

SUGAR DADDIES

Alan Ayckbourn

A key in the flat's front door. It opens. CHLOE appears, slightly sun-tanned. Due to having a number of packages, duty-free bags, suitcases, etc., she enters backwards and so doesn't immediately notice the room.

CHLOE: *(struggling)* Shit!

She eventually achieves her objective and gets all her luggage through the door. This she now closes. Chloe finally turns and sees Sasha.

Oh, hi! You're here. I've got so much stuff, I can't - *(She stops as she registers her surroundings for the first time.)*

I've got so much...stuff...

Silence. She stares at the room. Taking it all in. Her gaze surveys each wall, each item in turn. It takes a very long time for it to sink in. She is, at first, merely stunned. Her true reaction will follow shortly.

SASHA: Do you approve

CHLOE: *(stunned)* We've moved, haven't we? When did we move?

SASHA: No, it's the same flat. I just - improved it, a bit I think.

CHLOE: What have you done, Sasha? What have you done to our home?

SASHA: I just changed one or two...

CHLOE: I cannot believe this. I simply cannot believe this. Where's my desk?

SASHA: There.

CHLOE: That is not my desk. In no way is that my desk.

SASHA: It's a new one.

CHLOE: What are you talking about a new one? It doesn't even look like a desk. How could you do this? Sasha, how could you do this to me?

SASHA: You don't approve?

CHLOE: Approve? It's like the front room of a bloody brothel. It's vile. It's revolting! It's repellent.

SASHA: Perhaps you'll prefer the kitchen?

CHLOE: The Kitchen? You've done this to the kitchen, as well?

SASHA: I put a few new things in.

CHLOE: *(marching to the kitchen door)* This has got to be a joke!

CHLOE goes off to the kitchen, briefly.

SASHA: *(Calling after her)* It needed things doing to it. That cold tap kept dripping for a

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start, didn't it?

CHLOE: (off, with a cry) Oh, dear God!

CHLOE returns.

What have you done to my kitchen? What have you done to my bloody kitchen?

SASHA: Our kitchen.

CHLOE: No. **Your** kitchen now. I'm never setting foot in there again. Ever.

SASHA: You don't like that either?

CHLOE: If there's one thing I loathe more than anything else, it's bloody stainless steel. It's like a hall of mirrors. It's hideous, Sasha. Just hideous. How could you do this without even consulting me? How could you do it? No, this is a joke, isn't it? Please, tell me it's a joke. We're on some terrible TV programme. In a minute, awful Scots women and appalling men with long hair are going to come leaping out of cupboards, aren't they? How could you do this to me, Sasha?

SASHA: (unhappily) Well... (Her eyes move almost Inadvertently in the direction of the bedroom)

CHLOE: (following her gaze) You haven't done the bedrooms, as well. Please tell me you haven't done the bedrooms?

SASHA: Just one or two little improvements...

CHLOE: My bedroom? You've done my bedroom, too, haven't you? I don't even **allow** people into my bedroom and you've gone and done my bedroom.

CHLOE goes off to the bedrooms.

SASHA: (calling after her) They were very careful not to disturb your things more than they ...had to.

Offstage, CHLOE screams.

CHLOE: (with a terrible cry) I cannot believe this. I just cannot believe this. What is this on the walls? What is it? What is it?

SASHA: (grumpily) Fur. It's only fur.

SASHA waits unhappily. She is becoming rather tearful. Another scream offstage.

CHLOE: (off) What have you done to my bathroom?

SASHA: (to herself, muttering) Our bathroom ...

CHLOE returns.

CHLOE: Well, it is. It's a brothel, isn't it? You've turned the place into a brothel, haven't you? I certainly can't sleep in there. I'm surprised you haven't stuck a mirror on my ceiling and had done with it!

SASHA: We couldn't. The ceiling wasn't strong enough to take it.

CHLOE: We? Who's we? You and that bloody Uncle Val, presumably.

SASHA: No, it was a proper designer. I had a proper designer in. We did

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it so we could surprise you...

CHLOE: You had a *designer* do this? What designer?

SASHA: Charmiane.

