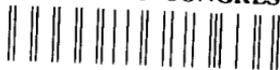


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the 1980s. The 1980s have been a decade of change for the world of work, and the 1990s are likely to be a decade of further change.

There are a number of reasons why the 1990s are likely to be a decade of further change. First, the pace of technological change is increasing. Second, the pace of globalisation is increasing. Third, the pace of demographic change is increasing. Fourth, the pace of environmental change is increasing. Fifth, the pace of social change is increasing.

These changes are likely to have a profound impact on the world of work. They are likely to create new opportunities and challenges. They are likely to require new skills and attitudes. They are likely to require new ways of working.

It is important that we understand these changes and their implications. It is important that we prepare ourselves for the changes that are ahead of us. It is important that we embrace the changes that are ahead of us.

The 1990s are likely to be a decade of great opportunity. The 1990s are likely to be a decade of great challenge. The 1990s are likely to be a decade of great change.

Let us embrace the changes that are ahead of us. Let us embrace the opportunities that are ahead of us. Let us embrace the challenges that are ahead of us.

The 1990s are likely to be a decade of great achievement. The 1990s are likely to be a decade of great progress. The 1990s are likely to be a decade of great success.

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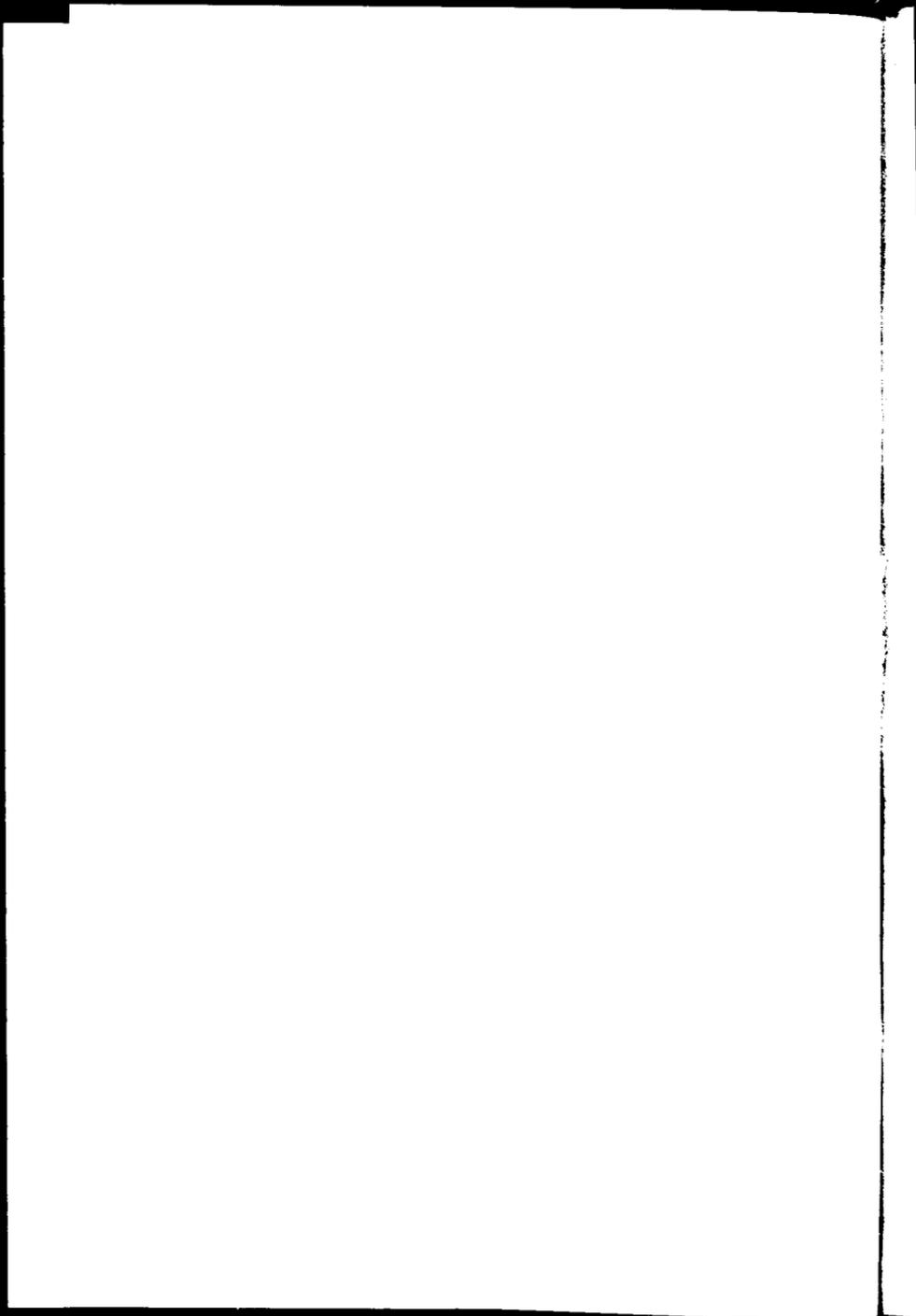
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# THE PROSECUTOR

