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THE PAPER CAVALIER

A COMEDY IN TWO ACTS

BY

BEULAH KING

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★**COMMODORE, THE.** 25 cents. A comedy in 3 acts, by ERASTUS OSGOOD. 6 males, 4 females, 2 interiors. Time, 2 hours. A very novel plot, worked out in an original manner involving the transfer of a large block of mining stock in which transaction the commodore assumes the role of a protecting genius. The dialogue is particularly bright, flows naturally and leads up to an unexpected climax, the suspense being sustained until final curtain. Amateur performances free. Professional acting rights upon application.

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★**BAD BEGINNING, A.** 25 cents. A comedy in 1 act, by ERNEST GRANT WHITE. 4 male, 2 female characters. 1 interior. Time, 1 hour. *Stephen*, a Nevada ranchman, comes to New York expecting to marry a society girl, but is "turned down cold." While preparing to return West immediately, his suite is entered by *Ann*; he assumes her to be a thief and engages her in conversation while deciding what disposition to make of her, and becoming interested loses his heart on the rebound. How it results shows that frequently at least "A Bad Beginning makes a good ending." A particularly effective sketch, and not "over the heads of beginners," is highly recommended to amateurs of some experience.

★**DR. UMPS.** 25 cents. A farcical prescription in 1 dose, by ERASTUS OSGOOD. 2 male, 2 female characters. 1 interior. Time, about 40 minutes. *John* has become a fault-finding and irritable husband. In order to reform him, *Marjory*, his wife, by means of suggestion makes him believe he is near a nervous break-down. Under the assumed name of *Dr. Umps*, she calls in her school pal, *Mrs. Small*. The routine through which *Dr. Umps* puts *John* is screamingly funny, and is so successful in its results that *Marjory* is absolutely satisfied with her attempted reformation.

★**PHARAOH'S KNOB.** 25 cents. A comedy in 1 act, by EDITH J. CRAINE. 1 male, 12 females. Time 1 hour. *Lieut. Kingston*, in love with *Elizabeth Jones*, is repulsed by her mother, who does not approve of penniless soldiers. The *Lieutenant* finds an iridescent knob and is seen by a credulous bell-hop, and for fun he tells her a fake story as to its value. This story travels rapidly among the hotel guests and as soon as it reaches *Mrs. Jones*' ears, her antipathy to the officer disappears. Eventually it becomes known that the knob belongs to an antique cabinet, but before this discovery is made, the *Lieutenant* and *Elizabeth* have been married; so *Mrs. Jones* has to approve. Introduces a clever girl bell-hop and hotel clerk, a female Sherlock Holmes and her admirer, besides other hotel guests.

★**WHOSE WIDOW?** 25 cents. A comedy in 1 act, by HELEN C. CLIFFORD. 5 males, 4 females. 1 interior. Plays about 50 minutes. *Marcella*, a young Western girl, arrives at her aunt's wearing a widow's gown, much to everyone's surprise this she did to gain more freedom. She assumes the name of *Mrs. Loney* and to her horror is soon made acquainted with persons of that name, presumably relatives of her alleged husband. The husband appears in the shape of an impostor and demands blackmail, but his plan is foiled, and after many comical incidents *Marcella* finds her match. The dialogue flows naturally and brightly, and the action is continuous. Recommended for schools.

★**ALICE'S BLIGHTED PROFESSION.** 25 cents. A sketch in 1 act, by HELEN C. CLIFFORD, for 6 or 8 girls. 1 interior. Time, about 50 minutes. *Alice*, a clientless young lawyer, seeking a stenographer, has several applicants, but none gives satisfaction. It eventually develops that all the applicants were disguised school friends of *Alice's* and adopted this method to induce her to give up the profession, which she does. Recommended for schools.

★**HER VICTORY.** 25 cents. A sketch in 1 act, by E. M. CRANE, for 17 female characters. Scene, interior of an artist's studio appropriately furnished, and arranged with such properties as are readily available. The number of characters may be cut; or several may double. Specialties, local hits, etc., may be introduced. An episode of a girl's colony in far-famed Greenwich Village of New York City, showing a bit of the trials and tribulations of a hard-working class of girls. Introduces an illustrator, a "Movie Queen," a ducky mammy, a daughter of Erin, etc. Gives great scope for character portrayal.

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By

BEULAH KING

*Author of "The Importance of Pam," "Poor Dear
Uncle James!" "His Sisters," etc.*

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The Paper Cavalier

CHARACTERS

CHARLES WAINWRIGHT.

CECILE WAINWRIGHT.....*His niece*

JOHN MARIOT.....*An aviator*

ANNE HOBSON.....*Companion to Cecile*

MRS. DAWES.....*Housekeeper*

SUSAN.....*A maid*

TIME.—The present.

LOCALITY.—Any country estate.

TIME OF PLAYING.—About one hour.

COSTUMES AND CHARACTERISTICS

CHARLES WAINWRIGHT, a dignified, rather handsome man of about 45; wears a dark business suit. ACT I, SCENE II, bathrobe and slippers.

CECILE WAINWRIGHT, a beautiful girl of about 20, stylishly dressed. ACT I, SCENE II, evening dress. ACT II, evening dress, also a large heavy coat, or a fur coat.

JOHN MARIOT, a fine-looking young man of about 28, wearing the costume of an aviator, leather coat, gaiters, etc.

ANNE HOBSON, a tall, slender girl of about 30, most severely groomed, wearing huge bone spectacles. The most that can be said in Miss Hobson's favor is that she has possibilities. ACT I, SCENE II, wears a pretty evening dress and is very much improved in appearance, having discarded the spectacles. ACT II, SCENE I, an attractive morning dress. SCENE II, evening dress.

MRS. DAWES, a plump, comfortable-looking person of about 50, wearing very neat house dress. ACT I, SCENE II, wears nightgown, hair done up in curlers.

SUSAN, a young girl of about 22, wearing the regular maid's costume. ACT I, SCENE II, nightgown.

STAGE DIRECTIONS

As seen by a performer on the stage facing the audience, R. means right hand; L., left hand; UP, toward back of stage; DOWN, toward footlights.

The Paper Cavalier

ACT I

SCENE.—*The private sitting-room of CECILE WAINWRIGHT in the tower of Castle Dreariedum, the country estate of her uncle. A circular room with a door R. leading into a small hallway which connects the rooms of the suite. The left and back walls contain windows arranged at equal intervals and between the windows are bookcases filled with dull-covered sets of books. DOWN stage R. a secretary with low chair. Writing material in secretary. DOWN stage L. is a chaise-longue with cushions, and beside it a reading-table with lamp. A framed picture of a cavalier is hidden under the cushions. There is nothing about the room to indicate that its future inhabitant is a beautiful young lady. At rise of curtain the stage is empty.*

ENTER MRS. DAWES, followed by MR. WAINWRIGHT.

MR. WAINWRIGHT. You understand, Mrs. Dawes, that it is only the unusual circumstances of the case that compel me to put my niece in the tower suite.

MRS. DAWES. I do, sir.

MR. W. You think she would be comfortable here?

MRS. D. I haven't a doubt of it, sir. Didn't Miss Cressenden prefer it and ask to be put here on her second visit to the Castle?

MR. W. Ah, yes, Mrs. Dawes, but my niece is so different from Miss Cressenden. Miss Cressenden was such a quiet, studious young lady and not a bit attracted to the opposite sex. (*With some asperity*) It was not necessary to guard her from the chauffeur.

MRS. D. If I may take the liberty to say so, sir, I think you are a bit hard on Miss Cecile. Such a dear, affectionate child!

MR. W. Come, come, Mrs. Dawes, it won't do at all for you to get sentimental about her. It isn't like you.

MRS. D. I hate to feel myself her warden, sir.

MR. W. But, my dear woman, it is for her own good. When a young lady becomes engaged three times before she is twenty she needs looking after.

MRS. D. (*slyly*). But you'll admit a young lady can't help it if she's attractive. As I heard from her own maid, the men are mad about her.

MR. W. (*pacing back and forth*). So it seems, Mrs. Dawes, so it seems, and for just that reason her father has sent her to me. There are no neighbors here, no society events. My chauffeur has been married these fifteen years. My footman is a grandfather and all my visitors are, like myself, past the age of romance.

MRS. D. (*looking at him with mournful eyes*). Ah, sir, what are you saying? You have yet to live a romance.

MR. W. (*who has heard this talk before*). Remember, I want you to have full charge of her. Such a mission would be quite out of the question, so far as I am concerned. I trust you implicitly.

MRS. D. (*with a curtsey*). Thank you, sir.

MR. W. My niece is bringing with her a young lady as companion.

MRS. D. Oh indeed, sir.

MR. W. A Miss Hobson; quiet and resourceful, as I understand it, who will be with her constantly.

MRS. D. That's nice. It will keep her from being lonely.

