PENGUIN READERS LEVEL 3

Miranda Hilliard does not live with her husband, Daniel. One day Madame Doubtfire comes to work for Miranda and help with the children. But Madame Doubtfire seems strange, more like a man than a woman . . .

Penguin Readers is a series of simplified stories which introduces you step-by-step to the literature that has made Penguin Books world famous. This series offers you classics, best-sellers, film-titles and original stories. Each book has extensive exercises, a detailed introduction and clear information about the syllabus. They are published at six levels from Beginner (300 words) to Advanced (3000 words).

The Series Editor is Derek Strange, a leading authority on reading schemes.

TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX
BLUE WOLF CHRIS COLUMBUS ROBIN WILLIAMS SALLY FIELD "MRS. DOUBTFIRE" PIERCE BROSNAN
HARVEY FIERSTEIN ROBERT PROSKY RAJA GOSNELL ANGELO GRAHAM DONALD McALPINE JOAN BRADSHAW
MATTHEW RUSHTON RANDI MAYEM SINGER LESLIE DIXON CHRIS COLUMBUS ANNE FINE
MARSHA GARCES WILLIAMS, ROBIN WILLIAMS MARK RADCLIFFE CHRIS COLUMBUS

- [ ] 6 Advanced (3000 words)
- [ ] 5 Upper Intermediate (2300 words)
- [ ] 4 Intermediate (1650 words)
- [x] 3 Pre-Intermediate (1050 words)
- [ ] 2 Elementary (500 words)
- [ ] 1 Beginner (300 words)

PENGUIN

ISBN 0-14-081494-9
90901
9 780140 814941

MRS. DOUBTFIRE

THE BRILLIANTLY FUNNY FILM FROM TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX
BASED ON THE NOVEL

Prof Anna Laura Cinca 5to año C Pellipini

MADAME DOUBTFIRE



ANNE FINE

PENGUIN READERS

OTHER TITLES IN THE SERIES

The following titles are available at Levels 2, 3 and 4:

Level 2
Baywatch
The Birds
The Canterville Ghost and the Model Millionaire
The Cay
Chocky
The Diary
Don't Look Behind You
Don't Look Now
Emily
Flour Babies
The Fox
Free Willy
The Ghost of Genny Castle
Grandad's Eleven
Jumanji
The Lady in the Lake
Little Women
Money to Burn
Persuasion
The Railway Children
The Room in the Tower and Other Ghost Stories
The Secret Garden
The Sheep-Pig
Simply Suspense
Slinky Jane
Stealing the Hills
Treasure Island
The Treasure Seekers
Under the Greenwood Tree
The Wave
We Are All Guilty
The Weirdo

Level 3
Black Beauty
The Black Cat and Other Stories
The Book of Heroic Failures
Braveheart
Calling All Monsters
A Catskill Eagle
Channel Runner
Cranford
The Darling Buds of May
Dubliners
Earthdark
Eraser
Forrest Gump
The Fugitive
Get Shorty
Goggle Eyes
Jane Eyre
King Solomon's Mines
The Man with Two Shadows and Other Ghost Stories
More Heroic Failures
Mrs Dalloway
My Fair Lady
My Family and Other Animals
Not a Penny More, Not a Penny Less
NYPD Blue: Blue Beginning
The Portrait of a Lady
Rain Man
The Reluctant Queen
Santorini
Sense and Sensibility
Sherlock Holmes and the Mystery of Boscombe Pool
St Agnes' Stand
StarGate
Summer of My German Soldier
The Thirty-nine Steps
Thunder Point
Time Bird
The Turn of the Screw
Twice Shy

Level 4
The Boys from Brazil
The Breathing Method
The Burden of Proof
The Client
The Danger
Detective Work
The Doll's House and Other Stories
Dracula
Far from the Madding Crowd
Farewell, My Lovely
Glitz
Gone with the Wind, Part 1
Gone with the Wind, Part 2
The House of Stairs
The Locked Room and Other Horror Stories
The Lost World
The Mill on the Floss
The Mosquito Coast
The Picture of Dorian Gray
Seven
Strangers on a Train
White Fang

For a complete list of the titles available in the Penguin Readers series please write to the following address for a catalogue: Penguin ELT Marketing Department, Penguin Books Ltd, 27 Wrights Lane, London W8 5TZ.

Madame Doubtfire

ANNE FINE

Level 3

Adapted by J. Y. K. Kerr from a novel by Anne Fine
Series Editor: Derek Strange



PENGUIN BOOKS

Madame Doubtfire

WANTED: CLEANER WHO CAN ALSO LOOK AFTER CHILDREN.

Miranda got only four telephone calls in answer to her advertisement. This was surprising. All the women who called had strangely low voices . . .

The Hilliards are at war. Daniel loves his children. He wants to see them more often. The trouble is, Miranda, their mother, wants him to see them less.

Miranda has the house. Miranda has the children. There's nothing he can do. But then Miranda needs a cleaning woman . . .

Anne Fine was born in Leicester, England, one of five girls. After leaving university, she worked as a teacher. She got married in 1968, and spent many years living in the USA, Canada and Scotland with her husband and two daughters. She now lives in Durham, England. She says that growing up can be very difficult – but also very funny.

There is a film of *Madame Doubtfire*, with the actor Robin Williams in it. It is called *Mrs Doubtfire* (1993).

KEL English books for everyone.
M. T. Alvear 1369 - Capital
Emilio Frers 2228 - Martínez
Conde 1990 - Belgrano "R"

PENGUIN BOOKS

Published by the Penguin Group
Penguin Books Ltd, 27 Wrights Lane, London W8 5TZ, England
Penguin Books USA Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, New York 10014, USA
Penguin Books Australia Ltd, Ringwood, Victoria, Australia
Penguin Books Canada Ltd, 10 Alcorn Avenue, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4V 3B2
Penguin Books (NZ) Ltd, 182–190 Wairau Road, Auckland 10, New Zealand

Penguin Books Ltd, Registered Offices: Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England

First published by Hamish Hamilton Children's Books 1987
This adaptation published by Penguin Books 1995
9 10

Copyright © J. Y. K. Kerr 1995
Illustrations copyright © Rowan Clifford 1995
All rights reserved

The moral right of the adapter and of the illustrator has been asserted

Illustrations by Rowan Clifford

Printed in England by Clays Ltd, St Ives plc
Set in 11/13 pt Lasercomp Bembo by
Datix International Limited, Bungay, Suffolk

Except in the United States of America, this book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, resold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser

To the teacher:

In addition to all the language forms of Levels One and Two, which are used again at this level of the series, the main verb forms and tenses used at Level Three are:

- past continuous verbs, present perfect simple verbs, conditional clauses (using the 'first' or 'open future' conditional), question tags and further common phrasal verbs
- modal verbs: *have* (*got*) *to* and *don't have to* (to express obligation), *need to* and *needn't* (to express necessity), *could* and *was able to* (to describe past ability), *could* and *would* (in offers and polite requests for help), and *shall* (for future plans, offers and suggestions).

