

MR. BIRBECK

Please prepare with a standard British accent

Side 1 of 1

MR. BIRBECK. I'm from the *Standard*.

LEO. Yes, I know.

MR. BIRBECK. I've brought a photographer. I hope you don't mind? We thought a little study of you in your own home would be novel and interesting.

LEO. [*bitterly*] I'm sure it would.

MR. BIRBECK. First of all, may I ask you a few questions?

LEO. Certainly, go ahead. Cigarette?

MR. BIRBECK. No, thank you. I'm not a smoker myself.

LEO. [*taking one and lighting it*] I am.

MR. BIRBECK. [*producing notebook*] This is not your first play, is it?

LEO. No, my seventh. Two of them have been produced in London within the last three years.

MR. BIRBECK. What were their names?

LEO. *The Swift River* and *Mrs Draper*.

MR. BIRBECK. How do you spell 'Mrs Draper'?

LEO. The usual way – m r s d r a p e r.

MR. BIRBECK. Which particular sport do you like best?

LEO. No particular one. I'm crazy about them all.

MR. BIRBECK. I see.

[*He writes.*]

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MR. BIRBECK. Do you believe the talkies will kill the theatre?

LEO. No. I think they'll kill the talkies.

MR. BIRBECK. [*laughing*] That's very good, that is. It really is.

LEO. Not as good as all that.

MR. BIRBECK. There's a question that interests our lady readers very much—

LEO. What's that?

MR. BIRBECK. What is your opinion of the modern girl?

LEO. [*without flinching*] Downright; straightforward: upright.

MR. BIRBECK. You approve of the modern girl, then?

LEO. I didn't say so.

MR. BIRBECK. What are your ideas on marriage?

LEO. Garbled.

MR. BIRBECK. That's good, that is. Very good!

LEO. [*rising*] Don't put it, though – don't write down any of this interview; come and see me again.

MR. BIRBECK. Why, what's wrong?

LEO. The whole thing's wrong, Mr—

MR. BIRBECK. Birbeck.

LEO. Mr. Birbeck. The whole business is grotesque. Don't you see how grotesque it is?

MR. BIRBECK. I'm afraid I don't understand.

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LEO. Don't you ever feel sick inside when you have to ask those questions?

MR. BIRBECK. No, why should I?

LEO. Will you do me a very great favour?

MR. BIRBECK. What is it?

LEO. Call in your photographer. Photograph me – and leave me alone.

MR. BIRBECK. [*offended*] Certainly.

LEO. Don't think me rude. I'm just rather tired, that's all.

MR. BIRBECK. I quite understand.

*[He goes out into the hall and returns in a moment with the
photographer.]*

MR. BIRBECK. Where do you think would be best?

LEO. Wherever you say.

MR. BIRBECK. Just here?

LEO. [*taking his stand just in front of the desk*] All alright.

MR. BIRBECK. Perhaps I could come and see you again some time when you're
not so tired?

LEO. Yes, of course. Telephone me.

MR. BIRBECK. Tomorrow?

LEO. Yes, tomorrow.

MR. BIRBECK. About eleven?

LEO. Yes. About eleven.

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MR. BIRBECK. Now, then – are you ready?