

FICTION

Clyde Fitch

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# Her Own Way

A PUBLIC DOMAIN BOOK

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FICTION



# **Her Own Way**

*A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS*

*By*

**CLYDE FITCH**



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*Transcriber's Note: various printer's errors--typos and missing punctuation--were corrected for this e-book.*

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TO  
MAXINE ELLIOTT  
AND EVERYTHING IS SAID!  
C.F. 1907

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### ***HER OWN WAY***

[ACT I](#)                      THE PLAYROOM.

*Ten days elapse.*

[ACT II](#)                      THE DRAWING-ROOM.

*Eight months elapse.*

[ACT III](#)                     GEORGIANA'S ROOM.

*Four weeks elapse.*

[ACT IV](#)                     THE DRAWING-ROOM.

PLACE--NEW YORK.

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### ***THE PEOPLE IN THE PLAY***

GEORGIANA CARLEY.	
MRS. CARLEY	Her step-mother.
MRS. STEVEN CARLEY	Her sister-in-law, born "Coast," and daughter of Mrs. Carley by a former marriage.
PHILIP	}
CHRISTOPHER	} Children of Mr. and Mrs. Steven Carley.
TOOTS	}
ELAINE	From next door.
LIZZIE	Mrs. Carley's maid.
MISS BELLA SHINDLE	"The Lady Hair-dresser."
LIEUTENANT RICHARD COLEMAN.	
SAM COAST	Louise Carley's own cousin.

STEVEN CARLEY	Georgiana's brother.
MOLES	Butler to the Carleys.
A FOOTMAN	At the Carleys.

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Produced at the Star Theatre, Buffalo, September 24, 1903, and on September 28, 1903, at the Garrick Theatre, New York, with the following cast:--

Georgiana Carley	Miss Maxine Elliott
Mrs. Carley	Miss Eva Vincent
Mrs. Steven Carley	Miss Nellie Thorne
Philip	Master Donald Gallaher
Christopher	Miss Beryl Morse
Toots	Miss Mollie King
Elaine	Miss Marie Hirsch
Lizzie	Miss Susanne Perry
Miss Bella Shindle	Miss Georgie Lawrence
Lieutenant Richard Coleman	Mr. Charles Cherry
Sam Coast	Mr. Arthur Byron
Steven Carley	Mr. R.C. Herz
Moles	Mr. Francklyn Hurleigh
Footman	Mr. B.M. Parmenter

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Produced at the Lyric Theatre, London, in May, 1905, and afterward at the Savoy Theatre, London, with the following cast:--

Georgiana Carley	Miss Maxine Elliott
Mrs. Carley	Mrs. Fanny Addison Pitt
Mrs. Steven Carley	Miss Nellie Thorne
Philip	Master Donald Gallaher
Christopher	Miss Beryl Morse
Toots	Miss Mollie King
Elaine	Miss Marie Hirsch
Lizzie	Miss Susanne Perry
Miss Bella Shindle	Miss Georgie Lawrence
Lieutenant Richard Coleman	Mr. Charles Cherry
Sam Coast	Mr. James Carew
Steven Carley	Mr. R.C. Herz
Moles	Mr. Francklyn Hurleigh
Footman	Mr. B.M. Parmenter

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## ACT I

*The nursery. Half-past two in the afternoon. A cool, delightful white room, with a frieze of children playing in the ocean spray; shelves of bright-colored books on the walls, and the months of a large calendar by Elizabeth*

*Shippen Green framed underneath. There is a deep bow-window at the back; the principal door is at the Left, and a smaller one on the Right. Toys of all sizes, for all ages, are scattered about with a holiday air. There is a sofa on the Right and a hobby horse on the Left.*

*There are four charming though somewhat spoiled children, with intermittent manners, with napkins tied up under their chins, sitting around the table, which is a little to the right of the centre of the room.*

*The FOOTMAN is busy removing the plates; the butler, MOLES, who stands behind PHILIP, always takes PHILIP'S plate. It is PHILIP'S birthday. LIZZIE stands behind ELAINE. In the centre of the table is a large cake with seven candles burning on it.*

PHILIP. What comes next?

CHRISTOPHER. Soup!

*[LIZZIE and MOLES suppress smiles, exchanging looks of delighted appreciation of CHRISTOPHER'S humor.]*

TOOTS. Ice cream!

ELAINE. Don't be absurd, Christopher, we've *had* soup.

CHRISTOPHER. I like it!

TOOTS. I like ice cream!

ELAINE. *[To TOOTS.]* Sh!

PHILIP. What comes next, Moles?

MOLES. I don't know, sir.

*[He goes out.]*

ELAINE. T'ain't manners to ask, anyway, Phil.

PHILIP. Who cares! It's my birthday!

CHRISTOPHER. When will it be my birthday?

*[The FOOTMAN reenters with plates, followed by MOLES, with silver dish of croquettes.]*

PHILIP. Here it comes; what is it?

MOLES. Chicken croquettes, sir.

PHILIP. Left overs! Had chicken yesterday! Bring 'em here first!

MOLES. No, ladies first, sir.

*[Serves ELAINE.]*

LIZZIE. And besides, Miss Elaine is company.

*[MOLES serves CHRISTOPHER.]*

PHILIP. That's all right. S'long it's Elaine, everything goes!

ELAINE. Phil!

*[Sliding down from her chair, she runs to him and kisses him.]*

PHILIP. *[Hopelessly embarrassed.]* Don't! not in front of everybody!

ELAINE. But I do love you, Phil, and you're my beau, and I'm so glad it's your birthday.

*[Goes back to her place unashamed and contented.]*

*[MOLES serves PHILIP.]*

LIZZIE. You oughtn't to talk about beaux at your age, Miss--ought Miss Elaine?

[To MOLES with a knowing glance.

MOLES. I ain't discussing the sex with you, Lizzie, but I will say all the girls I've known, began talking about beaux early and ended late.

CHRISTOPHER. I heard Lizzie and Moles talking about Aunt Georgiana's beau!

LIZZIE. Sh!

[FOOTMAN goes out with the croquette dish.

ELAINE. Mr. Dick Coleman's Miss Carley's beau!

PHILIP. No, he isn't! Mr. Dick's known Aunt Georgiana always, they're just little boy and girl friends. Lizzie says she's Cousin Sammy Coast's sweetheart.

LIZZIE. [*Indignant, though convulsed.*] I never did!

PHILIP. Yes, you did! To Maggie when you thought I wasn't paying attention.

[LIZZIE and MOLES exchange amused glances.

ELAINE. But Mr. Coast's your auntie's cousin; and your cousin can't be your beau.

PHILIP. He ain't any relation to Auntie Georgiana. Mamma said so. Mr. Coast's mamma's cousin, and grandma's nephew, but grandma isn't any real relation to auntie.

CHRISTOPHER. How?

PHILIP. I don't know how, only Aunt Georgiana had a different mamma, she didn't have grandma.

ELAINE. And the same papa!

PHILIP. Not all the time, mamma had another papa first.

CHRISTOPHER. It's sort of mixy, isn't it?

PHILIP. Yes, I guess mamma and Aunt Georgy are sort of divorced sisters!

ELAINE. Oh!

[*As if that explained it.*

TOOTS. [*Beating the table.*] Lemmelade! lemmelade!

[MOLES crosses to pitcher and serves TOOTS first, then the others.

PHILIP. Toots, you're getting tipsy!

[*The children laugh.*

CHRISTOPHER. Cousin Sammy comes to see Aunt Georgiana nearly every day.

PHILIP. Yes--he's begun to bring toys just like some of the others did.

CHRISTOPHER. [*With his mouth full.*] Hobby horse! Hobby horse!

[*Pointing to the hobby horse.*

LIZZIE. Don't talk with your mouth full, Mr. Christopher.

PHILIP. [*Shouting.*] He'll choke! He'll choke!

[*All laugh, tremendously amused.*

MOLES. Mr. Coast is a very fine gentleman.

PHILIP. Oh, I know! I saw him give you a dollar the other day, when he came to see auntie, and you advised his waiting and said auntie'd be in by five.

LIZZIE. Isn't he a case!

MOLES. He certainly is.

*[Returns pitcher to table on the Left.]*

CHRISTOPHER. I like Mr. Dick best. He's always taking us places and things.

TOOTS. *[Who has finished his croquette and is now ready for conversation.]* Um! Circus!

PHILIP. And not just 'cause he's stuck on auntie.

MOLES. You oughtn't to use that expression, Mr. Philip.

PHILIP. Why not! you do. I heard you tell Lizzie you were stuck on her last Sunday.

LIZZIE. *[Blushing.]* Oh, my!

CHRISTOPHER. Mr. Dick's a soldier!

PHILIP. Yes, siree! He helped stop a strike of street cars in Brooklyn. His name was in the papers!

CHRISTOPHER. He was hurted bad, and if he was dead, he'd have a monnymt with "Hero" embroidered on it. Aunt Georgiana said so!

ELAINE. I should think Miss Georgiana was too old, anyway, to have beaux.

CHRISTOPHER. Oh, awful old!

LIZZIE. Oh! Miss Carley isn't so old!

PHILIP. Yes, she is, too! She's our old maid aunt.

ELAINE. If she wasn't old, she'd be married. It must be awful to be so old.

PHILIP. She's nearly thirty, I guess.

ALL THE CHILDREN. Oh!

*[Loud and long.]*

CHRISTOPHER. You'll be deader soon after thirty, won't you?

TOOTS. *[Crying.]* I don't want Auntie Georgiana to be a deader!

PHILIP. *[Bored.]* Shut up!

LIZZIE. *[Comes to TOOTS and comforts him.]* Toots, dear!

PHILIP. I'm glad Aunt Georgiana's an old maid, 'cause I don't want her to leave us.

*[FOOTMAN enters and stands at the Right.]*

She gave me my birthday party.

MOLES. Yes, and this whole house'd miss your aunt, I can tell you that, Mr. Philip. *[Takes away the plates.]* She just keeps things going smooth with everybody.

PHILIP. I told her I saw you kiss Lizzie on the back stairs, Saturday.

MOLES. What!

*[Gives dishes to the FOOTMAN.]*

LIZZIE. He didn't! He didn't!

PHILIP. Yes, that's what Aunt Georgiana said, but I know better, and so does she, I guess!

LIZZIE. Isn't he a case!

*[MOLES goes out with the FOOTMAN.]*

PHILIP. Now what?

CHRISTOPHER. Soup!

PHILIP. Ice cream! I want ice cream!

LIZZIE. Sh!

ELAINE. My mamma don't let my brothers behave so at the table.

PHILIP. Neither don't we, 'cept our birthdays.

[MOLES *reenters with a tray and plates.*

CHRISTOPHER. What is it?

PHILIP. [*Screams.*] Eeh! Ice cream! It's ice cream!

LIZZIE. Sh!

PHILIP. Go ahead, dish it out!

[*Laughs.*

[MOLES *serves ice cream to ELAINE, then to PHILIP, TOOTS, and CHRISTOPHER.*

CHRISTOPHER. Mr. Dick Coleman is gooder as Cousin Sammy Coast.

ELAINE. Aunt Georgiana is goodest as him!

CHRISTOPHER. Aunt Georgiana is gooder as mamma!

TOOTS. And most goodest as grandma.

[LIZZIE *exchanges a glance with MOLES and goes out Right.*

PHILIP. Grandma! Rats!

MOLES. [*To PHILIP.*] Sh!

PHILIP. [*Shouts.*] Stop, Chris! He's taking too much ice cream!

ALL THE CHILDREN. Chris! Chris!

[*They keep up the clamor, laughing and shouting, till LIZZIE comes back.*

LIZZIE. Children! here comes grandma.

PHILIP. [*Disgusted.*] Oh, pshaw!

CHRISTOPHER. Don't want grandma.

LIZZIE. Sh!

[MRS. CARLEY *comes in from the Right. She is a middle-aged woman, of faded prettiness and frivolous manner. Every line and bit of character has been massaged out of her face. There is a sudden, embarrassed, and gloomy silence on the part of the children.*

MRS. CARLEY. Well, children, having a lovely party?

PHILIP. [*Grudgingly.*] Yes, ma'am!

ELAINE. [*Politely.*] Yes, ma'am.

CHRISTOPHER. Aunt Georgiana's party!

MRS. CARLEY. Yes, dear, it's too bad mamma is ill in bed. She says when you are all through, you may come up and say how do you do, while she kisses Phil. [*Silence.*] That will be nice, won't it?

PHILIP. [*Grudgingly.*] Yes, ma'am.

ELAINE. Yes, ma'am.

CHRISTOPHER. Yes, ma'am.

TOOTS. No!

MRS. CARLEY. We are glad you could come in, Elaine, and help celebrate Philip's birthday.

ELAINE. Thank you, ma'am!

[TOOTS *is mashing his ice cream strenuously with a spoon.*

MRS. CARLEY. Toots! don't be naughty and don't mash your ice cream up like that.

TOOTS. I like it.

CHRISTOPHER. Me too--it makes soup!

[*Copying* TOOTS.

MRS. CARLEY. Your collar's crooked, Chris.

[*Arranging it.*

CHRISTOPHER. Ouch!

[*Squirming.*

MRS. CARLEY. Phil, shall grandma cut your cake for you?

PHILIP. No, ma'am, Auntie Georgiana's going to cut it.

MRS. CARLEY. Oh, very well. How's your mamma, Elaine? Is she going to the big ball to-morrow?

ELAINE. Yes, ma'am.

MRS. CARLEY. We feel dreadfully. Philip's mamma's illness prevents our going.

ELAINE. Mamma said you weren't invited.

MRS. CARLEY. [*Pats PHILIP on the head, to his great disgust and discomfort.*] Your mamma had better mind! Your mamma is mistaken! Good-by, children, grandma is sorry she can't stay and have a good time with you. I am going to call, Elaine, on the Countess of Worling, Mrs. Tom Cooley's daughter. I don't think your mother knows them. Good-by, dears, enjoy yourselves.

[*She goes out Left.*

[*Silence till the door is well shut behind grandma, and then the children break out with shouts, all of them, of "Good-by, Grandma. Good-by," repeated ad lib. Then they calm down.*

PHILIP. Bully! Grandma's gone!

CHRISTOPHER. Ice cream!

ALL THE CHILDREN. More ice cream! Ice cream!

PHILIP. Let's see.

[MOLES *hands him the ice cream dish.*

CHRISTOPHER. [*To PHILIP.*] Can I have some more, or will it make me sick?

PHILIP. [*Serves the children.*] No, there's plenty. When there isn't enough, mamma always says it will make us sick.

CHRISTOPHER. And papa--when we have company unexpected, and there isn't enough of anything, papa always says F.H.B.

PHILIP. F.H.B.

ELAINE. Why?

CHRISTOPHER. He says it means Family Hold Back, and we all have to say "No, thank you," when it comes around! Do

you like grandma, Phil?

PHILIP. Naw! Grandma's no good.

[MOLES goes out with the empty ice cream dish.

TOOTS. No good, grandma!

[A knock outside the door Left.

GEORGIANA. [Outside.] Hello! Hello!

PHILIP. [Delighted.] Aunt Georgiana!

ALL THE CHILDREN. Aunt Georgiana!

GEORGIANA. [Outside.] Is this a private room at Sherry's, or may an old maid aunt come in?

ALL. No! Yes! Come in--come on in!

[They clatter on the table with their spoons, and shout "Hurrah! Aunt Georgiana!" as GEORGIANA enters. She is a beautiful creature, about thirty, and in the very height of health and spirits--an American Beauty rose the moment before it opens. She is flushed after her quick walk in the bracing, sunshiny winter's day. No wonder the children--and others--adore her!

GEORGIANA. What a good time!

CHRISTOPHER. Oh, we're having the beautifulest time, Auntie!

PHILIP. Great!

ELAINE. Perfectly lovely!

TOOTS. Um! Ice cream! Lots!

GEORGIANA. That's good! Stuff all you can, Toots! Are you ready to cut the cake?

ALL THE CHILDREN. Yes! Yes!

PHILIP. We waited for you.

CHRISTOPHER. We wouldn't let grandma.

[GEORGIANA drops her furs on the sofa and then comes to the table.

GEORGIANA. There's a ring in it. Whoever gets it will be married in a year.

[Starts to cut the cake.

TOOTS. I want the ring!

PHILIP. Hush up, you're only a baby!

[A loud knock on the door Left.

GEORGIANA. Oh, yes, I forgot. Cousin Sam wants to wish you many happy returns, Philip. May he come in?

PHILIP. Pshaw! Another man!

CHRISTOPHER. [In a "stagewhisper" to ELAINE.] He's the one--auntie's sweetheart!

GEORGIANA. [Amused.] Nonsense, Christopher, that's silly talk. Stop that for good! [Loud knocks repeated. To PHILIP.] May Cousin Sam come in? [PHILIP nods.] All right, he's got some presents! Come in, Mr. Coast.

[COAST comes in and goes straight to PHILIP. SAM COAST is a tall, slender, but strong-looking man, rather "raw-boned." He is dressed most fashionably and most expensively,--over-dressed, in fact, and yet not too vulgarly. A man of muscle and nerve, who makes his own code and keeps his own counsel.

COAST. Shake, Phil.

[*Shakes his hand.*]

PHILIP. [*His hand hurt.*] Golly! He can squeeze, can't he, Aunt Georgiana?

GEORGIANA. Well, really! Miss Elaine Jackson--Mr. Coast.

ELAINE. [*Embarrassed, rises, and curtseys.*] How do you do?

COAST. Pleased to make your acquaintance. Hello, rest of you.

CHRISTOPHER and TOOTS. Hello!

CHRISTOPHER. Are you Auntie Georgiana's beau?

COAST. Yes!

GEORGIANA. Chris!

CHRISTOPHER. Lizzie says so!

LIZZIE. I never!

TOOTS, CHRISTOPHER, and PHILIP. Yes, you did! You did too! You did too!

LIZZIE. [*To GEORGIANA.*] I never did, miss!

PHILIP. Yes you did, you did too!

GEORGIANA. I hope you didn't, Lizzie. You may leave the children with me now.

LIZZIE. Yes, ma'am.

[*LIZZIE, MOLES, and FOOTMAN go out at Right, each taking some plates, etc.*]

GEORGIANA. [*To COAST.*] I hope you don't mind.

COAST. Of course I don't. It's true as far as I'm concerned.

GEORGIANA. [*Laughing.*] It's not!

COAST. Listen, will you bet?

GEORGIANA. [*Laughing.*] Not before the children!

PHILIP. Come on, let's cut the cake!

GEORGIANA. Blow out the candles!

[*All the children blow out the candles and then get down from the table.*]

COAST. And here's my contribution to the party.

[*Brings out six big German mottoes from his pocket, and goes to table with them.*]

GEORGIANA. [*In pretended excitement.*] What? Mottoes!

ALL THE CHILDREN. [*In delighted chorus.*] Oh, mottoes!

PHILIP. Are those the silver mines?

COAST. No! Why?

[*Laughing and handing the mottoes around, while GEORGIANA cuts the cake.*]

PHILIP. I heard grandma say the other day, you had pockets full of silver mines.

GEORGIANA. The cake's ready!

[*All take a piece of cake. The children line up and down Centre from Right to Left:*  
ELAINE, TOOTS, PHILIP, CHRISTOPHER.

COAST. Your motto!

[*Handing one to* GEORGIANA.

GEORGIANA. One for me too! Oh, thank you!

COAST. Certainly, because I want a bit of cake. I'm after that ring.

[*Goes up back of table for cake.*

GEORGIANA. Don't anybody swallow the ring.

[*All eat the cake and now speak with their mouths full.*

CHRISTOPHER. I haven't got it yet, Auntie.

ELAINE. Nor I.

GEORGIANA. Don't talk. Everybody eat till some one gets it!

TOOTS. [*Crying.*] I can't eat my cake! I can't eat my cake!

GEORGIANA. Why not, dear?

TOOTS. 'Cause I haven't got no place! I haven't got no place to put it!

[*Crying.*

PHILIP. He's full up!

GEORGIANA. Never mind, Toots, dear, you shall have a piece for supper.

TOOTS. Will I have room then?

CHRISTOPHER. [*A sudden loud and frightened cry.*] Oh! Oh!

ALL. What's the matter?

[*All gather around* CHRISTOPHER.

GEORGIANA. [*Frightened.*] What is it, Chris?

