

## The Norman Conquests — Humour

- **Sarcasm:**
  - *“Couldn’t you have found something a little more natural? — What did you expect me to bring back? A bloody grand piano?”* (Table Manners)
  - *“You’ll spoil your meal. — Oh yes. All that lovely lettuce.”* (Table Manners)
  - *“Accidents happen, don’t they. (Annie) It wasn’t an accident. (Sarah) Oh. (Annie) No. The biscuits were so stale they threw themselves off the table in desperation. (Reg)”* (Table Manners)
  - *“Somebody’s saucepan seems to be getting rather agitated out there. (Ruth) Did you turn it down? (Sarah) No. I whispered soothing words to it. Of course, I turned it down. (Ruth)”* (Table Manners)
- **Character:**
  - *“It’s me that’s left looking stupid in front of the headmistress when you forget the names of our own children. (Sarah to Reg)”* (Table Manners)
  - *“What I always say about your salads, Annie, is that I may not enjoy eating them but I learn an awful lot about insect biology (Reg)”* (Table Manners)
  - *“Could you pass the centipede sauce, please. (Reg) Annie giggles. Sarah glares.”* (Table Manners)
  - Knock knock debacle with Tom who is his usual slow self (Living Together). Later when Reg gets them to play his game, Tom is slow and Sarah is irritated.
  - Mother listens in to Norman’s call to Ruth, and Norman threatens to wrap the phone cord around her neck (Living Together).
- **Situation & Slapstick:**
  - *“Don’t let me spoil the joke. I’m sure you both find me terribly amusing. I’m sure you all find me hilarious. (Sarah) Not at all. (Annie) Tom comes on laughing heartily”* (Table Manners)
  - Norman asks *“Do you ever get the feeling you’re being watched? Sarah’s secret agent”* (Living Together) when Reg comes in to fetch a waste paper basket.
- **Dramatic irony:**
  - *“She told me the reason why she’d planned the whole week-end. Why it had fallen through. (Tom) Oh. (Sarah) I could kick myself for being so slow off the mark. (Tom)”* (Table Manners)
- **Misunderstanding:**
  - Ruth tells Tom her ideas about women but he gets confused and thinks she is flirting with him; he gets worried about what Norman will think (Round and Round the Garden)
  - Norman and Ruth start fighting; Tom misunderstands, thinking Norman called Annie a *“tea bag”*, and punches Norman (Table Manners)
  - Annie talks about the possibility of moving out (to stir Tom into action); Tom misunderstands and says he would like first refusal (Table Manners)
- **Stereotypes & Caricature:**
  - All of the characters are stereotypes to a certain extent, but most of them break out of these stereotypes:
    - Annie plans a week-end away with Norman (after seeing her during the rest of the play, is it possible she would ever have gone?)
    - Mother reads naughty books
    - Tom gets violent with Norman
    - Sarah gives in to Norman when he seduces her
    - Ruth catches Norman with Annie and stops being indifferent
    - Norman: is he the only character who remains true to himself?