

BARBARA The Pearsons...?

HELEN Brian and Betty, down at number twenty-three.

BARBARA They're all right, as far as I know.

HELEN I've been round there half a dozen times and there's never anyone at home. I just wondered if they're okay.

*JULIE returns.*

JULIE Who's that?

HELEN The Pearsons.

JULIE They've gone on holiday. *(to BARBARA)* It's for you, Mum.

HELEN *(to JULIE)* At this time of the year?

JULIE Only for a week. They're back tomorrow.

*BARBARA goes to the door.*

BARBARA *(to JULIE)* Who is it?

JULIE A man.

BARBARA What man?

JULIE He didn't say.

BARBARA Oh, Julie...

*She goes into the hall, closing the door. She goes to the telephone.*

*JULIE pours tea for herself.*

JULIE Do you want some?

HELEN No, thanks.

*JULIE sips her tea; HELEN watches her.*

Well, now, young lady, and how are you today?

JULIE Fine.

HELEN Good.

JULIE (*mock American accent*) Fine and dandy.

HELEN Let's hope it stays that way.

JULIE (*glancing at HELEN*) Why shouldn't it?

HELEN You tell me.

JULIE *turns, frowning, to face HELEN.*

JULIE What's the matter, Auntie Helen?

HELEN I thought you weren't supposed to go riding about on motorcycles.

JULIE Oh.

HELEN Yes - oh.

JULIE When did you see me?

HELEN The other afternoon, with young Mr you-know-who.

JULIE Malcolm.

HELEN Yes, Malcolm. I thought all that was strictly *verboden*.

JULIE He was only bringing me home from school - and he's very careful.

HELEN Your momma doesn't think so.

JULIE You know what she's like: she worries about everything.

HELEN Only because she loves you.

JULIE She keeps treating me like a little girl. She doesn't realise that I'm grown up.

HELEN *looks at JULIE; she smiles affectionately.*

HELEN No. No, and I don't suppose she ever will. (*She goes to JULIE and kisses her.*) Okay, I won't say a word. It'll be our secret. Don't do anything silly, do you hear me?

JULIE (*smiling*) I won't. Thanks.

BARBARA *returns.*