

POLICEMAN. (*In the doorway.*) Better wait in here, ma'am. The crowd's in a nasty mood. I'd let them disperse before you try to leave.

ROMAINE. (*Moving down L. of the table*) Thank you.

(*The POLICEMAN and the WARDER exit up L. ROMAINE crosses towards LEONARD.*)

SIR WILFRID. (*Intercepting ROMAINE*) No, you don't.

ROMAINE. (*Amused*) Are you protecting Leonard from me? Really, there's no need.

SIR WILFRID. You've done enough harm.

ROMAINE. Mayn't I even congratulate Leonard on being free?

SIR WILFRID. No thanks to you.

ROMAINE. And rich.

LEONARD. (*Uncertainly.*) Rich?

MAYHEW. Yes, I think, Mr. Vole, that you will certainly inherit a great deal of money.

LEONARD. (*Boyishly*) Money doesn't seem to mean so much after what I've been through. Romaine, I can't understand . . .

ROMAINE. (*Smoothly.*) Leonard, I can explain.

SIR WILFRID. No!

(*SIR WILFRID and ROMAINE look at each other like antagonists.*)

ROMAINE. Tell me, do those words the Judge said mean that I shall—go to prison?

SIR WILFRID. You will quite certainly be charged with perjury and tried for it. You will probably go to prison.

LEONARD. (*Awkwardly.*) I'm sure that—that everything will come right. Romaine, don't worry.

MAYHEW. Will you never see sense, Vole? Now we must consider practicalities—this matter of probate.

(*MAYHEW draws LEONARD down R., where they murmur together. SIR WILFRID and ROMAINE look at each other like antagonists.*)

SIR WILFRID. It may interest you to know that I took your measure the first time we met. I made up my mind then to beat you at your little game, and by God I've done it. I've got him off—in spite of you.

ROMAINE. In spite—of me.

SIR WILFRID. You don't deny, do you, that you did your best to hang him?

ROMAINE. Would they have believed me if I had said that he was at home with me that night, and did not go out? Would they?

SIR WILFRID. (*Slightly uncomfortable*) Why not?

ROMAINE. Because they would have said to themselves: this woman loves this man—she would say or do anything for him. They would have had sympathy with me, yes. But they would not have *believed* me.

SIR WILFRID. If you'd been speaking the truth they would.

ROMAINE. I wonder. (*She pauses.*) I did not want their sympathy—I wanted them to dislike me, to mistrust me, to be convinced that I was a liar. And then, when my lies were broken down—then they believed . . . (*In the Cockney accent of the WOMAN who visited SIR WILFRID at his office.*) So now you know the whole story, mister—like to kiss me?

SIR WILFRID. (*Thunderstruck.*) My God!

ROMAINE. (*As herself*) Yes, the woman with the letters. I wrote those letters. I brought them to you. I was that woman. It wasn't *you* who won freedom for Leonard. It was *I*. And because of it I shall go to prison. (*Her eyes close.*) But at the end of it Leonard and I will be together again. Happy—loving each other.

SIR WILFRID. (*Moved.*) My dear . . . But couldn't you trust me? We believe, you know, that our British system of justice upholds the truth. We'd have got him off.

ROMAINE. I couldn't risk it. (*Slowly.*) You see, you *thought* he was innocent . . .

SIR WILFRID. (*With quick appreciation.*) And you *knew* he was innocent. I understand.

ROMAINE. But you do not understand at all. I knew he was *guilty*.

SIR WILFRID. (*Thunderstruck.*) But aren't you afraid?

ROMAINE. Afraid?

SIR WILFRID. Of linking your life with a murderer's.

ROMAINE. You don't understand—we love each other.

SIR WILFRID. The first time I met you I said you were a very remarkable woman—I see no reason to change my opinion. (*Crosses and exits up c.*)

~~(There is a COMMOTION off up L. and then a GIRL comes running on up L. She is a very young strawberry blonde with a sunny, obvious appeal. She rushes to LEONARD through the judge's bench and meets him down R.C.)~~

~~GIRL. Len, darling, you're free. (*She embraces him.*) Isn't it wonderful?~~