MR. W. Miss Hobson's chief duty, I believe, is to see that my niece engages in no retrospective moods, sentimental raptures or vain regrets.

MRS. D. Ah, yes, sir.

MR. W. To see that she posts no letters except the daily one to her father. (*Suddenly*) Of course, I know nothing positive of Miss Hobson, whether she is

trustworthy or not—that is for you to find out. You are to watch proceedings and to report everything to me. Her father has put great trust in me.

MRS. D. There can be absolutely no chance, sir, of her meeting a man in the tower of Drearietum.

ENTER SUSAN.

SUSAN. Miss Wainwright has arrived, sir, and is waiting for you in the lower hall.

MR. W. I will go down directly. (EXIT SUSAN) Now, Mrs. Dawes, I think everything is clear to you as far as my niece is concerned.

MRS. D. Absolutely, sir.

MR. W. (*hating to say it*). And there is nothing to offend—that is, go against our plans, or—er—er remind her there is a world of men?

MR. D. Nothing, sir.

MR. W. (*starting to D.*). Very well. [EXIT MR. W.]

MRS. D. (*for a second after he has gone, stands indeterminate, then she goes to the chaise-longue, takes from behind the cushions a framed picture of a charming cavalier and regards it solemnly*). I don't see the wrong in it. You belong here, if you are a man. I believe I'll hang you up after all. (*Looks about room for a fitting place*) You can't do any harm, and the poor child doesn't want to forget what a young man looks like. (*Takes the chair by the secretary, moves it to c. against rear wall and hangs the portrait between the windows. Getting down and surveying it*) You do look a bit devilish with that pose, but then you're only paper!

ENTER MISS ANNE HOBSON.

MISS HOBSON. Mrs. Dawes? (*Offers her hand*)

MRS. D. (*shaking hands with her*). Yes—I am Mrs. Dawes.

MISS H. And I am Anne Hobson, companion to Miss Wainwright.

MRS. D. (*a bit dazed*). Yes, yes, of course.

MISS H. Perhaps you didn't expect to see a person just like me.

MRS. D. Well—perhaps not, exactly.

MISS H. (*rather stiffly*). I hope we are to be friends.

MRS. D. (*laughing*). Put it companions in misery, my dear.

MISS H. Misery?

MRS. D. Well, I don't know what you'd call it, but I call it misery to keep watch over a nice innocent young lady like Miss Cecile.

MISS H. But she should not be unhappy about it. Why, I think it's wonderful here, so quiet and restful, and such a library—books upon books. I got a peep at them as I came up the staircase and I was simply thrilled.

MRS. D. Oh, my soul!

MISS H. Don't you like books? Doesn't the sight of them just thrill you?

MRS. D. Yes, but you're young. You ought to be living, not reading. Books are for the old.

MISS H. I admire books. They are my life.

MRS. D. (*aghast*). Don't you like to go to places and meet people?

MISS H. I'd much rather stay home and read.

MRS. D. (*well aware that she is rude*). Didn't you ever have a beau?

MISS H. Oh, never.

MRS. D. Then I don't wonder you didn't understand me when I spoke of companions in misery. (*Regarding ANNE solemnly*) Well, I suppose you're the one for her. Poor child.

MISS H. But why do you call her poor child? It is wonderful here with the birds and the flowers and her uncle and—me.

MRS. D. (*shaking her head*). Poor child! Has Thomas fetched the bags?

MISS H. Oh, yes.

MRS. D. Perhaps you'd like to rest a bit.

MISS H. I would. My head is so tired!

MRS. D. Come with me and I'll show you the rooms. (*They start toward D. just as CECILE ENTERS running in and flinging herself in MRS. DAWES' arms*)

CECILE (*to* MRS. DAWES). You dear thing. I'm so glad to see you. You're the only one I cared about seeing when dad told me I'd have to come here. I don't like Dreariendum, Mrs. Dawes.

MRS. D. No, no, of course not. But there, my dear, we must make the best of it. You never can tell what will turn up even at Dreariendum.

CECILE (*with a sigh*). No, I suppose not, but still you've got to admit the outlook is trying. There's Hobby. She likes it. Can you imagine it? (*Contemplating ANNE seriously*) Well, as Mrs. Dawes says, you never can tell what will happen anywhere. Why, romance may be lurking in the very corners of this tower!

MISS H. (*precisely*). A tower has no corners.

CECILE. Oh, Hobby, you're impossible. (*Catching hold of her arm*) Come on, let's get off our wraps and maybe you'll feel differently. (*They go toward D., CECILE calling back*) Wait for us, Mrs. Dawes. I've just loads to say to you. [EXIT ANNE and CECILE

MRS. D. (*with a chuckle*). I will. (*Walks over to the portrait she has just hung and talks to it*) She didn't notice you, sir, and I feel easier about letting you stay. (*Shaking her finger at it*) It's a great privilege I'm allowing you, for she's a very beautiful lady. But there, I suppose you'll fall in love with the other one. (ENTER MR. W., *hears her talking and steps back*)—just the perverseness of man, and you're no exception if you did live a hundred years ago. (*Sees MR. WAINWRIGHT*) Begging your pardon, sir. It's only me.

MR. W. But certainly I heard voices.

MRS. D. My voice, sir.

MR. W. Talking to?

MRS. D. (*shamefacedly*). Nobody, sir. (*He looks surprised*) It's just a way I have.

MR. W. (*protesting*). But, Mrs. Dawes—

MRS. D. I know, sir, it's an annoying way, but I think it must be the loneliness here that has brought it about.

MR. W. Very likely, very likely, but I would try and overcome it if I were you.

MRS. D. I will, sir. (*All the while she has been shifting positions to get his back to the portrait; now she succeeds in one final manœuvre*)

MR. W. (*in a low voice*). Well, what did she say?

MRS. D. (*still ruffled*). Say, sir?

MR. W. About being in the tower.

MRS. D. Not a word against it, sir.

MR. W. Not even about climbing the stairs?

MRS. D. Not even about climbing the stairs.

MR. W. Really? (*He is touched*)

MRS. D. And that other one is quite mad about the place, if you'll believe it, sir.

MR. W. That other one?

MRS. D. Miss Hobson, sir.

MR. W. Ah yes, there was a Miss Hobson. I remember now.

MRS. D. Didn't you speak with her, sir?

MR. W. Yes, yes, I met her on the stairs, but after that she quite slipped my mind.

MRS. D. Miss Cecile is looking well. (*Clasping her hands*) Such a beautiful child!

MR. W. If she acted as well as she looks she would be quite an angel.

MRS. D. (*slyly*). Ah, then you think she is beautiful?

MR. W. (*smiling in spite of himself*). My dear woman, I have eyes.

MRS. D. Pardon me, sir, but I didn't suppose you ever used them on a woman.

MR. W. (*stiffens perceptibly*). I came up here for the sole purpose of giving you one last instruction—at least I hope it is the last. Except when my niece is with me she is to remain in the tower.

MRS. D. I understand, sir.

[EXIT MR. WAINWRIGHT *bowing*]

MRS. D. (*looking after him*). Such a man! Too bad! There's not a woman in New York but would have him—not a one!

ENTER SUSAN.

SUSAN. Charles sent me up—said as how you wanted me.

MRS. D. I do, Susan. You are to help me in the care of the suite.

SUSAN. The suite they have shut up the beautiful lady in?

MRS. D. (*laughing*). Yes.

SUSAN. Oh, my soul!

MRS. D. You don't like the idea?

SUSAN. Don't like it? Mrs. Dawes, I'm her humble servant from this minute.

MRS. D. But your heart must be as stone, Susan. She is a prisoner.

SUSAN. Lord, then it's true what I heard downstairs.

MRS. D. Very likely it is.

SUSAN. Poor dear! Poor Miss Cecile!

MRS. D. Go into the bedrooms—on the right of the hall here, and unpack the young ladies' trunks. Miss Cecile expects you.

ENTER CECILE *and* MISS HOBSON.

CECILE (*running to the chaise-longue*). Was this chair always here? (*To MRS. DAWES*) Or did you put it here especially for me?

[EXIT SUSAN, *after allowing herself one peep at the beautiful lady.*]

MRS. D. Now, Miss Cecile. (*CECILE drapes herself upon it*)

CECILE. You had it put here, you darling.

MRS. D. I held out strong for it, although your uncle did call it by some strange name and mumbled something about a woman with a French name. (*MISS HOBSON sits in chair by secretary*)

CECILE. Really? Uncle Charles mumbled a woman's name? It can't be possible!

MISS H. He probably had reference to Madam Re-camier who reclined frequently on a chair after this kind.

CECILE. I'm sure she must have been interesting to have had a chair like this. You must tell me about her some day, Hobby.

MISS H. (*embarrassed*). Oh, no. (*With a quick look at MRS. DAWES*) That is, I couldn't.

