

BETRAYAL

by Harold Pinter

A flat - Winter, 1975 - Emma (30's) - Jerry (40's)

Emma - A woman ending an affair

Jerry - Emma's lover

Emma and Jerry are coming to the end of their love affair. They meet in the flat that they've kept for their clandestine meetings and discuss what to do with it.

(Flat. 1975. Winter. Jerry and Emma. They are sitting. Silence.)

JERRY: What do you want to do then? *(Pause.)*

EMMA: I don't quite know what we're doing, any more, that's all.

JERRY: Mmm. *(Pause.)*

EMMA: I mean, this flat...

JERRY: Yes.

EMMA: Can you actually remember when we were last here?

JERRY: In the summer, was it?

EMMA: Well, was it?

JERRY: I know it seems—

EMMA: It was the beginning of September.

JERRY: Well, that's summer, isn't it?

EMMA: It was actually extremely cold. It was early autumn.

JERRY: It's pretty cold now.

EMMA: We were going to get another electric fire.

JERRY: Yes, I never got that.

EMMA: Not much point in getting it if we're never here.

JERRY: We're here now.

EMMA: Not really. *(Silence.)*

JERRY: Well, things have changed. You've been so busy, your job, and everything.

EMMA: Well, I know. But I mean, I like it. I want to do it.

JERRY: No, it's great. It's marvellous for you. But you're not—

EMMA: If you're running a gallery you've got to run it, you've got to be there.

JERRY: But you're not free in the afternoons. Are you?

BETRAYAL

EMMA: No.

JERRY: So how can we meet?

EMMA: But look at the times you're out of the country. You're never here.

JERRY: But when I am here you're not free in the afternoons. So we can never meet.

EMMA: We can meet for lunch.

JERRY: We can meet for lunch but we can't come all the way out here for a quick lunch. I'm too old for that.

EMMA: I didn't suggest that. *(Pause.)* You see, in the past...we were inventive, we were determined, it was...it seemed impossible to meet...impossible...and yet we did. We met here, we took this flat and we met in this flat because we wanted to.

JERRY: It would not matter how much we wanted to if you're not free in the afternoons and I'm in America. *(Silence.)* Nights have always been out of the question and you know it. I have a family.

EMMA: I have a family too.

JERRY: I know that perfectly well. I might remind you that your husband is my oldest friend.

EMMA: What do you mean by that?

JERRY: I don't mean anything by it.

EMMA: But what are you trying to say by saying that?

JERRY: Jesus. I'm not trying to say anything. I've said precisely what I wanted to say.

EMMA: I see. *(Pause.)* The fact is that in the old days we used our imagination and we'd take a night and make an arrangement and go to an hotel.

JERRY: Yes. We did. *(Pause.)* But that was...in the main...before we got this flat.

EMMA: We haven't spent many nights...in this flat.

JERRY: No. *(Pause.)* Not many nights anywhere, really. *(Silence.)*

EMMA: Can you afford...to keep it going, month after month?

JERRY: Oh...

EMMA: It's a waste. Nobody comes here. I just can't bear to think about it, actually. Just...empty. All day and night. Day after day and

BETRAYAL

night after night. I mean the crockery and the curtains and the bed-spread and everything. And the tablecloth I brought from Venice. *(Laughs.)* It's ridiculous. *(Pause.)* It's just...an empty home.

JERRY: It's not a home. *(Pause.)* I know... I know what you wanted...but it could never...actually be a home. You have a home. I have a home. With curtains, etcetera. And children. Two children in two homes. There are no children here, so it's not the same kind of home.

EMMA: It was never intended to be the same kind of home. Was it?

(Pause.) You didn't ever see it as a home, in any sense, did you?

JERRY: No, I saw it as a flat...you know.

EMMA: For fucking.

JERRY: No, for loving.

EMMA: Well, there's not much of that left, is there? *(Silence.)*

JERRY: I don't think we don't love each other. *(Pause.)*

EMMA: Ah well. *(Pause.)* What will you do about all the...furniture?

JERRY: What?

EMMA: The contents. *(Silence.)*

JERRY: You know we can do something very simple, if we want to do it.

EMMA: You mean sell it to Mrs. Banks for a small sum and...and she can let it as a furnished flat?

JERRY: That's right. Wasn't the bed here?

EMMA: What?

JERRY: Wasn't it?

EMMA: We bought the bed. We bought everything. We bought the bed together.

JERRY: Ah. Yes. *(Emma stands.)*

EMMA: You'll make all the arrangements, then? With Mrs. Banks? *(Pause.)* I don't want anything. Nowhere I can put it, you see. I have a home, with tablecloths and all the rest of it.

JERRY: I'll go into it, with Mrs. Banks. There'll be a few quid, you know, so...

EMMA: No, I don't want any cash, thank you very much. *(Silence.)*

BETRAYAL

She puts coat on. I'm going now. *(He turns, looks at her.)* Oh here's my key. *(Takes out keyring, tries to take key from ring.)* Oh Christ. *(Struggles to take key from ring. Throws him the ring.)* You take it off. *(He catches it, looks at her.)* Can you just do it please? I'm picking up Charlotte from school. I'm taking her shopping. *(He takes key off.)* Do you realize this is an afternoon? It's the Gallery's afternoon off. That's why I'm here. We close every Thursday afternoon. Can I have my keyring? *(He gives it to her.)* Thanks. Listen. I think we've made absolutely the right decision. *(She goes. He stands.)*