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The Wooing of Eve

HARTLEY MANNERS



AMUEL FRENCH, 28-30 West 38th St., New York



The Wooing of Eve

An Entirely Artificial and Sentimental
Comedy in Three Acts

104
1859

By
J. HARTLEY MANNERS

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Act of March 4, 1909.

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The following is a copy of the programme of the first performance of "The Wooing of Eve" at the Liberty Theatre, New York City.

Monday evening, November 26, 1917

LAURETTE TAYLOR

in

THE WOOING OF EVE

A Thoroughly Artificial and Sentimental Comedy
In Three Acts

by

J. HARTLEY MANNERS

With

A. E. ANSON

Produced under the personal direction of the Author

THE CHARACTERS IN THE COMEDY

MISS ALVERSTONE.....	<i>Miss Laurette Taylor</i>
MRS. RODD.....	<i>Mrs. Teresa Maxwell Conover</i>
WINIFRED.....	<i>Miss Lynn Fontanne</i>
WALKLEY.....	<i>Miss Catherine Proctor</i>
SIR PHILIP GRAFTON.....	<i>Mr. A. E. Anson</i>
BRICE LIVINGSTONE.....	<i>Mr. Earle Brown</i>
JOHN RODD.....	<i>Mr. Frank Kemble Cooper</i>
CYRIL DALLAS ROKEBY PARRISCOURT	
	<i>Mr. Leonard Mudie</i>
REV. HENRY WARRENDER.....	<i>Mr. Douglas Ross</i>
WINCH.....	<i>Mr. J. M. Kerrigan</i>
BATES.....	<i>Mr. Basil West</i>

THE SCENES IN THE COMEDY

- ACT I. The action passes in the drawing-room of John Rodd's "town house" in Mount Street, London. Afternoon.
- ACT II. The action passes in the library at Sir Philip Grafton's, Edgeware. Evening of the same day.
- ACT III. The same as Act I. The next morning.

The incidents of the comedy take place in England during the last days of peace.

The Wooing of Eve

ACT I

The action passes in the drawing-room of John Rodd's town house in Mount Street, London.

In both architecture and coloring the room suggests a reproduction of early Italian art.

Recessed windows R., with cushioned seat running around. Large chesterfield turned to face windows R. Sofa down R.C. Table with curios, etc., behind sofa. Double doors up c. Large ottoman down L. Upholstered stool L.C. Door down L.

The whole scheme of coloring is in the most exquisite harmony and good taste.

There is a deep, yellow fog outside, consequently the room is almost dark.

As the curtain rises BATES, an elderly, nervous, timid footman, enters, followed by CYRIL DALLAS ROKEBY PARRISCOURT, a tall, slight, fair young man of twenty-seven with something of the affectation of a girl of nineteen. The scheme of his whole attire shows thought and care and suggests the high-priest of the religion of clothes. From his well brushed hair to his pointed shoes there emanates a glow of definite, smug satisfaction. He walks down c. and sits on ottoman L. BATES stands c. after closing doors.

BATES. Shall I turn on some light, sir?

PARRISCOURT. Light? Light? Oh, yes! Do, please.

BATES. (*Going to switch, turns on brackets, up r.*) The fog is very thick, sir.

(*First R. and second L. lights up*)

PARRISCOURT. Very! Very thick!

(*BATES turns on lights, switch above door L. When BATES is c.*)

PARRISCOURT. Has Sir Philip Grafton called this morning?

BATES. I don't know the gentleman, sir.

PARRISCOURT. (*Looking at him, surprised*) Oh?

BATES. No, sir. It's only my second day here, sir.

PARRISCOURT. (*Nods*) Is Mrs. Rodd in?

BATES. (*Up*) I'll see, sir. (*Goes out c., leaving doors open*)

(*PARRISCOURT rises and moves restlessly about the room, stops at the table r.c., picks up a finely chiselled dagger from it, and reads the inscription. BATES re-enters carrying a jewel-case, which he places on the table*)

BATES. (*At table*) Mrs. Rodd is in, sir. (*PARRISCOURT brightens up*) She desires me to say she will be with you in a few moments.

PARRISCOURT. Thanks! (*BATES goes out c., leaving doors open, and turns on switch in the hall*)

(*PARRISCOURT takes up the jewel-case, opens it, looks at the contents eagerly, and fingers them excitedly. He reveals in his manner all the curious appreciation of some sensitive gentlewoman at the sight and touch of precious stones. As he holds the case beneath the glow of the lamp on table r.c. he gives a sigh of delight, replacing the jewel-case open on the table*)

(*Enter MRS. RODD, an attractive woman of possibly*

thirty. She has the tired, imperious manner of a restless, discontented nature, and the querulousness of a self-constituted invalid. She closes door and comes c)

PARRISCOURT. (*Meets her and takes her gloved hand, confidently, and with an air of possession, into his own*) Dear heart! (*Kisses her hand. She crosses down L. after quickly withdrawing her hand. He looks at her with fervid admiration*) What an old-world picture you make!

MRS. RODD. Old-world? (*Standing in front of easy chair L.C.*)

PARRISCOURT. (c.) You might have stepped from the frame of some Fifteenth-Century master.

MRS. RODD. Oh! (*Turns away L.*) Don't try to be poetic—in a fog. Old-world! I never felt more modern. (*Sits on easy chair L., looks around room and shivers. PARRISCOURT comes down and stands by seat R. of easy chair*) I loathe electric light in the day. (*Glances around room. Coughs. Looks up at him*) Don't stand there staring at me. (*R. movement*) You have no idea how ridiculous you look.

PARRISCOURT. Ah! (*Movement of homage*)

MRS. RODD. Sit down!

PARRISCOURT. (*Laughs a sickly laugh that is meant to be full of devotion, sits on R. edge of seat, and sighs*) Ah!

MRS. RODD. (*Shrinks from him*) Oh! (*Sharply*) Have you been waiting long?

PARRISCOURT. Only a few minutes. It seemed years without you.

MRS. RODD. Really? (*Indifferently*)

PARRISCOURT. (*Indicating the flower at her waist—moves a little nearer on seat*) That orchid was an inspiration.

MRS. RODD. (*Looks at it*) I loathe the sickly

things. (*She unpins it, and is about to throw it away to R.*)

PARRISCOURT. (*Stopping her*) Give it to me. (*He takes it from her and fondles it lovingly*)

MRS. RODD. My husband left it for me.

PARRISCOURT. (*Starts. All enthusiasm dies*)
Your husband?

MRS. RODD. Yes. (*He throws it away to C. on the floor behind seat and wipes his fingers on his handkerchief*) It came in with my coffee this morning.

PARRISCOURT. Oh!

MRS. RODD. Well? (*Sharply*) What do you want?

PARRISCOURT. To be near you, dear heart! (*Bending nearer to her*)

MRS. RODD. Not too near. (*Draws away with a large gesture as if waving him still further from her, then settling back comfortably and looking coldly and scrutinisingly at him. After a moment's pause she speaks*) Well? Go on! Talk! Make crude, obvious, insolent love to me. It may distract me. (*Closes her eyes*) Oh! A night of neuralgia, a fog, you, and a morning of wedding preparations! (*Shivers*)

PARRISCOURT. How is the dear little bride?

MRS. RODD. The dear little bride is in a furious little temper with all of us. When she isn't crying she is fainting; when she isn't doing either she is abusing her father—and me—and the bridegroom.

PARRISCOURT. No change, dear heart? (*Mrs. Rodd shows irritation*)

MRS. RODD. No. She dislikes the idea of marriage more and more the nearer it draws.

PARRISCOURT. (*Laughs*) Sweet creature! Sir Philip has all the prospects of an interesting experiment. Hasn't he, dear . . . ?

MRS. RODD. (*Querulously, checking him*) Don't say "Dear heart" again. You have no idea how it jars. It's bad enough with the sun shining, but in a fog . . . !

PARRISCOURT. Don't be horrid, dear . . . (*She looks at him*) . . . dear one! (*Pause*) It will be an extraordinary marriage.

MRS. RODD. (*Rising and moving restlessly to window*) How I loathe London when it's like this! (*Goes to table, lights cigarette, coughs*) It stifles me. (*Moves to L. by ottoman*)

PARRISCOURT. Lucerne just now—is superb.

MRS. RODD. (*To c.*) Lucerne?

PARRISCOURT. Yes, dear—creature.

MRS. RODD. (*Sits on ottoman*) If you talk like that we're not going to be friends.

PARRISCOURT. We can *never* be—friends. (*Pulls small ottoman over to her and sits*) The friendship of a single man for a married woman is, in theory, delightful; in practice, elastic. Elastic stretches to a certain point only, and then— (*Snaps his fingers*) *snaps*. How you ever married John Rodd is an unsolved riddle to me. Why did you do it? Pique? Ambition? Or avarice?

MRS. RODD. (*Thinks a moment. Laughing harshly*) A little of all three, I think. (*Rises and crosses up c. and down again. Changing her tone abruptly*) But don't let's talk of it.

PARRISCOURT. Then let's talk of—Lucerne.

MRS. RODD. (*Stops level with him, looking straight at him*) Do you really suggest—?

PARRISCOURT. (*Hurriedly*) Nothing. I'm at the end of my resources. (*Rises. Crosses up to her*) What do you suggest?

MRS. RODD. (*Turning away. Down to back of chair L.*) I don't know. I don't like to think.

PARRISCOURT. (*Crosses to her*). And all the while you think of nothing else. (*Pause*)

MRS. RODD. There are moments when I am *drawn* to John. He seems like a magician.

PARRISCOURT. A magician?

MRS. RODD. Yes. He transmutes iron into gold. The world seems to be watching him—listening to everything he says. He is *master* of it.

PARRISCOURT. (*Derisively*) What world is he master of?

MRS. RODD. (*Turns, facing him*) The world of money, my friend. (*Touching jewels*) Don't forget that.

PARRISCOURT. Oh!

MRS. RODD. And remember also that money, if you get enough of it, can make you forget most things.

PARRISCOURT. Except one's two important senses—humor and smell. (*Mrs. Rodd looks at him*) Where was *your* sense of humor, when you married him? His soul is in iron—evil-smelling, disgusting-looking iron. Besides, he's fifty. More, possibly. And a daughter old enough to be married to-morrow! The daughter should have restrained you, dear heart! (*Mrs. Rodd looks at him*) I beg your pardon. It slipped out.

MRS. RODD. (*Thinking*) And yet, I was *happy*—for a time. (*Crosses down L. of easy chair to front of it*)

PARRISCOURT. I have no capacity for being jealous— (*Mrs. Rodd looks at him*)

MRS. RODD. No?

PARRISCOURT. —of the *past*.

MRS. RODD. (*Sits chair L.*) And the *present*?

PARRISCOURT. (*Sits above seat*) Is *mine*.

MRS. RODD. You're very confident.

PARRISCOURT. The world was made for the confident. *You* are my world.

MRS. RODD. Suppose you lose it?

PARRISCOURT. Willingly—when it is destroyed by fire. Not till then.

MRS. RODD. Oh?

PARRISCOURT. (*Slowly drops his voice*) Not—till—then—dear—— (*Leans forward to her. A look from MRS. RODD. Draws back*)——person.

MRS. RODD. (*After a pause during which she looks straight at him. Crosses to table R.C. Leaves cigarette in ash-tray. PARRISCOURT follows her with his eyes*) Will you promise me something?

PARRISCOURT. Oh, don't! I distrust promises. They always suggest a doubt. (*Crosses to her*) That is the weak part of the marriage-service. No one should ever promise anyone anything. It would make life so much *freer* not to, wouldn't it?

MRS. RODD. You *won't* promise me?

PARRISCOURT. Anything! (*Rise*) Everything. (*Crosses to her. Drops tone*) Nothing. (*Takes her hand*) Why not Lucerne? You must decide now. Go with me, or send me away.

MRS. RODD. Very well. I'll send you away. Take care. You are hurting my hand.

PARRISCOURT. (*Releasing her. She crosses down R. of ottoman R.C.*) If I go I shall not come back.

MRS. RODD. As you please!

PARRISCOURT. (*Above ottoman*) Why do you treat me like this? You were so different yesterday.

MRS. RODD. Perhaps it's the fog.

PARRISCOURT. I thought you cared for me.

MRS. RODD. I do, sometimes—when you're amusing and I'm bored. You're not a bit funny to-day.

PARRISCOURT. Oh! Why not go with me? You are *always* before me. I can't work—or think. I've done nothing since we met. When I am with you my brain teems with poems. When I leave you I am barren. Doubt kills genius.

MRS. RODD. Then you had better not see me any

more. If I've killed your genius it's really time you *went*, isn't it? (*Bitterly*) I don't want to have a poet's ruined career at my *door*.

PARRISCOURT. Go with me, and I'll write as I have never written before. You will place me on a pinnacle. You will——

(*Door L. opens. MRS. RODD stops him with a gesture, and turns back to the jewels, behind the table. Enter WINIFRED RODD, a beautiful, shy, sensitive child of eighteen. She walks well into the room before realizing that anyone is in it. When she sees MRS. RODD and PARRISCOURT she stops and stands irresolutely looking from one to the other, and makes a movement to go*)

PARRISCOURT. (*Moves down L.C., by ottoman to WINIFRED and shakes hands with her, breaking the situation with easy assurance*) My dear, dear, dear Miss Rodd. My kindest wishes for to-morrow.

WINIFRED. (*Up R. of ottoman, L.C., faintly—draws back*) Thank you!

PARRISCOURT. Do you know, I intended to bring you my last little volume of verse? It is called "Poems That Bruise." (*WINIFRED sniffs*) You'll love them. They are bound in blue-and-gold. So charming! Each song has its own individual heart-throb. Indeed, there's a blue-and-gold heart on the cover with a dagger through it. (*WINIFRED sobs*) You're so sympathetic you'll cry all the time you're reading it. If you'll allow me I'll go back for it. (*WINIFRED turns away*)

WINIFRED. It's most kind of you, but——

PARRISCOURT. (*Backing up*) Not at all! I stupidly left them in *my* hall—with *my* gloves. I won't be very long. (*Backs away a step. To MRS. RODD, who is standing up R., by table, as he goes to door c.*) Do, please, think that over. Will you? Perhaps when I come back you may—— (*MRS*

RODD *looks quickly at him and glares*) Ha! Ha! (*Laughs nervously*) Yes! For the present! (*Bows to MRS. RODD and WINIFRED separately, and goes out C. WINIFRED moves towards door L.*)

MRS. RODD. (*Calls to WINIFRED*) Come here. (*WINIFRED goes to her. MRS. RODD places the jewel-case in her hands*) Aren't they priceless?

WINIFRED. (*Looks at the jewels, then bursts into tears*) I can't marry him. I can't.

MRS. RODD. (*Irritably*) For goodness' sake don't cry again. (*WINIFRED walks down R. of ottoman to front of it*) It's so wearing. I'd rather you'd faint than cry. It's quieter. (*As WINIFRED continues to cry MRS. RODD places jewel-case on table*) Don't! (*Gradually WINIFRED'S sobs lessen. MRS. RODD sits L. of her*) You must think a little of others. Think of your father. He seems to have set his heart on this marriage.

WINIFRED. (*Suddenly looking up*) Have I no heart? Why should I be forced into marrying a man I dislike, when all the time I love someone else?

MRS. RODD. Yes, yes, yes, I know. Still——

WINIFRED. My father won't listen to me. He would to you. You are his wife. (*Sobs*) He loves you. (*Sob*) I am only his child. (*Sob*) Plead for me with him. Will you? (*Pause*) Will you?

MRS. RODD. All right. I will.

WINIFRED. (*Crying and laughing half-hysterically*) Oh, thank you! Bless you! (*Embraces MRS. RODD*)

MRS. RODD. Don't! Don't! Mind my hair.

WINIFRED. I'm so sorry. (*WINIFRED straightens MRS. RODD'S hair*) For the first time I have hope. Whatever you wish is law to him. He worships you. (*Sobs and laughs and attempts to embrace MRS. RODD again*)

MRS. RODD. (*Draws back*) Winifred, take care!

I'll see what can be done the moment he comes back.
(WINIFRED sobs) Ssh!

WINIFRED. (*Sobbing. Wiping her eyes*) You see how wrong it would be. Don't you?

MRS. RODD. (*Without feeling*) Yes, yes! Of course it would be. (WINIFRED sobs. MRS. RODD rises. *Helps WINIFRED up*) Now go upstairs and bathe your eyes. You'll look positively hideous if you keep crying all day. Hideous! (*Moves up c.l.*)

WINIFRED. (*In front of sofa, looking straight at MRS. RODD*) You've never liked me. Have you?

MRS. RODD. Why do you say that? *Liked you?* Of course I have.

WINIFRED. (*Sadly*) No, you haven't. But you do *pity* me now, don't you? (*Moves to MRS. RODD c.*)

MRS. RODD. Yes. I do.

WINIFRED. (*Smiles. Simply*) Thank you. (*Cries bitterly*) It's the first time I've been happy for days. (*Sniffs, steps away R. Looking up and straight at MRS. RODD*) And, see, should you ever be in any trouble or danger I'll do all I can in my poor little way to help you.

MRS. RODD. (*On her guard in a moment. Looking coldly and suspiciously at her*) Trouble? Danger? In what way?

WINIFRED. I can't quite tell you. But you're unhappy, too, aren't you?

MRS. RODD. Why should I be?

WINIFRED. I don't know—quite. But I'm sure you are. I've watched you. (MRS. RODD *faces her*) In this great house, sometimes filled with people, I've seen you quite alone—and with misery in your eyes.

MRS. RODD. (*Alarmed*) Oh! So you've watched me, have you?

WINIFRED. Oh, yes, often. When you little thought I was near you. I'm treated as a child.

Things are said before me—people's lives discussed—as freely as if I were not there. Sometimes they have talked about you. And I've been frightened. (*Goes impulsively to MRS. RODD*)

MRS. RODD. (*Looking at her malignantly and pushing her away*) So you have been watching me? And listening to talk about me? I'm not so sure that this marriage isn't the *best* thing that could happen.

WINIFRED. Oh!

MRS. RODD. When you are Lady Grafton at any rate I shall be rid of you. (*Goes right up c. WINIFRED following her. MRS. RODD L. of door*)

WINIFRED. (*In terror*) Don't say that. I'll never watch you again. I'll go away if anyone speaks of you. I'll see nothing—hear nothing. But don't—don't—— (*MRS. RODD comes a step L.C.*)

(*Doors c. are opened by BATES and JOHN RODD enters. He is an active, powerful man, a few years past fifty. His hair is streaked with grey, his forehead broad and massive, his eyes keen, sharp and penetrating, his manner quick and masterful. He hands BATES a letter*)

RODD. (*To BATES*) Take that down yourself. (*On hearing RODD'S voice, WINIFRED goes quickly into the alcove behind the curtains, R. RODD stands in doorway, looking at his wife, who is standing L. by doors. He smiles*) I hoped you'd be in.

MRS. RODD. I'm going upstairs. My head's splitting. (*Goes up to L. of doors c.*)

RODD. Don't go for a minute.

MRS. RODD. Oh, all right. (*Crosses L.D.*)

RODD. (*Coming down*) Is your head very bad?

MRS. RODD. Yes, it is. (*Sits, leans back in chair L.*)

RODD. What a shame! (*D.L.C.*) London isn't

fit to live in on a day like this. When all the worry of the wedding is over let us go to Scotland for a few weeks, eh?

MRS. RODD. (*Shivers*) Scotland, indeed. I loathe it. (*Suspiciously*) Why are you so early?

RODD. (*Evasively*) Eh? Why? I'm tired of business for today. So—I—thought I'd come—home.

MRS. RODD. Is that all?

RODD. Yes. What else?

MRS. RODD. (*Sharply*) I don't know what else! What a stupid question!