CECILE. Why?

MISS H. (*stammering*). Because—well, because she wasn't very nice.

CECILE. Wasn't very nice? Why, Hobby, then she must be interesting and you've got to tell me about her. If you don't I shall tell Uncle Charles that you know about her.

MISS H. (*near tears*). Oh, dear, you mustn't —

CECILE. But that's just what I do, you know—the things I mustn't. I'm like that. That's why I'm here.

MRS. D. (*GOING DOWN to c.*). Poor dear, did you feel bad about leaving New York? (*MISS HOBSON GOES to window center rear*)

CECILE. Oh, Dawes, I was having the most wonderful winter. I'd captured one Lord and two Counts, besides loads of millionaires' sons. (*MISS HOBSON gasps*)

MRS. D. I haven't a doubt of it, dearie.

CECILE. I wanted to marry the last count, but papa didn't see it that way.

MISS H. (*who has been looking out of the window*). What a wonderful view!

CECILE (*GOING to window*). Let's see what's so wonderful.

MISS H. I love it —

CECILE. Just sky, sky, sky! And the gardens look a million miles away.

MISS H. (*rapturously*). Think of it! We can watch all the storms come up.

CECILE (*trying hard to find a word of praise*). Yes, and it is a wonderful place to commit suicide. Just leap—and fall—fall—fall.

MRS. D. My dear, you are morbid!

MISS H. (*clapping her hands*). Oh, see that bird! How close he flies, the dear little thing. He almost

came in at the window. Look, look, he's lighted on the parapet.

CECILE (*curiously*). What's back of the parapet?

MRS. D. A stone balcony.

CECILE. And no stairs?

MRS. D. No stairs.

CECILE. Not even a water spout?

MRS. D. Alas, no.

CECILE (*GOING to chaise-longue and sitting*). What a life!

MRS. D. (*following c.*). Ah, my dear, one can never tell what will turn up.

CECILE. Well, I've made up my mind that whatever comes will have to come out of the sky. Nothing will get by Uncle Charles' dragons. (*EXIT MRS. DAWES*) Hobby?

MISS H. (*GOING back to secretary*). Yes?

CECILE. Did you ever hear the old song—"Reuben, Reuben, I've been thinking what a sad world this would be, if the men were all transported far beyond the northern sea?" (*Leans back on the cushions*)

MISS H. No, I don't think I ever did.

CECILE (*earnestly*). Hobby, don't you like the men?

MISS H. No—that is, I don't know.

CECILE (*sitting up, with interest*). *You don't know!* You mean——

MISS H. (*shyly*). I never knew any, except my father.

CECILE. You never knew any except your father!

MISS H. No.

CECILE. But wouldn't you like to know some?

MISS H. (*quietly*). This is a rather poor place to suggest that, isn't it?

CECILE (*delighted*). Oh, Hobby, I believe you have a sense of humor.

MISS H. I think I'd be afraid to meet them.

CECILE. Oh no, you wouldn't.

MISS H. Let's not talk about such things—men, I mean.

CECILE (*stubbornly*). Yes, let's!

MISS H. It's no use. There aren't any men here.

CECILE (*sarcastically*). Oh, aren't there?

MISS H. Heavens, what do you mean?

CECILE (*in the voice of an oracle*). There is a man here for *you*.

MISS H. (*rising*). A man here for me?

CECILE. Um-um for *you*.

MISS H. But what do you mean?

CECILE. There is Uncle Charles! (MISS HOBSON *flops onto the chair*) I have decided you are to marry Uncle Charles.

MISS H. (*exploding*). When did you decide that?

CECILE. The day papa told me I was to have a companion down here.

MISS H. Good land!

CECILE. Don't you think it nice? Doesn't the idea appeal to you?

MISS H. Not at all. As I told you before, I am not interested in men.

CECILE (*not to be outdone*). That's because they have not been interested in you. But, Hobby, let me tell you something. Uncle Charles is wild about you.

MISS H. Cecile Wainwright!

CECILE. He is. Don't you breathe a word of this. Come here. (MISS HOBSON GOES *to chaise-longue and flops weakly*). He told me so himself. (*Surveying MISS HOBSON*) You ought to be desperately flattered.

MISS H. But —

CECILE. He never looked at a woman before in all his forty-five years.

MISS H. (*incredulous, and speaking as if in a dream*). He told you he was wild about me —

CECILE (*wickedly*). Those were his words, dearie.

MISS H. But I don't understand. No man ever cared for me.

CECILE. He does. (*Close to her ear*) Don't you think he's rather handsome?

MISS H. Of course. Anyone would.

CECILE. And what you've seen of him—terribly nice?

MISS H. Oh, very! (*Shyly*)

CECILE. And he's so lonely—so awfully lonely!

MISS H. He must be!

CECILE. Not a kindred spirit to talk to—year in and year out. You would be a kindred spirit.

MISS H. Do you think so?

CECILE. I do and I know he thinks so.

MISS H. Did he say so?

CECILE. No, he didn't say that exactly.

MISS H. (*excitedly*). What did he say? Tell me.

CECILE (*leaning forward*). He said you attracted him strangely.

MISS H. But I only saw him a minute.

CECILE. That doesn't matter. (*In the tones of a clairvoyant*) He felt it.

MISS H. (*her hand on her heart*). Oh!

CECILE. You have heard of such things.

MISS H. Yes, and do you know I—I——

CECILE (*tense*). Yes?

MISS H. I felt when I entered the gates here (*Closing her eyes*), oh, so strange—as if——

CECILE (*almost pushing her off the chair in her eagerness to hear*). Yes?

MISS H. As if I might be going to live here.

CECILE. You mean that this would be your home?

MISS H. Just that. I never felt so about any other place—ever.

CECILE. It's wonderful. I hear strange whisperings like prophecies. I—I smell romance.

MISS H. (*rising*). Oh, I am dizzy. I—I never felt so strange before in all my life.

CECILE. It's love entering your heart. (*Rising and standing beside MISS HOBSON*) But listen, you must be calm—not rash. You must follow my instructions to the letter.

MISS H. I will, I will.

CECILE. There are some changes you must make.

MISS H. Changes?

CECILE. Yes, in your appearance.

MISS H. (*wailing*). But I can't help the way I look.

CECILE. Oh, yes, you can—immensely.—I have loads of clothes—enough for both of us and you shall wear some. (*Surveying her*) Then your hair. (*Calmly*) I think I'll cut it off.

MISS H. (*clutching her hair*). Cut my hair off!

CECILE. No, on second thought I think I won't. I'll marcel it.

MISS H. But my hair is impossible.

CECILE. No hair is impossible. Then those atrocious goggles!

MISS H. (*clutching them*). But I can't give *them* up. I can't see well without them.

CECILE. You don't want to see too much. I say they must go.

MISS H. (*wailing*). Oh dear, I thought you said he was wild about me as I am.

CECILE. So I did, but I want him to be wilder, a whole lot wilder. You promised you'd do as I said.

MISS H. I will, but what if I couldn't see and should tumble down the whole length of the tower stairs?

CECILE. All the better. He would pick you up and the joy of having you in his arms would make him realize what he has missed.

MISS H. But I don't want to fall down the tower stairs.

CECILE (*dramatically*). Not even to be held in his arms?

MISS H. (*relenting*). We-ll.

CECILE. I would die willingly to-day—to-night, if it were in the arms of the man I loved.

MISS H. But suppose I have headaches. I used to, you know, before I put on glasses.

CECILE. You won't now. In a few days you won't know you have a head. You'll be all heart.

MISS H. All heart? I can't imagine (*Smiling*), still—I do feel—most awfully happy.

CECILE. Go to your room. I'll be in in a few minutes.

MISS H. Are you going to fix me up?

CECILE. Um-um for dinner to-night.

MISS H. Oh!

[EXIT

CECILE (*flopping in a chair*). Perhaps I'm wicked, but what else has life to offer here?

ENTER MR. WAINWRIGHT.

MR. W. (*GOING to CECILE and putting a kind hand on her shoulder*). My dear, you look disconsolate.

CECILE. I am.

MR. W. (*turning away*). I'm sorry.

CECILE. I know and I suppose it isn't your fault. In fact, I'm sorry for you.

MR. W. (*who has always considered himself lucky*). Sorry for me?

CECILE. You lead such a lonely life.

MR. W. I have never thought so.

CECILE. Then you are all the more to be pitied.

MR. W. Come, come, my dear.

CECILE (*rising and GOING to him*). Uncle Charles, didn't you ever love anyone?

MR. W. We are not to discuss such matters. We are to forget there is such a thing as—love.

CECILE (*stubbornly*). But didn't you?

MR. W. No.

CECILE. Then it's time you began. Why, Uncle Charles, you're handsome.

MR. W. (*horrified*). You aren't making love to me!

