

*Simkins*—I tell you what it is, Mrs. Oh-be-joyful, it strikes me the sooner I get out of this house, the better.

*Enter MRS. TIMKINS.*

*Mrs. Timkins (aside)*—Timkins, back ; and that woman here !

*Mrs. Alljoy (rising quickly from sofa)*—Oh ! Mrs. Timkins, I am so glad you have returned ! Here is Timkins, says his name is Simkins, that he hasn't a wife, that she never was born, and that the sooner he is out of this house the better.

*Mrs. Timkins (haughtily)*—If my husband said all you impute to him, I should say the sooner he is out of the house the better it will be for himself.

*Simkins (aside)*—Oh ! ho ! here is the original and only Mrs. Timkins ; now, by Jove, I'm in for it !

*Mrs. Alljoy (in a whisper to Mrs. T.)*—I am afraid, Mrs. Timkins, your husband is not quite himself.

*Mrs. Timkins (savagely)*—And I am afraid, Mrs. Alljoy, you are concerning yourself in matters that do not belong to you.

*Mrs. Alljoy (aside and in a temper)*—Oh ! the jealous tiger ! she knows that Timkins has a partiality for me. (*Aloud*) I am very sorry, Mrs. Timkins ; I had no intention of offending you.

*Mrs. Timkins*—There is nothing you could say would offend me, Mrs. Alljoy. (*Turning to Simkins*) Where on earth did you get that suit of clothes ?

*Simkins (Looking at himself)*—Clothes ! clothes ! why, from my tailor, of course.

*Mrs. Timkins*—And you ordered them without consulting my taste ? the pattern is positively vulgar.

*Simkins*—Thank you, madam ; now in my town this suit of clothes is considered rather nobby.

*Mrs. Timkins*—In your town ! Pray where is that ?

*Simkins*—Simkinville in Shropshire ; named after my family, madam.

*Mrs. Alljoy*—There, I told you so—he insists that his name is Simkins.

*Mrs. Timkins (aside)*—This is simply dreadful—my poor husband ! But stay, a happy thought—that dreadful woman, Mrs. Alljoy. I will make use of her, no matter how repugnant it may be to my feelings. Dr. Pills and his two friends will be here presently for a consultation. Timkins must be got out of the way ; I will make use of Mrs. Alljoy for the purpose. (*To Mrs. Alljoy, in a whisper*) I regret if I spoke hastily a moment ago ; I am very much worried about Timkins' health. The doctors will be here presently for a consultation on his case. It is desirable that my husband should not be present. I will make an excuse for you to accompany him to the library. Will you engage his attention there for the next half-hour ?