Also used are:

- relative pronouns: *who*, *that* and *which* (in defining clauses)
- conjunctions: *if* and *since* (for time or reason), *so that* (for purpose or result) and *while*
- indirect speech (questions)
- participle clauses.

Specific attention is paid to vocabulary development in the Vocabulary Work exercises at the end of the book. These exercises are aimed at training students to enlarge their vocabulary systematically through intelligent reading and effective use of a dictionary.

To the student:

Dictionary Words:

- When you read this book, you will find that some words are darker black than the others on the page. Look them up in your dictionary, if you do not already know them, or try to guess the meaning of the words first, without a dictionary.

Before you read:

1 Look at the pictures in this book. They show some of the things which happen in the story. Now look at the list below. Which of the things in the list did you see in the pictures? Write 'yes' or 'no' for each one.

a driving a car
b reading a story
c painting a picture
d playing football
e looking at a bird
f gardening
g sitting in a theatre
h having a shower
i sleeping
j having a meal
k talking on the telephone
l buying clothes
m listening to a story
n cooking
o cleaning the house
p going upstairs

2 The pictures have given you some ideas about the story. Do you think it is:

a crime story
a mystery story
a funny story
a love story

Why do you think so?

CHAPTER ONE

A Quiet Afternoon Tea with Dad

It was tea-time on a Tuesday. The three children were on the stairs, going up to their father's apartment. Nobody wanted to carry the envelope. Lydia, who was the tallest, pushed it inside Christopher's shirt. Christopher pulled it out and said 'Here, Natty, give this to Dad.' Natalie shook her head angrily and put her hands behind her back, so Christopher dropped it down the front of her dress. When Daniel Hilliard opened the door to welcome them, he could see **tears** in Natalie's eyes.

'What is it you do to your sister?' he asked the other two. 'She's going to cry again.' Lydia looked away. Christopher turned red.

'Sorry,' they said.

Daniel carried Natalie, his youngest daughter, into the kitchen and sat her on the table. Then he noticed the letter inside her dress and took it out.

'Aha!' he said. 'Another letter from the Stone Woman! And how is she, your mother?'

'She thought she was getting a cold last week,' said Lydia, 'but then she got better.'

'That's a pity,' said Daniel. 'I mean, I'm glad.'

Nobody spoke. Christopher was sitting next to his **pet quail** in its box, singing to it softly. The bird looked like a little grey ball. It jumped up and down, making excited noises.

'Daddy, Mummy sends you her love,' said Natalie sweetly.

'Love from the Stone Woman? I don't believe it,' answered Daniel.

Natalie looked sad and hid her face.

'Poor Natty, it's hard for you, isn't it?' said Daniel and gave her a kiss.

'Why don't *you* try a bit harder?' said Lydia. 'You don't make it any easier for her, you know.'

'What do you mean by that?'

'I mean we only come here on Tuesdays for tea and every second weekend,' Lydia explained. 'It isn't much – we all know that. So it's nicer for Natty if she doesn't have to spend the time listening to all the unpleasant things you say about our mother.'

'You're right,' said Daniel. 'I must try harder. And I won't read the letter now. I'll read it later. I'm sure it's not important.'

Lydia and Christopher looked at each other quickly. They already knew what the letter said. Then the warm smell of cooking reached them from the oven. 'The bread!' said Daniel. 'Are you ready to eat?'

The three children suddenly became alive. Lydia moved her father's papers from the table top. Christopher looked for clean plates, knives and spoons for each person. Natalie went to bring glasses and a bottle of milk. Daniel took the hot bread out of the oven and put it on a dish. It lay there for a minute, big and round; then suddenly it got much smaller.

'What a pity!' said Natalie sadly.

'Mum says that often happens if you cook it too long,' said Lydia. But Daniel didn't agree. 'I didn't *cook* it too long,' he told them. 'It *waited* too long. Like me, it had to wait forty minutes until your mother was ready to bring you here.'

This **annoyed** Lydia. 'It isn't very easy for her, you know, being a single parent,' she said.

'You don't need to tell *me* that,' said Daniel. 'I'm a single parent too. Your mother has the three of you with her for most of the week but *I* don't. Now I've lost forty minutes of the very short time I have with you, just because she can't



Daniel took the hot bread out of the oven and put it on a dish. It lay there for a minute, big and round; then suddenly it got much smaller.

be here on time and doesn't worry about my feelings.' Picking up a big kitchen knife, Daniel pretended to cut the teapot's throat. Christopher watched with a bored face but Natalie was ready to start crying again.

'Oh, please stop being so stupid, Dad,' said Lydia, still annoyed. 'Natty's going to cry again. You tell *us* not to do it and then you do just the same.' She turned to her sister. 'Stop being a baby, Natty. He hasn't hurt the teapot. Or Mum. He can't control himself. You just have to learn not to notice.'

'I promise you I'll be better in future,' said Daniel quickly. 'When your mother brings you on Friday, I'll be perfect – wait and see.'

Lydia and Christopher kept quite still. Natalie noticed this immediately. Her eyes got bigger and more tears began to fall. Daniel gave her his handkerchief. 'There's no problem with next weekend, I hope?' Lydia and Christopher looked away and said nothing. Suddenly Daniel understood. Pushing Natalie to one side he jumped up, took the envelope and opened it quickly.

'Oh how can she be so selfish, so thoughtless –'

'Dad!'

'Robbing me of my weekends. How dare she!'

'Dad, please!'

'I'll murder her! Sometimes I feel I want to cut her throat!'

'No, Daddy, no!' Natalie ran over to her father and started hitting him as hard as she could.

Lydia was just as angry. 'Really, Dad! What *are* you thinking of?'

Christopher, deeply unhappy, went to sit on the floor next to Hetty the quail. He hated **quarrels**. He asked his fat little pet what she thought of all this screaming and shouting.

'I'm sorry, Natty,' said Daniel. 'I promise I won't say any more unkind things about your mother.'



Daniel pretended to cut the teapot's throat.

'Really and truly?' said Natalie, looking straight at him. 'What does the letter say?'

'Your mother thinks that Lydia and Christopher need some new clothes. So, instead of bringing you here, she's keeping you all over Friday night to take you shopping on Saturday morning.'

'It isn't right,' said Christopher. 'It *is* Dad's weekend this time.' He turned to his father. 'Phone her up and tell her it's your weekend, not hers.'

'Perhaps she'll say yes this time,' said Natalie.

'She never does,' said Lydia hopelessly.