CECILE (*with a laugh*). No, not exactly. Didn't a woman ever say that to you before?

MR. W. Never!

CECILE. Uncle Charles, don't you think Miss Hobson is nice?

MR. W. Yes, she seems to me to be a very nice sort.

CECILE. But I don't mean a nice *sort*.

MR. W. I've scarcely seen her.

CECILE. Your heart didn't thump the least little bit when you shook hands with her?

MR. W. My dear child, we had better drop the matter here.

CECILE (*shaking him gently*). Listen! Anne Hobson is one of the dearest girls that ever lived.

MR. W. I don't dispute you.

CECILE (*impatiently*). Oh dear, that's what makes it so hard—that damned (*He winces*) indifference of yours.

MR. W. My dear!

CECILE. Well, it is damned, isn't it? It's ruined your life so far.

MR. W. It is most unbecoming in a young lady to use profane language.

CECILE (*laughing*). Uncle Charles, I want to tell you something—about Anne Hobson.

MR. W. Whatever you like, my dear.

CECILE. She has wonderful possibilities.

MR. W. Indeed!

CECILE. She might be a raving beauty!

MR. W. Well, I wouldn't go that far.

CECILE (*in the voice of a charmer*). Her hair is fine and silky—only she does it the wrong way. Her eyes are lustrous but she hides them behind those dreadful glasses. Her teeth are wonderful but she never smiles and her figure——

MR. W. Yes, yes, that is enough but let's discuss something else. Must I remind you again that you are to forget——

CECILE (*flinging her arms about him*). Oh, Uncle Charles, I want to tell you something most awfully.

MR. W. Well?

CECILE. Something to do with you and Anne.

MR. W. (*shocked*). Cecile!

CECILE. No—no, don't be angry. Please say you want to hear it.

MR. W. But I don't.

CECILE (*slyly*). Something she said about you, and she's awfully intelligent.

MR. W. (*stiffly*). She has scarcely seen me.

CECILE. Ah, you old dear, she has seen you more than you think.

MR. W. What!

CECILE. Yes, she has. Now do you want to hear it?

MR. W. I don't understand you.

CECILE. It isn't necessary. One never understands matters concerning the heart.

MR. W. (*with a smile*). Indeed!

CECILE. Listen, Uncle Charles.

MR. W. (*amused*). I'm listening.

CECILE. Anne Hobson thinks you are *wonderful*. She's madly and lastingly in love with you.

MR. W. (*staggering*). Cecile!

CECILE. She is. (*He turns suddenly as if to make a bolt for the door*) Where are you going? (*Catches hold of him*)

MR. W. Down to the sanctity of my study. There is something in the air here.

CECILE (*excitedly*). Oh, do you feel it? Do you? That's what she said.

MR. W. *She!*

CECILE. *Anne!*

MR. W. (*with a groan*). Oh!

CECILE. It is fate—oh dear, it is—it is something!

MR. W. It is madness! (*He wrenches himself free*)

CECILE. No, no. Oh, Uncle Charles! (*He bolts and she after him, calling*) Uncle Charles! Uncle Charles!

CURTAIN

The curtain is lowered for a few minutes to denote the lapse of four hours.

SCENE II

SCENE.—*Same as previous scene. At the rise of curtain the stage is empty and dark. A clock somewhere strikes eleven. CECILE'S and MISS HOBSON'S voices are heard off stage. The lights go on and they ENTER. They are both in evening dress. MISS HOBSON much improved in appearance.*

CECILE. Well!

MISS H. Well!

CECILE. Are you satisfied with the way he acted toward you?

MISS H. (*sitting in desk chair*). No, I can't say he acted madly in love with me.

CECILE (*who is a bit discouraged about his actions, too*). My dear, he's too polite to show it the first night.

MISS H. (*mournfully*). Perhaps.

CECILE (*bending over her*). I caught him looking at you with love in his eye when you were eating your soup.

MISS H. Oh!

CECILE. And afterward when we went in the library he manœuvred—yes, manœuvred, to sit where he could get a good look at you.

MISS H. (*she is very honest*). Oh, Cecile, I think if there was any manœuvring done, he did it to get near the fire.

CECILE (*WALKING to other end of the room*). Hobby, you're prosaic. I know he wanted to get near the fire but *you* were near it, weren't you? And the firelight played wonderfully on your left cheek. (*Turning and looking at her earnestly*) I'm in love with you myself to-night. Really, I think I should have been a hair-dresser.

MISS H. Do I really look nice?

CECILE. You do, dearie.

MISS H. But he didn't say anything to me that was very—that is that would make me think —

CECILE. Of course not, but his glances spoke volumes and I know his heart was thumping terribly.

MISS H. I wish I could feel about it as you do.

CECILE. That's because you haven't had any experience. You don't know the true symptoms.

MISS H. I suppose not.

CECILE (*GOING over to her*). Take my word for it. Mr. Charles Wainwright will ask you to become mistress of Dreariedom before we leave the castle.

MISS H. (*thrilled*). Oh!

CECILE. Go to bed now, dear. You're tired.

MISS H. My head does ache a little.

CECILE. Don't think about your head. Think of Uncle Charles. (*A faint smile comes over MISS HOBSON'S lips*) You do look so much better without those goggles.

MISS H. (*rising*). You really think he cares for me?

CECILE. Of course I do.

MISS H. (*shyly*). I thought he seemed a little afraid of me.

CECILE. Nonsense! He was only afraid he would show his feelings too strongly.

MISS H. (*GOING toward door*). You aren't coming to bed now?

CECILE. No, I'm not sleepy.

MISS H. (*turning*). Cecile, I'm awfully upset. I feel so sorry for Mr. Wainwright. I wish I could do something to make him care for me. (*With a wail*) Oh dear, I thought I liked it here but I never felt like this before in all my life.

CECILE (*GOING to her and putting an arm about her*). Don't be worried, dear. It's love, and love is always upsetting.

MISS H. Do—do you think he might learn to care for me—in—t—time?

CECILE (*half weeping herself*). Yes, yes, but don't c-cry.

MISS H. You're c-crying yourself.

CECILE (*burying her head on ANNE'S shoulder*). I'm so lonely and unh-happy.

MISS H. Oh dear, everyone's unhappy. Let's go to bed.

CECILE (*straightening*). You go, dear. I'll write my letter to dad. (*She gently pushes ANNE toward door*) Good-night. [EXIT MISS HOBSON

MISS H. (*from the hall*). Good-night.

CECILE (*who always sees the funny side*). Pleasant dreams, Hobby. (*GOES to secretary, takes out paper and pen and starts to write*)

ENTER SUSAN *timidly*.

SUSAN. Pardon me, miss. I was sent up to see if you were all right. Mrs. Dawes, miss.

CECILE (*laughing*). And back of Mrs. Dawes, Uncle Charles—a network of spies. A network of spies that would do credit to the Imperial Government. (*Rising, the letter in her hand*) I suppose you want to see what I've written. (*Holding the letter toward SUSAN*) You see it's quite safe. It begins—Dear Dad.

SUSAN. Oh no, miss, I don't want to see it at all. Indeed, miss, I'm your friend.

CECILE. That's what all spies are—friends.

SUSAN. But I am, miss. Besides, I'm not clever enough to be a spy. Believe me I'd do anything for you, miss.

CECILE. I believe you would, Susan.

SUSAN. Yes, miss.

CECILE (*pointing a finger at her*). You wouldn't tell on me?

SUSAN. Cross my heart, miss.

CECILE. No matter what I did?

SUSAN. No matter what you did. (*Excitedly*) And I know something else, miss.

CECILE. What is it?

SUSAN (*in a whisper*). Mrs. Dawes wouldn't tell on you either. There!

CECILE. I see. You're all on my side.

SUSAN. Of course, I don't know about Charles and James and——

CECILE. They don't count. Of course *they* are with Uncle Charles. That makes it rather bad, because all visitors to the castle have to pass them. There are no secret stairways.

SUSAN (*slyly*). But there are other ways. (*She drops her eyes*)

CECILE. Other ways? Other ways by which they could reach the tower? (*Laughing*) You mean to make a ladder of my hair?

SUSAN (*disgusted*). No, no, miss.

CECILE. Well—what?

SUSAN. Listen! (*They listen for a moment, tense. There is silence, then faintly the whir of an airplane sounds*)

CECILE (*clasping her hands*). Oh!

SUSAN (*roguishly*). Do you get me, miss?

CECILE. Oh, Susan! (*They rush to the window center rear, open it and peer out into the night*) It's getting louder.

SUSAN. Oh, miss, I believe he sees the light in the tower. He's flying low.

CECILE. No, no, he doesn't. He's turning. He's going back. He's going away in the night. (*Whir fainter*)

SUSAN. But he'll come again. Surely, miss, he'll come again.