CHRISTOPHER. [*Screaming.*] Oh!

GEORGIANA. What is it, dear?

CHRISTOPHER. I've swallowed it!

ALL. What?

CHRISTOPHER. I've swallowed the ring!

ELAINE. That isn't fair!

PHILIP. Just like Chris, 'fraid some one else'd get it.

GEORGIANA. No, Chris, dear! [*To* COAST.] What will we do?

COAST. Chris has made a mistake, here is the ring! [*Finding it in his own piece of cake.*] There weren't two, were there?

GEORGIANA. No, that's the one!

CHRISTOPHER. [*Smiling and greatly relieved.*] Oh! I guess I 'magine'd it, then.

GEORGIANA. [*Affectionately pretending to shake him.*] Well, young man, you can imagine yourself spanked for giving us all a fright. Now, come along, the mottoes. [*To* COAST.] Of course the ring wasn't meant for you. What are you going to do with it?

COAST. Keep it.

GEORGIANA. No, you mustn't; it's the children's!

COAST. Philip, may I keep the ring?

PHILIP. [*On the hobby horse.*] Yes, sir.

COAST. And I'll give each one of you a ring in place of it. What kind will you have, Elaine?

*[He makes movement towards each child as he asks the question.]*

ELAINE. One big pearl with two great big rubies.

GEORGIANA. Mercy! Small order!

COAST. Very well. And you, Phil?

PHILIP. I don't want any ring. I want a watch and chain.

COAST. Good! And you, Chris, do you want a ring?

CHRISTOPHER. I want a gun!

COAST. All right. [*Writing.*] And Toots?

TOOTS. Nanny goat!

*[They all laugh. MOLES and FOOTMAN enter, answering the bell which GEORGIANA has rung.]*

GEORGIANA. The table, Moles.

MOLES. Yes, ma'am.

*[Takes away small plates, etc.; he then goes out Right, followed by FOOTMAN, who takes everything else from the table, leaving only the cover and a false nose left from the mottoes.]*

PHILIP. [*Crosses to GEORGIANA at table.*] Grandma's been up and said we were all to go and see mamma.

GEORGIANA. Go in your mottoes; that will be great fun!

ALL THE CHILDREN. Oh, yes! Hurrah!

*[Running off Left.]*

GEORGIANA. Ssh! Don't shout so; remember poor mamma's headache!

*[All repeat, "Remember poor mamma's headache" and take hands as they tip-toe out, PHILIP first, ELAINE second, CHRIS third, TOOTS fourth, repeating "Poor mamma's headache" in a whisper till they are all out.]*

COAST. I can't get this damned thing on. Too bad Cousin Loo's ill.

GEORGIANA. Oh, she isn't really. Louise is never perfectly well and happy unless she has something the matter with her, especially if she has nothing else to do; she's bored to-day, so she's got a headache! To-night, when there's a big ball to which she is not invited, she'll be frightfully alarmed about herself for fear of appendicitis, but to-morrow, when we have smart company at luncheon, she'll recover like a shot! It's all right for Louise, but it's hard on my brother, who really adores her.

*[She sits beside the table.]*

COAST. Adores! Say! That's the word I want to use about you!

*[Follows GEORGIANA to table, moves chair to front, and sits.]*

GEORGIANA. Nonsense, Sam! Do you know anything about some stocks called United Copper?

COAST. Rotten! Don't touch it!

GEORGIANA. My brother had a tip this morning on United Copper and wanted me to give him some money to put in it.

COAST. Listen! don't you do it.

GEORGIANA. I wish you'd use your influence with Steven to help him.

COAST. How?

GEORGIANA. You must know how mad he is over speculation? But perhaps you don't know that he has gone through all his own money, and, if she'll let him, he'll go through his wife's next. [*Smiling.*] Then I suppose it would be my turn!

COAST. Why doesn't he keep out of it?

GEORGIANA. He can't, we must keep it out of him! Out of his blood!

COAST. There's only one way.

GEORGIANA. What?

COAST. Ruin him!

GEORGIANA. That's too anarchistic! You speculate.

COAST. But I always win!

GEORGIANA. Can't you teach him?

COAST. Listen, if I could do that, I'd be the richest man in the world before I got through.

GEORGIANA. Can't you give Steve a tip on some sure things?

COAST. There ain't any sure things.

GEORGIANA. Why, other friends of Steve are always "putting him on to something good."

COAST. And what happens?

GEORGIANA. [*Smiling distressfully.*] Well, he does lose, usually.

COAST. I guess so!

GEORGIANA. But you must often have inside information.

COAST. And how much is that worth?

*[Takes up the false nose from table.]*

GEORGIANA. Well, it usually costs Steve all he has! But I thought you--

COAST. [*Interrupting.*] Miss Georgiana, you see this false nose?

GEORGIANA. Yes.

COAST. [*Putting it on.*] Well, now what do I look like?

GEORGIANA. [*Laughing.*] I shouldn't like to say!

COAST. Exactly! Well, see? That's what I'd be if I believed in tips and "inside information." If a man gives your brother a good tip, let him drop it like hot lead. People with a real good tip ain't giving it away. There's never enough to divide up and go around,--not in this world,--and inside information that gets told to a lamb like your brother is too damned outside information for me!

*[He rises and moves away, half in irritation, half in humor.]*

GEORGIANA. Oh! Oh!

COAST. Pardon.

GEORGIANA. Are you as rich as people say?

COAST. Richer!

GEORGIANA. How did you get it?

COAST. I started my dough with a mine.

GEORGIANA. Why can't you put Steve into a mine?

COAST. [*Laughing.*] What's the use? he'll lose everything just as quick in Wall Street.

GEORGIANA. But I mean a good mine.

COAST. [*Coming back to her.*] Listen! I worked right in our mine with my father when I was only eight years old! That's why I ain't better educated--I worked for ten years there down in the dirt and muck!

GEORGIANA. [*Interrupting.*] And silver!

COAST. [*Leaning on the back of the chair.*] Yes, and silver. [*Laughs.*] Father's out there working yet--don't have to now, but he likes it; he ain't comfortable on top of the earth--says there's too much room. If father'd been a man like Mackay, I guess he'd been just as rich as him to-day.

GEORGIANA. And still you won't help Steve?

COAST. T'ain't business. [*He puts back his chair and leans toward GEORGIANA, hand on table.*] If helping him, mind you, would get you, I might take it on. [*Humorously.*] I'd pay even the price of Steve to buy you.

GEORGIANA. [*Taking the false nose and putting it on.*] Well, I'm not for sale. [*Rises.*] But I would like to dispose of Steven.

COAST. Go on, please take that blame thing off.

[*Follows GEORGIANA across the room to the Left.*]

GEORGIANA. No, I like it! You must understand this about my brother. [*Taking off the nose.*] He is the dearest, best fellow in the world! kind-hearted and wouldn't do a thing that wasn't straightforward in business.

COAST. But you've got to be tricky if you want to succeed in our business. I don't mind telling you right out between us, I'm tricky!

GEORGIANA. I'm sorry to hear it.

COAST. Louise was a pretty good liar when she was a kid. She ought to help her husband along a little.

GEORGIANA. That's just it! if Steve had the right sort of wife,--but all Louise wants is social position and more money.

[*She sits on the hobby horse, amusedly.*]

COAST. If Louise was like you!

[*GEORGIANA puts the nose on quickly and rocks.*]

GEORGIANA. Heaven forbid! The only trouble with Steve is he's weak. He'd have been all right if he'd been a girl--or married to a president of Sorosis, or a daughter of the Present Revolution!

COAST. Miss Georgiana, take off that nose and let me ask you something.

GEORGIANA. Not at all, my dear Sammy. I know what it is you want to ask me! I'm much obliged and I won't.

COAST. You won't marry me!

GEORGIANA. No!

COAST. Why not?

GEORGIANA. Because I don't love you.

COAST. Who do you love?

GEORGIANA. That's not your business!

COAST. Do you love any one?

GEORGIANA. [*After a moment's hesitation, lies.*] No!

COAST. [*With insinuation.*] Why don't you get Dick Coleman to help Steven?

GEORGIANA. [*Taking off the nose.*] Why do you ask me that now in that way?

COAST. Information!

GEORGIANA. Dick's a lawyer. What could he do for Steven?

COAST. That's not the information I wanted.

GEORGIANA. But it's all the information you'll get!

*[Gets off the hobby horse and comes down a little.]*

COAST. *[Follows her.]* Georgiana, marry me, and I'll look after Steven all the rest of his life.

GEORGIANA. Sammy, you don't want me to marry you if I don't love you.

COAST. Yes, I do. Listen! I'd risk your not loving me; there's nothing on God's earth I wouldn't do to make you love me.

GEORGIANA. That's the trouble with you men, you think you can make a woman love you whether she wants to or not, but you can't!--neither can you keep her from loving you if she does, whether she wants to or not.

*[Throws nose away; crossing to the Left, sits in the rocking chair there.]*

COAST. I'd give you everything!

GEORGIANA. That you can buy!

COAST. Do you mean that you'd rather be dead poor than marry me?

GEORGIANA. No, I don't say that! When I've lost everything and Steven and Louise are bankrupt, and we haven't a penny--

COAST. Yes!

GEORGIANA. I might--I say I might--

COAST. Honest!

GEORGIANA. *[Laughing.]* Oh, dear, no!

COAST. I take you at your word, anyhow.

*[The children's voices are heard.]*

CHILDREN. *[Off Left.]* Come on back to our room and have some more fun.

GEORGIANA. Sh! Here come the children.

*[Rises.]*

COAST. Damn the children!

GEORGIANA. Sam!

*[She puts finger up, COAST kisses it.]*

COAST. Pardon! But I don't give up! Understand--I'm going to marry you!

GEORGIANA. *[Teasing him.]* When? When?

*[The children rush in screaming.]*

THE CHILDREN. Aunt Georgiana! Here's papa! Here's papa!

*[And STEVEN CARLEY enters Left. He is a slender, smooth-shaven, young-old looking man, his voice and body almost vibrating with nerve; a personality that so often appeals to the tenderness in women, while it irritates men. He brings his hat and coat with him.]*

STEVEN. Hello, Sam!

COAST. Morning!

STEVEN. Many happy returns, Georgy.

GEORGIANA. Oh, no, thank you! It's not for me yet, thank goodness!

PHILIP. Now let's play hide and seek.

THE CHILDREN. Hide and seek!

LIZZIE. [*Entering Left.*] Excuse me, please. Mrs. Jackson's maid is here for Miss Elaine.

PHILIP. Oh, pshaw!

CHRISTOPHER. Don't you go!

ELAINE. Oh, yes, I must! I'm sorry! [*She goes up stage with great diffidence to STEVEN and shakes his hand as she curtseys.*] Good-by, sir. [*To COAST also.*] Good-by, sir. [*To GEORGIANA.*] Good-by, ma'am, I've had a perfectly lovely time. [*Aside to GEORGIANA.*] Phil is my beau, but I like Mr. Coast awfully much too!

GEORGIANA. [*Laughing.*] You're beginning early! Come along, children, we'll take Elaine down. Excuse me, everybody, please.

PHILIP. If you've got any good tips, papa, save some for little brother.

*[The children go out Left with GEORGIANA.]*

STEVEN. [*Putting his hat and coat down on the sofa.*] He's on to his father early! Sam, any news?

COAST. No.

STEVEN. I've heard of a big thing, an absolutely straight tip,--inside information.

COAST. [*Sitting in the rocker.*] Well, don't tell it, or you'll spoil it.

STEVEN. The women are so down on my speculating, Georgiana especially.

*[Sits on the table.]*

COAST. What do the women folks know about business? Why don't you keep what you do to yourself?

STEVEN. But you see my money's all gone, and I need more--only to recoup with.

COAST. [*After a slight pause.*] As I remember, you can do what you like with Louise's money.

STEVEN. But is it right?

COAST. You're too blamed afraid, that's why you always lose.

STEVEN. [*Walking up and down.*] I know it. And this is the biggest chance I've had yet. If I dared risk it, I'm sure I could make a fortune! Not in words! I know what I'm talking about, Sam. Louise would have everything she wanted--and the way she'd live then! She could drop the social chip off her shoulders, go anywhere, and receive everybody.

*[Standing beside the table, he eats a little cake.]*

COAST. Well?

STEVEN. Do you advise me to risk it?

COAST. [*Pretending indifference.*] What?

STEVEN. Louise's money?

COAST. I ain't advising anything. If it went wrong, you'd blame me to the women.

STEVEN. Is that the kind of a man I am?

COAST. [*Rises and goes to Steven and slaps him on the back.*] No, Steve, I take it back. You take a licking better'n any feller I ever saw.

STEVEN. Experience! But this thing can't go wrong! The man who told me is the head and--I told Georgiana--didn't she give you a hint?

COAST. [*After a slight pause.*] No.

*[Turns up to the window and stands there with his back to Steven.]*

STEVEN. My tip's a great one--safe! Now, shall I take it?

COAST. Of course, when I feel as you do about a thing, I do it.

STEVEN. And by George, I will too!

COAST. Why not?

*[Turning and facing him.]*

STEVEN. Yes! what I make's for Louise, not for myself.

COAST. I wouldn't say anything to Louise about it.

*[Comes down a little.]*

STEVEN. No, she'd be sure to talk it over with Georgiana.

*[He sits by the table.]*

COAST. And, say, not a word, you know, about me in all this.

STEVEN. I give you my word, Sam.

COAST. Why not let the old lady in, too, Aunt Laura, if it's such a good thing?

*[He gives a side look at STEVEN.]*

STEVEN. Didn't they tell you?

COAST. What?

STEVEN. I put mother into East Mexicos!

COAST. Gee!

*[Whistles, crosses to the sofa Right, and sits on GEORGIANA'S furs; jumps up quickly, moves the furs, and then sits again.]*

STEVEN. That was an extraordinary thing. No one knows how it happened, but she lost every cent.

COAST. But--

STEVEN. Dear old Georgiana pays the interest for me, and the old lady doesn't know.

COAST. Georgiana's a damn fine girl.

STEVEN. She is! I'll pay her back out of this coup, too, another good thing.

COAST. Fine!

STEVEN. I believe I'll go back down town now.

*[Both rise and go Left as MOLES comes in.]*

COAST. All right. Come on, we'll go together.

STEVEN. Good!

MOLES. Please, sir, may I speak to you a minute, Mr. Carley?

COAST. I'll wait downstairs, Steve.

*[He goes out Left.]*

STEVEN. Yes, Moles?

MOLES. The champagne is out, sir.

STEVEN. Order another case.

MOLES. I did, three days ago, over the telephone, and I called them up yesterday to ask about it, and they said your bill

was so long outstanding they'd please like it settled before filling any future orders.

STEVEN. Tell Mrs. Carley; the household bills are her affair, aren't they?

MOLES. She says there is some mistake. She gave you a check for the wine bill last month, sir.

STEVEN. Did she? Oh, of course she did. It was the day I heard about Alabama Rails and I bought a couple on margin! They're down just now. The wine people must wait.

[*Dismissing him.*]

MOLES. But we've a big luncheon, sir, to-morrow and no wine.

STEVEN. Very well, then, I'll get Miss Georgiana to give you a check. I don't want to bother Mrs. Carley, she's got a headache.

MOLES. The wages are due, sir, and the trades books weren't settled last month.

STEVEN. Well, I'll attend to it all to-morrow or next day, Moles. Give me my coat, will you? [MOLES *gets the coat from the sofa and hands it to STEVEN.*] I've been short of ready money for a little while, but things are looking up. By the way, you're a good sort; I'd like to do you a good turn. I happen to be on to something, Moles, on to something down in Wall Street. Would you like to make a little money?

MOLES. [*Brightening visibly.*] Indeed and I would, sir. I've got two thousand three hundred and sixteen dollars in my savings bank, and I've heard of how these Wall Street magnums made fortunes out of less'n that.

STEVEN. I'll double it for you! You get it for me, Moles, and I'll make it into five or six thousand for you, sure!

MOLES. Thank you, sir!

STEVEN. [*Writes in note book.*] I'll put in an order to buy for you the first thing in the morning; and you have your money down at my office by ten o'clock, can you?

MOLES. Yes, sir, I can get off in the morning. I can't thank you enough, sir!

STEVEN. Oh, that's all right,--we'll be a rich household here before we get through, Moles. They'll be telephoning us to please send in some orders for champagne!

[*Puts note-book away.*]

MOLES. Oh, don't trouble about these bills, sir. I can hold off the people a little longer, and I'll order the wine in another place.

STEVEN. That's a good boy, Moles, then I won't have to bother my sister.

MOLES. Yes, sir.

[*He goes out as GEORGIANA and the children enter Left.*]

GEORGIANA. Here's papa! Come along, now, Steve, I've promised the children a game of hide and go seek!

STEVEN. All right, I knew father wanted to do something very much,--only couldn't think what. Of course, it was hide and seek!

GEORGIANA. Philip must be "it" first!

PHILIP. All right!

[PHILIP *goes into the corner Right, with his back to the others. All hide behind or under the different pieces of furniture--GEORGIANA under the table, TOOTS back of the rocker; STEVEN under the sofa, etc.*]

PHILIP. [*Impatient.*] Are you ready?

[*Pause.*]

CHRISTOPHER. Not yet!

[*Getting behind curtains Centre window.*]

PHILIP. Now are you ready?

[LIZZIE comes in Left, as soon as STEVEN hides under sofa.

GEORGIANA. Not yet!

[Getting under the table.

LIZZIE. Mr. Carley, please, sir!

STEVEN. [Putting his head out from under the sofa.] Yes, Lizzie?

CHRISTOPHER. Don't turn round, Phil, it's only Lizzie. Wait!

LIZZIE. Excuse me, but Mr. Coast sent me upstairs to see--

STEVEN. Oh, by George, yes! [Coming out from the sofa.] I forgot. I must go back down town.

PHILIP. Oh, pshaw!

[About to turn.

GEORGIANA. Don't turn, Phil!

CHRISTOPHER. No, the rest of us is hid!

STEVEN. I'm sorry, children! Father'd a great deal rather play hide and seek, but he's got to go to work. It's just like when you'd rather play but have to study!

PHILIP. When I get growed, I shan't never do anything I don't want to.

GEORGIANA. Then you'd be the most wonderful person in the world, and they'd put you in wax in the Eden Musee!

STEVEN. [Kissing PHIL, then CHRIS, then TOOTS.] Good-by, dears.

THE CHILDREN. [Dolefully.] Good-by.

[STEVEN crosses to the door Left.

GEORGIANA. Never mind, I'll finish with you. Don't turn around, Phil.

LIZZIE. [At the door Left.] Beg pardon, sir, but Moles has been and told me what you was going to do for him, sir. Would you be considering it great impertinence if I asked you to take six hundred dollars what I've saved, sir, and do things with it?

STEVEN. Certainly, Lizzie, send it by Moles in the morning.

LIZZIE. [Delighted.] Oh, thank you, sir!

STEVEN. I'm glad to do it; you've served us faithfully for some years now, Lizzie.

[He goes out.

LIZZIE. He's gone, miss.

[She goes out also.

GEORGIANA. [Calls.] Ready!

[PHILIP turns and looks about the room, then begins to look under things. He sees his AUNT GEORGIANA first and is about to touch her; but she laughingly motions him not to and points out TOOTS's hiding place.

PHILIP. [Finding TOOTS, touches him.] You're it!

TOOTS. [Very pleased.] I'm it! I'm it!

[Jumps up and down.

CHRISTOPHER. [Disappointed.] Somebody find me.

PHILIP. Oh, come on out from behind the curtain--you're--easy.

[CHRISTOPHER *comes out. Meanwhile* COLEMAN *is heard calling, "Hello, Phil, Phil," outside as he comes up the stairs.*

PHILIP. [*By the hobby horse.*] It's Mr. Dick!

THE CHILDREN. It's Mr. Dick!

GEORGIANA. Oh!

[*Starts to get out from under the table, but* COLEMAN *enters, so she crawls back.*

[LIEUTENANT RICHARD COLEMAN *is a handsome, finely built man of about thirty-two. He is a West Pointer; is a good oarsman, a crack shot, and a good fellow all around. No finicking about him, no nerves. Just a sane, healthy, fine fellow.*

DICK. Hello! Many happy returns, Phil. [*Shakes hands.*] Where's your Aunt Georgiana! [*Silence.*] Is she out?

