

Phryne or The Romance of a Young Wife A New and Original Play In Five Acts, by
Dion Boucicault, 1887

Written for Louise Thorndyke Boucicault

CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

Mark Carrington
Jack O'Beirne
Shirley Vereker
Major-Gen. Sir Dudley Clpoys
Lord Hurlingham
Gus Venables
Bunyon
Lord Billericay
Mrs. Foxhall Downey
Phryne
Rita Martinez
Barbara
Lady Florence Maskyline

Members of the Monte Carlo Club
 The Countess Riviera
 Miss Kate Rideout
 Lady Goodwood

Maggie Dust

Scene is laid in and near London. At the present

ACT I- *Mayfair, London, 1887. A suite of rooms in the house of Mark Carrington. Dinner service on table, R.C. Phryne is seated at fire R. reading a novel. Doors R. and L. Music.*

Enter Bunyon, with wood-basket, L.

BUNYON: The fire is getting low, ma'am; would you wish an hextra log?

PHRY: No. Yes; as you please. *Enter Maggie, R. to L. of table R.*

BUNYON: Here is the evening paper. *At back of R. table*

PHRY: Thank you; leave it there. *Bunyon Xes to fireplace.*

MAG.: *Back of R. table.* I've brought you a cup of tea, ma'am. You have took nothing since one o'clock; it has gone half-past eight.

PHRY: And dinner was ordered for seven.

MAGGIE: The cook say the fish ain't fit to serve, and the entrees is all spiled.

PHRY: Your master was never so late before. *Bell rings.* Ah! At last! There he is.

Bunyon rises passes behind off C & L Phryne rises puts book on mantel. Pours out tea and goes to L of table. Bunyon hastens out, R.

How good all our servants are. They take my little troubles to heart as if they were their own.

MAG.: Because you are so good to us. Sweet looks and kind words goes further than wages. This here is the hanniwarsary of your weddin'-day, and we keep it in the kitchen, ma'am, with a jubilee. It is on now! The cook have made a wedding-cake with a mottur atop in candy, "Our missus, God bless her!" and the stable purwides two bottles of champagne, which you was not to heer on, for fear you would send in the spread yourself, ma'am. Oh, we did not forget what day this was!

Re-enter BUNYON with telegram on salver. L. to C.

PHRY.: A message! *Goes C. She tears it open and reads.* "House of Commons. 8:15. Detained here. Important division in the House. Ministerial crisis. Don't wait. Mark." Mr. Carrington is not coming home to dinner. *Xes to fireplace.*

BUN.: (C.) Shall we serve it, ma'am.

PHRY: No! I—I want nothing. *Goes to fireplace. Exeunt MAGGIE and BUNYON C. & L.* Oh, I am a child! A fool! Shall I never be as other women, and have a life apart from him? Oh, my love is so sweet, I cannot turn it out of my thoughts. If I read a novel I begin comparing the hero with mine. *Throws book on table. BELL* If I take a walk my eyes are searching for his figure everywhere, expecting him to turn the corner. *Bell rings.* Oh, it may be Mark. *Runs to the window.* There is a hansom cab at the door! Oh! It is only Mrs. Downey. *Xes down L.*

MRS D.: *Outside.* Many thanks; I can find my way. *She enters.* You see I take your dove cot by storm. (C.) Carrington is fixed at the house. The Irish question is in the programme. That means all night! Wigs on the green! So I mean to carry you off for the evening. I have the royal double-box at the Opera, and two of the loveliest women that ever were photographed. You must make the third! *To mirror R.* After the opera, Lady Florence proposes a little supper at the club. (R.)

PHRY: The Monte Carlo?(L.)

MRS D.: Now, don't look horrified! You are a member.

PHRY: My dear Downey, I told you not to propose my name at that club. Mark would disapprove.

MRS D.: It was the countess of Fastnet put you up! You were seconded by Lady Goodwood and Miss Rideout, and elected d'emblee, as the French say. *R. to fireplace. Fixing herself in glass over mantel.*

PHRY: What sort of a place is it? Is it quite—oh?

MRS D.: I am a member, and have come through it unscathed! The society there, is, perhaps, a little mixed, but that gives it a tone of its own. If you come that that, you have only to listen to the cackle in any drawing-room to hear that one half of the ladies present allow very little character to the other half. *(R.)*

PHRY: Are the members principally married women? *(L.)*

MRS D.: Very much so! *Sits.* Husbands a little indistinct! But they can give them as a reference.

PHRY: I should not get home till one in the morning. *L. Xes to R.C.*

MRS D.: *Feet at fire.* Between one and three; but if our Italian tenor Saccharini should be there,
(Sees tea takes some goes to fire with it) and he gets down to the piano, or Mrs. Goodwood opens a bank for baccarat, we glide into daylight.

PHRY: I should find no pleasure if Mark was not there. *(C.)* I should have my heart at home here.

MRS D: With your dressing gown and slippers!
(Cheers)
What is that delightful uproar.

PHRY: Our servants are keeping a jubilee to celebrate this day.

MRS D: Your wedding day.

PHRY: One year ago, they remember it. But Mark forgets.
(Bell)

Oh, it that should be he – It is – it is – I hear his voice in the hall. *Runs out L.*

MRS D: Poor dear – she is not over it yet. To most girls – love comes like the measles, or any other infantile complaint. A month or two of steady matrimonial treatment affects a cure. But the poison has got into her system –

Enter Mark with his hat on. Phryne and Maggie L.

PHRY: My darling, have you dined? *MAGGIE searches about the room.*

MARK: I forget! Oh, yes! Dined at the Garrick with Merryweather and Russell. You received my telegram? (*L.*)

Exit Maggie R.H.D.

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PHRY: Yes, and I felt so disappointed, but now you are here.

MARK: I cannot stop a moment. *Mrs. Downey rises. Oh! Mrs. Downey, Xes to R. Removes his hat.* I beg your pardon. I did not see you. You have come, I hope, to cheer up Phryne.

PHRY: You are not going out again, Mark?

MARK: Yes. We expect to defeat the Government. Our party cannot spare a vote. *Enter MAGGIE with card basket R. Xes to L.* I only ran home for a moment to find a paper I feel sure was left here.

MAG: perhaps it was thrown into the basket with the rest of the visitor's tickets. *Brings it forward L. Holds it for him.*

Mark: I made some important notes upon the back of a card, (*Searches*) to aid me in my speech tonight. But my dear child, what is the meaning of this dress? What is going on tonight?

PHRY: It is the anniversary of our wedding-day, (*Cheers outside*) and the servants are making a night of it.

MARK: Pleasant for the neighbors!

MRS D: And thinking you would be engaged at the House, I wished to carry her away to the opera.

MARK: Certainly! Good idea! The little goose, mopes at home too much.

MRS D: Just what I have been telling her.

PHRY: But, Mark, dear, you have no time to give and receive dinners, and take me out to evening parties and make calls, so what am I to do? *Mark examines cards.*

MARK: Nonsense; what do other women do?

PHRY: But other women have not husbands like mine. I can't take interest in anything apart from you. I can listen to no conversation but yours. Other people seem such fools beside you, dear.

MARK: Really, Phryne, you make me feel like one when you talk like that. What can Mrs. Downey think? *Embraces her.*

MRS D: She is wondering why some Frenchman has not discovered how to inoculate a girl, so as to give it to her mildly.

MARK: (*Looking over the cards in basket which Maggie holds Phryne goes R. disconsolate.*)

The Countess of Newmarket at home, Wednesday. Miss Rideout, Lady Florence Maskyline, Sherley Vereker – I hope you do not receive that fellow.

PHRY: No – he leaves cards.

MRS D: What is the matter with him? He moves in the highest society.

MARK: I know his position and his career and have requested Phryne to drop his acquaintance. Lord Hurlingham, La Baronne de Riviera! What a crew! Not a reputable name in the pack!

MRS D: (*R.C.*) They are received into the best houses.

MARK: (*Quickly*) Not into mine!

MRS D: Then we should have an index expurgatorius as a social guide for young wives.

MARK: (*Taking a card*) (*Maggie puts basket on table. Mrs. Downey goes up and gradually Xes to L. watching*) Oh! Here are my notes. (*Looks at his watch*) I must be off.

PHRY: When shall you be home?

MARK: Don't wait up for me. I have the latch-key. I may be very late. Maggie, put my dress suit and all (*Goes to table R.*) I may require into a valise, and send Bunyon with it to the club. I can change there. *Exit Maggie, L.H.D.*

PHRY: (*Mournful*) Are you going to a reception?

MARK: Our party will meet after the division. (*C.*)

PHRY: In full dress? Where do you meet?

MARK: At Lady Grafton's, I believe.

PHRY: No, Mark; do not go to her house! That woman is in love with you! You don't see it; I do!

MARK: You are off your pretty little head. This comes of moping and brooding. The leaders of our party meet constantly in the salon of Lady Grafton. I wish mine was like it. (*To Mrs. Downey, L.*) She has made her house the Temple of Diplomacy.

PHRY: Yes; where you are worshipped! You are always there. (*A little to R.*)

MARK: So I am always in Court or at the House. But you don't suspect the Lord Chancellor or the Speaker of entertaining tender feelings towards me? (*C.*)

PHRY: I should do so if they were women! (*At chair L. of table*)

MARK: My foolish girl, if I listened to your heart I should abandon my career, abjure my fortune, and let you buy me a dog collar and chain.

PHRY: Oh, no! Go, Mark; go! (*Turns away hurt*)

MARK: I did not mean that; kiss me, and say goodnight. You must really learn to moderate your romantic—feelings – they are ridiculous.

MRS D: I have been giving her advice. (*L.*)

MARK: That's very good of you. Tone down her extravagant ideas, she has fortune, a grand position. She can be a star of the first magnitude, if she only appreciate her position and cultivate society – Look at Lady Grafton, why shouldn't this house be like hers. By Jove, that cannot be 10 o'clock. I fear it is though (*C.*) (*She turns to embrace him*) I must be off. (*Runs out*)

MRS D: (*Aside*) Which is the greater fool of the two? The little goose is crying. (*Aloud*) You are jealous of his devotion to his profession; another woman would be proud of him. (*C.*)

PHRY: (*Crying*) I—I am not another woman. (*Xes to fireplace*)

MRS D: She would love to see the world at his feet, and would want to share his renown.