CECILE. Do you think so? (*GOES DOWN stage R.*)

SUSAN (*following*). Course I do, miss. Something has just got to happen. (*Pause. CECILE stares dreamily*) I'll go, miss, and let you finish your letter.

CECILE (*turning to her*). But you're my friend; if anything should happen —

SUSAN (*dramatically*). Till death us do part! (*She turns toward door*)

CECILE (*laughing*). Good night.

SUSAN. Good night, miss.

[EXIT

CECILE (*GOES back to window and looks out*). I wonder where he's gone! (*Turns back into the room with a sigh*) I suppose he's gone forever. I suppose—I shall never see a man again. I am like poor Grenelda shut up in a tower forever. (*Turns so that she is directly facing the portrait of the cavalier*) I shall become old and gray and uninteresting. My heart will dry up before I am thirty and I — (*Discovers the portrait*) Oh! (*Pause*) Where did you come from? (*Reaches up and takes hold of the frame*) A cavalier! You wonderful creature! How did you get here? You look lonesome, too. You're smiling, but still you are sad. *Are you lonely?* (*With a sigh*) I suppose like me you have had a hundred loves in your day and now you are relegated to the towers of Drearietum. (*Dropping her hands*) Well, sir, you have company—in your misery. I am a prisoner, too. (*Turning a little to the right*) I shall talk to you and your eyes will answer

me. I know you've had a glorious life—a much better one than I am to have. My father has shut me up in a tower with an uncle who hasn't a spark of romance in his soul and some day he will take me out and marry me to a terribly sensible man whom I shall hate. Oh dear! You were a wandering minstrel, weren't you? I wonder if you ever came across any ladies shut up in a tower. At any rate you look sympathetic and we're going to be friends, I know. (*With a laugh she turns and comes DOWN front*) Cecile Wainwright and a paper cavalier! (*Turning and waving her hand to him*) Good-night! (*GOES to the light switch, turns off the light and starts toward door. JOHN MARIOT appears at the rear window center but it is too dark to see him*)

MARIOT. Is somebody there?

CECILE (*in a startled voice*). Oh!

MARIOT. May I speak with you, please?

CECILE (*with a thrill in her voice*). Oh, you are alive! You are not paper!

MARIOT. I am very much alive but I often wish I were dead.

CECILE. Where are you?

MARIOT. Right here.

CECILE. But how did you get down? (*Speaks in a strange voice as if she were afraid to break the spell*)

MARIOT. I fell down unfortunately.

CECILE. Don't say unfortunately. I'm—glad—you fell—down.

MARIOT. It's well somebody is. Everyone else will be frightfully sorry. (*Scrambles in the window and in doing so the picture which hangs close by falls with a crash*) Curses, I've broken something.

CECILE. Only your frame! It was mahogany, I know, but then that doesn't matter. Aren't you delighted to be alive?

MARIOT. I am if only to hear your voice. I wish you'd put on the lights and let me look at you.

CECILE. But wouldn't that break the spell—to put on the lights I mean.

MARIOT. The spell?

CECILE. Yes. I'm afraid if I put on the lights you'll vanish.

MARIOT. No, I won't. I assure you.

CECILE. Very well. (*Puts on the lights and stands with her eyes closed, not daring to look at him. Evidently he is struck by her beauty*) Are you there?

MARIOT. I am. Aren't you going to look at me?

CECILE. I'm afraid you won't be as nice as the portrait.

MARIOT. I assure you I am a whole lot nicer than any portrait ever taken of me.

CECILE. You vain creature! I suppose you have been praised until it has turned your head.

MARIOT. I have never been praised. Won't you look at me and praise me a little?

CECILE (*opening her eyes*). Yes. (*She regards him puzzled, then turns and looks at the remains of the portrait, then back to him*) But —

MARIOT. Yes?

CECILE. You—you aren't the cavalier,—that is you haven't his costume or — Where is your guitar?

MARIOT (*thinking it all very strange*). You were expecting somebody else?

CECILE. Yes—that is I—I, oh, don't you understand? But why have you come to me in those clothes?

MARIOT. I beg your pardon, mademoiselle. I left my dress-suit at home.

CECILE. Your dress-suit? But where is your velvet suit?

MARIOT (*puzzled*). My velvet suit?

CECILE. Yes, and your guitar.

MARIOT (*humoring her*). Alas, I left that home, too.

CECILE. Then I'm disappointed. I wanted you to bring that above all things. I know you play divinely.

MARIOT. On the contrary I don't play at all.

CECILE. Why did you pose with a guitar in your hands then?

MARIOT. I'm sorry. (*Murmuring*) Poor girl.

CECILE. I knew you'd come to me. I was so lonely. Don't you tell, but I am a prisoner.

MARIOT. A prisoner?

CECILE. Kept here by my uncle.

MARIOT. But why are you kept a prisoner?

CECILE (*sadly*). I am—like you—too fond of love.

MARIOT. Am I too fond of love?

CECILE. Of course. All cavaliers are.

MARIOT. But I'm not a cavalier.

CECILE. Am I dreaming? (*Looks about dazed*)
What has happened? (*Stoops over the broken fragments of the picture and picks up the portrait*) Oh no, here you are! just as I left you! I am dreaming. (*Her hand to her forehead*) Who—who are you?

MARIOT. I am John Mariot.

CECILE (*rising and going over to him*). But how did you get here?

MARIOT. Through the window. You see I was flying by the tower (*Her face lights up*) and my engine got cranky and I lighted on your parapet.

CECILE. Oh, what must you think of me? (*She laughs lightly*)

MARIOT (*all admiration*). I wish I might tell you, mademoiselle.

CECILE. I was alone here in the tower and I was so lonely that I was carrying on a kind of one-sided conversation with—with this portrait. (*Indicating the portrait which she holds out to him*)

MARIOT (*taking it*). Well, he is a sympathetic looking fellow.

CECILE. I had just finished talking to him—just put out the lights when you spoke to me and I thought it was the cavalier.

MARIOT (*laying the portrait on the secretary*). This is a place you might well think anything. What are they doing with you up here? Is it true what you said about your uncle?

CECILE. Yes—but oh, you're not afraid of him, are you? He won't keep you away?

MARIOT. Nothing will ever keep me away unless you wish it.

CECILE (*to herself*). How wonderful to hear such

words again! I have thirsted for them. (*Turning to him*) Do you know, I saw you go by?

MARIOT. I saw you, too. The light in the tower attracted me.

CECILE (*pointing a finger at him*). You adventurer. How dared you come?

MARIOT (*laughing*). I was out for adventure.

CECILE. Then you are a cavalier, after all.

MARIOT. Perhaps.

CECILE. Hark! (*They listen*) Did you hear something? Someone is coming—quick! (*She pulls him by the hand to the window*)

MARIOT. But I am not afraid of them.

CECILE (*wailing*). Oh, please, for my sake! Go.

MARIOT. Certainly, if you wish it. (*He flings one leg over the window-sill*)

CECILE. But you will come again?

MARIOT. To-morrow. (*MRS. DAWES and SUSAN in night clothes, in time to see him disappearing*)

MRS. D. (*astounded, stops short at the sight*). Godfrey diamonds!

SUSAN (*tremulous*). Was it a man? (*UNCLE CHARLES in bathrobe and slippers appears behind them*)

MARIOT (*without the window*). Adieu, mademoiselle. (*CECILE shuts the window and faces them*)

MR. W. (*who has heard the farewell*). Well, young lady!

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE.—*Same as the previous act. TIME, Morning of the next day. DISCOVERED* MRS. DAWES, SUSAN and MR. WAINWRIGHT *holding a serious consultation. SUSAN is standing, and rather defiant. MRS. DAWES is seated and rather weepy and MR. WAINWRIGHT paces back and forth.*

MR. W. I am loath to think you are deceiving me. I hate to call any woman a liar. (*Pause, during which*

he regards them earnestly) But you both entered the room before I did and consequently you must have heard and seen more. And yet—you claim, both of you, that you heard or saw nothing out of the ordinary. It is preposterous. (*Another pause during which he regards them out of the corner of his eye*) My ears never deceive me. I heard—distinctly I heard a man's voice. (*Icily*) It said—"Adieu, mademoiselle." (*Another sidelong glance*) You tell me I was dreaming. I never dream. I haven't dreamed for twenty years. (*With a gusto which makes them both jump*) And I will not allow the accusation. If I was dreaming how do you account for your own presence in the tower room at midnight? (*He turns to SUSAN*)

SUSAN. I was not in the tower room at midnight, begging your pardon, sir.

MR. W. What!

SUSAN. No, sir, you must have dreamed that I was there, sir.

MR. W. (*to MRS. DAWES*). And you?

MRS. D. Nor was I. I retired at eleven o'clock, sir, after sending Susan up to see that all was well with them. And I never stirred until six this morning.

