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Arthur Lewis Tubbs

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A Melodrama in Four Acts

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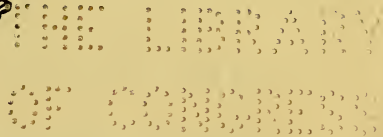
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By *Arthur Lewis Tubbs*

*Author of "Dinner at Six," "The Fruit of His Folly," etc.*

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PHILADELPHIA

THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY

1903

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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

ROBERT WINSLOW, *proprietor of "The Daily Review."*  
SETH WINSLOW, . . . . . *his brother.*  
HAROLD LA MOTTE, . . . . . *an adventurer.*  
WALTER GIFFORD, . . . . . *a reporter.*  
MR. JOHNSON, . . . . . *a printer.*  
TAD, . . . . . *a newspaper "devil."*

### OFFICERS.

PHOEBE ASHCROFT, *stenographer for "The Daily Review."*  
ADA LUDLOW, . . . . . *an heiress.*  
MRS. ELLISON DUNBAR-EVERLY-GRIGGS, *unused to riches.*  
LILY MAY, . . . . . *her darling child.*  
SALLIE POCKETT, . . . . . *Phœbe's maid.*

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## SYNOPSIS

### ACT I

Office of *The Daily Review*. The arrest.

### ACT II

At Mrs. Everly-Griggs' soiree musicale. A voice from the past.

### ACT III

Phœbe Ashcroft's home. The threat.

### ACT IV

At Mrs. Everly-Griggs'. Retribution.

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TIME IN REPRESENTATION :—TWO HOURS AND TWENTY  
MINUTES.



## COSTUMES AND CHARACTERISTICS

ROBERT WINSLOW. Act I, a plain business suit ; Act II, evening dress ; Act IV, similar to Act I. He is a dignified man of forty or thereabouts.

SETH. A neat business suit in Acts I, III and IV ; in Act II, evening dress. He is about twenty-five years of age, impulsive, and in Act I shows some signs of dissipation. Later, he seems somewhat subdued and gradually changes for the better. He is a character which wins admiration in spite of his faults.

LA MOTTE. A handsome, fascinating man of the world, a few years older than Seth. He has a rather florid complexion and his hair is mixed with gray about the temples and on top. He dresses stylishly, wearing evening dress in Act II, and handsome cut-away or frock-coat suit in Acts III and IV. Jaunty appearance, silk hat, flower in buttonhole, etc.

GIFFORD. Ordinary business suit in Act I, dress suit in Act II and neat clothes in Act IV. He is an energetic young fellow, quick of movement and speech.

JOHNSON. Working clothes, no coat, apron, sleeves rolled up. His apron and hands are much soiled with printer's ink, etc. He is a middle-aged man.

TAD. As small a boy as can be procured to play the part. Should be a typical smart, slangy youngster. In Act I he is dressed similarly to Johnson ; wears an apron black with ink and dirt and his hands and face are also smeared. In Act III he is clean and wears his dress-up suit.

PHŒBE. Act I, a neat but plain dress, with hat for entrance. Act II, a handsome evening gown, not too elaborate. Act III, modest house dress. Act IV similar to Act I, with hat.

ADA LUDLOW. Stately and somewhat haughty, though not necessarily a disagreeable character. In Act II she wears a very handsome and elaborate evening gown, with jewels. In Act IV, an elegant house dress.

MRS. GRIGGS. A parvenu. She wears in Act I a handsome morning street costume ; in Act II a most elaborate

evening gown and many jewels, flowers, etc. Act IV, rich house costume. She is always overdressed, as if with a desire to show how much she can afford. Should appear as a woman of nearly fifty attempting to look much younger; puts on many airs and gives the impression of being new to the wealth which she possesses.

LILY MAY. A large, overgrown girl of about seventeen, dressed like a child of ten, with short skirts. In Act I, a light dress, pink or blue sash, large hat, etc. Act II, child's white evening dress, with large sash. Her hair is in long braids, or flowing down her back, in first two Acts. In Act IV she is attired as a young lady, in a becoming dress with long skirt; her hair is done up. The contrast should be pronounced.

SALLIE POCKETT. A gawky country girl of slovenly appearance. She wears a rather short calico dress, showing her striped stockings and large, clumsy shoes; hair in pig-tails. When she walks she drags her feet along the floor, and she speaks in a drawling tone.

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## PROPERTIES

ACT I. Newspapers, proofs, pieces of copy, shears, ink-wells, pens, pencils, waste-basket; newspapers and letters, for morning mail. Typewriter; telephone on desk R., or hanging against wall.

ACT II. Dance cards.

ACT III. Tablecloth; tray with plate, cup and saucer; teapot containing steaming hot tea; plate of toast, another with meat. Several roses. Vase. A revolver.

ACT IV. Revolver. Roll of bills.

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## NOTICE TO PROFESSIONALS

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## ACT I

SCENE.—*The editorial rooms of The Daily Review. Door in flat leading to street, another R. U. E. to the composing room. There is a desk R., with revolving office chair; also waste-basket, piles of newspapers, hooks of "copy," proofs, etc., all the characteristic belongings and surroundings of a well-equipped newspaper office. A telephone hangs against wall of flat, R. C.; at L. another desk, or a table, on which is a typewriter, writing materials, etc. Also a small table up L. Discovered, ROBERT WINSLOW at desk R., reading proof. After short pause, TAD enters D. F., with a dozen or more papers, and some letters. These he places on desk by ROBERT as he speaks.*

TAD. Here's the mail, Mr. Winslow.

ROBERT. All right, Tad. (TAD is about to exit R.) Here, take this proof in. (TAD takes proof and again starts.) Bring me a revise as soon as possible.

TAD. Yes, sir.

ROBERT. And Tad——

TAD (*pausing*). Well, sir?

ROBERT. Tell Johnson I'd like to see him a minute.

TAD. Yes, sir.

(*Exit TAD R.*)

(ROBERT opens letters and glances at them, laying some on desk, placing others in pigeon-holes. After a pause, JOHNSON enters R. and stands a moment before speaking.)

JOHNSON. Tad said you wanted to see me, Mr. Winslow.

ROBERT (*looking up*). Oh, yes. Why,—a—Johnson,

what time did Seth leave the office yesterday? (*He wheels around in chair, facing JOHNSON.*)

JOHNSON. It was—well, I should say about four o'clock.

ROBERT. That's what I thought. And he hasn't shown up yet this morning. That's about the way he has been attending to business lately. I'm afraid he hasn't been of much help to you out in the other room, has he?

JOHNSON. Well, no, sir; but of course, being your brother——

ROBERT. Being my brother has nothing to do with it. He is the foreman, I pay him a good salary, and he ought to attend to business. (*PHCEBE ASHCROFT enters quietly D. F., unnoticed, removes her hat and sits at desk L., beginning to look over some papers.*) I have let the brother part of it make a difference, so far, but my patience is about played out. If it keeps on, I'm afraid we shall have to have a new foreman. That's all, Johnson. (*PHCEBE has glanced around anxiously and then resumed her work.*) Send me in a revise of that editorial as soon as you can.

JOHNSON. Yes, sir. (*He is about to exit, but sees PHCEBE and speaks to her.*) Good-morning, Miss Ashcroft.

PHCEBE (*looking around*). Good-morning, Mr. Johnson. (*Exit JOHNSON R.; ROBERT turns about in his chair and looks at PHCEBE.*)

ROBERT. Ah, good-morning, Miss Ashcroft. I didn't hear you come in.

PHCEBE (*smiling*). I haven't been here long. I'm afraid I'm a little late this morning, but I met one or two people who had some items to give me——

ROBERT. Oh, don't make any apologies. It isn't necessary. I hadn't thought a thing about it. I suppose you heard what I was just saying to Mr. Johnson about my brother?

PHCEBE. Do you think it will really be necessary?—that is, I hope it is not so bad as you said.

ROBERT. Miss Ashcroft, I don't want to be hard on Seth; I don't want you to think that I am. But it really does seem necessary to do something to make him mend his ways.

PHCEBE (*rising and going to c.*). But to discharge him, to perhaps send him away where your influence——?

ROBERT. Have I any influence over him? Does it look

like it? Why, I have been patient with him—more than patient; don't you know that I have? I have talked with him as kindly as I could, then I have scolded him. It does no good. He promises, and then goes right along as before.

PHŒBE. You have been kind and patient, Mr. Winslow; I know it. But don't you think you can give him still another chance and—excuse me, you must think me very forward to speak thus to you.

ROBERT. Not at all. And I'll do as you say; I'll have another serious talk with Seth and see if I can't bring him to his senses. At any rate, I'll give him a further trial and try my best to straighten it all out. By the way, here are one or two letters I wish you would answer. You'll know what to say. There's no particular hurry about them.

PHŒBE (*taking letters and returning to her desk*). Very well. Then I will write out my items first. (*She sits and begins writing.*)

ROBERT. I declare, Miss Ashcroft, you'll beat Gifford getting news, if you keep on. What is it now?

PHŒBE. Oh, nothing very important; only two or three personals. The best is about Miss Ludlow. She has returned from Europe.

ROBERT. You don't say? She's been gone more than a year, hasn't she?

PHŒBE. Yes, a year and a half. You know, she let her house to Mrs. Everly-Griggs, and she is staying there.

ROBERT. I see. Well, that's a pretty good item.

PHŒBE. Yes, and then I have some more particulars about Mrs. Griggs' party to-morrow evening. It is to be quite a grand affair.

ROBERT. I suppose so. She will just spread herself, no doubt. She has plenty of money to do it with. It's a pity she can't buy more brains with some of it. (PHŒBE *smiles.*) Well, I don't suppose I ought to say that, but you know how she is. No doubt she has a perfect right to all the hyphens in her name, seeing she's a widow for the third time, and of course she has a right to her money too; her last husband was kind enough to make a fortune all of a sudden and then die. But when she tries to pass herself off as a dashing young widow, and that overgrown daughter of hers as a child,—well, it's almost too much. But then, she'll make society news, so we don't want to lose sight of

Mrs. Ellison Dunbar-Everly-Griggs. (*He turns to his desk and PHŒBE laughingly does the same.*)

(*Enter TAD, R.*)

TAD. Mr. Johnson says he'd like to see you a minute, Mr. Winslow, about them ads. He says he d' know where y' want that Boston Store ad put, 'r some o' them reading notices.

ROBERT (*rising*). All right. Send that copy out as soon as you have it ready, please, Miss Ashcroft.

PHŒBE. Yes, sir.

(*Exit ROBERT, R.*)

TAD. Say, the boss has been blowing about Seth again, hain't he? I wouldn't wonder if he got the bounce. He ought t'.

PHŒBE. Why do you think so, Tad? Hasn't Mr. Seth been kind to you? (*She gives him several pieces of "copy."*)

TAD. Aw, I ain't kickin' about that, but why shouldn't he, if he don't stick t' business? He ain't no better 'n the rest of us, if he is the boss's brother. I reckon he'll find it out, too.

PHŒBE. I think you would do well to speak a little more respectfully of him, at any rate.

TAD. Aw say, I didn't mean nuthin'. I forgot he was your feller.

PHŒBE (*rising and turning indignantly upon TAD*). Tad, how dare you say that? He is nothing of the sort. You are altogether too officious!