PHRY: I would rather sit on his knee at home, and I don't want to share him with anybody. (*R.*)

MRS D: He is a rising man, and already a distinguished Member of Parliament; and a Queen's Counsel, at 40—(*Sits at table L. of it*)

PHRY: (*Indignant*) 38! (*Turns quickly*)

MRS D: Oh! I beg pardon.

PHRY: I notice that people over a certain age always try to make out other people older than they are. (*Xes to L.*)

MRS D: That is one for me. Ha-ha! I don't mind it, dear. I like your spirit.

PHRY: No you don't; you despise me, because I have none! But if you knew what I suffer! (*Up to Mrs. Downey*) Yes, Mark is a rising man. He rises at seven in the morning; he must be down at his office before nine: "Important consultation with junior counsel. (*Picks up telegram. All after at fireplace*) Don't mind me, love; shall be home to dinner at seven." That means a message at half-past eight: "important division in the House. Ministry in danger. Don't wait!" (*Round table to mantle*) Oh! The important division is here; in this house! The danger is here! And like a fool I do wait night after night till nine, ten, eleven. I send the servants to bed, and watch the cabs as they pass the door. Twelve, one! At last he comes! I run out to meet him; he cannot take me in his arms, they are full of law papers. "Why, Phryne, my love! How silly of you to wait up for me! You should leave that to the servants! Send me a cup of tea to my study; I must get through this case before I sleep. Go to bed; there's a dear. I am all right! Don't mind me!" Don't mind him! I wish he could teach me that lesson! (*Throws herself in chair*)

MRS D: Time will do it. Observe my case! My husband went to Canada to look after some mines; to be absent three months. That (*L. of table R.*) was sixteen years ago. Did I despond? No! I had a snug little income of my own. I waited. I had no family to trouble me, except a few small debts. I wrote explaining my difficulties, and offered to join him out there. He replied by cable that he was on his way home, and sent me a remittance. Since then, whenever I propose to rejoin him he always sends me a remittance. How would you like that life?

PHRY: Candidly?

MRS D: Candidly.

PHRY: I would rather sweep a crossing.

Mrs. Downey: Yes; at 23 a pretty girl and a deserted wife might create a sensation at a street corner. But I am 42. I should be laughed at. (*Cheers*) Do you hear that? Your servants are making merry. Be equal to the occasion. Come, brace up! Call Maggie; get your wraps. Come with me! If Mark cannot join in the fete, let us celebrate it without him. Begin at the opera and top off with Monte Carlo! (*Rises, goes up and down at back*)

PHRY: No. Not at the club amongst strangers, but here, by my own fireside. You can invite the whole party now in the box at the opera, and you can find others of our acquaintance at the club. Can it be done?

MRS D: Done! They will be delighted! (*Rises*)

PHRY: We can reckon on (*Examining cards in the basket – Feverish and excited at table*)

Lady Florence, the Countess, Miss Rideout, --

MRS D: Oh, if we could capture Saccharini!

PHRY: (*Still examining cards*) Lord Hurlingham, Mrs. Goodwood and Shirley Vereker.

MRS D: Poor, little woe-begone Vereker! He has never got over your marriage. Have you seen him lately?

PHRY: No! Mark discouraged his visits here. Says he is a fine young English gentleman; one of the modern time, who studies manners in the stable yard, and morals in a music hall. (*Still over cards*)

MRS D: (*Ring up Supers*) Severe, but photographic! Perhaps your husband is jealous.

PHRY: No! He is too busy!

MRS D: You are in downright earnest about this gathering here tonight?

PHRY: Certainly! Good idea! The little goose mopes too much at home. (*Xes to R. Excitedly*)

I am to do what other women do! (*Xes L.*) All right! I leave it all to you. (*Up L.C.*)

MRS D: And I accept the charge! Fortunately your household is all on foot. I will go down, parade (*Going to D.R. and returning*) the butler and cook; review the resources of the larder; see the wine buried in ice; and take a list of what is wanting to supply the banquet. The steward at the club will send it in, with a couple of waiters to assist. After supper we can have a little music— (*Sits at piano and plays waltz*)

PHRY: And a dance.

MRS D: Inevitably! I am in my element. (*Exits D.R.*)

PHRY: (*Xes R. and L. to piano*) (*Walking excitedly about*) He was dining at his club with a pair of chums, while I was eating my heart out here, like a fool! Ha-ha! He said I made him feel like one, that I wanted to lead him with a collar and chain like a pet dog! (*She sits at piano and plays*) Very well, I'll be like other women! Tra-la-la. I know the programme! Every day at 11 I'll air the fashions in the park! I'll set them! The shops will display the "Carrington" Hat; the "Phryne" dolman. He shall find me figuring in the photographers' windows, ten shillings a dozen! At four, I appear in the ring. Lady Fastnet drives a tandem! I'll go her one better with a team of piebalds in a curricule! Home at seven! "So sorry dear, I entirely forgot to order dinner. I am off to Richmond in Hurlingham's coach, with a delightful crowd. I have the box-seat. You can dine at the Garrick or the Rag. Can't say when we shall get back! Don't wait up for me! I have the latch key. By bye! We expect to have a royal time!" Ha-ha-ha! And be so hap-happy! Tra-

la-la! (*Her hysterical laughter gradually breaks into sobs as she leans her head on the piano*) Oh! I am so miserable!

Enter Jack O'Beirne. L.C.D.

JACK: Anybody at home?

PHRY: Oh! Jack, dear! (*Drying her eyes*) Are you here?

JACK: Yes; I am all here. (*Puts down his hat on table L.*)

PHRY: You are a god-send!

JACK: Quite the contrary. Mrs. Downey sent me. She hailed me from a hansom cab, as I was crossing the square. She said you wanted me.

PHRY: Of all men in the world, I want you the most at this moment. (*Takes his arm*)

JACK: I thought so, two years ago, but you changed my mind when you took Mark.

PHRY: Don't be a fool, Jack!

JACK: Just what I said to myself at the time.

PHRY: You are going to be my dear old boy—my friend. The same faithful, honest fellow that trotted by my side through my life! Your face is the first thing I can remember. (*They walk to L. the R. stop*)

JACK: Yours is the only thing I can remember!

PHRY: Do you recollect when I was 8 and you were 12, we sat in the apple tree at grandpa's garden, at home?

JACK: Don't I! Making ourselves ill with unripe pippins—

PHRY: And we took bites out of the same forbidden fruit.

JACK: Like Eve and the devil!

PHRY: And you made me swear I would marry you when I was old enough. Ha-ha!

JACK: Yes. (*Gloomy*) Ha-ha! And you didn't

PHRY: Then why have you kept away from this house lately. You are becoming quite a stranger.

JACK: I am glad to hear it.

PHRY: What do you mean?

JACK: I mean that my visits here did me no good.

PHRY: Nonsense! You have got over that silly, boyish fancy long ago. Why, Mark told me your name was associated with that of this new circus woman, Rita Martinez. It is all over London!

JACK: Oh! Did he say that?

PHRY: And he means to talk to you seriously about it.

JACK: Yes; I hope he will.

PHRY: You are compromising yourself disgracefully.

JACK: I am!

PHRY: You are to be seen nightly at the Wild West laden with bouquets with which you pelt this lovely Mexican. You are seen with her in public places, in the most unblushing fashion. It is awful!

JACK: I hope I am not overdoing it!

PHRY: Indeed, you are. You don't mind my mentioning the matter?

JACK: Oh, no! Thank you. It is all right.

PHRY: Is she so—very—attractive?

JACK: Suits me down to the ground!

PHRY: Could you not render your homage a little less conspicuously, and compromise yourself less openly?

JACK: No; that would not answer my purpose.

PHRY: Good Heavens! Jack, are you mad? What purpose?

JACK: To divert the tongues that were beginning to couple your name with mine.

PHRY: My name! What have I done?

JACK: Nothing. The whole fault is with me. This is what was said: "The wife of Mark Carrington is a beauty. Why don't she take her place in society?" (*R. in chair L. of table*)

Why does she hug her home? Her husband is never there! What is the attraction? Why, her cousin Jack O' Beirne! Oh! Oh!! He is always there!

PHRY: You heard of this? And you invented this comedy as a blind! You played this part of Rita's lover, so that the world should not say you were mine?

JACK: It was the only thing I could think of to—to repair the wrong.

PHRY: It was not your wrong, Jack, dear; it was Mark's. *(As she goes to embrace him she suddenly remembers herself, and restrains this gesture)* Oh! That he were like you!

JACK: I had rather be like him. *(Enter Maggie L.H.D. at door, looks off)*

MAGGIE: Here's four men from the Monte Carlo Club, ma'am, with a cart.

PHRY: It is the supper.

MAG: Yes, ma'am. Bunyon have got two dozen hextra dry on the hice; he wants to know if that's enough.

JACK: Enough! Holy Mumm! What for?

PHRY: For my guests. *(Bunyon and Servants cross with service and enter dining-room; Maggie draws crutains over arch, and closes out room at back and supper-table)(At fireplace R.)* Mark is out for the night, so I have sent Mrs. Downey to recruit a dozen friends to a social supper here—Lady Florence, Gus Venables, Kate Rideout, La Riviera, Hurlingham, Lady Newmarket, Shirley Vereker—a little surprise party.

JACK: A devilish great surprise for Mark, I should say. Does he know of this gathering?

PHRY: He? He neither knows nor cares! You will play master of the ceremonies.

JACK: No, I won't!

PHRY: Jack!

JACK: Phryne! Don't get excited. You are doing this in a fit of ill-temper!

PHRY: I never was more composed in my life. *(Up at back, turns)* "Why does no the wife of Mark Carrington take her place in society?"

JACK: This is not your place in society!

PHRY: *(Down C.)* "Why does she hug her home? Her husband is never there." Very well! She will fill her home with good fellowship. If it is not the cream of high life, it is the best a neglected wife can obtain. *(Xes to R.)*

JACK: She is off! She has got the bit between her pretty teeth, and the devil could not hold her.

PHRY: *(At fireplace)* Then why did he throw the reins on my back?

JACK: There is a smash ahead!

PHRY: Let it come. *(A bell rings. Jack takes up his hat)* Here they are! Oh Jack, don't leave me. *(Runs to him and seizes his arm)*

JACK: These people must not find me here, alone with you, at this hour of night, too. They will talk.