MR. W. (*getting a bit heated*). Mrs. Dawes, if I never draw another breath I saw you in the tower at midnight last night. You had on—(*She jumps*) a long flannel nightgown.

MRS. D. Oh, sir!

MR. W. Your hair was done up on—what do they call them—crimpers, yes crimpers. Aside from that, you appeared very familiar to me. (*SUSAN giggles*)

MR. W. (*to SUSAN*). You were there. How can you stand before me and deny it? (*Closing his eyes*) I can visualize every one of you.

MRS. D. Oh, sir!

MR. W. Miss Hobson was *not there*. (*Turning to rear wall*) The portrait that evidently hung *there* was smashed in a hundred pieces.

MRS. D. A portrait that evidently hung there, sir. There was no portrait there.

MR. W. (*excitedly*). What!

MRS. D. Begging your pardon, sir, but you recall your own words, that there were to be no portraits hung in the tower suite.

MR. W. (*now actually hollering*). Well, hung there or not, there was a broken picture lying on the floor. The scene is before me as clearly as the present one. I shall sift this matter to the bottom. You might as well both of you confess, first as last, that there was a visitor at the tower last night.

[EXIT, *turning and regarding them for a moment*

MRS. D. (*wiping her face*). Oh, my soul!

SUSAN. Ain't it awful! It's like the third degree.

MRS. D. I'm afraid we are wicked women if we *are* defending a poor helpless female.

SUSAN. Is she up?

MRS. D. Up? Good lord, no. She's sleeping sound as a top!

SUSAN. What if he sends us to jail?

MRS. D. Oh lord, child, you'd not notice the difference after living at Drearietum.

ENTER MISS HOBSON *in attractive morning garb and without the goggles.*

MISS H. Oh, Mrs. Dawes, what happened last night? Cecile won't wake up, and talk to me. I know it must have been something dreadful. I was having the most wonderful sleep when I was waked with a start. I sat straight up in bed and what do you think?—I saw a man, a tall, strange man pass my window. He was walking on the balcony close to the parapet. I got up and looked out and *saw him get in an airplane and fly off.*

MRS. D. Oh, my soul!

SUSAN (*off guard*). So that's how he got here!

MRS. D. (*to SUSAN*). Hush! (*SUSAN claps a hand over her mouth*)

MISS H. Cecile came in just afterward and I told her but she laughed. She said I was dreaming. (*SUSAN and MRS. DAWES exchange glances*)

MRS. D. Of course you were.

MISS H. I wasn't dreaming. I could describe him perfectly—what he wore and all.

MRS. D. Even so!

MISS H. I think it's dreadful. Cecile is deceiving her uncle and I am going to tell him this very morning—*everything*.

MRS. D. (*clutching her by the arm*). You mustn't.

MISS H. (*freeing herself*). What do you mean?

MRS. D. Just what I say. You mustn't tell a thing you saw or heard last night.

MISS H. So you saw and heard, too.

MRS. D. I didn't say so.

MISS H. And you aren't going to tell him?

MRS. D. No, or you aren't either.

MISS H. But can you stop me?

MRS. D. You'll see.

ENTER MR. WAINWRIGHT.

MR. W. (*offering a hand to MISS HOBSON*). Ah, good morning, Miss Hobson, and how are you after last night's escapade? (*MRS. DAWES entrenches herself behind MR. WAINWRIGHT and stares at MISS HOBSON with a terrible eye*)

MISS H. (*watching MRS. DAWES, hesitates a moment, swallows painfully then says in a light voice*). The night's escapade? I don't know what you mean.

MR. W. What! Mrs. Dawes has not been telling you about my—er—nightmare! (*During the following conversation MRS. DAWES does not take her eyes from MISS HOBSON'S face*)

MISS H. (*nervously*). Not a word!

MR. W. And how did you sleep last night?

MISS H. Oh, wonderfully. The air is so fine and the tower so quiet.

MR. W. Um-um, and my niece?

MISS H. (*looking at MRS. DAWES as if it were impossible to take her eyes from her face*). I don't think she stirred from the time we went to bed at eleven o'clock.

MR. W. Oh, she went to bed at eleven.

MISS H. Yes, with me.

MR. W. (*turning aside*). Funny! She had on her evening dress *then*.

MRS. D. (*thinking she is no longer needed*). If you'll excuse me, sir, I'll attend to my morning duties.

MR. W. You may go. Tell Charles to mix a bromo seltzer and take it to my study.

MRS. D. Yes, sir. Come, Susan.

[EXIT SUSAN and MRS. DAWES

MR. W. (*making sure they have gone*). Miss Hobson, I am either being basely deceived or else suffering from a strange hallucination. (*Earnestly*) I would give all I had if I could be assured that there was a visitor at the castle last night. I would do more. I would grant whatever was in my power to the one who could assure me.

MISS H. (*catching herself*). Oh, Mr. Wainwright!

MR. W. I am not an old man whose eyes and ears deceive him, at least I don't think I am.

MISS H. Why, Mr. Wainwright, you are in the prime of life.

MR. W. (*pathetically*). And yet I've got to admit that I am growing soft—that I am subject to hallucinations—wild dreams!

MISS H. Oh, it hurts me to hear you say that. It—it isn't true!

MR. W. I would to heaven it were not. Yes—I would gladly grant anything within my power to the one who could assure me— (*Paces back and forth*)

MISS H. (*slyly*). To the one who could assure you —?

MR. W. Evidently there is no one. (*With a sigh. Pause, while she regards him earnestly*)

MISS H. (*GOING over to him*). Mr. Wainwright, did you really mean what you just said?

MR. W. (*confused*). What I just said?

MISS H. About granting anything within your power to the one who could assure you —

MR. W. I did, and I meant it. (*She smiles*) But why do you ask?

MISS H. (*modestly*). Mr. Wainwright, I can assure you.

MR. W. (*turning*). You!

MISS H. I saw the visitor at the Castle last night. (*She looks around the room to see whether anyone is listening*)

MR. W. (*with greatest relief*). Ah!

MISS H. He came in an airplane and went away in one.

MR. W. Ah!

MISS H. He was tall and dressed in the costume of an aviator.

MR. W. Ah! (*Gratefully he clasps her hand*) Miss Hobson, you have given me a new lease of life. I am a different man. I am young again. What can I grant you?

MISS H. Oh dear, you sound like the fairy prince.

MR. W. (*drawing himself up, but still holding her hand*). I feel like one.

MISS H. You said anything within your power—

MR. W. (*heedless of what he is getting himself into*). I did and I meant it.

MISS H. (*overcome*). Oh!

MR. W. Come. Speak.

MISS H. (*shyness getting the best of her*). I'd rather tell you later.

MR. W. (*full of assurance*). Never postpone a request. To-night may be too late. Come. Tell me. Anything within my power. Surely you are too modest. (*At these words she breaks away from him, runs to the chaise-longue and buries her head in the cushions*)

MISS H. (*wailing*). Oh, I'm not modest—that's just what I'm not.

MR. W. (*distressed for her*). My dear girl!

MISS H. And you'll never think so after—after what I'm going to ask of you.

MR. W. (*soothingly*). Come—come, I'm sure you're

making it out worse than it is. What is it? (*He raises her head gently*) It isn't Dreariedom you're after, is it? (*He smiles*) Because if it is you'll have to allow me to stay on here or else break my heart.

MISS H. (*hastily*). Oh, how did you guess it? It is Dreariedom I want and—and you!

MR. W. (*stares blankly*). Dreariedom and me!

MISS H. (*excitedly*). Now—now do you think my request is modest?

MR. W. But I don't understand. You mean you want to marry me?

MISS H. (*her head goes down in the cushions*). Oh!

MR. W. Jove! I never thought of that! (*He paces back and forth and she peeps at him slyly from the cushions. Gradually his expression changes from dismay to interest, then to a smile that might easily signify happiness*)

MISS H. (*after seeing the smile*). Would it be so bad?

MR. W. I'm thinking.

MISS H. (*sitting up*). Please don't be too long about it. The suspense is awful. (*He gives her a sidelong glance*)

MR. W. You are in earnest?

MISS H. Of course.—Besides I thought yours was a promise.

MR. W. Then there is nothing you would take instead?

MISS H. Nothing.

MR. W. Then?

MISS H. Then?

MR. W. It's settled—of course. I am to marry you and we are to live at Dreariedom.

MISS H. Oh dear, you are an awful suitor.

MR. W. You aren't.

MISS H. Are you angry with me?

MR. W. No—not exactly. Why should I be? I set the trap myself.

MISS H. (*huffily*). I don't think you are very nice to speak as if I had *trapped* you.

MR. W. (*before he thinks*). But you d—— (*He cannot finish*)

MISS H. (*turning the tables*). How dare you say so? Trapped you!

MR. W. (*humbly*). I beg your pardon.