A FOUR-ACT DRAMA

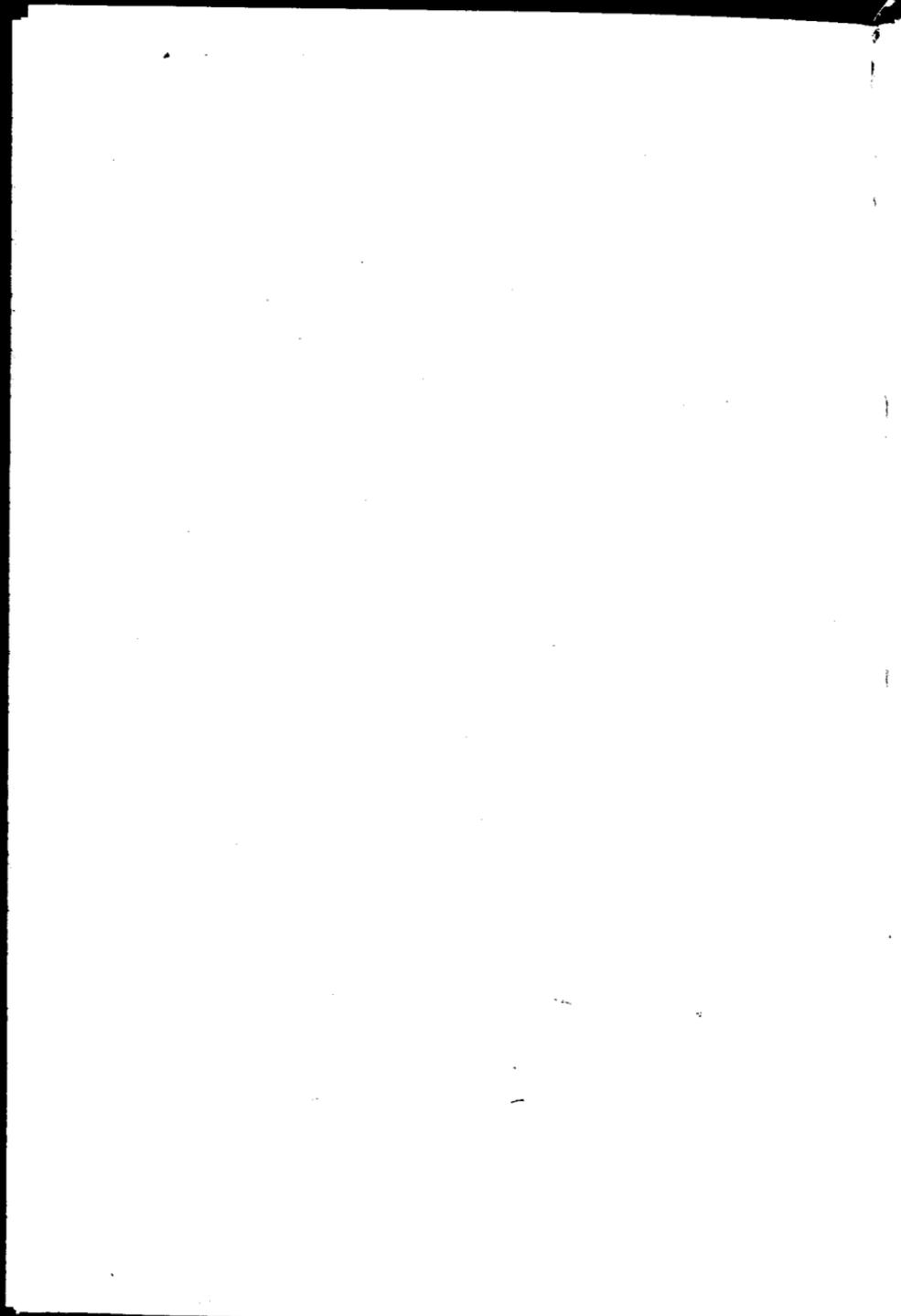
By

CLIFFORD G. ROE

and

CLARE TEAL WISEMAN





# THE PROSECUTOR

A FOUR-ACT DRAMA

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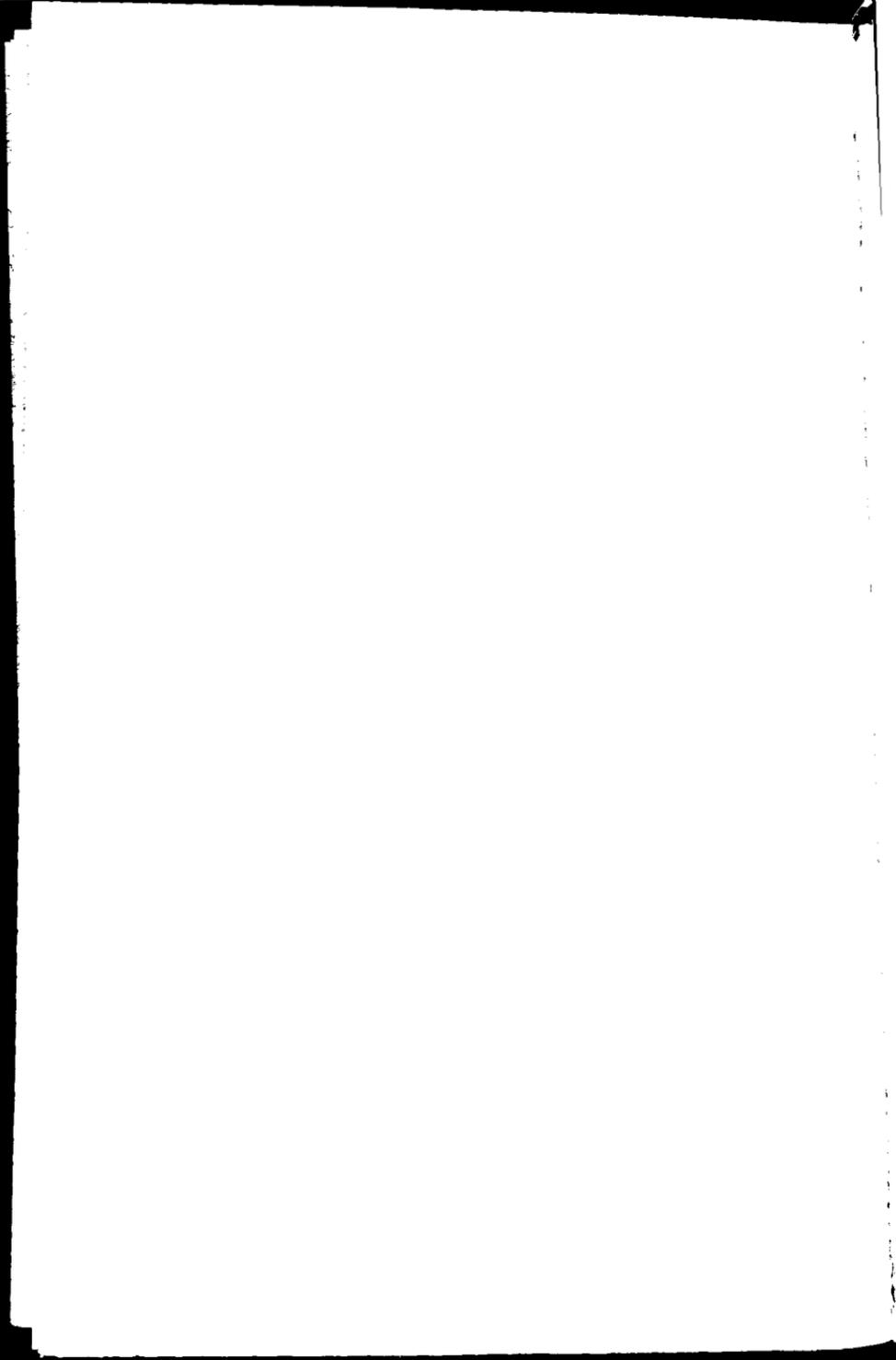
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—  
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CLIFFORD

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

In Order of Appearance.

MR. JAMES VANCLEVE ..... *A New York broker*  
ANDREW ..... *Servant in the VanCleve home*  
CLINTON RANDOLPH ..... *The Prosecutor*  
CORNELIA VANCLEVE ..... *Wife of James VanCleve*  
MARGARET VANCLEVE .....  
..... *The daughter. Randolph's fiancée*  
CYNTHIA ..... *Colored maid at the Highbrow Club*  
KID MCKOO ..... *Detective in Randolph's employ*  
FRENCHY }  
PIKER } ..... *Members of the Highbrow gang*  
TONY }  
HIGHBROW ..... *The leader and head of the gang*  
THE QUEEN ..... *His woman companion*  
MOSE MARCUS ..... *Lawyer for the gang*  
LORNA HOLMAN ..... *The maid of honor*  
GEORGE BARNES ..... *Clerk in Randolph's office*  
JIM BELL ..... *A plainclothes man*  
TIME:—*The present*  
PLACE:—*New York*



## DESCRIPTION OF CHARACTERS, COSTUMES, ETC.

MR. VANCLEVE—A typical New Yorker from one of the best old families, very conservative in everything, narrow-minded and hard to convince. Immaculate in his dress. Wears white vest and grey spats. His hair is grey, and he has small, closely-trimmed side-whiskers. He is rather portly and very dignified, but kindly. His face is ruddy and healthy.

ANDREW—A tall, thin, long-faced, very respectful and discreet butler. He moves with great dignity. Wears conventional garb.

CLINTON RANDOLPH—Tall, broad shouldered, powerful-looking man, clean-shaven, with a strong jaw, and dark hair slightly sprinkled with grey on the temples. Not too young, and yet not even middle-aged, but with a face that shows experience and ripe judgment and great strength of character. Wears business clothes, except in first act when he appears in evening dress. In second act, wears a coat over evening clothes.

MRS. VANCLEVE—Short, fat and fussy. Very decisive in her manner of speech. A born manager. Her costumes should be rich, and rather fussy than severe.

MARGARET—Tall, slender, rather fair—just a well-groomed, well-bred New York girl.

CYNTHIA—A trim-looking negro wench, not too dark. A saucy wench with a ready tongue or assumed stupidity as occasion demands. Not too young. Wears black or dark dress and white apron.

KID MCKOO—A young Irishman with an honest, open face. A scar across his cheek and one small one

on his forehead. He is shrewd and able to assume smooth manner when necessary, or lapse into the vernacular when off guard. Not very large, and very quick and agile in his movements. He has dark hair and a very winning smile.

**FRENCHY**—A blonde Frenchman (French descent—no accent). He has wavy hair and a small, curled-up, light mustache. Is very much of a dandy. Wears a check suit and red tie and socks to match.

**PIKER**—Brown hair, very thin face and hollow cheeks. Pronounced pallor. Rather small eyes. Is more quietly dressed than Frenchy. Is next to Highbrow in intelligence.

**TONY**—A little, stocky, strong Italian with a mean face and quarrelsome disposition. Wears a brown suit and soft hat and a flannel shirt.

**HIGHBROW**—A rather good looking fellow about twenty-five, with a pale, rather sad face, and a high forehead. He has dark hair and is well dressed. Gives an impression of superiority.

**THE QUEEN**—Tall, dark, handsome woman of the villainess type. Is thin and sharp-featured. Dressed in an evening gown of extremely low cut and wears many diamonds. A fillet of brilliants in her hair. Is also rather superior type—not tough in her manner, but plausible.

**MARCUS**—The typical little sheeny “shyster lawyer”—smooth, palavering, with a shifty eye and a servile bow.

**LORNA**—Young, blonde, pretty, with big blue eyes and an extremely innocent expression and childlike manner. Dainty, youthful clothes.

**BARNES**—Rather tall, dark, oily hair, well dressed, and smooth and courteous in his manner. Stoops a little, like a man whose life is spent over books. No longer young.

**JIM BELL**—Just a plain man.

# THE PROSECUTOR

## ACT I.

SCENE.—*The library in the VanCleve home. It is comfortably and artistically furnished, soft in coloring and dignified in effect—shows both taste and wealth in its appointments. At the back (u. c.) a large arched doorway opens into the entrance hall and discloses a stairway leading to the hall above. At the right (R 3) of the room is a large open fireplace. A tea table is in front of it. At the left is a desk with a telephone on it. Small enclosure with heavily draped windows and window seat. urc: Sky and trees to be seen from window. Time late afternoon. Bowls of flowers scattered about and palms in hall as though arranged for some festivity. Doorways R. 4 and L. 3. Library table in center of room. Book-cases.*

### THE CURTAIN RISES.

*Enter U. C. from hall Mr. VanCleve, followed closely by Andrew the butler. Just inside the doorway removes gloves and drops in hat that Andrew holds, then coat, which Andrew also takes.*

MR. VANCLEVE.—Is Mrs. VanCleve here, Andrew?

ANDREW.—No, sir; she has not come in, sir.

MR. VANCLEVE (*looks around at decorations*).—More functions today, Andrew?

