

Catherine #2
 Mrs. Daldry

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Mrs. Daldry enters the living room, looking the very picture of health.

MRS. DALDRY. Do not let me forget my hat again.

MRS. GIVINGS. It is right here.

MRS. DALDRY. Ah.

Thank you Dr. Givings.

Mrs. Givings hands Mrs. Daldry her hat.

DR. GIVINGS. Not at all. Good-bye.

MRS. DALDRY. Good-bye.

MRS. GIVINGS. Good-bye.

DR. GIVINGS. I'm going to the club. Mr. Edison's man is electrocuting dogs this evening. He is out to prove the deadliness of the alternating current over and above direct current. I think it's hogwash. In alternating current, the current flips back and forth, back and - you see how much this bores you.

He locks the door of the operating theater and puts the key in his pocket.

MRS. GIVINGS. Yes it is very boring good-bye and don't kiss me good-bye please.

DR. GIVINGS. Very well.

He leaves.

She storms.

She goes towards the operating theater.

She jiggles the door.

The doorbell rings.

MRS. DALDRY. I've forgotten my gloves, I'm so sorry, what must you think of me.

MRS. GIVINGS. Oh, I'm so happy to see you! My husband has just gone to the club and I am bored out of my mind.

MRS. DALDRY. I think my gloves are in the other room.

MRS. GIVINGS. It is locked.

MRS. DALDRY. Oh, I can come back tomorrow for my gloves.

MRS. GIVINGS. No, please stay. I have developed the most insatiable curiosity about my husband's operating theater. Perhaps you can tell me how it works.

MRS. DALDRY. Oh – no – I don't know how it works –

MRS. GIVINGS. He plugs it in, he turns it on, and then?

MRS. DALDRY. He applies electrical current to my – to my body – to release the magnetic fluid. That is what he says. Because there is excess fluid in my womb, causing my hysterical symptoms.

MRS. GIVINGS. Fluid?

MRS. DALDRY. Yes.

Really, I must go now –

MRS. GIVINGS. You sounded like this: oh, oh, ah-ee!

MRS. DALDRY. You were listening?

MRS. GIVINGS. It was loud.

MRS. DALDRY. Oh, dear. I will leave you now.

MRS. GIVINGS. Stay for tea.

Where does my husband place the electrical device?

MRS. DALDRY. (*pointing vaguely to her knees*) Just here.

MRS. GIVINGS. Hm.

And does it give you a pleasurable or a painful sensation?

MRS. DALDRY. Pleasure, and pain all at once – electrical current runs through my entire body – I see light – patterns of light, under my eye-lids – and a kind of white-hot coal on my feet – and I shudder violently, as though struck by a terrible lightning – and then a darkness descends, and I want to sleep.

MRS. GIVINGS. I never heard of anything so strange.

MRS. DALDRY. Let's talk of other things. They electrocuted an elephant at Coney Island.

MRS. GIVINGS. Yes, I've heard.

MRS. DALDRY. It is getting dark.

MRS. GIVINGS. I will turn the lamp on.

MRS. DALDRY. Please, don't.

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They electrocuted

They sit in the dark.

MRS. DALDRY. Can you imagine a time when all will be elec-
tric, all will be plugged in, why it will not stop at lights,
but the way we cook our eggs and the way we get our
chickens to lay their eggs too. Mr. Edison invented a
recording device which he says will change everything,
it will record the last wishes of the dying. Can you imagine?
A man may know the voice of his great great grand-
father, may know his last wishes. And what will become
of the human body? Electrical arms perhaps. Even the
fireflies will become electric.

MRS. GIVINGS. Electrical fireflies.

MRS. DALDRY. Yes.

MRS. GIVINGS. Electrical pianos.

MRS. DALDRY. God forbid.

MRS. GIVINGS. Oh, to think of never carrying a candle! Not
to walk through a hallway at night, holding a candle,
afraid of tripping in the dark, starting a fire, it makes
one more solemn, do you not think? Or to blow out
a candle - how beautiful! With one's own breath, to
extinguish the light! Do you think our children's chil-
dren will be less solemn? A flick of the finger - and
all is lit! A flick of the finger, and all is dark! On, off,
on off! We could change our minds a dozen times a
second! On, off, on off! We shall be like gods!

MRS. DALDRY. I'm afraid so.

MRS. GIVINGS. Have you a hat pin?

MRS. DALDRY. Yes.

She hands Mrs. Givings a pin from her hat.

Mrs. Givings goes to pick the lock of the operating theater.

MRS. GIVINGS. I will just retrieve your gloves.

Mrs. Givings enters the operating theater.

Mrs. Daldry is on her heels.

Mrs. Givings looks around.

MRS. GIVINGS. Is this it?