

Private Lives

By Noel Coward

[There is a dead silence.]

AMANDA: What have you been doing lately? During these last years?

ELYOT: Travelling about. I went round the world you know after

AMANDA *[hurriedly]*: Yes, yes, I know. How was it?

ELYOT: The world?

AMANDA: Yes.

ELYOT: Oh, highly enjoyable.

AMANDA: China must be very interesting.

ELYOT: Very big, China.

AMANDA: And Japan

ELYOT: Very small.

AMANDA: Did you eat sharks' fins, and take your shoes off, and use chopsticks and everything?

ELYOT: Practically everything.

AMANDA: And India, the burning Ghars, or Ghats, or whatever they are, and the Taj Mahal. How was the Taj Mahal?

ELYOT *[looking at her]*: Unbelievable, a sort of dream.

AMANDA: That was the moonlight, I expect; you must have seen it in the moonlight.

ELYOT *[never taking his eyes off her face]*: Yes, moonlight is cruelly deceptive.

AMANDA: And it didn't look like a biscuit box did it? I've always felt that it might.

ELYOT *[quietly]*: Darling, darling, I love you so.

AMANDA: And I do hope you met a sacred elephant. They're lint white I believe, and very, very sweet.

ELYOT: I've never loved anyone else for an instant.

AMANDA *[raising her hand feebly in protest]*: No, no, you mustn't-Elyot-stop.

ELYOT: You love me, too, don't you? There's no doubt about it anywhere, is there?

AMANDA: No, no doubt anywhere.

ELYOT: You're looking very lovely you know, in this damned moonlight. Your skin is clear and cool, and your eyes are shining, and you're growing lovelier and lovelier every second as I look at you. You don't hold any mystery for me, darling, do you mind? There isn't a particle of you that I don't know, remember, and want.

AMANDA *[softly]*: I'm glad, my sweet.

ELYOT: More than any desire anywhere, deep down in my deepest heart I want you back again-please

AMANDA *[putting her hand over his mouth]*: Don't say any more; you're making me cry so dreadfully.

[He pulls her gently into his arms and they stand silently, completely oblivious to everything but the moment, and each other. When finally, they separate, they sit down, rather breathlessly, on the balustrade.]