

## ACT I      THIS HAPPY BREED      SCENE I

MRS. F. (*querulously*): What is Frank doing?

ETHEL: Putting up the curtains in the front bedroom.

MRS. F.: He'll have the house down in a minute.

ETHEL: They've got to be up before we go to bed to-night, we can't have the whole neighbourhood watching us undress, can we?

MRS. F.: They couldn't see right across the road.

ETHEL: Well, they've got to go up some time.

MRS. F.: Nobody's thought to put any up in my room, there's no blind either. I suppose I don't matter.

ETHEL: Oh, do shut up grumbling, Mother. You know perfectly well the blinds haven't come yet and your room is at the back, anyhow.

MRS. F.: A nice thing if Mr. Whatsisname next door 'appens to go out into the garden and looks up.

ETHEL: We'll send him a note asking him to keep his head down.

MRS. F.: It's all very fine to laugh.

ETHEL: I don't know what's the matter with you to-day, Mother, really I don't. Moving in's no picnic anyhow, and it only makes things worse to keep complaining all the time.

MRS. F.: Me complain? I like that, I must say. I've 'ad a splitting headache ever since two o'clock and I 'aven't so much as mentioned it—rushing about here, there and everywhere, and a fat lot of thanks I get.

ETHEL: It's all right, Mother, cheer up, you'll feel better when you've 'ad a nice cup of tea.

MRS. F.: If I ever *do* 'ave a nice cup of tea.

ETHEL: Well, the kettle's on, but Sylvia isn't back yet.

MRS. F. (*contemptuously*): Sylvia!

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ETHEL: She 'ad to go to the U.K. Stores, you know, and that's quite a way.

MRS. F.: She wouldn't 'ave 'ad to do that if she 'adn't forgotten half the things we told her to order. That girl's getting sillier and sillier every breath she takes. I wouldn't be surprised if she 'adn't forgotten the number of the house and lost herself—her and her anæmia!

ETHEL: Well, she can't help her anæmia, can she, now?

MRS. F.: I don't know how you and Frank put up with her, and that's a fact.

ETHEL: Now you know as well as I do, Mother, I couldn't let my own sister-in-law live all by herself, could I? Specially after all she's been through.

MRS. F.: All she's been through, indeed.

ETHEL: I suppose you'll be saying next that she wasn't engaged to Bertie and he wasn't killed, and they've lived 'appy ever after!

MRS. F.: Sylvia 'asn't been through no more than anyone else has, not so much if the truth were known. What she needs is a job of work.

ETHEL: She couldn't stand it, she's too delicate, you know what the doctor said.

MRS. F.: That doctor'd say anything. Look how he went on over Queenie's whooping-cough, frightening us all to death.

ETHEL: Give us a hand with this little table. We can move it over by the window for the time being, it's not heavy.

MRS. F. (*rising reluctantly and helping with the table*): I'm not supposed to lift anything at all, you know—not anything.