MISS H. I wouldn't trap any man.

MR. W. (*actually believing her*). No, no, of course not.

MISS H. (*a little fearfully, not quite sure of him yet*). And you needn't marry me if you don't want to.

MR. W. But I thought you wanted me to.

MISS H. (*more huffily*). I've changed my mind.

MR. W. (*actually crestfallen*). I'm sorry, because I was beginning to like the idea immensely. Dreariedum and you. (*She thrills*). Won't you reconsider?

MISS H. (*snappily*). I might.

MR. W. Please, and right away. (*Using strategy*) My dear, if you and I were united, only think how much better we could work against my niece.

MISS H. Is that all you want to marry me for?

MR. W. No—no.

MISS H. (*in a voice that demands an explanation*). Well?

MR. W. I was thinking of the long winter evenings you and I could have before the fire.

MISS H. (*relenting*). Oh!

MR. W. And the walks over the country together.

MISS H. (*with enthusiasm*). Yes, yes, and I've always wanted to take a long tramp over the moors.

MR. W. (*getting proficient in the art*). And the rides together.

MISS H. (*completely won*). Ah, yes—the rides! (*He takes both her hands*) I do think we are kindred spirits.

MR. W. We are. (*He kisses her in a very dignified and solemn manner*)

MISS H. Shall we tell—the—the household?

MR. W. Not yet. We must first settle this affair of Cecile's. It must be stopped at once.

MISS H. Yes, of course.

MR. W. We will work together—you and I. I will go to Mrs. Dawes now to make arrangements for to-night.

MISS H. To-night?

MR. W. Yes. He will come again and we must keep her from seeing him. (GOES toward door, giving her a sweet smile. MISS HOBSON stands still a moment, then a smile breaks over her own face) [EXIT

MISS H. Anne Hobson, Mistress of Drearietum!—And it wasn't hard a bit.

CURTAIN

The curtain is lowered for a few minutes to denote the lapse of ten hours.

SCENE II

SCENE.—Same as previous. Evening of the same day.

DISCOVERED MISS HOBSON in evening dress, on her knees beside the lower end of the secretary. She is visible to the audience but completely hidden from anyone entering the room.

ENTER MR. WAINWRIGHT on tiptoe.

MR. W. (in a whisper). Are you there?

MISS H. (not daring to move). Yes.

MR. W. Have you been waiting long?

MISS H. Over an hour.

MR. W. Where is she?

MISS H. I don't know.

MR. W. (taking out his watch). It's ten o'clock.

MISS H. She's probably in the library reading. Oh dear!

MR. W. What is it?

MISS H. (near tears). I'm awfully tired being cramped up here.

MR. W. You're a trump. (She smiles. Faint whir is heard) Hark, what was that!

MISS H. He's come!

MR. W. (*chuckling*). She'll hear it and be up.
(*RUNS to the chaise-longue and crouches beside it*)

MISS H. (*holding up a warning finger*). She's coming. (*Voices heard*)

MR. W. Jove, she's got somebody with her. (*They duck their heads*)

ENTER SUSAN and MRS. DAWES.

MRS. D. (*with a wink at SUSAN*). That's funny. (*Looks about the room casually*) Miss Wainwright said she'd be up here.

SUSAN (*as if she had learned a part*). Did she want her for something particular? (*Every time MRS. DAWES speaks SUSAN'S lips move as if she were reciting a part*)

MRS. D. Yes, she said as how she was going out on the terrace and wanted her for company. I'll tell her Miss Hobson ain't to be found. (*Another wink at SUSAN*)

SUSAN. But she'll go out *alone*. She might meet somebody. She might meet a *man*.

MRS. D. I know it, Susan, but she's worried about what's become of her Uncle Charles. She hasn't seen him since dinner and I can't stop her. She will go out. Come. [EXIT MRS. DAWES and SUSAN

MR. W. (*struggling to his feet*). Quick, we must go down. She must not go out alone. She will meet him, that fellow—and he will take her off. (*Pulls MISS HOBSON to her feet and drags her off*)

[EXIT MR. WAINWRIGHT and MISS HOBSON

ENTER SUSAN and MRS. DAWES, *both smiling*.

SUSAN. My lord, my lord, I thought he'd see me when he run by.

MRS. D. They were in too much of a hurry, Susan. They had more important business on hand). (*SUSAN RUNS to the window*) Come, come away from that window, child. (*Shaking her head*) As I said before, perhaps I'm a wicked woman, but —

SUSAN (*GOING to her*). You ain't a wicked woman. Ain't you found out all about him? It ain't as if he wa'n't all right and his father a friend of Mr. Wainwright's.

MRS. D. But Mr. Wainwright don't know that—*yet*.

SUSAN. But he will soon.

MRS. D. Yes and right soon, I'm thinking.

SUSAN. She couldn't marry anyone as would please 'em more.

ENTER CECILE *much excited*.

CECILE (*RUNNING to MRS. DAWES*). You dear! I'll never forget what you've done for me. Oh, Dawes, he's so wonderful!

MRS. D. Remember now, you mustn't keep him too long. It won't take more than a half hour to search the terrace. (*SUSAN gapes at CECILE in admiration*)

CECILE. Are they out there?

MRS. D. Both of 'em. That minx, after what you've done for her.

CECILE. Poor Hobby! She couldn't help it. She's in love and one isn't responsible when one is in love.

MRS. D. She'll never get him.

CECILE. I'm not so sure. There's more than one way to lay a trap. (*At the window*) Oh, Dawes, he's coming. (*Opens the window*) He's right close. He's going to land. Oh, he's landing.

MRS. D. Come, Susan, this is no place for us.

[EXIT MRS. DAWES and SUSAN

CECILE (*leaning out and speaking in a low voice*). Captain Mariot! (*Pause*) Oh, you have come. I was so afraid! (*He appears at the window*)

MARIOT. May I come in?

CECILE. Just a minute to-night—two minutes. (*He scrambles in*)

MARIOT. And I have come all this distance for two minutes.

CECILE. Uncle Charles has discovered us and set a trap.

MARIOT. But I'm not afraid of Uncle Charles.

CECILE. But I am.

MARIOT. What will he do to you?

CECILE. He'll put me in a cage.

MARIOT. He can't, if you fly away with me.

CECILE (*rapturously*). Oh! I think I'd love to fly away with you! (*She regards him earnestly*) But I don't know you, you see. (*Sits in chaise-longue*)

MARIOT. Even so, wouldn't it be better to take a chance with me than to submit to sure imprisonment?

CECILE. You are terribly convincing. (*Her chin in her hand*)

MARIOT. I'm trying to be.

CECILE (*with a sigh*). Still, it is an awful chance.

MARIOT (*standing before her, his arms folded*). Do I look as bad as that?

CECILE. We don't know a thing about the family.

MARIOT. I can tell you something. (*Sadly*) I had an ancestor who was a member of Captain Kidd's crew.

CECILE. Oh, heavens!

MARIOT (*sadly*). He was hung!

CECILE. How dreadful! Don't tell father. It would be an end of everything.

MARIOT (*casually*). If I'm not mistaken, your father is well aware of it.

CECILE (*brightening*). He knows you? Dad knows you?

MARIOT. We've played golf together. He ought to.

CECILE. But I don't understand. Where was I?

MARIOT (*laughing*). Just at that time you were visiting a maiden aunt in Greenwich.

CECILE (*with a groan*). Oh, yes. Aunt Matilda. It was after I broke my engagement with Hal.

MARIOT. I had heard of you before. (*With a twinkle*)

CECILE. Through dad?

MARIOT. No.

CECILE. Did dad ever mention me?

MARIOT. Um—he told me he had a daughter whom he wanted me to meet.

CECILE (*excited*). He said that?

MARIOT. He did.

CECILE (*with great relief*). Then he approves of you.

MARIOT. Is that a sign?

CECILE. Absolutely with dad.—Do you know Uncle Charles?

MARIOT. Yes, and Uncle Charles approves of me, too.

CECILE. How do you know?

MARIOT. Because he spoke of you.

CECILE. What did he say?

MARIOT. He asked me if I had met you?

CECILE. Wonderful!

MARIOT. It is evident everyone approves of me. What about you?

CECILE. Oh,—I ——

MARIOT. Won't you take a *chance now*?

CECILE (*gloomily*). I don't think it is a *chance now*. Somehow the thrill has gone out of it.

MARIOT (*reassuringly*). No, no. It's really quite novel what we are to do. Elopement by airplane, you know, and all that.

CECILE (*excited*). Yes! But Uncle Charles will be wild ——

MARIOT. That's where the thrill comes in! Will you come?

CECILE (*hesitant*). I want—to.

MARIOT (*whimsically*). Thinking of that ancestor who was hung?

CECILE (*laughing*). No—silly!