PHRY: You are afraid they will tell Rita Martinez! *(Releases his arm)* I forgot! Very well, go! I won't detain you! *(Xes to L.)*

JACK: *(Dashing his hat in a corner)* Very well; I stop! But I warn you, I know these men, and of what they are capable, and if one of them forgets himself in your presence—I'll kill him.

PHRY: Jack! You are forgetting yourself. *(Turning quickly)*

JACK: That is true. I won't do it again. Forgive me. But, by St. Patrick, you would make a Pope swear. *(Goes to mantel R.)*

Enter Mrs Downey; followed Lady Florence, Shirley Vereker, Miss Rideout, Lady Newmarket, Lord Hurlingham, the Countess Riviera, Gus Venables.

MRS D: Here we are, my dear.

PHRY: How good of you all to accept so short a notice. *(Going up C. and greeting the people)*

LADY NEW: What a delightful nest you have here!

ALL: Quite too delightful!

LORD H: Awfully charming! The casket could not be too costly—that a-a contains so-so-so- a—

MISS R: *(Prompting him impatiently)* So precious a jewel! Don't be so long about it.

LORD H: Thanks; just so. Remarkable girl; always knows what I am going to say. This impromptu entertainment reminds me of a similar picnic at Lady Spankers in 1846 – was it 46 I remember. –

MRS D: Stop him Kate, before he gets to George the Fourth.

HURL: No – it was in 38.

KATE: Just so. We'll have it after supper.

LORD B: Won't somebody present me to Mrs. Carrington?

MRS D: Phryne, my love – Lord Billericay.

VERE: Heir presumptive to the Duke of Bubblemere.

LORD B: It is cruel to expose me to ridicule by reminding folks that nature has cast me for a part I cannot play.

PHRY: Why not?

LORD B: Look at me. Do I look like a Duke? Everybody slaps me on the back, because I don't inspire respect. The ballet girls call me Billie. My grand uncle, the Duke, gave me one sleeve- button on my last birthday, remarking I supplied the other myself. What did he mean?

JACK: He meant that you were the missing link.

ALL: Ha-ha.

LORD B: Oh. By Jove. What's that?

VERE: The lineal descendant of an ape.

LORD B: Very good. I have a scarf pin with a monkees head on it. I'll send it to this grace as a portrait of an ancestor.

ALL: Bravo.

JACK: The boy is not such a fool as he looks.

LORD B: No! Am I! Thank you.

The curtains are withdrawn. The inner room is discovered illuminated brilliantly, and supper served amongst a profusion of flowers. Liveried Servants in waiting.

MRS D: Oh! Why crowd ourselves in that little room? Let us pic-nic here, free and easy.

PHRY: Very well.

ALL: Splendid! Glorious!

They seat themselves. The servants serve. The gentlemen aid in bringing plates which the ladies place on their laps.

VER: When does the smoke come in?

PHRY: When you please.

ALL: Bravo.

LORD B: (Aside to Jack) I left Rita at the Wild West show, she's awfully put out because you failed to appear – She sent me to hunt you up. She expects to find you at the Monte Carlo tonight. Do come, or I shall catch it. Oh Jack – I wish she could love me as she loves you.

JACK: Hush.

LORD H: No it was in 46 – I remember.

(By this time the group sitting about the stage are eating and drinking in various attitudes)

MRS D: Ladies and gentlemen, I call this meeting to order!

ALL: Silence! Speech from Mrs. Downey!

MRS D: I do not propose to make a speech.

VER: Hear, hear!

MRS D: I propose a toast—the occasion we celebrate!—The wedding-day of the “Rose of Mayfair”--- our hostess—in the absence of her husband, elsewhere engaged—

VER: Hear, hear!

MRS D: Mrs. Carrington!

ALL: Mrs. Carrington!

VER: Bunyon give us alight.

MRS D: Now, dear, instead of a speech, let us have “The Bridal Chorus,” or “The Wedding Bells,” or something appropriate.

ALL: Bravissima!

(Phryne sits at piano and pre-)

LORD B: Something we can dance to.
(*Song – LORD BILLERICAY and HURLINGHAM, Dance L. finish at R.*)

(*Enter MARK, L.C.D. He stands looking at the group*)

JACK: (*Aside*) The devil!!

MRS D: My dear Mark; how delightful! We have just been drinking your health!

MARK: (*Very cold and calm*) I thank you, madam. (*Group puts down plates, glasses, etc. Phryne L. Mark L.C.*) (*Apart to Phryne*) What is the meaning of this scene? How comes these people here?

PHRYNE: (*Hesitatingly*) By my invitation. They are my guests.

MARK: They are not mine, and they are unfit to be yours!

JACK: (*To the others*) I think we had better retire!

VER: We are here by the Lady's invitation. (*Group go up to L.C. at back*)

LORD H: (*Advancing*) I have not the honor of Mr. Carrington's acquaintance—

Mark: Our visiting list is full, my lord.
(*Xes to R. Phryne follows him. He turns on her all this under the breath*)
(*Turns to Phryne*) The presence of that man, Vereker, your professed lover, in my house, is an outrage I will not tolerate. I must beg you will dismiss them all, at once!

PHRY: You cannot mean I should insult them in this unheard of manner?

MARK: If you don't get rid of them, I will! –(*Goes to fireplace*)

PHRY: Oh, Mark!
(*weeping goes to him*)
You will not humiliate me by insisting on so painful a scene. Give me a little time. You have already spoiled the party! Retire to your room, and in half an hour, or so, they will be gone.

MARK: (*Turning to her angrily*) If they feel the insult, so much the better; they will not darken my doors again.
(*They face each other for a moment*)

PHRY: (*After looking at Mark a moment she turns away from him and goes slowly to Center*) Ladies and gentlemen, I was unaware, when you were invited to our little party here, there could be any objection to our entertainments in this house. It appears there is so! (*Advancing towards group*) Therefore, I propose we adjourn to the Monte Carlo Club, to conclude the evening there so pleasantly begun!

(The group move toward the door)

ALL: So sorry to inconvenience! Of course, with pleasure!
(They go out gradually at door, L.C.)

MRS D: *(Apart to Phryne) (Down L. of Phryne)* My dear girl this is quite unnecessary.
(Aside to her) For Heaven's sake –

PHRY: *(Passionately)* Leave me alone.*(Turns)* Maggie, *(Mrs. Downey goes out, L.C.)*
give me my wraps.

(Mark goes up R.)

JACK: *(C.)* You are going too far.

PHRY: I don't care, he has degraded me! He has insulted my friends.

JACK: Will you listen?

(Vereker lingers outside door, L.C.)

PHRY: No!

(Jack retires up C.)

MARK: *(Down R.)* Phryne, if you leave my house tonight, you shall never return to it!

PHRY: *(Tying on her hat)* Oh! Very well! *(Crosses to C.)*

MARK: When you go out of my doors, they will be locked behind you. I swear it!

PHRY: Be it so. *(Goes out. Vereker meets her at door; she takes his arm and exits)*

MARK: *(R.)* I cannot credit my senses!

JACK: You have none, or you would not insult her in the presence of her friends!

MARK: Their presence here, and especially the presence of that man Vereker, is an insult to me!

JACK: *(C.)* And you resented it, like a coward, on a helpless woman!

MARK: Are you mad, sir?

JACK: I am! So are you! Do you think nobody has any spirit, any feeling, but yourself? Because you knew the poor girl was under your feet, you trampled upon her!

MARK: Oh! Of course you take her part!

JACK: Of course I do; when you don't! Oh, she was wrong! Yes, foolish! Yes! But when she raised her eyes full of tears to supplicate for mercy, you put your foot on her mouth like a brute!

MARK: Leave my house!

JACK: I am going to! You drove her out of it, and I have no business here! (*Exits*)

End of Act One

ACT II

SCENE-The Monte Carlo Club.

Mrs. Downey, Lord Hurlingham, Lady Goodwood, Kate Rideout, Gus Venables, Lady Florence, Vereker are seated round table, R. Playing cards. Servants waiting. Music under stage.

LADY F: I pass.

VER: Three!

MRS D: Come, Lord Hurlingham, what do you do?

LORD H: Let me see. How much is in the pool?

LADY F: 7 pounds six.

MRS R: Oh! Capp Nap., Nap.!

MRS D: Play.

MISS R: Clubs. Play your king.

LORD H: Eh? –(*Hesitating*)

MISS R: Oh, there! (*Picks the card from his hand and plays it*)

King!

(*They play*)

Now play the knave! Don't go to sleep! You are not in the House of Lords!

LADY F: For goodness sake, get on.

LORD H: (*Feebly*) Quite so. I think the rest of the tricks are mine.
(*Puts down his cards*)

MRS D: Not quite so! The last trick falls to my ten.

LORD.: Oh, dear! How was that?

MISS R: There, don't be feeble. Pay up, and look pleasant!

LORD H: It appears to me, when I play ladies, I have to pay every time.

MRS D: Happy man! It is my deal—

LORD H: While you are dealing – I will relate that picnic at Lady Spankers – I remember ---

(*Enter Rita*)

VER: Ah, Rita! The lovely Rita! The Mexican Venus! Is the show over?

RITA: I got away early.

LADY F: Was there a good house at the Wild West?

RITA: Packed.

MRS D: (*Dealing*) Anyone of note there?

RITA: There was a sprinkling of royalty, and the usual crowd of the noodleocracy. The nosegay brigade was in great force. I had not room in my coupe for all my floral offerings; so I told Lord Billericay to follow me with them in a hansom cab.

MRS D: A footman's service performed by the son of a peer. She has lords—in-waiting like a monarch!

LORD H: Miss Martinez reminds me of a lovely Spaniard I forget her name – who was all the rage in 1832 – I remember.

MISS R: Attend to the game! You are revoking!

RITA: The weak boy was on the road to ruin before he saw me! He was a prey to gamblers and to drink. His innocent infatuation pulled him up in time. He has only one complaint now—that's me! I can cure that—

VER: By administering encouragement in homeopathic doses?

RITA: Precisely! Instead of a day on the race course, or a night in a gaming club, I allow him to ride beside me in the park. Instead of a brand and soda, I allow him to kiss my hands.

VER: I wish Jack O'Beire would allow you to reclaim me.

