

(A GARDENER ENTERS, wheeling a barrow and unceremoniously plunks his morning's bounty on the cook's table.)

GARDENER. Turnips. *(Thud)* Onions.
(Thud) Cabbage.
(Thud) Beets. *(Thud)* ...And two coneyes.
(Thud. As he EXITS, he tips his hat to MAUD.)
Ma'am...

(He EXITS.)

MAUD. ...Yes, it smells divine.

MRS. ADAMS. *(Pleased)* Thank you, mum.
It's the apple dumplings.

MAUD. Dumplings! You're joking! My mother and I used to make apple dumplings together at our home in London, on the Edgeware Road. It was such a remarkable place to grow up.

MRS. ADAMS. I've never been to London, mum.

MAUD. *(Incredulous)* Never?

MRS. ADAMS. I always intended to.

MAUD. Then you must come and visit me.
On your next holiday. I insist, that's final.

MRS. ADAMS. Oh, mum -

MAUD. I don't want to hear any arguments, it is completely settled. *(Beat)* If I go back at all. I'm not sure that I can bear to leave Gloria.

MRS. ADAMS. I know just how you feel, mum. I have two girls meself. But there comes a time when you have to let 'em fly on their own. Even if they take off arse backwards.

(John ENTERS in his shirtsleeves. He sees MAUD and stops short - then enters the room anyway.)

JOHN. 'Evening.

MAUD. *(Acidly)* Good evening. Now as I was saying, Mrs. Adams, in my opinion, if one is tired of London, one is tired of life.

JOHN. I believe that Samuel Johnson had the same opinion about two hundred years ago.

MAUD. Really? What an amazing coincidence. *(Looking into one of the pots.)*
Ah! Now what is this? The smell is heaven.

MRS. ADAMS. That'll be the haggis, mum. We'll be havin' that at the weddin'.

MAUD. Do you know, I've heard about haggis since I was 1 child. I love that word. "Haggis." Now what is that white thing bobbing around there in the water? It looks fascinating.

MRS. ADAMS. That'd be the guts, mum. [She pronounces it "goots," to rhyme with "foot's."]

MAUD. I beg your pardon?

MRS. ADAMS. The guts. The stomach. O' the sheep. You can do it with calf guts, but most of us think that sheep is better.

JOHN. I'tis better. It's got more juice.

MAUD. *(Horried)* You're serving a...a...sheep's stomach at my niece's wedding?

JOHN. *(With a laugh at her ignorance.)*
Nay, o' course not. 'Tis only boiled in the stomach. The sweetness is in the chopped heart and lungs.

MAUD. Oh!

MRS. ADAMS. It's very popular.

MAUD. No. I'm sorry, but I'm afraid not. I won't have it.

JOHN. ...You "won't have it"?

MAUD. No. Sorry.

JOHN. *(Restraining himself.)* I'm obliged to tell you, mad-am, it is not a question of your havin' or not havin'.

MAUD. But we have guests coming from London!

JOHN. Let 'em come from Timbaktu- !

MAUD. They'll be disgusted!

JOHN. *(Roaring)* Then let 'em go home with my compliments!

MAUD. ... I will speak to Christy about it.

JOHN. You can speak to Jesus Christ Almighty and his Apostles and it'll make no difference! And I'll thank you not to be stickin' your nose into everything else appertainin' to this household!

MAUD. *(Quivering with indignation.)* In my opinion, you are a very rude man, and I pity you. I have half a mind to leave here today and *never come back.*

JOHN. What would it take to convince the other half?!