MARIOT. That you haven't known me long enough? (*He sits beside her*)

CECILE. Yes.

MARIOT. Suppose I take you home to dad and then you'll have time to try me out.

CECILE. That would never do. Dad would be so furious that I had put something over on him. He wouldn't let me marry you then if you were the King of England!

MARIOT. Oh, he's that kind, is he?

CECILE. Yes, he is. He hates to have anyone get the best of him. He sent me here because he felt sure I

would never meet a man at Dreariedum and now ——
(She smiles at him archly)

MARIOT. Still it wasn't your fault.

CECILE. He will say it is and he won't let me marry you. *(Rising)* I must go with you *now or never*.
(Voices without)

MARIOT *(rising)*. They are coming!

CECILE. Oh, what shall I do?

MARIOT. Come with me—please. *(She stands a moment hesitant looking into his eyes; then RUNS toward door)*

MARIOT *(calling)*. Where are you going?

CECILE *(calling back)*. To get my coat! *(He paces back and forth listening. Presently CECILE RE-ENTERS wearing fur coat)* Come! Quick!

MARIOT. I have a cap for you. *(Fishing in his pocket)*

CECILE. Quick! *(She pulls him to the window)*
 Put out the lights! *(He RUNS to the light switch and puts out the lights)*

MARIOT *(in total darkness)*. Where are you?

CECILE. Here! Hurry! *(He RUNS to her)* The window is open.

MARIOT. Let me help you.

CECILE. Oh dear! *(He helps her out)*

MARIOT. What is it?

CECILE. You haven't ever made love to me.

MARIOT *(climbing out after her)*. Are you quite safe?

CECILE *(from the balcony)*. Yes. Come. But you haven't even kissed me. *(Silence, then a sound of a kiss from the darkness and silence again)*

MR. W. *(from without)*. Where are the lights? *(He stumbles in)*

MISS H. *(from without)*. On the left wall.

CECILE *(voice as from a distance)*. Good night, Uncle Charles, I'm flying away with Captain Mariot.
(Whir of an airplane as the CURTAIN FALLS)

PLAYS WE RECOMMEND

Fifteen Cents Each (Postage, 1 Cent Extra)

Unless Otherwise Mentioned

		Acts	Males	Females	Time
Arabian Nights	Farce	3	4	5	2¼h
Bundle of Matches (27c.)	Comedy	2	1	7	1½h
Crawford's Claim (27c.)	Drama	3	9	3	2¼h
Her Ladyship's Niece (27c.)	Comedy	4	4	4	1½h
Just for Fun (27c.)	"	3	2	4	2h
Men, Maids, Matchmakers	" (27c.)	3	4	4	2h
Our Boys	"	3	6	4	2h
Puzzled Detective	Farce	3	5	3	1h
Three Hats	"	3	5	4	2h
Timothy Delano's Courtship	Comedy	2	2	3	1h
Up-to-Date Anne	"	2	2	3	1h
White Shawl (27c.)	Farce	2	3	3	1½h
Fleeing Flyer	"	1	4	3	1¼h
From Punkin' Ridge	Drama	1	6	3	1¼h
Handy Solomon	Farce	1	2	2	20m
Hoosier School	"	1	5	5	30m
Kiss in the Dark	"	1	2	3	45m
Larry	"	1	4	4	45m
Love Birds' Matrimonial Agency	"	1	3	4	30m
Married Lovers	Comedy	1	2	4	45m
Ma's New Boarders (27c.)	Farce	1	4	4	30m
Mrs. Forester's Crusade	"	1	1	2	30m
New Pastor	Sketch	1	2	2	30m
Relations	Farce	1	3	1	20m
Standing Room Only	Comedy	1	3	1	35m
Stormy Night	"	1	3	1	40m
Surprises (27c.)	Farce	1	2	3	30m
Tangles (27c.)	"	1	4	2	30m
Little Rogue Next Door	"	1	2	3	40m
'Till Three P. M.	"	1	2	1	20m
Train to Mauro	"	1	2	1	15m
When Women Rule	"	1	2	4	15m
Won by a Kodak	Comedy	1	2	3	50m
April Fools	Farce	1	3	0	30m
Fun in a Schoolroom	"	1	4	0	40m
Little Red Mare	"	1	3	0	35m
Manager's Trials	"	1	9	0	45m
Medica	"	1	7	0	35m
Mischievous Bob	Comedy	1	6	0	40m
Cheerful Companion	Dialogue	1	0	2	25m
Dolly's Double	"	1	1	1	20m
Drifted Apart	"	1	1	1	30m
Gentle Touch	"	1	1	1	30m
John's Emmy	"	1	1	1	20m
Point of View	"	1	1	1	20m
Professor's Truant Glove	"	1	1	1	20m
Belles of Blackville	Minstrel	1	0	any no.	2h
Sweet Family (27c.)	Entertainment	1	0	8	1h
Conspirators (27c.)	Comedy	2	0	12	40m
A Day and a Night (27c.)	"	2	0	10	1h
Gertrude Mason, M.D. (27c.)	Farce	1	0	7	80m
In Other People's Shoes	Comedy	1	0	8	50m
Maidens All Forlorn (27c.)	"	3	0	6	1¼h
Mary Ann	"	1	0	5	30m
Romance of Phyllis (27c.)	"	3	0	4	1¼h
Fuss vs. Feathers	Mock Trial	1	4	4	30m
Tanglefoot vs. Peruna	" "	1	7	18	1½h
Great Libel Case	" "	1	21	0	2h



PLAYS WE RECOMMEND

For Schools and Colleges

Twenty-five cents (Postage 2 cents extra)

		Acts	Males	Females	Time
Irish Eden	Comedy	3	8	6	2h
Kidnapped Freshman	Farce	3	12	4	2¼h
Matrimonial Tiff	Farce	1	2	1	1h
Little Savage	Comedy	3	4	4	2h
Lodgers Taken In	"	3	6	4	2½h
Miss Mosher of Colorado	"	4	5	3	2h
Miss Neptune	"	2	8	8	1¼h
My Uncle from India	"	4	13	4	2½h
Never Again	Farce	3	7	5	2h
New England Folks	Drama	3	8	4	2¼h
Next Door	Comedy	3	5	4	2h
Oak Farm	Comedy	3	7	4	2¼h
Riddles	"	3	3	3	1¼h
Rosebrook Farm	"	3	6	9	1¾h
Stubborn Motor Car	"	3	7	4	2½h
Too Many Husbands	Farce	2	8	4	2h
When a Man's Single	Comedy	3	4	4	2h
Where the Lane Turned	"	4	7	5	2h
After the Honeymoon	Farce	1	2	3	50m
Biscuits and Bills	Comedy	1	3	1	1¼h
Chance at Midnight	Drama	1	2	1	25m
Conquest of Helen	Comedy	1	3	2	1h
The Coward	Drama	1	5	2	30m
Sheriff of Tuckahoe	Western Sk.	1	3	1	1h
Bashful Mr. Bobbs	Comedy	3	4	7	2½h
Whose Widow	"	1	5	4	50m
Alice's Blighted Profession	Sketch	1	0	8	50m
Regular Girls	Entertainment	1	0	any no.	1h
100% American	Comedy	1	0	15	1½h
Parlor Patriots	"	1	0	12	1h
Fads and Fancies	Sketch	1	0	17	1h
Mr. Loring's Aunts	Comedy	3	0	13	1¼h
My Son Arthur	"	1	2	8	¾h
Sewing Circle Meets	Entertainment	1	0	10	1¼h
Every Senior	Morality play	1	0	8	40m
Bride and Groom	Farce	3	5	5	2¼h
Last Chance	Comedy	2	2	12	1½h
Bubbles	"	3	4	3	1½h
Hurricane Wooing	"	3	4	3	1½h
Peggy's Predicament	"	1	0	5	½h
Found in a Closet	"	1	1	3	20m
Slacker (?) for the Cause	Sketch	1	3	1	20m
Baby Scott	Farce	3	5	4	2¼h
Billy's Bungalow	Comedy	3	5	4	2h
College Chums	"	3	9	3	2h
Delegates from Denver	Farce	2	3	10	¾h
Football Romance	Comedy	4	9	4	2½h
Held for Postage	Farce	2	4	3	1¼h
In the Absence of Susan	"	3	4	6	1½h
Transaction in Stocks	Comedy	1	4	1	45m
Aunt Dinah's Quilting Party	Entertainment	1	5	11	2h
Bachelor Maids' Reunion	"	1	2	any no.	1½h
In the Ferry House	"	1	15	11	1½h
Rustic Minstrel Show	"	1	any no.	any no.	1½h
Ye Village Skewl of Long Ago	"	2	any no.	any no.	2h
Rainbow Kimona	"	2	0	9	1½h
Rosemary	Comedy	4	0	14	1½h
Pharaoh's Knob	"	1	1	12	1h