ANDREW.—Yes, sir; Miss Margaret gave a luncheon for her bridesmaids, today, sir. It went off very well, sir.

MR. VANCLEVE.—Yes, yes, I suppose so. (*Walks to fireplace and holds out his hands to the blaze. Solil-*

*oquizes.*) Luncheons, teas, dinners, receptions. Thank heaven, I have only one daughter to marry off!

ANDREW.—Yes, sir—that is, sir—(*Coughs behind his hand.*)

MR. VANCLEVE.—Are we dining alone tonight, Andrew?

ANDREW.—No, sir; Mrs. VanCleve told me to remind you, sir, that we would have guests for dinner.

MR. VANCLEVE (*sighing heavily*).—Who is to be here?

ANDREW.—Only Mr. Randolph, sir, and Miss Holman.

MR. VANCLEVE.—Oh, has Miss Holman arrived?

ANDREW.—No, sir; not yet, sir. Mrs. VanCleve and Miss Margaret have driven down to meet her, sir. She was expected in time for the luncheon. Miss Margaret thought she must have missed her train, sir, and so they have gone to meet the later one.

MR. VANCLEVE.—Oh, I see. Punctuality does not seem to be one of the things they teach in colleges. The girls of today live in a rush and are never known to be on time. I expect Margaret will be late for her own wedding. Her funeral will probably be the only thing she will ever be on time for. These girls are all alike.

ANDREW.—Yes, sir. (*Coughs behind his hand and withdraws into hall. VanCleve sits down in chair near table and picks up newspaper, glancing over it, as he talks.*)

MR. VANCLEVE (*soliloquizing*).—When Cornelia and I were young we didn't have all this fuss and rushing and constant go, and yet we managed to get married and stay married for twenty-five years. Nowadays *five* years is about the limit. We didn't have college educations, either, and yet I've been able to make a little mark on life's slate, and accumulate enough to keep the hyena from the hearth, and today our daughters have to begin where we leave off. Lord! The salary I had when Cornelia and I started

wouldn't keep Margaret in silk stockings and violets. Cornelia was just the same age as Margaret, too—just twenty-one years old—but Cornelia was a little girl. Margaret is a woman. We have no little girls nowadays. They went out of style with mutton-leg sleeves. Now they jump from childhood to womanhood over night—from dolls to eugenics—from Mother Goose to Ellen Key—from kindergarten to votes for women. I don't know what we're coming to! (*Pause. Looks over paper.*) There's something wrong with the age. Hello! I see Randolph is pushing that disappearance case pretty strong. Queer business! Randolph's all right, of course. He's a fine, clean fellow, but I don't half like his being so active in these affairs. It makes him so many enemies.

ANDREW (*appearing in doorway*).—Mr. Randolph, sir. Shall I show him in here, sir?

MR. VANCLEVE.—Yes—yes—of course. (*Exit Andrew. Enter Clinton Randolph.*)

RANDOLPH.—Good afternoon, Mr. VanCleve.

MR. VANCLEVE.—Ah, Clinton, I was just thinking about you.

RANDOLPH.—Nothing very dreadful, I hope. (*Smiling.*)

MR. VANCLEVE (*rising and putting his hand on the other man's shoulder affectionately*).—No, Clinton, I could not think anything very dreadful of you. I don't know any man I would sooner give my daughter to, and that's saying a good deal. She's all we have, you know, and I am thankful to feel that I am going to give her into the keeping of a man like you—a man with a clean record—a record of decent, honorable living behind him.

RANDOLPH (*wringing his hand*).—Thank you, sir. I've made mistakes, of course, but I've tried to—to be worthy, and that means a great deal from you, Mr. VanCleve. I appreciate it!

MR. VANCLEVE.—Well, Clinton, we are going to

miss our little girl, but I just want you to know that it is a comfort to both her mother and me to know she has not chosen unwisely. I tell you, in this age of swift living a girl runs a frightful risk in marrying. We didn't know so much when I was young. We just rushed in where angels fear to tread. I don't know but what we were happier, though. It was not Esculapius, but Dan Cupid who ruled the game then. Life was simpler—divorces and affinities were not fashionable.

RANDOLPH (*laughing*).—I think Dan Cupid will always rule any game that Margaret and I play, Mr. VanCleve. I realize that I'm a very lucky man.

MR. VANCLEVE (*solemnly*).—There's just one thing that is bothering me, Clinton. I was looking over the paper as you came in. (*Picks it up and both sit down in front of fireplace.*) It's this prosecution of yours against the abductors of that young girl, last month.

RANDOLPH.—Yes?

MR. VANCLEVE.—You know, my boy, this working against a gang—if there is such a thing—is dangerous business. They seem to think it is more *persecution* than prosecution, and, of course, I don't pretend to know very much about it all, but I do know human nature, and frankly, Clinton, I very much doubt whether any girl is—er—*abducted* in just that way, or for just that purpose, without her consent. I can't help believing that these mysterious disappearances one reads about are usually the result of an impulse to—er—kick over the traces, as it were, and—and—*take a bite of the apple.*

RANDOLPH (*smiling and shaking his head*).—Granted, that you are right in many cases, there are others, Mr. VanCleve, and I fear their name is legion, where there is no such explanation. Understand me, I do not mean that all women of that class are innocent victims, but that there are organized gangs trafficking in human merchandise—girls—there is not the shadow of a doubt. That many of these girls

are held *captives* until their bodies are broken, and their spirits bruised to such an extent that they never wish to face their own part of the world again, I know is true. That there is a complicated and far-reaching *system* back of it all, I am also convinced is true—a system implicating some who stand in high places, and in positions of authority and trust, sometimes. Why, that little girl in the case you speak of was plucked right out of a public place and a crowd of people, and she disappeared as completely as though the earth had opened and swallowed her up.

MR. VANCLEVE (*doubtingly*).—Oh, come, come, Clinton. These are not dark ages! I tell you, the girl must have been to blame. Why, it is our national boast, man, that an American girl is safe anywhere. I insist that if a girl is molested it is her own fault. I don't believe such things could happen to a really *nice* girl, don't you know—a well-brought-up girl, who conducted herself in a dignified manner.

RANDOLPH (*rising*).—You are wrong, Mr. VanCleve. I wish you were not. Some day I will prove it to you.

MR. VANCLEVE.—Well, just for the sake of argument—just for the sake of argument, understand—admitting that there is a basis of truth in what you say, don't you think that you are going at this thing a little bit strenuously, my boy? Don't you think that a little more conservative policy might be wiser, in these matters? If there *is* such a thing as a "gang" organized for these purposes, you can't fight a gang single-handed, you know—you can't do the Saint George and the Dragon act in this day and generation.

RANDOLPH (*a little heatedly*).—I tell you the Dragon still exists and swallows up its victims of innocent maidenhood every day, and as long as I have a drop of my mother's blood in my veins I shall fight it!

MR. VANCLEVE.—Well, young blood is hot blood,

and I appreciate your feeling in the matter, provided, of course, that you believe these to be the facts. But you will permit me to doubt that they are more than coincidences, or isolated cases, and to suggest that, if only for political reasons—for the sake of your career—er—you move a little cautiously in this matter. This paper, the *Advocate*, for instance, seems distinctly hostile in its attitude toward you.

RANDOLPH (*bitterly*).—No doubt—and with cause. Do you remember the big tenement block I had raided and cleared out, last month, in our search for this girl? Well, the owner of that block was also one of the owners of this newspaper. The connection is plain, isn't it?

MR. VANCLEVE.—Well, well! The coincidence is remarkable! I am surprised!

RANDOLPH.—It is not coincidence, Mr. VanCleve. That man knew perfectly well the use to which his property was being put, and he never hesitated to reap the harvest. Do you see how far-reaching this thing is? I have a clew that I believe will unearth one of its branches, and in a few days I may be able to convince you that there is a slavery today before the horrors of which black slavery pales. (*Talks in the manner of the prosecutor, striking the table with his fist.*) Meanwhile, nothing on earth will stop me in this fight. They may threaten me, they may break me, but it shall be a fight to the finish! Why, suppose a daughter of yours—suppose Margaret—

MR. VANCLEVE (*rising and speaking with angry impatience*).—Good Lord, man! Such a thing would be impossible. (*Voices are heard in the hall. Enter Mrs. VanCleve and Margaret.*)

MRS. VANCLEVE.—Oh, dear, I am ready to drop! Good afternoon, Clinton. Yes, a chair, please. (*Sits down.*) I never was so tired in my life. James, have you ordered tea?

MR. VANCLEVE.—Why, no, my dear; not yet.

MRS. VANCLEVE.—Ring, please. I shall perish if

I don't have a cup of tea at once. We have been rushing all day, and every day, for weeks. I am worn to a frazzle, now.

MR. VANCLEVE (*gallantly*).—My dear, you are a very *substantial* frazzle, at any rate.

MARGARET (*who has been greeting Randolph*).—Never mind, mother dear, it will soon be over.

MRS. VANCLEVE (*to Andrew, who appears in doorway L. 3*).—Tea, Andrew—and hurry. Margaret, I hope you will never be married again.