PHIL. No, she's under the table!

CHRISTOPHER AND TOOTS. [*Delighted.*] She's under the table! She's under the table!

DICK. [*Laughing.*] What!

PHILIP. Hide and seek.

[DICK *looks under the table; he and* GEORGIANA *laugh.*

DICK. Good morning, are you at home?

GEORGIANA. [*Very embarrassed.*] Oh, mercy! Do go away so I can get out!

DICK. [*Tremendously amused.*] Come on out!

GEORGIANA. No! I can't with you there. [*Laughing.*] Please leave the room for just one minute!

DICK. Not if I know it! Come on out!

GEORGIANA. Not for worlds! Go away, please! [DICK *shakes his head "No."*] Then I shall never come out.

DICK. Ah, but that's hardly fair, because I want to talk to you comfortably.

GEORGIANA. Well, then, come on under!

DICK. Is there room?

GEORGIANA. A cable car conductor who knew his business could seat four more people in here.

DICK. Still—I think I'm more comfortable up here.

GEORGIANA. Selfish! Go on away! [DICK *shakes his head.*] Children, if you love your auntie, go for Mr. Dick with all your might and main and push him into the hall.

[*The children shout and rush toward* DICK; *they catch hold of him.*

THE CHILDREN. Go away!

DICK. [*With mock ferocity.*] The first child I get hold of I'll *spank!*

[*The children laugh and shout and run away from him to behind the table.*

THE CHILDREN. *Spank!*

GEORGIANA. Ogre! Very well! After all, I'm not vain! It would take Barnum's human snake to get out of this gracefully, anyway!

[*Coming out, arranging her dress and hair.*

DICK. Have some help?

GEORGIANA. No, thank you. But still, what a horrid person you are, aren't you?

[*They both laugh.*

DICK. *You aren't!*

GEORGIANA. O dear me! Making up now with a compliment! Well, what do you think of my birthday antics? Playing hide and seek--or, perhaps, trained elephants--doesn't interest you!

CHRISTOPHER. Lelephants! Oh, Auntie! Is the *circus* coming?

[*The children give themselves up to transports. PHIL hugs TOOTS and repeats "Circus."*]

GEORGIANA. No, darling, but this circus is going--your old-maid aunt--to put herself to rights!

DICK. You couldn't improve on present appearances!

GEORGIANA. Really! Such fine speeches! But they don't go with your manners! Would you like to join in the game?

PHILIP. Oh, yes! Hurrah!

[*Runs to DICK, when MRS. CARLEY comes in from the Left.*]

MRS. CARLEY. Well! What's going on?

PHILIP. Birthdays!

MRS. CARLEY. Not for me!

GEORGIANA. Don't you want to play hide and go seek, mother?

MRS. CARLEY. I'm playing it all the time with old age! That's enough!

GEORGIANA. Well, excuse me, please, while I repair damages.

[*She goes out Right.*]

DICK. [*Calls.*] Come back.

CHILDREN. [*Calling.*] Come back!

MRS. CARLEY. I want the children for a few minutes.

THE CHILDREN. [*Disappointed.*] Oh, Grannie!

[*She goes to children and drives them off Left ahead of her.*]

THE CHILDREN. Oh, Grandma!

MRS. CARLEY. Mrs. Vale is downstairs with the twins, to wish Phil many happy returns.

[*The children go out Left unwillingly. MRS. CARLEY comes back.*]

DICK. Going to spoil our game, Grandma?

MRS. CARLEY. Don't you grandma me! You're old enough for me to marry you.

DICK. Help!

MRS. CARLEY. Don't worry! Having lost two good husbands, I'm not going to risk losing a third.

DICK. I breathe freely once more.

MRS. CARLEY. I thought Sammy Coast was here.

DICK. Not since I came. He seems a clever chap!

MRS. CARLEY. We think so, and we hope so. He adores Georgiana.

DICK. Oh!

MRS. CARLEY. Huh! huh! [*DICK walks away.*] What do you say to that match?

DICK. You don't mean?--

[*Turns to MRS. CARLEY.*]

MRS. CARLEY. Looks like it! It would be a fine thing for both of them. Sam could give her a fortune, and Georgiana give him a big position.

DICK. But--

MRS. CARLEY. He's crazy about her! Comes here every day--follows her like a dog.

DICK. But it isn't--

MRS. CARLEY. [*Interrupting.*] Not yet, but we don't dare breathe! And we're on tiptoe for the final word.

DICK. What does Steven say?

MRS. CARLEY. Delighted, of course. [*Walks away a little.*] I hope you haven't brought Steve any tips to-day.

DICK. [*Laughing.*] No!

MRS. CARLEY. Thank goodness! He doesn't seem to have had any this week and the house has been fairly quiet! [*GEORGIANA comes back.*] I must go to Mrs. Vale. [*Goes out.*]

GEORGIANA. Mother looks pleased.

DICK. She's never very depressed, is she?

GEORGIANA. Yes, sometimes,--in the day-time! It's largely a matter of frocks and bonnets, and depends sometimes on the exact color of her hair.

DICK. I often wonder that you keep on living with Mrs. Carley and Louise. They can't help being beastly uncongenial to you.

GEORGIANA. But Mrs. Carley brought me up. She did her worst with the best intentions, and you mustn't forget Steve! [*She sits beside the table and DICK leans against it to talk to her.*] He's my own brother, you know, and I'm so afraid Louise will finally disillusion him and spoil his happiness. I'm standing on guard.

DICK. You think a lot of Steve.

GEORGIANA. I love him better than any one else in the world. [*She adds in a very low voice.*] Almost!

[*A short pause.*]

DICK. Steve comes second!

[*Pause.*]

GEORGIANA. [*Low voice and looking away.*] Perhaps.

DICK. I hope you don't mind my asking you these questions.

GEORGIANA. No, I like it.

DICK. I don't want you to tell me anything more than you care to.

GEORGIANA. [*Turning and half laughing.*] That's very good of you.

DICK. But I *wish* you'd tell me everything.

GEORGIANA. My dear Dick, there isn't anything more for me to tell.

DICK. Oh, very well, if you want to leave it that way.

[*Moving away.*]

GEORGIANA. Leave what?

DICK. I mean if that's all you want to tell me.

GEORGIANA. Why don't *you* tell *me* something.

DICK. That's what I've come to do.

GEORGIANA. Have you?

DICK. [*Turns and faces* GEORGIANA.] Our regiment is ordered off to the Philippines.

GEORGIANA. Your regiment?

DICK. Yes.

GEORGIANA. [*Breathless.*] Who's going?

DICK. Who? Why, we're going, of course.

GEORGIANA. All of you?

DICK. Yes, all of us. There are two insurrections on a couple of islands that must be put down, and they want some fresh men.

GEORGIANA. But it will be awful warfare out there, won't it, unfair, cruel, unlawful warfare?

DICK. I suppose that's what it's likely to be with the natives until we teach them a thorough lesson on every one of the infernal islands.

GEORGIANA. But--

*[Hesitates, rises; they are both in front of the table.]*

DICK. But what?

GEORGIANA. [*Pause.*] But your business,--how can you leave your office?

DICK. There are plenty of people who'll be only too glad to take on my clients.

GEORGIANA. But when you come back?

DICK. If the worst comes to the worst, I'll have to begin all over again.

GEORGIANA. No! Don't go--Dick! Don't go!

DICK. Why not?

GEORGIANA. [*Humorously, to cover her emotion.*] I don't want any one else to get your clients.

DICK. Oh, you were thinking of my career! That'll take care of itself if I come back--and if I don't--

GEORGIANA. Please!

DICK. They said we were a lot of dandies in the regiment, and that if it ever came to fighting, people'd see us back down!

GEORGIANA. But need you all go?

DICK. That's the glory of it! It's fine, Georgy. There isn't a single man who'll be left behind, not on any old excuse!

GEORGIANA. Splendid!

DICK. You do want me to go, then, don't you?

GEORGIANA. Yes, if it's like that, I want you to go--but--I want you to come back, too!

*[Almost breaking down.]*

DICK. Hello! I believe you're crying.

GEORGIANA. I'm not!

DICK. [*Tenderly, scarcely believing.*] Do you care so much as that, Georgy?

GEORGIANA. [*Proudly.*] Of course I care!

DICK. It's funny, isn't it--think how long we've known each other.

GEORGIANA. [*Still with a choke and a tear.*] I don't see why it's funny.

DICK. What I mean is, we're sentimental beasts--we people.

GEORGIANA. Thank you, I don't care for the way you put it.

DICK. [*Takes a long breath.*] Well, I wish you joy, Georgiana.

GEORGIANA. Much obliged.

DICK. And good-by.

[*Shakes hands.*]

GEORGIANA. [*Rises.*] Not now, for good.

DICK. [*Laughing.*] Oh, no, we aren't off for ten days yet. But I wanted to tell my old pal first.

GEORGIANA. That was good of you. And you'll come in often before you go, won't you, Dick?

DICK. You bet! Every chance I get.

[*Both go up to the window. He has meant to go, but she manoeuvres him to the big seat instead.*]

GEORGIANA. And anything I can do for you?

[*She sits.*]

DICK. [*Sitting beside her.*] Oh, I don't think there can be anything.

GEORGIANA. Oh, yes, there is always something women can do for men who go away to fight. They make things! Let me make something for you.

DICK. Can't think of anything. Got everything I want.

GEORGIANA. You're a lucky man to have everything you want--and going off to the Philippines with a jolly crowd of friends and glad you're going! I take back all my sympathy, and I wouldn't make you anything now if you asked me to.

DICK. And, by George, just when I'd thought of something.

GEORGIANA. What?

DICK. [*Laughing.*] A court-plaster case!

GEORGIANA. You can buy one in a drug store.

DICK. I ought to have some present to carry in my breast pocket; don't you know bullets are always warded off that way?

GEORGIANA. Oh, that was in the old romantic days of the nineteenth century, and then it was a prayer book or a bunch of love letters. To-day it's much more apt to be a cigarette case!

[*The children run in, led by PHILIP.*]

PHILIP. They've gone! Hurrah! They've gone!

[*GEORGIANA and DICK rise.*]

CHRISTOPHER. They've gone! They've gone!

[*TOOTS hangs on to DICK.*]

PHILIP. [*Taking hold of GEORGIANA.*] Come on, now, our game, or we'll never have it!

CHRISTOPHER. Blindman's buff!

TOOTS. Yes, blindman's buff!

GEORGIANA. [*To DICK.*] Are you game?

DICK. Just one round, and then I must be off. I'll be blindfolded.

[*Takes out his handkerchief.*]

TOOTS. I want to be blindfolded!

PHILIP. No! Let Mr. Dick!

DICK. [*Giving his handkerchief to GEORGIANA.*] Will you blindfold me?

GEORGIANA. [*Binds his eyes.*] To my faults?

DICK. That would be Love's Labour Lost.

GEORGIANA. How do you mean Love's Labour Lost?

PHILIP. Don't let him peek!

DICK. And whoever I catch, I kiss!

PHILIP. No, tell the name first!

DICK. No, I must play my own game, and that is to kiss her first, and tell the name afterwards!

GEORGIANA. Now, turn him around three times, Christopher. [*CHRISTOPHER does so, holding DICK by the knees.*] And keep away, everybody!

CHRISTOPHER. Ready!

*[All watch eagerly. DICK moves down stage, reaching his arms out as a blindfolded person does, but always with his arms too high to catch one of the children.]*

PHILIP. Put your arms lower!

CHRISTOPHER. Yes, you can only catch Aunt Georgiana that way!

*[GEORGIANA, happy, pinches CHRISTOPHER'S arm playfully. DICK lowers his arms for a moment, but purposely catches no one. Then he lifts his arms a little towards GEORGIANA, who cries out and moves, lifting TOOTS on the table. DICK follows the sound of her voice and catches hold of TOOTS'S head.]*

PHILIP. [*Excited.*] Musn't move your hands!

DICK. Make her kiss me, then.

*[GEORGIANA leans over, holding TOOTS to one side, and kisses DICK herself.]*

PHILIP. [*Delighted, calls out.*] Guess who! Guess who!

*[GEORGIANA motions to the children not to tell and moves away.]*

DICK. [*Hearing the voice from where he supposes the kiss came, he takes off the bandage. He sees TOOTS and is disappointed.*] Why--I thought it was Georgiana! Toots! You rascal!

CHRISTOPHER. [*Trying to tell.*] But Mr. Dick, Mr. Dick!

*[TOOTS laughs and claps hands. GEORGIANA gets hold of CHRISTOPHER and holds her hand over his mouth. GEORGIANA and CHRISTOPHER follow DICK to the door Left.]*

GEORGIANA. [*To CHRISTOPHER, to stop his telling.*] Sh! [*To DICK.*] Good-by!

DICK. Good-by!

TOOTS. [*Wanting to tell.*] But--

PHILIP. Good-by! Good-by!

GEORGIANA. Good-by Dick! Come soon again!

DICK. To-morrow!

GEORGIANA. I'll wait in all day!

CHRISTOPHER. But Mr. Dick, it was--

*[GEORGIANA hushes him with her hand over his mouth.]*

GEORGIANA. Good-by!

DICK. Good-by!

*[He goes out Left.]*

CHRISTOPHER, PHILIP, AND TOOTS. Good-by!

*[GEORGIANA bursts into tears and hugs TOOTS on top of the table.]*

CHRISTOPHER. But it was you, Aunt Georgiana!

GEORGIANA. Don't any of you tell on auntie! You won't, will you? Let auntie have her own way.

## THE CURTAIN FALLS

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## ACT II

*The drawing-room at the Carleys'. A handsome room in dark wood, with tapestry on the walls and an old portrait built in over the mantle. The furniture is gilt, Louis XVI, covered with old crimson brocade. There is a warmth about the room, a profusion of flowers, some books and magazines. A piano in the upper left-hand corner; a window with a balcony at Left. Doors Right and Left. LOUISE and MRS. CARLEY are replacing the furniture, which has been disarranged. Out on the balcony MOLES is seen, with PHILIP and CHRISTOPHER, arranging an American flag on the balcony balustrade.*

LOUISE. Thank goodness, the luncheon's over!

MRS. CARLEY. Yes, I thought they'd never go, and I've got the Shindle woman coming to do my hair.

LOUISE. I noticed it was getting a little dark at the wrong end, mother.

MRS. CARLEY. What was it Steve said this morning? It was always darkest before blond! Well, it's lucky I'm good-natured so long as I live in this family and don't want to grow old.

LOUISE. What are they doing on the balcony?

MRS. CARLEY. Dick Coleman's regiment marches by here this afternoon.

*[She sits by a table Right.]*

LOUISE. Do they start for the Philippines to-day?

MRS. CARLEY. Yes, and the President is to receive them in front of the Plaza.

LOUISE. *[Coming to her.]* Have you noticed Steve?

MRS. CARLEY. No,--has he got a new suit?

LOUISE. No, something's troubling him. *[Thoughtfully.]* I believe he's been speculating again and has lost.

MRS. CARLEY. He couldn't; he hasn't got anything more to lose.

LOUISE. *[Petulantly.]* He hasn't played with the children for a week and he hates going out so lately,--wants to refuse every invitation! Even the ones you and I've been patting ourselves on the back for getting! I can't stand it.

MRS. CARLEY. Quite right, too--if one doesn't go out, where can one go, and if we don't go anywhere, what are we to do? We can't stay home. *[Rising, she crosses to mirror on table Left.]* I say, dear, what about having my hair a little redder?

LOUISE. Let me see! *[MRS. CARLEY faces her--LOUISE examines her critically.]* I wouldn't much; if you do, people will say you dye it.

MRS. CARLEY. I don't care what they say, so long as they don't say it to my face. Have you had yours massaged this morning?

LOUISE. Yes, why?

[Goes to mirror and, pushing MRS. CARLEY out of the way, examines her face in the glass.

MRS. CARLEY. Nothing, only I think you must have it done religiously, darling; the crow's feet are beginning to come.

[Sits on sofa and begins to crochet on an afghan.

LOUISE. Oh, I'm worried to-day and besides, I think our masseuse is getting careless. [Turns, goes up to MRS. CARLEY, and sits on the sofa.] I'm going to change her; she never tells you anything about anybody, anyway.

MRS. CARLEY. I told you that the first day she came. She was positively rude the way she refused to be pumped by me about the people next door. Do you know I'm worried too. [Rises, gives LOUISE her work, and again looks in the glass.] I think my hips are getting bigger.

LOUISE. Well, my dear mother, you must have hips sometime in your life, and you've done pretty well. Look at your friend, Mrs. Brint.

[FOOTMAN enters with tray, goes to table Right, and collects the small cups and saucers.

MRS. CARLEY. My dear! when Sarah Brint was *married* she looked like a widow! [LOUISE laughs.] It made me so mad seeing the people eat everything the way they did.

LOUISE. Mamma, you're so amusing. Of course we do have good food; we must get people here somehow.

MRS. CARLEY. And I not daring to eat a thing! Why is it nice things are all fattening?

[The FOOTMAN goes out.

LOUISE. [Rises and comes to MRS. CARLEY.] Does it strike you that this dress of mine makes me look too short-waisted?

MRS. CARLEY. Turn round. [LOUISE does so.] Yes! don't wear it again.

LOUISE. [Irritated.] Why didn't you tell me before lunch?

MRS. CARLEY. I didn't notice it!

LOUISE. [Angry. Turns to mirror and then to MRS. CARLEY.] That's just it! You don't care! You don't think of me ever! You only think of yourself!

MRS. CARLEY. [Angry.] That's not true. I've sacrificed my life for you, and for what good?

LOUISE. What good! Good heavens, haven't Steve and I done everything for you, lugged you into the best position almost in New York?

MRS. CARLEY. Yes, that's just it, "*almost!*" Your husband hates me and you back him up--and keep me in the background!

LOUISE. I couldn't! You wouldn't stay there.

[With a disagreeable laugh.

MRS. CARLEY. [Sits in chair left of the table.] That's it, insult me,--but I've had enough! I've made up my mind, anyway, to leave your house and live by myself.

[Whimpering.

LOUISE. Oh, stop, mamma. You know I didn't mean anything. I'm sorry!

MRS. CARLEY. [Crying.] No, I'm in the way.

LOUISE. You're not in the way. You know I couldn't live without my darling pretty little mamma. Please stop crying and kiss me.

[Puts her arms around her.

MRS. CARLEY. [Still crying.] I haven't anybody in the world but you.

LOUISE. Don't I know that, don't I know I couldn't get on without you! There! [Kisses her.] Now it's all right. Come on, darling, come up and get your hair dyed.

MRS. CARLEY. [*Pleasantly.*] Sh! don't *call* it that!

LOUISE. I am irritable lately, I know it--but I see without our money even Steve couldn't get us a decent position. We might just as well face the truth. Certain people don't appreciate you and me, mamma. We aren't even acquired tastes.

MRS. CARLEY. No one ever appreciated me long. I was prettier than you were at your age, and my husbands both fell in love with me at first sight. But I never wore well.

[*She takes a magazine from the table and begins to cut the pages.*]

LOUISE. I wonder if Georgiana *will* marry Sammy!

MRS. CARLEY. I wish to goodness she would.

LOUISE. I believe she's in love with Mr. Coleman.

MRS. CARLEY. No, they've always known each other.

LOUISE. Well, some people wear better than we do, that's all! and I believe she's in love with him, whether either of them know it or not.

[*GEORGIANA comes in Left with BELLA SHINDLE. MISS SHINDLE is a florid, buxom young person, pleased with herself and all the world. She carries several packages.*]

GEORGIANA. Here's Bella, mother.

EVERYBODY. How are you, Bella?

GEORGIANA. All your guests gone?

[*She sits left of table. MRS. CARLEY goes back of table, and LOUISE moves to the right.*]

MRS. CARLEY. Yes, thank goodness! You *might* have been here.

GEORGIANA. You know I can't stand your would-be smart parties!

LOUISE. I think they're always angry when they don't see you.

GEORGIANA. Nonsense! Did you have a good time? Pick everybody else to pieces?

LOUISE. No, we all said nice things about Mrs. Lothman.

GEORGIANA. Mercy! What's the matter with her?

LOUISE. My dear, she's a perfect nonentity; she might just as well *not* exist.