RODD. (*c. Sadly*) That's curious! I do all I can to please you, yet I seem always to say and do the very things you dislike. Don't I? (*Turns away a little*) I wonder why?

MRS. RODD. Don't let us analyze. It's bad enough to be ill, without probing for *reasons* for the illness.

RODD. (*Lightly*) I suppose married life does grow into a form of complaint.

MRS. RODD. Oh, if someone would only find the marriage-germ and destroy it!

RODD. (*Looking intently at her*) Do you feel that?

MRS. RODD. Yes, I do.

RODD. I see you do. (*Pause*) Try not to let others know it. Will you? Please! (*Pause*) It would be very humiliating to me if you did. (*Pause*) Do you mind?

MRS. RODD. All right.

RODD. (*Sits R. of her. Softly*) I'm sorry things have come to this. I've done what I could. You've had everything you wanted?

MRS. RODD. (*Wearily—smiles*) Oh, yes. Everything. I ought to be satisfied.

RODD. I've asked very little. Yet for the last year we seem to have got further from each other

every day. Don't we? (*Pause*) Why? (*Pause*) Is it my fault?

MRS. RODD. (*Mockingly*) Oh, no. (*Rises and up c.*) It's never the *man's* fault. It's always the *woman's*. We're so unreasonable. (*Opens c. doors a little*) Is that what you asked me to stay here and listen to?

RODD. (*Moves up to R. of her*) No. (*She turns in the doorway*) There's another thing I want you to do for me.

MRS. RODD. What? (*Comes down c.R. suspiciously*)

RODD. (c.l.) I would like you to be civil to someone who is coming here today on a visit. My niece. I haven't seen her for years. She spends most of her time traveling. She hasn't been in England since we—were married. She arrived this morning from America.

MRS. RODD. Is she an American?

RODD. Yes. My sister married one.

MRS. RODD. Oh, indeed! You never told me *that*.

RODD. I've never bothered you much with my family, but I would like you to be nice to Eve. She's the only one of my relatives I care about. Will you? (*Pause*) The boat got into Southampton a few hours ago. I intended to meet her at the train, but couldn't at the last minute. So I sent my secretary to the station to take care of her and bring her here.

MRS. RODD. Here?

RODD. Yes.

MRS. RODD. To *stay*?

RODD. If you don't mind.

MRS. RODD. (*Comes down to ottoman R.*) I most certainly *do* mind.

RODD. (c.) That's a pity! Up to a few years ago she used to spend months every year with Wini-

fred and—her mother. (*Pause*) I hoped *you'd* be friends, too.

MRS. RODD. (*Angrily*) *Why* did you invite her here?

RODD. What *else* could I do? She cabled from New York that she was sailing, and I replied asking her to make this her home as she always used to.

MRS. RODD. *Without consulting me?* (*Accusation*)

RODD. I meant to. But I've had so much to think of lately that I forgot. If you don't want her to come here——

MRS. RODD. (*Up c.*) I don't.

RODD. Very well. (*Crosses R.*)

MRS. RODD. At a time like this. (*Turns down*) Isn't the wedding enough to bother about?

RODD. Of course. Quite right.

MRS. RODD. In future ask *me* before you invite anyone. (*WINIFRED cries and sobs*)

RODD. I will. (*Pause. RODD hears sobs. WINIFRED appears through the curtains, sobbing and sniffing*) What's that? Is it a cat? (*RODD turns and sees her*) Why, Winifred, have you been here since I came in?

WINIFRED. (*Nods*) Yes.

RODD. (*Looks at his wife and then back to WINIFRED*) Pity! You've been crying again? (*Seats her L. of ottoman, R.*)

WINIFRED. (*Sobs and sniffs*) Yes.

RODD. Now, why don't you like Grafton? (*Sits R. of WINIFRED*)

WINIFRED. Because I love someone else.

RODD. Warrender.

WINIFRED. Yes.

RODD. A clergyman without a living.

WINIFRED. I love him.

RODD. What do you suppose he can give you? (*MRS. RODD sits on seat, L.C.*)

WINIFRED. But—I love him.

RODD. (*Sits L. of WINIFRED*) My dear Winifred, you must be guided by me. You have no character. (*Sob*) No strength. (*She sobs*) No will! (*Sob*) You don't really know what you want. (*Sob*) How should you? Grafton can give you position— (*WINIFRED sobs on all above cues*)

WINIFRED. But I don't love him.

RODD. All marriages are not for love. (*Looks over to MRS. RODD*) Still the world goes on. You must think. You must weigh things.

WINIFRED. I don't want to weigh things.

RODD. This young fanatic has nothing—not a thing.

WINIFRED. You can give us all we want.

RODD. (*Rises to c.*) Oh, but I won't! Not likely! Oh, no! Give you all you want, indeed! Nothing of the kind!

WINIFRED. Father! (*Weeps*)

RODD. (*c.*) You can't weep that out of me. Whoever marries you must take care of you without help from me.

WINIFRED. You would not do anything for us?

RODD. No. Not a thing. Certainly not. Besides, just now I *couldn't*. (*WINIFRED looks up surprised. MRS. RODD starts*) There you have it. Positively couldn't. Money's *heavy* and iron's *light* these days. (*To MRS. RODD*) There you have it. Just for a while, my dear, we'll have to retrench. For a bit—retrench. (*c.*)

MRS. RODD. (*Rising*) Retrench?

RODD. Cheerless little word. But there it is—retrench, retrench, retrench! But it's only temporary, of course. We must—retrench. We'll pull through. (*To WINIFRED*) Grafton can give you everything, everything. And—a—he can also help

me—help me considerably. You see, my dear, things have not gone very well with me of late.

MRS. RODD. (*Walks down to L. of RODD. Bitterly*) Don't tell me that you are stripped of the one thing that made you attractive.

RODD. Attractive? The one thing?

MRS. RODD. Your money.

RODD. My dear, don't say that. I——

(*Enter WALKLEY, a young, pretty, active maid*)

WALKLEY. Mr. Parriscourt. (*MRS. RODD crosses L. and sits armchair. WINIFRED rises and crosses R. to above ottoman*)

(*Enter PARRISCOURT, carrying a small blue-and-gold volume. Exit WALKLEY C.*)

PARRISCOURT. How do you do, Mr. Rodd? Dreary day it's been, hasn't it? But the fog's lifted, the sun's coming out. (*RODD goes to R. by desk*) It will shine on the bride. I haven't been long, have I? Here's the little volume. Each verse was wrung from me—positively wrung. (*WINIFRED sobs*) You'll love them. (*He hands WINIFRED the book*)

WINIFRED. (*Faintly*) Thank you! (*Drops the book*)

PARRISCOURT. (*Picks it up, dusts it, straightens corner*) Oh, I've autographed it and marked several of them. The "Ode to an Aching Heart" is quite my best work. It will make you suffer to read it.

WINIFRED. Thank you. (*RODD rises to R. of ottoman*)

PARRISCOURT. Really it will.

RODD. I'm sure it will. (*RODD takes WINIFRED up to desk R. They turn away from PARRISCOURT and talk together*)

PARRISCOURT. (*To RODD*) I'm afraid I'm in the way. Good-bye, Mrs. Rodd! Winifred! I'll see

you all to-morrow after the ceremony. (WINIFRED sobs)

(Enter BATES with a lady's travelling valise and a number of bouquets, etc. He leaves the door open. BATES crosses to door L. Midway MRS. RODD halts him.)

MRS. RODD. What are you doing?

BATES. Flowers for the lady.

MRS. RODD. What lady?

BATES. The lady who called this morning, Madam.

MRS. RODD. What was her name?

BATES. I didn't quite catch the name. (*Picks up valise front L. of D. door*) This has just been sent for her, too. (*Looking around*) I thought she was here.

MRS. RODD. Why?

BATES. I showed her in here—oh, quite some time ago. (*RODD rises and crosses up R.C.*)

MRS. RODD. You showed someone in here without knowing who she was?

BATES. Well, Madam, you see, it's only my second day—

MRS. RODD. (*Crosses R. quickly*) Take those things away.

BATES. Yes, madam. (*Moves to doors c.*)

RODD. (*Stopping him*) Was the lady's name *Alverstone*?

BATES. (*Trying to remember*) It might have been.

RODD. Find out where she is. Look for her. Bring her here.

BATES. Certainly, sir. (*Goes out c., leaving valise L. of doors. PARRISCOURT crosses up C.L.*)

MRS. RODD. (*Rises*) Where did you find that man?

RODD. He was very well recommended.

MRS. RODD. I'll get rid of him after the wedding. (*Indignantly turning to PARRISCOURT*)

PARRISCOURT. (*Acknowledges it*) Ah! (*MRS. RODD crosses to R.C. WINIFRED crosses L to C. and then to R. of PARRISCOURT and sits back of seat, L.C.*)

MRS. RODD. (*Crosses to R. and moves angrily about—up R. to window*) Where is she? Roaming about the house? Ugh! (*Furiously walking around*) Oh! (*Sits on chesterfield. A faint scream is heard. MRS. RODD jumps up. EVE rises on her elbow on the chesterfield, where she has evidently been in a sound sleep. All look at her in amazement. She rubs her eyes, straightens her hat, and slowly looks from one to the other, stifling a yawn*)

RODD. Eve!

EVE. (*Rises*) Hello, Uncle! Who sat on me? Did you sit on me?

RODD. No.

EVE. (*To MRS. RODD*) I suppose you sat on me. (*Looks at her wrist watch*) What time is it? Why, I've been asleep an hour! (*Rises and stretches. Sees WINIFRED*) Why, Winifred! (*Embraces her, then holds her at arm's length and looks at her critically*) My dear, you've grown into a woman. She needs fresh air. She must ride in the park with me to-morrow, Uncle.

RODD. Well, well——

EVE. (*WINIFRED cries*) Why is she crying, Uncle?

RODD. (*Introducing*) My wife.

EVE. Does she sit on her, too?

RODD. No, no! (*To MRS. RODD*) This is my niece, Miss Alverstone.

EVE. (*Turning to MRS. RODD*) How do you do, Mrs. Rodd? I must own I was curious to meet you. I hope we'll be friends, even though you did

sit on me at our first meeting. (*Shakes hands. Sees PARRISCOURT, who makes an exclamation*)

PARRISCOURT. Oh!

EVE. Who is that beautiful man?

MRS. RODD. (*Coldly*) Mr. Parriscourt. Miss
—Miss—

EVE. Alverstone.

MRS. RODD. Miss Alverstone. (*PARRISCOURT bows*)

EVE. (*Going to him, L.*) Not the poet, Cyril Dallas Rokeby Parriscourt?

PARRISCOURT. (*Pleased. Eagerly*) Yes, yes. (*Kisses both her hands*)

EVE. Does that make you think you're a Frenchman?

(*Enter WALKLEY C.*)

WALKLEY. Mr. Livingstone calling on Miss Alverstone.

EVE. (*Gives a moue of amusement*) Mr. Livingstone? Oh! (*To WALKLEY*) I'll ring.

WALKLEY. Yes, madam. (*Goes out c., closing doors c.*)

EVE. (*To RODD*) Mr. Livingstone is a great admirer of mine. He's an American. I collected him on my travels. He has followed me from city to city, from country to country, with a great deal of zeal and absolutely no discretion—in fact, he doesn't know what the word discretion means. His calling here to-day is an example. (*To MRS. RODD, and then to RODD*) Have you made arrangements for me to stay here?

RODD. (*Very uncomfortable*) Well—as a matter of fact—we—

EVE. (*Turning to MRS. RODD*) Inconvenient? Right! May I make this house my headquarters?

RODD. Well, you see— (*Pause*)

EVE. Oh! That's inconvenient, too. Well, Mrs.

RODD, may I put you to a small inconvenience? (*Crosses to MRS. RODD, D.R.*) Mr. Livingstone is downstairs. Would you mind my seeing him up here? I wouldn't like him to feel slighted. (*WINIFRED and RODD back up by wall table*)

MRS. RODD. (*Rise*) All right! (*Looks at her very coldly*) I'm very sorry I didn't know sooner that you were coming. I might have been able to include you in some of my engagements. (*Crosses below ottoman to c. doors. PARRISCOURT has anticipated her and is holding doors open*)

EVE. Don't worry, Mrs. Rodd, I'll see all I wish to while I'm in London, (*Exit MRS. RODD*) and (*catching sight of PARRISCOURT*) miss all I want to miss in London. (*EVE looks with uplifted eyebrows at RODD*)

PARRISCOURT. Ahem! Good-bye, Mr. Rodd! Miss Winifred! Good afternoon, Miss—Miss——

EVE. Alverstone. You'll find it quite easy to remember when you've met me a few times.

PARRISCOURT. I've no doubt. (*Bows and passes out*)

EVE. He looks just like his poems. Winifred, come here, I want to have a long, serious talk to you.

WINIFRED. You tell her, father—I can't. (*WINIFRED crosses to L. and exits*)

EVE. What can't she tell me?

RODD. (*C.R.*) My dear Eve, you've come among us at a surprisingly opportune time. She marries to-morrow.

EVE. (*L.C.*) Marries? Winifred? Oh, dear! At her age man should be forbidden fruit, and marriage a nursery legend. Is he any good?

RODD. Of the best blood in England.

EVE. Dear, dear! I thought you had given up valuing by blood. Is he rich?

RODD. Yes. Ha, ha! (*Laughs hollowly*)

EVE. Ah! I see. Best blood, and very rich. Oh, Uncle, what, what, what! (RODD *laughs*) Does she love him?

RODD. (*Hesitates*) He loves her.

EVE. Well, perhaps that's more to the point. Who is he? (*Enter WALKLEY, c.*) Well!

WALKLEY. Mr. Livingstone desires me to ask if it would be more convenient if he were to call later?

EVE. Not at all. Don't let him get away. Oh, there's my bag! (*Seeing bag inside door. To WALKLEY*) Count eighty. (*WALKLEY goes out c.*) Count a *hundred* and eighty. (*Calling after her. RODD starts to go*) Don't go, Uncle. I want you to meet Mr. Livingstone. (*Brings bag down l. on seat. Takes up bag and extracts mirror*) Please hold that. (*RODD holds mirror while she powders herself and re-arranges her hair. As she powders*) I wonder what my ancestress did without powder. How did she ever catch Adam?

RODD. Mark Twain said she stoned him.

EVE. Of course, firearms were not invented then. She could not have used powder or shot. She used chalk for her nose, I expect. Dabbed it on with moss.

RODD. Why don't we adopt that very sensible habit, powdering one's nose?

EVE. It's masculine conceit—to think they can outshine a shiny nose. (*Laughs. RODD laughs*) Poor little Winnie! Marrying to-morrow. It makes me feel quite old.

RODD. Why haven't you married?

EVE. Ah! Remember, Uncle. Remember the real epicure is the one who abstains. There! (*Hurriedly putting things away*) Thank you so much, Uncle! Sweet of you.

RODD. Would you mind, Eve? (*He arranges his tie in mirror*)

EVE. Want powder, Uncle? (RODD *shakes his head and smiles*)

(*Enter WALKLEY, c.*)

WALKLEY. Mr. Livingstone.

EVE. All right. (*Exit WALKLEY, c.*) You'll be just crazy about him, Uncle.

(*Enter at door c. BRICE LIVINGSTONE, a genial, polished, travelled American of about 36. He is a slender, muscular man, with the lithe, active frame of an athlete. In manner he is easy, positive, deferential, and humorous by turns. Assertive among men, diplomatic among women. The type of man who is ready to take his part in any emergency, quarrelsome or amorous.*)

EVE. (*Nervously*) How do?

LIVINGSTONE. (*Also a bit nervous*) How do? (*Shakes hands with EVE*) 'Fraid I butted in—disturbed—that is—— (*Glancing at RODD*)

EVE. (L.C.) You have not—butted in. Uncle, this is Mr. Livingstone. (*Introducing*) My uncle—Mr. Rodd.

LIVINGSTONE. (*c. Starts at the name of RODD and recovers some of his self-possession*) Rodd? Not John Rodd, by any chance?

RODD. (*Stiffly*) That is my name.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Crossing to him*) "The Iron King?"

RODD. I am interested in iron.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Laughing heartily, and taking RODD's unwilling hand*) I'm glad to shake you by the hand, sir. (*Laughs*) Ha, ha! I've been caught in one or two of your deals lately. (*RODD pulls away his hand*) Not out of the wood yet, are you?

RODD. What?

LIVINGSTONE. (*Laughing softly*) Say, I made

the "Rodd" for my own *back* when I went into iron, didn't I?

RODD. My name is good to-day.

LIVINGSTONE. Sure, it is. But will it be *to-morrow*?

RODD. Yes, sir. It will.

LIVINGSTONE. Glad to hear it. I'm in iron up to my neck.

RODD. (*Goes to doors c.*) Good day to you, sir.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Up R.*) I'm delighted to have met you. You send the blood through my veins again. I had begun to lose faith in my own judgment.

RODD. (*At door*) If you can't face a drop in prices you'd better keep out of the market. (*To EVE*) I want to see you before you go, Eve.

EVE. I'll run in to-morrow.

RODD. The wedding is at noon. (*Exits c.*)

EVE. (*Laughing*) That's a fine beginning you've made. I told him he'd be crazy about you. He is, too. I *think* he must be crazy about you. I'm *sure* he is. (*Sits L. armchair*)

LIVINGSTONE. Poor old chap! (*D.L.C.*)

EVE. (*Amazed*) *Poor—old—chap?* What do you mean?

LIVINGSTONE. (*Nods gravely*) He is up against it and no mistake.

EVE. Is he really in trouble?

LIVINGSTONE. I should just think he is. But he'll weather it. He's so strong and as full of resistance as his own iron.

EVE. (*Thoughtfully*) I'm glad I've come here—very glad.

LIVINGSTONE. Are you?

EVE. Yes, I am.

LIVINGSTONE. Is it in any way connected with me?

EVE. No. Not at all.

LIVINGSTONE. Oh, I just hoped it was. *(Pause)* I've made up my mind to take a very serious step next fall, and I want to consult you about it.

EVE. Indéed?

LIVINGSTONE. Yes. *(Pause)* Marry.

EVE. Eh?

LIVINGSTONE. Marry. *(Pause)* What do you think?

EVE. Oh, marriage is a thing I never think of.

LIVINGSTONE. Well, just think a little now.

EVE. If you wish to marry why consult anyone?

LIVINGSTONE. It's an arrangement of *two*, you know.

EVE. So I've heard.

LIVINGSTONE. I'm only one.

EVE. So I see.

LIVINGSTONE. I want you to help me out.

EVE. Can I?

LIVINGSTONE. You can.

EVE. How?

LIVINGSTONE. Marriage is a thing *I* never thought about until I met *you*. *Now* I think of nothing else.

EVE. How sad! *(She laughs)*

LIVINGSTONE. What do you think all my attention to you has meant?

EVE. Just ordinary courtesy.

LIVINGSTONE. Nothing of the sort! *(Pause)*
Wooing.

EVE. *(Laughing)* What?

LIVINGSTONE. *Wooing.*

EVE. *(Laughing)* Wooing?

LIVINGSTONE. Yes, wooing.

EVE. *(Laughs)* I love that word. *(Laughs)*

LIVINGSTONE. *(Sits above seat R. of EVE)* I want you to marry me.

EVE. I'm sorry.

LIVINGSTONE. Why? Don't you like me?

EVE. Oh, yes, I rather like you, or I wouldn't have allowed you to—I wouldn't have allowed you to——

LIVINGSTONE. Woo you?

EVE. (*Laughs*) Yes, woo me. I do love that word. Is that what you've been doing all this time?

LIVINGSTONE. Certainly it is.

EVE. Fancy that! And I didn't recognize it.

LIVINGSTONE. We've known each other six months.

