

MRS DEBDEN

MRS DEBDEN enters right and stops HYACINTH with a piercing call.

DEBDEN: I say - you there! You said the Bucket woman was this way.

With her back still turned, HYACINTH winces and speaks through gritted teeth.

HYACINTH:Bookay?

DEBDEN: What was that? Speak up.

HYACINTH sighs and realises she has no escape. She stops peering over her glasses - sets them firmly in place - then turns to face MRS DEBDEN adopting an attitude of near imbecility behind which she has decided to hide.

HYACINTH:(*Very bad village-idiot accent*) That were 'Good Day', mum. I were bidding you good day. As I were always raised to do with my betters. Specially when they talks nice like you.

DEBDEN: I see - well good day to you. Though why are you speaking like that? You sounded perfectly normal vocally at least when you were speaking to the dummy.

HYACINTH:Ah, that would be my acting voice, mum. I 'as to rehearse for my part in this play.

DEBDEN: Are you very badly sighted? I'm over here.

HYACINTH:Ah, there we go then. I expects we'll get along swimmingly now I've got the direction right.

DEBDEN: I suppose one has to admire the way you potter on despite your disabilities. Perhaps you can help me. I'm looking for . . . Can you hear me? You're not deaf as well?

HYACINTH:No, that's the vicar, mum. I'm sharp as a pin.

DEBDEN: I'm afraid you do rather give the impression that not much is sinking in.

HYACINTH:Don't you believe it, my dear, I'm ready for any little service. Go on. Try me. Give 'er a shot.

DEBDEN: Do you know Mrs Bucket?

HYACINTH:Only as Bookay, mum.

DEBDEN: You're losing me again. Have you seen her?

HYACINTH:I don't see too well on account of the lack of vitamins. And then there was the accident when I fell off the milking stool.

DEBDEN: Not very high, surely.

HYACINTH:We were on the barn roof, mum. Old Buttercup 'ad been up there since the flood. Fair took to it she did.

DEBDEN: Hallucinates too! Ye gods, woman you've got the full package. Are you able to work here?

HYACINTH:Oh, they lets me come to keep warm as long as I stay away from 'ealthy people.

DEBDEN: Why is that?

HYACINTH:It's the disease, mum. I passes it terrible. I only 'as to look at some folk and you can fair see the spots arriving.

MRS DEBDEN backs a pace. She indicates over her shoulder.

DEBDEN: Can I get back the way I came?

HYACINTH:Oh argh, mum. Door at the end. I could take you.

DEBDEN: No, no. I'll find my way.

MRS DEBDEN hurries back to the exit, right.