MRS D: (*Aside to him*) Vereker you are going too far!

LADY F: She's offended, look out.

RITA: (After a pause) Were you in Rome last winter?

VER: No; were you there?

RITA: Yes. I had quite an adventure.

VER: Let us hear it.

RITA: With pleasure. A young French count ventured to couple my name, offensively, with that of an honorable gentleman for whose family I entertained a sincere respect. I sent a friend to the count with an American message.

VER: Indeed?

RITA: That if he did not quit Rome within twenty-four hours, I would horsewhip him on sight!

VER: Wasn't that rather a high handed proceeding.

RITA: Very – when the hand is mine.

LORD H: That reminds me of the celebrated chevalier D'Eon a noted duelist who turned out to be a woman – I remember –

VER: Precisely – I was there at the time.

LORD H: Dear me. Why it was before I was born.

ALL: Impossible.

(Enter Lord Billericay loaded with bouquets and baskets of flowers, followed by servants also carrying flowers)

LORD B: There are more to come.

RITA: You foolish boy! I did not mean you should carry them all.

LORD B: By Jove! I am asphyxiated with the incense arising from this floral altar!
George, bring me a brandy and soda!

RITA: No! (*She gives him her hand*)

LORD B: (*Kisses her hand*) George, two glasses of iced tea.

LADY F: She has him well in hand.
(*Exits with Hurlingham and Miss Rideout R.*)

RITA: Did you find Mr. O'Bierne?

LORD B: Yes. I delivered your message to him.

RITA: Good boy. I will devote myself to you until Jack arrives. (*Xes C.*)
What is that waltz they are playing?

LORD B: It is called Rapture.

RITA: I will give it to you. (*Going*)

VER: I hope I did not offend you –

RITA: I have forgotten it if you did.

VER: Then we are friends.

RITA: No – I don't like you.

VER: Oh.
(*Exit Rita and Lord Billericay*)
I wonder they admitted that circus woman to the Club!

MRS D: She has been received and patronized by some of the best people. What do you know to her discredit?

VER: (*Sneering*) Ask Jack O'Beirne!

MRS D: He proclaims her to be one of most honorable of her sex. I don't think he is equally enthusiastic about you.

VER: Does he propose to marry her?
(*No. 1 Stop music*)

MRS D: You had better ask him.

VER: I hate him! (*Turns away; goes up, then returns and sits at back reading*)

(Enter Phryne)

PHRY: Past one o'clock.

VER: The very witching hour of night. Your presence has produced a sensation in the Club.

PHRY: Have you thought where I am to find shelter. I am an outcast you know.

MRS D: *(Rises)* My dear, the opinion of the world is on your side in this sad business. Everyone sympathizes with you.

PHRY: So much the worse. I had rather be in the wrong. It would render a reconciliation more easy.

VER: You don't mean that you would back down?

PHRY: I feel wretched enough to do anything. There is nothing heroic about me. What is to become of me? *(Xes L. sits on sofa)*

MRS D: You would not like to go to a hotel?

PHRY: Oh no –

VER: She would be besieged by newspaper fellows before breakfast.

MRS D: I would offer you a share of my flat but Miss Rideout is with me. Oh, I forgot, I have a riverside cottage at Fulham, where you can stay for the night. My carriage will take you there. You will find my old housekeeper – a dear old soul – who will make you welcome and comfortable. Vereker, please tell my coachman to drive down at once, wake her up – and get everything ready to receive Mrs. Carrington – It is only a 5 mile drive, the carriage will be back within an hour.

VER: I fly. Everybody in the Club will envy Mrs. Downey the privilege of affording you an asylum. *(Exits)*

(Phryne exits to R.)

MRS D: Don't fret dear.

PHRY: I am too frightened at which I have done.

MRS D: You have gone too far to recede. I tried to stop you, but now I say you must act on principle.

PHRY: I have none.

MRS D: If you hesitate you are lost.

PHRY: I don't mind being lost if Mark finds me.

MRS D: Have you no pride left?

PHRY: Very little.

MRS D: You feel no resentment for what he has done?

PHRY: Yes I am very angry with him for leaving me two whole hours in a place like this.
(*Xes L.*)

Where is Jack?

(*Enter Jack*)

JACK: Here he is. We had it out. And then he had me out.

PHRY: Oh Jack dear you haven't quarreled?

JACK: I called him a brute, and he showed me the door. I felt like taking my coat off. It would have done us both good to let the steam off, but on second thought I refrained.

PHRY: You thought of me?

JACK: No. I remembered that I was in training and he wasn't.

(*Re-enter Vereker*)

VER: That is all right.

JACK: What is all right?

MRS D: (*Xes to Jack*) I have arranged for Phryne to occupy my little box at Fulham tonight.

JACK: Alone?

MRS D: We can send her address to Mark. So he can find her there when his lordship pleases. Jack: She must sleep under her own roof and nowhere else. I will fetch Mark here if I have to bring him on a stretcher.

PHRY: Oh Jack, how good you are. Tell us what happened between you. (*Retires up*)

VER: I sent Mrs. Downey's coachman home, and substituted my coupe, with instructions to my coachman to take his place. When Phryne enters my carriage she will be drive to my villa at Wimbledon, she will not know the difference until she finds herself in the trap, and that is too late to escape. If I can only get rid of that bog trotter who watcher her like a dog at her heels.

PHRY: If we could only find where Mark is. You say he left our house shortly after I did.

JACK: Yes, he passed me in a cab as I walked here.

VER: I think I saw a figure very like his parading the opposite side of the street, and watching this club.

PHRY: *(To Jack)* Oh go down and see.

MRS D: I will go, he won't quarrel with me. Go back to the ballroom and try to meet him as if nothing had happened. Men hate scenes. *(Exits)*

VER: Allow me to offer you my arm.

PHRY: I cannot face the crowd in there – let us sit in the reading room until she returns. *(Reenter Mrs. Downey)*

(Enter Rita and Lord Billericay)

MRS D: And I cannot leave the club, at this hour of night and roam the streets alone without an escort.

RITA: I'll lend you Billericay if he can be of service, he's better than nothing.

MRS D: Oh, I could not deprive you.

RITA: You will oblige me.

LORD B: By all means.
(Exits with Mrs. Downey)

RITA: Sit down. Do you know anything of that boy?

JACK: I know.

RITA: He wants me to marry him. Give me your advice. What do you say about it.

JACK: He is mighty young—

RITA: He will mend of that; he will be a duke—

JACK: Yes; he is the biggest fish in the swim!

RITA: And you advise me to land him?

JACK: Do you love him?

RITA: No!—(*Xes C.*)

JACK: Have you told him so?

RITA: Yes! I told him that my father was captain on a Red River tug; at least I suppose he was my father, for when his boat blew up, and the pilot-house came down, they found there a dead man holding on to the wheel and a live child—that was me!

JACK: You started well.

RITA: First-rate! For ten years I was knocked about the levees, like a stray dog, until I hired on a ranch where the cowboys taught me to ride, and before I was fourteen I could throw a lariat, corral a herd of wild steers, or hit a jack rabbit on the wing.

JACK: You turned your skill in all three to royal account when you roped in every capital in Europe. You corralled all the hearts. Your rifle never missed its mark.

RITA: Yes! (*Turning*) I have missed you!

JACK: Me! I don't—quite—understand.

RITA: I will make it clear! You have exhibited in public an admiration for me, which you have avoided in private every opportunity to express; you send flowers to my house, which you have never entered; you display your infatuation from a private box. You follow me to all public places. If I go to a provincial city, the newspapers enquire, "where's O'Beirne?"

JACK: (*Aside*) I feel the rope wheeling over my head. She's got it down fine.

RITA: I have no parents – no one to protect my good name. Perhaps I have not got one because I earned my own living the best way I know how. If nature had put a sweet pipe in my throat – I might have roamed this world with honor and glory. But she only gave me a quick eye and a stout heart. And so qualified me for being the vagabond I am. (*To R. Corner*) That's what's the matter with me.

JACK: If they grow such vagabonds as you out in the wild west, I shall import a few to improve our stock here.

RITA: Last week you took me to see a drama, in which the leading actress played her own mother in the first part and her daughter afterwards. (*Xes L.*)

JACK: Yes, I remember – it's very common.

RITA: If I were playing my own mother now – I should say, Jack if you mean right by my Rita, why don't you say so? You're poor – but she is rich enough for both.

JACK: I haven't a rap. The world would say I married you for your fortune.

RITA: What's the matter with my face and figure?

JACK: You think me an honest fellow; don't deceive yourself. I am a fraud! I'm a skin full of lies.

RITA: They could not get a lie out of you with a derrick.

JACK: I love another woman! I have loved her since she was a child---

RITA: Why did you not marry her?

JACK: Because she preferred to marry another man!

RITA: So much the better for me!

JACK: I became the inseparable friend of the young couple.

RITA: So much the worse for the husband!

JACK: Just what the world was beginning to say, until I discovered a way of stopping their mouths.

RITA: How so?

JACK: Do you know the use of the lightning-rod they stick over a house?

RITA: It is to attract the mischievous elements in the air and divert them into the ground.

JACK: Precisely! You were the rod I stuck up over that house.

RITA: Me?

JACK: I looked out mercilessly for the most conspicuous beauty I could find, and made my devotion to her so public that we became the jest of the Club, and the topic of the newspapers. Wherever she traveled I followed—like the tail of a comet. On my faith! I never dreamed she would distinguish me amongst the other fools that made her court. But she did! Then I saw that I was no longer a fool. I was a scoundrel! You told me your life! There is mine!

RITA: You do not love me then, as you pretended?

JACK: No, I don't! I wish I could! I am in love with a woman I cannot have; and a woman is in love with me—that—that---

RITA: That you don't want?

JACK: Now you see what a worthless cad I am—

RITA: I am not afraid of this woman! She cannot be of much account to take any other man, when she could have had you. Who is she?

(Enter Phryne and Vereker)

JACK: Hush! *(He turns away)*

RITA: 'Tis she – Mr. Vereker will you present me to Mrs. Carrington?

PHRY: I am glad to know you.

RITA: Thank you. *(To Jack)* I am not surprised. I forgive you Jack.

JACK: What do you mean?

RITA: *(Aside)* She is my rival.

JACK: What makes you think so?