EVE. I've known you.

LIVINGSTONE. I've *followed* you half round the world.

EVE. Yes. It was not altogether my fault, was it?

LIVINGSTONE. And you've given me to understand I'm not altogether *distasteful* to you.

EVE. Yes, of course.

LIVINGSTONE. Do you like someone else better?

EVE. Not at the moment.

LIVINGSTONE. Well, then, what's the *trouble*?

EVE. My dear Mr. Livingstone——

LIVINGSTONE. (*Protesting*) No. No.

EVE. My dear *Mr.* Livingstone, one of the chief characteristics of our very remarkable people is that we like everything at first hand—news—houses—furniture—and—*women*.

LIVINGSTONE. That's true.

EVE. I'm *second-hand*, and not eligible.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Aghast*) *Second-hand?* (*Rises. She nods*) How's that?

EVE. I've been in love.

LIVINGSTONE. Have you? (*Relieved*) So have I. But, after all, what has that to do with it?

EVE. Mine was rather serious.

LIVINGSTONE. Mine is *very* serious—now. (*Sits R. of EVE on front of seat*)

EVE. Oh!

LIVINGSTONE. How long ago?

EVE. Years.

LIVINGSTONE. How many?

EVE. Oh, years and years. I was a girl then.

LIVINGSTONE. It *must* have been years. Two, eh?

EVE. No. Five.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Musing*) Oh! Very much in love?

EVE. (*Nods*) Very, very much.

LIVINGSTONE. Engaged?

EVE. Not quite. On the brink. Tottering.

LIVINGSTONE. What broke it off?

EVE. The old Adam that lies deep in all men's natures. He gave me my first glimpse of the abysmal brute. Enlightening, but unpleasant! (*Shivers and gives a little moue of disgust at the remembrance*)

LIVINGSTONE. American?

EVE. (*Shakes her head*) No. English.

LIVINGSTONE. Anyone who'd treat you badly is an ass.

EVE. You're a nice man, Mr. Livingstone.

LIVINGSTONE. Where is he?

EVE. I don't know.

LIVINGSTONE. Really?

EVE. Really.

LIVINGSTONE. Haven't you written to him?

EVE. No.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Pleased*) Didn't you hear from him?

EVE. No. I haven't written to him. I haven't heard from him, and I don't know where he is.

LIVINGSTONE. (*With great satisfaction*) A real quarrel, eh?

EVE. (*Nods*) I quarrelled. (*Laughs*) He said nothing. You see, he was English. (*Muses*) What a long time ago it seems! I was just a spoilt child

then. I'd never been denied anything. So when I first met him I fancied him, singled him out, and went after him. (*Smiling*) My parents showed great foresight when they christened me "Eve." I was very "Eve"-y, as a girl.

LIVINGSTONE. *Were* you?

EVE. Very. I know much better now.

LIVINGSTONE. *Do* you?

EVE. Oh, very much better. You would be surprised.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Embarrassed and protesting*) *I've* always thought Eve must have been a very nice sort of person. (*EVE laughs*) She looks it in her pictures.

EVE. The long-haired "it" as a famous writer one called her,—the long-haired "it." (*Shakes her head*) It's a silly old story. I mean the Adam and Eve one. It ended so miserably. Like mine.

LIVINGSTONE. But *you* didn't marry him.

EVE. She didn't either, did she? (*He acknowledges it*) But *I would* have. He had only to ask me. I was clay in his hands. And I was absolutely happy. (*Thinks a moment*) What a long time ago it seems! Oh, those days! I used to stay with his mother weeks at a time. Our mutual bond was music. He would play in the great hall, and I would lie in a hammock on the lawn, listen, and dream. Wonderful dreams, too! And he was in all of them. (*LIVINGSTONE has turned a little away from her. Pause*) Are you interested?

LIVINGSTONE. Yes, I am.

EVE. One day, half in a spirit of mischief, I promised to join him in celebrating a Chopin anniversary—at night, when the house was still. What a little fool I was in those days! I wonder if I'd do it now. (*Laughs uneasily*) Of course I wouldn't. If I hadn't gone that night! Oh, *if* I hadn't gone. There was no reason why we could not have cele-

brated Chopin by daylight. But, no. I insisted. It *had* to be *night*. It seemed more wonderful—more mysterious. So I went. There were no other guests in the house. When he was restless he would often play half through the night. He would that night—in honour of the Master's birthday. And he would play nothing but Chopin. We would talk of nothing but his wonderful music—breathing passion, calling for love. Night came. Everyone was asleep except Adam and Eve. I followed the path that led past, curiously enough, the apple trees, that led to his room. He was waiting for me. No king ever received a queen with greater homage and respect. He began to play—and how he *could* play. Music, the most insidious of all sensuous arts, at night a thousand times more so. Music, that whispers through the dark, and moans through the stillness. It whispered to *him*—finally mastered him. Then he made the one mistake that changed both our lives. I saw behind the artist-musician the Darwinian animal with bloodshot eyes and outstretched claws. I heard the coarse surging rush of passion. In that moment disillusion came. My girlhood vanished. I was astonished, frightened, ashamed. Out of a little window flew *love*, and in its place came that most dangerous feeling for woman to feel towards man—disgust. I showed it so plainly that the *animal* became once more the man of intellect and breeding. Silently he helped me with my cloak. Silently he walked with me to the end of the pathway. Silently he turned, and disappeared out of my life. I've never seen him since. (LIVINGSTONE *makes exclamation*. EVE *sighs, looking straight before her; rises and goes to c. Turns to him*) So you see, Mr. Livingstone, I'm not eligible.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Has watched her as she moved to c. Impressively*) I am just as *sure* in my *mind* of every moment, of your *past*, as I am of your *future*.

There are some women who could do no *wrong*.
You are one of them.

EVE. (*Repeats*) "There are *some* women who could do no *wrong*. *You are one of them.*" I like that. It shows faith. Where did you get it?

LIVINGSTONE. I don't know. It just came to me. *You made me think of it.*

EVE. Did I? You should always think in word pictures. (*Sits R. of him*) After all, English is a beautiful language if you take time to put the proper words in the proper place, isn't it?

LIVINGSTONE. Yep. (*Conscious of the fact that he is using slang*)

EVE. (*Laughs*) Because we are American is no reason our vocabulary should be limited to "Gee whiz," "On the level," "G'wan," "Beat it," "Come across," is it?

LIVINGSTONE. (*Thinks*) "Butted in." (*Both laugh*) But you can use them sometimes, can't you? (*Laughs*)

EVE. (*Pause*) On Sundays and public holidays. I do like big words.

LIVINGSTONE. Do you?

EVE. I know a lot of big words. (*He looks at her*) I have a collection of years. I'll teach you.

LIVINGSTONE. *Gee!* I wish you would.

EVE. Wouldn't it be *grand?*

LIVINGSTONE. *Elegant!* (*Both laugh*)

EVE. Seriously; I love big words. You know, nice, long, colourful ones with lots of syllables. I think I learnt them from him. (*Rises to c.R.*) Oh, the word pictures he could paint! (*Sighs*)

LIVINGSTONE. (*Rises, goes L. of her, watching her closely and speaking over her shoulder*) I believe you care for him still. Are you sure you don't love him?

EVE. Yes . . . quite sure. (*Enter WALKLEY C. Stands c.*) What is it?

WALKLEY. Is Miss Rodd here?

EVE. No, she's in her room. (WALKLEY crosses L.) Will you ask Miss Rodd to come here?

WALKLEY. But Sir Philip Grafton's calling on Miss Rodd.

EVE. Sir Philip Grafton? (*She grows white to the lips, her eyes look out beyond LIVINGSTONE into the past*)

WALKLEY. Yes, ma'am. (*Crosses to door L. and exits*)

EVE. (*To LIVINGSTONE*) Sir Philip Grafton!

LIVINGSTONE. To-morrow's bridegroom.

EVE. (*In horror and amazement*) What? Sir Philip Grafton to marry my cousin?

LIVINGSTONE. Yes. Didn't you know?

EVE. No. Sir Philip Grafton going to marry Winifred! (*Re-enter WALKLEY L.*) Ask Sir Philip to come here first.

WALKLEY. Yes, madam. (*Exit c.*)

EVE. Would you mind going now, please?
(R.C.)

LIVINGSTONE. Don't send me out without a little hope. If you tried very hard don't you think you could like me just a little?

EVE. I do like you a little. (*She laughs*)

LIVINGSTONE. Please let me wait for you downstairs.

EVE. Yes, but don't speak of marriage again.

(*Door opens and SIR PHILIP GRAFTON enters. He is an elegantly built, polished man of thirty-eight with finely chiselled features and a grave, earnest manner. Everything about him suggests the aristocrat, from his tasteful, subdued attire to the careful modulations of his voice. He is prematurely old and careworn. A thin line of silver runs through his hair and there are deep shadows beneath his eyes*)

LIVINGSTONE. (*Meeting him in doorway and shaking hands cheerfully*) How de do?

SIR PHILIP. (*Up c. in doorway. Surprised*) My dear Livingstone! This is a pleasure.

LIVINGSTONE. We meet to-night.

SIR PHILIP. Indeed?

LIVINGSTONE. Yes. I met Berkeley in Piccadilly, and he invited me to your farewell supper.

SIR PHILIP. I'm delighted.

LIVINGSTONE. Your last night of freedom, eh?
(*Laughs*)

SIR PHILIP. (*Laughs with him*) Yes.

LIVINGSTONE. Till to-night!

SIR PHILIP. Good-bye!

LIVINGSTONE. (*To EVE*) I'll be downstairs.
(*Goes out L., closing doors. SIR PHILIP walks down L.C. and sees EVE. He stands looking at her in astonishment*)

SIR PHILIP. Eve!

EVE. (*By L. of ottoman*) Hello, Philip!

SIR PHILIP. (*C.L.*) Eve! (*Long, awkward pause*) Where have you come from?

EVE. (*Smiles and nods upward*) From up there.
Dropped down.

SIR PHILIP. (*After a little pause*) You look well—and happy.

EVE. I'm well. (*Looking scrutinizingly at him*) Why, you're grey!

SIR PHILIP. (*Smiling*) Oh, no.

EVE. Yes, you are.

SIR PHILIP. No, really?

EVE. Well, a little.

SIR PHILIP. Perhaps a little.

EVE. Are you really going to marry Winifred to-morrow?

SIR PHILIP. Yes.

EVE. Why?

SIR PHILIP. Because I love her, I suppose.

EVE. Do you?

SIR PHILIP. Yes.

EVE. She's rather young, isn't she?

SIR PHILIP. That doesn't last, unfortunately.

EVE. You haven't taken long to forget me, have you?

SIR PHILIP. Five years.

EVE. (*Quickly*) Then you *had* forgotten me?

SIR PHILIP. I meant I haven't *seen* you for five years.

EVE. It's very curious, but I never thought of *you marrying*, somehow. (*Goes to front of ottoman and sits*)

SIR PHILIP. (*Crosses to her*) Are you married?

EVE. No.

SIR PHILIP. Oh!

EVE. No. I'm still roaming about loose.

SIR PHILIP. (*Smiles*) How very extraordinary!

EVE. Of course I haven't been altogether neglected. I've had a few nibbles. But they didn't amount to much. I'm very exacting.

SIR PHILIP. You used to be.

EVE. I am still. So you are marrying Wini-fred tomorrow! Well, so long as it's in the family! My cousin——

SIR PHILIP. (*Astonished*) Your cousin? Wini-fred, your cousin?

EVE. Yes, of course. Didn't you know?

SIR PHILIP. No.

EVE. Didn't she mention me?

SIR PHILIP. Never.

EVE. Didn't you tell her about me?

SIR PHILIP. (*Shakes his head evasively*) No.

EVE. Why not? Were you ashamed of me?

SIR PHILIP. Whenever I've thought of you I've been ashamed of *myself*.

EVE. Then you *have* thought of me?

SIR PHILIP. (*Nods*) Yes. Have you—of me?
(*Sits L. of EVE*)

EVE. Often.

SIR PHILIP. Gently?

EVE. Yes.

SIR PHILIP. Without bitterness?

EVE. With very little.

SIR PHILIP. Then time has softened your anger?

EVE. I could never stay angry very long, if you remember.

SIR PHILIP. I was very foolish then. Perhaps you understand better now. It was the look in your eyes, a tone in your voice, the faint breath of your perfume, the touch of your hand, and the vibrating melody of Chopin beating through it all.

EVE. (*Very softly*) Please don't, Philip.

SIR PHILIP. (*Rises*) You shrank from me in horror. Your words cut me to the quick. Your look burnt into my heart. When you left me, I was wretched, wretched. (*Moves a step*)

EVE. (*After a pause*) How long have you known Winifred?

SIR PHILIP. A few months.

EVE. And you really love her?

SIR PHILIP. Yes.

EVE. That's very curious.

SIR PHILIP. Oh, no. It's not curious. (*Looks at EVE*) Do you know, at times she is very like you were—then.

EVE. Like *me*? You make me laugh. How ridiculous! I *never* cry. Like *me*! You always had a wonderful imagination.

SIR PHILIP. *She* likes beautiful things, too. Yes, she often reminds me of you.

EVE. (*Rises*) Oh, don't say that—don't be absurd! Ha! Like *me*! (*Moving restlessly about*) I think it's a perfectly nonsensical marriage.

SIR PHILIP. (*Rising*) Don't say that.

EVE. I don't know what you want to marry for at all. (*Moves to front of armchair*) I haven't. (*Sits in armchair, R. Pause*)

SIR PHILIP. Neither Winifred nor I have had much happiness.

EVE. And neither of you is going to. You are not a bit suited to each other.

SIR PHILIP. (*With slight change of tone. Sits on end of ottoman, facing EVE*) Don't you think we are the best judges?

EVE. No, I don't. You're much too old for her. It takes a woman of great intelligence to understand you. You're only marrying her because she's *young*, and you're tired of going about alone.

SIR PHILIP. I *am* very tired of going about alone.

EVE. It's a perfectly stupid marriage. (*Crosses at back to C.L.*)

SIR PHILIP. (*Crosses in front to C. Smiles*) You haven't changed much. You always wanted to interfere in things, didn't you?

EVE. I'd like to interfere in *this*, believe me. My uncle has no right to allow it. (*Suddenly*) Why didn't you tell Winifred—about *me*?

SIR PHILIP. I didn't think it necessary.

EVE. Well, I do.

SIR PHILIP. What?

EVE. *You and Winifred!* It's perfectly disgusting.

SIR PHILIP. Please don't interfere, Eve. You would only disturb her mind.

EVE. Well, what are *you* going to do with her mind *if* you marry her? *You and Winifred!* It's monstrous! I shouldn't want to come to the house again if I thought I should have to meet you—married to Winifred.

SIR PHILIP. Why not? (*Enter WALKLEY*)

WALKLEY. Mr. Rodd wishes to see you in his study, sir.

SIR PHILIP. Very well. (*Exit maid. Goes to EVE*) Will you be at the wedding to-morrow?

EVE. No. Don't ask me to see you *married*.

SIR PHILIP. Why not?

EVE. Because——

SIR PHILIP. Then we shall not meet again?

EVE. No. I never want to see you again.

SIR PHILIP. Won't you at least wish me happiness? (*Hands out*)

EVE. No. Because you're not *going* to be happy married to Winifred.

SIR PHILIP. (*Pause*) Well! Happiness to you, Eve! (*Puts his hand out. EVE does not take it*) Good-bye! (*UP to c. doors*)

EVE. (*UP to him, L. of doors*) Oh, Philip! Of course I wish you all the happiness in the world. Really, I do.

SIR PHILIP. Thank you! (*Goes out looking steadily at EVE, and closing doors slowly*)

EVE. (*Stands thinking a moment, then moves restlessly about. WINIFRED enters at door L.*) Winifred, come here! Tell me something. What do you mean by making Sir Philip fall in love with you?

WINIFRED. I didn't make him. He just did it. I didn't want him to.

EVE. (*Suspiciously*) Are you sure?

WINIFRED. Indeed I am.

EVE. You didn't follow him about? Get in his way so that he'd notice you? Look languishingly at him? Brighten up when he came in, and sigh when he went away? (*WINIFRED shakes her head with increasing intensity to the progressive questions*) Honor bright?

WINIFRED. On the contrary, I always avoided him.

EVE. Avoided him?

WINIFRED. Always.

EVE. Oh, indeed! Avoided him! Who taught you that? Where did you meet him?

WINIFRED. (*Goes to her*) Father brought him here.

EVE. And you straightway fell in love with each other?

WINIFRED. (c.) I didn't.

EVE. Oh! You *didn't*?

WINIFRED. No.

EVE. Then what are you marrying him tomorrow for?

WINIFRED. Because it's my father's wish.

EVE. (*Eagerly*) Don't *you* wish it?

WINIFRED. Indeed I don't. I don't want to marry him—I never wanted to marry him. I hate him. I hate him.

EVE. That's right. You go on hating him. I wouldn't think of letting you marry a man like Sir Philip.

WINIFRED. Oh, I'm so glad.

EVE. I'll convince your father that he's not in the least worthy of you.

WINIFRED. (*Sobbing*) That won't be of any use. His mind is made up. (*Goes to EVE*)

EVE. Then he's got to change it.

WINIFRED. Nothing will change it—now. (*Crying on EVE's right shoulder*)

EVE. My dear child— (*Breaks off*) Don't cry any more on this shoulder, anyway, it's quite damp. Come over on the other if you must cry. (*WINIFRED half smiles, and stops crying—just sobs*) When you are as old as I am you will know that there is one thing in England today that will move mountains, and it isn't *faith*! It's *scandal*!

WINIFRED. (*Quickly looking at her*) Scandal?

EVE. No business man likes it in his family.

Well, I'll make such a scandal between now and to-morrow morning that your father will be glad to stop the marriage in sheer self-defence.

WINIFRED. (*Brightening*) Will you?

EVE. I will. What in the world does he want you to marry him at all for?

WINIFRED. You won't tell anyone?

EVE. Oh, it's something like *that*?

WINIFRED. Promise.

EVE. I promise. (*Sits L.*)

WINIFRED. (*On seat R. of armchair*) I think my father is in trouble.

EVE. And Sir Philip is going to help him?

WINIFRED. I think so.

EVE. (*Meditatively*) Oh! I see. (*Rises*) It's a *business* transaction?

WINIFRED. (*Nods*) I think it is.

EVE. Well, I'm going to spoil that transaction.

WINIFRED. Can *you* help *me*?

EVE. I intend to. I wouldn't think of it. I suffered when I was just about your age. (*WINIFRED looks up at her*)

WINIFRED. You did?

EVE. Yes. I did.

WINIFRED. A *man*?

EVE. Of course it was a man.

WINIFRED. Oh, tell me, what was he like?

EVE. (*Sits R. of WINIFRED on small ottoman*) He was very like Sir Phiilp.

WINIFRED. Oh, *was* he?

EVE. Very. Only *he* was younger.

WINIFRED. He is *old*, isn't he?

EVE. Oh, I don't know. Much too old for you, of course.

WINIFRED. Much.

EVE. What kind of lover is he now?

WINIFRED. (*Looks and says*) Now?

EVE. I mean, what kind of lover is he?

WINIFRED. (*Shivers*) Oh, don't!

EVE. Oh! *That* kind!

WINIFRED. I never let him make love to me.

EVE. What?

WINIFRED. (*Decidedly*) I hate to be alone with him.

EVE. Oh, does he talk much?

WINIFRED. Sometimes.

EVE. Great *big* words?

WINIFRED. (*Surprised*) Yes. How do you know?

EVE. (*Hurriedly evading the question*) Oh, lots of them make love *that* way, you know. *Con conversationally.* (WINIFRED *turns away*) Some of them play the piano, too.

WINIFRED. He does.

EVE. Does he play well?

