

Mr. Daldry

MRS. GIVINGS. (*cont.*) they got so plump in the autumn. My mother would make loads of jam – my mother was not a nervous or excitable woman. It was jam, it was laughing, and long walks out of doors. We haven't a grape arbor here – I am full of digressions these days Dr. Givings – but the point is I haven't the strength to wash the curtains every week and beat the ghosts out of them. You think I am talking like a madwoman but if you could see the curtains you would see that I really am very logical. They're horrible.

Mr. Daldry raises his eyebrows at Dr. Givings.

DR. GIVINGS. And you have tried the usual remedies, rest and relaxation?

MRS. DALDRY.

I do nothing but rest!
Nothing but rest!

MR. DALDRY.

Yes.

MR. DALDRY. When I met Mrs. Daldry she was seventeen. She was an extraordinary creature. She played the piano. We ate grape jam in the arbor and there I told her I wanted to take care of her and protect her forever, didn't I.

MRS. DALDRY. Yes.

MR. DALDRY. Now I am afraid there is very little sympathy between us.

MRS. DALDRY. I am breaking his heart – . He likes me to be a certain way. Perhaps if I could play the piano again but my fingers will not work.

MR. DALDRY. No, her fingers do not work. In the living room. Or in any other room, if you take my meaning, Dr. Givings.

MRS. DALDRY. Mr. Daldry please do not embarrass me with such vulgarities. I am shocked and disgusted and I will leave the room now.

She leaves the room.

She stands in the living room, flustered.

She sees the electrical lamp and turns it on and off.

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DR. GIVINGS. Mr. Daldry, your wife is suffering from hysteria. It is a very clear case. I recommend therapeutic electrical massage - weekly - possibly daily, we shall see - sessions. We need to relieve the pressure of her nerves.

You will soon have your blooming wife back, she will regain her color, light and cold will no longer have the same effect on her. You will soon be eating grape jam and wondering how it is that Mrs. Daldry looks so much like a seventeen year old.

MR. DALDRY. Thank you, Dr. Givings. You have no idea what a source of anguish my wife's illness has been to me. And to her, of course.

DR. GIVINGS. Of course. I will have her back for you in an hour's time.

MR. DALDRY. Thank you, Doctor.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Givings has re-entered the living room with the baby.

MRS. DALDRY. (to Mrs. Givings)

This lamp is extraordinary.

It hurts my eyes to watch it go on and off
 but I enjoy the pain.

It is a kind of religious ecstasy to feel half blind,
 do you not think?

MRS. GIVINGS.

Yes, isn't it?

I was not supposed to meet you

But I'm glad I have.

I hope you find my husband to be a comfort,

I know that I do.

MRS. DALDRY. May I hold your baby?

MRS. GIVINGS. Yes, of course.

DR. GIVINGS. I would ask you to leave Mrs. Daldry here while you take a walk around the grounds. Perhaps it's better if you don't disturb her now, Mr. Daldry.

MR. DALDRY. Of course. Whatever you think best, doctor.

MRS. DALDRY. (*while holding the baby*) What is the baby's name?

MRS. GIVINGS. Letitia. Lotty for short.

Three syllables seemed like too many for a baby.

MRS. DALDRY. Lotty.

During the preceding,

Dr. Givings shakes Mr. Daldry's hand.

Mr. Daldry puts his hat on.

Mr. Daldry gives a brief quizzical glance at the vibrator.

And exits.

ANNIE. (*in the living room, to Mrs. Daldry*) The doctor is ready for you now.

MRS. DALDRY. Oh, no must I go back in there? I would rather hold the baby.

Mr. Daldry enters the living room.

MR. DALDRY. Be a good girl.

Mrs. Daldry hands the baby back to Mrs. Givings.

MRS. DALDRY. Oh, she's beautiful.

MRS. GIVINGS. Isn't she? Too skinny though.

Mrs. Daldry hesitates, looking at the baby.

MR. DALDRY. The doctor is waiting, Sabrina.

MRS. GIVINGS. You'll be just fine.

My husband is a good doctor.

Or so I've been told.

If you'll excuse me, it's time for her nap.

Mrs. Givings exits to the nursery.

Annie leads Mrs. Daldry into the operating theater.

Mr. Daldry surveys the living room and prepares to walk the grounds.

In the operating theater:

DR. GIVINGS. Now then, Mrs. Daldry, I would ask you to remove your clothing but you may keep your underthings on. Please remove your corset, if you would. Annie will place a sheet over your lower regions. We will respect your modesty in every particular.