hussein.

HUSSEIN: I thought I was sure to be the leader, with the Captain behind me.

BADIA: Oh, yes, you thought, you thought... And now you are still thinking. Like a fool you don't realise that Hazlitt can be of no help whatever to you! He will be arrested for treason. Sooner or later his Government will get him. And do you think his own soldiers are going to stay with him? They're all running loose in the ^{barack} ~~oil-camp~~. Masudi took over the ammunition-dump an hour ago because the European sentry ran away. Without men, without ammunition and without a Government behind him, what power do you think the Captain can have?

HUSSEIN: Masudi took over the ammunition-dump?

BADIA: Yes! The harem isn't quite useless, you see. The news we get is quick and reliable. But all you can do is to stand up here with your idiotic dreams. Are you going to play away these last few hours?

HUSSEIN: I believe in the Captain. I will take him away to the hills, where he'll be safe from Masudi.

BADIA: But Masudi will not let you do that. He has all the ammunition he needs. He regards you as a dreaming fool, and he ^{is} ~~is~~ right! Look at you, with those silly distant eyes.

HUSSEIN: Leave me alone, Badia.

BADIA: Shall I tell you why you're not in the Council Chamber at this moment? Because your mind ^{is} ~~is~~ has been too full with this Leonora woman. You're like a dog, the way you sniff round other women. I saw it three months ago, but you were too busy calling me a whore and telling

me how beautiful the European lady was. As for your building up your power slowly like Masudi, no! You preferred to hang round the Europeans with your dreaming eyes!

HUSSEIN: She did you no harm.

BADIA: She ^{is} the root of the whole trouble. And let ~~me~~ ^{will} tell you who ~~is~~ ^{will} come out of this better than anybody else. Mohammed. Mohammed the doctor. Aren't you ashamed to associate with Mohammed's whore? What are you but his servant now? Have you any pride at all, Hussein?

HUSSEIN: Pride?

BADIA: She bears you no love for what you did. She has enough with two men already, and neither of them a drunkard. No, she worked on you as she worked on the Captain. Both of you are the dupes of a whore!

HUSSEIN: You must not call her that!

BADIA: Did you see Mohammed kissing her downstairs yesterday? ~~xxxxxx~~ You told me they were dancing together.

HUSSEIN (staring at her): Yes.

BADIA: She told you they were only friends. But I wonder if she told you she was two months gone with child?

HUSSEIN: Miss Friedmann?

BADIA: Whose child? The Captain's? Mohammed's? I don't know. Does she know? And you call me a whore, who have borne you two children and not so much as touched another man's hand!

HUSSEIN: She betrayed the Captain...

BADIA: Oh, the precious Captain! You believe in the

Captain, don't you? (Pulling her cloak down) Well, look at the bruise on my neck! That's what your friend does to your wife.

HUSSEIN (gripping hold of her arm): I said yesterday - ! I said, 'The mark on her neck' and - He deserves to die.

BADIA: And these are the Europeans you love. If only you could stand on your own feet like Masudi. Does he run after the Europeans? No, he stays in the hills, slowly building up his power, until they come to him.

HUSSEIN: I was following a dream all the time.

BADIA: And will you listen to me now?

HUSSEIN: Yes.

BADIA: We must leave here tonight. During the ^{next} ~~enxt~~ week you will collect all your tribesmen in the hills and arm them. Then you will send a message to Masudi and demand a place in the government.

A pause.

HUSSEIN: Can we leave here safely?

BADIA: The road to the north is clear now.

HUSSEIN: Then I'll do it.

BADIA: Give me the bottle you took from the house.

HUSSEIN (turning away): I -

BADIA: Give me that bottle.

He quietly takes the hip-flask of brandy from his pocket and gives it to her. She goes to the parapet and is just about to throw it down when she stops.

BADIA: There's someone coming.

HUSSEIN quickly joins her at the parapet and they look down into the darkness. A door closes below.

BADIA: I think it was Hazlitt.

There is the sound of someone mounting the stairs slowly and heavily. HUSSEIN and BADIA listen in silence, standing together. At ~~the~~ last the door is thrown open and HAZLITT appears. His clothes are disarranged. He looks from one to the other.

HAZLITT: Is Leonora here?

BADIA: We haven't seen her.

HAZLITT: Then - ?

He goes back to the door and opens it. He calls out, 'Baker!' He strides up and down the roof, waiting for the servant, who comes almost at once.

HAZLITT: Is Miss Friedmann here?

BAKER: No, sir. She went out this afternoon.

HAZLITT: Where to?

BAKER: She said she was going to the oil-camp.

HAZLITT: Alone?

BAKER: Yes, sir. After a 'phone-call from Mr. Shingleton, I think.

A pause.

HAZLITT: You know what's happening, do you?

BAKER: Yes.

HAZLITT: I'll give you a map, and you can take my car. Make for Headquarters. There's no future with me.

BAKER: Your car isn't here, sir.

HAZLITT: Why not?

BAKER: Miss Friedmann took it.

HAZLITT: What? With the roads as they are? Have you tried 'phoning the oil-camp?

BAKER: The lines are down, sir.

HAZLITT: Where did she make for?

BAKER: The road into town.

HAZLITT: But they're shooting up every car they see!

We'll give her twenty minutes, then we'll go out and search.

BAKER: Very well, sir.

He goes.

HAZLITT: What made her take the car? (He looks from HUSSEIN to BADIA, but neither replies) Well, did you see Masudi?

HUSSEIN: Yes.

HAZLITT: At what time?

HUSSEIN: Three o'clock, as you told me.

HAZLITT: And at four o'clock he attacked my military positions. Do you know anything about that?

HUSSEIN: No.

HAZLITT: He opened fire on my men. Most of my men have fled. Did you know that?

HUSSEIN: He sent me away. He would have nothing to do with me.

HAZLITT: You didn't by some chance come to a private arrangement with him? I'm surprised to find you here, unarmed as well.

HUSSEIN: He hardly looked at me.

HAZLITT: This is the man you sent me to negotiate with, - a treacherous swine. This is the man you asked me to give up my life for. You do realise I've given up my life, don't you? You're safe, in your own country. But I've no men, no weapons, and not a reliable friend in the town.

HUSSEIN: Not even Miss Friedmann?

HAZLITT goes closer to him.

HAZLITT: Are you sneezing at me?

HUSSEIN: Masudi threw me out of the Council Chamber because I used to come to your house, because

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I consorted with Europeans. Don't you think I have a right to sneer?

HAZLITT: But I led your revolt, man! Come to your senses!

HUSSEIN: We want our own leaders! You shame us, you and your - your women! Is ^{this} ~~it~~ your child she ^{is} bearing or Mohammed's? Do you know, or care? We haven't lost all religion and all self-respect, to admire a man like you, - ~~a~~ man who lets his wife make love to a lackey! If she wanted another man, let her come to me: I am clean, I am a prince. But she crawls like something out of the sand, all dark and poisonous, into Mohammed's bed! Mohammed! I hate Europeans, Captain. You deceived me. I let you see my wife, because I thought you were an honourable man. But you touched her. You are lower than the dirt under my feet, you and your tired whore! Your child will be born in your dirt, it will carry your shame and corruption all through its life, it will grow up under a curse and make its evil all over the world, (waving his arms wildly, his eyes staring) wherever it goes in the world!

HAZLITT (quietly, to BADIA): Is he armed?

BADIA: Why, - are you afraid?

HAZLITT gazes at her for a moment.

HAZLITT: So you've turned as well. ^{Because} ~~Beacsue~~ I didn't play your little game, eh?

BADIA: No. But you'll ruin him unless I get him away. We've got our lives to protect.

HUSSEIN: You tried to shame her! (Almost in tears)

Oh, my God, they would stone a prince!

STET

You should have been my friends...

BADIA: He ^{has} been drinking.

HAZLITT: I was always your friend.

HUSSEIN: A prince should only move among princes.
Masudi was right. He stayed in the hills.
We should not let them shame us...

There is a loud knock on the door, and BAKER enters.

BAKER: A car is coming towards the house, sir!

HAZLITT goes to the parapet and looks across the
desert.

HAZLITT: All right. Go downstairs. Bolt the door,
and open it only for Miss Friedmann.

BAKER
BKARE goes.

HAZLITT: You'd better not be seen here. Go out the
back way.

A car-engine is heard in the distance.

BADIA makes for the door, but HUSSEIN remains
where he is, staring before him.

BADIA: Come on! Do you want Masudi to find you
here? Suppose it's Masudi!

She runs back to him and drags him by the arm to
the door. As she does ^{this} he breaks into a deep sob. He
goes like a child, and we hear his sobs gradually die
away as he is led down the stairs.

HAZLITT watches from the parapet so that he shall
not be seen from below. The car draws nearer, and the
palm-tree is for a moment lighted up by the head-lights
as the car swings round to the entrance below. The engine
is switched off. There is a knock on the door below.
HAZLITT strains forward, trying to make out who it is.
At last the door below opens, and he leans back with a
relieved sigh.

A pause. SHINGLETON pushes open the door and

is quickly followed by LEONORA. She runs forward.

HAZLITT: Leonora!

They embrace.

HAZLITT: I thought - ! How did you get through?

LEONORA: We went round by the desert. And you? You were at the barracks?

HAZLITT: Yes. I got away through the bazaar.

SHINGLETON: And where are your men?

HAZLITT: Most of them deserted.

SHINGLETON: Deserted? You stand there and tell me that! They deserted, - from a madman like you? They were doing their duty by running away.

HAZLITT: He agreed not to attack either the barracks or the oil-camp.

SHINGLETON: His men have just set fire to the ^{camp.} ~~oil-camp.~~ Thank you, Hazlitt. You stood by my terms. Where were your sentries? What about the women and children on my hands?

HAZLITT: I tell you they opened up on us in the barracks. We couldn't reach the oil-camp in time.

SHINGLETON: And where were your tanks? In the car-park waiting to be captured, I suppose. You're a traitor, Hazlitt. Your honour is a filthy thing. You let Masudi lead you by the nose like a donkey. You were too damned clever to come to me for help, but I could have told you months ago what kind of travesty that man is. I've hunted with him, I've watched his furtive eyes. Well, what are you going to do about us now? You with the legend behind you, what is going to become of us now? Or have you no mite of humanity left in you?

- LEONORA: We shall be safe. I saw Mohammed, as I told you.
- SHINGLETON: You believe in Mohammed, then? I'm surprised you believe in any of these people. You're Europeans, therefore detestable in their eyes, - don't you realise that? When Mohammed came to me yesterday with a bullet wrapped up in tissue paper, he had only one idea in his head, to betray the Captain.
- HAZLITT: To betray me?
- LEONORA: No, no, Philip. He thought you had murdered Masudi. But he can't believe that today. You know how impulsive he always is.
- SHINGLETON: But what did he say when you asked him for help in the oil-camp this evening?
- LEONORA: What could he do? Masudi has the upper hand now. We've got to be realistic.
- HAZLITT: What's Mohammed up to, then?
- LEONORA: He went to the Council Chamber this afternoon and petitioned through his father for a place in the new government. Therefore he's our last friend with any power.
- SHINGLETON: Have you two been consoling each other like this for the last three months? I tell you none of these people is going to be of any help to you, because you're European. This is an anti-European riot. They used you both, and now they will abandon you. Masudi went back on his promise. What do you expect him to do now, carry you on his shoulders through the streets? Can't I wake either of you up? We've got to get away from here! Do you hear that? This is rebel territory now. Therefore

we must get away in the next hour.

HAZLITT: Take the car. Get Leonora out of here.

SHINGLETON: No, I shall take you both. You've got us into a mess we'll never be able to live down, but you're not staying here.

HAZLITT: I believe in Mohammed. Or, very well, I don't believe in Mohammed. But I've got to take the risk. Why shouldn't I? I deserve to die in any case. Why show me any mercy?

SHINGLETON: Because I won't leave a European here to be murdered by these people, - whoever that European is and whatever he has done. By a miracle I managed to get the women and children away, and I'm going to get you away too.

HAZLITT: You prefer to give me up to the European police on the other side of the border? Either ^{way} it's the same to me. I'll stay here.

LEONORA: I also believe in Mohammed. He's coming to save us both. Philip and I belong to this country now. Take the car yourself, and drive Philip's servant to the frontier. Leave us here.

SHINGLETON: Look. I can guarantee you something. I can get you both to the frontier inside three hours, and there I can put you in the hands of someone who'll smuggle you into the International Zone before dawn tomorrow morning. Could I be more lenient than this after what you've done? My God, what a fool I was! I thought you were just playing with ideas, and look what ^{has} happened: your ideas have turned one of the wealthiest colonies in the world upside down. Will you take my offer?

Walter Shingleton

HAZLITT: No. Some of them will stand by me now, I know it!

SHINGLETON (to LEONORA): Will you persuade him?

LEONORA: I think we should both stay here. I told Mohammed where to find us.

HAZLITT: These are my people now. I shall climb back into power through Mohammed.

LEONORA: I've known Mohammed for the last five years, Shingleton, and I trust him to come here tonight. He has never once failed me in anything.

A pause. Shingleton looks from one to the other.

SHINGLETON: I've tried my best.

He goes to the door.

SHINGLETON (calling down the stairs): Hey! (He turns back to HAZLITT) What's the fellow's name?

HAZLITT: Baker.

SHINGLETON: Baker! Come up!

They wait. The servant appears.

SHINGLETON: You and I are getting away to the frontier. The Captain and Miss Friedmann are staying. The sooner we go the better.

BAKER: How can we leave the ^{we go really staying?} Captain, sir?

HAZLITT: ~~Now~~ we shall be safe enough! A bodyguard is coming soon. But they mustn't find you here.

BAKER: A bodyguard?

HAZLITT: Under Mohammed the doctor. You remember him?

BAKER: Can you trust him to come, sir?

LEONORA: He's our best friend among them.

BAKER: Can you trust him, sir?

HAZLITT: What else can I do? Come to the frontier and give myself up to the police? Get yourself away from here. I'm no good to you any longer.

BAKER: Suppose they leave you, sir?

HAZLITT: They won't, Baker. Let me assure you, they won't.

A dog suddenly begins barking close by.

SHINGLETON: What's that? Listen!

A pause, during which there is utter silence.

Then we hear the slight metallic click of a safety-catch on a rifle being pulled back.

LEONORA: Who is it?

She clutches on to HAZLITT, who pulls her away from the parapet. They listen again, and now we hear something moving, perhaps people, outside.

HAZLITT: They're surrounding the house.

LEONORA: Perhaps it's Mohammed.

HAZLITT: Would he come like this? He'd bang on the door and call up to us. Quickly! Get Shingleton out of sight! Behind that bench! (He pushes LEONORA and SHINGLETON towards the other side of the stage) If they get up here, go down by the tree and make for the car. (To BAKER) Hide yourself *away!*

At first BAKER makes towards the other couple.

But HAZLITT stops him.

HAZLITT: No, no, don't crowd together!

He pushes BAKER through the door leading into the house, while SHINGLETON and LEONORA hide in the darkness behind the bench. Everything is in silence again.

HAZLITT takes out his revolver, inspects the bullet-chamber, and walks slowly towards the parapet.

SHINGLETON: Switch the light out, you fool! They can see you!

HAZLITT takes no notice of the voice behind him. He walks on towards the parapet with his revolver prepared.

k.

SCENE: a flat sun-roof. On the right the top branches of a palm tree can be seen, and under them a garden bench, shaded. Beyond the house is open desert. It is a bright morning.

CAPTAIN HAZLITT and HUSSEIN AL SHABAR are discovered. HAZLITT is just raising a shot-gun to the level of his eyes. He takes aim slowly at something beyond the house.

Suddenly there is a flutter of wings. He raises his gun briefly with the flight of the bird, then fires. The fluttering ceases, and he draws himself up again.

HUSSEIN: You're a fine shot, Captain!

HAZLITT takes out the discharged magazine and hands the gun to HUSSEIN.

HUSSEIN: Tell your servant to go and bring it in, or the vultures are going to get there before you.

HAZLITT: I'll call him now. (Goes to the door leading down into the house) Baker!

HUSSEIN: He's European, then?

HAZLITT: Yes.

HUSSEIN: A soldier?

HAZLITT: One of my own men, the best servant I've had.

BAKER enters. He brings them lemon tea in glasses.

HAZLITT: Thank you, Baker. Look - (pointing out) I've

shot a partridge. Just bring it in before the vultures get it.

BAKER: Very well, sir.

He leaves.

HAZLITT: You've been very kind to me since I came here. That wine you sent me yesterday was excellent, and this morning more food came from your wife. Will you thank her?

HUSSEIN: I'll do more, Captain. I'll introduce you to her. She's a beautiful woman, and I know she wants to meet you. None of my own countrymen are allowed to see her. But you are European, therefore you are honourable.

HAZLITT: I shall be honoured to meet her.

HUSSEIN: And we shall go hunting together, eh? Would you like that: pig-hunting?