WINIFRED. Oh, yes, very! The only times I ever liked him at all were when he played to me. (*Turns head away*)

EVE. (*Quite carelessly*) Chopin, I suppose. They all play *Chopin* to—to—very young girls.

WINIFRED. No. Elgar.

EVE. Elgar? Oh, really! Not "Pomp and Circumstance"? (WINIFRED *nods*) Fashions change, even in music. Has he always—behaved himself?

WINIFRED. Always.

EVE. He is not an *ardent lover*?

WINIFRED. Oh, no. Quite cold.

EVE. Dear me! He *must* be old.

WINIFRED. *Old*?

EVE. *Cold.*

WINIFRED. He is.

EVE. Dear me! (*Whimsically, her eyes dancing with mischief*) It must have been an amazing courtship. (*Laughs*) You resisted even big words, *and* Elgar, and froze him! You're a remarkable child.

Really, you are. *I couldn't have—at your age. (Confidentially)* Tell me, haven't you been in love yet, eh?

WINIFRED. (*Nods roguishly*) Yes.

EVE. Are you in love now? Oh, who is he?

WINIFRED. Harry.

EVE. Harry? Harry what?

WINIFRED. Warrender.

EVE. Harry Warrender! Sounds rather nice.

WINIFRED. The *Reverend* Harry Warrender.

EVE. Oh! *That* sounds more chilling.

WINIFRED. (*Hurriedly*) He *isn't*.

EVE. Well, of course, you ought to know. (WINIFRED *nods*) Very much in love with him?

WINIFRED. (*Crying*) Oh, very much.

EVE. Oh, you don't cry about that, too?

WINIFRED. Yes.

EVE. (*Laughs*) Does your father know?

WINIFRED. (*Crying*) Yes. But Harry will be quite poor for a while, and——

EVE. —and the rich baronet came along, and Papa made a bee-line for him?

WINIFRED. (*Sadly*) Yes.

EVE. Well, I'll look Harry over, and if he meets with my approval—— (WINIFRED *looks up at her expectantly*) I'll see what can be done. (*Rise*) But the first thing to be done is to free you from the big-worded, piano-playing baronet.

WINIFRED. (*Following her*) I would like to know how you are going to do it?

EVE. I am going to aim at the weakest point in John Rodd's constitution.

WINIFRED. How?

EVE. (*Looking about*) Where's that old dagger you always used to have lying around? The one with the Rodd motto carved on it? "Let no dishonor stain me." Eh? (*By table*) Here it is. (*Picks dagger up from table R.*)

WINIFRED. (*Alarmed*) You won't do anything dreadful?

EVE. (*Recklessly, her eyes dancing*) Anything! (*Looking at inscription on knife*) That's my uncle's weakest point—dishonor. (*Stabs at the air*) I am going to stab it.

WINIFRED. Oh, but—I think I'd rather marry the man.

EVE. (*Laughs*) Dry your eyes and let your nose cool down. By tomorrow you'll be a care-free child again. I am going to see Sir Philip tonight. (C.R.)

WINIFRED. See Sir Philip? Where?

EVE. I don't know. Wherever he's going to be. He may be at "Deepdene," Edgeware. (*Crosses R.C. Thinks*) What I need is a witness.

WINIFRED. (*Crosses to her*) A witness to what?

EVE. To the scandal I'm going to make to prevent your marriage. (*Suddenly sitting at writing-table*) I know—Mr. Livingstone!

WINIFRED. Who is Mr. Livingstone?

EVE. (*Begins to write*) "Dearest Philip——" No, that's too tender. (*Crosses c., WINIFRED follows*) "Dear Philip——" Too distant. (*Crosses C.L. WINIFRED follows*) "My dearest Philip——" The "My" underlined, and with a mark of exclamation after it. "Our talk this afternoon has awakened old memories——"

WINIFRED. Your talk?

EVE. Keep quiet. (*Writes*) "I agree to your suggestion."

WINIFRED. *Your* suggestion?

EVE. "Your last bachelor night shall have one mourner——"

WINIFRED. Mourner?

EVE. "—to close the tomb on what once was." (*Laughs*)

WINIFRED. What *was* once, Eve?

EVE. Ssh! "I shall go by the old path past the

appletrees and straight on till I come to your room. Be sure you leave the door open. Till nine-thirty! Eve." (*Blots and seals letter, but does not address envelope*)

WINIFRED. Oh, Eve! Do you know Sir Philip?

EVE. (*Nods*) Yes.

WINIFRED. Oh, Eve! Big words! Music! Oh, Eve! It *was* Sir Philip!

EVE. Yes.

WINIFRED. Oh, Eve!

EVE. What do you mean, "Oh, Eve"?

WINIFRED. You love him.

EVE. Love him! I am doing this because I love you. (*Contemptuously*) Love him! (*Rises, crosses*) Ha! You amuse me. (*Crosses R.*) Ha, ha! (*Crosses L., sits down. BATES comes noiselessly in and stands beside EVE. EVE, thinking, turns and suddenly sees him*) What's the matter?

BATES. Would you like the blinds up, madam?

EVE. Up? What for? Are they down?

BATES. Yes, madam. The fog's quite lifted.

EVE. Oh, is that the reason they're down?

BATES. Yes, madam.

EVE. I thought it might be a custom of the house.

BATES. I don't *think* it is. It may be. It's only my second day here, madam.

EVE. If it will make you any happier, put them up, by all means. (*BATES puts up the blinds and switches off the bracket*) Give this to Mr. Livingstone.

BATES. (*Puzzled*) Mr. Livingstone, madam?

EVE. Yes. Mr. Livingstone. Don't you know him?

BATES. Oh, there have been so many here this afternoon. You see, it's only——

EVE. Yes, yes. You'll find him waiting downstairs for me. Give it to him.

BATES. Yes, madam. (*Goes out through doors c., stops, turns back*) I think he's coming here now, madam.

EVE. (*Runs to door L., beckons WINIFRED to her. WINIFRED passes her and exits hurriedly into room L.*) Give it to him.

BATES. (*Up*) Any answer?

EVE. No. Just give it. Say nothing. Tell me when Mr. Livingstone has gone. (*Exit L., closing door.*)

(*Enter REVEREND HARRY WARRENDER, a tall, angular, eager young clergyman of twenty-five*)

WARRENDER. (*Peremptorily*) I'll wait here until Mr. Rodd is free. (*Goes DOWN R.*)

BATES. Does he know you're calling, sir?

WARRENDER. (*Explosively*) Of course he does. (*Goes up L. and back*) But tell him again. I must see him. I'll stay here until I do. (*Walking angrily up and down between the sofa and armchair*)

BATES. (*Very nervous*) Yes, sir. (*Handing him the letter*) For you, sir.

WARRENDER. (*By table. Takes the letter*) From whom?

BATES. A lady, sir.

WARRENDER. Don't stand there. Tell Mr. Rodd I'm waiting. (*About to open letter, hears Livingstone's voice, which stops him. Continues angrily walking up and down*)

BATES. Yes, sir. (*Hurries up to doors c.*)

(*Enter LIVINGSTONE quickly, c.*)

LIVINGSTONE. Has Miss Alverstone gone?

BATES. (*Looking fearfully at WARRENDER'S back, and whispering*) A lady has just left the room, sir.

LIVINGSTONE. Was it Miss Alverstone?

BATES. (*Again looking apprehensively at WARRENDER and whispering*) I am not aware of the lady's name, sir. Never saw her before. It's only my second day here, sir.

LIVINGSTONE. What are you whispering about?

BATES. You see, sir——

WARRENDER. (*Catching sight of him. Furiously*) Will you tell Mr. Rodd I'm here! (*Down R.*)

BATES. Yes, sir. (*Disappears, closing doors c.*)

LIVINGSTONE. (*Opens doors and calls after him*) And tell Miss Alverstone I'm here. (*Comes back and walks down c. The two men look at each other, then walk up and down parallel to each other, then meet down c.*)

LIVINGSTONE. (*Smiling cheerfully*) How do? My name's Livingstone. What's yours?

WARRENDER. (*Stiffly*) Warrender.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Genially*) Thank ye. Since we're thrown together we might as well be acquainted.

WARRENDER. As you like. (*Walks down R.*)

LIVINGSTONE. (*c. Looking at him curiously*) Friend of Mr. Rodd's?

WARRENDER. (*Abruptly*) No, I'm not. (*Goes angrily up R. LIVINGSTONE also goes up and meets him, c.R.*)

LIVINGSTONE. (*Quite curiously*) Going to the wedding to-morrow?

WARRENDER. (*About to go up to back, stops and glowers at LIVINGSTONE*) There won't be any wedding tomorrow.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Astonished*) Ye don't say?

WARRENDER. (*Angrily*) I do say. (*Turns angrily up R.C.*)

LIVINGSTONE. (*Now most curious*) What's the trouble?

WARRENDER. (*Crossing to him*) I don't know you.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Genially*) Don't let *that* bother you—I'm a friend of the bridegroom.

WARRENDER. (*Fiercely*) Oh, *are* you?

LIVINGSTONE. Sure! Known him for years.

WARRENDER. You ought to be ashamed to admit it.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Taken aback*) Ashamed? Why?

WARRENDER. (*Furiously*) The blackguard! (*Crosses to L.*)

LIVINGSTONE. (*Following*) *Is* he? I always thought him a very decent sort of fellow.

WARRENDER. *Decent? Decent?* Would a decent man *buy* a girl as his wife?

LIVINGSTONE. Of course not. *Is that* what he's doing?

WARRENDER. It's what he's *trying* to do. (*Sits on ottoman*)

LIVINGSTONE. Oh, that *is* blackguardly—damned blackguardly. (*Sees his clerical dress*) Excuse me!

WARRENDER. (*Ignoring the oath, loosening his collar*) It makes my blood boil.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Over to him*) I know that feeling—suffocating in the midst of air. What are you going to do about it?

WARRENDER. Stop it. That's what I'm going to do. Stop it. If I have to go to the altar to do it. He shall never take that beautiful *joyous* child into his tainted life. Never!

LIVINGSTONE. That's the spirit! Is there anything I can do?

WARRENDER. No. There isn't.

LIVINGSTONE. Oh, don't say that.

WARRENDER. It's my affair.

LIVINGSTONE. I beg your pardon.

WARRENDER. I didn't mean to be rude.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Softening*) That's all right.

WARRENDER. (*Gently, with entire change of tone*) We've grown up together since we were chil-

dren. (*Beating his knee with his clenched fist*) Since I first knew what *love was* I've loved her. (*Pause*) And her father wants to sell her to that *creature*. Her youth and her soul, and her laughter! But he won't. He won't. He—— (*Suddenly sees letter*) Excuse me! (*Tears it open and reads, becomes petrified with amazement, gives a great cry and rises*) Oh! Here is the instrument, the very instrument, to stop the marriage.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Excitedly*) Is that so? (*Crosses to WARRENDER*)

WARRENDER. I told you the man was a black-guard. Here's the proof. An assignation at his house tonight.

LIVINGSTONE. Really?

WARRENDER. If he were caught in his own home with the writer of this the marriage would *have* to be stopped.

LIVINGSTONE. It *might*.

WARRENDER. (*Determinedly. Putting letter back in envelope*) Very well. I shall go there. (*Pause*) I'll need a witness. *You'll* go with me.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Steps back*) Here, wait a minute.

WARRENDER. (*Crosses to him*) Yes, you will. I'll take no refusal. You know Mr. Rodd?

LIVINGSTONE. I've just met him.

WARRENDER. You know *me* now. Read this letter. (*Thrusts it at LIVINGSTONE*)

LIVINGSTONE. (*Pushing it away*) No, no. I don't want to read it.

WARRENDER. (*Fiercely*) Read it!

LIVINGSTONE. (c.) It's private. (*Backs away a step*)

WARRENDER. It shall be made *public* tomorrow if the marriage isn't stopped. Read it.

(BATES opens c. doors)

LIVINGSTONE. I'm not in the habit of reading letters that are not intended for me.

(BATES enters c.)

BATES. (To LIVINGSTONE) Mr. Rodd cannot see Mr. Warrender.

WARRENDER. He can't see me?

BATES. Is *your* name Warrender?

WARRENDER. Of course it is.

BATES. I thought it was Livingstone.

LIVINGSTONE. My name's Livingstone.

BATES. (To WARRENDER) Then the letter I gave you is intended for Mr. Livingstone.

LIVINGSTONE. What? (*The two men glare at each other*)

BATES. I beg pardon, I'm sure. I'm so sorry for the mistake. I hope, sir——

WARRENDER. That'll do.

BATES. You see, sir, it's only my second day here, sir. (*Exit*)

LIVINGSTONE. It ought to be his last. (WARRENDER crosses to LIVINGSTONE and gives him the letter. LIVINGSTONE looks at letter) There's no address on it.

WARRENDER. It's the envelope it came in.

LIVINGSTONE. What did you open it for if it wasn't addressed to you?

WARRENDER. (*Impatiently*) The servant said it was for me.

LIVINGSTONE. I see, and it was really meant for me.

WARRENDER. (*Testily*) No, no, no. It's meant for Grafton.

LIVINGSTONE. Grafton?

WARRENDER. Yes. Grafton. Grafton. Read it.

LIVINGSTONE. In that case, I'll do nothing of the kind—if it's meant for Grafton it's going to Graf-

ton. (*Sees desk R., gets envelope, comes down, putting letter in*)

WARRENDER. What are you doing?

LIVINGSTONE. I'm going to seal it up in this envelope so that no one else sees it except the man it's meant for. (*To R.C.*)

WARRENDER. (*Stopping him*) Will you realize that Miss Rodd's happiness is at stake? Mine too. That letter may help to stop the marriage. *Now* read it.

LIVINGSTONE. No. I will not. I have nothing to do with Miss Rodd or you. I'll not do a rotten thing like that. (*Crosses L.*)

WARRENDER. Where's the harm? I read it by accident. The writer has not even signed her full name. Only her Christian name. (*Pause*) Eve.

LIVINGSTONE. (*About to seal envelope, stops*) Eve?

WARRENDER. Yes. Neither of us know who she is, but we both do know that she makes an assignation with Sir Philip to-night. Indeed, according to that letter, they made it here this afternoon. *Now* will you read it?

LIVINGSTONE. (*Hesitates, glances at a portion of letter*) You say she is going to see Sir Philip Grafton tonight? (*Seals the letter*)

WARRENDER. She made an appointment at Deepdene, Edgeware in that letter for nine-thirty.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Suddenly and vehemently*) Then she's got to be stopped.

WARRENDER. (c.) Stopped?

LIVINGSTONE. Yes. Stopped, stopped, stopped. Do you think *I'm* going to allow a woman I've followed half-way round the world like a slave for six months to compromise herself with a fellow like Grafton? Not on your life. (*Crosses to R.*)

WARRENDER. (c. *Bewildered*) What have you got to do with it?

LIVINGSTONE. (c.) I'll tell you. I love the woman who is going to Sir Philip Grafton's tonight.

WARRENDER. What?

LIVINGSTONE. And rather than see her compromised for a moment I'd—I'd——

WARRENDER. (*Firmly*) But she's going.

LIVINGSTONE. Not if I can help it. If I can't prevent her I'll go, too.

WARRENDER. (*Going up to doors c.*) So will I. I'll expose him.

LIVINGSTONE. You can expose *him* as much as you like, but you won't say a word about *her*. (*Goes out*)

(BATES enters c. and gets in the way of both men, who push past him)

WARRENDER. (*Following him out*) I'm going to save Winifred.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Outside*) And I'm going to save Eve.

(*Enter WINIFRED and EVE at door L.*)

EVE. I've got to be there by nine-thirty.

BATES. Mr. Livingstone has just gone, madam.

EVE. Did you give him the letter?

BATES. (*Sadly*) Oh, yes. (*Pathetically*) I'm so mortified. Unfortunately, I gave it by mistake to another gentleman first.

EVE. To whom?

BATES. A Mr. Warrender.

WINIFRED. Harry!

EVE. A clergyman?

BATES. (*Backing to doors c.*) Yes. (*EVE and WINIFRED exchange glances*) I'm so sorry. You see, it's only my——

EVE. I know—your second day here. (*Exit BATES c. EVE and WINIFRED run to window R. and look out and down. Cab whistle is heard*)

WINIFRED. There's Harry.

EVE. Oh, is *that* Harry?

WINIFRED. Isn't he a darling?

EVE. I suppose so.

WINIFRED. Is that Mr. Livingstone?

EVE. Yes. Isn't he a duck?

WINIFRED. I suppose so.

EVE. Here's a taxi!

WINIFRED. They're quarrelling. Oh, he's pushed Harry out? You brute!

EVE. Never mind! Don't fall out of the window. He's getting on a bus. It's much more becoming of him. They're off! Oh, this is fun! I'll have two witnesses instead of one.

WINIFRED. Oh, Eve!

EVE. Oh, Winnie, Winnie, I'm so glad you don't love Philip. (*Kisses her*) Now for a perfectly scandalous evening! (*Exit. WINIFRED sniffs*)

THE CURTAIN FALLS

ACT II

The action passes in the library of SIR PHILIP GRAFTON'S, Edgware. Evening of the same day. It is a square, solidly built room, lined with shelves on which rest the most famous modern and ancient authors. In a cabinet are old manuscripts. On the wall portraits of the old-time inhabitants and tapestries purchased centuries ago. There are French windows at back up R. They are wide open, showing a gravel path, some rose-bushes, and a tree in shadow. Moonlight streams on to the path. There is a door down R. connecting with the interior, and a massive door up L., covered by curtains, connecting with the exterior. A large writing-bureau up R., covered with papers. On the shelf above are books of reference, medallions, and a few photographs, framed.

The rising of the curtain discloses SIR PHILIP GRAFTON, in evening dress, playing the piano.

Door R. opens, and enter WINCH, SIR PHILIP'S valet, a keen, well-groomed, carefully brushed man of about forty, of medium height, intelligent expression, and an assumed aristocratic manner, dressed in quiet travelling clothes. He walks across to SIR PHILIP and stands at respectful attention with his hat in hand and coat over arm.

WINCH coughs.

SIR PHILIP. (*Glances up at him*) Ah, Winch!

WINCH. I go up to town in twenty minutes, Sir Philip.

SIR PHILIP. Very well.

WINCH. Do we stay long in Naples, may I ask?

SIR PHILIP. No definite plans.

WINCH. (*With a little cough*) I have no desire to embarrass you. I would not do it for the world, Sir Philip—but I should like to be relieved of my duties at the earliest opportunity.

SIR PHILIP. (*Stops playing, swings slowly around on the piano-stool*) Indeed?

WINCH. Yes, Sir Philip. (*Warn bell*)

SIR PHILIP. You've been with me a long time, Winch.

WINCH. That's just it—if I may make so bold. I know your habits, Sir Philip, know them too well to commence learning *fresh* ones.

SIR PHILIP. (*Turns back to piano and looks through some music*) Please yourself. Mention it to my secretary.

WINCH. Yes, Sir Philip. With regret let me add. It's been a pleasure to attend you, Sir Philip, if I may say so. "It's easier to find a god in Athens than a man," someone once wrote. My experience in England, Sir Philip.

SIR PHILIP. (*Amused*) Ah!

WINCH. I have been fortunate in finding at least one.

SIR PHILIP. Thank you, Winch.

WINCH. Marriage breaks many ties—with respect, Sir Philip. Should you at any time find yourself, in a measure, unattached again, a line would call me to you, Sir Philip, with alacrity.

SIR PHILIP. You might mention that also to my secretary.

WINCH. Yes, Sir Philip. (*WINCH coughs*) Ahem! I ventured to make some few changes in your travelling library, Sir Philip.

SIR PHILIP. Oh?

WINCH. I've omitted the poets and restored the philosophers. Le Bruyère in Naples might have some merit, I ventured to think.

