amazing. You are dark like this continent. Mysterious, treacherous. When you rode to me through the night.
When you fainted in my arms. When I came to you in your bed, when I lifted the mosquito netting, when I said let me in, let me in. Oh don’t shut me out, Caroline, let me in.

(He disappears under her skirt.)

MRS. S. Please stop. I can’t concentrate. I want to go home. I wish I didn’t enjoy the sensation because I don’t like you, Clive. I do like living in your house where there’s plenty of guns. But I don’t like you at all. But I do like the sensation. Well I’ll have it then, I’ll have it.

(Voices are heard singing the First Noel)

MRS. S. Don’t stop. Don’t stop.

(CLIVE comes out from under HER skirt)

CLIVE. The Christmas picnic. I came.
MRS. S. I didn’t.
CLIVE. I’m all sticky.
MRS. S. What about me?
CLIVE. All right, are you? Come on. We mustn’t be found.
MRS. S. Don’t go now.
CLIVE. Caroline, you are so voracious. Do let go. Tidy yourself up. There’s a hair in my mouth. (CLIVE and MRS. SAUNDERS go off. MAUD, BETTY enter, JOSHUA with a hamper.)

MAUD. I never would have thought a guinea fowl could taste so like a turkey.
BETTY. I had to explain to the cook three times.
MAUD. You did very well dear.
(JOSHUA sits apart with gun. EDWARD and HARRY with VICTORIA on his shoulders, singing The First Noel. MAUD and BETTY are unpacking the hamper. CLIVE arrives separately)

BETTY. Uncle Harry playing horsy.
CLIVE. And now the moment we have all been waiting for. (CLIVE opens champagne. General acclaim)
CLIVE. Oh dear, stained my trousers, never mind.
EDWARD. Can I have some?
MAUD. Oh no Edward, not for you.
CLIVE. Give him half a glass.
MAUD. If your father says so.
CLIVE. All rise please. To Her Majesty Queen Victoria, God bless her, and her husband and all her dear children.
ALL. The Queen.
HARRY. Excellent, Clive, wherever did you get it?
CLIVE. I know a chap in French Equatorial Africa.

(ELLEN arrives)

BETTY. Ellen come and play with me.

(BETTY takes a ball from the hamper and plays catch with ELLEN. Murmurs of surprise and congratulations from the men whenever they catch the ball)
(Edward is playing clap hands with Vicky's doll.)

Betty. Edward, what have you got there?
Edward. I'm minding her.
Betty. Edward, I've told you before, dolls are for girls.
Maud. Where is Ellen? She should be looking after Edward. (She goes to the door) Ellen! Betty, why do you let that girl mope about in her own room? That's not what she's come to Africa for.
Betty. You must never let the boys at school know you like dolls. Never, never. You won't be on the cricket team, you won't grow up to be a man like your papa.
Edward. I don't want to be like papa. I hate papa.
Maud. Edward! Edward!
Betty. You're a horrid wicked boy and papa will beat you. Of course you don't hate him, you love him. Now give Victoria her doll at once.
Edward. She's not Victoria's doll, she's my doll. She doesn't love Victoria and Victoria doesn't love her. Victoria never even plays with her.
Maud. Victoria will learn to play with her.
Edward. She's mine and she loves me and she won't be happy if you take her away, she'll cry, she'll cry.

(Betty takes the doll away, slaps him, bursts into tears. Ellen comes in)

Betty. Ellen, look what you've done. Edward's had the doll again. Now, Ellen will you please do your job.

Ellen. Edward, you are a wicked boy. I am going to lock you in the nursery until suppertime. Now go upstairs this minute. (She slaps Edward, who bursts into tears and goes out) I do try to do what you want. I'm so sorry. (Ellen bursts into tears and goes out)

Maud. There now, Vicky's got her baby back. Where did Vicky's naughty baby go? Shall we smack her? Just a little smack? There, now she's a good baby. Clap hands daddy comes with his pockets full of plums. All for Vicky's baby. When I was a child we honoured our parents. My mama was an angel.

(Joshua comes in. He stands without speaking)

Betty. Joshua?
Joshua. Madam?
Betty. Did you want something?
Joshua. Sent to see the ladies are all right, Madam.

(Mrs. Saunders comes in)

Mrs. S. We're very well thank you Joshua, and how are you?
Joshua. Very well thank you Mrs. Saunders.
Mrs. S. And the stable boys?
Joshua. They have had justice, Madam.
Mrs. S. So I saw. And does your arm ache?
Maud. This is not a proper conversation, Mrs. Saunders.

(Harry and Clive come in)