HAZLITT: I could try it.

HUSSEIN: In the hills, where there are flowers. I used to be the finest horseman in the country, Captain, until I started drinking. I could pick up a handkerchief off the ground going at full gallop. I couldn't do it now. It takes all my strength to aim a gun.

HAZLITT: I'll make you try it again. We'll go riding together.

HUSSEIN: One day I shall take you into the hills and show you my tribesmen. I shall show you how they bow their heads in front of me and kiss my hand. We're going to be friends, you and I. For you I'm Hussein, Just Hussein. Not Prince Hussein or Al Shabar.

HAZLITT: You are a prince?

HUSSEIN: You've heard nothing about me, then?

HAZLITT: No, nothing.

HUSSEIN: Yes, Captain, I must confess to being a prince. Miss Friedmann will tell you something about me, perhaps. Is she coming here tonight?

HAZLITT: Yes, for dinner.

HUSSEIN: That will be very exciting for you. How long is it since you saw each other?

HAZLITT: Nearly two years. I was drafted into the army then, and she came here a few weeks after.

HUSSEIN: Two years, - so young, and parted so long! But you are younger than Miss Friedmann?

HAZLITT: Yes, a little.

HUSSEIN: But isn't it a most marvellous coincidence that you should have been sent here of all places?

HAZLITT: Oh, but I applied to come here. I worried them for more than a year: then they agreed because of my knowledge of Arabic.

HUSSEIN: You speak our language?

HAZLITT: Yes. I began studying it over four years ago. So I should probably have come to this country in any case, apart from the army.

HUSSEIN: I had no idea of that! How interesting. Then you are more one of us, - you know what I mean? You will understand us better than the other European officers before you. So you speak our language... Then we shall certainly be brothers, Captain. But we'll speak English, you and I, eh?

HAZLITT: Always? Why?

HUSSEIN (with a laugh): It is more dignified! (He lays his hand on HAZLITT's shoulder warmly) So you are together again. I remember the day Miss Friedmann came... I caught sight of

her at the hospital. A most beautiful young woman, Captain. You are lucky. My wife is beautiful, too. But I would give you a thousand acres of my land and a dozen villages to be rid of her for two years. You and Miss Friedmann are more than close friends, I take it? I mean, - I haven't been presuming too much?

M' - | HAZLITT:

Not at all; M' -

HUSSEIN:

Hussein: say 'Hussein'.

HAZLITT:

Hussein.

HUSSEIN:

Excellent. We shall understand each other very well. Now Miss Friedmann is the best doctor in the country, Captain. Imagine a woman coming to us as a doctor! We treat our own women like cattle! But in a month she had visited all the villages within a radius of twenty miles and set up clinics in five of them. There, that was something we could respect in a woman. We need more Europeans like her, Captain. (Digging him)

HAZLITT:

Tell me, are you going to introduce me to her? Haven't you spoken to her, then?

HUSSEIN:

Never. The only women I talk to apart from my wife are those I sleep with, - the whores. But I want my children to grow up worthy of people like Miss Friedmann, if you see what I mean. I don't want them to be greedy for things as I am, greedy for drink and women. One day you'll come to my house and see the clothes my children sleep in: you'll see their beds, their toys, the kind of food they eat.

You shall see for yourself that they're growing up like Europeans. Look, - my shirt, my jacket, my wrist-watch, even my handkerchief, - they're all from Europe. And I don't do it like a slave. I do it because my people can only survive with the help of Europe. I'm lucky, Captain, I was brought up by European nurses, so I can set all the others a good example here. Do you wonder I drink in this place? Wouldn't any man drink condemned to a stifling tomb like this, a tomb full of whores and spies?

HAZLITT: Yet I think I shall be happy here.

HUSSEIN: Happy to be out of Europe? Can a European say such a thing?

HAZLITT: But I'm free here. I command the station. I'm alone, there is no one to give me orders. This is a country I have always wanted to come to, and all my work lies here. When I'm not on duty I can wear just what I like. (Indicating his clothes)

HUSSEIN (with a smile) You would like to be a civilian again, eh?

HAZLITT: Yes! In six months I shall be free! But these last six months are going to be glorious. There'll be plenty of leisure, I shall go for rides early in the morning across the desert, in these clothes and without the eyes of a regiment on me. I shall go hunting. And sometimes I shall go with you into the hills and meet the tribal chiefs.

HUSSEIN: The tribal chiefs?

HAZLITT: Why not?

HUSSEIN: But a European officer! People aren't used to that here, my friend.

HAZLITT: How strange: I've come here as a soldier, and I even regret killing that bird. Yet you are a warrior: you've killed thousands of these birds, perhaps even men. I've never killed a man. Yet I'm here as a soldier, feared by many of your people. Perhaps I can change all that.

HUSSEIN: You want to change it, Captain? Might not that be dangerous?

HAZLITT: Why?

HUSSEIN (after a pause) Do you know anything about Miss Friedmann's activities here?

HAZLITT: No, nothing.

HUSSEIN: Well, then, it might not be so dangerous. You mean just to exchange cordialities with the chiefs? Yes, a good idea, especially since you speak our language.

HAZLITT: What are those 'activities'?

HUSSEIN: Let her tell you about them herself, if she wants to. I'm no spy, Captain.

HAZLITTA: But are they dangerous?

HUSSEIN: Let her tell you herself.

HAZLITT: Will she do that?

HUSSEIN: In time you will learn everything about us, Captain. In time all the Europeans want to leave us as if they were escaping a death-sentence. We need someone to put our faith in, Captain, someone who won't go away!

HAZLITT: Did the officers before me want to leave?

HUSSEIN: Sooner than anybody else. Look at the desert,

Captain. A European must always be a stranger to that. Even the men who were born here are half-dead with boredom. When I drink I'm trying to kill that boredom. You say you're alone here. But I don't want to be alone, Captain, and very soon, when the heat begins, you are going to say the same. This place may be good for cockroaches, and scorpions, and rats, and lizards, but it's no good for a man who has seen Europe.

HAZLITT: Miss Friedmann didn't leave you. She has been here nearly two years, after all.

HUSSEIN: True, she belongs to us more than any other European I know. But there is a reason for that. She has Mohammed the doctor, you see.

HAZLITT: Mohammed?

HUSSEIN: He's a surgeon at the local hospital, a man I detest. We can talk freely, you and I?

HAZLITT: Of course.

HUSSEIN: He takes her into the hills. They go by aeroplane. What I mean is, Captain, she isn't alone as you or any other officer would be. He takes her among the people. They talk to her as one of their own.

HAZLITT: Would they not do so to me?

HUSSEIN: That isn't likely, Captain. And it is going to be the loneliness which will drive you away from us.

HAZLITT: You detest this man, you say?

HUSSEIN: I do, Captain, and I wish you could use your influence on Miss Friedmann -

The bell rings at the door below.

HUSSEIN: You've another visitor. I shall find my own way out.

HAZLITT: You've been very kind to me.

HUSSEIN: If you need anything more, send ^{your} ~~your~~ servant across. Don't hesitate. We are only ^fifty yards from each other.

There is a knock on the door and BAKER enters.

BAKER: Mr. Shingleton is waiting, sir.

HAZLITT: Who is that?

BAKER: From the engineering camp, sir.

HAZLITT: Ah, yes. Show him up.

BAKER leaves.

HUSSEIN: Will you come and dine with me one day?

HAZLITT: I should be delighted.

HUSSEIN: In your uniform?

HAZLITT (with surprise) If you wish.

HUSSEIN: Excellent! Good bye, Captain.

They shake hands, and HUSSEIN leaves. HAZLITT goes to the parapet and stares out across the desert.

SHINGLETON enters silently. He watches HAZLITT, whose back is turned towards him. A pause.

SHINGLETON: Good morning, Captain Hazlitt.

HAZLITT (turning) Ah, Mr. Shingleton, of the engineering camp?

SHINGLETON: Yes. Headquarters told me you had arrived.

HAZLITT: Please sit down. It's shady here.

SHINGLETON: Miss Friedmann already knows you, I believe?

HAZLITT: Yes, we are old friends.

SHINGLETON: You are lucky to find an old friend in a post like this, Captain.

HAZLITT: No, I applied to come here.

SHINGLETON (with a glance at him) Oh, you did. You are

here on special draft, I believe?

HAZLITT: Yes. I took up Arabic four years ago. That's why they allowed me to come with only half the usual infantry training.

SHINGLETON: Well, I trust your decision to come here was wise. Most people regret it. But I can help you a little. I speak the language, too, and I know the inhabitants fairly well. So I hope we shall always work together. Did your Headquarters give you some idea of your tasks here?

HAZLITT: They told me you needed guards on the new road.

SHINGLETON: There are two things to remember. There have to be sentries, at least four at a time, along the stretch of road which is being built now. Naturally, this point is going to move further north as time goes on, and ultimately, after six months, when we are due to finish the whole project, you will have to send out whole platoons for a week or so at a time. Secondly, you have to deploy your troops round my camp if there is any trouble... I find this house a little far away, Captain: is that safe? I mean, you have had some military training, so you are in a position to know, but I just wonder if it's safe.

HAZLITT: I can keep in touch by telephone. And I have arranged for a green Verey light to be shot if I'm needed at the barracks urgently.

SHINGLETON: Well, think the matter over. There is always a danger - no, I should say possibility - of your being cut off from the road by the rebels, and that would be the end of us all.

HAZLITT: Still, I prefer to risk it.

SHINGLETON looks at him in astonishment.

~~SHINGLETON: I'm not anxious to take a billet close to my troops.~~

HAZLITT: ~~Now~~ I'm not anxious to take a billet close to my troops.

SHINGLETON (after a pause) Very well. All I can do is to give you advice, and so long as you know the dangers of being here, well and good.

HAZLITT: Is there likely to be trouble?

SHINGLETON: Not at all. But to a great extent it depends on you.

HAZLITT: How?

SHINGLETON: That road is a European concern, and your only job here is to protect it. That's understood. But clearly a rebel government is not in our interests. So you have to be very vigilant, you have to nip a rebellion in the bud if possible. It will save you a lot of trouble later on. That's where I can help you. I know every political figure of any note in this country, Captain, and I can usually give you some warning of trouble ahead.

HAZLITT: How does one nip such a thing in the bud?

SHINGLETON: Just by making a show of strength, by putting a tank or two on the road, and a few more sentries. You'll be quite within your rights. (A pause) Are you very friendly with Al Shabar?

HAZLITT: ~~What~~ Al Shabar?

SHINGLETON: Hussein al Shabar. He walked out as I came in; a very European looking fellow.

HAZLITT: Oh, he's my neighbour. He has been over twice with little gifts.

SHINGLETON: You didn't know him before you came here, I mean?

HAZLITT: Of course not. How could I?

SHINGLETON: Oh, he lived in Europe for several years.

SHINGLETON takes out a snuff-box, and offers it to HAZLITT.

SHINGLETON: Snuff?

HAZLITT: No, thank you.

SHINGLETON (taking snuff) I feel I ought to give you a little warning, Captain. It has something to do with Miss Friedmann. Please remember that I'm not speaking at all about your friendship with her. I'm only aware of two things: first, that you are fairly young, and, secondly, that you are new to this country. And I don't want you to run into any bad luck here. It would be an easy thing to do. I don't know how much influence Miss Friedmann has over you, but at the risk of offending you I'm going to tell you this. You may have heard that she has a friend called Mohammed, a surgeon.

HAZLITT: Yes.

SHINGLETON: Now both she and Mohammed support the rebels. He takes her by 'plane into the hills, sometimes once a month, sometimes twice, and there they meet the rebel-leaders. They ^{take} medical supplies with them. Mohammed is a very decent young man, but inclined to be hysterical. So long as the rebel-movement is under the sway of people like himself, we are safe. A bad rebel-

-movement - and it is a bad rebel-movement, I assure you - is perhaps even better than no rebel-movement at all. Now listen, Captain: when Miss Friedmann comes here to dinner tonight and sees you for the first time in two years, she will perhaps try to influence you.

HAZLITT: How?

SHINGLETON: She will suggest to you that by protecting the new road you are condoning the terrible starvation and disease in this country.

HAZLITT: Have I an argument against that?

SHINGLETON: Well, your argument is obvious. ~~It is a road that will bring you a great deal of business, and it will provide a way for the goods that you need with the north.~~ That road is for the benefit of the country. It is going to increase trade here by at least a half. And lastly, Captain, I must warn you that Miss Friedmann's conversation with you tonight will not be spontaneous.

HAZLITT: Why not?

SHINGLETON: Because her friend Mohammed will be behind it. I only want you to have your eyes open.

A pause.

HAZLITT: I can't imagine such a thing!

SHINGLETON: She is under his thumb, Captain.

HAZLITT: How can you know?

SHINGLETON: Let me be frank with you. I have spies everywhere in the town. Gossip travels fast, and this isn't even gossip, Captain.

HAZLITT: She will...

SHINGLETON: Now I don't want you to take these things too seriously. These local melodramatics never come to anything. Afterwards one laughs about

them. But one has to be warned of their coming.

HAZLITT: You are sure, then -

SHINGLETON: I know, Captain, I know. (He rises) Now as time goes on you may find this place affecting your mind and nerves. After nearly ten years here I've attained a kind of balance, so let's keep in touch with each other. The heat is going to start beating up very soon. So let's keep in touch with each other. (A pause) Eh? What do you say to that?

HAZLITT (collecting himself) Of course. You were kind to warn me.

SHINGLETON (leaving) You know my 'phone number.

HAZLITT: Yes.

SHINGLETON: And be careful not to play into their hands! Good bye.

They shake hands. Just as SHINGLETON is about to turn away, the harsh call-to-prayer sounds out from the minaret nearby. The loudspeaker blares and deafens.

HAZLITT's mouth opens in utter astonishment.

SHINGLETON laughs to see his face, and during the first pause in the prayer, he shouts across to him:

SHINGLETON: It's from the mosque! They call the faithful to prayer by loudspeaker nowadays!

He leaves. HAZLITT continues to stare across the desert as the deafening yell begins again and the CURTAIN slowly falls.

SCENE: a drawing room downstairs during the evening of the same day. It is dusk. On the right there is a door leading out into the garden, and on the left another door leading further into the house.

HAZLITT and BAKER are discovered. BAKER is laying the table for dinner: there are two places.

HAZLITT: You can light the candles now, Baker.

BAKER: Yes, sir.

He does this while HAZLITT goes about tidying the room.

BAKER: It's airless tonight, sir.

HAZLITT: Yes. I'll open the door.

HAZLITT opens the door leading into the garden and stands for a moment looking out.

HAZLITT: Did you find some ice after all?

BAKER: Yes, sir. I went to the next house.

HAZLITT: To Hussein Al Shabar's?

BAKER: Yes, sir. He gave me these flowers. He said they were for the lady.

HAZLITT: Ah, yes.

BAKER: Do you need anything more for the table?

HAZLITT: No, Baker. Just be ready with the drink.

BAKER leaves and HAZLITT goes to the table. He begins carefully re-arranging the flowers.

LEONORA FRIEDMANN appears in the garden, then in the doorway. She watches HAZLITT at the table. A pause. She enters the room.

LEONORA: Philip.

He turns round swiftly.

HAZLITT:

Leonora!

hauwa!

They stand gazing at each other.

HAZLITT:

How wonderful you look!

LEONORA:

I've hardly been able to sleep since your letter came.

HAZLITT:

You haven't changed at all.

He goes towards her and takes her by the shoulders.

HAZLITT:

Let me look at you.

LEONORA:

I'm so happy, Philip!

They kiss.

HAZLITT:

After two years -

LEONORA:

I couldn't believe it...

HAZLITT:

But wasn't it lucky? I went into the office quite by chance one afternoon. He was surly, and I thought there wasn't a hope. Then a week later he called me in and told me I was transferred.

LEONORA:

I would have come to Europe otherwise. Just for a week. That was my plan.

HAZLITT:

But now we have six months together. Then I shall be out of the army.

LEONORA:

In six months?

HAZLITT:

Perhaps sooner. (He takes her by the arm and leads her to the table) Come, sit down. But I thought you were coming by car. I heard nothing.

LEONORA:

No. I sent the driver back at the edge of the town. I wanted to walk.

HAZLITT pulls out a chair for her. Lying across it is his riding-whip. They see it and glance at each

other. He takes it up with a laugh.

HAZLITT: Do you know what that is for, darling?
It's for beating the natives with! (He playfully pushes a lock of her hair across her face) I managed to get ~~u~~champagne.
It's on the ice now.

HAZLITT goes to the door leading further into the house and calls out for BAKER.

LEONORA: What lovely flowers! They're from the hills, surely?

HAZLITT: Yes. My neighbour sent them across this afternoon. He said they were for the lady. That means for you.

LEONORA: Me? Can you remember his name?

HAZLITT: Hussein Al Shabar.

LEONORA: Ah, the landowner. He's the man who drinks.