RITA: My heart *(Exits L.I.E.)*

STOP

VER: Take courage, vindicate yourself. The eyes of your insulted friends are upon you.

PHRY: So they think I could creep back to the house from which I have been ejected like a dog.

VER: Excuse me, you sailed out of it like an indignant swan.

PHRY: Every moment that he allows me to remain here at the mercy of strangers –
(On sofa)

VER: Do not call me a stranger. I cannot forget the hopes I once entertained.

PHRY: It cannot be that he is indifferent as to what becomes of me.

VER: Your lips are parched, your hands are like ice. *(Servant passes with tray and glasses)* What have you there, champagne. Beer and soda?

PHRY: Neither, no –

VER: You must, you require some support (*Takes glasses*)
You do not wish to faint and bring all the club to witness your weakness. (*Gives her tumbler of wine after pouring brandy into it*)

PHRY: (*Drinks*) How cold it is.

(*Exit servant*)

VER: How cold you are.

PHRY: I am. Give me that cloak.

(*Vereker places Rita's cloak around her shoulders*)

VER: Had I the dear privilege of waiting upon you, I would desire no other occupation than to pass my life at your feet.

PHRY: I feel so strangely.

VER: (*Pours his glass into hers*) You will be better (*She drinks*) (*Enter Mrs. Downey and Mark*)

MRS D: Wait here until I find her.

MARK: Look there. (*Points to Vereker and Phryne*)

MRS D: More bravado. She knew we were coming. (*Aside*) What imprudence. (*Exits R.*)

PHRY: (*Rising*) Mark. (*Vereker passes to R.*)

MARK: I believe sir that you understood, that you are an unwelcome visitor at my house.

VER: Perfectly. I appreciate the reason of my exit but the lady has been please to revoke your cruel decree (*Xes to R.*)

MARK: (*C.*) You hear –

PHRY: I was wrong, you have been very kind Mr. Vereker, but my husband does not wish me to know you. (*L.*)

VER: Like other husbands he always suspects the wrong man. (*R.*)

(Enter Jack C.) One who marries so lovely a person as Mrs. Carrington, must accept the consequences. I make no secret of my admiration. But here is Mr. O'Beirne, who is a welcome guest to feast his devotion to your wife a feeling he has been artful enough to conceal it behind his professed infatuation for Rita Martinez; for whom he does not care a rush. So my dear sir you see that honesty in love affairs is not always the best policy.
(Exits R.I.E.)

MARK: You hear what he said *(C.)*

PHRY: Yes. *(L.)*

MARK: It is true, you are silent.

JACK: *(R.)* Yes, it is true so far as I am concerned. I love her better than you ever did or could.

MARK: *(C.)* And she knows it.

PHRY: Yes I knew it. When you left me alone with my starving heart it was all I had to live on.

MARK: *(C.)* So I have been your dupe.

JACK: No Mark, you have been your own. If I am not ashamed now to confess the truth, it is because my heart absolves me.

PHRY: I was wrong to leave my home and defy you. I left it and defied you – there begins and ends my fault. But the penalty you inflicted was unmanly and now you add the insult of suspicion. Let it be goodbye forever. *(Exits)*

MARK: Very well, forever be it. *(Exits)*

JACK: I wonder how long that forever will be.

(R-enter Phryne)

PHRY: Has he gone?

JACK: Yes – he's gone. Love makes children of us all, we play with one another's feelings, as children play with the toy pistol, until we find there's death in the little game.

(Re-enter Mrs. Downey)

MRS D: Well, did you bring those two fools together?

JACK: Oh yes, they came together like fire and gun-powder and exploded.

MRS D: Will you escort Phryne to my place at Fulham.

JACK: Impossible, I am one of the correspondents.

MRS D: You –

JACK: He accused me of loving her and I confessed it like an honest man.

MRS D: Like a fool.

JACK: I feel all the better for it.

MRS D: I do not like leaving her alone.

JACK: Rita shall follow her then, it is a woman's office to console her. If I were to play the part consolation might become too impressive. *(Exits R.)*

MRS D: I am to blame for all this, but who could have foreseen such a catastrophe.

VER: *(Re-enter)* Mrs. Carrington is seeking for you – she wishes to leave the club.

MRS D: Will you see that my carriage is in waiting – where is she. *(Exits)*

VER: Now is my chance if fortune will befriend me. *(Calls)*

Phillip are you there –*(Enter servant)* You remember my instructions, I have lent my coupe to Mrs. Downey to convey a lady friend to my cottage at Wimbledon. You are in her service for tonight. Bring your carriage to the door.

(Servant touches hat and exits. Re-enter Phryne with Mrs. Downey and Lord Billericay)

(Phryne at once Xes to L. corner)

PHRY: I am better now.

MRS D: Will you place Mrs. Carrington in my coupe.

VER: It is ready.

LORD B: Take my arm.

PHRY: Good night – you will come early to see me?

MRS D: I shall never forgive myself the share I have taken in this business. I wish you would let me go with you.

VER: Oh Lord!

PHRY: No, I am better alone. (*Exits with Lord Billericay*)

(*Enter Jack and Rita R.*)

JACK: You understand, I will leave you at the door of Mrs. Downey's cottage. You will pass the night beside her. I place you there on guard.

RITA: (*C.*) A guard of honor.

(*Reenter Lord Billericay C.*)

LORD B: She has gone.

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE- A Villa at Wimbledon.

A room in a villa at Wimbledon. Windows at back, looking into garden. Doors R. and L.

Enter Maggie R. with kettle.

MAG: Well, this is the queerest establishment as ever I see! No servants, except an old caretaker! I can't get a word out of her, nor find out where they keep things. I wonder if missis is awake yet? I thought I heard her moving in her room! It is nigh eleven o'clock. Oh, here she is!

(*Enter Phryne*) I hope, ma'am, you found I had brought all the things you wanted. You was asleep when I got here, and hour ago. I laid them out without disturbing you.

PHRY: You are very kind and thoughtful. Did Mr. Carrington object to your coming?

MAG: I did not ask him. Master have not been 'ome all night. So when the cabman brought your letter to me this morning, which it said, "Pack up my things, and send them by bearer," I just left that letter on the 'all table, so Mr. Carrington would see it when he comes in, and he will know where I am gone, and where you are—as it is right he should.

PHRY: But my note contained no address of this house!

MAG: No, ma'am; but I told Bunyon to get it from the cabman, and lay it on the 'all table beside your letter to me, which he did, while I was puttin' my own things together, because, if you please ma'am, I'd liefer stay beside you—if you will let me.

PHRY: You are a treasure, Maggie. You are sure Mr. Carrington will see the address?

MAG: I told Bunyon to be very particular and see master had it first thing!

PHRY: What is the hour? (*R.*)

MAG: It has gone eleven, ma'am!

PHRY: So late! I expected her to call before this!

MAG: It was nigh on four o'clock this morning when she found me sitting up waiting for you, and she left word as you had gone down to her cottage, and not to expect you home.

PHRY: It seems to be a very strange place! Have you remarked anything odd about it?

MAG: Yes, ma'am! It ain't a credit to any lady.

PHRY: It was dark when I arrived, and the rain fell in torrents; my head ached, and I was glad to get to bed as quickly as I could, without taking notice of the house, or of the person who let me in. But this morning I felt quite startled, upon opening a drawer in the dressing table, to find a case of razors and a smoking-cap. In a corner of the bedroom I discovered a boot-jack, and on the shelf in the wardrobe, a row of empty cigar boxes, a dog chain, and a collection of pipes! (*Pause*) Mr. Downey has been abroad for the last sixteen years! What does it mean?

MAG: Oh! It means ma'am, the caretaker has a husband, or a son. These kind of people live all over the house when the families ain't there; which it accounts for the smell of tobacco that flavors everything in the place! (*A bell rings*) There is the gate bell! (*She goes up to windows, and looks off R.*)

PHRY: It must be Mrs. Downey.

MAG: No, ma'am, it is a gentleman!

PHRY: Can it be Mark?

MAG: That's it, ma'am! I knew he would not be longcoming! He have found the address.

PHRY: Leave us! Go into my room! (*Maggie places a chair C. and goes off L.*) How I shake! Oh! This will not do at all! There is a big sob in my throat! If I had to speak I feel I shall cry; and once I cry, there is an end to dignity! Let me remember—he threatened to lock me out of our house! I will keep repeating those words to myself: "Lock me out! Lock me out!" No woman with the spirit of a canary would stand that! "Lock me out!" I must not look at him! The sound of his voice will strip all the pride from my heart, where it fits so awkwardly, that I feel like a fool in it!

(Sits, facing to L. so as to turn her back to door, R.) And if his eyes meet mine, I—shall give in, and then I cannot excuse what I have done!

(Enter Vereker) There he is! *(A pause; She murmurs to herself)* “Lock me out!”

VER: I hope you slept well!

PHRY: *(Starting up, turns round)* You! You here!

VER: Did you not expect me?

PHRY: Expect you? You!—

VER: I learned that you had sent home for your wardrobe, and for your servant to join you here, so I presumed and hoped you were reconciled to the—a position—*(R.)*

PHRY: I do not understand you! What position? *(L.)*

VER: And that you had forgiven me!

PHRY: I cannot perceive, sir, what I have to forgive, unless you allude to your intrusion here! *(L.)*

VER: That is true! I ought to have waited until I received your permission to present myself.

PHRY: Are you out of your senses, sir? Or, have I taken leave of mine?

VER: You have not, I see, discovered where you are—

PHRY: I am in the house of Mrs. Downey at Fulham! I came here in her carriage, as you are well aware!

VER: Oh, no! You are in my house at Wimbledon, and you came here in my carriage, of which you were not at all aware!

PHRY: You are jesting! Come, Mr. Vereker, let this end; it is not the moment for any silly mystification. Remember how I am placed, and if I may invoke the feelings you once professed towards me, show some respect, some tenderness, towards a very unhappy woman! You are witness last night to a foolish misunderstanding between Mr. Carrington and myself, but you are not aware of the painful circumstances that ensued.

VER: I am perfectly aware that your brute of a husband swore, that if you left the house you should never return to it. Of course, a dozen doors were open to the lovely outcast, but I contrived that she should accept my hospitality. Fortune favors the bold! You failed to discover the little ruse, and my precious jewel was transported to this miserable casket. And here you are! You understand?