SIR PHILIP. I appreciate your forethought, Winch. Anything else?

WINCH. (*Coughs*) Ahem! With the *greatest* respect, sir, and no little trepidation, my wishes for your happiness. (*SIR PHILIP just nods smilingly at him. WINCH bows gravely and goes out L. U. E. SIR PHILIP selects one of Debussy's operas and plays with sure and delicate touch. Bell rings in distance. WINCH re-enters L.U.E. and walks over to SIR P. who stops playing when he sees him*)

WINCH. Mr. Livingstone. I told him you didn't wish to be disturbed but he seemed to think you'd like to see him.

SIR PHILIP. Show Mr. Livingstone in. (*Rises and crosses to desk*)

WINCH. Yes, Sir Philip. (*Moves to go*)

SIR PHILIP. Wait! (*Turns to desk, picks up a sealed letter. WINCH moves down and stands by desk. SIR PHILIP hands him letter*) When you get to town take this round to my mother. (*Hands him travelling-secretary*) Bring that to me early to-morrow morning.

WINCH. Nine, Sir Philip?

SIR PHILIP. *Eight.*

WINCH. Yes, Sir Philip.

SIR PHILIP. (*Nods and looks at his watch*) Don't miss your train.

WINCH. No, Sir Philip. Anything else I can do?

SIR PHILIP. No. Yes. Stop at the garage and tell them to send me a car to-night at ten o'clock.

WINCH. Yes, Sir Philip. (*Exits L.U.E. SIR PHILIP tears up some letters, puts others in drawers. WINCH re-enters, L.U.E., shows in LIVING-*

STONE *and exits* L.U.E. LIVINGSTONE *is in evening dress, overcoat, and Homburg hat, gloves in hand, smoking a cigar. Start up on dimmers on back cloth; pale blue moonlight*)

LIVINGSTONE. (*Coming in breezily*) Hello!

SIR PHILIP. (*Going to him and shaking hands. They meet c.*) This is very delightful of you.

LIVINGSTONE. (L.C.) Is it?

SIR PHILIP. Delightful! Let me take your coat.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Slipping it off and throwing it with his gloves on to a chair up c.*) That's all right. Anywhere'll do. There we are! It's a pretty bleak night, so I thought I'd come out and—and—have a chat.

SIR PHILIP. How did you come, by train?

LIVINGSTONE. Yes. There were no cabs about. Had to walk from the station. One-eyed place out here, isn't it?

SIR PHILIP. (*Smiles*) It is rather quiet.

LIVINGSTONE. Quiet! That's not the word! The only people I've seen since I left London were the guard on the train and the station porter. He directed me here.

SIR PHILIP. Oh, really?

LIVINGSTONE. Yes.

SIR PHILIP. Ah! (*Pause*) Supper is not till twelve-thirty.

LIVINGSTONE. I know. What time shall we leave?

SIR PHILIP. We? *I am going in by the ten-fifteen.*

LIVINGSTONE. Fine! It will give me time to go to my rooms and change, and plenty of time for a cosy little talk here!

SIR PHILIP. (*Laughing*) Plenty! Sit down. Liqueur?

LIVINGSTONE. Whiskey, if you got it. Any rye?

SIR PHILIP. I'm afraid not.

LIVINGSTONE. Anything will do. Even Scotch.

SIR PHILIP. (*Bringing glasses and decanter to table*) Shall I?

LIVINGSTONE. Don't bother. I'll mix it. (*Does so*)

SIR PHILIP. The cigars are beside you?

LIVINGSTONE. Right. Hurrah. (*Drinks; takes cigar, bites end off, lights it without looking at SIR PHILIP*)

SIR PHILIP. (*Has poured out a pony of brandy for himself. They both drink. SIR PHILIP goes to desk*)

LIVINGSTONE. Have I butted in?

SIR PHILIP. Eh?

LIVINGSTONE. I mean, interrupted you?

SIR PHILIP. No. By the way, have you the same rooms in New York?

LIVINGSTONE. Yes.

SIR PHILIP. Let me see, on—on——

LIVINGSTONE. Fifth Avenue and 44th Street.

SIR PHILIP. The name of a *wine*, if I remember?

LIVINGSTONE. Sherry's.

SIR PHILIP. Of course! Sherry's. You made my hurried visit to New York extremely pleasant.

LIVINGSTONE. I was glad to have you.

SIR PHILIP. I dropped in for a cup of tea one day, and stayed six weeks. And, by the way, your advice was most helpful to me in—what's the name of your great stock exchange street? Something *dead*?

LIVINGSTONE. (*Laughingly*) Wall!

SIR PHILIP. That's it, Wall Street.

LIVINGSTONE. You're quite right, it's full of tombstones.

SIR PHILIP. I was very fortunate, under your guidance.

LIVINGSTONE. Oh, that's all right.

SIR PHILIP. I've not forgotten it.

LIVINGSTONE. Haven't you?

SIR PHILIP. I was, and am still, most grateful.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Braces himself for the attack, puts his cigar down, leans across the table, and looks straight at SIR PHILIP*) Well, here I am in my turn sitting in *your* rooms, and I want to ask *your* advice.

SIR PHILIP. (*Quite interested*) Splendid! About stocks?

LIVINGSTONE. No. About something almost as elusive, and quite as disappointing—at times.

SIR PHILIP. Oh? What's that?

LIVINGSTONE. A woman. (*SIR PHILIP draws back a bit, looking intently at him*) You can be of a whole lot of assistance to me.

SIR PHILIP. It will be a pleasure.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Grimly*) I'm not so sure about that. (*SIR PHILIP makes slight movement*)

SIR PHILIP. Why not?

LIVINGSTONE. Well, I'm not. Now, here's the proposition. Supposing you were very much in love with a woman (*SIR PHILIP looks at him steadily, but says nothing*) and she wrote a letter to another man saying she was going to *call* on him, at night, in his rooms?

SIR PHILIP. Yes?

LIVINGSTONE. What would you do?

SIR PHILIP. (*Suspicious*) How should I know she'd written it?

LIVINGSTONE. Suppose it fell into your hands *first*.

SIR PHILIP. That's ingenious!

LIVINGSTONE. What would you do?

SIR PHILIP. Is this a hypothetical question?

LIVINGSTONE. No. It's a *real* question. I know the man, and the woman, and I've seen the letter. (*Pause*) If you were the man who was in love with her, and *you* got the letter, what would you do?

SIR PHILIP. (*Musing*) I don't quite know.

LIVINGSTONE. Think, think, there's a good fellow!

SIR PHILIP. (*Looking shrewdly at him*) Why?

LIVINGSTONE. Well—I'd like to know your outlook. See?

SIR PHILIP. (*Pause*) I should *prevent* the meeting.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Smiling*) Good! We're on the same set of rails from the start. What else would you do?

SIR PHILIP. I'd look the man up—if he were the kind one *could* look up.

LIVINGSTONE. Good again! You wouldn't go to the woman first?

SIR PHILIP. No. I think not.

LIVINGSTONE. Surprising how we agree! (*Pause*) What would you do when you looked the fellow up?

SIR PHILIP. I'd probably tell him he was a blackguard.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Taken completely aback*) Eh? You'd tell him he was a——?

SIR PHILIP. Probably.

LIVINGSTONE. But suppose he was your friend?

SIR PHILIP. All the more reason, and the greater the privilege!

LIVINGSTONE. Yes. But suppose he didn't know that I—that is, that *you*—were in love with the woman?

SIR PHILIP. Then it's high time he did.

LIVINGSTONE. Why, you're after my own heart, all the way through. Except just one thing. I looked the man up, but I've liked him so much that I'd hate like hell to call him a blackguard. Let me off that, will you? (*Pause*) You know, I was really very fond of you, the little I saw of you. Don't ask me to call you names, please.

SIR PHILIP. (*In amazement*) Call me——?

LIVINGSTONE. (*Rising*) I don't want to do that. Let's fix it up quiet and nice, eh? Shall we? (SIR PHILIP *looks at him in stony silence*) I'm in deep water over Miss *Eve Alverstone*—right out of my depth—can't keep my head above. See where I'm coming?

SIR PHILIP. I do not.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Smiling indulgently up to him*) You old rascal!

SIR PHILIP. (*Rises*) Your talent for humor I have on several occasions during our short acquaintance envied. Unfortunately, I am, from an American standpoint, *void* of it. (*Moves out to c.*)

LIVINGSTONE. (*Rises*) So am I, for the moment. In fact, I'm dead serious. The woman I like more than any other I have ever met, or ever will meet, is coming here to-night.

SIR PHILIP. What?

LIVINGSTONE. (*Looks up at him*) Gee! Say, I wish *I* could keep an innocent face like that when I'm found out.

SIR PHILIP. (*Goes out to back of chair R.C.*) Miss Alverstone is coming here to-night?

LIVINGSTONE. She is. By appointment.

SIR PHILIP. What appointment?

LIVINGSTONE. You know best about that.

SIR PHILIP. No such appointment was ever made.

LIVINGSTONE. What's the use of saying that? You know she's coming.

SIR PHILIP. You are absolutely mistaken.

LIVINGSTONE. I wish I were. Let us talk the thing out frankly and above-board. I'm in love with her—that's where I stand. She seems to be in love with you——

SIR PHILIP. *I tell you——*

LIVINGSTONE. Quiet, just a minute. Don't imag-

ine for a moment that I think there is anything that reflects on her in making this—this—assig-nation.

SIR PHILIP *There was no—*

LIVINGSTONE. Will you let me finish?

SIR PHILIP. *I—*

LIVINGSTONE. Just let me finish, *please*. (*Pause.*

SIR PHILIP *turns, faces him*) I am sure the whole thing is just a high-spirited prank, the sort of thing she'd do without an atom of wrong, so far as she's concerned. But *we* know life in cities pretty well, and we've both seen what just such a prank as this has cost a woman. Haven't we? Let us protect Miss Alverstone from running any risk like that. If there is time, send her a message and stop her coming here.

SIR PHILIP. I assure you—

LIVINGSTONE. I don't want your *assurance*. For goodness sake *do* something. Telegraph! Telephone! Get a move on! (*Moves down R.*)

SIR PHILIP. I couldn't telegraph—I don't know Miss Alverstone's address. I couldn't telephone—I don't know her number. Do you still think there is an appointment?

LIVINGSTONE. Think! I *know*. Now don't fool about any longer. Stop her from coming.

SIR PHILIP. I don't know your reasons, but you seem to be trying to fasten a quarrel on me.

LIVINGSTONE. Nothing of the kind! At least, not yet. But if she comes here—

SIR PHILIP. (*Angrily walking up L.C. towards windows*) This has gone quite far enough.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Following him, also growing angry*) Very much *too* far, to my mind. (*Crosses c.*) I know, after what she told me to-day, what a fool I've been ever to have dreamed she could give me a second thought. *You're* the man she likes. (*SIR PHILIP turns angrily to speak*) Yes, you are.

What is she coming here for, the night before your marriage, unless she's crazy about you?

SIR PHILIP. (*Comes down*) *Once and for all*—

LIVINGSTONE. That's all right! I can't help it if she is. That lets *me* out. But, all the same, I'm just as jealous of her reputation as if she were my mother, or my sister, or my— (*His voice drops*) wife. And if any man caused the slightest suspicion to fall on her I'd—I'd— (*SIR PHILIP interrupts, his voice rising*) Oh, cut out all this arguing and do *something!*

SIR PHILIP. You really believe an appointment was made?

LIVINGSTONE. Just as much as I do that I'm standing *here—looking at you.*

SIR PHILIP. I give you my word of honor that I have no appointment with Miss Alverstone. When I met her this afternoon she expressed a wish never to see me again.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Looks searchingly at him, trying to judge whether he is speaking the truth*) Do you really mean that?

SIR PHILIP. On my word of honor.

LIVINGSTONE. Then what does she mean by writing to you?

SIR PHILIP. I don't know. How did you find out she did?

LIVINGSTONE. I saw the letter.

SIR PHILIP. Saw it?

LIVINGSTONE. Yes, I've got it.

SIR PHILIP. Where is it?

LIVINGSTONE. Here. (*Takes out letter and hands it to SIR PHILIP*)

SIR PHILIP. Where did you get this?

LIVINGSTONE. From—a—Mr. Warrender.

SIR PHILIP. Warrender?

LIVINGSTONE. Yes. A clergyman.

SIR PHILIP. Oh, *I know him.*

LIVINGSTONE. *He'll be here in a few minutes.*

SIR PHILIP. What for? (*Takes out letter from envelope*)

LIVINGSTONE. To raise Cain. He's got it in for you all right.

SIR PHILIP. Where did *he* get it?

LIVINGSTONE. That fool of an "only-my-second-day-here" servant gave it to *him* first, then to *me*. Nice thing, letting that parson see it. He's going to make a bunch of trouble, believe *me!*

SIR PHILIP. You *both* read it?

LIVINGSTONE. No, no. *I* didn't read it. *He* read it by accident, and told me something of what was in it.

SIR PHILIP. It's most bewildering.

LIVINGSTONE. Can't you think of something we can do? She may be here any minute.

SIR PHILIP. (*By piano*) That's out of the question. It's either a complete misunderstanding or else some clumsy joke.

LIVINGSTONE. Damned clumsy.

SIR PHILIP. (*Crossing to him*) But if you have the slightest suspicion stay here and go back to town with *me*.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Changing his tone as he begins to believe* SIR PHILIP) No appointment?

SIR PHILIP. No.

LIVINGSTONE. Never even talked about it?

SIR PHILIP. No.

LIVINGSTONE. Didn't tell you she was crazy about you?

SIR PHILIP. (*In curve of piano*) No. I repeat—she said she never wanted to see me again.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Thinking*) Well, this beats hell! (*Crosses*) I'm fairly up a tree now. (*By chair*)

SIR PHILIP. If I *had* received this letter the first thing I would have done would be as you suggested.

I would have stopped her coming. I am just as jealous of her reputation as you are.

LIVINGSTONE. Are you?

SIR PHILIP. (*Down to L. of LIVINGSTONE*) Why, naturally, anything that would injure Miss Alverstone would reflect on Miss Rodd.

LIVINGSTONE. That's true, too.

SIR PHILIP. But—wait here and satisfy yourself.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Goes to him D.L.C. Looks at SIR PHILIP, laughs, then offers his hand with relief*) You're a white man all right.

SIR PHILIP. I'm glad to have restored your confidence.

LIVINGSTONE. Well, you've done *that*.

SIR PHILIP. Thank you.

LIVINGSTONE. Oh, Lord, what a weight you've lifted off my mind! (*Going up c.*) How in the world did that letter go astray? If I were John Rodd I'd chloroform that butler. I tell you one thing. I'll write her a note here, with a full description of my feelings when I found out what was in the letter and of your face when I started on you. Gee, I certainly had you *going*, hadn't I?

SIR PHILIP. (C.L.) "Had me going?" (*By piano*)

LIVINGSTONE. Oh, Lord, you were "winging," weren't you?

SIR PHILIP. (*Puzzled*) I don't think so.

LIVINGSTONE. You were furious.

SIR PHILIP. Oh, yes, I certainly was a little annoyed.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Laughs*) I'll write a nice fresh billet doux and leave it at 40 Mount Street on my way back.

SIR PHILIP. (*Crossing to desk up R.*) Write it here.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Following him*) Oh, no. Can't

I go somewhere else? I want to write a *real* letter. You know—a funny one, and plenty of it.

SIR PHILIP. (*Goes to door R. and opens it*) There's an escritoire in here. I'll light up. (*Goes into the room R.*) Yes, there's everything in here.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Going up to windows; the whole garden is flooded with moonlight*) Do you know, when I came in here everything was all black—a pitch dark night, without a star. Now the Heavens are full of them, and there's a great big yellow moon as well. Great, isn't it? And it's just the same inside here. (*Tapping his head*) The darkness has all gone. I'm all starlight and moonshine. Word-picture! (*Crosses to door R. Exit singing*) "And when I tell them how wonderful you are, dear." (*Closes door R.*)

SIR PHILIP. (*Calling through door*) Is it cold in there?

LIVINGSTONE. Not a bit. (*Goes on singing the refrain*)

SIR PHILIP. (*Opens the door a few inches. Pause*) Must you sing? (*LIVINGSTONE laughs and finishes the song faintly*) Come back when you've finished your letter.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Off*) Right you are! (*SIR PHILIP closes the door, walks perplexedly to the desk, and destroys some letters and arranges others. He crosses to piano and sees a large photograph, which he is looking at intently when the sound of a motor horn is heard. He stops in the act and looks in the direction of the garden. Then the sound of an automobile going away. SIR PHILIP, satisfied that the automobile has gone, turns back to the photograph, and is about to destroy it*)

(*Enter EVE, wrapped in furs. SIR PHILIP, with photograph in his hand, looks at her in amazement.*)

EVE. (*Stands for a moment looking at him, her*

eyes dancing with mischief) Good evening! (*Moves down towards c.*) Am I late? I was so afraid I would be. I couldn't find a train to fit, so I motored out the whole way. (*Shivers. Looks at him standing thunderstruck by the windows.* SIR PHILIP closes the windows and comes down to her) I sent the chauffeur to the inn to get warm—to "*The Intrepid Fox.*" (*Sits in armchair, R. Smiles up at SIR PHILIP*) Where is your mother? (*Sits R.*)

SIR PHILIP. In town.

EVE. Oh, really? Have you still got the faithful Winch? (*Throwing back her wraps, she is seen to be in evening dress*)

SIR PHILIP. Yes.

EVE. Where is he?

SIR PHILIP. On his way to town.

EVE. (*Looking up*) Are we alone, then?

SIR PHILIP. No. Mr. Livingstone is here

EVE. Oh! Why did he come here?

SIR PHILIP. He brought me this letter from you.

EVE. Really?

SIR PHILIP. It was given to him by mistake.

EVE. Was it?

SIR PHILIP. It was.

EVE. How stupid!

SIR PHILIP. He seemed to think it his duty to call on me.

EVE. (*c.*) Why?

SIR PHILIP. (*L.C.*) To prevent you coming here.

EVE. (*Gives a little satisfied smile and sits again R.C.*) Did he want to save my reputation?

SIR PHILIP. He did.

EVE. *What* a nice man. Where is he?

SIR PHILIP. (*Points to door R.*) In there.

EVE. (*Half laughing*) Is he? (*Rise*) What's he doing?

SIR PHILIP. (c.) Writing you a letter.

EVE. Poor thing. Fancy that! Why, the key is on this side.

SIR PHILIP. (*Goes a little towards door R. and looks*) Yes. (*By table*)

EVE. Lock the door, Philip.

SIR PHILIP. Why?

EVE. I don't want him to come in—just yet.

SIR PHILIP. (*Moving to her*) But—

EVE. Never mind! I'll lock it myself. (*Goes to door, locks it, listens a moment, and nods merrily*) "He wouldn't believe me." He's singing. It must be a jolly letter. (*Looks at SIR PHILIP and bursts into uncontrollable laughter, R. of table R.C.*)

SIR PHILIP. I'm glad you think it amusing. Frankly, I don't.

EVE. I think it quite the funniest thing that could have happened.

SIR PHILIP. Why have you come here?

EVE. Philip! Suppose I wanted to see you for the last time on the earth of romance. Suppose sentiment conquered prudence. (*She looks quizzingly at the perplexed SIR PHILIP*)

SIR PHILIP. (*Behind table*) Sentiment conquered prudence? Sentiment? What sentiment can you have for me?

EVE. Ah, there we have it! What? You don't know how the news of your marriage shocked me to-day.

SIR PHILIP. *Shocked* you?

EVE. (*Nods sadly*) Yes. *Shocked*. Although a woman may thrust an emotion from her for years, and think she's forgotten it, sometimes it so happens that what she thought was *dead* has only been *slumbering*. That is my condition. I have discovered that—something—has only been slumbering.

