

ACT II      THIS HAPPY BREED      SCENE I

FRANK: Better pop round to the tobacconist's and telephone Mr. Freeman.

EDIE: I shan't have time this morning.

FRANK: To-morrow'll do.

EDIE: Wasn't it awful about poor Mrs. Flint's dress?

FRANK: What happened to it?

EDIE: Percy's been curled up on it all night, covered it with 'airs he 'as. She nearly 'ad a fit when she found 'im. Wonder you didn't 'ear the noise going on.

FRANK: The whole 'ouse has been in an uproar since eight o'clock.

EDIE: Well, we don't 'ave weddings every day of the week, do we?

FRANK: No, thank God.

EDIE (*going out with the tray*): One thing we've got a lovely day for it.

FRANK *left alone for a moment goes on with his paper.*

EDIE *returns.*

D'you mind if I move your tea on to the sideboard a minute, I'll 'ave to change the cloth.

FRANK: All right—I'll give you a hand.

*He places the teapot, milk jug, sugar basin and his cup on the sideboard and helps EDIE to change the tablecloths during the ensuing few lines.*

EDIE: I went with Mrs. Gibbons to the Plough last night to see the upstairs room. They've done it up lovely. We 'ad a look at the cake too, it's ever so pretty. Mrs. Gibbons says I can 'ave a bit to take 'ome to Ernie.

FRANK: Ernie must be getting quite a big boy now.

EDIE: 'E's nearly sixteen but you'd never think it—'e's short like dad, you know.

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FRANK: Oh, I see.

EDIE: 'E started trying to shave himself the other day with dad's razor, you'd have died laughing if you'd seen 'im.

FRANK: Did he cut himself?

EDIE: Not badly, just took the top off one or two spots.

EDIE *goes out.*

FRANK *puts the tea-things back on the table and sits down again. Presently BOB MITCHELL taps at the window. FRANK gets up and lets him in.*

BOB: Well, we've got a nice day for it.

FRANK: Want a cup of tea?

BOB: No, thanks—I'll have a Goldflake though, if you've got one.

FRANK: There's a packet on the mantelpiece, chuck us one too while you're at it.

BOB *takes a cigarette himself and throws the packet over to FRANK, who misses it.*

FRANK: Missed it! Can't see a thing with these glasses.

BOB: You'll get used to 'em.

FRANK: How's Nora?

BOB: A bit more cheerful, she always is when Billy's home, one thing her legs don't pain her any more, she just hasn't got any feeling in 'em at all. The doctor says she won't get no worse nor no better either—just stay about the same.

FRANK: Well, as long as she's a bit brighter in herself I suppose we mustn't grumble.

BOB: It was that last miscarriage six years ago that did her in, you know, she'd probably have been all right if it hadn't been for that.