

AUDREY. I think you'd better. You were very rude to your wife.

(MARY enters by the French windows.)

NEVILLE *(Quietly.)* You're my wife, Audrey. You always will be.

(He catches sight of MARY.)

Ah, Miss Aldin, are you going up to Lady Tressilian?

MARY. Yes, when Mr. Treves comes down.

(ROYDE enters by the French window. NEVILLE stares at him for a moment then exits after KAY.)

(Wearily.) Oh, dear! I don't think I've ever felt so tired in my life. If Lady Tressilian's bell rings tonight, I'm quite certain I shall never hear it.

(She sits heavily on the sofa.)

AUDREY. What bell?

MARY. It rings in my room in case Lady Tressilian should want anything in the night. It's one of those old-fashioned bells on a spring and worked with a wire. It makes a ghastly jangle, but Lady Tressilian insists that it's more reliable than electricity.

(She yawns.)

Excuse me, it's this dreadful sultry weather, I think.

AUDREY. You ought to go to bed, Mary. You look worn out.

MARY. I shall as soon as Mr. Treves has finished talking to Lady Tressilian. Then I shall tuck her up for the night and go to bed myself. Oh, dear. It's been a very trying day.

ROYDE. It certainly has.

(LATIMER enters by the French windows. AUDREY looks at him briefly.)

AUDREY. Thomas! Let's go on to the terrace.

(She makes for the French windows. ROYDE follows.)

ROYDE. Yes, I want to tell you about a detective story I've been reading.

(They exit. There is a pause as LATIMER looks after them for a moment.)

LATIMER. You and I, Miss Aldin, seem to be the odd men out. We must console each other. Can I get you a drink?

MARY. No, thank you.

(LATIMER pours himself a drink.)

LATIMER. One conjugal reconciliation in the rose garden, one faithful swain nerving himself to pop the question. Where do we come in? Nowhere. We're the outsiders.

(He raises his glass.)

Here's to the outsiders. And to hell with all those inside the ringed fence.

MARY. How bitter you are.

LATIMER. So are you.

MARY. Not really.

LATIMER. What's it like, fetching and carrying, running up and down stairs, endlessly waiting on an old woman?

MARY. There are worse things.

LATIMER. I wonder.

(He looks out the French windows after KAY. There is a pause.)

MARY. You're very unhappy.

LATIMER. Who isn't?

MARY. Have -

(She pauses, considering.)

- you always been in love with Kay?

LATIMER. More or less.

MARY. And she?

LATIMER. I thought so until Neville came along. Neville with his money and his sporting record. I could go climbing in the Himalayas if I'd ever had the cash.

MARY. You wouldn't want to.

LATIMER. Perhaps not. (*Sharply.*) What do you want out of life?

(*MARY pauses.*)

MARY. It's almost too late.

LATIMER. But not quite.

MARY. No, not quite. All I want is a little money, not very much, just enough.

LATIMER. Enough for what?

MARY. Enough to have some sort of life of my own before it's too late. I've never had anything.

LATIMER. Do you hate them, too? Those inside the fence?

MARY. (*Violently.*) Hate them - I...

(*She yawns.*)

No - no, I'm too tired to hate anybody.

(*TREVES enters from the house.*)

TREVES. Ah, Miss Aldin, Lady Tressilian would like you to go to her now if you will be so kind. I think she's feeling sleepy.

MARY. That's a blessing. Thank you, Mr. Treves. I'll go up at once. I shan't come down again so I'll say goodnight now. Good night, Mr. Latimer. Good night, Mr. Treves.

LATIMER. Good night.

(*MARY exits into the house.*)

I must be running along myself. With luck I shall get across the ferry and back to the hotel before the storm breaks.

(*ROYDE enters by the French windows.*)

ROYDE. Are you going, Latimer? Would you like a raincoat?

LATIMER. No, thanks, I'll chance it.

ROYDE. Hell of a storm coming.

TREVES. Is Audrey on the terrace?

ROYDE. (*Courtly.*) I haven't the faintest idea. I'm for bed. Good night.

(*ROYDE exits into the house. A low rumble of thunder is heard.*)

LATIMER. (*Maliciously.*) It would seem that the course of true love has not run smoothly. Was that thunder? Some way away still. I think I'll make it.

TREVES. I'll come with you and bolt the garden gate.

(*They exit by the French windows. AUDREY is heard off calling to them.*)

AUDREY. (*Offstage.*) Good night.

(*She enters rather quickly and makes for the door leading to the rest of house. Another rumble of thunder is heard. NEVILLE quickly follows her on.*)

NEVILLE. Audrey.

AUDREY. I'm going to bed, Neville. Good night.

NEVILLE. Don't go yet. I want to talk to you.

AUDREY. (*Nervously.*) I think you'd better not.

NEVILLE. I must. I've got to. Please listen to me, Audrey.

AUDREY. I'd rather you didn't.

NEVILLE. That means you know what I'm going to say.

(*She does not reply.*)

Audrey, can't we go back to where we were? Forget everything that has happened?

(*There is a slight pause.*)

AUDREY. Including Kay?

NEVILLE. Kay will be sensible.

AUDREY. What do you mean by sensible?