CHLOE: *Charmaine?*

SASHA: Yes

CHLOE: (*furiously*) Where did you find her? From a card on a telephone box? Well, you tell Charmaine that I want everything back as it was or I am suing her for every penny she's got. I want my tatty old desk. I want my armchair with the wobbly leg. I want my old-fashioned chipped bath, not that plastic monstrosity full of holes and most of all I want my own bed. You tell her that from me!

SASHA: I can't get it all back. It's probably on the tip by now.

CHLOE: Well, get your sugar daddy to hire a truck and get it back. In the meantime, I'm leaving, Sasha, I'm staying in a hotel until this is sorted out, do you hear? (*She starts to gather up her things.*)

SASHA: I think you're being very unfair.

CHLOE: What?

SASHA: I've gone to a lot of trouble with this. I thought you'd be pleased. I did this as much for you, you know.

CHLOE: No, Sasha, let's get this straight, in no way did you do this for me. You did this entirely for you. God knows what's going on in your personal life, I dread to think, but you're starting to behave just like that dirty old man.

SASHA: (*angrily*) He's not a dirty old man, don't you dare call him that!

CHLOE: (*slightly alarmed at the outburst*) Alright, sorry -

SASHA: He's just fond of me. He hasn't touched me. He hasn't laid a finger on me.

CHLOE: Sasha, he's destroying you. Can't you see it? Look at you, girl. He's changing you, turning you into something you're not. God, I've only been away two weeks and look at you. He's spending money on you like water. I don't know what he's after, but he's gradually destroying you.

SASHA: (*sulkily*) Like water? What are you talking about? It's all money.

CHLOE: You bought all this with your money?

SASHA: More or less.

CHLOE: Sasha, there's about ten thousand quids' worth of stuff in the kitchen alone.

SASHA: Well, he knows where to get things cheep, that's all.

CHLOE: (*staring at her*) And you really believe that, do you?

SASHA: (*evasively*) Yes

Slight pause.

CHLOE: You might be a naïve kid from the country, Sasha, but I don't

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think you're that much of a fool. You may not have paid for this now but you'll pay eventually, I promise you that, dear. You always do.

SASHA glowers at her.

CHLOE produces a gift-wrapped package from one of her bags.

(placing the package on the table) Here. A present from Majorca. You might as well have it. Nice little piece of local pottery. Though God knows where you're going to put it in here. Goodbye, then.

SASHA: *(with growing fury, quietly at first)* You're just jealous, aren't you? Got a boyfriend treats you like dirt, has you trotting around after him like a bloody little dog, here girl, beg girl, roll over. Pathetic! Woman of your age. No wonder you're half-falling apart. Pathetic! No wonder people laugh at you. Behind your back. Laughing at you, you're so pathetic. And then you see me getting people running after **me**. Treating me like I was special and you can't stand it, can you? Ignorant little country girl, me! And look at me now eh? You know how much this necklace cost, you know how much this bracelet was? You couldn't afford it in a bloody year, girl, I can tell you. And you just can't bear the thought of it, can you? Getting older and older, more washed-out and you're never going to make it now, are you? Bloody second-rate failure, you! Majorca? Bloody Majorca? Pathetic! Know who goes to Majorca, then, do you? Bloody second-rate bloody failures like you go to Majorca, that's who goes to Majorca. Me, bloody Pacific Ocean, mate, private yacht or nothing, me, I tell you. Well, go on then! Off you go! You want to go and sulk in a poky little bloody hotel on your own, you go! Go on, you bugger off! See if I care! Go on, get out! Get out!

SASHA stands, breathless from the outburst. CHLOE, very shaken, opens the front door, gathers up her belongings and without another word, goes out.

SASHA watches her. Impetuously, she snatches up the gift-wrapped present and goes to the front door.

(yelling after Chloe) And take your stupid, cheap, fucking Majorcan present with you!

SASHA hurls the package into the hall. We hear it shatter against the wall. Sasha returns and closes the door. She stands in the room trying to contain her anger, breathing heavily.

(after a moment, muttering to herself) Me, I only have expensive things in here.

As she stands, still recovering, the light fades to:

Blackout.

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