Daniel looked at the three sad faces. From the next room came the sound of the telephone. They sat silent. 'I'll get it,' said Daniel finally.

'No,' said Lydia, '*I'll* get it.' When she left the room Daniel saw Natalie putting her fingers in her ears. When she came back, Lydia's face was white. 'That call was really for you,' she said to her brother. 'Mum couldn't wait until you got home. She wanted you to know at once.'

'Know what?' asked Christopher, looking frightened.

'The cat killed your pet **hamsters**, Henry and Madge. They're both dead. There was blood all over the floor.'

Lydia was in tears. Christopher hid his face, his shoulders shaking. Natalie put her fingers in her ears again. Daniel looked at his **shocked** children. 'It's just like Miranda to make us all unhappy,' he said. 'One day I really will cut her throat!' Luckily Natalie, with her fingers still in her ears, couldn't hear him.

CHAPTER TWO

Naked in Front of the Neighbours

It was six o'clock – nearly time for the children to go. Daniel had a piece of news which he wanted to tell them personally. 'Listen,' he said, 'I've got a job.' (Daniel was an **actor** but these days he was always out of work.) The children looked up, trying not to laugh. 'It's down at the **art** school: four mornings and two evenings a week. It's not really an acting job but it's quite well paid.'

Lydia asked, 'What do you have to do, Dad?'

'And what do you have to wear for this job, Dad?' called out Natalie, laughing.

'You knew! You knew already!' shouted Daniel.

Christopher gave a big smile. 'Mum's terribly angry about it,' he said. 'I've never seen her so wild.'

'I don't know why she's angry. She's always telling me that I'm late with the money I send her. Why isn't she pleased that I've got a job at last?'

'But what a job, Dad,' said Lydia. '**Modelling** with no clothes on!'

'It's a real job. Someone has to do it. I think I'm quite good at it.'

'Mrs Hooper thinks so too,' Christopher told him.

'Mrs Hooper? Your next-door neighbour? How does she know?'

'She's a student in one of the art groups. She's painted you.'

'I don't believe it,' said Daniel.

'It's true,' said Natalie. 'Mr Hooper came round to show the painting to Mum. He said it was shocking.'

'Oh did he?' said Daniel. 'And what did your mother say?'

'She said it was shocking too; but she also laughed at it.'

'Your mother is usually much too busy with her work at

the Lighting Centre to laugh about anything. Why is everyone against my new job?'

'Mum says you won't make much money from it,' explained Lydia. 'Not as much as our cleaning-woman, she says.'

Daniel was surprised. 'But you don't have a cleaning-woman; and you don't need one. Your mother's house is beautifully clean. How much does she pay this person?'

'Three pounds an hour.'

'What?' Daniel was shocked. 'Three pounds an hour for cleaning a house that's clean already? Are you sure?'

'Part of the job is looking after us when we get back from school – until Mum gets home at half-past six. There's a bit of cooking, too,' Lydia explained.

'I can't believe it,' said Daniel. 'So that's how she spends the money I send her.'

'It probably isn't your money,' said Lydia. 'It's probably hers. She says she has to travel a lot this year and she needs to leave us with the right kind of person.'

'Why can't she leave you with *me*? *I'm* the right kind of person and I'm also your father.'

'You know she won't agree to that, Dad,' said Christopher. 'We did ask her but she said it just gives her too many problems.'

'We like being here with you much more than being there with somebody we don't really know. But it isn't going to happen, is it?' said Lydia.

'I can ask your mother,' said Daniel. The children were silent. 'Or perhaps I'll try something different.' A far-away light came into his eyes: it meant that he was daydreaming again. Without thinking, he took out his purple handkerchief and tied it round the loaf of bread in front of him. He pulled hard and pieces of bread flew all over the room.

The children looked at him with shocked faces but said nothing.



He took out his purple hankerchief and tied it round the loaf of bread in front of him. He pulled hard and pieces of bread flew all over the room.

CHAPTER THREE

A Visit from the Stone Woman

While they were still picking bits of bread off the floor, they heard the sound of Miranda's car from the street. Daniel looked at the time: it was only twenty minutes to seven.

'That's Mum,' said Natalie.

'Surely not,' said Daniel. 'It's much too soon.' But the children began to run around the room picking up their things.

'Stop!' Daniel shouted. 'Listen to me, all of you. This can't go on. She brings you here forty minutes late and you don't dare to say a word to her. And now she comes to get you twenty minutes early and you're all afraid that maybe she'll have to wait for half an hour. You're not just *her* children, you're *my* children too. You have to tell your mother that this time she has gone too far!'

'No,' said Christopher, '*you* have to tell her that!'

'Who? Me?' said Daniel. 'All right, I will.'

Just then there was a loud noise and the front door flew open, hitting the wall. Miranda Hilliard, businesswoman and Director of Hilliard's Lighting Centre, stood in the doorway.

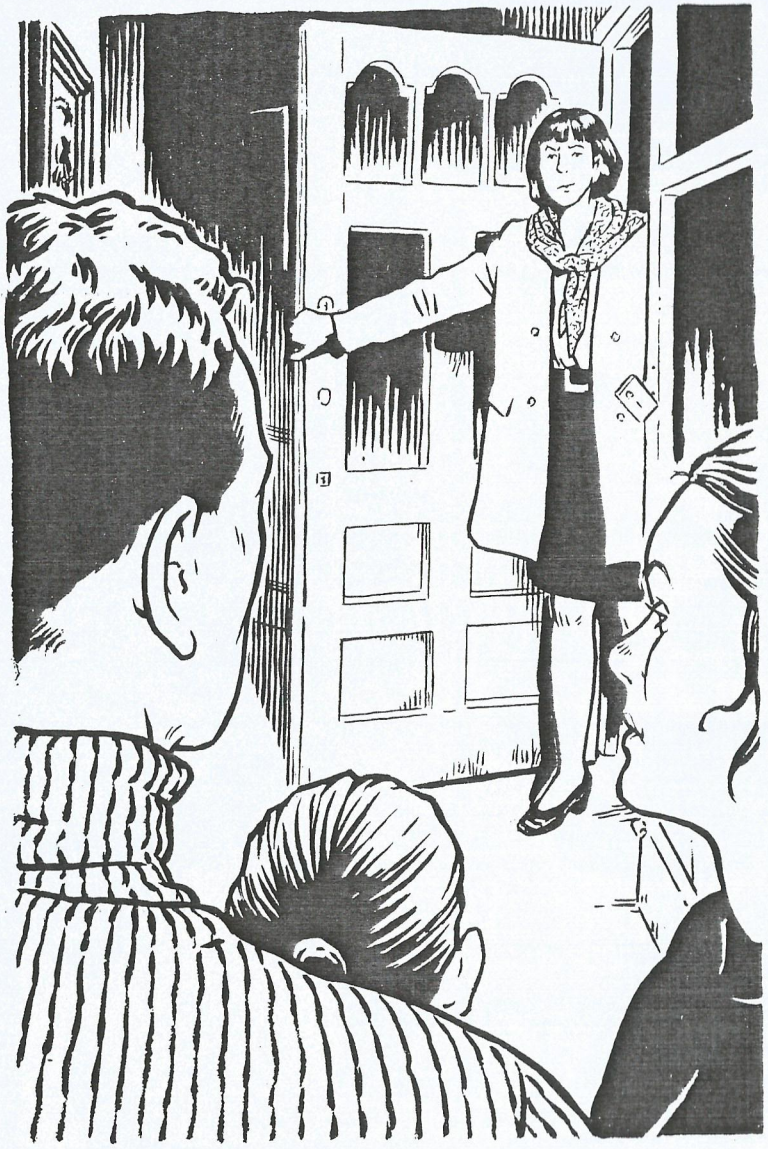
'Good evening, Dan.'

