

JOHN. What's that mean?

STANLEY. United Press International.

JOHN. Press?

STANLEY. Sort of agency that doles out stuff to all the newspapers.

JOHN. (*Moves to Stanley at L end of settee. Aghast.*) You gave them my address.

STANLEY. Yes, that policeman was right. You're going to be a hero.

JOHN. I won't see them.

STANLEY. Why on earth not? Just an interview. Probably a photograph.

JOHN. (*Grabs Stanley. Hoarsely.*) Photograph?!

(*During the above dialogue MARY has returned from ULC closing door. SHE is making her way to kitchen DL.*)

JOHN. I'm not seeing anybody, Mary. (*Hurries over to Mary at door DL.*)

MARY. What?

STANLEY. The press have just been on the phone. They're sending somebody over.

JOHN. They've got a damn cheek.

MARY. The hospital gave him some tablets. I'll get them. (*SHE exits into kitchen DL.*)

JOHN. (*Shouts after her.*) I'm still not meeting anybody! (*Closes kitchen door.*)

STANLEY. Take it easy, old son. (*Sits John in chair DL.*)

JOHN. (*Rising.*) Stanley, you don't understand.

STANLEY. You're right there. Blimey, when you think of half the rubbish the papers print, you deserve to be on the front page.

JOHN. (*Pulls Stanley away from kitchen to DC.*) Stanley! Nothing must be said about me in the

newspapers. You'll have to deal with them when they get here. Say it wasn't me, say it was you. Say anything.

STANLEY. What the hell are you talking about?

JOHN. It would ruin me.

STANLEY. If this story appears in the papers?

JOHN. Yes! I'll be ruined with Barbara.

STANLEY. Why should you be ruined—*(HE stops.)*
Who's Barbara?

JOHN. She's—a lady.

STANLEY. A lady? *(HE suddenly realizes.)* Ooo! You naughty naughty Johnny. So Barbara's a little bit on the side, is she?

JOHN. There's more to Barbara than that.

STANLEY. She's got a big bit, eh? Lovely!

(STANLEY indicates a large bosom. JOHN pulls Stanley down on to the settee. During the next couple of pages while JOHN tells his story both JOHN and STANLEY must be aware that Mary is only in the kitchen and could come in at any moment.)

JOHN. Stanley! All hell would be let loose if Barbara were to see anything in the newspapers about me and Mary and living in Wimbledon.

STANLEY. Why?

JOHN. Because I live with Barbara in Streatham.

STANLEY. No, old son, you live with Mary in Wimbledon.

JOHN. That, too.

STANLEY. *(Blankly.)* You've got two homes?

JOHN. Yes.

STANLEY. One *here* with Mary—?

JOHN. Yes.

STANLEY. And one with your girl friend in Streatham?

JOHN. Yes. Only Barbara's not my girl friend.

STANLEY. What is she, a Shetland Pony?

JOHN. She's my wife.

STANLEY. I beg your pardon?

JOHN. Barbara and I are married.

STANLEY. (*Nonplussed.*) Mary and you are married.

JOHN. That too.

STANLEY. (*Staggered.*) You've got two wives?

JOHN. Yes.

STANLEY. And two homes?

JOHN. Yes.

STANLEY. God almighty, I thought you were *ordinary!*

JOHN. Yes.

STANLEY. (*Shakes his head in disbelief.*) I can't believe it.

JOHN. I think I've always been a bit surprised myself.

STANLEY. And you just flit between Wimbledon and Streatham like some over-sexed bumble bee, do you?

JOHN. Sort of.

STANLEY. But, blimey, *Streatham*. That's practically next door.

JOHN. Four and a half minutes in the taxi.

STANLEY. Jeez!

JOHN. It's quite handy actually.

STANLEY. Yes!

JOHN. I mean, driving a taxi's not like an ordinary job, is it? Unusual hours. Morning shift. Afternoon shift. Evening shift. Night shift.

STANLEY. I suppose we should be grateful you're not a Concorde pilot. What about the *expense*? It must cost a fortune.

JOHN. Not really. Both Mary and Barbara work. And then I don't need much pocket money.

STANLEY. No time to spend it.

JOHN. Well, I'm either driving the taxi and rushing back to get to be with Mary or driving the taxi and rushing—

JOHN/STANLEY. (*Together.*) back to get to bed with Barbara.

STANLEY. What do you do on your day off?

JOHN. Sleep a lot.

STANLEY. Yes. (*Gaping at John.*) You did actually marry both of them, did you?

JOHN. Oh, yes. Mary was the first. That was a lovely wedding—in a church. I met Barbara four months later.

STANLEY. Four months!?

JOHN. Ssh! She just got into my taxi at Victoria Station. She'd been to Worthing on holiday and we started chatting between Victoria and Streatham where she had this flat. I helped her take her cases up and we chatted some more and she asked me if I'd like a cup of tea. And I said "yes." And we chatted. And then she asked me if I'd like to come to tea the next day and I say "yes" and so I did. And the next day we chatted again—

STANLEY. It's a pity you forgot to mention Mary while you were doing all this bloody chatting.

JOHN. Yes, well one cup of tea lead to another and another and I sort of got carried away, I suppose. And having not mentioned Mary in the first place, I didn't know how to bring it up afterwards.

STANLEY. So you asked Barbara to marry you.

JOHN. No. *She asked me.*

STANLEY. (*Rising.*) Gawd Almighty. (*Breaks DRC.*)

JOHN. Well—I didn't have the heart to say "no."

STANLEY. Eh!?

JOHN. So we got married at Streatham Registry Office.

STANLEY. And you moved in with Barbara.

JOHN. Yes.

STANLEY. While still living here with Mary.

JOHN. Yes.

STANLEY. You've committed bigamy, that's what you've done.

JOHN. Well, sort of.

STANLEY. No, not sort of. One hundred percent bigamy.

(JOHN nods.)

STANLEY. It a criminal offense.

(JOHN nods.)

STANLEY. You could go to jail.

(JOHN nods.)

STANLEY. Doesn't that worry you?

JOHN. *(Nods.)* I've been too busy to think about it.

STANLEY. I don't know how you cope.

JOHN. It needs a very tight schedule.

STANLEY. And hell of a stamina. I don't know how you manage it. I can only just about find the energy to satisfy the girl friend and sign on at the Labour Exchange.

JOHN. *(Rises and moves to Stanley.)* Look, I've got to get over to Barbara right away or she'll be worried sick. I'm always bang on time.

STANLEY. I can see why you need that schedule now.

JOHN. I was due back at 7:30 this morning from the Early shift. *(Takes out diary.)*

STANLEY. With Barbara in Streatham.

JOHN. Yes.

STANLEY. *(Takes the diary.)* What are all these letters?