TAD. Gee! Well, you needn't get mad about it. If he ain't in love with you, I'll eat my shirt. And you him! (*He runs out R., laughing mischievously. PHŒBE stands looking after him, flushed and indignant.*)

PHŒBE (*after a pause, in a softened manner*). But it is true! Yes, I do love him, and I hope—I am sure—he loves me! (*She turns and again sits at her desk, just as WALTER GIFFORD bustles in C. D.*)

WALTER. Ah, good-morning. Got a fine piece of news.

PHŒBE. Have you? What's it about?

WALTER (*going to table up L. and preparing to write*). Gambling-house raided last night down on Perry Street. Two men arrested.

PHOEBE. Who were they?

WALTER. Didn't get the names. Hurried up here to write enough for the first edition, then I'm going to the police station to get the names. They say one man skipped out the back door and got away.

PHOEBE. How sad it is.

WALTER. Sad? Pshaw! makes good news. Deserve to get arrested, don't they? Wish there'd be a few more such doings in this place, so we'd have something to fill up with. No fun reporting in this one-horse place. Nothing ever happens. (*He is busily writing, talking at the same time.*)

PHOEBE. I should say a great deal happens; Miss Ludlow back from Europe, and — (*She is busy using her typewriter, pausing now and then as she speaks.*)

WALTER. Yes, and did you hear about it? They say she's engaged, or as good as. Lily May Griggs told me.

PHOEBE. Lily May? Why, when do you ever see her?

WALTER. Oh, times enough, on the sly. She isn't so slow as some people think. It's a shame the way her mother keeps her dressed like a kid and tries to pass her off as one. But she'll rebel some day, and when she does—well, watch out for a circus.

PHOEBE. So you know her?

WALTER. Know her? Of course I do. We met at a church sociable a year or so ago, and after that at one or two places, and—well, now Lily May steals away and meets me. Don't you give us away!

PHOEBE. Why, no; but it isn't right, Mr. Gifford. How can you encourage a young girl to deceive her mother?

WALTER. I couldn't, I don't suppose, under ordinary circumstances, but when a girl's kept under the way she is, and made to look foolish of by a vain, unreasonable mother like Mrs. Griggs, I think she has a right to look out for herself a little. Now, don't you, when you come right down to it? Be candid, now.

PHOEBE. Well, I do see some excuse for Lily May, but—no, no girl can have a sufficient excuse for deceiving her mother.

WALTER. Mm,—well, maybe you're right! I suppose you are. But we've decided to come right out and tell her mother the whole thing.

PHOEBE. The whole thing?

WALTER. Why, yes. That we're in love, you know, and——

PHCEBE. Oh! I didn't quite understand. So that's it?

WALTER. Y-yes. I suppose Mother Griggs'll have a fit, but she might as well have it first as last. You're going to the party to-morrow night, aren't you?

PHCEBE. Oh, yes. I am to sing, you know.

WALTER. Sure enough. It's to be a kind of a concert, too, isn't it? Ball, reception, concert, and a little of everything. It's a wonder she let Lily May invite me. But then, of course she doesn't suspect anything.

PHCEBE. And then, you will have to write it up, no doubt.

WALTER. I presume. Well, I'll get you to help me—about the dresses and so on. We'll make a swell article of it—a whole column or so, with a scare head. (*The telephone bell rings.*) Would you just as soon answer that? I want to finish this article.

PHCEBE (*going to telephone and answering the call*). Hello! Yes, this is the *Review* office. Yes, he's here. Who is this, please? Police station? (*To WALTER.*) It's the police station, Mr. Gifford.

WALTER. Probably something about this arrest. Ask them.

PHCEBE (*speaking in 'phone*). Hello. Can't I take it? (*She pauses each time long enough for another to speak.*) Very well, I will call him. Wait a minute. (*Laying down the receiver.*) They want to speak to Mr. Winslow. (*Going to R. and calling.*) Mr. Winslow! There is some one on the 'phone who wishes to speak to you.

(*She returns to her desk and resumes typewriting. ROBERT enters and goes to 'phone. WALTER continues busily writing.*)

ROBERT. Hello! Yes. What's that? What—Seth? You—hello! What about it? (*There is a longer pause, during which ROBERT becomes considerably agitated.*) Yes, I'll come at once. (*Turning from 'phone and getting his hat.*) I've have to go out, Miss Ashcroft. I'll be back as soon as I can. (*At D. F.*) Gifford, tell Johnson to hold the first edition till he hears from me. If I can't get back, I'll 'phone.

(*Exit ROBERT hurriedly.*)

WALTER. What's up now, I wonder?

PHŒBE. He has gone to the police station. It is something about Mr. Seth. What if —

WALTER (*jumping up*). I know. Seth was in that gambling scrape last night. He's arrested.

PHŒBE. Oh, no! It cannot be.

WALTER. I'll bet you. He's been gambling lately, that's what's been the matter, and I'll bet anything he's one of those fellows they caught.

(PHŒBE has risen, now sinks back into her chair, trembling.

JOHNSON enters R.)

JOHNSON. Where'd the boss go, Gifford?

WALTER. To the police station. He said to hold the first edition till you hear from him. Here, you can have this set up and it'll be ready in case he says to go ahead. (*He gives JOHNSON the copy he has prepared.*) I'll run down there myself and see what it's all about. (*He takes his hat and goes rapidly out* D. F. JOHNSON is about to exit R.)

PHŒBE. Oh, Mr. Johnson, you don't think it is true, do you?

JOHNSON. What, Miss Ashcroft?

PHŒBE. That Mr. Seth is arrested. It cannot be.

JOHNSON. Oh, I hope not. I knew he hadn't been exactly straight lately, but I hope it hasn't come to that. (*There is a knocking on door in F.*) Well, now, who do you suppose doesn't know any more than to knock at a printing-office? (*He goes and opens door, admitting MRS. EVERLY-GRIGGS and LILY MAY.*)

MRS. GRIGGS (*looking curiously about*). Is this the publishing office of *The Review*?

JOHNSON. Yes, ma'am.

MRS. GRIGGS. I thought it was. (*She comes down; LILY MAY hangs back.*) Lily May, you sit down and be quiet, like a good girl. (*She sees PHŒBE. JOHNSON exits R.*) Oh, Miss Ashcroft, it's you, isn't it? You're the very one I wanted to see.

(PHŒBE has risen and now comes forward; MRS. GRIGGS shakes hands with her, using an exaggerated high shake.)

PHŒBE. Good-morning, Mrs. Griggs. Won't you be seated? (*Offering her a chair.*)

MRS. GRIGGS. Thank you. (*She sits. LILY MAY is seated back near door.*) Oh, this is my little daughter, Lily May. You know her, I believe?

PHŒBE. Oh, yes. How do you do? (*To LILY MAY.*)

LILY MAY. How do you do?

MRS. GRIGGS. Don't you go and meddle with anything, Lily May. She's so mischeevous, Miss Ashcroft. I don't take her out with me very often, but when I do, she is such a care.

PHŒBE. She is getting to be quite a young lady, isn't she?

MRS. GRIGGS. Oh, no! Lily May is only thirteen, but she's large of her age. It doesn't seem but yesterday she was an innocent little cherup.

LILY MAY (*who is fussing with her sash*). Why, ma, I am almost —

MRS. GRIGGS (*quickly*). Lily May, stop fussing with your sash! You'll muss it all up. Dear me, will you never learn to be a good little girl?

LILY MAY. I'm afraid not, ma, if I keep on growing. (*She giggles.*)

MRS. GRIGGS. Be quiet, you saucy child! You see, Miss Ashcroft, she is quite incorridgible. Well, I came to see you, Miss Ashcroft, about your singing to-morrow night. Of course you won't disappoint us?

PHŒBE. I shall be prepared to sing, if you desire it, although I am sure you could find some one who would give your guests more pleasure.

MRS. GRIGGS. Oh, no, indeed. I have heard your singing lorded to the skies. It's going to be a miscellaneous sort of an entertainment—a variety, you know. I don't think people like too much of one thing. You must be sure and sing. I expect to have a very nice program. (*Rising.*) Well, I guess we'd better be going. I just dropped in to make sure.

PHŒBE. You may depend upon me. I hear Miss Ludlow is back from Europe?

MRS. GRIGGS. Yes, she came quite unexpectedly. She's had a grand time and received several offers. I imagine she's engaged, too, or soon will be. Well, he'll get a rich wife. I suppose you'll have it in *The Review* all about the entertainment?



PHŒBE. Oh, yes, I dare say we will cover it.

MRS. GRIGGS. Do what?

PHŒBE. I mean write it up; have a full account.

(TAD enters R. with proof. He stands ogling LILY MAY, who smiles at him. They are unnoticed by the others.)

MRS. GRIGGS. I'll send the carriage for you, Miss Ashcroft, at—say half-past eight. (She now sees LILY MAY and TAD, who are acting a little pantomime.) Child, with whom are you conversing?

TAD. I'm the devil, ma'am.

MRS. GRIGGS (*horrified*). The —! Goodness gracious! Lily May, come away instantly from that odorous ruffian who assumes to swear in our very presence! Boy, how dare you use such a profaneous word before my innocent offspring? (She has taken LILY MAY by the hand and drawn her away from TAD, who stands R. C., grinning.)

TAD. That ain't swearin'. Don't you know what the devil is? He's the kid in a printin'-office what does the nasty work fer nothin'.

PHŒBE (*laughing in spite of herself*). Tad, give me the proof and go back in the other room. (She takes the proof and TAD goes R., pausing in door. LILY MAY giggles.)

MRS. GRIGGS. Lily May, stop giggling! I shall have to catechise you when we get home. Good-day, Miss Ashcroft.

(She goes out D. F., pulling LILY MAY by the hand. LILY MAY looks back, with a smothered titter. Her mother gives her a vigorous jerk and she stumbles as she goes out of the door.)

TAD (*going and looking after MRS. GRIGGS and LILY MAY*). Say, wouldn't they jar y'?

PHŒBE. Why, Tad!

TAD. Well, wouldn't they? That Mis' Griggs puts on more airs than a windmill, and that girl,—gosh! they give me a pain!

PHŒBE. Dear me, Tad, I wish you wouldn't use such dreadful slang. Here, take this copy in.

(She gives him some copy; he grins and exits R., as ROBERT enters D. F. PHŒBE rises as she sees him.)

PHŒBE. Oh, Mr. Winslow, what has happened? Won't you tell me?

ROBERT. I'd rather not, Miss Ashcroft.

PHŒBE. But I know. Your brother has been arrested.

ROBERT. Yes.

PHŒBE. But you can save him? You can prevent his arrest from becoming known?

ROBERT. I hope so. I have bailed him and will pay whatever fine is necessary. I trust we can keep his disgrace secret. I will tell Johnson to see that nothing goes in the paper about the affair last night; that is all that I can do. (*Starts R., then turns again.*) But this must end it. If he gets in such a scrape again, he shall suffer the consequences. Can you blame me?

PHŒBE. Perhaps not; but I am sure this will be the last.

ROBERT. Let us hope that it may be.

(*Exit ROBERT R.*)

(*As PHŒBE returns to her desk, WALTER GIFFORD hurries in D. F.*)

WALTER. It was Seth!

PHŒBE. Yes, I know. Mr. Winslow is here. He has gone to tell Mr. Johnson not to put anything in the paper about it.

WALTER. Yes, of course; that's just the way. Spoil the best piece of news we've had in a dog's age! It's a shame!

PHŒBE. But would you have Mr. Winslow publish his own brother's disgrace?

