

Your main commentary should be focused on *do*. Other topics may also be addressed.

'You might think that as we had become friends she would have pretended not to notice, but when it has anything to do with her job she has no friends.'

5 'Very praiseworthy. But I was about to speak about *Cousin Angela*. I have a bit of news which may bring the roses back to your cheeks. Llewellyn is going to do it as a picture.'

He was right about the roses. They returned just as predicted. Sally emitted what in any popsy less personable would have been a squeal.

10 'You might have told me before,' she said reproachfully.

'Slipped my mind.'

'I've been going through hell.'

'Good for adrenal glands.'

'How much?'

'We haven't talked terms yet.'

15 'But these studios always pay the earth, don't they?'

'Invariably.'

'We shall be rich without my money.'

'Modestly bloated.'

'And no danger of your feelings being hurt because I paid the bills.'

20 'The husband always ought to have the money. Ask any husband.'

'Yes. Otherwise it offends his *amour propre*.'

'My God. French and everything. I'm getting a gifted wife. You must have been on many a day excursion to Boulogne.'

'I did go once.'

25 'You didn't happen to run into a man named Bingham, did you?'

'Not that I remember.'

'You would have remembered if you had. He fell overboard. You would have noticed. Well, excuse me for a moment.'

'Where are you going?'

30 'Only to the telephone. I thought I ought to ring Llewellyn up and ask him how he's getting on. He's in hospital.'

'Is he ill?'

'No. Merely hiding from Vera Dalrymple. I'll explain later.'

35 From her knowledge of Ivor Llewellyn, gathered at the time when she had interviewed him for her paper, Sally would have supposed that any telephone conversation in which he took part would have been of considerable duration. She had thought of him as a man always with plenty to say and not averse to the sound of his own voice. But this telephone conversation terminated almost before it had begun. Joe said

40 'I.L.? Pickering,' and that was all he said. And after listening for not more than a minute he hung up and came away from the instrument, Mr Llewellyn having apparently replaced the receiver at the other end.

It perplexed Sally. Then she saw Joe's face, and perplexity was succeeded by dismay.

45 'Joe!' she cried. 'What is it?' and he smiled the ghost of a twisted smile, the smile of a man whose world has collapsed beneath him but who knows that he must show himself one of the bull-dog breed whose upper lips never unstiffen.

'Do you want it broken gently?'

50 'No!'

'It'll be a shock.'

'I don't care.'

'Well, I'm sorry to say that Llewellyn has fired me and isn't going to do the play.'

55 Sally did not swoon, but looking back later she wondered how she had managed to avoid doing so. The floor heaved like an ocean swell, and Joe became for a moment two Joes, both flickering. It seemed an age before she could speak, and when she did she could only say 'But why?'

60 Joe replied that Mr Llewellyn had not told him why.

'All he said was "Pickering, eh? Just the man I wanted to contact. You're fired, Pickering, and if you think I'm going to make a picture of your damned play, you're mistaken."'

'Nothing else?'

65 'Only instructions to remove my blasted belongings from 8 Enniston Gardens without delay.'

'But what had you done to him?'

'Not a thing.'

'Had he seemed hostile?'

70 'On the contrary, my stock was particularly high with him. He wanted to avoid Vera Dalrymple, who had phoned to say she was coming to call, and I suggested that he should go to hospital. His gratitude was touching.'

'Well, I don't understand it.'

75 'I do. It's the jinx that's been following me around for weeks, making everything I do go wrong.'

'Not everything. You found me.'