RANDOLPH.—I agree with that heartily, Mrs. VanCleve. (*Comes over to tea table and sits down.*) What particular form of social torture have you had to go through with today?

MRS. VANCLEVE.—Mercy, man, the half will never be told. I am a hard-working woman, and the unappreciative world thinks I sit in the lap of Luxury and let her rock me.

RANDOLPH.—The world is more likely to stone you than rock you, I fear.

MARGARET (*happily*).—I think it's a lovely world.

MRS. VANCLEVE.—Well, your bones are younger than mine, my dear. You can *talk* all morning and *tea* all afternoon and *tango* all night, and still be fresh. *You* are in love. That explains everything! Love is not only blind. It's deaf to trouble, and dumb to duty, and proof against all the outrageous slings and arrows, except Cupid's.

MARGARET.—Oh, I am not as bad as that, mother.

MRS. VANCLEVE.—Well, isn't it I who quarrel with the dressmakers for you, and act as a buffer between you and the tailor, and cajole the milliners and arrange with the caterers—

RANDOLPH (*interrupting*).—All that today?

MRS. VANCLEVE.—Oh, yes (*Andrew appears with the tea tray. Mrs. VanCleve pours tea. Randolph passes cup to Margaret and sits down beside her*)—and more. Tea, James?

MR. VANCLEVE.—No, thanks. Not for me. It

spoils my dinner. It seems to me we are always eating.

MRS. VANCLEVE.—One gets the habit—and I would like to lose a few pounds, too. Are there cakes, Andrew? (*He goes for them.*)

MARGARET.—I gave my bridesmaid luncheon today, father. It was lovely. Just one thing to mar it. Lorna, my maid of honor, did not arrive in time.

RANDOLPH.—Miss Holman?

MARGARET.—Yes. I expected her this morning on the 11:45, and went down with the car to meet her, but she was not there. We thought she must have missed the train and taken a later one, so mother and I went down to the 4:30, but she was not on that, either. There is not another until quite late tonight. I thought there might be a telegram.

MRS. VANCLEVE (*to Andrew, coming with cakes*).—Is there any message, Andrew?

ANDREW.—Not that I know of, ma'am.

MR. VANCLEVE (*looking at Randolph nervously*).—Why, that's very strange!

RANDOLPH.—She was traveling alone?

MARGARET.—Yes, and for the first time. She is very young, you know—just eighteen—and Professor Holman, her father, is very strict with her. You know I lived with them during my last college years, so I know.

MRS. VANCLEVE.—Well, I call it very rude not to send a telegram if she missed her train. Do you think she could have mistaken the day?

MARGARET.—Oh, no. Her letter said Friday, distinctly, I am sure. I have it here. (*Goes to desk.*) Here is her picture, too, Clinton. Isn't she a dear?

RANDOLPH (*studying photo closely*).—She is, indeed. Just a sweet, innocent-looking child.

MARGARET (*eagerly*).—She is just as sweet as she looks. Oh, I know you will like her! Here is the letter. (*Reads.*) "Will arrive on the 11:45 Friday

morning. Can hardly wait to see you, darling girl—”

RANDOLPH.—Does she say which station?

MARGARET.—Why, no. We went to the Grand Central station.

MR. VANCLEVE (*relieved*).—She is probably waiting at the 125th, and hasn't sense enough to take a cab here.

RANDOLPH.—I hope she *hasn't*, as long as she is alone. (*Aside to VanCleve.*) The cabmen of the stations often belong to the *gangs* I mentioned. (*VanCleve sits in front of fireplace and works his hands nervously, thinking deeply.*)

MRS. VANCLEVE.—The little ninny! She has probably waited there about five hours. These small-town girls never know what to do in an emergency. They are so helpless! Let us send the chauffeur back there for her. We must dress, you know. Here, Margaret, give me the photograph and I will show it to him so he will recognize her. (*Takes photograph. Exit into hall.*)

MARGARET.—I think she must have decided to wait until tomorrow—the wedding rehearsal is not until Monday, you know—and has probably written instead of telegraphing. I only hope she is isn't ill. It would upset all our plans.

RANDOLPH (*drawing Margaret into window enclosure*).—Margaret, sweetheart, I can hardly realize you will be my *wife*, so soon.

MARGARET (*looking up at him*).—Less than a week, Clinton. I can hardly realize it myself. I am so happy! It all seems too good to be true!

RANDOLPH.—Dear girl! I hope I may never fail you—that the happiness may last. (*Kisses her tenderly. Father is still sitting before the fire, deep in worried thought. His back is toward them.*)

MRS. VANCLEVE (*entering with photograph, which she places on desk*).—Come, Margaret, we have just time to dress. (*She starts up stairway.*)

RANDOLPH.—Has your friend Lorna any special sweetheart among the boys of the college? She wouldn't have stolen off for a little lark—a matinee or something—would she?

MARGARET.—Oh, no. I am sure she would not. Lorna is not the girl for larks. She is quiet and shy and studious. I was glad to induce her to come for the wedding, for I think it will all be like a bit of fairyland to her.

RANDOLPH.—I hope so. Just being with you ought to work magic.

MARGARET (*smiling*).—I must run away. There is barely time to dress. (*Throws him an airy kiss and goes upstairs.*)

MR. VANCLEVE.—Confound you, Clinton! I am getting as nervous as an old woman over that girl—and all because of your talk about disappearances and conspiracies.

RANDOLPH.—Well, Mr. VanCleve, I don't want to be a calamity howler, but I don't like the looks of it myself. You may not believe it, but I happened to get hold of an intercepted letter, an *order* for young girls for an exclusive establishment, and the pirates are now in search of prey, so no unsophisticated girl is safe. All I need is a little more evidence like that to convict some of the leaders in this special gang.

MR. VANCLEVE.—Well, I still believe these victims all walk into the cage of their own accord—girls know more than their mothers nowadays—but, by Jupiter, Clinton, it all makes the father of a daughter *think*, I tell you.

RANDOLPH (*earnestly*).—That is just what I want it to do. (*Telephone rings. VanCleve goes to desk and answers it.*)

MR. VANCLEVE.—Hello—yes, this is he—Mrs. Holman? Oh, yes—. Whether she arrived safely?— (*Looks excitedly at Randolph, who comes closer.*) Why, when did she leave home?— This morning? At what time?— Was to let you know at once, you

say?— Yes, yes— (*Aside to Randolph, covering mouthpiece with his hand.*) Good Heavens, Randolph! Something *has* happened to that girl! (*In phone.*) Yes, I see— Why, no, Mrs. Holman, she is not here yet, but we think she may have mistaken the station— Now, don't be alarmed— It's all right— We've sent the car over there now— No, *no*, Mrs. Holman. This is the twentieth century, you know— Yes, but she can always call a policeman— Now don't worry.— Yes, we will call you again later. It's just a misunderstanding, I am sure— Yes— I certainly will— Yes—good-bye. (*They stare at each other in silence for a moment.*)

RANDOLPH.—We must get busy on this at once. I don't believe, for a minute, she is waiting at the 125th. She would phone, of course. She is not a greenhorn. We would better not tell the ladies yet. It would alarm them, of course. Margaret knows something of these cases of mine, you know. As her future husband, I have warned her of some of the dangers *you* do not believe exist. Margaret is not an ignorant child. She is a woman and would understand.

MR. VANCLEVE.—No, we must not tell them, of course, but what are you going to do—what are you going to do? Notify the police? (*Reaches for phone again. Randolph intercepts him.*)

RANDOLPH.—Not yet, not yet, Mr. VanCleve. The police mean publicity. Publicity, now, would be fatal. Wait! I have a man working for me—a detective called Kid McKoo—a brawny little Irishman, shrewd, and as clever as they make them, and loyal as a dog. He has done some fine work. He pretends to be one of the gang, you see—and he knows the underworld, and knows the whole game. This is a case for him, I think. I know just where to reach him now. With your permission, I will call him up.

MR. VANCLEVE (*stepping aside*).—Certainly, certainly. This is beyond me. I leave it in your hands.

I don't know the game. But—but—don't you think you might try the hospitals first?

RANDOLPH.—Yes, I will attend to that, too. (*Picks up phone. VanCleve paces up and down and runs his hand over his head in a bewildered way.*) West, 1224—yes—hello—that you McKoo?— Yes— Well, drop that for the present. I have something new on hand, more important. (*Margaret appears on the stairway landing and pauses there, listening. Is dressed in evening gown.*) Listen carefully. Get busy among the fellows at once, and learn, if you can, whether any of them has procured a new girl—small, blond, blue eyes, very pretty, well educated and refined, who came in at the Grand Central on the 11:45 today. (*Margaret gasps and leans over the rail.*) Yes, it might be the Highbrow gang getting her to fill that order— yes— of course, she would bring a big price.— What?— You've got Cynthia planted as maid at the Highbrow Club? Good work! Get word to her. If they've got her we'll get them red handed— Conviction is sure, *and we must save that girl.* I'll get on the track of the hospitals and the railroad detectives, then run right down and meet you. My car is outside— I've got her photo. Now listen— I'll wait till I hear from you or Cynthia. If she's there, arrange a signal. Well?— Yes, I'll see the lieutenant, you understand what you are to do. Don't fail me, Kid— This is personal—yes, if she's not there we will need help to round up the other joints. Her name is Holman—get it? H-o-l-m-a-n.— All right. (*Margaret, who has been creeping down the stairs a step at a time, listening, bursts into the room screaming.*)

MARGARET.—*Clinton!* What does this mean? Where is Lorna? Tell me. What has happened? (*Mrs. VanCleve appears on landing just as Margaret screams. Pauses, then hurries down the stairs.*)

MR. VANCLEVE.—Now, don't get excited, my dear. There is some mistake.