WALTER. Well, he might leave his name out. Folks'll hear there has been some kind of a row, and say we are dead slow for not having a word about it. That's newspaper enterprise for you! Well, suppose I'll have to go and hunt up something else now—some Ladies' Aid Society meeting, a new fence, or something exciting like that. Darn the luck!

(*He rushes out D. F. slamming the door behind him. As he goes out, SETH comes in; he is somewhat agitated, but attempts to act naturally.*)

SETH. Good-morning, Phœbe.

PHŒBE. Oh, Seth! (*Going toward him, then pausing, as if almost afraid to speak to him.*)

SETH. What? Anything the matter?

PHŒBE. N-no.

SETH. Yes, there is. I'm late. I suppose Rob has been finding fault about it. Where is he?

PHŒBE. In the composing room. (*She is almost in tears and turns away from him to hide her emotion.*)

SETH. All right. Why, what's the matter? You—you're crying?

PHŒBE (*looking at him*). No, I'm not.

SETH. You were. What is it about?

PHŒBE. I—— Oh, Seth, I have been so worried about you.

SETH. About me? (*He approaches her with tenderness.*) That's too bad. Don't you know you ought not to do that? I was all right.

PHŒBE. All right, Seth?

SETH. Why, yes, I—— (*Looking keenly at her.*) You—you know—of—— (*She assents.*) Rob has told you! (*Angrily.*) I might have known. (*He draws away from her.*)

PHŒBE. No, Seth. There came a telephone message from the police station. I guessed it. Mr. Winslow was not the one who told me.

SETH. He would, though. He is always trying to prejudice you against me.

PHŒBE. You wrong him. You have no right to be angry with him, after all he has done for you, and the patience——

SETH (*bitterly*). Oh, he has been filling you with admiration for his brotherly affection and liberality, has he? (*He is standing C. ; she L. C.*) Well, I fail to see it. Am I not simply a workman in his office, when by good rights I ought to be his partner?

PHŒBE. And so you might be, no doubt, had you proved worthy. Yes, Seth, I am going to speak plainly, for I think it is best. You are most ungrateful when you feel and speak as you do.

SETH. I—suppose I am. It would serve me right if he let me go to the dogs. But—well, Phœbe, the fact is, I am in a worse fix than either you or he know anything about.

PHŒBE. Why, he will pay your fine——

SETH. That is not all. Last night I lost over four hundred dollars gambling.

PHŒBE. Oh, Seth!

SETH. Yes, and I can't pay it. I haven't a cent. I owe it to a stranger, a man who called himself Albert Bener. He seems to be a professional gambler, a thorough scoundrel and a cheat. He threatens me, if I do not pay him the money inside of a week. I don't know what to do.

PHŒBE. But this man? Can he make you pay?

SETH. He will. If I don't, he will make lots of trouble for me. I have no doubt he is a desperate character, who would stop at nothing.

PHŒBE. But was he not arrested too?

SETH. No, indeed, not he. He skipped out the back door and got away. Oh, he's a slick one. You don't often get the best of those fellows. I was a fool to play with him, but he was cunning enough to get me half intoxicated and then lead me on. Yes, I know it was disgraceful. I regret it all now, but what good does that do? It doesn't pay my debt.

PHŒBE. You must tell your brother.

SETH. I dare not. He is angry enough already. If he knew the worst, he would throw me over at once.

PHŒBE. You misjudge him. Tell him all and promise to do better. Promise, Seth, and stick to it. He will give you another chance.

SETH. Is there no other way?

PHŒBE. You know I haven't the money, Seth.

SETH. Oh, I didn't mean that!

PHŒBE. I know it. But if I did have it, I would give it to you at once. But it is best that you should tell your brother. Then try,—oh, try to do better, to be what I want you to be and what you are at heart—a good, trustworthy and noble man.

SETH. I will, Phœbe, with your help. You will help me?

PHŒBE. Yes, Seth.

SETH. As—as my wife? Say yes, Phœbe; say that you will be my wife, and then I can do anything.

PHŒBE (*drawing away slightly, as he attempts to embrace her*). I—don't, Seth. Oh, why have you spoken of this now?

SETH. You knew; you must have known. Could you

not see? Ah, you know I love you, and that I want you to be mine. Won't you say you will be?

PHŒBE. I cannot; not now. There is something I must tell you; some other time. Wait.

SETH. There is nothing you must tell me except that you love me and will be my wife. That is all I ask.

PHŒBE. But there is something else, Seth; something that you must hear. Remember, you know nothing of my past; nothing of my family nor my home before I came here three years ago.

SETH. All that is nothing to me.

PHŒBE. It may be something, more than you think now, when you have heard it. I will tell you everything at the first opportunity, then if you still want me to be your wife,—well, I will give you my answer then. Now I am going to send your brother to you. You have something to say to him. (*He would kiss her, but she smiles reprovingly, with a gentle gesture of remonstrance, and goes R.*)

SETH. No, not yet. Wait.

PHŒBE. It will never be easier than now.

(*Exit PHŒBE R.*)

SETH (*standing in dejection, looking after her, till ROBERT enters*): Well, Rob, I am here.

ROBERT. Yes, Seth, I see you are. Well, do you want to go to work?

SETH. Yes. But first, I have something to say to you.

ROBERT. Is it necessary? I understand it all. If you are willing to start new and prove that you mean what you say when you promise to do better, why, that's all there is of it. I am willing to overlook everything that has passed and never mention it again.

SETH (*confused*). Yes, but, that isn't all. I mean,—the fact is, there is something else.

ROBERT. Something else?

SETH. Yes. I—I need some money.

ROBERT. Well, I will advance you a week's salary. (*Taking out his pocketbook and giving SETH money.*) No, I'll give it to you, and you shall have your salary just the same at the end of the week.

SETH. You are generous, and I thank you, but —

ROBERT. Oh, that's all right. Don't say anything about it. Come, we'd better be getting the paper to press.

SETH. In a moment. But first, I want to speak to you about — (*Seems about to tell what is on his mind, but wavers and turns away as if he had not the courage.*)

ROBERT. Well, what?

SETH. Never mind now; another time will do. (ROBERT *starts to exit.*) No, wait. I—I want to ask you to do all you can to keep the affair of last night a secret; not only for my sake, but for—hers.

ROBERT (*pausing and turning to SETH with a keen look*). Hers?

SETH. Miss Ashcroft—Phœbe. I want to prove worthy of her. I want to make her my wife.

ROBERT. Your wife! Can you think of such a thing now, with such a stain to wash away? Do you dare think of asking such a pure, lovely woman as she to become your wife? No, not until you have proven yourself a man, and —

SETH (*firing up*). Oh, she knows that I am not the model man you profess to be, but she has a better opinion of me than you have. I have told her I love her and asked her to be my wife.

ROBERT. It was an insult to her, after what has happened.

SETH (*angrily*). You dare?

ROBERT. Yes. You are not fit to be any woman's husband.

SETH. You! —

(*Raises his hand to strike him, but catches sight of PHŒBE, who has entered R., and stands looking at him. He lets his arm fall and draws back to L. C., flushed with anger.*)

ROBERT *has faced him calmly, but now sees PHŒBE, and without a word passes her and exits R. She advances to C., her eyes fixed sternly upon SETH.*)

PHŒBE. Are you a coward, after all?

SETH. I had cause. He —

PHŒBE. Nothing can excuse what you have done. (*Pointing indignantly R.*) Go! Apologize to him at once, or never speak to me again!

(*He tries to face her, but his eyes fall and he slowly exits R., in a shamefaced manner. She stands looking after him.*)

## ACT II

SCENE.—*The reception room in MRS. EVERLY-GRIGGS' residence; an elegantly furnished apartment. Double doors at the back open to a hall which leads R. to ballroom and L. to the conservatory. There is a table down R.; sofa, chairs, etc., about stage. An orchestra is heard softly playing a waltz in the ballroom. As curtain rises, ADA LUDLOW enters C. from L., attended by HAROLD LA MOTTE. They are laughing and chatting.*

ADA. Yes, Mr. La Motte, it was a complete surprise, meeting you here to-night. You know, I had not seen you since we parted in Paris.

LA MOTTE. I arrived from Europe only a week ago, and lost no time in coming here. I could not remain long away from your side. There was nothing in Europe to attract me after you left.

ADA. Oh, you flatterer! I fear you men are all alike!

LA MOTTE. No, no; they don't all love you as I do. None of them do. (*She makes a slight remonstrance.*) No, you cannot, you must not put me off any longer. You said you would give me your answer when next we met —

ADA. But I did not think it was to be so soon —

LA MOTTE. Two months!—an age!

ADA. I thought it was to be when you came at my bidding, and you have come unbidden. No, you must wait. I—I will see you in a week. Come then.

LA MOTTE. A whole week! But it shall be as you say. But give me hope—one word! Tell me —

(*Voices are heard off R. She turns from him and goes up, meeting ROBERT WINSLOW and MRS. GRIGGS.*)

MRS. GRIGGS. Ah, here you are. I was just telling Mr. Winslow how lovely you looked, Miss Ludlow, and about Mr. La Motte. I wanted him to meet him. Mr. Winslow, Mr. La Motte. (*The men bow to each other.*) Mr. Winslow is the proprietor of *The Review*, you know, Mr. La Motte,—our paper,

LA MOTTE. Oh! Indeed?

MRS. GRIGGS. Yes. Why, we wouldn't know what was going on if it wasn't for *The Review*. Now, I dare say this 'll all be in the paper to-morrow, all about our dresses and everything. Won't it, Mr. Winslow?

ROBERT. Why, yes, we hope to have a complete account. I think it's worth it. Don't you, Miss Ludlow?

ADA. Oh, decidedly. It seems to be a great success.

MRS. GRIGGS. Now you're getting complimentary. It's quite a modest little affair, I'm sure. I call it a "sore-musically." We're going to have some singing before long. Miss Ashcroft's going to favor us.

ADA. Miss Ashcroft?

MRS. GRIGGS. Yes. She's a lovely singer. Gets a salary in the Baptist church. She's Mr. Winslow's typewriter.

LA MOTTE (*raising his eyebrows significantly*). And a singer? What a diversity of talents!

ROBERT (*with some spirit*). Miss Ashcroft is indeed a talented young woman.

LA MOTTE. Ah! Perhaps I may hope to be favored with an introduction. (*There is a waltz being played in the ballroom.*) This is our waltz, Miss Ludlow. (*Offering her his arm.*) Shall we go?

ADA. If we may be excused?

MRS. GRIGGS. Oh, certainly. The waltzes would be wasted if you didn't dance 'em.

(*ADA takes LA MOTTE'S arm and they go off to R. ROBERT watches them, then turns to MRS. GRIGGS with an expression which denotes disapproval.*)

ROBERT. Who is he?

MRS. GRIGGS. La Motte—Harold La Motte, a friend of Miss Ludlow's, a—engaged to her, I believe, or expects to be. You don't seem to like him.

ROBERT. I mistrust him. I don't think he is what he pretends to be.

MRS. GRIGGS. But he's handsome; looks lovely in that dress suit. I never met him myself till to-night. I invited him as Miss Ludlow's consort, but I don't know anything about him. (*She has gone up R., and is now about to exit.*) But dear me, it's about time to start the program. You'll excuse me, won't you—or come along? I'll have to tell them to begin,



ROBERT. I'll stroll in the conservatory, or out on the veranda. (*He goes to C. D. L., she to C. D. R.*)

MRS. GRIGGS. Don't go too far. You mustn't miss the music, and you know you want to hear Miss Ashcroft sing.

