

Cloud Nine

by Caryl Churchill (from: Churchill Plays: 1)

Act 1, Scene 5

Maud Come along Edward, this is such fun.

Everyone enters, triumphal arch for **Harry** and **Ellen**.

Maud Your mama's wedding was a splendid occasion, Edward. I cried and cried.

Ellen and **Betty** go aside.

Ellen Betty, what happens with a man? I don't know what to do.

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Betty You just keep still.

Ellen And what does he do?

Betty Harry will know what to do.

Ellen And is it enjoyable?

Betty Ellen, you're not getting married to enjoy yourself.

Ellen Don't forget me, Betty.

Ellen goes.

Betty I think my necklace has been stolen Clive. I did so want to wear it at the wedding.

Edward It was Joshua. Joshua took it.

Clive Joshua?

Edward He did, he did, I saw him with it.

Harry Edward, that's not true.

Edward It is, it is.

Harry Edward, I'm afraid you took it yourself.

Edward I did not.

Harry I have seen him with it.

Clive Edward, is that true? Where is it? Did you take your mother's necklace? And to try and blame Joshua, good God.

Edward runs off.

Betty Edward, come back. Have you got my necklace?

Harry I should leave him alone. He'll bring it back.

Betty I wanted to wear it. I wanted to look my best at your wedding.

Harry You always look your best to me.

Betty I shall get drunk.

Mrs Saunders comes.

Mrs Saunders The sale of my property is completed. I shall leave tomorrow.

Clive That's just as well. Whose protection will you seek this time?

Mrs Saunders I shall go to England and buy a farm there. I shall introduce threshing machines.

Clive Amazing spirit.

He kisses her. **Betty** launches herself on **Mrs Saunders**. They fall to the ground.

Clive Betty – Caroline – I don't deserve this – Harry, Harry.

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Harry and **Clive** separate them. **Harry** holding **Mrs Saunders**; **Clive**, **Betty**.

Clive Mrs Saunders, how can you abuse my hospitality? How dare you touch my wife? You must leave here at once.

Betty Go away, go away. You are a wicked woman.

Maud Mrs Saunders, I am shocked. This is your hostess.

Clive Pack your bags and leave the house this instant.

Mrs Saunders I was leaving anyway. There's no place for me here. I have made arrangements to leave tomorrow, and tomorrow is when I will leave. I wish you joy, Mr Bagley.

Mrs Saunders goes.

Clive No place for her anywhere I should think. Shocking behaviour.

Betty Oh Clive, forgive me, and love me like you used to.

Clive Were you jealous my dove? My own dear wife!

Maud Ah, Mr Bagley, one flesh, you see.

Edward comes back with the necklace.

Clive Good God, Edward, it's true.

Edward I was minding it for mama because of the troubles.

Clive Well done, Edward, that was very manly of you. See Betty? Edward was protecting his mama's jewels from the rebels. What a hysterical fuss over nothing. Well done, little man. It is quite safe now. The bad men are dead. Edward, you may do up the necklace for mama.

Edward does up **Betty's** necklace, supervised by **Clive**, **Joshua** is drinking steadily. **Ellen** comes back.

Maud Ah, here's the bride. Come along, Ellen, you don't cry at your own wedding, only at other people's.

Clive Now, speeches, speeches. Who is going to make a speech? Harry, make a speech.

Harry I'm no speaker. You're the one for that.

All Speech, speech.

Harry My dear friends – what can I say – the empire – the family – the married state to which I have always aspired – your shining example of domestic bliss – my great good fortune in winning Ellen's love – happiest day of my life.

Applause.

Clive Cut the cake, cut the cake.

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Harry and **Ellen** take the knife to cut the cake. **Harry** steps on the doll under the table.

Harry What's this?

Ellen Oh look.

Betty Edward.

Edward It was Joshua. It was Joshua. I saw him.

Clive Don't tell lies again.

He hits **Edward** across the side of the head.

Unaccustomed as I am to public speaking –

Cheers.

Harry, my friend. So brave and strong and supple.
Ellen, from neath her veil so shyly peeking.
I wish you joy. A toast – the happy couple.
Dangers are past. Our enemies are killed.
– Put your arm round her, Harry, have a kiss –
All murmuring of discontent is stilled.
Long may you live in peace and joy and bliss.

While he is speaking **Joshua** raises his gun to shoot **Clive**. Only **Edward** sees. He does nothing to warn the others. He put his hands over his ears.

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