ROSE & LOTTY

LOTTY. She has no headache.
MRS. GRAVES. Carlyle suffered at one point terribly from headache …
LOTTY. She has no headache. She only wants to be left alone.
MRS. GRAVES. Something else you've "seen," Mrs. Wilton?
LOTTY. Yes. When I looked at her just now, I saw inside of her.
MRS. GRAVES. I think I may burst after all.
LOTTY. *San Salvatore* is working its charms on Lady Caroline. *(Sneaking up behind Mrs. Graves and placing a flower in her hair, which Mrs. Graves doesn't notice.)* It's working its charms on all of us. Just at different rates, that's all. You really must take the boat out. Both of you. I've never felt so calm, or been able to think so clearly.
MRS. GRAVES. I think quite clearly enough, thank you.
LOTTY. And I've never wept so. A boat is a lovely place for weeping. *(Mrs. Graves has had enough.)*
MRS. GRAVES. *(Rising.)* I've castor oil in my room. *(She starts to exit.)* Mrs. Wilton, if you were a woman of greater age, your behavior could be understood as dotage. *(Lotty considers.)*
LOTTY. Well, if I did have a choice, Mrs. Graves, I suppose I would prefer dotage to condescension. *(Mrs. Graves stops, glares.)*
MRS. GRAVES. Cover your legs! *(She exits.)*
LOTTY. *(Inhales, looks about.)* Isn't it gorgeous to be part of this all, Rose? The dandelions and the lilies, me and Mrs. Graves … all let in, all welcome!
ROSE. *(At wit's end.)* Honestly, Lotty. You'd make Pollyanna ill.
LOTTY. I can't help it. For the first time I feel such a part of everything!
ROSE. And what about me?
LOTTY. You must open yourself to it, Rose. You're angry.
ROSE. *(Strongly.)* Yes. I am.
LOTTY. That's good!
ROSE. You're all so independent.
LOTTY. Perhaps you don't want to be independent.
ROSE. I do!
LOTTY. Nine days without husbands. Perhaps that doesn't suit you, Rose. I have a confession myself. Since we arrived here there hasn't been one moment when I wasn't thinking of Mellersh.
ROSE. I dreamed of him last night.
LOTTY. Mellersh?
ROSE. Frederick.
LOTTY. "Frederick." So that's his name!

ROSE. And I forgot to say my prayers.
LOTTY. Your dream was your prayer.
ROSE. *That* … is not what one prays for.
LOTTY. Physical love, you mean?
ROSE. Lotty! Mrs. Graves is right. Sometimes you are too much.
LOTTY. I can't help it, Rose. I don't know how else to be.
ROSE. It's selfish.
LOTTY. I am a particular challenge. As much as Mrs. Graves. And as much as poor Mellersh.
ROSE. Poor Mellersh? Are you hearing yourself?
LOTTY. Yes, I hear myself. Waking every morning to that second bed staring at me. I've been a miser, Rose. Rationing my love.
ROSE. What are you saying?
LOTTY. We must forgive our husbands, and ourselves, and get on with things.
ROSE. Lotty … *(Lotty takes a deep breath.)*
LOTTY. I've written to Mellersh and told him everything.
ROSE. What?!
LOTTY. Well, except about my nest egg. I wish he were here so I could tell him that as well.
ROSE. You don't mean that.
LOTTY. I do, Rose. *(Nervously.)* I've … invited him.
ROSE. *(Stunned.)* You can't be serious.
LOTTY. We said in London that there would be room for guests.
ROSE. We said in London that there would be an extra room.
LOTTY. *(Becoming increasingly excited.)* And there is! There's room for everyone! Even your Frederick.
ROSE. Frederick?
LOTTY. Do you call him "Freddy"?
ROSE. I do not. *(Becoming increasingly upset.)* The whole idea of our coming here was to get away.
LOTTY. We got away!
ROSE. And now, after barely one week of it, you want to ask the very people …
LOTTY. The very people we were getting away from. It's true. It's idiotically illogical. But they must be here now. I've seen it!
ROSE. Stop this, Lotty. I'm warning you.
LOTTY. Write to your Frederick, Rose, and tell him everything!
ROSE. It's not that simple.
LOTTY. About *San Salvatore* … and the wisteria …
ROSE. You can't understand … *(Lotty laughs.)*