GEORGIANA. [*Amused.*] Well, to tell the truth, I don't care much about her myself. She's one of those boring creatures who when you ask her how she is, really tells you!

MRS. CARLEY. *You* with fancy work! What in the world are you doing?

GEORGIANA. I am knitting a tie for Dick!

MRS. CARLEY. Good gracious. Well, I'll go upstairs and get into something *loose*. I'll be ready in ten minutes.

[*She goes out Right.*]

LOUISE. I must see the children; I haven't seen them to-day.

[*She follows her mother out.*]

BELLA. Miss Carley.

GEORGIANA. Yes, Bella.

BELLA. Mr. Coleman, Lieutenant Coleman, is going to the Philippines to-day.

GEORGIANA. [*Sighing involuntarily.*] Yes, Bella.

BELLA. I've got a friend going along.

GEORGIANA. In the company?

BELLA. Yes--well, I don't mind telling you--he's my young man, Miss Carley.

GEORGIANA. Why, Bella, I didn't know you were engaged?

BELLA. Well, I don't know as you'd call it exactly, yes I *would* say as we *was* engaged--though I haven't got a ring. But we're going to get married when he comes back, if hugging and kissing is binding, which I *guess*, with witnesses! He wanted to give me a ring of his mother's, but I said "No," I wouldn't take that, it was sacred and he'd always wore it. You see it was an old-fashioned-looking sort of onyx stone with oyster pearls, and not for me--I'd rather wait.

GEORGIANA. You have an eye out on the main chance, Bella.

BELLA. Well, I wasn't born yesterday. Say, all the girls was crazy about him. I met him to dancing school Tuesday evenings at Adelphi Hall and we started right in, every Sunday night to church and every Saturday to the theatre. He enjoyed Sundays best and I Saturdays, but I felt it was because church was cheapest. He's dreadful economical.

GEORGIANA. You get more attention than I do from my soldier. You at least have the consolation of knowing you're the girl he's left behind.

BELLA. 'Tain't much consolation if I get left for *good*! Say, will you ask Mr. Coleman to sort o' look after him? Ask him to please put him in the back row when there's fighting--and keep an eye on his health. I'm afraid it's dreadful *damp* being a soldier; and do you know that man actually catches cold if he forgets his rubbers and it sprinkles?

GEORGIANA. I don't think he ought to go if he's so delicate; Mr. Coleman will take an interest in your friend, I know, if I ask him. What's his name?

BELLA. Mr. Gootch.

GEORGIANA. *Mr. Gootch!* Yes, I can remember that. But, you see, if he's a soldier he must do his duty, whatever it is.

BELLA. There's no holding him back! He's jus' as likely as not to lose his position at Snipleys, Crabford & Snipleys, too, but he *will* go! It's surprising to see a man with such a weak chest and delicate feet, so awful brave and persistent.

LOUISE. [*Coming back.*] I bore the children to death, so I left them. What are all these bundles, Bella?

BELLA. Christmas presents. This is just the time of the year to buy, you know, you can get such bargains! and if there's one thing I think nicer'n anything else to get cheap, it's Christmas presents.

GEORGIANA. You should do like Mrs. Carley, Bella, save half of the things you get one year to give away the next.

[*She sits by the table and goes on with her work.*]

LOUISE. I always do that. I get so many things I can't bear.

GEORGIANA. But you must be careful not to send them back to the same place they came from! That *has* happened.

LOUISE. Georgiana!

[*Bella laughs out loud and sits on the sofa. Louise sits opposite Georgiana.*]

GEORGIANA. What have you got? Sit down and tell us.

BELLA. Thank you, ma'am. [*Delighted with the opportunity. Taking up the different parcels.*] Well, I've got an elegant pair of scissors for mother, marked down because of a flaw in the steel, but she's near-sighted, and she don't want to use 'em anyway--it's just to feel she has another pair. Scissors is mother's fad--sort of born in her, I guess, for my mother's mother was a kind of dressmaker. She didn't have robes and mantucks over her door, you know,--she was too swell for that,--she went out by the day! And this is a real bronze Louis ink-stand for my sister's husband, only cost thirty-nine cents and hasn't got a thing the matter with it, so long as you don't see the others--if you see the others, you'll observe that there's a naked lady missing off the top part which I'm glad of anyway as I'm giving it to a gentleman, and he'll never see the others besides. And this is two boxes of writing paper; aren't they *huge!* awful cheap with a lovely picture of an actress on top--Lillian Russell in *Mice and Men*, I think, on one, and Jean Duresk the Opera Singer in *Lonegrind* on the other. The boxes 'av got false bottoms--so there ain't very much writing material, but the rich effect's there all the same.

GEORGIANA. [*Laughing.*] Bella, you're a wonderful shopper!

BELLA. And this is a copy of Homer's *Iliad* for my sister. Do you know it? Is it nice? Anything like Hall Caine's works, or Mary Corelli's? She's always been my sister's favorite writress. You see they've got a whole counter of these

beautifully bound in red and gold, and only nineteen cents. But it's so hard to decide which to buy. I've about decided now to take this back and change it for *Lucille*. Which do you think my sister'd like best, Homer's *Iliad* or *Lucille*?

GEORGIANA. I believe she'd prefer *Lucille*, and besides half the fun in shopping is in the changing one's mind and taking things back, don't you think so?

BELLA. Yes, ma'am, I think so.

[MOLES enters Left.

MOLES. Mr. Coast to see Miss Georgiana, please.

[BELLA rises.

GEORGIANA. Did you say I was in?

MOLES. Yes, miss.

GEORGIANA. What a bore! Very well, Moles.

[He goes out.

BELLA. I'll be going up to Mrs. Carley, now.

[Goes toward the door Right.

GEORGIANA. Wait a minute, Bella. I want you to do something for me. Entertain Sammy, Louise, till I come back.

[She goes out with BELLA.

LOUISE. I never was able to entertain Sammy, but I'll do my best.

[COAST enters, announced by MOLES, who immediately exits.

COAST. Hello, Lou, how goes it?

LOUISE. Beastly!

COAST. Where's Miss Georgiana?

LOUISE. She'll be down in a minute. Sam, do you know what's the matter with Steve?

COAST. Probably he's been losing.

LOUISE. Whose money?

COAST. Everybody's.

LOUISE. But can't you help him?

COAST. No; it's not my business.

[Sits on the sofa, putting the pillows out of his way.

LOUISE. But he's my husband, and you're my cousin.

COAST. What's the difference? Twenty years ago, when your father was rich as Croesus and my gov'ner and I up a stump for--tobacco, anyway, if not for bread, did he lift a finger to help us? not on your life! That lets me out! Every man for himself--and listen, if I wanted to starve I could lose a real good fortune through Steve Carley, without any outside help.

LOUISE. I told mother you'd be like that.

COAST. We're all pretty much alike; she'd recognize the Coast family.

LOUISE. If you were married to Georgiana, you couldn't ignore her brother. She isn't like us.

COAST. Well, if I could get Georgiana, [Going to LOUISE.] I'd be willing to do a good deal. She's the only woman I can see in this world my size.

LOUISE. So I guessed, but if Dick Coleman proposes before he goes to the Philippines, I wouldn't give much for your

chances.

COAST. Listen, Lou; did you ever know me to lose anything I'd set my mind on getting.

LOUISE. No.

COAST. Well I mean to marry Georgiana, Dick Coleman or no Dick Coleman. No, I'll put it different from that. I mean to make her love me, because, by God, I love that woman so I'd do anything, commit a crime almost, to get her.

[STEVEN *enters Left* and COAST *goes up to the mantel*.

LOUISE. Steve, aren't you up town early?

STEVEN. A little.

[*Sits Left*. MOLES *enters*.

MOLES. Beg pardon, sir.

LOUISE. What is it, Moles?

MOLES. [*To LOUISE*.] Mr. Carley, m'm. [*To STEVEN*.] Could I speak with you a few moments, sir?

STEVEN. I'm very busy to-day, Moles.

MOLES. But have you noticed sir, this morning, United Copper is lower.

STEVEN. It can't be helped--go about your business.

MOLES. But for heaven's sake, Mr. Carley--you said yesterday if it dropped another point and we couldn't give up any more money, Lizzie and me'd both lose everything we had.

STEVEN. I'm sorrier than I can say, but there are lots of others worse off than you.

[GEORGIANA *reenters Right*.

COAST. [*Cynically to STEVEN*.] You don't mean to say you've been speculating with Moles's money.

LOUISE. Moles!

STEVEN. It was for *himself*, not me, I put him in.

MOLES. And Lizzie, sir. And we'd counted it up, how if we made all you said, we could leave service soon, sir, and we could afford a small house in the country with say *four* rooms and *one* baby--Lizzie doing her own work.

LOUISE. Do you mean to say, Steve, that your own servants have lost their earnings through you?

MOLES. Yes, m'm.

STEVEN. [*Doggedly*.] Put it that way if you like. I meant to do them a good turn.

LOUISE. But we can't let that happen; we must pay them back!

COAST. [*Amused*.] Bully for you, Louise! getting generous in your old age.

LOUISE. It would ruin us socially if it got out!

COAST. Oh, I see!

MOLES. Mr. Carley said it was *sure*, ma'am.

[COAST *laughs a rather coarse laugh*.

STEVEN. For heaven's sake, Coast! Go away, Moles.

[MOLES *goes out Left*.

COAST. [*To STEVEN*.] Are they holding on for you?

STEVEN. They said they'd give me till to-morrow to put up more security.

[*Sits Right*.

COAST. What do you need?

[*No answer.*]

LOUISE. How much more security, Steve?

[*Goes to STEVE.*]

STEVEN. Say a hundred and fifty thousand.

[*COAST whistles.*]

LOUISE. He'd better hold on, Sam, hadn't he; what do you think of the stock?

COAST. Don't ask *me*.

LOUISE. We've got *to risk it*, anyway. Use some of my bonds, Steve.

STEVEN. Louise!

LOUISE. Yes, I mean it, we must.

STEVEN. You don't understand me--we can't use your security.

LOUISE. Why not?

STEVEN. [*Rising and half turning away.*] Not--again.

LOUISE. How do you mean "again"?

STEVEN. Your money is all there, all, already buried in it!

LOUISE. *All my money? All of it!*

STEVEN. Yes, I wanted to win back your mother's, I wanted--

[*Interrupted.*]

LOUISE. [*Beside herself.*] You wanted! You wanted!! You wanted!!! To ruin us, that is what I should say you wanted to do!--Do you mean to say, behind my back, you've gambled away every cent I have, as well as all my mother's money!?!]

GEORGIANA. No! it's not possible--Steve!

[*Comes between STEVEN and LOUISE.*]

STEVEN. When did you come in, Georgy?

LOUISE. Georgy! [*No answer; she continues hysterically.*] He can't deny it; it's true! And it's rank dishonesty, that's what it is! You've robbed me, you've robbed my mother, you've robbed your own children! The papers will call you a--

STEVEN. [*Interrupting.*] That's not true! I had control of your money--to do with as I choose, and I did what I thought was for the best.

LOUISE. You've never done anything for me that wasn't for the worst!

[*Walking up and down excitedly.*]

GEORGIANA. Louise!

LOUISE. It's true! If I can save a cent out of this ruin, I'll take it and the children away from you! I'll never live with you again! I'll show you up to all your smart friends who've snubbed me! I'll send you to state prison if I can!

[*Sits in the arm-chair down Left.*]

COAST. Shut up, Lou! You'd better get a little legal advice before you start on that track.

GEORGIANA. Louise!

[*Goes to LOUISE.*]

LOUISE. Well, what have *you* got to say? My mother brought *you* up, was a second mother to your brother who ruined us, but you've got *your* money, I suppose. You've been clever enough to keep *your* money in your own hands,--you

and he will always have enough!

[*Crying hysterically.*]

GEORGIANA. *Will* you listen to me and let me say what I'm trying to?

LOUISE. [*Bursting into floods of tears, overwhelmed with sympathy for herself.*] He's broken my heart! That's what he's done; broken my heart!

GEORGIANA. [*Going to LOUISE.*] Oh, no, he hasn't, Louise, he's only broken your bank, and you don't know the difference. I want to say to you now,--that all Steve needed was real love, and the guiding hand of a true, sensible woman--

STEVEN. [*Interrupting her, goes to GEORGIANA. GEORGIANA turns to STEVEN.*] No, Georgy! You mustn't blame Louise! I love her and always will, just as she is. She doesn't mean all she says now--she's angry, and she has a right to be--I'm one of those men who never succeed--who never have any luck, and it's bad luck for her to have to share mine.

GEORGIANA. Well, what's done's done? But, as Louise says, my money's left.

STEVEN. Yes, but--

GEORGIANA. Mine must do for all of us.

COAST. [*Strongly.*] Excuse me, but I'll see that Louise and her mother don't suffer; *you* keep your money.

GEORGIANA. No, that's not the point, Sam. I asked you once to give my brother advice and you refused. You might have prevented this, and now we can get along without your money. Steve won't have to go out of his own family to make up as far as he can for what he's lost out of yours.

[*SAM turns away to the mantel.*]

STEVEN. Georgy! O Georgy! You're an angel! [*Hugging her and kissing her in a transport of relief.*] I'll get out of it, you'll see! I'll cover myself to-morrow. I can do that with your Croton Bonds and your Mutual Life and a couple of mortgages, and we'll win in the end, and Louise get hers back and mother too--! [*His arm about his wife.*] It's *sure* in the end, *it's got* to be, Louise.

[*There is no response from LOUISE.*]

GEORGIANA. Steven, I have a condition about my money.

STEVEN. [*Crestfallen.*] What?

GEORGIANA. It isn't to be used as you think. If I'm to help you, it must be in my own way.

STEVEN. How do you mean?

GEORGIANA. What's lost is *lost*. I have between five and six hundred thousand dollars, and we must all live on the income of that. And you must give your word of honor never to gamble in stocks again.

[*SAM comes back to front of table.*]

LOUISE. [*To STEVEN, suddenly realizing it again.*] You let *all* my money go?

GEORGIANA. [*To LOUISE.*] I will share what I have with you.

STEVEN. [*To GEORGIANA.*] But you must let me try to get back--

GEORGIANA. [*Interrupting.*] It would only be throwing good money after bad!

COAST. [*Sardonically.*] How about Moles and Lizzie?

GEORGIANA. Don't *you* worry about them! Moles and Lizzie shall have their money back, of course.

STEVEN. But I can't do it, Georgy. It's losing--why it's like losing a million to us!

GEORGIANA. Suppose you went on speculating with my money, and it went the same way as Louise's and her mother's?

COAST. And Lizzie's and Moles?

STEVEN. But it can't--*it can't!*

[STEVEN *sits on the sofa*. GEORGIANA *sits beside STEVEN*. LOUISE *is still in the arm-chair Left*.

GEORGIANA. O Steve! I've heard that so often. [*A pause*.] You were always a straight boy, Steve, and you always kept your word. Your notion of honor, it seems to me, in little things hasn't been so strong lately, as this fever of speculation grew on you, but still you are the same Steve and you've never lied about your transactions; so I have faith in you. Now let's settle this once and for all and *my way*!

STEVEN. It's very hard, Georgiana.

LOUISE. We can never all of us live on your income--not as we're used to.

GEORGIANA. That's true. Come, Steve. Give me your word never to go into another speculation and let's throw it off for to-day. Dick's coming to say good-by. Let's give him happy memories of us, at least to take away with him. [*A moment's pause*.] Come, Steve?

STEVEN. [*Low voice*.] All right.

GEORGIANA. No more speculating; you'll give me your word--[STEVEN *rises*, GEORGIANA *rises*. STEVEN *nods his head*.]--of honor, Steve?

STEVEN. Yes!

[*Nods his head*.

GEORGIANA. Then that's settled.

[*Gives SAM a calm, defiant look*.

STEVEN. O Georgy! I don't seem grateful, but I am. I can't tell you! I can't say! But it's wonderful what you're doing! God bless you!

[*Puts his arms on GEORGIANA's shoulders*.

GEORGIANA. [*With emotion, almost breaking down*.] That's all right, Steve. We'll begin all over again.

[*She kisses him*.

LOUISE. [*To GEORGIANA*.] I suppose I ought to thank you too.

GEORGIANA. No, don't bother. Come upstairs and have your hair shampooed. Bella must have painted mother red enough by now; it'll rest you and do you good.

LOUISE. After all, you're no real relation of ours, and you've done a fine thing.

GEORGIANA. [*Very simply*.] Don't talk about it. I wish it were more. I realize fully what it means to your mother and you to have all your money gone. But we'll put our shoulders to the wheel and make the best of it. Come, dear, come.

[*She goes out Right*. LOUISE *is about to follow, but is stopped by STEVEN*.

STEVEN. Louise, do you forgive me?

LOUISE. No, you ought to have asked my advice--let me know.

STEVEN. But when I used to talk to you about money matters, dear, you always begged me not to bother you.

LOUISE. I don't care, this is different. Sam!

[*Nodding good-by*.

COAST. Do you mind my joining you to see the procession go by at five?

LOUISE. No!

[*She goes out Right*.

STEVEN. What procession?

COAST. Coleman's regiment.

[He puts his feet upon small gilt chair beside the table.

STEVEN. Oh, yes! Well--I've made a pretty big mess of things. I'm not fit to live, that's what's the trouble with me.

COAST. Oh, you must take everything in the day's work; but it's a pity she made you give her that promise.

STEVEN. Why?

COAST. [Goes to him.] You all can't live on the income from five hundred thousand dollars. Now there'll be a *bust* up sure!

STEVEN. Ss! that's all I need.

[Sits on the sofa.

COAST. That promise of yours to Georgiana's binding, ain't it?

STEVEN. [Looks up.] Of course. Why?

COAST. No why.

[A pause.

STEVEN. You think United Copper will go up again?

COAST. If not, I know something that *will*.

STEVEN. Something you're in yourself?

COAST. Yes.

STEVEN. And you'd put me on?

COAST. Yep. I don't think there's any other way out of this for you all.

STEVEN. Sam!

[He rises.

COAST. It's *absolutely safe*.

STEVEN. I could get it back? *Some*, anyway, of what I've lost?

COAST. Sure!--

STEVEN. But I gave Georgiana my word.

COAST. Of course she got that promise out of you because she thought you'd lose again.

STEVEN. Yes, but my word is *my* word.

COAST. Do you suppose she'd mind, if you won, won back Louise's money, won back the girl's happiness?

STEVEN. Suppose I tell her what you can do and ask her to let me off this once?

COAST. No, women don't understand business. She wouldn't realize *I can know* I'd win, any more than *you feel sure* and lose.

STEVEN. Yes, it would do no *good* to ask her.

COAST. Too bad, because I'd guarantee you wouldn't lose, not this deal. Of course I wouldn't be responsible for any future transaction.

STEVEN. But I'd be satisfied with this one, if I got back my losses.

COAST. I don't say you'd get back *all*, in one deal, but a good start which might turn your luck.

STEVEN. It's always like that; I've known such cases over and over again. But I've never yet broken my word to Georgiana,--somehow or other I feel as if I did that once I wouldn't have any hold over myself.

COAST. I don't suppose you could get at her securities anyway this afternoon?

STEVEN. Oh, yes, I could. We have our deposit box together.

COAST. Don't you think she'd forgive you when it means such a lot to Louise and her mother?

STEVEN. Why shouldn't she?

COAST. Why don't you risk it? That promise was just to keep you from losing, and this time I'll see you don't lose--so why not?

STEVEN. By George, I will! Georgiana really can't blame me when there's so much at stake.

COAST. Can you get the stuff to-day?

STEVEN. [*Looks at his watch.*] Yes, if I hurry.

COAST. All right, go ahead. I'll come to your office to-morrow at nine. Listen--I ain't supposed, of course, to have anything to do with this--and when you get it, don't go giving my tip to other chumps.

STEVEN. Oh, no.

COAST. What you do is on your own responsibility?

STEVEN. Exactly, only *you* guarantee?

COAST. That you don't lose this time. [*Looking at his watch.*] You'd better hurry.

STEVEN. Thank you, Sam.

[*Shakes his hand.*]

COAST. Oh, that's all right. Say, I want to marry your sister. No objection on your part, is there?

STEVEN. Well, I should say not!

COAST. She don't seem to cotton to me.

STEVEN. She doesn't know you.

COAST. Do you think if she was up a tree for funds she'd look at me any kinder?

STEVEN. Not a bit.

