

inside, mostly unhappy passengers standing around the ticket counters. She pushed her way through and spoke to the clerk.

'Yes,' he said. 'Your flight has been delayed. But please don't go away. We're expecting this weather to clear at any moment.'

She went back to her husband, who was still sitting in the car, and told him the news. 'But don't wait, dear,' she said. 'There's no sense in that.'

'I won't,' he answered, 'as long as the driver can get me back. Can you get me back, driver?'

'I think so,' the man said.

'Is the luggage out?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Goodbye, dear,' Mrs Foster said, leaning into the car and giving her husband a small kiss on the rough grey fur of his cheek.

'Goodbye,' he answered. 'Have a good trip.'

The car drove off, and Mrs Foster was left alone.

The rest of the day was like a bad dream. She sat for hour after hour on a seat as close to the airline desk as possible, and every thirty minutes or so she got up and asked the clerk if the situation had changed. She always received the same reply – that she must continue to wait, because the fog might blow away at any moment. It was not until after six in the evening that it was announced that the flight had been delayed until eleven o'clock the next morning.

Mrs Foster did not quite know what to do when she heard this news. She stayed sitting on her seat for at least another half-hour, wondering, in a tired sort of way, where she might go to spend the night. She hated to leave the airport. She didn't wish to see her husband. She was frightened that in one way or another he would, in the end, manage to prevent her from getting to France. She would have liked to remain just where she was, sitting on the seat all night. That would be the safest. But she was already very

tired, and it did not take her long to realize that this was a stupid thing for an old lady to do. So in the end she went to a phone and called the house.

Her husband, who was on the point of leaving for his club, answered it himself. She told him the news, and asked whether the servants were still there.

'They've all gone,' he told her.

'In that case, dear, I'll just get myself a room somewhere for the night. And don't worry yourself about it at all.'

'That would be silly,' he said. 'You've got a large house available here. Use it.'

'But, dear, it's empty.'

'Then I'll stay with you myself.'

'There's no food in the house. There's nothing.'

'Then eat before you come in. Don't be so stupid, woman! Everything you do, you seem to want to make a problem out of it.'

'Yes,' she said. 'I'm sorry. I'll get myself a sandwich here, and then I'll come home.'

Outside, the fog had cleared a little, but it was still a long, slow drive in the taxi, and she did not arrive back at the house on 62nd Street until fairly late.

Her husband came out of his study when he heard her coming in. 'Well,' he said, standing by the door, 'how was Paris?'

'We leave at eleven in the morning,' she answered. 'It's definite.'

'You mean, if the fog clears.'

'It's clearing now. There's a wind coming up.'

'You look tired,' he said. 'You must have had an anxious day.'

'It wasn't very comfortable. I think I'll go straight to bed.'

'I've ordered a car for the morning,' he said. 'Nine o'clock.'

'Oh, thank you, dear. And I certainly hope you're not going to go to the trouble of coming all the way out again to see me off.'

'No,' he said slowly. 'I don't think I will. But there's no reason