



A HELL OF A MESS  
IN HEAVEN



LGM

**Act 1, scene 1**

*At the center of the stage a coffee table with a tea set, behind it a couch. On the prompt side, a day bed. And on the opposite prompt side a fireplace and right beside it an armchair. The furniture are mismatched, from different periods of time and in different conditions. And at the back on the stage a double golden door. The stage is brightly lit. Mrs. Clark is laying on the day bed with Blanche and Mister Clark is in the armchair.*

MRS CLARK, *irritated*

I mean it's nice but could it be nicer. This couch is so uncomfortable. We use to live in the finest of flats in London, and look at us now!

MR CLARK, *careless*

Stop Celia, your bad mood is going to stress the baby...

MRS CLARK

Damn it, Ossie! This baby hasn't come out in years and it's not coming out today!

*(Silence)*

Now I'm feeling noxious, the appointment was ten minutes ago. Didn't David had any other friends?

MR CLARK

At the time were we still alive, David was already pretty discrete about his life anyway. And to vanish from the face of Earth overnight, he might have had some dark secrets. You never know what to expect from people.

MRS CLARK, *irritated*

The note we received said that he went missing and could be dead. Therefore, we might have to welcome him. But can't they be sure? I'm not going to stay here forever...

MR CLARK, *sarcastically*

Because you have better things to do? In the eternity of our after life, waiting a little is not going to bother us that much.

MRS CLARK

Talking about eternity... How old do you think he'll be if he arrives?

MR CLARK

What do you mean?

MRS CLARK

I mean that here, we have no knowledge of time. If he arrives, he could have died the day after us or maybe fifty years later. It would feel the same for us up here.

MR CLARK, *pensive, twisting his hair around his finger*

I never though about that... I guess we'll see...

MRS CLARK

For God sake Ossie, would you stop playing with your hair. You look like a dumb little girl. It's way too long.

MR CLARK

I already told you that when I cut it, it grows back immediately. So would you please give me a break. Get use to it, it's going to be like that for the rest of eternity.

MRS CLARK

An eternity with you sounds way too long...

## **Scene 2**

*Nan and Byron enter from the prompt side, looking confused*

*MR CLARK, look at his wife*

I'll take care of this my dear.

*He stands up and go toward them*

*MR CLARK, with condescension*

I think you are in the wrong place... This is a private event; the door is behind you.

*NAN, to Byron, irritated*

Byron! I told you we should have changed. *(Turn to Mr Clark, sarcastically)*

Now Mister "Girly Hair" thinks we are peasants.

*Mrs Clark giggles*

*MR CLARK, confused*

What is wrong with my hair ?

*MRS CLARK, laughs*

I told you, it's too long.

BYRON

We are here for a friend. We heard he went missing. If he died, he could arrive at any minutes.

*MRS CLARK, friendly*

Oh, excuse my husband's manners. I'm Celia Clark and this rude man is Ossie. Come on and sit with us.

LGM

Spending some time with you will always be better than one more minute  
alone with my husband.

*Mr Clark return to his sit, rolling his eyes. Nan and Byron take place on  
the couch.*

MRS CLARK

I feel like I have seen you before... (*Silence*) Oh, you are those lovely dad  
and daughter on this famous painting... What is it called?... *The American  
Gothic!*  
But I didn't know you were that...civilized.

BYRON, angry

Lord please, no! We are not related! I shouldn't have agreed to be the  
model.

NAN, *to Mrs Clark*

Indeed... I'm Nan. My brother was the painter, he shouldn't have put us  
together for this. Now the whole world think that this man and I are a  
family. I don't even know this man. (*whispering*) He is just the dentist. But  
apparently we are stuck together for eternity.

MRS CLARK

I know the feeling... Anyway, our dear friend never told us he had a sister.  
That's lovely! We met him back in London, he painted our portrait,  
alongside with Blanche. (*looking at the cat*)

NAN

In reality, he wasn't really my brother. He arrived in town alone and had  
nowhere to stay. He was so nice we didn't even wonder about his past.  
He quickly became a good friend, so quickly that it was like we adopted  
him. We loved him, even if he was a little weird sometimes.

MR CLARK

Weird?

NAN, *nostalgic*

Yes... He loved going for a walk at night to sing and dance in the woods.  
He was one of a kind...