ROBERT. Oh, I shall hear that, never fear.

(*MRS. GRIGGS goes out to R. ROBERT is about to exit L., when he meets SETH and remains. They come down C. as they talk. SETH is somewhat excited.*)

SETH. Rob, have you met that man? He is here.

ROBERT. What man?

SETH. The one they call La Motte. Do you know who he is?

ROBERT. No; only that he is a friend, an admirer, of Miss Ludlow's.

SETH. A fortune hunter, a scoundrel! Rob, he is the man to whom I lost that money.

ROBERT. What! a gambler? Are you sure?

SETH. Sure? Could I be mistaken? Am I not in his power? I tell you he is a rascal—a thief. I knew him as Albert Benner, but he is the same man. He is after Miss Ludlow for her money.

ROBERT. We must warn her.

SETH. I dare not. He has it in his power to disgrace me.

ROBERT. Yes, Seth, to tell of your disgrace, for is it not still disgrace while it is hidden? You should have thought —

SETH. Yes, yes, I know, but this is no place for a sermon. I must leave here at once. Please excuse me to Mrs. Griggs. Tell her business called me—anything. And tell Phoebe I had to go.

ROBERT. Yes; but Seth, is it best to run away? Don't be a—afraid.

SETH. Say it—"a coward." Well, then, I am. But how can I meet him now—here? No; I must go. (*He starts to exit C., just as MRS. GRIGGS enters hurriedly and detains him.*)

MRS. GRIGGS. Oh, why don't you hurry? Miss Ashcroft is just going to sing. Come right along, both of you. (*She takes SETH's arm and urges him to go.*)

SETH. Really, Mrs. Griggs, you will have to excuse me, please, I must go—

MRS. GRIGGS. Go? The idea! Just as we're going to have such a treat. You know you'd rather hear Phœbe Ashcroft sing than—— Oh, come along. You too, Mr. Winslow. (*To ROBERT.*)

ROBERT. Very well.

MRS. GRIGGS (*to SETH, as she compels him to go with her*). The idea of your running away from my party before it's half over! I'd never forgive you in the world. (*She clings to SETH'S arm and he is forced to attend her. She looks back at ROBERT, who nods, smiling.*)

ROBERT. Oh, I'm coming!

(*They exeunt R., as WALTER GIFFORD and LILY MAY GRIGGS enter L. Her sash is untied and she is trying to tie it.*)

LILY MAY. How that old sash acts. I'd just like to say—darn!

WALTER. Why don't you? It isn't a bit worse than it is to think it.

LILY MAY. Isn't it? Darn, then! There! But it doesn't help me tie it. I guess you'll have to. Can you tie a double bow?

WALTER. I can try. Let's see. (*She turns around and he attempts to tie the sash.*) I thought your mother didn't let you have beaux?

LILY. Oh, this kind—lots of 'em. But boy beaux—goodness! she'd just as soon let me have a—a hoptoad.

WALTER. Well, I'm one, and——

LILY MAY. A hoptoad?

WALTER. Well, I meant a "boy beau," but if you wanted me to be a hoptoad, I'd be just as much like one as I could. But I think I'd rather be—er—something a little more agreeable.

LILY MAY. I should hope so. I hate toads. (*Looking around at him.*) Got it tied? (*He keeps tying and untying the ribbon.*)

WALTER. Well, I can't seem to make a very good job of it.

LILY MAY. I should say not. Why, can't you make a better bow than that?

WALTER. B-e-a-u?

LILY MAY. No, of course not: b-o-w. (*They finally have the sash tied after a fashion.*) There! I guess that'll

have to do. Now, you go away. You know I can't dance with you for four or five more times yet. If ma notices that we're together too much, she might ——

WALTER. Send me away?

LILY MAY. Maybe. And me to bed.

WALTER. What! a young lady like you?

LILY MAY. A young lady, am I, in these clothes? Look like it, don't I? Oh, sometimes I get real—real rebellious, ma treats me so. I'm seventeen, and she wants me to pass for a little girl. Do you blame me?

WALTER. No, I don't. If I were you, I wouldn't stand it any longer.

LILY MAY. There! now you're setting me up to go against ma. You don't know how she is. Why, she wouldn't let me talk to you alone like this.

WALTER. Oh, I know that well enough. All she invited me for, anyway, was to write it all up. I'm only a reporter.

LILY MAY. You're more than that to me, Walter.

WALTER. Lily May! (*He is about to embrace her, but she springs away from him.*)

LILY MAY. Oh, you mustn't! Somebody might see us. What if ma knew we have been acquainted so long, and met secretly, and ——

WALTER. And that I have kissed you?

LILY MAY. Sh! Mercy, don't say it so loud. (*Looking R.*) Somebody's coming. Go,—quick! Hurry! Maybe it's ma!

WALTER (*as he hurries to go out R.*). But I'll see you again. (*Looks at his dance card.*) Remember, number eleven!

LILY MAY. Yes, I'll remember.

(*Motions him away with her hand. He goes out R., and she looks first after him, then L., and back and forth till ADA LUDLOW and LA MOTTE enter C. D. R.*)

ADA. Oh, here's Lily May. How do you do, Lily May?

LILY MAY. How do you do?

ADA. Are you having a good time?

LILY MAY. Pretty good, thank you.

LA MOTTE. Isn't it pretty late for little girls to be up?

LILY MAY. Not when we have a party.

ADA (*to LA MOTTE*). I presume she took a nap this afternoon. That's the way little girls do, when they are to be allowed to stay up for the evening.

LILY MAY. I suppose you're too old?

(*ADA is evidently annoyed, but attempts to conceal it. LA MOTTE smiles.*)

LA MOTTE (*to ADA*). That's the time the little girl paid back the big one, isn't it?

ADA. The saucy thing!

(*There is the sound of the prelude to a song from R. LILY MAY runs up to C. and stands looking off. ADA and LA MOTTE are down L. She sits and he leans over her chair, smiling and talking. A full, sweet feminine voice begins singing a tender love song or ballad. LA MOTTE suddenly stops talking to ADA, looks up, surprised, and listens intently. As the song progresses, he shows agitation, which he conceals before ADA looks up at him.*)

LA MOTTE (*after several bars have been sung*). Who is it?

ADA. Singing?

LA MOTTE. Yes.

ADA. Miss Ashcroft; isn't it, Lily May?

LILY MAY. Yes. Hasn't she got a lovely voice?

ADA. Very sweet.

LA MOTTE. Beautiful!

ADA. And she is only a typewriter—in Mr. Winslow's newspaper office.

LA MOTTE. Oh, that's who it is? I remember. The talented young woman who gets a salary in the Baptist church. (*He speaks rather sarcastically. LILY MAY looks at him sharply.*)

LILY MAY. You needn't make fun of her. There's no young woman here any prettier, or more talented, or any more of a lady, either!

(*She exits hurriedly to R., with a disdainful backward look at them.*)

ADA (*springing up, angrily*). Impudence!

LA MOTTE. Oh, she's only a child!

ADA. Child! She's no such thing. She's old enough to know when she insults her mother's guests.

LA MOTTE. Oh, come now, it isn't so bad as that. We started it, you know. She certainly isn't so simple, after all.

ADA (*gradually melting to a good-natured laugh*). No, indeed, and perhaps I deserved it. She is very sensitive about being called a little girl, and I ought not to have teased her. It's all her silly mother's fault. But listen! Isn't that a sweet voice?

LA MOTTE (*who has, through all the conversation, shown a deep interest in the singing, as if the voice had some mysterious power to move him*). It is a rare voice—such a voice as one seldom hears, such a voice as—as I ——

(*He stops speaking suddenly and starts excitedly up c., pausing in the entrance and looking off to R.*)

ADA. What is it? Are you so charmed?

LA MOTTE. Charmed? Miss Ludlow, that voice is not strange to me.

ADA. Why, what do you mean? You have heard Miss Ashcroft sing before? I thought you had not seen her yet?

LA MOTTE. Miss Ashcroft? No. But the possessor of that voice?—yes. (*He seems suddenly to remember what he is saying.*) But no, it is only my imagination.

ADA. But why should it affect you so?

LA MOTTE. Affect me? Why, you see, it sounded so much like the voice of an old friend of mine, who is—dead—that it startled me for a moment, that is all.

(*He comes down again and they listen and talk till the song ends, then go to R. C., as MRS. GRIGGS and SETH enter from R., not seeing them at first.*)

MRS. GRIGGS. Must you really go, Mr. Winslow? Well, if you must, of course I will excuse you, but it seems too bad. Just as the festivities are at their highest.

SETH. I am sorry, Mrs. Griggs, but I feel that I must go and ——

(*He sees LA MOTTE and pauses, turns as if to go, then thinks better of it and remains, striving to hide his agitation.*)

MRS. GRIGGS *has followed his glance and now sees LA MOTTE and ADA. She goes down to them.*)

MRS. GRIGGS. Well, well, you two been hiding your-

selves here, while everybody else was listening to Miss Ashcroft's song? How could you?

ADA. Oh, we could hear very nicely here, Mrs. Griggs.

LA MOTTE. Perfectly.

MRS. GRIGGS. Wasn't it splendorous? She's going to sing another pretty soon. Oh, here's Mr. Winslow! Have you met him?

ADA. Not in a long time. (*She goes c. and speaks to SETH, who is compelled to come down.*) How do you do, Mr. Winslow? (*SETH returns her salutation politely.*)

MRS. GRIGGS. You haven't met him, have you, Mr. La Motte?

LA MOTTE. I—think not. No.

SETH. I have never met—Mr. La Motte! (*He emphasizes the name rather significantly but only LA MOTTE notices it. He glares at SETH, and bows stiffly.*)

MRS. GRIGGS. Mr. Winslow was just telling me he'd have to go, and I say it's too bad. Isn't it a pretty note to have business at such a time at this?

LA MOTTE. It is, indeed. However, it is "business before pleasure," you know, Mrs. Griggs.

MRS. GRIGGS. As if it wasn't our business to enjoy ourselves once in awhile. I say we ought to. Now, Mr. Winslow, why must you go?

LA MOTTE (*insinuatingly*). Perhaps there are reasons which Mr. Winslow cannot explain.

SETH. I will remain.

MRS. GRIGGS. Good! I knew you would, all the time. (*To LA MOTTE.*) It's time you delinquished Miss Ludlow for a little while, don't you think so? You've monopolized her the whole evening. I think she ought to give Mr. Winslow a dance. Don't you?

LA MOTTE (*smiling faintly*). That's for Miss Ludlow to say.

ADA. And for Mr. Winslow to determine. He has not asked me.

SETH. I have had no opportunity. Will you give me the pleasure?

ADA. Certainly. With Mr. La Motte's permission. This was his dance.

SETH. Oh, do not let me ——

LA MOTTE. I release her.

SETH. Thank you.

(*The orchestra is again playing a waltz. SETH and ADA go off to R.*)

MRS. GRIGGS. How easily that was arranged. Now I want you to meet Miss Ashcroft. Wouldn't you like to?

LA MOTTE. I should be delighted.

MRS. GRIGGS. You'll find her charming. I think folks ought to circulate around and make themselves agreeable, don't you? Of course, we all know how 'tis with you and Miss Ludlow, but I can't allow you to have her all to yourself to-night. I suppose it'll be announced before long, won't it?

LA MOTTE. Really, Mrs. Griggs, I—that's for Miss Ludlow to say, you know.