COAST. Some women do.

STEVEN. Not Georgiana! Good-by.

COAST. [*To STEVE.*] So long.

[*STEVEN turns to go, but stops as MOLES shows COLEMAN into the room. The latter is dressed in his uniform of first lieutenant.*]

DICK. Hello, Steven! Hello, Coast!

COAST. We gates!

STEVEN. How are you, Dick? Excuse me, I'm in a hurry. You're off to-day?

DICK. Yes, I've come to shake hands.

STEVEN. Good-by, old man, and good luck--sorry to have to go! Good-by!

[*Shakes hands warmly, with feeling.*]

DICK. Good-by.

[*STEVEN goes out Left.*]

COAST. [*Sitting Right.*] Oh, I guess she ain't so different.

DICK. Who?

COAST. Georgiana, she's *just a woman!*

DICK. No, take my word for it, she's not *a* woman, she's *the* woman.

[*Sits on the piano bench.*]

COAST. 'Spouse she likes money and nice things always about her?

DICK. She's always had them--and always would if I could help give them to her.

COAST. Huh, huh! Well--say, Steve's got himself in a devil of a hole! Speculated with his wife's money--and they're broke.

DICK. Good God, what do you mean?

[*Rises.*]

COAST. What I say. Steve is one of those good-hearted gulls who's a blame slob on the money market, and he's gone under to the extent of Aunt Laura's and Louise's *spondulix*, that's all.

[*He is rather amused. DICK goes back of table, puts his hat on it.*]

DICK. What are they going to do?

COAST. Georgiana wants to pony up like a brick and keep the whole lot!

DICK. Just like her!

COAST. Oh, of course, I'll see Georgiana don't really lose by it in no way in the end.

DICK. You *will*?

COAST. Why of course!

DICK. She isn't going to let Steve speculate with her money, is she?

COAST. Can't say.

[*A pause.*]

DICK. Look here, I'd like to help Steve myself, if I thought I could protect Georgiana. I'll let Steve have some money. You needn't say anything to anybody. How much will see him through?

COAST. That's real good of you, but I couldn't let outsiders help 'em.

DICK. I'm not exactly an outsider; and the truth is, Coast, I'd give anything to have the right to help Georgiana. [*A silence.*] Look here. I'm going to ask you a question, straight out!

COAST. Fire ahead!

[*Looks at DICK with a perfectly blank face.*]

DICK. Anything between you and Georgiana?

COAST. [*After a short pause.*] There is--

DICK. Mrs. Carley hinted as much.

COAST. [*Unflinchingly.*] I'm--er--I'm going to marry Georgiana.

[*A pause. COAST looks DICK in the eye, then away.*]

DICK. Congratulate you, Coast! [*Shakes his hand.*] She's worth even more than you can give her!

COAST. That's right!

[*COAST goes out on the balcony and whistles "Congo." DICK walks away and turns his back. DICK goes to the mantel and takes up a picture of GEORGIANA, looks at it, takes it out of the frame, and seeing that COAST isn't observing, puts it in his breast pocket. He turns round with a pathetic sort of half-laughing exclamation to COAST.*]

DICK. I say, Coast. [*COAST comes in from the balcony.*] I've been in love with Georgiana for years.

COAST. That don't surprise me!

[COAST sits on the piano bench.

DICK. I never realized it until the other day, when I found I was going to leave her, and--perhaps--not coming back, and then I found boy friendship had sort of grown up into a man's love--I almost told her--[Pause.] I wonder if I'd found it out sooner--before you came along--

COAST. No use shutting the stable door *after* the horse is swiped!

DICK. I shan't be able to say exactly what I wanted to to Georgiana--but that's--your luck--I guess the quicker I can say good-by and get out, the better for me--

COAST. Listen--don't say anything to Georgiana about her and me, will you, unless of course she tells you--we're not talking about it yet.

DICK. I don't care mentioning it, thank you.

[MRS. CARLEY and GEORGIANA come in Right and meet DICK.

MRS. CARLEY. We're so sorry to say good-by, Dick--will you have some tea?

DICK. No, thanks.

COAST. Hello, Auntie.

[MRS. CARLEY goes to the sofa and sits with her crocheting.

GEORGIANA. Dick!

[Shaking his hand--a second long. They look into each other's eyes.

MRS. CARLEY. Isn't he fine in his uniform?

DICK. [Embarrassed.] I hadn't time to change before we start.

MRS. CARLEY. Louise asks me to give her farewells; she's got a bad headache and is being shampooed--she's *too* disappointed not to see you.

DICK. I'm sorry she's in her usual health.

MRS. CARLEY. Got it from her father; we didn't expect him to live a year when I married him, but he surprised us all--and I tell Louise she'll outlive me yet. How are you, Sammy?

[Drops her worsted; COAST picks it up and gives it to her.

COAST. All right, only I need a shave.

[He sits Left.

MRS. CARLEY. Well, you shouldn't talk about it! You need a lot of coaching.

GEORGIANA. [Aside to DICK.] Stay; I want to speak to you alone.

DICK. All right, old girl, I think I know why.

MRS. CARLEY. Why don't you all sit down?

GEORGIANA. He hasn't much time.

DICK. I haven't long to stay. I must be at the armory by a quarter to four.

GEORGIANA. You march by here at four, don't you, on your way to the 42d St. Station?

DICK. Yes, rather a bore; but the Governor insists, and Roosevelt comes on to receive us at 59th St.

GEORGIANA. We oughtn't to keep Dick, then, mother; we ought to say good-by at once.

[They all rise.

MRS. CARLEY. Very well, speed the parting guest! Good-by, Dick, we'll watch the papers to see what brave things you

do, and don't fall in love with any of the *decollete* young nigger ladies we read about.

DICK. Good-by, Mrs. Carley. [*They wait for GEORGIANA to say good-by. A pause.*] Good-by, Coast!

[*Crosses to COAST, who rises and shakes hands with DICK.*

COAST. Good-by! Good luck--

GEORGIANA. [*Pointedly.*] Good-by, Sam.

COAST. Oh, I'm not going.

[*A pause.*

DICK. [*To GEORGIANA.*] Good-by.

GEORGIANA. Good-by! [*Shakes his hand and adds under her breath to him.*] Don't go. Don't go.

[*A pause; all wait.*

MRS. CARLEY. He isn't in a hurry, after all, Georgiana; let's all sit down again.

[*They all sit.*

GEORGIANA. [*Laughing, embarrassed.*] Of course I don't want to urge you off, Dick.

DICK. [*Rising.*] No, but really, after all, I think I *must* go.

[*All rise again.*

GEORGIANA. No! Mother, I want to speak with Dick alone, before he goes; you won't mind leaving us, will you, you and Sam?

[*Sam rises.*

MRS. CARLEY. [*Unwilling.*] Oh, no--Come along, Sam. We'll be on the balcony when you pass, Dick; be sure to look up. Good-by.

[*Going.*

DICK. [*Shaking her hand.*] I'll look up.

COAST. [*At the door Right.*] I'll go up and see the kids.

[*COAST looks at Dick and goes out very slowly with MRS. CARLEY.*

GEORGIANA. I couldn't say good-by to you like that--I couldn't share my good-by with mother; you understand that, don't you, Dick.

DICK. Yes, old girl, though if I had my way I wouldn't say good-by to *you* at all--I hate good-bys to people I care about.

GEORGIANA. Sit down just a few minutes.

[*They sit down by the table.*

DICK. [*Sees the tie in her hands.*] Busy making reins for Toots? What an ugly color!

GEORGIANA. Is it? Well, it's a tie for you!

DICK. Oh--I mean it's ugly for reins, but perfectly lovely for a tie--I'll take it with me.

[*Puts it in his pocket.*

GEORGIANA. I wish I could go with you.

DICK. Don't you think you're needed here just at this moment?

GEORGIANA. Has Steve told you?

DICK. No, Coast did.

GEORGIANA. Don't you think I'm doing right?

DICK. If you love him, of course, old girl, you're doing right. I think I must go now. [*Rises.*] Good-by.

GEORGIANA. No, don't go yet, please. I can't bear to have you go.

DICK. It's good of you to care so much. [*Leans against the table.*] You know only yesterday I woke up and suddenly began to hope--

GEORGIANA. What--

DICK. Nothing; I don't hope it any more, anyway! I say, Georgiana, you'll go around and see mother and father once in a while, won't you?

GEORGIANA. Of course I will--

DICK. It'll cheer them up a lot, you know--they feel so badly; it's pretty tough on them, my leaving.

GEORGIANA. *I feel badly too--*

DICK. That's jolly good of you.

GEORGIANA. And isn't it just a little *tough* to leave me? Your oldest friend almost, you know.

*[She adds this latter to cover up the sentiment which was coming too near the surface.]*

DICK. Of course it is.

GEORGIANA. You haven't said so.

DICK. Still waters run deep, Georgy, and I--*[He moves away.]* really, I must be going.

GEORGIANA. [*Rising.*] No, *don't* go.

DICK. [*Looking at his watch.*] I must.

GEORGIANA. No, let me see your watch. Yes, you have got three more minutes. Please--sit down--

*[She persuades him to sit down again, and she reseats herself.]*

DICK. Have your own way!

GEORGIANA. Will there be fighting?

DICK. I hope so!

GEORGIANA. Oh, but what fighting! I've read, I know--ambushes and tortures--their war is murder.

DICK. Yes, and that's why we're going out there to put an end to it.

GEORGIANA. Why need *you*?

DICK. Some one must, I as well as another; in fact, just now, I *better* than any other.

GEORGIANA. Why *you* better?

DICK. Because I want to go--I've got a restless fit, Georgiana--and want to get away from here--I want to get away from everybody.

GEORGIANA. From *me*?

DICK. Yes, even from *you*!

GEORGIANA. [*Hurt.*] Thank you.

DICK. I should think your woman's instinct would teach you why.

GEORGIANA. Well, it doesn't! and I really should be very much obliged to you if you would help my woman's instinct out.

DICK. Of course it's all right what you're going to do, only--well, I don't want to be here to see it.

GEORGIANA. But, Dick, I'm perfectly happy in what I'm doing.

DICK. Of course! but that doesn't make it any the pleasanter for me. [*Rises.*] Good-by.

GEORGIANA. [*Rising.*] And that's all, just good-by?

DICK. No, I wish you all kinds of happiness in the future and the happiest marriage in the world.

GEORGIANA. Oh, thank you very much.

DICK. [*With great effort.*] I wish you everything that's good, Georgy, old girl!

GEORGIANA. Well, I'm sure no one could ask for more; and what shall I wish you?

DICK. Wish me a big fight, and an exciting one! Wish me a chance to do something! Wish me--oh, what does it matter--wish me--"Good-by."

GEORGIANA. What does it matter? Good-by! No!

*[They shake hands; she follows him to the door.]*

DICK. I must. I'll be late.

GEORGIANA. *Be late.*

DICK. [*Looking at her a moment.*] *I am--too late.* Good-by.

*[He is going out again and she stops him. Good-by. Light-heartedly.]*

*[He goes out. She stands where he leaves her, facing the door. A pause.]*

GEORGIANA. "What does it matter"--"wish me good-by."

*[She turns, looking straight ahead of her, gazing into space, realizing what it means to her. Slowly the emotion creeps into her face, she falters where she stands, and turns about to burst into tears, when COAST comes back into the room.]*

COAST. I heard Coleman go--can I talk with you a little?

GEORGIANA. [*Sitting on the sofa.*] No, Sam, I don't feel like it!

*[She cannot keep her tears back.]*

COAST. [*Going to her.*] Georgy, don't--don't--I love you.

GEORGIANA. No! I don't want you to.

COAST. It don't make any difference if you want me to or not; I do, got to, it's so strong in me--won't you have me?

GEORGIANA. No! Won't you leave me alone a little?

COAST. No, I can't. Listen; I know I'm not refined enough for you--but I can get over that in time. Sure! I can get over everything for you, if you'll only love me.

GEORGIANA. No! now go away from me.

*[He kneels beside her a little awkwardly, trying to make her look at him.]*

COAST. There isn't a thing in this world that money can buy I won't give you.

GEORGIANA. There are some things money can't buy.

COAST. No, there ain't--not *my* money! You'll have everything a woman can hanker after in this world--the best there is, and Steve shall have it, too, for your sake.

GEORGIANA. I can never love you.

COAST. Listen! I'll make my wife the biggest woman in the city--I'll make her--

GEORGIANA. [*Interrupting.*] Sam, stop! [*He rises.*] I can't hear any more!

*[A pause--she sobs; he waits.]*

COAST. I won't stop, not till you say you'll marry me! If I let up to-day, I'll begin again to-morrow, and when I stop to-

morrow it'll be to go ahead the day after! I've never failed yet in getting anything I've set after, and this is the biggest thing I've ever made up my mind to.

GEORGIANA. And this time you *will* lose. Because I can never love you. [*He tries to interrupt.*] No, let me finish. I'll tell you why I can't love you. I'll tell you, only just you, Sam, remember that. I could never love you because I love now, with every bit of love there is in me, the man who has just left this house, who has gone to fight and perhaps will never come back.

COAST. Has he asked you to be his wife?

GEORGIANA. I love him all the same!

COAST. And I love you the same way you love him--ain't you a little sorry for me?

GEORGIANA. Yes--

COAST. That'll do to go on with--

GEORGIANA. [*Laughs hysterically.*] Oh--Sam, can't I make you understand?

COAST. No, nor make me give up. I'm coming to see you again to-morrow; when will you be in?

GEORGIANA. Not at all.

[*She moves about the room.*]

COAST. What time in the afternoon?

GEORGIANA. I shall be out all afternoon.

COAST. I'll call at five.

GEORGIANA. Very well! You'll find Louise and mother.

COAST. *Coleman* thinks you'll have me!

GEORGIANA. He couldn't! Why should he?

COAST. He congratulated me, when he was here just now!

GEORGIANA. For what?

COAST. For you!

GEORGIANA. Oh! [*Laughing hysterically.*] That's what he meant by his happy marriage--

[*Laughing and crying.*]

COAST. If he mentioned marriage, that's what he meant.

GEORGIANA. But didn't you tell him he was wrong?

COAST. No.

GEORGIANA. But why not?

COAST. I wanted him to think it!

GEORGIANA. But it was wrong of you--it can never be true, and I don't want him to go away believing it. [*Music of a military band is heard in the distance.*] Here they come! [*Going to the balcony, he follows.*] No, please don't come out with me! Sam--I don't want him to see me standing there with you. [*SAM starts towards GEORGIANA.*] Let me go out on the balcony *alone*, Sam! Please, alone!

[*He looks at her a moment and then deliberately goes past her out on to the balcony.*]

MRS. CARLEY. [*Hurrying in from the Right.*] They're coming! I've told the children.

[*She goes out on balcony. The children run in.*]

ALL THE CHILDREN. The soldiers are coming! Auntie, the soldiers are coming!

[*They rush out on the balcony.*]

COAST. [*In the window, picking up PHIL in his arms.*] Come on, Georgy. What does it matter?

GEORGIANA. That's true, go on! What does it matter, it's good-by!

[*COAST goes on the balcony. MRS. CARLEY, on balcony, calls, "Here comes DICK!"*]

*GEORGIANA hesitates and then goes close to the window. She stands in a chair so as to see over the others' heads, hidden behind the curtain of the half-open window, and watches. The music is louder as they pass under the balcony; a flag is seen almost on level with the balcony floor. Those on the balcony wave and shout, and shouts are heard in the street. GEORGIANA stands still, wiping the tears from her eyes every moment with a tiny wad of a handkerchief, and as the music passes, growing less loud,*

#### THE CURTAIN FALLS

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### ACT III

*Eight months later: GEORGIANA'S room, an octagonal room with dark panel walnut woodwork and panels of yellow brocade, with furniture to match. All in the simplest style of Louis XV. There is a fireplace on the Left, and doors Right and Left. Two windows at the back. At right of the Centre is a very large dressing table covered with massive silver toilet articles, a big mirror; candelabra, etc., and a silver-framed, photograph of DICK COLEMAN. There is a low bench before the table, tables and chairs about the room, and a most comfortable, roomy sofa, on the Left, piled with embroidered pillows. It is after seven and the lamps are lit. STEVEN enters from Left and sits on the sofa. He is haggard, his clothes mussed, his linen rumpled and soiled. He is painfully nervous and agitated; he cannot keep still; as soon as he sits down he gets up; he goes from one place in the room to another, taking up a picture without looking at it, sitting down and getting up again. Twice he half-whispers, half-groans, "Good God!" He takes out a pistol from his pocket, looks at it, and puts it away again as LIZZIE enters Right.*

LIZZIE. Miss Carley says she'll be in as soon as she can.

STEVEN. [*Rising and going to the dressing table.*] Is she dressing for the ball now?

LIZZIE. No, sir, she's wearing a tea gown for dinner; it'll be a grand sight, the ball, sir!

STEVEN. I suppose so.

LIZZIE. Pity *we* couldn't 'ave got the Grand Duke here, sir, to dinner.

STEVEN. [*Moving about.*] We couldn't afford to entertain a Russian prince, Lizzie,—don't tell your mistress,—but I've been speculating again and we're hard up.

LIZZIE. Oh, I am so sorry, sir—I know how to sympathize with you, though we did get our money back! Perhaps you'll get yours.

STEVEN. How about you and Moles?

[*Comes to LIZZIE.*]

LIZZIE. Well, sir, last Tuesday we counted up, we're about two years off, or fourteen hundred dollars distance, so to speak. We've calculated then we could marry and settle down if we'd be satisfied with two rooms and no children.

[*There is a knock on door Left. Yes? [Going to the door, opens it.] Oh, come in, sir. [Moves away.] Mr. Carley is here.*]

COAST. [*Entering.*] Where's Miss Georgiana?

LIZZIE. She's dressing, sir. She'll be down in five or ten minutes.

[*Goes out Right.*]

COAST. How are you?

[*The two men nod a surly greeting.*]

STEVEN. I've been looking for you all afternoon!

COAST. Didn't you know I was coming here and going with your folks to the ball?

STEVEN. I forgot!

[*After a pause, both men look at each other.*]

Well, Sam, I'm done! I'm done for good this time!

COAST. Sorry, but you can't blame me.

[*He sits in an arm-chair near the sofa.*]

STEVEN. I do. You told me you were going into this last business, but you didn't tell me you were going to get right out again.

COAST. 'Twasn't my business to tell you that--I didn't advise *you* to go in!

STEVEN. No, but you put me up to it all the same!

COAST. Not a bit! The only time I advised you was some months ago, when you'd just lost Louise's money,--then I put you on to something, so you shouldn't lose Georgiana's. Did you win?

STEVEN. Yes, and broke my word to Georgiana.

COAST. Well, that's her and your business, but it let me out! From that time on you were on your own hook.

STEVEN. You were always throwing out hints that you meant me to take.

COAST. Listen. [*Rises and goes to STEVEN.*] You can't prove that!

STEVEN. You know you led me into it, you know you did. You tempted me in the first place to break my word of honor to my sister. Whether you meant to or not, you did it, damn you--and you're a rich man, you've got millions, and can help me out! Will you?

COAST. [*Quietly.*] No.

[*Moves a little away toward the Left.*]

STEVE. You're my wife's own cousin, and she's a pauper and through no fault of her own. Will you help me for her sake?

COAST. [*Still quietly.*] No.

STEVEN. You're in love with my sister, and she's not got a cent of her own to-night *through me*. Will you help me for her sake?

COAST. [*Still quietly.*] No!

STEVEN. [*Going to him.*] No?

COAST. No!

[*Strong.*]

STEVEN. Then damn you for a dirty blackguard!

COAST. [*Laughs.*] That's pretty talk; I guess you got that from *me* too!

STEVEN. [*Doggedly.*] I'll do more than talk!

[*Turns away and goes up stage.*]

COAST. What?

STEVEN. Wait and see.

COAST. Listen! if one thing happens, I'll help you.

STEVEN. [*Turning.*] You mean Georgiana!

COAST. Yes, if she'll marry me, I'll make up to you every damn cent of hers you've got rid of.

STEVEN. And if she won't?

COAST. I'll make up every penny of Louise's you've lost, if Georgiana'll marry me. Listen--[SAM *puts his arm around STEVEN and brings him down to the sofa and they sit.*] she loves you, you're the kind that always has influence with women; use yours for me, Steve, it'll be worth your while.

