

Side 1
Smith/Christina

MISS FFOLIOT-FFOULKES. Stay here, Christina. I don't want my things left. *(To the STEWARD.)* Is all the drinking water on this boat very fresh— is it boiled?

(She exits right, followed by the STEWARD.)

Start

SMITH. *(after a pause)* Too bad they spelt your aunt's name with a large "F."

CHRISTINA. Oh, that's always happening. It's not really sensible when you come to think of it, to spell a name with two small "f's."

SMITH. It's one of our incomprehensible English whimsies. *(Pause.)* Are you going to Wadi Haifa and back for the trip, or on to Khartoum?

CHRISTINA. Oh, just for the trip. It's all so picturesque, and I love the donkeys and all the beads and things. *(She takes a large plaster scarab out of her bag.)* I bought this yesterday. *(She crosses to SMITH.)* The man said it was a real sacred scarab. Is it?

SMITH. *(examining it)* The curious thing is that you couldn't buy one of these in Birmingham if you tried.

CHRISTINA. Oh, is that where it comes from?

SMITH. I've always understood they were made in Birmingham for the export market, but it *may* be Sheffield.

CHRISTINA. *(looking downhearted)* I paid five piastres for it.

SMITH. Anyway, it's a lovely specimen. So *naïve*, if you know what I mean.

(There are noises from off right. The BEADSELLERS can be heard among them.)

CHRISTINA. *(moving up center and looking off right)* Somebody else is coming on board. I wonder if it's her?

SMITH. You are expecting a friend?

CHRISTINA. Oh, no. I meant Mrs. Mostyn. *(She crosses right center.)* She's on her honeymoon. You must have read about her: Kay Ridgeway. Her father was the great financier. They say she's the richest girl in England.

SMITH. That must be very bad for her.

CHRISTINA. She's not only rich. She's absolutely lovely! And she's just made a romantic marriage. Think of being rich, and lovely, and having everything in the world you want! *(Her tone is ecstatic.)*

SMITH. I'd rather not think of it. It makes me feel sick.

CHRISTINA. There have been pictures of her in all the papers.

SMITH. *(rising and moving up left, with fury)* Why should there be? Why should anyone want to look at pictures of an idle, useless girl who's never done a hand's turn in her life? Faugh! Why not pictures of decent factory girls going to their day's work?

CHRISTINA. *(moving in to the center table; amused)* Who'd want to look at pictures of them? I wouldn't.

SMITH. *(turning on her)* Do you despise the workers of the world?

CHRISTINA. Not at all. *(She sits on the corner of the table.)* I'm one myself. I work in an office in Edinburgh as a shorthand typist. But I wouldn't pay good money for a paper to look at pictures of shorthand typists or factory girls.

SMITH. You've no proper sense of the dignity of labour.

CHRISTINA. Do you do such an awful lot of work yourself?

SMITH. *(turning away down left; slightly disconcerted)* I'm studying conditions at the moment. I intend to work extremely hard.

CHRISTINA. Well, maybe when you do, you'll understand that there's such a thing as romance. And when a rich girl like Kay Ridgeway, who might have married anybody, marries a young man with no money at all and very good-looking, and they're on their honeymoon and going to be on the same boat — well, it's just too thrilling for words.

End

SMITH. I see. You've got what used to be called the novelette mind.