'Evening, Miranda.'

'Your front door's a bit hard to open.'

'It was locked.'

'Oh, was it?' She looked back at the door, not very interested. She began to look round the dirty, untidy room. 'What's this thing here?' she asked, pointing to the quail in its box.



Miranda Hilliard, businesswoman, stood in the doorway.

'That's Hetty, Christopher's quail. Don't you remember?'

'Does it make much **mess**? Or noise?' she asked. 'If it's not noisy, we'll take it.'

'Listen,' said Daniel. 'This isn't a shop, it's a home. It's Christopher's quail. You can't buy it.'

'Don't be so silly, Daniel. I don't want to buy it, I want to take it. It will be nice for Christopher to have in place of his dead hamsters. Try not to be so selfish. Now, children, pick up your things. We must hurry.' She took an envelope from her bag. 'We have to leave this at the newspaper office on the way home.'

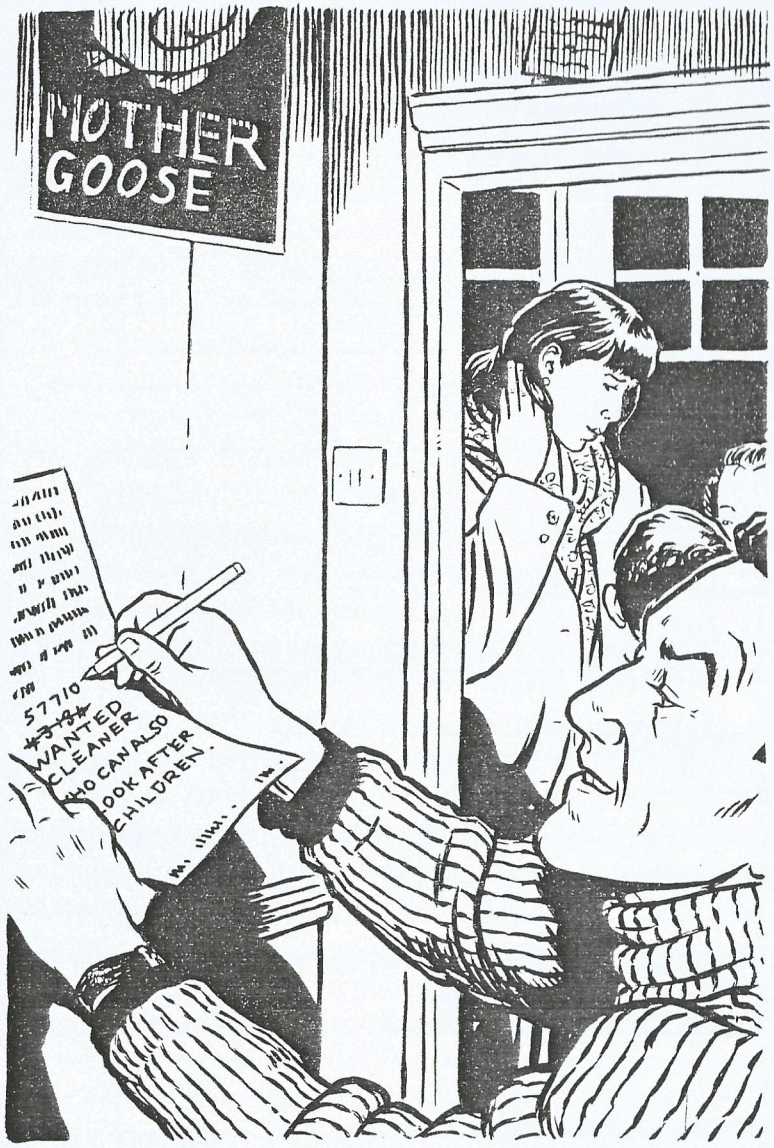
'Is that the **advertisement** for the cleaning-woman?' Lydia asked her mother. It was Daniel's time to speak, but he didn't know what to say. 'Can I read it?' he asked. It said:

WANTED:
CLEANER WHO CAN ALSO
LOOK AFTER CHILDREN
PHONE: 43184

Daniel saw Natalie's face, full of hope, watching him. 'Miranda, you don't need to pay a cleaning-woman or a **housekeeper**. The children can come here after school and you can pick them up on your way home from work.'

Miranda was not really listening. 'I'll think about it,' she said, looking bored. Daniel could see another big tear but this time it was running down Christopher's face. It fell on to the writing of the advertisement and made a small blue river down the paper.

Suddenly Daniel had a wonderful idea. 'Here, I'll put that right,' he said, pointing to the place where the tear fell. He **pretended** to make the word clearer. At the same time he quickly put a line through Miranda's telephone number and wrote his number instead. 'There, that's better,' he said. He



He quickly put a line through Miranda's telephone number and wrote his number instead.

put the piece of paper back in its envelope and pressed the envelope shut. 'Do you need a stamp, Miranda?' he asked.

'No thanks. Christopher can drop it into the letter-box at the newspaper office on the way. Goodbye, Daniel. The children will see you on Saturday when we've finished our shopping. I'm not sure what time that will be.'

Daniel put his arms round each of the children. They looked at him sadly. After they left, he began to dream of new ways of killing his difficult wife.

CHAPTER FOUR

Saying the Right Thing

Miranda got only four telephone calls in answer to her advertisement. This was surprising. All the women who called had strangely low voices. The first caller said she didn't like girls and another caller thought that these children were too old for her. The last call came many hours later, just when Miranda was beginning to lose hope. Like the other callers, the speaker's voice was quite deep and not very clear. 'Two girls and a boy? That's just lovely! I like children of any age.'

'There's a little cooking,' said Miranda.

'I only do real cooking, you know,' said the voice. 'No food from packets. Now when shall I come round and see you? Seven thirty tomorrow evening? And your name, dear? And the address?'