MARGARET.—Oh, don't deceive me. (*Sobbing.*) Tell me the truth. I *heard* what you said. Oh, if anything has happened to her—why, Lorna is like my little sister, you know—

MRS. VANCLEVE (*entering*).—Mercy! What is the matter?

MARGARET (*sobs*).—Lorna—

RANDOLPH.—Miss Holman started on the early train, Mrs. VanCleve, and all we know is that she has not arrived.

MRS. VANCLEVE (*stammers in excitement*).—But, but—how—

MR. VANCLEVE (*soothingly*).—Her mother telephoned, my dear. She is naturally anxious. There is some mistake.

MARGARET (*wildly*).—But you said those *wretches*, you have told me about, probably have her, you did—you did—I *heard* you. Oh (*weeping*), are there really such fiends living? My little Lorna—my little sister— (*All are standing aghast. She screams at them frantically.*) Why don't you do something?

MRS. VANCLEVE (*decidedly*).—Call the police! (*Rushes toward the phone. All talk at once.*)

MARGARET.—Oh, hurry, hurry—call them at once.

MR. VANCLEVE.—That's just what I advise.

MRS. VANCLEVE.—Couldn't any of you think of that? I have to think for everybody. (*Starts to phone.*)

RANDOLPH.—Stop! (*All pause.*) If you notify the police now you'll never get her. For God's sake, leave this to me! (*Exit. Outer door slams. All stand staring for a moment. Margaret, wiping her eyes, looks after Randolph half doubtfully. Mrs. VanCleve, snorting angrily, makes a move toward the phone, then stops herself. Mr. VanCleve looks at them a moment—starts to speak—stops himself—thrusts his hands into his pockets and walks to fireplace. Stands with back turned to women. Mar-*

*garet goes to the window and pulls curtains aside and looks out.)*

ANDREW (*appearing in doorway*).—Dinner is served, madam.

CURTAIN.

## ACT II.

*Curtain rises on Cynthia, busy at buffet, wiping glasses, etc.*

CYNTHIA.—Laws a massy, dis am been a busy day! It's "Cynthia come h'yar," an "Cynthia, go dar"—just one thing, den anoder—jest keeps me humpin' myself. I wouldn't take dis sneakin' detective job for a hun'ed dollars a week if 'twarn't for mighty good cause. (*Pours out glass of whiskey.*) It's religion, dat's what, it am—a—makin' me do it. (*Gulps down the drink.*) If 'twarn't my religious duty I'd neber come a-pussy-footin' in on dese white trash disaway. I got some heart if I am black. (*Sighs.*) Dem pore girls—some drunk—some doped—some cryin'—some prayin'—gag 'em if dey pray too loud—beat 'em if dey holler! Lordy, it's heart renderin'—dat's what it am—it's heart renderin'! My ol' man, he de wurthlessest nigger eber was, but he ain't neber treat me dat-away. Married by de preacher we was. Put a ring on my finger, all right—cos' him two dollahs and a half, real money—platin' ain't wore off yit! (*Bell rings. Two short and one long ring.*)

CYNTHIA.—Who dat? Dat's 'e right signal. Two short and one long. Mebbe got anoder new skirt! Oh, lawsy! (*Sighs and goes to door down hall—calls.*) Jes' minute. (*Lets in Kid McKoo. He carelessly shuts door after him.*)

KID.—Nobody 'round tonight, Cynthia?

CYNTHIA.—Sure, dey am! Always some one round h'yar. Nebber leeb me 'lone a minute. You'd orter know dat. Day just ain't handy dis particular moment. Who you want?

KID.—You, Cynthia. (*Comes close.*) Tell me, is there anything new?

CYNTHIA.—Oh, de same ol' story—

KID (*interrupts*).—Any new girl today?

CYNTHIA.—Dey sure am. Right pretty one. Dey gave her so much dope dey done thought she'd die on 'em. Lawsy (*blinks*), I pretty near ducked out. She don' know whar she am yit.

KID (*taking hold of her arm*).—Quick—tell me—what does she look like?

CYNTHIA (*rolling her eyes*).—Oh, she am as sweet as de lilies ob de field—

KID (*throwing her arm away from his impatiently*).—That's a hell of a description! Is she tall or short? Fat or a sliver? Peroxide or dark?

CYNTHIA.—Oh (*pauses as though she just understood*) she am right small (*measures various heights*), and kinder th-thin-like (*pause*)—pretty yaller hair—eyes so blue, an' heart so true—

KID (*roughly*).—Come, spit it out—spit it out.

CYNTHIA.—Hones' to goodness! She look at you jes' as innocent as a newborn babe.

KID (*drawing photo from his pocket*).—Here, does she look anything like that?

CYNTHIA.—Law sakes, man—whar d'you git that picture? (*Looks at it over his shoulder.*)

KID.—Is that the girl?

CYNTHIA.—It sure am, de di-entical pusson.

KID.—She's here, you say?

CYNTHIA.—Uh-huh! De queen's in dere now, herself. Dis am extra fine girl.

KID.—Is she all right?

CYNTHIA.—Sure, she am. She been too doped to send out yit. Ain't a hair ob her head been harmed. She ain't been choked or beaten up or nothin'. Lord be praised. I jest can't stand seein' them pore things beaten up, like dey fix 'em when dey fight. Dat Tony—he'll kill some of 'em yit. She friend of yours?

KID.—No, not mine; Randolph's.

CYNTHIA.—Oho! Dat accounts for dese tears on

you part, and dat shake-em-up voice you try on me. It's all right fo' you to display you emotions, but you needn't to display 'em by pinchin' my arm, like you done. (*Looks at arm and blinks resentfully.*)

KID.—There's something besides your arm goin' to get pinched. This game has been running long enough. We've been trying to get the goods on this gang, so strong that only the penitentiary will hold 'em. We've got 'em sewed up in a sack, this time. Evidence enough to sink a ship! This is a big game, Cynthia, with you at the bat. Will you play up?

CYNTHIA (*spitting on her hands and taking a batter's attitude*).—Strike one!

KID.—All right, then. Listen! When I give you the high sign by rubbing my face with my handkerchief and saying "It's hot in this house" (*illustrates*), you go straight to the 'phone and call Spring 2613. If a man answers you pipe up, "I know your voice, honey." If he says "Who is it? 1-2-3," that's your clue that the right party is on the wire. It's a private wire, but even they sometimes get crossed, so be sure you are right. I'll break your black head if you don't get this thing straight.

CYNTHIA (*arms akimbo*).—Is dat so? Well, you can play ball without a batter, den.

KID (*excitedly*).—Now, no monkey business—straight game! When he says "1-2-3," you say "It's my old man." That'll slip the trolley if the gang is listening. See?

CYNTHIA (*nods*).—Yep.

KID.—Then he'll say "When?"—just one word "when?" and you say "Meet me just as soon as you can. I got something I want to tell you, honey." Then quit and go about your business.

CYNTHIA.—Hol' on dar, a minute fore I quit. Let's see if I rightly understand's you in dis matter. First you-all will wipe you ugly white mug wid a handkerchief. (*Kid nods, then doubles his fist threateningly. She ducks.*) An' you remarks on de heat.

KID.—Yes, proceed (*she blinks*)—continue (*she looks blank and blinks again*), go on, go on—

CYNTHIA.—Oh, den I goes and calls—what dat number?

KID.—Spring 2613.

CYNTHIA.—Write it on my apron. (*Holds it up and he writes on hem.*) I know de rest. Ef it's 1-2-3 when he says "When," I tell him come right up.

KID.—No, no—you say "Meet me as soon as you can."

CYNTHIA.—Oh, yas, co'se I does. I got 'em all right now. "Meet me as soon as you can." (*Door slams outside. Both start. Cynthia walks over and looks out in hall. Kid goes to buffet.*)

KID.—Where's the whiskey? Gimme enough to perfume the ozone surrounding my presence. (*With affectation.*)

CYNTHIA.—Talk United States. man.

KID.—All right. Gimme a drink. I'm going to get stewed, see? I'm going to do the soused act, see? Pickled, spifficated, jingled—what more do you want?

