

A BILL OF DIVORCEMENT

KIT All serene? "The mistletoe hung in the old oak hall!"

SYDNEY Oh, for God's sake, stop it!

KIT What's the row?

SYDNEY You never know when to stop.

KIT Well, you needn't snap out at a person---

SYDNEY Sorry! Oh sorry, old man! I'm jumpy today.

KIT Nervy old thing!

SYDNEY I--I suppose I am.

KIT One minute you're as nice as pie and then you fizz up like a seidlitz powder, all about nothing.

SYDNEY All about nothing. Sorry my old Kit, sorry! Come and talk. What's the news?

KIT I told you it all this morning. What's yours?

SYDNEY I like yours better. How's the pamphlet going?

KIT Nearly done. I put in all your stuff.

SYDNEY Good.

KIT Though you know, I don't agree with it. What I feel is--your not listening.

SYDNEY - Kit, talking of that paper--I read somewhere--suppose now--is it true it can skip a generation?

KIT It? What?

SYDNEY Oh--any illness. Consumption or--well, say insanity. Suppose--you, for instance--suppose you were a queer family--a little, you know. Say your mother or your father was queer--and you weren't. You were perfectly fit, you understand, perfectly fit--

KIT Well?

SYDNEY What about the children?

KIT I wouldn't risk it. Thank the Lord your father's was only shell-shock.

SYDNEY Why?

KIT You can't pass on shell-shock.

SYDNEY They you can pass on insanity--even if you're fit yourself?

KIT Of course you can.

SYDNEY It would be very wicked wouldn't it--to children? Oh, it would be wicked. I suppose when people are in love they don't think.

KIT Won't think.

SYDNEY But isn't there a school that says there's no such thing as insanity?

KIT Well, all I know is I wouldn't risk it.

SYDNEY It--it's hard on people.

KIT My word, yes. They say that's why old Alliot never married.

SYDNEY Oh, village gossip.

KIT Well, you know what the matter is.

SYDNEY Who was it, Kit?

KIT Old Miss Robson

SYDNEY Rot!

KIT Fact.

SYDNEY But she's all right.

KIT She had a game sister.

SYDNEY Of course! I just remember her. She used to scare me.

KIT Oh, it must be true. They're such tremendous pals still.

SYDNEY Poor old things!

KIT Rotten for her.

SYDNEY Rotten for him! What did shoe go on being pals with him for?

KIT Why shouldn't she?

SYDNEY Well, it stopped him marrying anyone else. She oughtn't to have let him.

KIT You can't stop a person being fond of you.

SYDNEY When it's a man you can.

KIT My dear girl, you don't know what you're talking about.

SYDNEY My dear boy, if a girl finds out that it's not right for her to marry a man, it's up to her to choke him off.

KIT Rot!

SYDNEY Well, I think so.

KIT Couldn't be done.

SYDNEY Couldn't it just?

KIT Any man would see through it.

SYDNEY As if any man ever saw through anything! As if I couldn't choke you off in five minutes if I wanted to!

KIT I'd like to see you try!

SYDNEY Would you?

KIT My dear girl, we're not all fools where women are concerned.

SYDNEY I admire you air of conviction.

KIT Don't be clever-clever, old thing. Be---

SYDNEY Don't.

KIT Why not?

SYDNEY I hate being pawed.

KIT Look here Sydney, d'you call this a way of spending Christmas afternoon?

SYDNEY It isn't much of a way, is it?

KIT Well then, old thing!

SYDNEY I told you to leave me alone.

KIT Oh, well, if you can't be decent, I'm going.

SYDNEY Counter attraction?

KIT Now my dear old thing, look here. I know it's only a sort of way you've got into; but when you say--"men"--with a sort of sneer, and "other attractions"--like that, in that voice, it just sounds cheap. I hate it. It's not like you. I wish you wouldn't.

SYDNEY Dear me!