Miranda quickly agreed. 'And you are . . . Mrs . . .?'

'Madame, dear. Madame Doubtfire. Till tomorrow then.'

Natalie was the first to meet her. She heard a quiet knock on the front door and opened it. Madame Doubtfire was a

very big person, dressed in a full pink coat, a long thick skirt and heavy black shoes. Her hair was tied up in a kind of towel. 'You must be little Natalie,' she said. 'I'm Madame Doubtfire, dear. Going up to bed, are we? Come on then, up we go.'

Natalie quickly cleaned her teeth and sat on the toilet. Soon she was in bed. Madame Doubtfire picked up Natalie's favourite storybook and read it to her from beginning to end.

'Good night. Sleep well.'

'Good night, Daddy.'

'Shhh! You mustn't call me that. I'm Madame Doubtfire.'

'All right, Madame Doubtfire.'

'That's better.' He gave her a kiss but already she was fast asleep. When Madame Doubtfire went downstairs again, she and Miranda met in the kitchen.

Miranda was very surprised. 'Asleep? Are you sure?'

'Quite sure,' said Madame Doubtfire.

'I'll just go up and look,' said Miranda.

'Please do.'

While Miranda ran upstairs, Daniel said a quick hello to Hetty the quail and looked round the kitchen.

'Sleeping beautifully,' said Miranda. She made some coffee and began to look closely at this large, strange woman with the heavy **make-up** on her face. She looked odd but she seemed very kind.

'You don't live with your husband, dear?' asked Madame Doubtfire.

'No, we're **divorced**, I'm glad to say. He's a very difficult man.' Madame Doubtfire got to her feet but Miranda said quickly, 'Please don't go yet. Stay and meet the other two children. And then, if you like them . . .'

Just then they heard the sound of laughing at the back door. 'Here they are, back from swimming. And they'll be so hungry.' Miranda went to the fridge.

Madame Doubtfire turned to meet the newcomers. 'Hello, I'm Madame Doubtfire. I've come about the housekeeping job. I hope we'll be friends.'

Lydia looked very hard at this big, strangely dressed woman. Nobody spoke. Then Christopher threw his wet swimming things on the floor and said angrily, 'Why can't Dad look after us?'

'Young man, is that the way you usually speak to your mother?' said Madame Doubtfire. Christopher turned bright red. Lydia's mouth fell open. Miranda nearly dropped the plate she was holding. Madame Doubtfire went on:

'Your mother has had a long, hard day, making money to pay for your home and your swimming. And now you are rude to her in front of a perfect stranger. We don't like to hear that from you, Christopher.'

'I'm sorry,' said Christopher quietly.

Meanwhile Lydia was looking very hard at Madame Doubtfire. She seemed strangely excited. 'Oh Christopher, you're so stupid,' she said, pulling him by his jacket. 'Come on! Upstairs! We've got so much homework to do, we must get started. So nice to meet you,' she called to Madame Doubtfire. 'I'm sure we'll be *great* friends. And Christopher too, of course.'

Miranda lay back in her chair. 'Well, Madame Doubtfire, everybody likes you, you see.'

'They're lovely children, dear. But I do think your little boy needs a strong hand.'

Miranda smiled. 'I quite agree,' she said. 'And Madame Doubtfire, the job's yours!'



'Hello, I'm Madame Doubtfire. I've come about the housekeeping job. I hope we'll be friends.'

CHAPTER FIVE

Learning to Do the New Job

It was two weeks later. Lydia and Christopher, back from school, were working hard, cleaning and tidying their bedrooms, while Madame Doubtfire watched them. She was smoking a small cigar. 'Make the house really tidy,' she told them, 'or I'll lose my job.'

'Why do you get the money for cleaning the house while we have to do the work?' asked Christopher, feeling annoyed. 'And what are we having for supper? We're so hungry.'

'Listen,' said Madame Doubtfire, 'I help you with your homework. I do the washing. I haven't time to do all the shopping and cooking too. What about quail for supper?'

'You mean eat Hetty?' said Christopher, terribly shocked. 'We can't possibly do that! Don't worry about cooking the meal. Lydia and I will do it.'

Madame Doubtfire sat down and looked out of the window with a smile on her face.

The two older children understood that Daniel and Madame Doubtfire were the same person. Lydia thought it was funny. Christopher was always worried, asking himself, 'what if our mother finds out?' But Natalie wanted to believe in Madame Doubtfire. So now Daniel was careful to drink his beer in a teacup and to smoke his cigars only when Natalie wasn't there. Every day before tea-time he locked himself in the bathroom for a second shave.

Natalie liked to follow Madame Doubtfire round the house, talking about her school, her games and her Daddy.



'Make the house really tidy,' she told them, 'or I'll lose my job.'

'I'm going to give my Daddy a tie for his birthday,' she said. 'A pink one.'

'That's nice, dear,' said Madame Doubtfire.

'Do you think he likes pink?'

'Why not ask him, dear?'

'Yes, I will ask him, when we go to tea next Tuesday.'

When Miranda got home, she was very tired.

'Just before I go, dear,' said Madame Doubtfire, 'the children's father phoned.'

'Oh **God**, what did he want this time?'

'He doesn't phone very often, you know,' said Madame Doubtfire.

But Miranda didn't forgive people easily. 'He doesn't need to phone at *any* time. He knows the children's programme of visits perfectly well by now. So what did he want?'

'He wants to take the children to the theatre on Saturday afternoon.'

Natalie gave a happy, excited scream.

'This Saturday? But it's *my* weekend this Saturday,' said Miranda, looking angry.

'But you're away until six on Saturday, dear, at that meeting in Wolverhampton. That's what you said,' Madame Doubtfire told her.

Christopher ran up to his mother. 'Oh, please can we go with Dad on Saturday, Mum? We haven't been to the theatre for years! Please, please, please!'

'Oh I don't know,' said Miranda, feeling annoyed. 'Why does he always give me problems? He's impossible!'

It was time for Madame Doubtfire to speak. 'I think this is your mother's way of saying "yes", dears,' she said. 'Your father is Daniel Hilliard, isn't he? I've seen him acting, you know. He's very good.'

Lydia was smiling, but Christopher was worried that



'Oh, please can we go with Dad on Saturday, Mum? We haven't been to the theatre for years!'

his father was trying to be too clever. 'Your bus!' he cried. 'You mustn't miss your bus!'

Madame Doubtfire picked up her coat and bag and ran to the door, blowing kisses at the children. 'Goodbye, my dears,' she called. 'Until tomorrow!'

When Miranda went upstairs, she found every room clean and tidy. 'Madame Doubtfire is wonderful,' she thought, 'but she's also very odd.' She turned to Christopher. 'How do you like Madame Doubtfire?' she asked.

'Oh she's great, just great,' was the answer.