LOTTY. And Mrs. Graves, and …
ROSE. *(Desperately.)* LISTEN TO ME! He wouldn't come!
LOTTY. Don't be silly.
ROSE. I lost a child, Lotty. I lost my child. Our child.
LOTTY. *(Quietly.)* Oh, Rose.
ROSE. Our beauty. It's been four years now, but …
LOTTY. No …
ROSE. Four years of trying to understand such a … punishment.
LOTTY. *(Going to Rose, holding her.)* No. No. *(Rose embraces her, crying.)* Rose. *(Thinks.)* I can't pretend to know what you're feeling, Rose. But I do know that you are not alone.
ROSE. I have you now.
LOTTY. Not me. Frederick.
ROSE. You're not listening.
LOTTY. You must invite him.
ROSE. He won't come.
LOTTY. He will. I've seen it! Frederick and Mellersh. At *San Salvatore. (Rose smiles.)*
ROSE. How can you see Frederick, Lotty? You don't know a thing about him.
LOTTY. You're such a damned logical woman, Mrs. Arnott. *(Lotty extends her hand.)* Come. Let me take you boating. You can tell me everything.
ROSE. You said you were hungry.
LOTTY. We'll pick berries. You're right, Rose. I haven't been listening. But we're sisters, remember? And I'm listening now. *(Rose takes Lotty's hand. They exit into the garden. Caroline enters from the villa, sees them leaving, sighs, relieved. She goes to the chaise, retrieves a flask from behind the pillows, opens it, drinks, exhales deeply. Mrs. Graves enters from the villa, flower in hair and castor oil in hand. She watches Caroline replace the flask.)*
MRS. GRAVES. Castor oil! *(Caroline smoothes herself.)* I expect the sun has caused you to feel ill. You should take some castor oil and go to bed.
CAROLINE. But I don't want castor oil, and I don't want to go to bed. I just want to be alone to think.
MRS. GRAVES. No one wants a woman who thinks. You should go to bed and get well.
CAROLINE. I am well.
MRS. GRAVES. Then I have had all the trouble of coming after you for nothing.

CAROLINE. Wouldn't you prefer coming after me and finding me well to coming after me and finding me ill? *(Mrs. Graves lets out a small laugh, walks into the sun and looks up, inhales deeply. Costanza enters with a telegram.)*
COSTANZA. *Un telegramma, per la Signora Wilton. ("A telegram, for Mrs. Wilton.")*
CAROLINE. *È nel giardino, Costanza. ("She is in the garden.")*
COSTANZA. *Ah. Grazie, Donna Carolina. (She exits into the garden, calling.) Signora Wilton! Un telegramma! Signora Wilton!*
MRS. GRAVES. Now who could be sending Mrs. Wilton a telegram?
CAROLINE. You shouldn't be so hard on Lotty, Mrs. Graves.
MRS. GRAVES. That woman must be curbed.
CAROLINE. She understands things, I think, in her way.
MRS. GRAVES. She "sees" things, you mean. Just a moment ago she said she saw inside of you.
CAROLINE. If that's so, then she's one of the few people who has ever bothered. *(Mrs. Graves considers.)*
MRS. GRAVES. You are an intriguing creature, Lady Caroline. I am very glad there are no men about. You are precisely the sort of woman who unbalances men. My mother unbalanced men, and I dare say it can come at quite a cost.
CAROLINE. Pricey, was she? *(Mrs. Graves glares.)* I apologize, Mrs. Graves. Sometimes I can go too far.
MRS. GRAVES. I understand some things myself, Lady Caroline, in my way. The burden of wit on our sex, for example. You should be thankful for your beauty. At least you are allowed credit for that.
CAROLINE. I would gladly trade it all, Mrs. Graves.
MRS. GRAVES. *(Chuckling.)* For what?
CAROLINE. Things lost.
MRS. GRAVES. How so?
CAROLINE. Jolly war, wasn't it? Except for those who never returned. And those of us who loved them. *(Mrs. Graves softens.)*
MRS. GRAVES. A brother?
CAROLINE. Never mind.
MRS. GRAVES. You are impossible.
CAROLINE. A husband.
MRS. GRAVES. A husband? I … *(Moved.)* I am sorry … I didn't know.
CAROLINE. No one did. We secretly married the night before his duty. For good luck. Funny, no?