Madame Arcati, Charles, Elvira

ELVIRA. Charles! (*She moves to above the sofa*)

CHARLES. What on earth's the matter?

ELVIRA (*seeing Madame Arcati*) Oh! What's she doing here?

CHARLES. She came to offer me her condolences.

ELVIRA (*moving above the sofa to the mantelpiece, then across, below Madame Arcati, and up to the piano*) They should have been congratulations.

CHARLES. Please don't say things like that, Elvira—it is in the worst possible taste. Madame Arcati, allow me to introduce my first wife, Elvira.

MADAME ARCATI. How do you do?

ELVIRA. What does she want, Charles? Send her away. (*She walks about the room*)

MADAME ARCATI. In what part of the room is she at the moment?

CHARLES. She's moving about rather rapidly. I'll tell you when and where she settles.

ELVIRA. She's the one who got me here in the first place, isn't she?

CHARLES. Yes.

ELVIRA. Well, please tell her to get me away again as soon as possible. I can't stand this house another minute.

CHARLES. Really, Elvira—I'm surprised at you.

ELVIRA (*nearly in tears*) I don't care how surprised you are. I want to go home. I'm sick of the whole thing.

CHARLES. Don't be childish, Elvira.

ELVIRA. I'm not being childish—I mean it.

MADAME ARCATI (*rising and moving to the fireplace—sniffing*) Very interesting—very interesting—I smell ectoplasm strongly!

ELVIRA. What a disgusting thing to say.

MADAME ARCATI (*up above the sofa to the* R *of Elvira, very excited*) Where is she now?

CHARLES. Here—close to me.

MADAME ARCATI (*mystically—stretching out her hands*) Are you happy, my dear?

ELVIRA (*stamping her foot*) Tell the silly old bitch to mind her own business!

MADAME ARCATI (*in a sing-song voice*) Was the journey difficult? Are you weary?

ELVIRA (*moving downstage* L *to the gramophone*) She's dotty.

CHARLES. Just a moment, Madame Arcati . . .

MADAME ARCATI (*with her eyes shut*) This is wonderful—wonderful——

ELVIRA. For God's sake tell her to go into the other room, Charles. I've got to talk to you.

CHARLES. Madame Arcati . . .

MADAME ARCATI. Just a moment. I almost have contact. I can sense the vibrations—this is magnificent . . .

CHARLES. Go on, Elvira—don't be a spoilsport—give her a bit of encouragement.

ELVIRA. If you'll promise to get her into the other room.

CHARLES. All right.

(ELVIRA *crosses below Madame Arcati to the* R *of her and blows gently into her ear*)

MADAME ARCATI (*jumping*) Yes, yes. Again! Again!

ELVIRA (*blowing in the other ear*) How's that?

MADAME ARCATI (*clasping and unclasping her hands in a frenzy of excitement*) This is first rate—it really is first rate! Absolutely stunning!

CHARLES. I'm so glad you're pleased.

ELVIRA. Please get rid of her. Ruth will be in in a minute.

CHARLES. Madame Arcati, would you think it most frightfully

rude if I asked you to go into the dining-room for a moment? My first wife wishes to speak to me alone.

MADAME ARCATI. Oh, must I? It's so lovely being actually in the room with her!

CHARLES. Only for a few minutes. I promise she'll be here when you come back.

MADAME ARCATI. Very well. Hand me my bag, will you? It's on the settee.

ELVIRA (*picking it up and handing it to her*) Here you are.

MADAME ARCATI (*taking it and blowing her a kiss*) Oh, you darling—you little darling!