'What do *you* think, Lydia?' Miranda wanted to know. 'Don't you think she's strange?'

'Well,' Lydia smiled, 'she is a *little* strange.'

'But don't you think it's better than having more time with your father?'

'Well, perhaps not better, but I have to say it's *different*.'

Natalie's answer was, 'I think Madame Doubtfire is the person I like best in the whole world.'

'But what about Dad?' Lydia asked her.

Natalie suddenly looked terribly frightened. At first she didn't answer. Then she breathed deeply and said, 'I think I like them both . . . just the same!'

CHAPTER SIX

Happy Families

'How about a nice cup of tea, dear?'

Miranda, just back from her work, was sitting in front of the warm fire. She gladly took the cup which Madame Doubtfire was offering. The tea, the fire, the comfortable chair: everything was perfect. Madame Doubtfire did look a

little strange but she was perfect too. It was wonderful to come home to a clean house and find the supper ready and the children quietly doing their homework.

'I'll just build up the fire before I go,' said Madame Doubtfire.

'You're wonderful, Madame Doubtfire. You're better than a husband!'

'Oh really?' said Madame Doubtfire, picking up her handbag. 'Why is your husband so terrible?'

'Oh he's just an impossible person!' And Miranda began to tell her about all Daniel's crazy adventures, starting with their wedding day. 'You hope people will change after they get married, but they don't. In the end I felt so ashamed of all the terrible things he did. I was very unhappy.'

'Well, it all happened long ago, dear,' said Madame Doubtfire. 'It's all over now.'

'You think it's over?' said Miranda with strong feeling. 'Just look at this! Mr Hooper from next door brought it round a few days ago.' She pulled something out from behind a cupboard. It was one of Mrs Hooper's paintings from the art school. It showed Daniel's naked body, all out of shape and painted in unpleasant pink and purple colours, looking terribly ugly. The worst thing, of course, was that he had no clothes on.

Daniel wanted to shut his eyes but he had to look. 'Oh my God!' he said weakly.

Lydia and Christopher began to laugh. 'It isn't funny,' said Miranda. 'And what's worse, I found out today that your father is planning to do his modelling right here in my own home.'

They were all too surprised to speak. Did Miranda know the true facts about Madame Doubtfire? 'That's right, look shocked,' Miranda continued. 'He's going to be here in this room modelling for the art group – naked! It's all because the



She picked up the painting. 'Isn't it really and truly terrible? I'm going to throw it out right now!'

art school is closing for half-term and Mrs Hooper has workmen in her house. I told her the group could meet here. Oh, why was I so stupid?'

Madame Doubtfire was looking worried. 'I'm sure they can find another place to meet, dear.'

'That's what I thought; but they say they can't.'

'So they're all coming here?'

'At ten o'clock next Tuesday morning.'

'I'm so glad I don't come on Tuesdays, dear. Thankfully I shall miss it.'

'But you *must* be here!' said Miranda. 'Think of all those strangers in the house! When you started this job, you agreed to come at other times if I needed you. This is one of those times. I *must* have you here.' She picked up the painting. 'Isn't it really and truly terrible? I'm going to throw it out right now!' Miranda went to leave the picture outside the back door, and Daniel's eyes followed every movement she made. He pretended to throw a bomb at her, then turned and saw the three children watching him.

'Not here, Dad,' said Lydia quietly. 'Not here in her own home.'

'Sorry,' said Daniel, feeling ashamed. 'Sorry, Lydia.'

CHAPTER SEVEN

Actors and Happy Pigs

The trip to the theatre was not as enjoyable as Daniel hoped. The tickets were cheap ones and they couldn't see the **play** very well from that part of the theatre. Natalie tried to see better by sitting on Daniel's knee, but she fell asleep almost immediately. In fact the play wasn't very suitable for children,

so he was glad that she slept through it. It was about a husband and wife who were happily married and another husband and wife who were unhappily married. There was a lot of shouting and screaming. Natalie felt so heavy that Daniel's arm and both his legs lost all feeling by the end of the play. But both Lydia and Christopher thought the play was wonderful. 'The best acting I've ever seen,' said Lydia. 'Their feelings were so real, weren't they?'

'Oh, it's just acting. It's just a job,' said Daniel. 'You don't really have to feel all those feelings when you're acting, you know.'

'Is it time to go home now?' asked Christopher. Daniel knew that 'home' for the children meant Springer Avenue. This annoyed him, so he decided to take them back to *his* home instead of to Miranda's.

When they were in Daniel's flat, Christopher suddenly said, 'You're a good actor, Dad. Why didn't you stay in the family and *pretend* to be happy instead of leaving? You've just told us acting is only a job, you don't really feel all those feelings, so why didn't you stay?'

Suddenly Daniel became so angry he seemed to go crazy. He took Christopher by the neck and threw him against the wall. 'Why, why, why?' he shouted. 'Because a job is just a job but real **life** is real!' Slowly he began to control himself and took his hands away from his son's throat.

'I'm sorry,' Christopher said, very frightened. 'I didn't mean any of that.'

'Of course you meant it!' said Daniel, still angry. 'You want me to live in that house day after day, year after year, living a lie with your mother, just pretending it's an acting job?'

To his surprise it was Lydia who said, 'And why not? You and Mum had us children to look after. You can't just stop



The play was about a husband and wife who were happily married and another husband and wife who were unhappily married.

being a father because you decide you can't live with your wife.'

Daniel became much angrier than before. 'How dare you?' he shouted. 'Have I *ever* stopped being your father?'

'But you didn't *have* to leave, Dad. Why not just act, the way Christopher said?'

'Because I'm a living person, that's why! I'm real! I breathe, I think, I feel. I have only one life and I want to live it, not act it. I'm not a happy pig!'

Slowly Daniel became calmer. The three of them went to the sitting-room where Natalie was. 'What did you mean about happy pigs?' asked Lydia finally.

'It's just that some things are important,' answered Daniel. 'A famous man once said, "It is better to be an unhappy thinker than a happy pig."'

The children thought about this. 'Probably he was right,' said Lydia. Christopher agreed but Natalie didn't. 'I like pigs,' she said.

'I can't spend every day acting just to have a quiet life,' said Daniel.

'But what about you and Madame Doubtfire? That's acting, isn't it? And the worst thing is that *we* have to act too. Being with Madame Doubtfire isn't like being with you when you're Dad.'

Just then they heard the sound of the phone.

'I'll get it,' said Daniel. 'Listen to this piece of acting!' He began speaking into the phone. 'Lovely to hear from you, Miranda. What, seven o'clock already? And you want them back immediately? You're sending a taxi and want me to pay? Of course. No problem. So sorry. Yes. Goodbye, Miranda.' He gave the telephone to Lydia. 'Here, your Mum wants a quick word.'