HAZLITT: He adores you.

LEONORA: He adores anything European, Philip.

BAKER enters the room. He places the champagne on the table, then leaves.

LEONORA: Is he one of your soldiers?

HAZLITT: Yes.

LEONORA: Reliable?

HAZLITT: What do you mean?

LEONORA: Oh, there are so many spies here.

HAZLITT ^o pours champagne into two glasses. They touch glasses.

HAZLITT: To our love, and our life here.

They drink.

LEONORA (looking about her) Is this house all your own, darling? It looks grand from outside.

HAZLITT: It's mine for six months. I spent the whole of

yesterday looking for it. That's why I asked you to wait for two days, so that I could have everything ready when you came. We moved the furniture in last night. It belongs to the last officer.

LEONORA: I've some lovely rugs and covers at the hospital. I'll bring them here.

HAZLITT: Will you, - to make me feel free at last? I hated that regimental life in Europe! Every time I went for a ride I had the eyes of a whole regiment on me. But here I can do more or less what I like. I command the station. We are miles from the barracks here. I shall see you every day and... You're dreaming. What have I just said?

LEONORA: It seems impossible that you're here at last. I was listening to your voice.

HAZLITT: Smile, darling. (He puts his hand under her chin and lifts her face gently) You haven't really smiled yet. (He lifts up the corners of her mouth into a smile) There: now that is the girl I remember.

LEONORA: This is a sad place. I've been here too long, Philip.

HAZLITT: But we shall be happy here. I intend to make you happy. (Watching her) You don't believe in that, do you?

LEONORA: It's this country, Philip.

HAZLITT: But can't we keep ^{the}~~the~~ country outside, beyond that door?

LEONORA: It can't be done, not here.

HAZLITT: Why do you say that?

LEONORA (after a pause) We are together now. That's all we need think about.

HAZLITT: I felt so happy when I arrived here. People talk to me about the heat and the mosquitoes and the boredom, but I know I shall love this country. Why do you think I learned the language, if not to settle in such a country? I was tired of Europe.

LEONORA: You are right to feel excited. But I can't bear to think of you being detested here, darling.

HAZLITT: Detested? By whom?

LEONORA: You think you're a newcomer. So you are, but only to me. For all the others you are merely a Captain. And Captains here are all the same, because they are given the same orders. They are ciphers, Philip, not men with names.

HAZLITT: But people can be told. They -

LEONORA: What do your scruples matter, or your knowledge of their language, or your excitement at being here? You are a Captain, and your men guard the new road.

HAZLITT: A pure formality!

LEONORA: But the landowners look on you as their saviour. And they are right. The landowners are hard, greedy men. Thousands die for them every year in the villages.

HAZLITT: My name is linked with them?

LEONORA: With the most corrupt of them. Your guards on the new road will always prevent the rebels from coming down. It is the new road which cuts the rebels off from this city.

HAZLITT: I knew that.

LEONORA: You knew it?

HAZLITT (with a shrug) I thought the rebels were a few
hotheads. I decided to risk it.

LEONORA: They are the only people who will help us
send doctors to the villages and enlarge the
city hospital.

HAZLITT: Then I must meet them. I must go to the
villages.

LEONORA: Among the rebels? That would be treason,
my dear. You are so young. I'm terrified
you might do something rash. You must obey
your orders, no matter what people think.

HAZLITT: And if my orders are to shoot down your friends?

LEONORA (with a sudden glance at him) Why do you say
'friends'?

HAZLITT: Because the rebels are your friends.

LEONORA: I go from village to village with medical
supplies, and those villages happen to be in
rebel-territory. I refuse to spend every
day treating the sons and daughters of land-
owners! Of course people will say I belong
to the rebels. They hardly know what a
conscientious doctor is. Their own doctors
are so lazy and corrupt.

HAZLITT: Who is Mohammed?

She sighs.

LEONORA: Has Shingleton been here already?

HAZLITT: Yes, - this morning.

LEONORA: Mohammed is the senior surgeon at the hospital.
He is my best friend here, Philip.

HAZLITT: You said nothing about all this in your letters.

LEONORA: Because letters are opened.

HAZLITT: But everyone talks about your visits to the

hills.

LEONORA: Suppose they had opened my letters in Europe? You wouldn't be here now. The army would have seen to that.

HAZLITT: Isn't it dangerous to support the rebels, - for a European, I mean?

LEONORA: Why? Mohammed is my employer. The Europeans have no say.

HAZLITT: Is Shingleton an important man here?

LEONORA (With a shrug) Hardly. He gives himself an air of importance.

HAZLITT: What about these spies of his?

LEONORA: Oh, they are his word for common gossip! He invites a few schoolmasters to tea and thinks he is going among the people. There is a legend about him that if the rebels burned down his camp he would be standing among the flames shouting, 'I refuse to take this seriously!' That is what he always says: 'I refuse to take this seriously!' He knows nothing, he is all bombast. But to you, Philip, he could be dangerous. He has no power over me, you see.

HAZLITT: He came to me with a very strange story this morning.

LEONORA: About me?

HAZLITT: Yes. He said you were under Mohammed's thumb.

LEONORA: Oh, that's a favourite idea of his! He smells a plot in everything.

HAZLITT: He said Mohammed was behind your visit here tonight.

LEONORA: Behind my visit? How ridiculous!

HAZLITT: He thought - . Oh, there was some nonsense!
(He stares at LEONORA) I mean, I can't believe it, but - !

LEONORA: Has he made you suspicious? (She rises and goes to the window) There, you wonder I'm sad! The day after you arrive they get to work on you. How do we keep this country out? (Looking out of the window) Look at your sentry standing there. He can't protect you. ~~Why the world~~ ^{No one can} protect you.

HAZLITT: Against whom?

LEONORA: Against men like Shingleton. (Turning) And against me, Philip! I'm a danger to you here. I had no idea you were coming. I got to work in the villages, and with all the rest I sneered at the European officers and his tanks.

HAZLITT: How else could I have come here, except as a European officer? How else could we be together now?

LEONORA: There was no other way.

HAZLITT: I had to see you! I would have accepted anything to see you! Was I right? (She does not reply) Should I have stayed in Europe, then, yearning for you every minute of the day?

LEONORA: In six months it would have been over. You could have come to me then. Mohammed would have found you a job here.

HAZLITT: Why didn't you say that in a letter?

LEONORA: How could I have said it?

HAZLITT: In two words: 'Don't come'. Simple.

I should have gone on festering in the barracks. You should have said, 'Don't come, Philip, because they hate you here.'

LEONORA: But I said to myself, 'I must see Philip. I must touch him again and speak to him. Otherwise I shall go mad.'

HAZLITT: Then wasn't I right to come? no matter what happens? (Pacing about) I wanted to travel. I wanted to use my Arabic. That's all I thought about when they put me into the army. Would you have preferred me to go to prison?

LEONORA: You talk as if I were accusing you of something.

HAZLITT: Well, am I not guilty?

LEONORA: Guilty of what?

HAZLITT: My job here is to guard the new road. That road cuts the rebels off from the city. It is therefore within my power to nip any rebellion in the bud. Indeed, I'm expected to do that. Am I not guilty, then?

LEONORA: Not you!

HAZLITT: Am I not guilty of aiding and abetting the very things you and Mohammed are trying to stop? I thought I was coming here as a saviour, you see, - not a saviour of the landlords, but a friend of the people who has studied their language and religion: listen to me, people, I bring you food and medical supplies, if you just accept a bullet in your head as a preliminary! No wonder Shingleton talked to me as if I were an idiot this morning! He came to see a European officer and

what did he find? He found a young man in dirty riding breeches who announced his intention of living three miles away from the troops under his command, and whose mistress was famous for her rebel sympathies! No wonder he kept eyeing me as if he thought I was going to dive off the roof into the garden at any minute!

He picks up his riding-whip, stares at it, then throws it aside in disgust.

LEONORA: This is our first evening, Philip. Forget about these ^{other} things.

He takes her by the shoulders and looks into her eyes.

HAZLITT: Are you in love with me?

LEONORA: Yes!

He kisses her.

HAZLITT: Whatever I do? You love me whatever I do in this country? Answer. Look at me. Answer, Leonora. Whatever I do? (A pause) There, (walking away) you can't love my power. You can't love me in everything I do and say: Because what I might have to do is to sight a machine-gun on an angry crowd, and what I might have to say is (wildly) 'Fire! Fire! Fire! Fire!'

There is a loud knock on the door leading into the garden. HAZLITT calls out, 'Come in!' and the door is flung open by HUSSEIN AL SHABAR. He has clearly been drinking. He sways in the doorway, staring at them, then comes towards the ^{table}.

HAZLITT: This is Hussein Al Sh^abar, Leonora.

LEONORA: How do you do?

HUSSEIN kisses his own hand and raises it to his

brow, in profound homage.

HUSSEIN: We are poor people, Miss Friedmann. We are humble. We have nothing to give you but the darkness of our shame, and too much heat, and the silence. (He points to the bottle on the table) Is that champagne, Captain?

HAZLITT: Yes. May I give you some?

HUSSEIN: I've just escaped from my wife. Let me have a glass, please.

HAZLITT pours a third glass of champagne, but when he offers it to HUSSEIN the latter holds up his hand.

HUSSEIN(seating himself) Could I ask you to do something before I drink? Just draw the curtains. This is a city of eyes, and a prince is supposed never ~~to~~ drink in our country. I'm afraid even my servants spy on me.

HAZLITT goes to the window and draws the curtains. It is already night.

HUSSEIN (with a chuckle) So you are together at last.

Well, (raising his glass) a blessing on both of you!

(Drinks, then speaks to LEONORA) I've heard about your visits to Masudi. I deeply admire you for that.

HAZLITT: Who is Masudi?

HUSSEIN: The rebel leader in the hills, Captain. An exile, a man with a price on his head.

HAZLITT (to LEONORA) It seems that one can't keep anything secret here.

HUSSEIN: Your thoughts, your lovers, your most closely guarded secrets are common knowledge here, Captain! The police see into every car that passes them on the street, - they stare inside to see what new friends you have. By dawn tomorrow everybody will know at what time Miss Friedmann left this house. You would be well

advised to draw your curtains after dusk every evening, Captain.

LEONORA: It's true. One can't be alone here.

HUSSEIN: Masudi has made one fatal mistake, Miss Friedmann. He does not believe in Europe. But in Europe lies our only hope. He hates Europe; I aspire to Europe. But you agree with him?

LEONORA: Yes.

HUSSEIN: Yet you are a European.

LEONORA: This country should be free of Europe.

HUSSEIN: Then where will Masudi get his arms? Who will work his factories? Who will plan the new road? He believes in equality and independence. These are European ideas.

LEONORA: I can't think. I'm sorry. (Rising) It's so hot tonight.

HUSSEIN: The poor shall inherit the earth. The day of the overlords, our day, Captain - is finished.

HAZLITT (to LEONORA as she goes towards the door) I, an overlord: you see?

She opens the door and looks outside.

HUSSEIN: The heat will come earlier this year. Your health, Captain.

They touch glasses.

LEONORA: Philip, I think there's someone outside.

HAZLITT: It must be the sentry.

LEONORA: No, I think it's a woman.

HUSSEIN: Then it's my wife.

HAZLITT goes to the door.

HUSSEIN: Is it my wife?

HAZLITT (calling into the garden) Who's there?

HUSSEIN joins them at the door.

HUSSEIN (peering into the darkness) Badia? Badia?

(With a laugh) Are you a spy or something?

Go back to the house, woman. (As she appears)

Now why don't you stay in the house?

BADIA: Because you shan't disgrace ~~me~~! Why do you
worry these people?

HAZLITT: No, no, come in.

BADIA: But, Captain -

HAZLITT: No, you've both been so kind. Drink a glass of champagne with us.

He ushers BADIA AL SHABAR into the room, and the others follow.

BADIA: I came to stop him drinking, Captain. I have to watch him wherever he goes.

HUSSEIN: Why do you worry, woman?

BADIA: Because you weren't invited here, and if you were sober you would never dare to come. These people have a private party.

HUSSEIN: Am I wanted or not, Captain?

HAZLITT: Please stay, both of you. Will you sit down? Champagne, Mrs - ?

HUSSEIN: Call her Badia, Captain. Let's keep the veil for outside. How free it feels, just to sit here!

BADIA: Very little, Captain. And you shouldn't give my husband any more.

HAZLITT: Only one more glass, to celebrate.

BADIA: But that can make the difference between a peaceful night and hell itself!

HUSSEIN: Be quiet, woman! (Holding up his glass)
The Captain and I understand each other.

BADIA: Every night I have to look after him as if he were a child. Last week he thought he saw a man outside and started firing his revolver through the ^{window.} ~~glass.~~ He's jealous of every man who comes near the house.

HUSSEIN: Am I jealous of the Captain? No, - because the Captain is an honourable man. But the men you are talking about - my countrymen -

they're a pack of wolves.

BADIA: Every time I go out in the car he must have a detailed account of the journey from my driver.

HUSSEIN: But your worries are over, Badia. The Captain and Miss Friedmann will keep you entertained. *(He winks at Hagitt)*

BADIA: ~~Am~~ Perhaps they don't want to come to my house and see you drunk every evening. *(To Leonora)* But perhaps we could have tea together sometimes, Miss Friedmann.

HUSSEIN: All the gossip in this city begins in the harem. Beware of those tea-parties, Miss Friedmann.

BADIA: Am I to be robbed of my tea-parties, then? You keep me locked up in the house all day and you even begrudge me the company of women!

HUSSEIN: Do you wonder I drink, Captain? I drink to forget the indignity of my marriage. Be careful of her, Miss Friedmann. She will put her coils round your little life.

He drinks.

BADIA: The doctors have told you often enough: you're drinking yourself to death.

HUSSEIN: Look at her, Captain: a beautiful woman. To sleep with her is like a feast. But she has no right even to sit in the same room as Miss Friedmann, because she lacks honour. If I let her go free she'd become a whore in a fortnight. She thinks like a whore and she has the tongue of ^a whore. You can hear for yourself.

LEONORA *(to BADIA)*: Do you never go out, then?

BADIA: I'm allowed an evening drive in the car. I go up the main street and back again. I

wonder if you've ever realised how envious we women are when we see you walking freely in the streets? You are a wonderful symbol for us.

HUSSEIN: Yes and at their tea-parties they strip you down to a carcase with their vile talk. They pay their servants to spy on you. Shall I tell you one of their stories? They say a guard came across you lying in a ditch with Mohammed the doctor. That's the kind of symbol you represent for them! A symbol of their own lechery!

BADIA: You shame me!

HUSSEIN: Everything must be underhand here. Any crime, any perversion, may be practised in secret. But anything truly innocent they'll befoul. (To HAZLITT) But you and I are going to alter all that.

BADIA: Free your woman^e first, then the gossip will stop.

HUSSEIN: Is he going to treat us like slaves, your old friend here, Miss Friedmann?

LEONORA: I've never known him do that.

HUSSEIN: No. How could it be so? He's an old friend of yours. This morning you said you wanted to see the tribal chiefs, Captain. Well, that can be arranged.

BADIA: He has ~~and~~^{wild} schemes, Captain. They never come to anything.

HUSSEIN: We have to learn from Europe. And the Captain is in a position to teach us.

LEONORA: He can only obey his orders.

HUSSEIN: There's a way to everything, Miss Friedmann.
Are you our friend, Captain?

HAZLITT: Of course.

HUSSEIN: Sympathy is what we require: an active sympathy, Captain. And in return for your sympathy I can hold out for you a most wonderful life. You will be able to turn this sad life of the outpost into a crusade, you will have the marvellous countryside in the north at your disposal, you will have mountains and streams, and flowers like endless carpets at your feet. You will hold daily court with your leaders, you will be praised wherever you go and loved; all your days will be full and free, with hunting and riding and banquetting. It will be a life worthy of a man, not the cramped, careful life of an officer commanding an outpost, where there's no prowess, no anger, no dignity, only a slow and gradual degradation of your powers. I may be a drunkard and my wife may be a whore, but there's something in what I say, isn't there?

A pause, during which LEONORA watches HAZLITT.

LEONORA: That appeals to you, does it?

HAZLITT: Perhaps... Why shouldn't it?

BADIA: His head is swollen with dreams because he drinks too much, Captain. Come and see him at five o'clock tomorrow morning, Captain, when he is holding his stomach and groaning in my arms: then you will see what a warrior we have!

HUSSEIN: Am I not a warrior, then? You, a woman, say that? (Looks round) Am I to prove myself, then? (Jumps up, laughing) Let's see how you like this!

He walks unsteadily across to the wall and pulls

down Hazlitt's revolver-holster.

BADIA: Hussein!

She jumps up as he takes out the revolver.

With a laugh he pushes her away, and breaks the revolver open. HAZLITT rises.

HAZLITT: Don't be an idiot. Put it away.