MRS CLARK, *shocked*

I did not know him to be like that... (*quickly changing the subject*) And you  
mister, how did you met him?

BYRON, *joyful*

It's a really funny story, he came one day to my office asking me to chop down his canines. At first I laughed but when I saw them I swear I had never seen longer teeth in my entire life. Birth abnormalities I supposed. And one thing leading to another I became his muse.

*They all laugh*

NAN

Sadly, he left town for Europe in 1950, to pursue his career. We never saw him again. I guess he got scared of the direction our country was taking. With the Cold War and the witch hunts for communists, he wanted fresh air. You met him then I suppose.

MR CLARK, giggling

Which hunts... It sounds like a medieval story... Indeed, I met him during my studies. He was a very talented man.

### **Scene 3.**

*The ambassadors enter on the prompt side.*

JEAN DINTEVILLE

Good day to you. (*looks around*) And particularly to you, Madam. (*kissing Nan's hand*)

GEORGES DE SELVE, *with an empty bottle of wine in the hand*

Hellooooooooooooooooooooo! There are soooo many people here. Even simple folks! Oh look, there is a bohemian with long hair! (*pointing at Mr Clark*)

MR CLARK

Again, really!? What is wrong with my hair? It's trendy at the moment...

MRS CLARK, *sarcastically*

What moment my dear! There's no time here, look at us. We are from different centuries and our stay here feels the same.

JEAN DINTEVILLE, *unease*

Excuse him, he is drunk. (*aside to Georges*) Vous me vergognez, sac à vin!

GEORGES DE SELVE

Excuse me, you know I spent all my life in a monastery. It was so strict but I belong to the party world! I was an ambassador in Roma, England, Venice and Vienna! My name is Georges de Selve and the angry man next to me is Jean Dinteville, an ambassador as well.

JEAN DINTEVILLE

We traveled our entire life to make our rulers proud and for the love of our country. (*romantically, at Nan*)

LGM

But my true love, is the one I find in the company of beautiful women...

NAN, *excited*

I'm a single lady!

MRS CLARK

If only...

*The lights sizzle. A divine bell rang, in the distance the yap of dogs.*

MRS CLARK

Oh, so much noise for nothing...

*The lights go back to normal and the noises stop*

NAN, *flirts*

By the way, why are you two here?

JEAN DINTEVILLE

A friend of ours went missing, a painter that did our portrait. We're here to see if he is going to come.

NAN

Great we are here for him too. We can wait together.

MR CLARK

Miss, I don't think they are expecting the same person. How could they know him? They are at least from the sixteenth century.

BYRON, *petting Jean Dinteville coat*

Wait a second ... You're right. I know Nan and I look like we are from the countryside of the nineteenth century but our portrait is actually from 1930. *(To Mr Clark)* you and your wife were painted in 1971 and died short after it which explain why you are here. We can assume it's possible he painted us four. *(To Jean and Georges)* But how could our friend have painted you both?

NAN, *flirt and hold on to Jean*

Who cares anyway! Tell me about your painter, I want to hear you talk.

JEAN DINTEVILLE

Well, he was a fascinating man as well as a fascinated one. He knew about everything, he was a real scholar. If you could see our portrait, everything is represented. From science to poetry and from astrology to music. He made us look smart but he was the real genius

GEORGES DE SELVE, *sits on the floor*

Absolutely, I remember that. He was always asking a lot about religion. He worried about his soul, he wanted to know about eternal life.

He once told me that he would love to be immortal just to keep on learning. As you said a real genius... And kind of a heretic.

*He falls asleep on the floor.*

JEAN DINTEVILLE, *laughs, to Georges*

That's true, he was the first one asking questions but the last one seen on Sunday. I am sure that he has never set foot in a church. (*waits for a response*) Well good night I guess.

*The lights sizzle. A divine bell rang, in the distance the yap of hundred dogs.*

MR CLARK, *exhausted*

Really, again!

*An unknown voice coming from the back of the stage*

ELIZABETH II

William! Let me die in peace for bloody hell!

*The lights go back to normal and the noises stop.*

MR CLARK, *like nothing happened*

We are talking about painters and how well they painted us without giving them a little credit for their work. At least tell us the name of your friend.

JEAN DINTEVILLE

Hans Holbein. What is the name of yours?

MRS CLARK

David Hockney.

