

CHLOË Oh—erm ... I thought I'd bring it to you.

She is carrying a small tray with two mugs on it.

BERNARD I have to go and see about my car.

HANNAH Going to hide it?

BERNARD Hide it? I'm going to sell it! Is there a pub I can put up at in the village?

He turns back to them as he is about to leave through the garden.

Aren't you glad I'm here?

He leaves.

→ CHLOË He said he knew you.

HANNAH He couldn't have.

CHLOË No, perhaps not. He said he wanted to be a surprise, but I suppose that's different. I thought there was a lot of sexual energy there, didn't you?

HANNAH What?

CHLOË Bouncy on his feet, you see, a sure sign. Should I invite him for you?

HANNAH To what? No.

CHLOË You can invite him—that's better. He can come as your partner.

HANNAH Stop it. Thank you for the tea.

CHLOË If you don't want him, I'll have him. Is he married?

HANNAH I haven't the slightest idea. Aren't you supposed to have a pony?

CHLOË I'm just trying to fix you up, Hannah.

HANNAH Believe me, it gets less important.

CHLOË - HANNAH

CHLOË I mean for the dancing. He can come as Beau Brummel.

HANNAH I don't want to dress up and I don't want a dancing partner, least of all Mr Nightingale. I don't dance.

CHLOË Don't be such a prune. You were kissing him, anyway.

HANNAH He was kissing me, and only out of general enthusiasm.

CHLOË Well, don't say I didn't give you first chance. My genius brother will be much relieved. He's in love with you, I suppose you know.

HANNAH (Angry) That's a joke!

CHLOË It's not a joke to him.

HANNAH Of course it is—not even a joke—how can you be so ridiculous?

Gus enters from the garden, in his customary silent awkwardness.

CHLOË Hello, Gus, what have you got?

Gus has an apple, just picked, with a leaf or two still attached. He offers the apple to Hannah.

HANNAH (Surprised) Oh! ... Thank you!

CHLOË (Leaving) Told you.

Chloë closes the door on herself.

HANNAH Thank you. Oh dear.

SCENE III

The schoolroom. The next morning. Present are: Thomasina, Septimus, Jellaby. We have seen this composition before: Thomasina at her place at the table; Septimus reading a letter which has just arrived; Jellaby waiting, having just delivered the letter.

'The Couch of Eros' is in front of Septimus, open, together with sheets of paper on which he has been writing. His portfolio is on the table. Plautus