HUSSEIN looks at the bullet-chamber and removes some bullets.

HUSSEIN: I allow myself one bullet, Captain: a one-in-six chance.

BADIA (trying to grasp hold of him): Stop him, Captain!

He'll do away with his life!

HAZLITT: Do you want me to throw you out?

HUSSEIN holds BADIA away and, slowly lowering the revolver, looks at HAZLITT with a smile.

HUSSEIN: Now, Captain, we are honourable men. If I wish to kill myself, let me. We are all alone. You are my brother. Sit down.

HAZLITT: All right. Do what you like.

HUSSEIN closes the revolver, sets the chamber rolling and points the barrel at his right temple.

BADIA: Hussein! I love you, Hussein!

She draws back in horror as it becomes clear that he is determined to pull the trigger. He ^{stares} into her eyes, swaying drunkenly. He fires. There is a slight click, and BADIA bursts into tears.

HUSSEIN: So I'm not a warrior at five o'clock in the morning. I'm a dreamer. Isn't that what you said? (Calmly replacing the revolver) Go back to your seat, woman, and keep a hold on your tongue. The Captain and I are going to work together. Keep your nose out of our business, you understand?

BADIA returns to her seat. She slumps in her

chair, reaches slowly for the bottle and pours herself a full glass. As she begins to drink the CURTAIN slowly falls.

SECOND ACT.

SCENE: the same a few weeks later. It is afternoon. The room is much brighter than formerly, and furnished more in the Eastern style. There are brightly coloured rugs, cushions and table-covers.

HUSSEIN AL SHABAR is discovered. He is standing in the middle of the room. He looks about him, then sees Hazlitt's military cap hanging near the door. He takes it down and goes to the mirror. There he tries it on, staring at himself with a stern expression. He glances quickly at the window and takes up Hazlitt's riding stick. He strides about the room in a military fashion, with the stick under his left arm, his chin thrust forward pugnaciously. He suddenly stands to attention and seems to confront someone smaller than himself.

HUSSEIN (between his teeth): Come on! Come on!

He shakes the whip in a threatening way at the imaginary figure.

HUSSEIN: Well, what do you want, man? Do you usually stand like that in front of an officer?

Footsteps are heard at the door, and he quickly throws the stick to one side and replaces the cap on its hook.

HAZLITT enters. He sits down wearily on the divan and begins unclipping his belt with the revolver-holster. HUSSEIN goes to the sideboard and pours him a drink. On his way past the window he stops suddenly and draws the curtains, though it is bright outside. At first HAZLITT refuses the drink, but HUSSEIN insists.

HUSSEIN: Drink it, my friend.

HAZLITT drinks.

HUSSEIN: What did you find?

HAZLITT: We found Masudi. They opened fire on us along

one of the gorges. They're mad, like all mountain people. They'd shoot at a cloud if it came near enough. Not that they'd hit it.

He takes his revolver out of its case and begins cleaning it angrily.

HUSSEIN: But you saw Masudi?

HAZLITT: Yes. I sent a scout forward with a white handkerchief. They love that kind of silly melodrama.

HUSSEIN: Did he agree to your terms?

HAZLITT: He asked for time.

HUSSEIN: How much?

HAZLITT: Two months.

HUSSEIN: But that's far too long! There were two incidents here while you were away. A crowd threw stones at one of the ^eambassies, and the Public Presecutor got a bullet through the wind-screen of his car. There are extra police in the streets. Does Masudi think he can wait even a fortnight, let along two months? He must act now, or people are going to lose interest, especially now that the heat is coming.

HAZLITT: All Masudi wants is time to get round the tribes and test their loyalty.

HUSSEIN: Did he trust you?

HAZLITT: No.

HUSSEIN: But he had heard of you?

HAZLITT: Yes. But it's you he doesn't trust. He says you are a landowner, and far too friendly with Europeans.

HUSSEIN chuckles.

HUSSEIN: How does he look?

HAZLITT: Tall, with a huge golden beard. I don't like his harsh voice, and the way he pushes his belly

into you when he addresses you. I was on tenterhooks the whole time, especially at night when they got drunk and practised shooting at the stars. You want these gangsters to form a new government? You must be off your head! Well, I suppose you are, being one of them.

HUSSEIN: I'm going to make use of Masudi. He's a fine warrior, but he's an idiot. I'll make good use of him when the time comes, Captain.

HAZLITT: If he doesn't put a knife in your back before that.

HUSSEIN: So he opened fire on you. That was his fun, for he knew you were coming.

HAZLITT: But he put a bullet through my sergeant's hand. How do I explain that? It's bad enough to be absent from my post for ^a week, let alone have my sergeant wounded quite inexplicably.

HUSSEIN: You must keep an eye on Shingleton.

HAZLITT: I no longer believe in this rebellion. You are all children playing ~~with~~ with pistols, all you mountain people. You think of nothing but killing. Night after night that Masudi man would sit in front of me and tell me the same story about how five years ago he was gored by a wild pig. He used to stretch himself out on the carpet ~~for~~ every evening while one of his followers bent down and snorted like a pig and theⁿ gored him while he groaned and writhed about. Imagine that great buffalo with his golden beard writhing all over the floor!

HUSSEIN: This country is on the brink of revolution, Captain. Even children playing with pistols can frighten adults like yourself. You can't desert us now.

HAZLITT: Did I say I intended to?

HUSSEIN: Tell me, what terms did you and Masudi agree on?

HAZLITT: I said I'd give him arms and ammunition; secondly, that I'd order my men not to open fire in the case of rioting. I promised these things on one condition: namely, that he left the engineering camp alone and did not so much as put a picket near its gates. He agreed immediately, and promised that any man who entered the engineering camp or did violence to any European there would be executed on the spot.

HUSSEIN: What an idiot he is! We'll surround the police headquarters, incite the army to lay down arms, march on the House of Assembly, and by dawn next day there'll be a new government under one of my friends, and Masudi will be back in his mountains shooting at clouds. Meanwhile, work on the new road will continue under European management. You've done excellently, Captain. May I have the honour of inviting you to my house tomorrow? With Miss Friedmann of course? (Looks about him) She has certainly made many changes here. (He lifts up one of the corners of the table-cover) You are learning how to live like one of the people. (He lets the cover go thoughtfully) But you are a European, Captain. Therefore you are the equivalent of a prince for my people.

HAZLITT: What do you mean?

HUSSEIN: Well, these garish things... They are for the poor, the low-born.

HAZLITT: They belong to Miss Friedmann.

HUSSEIN: Europeans are cleaner than we are. They are gentlemen. But these are cheap, hand-made things, unworthy of people like yourself.

HAZLITT: I'm tired, Hussein. I want to rest.

HUSSEIN: I'm sorry, Captain: only I want everyone to look up to you in our country. Before I go tell me where your wounded sergeant is. I can get him to a private doctor.

HAZLITT: I sent him along to Mohammed at the local hospital.

HUSSEIN: To Mohammed? You can trust him?

HAZLITT: Of course.

HUSSEIN: I think you are wrong, Captain. I think you are wrong not to keep an eye on Miss Friedmann.

HAZLITT: What has Miss Friedmann got to do with it?

HUSSEIN: Have you any idea where she is now?

HAZLITT: No. At the hospital, perhaps.

HUSSEIN: Suppose she is sleeping with someone else?

HAZLITT: With - (He rises slowly and goes towards HUSSEIN, staring at him in astonishment) Are you trying to tell me something?

HUSSEIN: No, Captain.

HAZLITT: You are sure?

HUSSEIN: Quite sure. But I believe that a man should know where his woman goes, and with whom, and for what purpose. Miss Friedmann sees just as much as Mohammed the doctor as she did in the old days. And I tell you something bad will come of that. There's no love in Mohammed for you, my friend. Beware of that lackey. Are you sure he knows nothing about these patrols of yours?

HAZLITT: Nothing.

HUSSEIN: And you tell Miss Friedmann nothing?

HAZLITT: I tell her that they are part of my duties

here.

HUSSEIN: Is she working for Mohammed?

HAZLITT: For God's sake! I trust him. I'm in love with her! What else can I do?

HUSSEIN: Forbid her to see him.

HAZLITT: Just because you hate him? Are you jealous of his hours alone with her? I tell Miss Friedmann nothing, and she seldom asks a question. Now will you let me rest?

HUSSEIN: Come to me tomorrow night. Forgive me. I'm a little suspicious. But we have to be careful at the early stages. He is low-born, this Mohammed, the son of servants. Such people have to be watched. Good bye, Captain.

HAZLITT: Good bye.

The moment HUSSEIN is gone HAZLITT goes to the other door, opens it and calls out, "Baker!" Then he returns to the divan and begins taking off his muddy boots.

BAKER enters.

BAKER: I expected you yesterday, sir.

HAZLITT: Yes, we were held up, Baker. Did anything happen?

BAKER: No, sir.

HAZLITT: The Sergeant Major didn't telephone?

BAKER: No, sir. But I think Headquarters spoke to him on the office-telephone several times.

HAZLITT: What about?

BAKER: I couldn't find out, sir.

HAZLITT hands him the muddy boots.

BAKER: These are wet through. You must have been a long way, sir.

HAZLITT: Yes, it was raining in the hills. And much cooler. I enjoy these patrols.

BAKER: Will you be in for dinner tonight, sir?

HAZLITT: Yes.

BAKER: One or two places?

HAZLITT: Two.

BAKER: And can I make you coffee now? You look worn-out, sir.

HAZLITT: Yes, get me coffee. You are sure nothing happened?

BAKER: Quite sure, sir.

BAKER leaves. HAZLITT waits for the door to close, then goes to the telephone.

HAZLITT: Captain Hazlitt here... Give me the Sergeant Major... (He puts the receiver down for a moment and goes hurriedly to the window. He looks outside, then returns) Hullo, Sergeant Major... Has everything been all right? Tell me, did Headquarters telephone for anything? ... They did not? I mean, Headquarters did not ring you up with any questions?... I see... Well, thank you, Sergeant Major. Good bye.

He replaces the receiver and stands by it thoughtfully. There is a knock on the door.

He admits LEONORA and MOHAMMED.

LEONORA: I came over yesterday, but you weren't back, darling. (They kiss) You look so tired.

HAZLITT: Do I? Hullo, Mohammed! Come and sit down.

MOHAMMED: Thank you. I've just been treating one of your soldiers, Philip.

HAZLITT: At the hospital?

MOHAMMED: Yes.

HAZLITT: One of my sergeants? Yes, I sent him over.

MOHAMMED: But why? Usually they go to the military post.

HAZLITT: Oh, this was only a scratch, a pebble or something, so I sent him straight across to you.

MOHAMMED: But there was a bullet in his hand.

HAZLITT: No. I looked at that hand pretty closely, and there was nothing in the flesh.

MOHAMMED: But there was a bullet in the palm, Philip. I've got it in my pocket.

HAZLITT: Well, he must have been fooling about with a revolver. He never told me.

LEONORA: Was the journey hard?

HAZLITT: We had to walk single file the whole way, it was so narrow and stony. It took two days of walking to get there.

LEONORA: Were the donkeys slow?

HAZLITT: I decided to send them back and rely on the villages for food. We went with one day's supply of food and we were away - how long? - six days or so.

LEONORA: You were lucky if you got more than rice out of them.

HAZLITT: But we had a kind of banquet twice a day wherever we went: sometimes chicken, sometimes a lamb. They would sit round in a circle and watch me eat.

LEONORA: Did you like them?

HAZLITT: The poorest of them, - not the chieftains. The chieftains were boorish, always playing with their guns. But it's so cool and fresh up there. Everything looks so much brighter.

LEONORA: And how were you liked?

HAZLITT: They were astonished to hear me speak their language. They came and kissed my shoes, bowed as I went by. Word of my coming passed from village to village... I feel at home with these people: I find I laugh at the same things and grow solemn at the same things. In Europe I feel far less at home. Their last rice they would share with me, their last drop of tea.

MOHAMMED (with a laugh) It sounds quite romantic, Philip.

LEONORA: No, I felt just the same after my first visit to the hills.

HAZLITT: You remember there was an eclipse of the sun two days ago? Well, an old woman came out of a hut in front of me with her cloak drawn tight up to her eyes, looking terribly awed and guilty. She pointed to the sun and told me, 'God is angry with us. That is why he is hiding himself now.' She daren't look up, she was so awe-struck. And I felt I understood her. I didn't feel it was a bit strange.

MOHAMMED: But I am afraid, Philip, that the religion which makes her hide her face from a wrathful God is also the religion which makes her hide her face from a wrathful landlord. Come and live as half my patients live, and then you'll see which you prefer: devout Muslims or city hospitals.

HAZLITT smiles and shrugs his shoulders.

HAZLITT: The truth is I'm sick of Europe, Mohammed. So you must allow me to be a little romantic about your people. By the way, they seem to

worship you. Leonora, also. They talked about you both.

MOHAMMED: But they are not running the clinics. That's more to the point.

HAZLITT: I saw no clinics.

MOHAMMED: Exactly. They'll sit round in circles and tell each other that Leonora and I are the chosen of God, - (imitating their solemn avowals) yes, by God, by the God that is, by my God! But they'll let their children go blind with trachoma and die of malaria rather than use the drugs we give them every month.

HAZLITT: You must expect that at first. They are resigned. They know how to suffer. But they aren't cowed, Mohammed. Their eyes have a keen look. They ~~have~~^{are} half-broken with disease, but they are still quick, proud, graceful creatures.

MOHAMMED: But I say they are cowed. They are beaten. Their landlord strips them of their grain, their rice, their dates, and all they do is to sit outside their huts smoking hashish and calling on the mercy of God and waiting for me to come and nurse their wounds! You tell me they kissed your feet? They bowed as you passed by? Of course they kissed your feet! You are the arch-landowner, Philip, the prince, the European: they are flattered that you a European should want to visit their filthy huts. They don't expect it. They would be far less surprised if you gave them each a kick in the backside and

ran your tanks through their mud-huts, just to show them that life can be harder than even they think... And when they heard you speak their language they were astonished and delighted that you a prince and a European should wish to soil your tongue in that way. Do you think they treat their landlords any differently? No. They sit and complain about him until the sun goes down, but when he pays them a visit, which he rarely does, they kiss his feet, they go down on their hands and knees to him. And when he hits a man in the mouth for speaking out of turn that man kisses the hand that struck him. They would kiss your tanks, my friend, then lie down to be run over by them!

HAZLITT:

Haven't you travelled a long way from your own people, Mohammed? Aren't you as much a stranger to them as I am? You are almost as European as I am, and you blame them for not being the same.

MOHAMMED:

I want to build more hospitals, to put a medical officer in every one of the malarial villages, to stop the doctors treating the rich and not the poor, to make the dry land fertile with a national irrigation scheme. I am sick of my country just as you are sick of Europe. I am sick of the endless wastes of sand, of the fly-blown wounds I have to stare at every day, of the people who are so loyal and resigned. We may be very romantic to you, as we are to many other visiting Europeans, but I'll give you the Kuran, I'll give you Arab honour ~~and~~

and hospitality, I'll give you all the sentimental camouflage for hospitals, drains, DDT spray in the streets, equality of women with men, and decent schools in every village.

HAZLITT: I don't deny your right.

MOHAMMED: People like you, with bullets in their pouches, must be told the truth.

HAZLITT: I knew the truth long ago, from Leonora.

MOHAMMED: Not until every European has gone from this country shall we be strong again.

He wipes his brow in silence. A pause.

HAZLITT: I get too much interference, too much advice, from you and everybody else. I'm alone. How many times have I got to repeat that? I'm alone.

MOHAMMED: You want to make an island for yourself, then? The world doesn't allow it.

HAZLITT: Well, then, I defy the world. I shall be loved just because I am a man on an island. But you're not going to buy me out. Even if I die a mere European gentleman, or a freak and senile Christian, an apostle of dead creeds, then I will gladly die as such, on my lonely island, whatever names you like to give me. I shall be myself. Death is one way of evading all your wretched names. (To LEONORA, drowsily) Well, which of us is right?

LEONORA: Mohammed is right. In this country you have to choose: you have to act one way or the other. You have to choose whether to do your job here like any other European officer, or to join the rebels. And I won't allow you to commit an act of treason. So you must simply

be patient, Philip, and put away all these romantic scruples. You must stop visiting the villages. For my sake you must forget what people think of you here, forget what Mohammed thinks, forget everything I said on our first evening together.

HAZLITT: I must try to cancel myself out... Is that your advice? My romantic scruples, you say: but they are myself.

MOHAMMED: We don't need your help.

HAZLITT: No? But I shall prove something to you all. I don't believe in your new society. I don't believe in your conscience. It is a clinical thing. It burns, sterilises. I believe in myself.

MOHAMMED: And you will change the world?