*Blanche meows.*

NAN

Wait a minute! My brother's name is Grant Wood. I though we knew the same man...

*Blanche meows*

MRS CLARK

Well, we assumed wrong! We are not waiting for the same person apparently.

LGM

GEORGE DE SELVE, *wakes up*

Or maybe the friend we are individually talking about is, in reality, the same man. Maybe Hans did become immortal and live to meet us all. (Silence) Think about it, I never saw him up there. He should have been dead by now. (*Silence, then laughs*) What am I saying, I should stop drinking.

*They all laugh.*

JEAN DINTEVILLE

That was a good one, you almost got me.

*The lights sizzle. A divine bell rang, in the distance the yap of hundred dogs. The Queen enters from the back of the stage and arrives at the center of the stage.*

**Scene 4**

ELIZABETH II

Finally! They have tried to restart my heart for ten minutes. I'm exhausted... What are you waiting for, show some respect to her Majesty

Elizabeth III!

*Time, silence, everybody bends.*

ELIZABETH II

Now that I'm here, I shall take my revenge. Where is this bloody painter! I want to kill him! That's kind of ironic... Anyway, I've been looking for this cad for years after his painting was out. But he disappeared. If the whole MI6 can't find him, he must be already dead!

MRS CLARK, *shocked and impressed*

May her Majesty explains us what is that this painter did.

ELIZABETH II

He painted this horrible portrait.

*She lift up her bowl gown and take out the portrait. All are shocked and disgusted.*

MR CLARK

OH MY GOD! MY EYES!

*Mrs Clark faints and George vomits.*

NAN, *laughing*

You look like a man!

JEAN DINTEVILLE

Seigneur! Hors de ma vue!

ELIZABETH II, *hides the painting*

You see! He mocked her Majesty and he will pay for it! I dare you to insult the Queen of England!

MRS CLARK, dizzy

And does her Majesty have a picture of this painter perhaps? So I will be able to never ask a portrait from this man in case I see him. *Blanche meows.*

ELIZABETH II

Of course I do, on my phone my grandson gave me. (*tipping on a smartphone*) But I can never unlock this thing... Wait... Oh there it is... *Blanche meows.*

Yes! It's the last picture we found of him after his disappearance.

*Elizabeth shows the phone to everybody.*

MR CLARK

But ... It's David!

*Blanche meows.*

GEORGES DE SELVE

Are you kidding me? It's Hans Holbein.

*Blanche meows.*

NAN, *amazed*

No! It's Grant Wood, my brother.

*Blanche meows.*

ELIZABETH II

Well, I can say for sure the man I'm looking for is Lucian Freud.

*Blanche meows.*

GEORGES DE SELVE, *angry*

Will you stop, spawn of Satan?!

ELIZABETH II, *furious*

So you all know this failed artist! Tell me where he is!

NAN, *angry*

I dare you to speak of him like that! Take it back!

LGM

ELIZABETH II

Do you know who you are talking to! I can say whatever I want, you peasant!

BYRON

Don't talk to her like that!

MRS CLARK

Have some respect for the Queen!

BYRON

Watch your mouth, posh lady! I don't own respect to this Dame and even less to you, the woman who married Mr "Girly Hair"!

MR CLARK, *going mad*

That's enough! I can't take it anymore! I'm going to show you who's the little girl!

*The fight escalates. Sound of someone banging on a door. The tea table moves and Blanche meows. No one notices. It happens again, louder.*

*Blanche meows. Everybody stops, aware. Suddenly, the tea table overturns and a hatch opens on the floor, a red light is coming out of it.*

*A voice, offstage.*

THE PAINTER, *casually*

Hello everybody! I've been banging on this hatch for ten minutes... I know you were expecting me up there. I'm sorry I couldn't make it. But there is a crazy old lady after me, so I'm currently taking a little vacation with my old pal and master Satan.

*Silence*

THE PAINTER

Oh yes, I should explain that by the way. I just sold my soul to the Devil a couple of centuries ago. I know it sounds bad but I swear to God, I still enjoyed meeting you all and be able to paint and learn throughout history. You know even demons need friends and have hobbies. Anyway, it was nice to talk to you, take care.

*Everybody is shocked and speechless. Time.*

ELIZABETH II

Wait a second... I'm gonna show you crazy, you bloody demon!

*She jumps into the hatch.*

THE END