Lydia's conversation was much the same. Christopher was smiling. 'Maybe Lydia is good at acting too.'

'It's true,' said Lydia. 'It wasn't a very real phone call, was it? We can all *stop*, you know.'

'All stop what?'

'Stop acting. And being happy pigs. We can say what we're really thinking, instead.'

It was time for the children to go. Daniel gave Lydia the money for the taxi and said goodbye. 'You realize that if there's no more acting, Madame Doubtfire will have to leave her job?'

'We'll think of some other way to see more of you,' Lydia called back, waving from the taxi.

The taxi drove away and Daniel began daydreaming again. 'War,' he said softly. 'War.' This time he dreamed of sending aeroplanes to bomb Miranda in Springer Avenue.

'And now Madame Doubtfire has to write and tell her that she can't go on with the job,' he said to himself, smiling.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Don't Mend the Roof on the Day of a Storm

Daniel arrived for work at Springer Avenue on Tuesday morning, wearing a clean skirt and a pretty new hat. He was surprised to find his three children waiting for him.

'Why aren't you in school?' he asked.

'There's a **strike**. Natalie gave you the letter yesterday.' Daniel now remembered that there was a letter from school which he forgot to read.

'Oh well, it doesn't matter,' he said. But then he remembered: the art group! His face went white. 'Yes it does matter!' he said. 'You can't stay here today.'

'Why not?'

'Because the art group is meeting here this morning. I have to model for them – naked.'

'That's all right,' the children said politely. 'We've seen you naked before.'

'But it's not all right for *me*. No, no, no!' shouted Daniel. 'Can't you go and play somewhere? Or read or paint or cook? Oh God, what shall I do?'

The children ran upstairs laughing. Daniel hurried into the kitchen to get the coffee ready. There was a knock at the door. It was Mrs Hooper, the next-door neighbour. 'Good morning, Madame Doubtfire,' she said brightly.

'You're a little early I'm afraid, dear,' said Daniel; but Mrs Hooper pushed past him. Behind her, Daniel could see other people in the group with their paper and paints. He ran back to the kitchen and began serving coffee. Soon there were eleven people, all eating and drinking.

Daniel's plan was to disappear, change and come round to the front door dressed like Daniel. But suddenly he realized the terrible fact: he didn't have any men's clothes with him! No jacket, no trousers or shoes.

'Have you finished your coffee, everyone?' Madame Doubtfire called sweetly. 'I'll just go and get Mr Hilliard for you.'

Leaving the art students in the sitting-room, Daniel ran upstairs. Christopher was waiting for him. 'Quick, help me change,' Daniel said. 'I need one of your mother's dresses to put round me.' He cleaned the make-up from his face and took off Madame Doubtfire's clothes. He looked wildly for something to cover himself with but nothing seemed right. Finally he decided to wear a brightly coloured beach towel round his middle.

'Mum doesn't know about the strike,' explained Christopher. 'She thinks that we're at school. We left as usual this morning and then hid in the garden until she went to work.'



'You're a little early I'm afraid, dear,' said Daniel; but Mrs Hooper pushed past him. Behind her, Daniel could see other people in the group with their paper and paints.

'What if she's read Madame Doubtfire's letter?' said Daniel, looking worried. 'Maybe she'll come home early to ask her not to leave.'

'If she comes back early, you're a dead man!'

'Oh God!' said Daniel and ran downstairs. The students spent some time asking him to sit in this way or that, but finally everyone was pleased with the model. Time passed and Daniel began to feel calmer. The children were out of the way, Miranda was at work and nobody was asking for Madame Doubtfire.

But in fact trouble was already on the way. Suddenly he noticed the heads of his three children outside, looking in through the window with big smiles on their faces. And then – much worse – he saw Miranda Hilliard. She was hurrying towards the house. 'Oh dear God,' said Daniel to himself, 'please, please save me!'

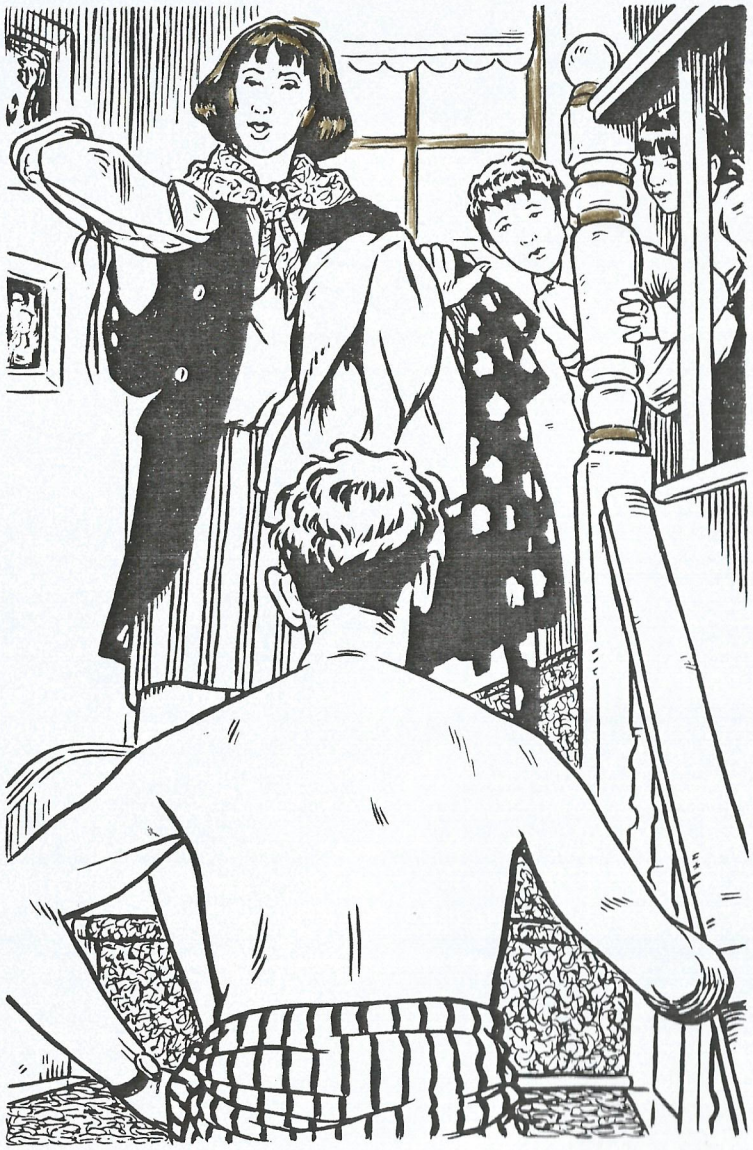
He could hear Miranda shouting at the children. 'Why aren't you in school? What? A strike? Where's Madame Doubtfire?' They went in by the back door and then went upstairs, Miranda still shouting. It was too much. He jumped off his chair. 'Sorry!' he said, 'back in a minute!' and ran out of the room.