CYNTHIA.—Oh, why didn't you-all say so the fust time? (*She starts to fill a large glass and he stops her.*)

KID.—Here, just a small one. I'll need all the wits I have. (*Ring at bell. Two short and one long ring. Cynthia goes to the door, off stage. Kid dives on to sofa.*) She's here! Gee whizz! She's here, and there is mighty little time to fix things up. I wonder if that fool nigger will get that signal all balled up. Sometimes I think she hasn't got the sense that God gives geese. Well, here's hoping they'll get here in time. (*Lies down and pretends to be asleep. Enter Frenchy, Piker and Tony. Tony sits down and puts his feet up on the table. Frenchy goes to the buffet and pours himself a glass of absinthe. Piker strolls around the room, his hands in his pockets.*)

PIKER.—Where's Highbrow?

CYNTHIA.—He in dar. (*Motions with her head toward door U. R.*)

PIKER.—Did he find that letter I lost?

CYNTHIA.—No; he done had me search all over dis house for dat letter. What kind of lookin' letter was dat?

PIKER.—You darned fool! Go get him. (*Cynthia goes. U. R. Piker sits at table and seems very nervous and restless. Frenchy still stands by buffet. Tony, at the table, is facing sofa.*)

TONY.—Look at da kid! Drunk as a pig!

PIKER.—Aw, he's always soused! Never saw him do a bit of real work yet. Did he ever bring in a girl, that you know of?

FRENCHY (*shrugging*).—They said he was a winner.

PIKER.—Winner, nothin'! He never brought a girl here yet. He's no good. They always give him the slip. (*Kid snores.*)

TONY.—Kick him out! Come on—let's kick him out! (*Stares at him with a sneering look.*)

FRENCHY (*coming over and sitting at table*).—Yes, let's have some excitement. Let's give him the sack! Come on; let's take him out and give him a bath in the river. It'll do him good!

PIKER (*in a lower tone*).—Keep still! We can't. He knows too much. He might squeal.

TONY (*with a grin and shrug*).—Shut him up, den. (*Runs his hand across his throat.*) Cut out his whistle—eh? Cut out his whistle. (*Kid snores. They all laugh.*)

PIKER.—'Sh. (*Enter Cynthia. Piker walks restlessly around. Goes to buffet.*) For the love of Mike, Cynthia, where's the snow?

CYNTHIA.—Right dar in de salt-cellar. Right whar you put 'em you own self. Been a bear 't would have bit you. It's a pity it warn't. (*Blinks. She hands him a saltshaker. He sprinkles a little in his hand and snuffs it up his nostrils.*)

FRENCHY.—Aw, cut it out, Piker.

PIKER. (*dusting his hands off*).—What?

FRENCHY.—That cocaine dope. It will get you if you don't—

PIKER (*growling*).—Aw, mind your own business! I can tend to mine. You might do some cutting out yourself—on the absinthe.

FRENCHY.—That's different. (*Enter Highbrow.*)

PIKER (*to Highbrow*).—Cynthy says that letter I lost didn't turn up. Is that so?

HIGHBROW.—No, it is not here. Say, what do you mean, anyway, by carrying a thing like that in your clothes so long? This is a nice mess!

PIKER.—Now, don't jump on me, Highbrow. I won't stand for it. I never got caught with the goods, yet.

HIGHBROW.—Well, that's all right, Piker, but how did it get away from you? The code, too. This is dangerous business, I tell you. I've told you never to keep things in your kicks.

PIKER.—I know—I know. It will turn up.

HIGHBROW.—Well, we've searched here. Now you get the other place searched, too. We are likely to get pinched if that order gets out.

PIKER.—All right, all right. I'll go over now.

HIGHBROW.—No; wait awhile. I may need you to drive the cab over with the new girl. (*Turns to others.*) Well, how are you coming on? (*Piker takes cards from drawer of sideboard and goes over to table where he slaps them down. Draws up a chair and sits down.*)

TONY.—Frenchy's got a new one on the string—a waitress in the Cosmopole.

HIGHBROW.—A waitress? Well, don't loiter. Hurry up about it. We need six at least, right away. We've got several orders to fill.

FRENCHY.—Oh, I've got it all fixed up to take her to a dance tomorrow night. I'll get her drunk. She'll be dead easy.

HIGHBROW.—All right—all right. What are you doing, Tony?

TONY.—My leetle sister come on da ship tomorrow. Verra pretty—ah-h-h, so pretty. Sixteen years old. How much I get for her?

HIGHBROW.—I'll have to see her first.

TONY.—You give seventy-five—hun' red? I get hun' red easy.

HIGHBROW.—What I want now is another high-class girl—good family, educated, refined. The Queen got one today. I haven't seen her yet, but I hear she is a dandy. (*Men have started card game. Tony rakes in a pile of chips and laughs loud. All talk excitedly.*)

ALL.—Here, what d'you have? Show up. That's mine, etc. (*Enter Queen U. R. Raises her hand and says "Sh." Closes door quickly behind her.*)

QUEEN.—Keep quiet. I can't have so much noise here. I've got a new one in there, and she's just rousing up.

HIGHBROW.—Is she all right?

QUEEN.—Yes, she's coming out all right, but she gave me a scare. I had to dope her pretty strong to get her, and she nearly croaked. (*Walks to desk and sits down.*)

HIGHBROW.—You said she was a dandy? (*Walks over to desk.*)

QUEEN.—Yes—young, pretty; a college girl. (*Sits at desk looking over papers. Highbrow leans against it. While Queen and Highbrow are talking, Frenchy, Tony and Piker are playing poker—a silent game. Piker gets a card from his sock and slips into his hand by stealth. No one sees him. Facial expression and action alone show progress of game. Tony forgets to ante. Puts one chip in and palms one out. Slips chip in his pocket. Excited calls and show-downs. Occasional phrases—"How many?" "These will do," "Call you," "Jack-pot," "Queens are*

good," "Misdeal," "Whatcher got?" "Full house," etc.)

HIGHBROW.—A college girl! How did you get her?

QUEEN.—How did I get her? Why, on a parlor car. Poor little innocent! She never traveled alone before. Nervous about it. (*Turns from desk and tells tale with pride in her achievement.*) I sat in the next chair and lent her a magazine. She was a little shy at first, so I just let her read awhile. Then (*takes on cultured voice*) "Are you traveling far?" says I, with my sweetest smile. "Just to New York," says she. "You are young to be traveling alone," says I. "This is the first time," says she, "but my friends will meet me at the Grand Central station." Then I asked her what part of the city she would visit, and when she said *Fifth Avenue*, I nearly had heart failure, but she was just what I needed for this special order. Did you see this? (*Takes letter from drawer of desk.*)

HIGHBROW.—No, read it.

QUEEN (*reads*).—"Dear Madam: I tried to get you on the wire but could not. Kindly send me a pretty little blond tomorrow at the *latest*, without fail. This is important, so I am sending this special delivery. Send a *young* girl who uses good conversation—a school girl, maybe. Now please don't disappoint me.

"—————"

HIGHBROW.—H'm! When did that come?

QUEEN.—Yesterday. There was no time to lose. She just fills the bill.

HIGHBROW.—That's good. How did you work it?

QUEEN.—Oh, I did the high society act—let drop a few remarks about my car, and my maid, and the names of one or two society dames, as though we were thicker than glue. She fell for it. She told me the story of her life in regulation time. (*Laughs.*)

HIGHBROW.—They all do it! It's funny, too, how they blab to strangers.

QUEEN.—Yes; in just a little while we were intimate friends. Nobody noticed us. I kept my eyes peeled for the trainmen.

HIGHBROW.—You are sure you were not watched?

QUEEN (*impatiently*).—Say, I don't go out with blinders on. There's no moss growing under my feet, either.

HIGHBROW.—Well, you needn't get sore. I'm suspicious with that letter out—that's all. Go on.

QUEEN (*nods*).—Well, when we got in pretty near town I handed her the box of candy.

HIGHBROW.—They always fall for that, too. When a girl refuses candy she's either sick, or fat. How do you fix up that dope?

QUEEN.—With morphine. Here, I have the box all fixed. (*Opens desk drawer and takes out candy box.*) I put a small dose, so they don't taste it, in these chocolates—poke it in from the bottom with a pin. I always have some pieces marked with nuts, like this, without any dope, that I can eat myself, to disarm suspicion.

HIGHBROW.—Good scheme!

QUEEN.—Have some?

HIGHBROW.—Not for mine.

QUEEN.—Well, when she had eaten two or three pieces she began to get drowsy, but I kept her awake by talking to her. She was just fighting sleep, but trying to be polite. Gee, it was funny! (*Laughs.*) By the time we were almost in to 125th Street she was dizzy and confused. I had a second layer of chocolates, marked with cherries on top, fixed with a good stiff dose. See? (*Shows him.*) Just before the train pulled in I offered her those. Golly! She took two! I wanted to slip her off at the 125th Street, because her friends were waiting at the Grand Central, and I just managed to get her coat and hat on and get her off the train when she collapsed. I had told her it was her station and she didn't know the difference. A porter came to carry our bags, and I

told him my daughter (*laughs*) was sick and he helped me get her out. Hawk, our old cabby—you remember Hawk?