HAZLITT: By my example, perhaps; by my small addition. (Seeing MOHAMMED's shrug) You think only of what is possible in the world; but I want to try the impossible. A moth burns its wings against the light. Of course it is suicidal; it is unwise to go near the light. But what about the moths who no longer love the light? ^{burning and fatal though it is?} I think they are rather small creatures, rather pitiable. (Raising his eyebrows, going near to MOHAMMED) What do you say?

MOHAMMED: You have time ~~time~~ to think, Philip: that's the difference between us. For me there are wounds to be bandaged, cancers to cut out. The sight of that blood, you see, is so compelling: it fills out all my memory, all my conscience, all my future. Oh, yes, thinking is admirable,

and you are most intelligent: but thinking is a luxury. People like me are plunged right into society, and people like me are going to change it.

HAZLITT: Only men will change it; not ideas, only men, each of them alone.

MOHAMMED: Hospitals will change it, Philip. Surgical instruments will change it. (With a sudden laugh) Yes, we are all cowed here! I am Leonora's friend, and your friend, and I think it still flatters me that you consider me worthy of your friendship. We must fight our love for you. Only then shall we be free, only then will you not dare to give us your ~~sympat~~ sympathy. Sympathy is what we give to invalids, after all.

LEONORA: You don't trust Philip, do you? personally, I mean?

MOHAMMED (looking at her for a moment) No. Oh, I may shake hands with him, I may even like him, but he can't gainsay his uniform. (To HAZLITT) Did you see Masudi?

HAZLITT: Why should I want to see Masudi?

MOHAMMED: Is that why you went into the hills, to see him?

HAZLITT: No, Mohammed. What makes you ask?

MOHAMMED: There are rumours. Why did you go into the

hills?

HAZLITT: It is one of my duties here to go.

MOHAMMED: To go into rebel-territory?

HAZLITT: I was on the edge of ~~the~~ rebel-territory.

MOHAMMED: You went inside.

HAZLITT: I did nothing of the kind, Mohammed.

MOHAMMED (searching his eyes) No, I don't trust you.

(Walking away) It isn't your fault you were sent here. I realise you wanted to see Leonora. But that (pointing to Hazlitt's revolver holster) is what frightens me. Those bullets are meant to kill human beings, my friend. Aren't they a temptation to you? Go on, prove to me that you're not like all the others. Why should I trust you any more than the others?

LEONORA: What would you do if you were in his place?

MOHAMMED: I should never be in his place, Leonora.

Good bye.

He leaves the room. HAZLITT sits down heavily on the divan. LEONORA goes to his side and puts her hand on his shoulder.

There is a knock on the inner door. BAKER enters with coffee. He places the tray on the dining table.

HAZLITT has his head bowed.

BAKER: Your coffee is ready, sir.

LEONORA: Could you bring it to him here? I don't think he's well.

BAKER: Your coffee, ~~now~~ sir. Shall I bring it to you?

HAZLITT: Please, Baker.

BAKER (taking the coffee to HAZLITT's side) Can I get you some aspirins, sir?

HAZLITT: No, thank you.

BAKER leaves the room.

HAZLITT: I saw Masudi.

LEONORA: You saw him? You spoke to him? But, Philip, what about your men?

HAZLITT: I went forward alone.

LEONORA: Why - ?

HAZLITT: I don't want to answer your questions, Leonora. No harm can come of my visit. But a lot of harm can come from talking too much... I was thinking of you all the way back. Did you miss me?

LEONORA: Yes. I kept coming here, just to look at the room.

HAZLITT: It was so wonderfully cool in the hills. I kept thinking to myself, even if I plunge myself into disgrace, even if I'm killed, well, that's a fair price to pay. (Touching her) It is worth death, just to be with you again.

LEONORA: But no one is going to hurt you, Philip.

HAZLITT: Oh, one gets afraid.

LEONORA: Why?

HAZLITT: If one is too happy, I mean.

LEONORA: You look tired and sad, darling: anything but happy.

HAZLITT: I mean happy with you, only with you. (Staring into her eyes) We must make an island for ourselves here. Oh, those endless words, endless, endless words, dinning into my brain! Can't we stop them? All the time they are breaking in. We must stay close together, Leonora, we must never - ! We must keep out other people. But yet, my God, it must come to

an end. It can't be eternal. Yet it feels eternal.

LEONORA: We need only keep out Hussein and Mohammed. Only they can interfere with us.

HAZLITT: You say that, when -

LEONORA: I can give up my work at the hospital. I hardly think of my work now.

HAZLITT: I wish we could live in this love-cave for ever, Leonora, I want to die in it. We must blind our eyes. We must see only each other.

LEONORA: There is one way of saving ourselves, Philip. Do you know what that is?

HAZLITT: No.

LEONORA: We could go away from here. We must go back to Europe.

HAZLITT: They would never allow me.

LEONORA: But you could try!

HAZLITT: They'd refuse. I'm certain they would refuse.

LEONORA: But won't you even try?

HAZLITT: It's hopeless.

LEONORA: Try, Philip, for my sake.

A pause.

LEONORA: Well? (HAZLITT does not reply) You don't want to go back, do you? Really you don't want to save yourself, do you?

HAZLITT: I should always blame myself afterwards.

LEONORA: Why?

HAZLITT: I should blame myself for cowardice.

LEONORA: Then you want to be a hero? It can't be done in this country.

HAZLITT: But here I feel - well, there is something to get my teeth into. (Rises) It won't be easy.

They hate me. Mohammed would like to trust me, but he can't. I want to prove them wrong. I want to prove to them what I am, Philip Hazlitt, apart from the Captain. It is a sacrifice I should willingly undertake, you see, because I mean to spend my life among these people. Do you see why I should always blame myself for cowardice?

LEONORA: Very well. I shall stay at the hospital. We shall go through with this ghastly summer. Hussein and Mohammed will go on coming to this house.

HAZLITT: But this is the beginning of my work, Leonora. I shall make reports about every village I go to. I shall record all the conversations I have, I shall get to know every foot of the country, and every man and woman of any importance. No harm can come of that: I shan't have to disobey orders. It will be fascinating work, Leonora.

LEONORA: They'll take us away from each other. Only in Europe will we be allowed our dreams.

HAZLITT: You must never tell Mohammed where I go and what I do. I shall never again take my own men into the hills. That was a piece of folly. I shall go alone. As long as we say nothing we shall be safe.

LEONORA: Something terrible will happen.

HAZLITT: Mohammed has made you feel miserable. Hasn't it occurred to you, darling, that perhaps he is a little jealous of the way they received me in the hills? He has a grudge against all Europeans.

The poor people are different.

LEONORA: I've been here too long. I can't judge any more.

HAZLITT: I must work in secret. (Going towards the window) Now that sentry of mine sees everything that goes on here, every coming and going. There - you see? That's where the rumours start. That's why the Sergeant Major takes a rude tone to me and refuses to say that Headquarters 'phoned him, as I know they did.

LEONORA: Headquarters - ?

HAZLITT: Well, I shall send that sentry away. I shall do it now. I've decided.

He goes to the inner door and calls out for BAKER.

LEONORA: Even Hussein has a guard on his house, Philip. There are thieves in this country, apart from rebels.

HAZLITT: I'm a good shot. So is Baker.

BAKER enters.

HAZLITT: You're a good shot, aren't you, Baker?

BAKER: A good shot, sir?

HAZLITT: With a rifle.

BAKER: Yes.

HAZLITT: Well, go and tell that sentry outside that we no longer need him. Tell him to return to barracks immediately.

BAKER: But -

HAZLITT: Hurry!

BAKER: Yes, sir.

BAKER goes out into the garden. HAZLITT watches him from the door.

HAZLITT: Now we shall be alone. We shall have less talk about the Captain receiving a European

lady at night.

LEONORA: Is there such talk?

HAZLITT: There must be! Can't you imagine what my men say among themselves? Sentry-duty up here is a regular peep-show! Baker I can trust. And for him there must be no mystery now.

LEONORA: Was he your servant before you came here?

HAZLITT: No. But I simply trust him.

BAKER returns.

HAZLITT leads him to the centre of the room, where LEONORA is standing.

HAZLITT: Do you know who this is, Baker?

BAKER: No, sir.

HAZLITT: But you have seen her before?

BAKER: Yes, sir.

HAZLITT: Her name is Miss Friedmann, Baker. She has often slept here, as I expect you know. Soon she will live here all the time.

BAKER stares at him in astonishment.

BAKER: Yes, sir.

HAZLITT: This house is going to be a happy house. After all, we are in a wonderful country. That wilderness outside, try and turn it into a garden. I want you to lay lawns, to grow spring flowers, to bring in trees, to dig irrigation canals, to make a shaded summer house. Go into the town tomorrow and find the labour. We shall ^{have} the best food and the best wine. Everybody else is miserable here. But we are going to be a happy house in their midst.

BAKER: Yes, sir.

HAZLITT: Miss Friedmann is going to be your mistress. In future you will not disregard her orders, as I remember you did this afternoon.

BAKER: I'm sorry, sir.

HAZLITT: You can go, then. Thank you.

BAKER leaves.

LEONORA: He thinks you are mad.

HAZLITT: Perhaps. But I feel better. Shall we sit down to coffee, as we used to in Europe?

(As he goes to the inner door) From now on you are going to be a silent spectator, ~~and~~

~~and~~ Mohammed also. No more words, thank God! (Opening the door and calling out)

Baker, bring another cup!

CERTAIN.

THIRD ACT.

SCENE: the same, one afternoon several weeks later.

As the curtain rises there is the sound of a small reconnaissance aircraft passing low overhead. LEONORA and MOHAMMED are standing in the garden looking up. When the sound of the 'plane dies away they come into the room and close the door.

LEONORA: How far away is the air-port?

MOHAMMED: About ten miles south of here.

LEONORA: Then he'll be arriving soon.

She goes to the mirror and paints her lips.

LEONORA: Do I look haggard? It's so hot!

MOHAMMED: No, just excited. Whose aeroplane is he using?

LEONORA: I think it belongs to one of the landowners.

MOHAMMED: Has Hussein had a hand in it?

LEONORA: I don't know. Philip hardly speaks to me about his work nowadays. These are just routine patrols, part of his duty here.

MOHAMMED: You are quite a changed person, Leonora! Are you happy to let him lead you to your doom?

LEONORA: I feel sure of him at last. I belong to him.

MOHAMMED: Did he take any of his soldiers with him?

LEONORA: Not this time.

MOHAMMED: How long has he been away?

LEONORA: Three or four days.

MOHAMMED: He is doomed, Leonora. (A pause) You never go to the villages now. I don't

see you at the hospital more than once a week. ~~now~~

LEONORA: I belong to him, Mohammed. I've no will.

MOHAMMED: You confess that to me, you who were once so proud? He came like an evil spirit...

LEONORA: I can't go on with my old work ^{in the hills:} it might be dangerous to him. I'm too much in love with him, Mohammed.

MOHAMMED: He might get himself killed tomorrow, and you ^{as well.}
~~with him~~

LEONORA: Then I shall have to go down with him.

She goes to the inner door and calls out 'Baker!'
He comes almost at once.

LEONORA: The Captain will be here in about ten minutes, Baker. We saw his 'plane go over just now.

BAKER: Very good, Madam.

LEONORA: Are the chickens plucked and cleaned?

BAKER: I've just done it, Madam.

LEONORA: That's all, then.

BAKER leaves.

LEONORA: There, Mohammed, you see how much a wife I am. In three months my character has changed completely.

MOHAMMED: I tell you I'm certain that one of his men has killed Masudi. Had it not been for you, Leonora, I would have shown my piece of evidence to Shingleton long before now.

LEONORA: What is this piece of evidence?

MOHAMMED: You saw it yourself two months ago: the bullet I extracted from the sergeant's hand. Philip told me the man had been playing with a revolver or something. But he was telling a lie. The bullet belongs to an automatic gun which is

obsolete now and which only Masudi's men have in great number. Now this surely is absolute proof, Leonora, that he must have had a skirmish with the rebels. And I believe that Masudi was killed during that skirmish, ~~and~~^{and} ~~that~~^{and} Philip set out quite deliberately from this place to murder him. I believe that he has been lying to you and everyone else. I believe that he is using you and even Hussein Al Shabar quite coldly. I believe, Leonora, that he is a first-class actor with an infinite power to charm other people, as he has charmed you and me.

LEONORA: How ridiculous you are!

MOHAMMED: Masudi has not been seen or heard of again since the day Philip first went to the hills.

LEONORA: Why have you waited all this time, then, if you were so sure?

MOHAMMED: Because only yesterday did I hear that Masudi is missing. Of course, there had been rumours before.

LEONORA: Philip couldn't. He couldn't.

MOHAMMED: In other words he has charmed you, as I confess he charmed me. He went to Hussein for help, you see, and Hussein thought he'd at last got a powerful European on Masudi's side. But all the time he was being tricked.

LEONORA: Are you jealous of Philip?

MOHAMMED: This is how I stand: I want to get you away from him because I love you. I don't ask you to try and love me; I only ask you to

save yourself. Philip is damned, Leonora, and I shall not let you be damned with him. I am going to tell Shingleton everything I know about him. I shall show him the bullet, for one thing.

LEONORA: Philip is obeying orders. Your evidence will mean nothing. From the beginning you have had the idea that he is doing harm.

MOHAMMED: Yes. The idea obsesses me.

LEONORA: If he is a traitor, then so am I. My ~~brain~~ doesn't work any more. I remember the work I did with you, I am still loyal to it, but my brain says nothing to me any more. I am having a child by him, Mohammed.

MOHAMMED: A child?

LEONORA: You mustn't try to hurt him. I've got to stay with him now.

MOHAMMED goes towards her in quiet astonishment.

MOHAMMED: Are you sure?

LEONORA: Yes.

MOHAMMED: Why didn't you tell me before?

LEONORA: I don't know.

MOHAMMED: What about the gossip? And where are you going to have the child?

LEONORA: I was relying on you for that.

MOHAMMED: On me? Yet you stay with Philip...

LEONORA: If you want to get him killed by someone, then I shall have to suffer it. I'm helpless. But I can't leave him.

MOHAMMED: And suppose there are riots? Suppose they surround this house? Is it going to be very safe for your child?

LEONORA (putting her hand to her brow) I want you to
do your best for me.

MOHAMMED: Has it occurred to you that there is another
solution?

A pause.

LEONORA: What?

MOHAMMED: You would no longer feel helpless. Your
brain would work again. You realise that
it is almost impossible to keep such a thing
secret from the women here? They have the
intuitions of sewer-rats.

LEONORA: I'll never leave the house.

MOHAMMED: Why not be wise and have the child brought
off? It could be done quietly and efficient-
ly? I can do it myself. No one need know.

LEONORA: How horrible...

MOHAMMED: Not so horrible as your own death by rebel
bullets.

LEONORA: Yes, far more horrible, far, far more horrible!
All you're aware of is an ~~embryo~~ ~~embryo~~
embryo. But it belongs to Philip and me
together. It is alive. Your hands are for
cancers and tumours, not for living things.
Do you want a world of old people?

MOHAMMED: I want you to be safe.

LEONORA: How you could ask me to do such a thing...

MOHAMMED (with a shrug) Very well, then: you shall have
your child. You shall have all the help I can
give you.

LEONORA (looking about her) I'd quite forgotten he was on
his way home! You've made this place feel

quite dark. I was so happy before. I feel happy the instant Philip enters my head!

MOHAMMED: Yes, and you daren't look into the future.

LEONORA: But I do dare. I see you going to see Shingleton, for instance. I see him laughing in your face. I see Philip coming back in a few minutes and your shaking hands with him like an old friend. I see one day leading into another, full of the usual routines. I see a riot - of course there will be a riot - and I see stones being flung at an Embassy window and the students dispersing after twelve hours with nothing settled. Our talk is daring, Mohammed. But only our talk.

MOHAMMED: You don't see Philip as a murderer? or yourself as a traitor?

LEONORA: No, or perhaps I do. But I refuse to get him into trouble.

MOHAMMED: And suppose I betray him?

LEONORA: You wouldn't do it.

MOHAMMED: When he comes into this room I shall shake hands with him. I may even smile at him. But after that I shall betray him.

LEONORA: And Shingleton will laugh in your face.

MOHAMMED: Then I will go to someone who does not laugh. You shall have your child, Leonora, but you shan't keep Philip. You are going to see for yourself if I'm just a talker, just a surgeon at the local hospital who pats frightened children on the head. Now you've given me the chance to prove myself. And I am going to seize that chance.

LEONORA goes towards him with a smile and puts her

silk scarf playfully round his head, making a turban of it. He stands there looking into her eyes, quite unable to smile.

LEONORA: There, betray whom you like. You look such a baby. All men, even the broad ones, can be made to look like babies in a moment. Your eyes are so mournful, Mohammed. Very well, go and betray Philip. Go and have your little game. But I tell you everything is going to come out all right. I know this because I'm a woman, because there is not the vestige of an ominous warning inside me about the future, because I'm calm and perfectly reassured, even by your stupid eyes.