He met her half-way up the stairs. Miranda was holding Madame Doubtfire's clothes in her hand, looking confused. 'What are *you* doing here? Where's Madame Doubtfire?' She looked at him closely, then at the clothes. Suddenly she understood. '*You* were Madame Doubtfire all the time!'

'Miranda, please. I can explain.'

She threw the clothes in his face. 'How dare you! How dare you make a fool of me like this! And get my own children to tell lies to me!'

'That's enough, Miranda,' said Daniel. 'It was you who didn't like the children spending their time with me. You usually brought them hours late.'



'You *were Madame Doubtfire all the time!*'

'Yes, I *was* late sometimes. Because I have a job. For fourteen years I've worked long hours to keep this family. And you just sit in your messy old flat waiting for me to bring the children to you. You don't know what hard work is!'

The quarrel grew longer and louder and more hateful. The children sat listening at the top of the stairs, their faces white. Below, the students of the painting group silently left the house, pretending not to hear anything. 'I'll never forgive you for this, Daniel. Never! The children understand, don't you?' Miranda looked round at them but none of them moved or spoke.

'They won't stop loving me. I am their *mother*!'

'They won't stop loving *me*. I am their *father*!'

Lydia stood up. 'I hate you *both*!' she said, in a shaky voice. She went into her bedroom and shut the door.

Miranda turned to Natalie but Christopher picked his little sister up. 'Go on with your stupid quarrel!' he shouted, 'and just leave us alone!' They followed Lydia into her bedroom and again the door shut.

Daniel felt terrible. 'Miranda –'

'Get out of this house!'

'What about the children? It *is* Tuesday, remember.'

Miranda's face was white and angry. Quickly, Daniel ran downstairs. He took off his towel and put on Madame Doubtfire's clothes again. Miranda sat on the stairs without moving or speaking. Daniel left the house.

CHAPTER NINE

A Book at Bedtime

Daniel went home feeling deeply unhappy. When he reached his flat, the first thing he did was to put on his usual clothes. Then he put all Madame Doubtfire's hats, coats and skirts into a black plastic bag and left the bag outside the back door.

Then he went out to buy things for cleaning the house. He washed the kitchen floor until it shone and then he cleaned the dirty old oven. Next he cleaned the kitchen walls and all the windows in the flat, inside and out. He was just finishing when there was a knock at the door. His older daughter stood outside.

'Lydia! You've come!'

'Yes, here I am.' Her voice was not very friendly.

'Can I make you some tea?'

'No, thank you.'

She walked past his clean kitchen and sat down in the sitting-room. Daniel sat down too. They were silent for a little. 'That was quite a quarrel between your mother and me,' said Daniel shyly.

'It was terrible, just terrible. I don't want to talk just now. I only came because it's Tuesday afternoon.'

'Because Tuesday afternoon is *my* time?'

'That's the agreement, isn't it? And, yes, there *is* something I want to say. Your life with Mum has been a mess, hasn't it? You aren't really friends any more. The only good part in all this mess is us children. It's only because of us that you go on seeing each other. Do you understand?'

'Yes, I see what you mean.'

'So it's not enough to say what you want and what Mum wants. You have to listen to what your children want too.'

'Did you tell your Mum this?'

'I tried to tell her but she wasn't listening. She was too angry. She didn't want me to come here. And then I said she must stop thinking of herself all the time and think about us. She and I had a quarrel too, you see.'

'What were you trying to tell her?'

'That you can give people orders and still not win; that you can try to control people and still lose them. She has to realize that.'

'I think she will realize it,' said Daniel softly.

'So I just left the house and took a bus and now I'm here. But I do feel tired. Can I have a rest for a little?'

'Of course.' Daniel helped her to lie down on the sofa and went to find something warm to cover her with. When he came back, she was already asleep.

It was Natalie's voice that woke Lydia up. She ran into the house calling, 'Daddy, Daddy!' looking in every room.

'Surprise, surprise!' Daniel said. 'Is Christopher with you?'

'He's coming up with Mum.'

And there Miranda was, red-eyed and white-faced. Daniel looked at her and she looked at him. They both felt deeply ashamed.

'Please,' said Daniel, 'stay for a cup of tea. You look so white and tired.' He showed Miranda into the kitchen, now shining like new.

'Oh, it looks a lot better,' she said immediately. 'Before it was so dirty that I didn't like the children having meals here. But Daniel, please understand: I don't want Madame Doubtfire back.'

'Don't worry. She's dead and gone. I'm sorry about all my acting. It wasn't a kind thing to do. Here's your tea.'



There Miranda was, red-eyed and white-faced. Daniel looked at her and she looked at him. They both felt deeply ashamed.

'Thank you,' said Miranda. She drank from her cup. 'It's nice – but not as good as Madame Doubtfire's tea! Now listen, Daniel. I don't want you back as a housekeeper. You did a good job but I don't want you in the house. But what about becoming the gardener? If you work in the afternoons, you'll still see the children after school.'

'That's a great idea. I love it,' said Daniel. They both suddenly smiled and shook hands.

'The children can stay the night, if you like,' said Miranda, 'because the strike at the school is still on, and I have to go to Birmingham early in the morning.'

'Wonderful! They'll be back at your home when you get back.'

'Thanks a lot, Dan.' Miranda gave him a quick kiss and left the apartment, waving goodbye to the children.

'That went well, didn't it?' said Christopher, when the front door closed.

'Why were you listening?' said Daniel. 'It's not your business.'

'Not my business?' said Christopher, surprised. 'Who do you think got Mum to come round here? Natty and I went on and on telling her, "It's Tuesday: we have to be at Dad's place."'

Natty was in the sitting-room. 'Will you read my book to me?' she asked, showing Daniel her favourite story. 'I've decided to keep it in your house now,' she told him.

'Your mother says you can all stay the night,' Daniel said, 'so we've got lots of time.'

Just then they heard the sound of the telephone. It was Miranda. Daniel answered, choosing his words carefully. 'Do you want the children back?' he asked.

'Oh no,' she answered. 'I've just got home and – oh, it's Hetty! She's lying in her box with her feet in the air. I'm afraid she's dead. Will you tell Christopher, please? You do it so much better than me.'

'OK. I'll tell him. But not until tomorrow. We've all had quite enough for one day.'

'I'm glad the children are with you, Dan. That means you won't miss your dear friend Madame Doubtfire too much!'

Both of them ended the conversation laughing. Daniel sat down and took Natalie on his knee. He picked up the book and began to read her favourite story to her. Christopher and Lydia pretended not to be interested, but Daniel knew that they were listening too.

The war between the Hilliards was over at last.