PHRY: Yes! You expected to compromise me so irretrievably, and bring me so low, that I might become a fitting companion for you!

VER: Oh, no! Don't look at it in that light.

PHRY: (*Calling off L.*) Maggie!

VER: My dear Phryne, do listen—

PHRY: Mrs. Carrington is my name, sir! I have done nothing to forfeit the right to be addressed by it! (*Enter Maggie*) Stay in this room while that person is here! After what he has done, it is doubtful what he may say. Now, sir, proceed!

VER: Pro-ceed? I—I don't quite understand! I don't remember!

PHRY: You were explaining the successful trick by which I was entrapped into this house! You remarked that Fortune, the god of fools and knaves, favors the bold, but you are not aware how far that divinity assisted you in making me appear infamous in the eyes of the man whose life and honor I have sacrificed! This morning I sent to his house—my home—requesting my personal effects should be sent here—here to your address! You understand how hopelessly I am involved! I cannot expect him to believe that I remained a passive dupe in your hands! It seems incredible to myself—

VER: Quite so! What would it appear to a lawyer, whose business it is to doubt everybody? Life would become intolerable beside him.

PHRY: Nothing! Nothing would carry conviction to his mind of the truth! Can you see any escape from such a person? I can't!

VER: Why not become reconciled to it?

PHRY: There are two insuperable obstacles!

VER: Let me overcome them! What are they?

PHRY: One is: I am an honest woman! The other is: the unutterable contempt with which I regard you!

VER: This is all very fine! But what are you going to do?

PHRY: If I must appear infamous, I must bear it as the penalty of my fault! But to be infamous—Oh, no! and, frankly, you afford no temptation!—

MAGGIE: Not much!

VER: You are excited! I leave you until you cool down. Meanwhile, remember that your presence here is known only to ourselves—it is quite a family secret. Don't ventilate the

circumstances imprudently! Don't let your temper circulate the scandal! Of course Mark will hold his tongue. Man of the world, you can rely on my discretion!

(Mark appears at window in garden) A note addressed to the Monte Carlo will always reach me. Eh! Good morning!

MARK: Stay a moment!

MAGGIE: Master here! I'm not wanted! *(Exits)*

VER: I presume I understand the motive of your visit!

MARK: I think not.

VER: I am prepared to afford you satisfaction. *(To R. Corner)*

MARK: I want none that you can give me. You have already satisfied me that I married a woman who is not worth disputing with you! I don't propose to make you a hero on what is called the field of honor; nor seek in a law court a valuation of my feelings, and make you pay for her shame.

VER: Then, may I ask what you do want?

MARK: I want that you, this lady and I should understand one another! I begin with myself: Last night I was guilty of conduct towards her which no provocation on her part could justify—

VER: Very honorable in you to make this frank acknow--

MARK: This is no affair of yours! I shall come to you presently!

VER: I thought you were offering an apology to her!

Mark: No, sir! I was offering an apology to myself! I owe the lady none! Now for you! It is right you should know, and she should learn why I decline to receive you into my house, and why I requested my wife to drop your acquaintance! Will you look over these papers? *(Hands a packet of letters to Vereker)*

VER: *(After looking at them)* In my hand-writing!

Mark: You recognized that?

VER: You have obtained possession of a private correspondence, and you have violated—

MARK: Nothing! Those papers came into my hands in the way of business two years ago. I was counsel in the case of Mellish versus Chappell. Amongst the documents furnished to the prosecution those letters were offered as evidence. They proved your

share in a criminal fraud, and their production in court would have sent you into penal servitude! You were at that time a suitor for the hand of this lady. Those papers placed you, my rival at my mercy. I declined to use such means to remove you from my path. I betrayed my trust. The papers were mislaid and could not be found at the trial, so you escape a sentence under which your accomplices are now suffering. You had better destroy them.

VER: I was unaware—of this—this obligation—I owe you!

MARK: Forget it, with the rest of your debts! I would rather you did not feel obliged to me for anything! I think you were going as I entered. I will not detain you longer. *(At C.)*

VER: *(Up C. to R.)* Good morning! Thank you!
(Going out he murmurs under his breath)

MARK: *(Who has taken his hat and gloves from table. R.H.)* I have no wish to inflict further pain upon you by my presence here, so let us speak briefly of the future, as the past is done with. I shall not interfere with your life in any way. You will receive an allowance to sustain the name you will continue to bear, and at my death, whatever I have to leave, will be yours. You see, my broken heart contains no resentment! I shall take upon myself the whole blame of our separation, none shall attach you! I—have no more to say! *(He goes slowly to window at back)*

Yes! That is all! *(As he goes out dejectedly, and disappears into the garden, she falls slowly back on the floor insensible)*

CURTAIN

ACT IV

SCENE I- *The chambers of Mark Carrington. Mark seated at desk, R.C. Bagot Standing C.*

MARK: Have you closed up all our business?

BAGOT: Yes, sir. I think you will find everything clear.

BELL

MARK: There is a check for your salary up to Christmas.

BAGOT: Thank you, sir;--you are very liberal.

MARK: And you have been very faithful.
(Bell rings)

You will not admit anyone to see me.

BAGOT: A gentleman called here this morning, he left this card, and said he would call again at two ----this may be him. (*Going*)

MARK: (*Reading card*) Mr. O'Beirne: Stay, you may admit him.

(*Exit Bagot*)

(*Enter JACK L.3.E*)

JACK: I hope there is not ill feeling between us, Mark.

MARK: I am glad to see you.

JACK: That's well:--we heard that you were leaving England.

MARK: Yes, I sail next month for India; I have been appointed Judge of the Supreme Court at Madras.

JACK: Likely to be gone long?

MARK: For life, I hope.

JACK: As I am the only relative Phryne has, I come on her behalf.

MARK: I have placed a sum of money at your disposal for her support.

JACK: She has not touched it; and declines any assistance from you.

MARK: She has no means and I insist that she shall not expose my name to humiliation.

JACK: She does not bear your name:--and she has ample means and she knew you would not believe her---but I did because I had loved, believed her ever since she could lisp my name, and I knew she could not lie. Because I loved her—loved her well enough to give her up to you and guard her in your house like the faithful hound I was content to be, and when you drove us out of it, I loved her well enough to marry another woman that I might provide an honorable home for her.

MARK: God bless you, Jack.

JACK: He did—with the best wife in the world.

MARK: Is Phryne with you still?

JACK: What is that to you?

MARK: Have I lost the right to enquire?

JACK: Of course you have:--You have cut her adrift—what is it to you on what shore she may be cast, if she is not dead—no thanks to you. But to the business that brought me here—Feeling herself to be a burden on your future career, she now desires to set you free that you may contract a marriage with someone more congenial to your aspiring soul. Someone who will love you less and suit you better; she sends me with this offer of your freedom; you are a lawyer and can arrange some means for procuring a divorce.

MARK: Perhaps she foresees also someone to take my place.

JACK: You can feel no interest in what becomes of so unworthy a woman.

MARK: She loved me once.

JACK: I should think she did. (*Rises*) Since she took you when she might have had me.

MARK: Oh, if I could believe in her as you do.

JACK: Don't try. Be just—release the girl, and let her find a better man.

MARK: If she be innocent, what a wretch I have been.

SCENE II- *The morning room in the Country House of Sir Dudley Colpoys. Enter Sir Dudley with paper in his hand.*

SIR D: Barbara, Barbara. My dear, leave off teasing that unhappy instrument for a few moments, Barbara.

(Enter Barbata R.I.E.)

BARBARA: I promised to practice my scales for one hour every morning; those are the orders of Miss Godfrey. Do you assume the responsibility of my disobedience?

SIR D: No, no, what do you take me for?

BARBARA: For a coward. Oh, papa. You---a baronet and a rear admiral afraid of a governess?

SIR D: I do confess it. She is an ironclad. And when she brings her calm, big eyes to bear upon me I feel as if I were under the muzzles of a pair of 84 pounders.

BARBARA: Take care papa. Those big guns are making a target of your heart. (*Xes R.*)

SIR D: Nonsense. I am fifty years of age and she is not five and twenty. (*Xes to R.*)

BARBARA: Look me in the face. Do you dare to tell me that you never contemplated turning my governess into my mamma?

SIR D: There is a picture hanging in our dining room that answers you. It represents the old line of battleship, the Vanguard, being towed into port by a lively little steamer. That means an old hulk like me being towed to the grave by a lovely young creature like Miss Godfrey.

BARBARA: Is that why I have seen your eyes fixed so sadly on that painting? I'll have it burned. I won't allow anyone to call my papa an old hulk.

SIR D: Then you would not grudge her a share of my heart, eh?

BARBARA: Should I be here by your side this moment, if she had not nursed me through the typhoid fever? The doctor told me she never closed her eyes for three nights. He says she saved my life. Could I refuse her a share of yours?

SIR D: I—I think she is much respected by everyone in this neighborhood. But what would the world say?

BARBARA: You have no one in the world to be afraid of except me, and I give my consent.

SIR D: But, would she give hers?

BARBARA: Ask her.

SIR D: I would sooner sail up to Gibraltar, and demand its surrender. (*Enter servant with a card L.I.E*) What is here? A visitor. (*Reads card*) Oh, Lord Vauxhall. We shall be delighted to see him. (*Exit servant*) Stay; Barbara where are you off to?

BARBARA: I am going to the village to see Miss Godfrey.

SIR D: Will you not stay to welcome your intended husband?

BARBARA: I am welcome his lordship when I succeed in forgetting my cousin Philip, the dear boy you drove away from our house three years ago.

SIR D: Because he was an unmitigated scamp.

BARBARA: But he loved me. Where is he now?

SIR D: The Lord knows; gone to the devil, perhaps; he was due there.

BARBARA: He was last heard of at Palermo, very ill.

SIR D: No wonder, he left England with a dilapidated constitution.

BARBARA: If you had kept him here he would not have dilapidated himself.

SIR D: Lord Billericay is a disgrace to his title. He was expelled from college; then he went on the turf, (he had better have gone under it) then he took to drink----

BARBARA: The poor boy is so weak. Two glasses of our home-made wine always made him ill.

SIR D: No wonder. ONE would settle me. But worst of all—well,—it is not fit for you to hear.

BARBARA: In that case it is your duty to tell me.