She leaves him and goes towards the gramophone. He is just about to take down the scarf when she turns round and runs back to him with a laugh.

LEONORA: No, no, you must leave it!

She re-arranges it, then returns to the gramophone and puts on a quick waltz. She takes hold of him gaily. She begins to turn him round and round in the dance. At first he moves heavily and sadly, watching her with an expression of pity. But soon he is forced to smile: he takes her more firmly, and at last they begin to dance swiftly round the room.

The front door opens suddenly and HUSSEIN appears. He looks at the couple with astonishment and steps back. They stop, and MOHAMMED quickly pulls the silk scarf from his head. The three of them stand quite still, until LEONORA goes to the gramophone and takes the record off.

HUSSEIN: I am looking for the Captain. I saw his 'plane go over.

LEONORA: He should be here in a few minutes. Why not stay, Hussein?

HUSSEIN simply stands at the open door staring at Mohammed.

HUSSEIN: Have you any right to visit the Captain's house ^h _A while he is away?

MOHAMMED: Any right?

HUSSEIN: I ask by what right you are here.

MOHAMMED: I am here because Captain Hazlitt invited me to come.

HUSSEIN(to LEONORA): Is this true?

LEONORA: Why shouldn't it be true?

HUSSEIN: Then all the more shameful for me. I happen to be the Captain's closest friend here, - and, I had hoped, yours too.

LEONORA: I don't understand you.

HUSSEIN: I shall visit the Captain when he's alone.

He leaves, slamming the door. MOHAMMED goes to the window and watches him return to his own house.

MOHAMMED: What a buffoon he is! Look, he's trembling with rage! He calls himself prince, and he really believes he's a prince, though no one else here does, including the shoe-shine boys. He hates me because he thought he saw me smiling at his wife one day! No wonder he played so well into your Captain's hands. (He turns from the window) You look a little sadder now.

LEONORA: He quite frightened me.

MOHAMMED: You look chastened. Things happen very suddenly in this country, you see. In a moment we pass from gaiety to fear. Sometimes we have no warning at all of the most terrifying events, even the women among us with their marvellous intuitions of the future.

There is a knock on the front door.

LEONORA: Is that Philip?

MOHAMMED looks out of the window.

MOHAMMED: No, it's a woman. I think it's Hussein's wife. Do you want me to go?

LEONORA: Why should you?

She goes to the door and admits BADIA AL SHABAR.

BADIA: Hussein came^e back just now in such a rage!

LEONORA: But nothing was wrong. He saw Mohammed and
! ~~me~~^{me} dancing together, that's all. We're waiting
^ for Philip to come back.

BADIA: Mohammed? Ah, the doctor. Then I understand.

MOHAMMED: Will you excuse me?

He starts to leave the room.

LEONORA: Why?

MOHAMMED: Oh, it's the convention here. I don't want to give cause for jealousy. I'll wait in the garden.

He leaves, and BADIA draws LEONORA away from the door.

BADIA: Do you know what these men have been planning together?

LEONORA: Which men?

BADIA: Hussein and the Captain.

LEONORA closes the door swiftly.

BADIA: But you must surely know.

LEONORA: I know nothing.

BADIA: Does the Captain never confide in you?

LEONORA: Not now.

BADIA: I hear everything from Hussein when he is drunk. But we'll keep his secret. Men are helpless without us.

LEONORA: What did he tell you?

BADIA: First of all the Captain has been taking patrols into the hills.

LEONORA: I know that.

BADIA: Secondly, he made contact with Masudi on his first patrol six weeks ago.

LEONORA: To kill him?

BADIA: Why, - to kill him? To negotiate with him. To lay down plans for the rebellion of our people.

LEONORA: But Masudi has disappeared!

BADIA: Only as part of the plan. Actually he is massing his men in the hills, ready for an assault on this town. And your Captain has just flown back from making the final arrangements with him.

LEONORA: With whom?

BADIA: With Masudi.

LEONORA: But he did not kill Masudi...

BADIA: He sees Masudi again and again, my dear. Why should he want to kill him? (She looks closely at Leonora) What is the matter with you, my dear? You look ill today. How long have you been like this?

She takes LEONORA by the arm and leads her to the divan.

LEONORA: The Captain will support Masudi?

BADIA: That's the secret you and I have to keep. But you ought to be excited! And look at you, - like a child!

LEONORA: Why excited?

BADIA: Because this is a triumph for you, and for everybody else who has worked for the rebels. It is a triumph that at last we have a European officer on our side.

LEONORA: And what about the European officer himself?

BADIA: You are lucky to have him, my dear. My own husband is a wild bear in comparison. Yet I think more highly of my husband now. Masudi always used to call him a clown. But I wonder what he calls him now?

LEONORA: Hussein should have kept out of this house!

BADIA: Why?

LEONORA: It was he who influenced Philip! Don't you understand that Philip has plunged himself into disgrace, that he has committed an act of treason? Do you expect me to sit here and listen to what you are saying and be excited? Drunk fools like Hussein have robbed my Philip of his life!

She bursts into tears, but BADIA makes little effort to comfort her.

BADIA: But it was you who influenced the Captain, not Hussein. Hussein told me himself ~~that~~ how helpful it was to have you in this house.

LEONORA: I have said nothing to influence him, not since our first evening together.

BADIA: Are you sure?

LEONORA: It was Hussein, all the time!

BADIA: Shall we ask him when he comes, then?

LEONORA: Ask who?

BADIA: The Captain. Shall we ask him whether it was Hussein or you who really caused him to help the rebels?

LEONORA: I knew this country would suck him into its horrible swamp! And you, - with your tongue!

BADIA: You're sick, my dear.

LEONORA: Sick! Aren't you sick with the filthy washing you take in from other people all the time?

BADIA: Is that why you don't come to see me?

LEONORA: Yes, because I detest your quick tongue!

BADIA: And my quick eyes? Because they see everything you do, because they see how you got the Captain in your power, because they see how you turned my husband's head? Because they see you all too well, my friend, - in your true colours!

A faint welcoming cry, 'Mohammed!' is heard and BADIA leaps to her feet.

BADIA: It's the Captain. Get up and powder your face.

LEONORA rises listlessly and goes to the mirror, where she wipes the tears away from her eyes. After a pause HAZLITT opens the door and leads MOHAMMED in by the hand.

HAZLITT: He was outside because of the harem! Badia, how are you?

He kisses her hand gaily, then goes across to LEONORA and embraces her. BADIA and MOHAMMED stand looking on shyly. HAZLITT turns and notices them.

HAZLITT (with a laugh) Haven't you seen a man kiss the woman he loves before? Look! I'll show you again!

He takes LEONORA in his arms, holds back her head and kisses her on the lips.

HAZLITT: You see? So much for your dark shames! So much for your precious harem, eh, Badia? Oh, we're going to blow a fine new wind across those dark shames of yours! Ah, Leonora I feel so happy!

He walks towards MOHAMMED and lifts his chin up playfully with his fist.

HAZLITT: But you don't believe in me yet, eh?

MOHAMMED: Will you excuse me if I go now, Philip?
I reckoned on your coming back earlier. I should have been at the hospital long ago.

HAZLITT (to LEONORA) Have you given him tea?

LEONORA: We had some at the clinic.

HAZLITT: Go, then. But have dinner with me tonight.

MOHAMMED: Tomorrow night, Philip. I'm on duty tonight.

HAZLITT: Tomorrow night? (He laughs) I think you may be required at the hospital tomorrow night also.

MOHAMMED: Why?

HAZLITT looks from one to the other of them as they stand facing him in silence.

HAZLITT: What are you^{all} looking so solemn about?

LEONORA: Why is Mohammed going to be required at the hospital tomorrow night?

HAZLITT: Oh - ! Some celebration... Some brawl - at the House of Assembly, - I was joking. A few friendly dagger-blows perhaps.

BADIA: Have you seen Hussein?

HAZLITT (looking at her closely) Why should I have seen Hussein?

BADIA: I wondered...

MOHAMMED: I'll leave you, then. Good ~~bye~~^{re}, Philip.

HAZLITT: Good bye. I just wanted to see your face.

MOHAMMED bows slightly to the two women and goes out.

LEONORA: I want to know where you have been, Philip.

HAZLITT (turning on her sharply) I told you long ago
what these trips were for!

LEONORA: Shall I put on one of those black veils, then?
But you are dealing with a European woman, ~~my~~
~~friend~~ You may bristle with revolvers and
machine-guns, but I have eyes in my head, and
they tell me I have a dirty liar before me.

A pause.

HAZLITT: Badia. Do you know what she is talking about?

BADIA: Be honest with her. She's not a fool.

HAZLITT: Both of you think you know something. What is
it you think you know?

LEONORA: That you have just come back from negotiating
with Masudi; that you are hand-in-glove with
the rebels; that you will one day be put to
death for treason; that you have plunged your
name into disgrace; that you have ruined me,
and anything born of me. That you are the
dupe of a drunkard.

HAZLITT walks to the window and looks out. He
goes to the inner door and opens it. He looks into the
corridor, and closes it again.

HAZLITT: Who told you? Badia?

LEONORA (almost in tears) Yes.

HAZLITT (to BADIA): How did you get to know all this?

BADIA: I have a right to know.

HAZLITT: I asked you how you got to know it.

BADIA: I'm a reliable person. People can rely on
my tact when they tell me things.

HAZLITT: Ah, forgive me. Your tact.

BADIA: I can keep a secret. I saw Masudi once.

HAZLITT: And you had a serious political discussion?

BADIA: He knows and trusts me.

HAZLITT: Did his big hands wander?

BADIA: Did - ?

HAZLITT seizes her by the throat and pulls her roughly to and fro.

BADIA: Leonora! Leonora!

HAZLITT: Come on! Come on! Who told you?

She says something inaudible. HAZLITT bends down to listen to her.

HAZLITT: What? What? (She repeats it) Ah, Hussein, Hussein. I might have guessed.

He pushes her back so that she falls onto the divan.

LEONORA: Philip!

HAZLITT: Did he tell you himself, or did you overhear it?

BADIA: He told me himself.

HAZLITT: When he was drunk?

BADIA: Yes.

HAZLITT: The idiot. If you utter a word of what Hussein told you to anyone outside this room, you will get a knife in your back. Now: we are friends. The three of us: fellow-conspirators. I'm glad you both know, because things are beginning to move very fast. We need our women at such a time. Where is Hussein?

BADIA: In the house. He came to look for you after your 'plane went over, but you hadn't come.

HAZLITT: Ah, the aeroplane! (To LEONORA) Did you see me wave?

LEONORA: Yes.

HAZLITT: Was that Mohammed I could see you with?

LEONORA: Yes.

HAZLITT: You've both made me feel quite nervous.
(He begins striding about) I hate this waiting about! It's so hot! But nothing's wrong: I want you both to get that into your heads.

LEONORA: We ought to have gone back to Europe. I pleaded with you. I stopped my work in the hills. I have been living for no one but you. And now - ! How this country has changed you!

The tekephone beel rings. HAZLITT takes up the receiver.

HAZLITT; Hullo... Yes, Sergeant Major.

He listens carefully for some time, then turns to LEONORA with his hand over the mouth-piece.

HAZLITT: Shingleton went to the Sergeant Major and ordered him to double up the sentries while I was away: because of the "local situation".
He listens at the 'phone again.

HAZLITT: And what? Yes, yes, I see... Exactly.

He puts the receiver down and goes slowly to a chair.

HAZLITT: What does he mean, - the "local situation"?
Do you think he knows anything?

LEONORA: He ~~isn't~~^{listens} to the gossip.

HAZLITT: But I've kept everything so quiet. I can't understand it. My men have always been reserved towards me. They know I'm only here because of my Arabic. But -

LEONORA: You've given in to the daydreams of a drunk, Philip.

BADIA: Tell her, Captain. Tell her if it was my poor Hussein who led you to the rebels, or she herself.

LEONORA: Hussein made you feel proud to be with Masudi.

HAZLITT (after a pause) No one led me to the rebels. I went to them alone. Gradually I became involved... But just for the moment the meaning has gone. It's so hot here! I'm confused. Tomorrow I shall be clear again. Everything will be clear and cheerful tomorrow, Leonora.

LEONORA: Well, I'm not going to daydream any longer.

She puts the silk scarf round her head as if she were going out.

HAZLITT: Where are you going?

LEONORA: I'm going to see Shingleton.

HAZLITT: Why?

LEONORA: To calm him down, and to find out what he knows. You can't afford to have him as your enemy.

HAZLITT: And I can't afford to let him know the truth.

LEONORA: But surely he knows everything.

HAZLITT: Not even Hussein knows.

LEONORA: What is the truth, then?

HAZLITT: But Shingleton must never know.

LEONORA: Very well. Tell me what the truth is.

HAZLITT: Masudi and I have agreed on a time.

LEONORA: A time?

HAZLITT: Masudi reaches this town at dawn tomorrow morning.

LEONORA: For the rebellion?

HAZLITT: Yes.

LEONORA: Tomorrow! Then he is already on the move?
Oh, you fool! How do you think we can save
you now?

She goes to the door.

CURTAIN.

SCENE: the same, a little later. It is now evening. HAZLITT and BADIA AL SHABAR are discovered.

BADIA: If you went back to your country now, Captain, would they shoot you?

HAZLITT: Yes. I suppose they would.

BADIA: Will you ever be able to go back to your country?

HAZLITT: No. How strange: that had never occurred to me.

BADIA: You've courage. That's why. But just think: if Hussein had been a Captain and had betrayed his country, would I still love him?

HAZLITT: Have I betrayed my country?

BADIA: Your own people would say so.

HAZLITT: Masudi has agreed not to touch the ^{camp.} ~~on Masudi~~
That was my first condition.

BADIA: BUT Masudi is a liar.

HAZLITT: I feel so utterly alone. From now on no one can help me. Yet I've hardly been conscious of what I've done.

BADIA: You've been led astray by a very beautiful woman, Captain.

HAZLITT: Why do you say that?

BADIA: Because I don't want you to blame Hussein if anything goes wrong. Leonora played her part as well, remember; and a bigger part, too. Her intelligence frightens me, Captain. It has changed all of us. Without it we could all have been living peacefully together. Look at her effect on Hussein.

HAZLITT: What was her effect on Hussein?

BADIA: Don't you see that the man adores her? Havent you noticed him when they're together? All

day he talks about her, and when he's lying in bed drunk he pulls his pillow about and calls it Leonora. For Hussein she is the highest type of European woman. Whereas I'm the whore.

HAZLITT: Are you jealous of her?

BADIA (with a shrug) Hussein goes to the brothel three or four times a week. How could I be jealous? He disgusts me. Whereas you are different.

HAZLITT: What did you mean when you said that we might be living peacefully together?

BADIA: She led you astray.

HAZLITT: I make my own decisions.

BADIA: But you have been working with Hussein. And do you think he ^w_Aould have moved a muscle without a woman like Leonora to guide him?

HAZLITT: Were they friends, then? before I came?

BADIA: No. But since you arrived he has always been trying to show off in front of her. These patrols he asked you to go on, they are all showing off for Leonora's benefit! Hussein needs only one incentive: a woman. He's like a wild beast where women are concerned. What kind of rebel is it who gives his wife all the secrets? Rebel!

HAZLITT: Did Leonora ever go to see him in private?

BADIA: Perhaps. She isn't unwilling to use her charms, Captain. Only this afternoon she and the doctor were dancing round this room, laughing and kissing each other.

HAZLITT: Kissing?

BADIA: Hussein said so. But he talks wildly. His

brain is soft with drink.

HAZLITT (putting his handkerchief to his brow): They are only friends, Mohammed and Leonora, ^{only} ^{friends}.

BADIA: Of course. But if I show that I admire you, if I say that of all the men who have come from Europe I think you are the finest, they call me a whore. But the precious Miss Friedmann can have her friendships.

HAZLITT: Only Hussein calls you ^{that} ~~anybody~~.

BADIA: No. You say the same, in your heart. Look at the way you pushed me about when Leonora was here. Would you do that to a European woman?

HAZLITT: It was because you lied to me.

BADIA: But it's the same judgement all the time, - that I'm just an appendage of Hussein's life, that I'm of no importance in myself and have got to be kept under lock and key. Oh, yes, I'm beautiful enough, but so are the girls in the brothels, so are the cabaret-girls! When I met Miss Friedmann for the first time I asked her to come and see me in my house. She came once. Once.

HAZLITT: Why was that?

BADIA: Because there is nothing romantic in my house, no men for one thing. Only magazines and tea. But there's no difference of intelligence between Miss Friedmann and me, Captain, nor any difference of beauty. There is only one difference: she is free and I'm not. If I were free like her men would fall in love with me as well.

HAZLITT: But men surely do fall in love with you.

