

**THE RATS - An excerpt between Sandra and David.** SANDRA is “a smart and very attractive woman of thirty,” who’s having an affair with DAVID, who is “a good-looking man in his late thirties, but behind his charm and manner you sense a certain ruthlessness.” Sandra has recently arrived at a friend’s apartment, believing she was invited over for drinks, but discovers that no one’s home. David has arrived recently, believing he was invited by Sandra for a rendezvous. Both are slowly realizing that they may have been lured to this apartment by an unknown person for nefarious reasons. **Page 1/3**

**SANDRA.** David there’s something very queer about all this. The Torrances rang up and asked me to come here for drinks.

**DAVID.** Obviously it’s the wrong day. No signs of preparation for a party.

**SANDRA.** And the most peculiar thing of all is that the Torrances went to the South of France last Saturday, so how on earth could Pat Torrance ring me up the day before yesterday?

**DAVID.** She rang you up herself? It wasn’t a message?

**SANDRA.** No, it was Pat. At least I thought it was.

**DAVID.** But now you’re not so sure? Did you recognise her voice?

**SANDRA.** I don’t know her awfully well. She said, “Pat Torrance speaking.” It never occurred to me that it wasn’t her.

**DAVID.** There’s something behind all this that I don’t understand.

**SANDRA.** I don’t either. And I don’t like it.

**DAVID.** But what’s the point of it all? Ringing you up, pretending to be Pat Torrance, getting you to come here, getting me to come here by sending me a

message, supposedly from you. What does it all add up to?

**SANDRA.** I wonder –

*(She breaks off. DAVID looks at her keenly.)*

**DAVID.** You’ve got some idea about it. Come on, tell me.

**SANDRA.** *(Slowly.)* I wondered if – it might not be – John.

**DAVID.** *(Astonished.)* John?

**SANDRA.** Sometimes I’ve thought that he’d begun to suspect about us.

**DAVID.** *(Sharply.)* You never told me.

**SANDRA.** I thought I was probably imagining it.

**DAVID.** *(Thoughtfully.)* John. But how would he tie up with the Torrances? Could he have got this Torrance woman to ring you up and –

**SANDRA.** That’s absurd. John hardly knows her.

**DAVID.** He might have managed to borrow their flat and then got someone or other to ring up and pretend to be Patricia Torrance.

**SANDRA.** But why? Why?

**DAVID.** My dear girl, use your head. To catch us in the act. In flagrante delicto.

***THE RATS - An excerpt between Sandra and David.***

**SANDRA.** Oh, I see.

**DAVID.** Probably means to come here himself and surprise us in amorous play!

**SANDRA.** What a beastly, disgusting thing to do!

**DAVID.** (*Amused.*) No good taking such a high and moral tone, darling. After all, a husband is justified, I suppose, in being annoyed if he finds his wife has taken a lover. How long have you been married now?

**SANDRA.** Three years.

**DAVID.** And old John is still inclined to be on the jealous side, eh?

**SANDRA.** Of course he's jealous, you know that. But on the other hand he's frightfully simple. Anyone could deceive him. I was quite sure he hadn't got a clue until just lately.

**DAVID.** Well, I suppose some kind friend has been around and told him the good news. Though I must say we've always been careful enough.

**SANDRA.** (*Bitterly.*) Somebody always knows. I must say I'd like to know the explanation of all this, it does seem so queer. I can't really believe that –  
(*DAVID rattles the handle to the front door.*)

**DAVID.** Hullo, this door's locked. Somebody seems to have locked it from the outside.

**SANDRA.** Locked us in, do you mean?

**DAVID.** Yes.

**SANDRA.** But that's absurd. We can – All we have to do is bang or shout.

**DAVID.** No, don't do that. Wait a minute, sit down.

We've got to think this out first. There's something very odd going on. It may be Alec or it may be someone else. Somebody got us here, pretending to you to be the Torrances and sending me a message apparently from you. Whoever it is got us here and now we're locked up here, together.

**SANDRA.** But it's absurd. We've only got to shout.

**DAVID.** Oh yes, shout. And then what happens? A scandal. Here we are, meeting in somebody else's flat while they're away, obviously a guilty assignation of some kind and then some practical joker has locked us in.

**SANDRA.** Then the sooner we call his bluff the better. We'll make a hell of a row and pass it all off as a joke.

(*DAVID's manner starts to get unpleasant.*)

**DAVID.** I tell you I can't afford a scandal! It'll absolutely ruin my chances of getting that appointment. If John were to bring divorce proceedings now, it'd be the end.

**SANDRA.** What a selfish brute you are. You don't think of anyone but yourself. What about me? What about my reputation?

**DAVID.** You've never had much of one.

(*SANDRA moves to slap him.*)

(*Quietly.*) Sit down.

(*She does so.*)

***THE RATS - An excerpt between Sandra and David.***

Let me think. Yes. Somebody laid a trap for us and we're caught in it. We've got to think of the best way out.

**SANDRA.** You still think it was John. I don't believe it.

**DAVID.** It's Alec I'm thinking of. Alec hates my guts, always has. Suppose that Alec worked upon John and –

*(He stops abruptly, looking down at the ground.)*

**SANDRA.** What is it?

*(DAVID kneels at the chest, touching something on the floor.)*

**DAVID.** Sawdust. A little heap of sawdust. These holes – They've been drilled. Four little round holes. Air holes, so that somebody could breathe.

**SANDRA.** *(Rising.)* What do you mean?

**DAVID.** Supposing Alec worked on John's suspicions, supposing he suggested that John should hide in the chest and that he, Alec, would arrange to get us here together.

**SANDRA.** You mean – you mean that John's hiding now in that chest? He is there now? That he's heard all we've been saying – that – that –

**DAVID.** I think it's possible – quite possible.

*(DAVID opens the lid of the chest, looks inside then quickly closes it.)*

My God!

**SANDRA.** What is it? What is it?

*(She moves to the chest.)*

**DAVID.** Don't! Don't look inside!

**SANDRA.** What is it?

*(DAVID takes her and sits her down.)*

**DAVID.** Come and sit down. Now, don't scream. Keep your voice down. We've got to keep our heads over this.

**SANDRA.** Tell me.

**DAVID.** It's John. He's there, in that chest. And he's dead.