SIR D: There was some circus woman.

BARBARA: How dreadful.

SIR D: You see to what society he descended.

BARBARA: (*R.*) If he had run away with a duchess----

SIR D: Barbara, I am horrified at you.

BARBARA: So am I. I know I ought to forget poor Phil but I can't. (*Enter Vereker L.I.E.*)

VER: Pardon me taking you by surprise.

SIR D: My dear lord, you are always welcome to Penmaddoc, we trust, you regard it as your future home.

VER: Will my lovely affianced add her assurance to yours? (*Xes R.*)

SIR D: Of course she will. I suppose you have come down to inspect the estate? Are you staying at the Hall?

VER: No; I have taken rooms at the village inn.

SIR D: You must stop here with us.

VER: I would not intrude----

SIR D: Intrude! In the house of your father-in-law, that is to be.

BARBARA: Stay. Before his lordship accepts your invitation, which he may think includes mine, let us understand each other----

VER: With all my heart----

BARBARA: By the recent death of your grand-uncle, you came into the title you wear; but as there was not estate attached to it---except the Hall and a few acres---the inheritance was a barren honor.

VER: Vox et praeterea nihil: In fact, Vaux, without the Hall.

BARBARA: The estate was bequeathed to me---

SIR D: With the condition----

BARBARA: With no condition, whatever. I have seen the will. The old lord left a letter addressed to me, where he expressed a hope, that you might reform----

VER: He never liked me----

BARBARA: And if you could become worthy of me----

VER: Impossible condition.

BARBARA: And if there was no outstanding claim upon my heart----

VER: What a business-like angel you are----

BARBARA: You might through me regain the estate.

VER: And, like a lovely minister of justice, you pronounce a decree in my favor.

BARBARA: The court reserves its decision. (*Exits R.*)

VER: Her mind seems rather unsettled on this subject. What has happened?

SIR D: Her cousin, Lord Billericay, had returned to England.

VER: I understood that child's play was at an end.

SIR D: So I thought---indeed I have her word that she would not speak to him if they met. But be advised—make sure of her.

VER: How can I do so, if she will not be guided by you---

SIR D: Try to gain the influence of Miss Godfrey, there is no lady in the county more respected.

VER: Who is she? (*R.*)

SIR D: Simply a music teacher and the organist of our church, but she is worshipped by us all and if she would consent to take Barbara's place as mistress of Penmaddoc I would make her Lady Colpoys tomorrow;--so pay your court to her, my lord.

(Enter servant L.I.E.)

SERVANT: Mr. Carrington, sir.

SIR D: Show him in. This is most fortunate. I want to bring you two together.

VER: The devil.

SIR D: He is trustee under the late lord's will and I am sure, when he knows you better, you will remove his repugnance to the marriage. *(Enter Mark L.I.E.)*

I am glad to see you. I believe I need not introduce you gentlemen, to each other.

MARK: I think it is unnecessary.

VER: Quite so---good morning. *(Going R.)*

MARK: Stay. My visit here concerns you, it is better you should hear what I have to say.

SIR D: Yes; it may tend to reconcile you both.*(C.)*

MARK: I have declined to accept the office of trustee to your daughter, as I could not fulfill the wishes of the late lord in respect to this gentleman.*(Xes to R.)* I would rather attend her funeral than witness her marriage with you, sir.*(L.)*

VER: That is rather a vigorous statement. Will you kindly mention the ground on which it is made.

MARK: You know I cannot.

VER: I thought so.

SIR D: Is that just.

MARK: Very unjust to you—but it matters little, in a few days I sail for India. *(Xes to L.)*

VER: No one will follow your departure with a more grateful sense of relief---Bon voyage.

(Exits R.I.E.)

MARK: I leave you with one sincere piece of advice;--give your daughter to her cousin, Lord Billericay, he may be a fool but he is a gentleman;--the two characters may coexist.

SIR D: I am a remarkable specimen of that fact—I contemplate marrying again.

MARK: I see no folly in that. You are not fifty years of age.

SIR D: But the girl I adore is not twenty-five. When I tell you that she is governess of my daughter I fear you will laugh at me.

MARK: If she is not doing so, why should I? I presume you know the lady well; her character and family; and that she is willing to become the mother of your child. Is she a native of this county?

SIR D: No; she came here a stranger eighteen months ago. But her modest gentle, lovely nature soon won our hearts. She is an angel.

MARK: Of course. There is a period in every woman's life when she is an angel. The period is short.

SIR D: She has suffered some great misfortune----

MARK: Which has cooled her down into being a woman.

SIR D: Perhaps some unhappy love affair.

MARK: So much the better. She is less subject to a second attack.

SIR D: If you only knew her as I do.

MARK: For what purpose? To be deceived by an angel face? My dear Sir Dudley, for a whole year I lived beside one of these heavenly creatures—the envy of our little world. My life was brimful of hers. We knew no society but our loving selves. Out of this cloudless sky fell the thunderbolt: One night, after a few foolish words exchanged in anger, she turned and left my house---flung me aside like a worn out glove. I cannot tell you how I discovered her next day, a degraded woman.

SIR D: So I staked mine and lost. I wish you every happiness with her. Will you not let me take my leave of your daughter—I must catch the three o'clock train.

SIR D: She is at Miss Godfrey's cottage, it is in your road to the station;--I will walk with you.

MARK: You are resolved I shall see this paragon of yours,--well if it must be so. (*Exeunt L.I.E.*)

SCENE III- *The interior of a cottage.*

Enter Maggie, followed by Lord Billericay R.3.E.

MAG: This way, sir. What name shall I say?

LORD B: There is my card. (*Hands Maggie a card*)

MAG: Miss Godfrey is engaged with a pupil. I don't think she can see you, sir. (*Going*)

LORD B: Say I will call again, at any hour she may find it convenient to receive me. (*Exit Maggie L.*) I feel like a criminal waiting for the return of the jury with their verdict. Where did I put Babee's letter? I am so nervous. I wish I had a glass of brandy, just to brace me up. No, I forgot; I have sworn off. Come, be a man, Billery. Be a man for once in your life. Ah, I never was,--don't think I ever shall be. (*Enter Phryne with card L.3.E.*)

PHRY: Lord Billericay.

LORD B: Ye-es, that's me. (*Recognizes her – Bus.*)

PHRY: I can guess the object of your visit.

LORD B: Thanks, very much. That is a great relief. Barbara has told you all about me, I suppose?

PHRY: I believe so.

LORD B: You must think me an awful bad lot.

PHRY: What must you think of me, if you come here, taking for granted you can use me, and perhaps my house, as a convenience to correspond with and to meet my pupil?

LORD B: I don't propose anything of the kind. If Uncle Dudley kicked me out, I deserved it; and when he considered me no fit companion for Barbara, I knew that better than he did.

PHRY: Did you tell him so?

LORD B: No; I went on a long drunk, and woke up in a police court. Then the newspapers went for me. They took me as a subject for a lecture on the degradation of the aristocracy. That finished me. Every friend deserted me.

PHRY: No; Barbara remained true. I am afraid it is wrong in me to say so.

LORD B: No, no. I give you my honor (and I don't think I have parted with that), I will not attempt to see her. If we meet I will not speak to her.

PHRY: I accept your pledge. Sit down, and tell me what brings you here.

LORD B: This letter from Barbara (*Hands her a letter*) It reached me at Palermo, and brought me home.

PHRY: (*Reading*) “The only person who exercises influence over papa is Miss Godfrey, my music teacher. I love her dearly, and I think papa has lost his heart to my lovely governess. If she will speak for us, he will yield to her intercession. If she fail, then my life will not be worth having; so I don’t care what becomes of me.”

LORD B: Oh. Miss Godfrey, that means she will marry my rival—my rival in every respect. He is quite as bad a lot as I am. You may not believe that.

PHRY: I will take your word for it. Poor Barbara must choose between you two—bad lots.

LORD B: Awful, isn’t it. (*Enter Barbara, breathless. Billericay starts up. Phryne rises*)

BARBARA: (*Passing to L., and taking off her hat without seeing Billericay*) Oh my dear; I am in such trouble.

PHRY: (*Looking from one to the other*) So am I.

BARBARA: He has come at last.(*L.*)

PHRY: Yes. And I suggest that he had better go.

BARBARA: (*Coming down to her, sees Billericay, and stands amazed*) Oh, Billy.(*Runs to him*)

LORD B: Babie. (*They are about to approach, when Phryne arrests them with a gesture*)

PHRY: Ah, remember, my lord, where you are; and the pledge you have given me. This young lady, my pupil, is a perfect stranger to you.

LORD B: Quite so. I forgot. Oh, dear.

PHRY: Any familiarity under my roof is—a breach of contract.

LORD B: Yes. I—suppose I had better go. I have promised upon my honor not to address my cousin Barbara. And I won’t—not if I die for it.

PHRY: (*To Barbara*) And you have promised your father, that if you met this gentleman you would not speak to him.

BARBARA: I will keep my word. But should you see cousin Phil, tell him from me that I have never changed a bit.

PHRY: Stop.

BARBARA: And I never will. And I don't believe he is half as bad as they say he is.

LORD B: (*On the other side of Phryne*) Tell her he is worse---much worse.

PHRY: (*Between them*) Oh, this will never do. (*Calls*) Maggie.

BARBARA: And I don't care if he is. I will continue true to him. And I always attend church service every Wednesday afternoon—when there is nobody there---

PHRY: (*Handing Billericay his hat*) Good morning, I am so sorry you are obliged to go.

(*Enter Maggie*)

LORD B: Try to persuade her that she is an angel, and that I went to the devil for her sake.

PHRY: Maggie, the door.

BARBARA: (*Pursuing them up stage*) And I will die and be buried before I give him up.

MAG: This way, sir. (*Shows him out*)

PHRY: Are you not ashamed of yourself to use me so?

LORD B: (*Returning, followed by Maggie*) I have left my gloves somewhere.

PHRY: You have got them on.

LORD B: Oh, so I have. I—I was in hopes I had left them here. (*Exits preceded by Maggie*)

PHRY: Your father should be informed of this meeting.

BARBARA: I suppose so.

PHRY: He must be.

BARBARA: Will you tell him? (*L.*)

PHRY: Why should I interfere?(*C.*)

BARBARA: My intended husband has arrived to claim the fulfillment of my promise. (*Xes to R.*)

PHRY: Did you give any to marry him?

