

start

MOLLIE. You can't go on being looked after all your life. Things happen to you. And you've got to bear them - you've got to go on just as usual.

CHRISTOPHER. One can't do that.

MOLLIE. Yes, one can.

CHRISTOPHER. You mean - you have? *(He moves up to left of*

MOLLIE.)

MOLLIE. *(facing CHRISTOPHER.)* Yes.

CHRISTOPHER. What was it? Something very bad?

MOLLIE. Something I've never forgotten.

CHRISTOPHER. Was it to do with Giles?

MOLLIE. No, it was long before I met Giles.

CHRISTOPHER. You must have been very young. Almost a child.

MOLLIE. Perhaps that's why it was so - awful. It was horrible - horrible... I try to put it out of my mind. I try never to think about it.

CHRISTOPHER. So - you're running away, too. Running away from things - instead of facing them?

MOLLIE. Yes - perhaps, in a way, I am.

(There is a silence.)

Considering that I never saw you until yesterday, we seem to know each other rather well.

CHRISTOPHER. Yes, it's odd, isn't it?

MOLLIE. I don't know. I suppose there's a sort of - sympathy between us.

CHRISTOPHER. Anyway, you think I ought to stick it out.

MOLLIE. Well, frankly, what else can you do?

CHRISTOPHER. I might pinch the sergeant's skis. I can ski quite well.

MOLLIE. That would be frightfully stupid. It would be almost like admitting you're guilty.

CHRISTOPHER. Sergeant Trotter thinks I'm guilty.

MOLLIE. No, he doesn't. At least -- I don't know what he thinks.

(She moves down to the armchair centre, pulls out the evening paper from under the cushion and stares at it. Suddenly, with passion) I hate him -- I hate him -- I hate him...

CHRISTOPHER. *(startled)* Who?

MOLLIE. Sergeant Trotter. He puts things into your head. Things that aren't true, that can't possibly be true.

CHRISTOPHER. What is all this?

MOLLIE. I don't believe it -- I won't believe it...

CHRISTOPHER. What won't you believe? *(He moves slowly to MOLLIE, puts his hands on her shoulders and turns her round to face him.)* Come on -- out with it!

MOLLIE. *(showing the paper)* You see that?

CHRISTOPHER. Yes.

MOLLIE. What is it? Yesterday's evening paper -- a London paper. And it was in Giles' pocket. But Giles didn't go to London yesterday.

CHRISTOPHER. Well, if he was here all day...

MOLLIE. But he wasn't. He went off in the car to look for chicken wire, but he couldn't find any.

CHRISTOPHER. Well, that's all right. *(moving left centre)* Probably he did go up to London after all.

MOLLIE. Then why shouldn't he tell me he did? Why pretend he'd been driving all round the countryside?

CHRISTOPHER. Perhaps, with the news of this murder...

MOLLIE. He didn't know about the murder. Or did he? Did he? *(She moves to the fire.)*

CHRISTOPHER. Good Lord, Mollie. Surely you don't think -- the Sergeant doesn't think...

(During the next speech MOLLIE crosses slowly up stage to left of the sofa. CHRISTOPHER silently drops the paper on the sofa.)

MOLLIE. I don't know what the Sergeant thinks. And he can make you think things about people. You ask yourself questions and you begin to doubt. You feel that somebody you love and know well might be – a stranger. (*whispering*) That's what happens in a nightmare. You're somewhere in the middle of friends and then you suddenly look at their faces and they're not your friends any longer – they're different people – just pretending. Perhaps you can't trust anybody – perhaps everybody's a stranger. (*She puts her hands to her face.*)

end | (**CHRISTOPHER** moves to the left end of the sofa, kneels on it and takes her hands away from her face. **GILES** enters from the dining-room down right, but stops when he sees them. **MOLLIE** backs away, and **CHRISTOPHER** sits on the sofa.)

GILES. (*at the door*) I seem to be interrupting something.

MOLLIE. No, we were – just talking. I must go to the kitchen – there's the pie and potatoes – and I must do – do the spinach. (*She moves right above the armchair centre.*)

CHRISTOPHER. (*rising and moving centre*) I'll come and give you a hand.

GILES. (*moving up to the fire*) No, you won't.

MOLLIE. Giles.

GILES. *Tête-à-têtes* aren't very healthy things at present. You keep out of the kitchen and keep away from my wife.

CHRISTOPHER. But really, look here...

GILES. (*furious*) You keep away from my wife, Wren. She's not going to be the next victim.

CHRISTOPHER. So that's what you think about me.

GILES. I've already said so, haven't I? There's a killer loose in this house – and it seems to me you fit the bill.

CHRISTOPHER. I'm not the only one to fit the bill.

GILES. I don't see who else does.

CHRISTOPHER. How blind you are – or do you just pretend to be blind?