MRS. GRIGGS. Oh, yes, I understand. Now you wait right here a minute and I'll find Miss Ashcroft. I want you to dance with her. She's as graceful as a gazette.

LA MOTTE. Indeed! Do let me meet her at once.

MRS. GRIGGS. Just you wait. Don't run away after your feeancy, now.

(*Exit MRS. GRIGGS C. D. R.*)

LA MOTTE. What an insufferable bore that woman is! My "feeancy!" Ha! ha! Let us hope I may have the good luck to make her my "feeancy," and my wife, in short order. And then,—well, then won't we be in clover, my boy? Maybe not. The haughty beauty thinks I'm dead in love with her. Ha! So I am, my heiress, with your money! What fools these women are! They're all alike.

(*He has been walking about stage, now pauses down L. C., not at first seeing MRS. GRIGGS and PHOEBE ASHCROFT, who enter C. D. R. As MRS. GRIGGS speaks, he turns and sees PHOEBE; starts, but manages to hide his surprise from MRS. GRIGGS. PHOEBE, as she sees him, is at first almost overcome by emotion and reaches out her hand unconsciously, as if to grasp something for support; totters for an instant, then partially recovers her self-possession and as MRS. GRIGGS introduces them bows to LA MOTTE in a manner that, while constrained, is noticed only by him. He is coolly polite.*)

MRS. GRIGGS. Mr. La Motte, allow me to present Miss Ashcroft. Miss Ashcroft, Mr. La Motte. (*After their ac-*

*knowledgments she continues.*) Now I'll leave you to get acquainted and see how all my other guests are enjoying themselves. You'll excuse me, won't you? Mr. La Motte was praising your voice, Miss Ashcroft. He's Miss Ludlow's—friend, you know. (*With a coquettish glance at LA MOTTE.*) Oh, I wasn't going to tell, don't be frightened. (*Down C. D.*) He was afraid I was going to tell something, Miss Ashcroft, but I wasn't. No, indeed!

(*Exit MRS. GRIGGS C. D. R.*)

LA MOTTE (*he looks at PHEBE calmly a moment, then smiles almost insolently, as he steps toward her and speaks*). Well, aren't you going to speak,—Miss Ashcroft? Have you nothing to say to me after our long separation?

PHEBE (*she has drawn away from him, with repulsion, and scarcely looks at him*). I had hoped that I need never speak to you again.

LA MOTTE. But fate wills it otherwise, eh? It's not my fault, surely. Really, I quite stumbled upon your hiding-place. Considerable of a come-down for a society belle, isn't it—typewriter in a country printing office?

PHEBE. It is no come-down to earn an honest living. Have you been as honorable?

LA MOTTE. Come now, don't get personal. I am not afraid of you. All you've got to do is to keep still. Do that and I will do the same, but tell on me and—well, you know me.

PHEBE. Know you? Yes, Gilbert Dayne, I do know you, I know why you are here, and I mean to thwart your purpose. You shall not deceive Miss Ludlow, whose money you covet,—no, not if I can prevent it.

LA MOTTE (*with a sarcastic laugh*). But you dare not. Say so much as one word to her, or any one else, and I will pay you back blow for blow.

PHEBE. You may do your worst, I shall do my duty. No matter what the consequences to me, I shall not let you ruin another woman's life.

LA MOTTE (*stepping close to her threateningly*). You'd better heed me, or I—

PHEBE (*facing him boldly, so that he is somewhat cowed*). Oh, I am not afraid of you. You may not fear me, but you fear the law which I can invoke. Ah, that makes you tremble, does it? And I tell you, Gilbert Dayne, I shall



not spare you unless you leave to-morrow and never show your face here again. I have only to reveal your past to prove you the villain you are.

LA MOTTE. My past? And what of your own? Is not my past a part of yours? Disgrace me, and you fall with me.

PHŒBE. No, I will never fall lower than you have already dragged me—into sorrow and suffering. You know that I have committed no wrong. I have done no crime. Gilbert Dayne!

LA MOTTE (*seizing her wrist, roughly*). Be still, I say! Don't you dare speak that name again. This is no place to have a discussion. You must treat me as a stranger to-night. Where can I see you alone, and when?

PHŒBE. Let me go! Don't dare to touch me! I refuse to see you alone again. It would be useless.

LA MOTTE. I promise you it would not. I have more to tell you than I can say here.

PHŒBE. You could say nothing that would change my determination.

LA MOTTE (*speaking in low, distinct tones, close to her ear*). I can say something to your lover—Seth Winslow!

PHŒBE. You dare not!

LA MOTTE. I dare do anything. You know me well enough for that. Defy me, and ——

PHŒBE. I do defy you!

(*She is about to go, but he intercepts her, seizing her arm. She tries to free herself, but he holds her tightly.*)

PHŒBE. Let me go! How dare you?

LA MOTTE. Beware! If I let you go without your promise of silence, it is to tell Seth Winslow ——

(*SETH has appeared in C. D. just as his name is spoken and now stands looking at them.*)

SETH (*stepping quickly forward and encountering him*). If you have anything to tell Seth Winslow, he is here to hear it.

(*PHŒBE drops back dismayed and totters, as if about to faint. SETH goes to her and supports her.*)

SETH. What have you to say?

LA MOTTE. Ask her. If she bids me speak, I will do so.

PHŒBE. No, no; not now. It is nothing. (*She revives and draws away from SETH, who stands R. C.; LA MOTTE is L. C. She crosses, so that she is near the latter. Just then LILY MAY runs across C. D., from R. to L., laughing, followed quickly by WALTER GIFFORD. They disappear to L., as MRS. GRIGGS enters from R., with ROBERT WINSLOW.*)

MRS. GRIGGS Why, Miss Ashcroft, I've been looking everywhere for you. It's time for your song.

PHŒBE. I am sorry. I will go. (*She starts to go, speaking aside to LA MOTTE.*) To-morrow night. I will see you then.

(*She goes up to C., ROBERT WINSLOW offers her his arm; she takes it and goes off to R., followed by MRS. GRIGGS. They meet ADA LUDLOW, who nods to them as she comes in and is met by LA MOTTE. She smiles, takes his arm and they slowly saunter off to L., laughing and talking, ignoring SETH, who is part way down stage to R. He stands for an instant looking after them, then the prelude of a song is heard being played off R. He goes up to C. and stands looking off to R. Just as PHŒBE'S voice is heard beginning the song, the curtain falls. The singing may continue after fall of curtain until the first verse has been sung.*)

END OF ACT II

### ACT III

SCENE.—*A plainly but neatly furnished room in the modest house occupied by PHCEBE ASHCROFT. The furnishings should denote taste and refinement, combined with evidences of a moderate income. Discovered, SALLIE POCKETT, a slovenly, gawky country girl, laying the cloth on one end of a small table R. C. A tray, with a plate, cup, saucer, etc., is on another table or stand L. SALLIE shuffles back and forth, as PHCEBE, looking pale and ill, enters R.)*

SALLIE (*running to assist her*). Oh, here y' are, miss. Lor, miss, how white y' are, like a sheet. Tremblin', too. Be y' that sick, miss?

PHCEBE. Oh, no, Sallie; it is only the result of a bad headache. I am not sick.

SALLIE. Well, y' look it. (*Placing her in chair by table.*) Here now, set right down here 'n' see what I've fixed y'. Some nice toast, a piece o' ham 'nd a cup o' hot tea. Ain't that nice, now? (*She brings articles from tray.*)

PHCEBE. Very nice, Sallie. How kind you are.

SALLIE. Kind yer grandmother! Land! ain't I paid fer it? (*Pours tea.*)

PHCEBE. Paid? Ah, I couldn't pay you for taking care of me as you do, Sallie. I don't know what I should do without you.

SALLIE. Well, I reckon it would be lonesome like for y', all alone in this house here. Sometimes, miss, ain't y' kind o' scared as it is, just you and me?

PHCEBE. Why, no; not at all. What would harm us?

SALLIE. I d' know. But ain't you never put no stock in hoodoos, miss?

PHCEBE. Hoodoos?

SALLIE. 'R ghosts like?

PHCEBE. Oh, no, I don't believe in them.

SALLIE. 'Nd don't y' b'lieve in bugglers, nuther?

PHCEBE. Yes, of course I believe there are burglars; but none that we need be afraid of. What could they expect to

find here, in this little house? There's nothing worth stealing.

SALLIE. You!

PHŒBE. Me? (*Laughing.*) Oh, now you are making fun of me, Sallie. Nobody would want to steal me.

SALLIE. I d' know, miss. I've seen some of 'em lookin' at you 's if they'd like t'.

PHŒBE. Who? Burglars?

SALLIE. Land o' goodness, no! Men. Mr. Winslow, mebbe, either one of 'em. I d' know which of 'em wants y' the worst, that oldest one 'r t' other one.

PHŒBE. Sallie! You mustn't talk so. It's all nonsense. What ever put such ideas into your head?

SALLIE. I d' know. Guess they jest come along 'thout no putt'n'. Here! Why ain't you eat'n'? Your tea's all gett'n' cold. Ain't it jest like dish water?

PHŒBE. No, Sallie, it is very nice. (*She drinks and eats sparingly.*) What time is it?

SALLIE. Pretty late fer t' be eatin' supper. After half-past seven.

PHŒBE. Is it so late? What a lazy day I have had. It's the first time I have missed going to the office in a long while.

SALLIE. Well, y' wa'n't able. (*There is a knocking on door.*) Somebuddy's rappin'.

PHŒBE (*partly rising, tremblingly*). I expect a visitor. See who it is.

(*SALLIE goes to door and admits TAD, who enters bashfully, with his hat in one hand and the other behind him.*)

TAD (*in an awkward, boyish fashion*). How d' do, Miss Ashcroft?

PHŒBE. Why, good-evening, Tad. How kind of you to come and see me.

TAD. Missed you awful down 't the office to-day. Thought I'd come and see how you was. Hope you're better.

PHŒBE. Oh, yes, thank you. I shall be back at my desk to-morrow, I hope. The next day, anyhow. Won't you sit down?

TAD. No thanks, can't stay. (*He has thrown aside his hat and now stands with both hands behind him; speaks in*

*an abashed, half-scared manner.*) Uh,—a—which hand'll you take?

PHŒBE (*not comprehending*). Which hand?

SALLIE (*clearing the things from table; now glancing at TAD*). He's got something t' give y', miss. Guess which hand it's in.

TAD. Yes. Which'll y' take?

PHŒBE. Oh! Well, let—me—see! This one! (*She designates the hand in which he is holding several roses, which he now produces and offers to her.*)

SALLIE. You got it!

TAD. That's right. Here!

PHŒBE. Oh, how pretty! Are they for me, Tad?

TAD. Yes. I got 'm fer you. (*Gives PHŒBE the roses.*) I thought seein' you's sick, they'd kind o'—I guess I'll have t' go. (*Getting his hat.*)

SALLIE. Shall I put 'em in water, miss?

PHŒBE. Yes, please, Sallie. (*SALLIE takes the roses and exits R.*) Don't be in a hurry, Tad. Tell me how everything has gone at the office to-day.

TAD. Oh, pretty well, c'nsid'rin'. 'Twa'n't like it is when you're there.

(*Enter SALLIE R.*)

SALLIE. So you work in the printin' office, do y', bub?

TAD. Yep. I'm the devil.

SALLIE. Land o' goodness, be y'? You don't look it. Did y' hear that, Miss Phœbe? (*She has a vase for the roses and now arranges them on table.*)

PHŒBE. Yes, Tad's the devil, but a very nice one and not at all deserving of the name.