- BADIA: And if I were free they wouldn't call me these things! And you would take my love as a gift, not pull me about as you did.
- HAZLITT: Your love?
- BADIA: I think about you every hour of the day. And the more I'm alone, the more do I think of you. I've envied Leonora more than any other woman ^I ~~we~~ know. Why are you looking at me like that?
- HAZLITT: I'm astonished. Yes, this country has changed me...
- BADIA: Are you thinking of me as a shameless creature? Does Hussein tell you all the time how I scream and stamp and curse like one? Be married to a drunkard who is sick over your silk dresses and carpets every night, then see if you'd scream or not!
- HAZLITT: It wasn't in my head. I was just astonished.
- BADIA: It's a pure feeling. Even you who receive it can't take away its purity.
- HAZLITT: Does Hussein know?
- BADIA: What do any of these people know about love? You can't eat love, you can't chop it up for fire-wood, you can't use it to kill mosquitoes with! Hussein feels an appetite, he gratifies it, then it's all finished! That's the limit of his love.
- HAZLITT: You tell me all this, Badia, just a few hours before the rebellion...
- BADIA: This is my first chance to see you alone. Tomorrow you are going to be a powerful man. Then you'll remember that I loved you at a time when you had no power. Are you so much

in love with her?

HAZLITT: Yes.

BADIA (Putting her hand up to her neck) You hurt me when
you caught hold of my neck.

HAZLITT: I shall never treat you like that again.

BADIA: Feel. Is there a swelling?

She draws his hand along her neck and moves
closer to him.

BADIA: Won't you kiss the bruise you have made?
He remains quite still, and at last she lowers her
hand.

BADIA: Is she having a child?

HAZLITT: How do you know that?

BADIA: I only guessed. She looks ill. I would like
to be with you every hour of the day, and for
the rest of my life. (Looking about the room)
But she was here before me. You can see her
mark all over the room, whereas when I came
here first it was simple and -

There is a light knock on the front door. HAZLITT
opens it and HUSSEIN AL SHABAR steps into the room.

HUSSEIN: Ah, Captain, so you are back. I saw your
'plane go over this afternoon.

They shake hands, and HUSSEIN stares from HAZLITT
to BADIA.

HUSSEIN: Go back to your house and stay there. (She
does not move, but continues looking at
HAZLITT. Suddenly HUSSEIN makes as if to
strike her.) Get out!

She flinches away, then leaves the room.

HUSSEIN: I want you to answer a question, Captain.
Am I your best friend in this country?

HAZLITT: Yes. What is the matter with you?

HUSSEIN: This: that I don't like some of your friends.
They could easily interfere with our work.

HAZLITT: Are you talking about Mohammed?

HUSSEIN: When I came here this afternoon I saw Miss
Friedmann and the doctor dancing round this
room like lovers. Now that is very shameful
to me: first, because you allow an enemy of
mine to come to your house while you are away;
and secondly because Miss Friedmann clearly
prefers the company of the doctor to mine.
That is to say, she prefers someone vulgar!

HAZLITT: He is the best surgeon in the country. And
do you question his honour?

HUSSEIN: I do. To his face if necessary.

HAZLITT: And you never doubt your own? Is it an
honourable man who tells his wife political
secrets when he is drunk? Look at you
trembling there. All this stuff you talk
about honour and pride, - it's the after-effect
of liquor!

HUSSEIN: Whatever my wife tells you is untrue.

HAZLITT: ~~And then~~ → Then how does ^{she} know I have been negotiating
with Masudi?

HUSSEIN: Just a woman's talk.

HAZLITT: I had to force it out of her. I know when
Badia is telling the truth. Yet I can trust
Mohammed, you see.

A pause.

HUSSEIN: Did I tell her these things?

HAZLITT: How else could she know?

HUSSEIN: With a bottle in my hand I have no honour, no
pride, no dignity. Sometimes she waits in the

porch for me at night and beats me like a child when I'm drunk.

HAZLITT: You must keep her mouth shut. Masudi and I have agreed on a time. That time is dawn tomorrow morning.

HUSSEIN: Tomorrow?

HAZLITT: You don't look excited or even interested. What is the matter with you?

HUSSEIN looks at him in silence.

HUSSEIN: How long was Badia here alone?

HAZLITT: Perhaps a couple of hours. You idiot! Do you think I'm after her?

HUSSEIN (screwing up his face) It's all these strange people who come and go... As if from dark places. Everything suspicious. There should only be you and Miss Friedmann here in this house. Nobody else. This Baker of yours: his eyes are strange. And Shingleton comes here sometimes. As well as Mohammed. And Badia is always longing to come here, - I can feel her longing like a bitch on heat.

HAZLITT: Listen to me. Hussein, listen. Tomorrow you must get through to the House of Assembly in time to meet Masudi at three o'clock in the afternoon. By that time he will probably have the police headquarters and the barracks under control. Now go and get some sleep. You will need all your strength tomorrow. And keep that woman's mouth shut.

HUSSEIN (moving closer to him) I saw a mark on her throat when I came in. You - !

He takes a step forward but HAZLITT instantly pulls out his revolver and points it at him.

HAZLITT: I order you to go and get some sleep.

There are footsteps outside and HAZLITT quickly replaces his revolver. LEONORA enters the room with SHINGLETON. The latter looks from HAZLITT to HUSSEIN closely. HUSSEIN makes a bow, but SHINGLETON disregards him.

HAZLITT: Please come in.

HUSSEIN watches them for a moment, then goes away.

SHINGLETON: I see you've no guard on the house, Captain.

HAZLITT: I sent him away some weeks ago.

SHINGLETON: That isn't wise in this country. You look less well than when I saw you first.

HAZLITT: Do I? Will you sit down?

SHINGLETON (seating himself) You are still thick with this Hussein, then? (With a smile) I hope he isn't leading you astray?

HAZLITT: No.

LEONORA: Don't you mean 'yes'?

HAZLITT: You shouldn't say that!

SHINGLETON: But she has a right to say it, Captain: because it is true.

HAZLITT: By what right do you telephone my own Sergeant Major and tell him what sentries to post?

SHINGLETON: Let me tell you, Captain: first because I am the manager of the engineering camp, and secondly because you are here to protect me.

HAZLITT: I do protect you.

SHINGLETON: But not when you are away, Captain. You're away quite often, aren't you? Look at Miss Friedmann here: she is terrified that you are going to make a fool of yourself, isn't she?

That's why she came running to me this afternoon.

HAZLITT: I leave strict orders when I go away.

SHINGLETON: But I'm supposed to advise you. Can I do that when you're away? No, I have to advise your Sergeant Major. That means giving him orders.

HAZLITT: Are you sure you know so much about this country?

SHINGLETON: Far more than you. (With a chuckle) I don't think you realise how helpful I have been, Captain. One word from me to Headquarters and you would have been dismissed the service long ago.

HAZLITT: Why? Because I take reconnaissance patrols into the hills?

SHINGLETON: Yes: because that is not one of your duties here. And in any case these are hardly reconnaissance patrols, are they?

HAZLITT does not answer.

SHINGLETON: Are these reconnaissance patrols, Captain? I liked the look of your little aeroplane today.

HAZLITT: Oh, yes, your spies...

SHINGLETON: I know at what hour you landed in the hills five days ago, and at what hour you took off today.

HAZLITT: Then why didn't you pass word to Headquarters?

SHINGLETON: Because I think Miss Friedmann and this worthless drunkard of yours have an undue influence over you, Captain. Because I don't take Miss Friedmann seriously, or

Hussein seriously, or lastly yourself seriously. So I shall just have to wait patiently until you have played out your little comic opera. You people are powerless. This Masudi has a golden beard, hasn't he?

HAZLITT: Should I know that?

SHINGLETON: You do know that, Captain, because you saw him today. And that is why Miss Fræedmann came running to me, - to find out what steps I was taking. For God's sake come off your pedestal, man! It is within my power to get you shipped off home on a treason charge!

LEONORA: Have you taken any steps?

SHINGLETON: No, but I shall only continue to take no steps on certain conditions. You realise how I compromise myself in this way?

HAZLITT: Why do it, then?

SHINGLETON: Ah, Captain, perhaps I have a little mercy after all. The army is hardly your career; ~~hawaii~~
^y You are more a scholar than a soldier, - is that it? I have to make allowances. (Going close to HAZLITT, speaking to him intimately) Perhaps I even admire you, Captain - secretly. Has that ever occurred to you?

HAZLITT: What are the conditions?

SHINGLETON (still watching for a moment) That you keep Hussein out of this house, that you cease your so-called patrols, that you wear your uniform like any other European officer, and that you keep a permanent guard on this house. Lastly, that at the first sign of trouble you ^{post} ~~put down~~ extra sentries and bring out your mortar-guns. (A pause) Do you agree?

HAZLITT: Yes, I agree.

SHINGLETON (giving him a sudden glance) Am I to believe that?

HAZLITT: You have your moments of comic opera too...
Yes, you are to believe it. And I'll thank you never to interfere with my sentries again.

SHINGLETON: Why not simply thank me? since you owe me your life? Because you are a damned ungrateful puppy! Because you are a helpless child! Because this bloody pest-hole is a real test of a man! And what have you done here? You have let a drunkard and a sentimental slip of a girl tell you how to conduct your life, how to betray your country, how to lie like a servant! Oh, yes, look at it all! (Poking at the cushions, picking up the covers) Very pretty! But it's what a woman would do! It's fickle, showy, spineless! Not like a man, least of all like a Captain.

LEONORA: Leave him alone.

SHINGLETON (looking from one to the other) You imagine you know a little about the people of this country, don't you? But you haven't met them, Captain. You just haven't met them. You have met Hussein Al Shabar, and Mohammed the doctor, namely the two people in this country who speak English ~~as~~ with perfect fluency and who happen to have been sent as children to the same European school in Alexandria. They even look like Europeans. Mohammed is a little dark perhaps. But the others, the vast majority, they shun you. They hate your uniform, and one day they'll dispose of these friends of yours.

HAZLITT: I have been among the villagers. They are my friends.

SHINGLETON: But they will quite happily put a bullet between your eyes when you are no longer of any use to them, - not the villagers perhaps, but certainly their leaders.

HAZLITT: I am trusted here.

SHINGLETON: But still you are not one of them. The fact is you're just a man who chose his job and then funk'd its consequences.

HAZLITT: I funk'd nothing, I -

SHINGLETON: But your eyes are full of doubt! Only now are you waking up to the truth; ~~only~~now are you realising what a dangerous game you have played. It is hot in this place: we Europeans lost touch here quickly. Who are we? Afetr a week we no longer know. We have bodies, yes, and names. But that silent core of identity that was us in Europe dies: it dies, Captain. Even Miss Friedmann has changed... Now listen to me, Captain. I want ~~you~~ you to behave wisely. If you agree to my terms, we shall have nothing more to say. I told you when we met how easy it was in this country to fall into error. We need men like you here, men who ~~speak~~ speak the language and - within limits - go out among the people. By all means do that: but I forbid you to see Masudi again. Keep your sympathies in reserve until you are out of the army. Do you want a treason charge on your head, man? What is the matter with him, Miss Friedmann?
(Goes to HAZLITT and takes him by the shoulder)

Are you ill? Is the heat upsetting your nerves?
(To LEONORA) Could you admit him to hospital for
a few days?

HAZLITT: No, no. I went to a village... I thought
there was no harm in seeing Masudi.

SHINGLETON: If Headquarters got to hear of it, what then?

HAZLITT: He is a good man.

SHINGLETON: But listen, my child, he is also a fool. He
wants power, nothing else: don't you make any
mistake about that. And now, before I go, I
am going to ask you to do something for me.

HAZLITT: Yes.

SHINGLETON: Please order a sentry to be mounted outside
this house. Now.

HAZLITT goes slowly to the telephone and picks it up.

HAZLITT: Give me the Sergeant Major... This is Captain
Hazlitt... You will send a sentry to this house
immediately. There will be a constant guard on
this house from now on... What?... What?...
(Suddenly shrieking at the top of his voice, the
telephone trembling in his hand) No, you fool:
a guard now! Now! Now!

He slams the receiver down and walks away.

SHINGLETON I think he will need a rest, Miss Friedmann.
There, that's sensible. Well, good bye. And
don't forget, Captain, bring out your mortar-
guns!

He leaves. HAZLITT goes to the door and stares into
the darkness outside.

HAZLITT: He called me 'my child'. His child! Yet

I felt like a child. I don't know what I have done.

A pause. He turns and looks at LEONORA.

HAZLITT: What did you tell him?

LEONORA: That you had been negotiating with Masudi.

HAZLITT: Did you mention our plan for dawn tomorrow?

LEONORA: No.

HAZLITT: Are you telling the truth?

LEONORA: I said nothing about tomorrow.

HAZLITT: He seems quite in the dark. His 'spies' let him down. My security was excellent, that's why.

LEONORA: Are you going to do what he asked?

A pause. HAZLITT again stares into the darkness outside.

LEONORA: Are you?

HAZLITT: I can't, Leonora.

LEONORA: But you agreed to his terms!

HAZLITT: Men fought each other today for the honour of kissing my hand.

LEONORA: And that flatters you?

HAZLITT: I don't belong to this house, or to the colonial army. I shall take you into the hills, where everything is cool and fresh.

LEONORA: You agreed to his terms, Philip.

HAZLITT: I can't turn my guns on these people. They trust me now. We'll be feted, you and I, darling. I can't think beyond that. I have proved myself to be more than ^{my} ~~the~~ uniform. I did the impossible: I created a legend here. I promised you I would do that. I showed you all I did not fear your hatred. And now I shall be rewarded. How silent everything is... (Looks about him suddenly) I must go to ^{Hussein,} ~~HUSSEIN~~. We'd better sleep on

the roof. It will be safer. Tell
Baker to take the ^tmatresses up.
^

He turns to leave the room.

LEONORA: Then you are going to let Masudi through?

HAZLITT: Yes.

He leaves. LEONORA stands for a moment alone,
then rushes to the door.

LEONORA: Philip, come back! Please come back!

He runs back to the door and she falls weeping
into his arms.

LEONORA: Are you blind? (Shaking him by the shoulders)
Look at me! Look at me! How can I make
you see?

HAZLITT: Leonora!

LEONORA: What about my child, Philip? You can't let
them kill my child!

CURTAIN.

FOURTH ACT.

SCENE: the roof, during the evening of the following day.

Above the door leading down into the house there is a powerful electric light. The sky and the desert beyond the house are quite dark. The leaves of the palm tree can be seen, but the garden bench is now in obscurity. Leaning against the parapet are two mattresses, and blankets.

In the distance there is the sound of rifle and machine-gun fire. This is intermittent throughout the scene.

HUSSEIN AL SHABAR is discovered alone. He is standing under the electric bulb. He goes to the parapet and looks out into the darkness. He then takes from his pocket a hip-flask, unscrews its top, and drinks. He stands still for a moment, smacking his lips.

There is the long rumble of an explosion in the distance, and yellow flames begin to light up the sky. HUSSEIN starts. He watches the distant flames for a moment, then takes another drink. There is a noise on the stairs behind the door, and he quickly puts the flask away. A pause.

The door opens and a woman dressed in a black abba comes onto the roof. She has drawn the garment up over the lower part of her face. She is BADIA AL SHABAR.

HUSSEIN: Is that the ^{engineering} ~~ADU~~ camp?

BADIA: Yes. What are you doing here alone?

HUSSEIN: Waiting for Hazlitt. Why do you worry about me?

BADIA: I don't like it when you prowl around. Do you want to be shot, standing up here with the light on?

HUSSEIN: Shot at our leader's house? We're winning. We've surrounded the police headquarters.

BADIA: Then why aren't you with Masudi?

HUSSEIN: I saw him this afternoon at the House of Assembly.

BADIA: But you should have stayed with him. He'll be picking his ministers in an hour's time.

HUSSEIN: He told me to come back home. He treated me like a servant, Badia.

BADIA: And you accepted that? You came meekly home with the tail between your legs?

HUSSEIN: I'm waiting for Hazlitt. I can rely on him for help. He's the real leader, not Masudi at all. I couldn't bear the disgrace, Badia, of standing in that great Council chamber with everybody laughing at me. I'm a prince. These lackeys would stone a prince.

BADIA: And you believe that Hazlitt is the real leader?

HUSSEIN: He controls the arms and ammunition. He is our spokesman with Europe. He is also my friend, and in my friendship with him lies my strength. So I'm staying here.

BADIA: And the Captain is going to give you help...

HUSSEIN: Of course! Did you expect me to stay with those vagabonds, then? If I'd so much as opened my mouth they'd have cut me up like a dog. Do you expect me to stand in the Council chamber and wait for Masudi's guards to clap a pair of hand-cuffs on me?

BADIA: You didn't think of all this before, Hussein.

HUSSEIN: I thought I was sure to be the leader, with the Captain behind me.

BADIA: Oh, yes, you thought, you thought... And now you are still thinking. Like a fool you don't realise that Hazlitt can be of no help whatsoever to you! He will be arrested for treason. Sooner or later his Government will get him. And do you think his own men are going to stay with him? They're all running loose in the barracks. Masudi took over the ammunition-dump an hour ago because the European sentry ran away. Without men, without ammunition and without a Government behind him, what power do you think the Captain will have?

