

## LIZ

### 1

**EMMET:** Determination. Artistic passion. I intend this production to be memorable. I want even the smaller parts to shine. I know the role's not enormous, but I want the audience to see an elegant, gracious Lady Malvern.

*HYACINTH has re-entered, right, and she stops dead as she hears this. As she digests it her sudden interest is written clearly on her face.*

*EMMET has also stopped dead in his pacing and that he can read her face is also written on his face together with his appalled reaction.*

**HYACINTH:** Elegant - gracious - person required to play a titled lady. Now who does that remind you of?

**EMMET:** Hyacinth I have to tell you that you'd hate . . .

**HYACINTH:** And I have to tell you that you must not look at me for the part - made in heaven though you might think it would be. You know I hate to disappoint you, Emmet, but you really must not ask.

**EMMET:** I won't. I promise. I won't ask. Tell her Liz. She can have it in writing.

**HYACINTH:** I really shouldn't. I have so many other commitments.

**EMMET:** I agree, you really shouldn't. Tell her, Liz.

**LIZ:** We understand, Hyacinth. Please don't feel you have to oblige us. There's your painting . . .

**HYACINTH:** But then again, I ought not to be selfish and think only of my own needs.

**EMMET:** Yes, you should. Of course, you should. It's the artist's duty to be selfish.

**HYACINTH:** How many glittering gowns would Lady Malvern have to wear? I can do gowns. And, of course, she'd need something simpler but chic to wear round the house. What do you think, Mr Milson?

**EMMET:** He thinks you ought to be selfish.

**MILLY:** It's no good asking me. If it's not computers I get things wrong. Marriage for instance.

**HYACINTH:** Poor Mr Milson. If I joined the cast, you'd have someone to lean on.

**EMMET:** We have Liz for leaning on.

**LIZ:** Story of my life.

**HYACINTH:** Look at Emmet. He's quite distraught. He's so disappointed at my not being available. How can I treat him like that?

**EMMET:** You can. You can treat me like that. Tell her Liz.

**HYACINTH:** Poor Emmet. Of course, I'll do it. I'll be your elegant Lady Malvern. No, no, please, I want no thanks. Although I would expect to give you my input with regard to her wardrobe.

**EMMET:** Gone. The part's gone. I'm sorry, it's gone. Tell her it's gone.

LIZ: Apparently it's gone, Hyacinth.

HYACINTH:Gone?

EMMET: I'm offering it to Doreen Pringle.

HYACINTH:Doreen Pringle? That little mouse. Well, of course, you know I like Doreen Pringle. I once almost invited her to one of my candlelight suppers until I found someone more suitable. She's an absolute dear but not if you're looking for elegance.

LIZ: But, Hyacinth, what about your painting?

HYACINTH:Well, I'm sure I can take a little time off for other interests. Picasso did. Very extensively from what one hears.

EMMET: You'd hate the part, Hyacinth. You'd also have to play another part as well, you see. It's hard work. Time consuming.

HYACINTH:He worries about me so. Worry not, Emmet. Your problems are solved. I look forward to working with you, Mr Milson. I'm so pleased that you've found your way to the right sort already. (*To EMMET as she pats his stricken cheek*) I promise you, Emmet, I'll be a Lady Malvern you'll remember.

*HYACINTH exits, right, singing happily "There's No Business Like Show Business."*

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2

*EMMET strides across stage from left to right with LIZ following and keeping pace.*

EMMET: Have we got all the costumes now?

LIZ: Just about. Some might need a nip and tuck.

EMMET: Who do we know that can sew?

LIZ: It's usually me.

EMMET: I don't know what I'd do without you.

LIZ: I know.

EMMET: This is a hard one, Liz. I lie awake nights wondering - is there life after Hyacinth?

LIZ: You should take your pills. She amounts almost to a medical condition.

EMMET: I'm constantly plotting. Not for the play. How best to murder Hyacinth.

LIZ: This play has enough murders to be going on with.

EMMET: How I'd love to sneak another one in.

LIZ: Don't be wicked with her. You know she adores you.

EMMET: Only because she thinks I'm an admirer. Can you believe? Her self-esteem is so impenetrable.

LIZ: I think deep down you probably are an admirer.

EMMET: That's a terrible thing to say to anyone.

LIZ: You shouldn't have kissed her last Christmas.

EMMET: She was under the mistletoe. She was so obviously under the mistletoe and she'd been there so long the tension was becoming unbearable. It was an act on my part of selfless courage.

**LIZ:** I bet she's looking forward to next Christmas.  
**EMMET:** I'm not going.