BARBARA: If I did I feel I cannot keep it. (*Xes R.*) But papa will hold me to my word, unless you persuade him. He will listen to you. He sees with your eyes, hears with your ears, and will be guided by your wishes. (*To her caressingly*)

PHRY: I have read this letter, (*Hands the letter to Barbara*) so I cannot pretend to misunderstand you.

BARBARA: Oh. Why cannot you make your home with us? (*Behind her L.*)

PHRY: I will tell you why. You have remarked this locket, that never leaves my neck—what do you suppose it contains?

BARBARA: The portrait of someone you were very fond of. (*Leans over her*)

PHRY: It is the portrait of a life---open it.

BARBARA: (*Opens locket*) A wedding ring. Oh, you were engaged to somebody, and you have lost him. (*Arms about her*)

PHRY: Yes.

BARBARA: To me. Yes. (*Rises, crosses to C.*)

BARBARA: (*Returns locket*) I understand. (*Comes L.C. arms about Phryne*)

PHRY: I came here, as a wounded animal seeks the loneliest spot, to hide away and perish out of sight. But a new life grew up around me. Gentle hearts brought me comfort, if not content, and made for my sorrow a home---

BARBARA: Until I brought you trouble. Forget what I have said, it is all nonsense. But if you many not speak to papa, you can see my intended.

PHRY: Yes, I will see him if you wish.

BARBARA: How good you are.

MAG: (*Entering R.*) Mr. and Mrs. Jack O'Bierne and Mrs. Downey:

BARBARA: Visitors. I'm off. (*Exit C*)

(*Enter Jack, Rita and Mrs. Downey R.3.E.*)

RITA: Here we are.

PHRY: Mrs. Downey. (*Crosses to her*)

MRS D: Oh, you dreadful willful girl, how glad I am to see you again.

JACK: It was Rita betrayed your secret—it wasn't me. (*On R*)

RITA: Isn't that mean – to shift the blame on to my shoulders.

JACK: The loveliest in the world.

MRS D: (*To Phryne*) Oh, how you have improved.

JACK: Impossible, there was no room for it.

PHRY: Please confine such remarks to your wife. (*L C*)

RITA: Let them out Jack, I know I come second.

JACK: No; my heart has twins; I am fit to be shown in a museum as a man who is in love with two women at the same time.

PHRY: Hold your tongue.

JACK: I won't! I am proud of it.

RITA: So am I. (*Sits on sofa L*)

PHRY: I am sorry to observe you are in mourning.

MRS D: I should think I was.

PHRY: You have suffered a loss?

MRS D: Eight hundred a year (*Sits L of table*) Eighteen months ago I wrote to Downey, as usual, to say I was going to join him, and instead of a remittance they enclosed me a certificate of his decease. (*Bus*)

PHRY: He left me without a penny. Jack found me in despair.

JACK: I thought Rita was in want of a mother—a bodyguard. Mrs. Downey was a good figure to play the part.

RITA: (*X to her*) So I engaged her to take care of me, while I take care of her, and a better mother never spoiled an only child.

JACK: She is inclined to overact, when she invents a noble father—her first husband, the predecessor of Downey, a Mexican count.

MRS D: It is strengthening my hand.

JACK: Yes; but you need not hold five acres.

MRS D: The public love a little romance. That disobedient girl refuses to mount a coronet on her note paper, or to sign herself Donna Rita Segovia y Martinez, Countess of Cuzco-Chihuahua.

JACK: She prefers Mrs. Jack O'Beirne.

(Re-enter Barbara)

BARBARA: He is here—Oh, I beg your pardon, you are engaged. *(L. C)*

PHRY: No, do not go—this is Miss Colpoys, Mrs. Downey, Mr. O'Beirne

RITA: *(X to him)* Rita Martinez, who is very glad to know you.

BARBARA: I am not surprised that Billy forgot me when he saw you.

RITA: But he did not—I let him talk to me about you, and that was all the charm he found in me.

JACK: *(R.)* Is she not an American angel?

BARBARA: You seem very good.

JACK: She is the same all through.

BARBARA: I am sure of it. Dear Miss Godfrey, he is waiting outside to see you.

PHRY: *(To the rest)* Will you allow Miss Colpoys to show you around my little domain:

JACK: Which being interpreted means “get out” *(Offers Barbara his arm)* Who would not follow Miss Colpoys to the end of the earth?

RITA: Jack. Stop it—how dare you do it under my very nose.

MRS D: Better there than behind your back, my dear.

PHRY: *(Goes up, following them)* How happy they are. *(Exeunt)*

(Enter Vereker. R 3 E)

VER: *(Down R)* So I must propiate the governess. This designing woman has evidently got possession of Sir Dudley, and rules the whole establishment. She will marry the old fool. Now, to deal with my respected mother-in-law, on whose decision my fate depends.*(Phryne comes down; they stand astounded regarding each other)* Phryne.

PHRY: You! I—I expected to see another person. *(C to L)*

VER: Lord Vauxhall? I am he. I little anticipated this meeting. But I understand your position.
(To R C)

PHRY: I hope then you will respect it.

VER: You may rely on my discretion. Your secret is safe with me. *(C)* If I were not a poor man, I would ask you to get a divorce from Carrington and become my wife, but you are a luxury I cannot afford. I envy Sir Dudley who is blindly infatuated. No wonder. *(To R)*

PHRY: But you are aware that Mr. Carrington is my husband.

VER: Of course. You will get released from that tie—*(Turning)*

PHRY: And cover my soiled name with that of this worthy gentleman.

VER: You women are so clever. I- *(To R)* don't doubt you have contrived some little plan to deceive the old fool, in which, whatever it may be, you can rely on my assistance.

PHRY: I am sure of that. And the price for that assistance is simply my help to obtain for you the hand and fortune of his daughter? *(Still C)*

VER: And yours, that is to be. Precisely.

PHRY: And if I decline—

VER: You won't do that? *(Toward her R C)* I am sure you will not place me in so painful a predicament.

PHRY: Out with it. You mean that you will proclaim me to be the imposter I am. You will tear the mask from my face.

VER: I have no wish to injure your position in this neighborhood, but if you use your power over Sir Dudley and Barbara to defeat my claims here, I shall feel justified in disclosing to them what you are. Now make up your charming mind about this matter. Don't be rash; think it over.
(Phryne rings the bell) What are you doing?

PHRY: I am making up my mind, as your lordship requests. *(Enter Maggie Q 3 E)*
(To Maggie) You will find Miss Barbara in the garden – beg her to come here. I wish to see her* here.

MAG: Sir Dudley is coming up the lane, Miss. *(Exit C to R)*

PHRY: Ah, so much the better. *(To Vereker)* Let us wait until he comes. *(Around C)*

VER: Would it not be better to see them privately?

PHRY: No. This is part of the little scheme I have contrived to which you alluded just now.

(Sits on sofa)

VER: Shall I not be rather awkwardly placed?

PHRY: Not at all. Your presence is essential.

VER: Pray, explain your intention? *(Down R)*

PHRY: Don't you think the Japanese are in many ways a remarkable people?

VER: The Japanese.

PHRY: Yes. They seem to have exerted an influence over our taste in decorative art. *(Fan bus)*

VER: *(Aside)* Is she off her head? We heard that she had passed some time in a lunatic asylum.

PHRY: There is one of their customs which I find admirably graceful. I mean that of self-execution.

VER: *(Aside)* My sudden appearance has provoked a relapse.

PHRY: They call it Hara-Kiri. When the honor of a nobleman is wounded and he perceives no means of redress, he becomes his own executioner.

VER: I do not believe in any such nonsense.

(Enter Sir Dudley, R. Barbara C)

PHRY: I am glad you have come. I want your presence to witness an act of supreme justice in which my lord here cannot believe.

VER: What the devil can she mean?

PHRY: There are two guests here in your house whose presence dishonors your roof; two imposters whom it is my duty to unmask; one is the disgraced wife of Mark Carrington, the other an unconvicted felon.

(Enter Mrs. Downey, Rita, and Jack C)

Two years ago that woman in a moment of passion left the home of her husband to seek refuge with a friend.

MRS D: Yes, with me. (*To her*)

PHRY: By a cowardly snare she was carried to a house which she believed to be that of this lady—it was the residence of a man who had contrived this scheme to compromise her good name. I was that helpless, innocent woman, and there is the man who wrecked my life. (*X C*)

Do you believe me?

SIR D: I do, with all my soul.

BARBARA: (*Crosses to her*) So do I.

VER: (*R*) I must be allowed to qualify these statements as purely imaginary. The lady has been recently the inmate of an asylum from which, it seems, she has been prematurely released.

PHRY: (*Down L C to Rita*) (*Barbara turns to Sir D*) Is it false also that here a few moments ago when you discovered in Miss Godfrey, your victim—when you thought her in your power, you threatened to expose the disgraced wife if she refused her aid to deceive Sir Dudley and sacrifice his child.

VER: (*C*) Has this unhappy lady no friend to take care of her and put her under proper restraint.

MARK: Yes, my lord, she has one who feels at last how deeply she has been wronged and who can verify every word she has spoken.

PHRY: Mark! (*He goes to her and embraces her*)

JACK: I could not imagine by what means conviction could be carried to Carrington as to the share you took in this business, but you have managed it very well.

VER: So glad to have assisted at a reconciliation. Sir Dudley, I trust you will extend a pardon to your nephew—I resign in his favor.

SIR D: You anticipate my intentions. (*Phryne and Mark on sofa*)

VER: Good evening. (*Exit*)

MARK: Sir Dudley, you assured me that in Miss Godfrey I should find all that was lovely, gracious, and pure in woman; forgive me if I am a convert to your creed.

SIR D: (*X C*) Don't laugh at me.

PHRY: Laugh at you—my benefactor, my father.

SIR D: I must lose you; and my daughter also, what will become of me—

JACK: (*Aside*) Downey, my dear, now's your chance.

MRS D: No, sir; Barbara will never leave your side. You will take me in to board for life.

JACK: I say, Phryne, how about that offer I took from you to Mark about the divorce.

PHRY: (*Embracing Mark*) Oh, no.

TAG

Ring.

The heart that conquers is the heart that yields.

CURTAIN.