SALLIE. Well, if I ever! If it was "imp" y' called him!

TAD. Aw, say, you ain't no angel yerself, I reckon! (*SALLIE makes a good-natured motion as if to strike him; he makes a face at her, dodging. At door, about to go.*) Say, Miss Ashcroft, don't—please don't say anything t' the fellers in the office about them roses.

PHŒBE. Why not? You needn't be ashamed of them, Tad.

TAD. Oh, I ain't; but y' see,—well, they might guy me, y' see, and say I was tryin' t' git y' t' be—er—my girl,

SALLIE (*laughing*). Ho! will y' listen t' that?

TAD. Well, I guess they wouldn't say any feller was tryin' t' git you! Good-bye, Miss Ashcroft.

(*Exit TAD hurriedly.*)

SALLIE (*going to door and looking after him*). If that ain't a kid! Y' can't git the best of him, can y'?

PHŒBE. No; Tad is very bright. (*SALLIE takes things from table and exits R. There is a knock on door. PHŒBE starts, hesitates an instant, then seems to gain courage and goes and opens door, admitting SETH WINSLOW. She starts back in dismay.*) I—I thought——

SETH. You thought it was some one else. But you see it is I—Seth Winslow! You are not glad to see me, eh? Well, I am here, just the same. (*He is slightly intoxicated and shows excitement, being in a reckless mood and scarcely knowing what he says or does.*)

PHŒBE. Why, Seth, what do you mean? What is the matter?

SETH. Matter? You know. You have not forgotten last night, neither have I. What is that man to you? You know him. What is he to you, I say? Tell me.

PHŒBE. I will tell you; only be calm. I will tell you, some other time. Not to-night.

SETH. Yes, to-night. There may be no other time.

PHŒBE. What do you mean?

SETH. I mean that either he or I may not be alive after to-night——

PHŒBE. Oh, no! no! Seth, promise me you will do nothing rash! That you will not harm him.

SETH. Because you love him? No! I will give him a chance for his life, but he kills me or I kill him!

PHŒBE. You don't know what you are saying. You do not understand. I can explain everything, I can prove to you that I have not been false. But not to-night, Seth, not now. You must go home now, promising me that you will not see him to-night. To-morrow you will be calmer and see it in a different light. You will do this, Seth, for my sake?

SETH. No. If you can explain, do it now.

PHŒBE. Oh, Seth, can't you trust me? Can't you believe that I will not deceive you? If you cannot, then you are not worthy of my confidence.

SETH. Then I will go. (*He starts, but she seizes his arm, almost frantically.*)

PHŒBE. Not to him! Not to find him! Promise me you will not see him to-night.

SETH. No. I stay to hear your explanation, or I go to have a reckoning with him. Take your choice.

PHŒBE (*tottering to a chair or table and leaning on it for support*). Oh, can't you see I am ill, weak? If you ever loved me, if you have one spark of pity or regard for me now, do as I beg of you—for your sake as well as for mine.

SETH. Or for his? No. That man is a scoundrel, a traitor. He got me in his power by treachery and cheating. He threatens me with exposure, disgrace. That I could stand. But the thought that you loved him, love him even now, perhaps,—do you think I can face all this calmly and not have my revenge? Then you think I am not flesh and blood.

PHŒBE. Then I think you are not a man, but a coward as well as he. I think you are not worth trusting if you have no more faith in me than this.

SETH (*beginning to weaken*). Oh, Phœbe, you don't know all I have suffered, what I am facing. If you knew —

PHŒBE. Or if you knew what I am suffering, what I have to face. I only ask you to trust me, as I am willing to trust you. I ask you to leave me till to-morrow and not to see Harold La Motte, or to have any words with him. (*Grasping his arm, imploringly.*) May I trust you?

SETH (*after looking a moment steadily into her eyes*). You may. (*He suddenly clasps her in his arms, passionately.*) Oh, Phœbe, if you knew how I love you!

PHŒBE (*yielding to his embrace briefly, then withdrawing from his arms in a frightened manner*). No, no, you must not! You must go now.

SETH. You fear to have me stay? Is that it? Tell me, do you expect Harold La Motte here to-night?

PHŒBE. Is this the way you trust me?

SETH. You can't deny it. You do expect him. That is why you want me to go. By George —!

PHŒBE. You may take your choice, now—go or stay. Trust me, keep your promise and be my friend, or doubt me and end all between us. Which shall it be?

SETH (*after slight hesitation*). I—I will go.

(*He steps toward door, as if to go, when there is a knock upon it. He starts back, while PHŒBE runs to door and leans against it, trembling with fear. She points toward L.*)

PHŒBE (*in a cautious tone*). Go in there.

SETH. What! hide? No.

PHŒBE. Oh, I beg of you, leave me. You have promised to trust me. Do so now. Prove your faith in me by going in there and remaining till I call you. (*The knocking is repeated.*)

SETH. It is La Motte!

PHŒBE. You doubt me.

SETH (*crossing to L.*). No!

(*Exit SETH L.*)

(*PHŒBE, after pausing an instant, to compose herself, opens the door and HAROLD LA MOTTE steps in. He looks quickly about the room, suspiciously.*)

LA MOTTE. Why didn't you open the door? There was some one here.

PHŒBE. It would have suited me better never to open it to you.

LA MOTTE. Come now, none of your sarcasm. I know you're sorry I am not dead, as you believed for three years, but you see I am very much alive.

PHŒBE. I certainly have no reason to be thankful that you are.

LA MOTTE. Well, we won't waste words telling unpleasant truths. I am here to get your decision. What are you going to do? There is but one thing I ask of you,—the easiest thing in the world.

PHŒBE. And that is?

LA MOTTE. Silence.

PHŒBE. And that I refuse.

LA MOTTE. Pshaw! you want to be coaxed. You want money. Well, what is your price?

PHŒBE. Price? Do you dare suggest such a thing to me? No. Do what you will, I shall expose you and send you back to the prison from which you escaped.

LA MOTTE (*looking about, in fright*). Hush! or if I go back, it may be for a worse crime than I have ever yet committed. (*Threatening her.*)



PHŒBE. I believe you capable of even that, but I do not fear you. You cannot buy my silence nor frighten me into submission. (*They are both down c., he L. and she R.*) I thought you were dead, as you say, for three years, and I had no reason to mourn for you. It was you, my father's partner, who got him into your power and stole from him till his business was ruined and he died, a disappointed and broken-hearted man.

LA MOTTE. It was not my fault if he failed.

PHŒBE. It was all your fault—your dishonesty and treachery. Was it not proven, and were you not sent to prison for twelve years? Your sentence was not half up when you escaped. You shall go back, if I can send you there.

LA MOTTE. You are merciless.

PHŒBE. What were you but merciless, cruel? You ruined my father—yes, killed him,—and made my life worse than death. Now you think to make me keep silent while you entrap another woman and ruin her life. Never!

LA MOTTE. Such talk is all very heroic, my dear, and would sound well on the stage; but this is plain reality. You have got to leave this place at once, or swear to me never to tell a word of what you know. Which shall it be?

PHŒBE. Neither. I defy you!

LA MOTTE (*he seizes hold of her roughly*). You shall do as I say, or —— (*He has taken hold of her shoulders and forced her against the table. She struggles to free herself, but he holds her firmly.*) Swear! Swear to keep silent, or you may never live to speak!

PHŒBE. No, no, I will not! Release me!

LA MOTTE (*with his hands on her throat*). Not until you promise. I will kill you first!

(*He tightens his hold on her throat; she sinks back lifelessly, as SETH flings open the door L. and bursts in. He runs and grasps LA MOTTE by the shoulders and powerfully hurls him to L., where he nearly falls. PHŒBE revives sufficiently to recognize SETH, then with a cry faints and falls into chair. LA MOTTE now rushes at SETH and they struggle fiercely for a time, then separate and stand glaring at each other.*)

SETH. You coward!

LA MOTTE. You shall pay for this!

SETH. I am ready for a settlement now. (*He goes and bends over PHŒBE, speaking tenderly to her.*) Miss Ashcroft! Speak to me. Are you hurt? (*He turns to LA MOTTE just in time to see him taking a revolver from his pocket.*) You —

(*LA MOTTE is about to raise the weapon when SETH springs upon him and knocks it from his grasp to the floor. As they grapple again SALLIE rushes in R. She runs about screaming "Help! Murder!" etc. PHŒBE revives and looks on in terror. LA MOTTE now deals SETH a blow which sends him reeling across to R., where he falls backward, stunned and helpless for a moment. PHŒBE attempts to intercede with LA MOTTE, but he pushes her roughly aside; she again goes to him, throwing her arms about him and almost kneeling as she implores him to desist.*)

PHŒBE. No, no! Do not kill him! I will promise! I swear to do as you say!

LA MOTTE. To save your lover. No!

(*He seizes a chair which stands L. C. and raises it above his head, to strike SETH, who is about to rise. SALLIE has in the meantime noticed the revolver on the floor and picked it up; she now springs in front of LA MOTTE and points it at him.*)

SALLIE. Drop it! (*LA MOTTE glares at her fiercely; she makes a motion as if to fire; he drops the chair, cowed. She keeps the weapon pointed at him, forcing him to the door in F., through which he sneaks, with a menacing gesture. SETH has risen and goes to PHŒBE, who falls fainting in his arms. As LA MOTTE disappears, SALLIE slams the door after him and falls with her back against it, laughing.*)

END OF ACT III

## ACT IV

SCENE.—*Same as Act II, or another handsome apartment at MRS. EVERLY-GRIGGS'. Discovered, WALTER GIFFORD, in C. D., motioning to some one off L.*

WALTER. Come on in, Lily May. What are you afraid of? (*Pause.*) There's no one here. Pshaw, you've got to face her some time and you might as well have it over first as last. Come on. Don't be afraid.

LILY MAY (*poking her head cautiously around edge of door*). Are you sure she isn't here?

WALTER. Positive.

LILY MAY. Nor anybody else?

WALTER. Not a soul.

LILY MAY (*entering timidly*). Oh, I'm just about scared to death. What ever will ma say?

WALTER. Well, I shouldn't care. Excuse me if I say it of your own mother, but I think it serves her right. To think of her keeping you dressed like a little girl, when you're—how old are you?

LILY MAY (*strutting about and surveying herself proudly*). Well, I'm old enough to have my dresses down and my hair up, and they are at last. How do you like me?

WALTER (*as if to embrace her*). Like you? That doesn't express it —

LILY MAY (*drawing away*). Oh, I mean this way: dressed like a grown-up? Ain't it grand?

WALTER. Scrumptious! And to think you had that dress made all without your mother's knowing it.

LILY MAY. Yes, and this isn't the only one. I suppose it's perfectly awful to deceive one's mother so, but what is a girl going to do, when she's so misused? You don't blame me, do you, Walter?

WALTER. Blame you? I guess not. I will blame you, though, if you don't go still farther and tell your mother that we've decided to get married.

LILY MAY. Oh, you've got to tell her that!

WALTER. I have? Oh, say, now, don't you think it's your place to break it to her first? That is, I mean wouldn't it be—a—safer?

LILY MAY. So, you're afraid of a little thing like that, are you? After I've done my share, too, and put my dresses down and my hair up? Very well, if that's all you care about me. Heroes in books risk their lives for the one they love, and you—you—I believe you're a coward.

WALTER. Coward, eh? Well, if that's the opinion you have of me, I must say you aren't very flattering. If you loved me, you wouldn't say that.

