

ROSE. I have two in mine as well.

MRS. GRAVES. Yours must be Lady Caroline's second bed. She also had hers removed.

LOTTY. I see. What was it, Rose?

ROSE. What?

LOTTY. (*Weakly.*) "Heaven." (*Rose returns to the book.*) You are chic, Lady Caroline.

MRS. GRAVES. She needs a hat. One mustn't get too much sun too soon, Mrs. Wilton.

ROSE. (*Finding the word. Flatly.*) "Paradiso." Heaven. (*Costanza enters from the villa.*)

COSTANZA. (*Seeing Lotty and Rose, pleased.*) Ah, buona mattina, Signore! Scusatemi. ("Good morning, ladies! Excuse me." Stone-faced to Mrs. Graves.) Sì, Signora? ("Yes, Madame?")

MRS. GRAVES. It is time for breakfast.

COSTANZA. Adesso? ("Now?")

MRS. GRAVES. (*Shouting.*) Breakfast!

COSTANZA. Sì, sì, Signora. "Breakfast." (*Instructing.*) "Colazione." (*Mrs. Graves waves her away.*) Imperialista! (*She exits.*)

MRS. GRAVES. I saw to it breakfast was delayed one hour for your first day. It will not be done again. (*Standing.*) Come, ladies. We must be punctual or Costanza will take it as a sign that she too may be lax.

ROSE. (*Taking a stand.*) Mrs. Graves.

MRS. GRAVES. Yes?

ROSE. About the sitting room.

MRS. GRAVES. What?

LOTTY. (*Smoothly.*) We are only too glad for you to have it, if it makes you happy, Mrs. Graves. We wouldn't have suggested using it had we known. (*Mrs. Graves tries to understand Lotty's intentions, decides not to bother, begins to exit into the villa.*) Not until you had invited us, anyhow. As I'm sure you soon shall. (*Mrs. Graves stops in disbelief.*)

MRS. GRAVES. (*To Lotty.*) Do pull yourself together! (*She exits. Lotty sighs happily.*)

LOTTY. We had so hoped to prepare things before your arrival, Lady Caroline.

CAROLINE. Everything has been seen to.

LOTTY. It must be very assuring to be independent, and to know exactly what one wants.

CAROLINE. Quite.

ROSE. (*Flatly.*) But independence, Lady Caroline, does snub the

benevolences of others.

CAROLINE. I'm sorry about the beds. I gave no directions. I merely asked Costanza to remove them.

LOTTY. (*Looking out.*) It seems silly to be talking about beds in heaven.

CAROLINE. It is lovely, isn't it?

LOTTY. It's as if you belonged here all along.

CAROLINE. What do you mean?

LOTTY. In a setting as beautiful as yourself. (*Caroline smiles. Rose frowns.*)

ROSE. Beauty is a gift.

CAROLINE. Yes.

ROSE. I hope you make the most of it, Lady Caroline.

CAROLINE. I've been making the most of it ever since I can remember.

ROSE. Good. Because it won't last. (*Caroline quiets, looks down, rises.*)

CAROLINE. Please tell Mrs. Graves that I don't care to take breakfast now. I'd like to go into the village. (*She starts to exit into the garden.*)

LOTTY. (*A little hurt.*) Oh. Hurry back, then.

CAROLINE. (*Stopping. To Lotty.*) I am glad you've arrived safely. (*She exits. Rose watches after her. Lotty looks around.*)

LOTTY. Oh, Rose. We haven't been punished. We've been blessed!

ROSE. She's treading on the periwinkles.

LOTTY. They're hers as much as ours.

ROSE. It doesn't seem right.

LOTTY. One mustn't question in heaven. It isn't done.

ROSE. We've been displaced as hostesses.

LOTTY. None of us is the hostess. Here we are equal. (*She closes her eyes and takes a deep breath.*) Smell the fragrance, Rose. It's positively ... sensual!

ROSE. Lotty!

LOTTY. It makes me want to kiss someone! (*Lotty takes Rose's hand and kisses it.*) You know who would love all of this?

ROSE. Who? (*Lotty thinks, frowns.*)

LOTTY. Never mind. (*From within the house, the sound of Mrs. Graves furiously ringing her bell. The ladies shudder.*)

ROSE. That woman!

LOTTY. Mrs. Graves doesn't know yet that she's in heaven. Oh, take it in, Rose! (*Shouting to the skies.*) *Paradiso!* (*To Rose, beaming.*)