KIT Now I suppose you're annoyed.
SYDNEY Oh, no, I'm only amused.
KIT There's nothing amusing about me Sydney. I'm in earnest.
SYDNEY I'm sure you are. You got out of answering an innocent little question quite neatly. It looks like practice.
KIT Now, look here, Sydney, I swear to you--
SYDNEY Swear!
KIT If you're thinking of Alice Hewitt, I've only met her four times.
SYDNEY Oh, so her name is Alice!
KIT Didn't you know?
SYDNEY Never heard of her till this minute.
KIT What on earth have you been driving at?
SYDNEY Trying an experiment.
KIT If it's because you're jealous--
SYDNEY Jealous! Jealous of a--What colour are her eyes?
KIT How'd I know?
SYDNEY Kit! What colour are mine?
KIT Oh, er--oh--
SYDNEY Kit! What colour are mine? Look at my frock you donkey! What do you suppose I wear blue for? So Alice has got blue eyes!
KIT How do you know?
SYDNEY I know you Kit. You're conservative.
KIT As a matter of fact, she isn't unlike you. That's what made me talk to her.
SYDNEY Oh, you've talked to her?
KIT Oh, yes--quite a lot. She's a friend of my sister's.
SYDNEY She always is.
KIT What d'you mean--"she always is"? I tell you I've only met her four times. I can't make you out.
SYDNEY Not?
KIT I wish I could make you out.
SYDNEY Oh, I wish you could.
KIT I say old thing, is anything really the matter?
SYDNEY I'm worried.
KIT Oh, that! Yes, it's beastly for your mother.
SYDNEY oh, it's not that. At least--
KIT What?
SYDNEY Oh, I don't know.
KIT Can't you tell me?
SYDNEY No, old man.
KIT But--look here marriage has got to be a sort of mutual show, hasn't it? Confidence, and all that?
KIT What's the matter now?
SYDNEY Do you preach this sort of sermon to Alice?
KIT Sydney--that's--that's rude--that's--that's---
SYDNEY Take time, darling!
KIT You're being simply insulting.

SYDNEY Too bad! I should go and tell Alice.
KIT Damn Alice!
SYDNEY Oh, no, Kit, she'd got blue eyes.
KIT Look here, what's up?
SYDNEY Nix.
KIT Have you really got your back up? What's the matter with you Sydney?
SYDNEY D'you want to know?
KIT I think I'd better.
SYDNEY Well, it's "jam tomorrow, jam yesterday, but--" Surely you know how it ends?
KIT I don't. And I don't want to.
SYDNEY "But never jam today."
KIT Why, Sydney!
SYDNEY D'you know what that's out of?
KIT NO.
SYDNEY You ought to --"Alice"-- No, no, no! "Alice through the looking glass!" I can't help it Kit. When I look in the looking glass I see--Alice.
KIT Once and for all, Sydney, will you shut up about Alice?
SYDNEY Can't. It's her jam today.
KIT I wish you would talk sense for a change.
SYDNEY But I am. I'm conveying to you as nicely and tactfully as possible that I'm--
KIT What, Sydney?
SYDNEY Tired of jam.
KIT D'you mean you're tired of me?
SYDNEY That would be putting it crudely.
KIT What's got into you? I don't know you.
SYDNEY P'raps you're beginning to.
KIT But what have I don't?
SYDNEY Well, for one thing you shouldn't have told your father we were engaged. What girl, do you suppose, would stand it? You ask Alice.
KIT If you're not jolly careful I will.
SYDNEY Good for you!
KIT And if I do I'll ask her more than that.
SYDNEY I should go and do it now if I were you. Strike while the iron's hot.
KIT You're mad.
SYDNEY Yes, I suppose that's the right word to fling at me.
KIT I never meant that. You're twisting the words in my mouth. You're just picking a quarrel.
SYDNEY Well, what's one to do with a little boy who won't take his medicine? I tried to give to you in jam.
KIT You want me to go?
SYDNEY Yes
KIT For good?
SYDNEY Yes.
KIT Honest?
SYDNEY Yes.
KIT Right.