HUSSEIN: Masudi took over the ammunition-dump?

BADIA: Yes! The harem isn't quite useless, you see. The news we get is quick and reliable. But all you can do is to stand up here with your idiotic dreams. Are you going to play away these last few hours?

HUSSEIN: I believe in the Captain. I will take him away to the hills, where he'll be safe from Masudi.

BADIA: But Masudi will not let you do that. He has all the ammunition he needs. He thinks you are a dreaming fool, and he is right! Look at you, with those silly distant eyes.

HUSSEIN: Leave me alone, Badia.

BADIA: Shall I tell you why you aren't in the Council Chamber at this moment? Because your mind has been too full with this Leonora woman. You're like a dog, the way you sniff round other women. I saw it three months ago, but you were too busy calling me a whore and telling

me how beautiful the European lady was. As for your building up your power slowly like Masudi, no! You preferred to hang round the Europeans with your dreaming eyes!

HUSSEIN: She did you no harm.

BADIA: She's the root of the whole trouble. And ^{let me} ~~will~~ tell you who ^{will} ~~will~~ come out of this better than anybody else. Mohammed. Mohammed the doctor. Aren't you ashamed to associate with Mohammed's whore? What are you but his servant now? Have you any pride at all, Hussein?

HUSSEIN: Pride?

BADIA: She bears you no love for what you did. She has enough with two men already, and neither of them a drunkard. No, she worked on you as she worked on the Captain. Both of you are the dupes of a whore!

HUSSEIN: You must not call her that!

BADIA: Did you see Mohammed kissing her downstairs yesterday? ~~Yesterday?~~ You told me they were dancing together.

HUSSEIN (staring at her): Yes.

BADIA: She told you they were only friends. But I wonder if she told you she was two months gone with child?

HUSSEIN: Miss Friedmann!

BADIA: ^wWhose child? The Captain's? Mohammed's? I don't know. Does she know? And you call me a whore, who have borne you two children and not so much as touched another man's hand!

HUSSEIN: She betrayed the Captain...

BADIA: Oh, the precious Captain! You believe in the

Captain, don't you? (Pulling her cloak down) Well, look at the bruise on my neck! That's what your friend does to your wife.

HUSSEIN (gripping hold of her arm): I said yesterday - !

I said, 'The mark on her neck' and - He deserves to die.

BADIA: And these are the Europeans you love. If only you could stand on your own feet like Masudi. Does he run after the Europeans? No, he stays in the hills, slowly building up his power, until they come to him.

HUSSEIN: I was following a dream all the time.

BADIA: And will you listen to me now?

HUSSEIN: Yes.

BADIA: We must leave here tonight. During the ^{next} ~~next~~ week you will collect all your tribesmen in the hills and arm them. Then you will send a message to Masudi and demand a place in the government.

A pause.

HUSSEIN: Can we leave here safely?

BADIA: The road to the north is clear now.

HUSSEIN: Then I'll do it.

BADIA: Give me the bottle you took from the house.

HUSSEIN (turning away): I -

BADIA: Give me that bottle.

He quietly takes the hip-flask of brandy from his pocket and gives it to her. She goes to the parapet and is just about to throw it down when she stops.

BADIA: There's someone coming.

HUSSEIN quickly joins her at the parapet and they look down into the darkness. A door closes below.

BADIA: I think it was Hazlitt.

There is the sound of someone mounting the stairs slowly and heavily. HUSSEIN and BADIA listen in silence, standing together. At last the door is thrown open and HAZLITT appears. His clothes are disarranged. He looks from one to the other.

HAZLITT: Is Leonora here?

BADIA: We haven't seen her.

HAZLITT: Then - ?

He goes back to the door and opens it. He calls out 'Baker!' He strides up and down the roof, waiting for the servant, who comes almost at once.

HAZLITT: Is Miss Friedmann here?

BAKER: No. She went out this afternoon.

HAZLITT: Where to?

BAKER: She said she was going to the hospital.

HAZLITT: Alone?

BAKER: Yes. There was a 'phone-call from Mr. Shingleton, I think.

A pause.

HAZLITT: You know what's happening, do you?

BAKER: Yes.

HAZLITT: I'll give you a map, and you can take my car. Make for Headquarters. There's no future with me.

BAKER: Your car isn't here.

HAZLITT: Why not?

BAKER: Miss Friedmann took it.

HAZLITT: What? With the roads as they are? Have you tried phoning the hospital?

BAKER: The lines are down.

HAZLITT: Where did she make for?

BAKER: The road into town.

HAZLITT: But they're shooting up every car they see!

We'll give her twenty minutes, then we'll go out and search.

BAKER: Very well. ~~OK~~

He goes.

HAZLITT: What made her take the car? (He looks from HUSSEIN to BADIA, but neither replies) Well, did you see Masudi?

HUSSEIN: Yes.

HAZLITT: At what time?

HUSSEIN: Three o'clock, as you told me.

HAZLITT: And at four o'clock he attacked my military positions. Do you know anything about that?

HUSSEIN: No.

HAZLITT: He opened fire on my men. Most of my men have fled. Did you know that?

HUSSEIN: He sent me away. He would have nothing to do with me.

HAZLITT: You didn't by some chance come to a private arrangement with him? I'm surprised to find you here, unarmed as well.

HUSSEIN: He hardly looked at me.

HAZLITT: This is the man you sent me to negotiate with, - a treacherous swine. This is the man you asked me to give up my life for. You do realise I've given up my life, don't you? You're safe, in your own country. But I've no men, no weapons, and not a reliable friend in the town.

HUSSEIN: Not even Miss Friedmann?

HAZLITT goes closer to him.

HAZLITT: Are you sneezing at me?

HUSSEIN: Masudi threw me out of the Council Chamber because I used to come to your house, because

I consorted with Europeans. Don't you think I have a right to sneer?

HAZLITT: But I led your revolt, man! Come to your senses!

HUSSEIN: We want our own leaders! You shame us, you and your - your women! Is it your child she's bearing or Mohammed's? Do you know, or care? We haven't lost all religion and all self-respect, to admire a man like you; - ^a man who lets his wife make love to a lackey! If she wanted another man, let her come to me: I am clean, I am a prince. But she crawls like something out of the sand, all dark and poisonous, into Mohammed's bed! Mohammed! I hate Europeans, Captain. You deceived me. I let you see my wife, because I thought you were an honourable man. But you touched her. You are ~~lower~~ than the dirt under my feet, you and your tired whore! Your child will be born in your dirt, it will carry your shame and corruption all through its life, it will grow up under a curse and make its evil all over the world, (waving his arms wildly, his eyes staring) wherever it goes in the world!

HAZLITT (quietly, to BADIA): Is he armed?

BADIA: Why, - are you afraid?

HAZLITT gazes at her for a moment.

HAZLITT: So you've turned as well. ^{Because} Beacsue I didn't play your little game, eh?

BADIA: No. But you'll ruin him unless I get him away. We've got our lives to protect.

HUSSEIN: You tried to shame her! (Almost in tears)
Oh, my God, they would stone a prince!

You should have been my friends...

BADIA: He's been drinking.

HAZLITT: I was always your friend.

HUSSEIN: A prince should only move among princes.

Masudi was right. He stayed in the hills.

We should not let them shame us...

There is a loud knock on the door, and BAKER enters.

BAKER: A car is coming towards the house! ~~WHM~~

HAZLITT goes to the parapet and looks across the desert.

HAZLITT: All right. Go downstairs. Bolt the door, and open it only for Miss Friedmann.

BAKER
BKARE goes.

HAZLITT: You'd better not be seen here. Go out the back way.

A car-engine is heard in the distance.

BADIA makes for the door, but HUSSEIN remains where he is, staring before him.

BADIA: Come on! Do you want Masudi to find you here? Suppose it's Masudi!

She runs back to him and drags him by the arm to the door. As she does ^{she} he breaks into a deep sob. He goes like a child, and we hear his sobs gradually die away as he is led down the stairs.

HAZLITT watches from the parapet so that he shall not be seen from below. The car draws nearer, and the palm-tree is for a moment lighted up by the head-lights as the car swings round to the entrance below. The engine is switched off. There is a knock on the door below. HAZLITT strains forward, trying to make out who it is. At last the door below opens, and he leans back with a relieved sigh.

A pause. SHINGLETON pushes open the door and

is quickly followed by LEONORA. She runs forward.

HAZLITT: Leonora!

They embrace.

HAZLITT: I thought - ! How did you get through?

LEONORA: We went round by the desert. And you? You were at the barracks?

HAZLITT: Yes. I got away through the bazaar.

SHINGLETON: And where are your men?

HAZLITT: Most of them deserted.

SHINGLETON: Deserted? You stand there and tell me that! They deserted, - from a madman like you? They were doing their duty by running away.

HAZLITT: He agreed not to attack either the barracks or the ~~oil~~ camp.

SHINGLETON: His men have just set fire to the ~~oil~~ camp. Thank you, Hazlitt. You stood by my terms. Where were your sentries? What about the women and children on my hands?

HAZLITT: I tell you they opened up on us in the barracks. We couldn't reach the oil-camp in time.

SHINGLETON: And where were your ^{guns} ~~weapons~~? In the car-park waiting to be captured, I suppose. You're a traitor, Hazlitt. Your honour is a filthy thing. You let Masudi lead you by the nose like a donkey. You were too damned clever to come to me for help, but I could have told you months ago what kind of travesty that man is. I've hunted with him, I've watched his furtive eyes. Well, what are you going to do about us now? You with the legend behind you, what is going to become of us now? Or have you no mite of humanity left in you?

- LEONORA: We shall be safe. I saw Mohammed, as I told you.
- SHINGLETON: You believe in Mohammed, then? I'm surprised you believe in any of these people. You're Europeans, therefore detestable in their eyes, - don't you realise that? When Mohammed came to me yesterday with a bullet wrapped up in tissue paper, he had only one idea in his head, to betray the Captain.
- HAZLITT: To betray me?
- LEONORA: No, no, Philip. He thought you had murdered Masudi. But he can't believe that today. You know how ~~impulsive~~^{impulsive} he always is.
- SHINGLETON: But what did he say when you asked him for help in the ~~bill~~ camp this evening?
- LEONORA: What could he do? Masudi has the upper hand now. We've got to be realistic.
- HAZLITT: What's Mohammed up to, then?
- LEONORA: He went to the Council Chamber this afternoon and petitioned through his father for a place in the new government. Therefore he's our last friend with any power.
- SHINGLETON: Have you two been consoling each other like this for the last three months? I tell you none of these people is going to be of any help to you, because you're European. This is an anti-European riot. They used you both, and now they will abandon you. Masudi went back on his promise. What do you expect him to do now, carry you on his shoulders through the streets? Can't I wake either of you up? We've got to get away from here! Do you hear that? This is rebel territory now. Therefore

we must get away in the next hour.

HAZLITT: Take the car. Get Leonora out of here.

SHINGLETON: No, I shall take you both. You've got us into a mess we'll never be able to live down, but you're not staying here.

HAZLITT: I believe in Mohammed. Or, very well, I don't believe in Mohammed. But I've got to take the risk. Why shouldn't I? I deserve to die in any case. Why show me any mercy?

SHINGLETON: I want you to live. I don't want to see you murdered by these people.

HAZLITT: You prefer to give me up to the European police on the other side of the border? Either way it's the same to me. I'll stay here.

LEONORA: I also believe in Mohammed. He is coming to save us both. Philip and I belong to this country now. Take the car yourself, and drive Philip's servant to the frontier. Leave us here.

SHINGLETON: Look. I can guarantee you something. I can get you both to the frontier inside three hours, and there I can put you in the hands of someone who'll smuggle you into the International Zone before dawn tomorrow morning. My God, what a fool I was! I put my faith in a child! I thought you were just playing with ideas, and look what happened! (A pause) Will you take my offer?

HAZLITT: No. Some of them will stand by me now, I
know it!

SHINGLETON (to LEONORA) Will you persuade him?

LEONORA: I think we should both stay here. I told
Mohammed where to find us.

HAZLITT: These are my people now. Mohammed will bring
me back to them.

LEONORA: I've known Mohammed for the last five years,
Shingleton, and I trust him to come here tonight.
He has never once failed me in anything.

A pause. SHINGLETON looks from one to the other.

SHINGLETON: I've tried my best.

He goes to the door.

SHINGLETON (calling down the stairs) Hey! (He turns back
to HAZLITT) What's the fellow's name?

HAZLITT: Baker.

SHINGLETON: Baker! Come up!

They wait. The servant appears.

SHINGLETON: You and I are getting away to the frontier.
The Captain and Miss Friedmann are staying.
The sooner we go the better.

BAKER: How can we leave the Captain?

HAZLITT: Oh, we shall be safe enough! A bodyguard is
coming soon. But they mustn't find you here.

BAKER: A bodyguard?

HAZLITT: Under Mohammed the doctor. You remember him?

BAKER: Can you trust him to come?

LEONORA: He's our best friend among them.

BAKER (to HAZLITT) Can you trust him?

HAZLITT: What use can I do? Come to the frontier and
give myself up to the police? Get yourself
away from here. I'm no good to you any longer.

BAKER: § Suppose they leave you? ~~mmmm~~

HAZLITT: They won't, Baker. Let me assure you, they won't.

A dog suddenly begins barking close by.

SHINGLETON: What's that? Listen!

A pause, during which there is utter silence. Then we hear the sound of a rifle-bolt being pulled back and pushed home again.

LEONORA: Who is it?

She clutches on to HAZLITT, who pulls her away from the parapet. They listen again, and now we hear something moving, perhaps people, outside.

HAZLITT: They're surrounding the house.

LEONORA: Perhaps it's Mohammed.

HAZLITT: Would he come like this? He'd bang on the door and call up to us. Quickly! Get Shingleton out of sight! Behind that ~~bench~~ bench! (He pushes LEONORA and SHINGLETON towards the other side of the stage) If they get up here, go down by the tree and make for the car. (To BAKER) Hide yourself away!

At first BAKER makes towards the other couple.

But HAZLITT stops him.

HAZLITT: No, no, don't crowd together!

He pushes BAKER through the door leading into the house, while SHINGLETON and LEONORA hide in the darkness behind the bench. Everything is in silence again.

HAZLITT takes out his revolver, inspects the bullet-chamber, and walks slowly towards the parapet.

SHINGLETON: Switch the light out, you fool! They can see you!

HAZLITT takes no notice of the voice behind him. He walks on towards the parapet with his revolver prepared.

He stands still and peers down into the darkness, shielding his eyes from the electric ^{light} ~~light~~. Suddenly he lowers his revolver.

HAZLITT (with extraordinary relief): It is Mohammed!

Leonora, it's Mohammed! We - !

Just as Leonora runs out of hiding there are three rifle shots from below.

SHINGLETON: Switch the light out!

Each of the bullets hits HAZLITT. LEONORA screams and is dragged back by SHINGLETON. HAZLITT does not quite fall. Below, they begin to batter down the door, forcing an entry. The dog continues to bark.

By holding on to the iron bar of the parapet, HAZLITT manages to crawl very slowly towards the door leading down into the house. There, with a last effort, he manages to reach up and switch off the electric light.

In utter darkness we hear him fall, and the door below at last collapses. There is a brief silence, then the sound of boots on the stairway.

The door opens, and the electric light is switched on again, by MOHAMMED. He looks down at HAZLITT's body and peers across to the other side of the roof.

MOHAMMED: Leonora!

There is silence.

MOHAMMED: Leonora!

Slowly LEONORA, her head bowed, comes out from the shadows under the palm tree and walks towards him. She stares down at the body, then at MOHAMMED.

LEONORA: Mohammed...

MOHAMMED: Go downstairs. Now do you take me seriously?

She stops, searching the darkness beyond the open door.

LEONORA: Are they going to hurt me?

MOHAMMED: We 're taking you into the hills. No one will hurt you.

He takes her arm, and they go out. Their footsteps sound on the stairs, then die away.

SHINGLETON comes out of the shadows and walks across to HAZLITT's body. He leans against the parapet, stares down at it for some time in the silence, then his face in his hands.

BAKER enters.

BAKER: The car's ready, sir. They've got the road.

SHINGLETON nods.

SHINGLETON: We might have saved him if you'd

BAKER: I did my best. I told you all

BAKER goes across to one of the main doors, leans against the parapet and fetches a blanket. He spreads it carefully over the body from head to foot.

SHINGLETON goes out, followed by BAKER, who switches off the light. There is a pause, then we hear a car-engine start up below. There is a brief roar, then the gear is hastily engaged. The car moves swiftly away, and the sound of its engine grows less and less.

When all is silent again there is a long rumble in the distance and the yellow flames of the engineering camp flare up for a moment and light the roof as the CURTAIN slowly falls.

THE END.