HIGHBROW.—Yes, of course. I thought he was doing time.

QUEEN.—He's out again. Well, he was hanging around and he recognized me, and drove right up. We got her in the cab, and the rest was easy. She certainly got a stiff dose, though. She's been sleeping ever since. I have given her a lot of black coffee, too.

HIGHBROW.—Well, we'll get her up there tonight, anyway, won't we?

QUEEN.—Oh, yes. (*Bell rings just once. Men sweep cards and chips into drawer of table, and get out quickly, at different doors. Queen leaves at U. R. Cynthia starts down hall to door. Kid jumps up and gets order letter from the desk drawer where the Queen has left it.*)

KID.—That's some evidence! (*Gets back on couch quickly. Cynthia comes back followed by Mose Marcus.*)

MARCUS.—Any one here?

CYNTHIA.—Sure dey am. Dey jest stepped out. (*Calls.*) It's all right. (*Goes to door L. 3. Calls.*) It's nobody—jest Marcus. (*Goes to other door U. R.*) All right, I said. (*The men all come back.*)

MARCUS.—Good evening.

HIGHBROW.—Oh, it's you, Marcus. What's up?

MARCUS.—Yes. I want to know if any of you fellows lost a letter to Philadelphia, with the code in it?

PIKER (*excitedly*).—Yes—I did.

MARCUS.—Oh, you did (*sarcastically*)? Well, it was found and turned over to the Law and Order League. They handed it to Captain Conn. Lucky thing he's a friend of ours, and he tipped me off.

HIGHBROW.—Do you think they're on?

MARCUS.—Well, you'd better be careful. There

may be some raids, you know. I dropped in to warn you. If the Prosecutor gets hold of this—

PIKER.—We'll have to throttle the Prosecutor, somehow.

FRENCHY.—Sure thing! He's getting a lot of convictions.

MARCUS.—That is just it. That man is rousing public sentiment. He's got 'em going. So far he has caught only small fry, but he might get *you*.

TONY (*sneering*).—Yes, Piker leakin' like this! (*Points to Highbrow.*)

PIKER.—Oh, shut your face!

HIGHBROW.—Well, what's to be done?

MARCUS (*sagely*).—Keep public opinion stirred up—but make 'em believe it's all *bunk*. Show 'em the police are bulling just to get credit for doing something besides draw their salaries. Discredit the Prosecutor—see?

HIGHBROW.—Yes, but you can't get back of court records.

MARCUS.—Make the "dear peepul" believe they are isolated cases. That's the game!

HIGHBROW.—Well, that don't help us any.

MARCUS (*getting confidential*).—See here—if you'll stand back of me, I'll fix this up. Will you give your share to stop this thing? It will take a pile. They've all got their price, you know. He's got a stiff one, all right. We haven't been able to reach him, or to ridicule him.

HIGHBROW.—Why, of course, we'll stand in. Let me know how much you will need.

MARCUS.—I'll try him once more. I'll offer him a *big* bunch of money—eh? (*All nod but Tony and Highbrow.*) And if that don't work I've got the prettiest little frameup you ever saw put over.

HIGHBROW.—What is it?

MARCUS (*getting confidential*).—Some of these women will lie their tongues tired for a little piece of money. We'll get them to blacken his character—

swear he is as bad as all the rest. I can fix it up to show that he owes a big bill at Madam Martell's, and that she let it run because she was afraid of him. We might make it a thousand dollars.

HIGHBROW.—Isn't that pretty stiff?

MARCUS.—No—make it big enough to get the public good and sore. How would that do? Then I've got the *Daily Advocate* fixed. They are just itching to get something on Randolph. I can get the story all fixed up, now, in fact—and the minute I say the word it goes on the press. You see how we can squeeze him? I guess he'll holler "Help" and let up on this prosecuting when I show him that, eh? He's going to be married, next week, too. Going to marry old Moneybag VanCleve's daughter. Have we got him? I guess, yes.

HIGHBROW.—You've got him all right, Mose. That's a pretty low-down trick, but it will put the silencer on him for a while.

TONY.—Aw—what's de use of all dat trouble. Go over and plug him out—give him some lead.

PIKER.—And end our game? Not much! Mose, you're all right! That's great stuff you've doped out. That'll fix him.

FRENCHY.—Come on, Mose, get in the game. (*Take the cards out again.*)

MARCUS.—No, I got to get along. (*Exit.*)

PIKER.—Some scheme, eh? (*Highbrow sits down at the table, and they deal him some cards. Sits facing Tony, who is at left of table.*)

HIGHBROW (*doubtfully*).—Oh, I don't know. Only a skunk would pull off a dirty game like that. A fellow with a college education, too, who might have played square.

PIKER.—Oh, you've got a college education, too—and you ain't so nasty nice.

HIGHBROW (*angrily, throwing down cards*).—Now, none of that. That fellow is posing as a respectable citizen. I'm not. He's a crooked stick pretending to

be straight. He's a hypocrite—I'm not. He's not a white man—he's yellow clear through. Why, that low-down thief would pull any string to gain his end. He works the game both ways. He'd tip us off for money—and he'd *sell us out* for money, too. (*Bangs the table with his fist.*) What I am, I am—but I never double-crossed my own kind.

FRENCHY (*kicking Piker, under the table*).—How did you ever get into this game, any way?

HIGHBROW (*facing audience and talking half in soliloquy*).—My, fellows, that brings back some awful memories! Memories of my boyhood days. (*Pause.*) Strange, how much can happen in a short time—and how differently our lives turn out from what we plan them. Why, boys, I was the only son, and the apple of my father's eye. He had me pegged for a great man. You may not believe it, but they were going to train me for either a lawyer or a minister. I was given a chance at a college education in a little town not very far from here—and here I am. (*Buries his face in his hands a moment. Piker pushes back his chair restlessly and Frenchy runs his hand through his hair, as though reminded of their own boyhoods. Tony sits back and grins sardonically.*) Well, the dope did it. It got the best of me. I tried at first, but it's no use. I can't leave it alone. (*Piker nods understandingly.*) What started it, you say? I know exactly. I was captain of the baseball team, and one day, when we had won a victory and were all feeling pretty good, we went out to celebrate and see the town—and the upshot of it was we all got teed up—drunk as lords. Well, to cut it short, the faculty got wind of it and we were all called on the carpet, before the president. My father wouldn't believe there was anything to it at first—poor old dad—but I owned up, and, because I was captain of the team, I was the goat and got the worst of it. I'm not kicking, but I was expelled—fired in disgrace (*wearily*). Well, I wouldn't go home after that—I skipped the town.

I didn't know what to do. Never did a bit of real work in my life. The first job I got was on a railroad train, but that was work, and I didn't last long. I got in with some tough guys, though, and I went down, till I got to using the dope. Then I learned how to live without work. (*Pauses, staring into space.*)

TONY.—Well, you know your job all right—nobody better (*half sneering*).

HIGHBROW (*turning and picking up his cards. All look at their hands ready to resume game*).—Yes, six years in this business has certainly taught me the game. (*Sighs.*)

PIKER.—You're the king of the bunch, all right, but you never had to go the limit the way we do. No strong-arm work for you. You get 'em on your face.

FRENCHY.—Yes (*shrugs*), the love game for him. "Marry me, Maudie." (*Laughs and holds out his arms.*)

PIKER.—No; the theatrical business is his long suit. He puts in an ad for the chorus, or road companies. They come a-flocking. Every little fool thinks she's going to be a star. He plays the manager with that polite talk o' his—

HIGHBROW.—Well, it's a cinch I don't put over the raw deals you fellows do. (*To dealer.*) Gimme one. Why, it takes more brains than any fool lawyer like Marcus has to run this business. It's not all rough stuff, you know—some of you guys would be doing time, if you hadn't had my thinker back of you—and don't you forget it. Why, you fellows couldn't even get in the front door of a decent home. All you can pick up is emigrants, factory girls or some little tenement toughs. It takes me to do the fine work. The girls from the stores, who know a thing or two; the office girls, who have had a little schooling; the girls down on the farm, who've been brought up in the good, old-fashioned way—all the poor idiots who think

men in our work go *labeled* with hoofs and horns. (*Laughs bitterly.*) Yes, and those who label us are the very ones who keep this thing going—the very ones who patronize the business, and always go scot-free when trouble comes. We sell our very souls and they pay for them with *money*, or when they find they have paid with health, as well, they set up a holler and get a few more laws passed—to protect *themselves*. The very fathers who have preached the old gospel of “boys will be boys,” and “they’ve got to sow their wild oats,” are the first to turn against us. Openly, every man’s hand is against us. Secretly, men demand that we exist.

PIKER.—I guess that’s so.

HIGHBROW.—And the so-called good women are to blame for it, too. They will receive a man in their homes and marry him to their daughters. No matter what he does, if he only has the dough. Oh, I’m not the only one who ain’t so nasty nice. (*Turns back to the game. All begin to play. Cynthia comes in and goes to sideboard. Kid, who has been apparently asleep all the time, breathing hard and snoring once in a while, wakes up, stretches, yawns. Cynthia turns and looks at him. He is sitting on edge of couch, wiping his face.*)

KID (*yawning*).—Gee, it’s hot here, fellows. Why don’t you open a window? (*Cynthia goes to phone in hall just outside door and takes down receiver.*)

CYNTHIA (*looking at apron hem*).—Spring 2613.