LILY MAY. Then prove you're not. Ask ma.

WALTER. M'm,—don't you think we'd better let her get over the shock of seeing you in those clothes, first?

LILY MAY. Yes, perhaps. And then,—you will ask her, won't you, Walter, dear?

WALTER. I'll more than ask her, Lily May, darling. I'll ask her, then if she refuses —

LILY MAY. Which she will, of course.

WALTER. Oh, she will? Well, then I'll tell her we have it all settled, and that we're going to get married anyway.

LILY MAY. Well,—maybe you'd better let me coax her a little first. Ma usually gives in if I tease hard enough and stick to it. When it's anything I want real bad, and —

WALTER. You do want me that way, don't you?

LILY MAY. No.

WALTER. You don't? Oh, Lily May!

LILY MAY (*teasing him; he puts on an injured air*). Well, I don't. I don't want you bad, do I—any worse than you are?

WALTER. Oh!

LILY MAY. I want you because you're—so—good. There! now are you satisfied?

WALTER. N-no. I will be, though, when I've had a kiss.

LILY MAY. Only one?

WALTER. One—thousand!

(*He kisses her, just as MRS. GRIGGS, off R., calls "LILY MAY!" They separate, she running R. and he L.*)

LILY MAY. It's ma!

WALTER. Murder!

(*They hide, R. and L., and peep cautiously out as MRS. GRIGGS enters, acting a pantomime of warning gestures, throwing kisses, talking on their fingers, etc., behind her back.*)

MRS. GRIGGS. Lily May! Where is that child? I was sure I heard her voice. Lily May, where are you? (WALTER motions LILY MAY to come out and show herself. She shakes her head emphatically. In his excitement he makes a slight noise which attracts MRS. GRIGGS' attention; she turns and sees him motioning.) Why, Mr. Gifford, is that you? Where did you come from?

WALTER (*entering, much abashed*). N-nowhere, ma'am. I—that is, I just dropped in, you know.

MRS. GRIGGS. To see me, I suppose?

WALTER. N-no,—that is, y-yes, ma'am!

MRS. GRIGGS. I'm delighted to see you, I am sure. Won't you take a seat? Pleasant evening, isn't it?

WALTER (*sitting awkwardly on the edge of a chair R. C., and fidgeting about*). It—it looks some like it, yes ma'am.

MRS. GRIGGS. Like what, Mr. Gifford? (*Sits c. or L. C.*)

WALTER. Rain, ma'am. That is, I mean, yes, ma'am, it's a very pleasant evening. Your party was a—a great success.

MRS. GRIGGS. Oh, thank you. Everybody seemed to think it was. They tell me I quite extinguished myself.

WALTER. Oh, I'm sure you did, Mrs. Griggs.

MRS. GRIGGS. Oh, no, it was quite unpretentional. (*He keeps looking L. at LILY MAY, making eyes, etc. MRS. GRIGGS looks at him curiously.*) That was a very nice account you had in *The Review* about it. I suppose I am indebted to you for that?

WALTER. Only partly, ma'am. I —

(*He nods at LILY MAY, motioning her to come out, in such a way that MRS. GRIGGS sees him, turns about quickly and catches sight of LILY MAY, who dodges back too late.*)

MRS. GRIGGS (*springing up*). Lily May, is that you?

LILY MAY (*not in sight*). Yes, ma.

MRS. GRIGGS (*going L.*). Come out here this minute. What do you mean by such behavior? (*LILY MAY appears slowly, standing sheepishly before MRS. GRIGGS, who looks*

at her a moment in astonishment, then screams and falls into chair.) Lily May! What have you been doing?

LILY MAY. Don't you see, ma? Dressing like I ought to dress.

MRS. GRIGGS. Oh! Oh! Oh! To think you would do such a thing! Oh! I shall faint! Oh, dear! O-oh! (*She is almost in hysterics. WALTER attempts to assist her.*) Go away! You're in it, I know you are. It's owing to you! Oh, dear, my own child, too! (*Suddenly resuming her natural tone.*) Lily May, where'd you get that dress? (*Rising.*)

LILY MAY. I—I had it made, ma.

MRS. GRIGGS. And charged to me, I suppose?

LILY MAY. Yes, ma; and a few others.

MRS. GRIGGS. Well, you go and take it off.

LILY MAY. I don't want to.

MRS. GRIGGS. You do as I say.

LILY MAY. I'm not going to take it off; or if I do, I shall put another just such a one on. I'm not going to dress like a little girl any longer, I don't care what you say.

MRS. GRIGGS (*dumbfounded*). Lily May!

LILY MAY. Well, I'm not. So there! I've stood it long enough. I'll have a beau, too.

MRS. GRIGGS. What! You—have a—a beau?

LILY MAY. Yes, ma; I've got him all picked out. Here he is. (*Presenting WALTER, who now steps to her side and puts his arm about her. They bow to MRS. GRIGGS deferentially.*)

MRS. GRIGGS. I must be dreaming! You, Mr. Gifford? My daughter—you?—I—

WALTER. Exactly, Mrs. Griggs. Your daughter and I. Fact is, ma'am, we—we're—engaged!

LILY MAY. Yes, ma, we're engaged!

(*They sail out C. D. L., before MRS. GRIGGS can recover from her astonishment. Finally she follows them and is about to exit L., in a terrible state of perturbation, when ADA LUDLOW enters R.*)

ADA. Why, what has happened, Mrs. Griggs? You seem excited.

MRS. GRIGGS (*coming back; they gradually come down*). Excited? I never was more excited in my life. And I

have good cause. What do you think? Lily May has gone and put on a long dress and got her hair done up, unbeknown to me.

ADA. No!

MRS. GRIGGS. And that isn't the worst of it. She's got a beau, too, and is engaged to him.

ADA. Never!

MRS. GRIGGS. She has! It's that Walter Gifford, the reporter.

ADA. Well, I'm not surprised.

MRS. GRIGGS. You're not?

ADA. Why, no. Lily May is no longer a child, and your treating her like one and forbidding her having a beau was the very thing to make her have one on the sly. I am afraid you have only yourself to blame.

MRS. GRIGGS. Yes, of course you'd go against me too; it's all I could expect. You girls are all alike. You must have beaux and get married, and all such nonsense.

ADA. Why, Mrs. Griggs, you have been married three times.

MRS. GRIGGS. Well, what if I have?

ADA. Nothing, only you shouldn't put anything in the way of those who have not tried it once yet. By the way, Mr. La Motte is coming for my answer to-night.

MRS. GRIGGS. And it is to be yes, of course?

ADA. Well, he doesn't seem willing to take no for an answer, so what can I say but "Yes"?

MRS. GRIGGS. He's certainly a handsome man, and stylish, but sometimes I feel as if—well, do you feel quite sure of him? That is,—excuse me, my dear, it's your affair and I've no business to meddle. But I am older than you are—some—and have, as you say, had more experience. I only want you to be sure of the step you are taking. It means so much, you know.

ADA. I understand. But I have thought it all over, Mrs. Griggs. I love Mr. La Motte and I have decided to be his wife.

MRS. GRIGGS. Then of course I have nothing more to say, except that I hope it will prove a most suspicious match. (*Going up.*) I am going to find Lily May now and try to reason with her. To think of having her jump from thirteen to eighteen all in one day! It makes me feel as old as my own grandmother!

(Exit MRS. GRIGGS C. D. L.)

ADA. Poor Mrs. Griggs, she is at last reaping the results of her own vanity and foolishness. (*Rising and walking up.*) I wonder why Harold doesn't come. It is time. (*She looks off to L., as MRS. GRIGGS returns.*) What is it, Mrs. Griggs?

MRS. GRIGGS. Some one who wishes to see you, Ada. Miss Ashcroft.

ADA. Miss Ashcroft? Tell her I am engaged and cannot see her.

MRS. GRIGGS. She says she must see you.

ADA. Mrs. Griggs, if you care to admit that woman to your house, I must at least ask the privilege of declining to meet her again.

MRS. GRIGGS. Why, Miss Ludlow—Ada—what do you mean? Miss Ashcroft——

ADA. Is not a person with whom I care to have anything more to do. Will you tell her for me, please, that I decline to see her?

MRS. GRIGGS. I'll excuse you to her, of course, if you insist, though I don't at all understand what you mean. I'm sure she is—— (*She has turned to go up and pauses as she sees PHOEBE standing in C. D.*) Oh, Miss Ashcroft——

PHOEBE. Pardon me if I intrude, but I must speak with Miss Ludlow.

ADA. I beg to be excused. (*She is about to go.*)

PHOEBE. And I beg that you will remain. You must not refuse, Miss Ludlow, to listen to what I have to say.

MRS. GRIGGS. I dare say you wish to do so in privation, so I will retire.

(Exit MRS. GRIGGS C. D. L.)

ADA (*she is very haughty and treats PHOEBE with almost insolent coolness*). I do not understand why you should force your presence upon me in this manner, Miss Ashcroft, but if you insist upon speaking with me, of course I will listen. Pray be seated.

PHOEBE. Thank you, but I prefer to stand. (*She is down C. ; ADA L. C.*) Miss Ludlow, I come to you as one woman to another. I come because I cannot remain silent without feeling that I would be false to you, to myself and to that true womanhood which I am sure we both wish to represent.



ADA. I certainly hope to do so, Miss Ashcroft.

PHŒBE. You? There can be but one meaning to your emphasis, but one excuse for your treatment of me. Will you explain why I am subjected to this insinuation? (*There is a pause; ADA haughtily turns away from her.*) Miss Ludlow, he has been slandering me to you, and you believe him. Is it not true?

ADA. If you mean Mr. La Motte, I must ask you not to speak further in reference to him. There is nothing more to be said. (*She is about to go, but pauses as PHŒBE speaks.*)

PHŒBE. There is a great deal to be said. I wish to know what he has said about me.

ADA. And I refuse to tell you. You must excuse me.

(*She goes up toward C. D., but PHŒBE bars her way and she is forced to remain. She does so with a show of indignation.*)

PHŒBE. No! You shall not go until you know all. Oh, Miss Ludlow, you cannot refuse to let another woman defend her good name.

ADA. Then I will tell you, seeing you drive me to it. I will tell you that I do not believe you have a good name, that your right name is not known here and never has been known; that your life here is a lie and —

PHŒBE. Oh!

ADA. That you dare not face the truth in regard to your past.

PHŒBE. Stop! I know now to what means he has resorted in hope of saving himself. He thinks to make you disbelieve what I say by filling your mind with such base suspicions as these. But he will find that he is powerless, for the truth is all I ask.

ADA. I refuse to listen to anything more. You will please to stand aside and let me pass.

PHŒBE (*still barring her way and forcing her to remain*). You shall not go until you have heard me. Miss Ludlow, when I came to this village, three years ago, it was with a broken heart and a blighted life. It was also under an assumed name, for Phœbe Ashcroft was my mother's maiden name and is not my own. I was a married woman, —as I thought, a widow.

ADA. A widow?

PHŒBE. Yes, the widow of Gilbert Dayne, whom you know as Harold La Motte.

ADA. His—wife?

PHŒBE. I was—I am—his wife.

ADA. I do not believe it.

