



Blithe Spirit

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Places Discussed

Living room. Central room in the Condomines' house in Kent in which the entire action of the play takes place. The home is situated somewhere between the southeastern English towns of Folkestone and Hythe. The room is described as being attractive and comfortably furnished, though it is not clear whether this reflects the tastes of Charles Condomine's first wife, Elvira, or his second, Ruth. Elvira implies that the room was designed by her and laments that it has been "spoiled" by Ruth, whose taste is "thoroughly artsy-craftsy." Significantly, the room is the one in which Elvira died, but she seems not to be tied to it and is able to leave as she wishes.

By setting the play in one room, Noël Coward brings to the fore the claustrophobic nature of the relationship between Condomine and his current wife. Ruth is not convinced of her husband's affection for her, and the gulf between her and her husband is emphasized by her being unable to see or hear Elvira, obliging her to address the empty air and frequently the wrong spot when she attempts to talk to the ghost, whereas Condomine can see and hear his first wife perfectly.

The living room becomes the focus first of the two wives' resentment of each other, manifested in their constant rearrangement of vases of flowers. Later, after Ruth's death as a result of Elvira's tampering with her car, it becomes the focus of their joint resentment of Charles, once he realizes that he is free of both of them, at which point they begin to destroy the room.

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