

The woman sat by herself in the small room at the back of the house. She could hear the voices of the people sitting together in the large front room and at times a few notes from a well known air would reach her from the radio set which was always kept near the door. Generally, she liked to sit with the others in the evening, hearing them talk about the events of the day and expressing opinions on the news given out by the B.B.C. The people were employed in such different ways and they held such widely differing opinions that she who knew little about the arts in any form believed that to sit in that room was as good as going to watch a play. That night, however, she continued to sit by herself in the small and rather plain back room that had been used as an office for the past thirty years. She looked down at her hands and saw on them signs of years of hard work. Not for her were the white hands of her boarders few if any of whom had ever done any really hard word in their lives. Her hands were red and covered with little black lines. For as long as she could remember she had had to work for her living, helping her mother and afterwards working in the boarding house. That day her boarding house had been bought. She herself had signed the papers that meant that the house would pass into other hands next month another woman would own the boarding house and would plan the meals for the boarders and would or so she hoped look after their comfort and well being. Nor had she any right to be upset about this because she herself had put the house up for sale with the announcement a business for sale in good running order. The owner is willing to consider the sale at a reasonable price of the boarding house known as high view. It faces the sea and has room for 25 boarders. An interesting and profitable business for anyone willing to work. There were, it seemed, many people willing to work, for letters had been received for interested parties all over the country and she had been successful in selling the boarding house to a young woman who would, she thought, run it on the same lines as she herself had done. Again she looked down at her red and hard worked hands. For her the days of hard work were over for the sale had brought her a good round sum of money on which she could live peacefully for the rest of her days on earth without doing any work at all. A strange end to a strange life, she thought. She was 13 years old when her mother had died and she had gone to live with a relation who worked as a housekeeper in a small boarding house at the seaside.