PHŒBE. It is the truth. I was married to him five years ago in New York, where he was my father's partner in business. I thought I loved him, once, for my girlish eyes were enamored of his handsome face and I was deceived, as many girls have been. Alas, it was not long before my eyes were opened. I soon learned that he was a slave to almost every evil passion. He beat me and ill treated me in every way, till death would have been welcome. He killed every hope and ambition that I had ever had and almost drove me to suicide. Then the worst blow of all came. It was discovered that he had wronged my father, cheated him out of thousands of dollars. Father had trusted him implicitly and let him get everything into his own hands, till at last it was too late to save so much as a dollar, and we were left penniless. The shock killed my father and left me more desolate than before. My husband was sent to prison.

ADA. To—prison?

PHŒBE. Yes, for twelve years. But he escaped and fled to Europe, where he met you.

ADA. I cannot believe it.

PHŒBE. It is true. I have proofs that it is so.

ADA (*rising*). But if this is true, if he is a fugitive from justice, how dare he return to this country, to run the risk ——?

PHŒBE. Miss Ludlow, he was playing for big stakes—your fortune. More than that, he felt safe because he was believed to be dead. I have thought him so.

ADA. But how?

PHŒBE. It seemed that fate favored him for a time. The ship on which he sailed was wrecked, and in the confusion of the disaster he changed clothes with a man who answered his own description, left marks upon him which apparently proved his identity, and thus was reported as drowned, and all search for him was abandoned. So you see, he returned here under an assumed name without fear of detection.

ADA. This is a remarkable story, Miss Ashcroft, and

one which I would fain disbelieve. But you should at least have the chance to prove it. If you fail —

PHŒBE. I shall not fail. I have sent for a man who can prove all I have said. He was a clerk in my father's employ and knew Mr. Dayne for years. He will be here to-day, in company with officers from the prison from which my husband escaped.

ADA. Your husband! And you thought him dead. Oh, it is terrible; worse for you than for me. I have escaped the misery, perhaps, which has only returned to you. (*With some tenderness, taking PHŒBE's hand.*) I do pity you from the bottom of my heart. (*PHŒBE is weeping.*) It means that your love for Seth —

PHŒBE (*looking up*). Don't speak of that. That love must now be a thing unacknowledged. I must put it out of my heart, as he must put it out of his.

ADA. But the law would give you a divorce.

PHŒBE. No; my husband is alive, and while he lives he is my husband, whatever he has done. I do not love him, nor pity him; I shall show him no mercy, but I cannot give my hand to another while he lives. I shall go away from here and bear my lot as best I can. I have nothing to live for, but I must still live. Now I will leave you, Miss Ludlow. It has been a painful duty which I have performed, but it had to be done. You may think you suffer, but mine is a misery which I pray Heaven you may never know. Good-bye. (*She goes up to C. D.*)

ADA (*following her*). When—when will they ar-arrest him?

PHŒBE. To-day. The local officers are watching him and he will be arrested as soon as the prison officials arrive. Remember, you must not breathe a word of what I have told you to any one, as yet.

ADA. No, no. I understand.

PHŒBE (*looking off to R.*). Some one is coming. Oh, Miss Ludlow, it is Seth Winslow. I cannot see him. Let me go.

ADA (*going to L. 2 E.*). Come; this way.

(*They are about to exit, when SETH WINSLOW enters hurriedly C. D. R. He is greatly agitated.*)

SETH. Miss Ashcroft—Phœbe!

PHŒBE (*turning and looking sadly at him*). I—I must go.

SETH. Not yet,—wait. I must speak with you. (*ADA goes out L. 2 E. and PHŒBE returns to C.*) Robert has told me. Oh, Phœbe, is it true?

PHŒBE. It is all true.

SETH. But it shall not separate us. Nothing shall do that.

PHŒBE. Fate has done so. That man is my husband.

SETH. But the law will free you. He no longer has any claim upon you. Oh, Phœbe, I cannot give you up now. You are my guardian angel and with your help I can be a better man. I have promised my brother to do differently, to give up my bad habits and redeem the past. I mean it, too, and shall stick to it. I will, Phœbe; I swear it. But if I lose you —

PHŒBE. Oh, Seth, you must not let that make any difference. Do it for my sake, just the same. Though we must part, he can never again have a place in my heart nor drive you from it.

SETH. Then free yourself from him —

PHŒBE. No. Only death can do that. But I shall always remember you, Seth, and believe in you. I know you will keep your word.

SETH. I will, Phœbe, I will.

*(She places her hand on his arm, tenderly, and he stands with drooping head. Enter MRS. GRIGGS and ROBERT WINSLOW L. Seeing them, SETH goes up R.; PHŒBE stands C., burying her face in her hands, sobbing. MRS. GRIGGS goes to her, putting her arm about her.)*

MRS. GRIGGS. You poor child. (*PHŒBE weeps upon her shoulder.*)

*(MRS. GRIGGS and PHŒBE are down C. ROBERT goes up R. to SETH.)*

ROBERT. Seth, they are here.

SETH. The officers?

ROBERT. Yes. They have followed La Motte. He is in the conservatory waiting to see Miss Ludlow.

MRS. GRIGGS (*to PHŒBE*). Yes, dear; I told him he might see her here.

SETH. And he suspects nothing?

ROBERT. Nothing.

MRS. GRIGGS. You had better go in there (*pointing to*

L. 2 E.), and I will call Ada and then tell him she is here. You, Mr. Winslow, (*to* ROBERT) may slip out and bring in those men. Oh, mercy me! it's dreadful business! I wish it didn't have to happen in my house, but I can't stand in the way of justability.

PHŒBE. It is indeed terrible, Mrs. Griggs, but it must be done.

MRS. GRIGGS. Yes, yes, I know. Then let it be over with as soon as possible.

(ROBERT and SETH *exeunt* R. 2 E.; PHŒBE *goes out* L. U. E., MRS. GRIGGS *starts to exit* C. D. L., *but is stopped by* LILY MAY, *who enters* R. and *pauses.*)

LILY MAY. Oh, ma, we've come to ask your forgiveness. (*Motioning off* R.) Come on in, Walter, and tell ma.

MRS. GRIGGS. I can't be bothered now. You must wait.

LILY MAY. We can't. We've made up our minds to ask you and we must do it. Mustn't we, Walter?

WALTER (*who has entered rather timidly and now stands at a safe distance*). Y-yes. We—want your b-b-blessing, Mrs. Griggs.

LILY MAY. Yes, ma; and your consent.

MRS. GRIGGS. Well, you'll have to do your pleading some other time. I can't stop to think about it now.

LILY MAY. It won't take long, ma; not a minute.

WALTER. No, ma—I mean, no; Mrs. Griggs, not a half a minute.

MRS. GRIGGS. Dear me, what do you want me to say?

LILY MAY. That you forgive me.

MRS. GRIGGS. Well, I—I do, then.

LILY MAY. And Walter, too?

WALTER. Yes, and me, too?

MRS. GRIGGS. Yes, both of you.

LILY MAY. Oh, ma! (*Hugging her.*) And we can get married?

MRS. GRIGGS. Mm,—well, that I will consider. (*To* WALTER.) I have consulted Mr. Winslow about you, sir, and he tells me you are a likely young man and doing well. If Lily May's set on having you I suppose she'll have to.

LILY MAY. Oh, ma, you're an angel! (*Hugging her more emphatically.*)

MRS. GRIGGS. And you're a nuisance. Now let me go.

Remember, you're only just engaged for a long time yet. Don't you begin to tease to get married till I get good and ready to let you. (LILY MAY *is still hugging her.*) Child, let me go! (LILY MAY *releases her and she starts to go out.*)

LILY MAY. And oh, ma,—say! I can keep my dresses down, can't I?

MRS. GRIGGS. Yes, I suppose so.

LILY MAY. And my hair up?

MRS. GRIGGS. Yes, yes; only don't bother me. Dear me, you're enough to drive a body to extraction!

(MRS. GRIGGS *hurries out* C. D. L.)

LILY MAY. There! It's all fixed. Isn't it lovely?

WALTER. Fine!

LILY MAY. We're engaged.

WALTER. Of course we are. You'll let me kiss you now, won't you?

LILY MAY. Let you? Don't you know how to help yourself?

WALTER. Well, I reckon.

LILY MAY. Let's see you do it.

(*He attempts to kiss her; she runs up to C. D., into HAROLD LA MOTTE, who is entering from L. She giggles, cries "Oh, excuse me!" and runs on out, followed by WALTER. LA MOTTE looks after them a moment, smiling sarcastically, then comes down. ADA LUDLOW steals in L. 2 E. and goes up to him, looking fearfully about. She is pale and trembling. He notices her agitation.*)

LA MOTTE. What is it? You are agitated. Ah, you are vexed with me for being late. Is that it? Forgive me. I was unable to come before. (*He attempts to take her hand, but she draws away from him, with a shudder.*)

ADA. No, no; don't touch me!

LA MOTTE. Why, what do you mean? What has happened?

ADA. I know all,—your treachery, your villainy. You have a wife, you have deceived me—I must never see you again!

LA MOTTE. Who has told you this? It is a lie!

ADA. It is the truth. But in spite of it all; in spite

of your sin, your shame, I love you. God forgive me, I love you still, and I will try to save you.

LA MOTTE (*alarmed*). Why, what do you mean?

ADA. They are here, after you—the officers from the prison.

LA MOTTE. Here! They shall never take me alive, never!

ADA. There may still be time for you to escape.

LA MOTTE. You will help me?

ADA. Yes, for I love you. Not even the fearful truth can kill that love, and unworthy as you are, I will help you. Go! (*Pointing him to L. I E.*) This way. You will find the way clear there. Go to the stable, take Victor, my horse, and ride for your liberty. I will try and keep them here until you have reached a safe distance.

LA MOTTE. And you will do this for me,—after all?

ADA. It is all I can do for you. It is your only chance. Go!

LA MOTTE. God bless you.

(*He seizes her hand and kisses it; she is overcome with passionate grief and raises her face to him. He kisses her brow.*)

ADA (*as if struggling to regain her self-possession*). Oh, you must fly! Here! Here is money, all you will need. Take it. (*She gives him a roll of bank-notes.*) Good-bye,—forever!

(*She stands with drooping head, her face buried in her hands; he is about to exit L. I E., when PHEBE ASHCROFT appears in L. U. E.*)

PHEBE. Stop!

(*He rushes out; PHEBE runs to C. D. and meets ROBERT WINSLOW, with officers.*)

PHEBE (*pointing to L. I E.*). That way! He is trying to escape.

(*ROBERT stands aside and the officers go to L. I E., where they encounter ADA, who stands with her arms outstretched across the door.*)

ADA. No! You shall not go! (*She is apparently half unconscious of her action.*)

(*The officers push past her ; she staggers to c., falling in a faint. PHCEBE goes to her ; ROBERT is in L. I E., looking off. SETH enters, C. D., followed quickly by MRS. GRIGGS. There is a pistol shot heard off L. I E. ROBERT rushes out, followed by SETH. PHCEBE stands c., looking L., in rigid suspense. SETH enters and goes to her, taking her in his arms.*)

SETH. Phœbe !

(*She seems to understand what he means and buries her face on his shoulder. ROBERT appears in L. I E.*)

ROBERT. It is ended !

(*MRS. GRIGGS is up c. LILY MAY and WALTER GIFFORD now appear in C. D. in time to hear ROBERT'S words. MRS. GRIGGS stretches out her arm, as if to keep them back, but they press forward, looking around her at ROBERT, with awe-stricken faces.*)

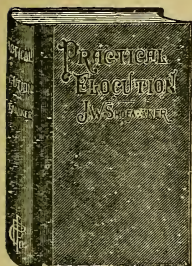
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