

FLORENCE. [*Endeavoring to imitate the manner of delivery, and speaking in a deep, tragic tone*] So do I.

MRS. PAMPINELLI. Perfect.

HOSSEFROSSE. [*Turning to Mrs. Pampinelli*] Go on?

MRS. PAMPINELLI. Yes, go on.

HOSSEFROSSE. [*Clearing his throat and trying to summon his attack*] What is your reason for sneaking into my office at this hour?

FLORENCE. Is it necessary that your wife have a reason for coming to your office?

HOSSEFROSSE. You wanted to embarrass Mrs. Rush, that was it, wasn't it?

MRS. PAMPINELLI. [*Waving her hand toward them with an upward movement*] Tempo, children!

FLORENCE. I wanted to meet my rival.

HOSSEFROSSE. You could have met Mrs. Rush under more candid circumstances.

MRS. PAMPINELLI. [*Moving around towards them, in front of the table*] Tempo, children!

FLORENCE. The present ones suited my purposes better.

HOSSEFROSSE. [*Turning away impatiently*] Naturally!—You wanted a scene! [*He starts over to the right, but Mrs. Pampinelli is standing right in his way, so he stops short, but maintains the physical tautness of his character. Florence, too, has turned away, to the left, and is moving across in front of the table towards the arm-chair.*] [70]

MRS. PAMPINELLI. [*Oblivious of Hossefrosse, and still making her upward waving gesture over his shoulder*] Tempo, Florence! [*Suddenly becoming conscious that she is obstructing Hossefrosse's cross, and stepping below him*] I beg your pardon.

HOSSEFROSSE. [*Bowing stiffly*] Not at all. [*He continues over to the right and stops, right in front of Spindler, and they stand looking into each other's eyes; while Mrs. Pampinelli comes up at the left of the table to the piano.*]

FLORENCE. [*Sitting down in the arm-chair*] I think if I were a scenic woman I've had ample opportunity during the last fifteen minutes to indulge myself.

HOSSEFROSSE. [*Still looking into Spindler's eyes*] You did I think;—

MRS. PAMPINELLI. [*Beckoning to Spindler*] Mr. Spindler.

HOSSEFROSSE. I had the pleasure of hearing you.

FLORENCE. Was it a pleasure, Clyde?

MRS. PAMPINELLI and HOSSEFROSSE, together.

MRS. PAMPINELLI. [*Still beckoning to Spindler*] Mr. Spindler!

HOSSEFROSSE. [*Whirling around and glaring at Florence*] It appears to amuse you! [*Spindler steps below Hossefrosse and passes up in front of him to Mrs. Pampinelli, who whispers something to him.*]

FLORENCE. [*Unfastening her neckpiece*] I have an inopportune sense of humor. [71]

HOSSEFROSSE. You should be able to appreciate the situation, you created it!

FLORENCE. [*Looking over at him*] I didn't create her husband.

HOSSEFROSSE. [*Making a little gesture of annoyance*] I'm afraid I'm stuck! [*He tries hard to think, and Mrs. Pampinelli makes a gesture toward Mrs. Fell to give him the line, but Nelly*]