STEVEN. [*Halflaughs.*] You want me to try and persuade her to marry you against her own desire even?

COAST. That's the figure.

STEVEN. When I know you're, in your way, just as dishonorable a man as I am, and hard and heartless, [STEVE *rises.*] I wouldn't risk my sister's happiness with you, if it would save me twice over. Even if she loved you, I'd say what I could against it.

COAST. [*Quick.*] She'll never know you broke your word to her if I help you.

STEVEN. Yes, she will, because I mean to tell her to-night.

COAST. All right!

STEVEN. That's what I've come for, to make a clean breast of everything.

COAST. You're a damned fool! [*He rises and moves away.*] However, each way plays more or less into my hands.

GEORGIANA. [*Outside of door Right.*] If you are telling secrets, look out--I'm coming!

COAST. Come on!

[*GEORGIANA comes in, dressed in graceful negligee tea gown.*]

GEORGIANA. Good evening, Sam! Steve, you're not dressed yet?

STEVEN. I forgot about the ball.

GEORGIANA. I can tell you one person who hasn't, and that's mother!

COAST. [*Laughing.*] Is she going to be corking?

GEORGIANA. [*Sitting in the arm-chair by the sofa.*] If the Grand Duke were a bachelor and mother had designs upon him, she couldn't possibly take more pains! She's going to be beyond all words. She's got every jewel she owns and can borrow draped about her, till she looks like Tiffany's exhibit at the St. Louis Fair. And as for her hair, she's had Bella Shindle working on it all afternoon, till it's the Titianest Titian that ever flamed on human head!

COAST. Sounds great!

[*Sitting on the bench. STEVEN sits on the sofa.*]

GEORGIANA. Wait! She's built her tiara up with a breastpin and an aigrette off my winter hat, and it was all I could do to keep her from wearing the three feathers in which she was presented to the Queen in A.D. '73.

[*They all laugh good-naturedly.*]

COAST. Aunt Laura's a corker!

GEORGIANA. Well, no one will miss her! She'll get the Grand Duke's eye if no one else does! I tell her she'll go through the ballroom like a search-light!

COAST. Is she all dressed now?

GEORGIANA. Not yet. I'm judging by her dress rehearsal! I left her in a state of terrible indecision as to whether she should arch her eyebrows "just a little" with a burnt match!

[*All laugh again good-naturedly.*]

COAST. Smart old girl!

GEORGIANA. She's all the happier for being silly, and she's a good soul and does her best! What's *your* news, Steve?

[Turning to STEVEN.

STEVEN. Sam, would you mind?

[Motions to COAST to leave the room.

COAST. Oh, no! [Rises.] See you later! I'll go and take a squint at auntie.

[He goes out Right.

GEORGIANA. Steve, you look troubled--what's gone wrong?

[She goes to STEVEN on the sofa and sits beside him.

STEVEN. I have!

GEORGIANA. How do you mean? You and Louise haven't quarrelled?

STEVEN. If it was only that!

GEORGIANA. What then?

STEVEN. I've gone wrong, I tell you, all wrong.

GEORGIANA. How? In what way, Steve?

STEVEN. Your money's lost, it's all lost.

[GEORGIANA rises. A pause.

GEORGIANA. How do you mean?

STEVEN. And that isn't the worst of it, either. I've broken my word to you! I know I've killed your faith in me. I've lost faith in myself.

GEORGIANA. [Still standing, very strong.] Steve!

STEVEN. I've speculated!

GEORGIANA. No, Steve!

STEVEN. [Rises and goes to the mantel.] Yes, I've been speculating since the very day I said I wouldn't. I won a lot at first, and of course I thought I'd get all back; and then, of course, what I did get back was my old cursed luck!

GEORGIANA. Oh, Steve! And I believed in you so thoroughly, I never had a doubt!

STEVEN. I know it! I know it! I'm rotten all through, Georgy. [Bursting into tears.] I'm not worth being forgiven--[He falls on his knees, in a paroxysm of sobs and tears.] I'm rotten! Oh--I'm rotten--

[He sobs uncontrollably.

[GEORGIANA watches him a little while in silence. Then she goes to him and puts her hand on his shoulder.

GEORGIANA. Steve!

STEVEN. [Sobbing.] Yes!

GEORGIANA. I forgive you!

STEVEN. No! No!

GEORGIANA. And I'll trust you again if I have a chance.

STEVEN. [Looking up.] Georgy, what do you mean?

[Beginning to control his sobs.

GEORGIANA. I mean, though it's been a pretty big blow, my faith in you isn't altogether gone yet.

STEVEN. Oh, I can't bear it! I can't bear it! But you don't mean it! No, you can't mean it! How could you? Forgive me? Trust me again? No, no! You couldn't--it's all over! I've thrown away my own money first, then my wife's and her

mother's--that ought to have been enough,--but I had to go and break my word of honor to you, and lose every penny of yours! There's no excuse for me, nor reason to forgive.

GEORGIANA. [*After a moment, very quietly, with her eyes filling.*] There's love, Steve!

STEVEN. Not for a man like me. I'm not worth it. [*He rises.*] Not deserving it! There's only one thing for such as me, and that is to end it all with a bullet.

GEORGIANA. Now you're talking wildly!

STEVEN. [*In a lowered voice.*] No, Georgy, I mean it! It's better for all of you to have me out of the way; I tried to do it to-day--only, I was afraid!

GEORGIANA. That would be worse than anything you have done yet. That I would never forgive--anything but that!

[*She goes to him.*]

STEVEN. But the shame of my life now, the degradation, the *rot* of it!

[*A moment's pause.*]

GEORGIANA. [*The idea comes to her.*] Steve, I told you I'd trust you again if I had the chance! Here is the first one, and I take it! Promise me you'll never again even think of taking your life.

STEVEN. What's the good of my promising?

GEORGIANA. If you tell me, I'll believe you.

[*A short pause.*]

[*STEVEN, not looking at her, puts his hand in the pocket where the pistol is, then takes his hand away, still not looking at her.*]

Look me straight in the face, Steve, and say, "I promise."

[*He hesitates only a moment, and then does so.*]

STEVEN. I promise.

[*He turns a little away from her, takes the pistol from his pocket, and gives it to her.*]

GEORGIANA. [*Bursting into tears.*] Oh, Steve!

[*She turns away and puts the pistol on the table between the windows.*]

STEVEN. Forgive me, Georgy, forgive me! This promise I'll keep. Only forgive me for breaking your heart like this!

COAST. [*Entering Right.*] I've been sent up to bring you down to dinner.

[*He takes in the situation. A pause.*]

GEORGIANA. Do you know what Steve has just told me?

STEVEN. [*Bitterly.*] Yes, he knows.

COAST. Just what?

GEORGIANA. Steve has gone on speculating, and my money's followed the rest.

COAST. Yes, I knew that.

GEORGIANA. Couldn't you have saved him?

COAST. I offered to once, but you refused.

GEORGIANA. And now?

[*Short pause.*]

COAST. [*He goes to GEORGIANA, who is on the sofa.*] My offer is still open to the same tune.

STEVEN. No, Georgy, no!

GEORGIANA. For Steve's own sake, won't you do something for him? Get him some position so that he can take care of Louise. I'll look after myself.

COAST. I'll do all and more, *if you'll* marry me.

GEORGIANA. You know I can't marry you.

COAST. What does Steve say?

STEVEN. What Georgy says, I say.

COAST. How are you going to get out of this without me?

STEVEN. I don't know.

COAST. And there's something else. [*Steps towards STEVEN.*] Perhaps you don't know that unless some one does get you out of this, it won't be only a money smash-up for Georgiana, but disgrace too!

GEORGIANA. That can't be true! I shall say my brother had control of my money to do what he liked with it.

COAST. But any lawyer would take up the case of criminal mismanagement for my aunt and cousin's affairs.

GEORGIANA. But *they* wouldn't allow it.

COAST. Well, what do you think?

STEVEN. Louise--never!

COAST. Leave it to me!

STEVEN. Ah! your true colors! You heard him, Georgy?

COAST. Well, let that pass. But you know that you've overdrawn at your bank, that you've overdrawn at your brokers, and that you can no more get out of the muddle you've got yourself into without one of the biggest public scandals there's been in the street for years!

GEORGIANA. But *you* can spare us that?

STEVEN. [*Very low.*] Good God!

[*He moves away.*]

COAST. [*To GEORGIANA.*] That's what I can.

GEORGIANA. And you love me?

COAST. I certainly do!

GEORGIANA. Then you *will* spare us!

COAST. If you'll marry me.

STEVEN. No! [*Comes down to her.*] Georgy, you mustn't! [*COAST walks away.*] Don't you see what a selfish brute Sam is? Of course it was *my* fault that I gambled, but he tempted me, he led me into it when he *knew* I *couldn't resist*. The very day and hour I gave you my promise, he gave me a tip and guaranteed I shouldn't lose!

GEORGIANA. Sam! Oh!

[*She turns to the bench before her dressing table and sinks upon it.*]

COAST. [*Speaks to her across the table.*] It's true! And I led him to speculate more, I tricked him first with winning and then let him go! I knew he'd soon do for himself alone, and he did! Yes--I ruined him purposely and you through him, so as to get you to be my wife. I did it purposely and I'd do it again! Of course I meant all along to make it up in the end when I'd got you.

GEORGIANA. And did you really think you *could* get me that way?

COAST. Why, you've got to marry me. You needn't be afraid of what I won't do for you. I love you, you know that. Everything--I've told you that before. You shall have *everything* on God's earth you want, and Louise and her mother shall live in style as they always have, and Steve have his own money back, with a brother-in-law to help him take care

of it! And what's the other side of the picture? Nothing for you or Louise or anybody--and disgrace for Steve into the bargain. Why, you've got to marry me! [GEORGIANA rises, COAST follows her.] Don't you see? Anyway [Smiling.] it was only a trick to make you, because, Georgy, I love you so! [A pause; she stands looking at him.] Well?

GEORGIANA. I'm trying to realize--to understand it all.

[MOLES enters Left.

MOLES. Please, miss, Mrs. Carley says your soup is all cold and they're on with the fish.

GEORGIANA. Tell Mrs. Carley not to wait for Mr. Carley and me, we're not coming down; but Mr. Coast will join them in a moment.

[COAST looks up surprised.

MOLES. Yes, miss.

[He goes out. A moment's pause.

COAST. What do you mean by that?

[Another pause.

GEORGIANA. [Slowly.] Not to save myself, not even to save my brother, and from even worse than we have to face, would I marry you.

COAST. Don't say that, Georgy!

GEORGY. Why, every word you've said, and everything you've done to make me love you, makes me instead--yes--and for what you've done with Steve [Looks at STEVE.], I do hate you.

[Goes to the sofa, COAST follows.

COAST. I only said it because I love you, Georgiana.

GEORGIANA. Oh, Sam Coast, you don't know what love is! Love doesn't make beasts of men, it makes men of beasts. It doesn't take all for itself--it sacrifices all for another. Love isn't an enemy that lays traps and makes ambushes,--love is a friend whose heart is a divine magnet! Real love makes an angel of a woman and a hero of a man, but love such as you have--oh, the happiness in this world that's been lost through it!

COAST. You don't know me!

GEORGIANA. I didn't, but I do! You've dragged down my brother, sacrificed him and my belief in him, almost, for your own selfish end, tried to trap me into marrying you when you know I didn't love you.

COAST. But you would--

GEORGIANA. Once perhaps, though I can't imagine it! But not now! No! I'd starve and suffer and die now before I could ever love you.

[A pause; COAST goes to the table and stands halfshamefaced a moment, then he pulls himself up and turns.

COAST. Well, face the music for a while, and then see!

GEORGIANA. They're waiting for you at dinner; please join them and tell them what you like.

COAST. I'll tell them nothing. I'll let you and Steve think things over a little.

STEVEN. [Rises, and goes to meet COAST.] You will have something to settle with me outside of money matters!

COAST. [With a jeer.] Please yourself.

[He goes out.

GEORGIANA. [To STEVEN.] I believe I can influence Louise to do nothing for the sake of the children, and she loves you in her way.

STEVEN. But the bank?

[*He sits on sofa beside her.*]

GEORGIANA. Oh, we can take care of the bank; after all, we've friends, we've jewels, we've this house.

STEVEN. That's true, and the brokers?

GEORGIANA. Who are they?

STEVEN. Caldwell and Hovery.

GEORGIANA. Mr. Caldwell will be at the ball to-night?

STEVEN. Probably.

GEORGIANA. I'll see him. We've always been good friends,--and so were his father and your father. He won't let his firm make a scandal if he can help it, especially as they can gain nothing and we should lose so much! Steve, we'll get out of this yet, with your name all right!

BELLA. [*Entering Right.*] May I come in?

GEORGIANA. Yes, Bella.

BELLA. Oh, good evening, Mr. Carley, it's a pleasant evening!

STEVEN. Good evening, Miss Shindle.

BELLA. What I come to ask is if I shall do you now, and Mrs. Wishings around the corner afterwards?

GEORGIANA. I think I'd rather you went to Mrs. Wishings first if you don't mind.

BELLA. Oh, it's all the same to me! Mrs. Wishings ain't really in the smart set and they say her husband ain't so rich, and she's horrid to her servants--don't give them cake. I don't care if I lost her head to do! I'm like that, as you know, particular when I'm particular, but--well--just supercilious and negligee when it don't count! Good gracious! [*Laughing.*] Oh, here's a letter for you I brought up for Lizzie. It's from the Phillypeenys and has a special delivery on. [*GEORGIANA takes letter and opens it and reads it.*] That's how it come at this hour. Some folks do have luck, as the saying is! I've got to wait till to-morrow morning for mine if I get one, and if there's a Phillypeeny post and I don't get one, well, I pity the ladies' hair I dress to-morrow, that's all! [*To STEVEN.*] Mr. Carley, you've got lovely soft hair, haven't you? I know you have a lovely disposition, I can tell it from your hair. Yes, indeed, they always go together, it's a certain sign! Now Mrs. Wishings' hair is just like a horse's tail! what there is of it. I often feel like asking her which she'd rather I done it, on or off! [*Laughs heartily.*] I must have my little joke, but nobody minds me--good-by.

STEVEN. Good-by.

[*BELLA goes out Left.*]

GEORGIANA. [*Looking up, bursting with happiness and reading as she speaks.*] Oh, Steve! Steve! Such good news! I can hardly wait to tell you, but just let me finish it.

STEVEN. Finish anything that means good news, Georgy, and then for heaven's sake tell me what it is.

GEORGIANA. [*Closing the letter.*] It's finished!

[*She looks up radiant and forgetful of him for a moment.*]

STEVEN. Well!

[*Rises and goes to GEORGIANA.*]

GEORGIANA. [*Softly.*] Dick loves me!

STEVEN. Dick Coleman?

GEORGIANA. He loves me, he's always loved me!

STEVEN. But why--? I don't understand--

GEORGIANA. No, I didn't know it. I thought--there were reasons why I thought he didn't love me. But I understand now. Listen; I'll read you a part of his letter--*a part of it!* Oh, this makes up for everything, Steve. [*She reads.*] "My dear-- [*She stops and improvises the next three words.*] my dear Georgy: [*She looks up slyly to see if Steven noticed the*

*change; he didn't.*] Each steamer brings me letters from home, but never a word of your engagement to Coast, never a word of your marriage. Is that broken off--" How do you suppose he got the impression I was going to marry Sam?

STEVEN. Why everybody has seen, who cared to look, that Sam was dead in love with you.

GEORGIANA. Yes, but--well--never mind, listen--"Well, however it is, we're starting off to-morrow out of reach of letters and everything else, except an ugly band of natives that we came here to do for. The chances are pretty big against many of us getting back, and anyway I'm going to take this chance to tell you that I love you better than anything and everything and everybody in the world. And in case I never come back, somehow or other, I don't know why, I want you to know it. I was a little late in finding it out,--all of a sudden I knew you were the only woman for me, and that the only thing I seemed to want in the world was you for *a wife*. And there was Coast ahead of me! I don't know if it would have made any difference if you loved Coast and not me, perhaps you never would have cared for me, but I'd have done my best, for, Georgy--I love you"--*[She reads ahead to herself, murmuring so he cannot understand.]* "I don't know why I must tell you all this, but I must"--*[She reads ahead again in silence, skipping the passages which are too loving and too precious to read aloud.]* I think that's all--*[She looks up and smiles, and adds softly.]* that I care to read aloud! Oh, Steve!

*[She puts her arms around his neck and hugs him.*

STEVEN. I'm so glad, old girl, so glad!

*[Tightening his arm about her.*

GEORGIANA. Steve, I'm so happy! I don't want to seem selfish, and really I'm not forgetting you, but I can't help it. I'm so happy.

*[STEVEN kisses her. A short pause.*

GEORGIANA. *[Softly, thoughtfully.]* Can one cable to the Philippines?

STEVEN. Yes!

*[Smiling and again giving her a little squeeze.*

GEORGIANA. *[Going to the sofa.]* So far as I'm concerned, my money now doesn't count a rap. Dick has plenty and doesn't want mine. So now it's only Louise and mother you must think of, and you can take care of them well, you know you can, if they'll only accept the different conditions. And Dick and I'll help--

STEVEN. *[Interrupting.]* I hate to say it, Georgiana, but suppose--

*[Very serious.*

GEORGIANA. What?

STEVEN. Well, you know why Dick wrote that letter,--because he was going into dangerous fighting.

GEORGIANA. Oh, he will come back, he *must* come back! So few of our men have been lost in the Philippines, Dick can't be one of the few. After all, life nowadays isn't so tragic as that.

STEVEN. Yes, of course Dick'll come back, Georgy *[Short pause.]*, but won't he despise me?

GEORGIANA. No, you're *my* brother. And oh, Steven, forgive me, but I'm so *happy*. *[Hugging the pillows on the sofa and burying her face in them.]* Don't let me be silly--don't let me forget I'm an old maid,--and there's no fool like an old fool! I mustn't forget there's probably an orange or two among the blossoms for my hair!

*[MRS. CARLEY and LOUISE come into the room from the Right without speaking. They look from GEORGIANA to STEVEN. They are under the strain of violent emotion almost too much for words. Their appearance is tragic.] There is a pause.*

STEVEN. Sam has told you?

LOUISE. It isn't *true* what he says?

MRS. CARLEY. *[Bursting out, as the strain breaks.]* That everything's gone? *Everything!*

*[MRS. CARLEY comes to STEVEN.*

STEVEN. Yes, it's *true!*--

[*He moves up.*

MRS. CARLEY. *We haven't a cent?*--not a penny! for car fare! for theatre tickets! nothing for our wash bills, or to go away with in the summer!

LOUISE. Georgiana's money gone too--now, Steve?

MRS. CARLEY. As well as *Louise's* and *mine's*?

GEORGIANA. Yes, mine's gone too now, but I'm going to take it just as sensibly as Louise did before me.

MRS. CARLEY. She had yours to fall back on.

GEORGIANA. And I'm going to take myself off your hands, and Steve is perfectly capable of getting some dignified position and taking care of you and Louise.

MRS. CARLEY. Yes, I can imagine what that means! A flat with rooms like a string of buttons, mantelpiece beds and divans! and all your friends trying to get into the bathroom when they are looking for the hall door to get out!

[*COAST comes in from the Right. They all look at SAM.*

GEORGIANA. Do you think Sam has a place here in what we may say now?

LOUISE. Why not? He's my cousin.

MRS. CARLEY. Yes. And the only one of us now anyway who has a cent.

LOUISE. I don't think we can expect much help from Sam as to money.

COAST. That shows you don't know me.

LOUISE. [*Going to COAST.*] You'll help us?

COAST. I've offered to make up every cent Steve's lost; ask Georgiana.

GEORGIANA. Yes, Sam offered to make a "trade" with me--

MRS. CARLEY. How?

[*Looks at GEORGIANA.*

GEORGIANA. To make up Steve's losses if I'd marry him.

MRS. CARLEY. [*Quietly to COAST.*] Sam! It's too good to be true.

COAST. So Georgiana thinks.

LOUISE. [*Angrily.*] You won't do it?

GEORGIANA. No, I don't love your cousin.

MRS. CARLEY. Don't love him! What do you owe us? Louise loved Steve and what good did it do her? You've got the chance to make up for your brother!