SIR PHILIP. (*In absolute astonishment*) Something has been slumbering?

EVE. Don't repeat everything I say. It will take so long to finish. (*Behind chair R.*) You haven't asked me to stay.

SIR PHILIP. No.

EVE. Very well. I will. (*Sits R.*) Let our farewell be almost *unspoken*. If women break their hearts, at least let it be in silence. It is all a man ever exacts from them, isn't it? (*Moves. Pause*) Just *silence*. (*Pause*) It's very hard on the woman, Philip, isn't it? (*To c.*) I suppose this *is* farewell.

SIR PHILIP. I understood you to say it this afternoon.

EVE. I thought afterwards I'd rather say it *here*. (*Looks around. Crosses front—crosses back to L.C.*) Here, in this room consecrated by memory to my—slumbering—sentiment. Because it was here you—

SIR PHILIP. Please don't refer to—*that*.

EVE. I won't. (*Pause*) You are really going to marry my little cousin?

SIR PHILIP. (*R.C.*) I am.

EVE. Poor Winifred! Her life all hot sunshine and quick tears. You have driven away the sunshine. Only the tears remain—oceans of them. Poor Winifred!

SIR PHILIP. I intend to make everything happy for her.

EVE. Then why fasten chains around her?

SIR PHILIP. *I love Winifred.*

EVE. I, too, am devoted to her. That is one of the reasons why I risked your temper—and my own reputation—by coming here. Please give her up, Philip.

SIR PHILIP. No, I love her.

EVE. You know, Philip, if you say that often enough you'll begin to believe it. In the name of all great men and for the sake of one suffering woman, give up Winifred. (*Quite close to him*)

SIR PHILIP. Are *you* trying to waken something in me, Eve?

EVE. Yes.

SIR PHILIP. What?

EVE. Pity for Winifred, Philip.

SIR PHILIP. I mean the memory of you five years ago?

EVE. Ah! It was just such a night.

SIR PHILIP. Yes. Moonlight! Music! You, the woman!

EVE. And you, the man.

SIR PHILIP. Oh, if only——

EVE. If only the dormant brute had *lain* dormant?

SIR PHILIP. (*Shocked*) Can you speak of it so cold-bloodedly?

EVE. (*Presses her cheeks*) I burn at the remembrance.

SIR PHILIP. Yes. Now everything is changed.

EVE. Changed indeed! (*Sighs*) I am an old maid, and you want to marry a *child* to-morrow. (*Pause*) But you won't, will you, Philip?

SIR PHILIP. (*Coming under her spell*) Suppose I do what you ask me—make the sacrifice—will you do something in return?

EVE. What?

SIR PHILIP. Think back with me five years.

EVE. I'd love to.

SIR PHILIP. Let it be as though the later words were never spoken, as though the barrier had never been, as though we were now as we were then—a man and a woman on equal terms, lovers.

EVE. (*Looks at windows, withdraws her hand, and turns up to windows. Then goes to piano, picks up photograph*) Oh! *Me!* It's an old one, isn't it?

SIR PHILIP. (*Goes to piano and sits and plays softly, watching her intently*) Yes. It hasn't been off there for five years.

EVE. What were you going to do, destroy me?

SIR PHILIP. (*Strikes chord on piano*) No, no. Oh, no.

EVE. Oh, yes, you were. I don't blame you. How proper I looked five years ago.

SIR PHILIP. Adorable. (*Plays Chopin's Nocturne in E*)

EVE. How like you, Philip, to play the piano. (*Listens for several bars*) Why, it's the same nocturne! I first heard you play that five years ago. (*Waits until the movement is finished then, quite moved, goes to him and touches him on the shoulder*) Oh, Philip! Philip! (*He stops playing*)

SIR PHILIP. Eve!

EVE. Philip, my dear.

SIR PHILIP. (*Rises and goes to her*) Eve, it's just as it was five years ago.

EVE. Yes, Philip.

SIR PHILIP. What do you want me to do?

EVE. I want you to give up Winifred.

SIR PHILIP. I will. Be my wife.

EVE. Don't be absurd. Be your wife, Philip?

SIR PHILIP. Yes. The world was made for us. (*WARRENDER comes in at windows c.*) *Be my wife.* (*SIR PHILIP embraces her*)

(*WARRENDER enters c. doors*)

EVE. (*Sees WARRENDER*) You fool! You've come too soon.

SIR PHILIP. Too soon? What do you mean? (*LIVINGSTONE rattles at door R.*)

LIVINGSTONE. Sir Philip! Hullo! Sir Philip! You've locked me in. (*Rattles door continuously*) Grafton! Sir Philip! (*Goes on rattling. EVE has crossed to up L.C. SIR PHILIP goes to door, unlocks, and opens it*)

LIVINGSTONE. (*Enters and closes door, a sealed*

letter in his hand) Why, what in the world did you lock the door for? (*Sees WARRENDER*) Hello! (*Following direction of WARRENDER'S eye, turns, and sees EVE*) Miss Alverstone!

WARRENDER. (*Comes a little way into the room and speaks to LIVINGSTONE*) I'm glad you're here. (*Points to SIR PHILIP*) That man is a proven black-guard. (*LIVINGSTONE looks from SIR PHILIP to EVE*) The marriage to-morrow cannot take place.

LIVINGSTONE. Here! Gently, gently! You stop the marriage by all *means*. Call him (*Indicating SIR PHILIP*) all the hard names you please. (*Looks at EVE*) But don't—don't drag any *woman's* name into this wretched business.

WARRENDER. Miss Rodd will not be sacrificed for the sake of speaking the truth.

LIVINGSTONE. Nor shall any other woman be sacrificed to suit your convenience. Make up your mind to that. (*He crosses to EVE*)

SIR PHILIP. (*Crossing to R.C.*) Will you tell me by what right you dare to force yourself into this room?

WARRENDER. (*C.*) I will. A letter came, providentially, into my hands that was intended for you. It showed beyond any question that you are not the type of man Miss Rodd should be allowed to marry.

SIR PHILIP. Since when have you assumed the right to say whom Miss Rodd shall or shall not marry?

WARRENDER. I *love* Miss Rodd.

SIR PHILIP. You!— (*Crosses D.R.*)

EVE. (*Interrupting. Crosses to L.C.*) If he loves Miss Rodd of course he has a right to interfere if she's going to marry someone else. (*To WARRENDER*) You have every right. You love her. That is enough. There shall be no marriage to-morrow.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Quickly*) He'll not sacrifice you.

EVE. I never allow any man to do that, Mr. Livingstone.

LIVINGSTONE. But don't you see that——

EVE. (*Stops LIVINGSTONE, and turns to WARRENDER*) I am very glad you came, though I wish you had come later. Still, I'm glad you came. I never knew a marriage to interest so many different people in so many different ways. I heard of it only this afternoon, and I wanted to stop it.

WARRENDER. Stop it?

EVE. The time was short, so I came here. I found Sir Philip *most* reasonable. We were just arriving at a most satisfactory conclusion when you came in.

WARRENDER. (*Sternly*) Satisfactory conclusion! Why, you were in his arms. (*LIVINGSTONE makes movement*)

EVE. Well, isn't that a satisfactory conclusion between a man and a woman? It was most satisfactory, wasn't it, Philip? (*SIR PHILIP turns away R.*)

LIVINGSTONE. (*Crosses to WARRENDER*) Now, look here——

WARRENDER. (*Still looking at EVE*) Then it is distinctly understood that there shall be no question of Miss Rodd marrying that man to-morrow?

EVE. It is distinctly understood that there shall be no question of Miss Rodd marrying to-morrow. No question whatever. The whole thing is *off*. (*To SIR PHILIP*) Isn't it, Philip?

SIR PHILIP. (*R.*) It does not rest with you, Miss Alverstone. (*To WARRENDER*) Now will you be good enough to go?

WARRENDER. (*To SIR PHILIP*) I warn you I shall make the fullest possible use of what I saw here just now.

LIVINGSTONE. Why, you——

EVE. (*Checking him, turns to WARRENDER*)

Quite right. You make the fullest possible use of what you saw here, just now. If you forget anything ask *me*. I'll prompt you. Miss Rodd must not marry him. (*To SIR PHILIP*) Really, she mustn't, Philip.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Following WARRENDER*) You'll not mention *her* name. (*Indicating EVE*)

WARRENDER. Not unless it is necessary.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Up c.l.*) It shall *not* be necessary. Make up your mind to that.

WARRENDER. (*Up c.*) To-morrow morning I shall call on Mr. Rodd.

EVE. (*r.c. by chair*) So shall I. I'm going to see you through this, young parson.

LIVINGSTONE. If he'll allow me *I'd* like to be there as well.

EVE. (*To LIVINGSTONE*) Certainly he'll allow you. I'll see that he does.

WARRENDER. (*Pointing at SIR PHILIP, but EVE is in the way*) You're hemmed in.

EVE. (*Stepping back from WARRENDER'S accusing finger. To SIR PHILIP*) That's meant for you, Philip.

WARRENDER. (*To SIR PHILIP*) I'll show you no mercy. A man who'd marry a child against her will deserves none. (*Turns to LIVINGSTONE*) Good-night. (*LIVINGSTONE turns away silently*)

EVE. (*Runs up to c. Brightly*) Good-night! Good luck! (*WARRENDER disappears through windows. The three stand a moment in silence. Both the men are looking at EVE. She looks first at LIVINGSTONE, who is staring sadly at her, then at SIR PHILIP, who is frowning gloomily*)

EVE. (*Comes c. and turns to LIVINGSTONE*) Be sure to meet me at my uncle's to-morrow morning. We'll need you.

LIVINGSTONE. You must think me an interfering fool for coming here to-night.

EVE. Indeed I don't. I think it was splendid of you.

LIVINGSTONE. I hoped to have avoided all this. If I hadn't gone in there (*Indicating room R.*) I might have.

EVE. I'll forgive you—if you'll let me have that letter you've just written. (*Pointing to the letter in his hand*)

LIVINGSTONE. (*Shakes his head*) No. It wouldn't mean anything now.

EVE. Why not?

LIVINGSTONE. Because when I wrote it I was convinced you weren't coming. (*Nodding to SIR PHILIP*) *He* convinced me.

EVE. (*To SIR PHILIP*) What did you do that for?

LIVINGSTONE. (*To EVE*) So you were only laughing at me this afternoon.

EVE. (*Softly*) I've never done that.

LIVINGSTONE. Just playing the fool with me.

EVE. (*Shaking her head*) No, I wasn't.

LIVINGSTONE. Well, you certainly got away with it. The honors rest with you. I'll tell you one thing, I'm out of conceit with myself for the rest of my life. (*EVE holds out her hand for the letter. LIVINGSTONE tears it up and puts the pieces in his pocket*) There's the end of that. (*Pause. Turns to her*) Do you really want me to call on Mr. Rodd in the morning?

EVE. (*Gently*) Yes. I'd like you to. I'll need you.

LIVINGSTONE. All right. I will. And after that I won't bother you any more. You've put me in my place, all right.

EVE. (*Putting her hand on his arm*) I'm very sorry.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Looks at her hand*) Good-night! (*Goes up and gets his overcoat, hat and gloves.*)

Looks at SIR PHILIP) I must apologize for blundering in here to-night.

SIR PHILIP. Not at all.

LIVINGSTONE. I meant well, but I see I'm in wrong. Most of us are when we interfere in other people's business. I deserved a snub——

SIR PHILIP. No, no.

LIVINGSTONE. You've let me down easy. Much obliged! Good-night.

SIR PHILIP. Good-night!

(Exit LIVINGSTONE c. to L.)

EVE. *(Calls after him)* Good-night, Mr. Livingstone! *(To SIR PHILIP)* He thinks this is a tragedy. He doesn't know how funny it is. He'll laugh when I tell him. Do you know what he said to me this morning? He told me I was the sort of a woman who could do no wrong. What in the world does he think of me now? *Alone—with you.* That's wrong, surely. I know the parson thinks the worst. *(Up c. Laughs immoderately)* He takes himself very seriously, even for a parson, doesn't he? *(Pause)* Yes, he does.

SIR PHILIP. *(To her)* Was this a trap?

EVE. *(Contemptuously)* Don't be absurd. A trap!

SIR PHILIP. Was it?

EVE. *(Defiantly)* Suppose it was.

SIR PHILIP. Then you admit it?

EVE. If you like.

SIR PHILIP. *(Pause. Crosses to EVE, looks steadily at her)* Don't you think it was a little cruel? More than a little unwise? And altogether unworthy of you?

EVE. *(Down L.C.)* From the moment I realized how wretched I was—I mean, *she* was—I made up my mind to save her.

SIR PHILIP. *(To her)* At your own expense.

EVE. Well, chiefly at *yours*.

SIR PHILIP. You think I am beaten?

EVE. It isn't generous to gloat.

SIR PHILIP. I'm *not*.

EVE. No?

SIR PHILIP. No.

EVE. (*Crosses*) We'll see.

SIR PHILIP. (c.) So you were laughing at *me* as well just now?

EVE. You won't believe me, but not all the time.

SIR PHILIP. It's a dangerous pastime.

EVE. I know it is. That's why I did it.

SIR PHILIP. (*Comes down level with her*) So you have burned all my bridges, you think?

EVE. Well, most of them, so far as Winifred is concerned, I am sure.

SIR PHILIP. I suppose I ought to be furious with you.

EVE. It's a very good imitation you're giving. Aren't you furious with me?

SIR PHILIP. Yes, I am. And yet my resentment is strongly tinged with admiration.

EVE. Admiration?

SIR PHILIP. (*Looks intently at her*) A woman who has the wit to plan and the courage to execute such a coup as you have to-night has a common bond with mankind. She compels admiration. You compel mine. (*Smiles at her*) I yield to your spell. Even as Adam, I fall victim to *Eve*. (*Sits L. of table*) They were banished for a fault. *We* shall be after to-night. Sha'n't we? Only *we* shall not be ashamed. We shall be clothed with the garment of worldly experience.

EVE. (*Claps her hands*) Bravo, Philip! Very nicely put. You still love word-painting. Well, I think I have done all the good, *and* harm, I can for to-night. I must be off. (*She is holding her coat.*

SIR PHILIP *takes it from her and throws it on back of chair L. to U.R. Rises*) Will you phone to "The Intrepid Fox" for my chauffeur?

SIR PHILIP. We shall not need him.

EVE. I *do* need him.

SIR PHILIP. He is quite comfortable there, let us make ourselves comfortable *here*. (*Sits L. of table*)

EVE. (*In absolute astonishment*) What?

SIR PHILIP. You know, you've had things pretty much your own way so far, haven't you? I'm sure you won't grudge me having a little of *my* own way now, will you?

EVE. Have as much of it as you like—after I've gone. Where is your 'phone?

SIR PHILIP. (*Rises*) In the hall.

EVE. Tell him to come at once. I'm quite tired suddenly. (*Sits R. of table R.C.*)

SIR PHILIP. That's right! Rest there. I don't like the idea of your going back so late over the dark roads. Stay here.

EVE. Stay here? I'll not do anything of the kind.

SIR PHILIP. Please do. (*Pause*) Do you know, in Africa the bride and groom sit up together all the night before the wedding?

EVE. What a very large amount of information you have on very small subjects! No, I don't know what they do in Africa, and, what's more, I don't care.

SIR PHILIP. (*Sits*) Let us sit up all to-night.

EVE. Us? *You and me?* (*Laughs heartily*) That's the first joke I ever heard you make, Philip. And it's such a stupid one! If you're too lazy I'll phone myself. (*About to cross room*)

SIR PHILIP. (*Slipping in front of her. Crosses to door. Locks door up L., and pockets the key*)

EVE. What are you doing that for?

SIR PHILIP. (*Crosses to her*) I don't want you to telephone.

EVE. (*Sits. Looks at him a moment, then turns and hurries to windows c. SIR PHILIP quickly goes to windows, locks them, and again pockets the key. EVE glares at him indignantly*) How long do you intend to keep this up?

SIR PHILIP. Until it is time to prepare for the ceremony to-morrow morning. (*Sits L.*)

EVE. (*Down c. Looks sneeringly at him*) Poor Philip! Is this how you try to get even with me? Your idea of punishment! Locking me in—with you? Oh, what a punishment!

SIR PHILIP. Well, you came here to compromise me, didn't you? And you succeeded. Now— (*Shrugs his shoulders*)

EVE (*contemptuously*) Is there anything quite so pitiable in all humanity as a man robbed of what he had set his heart on? Where is the—the bell? (*SIR PHILIP points to it on the table. Looking around, sees it*) Ah! (*Goes to bell and rings continuously. SIR PHILIP laughs*) What are you grinning at?

SIR PHILIP. (*Seated*) I told you there was nobody else in the house. We are quite alone. (*Pause, as she stops ringing and glares at him. Rises*) How history repeats itself! Only, five years ago my mother was within call.

EVE. (*Moves to c. a little, towards him, laughing heartily, yet her laughter has a strange ring of uneasiness*) Why not accept defeat gracefully, Philip?

SIR PHILIP. With you as my wife I would accept anything gracefully.

EVE. If the *population* of the world was narrowed down to just you and me I would ask you which hemisphere you preferred and I would choose the other one. (*Angrily*) Let me out of here.

SIR PHILIP. No. You are going to stay here all night.

EVE. You wouldn't dare.

SIR PHILIP. Oh, yes, I would.

EVE. (c. *Sneers at him again*) It would be quite worthy of you. A man who would force his attentions on a child by bribing her father would do anything contemptible. It will be just one more discreditable action in a most discreditable career. (SIR PHILIP *laughs*)

SIR PHILIP. Now you listen to me. (*Pause. Rises*) Either you agree to place no obstacle in the way of to-morrow's marriage or you stay here all night.

EVE. You'll not marry Winifred, and I'll not stay here all night.

SIR PHILIP. Oh, yes, you will.

EVE. Do you know what it would mean if you did such a contemptible thing? You would get a public horse-whipping. I'd see to that. You would be expelled from every club. I'd see to that, too. Your name would stand for all that is hateful after I had got through with you!

SIR PHILIP. I'll risk all that.

EVE. Do you suppose my uncle will allow you to marry Winifred after to-night?

SIR PHILIP. I do. Indeed, it is your uncle who suggested the marriage. To-morrow—after the ceremony—I become his partner. No *marriage*, no *partnership*.

EVE. Oh, the business transaction.

SIR PHILIP. That's a most ingenuous way of putting it.

EVE. It's infamous! Outrageous! Let me out of here.

SIR PHILIP. No. You will have plenty of opportunity between now and to-morrow morning to think over the outrageous thing *you* have done to-

night. It may teach you to be careful how you interfere in people's lives again.

EVE. I did it for Winifred.

(Warn bell and lights out)

SIR PHILIP. I am not so sure. You deliberately played on my memory of you so that I might fall into the trap you laid. You've waited five years for to-night to enjoy my discomfiture. I will not wait five minutes to ensure yours. It has begun already. You have destroyed any feeling I ever had for you. I have only contempt. *(Turns L.)*

EVE. *(Furiously)* Oh! *(Rattles windows)*
Open this.

SIR PHILIP. No.

EVE. I *command* you to open this window.

SIR PHILIP. No.

EVE. *(Pause)* I *appeal* to your pride.

SIR PHILIP. No. Any pride in my memory of you died in this room a few minutes ago.

EVE. I appeal to your pity. *(Crosses to him)*

SIR PHILIP. It is all for myself. You have treated me very badly.

EVE. *(Gently)* I'm sorry I did, Philip. Forgive me. Let me go.

SIR PHILIP. No.

EVE. Please do, Philip.

SIR PHILIP. No.

