CLARKE

SYLVIA. I didn't know you were pregnant!

MARJORIE. *(A bit of a confession.)* Not to worry, dear, this is actually quite convenient.

On the heels of the word "convenient," Beau enters with a tea tray from the kitchen AND there's a knock at the door. They all look out.

Who's that?

Beau sets the tray down. More knocking.

CLARKE. *(From off.)* Sylvie?

They all look at the door.

MARJORIE. *(Gobsmacked.)* Clarke?

CLARKE. *(From off.)* Beau, I know you're in there. Open the door.

SYLVIA. Perhaps telegrams weren't such a grand idea after all.

BEAU. Delayed logic is consistently disappointing.

Beau wipes his brow with his hanky, then opens the door. Wind blows, birds chirp. Clarke enters.

Good morning, Clarke.

CLARKE. Morning.

BEAU. How was your walk?

CLARKE. Lovely. *(Genuine.)* What a smart robe.

BEAU. It's from China.

CLARKE. *(Handing Beau his hat/umbrella.)* I didn't see any robes like that when I was in China.

BEAU. Well, next time you go I'll give you the name of the tailor.

CLARKE. Yes, please, I'd like that *(Feeling it.)* —silky, smooth... *(Noticing Marjorie and Sylvia.)* Darling?!

MARJORIE. Clarke! SYLVIA. Clarke.

CLARKE. Darling, what are you doing here?

SYLVIA. Darling, you knew I was here. You came looking for me.

CLARKE. No, not you, darling. *(To Marjorie.)* You, darling.

MARJORIE. Did you get a telegram from Sylvie too then, darling? We must have been on the same train. What a relief, isn't it, dear?

CLARKE. Quite!

Sylvia and Beau look at each other, then back to Clarke and Marjorie.

SYLVIA and BEAU. Sorry?

CLARKE. We haven't known how to tell you.

SYLVIA. Tell us what?

CLARKE. *(Genuine.)* That's a lovely negligee, Sylvie.

SYLVIA. Thank you, Clarke.

BEAU. Tell us what, Clarke?

CLARKE. *(Soaking in the place.)* I always love it here.

BEAU. As do I.

CLARKE. It's so tidy and well kept.

BEAU. Mother wouldn't have it any other way.

CLARKE. That's what *I'm* saying.

SYLVIA. Tell us what, Clarke?

CLARKE. Ah, yes. Simply put... *(Not at all simply.)* Marjorie and I are in love!

Clarke and Marjorie revel in their love.

Note: Wherever Marjorie and Clarke can steal a kiss, a look, a grab, they ought to. There's nothing "mediocre" about what they have together.

BEAU. With each other?

MARJORIE. Quite. In fact, Beau, darling, well, I suppose considering *your* news it will come as a comfort to you now. This child is not yours!

CLARKE. *(With enormous pride.)* I'm the father, Beau! *(Breathes deeply, now joyous.)* God, it feels good to get that off my chest! I was dreading having to act the uncle to my son.

MARJORIE. Or daughter.

CLARKE. *(A throwaway.)* Right. *(Now a proclamation.)* I want the child to call me Papa!

MARJORIE. What a favor you've done us, Sylvie! I know tonight,

I shall sleep well for once. It's been awful. Sneaking away at every chance we could. Loving in secret these long seven years.

SYLVIA and BEAU. Seven years?!

BEAU. *(Keeping a lid on it.)* I'm getting some ice.

Beau moves toward the kitchen.

MARJORIE. Why?

BEAU. I think I'll have a scotch. Sylvie?

SYLVIA. *(Truly in need of one.)* Yes, please.

Beau exits.

MARJORIE. At nine in the morning? How daring! *(Calling off.)* You know, I think I'll have one too!

CLARKE. *(Calling off.)* Make that four. *(Nuzzling Marjorie.)* It's a bit of a celebration isn't it?

SYLVIA. Seems debatable. *(To Marjorie.)* Sneaking away at *every* chance you could? As in—often?!

MARJORIE. No more often than you and Beau, I'm sure.

SYLVIA. We limit ourselves to one night per year.

A beat and then Clarke and Marjorie burst out laughing.

MARJORIE. One night?!

CLARKE. That's quite disciplined!

SYLVIA. *(With seething incredulousness.)* Yes, well, we're married, you see, so we felt the impropriety was best handled in a moderated capacity!

Beau enters with ice.

BEAU. *(Still heated.)* Ice!

Beau fixes drinks at the bar.

MARJORIE. *(With a twinkle in her eye.)* We weren't able to have that kind of self-control.

SYLVIA. Weren't you?

MARJORIE. I've never felt so alive as I do when I'm with Clarke.

BEAU. Lovely.

CLARKE. It has been rather exciting.

Clarke and Marjorie canoodle.

SYLVIA. *(To Clarke.)* And here, I thought you spent your spare time at the library.

MARJORIE. Mm, yes. The library, the study... *(With an extra twinkle.)* ...the stables.

SYLVIA and BEAU. The stables?!

Marjorie and Clarke revel in the memory.

SYLVIA. *(Disgustedly.)* Where did you do it? Were the horses watching?

MARJORIE. Oh, what difference does it make where? Whether one night or every night, an affair's an affair, isn't it?

SYLVIA and BEAU. Every night?!

CLARKE. *(Utterly casual, to Sylvia.)* Well, not every night, darling. Some nights I really *did* have to work.

MARJORIE. Perhaps God simply got mixed up and put the wrong brother with the wrong wife.

BEAU. *(Handing out drinks.)* Let's not bring God into this, shall we?

CLARKE. And why not? With the way I feel about Marjorie, I see no other explanation!

MARJORIE. Oh Clarke.

CLARKE. *(Another proclamation.)* A higher power has brought us together!

MARJORIE. How glorious!

Clarke and Marjorie kiss.

CLARKE. Cheers!

They clink glasses.

ALL. *(Emotionally diverse.)* Cheers!

They sip. Then...

SYLVIA. *(To Beau.)* Beau, if my husband and your wife have been together every evening, where have you been? You told me we couldn't see each other but once a year or Marjorie would suspect you.

Beau pours himself another.