STEVEN. That's not Georgiana's *duty*,--to make up for me.

MRS. CARLEY. You can't do it yourself, and you don't want your wife to starve, do you.

GEORGIANA. Louise *won't* starve.

LOUISE. [*To GEORGIANA.*] You could save us and you won't!

GEORGIANA. I don't love Sam.

MRS. CARLEY. Don't "love"? Did Molly Packer from Toledo love the Duke of Birmingham? and isn't she happy now?

GEORGIANA. I don't know, I have my doubts.

MRS. CARLEY. Doubts! Oh, *doubts!*

GEORGIANA. That's not the point, mother. I'm not going to marry Sam.

MRS. CARLEY. Oh, very well, then, have your way.

GEORGIANA. I will, mother.

MRS. CARLEY. [*Going to the sofa.*] Don't consider my way at all.

GEORGIANA. I won't, mother, since you ask me not to.

MRS. CARLEY. But I'll tell you this, Georgiana, you're just as bad as Steve! We must shake off both of you. Louise must get a divorce and marry again. Look what other widows have done before her.

[*Louise goes to her mother and takes her hand.*]

GEORGIANA. Mother! Louise!

LOUISE. Well, why not?

MRS. CARLEY. Certainly!

GEORGIANA. [*Goes to them.*] *No!* Listen! You must stand by Steve, both of you. You ought to do it out of affection, for, after all, whatever you've got of friends and position and the things you value he gave you! But never mind that! You ought to stand by him out of loyalty,--but never mind that! You've *got* to stand by him because if you ruin him you'll ruin yourselves. You and mother could never hold up your heads again in our world--in the world you love--if you left Steve. After all, though our world may be careless sometimes of what it does itself, it is very particular about what those people do who are *its guests!* Of course, Louise, it does come hardest on you, for yourself and for the children--but still you've got to stand by Steve.

MRS. CARLEY. Sam!

[*Going to SAM for help.*]

LOUISE. Oh, I suppose I'll forgive him, I always do, but I don't know about forgiving you.

GEORGIANA. *Me?*

LOUISE. If you don't marry Sam! You can make everything all right, and Sam loves you--you can make mother happy and me happy and Steve happy....

STEVEN. [*Interrupting.*] No, leave me out!

[*He goes up behind the sofa.*]

LOUISE. Our life would go on just the same,--Steve will make no more mistakes. I think you're heartless to refuse!

GEORGIANA. But, Louise, you ask me to give up entirely my own happiness.

LOUISE. Not at all! There's no one else in love with you but Sam, and this isn't your first year out, you know.

MRS. CARLEY. And anyway it would be *five* happy against *one* unhappy, there's no arguing about that.

COAST. [*To LOUISE.*] You and your mother both think she ought to accept me, don't you?

LOUISE. Certainly.

COAST. [*To GEORGIANA.*] I told you.

GEORGIANA. Yes, Sam, you win!--but Louise! I love some one else.

LOUISE. Dick Coleman?

GEORGIANA. Yes, and I'm going to marry him.

COAST. [*Turning quickly.*] Has he asked you?

GEORGIANA. Yes! To-day!

[*Showing her letter: MRS. CARLEY sits on the sofa.*]

COAST. [*Angry, to LOUISE.*] Then you bring suit against Steve and I'll back you up,--I'll bet you I'll get your case!

LOUISE. But Steve hasn't any money.

COAST. No, but you can show him up! You can blackguard his name for him! You can disgrace him in the papers!

LOUISE. But I don't want to do that! It would only make things worse.

GEORGIANA. Good, Louise!

COAST. I'll bet the bank and Steve's brokers won't be so soft-hearted.

GEORGIANA. There's this house for the bank.

MRS. CARLEY. [*Crying.*] *This house!* I shall die!

[*GEORGIANA goes to her.*]

GEORGIANA. Oh, no, you won't; you'll live very happily in a nice little flat, with two servants and a polite elevator boy in buttons.

MRS. CARLEY. [*Pitifully.*] Louise!

GEORGIANA. And Mr. Caldwell I am going to see at the ball to-night. I believe he will help us if he can.

LOUISE. You're going to the ball? In spite of everything?

GEORGIANA. Yes, we must. Let's have as little talk about the whole thing as possible. Steve's had bad luck! The people mustn't think there's anything we're ashamed of. There isn't anything.

COAST. Oh, isn't there?

GEORGIANA. No.

[*LOUISE gets the smelling salts from the table for MRS. CARLEY.*]

MRS. CARLEY. It's true; so long as we've lost everything else, I don't see why she should lose the ball too!

[*Using the smelling salts.*]

LOUISE. And I suppose we really ought to be seen there, or lots of people will *never* believe we were asked.

COAST. Well, I guess this is where I get out. I'll strike one of those musical comedies! I think ragtime will be good enough for me to-night, instead of a neck and arm circus. You won't want me for escort after all this?

LOUISE. You can please yourself, Sam.

COAST. Not exactly; I guess this is the day I try sour grapes. [*Goes to door Left,--he turns.*] When's Coleman coming back, Georgiana?

GEORGIANA. I don't know.

COAST. Oh! [*Goes to STEVEN at mantel.*] Steve--listen--how long are they holding that rotten stock of yours for you?

STEVEN. [*Laughs.*] Ha! till to-morrow noon.

COAST. Well, cheer up, I'll send her up ten points for you by eleven. [*Slaps him on the back.*] See you all later, maybe, if my show's dull.

[*And with a side glance at GEORGIANA he goes out Left.*]

MRS. CARLEY. [*Rises.*] I only wish to heaven Sam Coast wanted to marry *me!*

LOUISE. Mother! Come, let's finish dressing.

MRS. CARLEY. I don't know whether to go to the ball or stay home and have a good cry.

GEORGIANA. Do whichever gives you the most pleasure, mother.

[*LIZZIE enters Right and stands behind the dressing table.*]

MRS. CARLEY. What? [*Looking at herself in the glass.*] It's all very well for them to give us women a new front, I wish they'd give us new backs too.

[*She goes out Right.*]

LIZZIE. You must start dressing, miss--Miss Shindle will be back.

GEORGIANA. [*Absent-mindedly.*] Yes, yes, Lizzie.

[*LIZZIE goes out.*]

Louise, I'm so glad you will stand by Steve; and try and be glad a little for me.

[*Placing her arm about LOUISE.*]

LOUISE. Yes, I don't blame you, Georgy, so long as Dick's proposed. I'd do just as you've done, and I will be glad for you by to-morrow,--I am *glad now*.

[*Kisses her impulsively.*]

GEORGIANA. Thank you, Louise, dear.

[*She goes out Right.*]

STEVEN. Louise!

LOUISE. [*Comes to STEVE.*] Steve. [*LOUISE touches STEVE on the arm.*] I don't want to be horrid, but do you think you will be able to get anything decent to do?

STEVEN. I'm sure I will.

LOUISE. But will we have enough money to hold our own?

STEVEN. I'll do my best. Louise, I appreciate your not making more of a row!

[*With his arm around her.*]

LOUISE. Oh, Steve, I know it's just as hard for you--and I do love you and I want to be nice about it, but--*[She cries.* STEVEN *kisses her again, in his arms.*] I mustn't give way like this. I'll be a sight at the ball. Don't let me cry, dear.

STEVEN. All right. Come on upstairs now, and make yourself beautiful.

[*They go toward the door Right.*]

BELLA. [*Reentering Left.*] Good evening again, is Miss Georgiana ready for me?

LOUISE. She must be,--is my hair all right?

BELLA. Oh, yes, that's one thing about my hair dressing, though I do say it as shouldn't, it *has* a lasting quality.

[*LOUISE goes out Right.*]

GEORGIANA. [*Calls from inside.*] Is that you, Bella?

BELLA. Yes, ma'am.

GEORGIANA. I'll be there in a minute--be quick, Lizzie.

BELLA. [*Lower voice.*] Mr. Carley, have you seen the evening papers?

STEVEN. No!

BELLA. I just bought one and it's got an article about the 91st regiment.

STEVEN. What about it?

[*Looks to see if door is closed.*]

BELLA. [*Same voice.*] They say it may 'a' been wiped out of existence: it's three weeks now since news of it was due, and the paper's afraid they've met with an ambyscade or something like that.

STEVEN. Oh, when the newspapers are hard up for news they get up something about the Philippines! It's the modern sea-serpent. When there's absolutely nothing else to print--no girl suicide in Brooklyn, or cyclone in Kansas, or joke on Chicago, then they give the Philippines a paragraph or an insurrection. Don't you worry, Miss Shindle.

[*He sits in the arm-chair near the sofa.*]

BELLA. But it says the island they went against was the heathenest of the lot, and that there's no good reason why if they'd hadn't no fight with the natives, we shouldn't 'a' had news from them.

STEVEN. The whole question of news in a case like this is too uncertain to make so much alarm about. The men's idea is not to send picture postal cards of daily movements home to America, but to lick the natives into shape!

BELLA. I'm sure you do comfort me. Don't know as Miss Georgiana told you, but my young man's out there, with Mr.--Lieutenant Coleman.

STEVEN. Well, don't worry. You just make up your mind the papers are short of news to-night.

BELLA. Goodness, they won't be to-morrow with all they're going to print about this ball! Say, I've a friend whose sister's a literary lady and writes for the Sunday papers in Buffalo. She's got an article in my line, called the "Heads of the Smart Set which was Set at the Grand Duke." Ain't that a cute name for an article? And it don't mean their heads either; it means their coffyures, as she says--she speaks French. She was born and raised in Niagara Falls, near to Canada, where the language comes natural,--over the water, as it were!

STEVEN. [*Going to her.*] I wouldn't mention this newspaper report to Miss Carley--it would only needlessly alarm her, perhaps, and spoil her evening.

BELLA. Oh, I wouldn't for worlds.

[*She moves to the dressing table as GEORGIANA comes in.*]

GEORGIANA. Here I am! Oh, my dear Steve! You'll be late. You're not dressed yet.

STEVEN. All right. I'm going now--I was entertaining Miss Shindle till you were ready.

[*With a bow to MISS SHINDLE, STEVEN goes out Right.*]

BELLA. [*Taking her bottles, etc., from a little bag which she carries.*] He is a perfect gentleman!

GEORGIANA. [*Sitting before the dressing table.*] Now come along, Bella! I only want you to brush my hair; I've had a trying evening here, and I've a splitting headache. See if you can take it away and make me look as if I'd never had one.

BELLA. [*Tying apron about GEORGIANA'S neck.*] I'll do my best; but I can tell you most of the ladies I know'd be willing to have a headache every blessed minute of their lives if they could look as you do now!

GEORGIANA. Oh, what blamey, Bella! I don't know, somehow I want to be beautiful to-night.

BELLA. For the Dook?

[*Beginning to brush her hair.*]

GEORGIANA. No!

BELLA. For him?

[*Pointing at COLEMAN'S photograph with her hair-brush.*]

GEORGIANA. Yes. [*Drawing the picture toward her.*] It was a dear letter I had from him to-night, Bella! I hope you'll have as nice a one from Mr. Gootch to-morrow morning.

BELLA. Well, if I don't--

[*Shutting her teeth, she unconsciously pulls GEORGIANA'S hair.*]

GEORGIANA. Oh, oh!

BELLA. Oh, I beg your pardon!

GEORGIANA. Don't take it out on me, wait till Mr. Gootch gets back!

BELLA. [*Combing.*] I don't know as you're the jealous kind. Judging from your hair you ain't. It usually goes with blonde or red, or else crimp, and what I dislike about red hair is the freckles--you can almost count on 'em! You've got sort of trusting hair. But besides, Mr. Coleman wasn't a floor walker in a shop with over a hundred lady clerks--I think that's apt to make a gentleman flightier; and he being *bald*, has me to a disadvantage, so to speak. I can't judge by my customary signs.

GEORGIANA. [*Looking at COLEMAN'S photograph.*] Bella, I should say Lieutenant Coleman has splendid, straight, honest hair, shouldn't you?

BELLA. I can't say as I've ever really had any experience of his hair, ma'am.

GEORGIANA. But do you think him an awfully handsome man, Bella, or am I prejudiced?

BELLA. No, indeed, I never seen a handsomer gentleman, not even in the pictures of gentlemen's clothes in tailor store windows. [*Puts comb down, and takes brush and brushes again.*] But what continues to make me nervous about Mr. Gootch is that he's right there among all those black creatures, whose manners is very free, I'm told, and whose style of dressing is peculiar, the least you say! Mr. Gootch always did favor dark-complexioned people, and if that letter don't come to-morrow--

[*Getting excited, she again pulls GEORGIANA'S hair.*

GEORGIANA. Ouch! [*Laughing, holds up her hand, and catches her hair to ward off another pull.*] Be careful!

BELLA. Excuse me! in my art, there's no use talking, you oughtn't let your mind wander from the subject in hand--does your head feel better?

GEORGIANA. I don't know, Bella, if it does or not! Your treatment is very heroic.

BELLA. [*Spraying her hair:*] You don't feel worried about something happening to them way out there, do you, Miss Georgiana?

GEORGIANA. I daren't think of it. Oh, Bella, I've had lots of trouble to-day, and I've a serious time ahead of me--but all the same I am such a happy woman. [*Turning to look at BELLA, she disarranges her hair, much to BELLA'S disapproval.*] Do you love Mr. Gootch tremendously, Bella?

BELLA. Why, love isn't the word! my feeling for Mr. Gootch is a positive worship. When I get to thinking of him in the underground I always go by my station, sometimes two.

GEORGIANA. Be grateful for your love, Bella; it's a wonderful thing.

BELLA. [*Finishing the dressing of the hair:*] You know I've just done Mrs. Wishings, she puts too much on!

GEORGIANA. Does she rouge?

BELLA. No, hair. I don't mind a switch or two for foundation, and a couple of puffs for ornament, with a tight curl or two for style,--especially if you've got one of those new undilated fronts, but I think that's all you can expect to have any hair dresser make look as if it grewed there. There! How's that?

[*Puts hairpin in GEORGIANA'S hair.*

GEORGIANA. [*Holding up DICK'S photograph.*] How's that, Dick--is it all right?

BELLA. [*Delighted.*] Ain't that a cute idea?

GEORGIANA. We both trust you, Bella, to make me all right.

BELLA. What ornaments?

[*Taking off the apron, she walks around to Right of the table.*

GEORGIANA. Would you wear any?

BELLA. Oh, yes, for such an occasion! Of course, for maidens only feathers is correct; for wives and widows, tiaras and feathers.

[*Putting away her things. MRS. CARLEY enters in a flurry of excitement, superbly dressed, and too youthfully.*

MRS. CARLEY. Here I am; I've hurried so I don't feel half dressed.

GEORGIANA. [*Smiling.*] That's almost the way you *look*, mother.

MRS. CARLEY. Well, I always did have shoulders, and I don't intend to hide them under a bushel; but what do you think of the dress, is it a success?

GEORGIANA. From your point of view--perfect!

MRS. CARLEY. Yes, but what's the difference about your point of view about it and mine?

GEORGIANA. Well, I should think about thirty years, darling!

MRS. CARLEY. Oh, Georgiana, you really are unkind. When I don't know how on earth it's ever going to be paid for now, I think you might be serious, and let me feel anyway it's a success.

GEORGIANA. Mother dear, it's a triumph. Really, I never saw you look better!

MRS. CARLEY. Really! and how is my hair?

GEORGIANA. Redder!

BELLA. Oh, Miss Georgiana, it isn't too red a bit.

GEORGIANA. It's very fine, Bella, but I think I'd take off a little. You don't want Mrs. Carley to rival Mrs. Wishings and look as if she'd cornered the hair market.

BELLA. She's just teasing you.

[GEORGIANA *has risen.*

MRS. CARLEY. You are lovely, Georgiana.

GEORGIANA. That's because my thoughts are lovely.

MRS. CARLEY. I'm awfully proud of you, dear, and wish you were my own daughter.

GEORGIANA. Thank you, mother.

MRS. CARLEY. The Grand Duke will surely notice you. Aren't you going to put something in your hair?

BELLA. [*Handing it to* GEORGIANA.] A rose with glass dewdrops.

[*Newsboy's voice heard in the street--calling, "Extra--Extra--Terrible"--the rest is indistinct.*

GEORGIANA. What's that?

MRS. CARLEY. A newsboy with an extra.

[*Man's voice outside, "Extra--Extra--Terrible"--the rest is still indistinct. LOUISE enters, beautifully dressed.*

BELLA. Oh!

GEORGIANA. Lovely, Louise!

LOUISE. I've got a splitting headache. [*Man's voice outside, "Extra--Extra."*] What can the extra be? [*Enter STEVEN.*] Steve, do you know what the extra is?

STEVEN. Oh, they're never anything you know.

[*In distance are heard several voices at once at different distances, all calling, "Extra--Extra--Terrible"--etc.*

MRS. CARLEY. Yes, they're always so disappointing, generally a railway accident out west! or a bomb thrown in Europe. Are you ready, Georgiana?

[*The "Extras" are louder.*

STEVEN. Yes, if we're going we ought to go.

[*"Extra--Extra," called underneath the window.*

GEORGIANA. Listen, what did he say?

[*Voice shouts outside, "Terrible fight in the Philippines; an entire regiment wiped out!"*

BELLA. [*Frightened.*] I heard "Philippines."

[*Goes to the window.*]

GEORGIANA. And a terrible fight! Some one must get the paper!

STEVEN. We haven't time now, Georgy.

MRS. CARLEY. Yes, we must be there before the Grand Duke arrives.

[*Outside, "Extra--Extra!"*]

GEORGIANA. I must see that paper, Steve.

MRS. CARLEY. Georgiana, I think you are too thoughtless.

[*Outside, "Entire regiment wiped out!"*]

GEORGIANA. Steve, do you hear that! Will you get the paper or shall I call to the man?

STEVEN. I'll get it. [*Goes to a window and opens it, pulling aside the curtain. He calls down to the boy in the street.*] Here! Hi! Extra!

[*Voice outside, "Here you are, boss!"*]

STEVEN. Ring the bell.

[*He comes back into the room. One "Extra" is heard louder than before, and then the cries gradually die away.*]

MRS. CARLEY. The carriage has already been here nearly an hour.

GEORGIANA. It if should be Dick's fight, if it should be Dick's regiment!

LOUISE. Make up your mind, mother, to be a little late. We can't go till we see the paper.

GEORGIANA. [*At the door Right.*] Lizzie! Where is she? Didn't he go to the door with the paper, Steve?

BELLA. I'll see, miss.

[*She goes out Right.*]

STEVEN. Yes. I saw him. But, Georgy, it won't be Dick's regiment.

MRS. CARLEY. [*By the sofa.*] Louise, I'll tell you what we'll do, let's go down and be getting on our wraps.

LOUISE. No, mother, wait.

GEORGIANA. No, Louise, go down, please, with mother. I'd rather.

MRS. CARLEY. [*Going out Left.*] Yes, come along.

[*LOUISE looks at GEORGIANA, who nods her head "Yes" to go.*]

LOUISE. I'll come back.

[*She follows MRS. CARLEY out. LIZZIE enters Right with the paper: GEORGIANA takes the paper from LIZZIE, who immediately goes out Right.*]

STEVEN. Shall I look?

GEORGIANA. [*Standing by the sofa.*] No, I will. Here it is--"Battle with Ladrones. The 91st Regiment of New York, which went out under Captain H.S. Miller to subdue the bandits in the Island of Orla, met an ambuscade of the Ladrones and were annihilated almost to a man." [*She looks up dazed, not able at once to realize what it means. Rereads, skipping some lines.*] "Captain H.S. Miller who went out under--to subdue the bandits in the--met an ambuscade of the Ladrones and was annihilated almost to a man." Steve! his regiment,--do you think it's true? Do you think it can be true?

STEVEN. [*Beside her.*] No, let me read it.

GEORGIANA. [*She sinks down on the end of the sofa.*] No, I will! [*She reads on.*] "News was brought by private--private-- [*Her eyes hurrying on.*] the sole survivors. Privates--" [*Her eyes run along the printed lines again.*] Steve, I can't see

his name. Isn't it there? Can't you see it?

STEVEN. [*Looking.*] No.

GEORGIANA. [*Almost whispers.*] It means--?

STEVEN. [*Striving to hide his own emotion and to encourage her.*] The news is too meagre to be true.