EVE. *(Crosses R. Angrily)* Oh, it is disgraceful! Abominable! If this is a joke it is in the worst possible taste.

SIR PHILIP. It's no joke. *(Turns away. EVE goes angrily to armchair. Little by little she realizes her helplessness. A feeling of misery comes over her as she realizes that all she has staked has been lost. Tears come into her eyes. She sits, buries her face, and cries quietly. Hearing a muffled sob, he turns and looks at her. She goes on cry-*

ing. He softens and moves over to her. She raises her head to wipe her eyes and finds him looking at her)

EVE. Don't stand there looking at me. I can't bear to look at you. *(Turns her back on him. He stands perfectly still for a moment, then goes to piano and plays very softly)* Don't you dare to play that piano. *(Stops her ears)* I'll never hear the piano again without thinking of this—and hating you. *(Long pause)* Oh! *(Grimaces at him. He continues to play. BELL. A bell sounds through the house. EVE sits up erect and listens)* You have a visitor—God bless him! *(SIR PHILIP goes on playing)* Let your visitor in, Philip. *(He plays Polonaise loudly. BELL. Bell rings again, loud and long)* Open the door, Philip. *(He plays louder. BELL. Bell rings continuously till lights go out)*

SIR PHILIP. No! *(Stops music)*

EVE. You might just as well open the door. When he's tired of ringing he'll come to the windows. He's sure to have seen the light. *(SIR PHILIP turns round, looks at her, goes deliberately to the switch, and turns off the lights. Moonlight streams in through the windows. Lights out)* What a very determined person! Do you really think you can keep me here?

SIR PHILIP. *(Comes down)* I mean to.
(Warn lights on)

EVE. With someone outside?

SIR PHILIP. Call out. No one will hear you.

EVE. Help!

SIR PHILIP. Oh, louder!

EVE. Help!

SIR PHILIP. Oh, much louder! *(Sounds of footsteps are heard on gravel. Goes to window L. and listens)* They're going away.

EVE. You really think you can keep me here with someone outside? You must be mad. *(Picks*

up a paperweight and hurls it through the windows c. Crash of glass) Now give me the key and turn on the lights. They're sure to come now they've heard the smash. Turn on the lights and give me the key. (SIR PHILIP *switches on the lights and hands her the key. LIGHTS ON. EVE unlocks windows c.*) Come here! Straight up the path. (*Man appears at windows c.*) Did you throw that stone?

CHAUFFEUR. Stone, Miss? No, not me, Miss.

EVE. That's very extraordinary! Well, what do you want?

CHAUFFEUR. The car for Sir Philip Grafton, that was ordered for ten. (*Turns to go*)

EVE. Don't go away. Stay here. Just wait a minute. You can drive me to the inn first, and come back for Sir Philip. (*Standing by windows*) Philip, please say good-night to your mother for me, will you? Give me my cloak. (*He fetches it. She stands in doorway looking on the path*) Dear! Dear! What a lot of broken glass! (SIR PHILIP *helps her with her cloak, which he offers inside out*) I usually wear the lining on the *inside*. Oh, I wonder when we'll meet again.

SIR PHILIP. To-morrow, at the wedding.

EVE. Think so?

SIR PHILIP. If you'll come.

EVE. (*Mockingly*) Hope is delightful. Thank you so much for a most exciting evening! (*Laughs and goes outside the windows c. To chauffeur*) Take me to "*The Intrepid Fox.*" Then come back for Sir Philip. (*To SIR PHILIP*) "*The Intrepid Fox!*" (*Disappears*)

THE CURTAIN FALLS

END OF ACT II

ACT III

SCENE: *Same as Act I. The next morning, just before noon. Sunshine is flooding in from the great window. On every available place are flowers, in baskets, in boxes, and arranged as bouquets. WALKLEY discovered at the rise of curtain placing some newly arrived bouquets on the seat in the alcove. BATES enters c. with two baskets of flowers.*

BATES. (*c. Standing nervously, holding the baskets timidly*) Do these go in here?

WALKLEY. (*r.*) Yes.

BATES. (*Helplessly looking around*) Where?

WALKLEY. Oh, anywhere. Put them down. I'll see to them.

BATES. (*Puts them down just where he is standing*) There's a lady calling on Mrs. Rodd.

WALKLEY. Tell her.

BATES. (*Looking around to l.*) She's not here.

WALKLEY. Well, go to her room. (*Moves c. Sees flower baskets*) Don't put them there. Go tell Mrs. Rodd. (*BATES picks up baskets and moves toward l. doors. As BATES goes to door l. MRS. RODD enters c. charmingly dressed for the wedding*)

BATES. (*Stands respectfully until MRS. RODD moves down c. drawing on her gloves. He then comes in line with MRS. RODD and coughs*) There's a lady calling.

MRS. RODD. (*Quickly*) What's her name?
(*Up c.*)

BATES. (*Nervously. L.C.*) I didn't quite catch it, madam. Sounded like "Alvston." Talks very quickly.

MRS. RODD. *Alverstone?*

BATES. (*Nods quickly and earnestly*) Yes, that's it, madam.

MRS. RODD. (*Angrily. R.C.*) Very well! (*BATES goes out c., closes door. MRS. RODD crosses to C.L.*) Walkley? (*WALKLEY turns from arranging flowers at desk. MRS. RODD motions her to come near. She does so, L.C.*) I leave for Switzerland to-morrow afternoon. You will go with me?

WALKLEY. (*Brightening up. C.R.*) Oh, really, madam?

MRS. RODD. (*Looks shrewdly at her*) Do you understand the meaning of the word *discretion*?

WALKLEY. (*Enthusiastically. C.L.*) Oh, yes, madam. I use it frequently.

MRS. RODD. Kindly *exercise* it—about Switzerland.

WALKLEY. Certainly, madam. (*Goes to desk*)

MRS. RODD. Pack *to-day*, while we're all out. I'll tell you to-night about the train. That will do. (*Crosses D.R.C.*)

WALKLEY. (*C.*) Yes, madam. (*Turns to go*)

MRS. RODD. (*Walks round to behind chair L.*) Should my husband ask any questions—it's unlikely—I am going to the Barkshires' in Reading. (*WALKLEY goes to her*) Understand? (*Walks round L. of ottoman, D.L. WALKLEY goes up to L. of D. doors*) Not Switzerland—Reading. (*Down L.*)

(*BATES enters c., showing in EVE. WALKLEY goes out c., followed by BATES*)

EVE. (*Shaking hands with MRS. RODD*) Oh, I'm so glad you're here. I was frightened I'd miss you.

MRS. RODD. Why?

EVE. I've something dreadful to talk to you about, and I don't know how to begin.

MRS. RODD. Dreadful? (*Sits*)

EVE. (*Sits*) Awful! After I've said it you will very likely send me out of the house. But I can't help it. I *must* say it.

MRS. RODD. Go on.

EVE. It's all very well to say go on but I don't know how to begin. I've never done anything like this before. Never! (*Rise*) The only way I can do it is to just *blurt* it out. May I—*blurt* it?

MRS. RODD. Are you sure *I'm* the right person to *blurt* it to? (*Looking at EVE. With a cold stare*)

EVE. Oh, yes. Indeed you are. (*Nervously clasping and unclasping her hands. With an effort*) Here goes. I went to three teas yesterday afternoon—three horrid, nasty, gossip-y teas—and at *all* of them there was *one topic*—you and Mr. Parriscourt.

MRS. RODD. What? (*Rises*)

EVE. It was revolting, the things they said. Disgraceful. So at the *last* tea I made up my mind to punish them. And I *did*. I recited to them, I quoted

“Dame Gossip's a wanton, whatever her dress.
Her sire was a lie, and her dam a guess.
And poison is in her polluting caress.
Unless you're a porker
Keep out of the *sty*.
Pass her by.”

“Ladies,” I said: “You must keep out of the Rodd *sty!*” You'd have been surprised if you'd seen the effect. They *wilted*—absolutely wilted. Shut up like clams. So I made up my mind to come straight to you and tell you. What they said was—

MRS. RODD. (*Angrily*) I *don't want* to hear it.

(*Crosses R.C.*) I don't care about gossip. I never listen to it.

EVE. (*To c.*) You can't hate it more than I do. But what I detest even more than gossip is a man who, if we flatter him by even noticing him, goes around *talking* about us and boasting of his conquest.

MRS. RODD. *Talking—and boasting?*

EVE. He's made you the laughing-stock of the miserable little tea gatherings. I know there's no harm—there couldn't be. But I hated to think of him going about London causing all this gossip and you innocent of it all. So I thought I'd tell you. (*A movement from MRS. RODD who sits, ottoman R.*) Now I suppose you'll never speak to me again? (*Pause*) And you're quite right. (*MRS. RODD sits on ottoman, livid with anger*) It's too bad. I so much wanted you to like me. May I see Winifred before I go?

MRS. RODD. Yes.

EVE. Thank you. (*Crosses to L.*)

(*Enter BATES, announces MR. PARRISCOURT. Pause*)

(*Enter PARRISCOURT, scrupulously dressed for the wedding, from L. of doors c. Exit BATES c. closing doors. PARRISCOURT moves down c. smiling confidently and all unsuspectingly*)

PARRISCOURT. (*To EVE*) Good morning, Miss—Miss—

EVE. (*Crosses up L.C.*) Oh, don't try to remember it. (*Looks at MRS. RODD, who makes no sign. EVE goes out L. PARRISCOURT goes down near to MRS. RODD, and speaks in an undertone with quiet, exulting confidence*)

PARRISCOURT. *Dear heart—you look divine. (Pause) How well pallor becomes you! (Pause) Sleepless again? Each eye has its shadow. (Pause)*

You're priceless this morning. Sleep and forgetfulness shall come—in Lucerne. (MRS. RODD *shivers*. *Pause*) At twelve to-morrow?

MRS. RODD. (*Firmly*). No.

PARRISCOURT. (*Puzzled*) No?

MRS. RODD. (*Still more decidedly*) No.

PARRISCOURT. Has something happened to change it?

MRS. RODD. Yes.

PARRISCOURT. Oh! When *shall* we go?

MRS. RODD. *Not at all*.

PARRISCOURT. (*Aghast*) You can't mean that?

MRS. RODD. I *do* mean it.

PARRISCOURT. But, surely—this must be—a—a—*mood*? A mood that will pass, eh?

MRS. RODD. It will not pass. I am not going to Lucerne—and I am not going to see you again.

PARRISCOURT. But *why*? *Why*?

MRS. RODD. (*Rises. Turns on him*) How dare you go about London talking about me? Boasting of your *conquest*? How dare you?

PARRISCOURT. (*Steps back a little*) Oh! Is *that* the cause? (*Explaining. Down front of ottoman*) I may inadvertently have dropped here a panegyric, there a scarlet phrase about you. You have colored my thoughts with the purple of your beauty. Where was the harm? I *meant* none. It was a poet's excess of adoration. Forgive me.

MRS. RODD. (*Furiously*) Oh, if I'd only known! Go! (*Turns and points to him to go and walks back R.C.*)

PARRISCOURT. (*Crosses up L. of doors. Pause*) You can't mean that. If I go away, I shan't come back. (*She turns her back on him*) Dear! Dear! I have such hopes of you. I placed you among the elect. I carved you in ivory and put you on a pedestal. Must I remove it? (*Very bitterly*)

MRS. RODD. Oh! (*Angrily. Goes down a little*)

PARRISCOURT. *This can't be final.*

MRS. RODD. *It is—absolutely final.*

PARRISCOURT. (*Musing—turns*) Lucerne alone is tedious. (*Brightens up and comes down a few steps*) Still, there will be Mount Street waiting! Eh?

MRS. RODD. There is one house in Mount Street that is closed to you forever. *This house.*

PARRISCOURT. Oh, come, dear heart!

MRS. RODD. (*With a flash of anger*) How dare you? (*Rises, turns to desk, and rings bell*)

PARRISCOURT. (*Moves up c. to door, looks off, then turns down to MRS. RODD*) This has been such a shock that I really can't stay for the ceremony. I can't, really. Pray make my excuses to Mr. Rodd and Winifred. Wish her joy for me—as my flowers did. (*Indicating them, picking them up and smelling them*) I'm sorry to miss the ceremony, but—weddings bore me. I'd counted so much on you. What a pity!

(*Enter BATES c.*)

MRS. RODD. (*To BATES, indicating PARRISCOURT*) The door! (*PARRISCOURT bows to MRS. RODD, sighs and goes out c., taking the flowers with him*) Bates! (*BATES turns to MRS. RODD*) I am not at home to Mr. Parriscourt in future.

BATES. No, madam. (*He pauses, then looks round the room*)

MRS. RODD. What do you want?

BATES. Miss Alverstone—she's not here.

MRS. RODD. (*Pointing to room off L.*) She's in there.

BATES. (*Crosses to door L., and opens it. EVE enters*) There's a gentleman to see you.

EVE. What's his name?

BATES. I didn't quite catch the name.

MRS. RODD. You must get the names correctly. Go and find out.

BATES. Yes, madam.

EVE. I know who it is—Mr. Livingstone.

BATES. (*Brightening*) That sounds like it, madam.

EVE. (*To MRS. RODD*) I'll go down to him.

MRS. RODD. No. (*To BATES*) Here in a few minutes.

BATES. Yes, madam. (*Exit c.*)

MRS. RODD. It is ridiculous—

EVE. (*Comes down R. of sofa and turns quickly L. in front of it*) Never mind! Give him time. It's only his—er—*third* day here. (*MRS. RODD laughs*) Then you're not angry with me for what I said just now?

MRS. RODD. (*Going to door*) No. You were quite right to tell me of my friends' gossip—quite right.

EVE. (*In front of ottoman*) Would you think me very rude if I asked you to let me see Mr. Livingstone alone? There's going to be an awful fuss in a few minutes, and I want to talk to him first. Do you mind?

MRS. RODD. Of course not! (*The sounds of WINIFRED'S sniffling can be heard off*)

EVE. Here comes the bride. (*Comes to c.* *MRS. RODD crosses to L.* *WINIFRED goes to EVE.* *She is in bride's dress, looking particularly miserable. She stands looking forlornly at EVE and MRS. RODD*) What a beautiful bride! (*To MRS. RODD*) Isn't she a pretty bride?

WINIFRED. (*Gasping, on the verge of tears*) But—I—don't—want—to—be—a—bride.

EVE. I'll tell you a great secret—you're not going to be a bride. You've lost him.

WINIFRED. (*Joyfully*). Really?

EVE. You'll never be Lady Grafton.

MRS. RODD. What?

EVE. Never.

MRS. RODD. Why not?

EVE. It's too long a story to tell but she never will.

WINIFRED. I never wanted to be.

EVE. I know. And you never will. Just plain Miss Rodd. Winifred to your relatives, and Winnie to those who love you. (*Impulsively takes WINIFRED in her arms, then holds her at arm's length and looks at her admiringly*)

WINIFRED. (*Fondling EVE*) I am so glad you came among us. You are the only one who has been the least bit kind to me. (*Looking at MRS. RODD*)

MRS. RODD. (*Severely to WINIFRED*) If you'd only stop crying and sniffing every one would be kind to you. (*Goes out L.*)

EVE. (*To WINIFRED*) There. All the world loves a smiler—smile at your cousin Eve. Go and take off your veil. (*WINIFRED laughs and EVE stops and points to the veil*) The badge of slavery! The nun takes it when she gives up the world. *We* take it when we give up romance. Once we put *this* on Fancy creeps away out of our lives and grim reality takes its place. (*Takes it off and thrusts it into WINIFRED'S hands*) Take it out of my sight. The veil of tears. (*WINIFRED sniffs*) Run along! Make out you're going to the altar with Harry.

WINIFRED. Oh—Oh!

EVE. Now face about. Shoulders up—toes out—
(*Hums wedding march as they cross to door L.*)

(*Enter LIVINGSTONE on second bar of the Wedding March. WINIFRED darts off. door L.*)

LIVINGSTONE. The Bride—

EVE. Yes.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Closes door*) Good morning. Is Mr. Warrender here?

EVE. Not yet.

LIVINGSTONE. Or Mr. Rodd?

EVE. Not yet.

LIVINGSTONE. Sir Philip Grafton?

EVE. Not yet.

LIVINGSTONE. But the wedding?

EVE. Not yet.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Eagerly and anxiously*) Do they know—about you—last night?

EVE. (*Smiling mischievously*) Not yet. (*Crosses and sits on ottoman*)

LIVINGSTONE. Good. (*By sofa*) I wanted to be here ahead of that—(*Checks himself*)—parson.

EVE. You are——

LIVINGSTONE. If he carried out his threat, why, it would become town-talk.

EVE. (*Sighs and roguishly watches him through her half-closed eyes*) Ah!

LIVINGSTONE. (*Nervously*) You would be made the target for all kinds of—of—(*Breaks off*) It's unthinkable.

EVE. What does it matter, so long as Miss Rodd is saved? Of course, when the truth is known I shall be finished. That's certain.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Standing in front of her*) No, it isn't. Not by a long way, it isn't. Not if I have to lie you out of it.

EVE. (*Rises*) But I don't want to be lied out of it. I want you to tell the truth.

LIVINGSTONE. But I came here to protect you.

EVE. I don't want to be protected. I want the marriage stopped—and you've got to help me. Will you help me?

LIVINGSTONE. Wait a minute. Tell me one thing. Will you?

EVE. It depends on what it is.

LIVINGSTONE. Was Sir Philip Grafton the man you spoke of yesterday?

EVE. (*Pause. Looks away*) Yes.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Pause*) Oh! But, you said then that you hated him.

EVE. (*Sits ottoman R.*) I *did*—yesterday—afternoon.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Pause*) And yet a few hours later you were with him?

EVE. Exactly. Wasn't that odd?

LIVINGSTONE. Why did you go if you hated him?

EVE. I don't know. I think hate and love revolve in a great big cycle. First one comes up—then the other. Have you ever thought that?

LIVINGSTONE. (*Decidedly. Suddenly*) Love and hate? *Love?* (*Sits L. of her*) You don't mean to say you love him *again?*

EVE. Again! I'm not sure I haven't loved him all these years.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Sits*) After what he *did?*

EVE. What did he do?

LIVINGSTONE. I don't know. But, after what you said——

EVE. What did I say?

LIVINGSTONE. Well, I don't know—only that——

EVE. Yes, but after all, that was five years ago. (*Thinks a moment*) I must have been a dreadful little prude *five years ago!*

LIVINGSTONE. (*Sits back staring at her*) I don't understand you at all.

EVE. Of course you don't. Don't let that discourage you. Few men really ever understand a woman. You see, you won't give us credit for any emotion except the domestic one. We're really brigands. But being feminine we must sit at home and munch the dry bread of peace—while you eat the wild fruits of lawlessness.

LIVINGSTONE. Oh, but——

EVE. If we browse ever so little on your land of great privileges you raise your eyebrows and say,

I don't understand you. I thought you believed the best of me last night, not the worst.

LIVINGSTONE. *I did believe in you—in my heart.*

EVE. (*Doubtfully*) Yes—but you suspected me with your eyes, didn't you? (*He does not answer*) Now I'll tell you the truth. That mysterious note of mine I sent to you deliberately. I wanted you to do just what you did—go to Sir Philip to try to prevent me from coming. You were to be—unconsciously—my fellow-conspirator. I intended to make a scandal so that my uncle would have to stop the marriage, in sheer self-defence. You were to be my witness. As I had told you the incident of five years ago I *thought* you *might* jump to conclusions. You did! But my little plan went further than I expected when my letter fell into the hands of the clergy. (*Laughs heartily*) Now I have two witnesses instead of one.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Rises, crosses to c. Then speaks*) Well, one thing is very plain to me—I'm just an ordinary, hundred-different kinds of a fool.

EVE. Every man feels that when he tries to fathom a woman's reasons.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Moves away a few steps, thinking. Turns to her*) I suppose now I haven't a hope? Have I?

EVE. (*Rises. Looking at LIVINGSTONE*) My dear Mr. Livingstone, although my intelligence whispers marry Mr. Livingstone and find peace and contentment, my soul cries out: "Eve, get your Adam." And my Adam has always been Philip—in spite of his faults. We both have tempers—we are both extravagant. We would quarrel and make it up—quarrel and make it up again. But we are real mates. Still, I don't suppose I will ever get him. Yet I shall always have a glorious memory. That's all. Just a memory.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Thinks for a moment, then makes*

up his mind) Miss Alverstone, I have been suffering from mental myopia. When I came in here I thought everything was sunshine and flowers. Now I am plunged in Cimmerian gloom.

EVE. What!

LIVINGSTONE. Get me?

EVE. No.

LIVINGSTONE. Word picture. (*Both laugh*) But honestly, will you let me do one friendly thing before you send me away? Let me straighten out last night's business.

EVE. Indeed I will. And remember—the truth—the whole truth—and nothing but the truth can save me—I mean save my cousin. You and Mr. Warrender caught me red-handed.

(*Enter JOHN RODD, C. Comes down. He is pale and haggard and evidently under a great strain. He also is dressed punctiliously for the wedding. He walks well into the room; stops short when he sees LIVINGSTONE*)

LIVINGSTONE. (*Genially. Up to him*) Hullo. How de do?

RODD. (*Nods curtly at him, goes to EVE and shakes her warmly by the hand*) Nice of you to come. I wanted you to be with us. Have you seen Winifred?

EVE. Yes. She's gone back to her room.

RODD. (*In an undertone, to EVE, R.*) For goodness' sake get rid of that man. The very sight of him irritates me.

(*Enter BATES, C.L. of door*)

BATES. Mr. Warren is calling.

RODD. Who?

EVE. You mean Mr. Warrender.

BATES. That's it. (*LIVINGSTONE turns quickly and looks at EVE*)

RODD. I can't see him.

EVE. You must see him.

RODD. (*Surprised*) Why?

EVE. (*To BATES*) Wait a minute. (*To RODD*) He has something very important to tell you.

RODD. (*Still more surprised*) How do you know?

EVE. He has already told me.

RODD. If he intends to make any trouble——

EVE. (*Quickly*) He doesn't. He wants to *save* you from trouble.

RODD. *Save* me?

EVE. Yes. Show him up. (*BATES exits c.*)

LIVINGSTONE. (*To RODD*) Sure you don't mind me——?

RODD. (*Angrily*) *What?*

EVE. (*Cutting in*) Staying here? Certainly not. We *want* you.

RODD. (*Turning to her*) Why?

EVE. He's in the *muddle*, too. (*Opens door*)

RODD. (*Puzzled*) What *muddle*?

(*BATES at door c. shows in WARRENDER and closes door. WARRENDER walks firmly and decidedly into the room; stops short when he sees EVE. EVE smiles at him encouragingly. As he takes a step toward RODD he sees LIVINGSTONE*)

LIVINGSTONE. (*Gravely*) How are ye?

WARRENDER. (D.C.) How do you do?

EVE. (*To WARRENDER*) Do you mind *me* being here?

LIVINGSTONE. Or me?

EVE. We want to help you all we can.

(*WARRENDER looks from one to the other and then at RODD*)

RODD. (*Loudly, to WARRENDER*) Well? What is it? What do you want?

WARRENDER. (*Resolutely*) There can be *no* marriage today.

RODD. Who says so?

WARRENDER. *You* will—when you know what happened last night.

RODD. *What* happened last night? (LIVINGSTONE *shows great anxiety*) Go on.

WARRENDER. (*Looking frowningly at EVE and LIVINGSTONE*) I'd rather tell you without these people being here.

EVE. Don't mind us. (*To RODD*) We're really rather necessary.

RODD. (*To WARRENDER*) Say whatever you have to say.

WARRENDER. (*Hesitates. Then firmly*) You can't allow your daughter to marry Sir Philip Grafton. He is a proven blackguard.

RODD. Oh, *you've* heard that, have you?

WARRENDER. Yes, I have heard it, *often*. But I never had *proof* of it until *last night*.

RODD. What proof have you?

EVE. Go on. Go on. What proof have you?

WARRENDER. (*Determinedly*) Last night. He entertained a lady—*alone*—in his house in Edgeware. (*Pause*) The letter making the assignation came providentially into my hands. (*Pause*) I caught them. (*Pause*) She was in his arms. (*Movement from LIVINGSTONE*)

RODD. I want something more than your word.

WARRENDER. (*Turns full on LIVINGSTONE*) He was there a moment afterwards.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Angrily*) Here—wait a minute!

WARRENDER. (*Firmly*) *You were*. You can't deny it.

EVE. He *hasn't* denied it. (*To RODD*) Mr. Livingstone *was there*. (*Nods towards WARRENDER*) He's quite right, Uncle.

RODD. She was in his arms?

WARRENDER. Yes. At night. No one else in the house.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Furiously*) What nonsense! I was there.

EVE. (*Checking him*) There was no one else in the room——

LIVINGSTONE. But I——

EVE. (*Turning to WARRENDER*) A great help you are.

RODD. (*Quite worried. Trying to find some excuse*) She was probably some old friend.

WARRENDER. And if she *were*? What was he doing with an *old friend* in his arms at that time of night?

EVE. Quite right. (*To RODD*) What was he doing with an old friend in his arms at that time of night?

RODD. I don't know. (*Growing more and more nervous and worried*) But no one need know anything about it?

WARRENDER. (*Indicates LIVINGSTONE*) He knows about it. I know about it.

RODD. Then I put you both on your word of honor not to say anything about it.

WARRENDER. (c.) But the mere fact that the man is *what* he is——

RODD. (r.) Rubbish! If we knew the whole story we should probably find she was either an *old friend*, or else—a—a—*new* one that didn't matter.

WARRENDER. Didn't matter!

EVE. (*To RODD. WARRENDER goes c.*) Oh? *Old friends* have certain privileges, you think?

RODD. Certainly. (*Jumping at the explanation*)

EVE. And *new* ones don't matter?

RODD. (*Confusedly*). Eh? In—in—a case like *that—no*.

EVE. What a delightfully convenient doctrine. (*Goes up to table and above it*)

RODD. (*Crosses to WARRENDER*) I respect your earnestness, and I'm glad you told me. I'll give Sir Philip a good talking to— (*Turning to EVE*)—a thoroughly good talking to. But, frankly, I see no reason for stopping the marriage. And, what is more, I *won't*.

WARRENDER. (*Angrily*) *What?*

EVE. Oh!

LIVINGSTONE. Now see here, Mr. Rodd, I—was there last night and I—

EVE. (*Crosses c.*) You should have said all that before. (*Stops him with a gesture and turns to RODD*) There's one great, overwhelming reason *why* you'll have to. If you don't it will cause a scandal that will flash all over London. (*Nods gravely*) I was the woman he discovered in Sir Philip's rooms and arms.

RODD. (*In a hoarse whisper*) You?

EVE. (*Nods again*) Yes. *Me.* (*Nods again towards WARRENDER*) It was only his delicacy prevented him from telling you. (*To WARRENDER. Pause*) Besides, I don't think you know who I am. My name is Alverstone, and I am his niece. (*Indicates RODD. WARRENDER shows his evident astonishment. To RODD*) You see how dreadful it all is. (*Pause for a laugh*)

RODD. (*Speaking as if to himself*) The marriage must go on. Scandal or not, it *must*.

EVE. No, it *mustn't*. Really, it *mustn't*.

RODD. (*Rises. To EVE. Almost distractedly*) It must. Why not? It's a very good thing for Winifred. It's an excellent thing for Sir Philip. And it's a splendid thing—for me. It must go on. Really, it *must*.

WARRENDER. You are selling your daughter.

RODD. Not a bit of it! I'm making her a very handsome present. I'm making Sir Philip a very

delightful present. And I'm making myself—er—a very charming present.

EVE. *Uncle!* You're an old reprobate.

RODD. No, I'm not. Really I'm not. But things have not been very rosy with me of late—I've tried to carry it off as well as I could—but there are thousands of people depending on my good name (*LIVINGSTONE nods*) and rather than sacrifice them I'll sacrifice Winifred. And after all, it isn't such a great sacrifice. It's one of the best matches in the country.

EVE. Oh, Uncle, is it as bad as that?

RODD. Yes, dear. It is.

(Enter SIR PHILIP GRAFTON at doors c., shown in by BATES, who closes the door)

SIR PHILIP. *(Comes in slowly and bows gravely to EVE and RODD, then looks at WARRENDER and LIVINGSTONE. To WARRENDER)* I thought I should find you here. *(Takes out envelope and hands it to RODD. RODD takes it. His face lights up, and his hand trembles as he takes the document out of the envelope and looks at the signature. Both WARRENDER and LIVINGSTONE make movements to RODD. EVE stops them. SIR PHILIP, quietly, to RODD)* You have probably heard by now certain things that do not place me in a very desirable light. *(Pause)* Haven't you? *(EVE is down L.)*

RODD. *(Confusedly)* I—have heard—something.

SIR PHILIP. I thought so. *(Looks at WARRENDER. Pause)* I don't know exactly *what* you have heard, but no doubt it is sufficient to influence you in withdrawing your consent to my marriage with Winifred.

RODD. *(Hurriedly)* I won't altogether say that. *(WARRENDER gives an ejaculation. EVE stops him from interrupting)* If you will give me your word that the incident was innocent and that you are

sorry it happened—why, I'll accept your explanation with my strong regret that you should have put yourself in such a position.

EVE. Oh, dear!

(WARRENDER *up* L.C. *again tries to speak, and is silenced by EVE*)

SIR PHILIP. Indeed? You're generous. (*Pause*) Unfortunately, I can't give you my word that the occurrence was innocent.

EVE. Philip—

SIR PHILIP. Or that I'm sorry it happened. (WARRENDER *comes down. All look at EVE*) I'm not sorry, and it was not innocent.

RODD. (*Aghast. Under his breath*) Not innocent?

SIR PHILIP. No. (RODD, LIVINGSTONE and WARRENDER *turn and look at EVE. She drops her eyes, turns a little away, and laughs silently*) I use the word "innocent" in its broader meaning.

RODD. (*Relieved*) Oh! Ah!

EVE. Broader?

SIR PHILIP. The lady he (*Indicating WARRENDER*) saw me with in an apparently compromising situation was, at one time, very dear to me. Last night I realized that my affection for her was deeper than I thought. It was as strong then as it was—many years ago. (*To RODD*) Therefore I withdraw from a marriage that from the first has been more than a little distasteful to—your daughter.

RODD. (*Disappointed*) What?

PHILIP. With my sincere regret for having ever tried to force my attention on her. (LIVINGSTONE *crosses up to c. EVE sits. WARRENDER gives a great gesture of relief*)

RODD. (*R. Trembling with anxiety, holds up the deed*) Does that mean that you intend to cancel your agreement with me, and—and marry Eve?

SIR PHILIP. No. I have no intention of lashing myself to the wheel of Miss Alverstone's chariot of vanity.

EVE. Oh, Philip!

RODD. Ah! Well, of course, that's different. You don't know what it means to me.

SIR PHILIP. (*Pauses as he looks at RODD*) I think I do.

RODD. You'll lose nothing by it.

SIR PHILIP. Of course not. It's a most excellent investment!

RODD. I'll sign it now. (*Goes to desk R. and sits*)

SIR PHILIP. (*Standing beside him*) There's just one clause there I've ventured to alter. I've initialled it. Read it, and if you agree you might do the same. And the whole thing will be settled. My agent has full instructions—

(*RODD opening out the deed, and SIR PHILIP pointing out the clause, which RODD reads, agrees to, and initials. While they are so occupied the following scene goes on*)

EVE. (*To WARRENDER. Pointing to door L.*) Winifred is in there with Mrs. Rodd. If I'm here when the marriage takes place, I'll be bridesmaid.

WARRENDER. Thank you, Miss Alverstone.

EVE. You're welcome, Mr. Warrender. Can you laugh? (*He smiles first and then laughs*) I'm so glad you can laugh. Run along and teach Winifred how to do it. It'll save a lot of trouble later on. (*Exit WARRENDER*)

LIVINGSTONE. Is it good-bye?

EVE. I never say good-bye. We'll meet again. And remember one thing—wherever you go you carry a little bit of my heart with you.

LIVINGSTONE. (*Brightly*) I wish I had it all. (*Takes up coat. EVE by L. of door C. LIVINGSTONE smiles brightly at her and passes out*)

SIR PHILIP. (*Goes to doors c. Calling*) Livingstone! (*Joins him by doors c. LIVINGSTONE exits*)

EVE. (*To SIR PHILIP*) Are you coming back?

SIR PHILIP. Yes.

EVE. Oh!

SIR PHILIP. To see Mr. Rodd. (*Exit c. to L. EVE stands looking at him*)

(*Door opens. WINIFRED sobs off L. WARRENDER laughs. MRS. RODD enters L. and closes door quickly*)

MRS. RODD. (*Up L.C. to RODD*) Then there will be no marriage, John?

RODD. (*Confused. Up C.R.*) No. Sir Philip was most reasonable. We must send the guests away.

MRS. RODD. And return the presents?

RODD. Yes—most of them.

MRS. RODD. It must be a happy release for both of them.

RODD. Quite—quite—

MRS. RODD. Mr. Warrender is in there with Winifred.

RODD. Oh!

MRS. RODD. He's laughing and she's still crying. You'd better go in to them.

RODD. Oh, but Sir Philip is coming to see me.

EVE. (*By doors c.*) Don't worry about that, Uncle. I'll tell him you're in your room.

MRS. RODD. For goodness' sake, let them be engaged. It may quiet her.

RODD. I suppose I may as well.

MRS. RODD. Yes, do. And let us get out of London for a while.

RODD. All right. Switzerland?

MRS. RODD. (*Shivers*) Good Heavens, *no!* Scotland *isn't* so bad. I'll go any time you like.

RODD. (*Brightening up*) To-morrow?

MRS. RODD. The sooner the better. (*Movement from RODD*) Ask Miss Alverstone. She might like to go. (*To EVE*) Would you like to go with us—to Scotland?

EVE. (*Smiling—looking off after SIR PHILIP at c. door*) Can I leave it open? I may want to bring a friend.

MRS. RODD. A friend?

EVE. Yes, an old friend.

RODD. Certainly. (*To MRS. RODD*) I'm so glad we're going up to Scotland. There's something about London gets into your bones.

(MR. and MRS. RODD *exit* L. WINIFRED *sobs*—WARRENDER *laugh off* L. *as they exit*. SIR PHILIP *enters* c., *looks around the room for* RODD)

SIR PHILIP. (*To EVE*) Where's Mr. Rodd?

EVE. (*Closes doors*) In his room. (SIR PHILIP *about to go*, L.) He doesn't want to be disturbed. He's coming back—he told me to tell you to wait, here. (SIR PHILIP *sits on ottoman, his back to EVE*) Haven't you anything to say to me?

SIR PHILIP. No. You've got your wish. Your cousin is free.

EVE. Yes. Thank you.

SIR PHILIP. I hope you will enjoy all the fruits of your victory.

EVE. I'd like to. (*Goes to L. of ottoman*) Have you anything else to say to me?

SIR PHILIP. (*Rises*) Yes. Was it just to save Winifred you did what you did last night?

EVE. No—not altogether.

SIR PHILIP. Was it harking back five years—revenge?

EVE. (*Shakes her head*) It was another of the deadly sins.

SIR PHILIP. Oh!

EVE. (*Nods*) Jealousy.

SIR PHILIP. (*Amazed*) You were jealous of Winifred!

EVE. And of you.

SIR PHILIP. Amazing. (*Turns to front*)

EVE. Isn't it? (*Pause*) Would you have kept me in that room until morning?

SIR PHILIP. I would.

EVE. Fancy that.

SIR PHILIP. You may think it contemptible—but I wanted you to remember last night.

EVE. Believe me—I shall never forget it.

SIR PHILIP. You hurt me as I've never been hurt before.

EVE. (*Looking intently at him*) I feel that.

SIR PHILIP. To pretend an emotion so as to betray a man into a false position one usually associates with the type of woman whom we all despise—the coquette. When it is done deliberately to compromise a man it is—— (*Breaks off*)

EVE. I didn't *pretend*—all the time.

SIR PHILIP. Ha!

EVE. Indeed, I didn't. I would have given ten years of my life if that man hadn't come in when he did.

SIR PHILIP. After having arranged that he should!

EVE. I felt so sorry for that when you asked me to be your wife.

SIR PHILIP. You don't appear to know your mind five consecutive minutes.

EVE. My dear Philip—I have known my mind for the last five years, but have never recognized it. Is it true that your love is stronger than it was five years ago?

SIR PHILIP. It was—until you outraged even ordinary decency.

EVE. Is it gone now?

SIR PHILIP. No—I think I shall always love the

woman in you I like to look back and remember.

EVE. Oh, Philip!

SIR PHILIP. But the other part of your nature frightens me. You don't appear to realize the misery you cause others. I saw that last night. There could be no happiness for us. I could never be sure of anything you meant. I thought I saw love and truth in your eyes and a moment afterwards I found you were assuming both to serve your own private ends. You've destroyed the very groundwork of affection—faith. Good-bye. (*Goes to door L.*)

EVE. (*Seated on ottoman c.*) My dear Philip. You did see love and truth in my eyes last night. Believe me, I would have given anything if that man hadn't come in when he did. (*SIR PHILIP moves down a step*) When I saw you yesterday my heart leaped toward you. When I heard of your approaching marriage, I was very, very jealous. But if Winifred had loved you I should not have interfered. (*Exclamation from SIR PHILIP*) Believe me, if Winifred had loved you, I should not have interfered. It is quite true I had arranged to be found in your rooms. But, oh, my dear, I never thought you would take me in your arms. If I had known your love still lived there would have been no need for witnesses. (*SIR PHILIP turns away*) I have a confession to make. The last five years have been a pilgrimage. I have followed you from city to city—all the places you used to visit—Paris, London, Monte Carlo, Rome—hoping to catch a glimpse of you—throwing myself your way to make you notice me. I'm sorry I've lost your regard. I'll never interfere in your life again. But I can't live without you. I'm so miserable. (*Covers her eyes and cries. SIR PHILIP goes up c. Down again and up c. and down to her. Finally he sits gloomily beside her*)

SIR PHILIP. What do you want me to do?

EVE. I want you to woo me, Philip. (*Puts her head on his shoulder*)

CURTAIN

END OF THE COMEDY

STAGE MANAGER'S NOTES

ACT I

See that Jewel Case, Letter, Salver and Telegram, and Book of Poems are outside Doors C.

See that Dagger, Cigarette Box with cigarettes, Ash-tray, Match-bowl, and small Matchbox with matches, and Vase of Violets are on table by sofa.

See that Pens, Ink, Notepaper, and Envelopes are on Writing-desk.

See that all brackets and door-strips are OUT. Green bunches dimmed at windows.

Try blinds in Windows.

Footlights one-fourth up. Amber only.

Ready, PARRISCOURT, BATES, MRS. RODD, C.

ACT III

NOTES : *See* Set same as Act I. Bouquets of Flowers, etc., on Tables. Sideboard and Window-seat.

See Ottoman is square to Audience.

See Two Baskets of Flowers outside c. doors.

LIGHTS: Everything full up. Footlights three-quarters. Border one Circuit. Bunches at Windows and Doors. Brackets—out.

Ready, WALKLEY, BATES, MRS. RODD, EVE.

Photographs of scenes in the play may be secured by application to the White Studios, 1546 Broadway.

9

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: April 2009

Preservation Technology
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