MRS. CARLEY. [*In hall Left.*] Georgiana! We must go.

GEORGIANA. [*Starts. To STEVEN.*] Don't let mother come in, please.

LOUISE. [*Just outside the door.*] Georgiana, we must go.

GEORGIANA. [*To STEVEN.*] Say I'm coming.

STEVEN. I can't leave you alone. [*Going to the door.*] Georgy's coming.

LOUISE. [*Outside.*] Good! Hurry!

STEVEN. [*Coming back to her.*] But I can't leave you.

GEORGIANA. You must. And anyway I want you to. I want to be alone.

[STEVEN hesitates. He comes and takes her hand and is about to kiss her; but something keeps him back; he presses her hand and she gives a grateful look. She crosses to the dressing table and sits before it, dazed. Slowly she takes the flowers from her hair; the pearls from her neck. The front door slams, she lifts her head, and leaning her arm toward DICK's picture, draws it toward her; gazing at it. Then, crying, "Dick, Dick," she bursts into tears and drops her head upon her arms outstretched on the table as

#### THE CURTAIN FALLS

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### ACT IV

*Seven weeks later. The drawing-room as in Act II. GEORGIANA, in a clinging black lace dress, is at the piano, playing "Traumerei." The sunshine pours in through the windows. MOLES comes in apologetically from the Left.*

MOLES. Mr. Coast wants to know if you will see him, miss.

GEORGIANA. [*Who continues playing.*] Very well, Moles.

MOLES. Shall I show him up?

[GEORGIANA nods her head. MOLES goes out. GEORGIANA continues playing. In a few seconds MOLES reenters with COAST.

COAST. Good morning, Georgiana.

[GEORGIANA, half smiling, bows very impersonally, and continues playing till she finishes the music. COAST leans against the piano, facing her, and watches her and waits.

GEORGIANA. [*When she has finished.*] How long is it since you and I have been friends?

COAST. It's five weeks and a couple of days--but it wasn't my fault.

GEORGIANA. Wasn't it? Well? What is it? Why do you want to see me?

COAST. Same reason as ever!

GEORGIANA. No,--you wouldn't ask me that now!

COAST. Yes, I would!

GEORGIANA. No, Sam! Love isn't a game with all women, if you lose with one hand, to try another. Do you mean you think because Dick is dead, it would be any more possible for me to care for you? I don't respect you, Sam, and I don't like you,--and that's putting it very politely,--for many reasons; but one's enough--*Steve!*

[*COAST looks away.*]

COAST. [*After a second's pause.*] I've let you go on because I know I deserve all I get; and I've caught on to the fact that you won't ever care about me the way I want. Well, it's funny, it don't seem to make much difference in my feelings for you all the same! [*Half laughs.*] I ain't exactly ashamed of what I've done, but I'm sort of *sorry*--for you.

GEORGIANA. [*Rising.*] I don't want your sympathy, Sam.

[*She comes away from the piano and he follows her.*]

COAST. Well, you've got to get it, anyway! That you can't help, and if you can help loving me, you can't help my loving you! Anyway, I don't want you to have to get out o' this house.

GEORGIANA. That is all settled now; we can't afford to live here, of course.

COAST. Yes, you can.

GEORGIANA. No, no--Steve's salary--

COAST. Steve's leaving that job; he don't need that money any longer.

[*He looks at her; she looks in his face--a short pause; then--*]

GEORGIANA. You don't mean you've given Steve--

COAST. Don't worry, I'm giving away nothing. Steve's got a new job.

GEORGIANA. What?

COAST. I'm going home--leastways so far's Denver--and Steve's going to look after my interests here.

GEORGIANA. But--

COAST. [*Interrupting her.*] Oh, don't worry--he can't act without my advice--and that's just the kind of a man I want! I don't want none of these here fellers who's got judgment o' their own! Steve's knows he's a fool in business, and he'll obey me implicitly.

GEORGIANA. [*Sitting by the table Left.*] And Steve is willing to accept from you--

COAST. [*Interrupting.*] Oh, I guess he considers I owe him that much anyway.

GEORGIANA. You couldn't repay what you owe Steve.

COAST. That's how *you* look at it! Then there's Coleman's money.

GEORGIANA. Don't speak about that, please.

COAST. Why not? he's left it to you, everybody knows it, and it must be a good deal.

GEORGIANA. I can't and won't discuss that with you.

COAST. [*Goes to GEORGIANA.*] I wish you didn't feel so hard against me, Georgy!

GEORGIANA. To tell you the truth, Sam, I don't think I feel anything about you.

COAST. Oh, Lord, that's worse! I guess I won't stop at Denver,--I'll go away out to the mine for a while and join father.--Good-by.

GEORGIANA. Good-by.

[*Rises.*]

COAST. I swore off a lot of things when I thought I was going to get you, Georgiana!

GEORGIANA. [*Without any feeling.*] I'm glad!

COAST. But I don't want to put on any bluff. I've sworn 'em all on again.

[*Going Left.*

GEORGIANA. [*Same voice, without feeling.*] I'm sorry.

COAST. [*Turning quickly and with an absurd ray of hope.*] Are you really?

GEORGIANA. [*Looking at him a second.*] No, Sam, I suppose, if I tell the truth, I don't really care. You see, somehow or other, I don't care very much about anything.

COAST. [*Discouraged.*] Good-by.

GEORGIANA. Good-by, a pleasant journey.

[*She turns away. Coast is about to go when he meets LOUISE, who enters Left.*

LOUISE. Good morning, Sam. Where are you off to?

[*Going to the sofa.*

COAST. Chicago first, Lou, and then Denver, and eventually--hell, I guess!

[*With a little gulp in his throat he goes out quickly.*

LOUISE. What's the matter with him--he hasn't proposed to you again?

GEORGIANA. He's going away, and he's made Steve--

LOUISE. [*Interrupting.*] I've just seen Steve, he's told me. Steve's coming uptown soon--to see you--

GEORGIANA. [*Sitting on the sofa beside LOUISE.*] To see me--why?

LOUISE. He'll tell you better than I--I feel happy, Georgiana.

GEORGIANA. I'm glad.

LOUISE. And I believe you'll be happy again.

GEORGIANA. Thank you, Louise!

[*MRS. CARLEY enters Right and sits by the table.*

MRS. CARLEY. You back, Louise! I'm that tired, shopping. I'm buying everything I can think of we'll be likely to need for months. There'll be *no* pleasure buying things when, instead of having them sent to 2 East 71st Street, we have to say 329 West 143rd!

GEORGIANA. [*Rises and goes back of the table.*] Mother, dear, you may not have to leave here after all!

MRS. CARLEY. What do you mean?

GEORGIANA. Louise will tell you. I've promised to sit through lunch with the children this morning if you don't mind, and it's their hour.

MRS. CARLEY. But, Georgiana--

[*She is interrupted by a gesture and a glance from LOUISE to let GEORGIANA go.*

GEORGIANA. [*Sweetly.*] Yes? Do you want me for anything, dear?

[*LOUISE repeats the gesture, unnoticed by GEORGIANA.*

MRS. CARLEY. Oh, no.

GEORGIANA. If you want me--

MRS. CARLEY. No.

GEORGIANA. Louise, I told Bella Shindle I'd help her get up an article this morning on the drawing-room and dining room for her sister--you know--who has a friend who writes for the weekly papers. You don't mind, do you?

LOUISE. No.

GEORGIANA. Of course, if you *do* mind--

LOUISE. But I don't, not the least in the world.

GEORGIANA. [*Smiling.*] Bella says it will be a great thing for her sister's reputation--what she calls such a "select" house as ours--and buy her a new hat besides. So I thought we'd better.

[*She goes out Right.*

MRS. CARLEY. Did you ever know any one so changed? She hasn't been horrid to me once since he died. It makes me feel perfectly dreadful to have her treat me so nice.

[*Almost crying, crosses to Left.*

LOUISE. Mother, you know Mrs. Coleman sent for me just now.

MRS. CARLEY. Yes?

LOUISE. Well, why, do you suppose?

MRS. CARLEY. I don't know, but I hope you'll tell me that, too, sometime--what about Steve?

LOUISE. That must wait, mother--Dick Coleman--

MRS. CARLEY. What? Don't tell me he made another will, and didn't leave Georgiana his money.

LOUISE. No, it's good news for Georgiana. I'm almost as afraid to tell you as to tell her. [*Whispers.*] Dick Coleman may be alive, after all.

MRS. CARLEY. Louise!

LOUISE. It is possible he was one of the three men who arrived at San Francisco nearly a week ago.

MRS. CARLEY. Who were taken prisoners by the Ladrones and escaped?

LOUISE. Yes! The three men who got away from Cebu in a boat and were picked up by a German steamer. It seems more than probable. They got one name wrong in the despatches, making it "*Richard Cotten*"--who was also missing--instead of "*Richard Coleman*."

MRS. CARLEY. But how did you find out all this?

LOUISE. From Mrs. Coleman. And it's all in the morning paper, and we never took the trouble to look!

MRS. CARLEY. I read the society notes--it wasn't in there.

LOUISE. Well, the Colemans saw it and telegraphed at once to Washington for confirmation.

MRS. CARLEY. Did they get it?

LOUISE. Not yet. But we're all in the greatest hopes!

MRS. CARLEY. But if Dick Coleman was with those other men in San Francisco, why didn't he telegraph home?

LOUISE. That's the one thing that makes still a dreadful doubt. [*Rises and rings the bell.*] The Colemans are nearly mad waiting for their reply from Washington.

MRS. CARLEY. Shall you tell Georgiana?

[*She rises.*

LOUISE. Not till we are a little more certain. It would be dreadful to open the wound of her grief again for nothing. Oh, if it's only true!

MRS. CARLEY. And you've seen Steve?

LOUISE. Yes, he went off at once to the newspaper to see how authentic their information was, and then he was going on to the Colemans. [*MOLES enters Left in answer to the bell.*] Moles, bring me the morning paper.

MOLES. [*Unable to suppress his excitement.*] I've read it, m'm! We're all nearly crazy over it downstairs. Lizzie's took to crying and can't answer her bells.--Is it true, Mrs. Carley?

LOUISE. Yes, we hope it's true, Moles.

MOLES. Thank God, m'm, if you'll excuse me!

LOUISE. But we're not sure yet, and you mustn't let anything drop before Miss Georgiana till we are certain.

MOLES. No, m'm.

[*He goes out.*]

MRS. CARLEY. Oughtn't we to give Georgiana a hint to prepare her in some way?

LOUISE. Perhaps, if we do it very carefully.

MRS. CARLEY. It seems awful to me not to tell her right out. Of course we won't have Dick Coleman's money to help live on now, if he's back.

LOUISE. Never mind that, mother.

[*MOLES returns with the paper.*]

MOLES. Here is the paper, m'm, and Miss Shindle is come--she says to interview the drawing-room.

LOUISE. Very well--tell Miss Georgiana.

MOLES. Yes, m'm.

[*Goes out Right. LOUISE looks through the paper. MOLES brings in BELLA. BELLA shows signs of suppressed excitement.*]

BELLA. Oh, Mrs. Carley, have you seen the papers--isn't it splendid?

LOUISE. Yes, if it's only true. We're trying to make sure!

[*LOUISE finds the place in the paper.*]

MRS. CARLEY. [*Rising.*] She doesn't know yet.

BELLA. Oh, Mrs. Carley!

LOUISE. We're waiting to be *sure*, and that we may be almost any minute.

BELLA. Mercy! I don't see how you can keep it to yourself.

MRS. CARLEY. You might give her a little hint, Bella, if you get a chance.

BELLA. I wouldn't dare. If I opened my mouth wide enough to give her a hint, I know it would all burst out!

LOUISE. As soon as Mr. Carley comes, make an excuse to leave her, won't you? We expect him to bring us some definite news?

BELLA. Yes, indeed!

[*MRS. CARLEY and LOUISE go out Left, as GEORGIANA comes in.*]

GEORGIANA. [*Pleasantly.*] Good morning, Bella.

[*She sits by the table.*]

BELLA. Good morning, ain't it a fine morning?

GEORGIANA. Is it? I haven't been out.

BELLA. I'm scared to death. [*Laughing nervously.*] I ain't going to write the article myself, you know. It's my sister's husband's friend--she's real literary enough! She's got a typewriter.

GEORGIANA. One can't do everything in this world, Bella, and you must be content with being a real *artiste* in your own profession.

BELLA. Yes, I will say without boasting, so to speak, I don't believe there's a soul in New York who can make hair go further and wear less, than me! [*Laughs heartily.*] What's this room? Of course it's one of them Louis, I suppose, ain't it? [*Looks around the room.*] Let me see, is it Louis Eleventimes? I saw Henry Irving in that, it was fine!

GEORGIANA. No, Bella, Henry Irving has never been in this room, and it's Louis XVI.

BELLA. Oh, of course! [*Writing.*] How well you're looking, Miss Georgiana. Look to me kinder as if you thought good news was in the wind!

[*She glances at her surreptitiously, but down again quickly, frightened.*]

GEORGIANA. Why, Bella?

BELLA. Oh, that's just my idea, that's all. What might this picture be? Shall we say--er--er--Michael Ange?

GEORGIANA. [*Suppressing a smile.*] No, that is a Van Dyck.

BELLA. Of course! I might have known! [*Writing.*] This entire room is a fine bit, ain't it? All Louis--[*She looks back in her book.*] 16, as a piece, I suppose?

GEORGIANA. Yes.

BELLA. So I see! My! How I love all this kind of thing. I couldn't live without a lot o' bric-a-brah lying around sort of careless like and undusted. These tapestries are real, I presume?

GEORGIANA. Yes.

BELLA. I thought so! I got a beautiful piece of tapestry over my washstand, hand-painted, and all the faces and clothes outlined in chenille cross-stitch by the Singer Sewing Machine--but it's not quite the same as yours.

GEORGIANA. It must be very pretty.

BELLA. Oh, it adds a touch! Mr. Gootch gave it to me for an engagement present.

GEORGIANA. Does Mr. Gootch ever speak of Mr. Coleman?

BELLA. He worships him--naturally, as Mr. Coleman got wounded in both arms carrying him to a safe place! Mr. Gootch says as there wasn't a man in the regiment braver or as popular as Mr. Coleman. Don't you think, perhaps, sometimes, maybe, Miss Georgiana--

[*She stops near GEORGIANA.*]

GEORGIANA. Maybe what--?

BELLA. Oh, I dunno--I--

GEORGIANA. [*Rising and going to the sofa.*] Come, Bella, we must get on with your article.

[*A pause.*]

BELLA. [*Looking about.*] Why, you haven't got a cosy corner, have you? And yet you seem to go in for the real artistic! I don't know what my sister 'n' I'd do without our cosy corner! It is draped with a fish net, and has paper butterflies and beetles in it! Very artistic! And she's got--well, really now, I believe she's got at least *eleven pillers*; counting the two ticking ones that has their covers come off at night for our bed!

GEORGIANA. [*Rising nervously.*] Bella, I have some colored dresses I'd like to give you for your trousseau, if you care to take them. They've not been worn very much.

BELLA. Oh, Miss Georgiana, of course I'd take 'em--only, I don't know, I sort of feel it in my bones you'll wear 'em yourself.

[*STEVEN enters Left suddenly. He tries to conceal his great excitement. MOLES is with him.*]

STEVEN. [*To MOLES.*] Tell Mrs. Carley I want to see her here, please.

MOLES. Yes, sir.

[*He goes out Right.*]

STEVEN. Hello, Georgy!

GEORGIANA. Steve!

STEVEN. Good morning, Miss Shindle.

BELLA. Good morning, Mr. Carley. I must be going now, Miss Georgiana.

GEORGIANA. But have you got enough for the article?

BELLA. Oh, yes, miss--Louise furniture, the Van Wyck picture, tapestry effects--etcetra. Thank you ever so much. Good-by!

GEORGIANA. Wait, I'll tell you about the dining room.

*[She goes out with BELLA Left, and LOUISE enters.]*

STEVEN. Louise, it's true!

LOUISE. Oh, Steve!

STEVEN. It was a press telegram and has been verified by private wire. Besides, Mrs. Coleman has a telegram from Dick himself.

LOUISE. From where?

STEVEN. From San Francisco, when the Colemans were at Palm Beach. Their servants foolishly *mailed* the telegram to them, and before it arrived in Florida, they were on their way North, coming by easy stages.

LOUISE. *[Rises.]* And the message only just caught up with them! Who will tell her?

*[MOLES comes in Left with a note.]*

MOLES. A note just come for you, sir, by Mr. Coleman's man.

STEVEN. We must break it very gently, prepare her a little for it if we can. *[To MOLES.]* Thanks. *[Takes note, opens it, and reads it hurriedly.]* He's there! With his father and mother!

MOLES. *[Forgetting himself.]* Oh, sir--I'm so glad! Excuse me, sir, but we're all so glad, sir--any answer sir?

*[His eyes fill up.]*

STEVEN. No, only tell Miss Georgiana I want to see her.

MOLES. *[Who has to swallow a lump in his throat before he can speak.]* Yes, sir.

*[He goes out Right.]*

LOUISE. *[Wiping her eyes, goes to STEVEN.]* What does it say?

STEVEN. *[Reads the note.]* "Dick and the answer from Washington arrived together!" He'll be over here at once--they won't keep him.

LOUISE. We must tell her before he gets here.

STEVEN. Yes.

LOUISE. We must do it very carefully.

STEVEN. But we mustn't lose any time.

*[GEORGIANA comes in during this last speech, overhearing it. A movement is made by others on GEORGIANA'S entrance.]*

GEORGIANA. "Losing time!" Am I keeping you from anything? I'm very sorry!

LOUISE. *[Very tenderly, and hiding her emotion.]* No, you're not keeping us, Georgy, we only wanted to see you, that's all.

GEORGIANA. *[Going to her.]* Why?

STEVEN. *[Also very tenderly.]* Do we have to have a reason to want to see you, isn't that we love you enough?

GEORGIANA. Yes, but why do you speak to me like this?--it's very kind of you--only--what does it mean?

*[Smiling a little nervously, they hesitate.]*

LOUISE. Steve has news for you, Georgy.

GEORGIANA. I know about it, Coast told me.

STEVEN. It isn't that, Georgy.

GEORGIANA. What is it, then? How serious you both look.

*[She becomes frightened.]*

STEVEN. This is *good* news.

GEORGIANA. *Good* news!

LOUISE. Yes.

STEVEN. The best in the world!

GEORGIANA. For me?

STEVEN. For you!

GEORGIANA. *[A second's pause, she speaks then in a low voice.]* No, it can't be! It can't be!

STEVEN. Yes, it *is*, Georgy!

GEORGIANA. No!

STEVEN. Georgy! It *is*!

*[MOLES enters Left.]*

MOLES. *[With voice full of happy emotion which he cannot disguise.]* Please, sir--

*[He hesitates.]*

STEVEN. Show him here, Moles.

*[MOLES lowers his head and goes out.]*

GEORGIANA. Dick--?

*[She looks from STEVEN to LOUISE. They all show her by their faces and movements that it is true.]*

GEORGIANA. *[Whispers.]* Dick!

*[She stands waiting, breathless. STEVEN steals out with his arm about LOUISE.]*

GEORGIANA. *[Excitedly, to herself.]* Come! No, no! It can't be true! It can't be true! They killed him, those brutes out there! You told me so! Every one believed it! I believed it! And so you want me to believe he's alive! That he's here! In this house, coming into this room--that I shall see--

*[She stops suddenly, looking up. The door-knob of the door Left turns. Every nerve in GEORGIANA's body grows tense. MOLES opens the door and lets DICK pass in and closes the door behind him.]*

GEORGIANA. *[Cries out.]* Dick!

*[DICK goes towards her, but stops. She starts towards him, stops a moment, and they look at each other, unable to speak,--then she goes on slowly, almost fearfully, till she reaches him.]*

DICK. *[Moving to her:]* Georgy!

*[He stands before her with both arms bandaged in a sling.]*

GEORGIANA. *[Whispers.]* Dick! *[Looks him straight in the eyes--he looks back. She cries out.]* Dick!

[*Holding out her arms toward him.*

DICK. Georgy! [*He looks down at his arms.*] My arms--I can't--

GEORGIANA. Oh, Dick!

[*And putting her arms tenderly about his neck, she holds him close, as he leans down his head and kisses her, and*

THE CURTAIN FALLS

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