PIKER.—Aw, lay down, you mutt-head!

CYNTHIA.—I know your voice, honey.

HIGHBROW.—Here, what did you take that with? Show up.

TONY.—Three skirts. (*Lays down cards.*) Ain’t that good enough for you (*angrily*)?

HIGHBROW.—Make it a jack pot this time.

OTHERS.—All right. Two here. I stick, etc.

CYNTHIA.—There’s something I want to tell you. Meet me as soon as yo can, honey.

HIGHBROW (*losing*).—Curses on the luck! (*Slams his hand down.*)

PIKER (*dealing*).—Jack pot, and five to come in, eh?

FRENCHY (*eagerly*).—All right.

TONY.—Here's ten to start it. (*They play the hand out silently, but with tense feeling.*)

HIGHBROW.—Raise you ten.

PIKER.—I'm with you.

FRENCHY.—By me. (*Lays down his hand.*)

TONY (*eagerly*).—It'll cost you fifty to see me.

HIGHBROW.—There's your fifty and fifty more. (*Shows audience four aces.*)

TONY.—Make it a hundred more.

HIGHBROW.—I'll make it two hundred. Pony up! What you got?

TONY (*triumphantly spreads cards on table*).—A straight—all reds. Can you beat it?

HIGHBROW (*slamming his hand down*).—I'm through. You've trimmed me, all right. What rotten luck!

TONY (*triumphantly raking in pile*).—Aw, come on. I'll play you for your watch.

HIGHBROW.—No, luck's against me. And if you won that watch I'd take it away from you.

TONY.—I tell you—I'll play you for the new girl, eh? What do you say?

HIGHBROW.—No, my luck is turned. I tell you. (*Walks away. Frenchy goes to the buffet for another drink.*)

TONY.—Aw, come on, be good sport.

HIGHBROW (*leaning over table in sudden decision*).—I'll shake you for the girl—the new girl against the pot! What do you say?

TONY.—All right. It's a go! Hey (*to Cynthia*)! Bring out the girl. I want to see da stakes. Go on, get her. (*Exit Cynthia, looking mad.*)

HIGHBROW (*taking dice from drawer*).—Come on,

then. The whole pot against (*pauses*)—against a girl's soul. (*Picks up the dice and his hand trembles—then turns away and runs a hypodermic needle into his arm. Turns back and takes up dice again.*) I'm a little shaky. Now, I'm ready. The best two out of three. (*They shake dice. Kid joins Frenchy and Tony and watches the play. Highbrow wins the first time. Gets excited. Tony wins the second time. Frenchy snaps his fingers and says "Come sixes." Just exclamations from the others. Third throw Tony wins.*)

TONY.—Aw, I got him skinned! It's mine! (*Hops around in glee. The others laugh.*) Dammit, bring her in, Cynthia.

PIKER.—Poor old Highbrow! He cleaned you up, for fair.

FRENCHY.—Tony is a shark with the cards, all right.

HIGHBROW.—He has the devil's own luck tonight. Well, never mind! I'll get you next time.

TONY.—Well, maybe I got a lemon at that. (*Shrugs and laughs. Door U. R. opens. Enter Lorna supported by Queen and Cynthia. She pulls away from Cynthia's touch and leans against the Queen trustingly. At first her face is turned away from Highbrow. Then she looks around in dazed wonder.*)

LORNA.—Why, where am I? (*Her eyes rest on Highbrow, who is staring at her in amazed incredulity.*) Oh, (*screams*)—my brother! (*Pauses a moment in doubt, then goes toward him and, looking once more to be absolutely sure, throws her arms around his neck. He starts to embrace her—hesitates, feeling unfit to touch her, then clasps her close, putting his head down on hers. All look on in astonishment.*)

TONY.—Here, cut out that love business! That's my girl! (*Starts toward them.*)

HIGHBROW (*holding her protectingly*).—Hands off! Good God, man, this is my sister!

TONY.—Well, what of that? Wasn't you goin' to take my sister? Eh, what? (*Snarls.*) You ain't any better than me. Here—gimme da girl. She's mine! I won her. (*Takes hold of her and tries to pull her away. She screams. Highbrow holds her to one side with left arm and hurls Tony away with the right. Tony falls over a chair. Cynthia starts for phone, creeping a step at a time, back of the fighters, so they will not notice her.*)

QUEEN (*with hands raised, calls*).—Be still. Be still, I say!

HIGHBROW.—You damned rat! Keep off! (*Turns back to Lorna, who is half fainting in his arms. Tony crouches and draws a knife.*)

TONY.—Rat, am I? (*Gets ready to spring.*)

KID.—Look out!

QUEEN.—Don't kill him! (*Screams. Highbrow, holding Lorna, cannot protect himself. Tony leaps at him and stabs him in the back. He gasps and falls, face down. Tony stands over him with the knife raised. Lorna screams and almost collapses. Cynthia catches her. All are standing aghast, when sound of breaking glass is heard. Tony grabs Lorna and starts to drag her out U. R. His hand is over her mouth so she can't scream, but she fights and clutches at everything. Then door U. L. is smashed in. Police with revolvers enter and cover the gang. Through their midst rushes the Prosecutor.*)

KID.—There she is. Save her. (*Pointing to Lorna. The Prosecutor covers Tony with revolver and puts his arm around Lorna. Kid goes to desk and slips candy box in his pocket behind the Queen's back. One officer grabs Tony and takes his knife away. One goes to desk and takes books. One keeps the whole gang covered—men with their hands up.*)

RANDOLPH.—March them all to the wagon. (*They*

*are lined up and marched out, Kid and Cynthia in the rear, he grinning at her over his shoulder and shaking his own hand, as they go. Lorna, half fainting, in the Prosecutor's arms. Highbrow, face down on the floor, does not move.*

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

TIME.—*The next morning.*

SCENE.—*The private office of the Prosecutor.*

*Doors U. R. C., U. L. C. and R. 3. Filing cabinet and book cases U. C. Another cabinet at L. 3. A large flat-top desk forward of L. C. A chair on each side of it and one at the upper end. Table with chair at R. 2, and easy chair near it. The word "Private" on door R. 3.*

CURTAIN.

*Barnes is discovered looking over letter-files L. 3. He looks around cautiously and slips one in his pocket. A knock on door R. 3 is heard. Barnes goes to the door and holding it open beckons some one outside to come in. He holds a sheaf of papers in his hand.*

BARNES.—Bring the young lady in here, Bell. (*Enter Jim Bell, holding Lorna by the arm. She is pale and seems very worn and weary, but holds herself continually on guard and is suspicious.*)

BELL.—All right, Mr. Barnes. (*To Lorna, whom he leads to an easy chair on right of stage.*) There, Miss, sit down. You'll be more comfortable here. (*Lorna sits down.*)

BARNES.—You will not have long to wait. (*Goes to desk and sorts papers, with his back toward them, but listening to what they say.*)

LORNA (*half in tears*).—Why do you keep me in this way? I want to go to my friends.

BELL (*soothingly*).—Now, don't you worry. You'll be all right. (*He pats her shoulder kindly, but she shrinks away.*)

LORNA.—But please, where is my brother?

BELL.—Now, you just want to quit worryin'. He's

all right, too. He's safe in the hospital. (*Barnes listening, narrows his eyes. Strolls over toward them.*)

BARNES.—You might step out in the other room, Jim, and call up headquarters. I understood there was a message for you.

BELL.—All right, Cap, I'll leave her to you.

BARNES.—You just wait in the outer office. (*Exit Bell, U. R. C., nodding. Waits till door is tightly closed before speaking.*) Now, young lady—er—what is your name?

LORNA.—Holman—Lorna Holman.

BARNES.—Oh, yes, Miss Holman—and, pardon me, but how old are you?

LORNA.—I am eighteen.

BARNES.—Eighteen—a mere child! And this man who was stabbed last night is your brother?

LORNA (*eagerly*).—Yes, my brother Jack. He has been missing so long. Won't you take me to him?

BARNES (*puts up hand, protestingly*).—Pardon me, again—but would you mind telling me why you are telling me these things?

LORNA (*draws back frightened*).—Why, because you asked me.

BARNES (*smiles patronizingly*).—And do you always answer all the questions that are put to you? (*She does not reply to this, but looks at him, frightened.*) Because, if you do it's a bad practice. You are very young and I am going to give you a little advice—*provided* you keep it to yourself. Can you keep your mouth closed? (*She just nods silently.*) Very well, then, I'm going to tell you something for your own good. (*He sits on corner of desk and talks confidentially.*) Your brother is in the hospital with a pretty bad wound, but he has a fighting chance for his life. However, if he recovers, do you know what will happen to him?

LORNA.—He will come home again. (*Eagerly.*)

BARNES.—Oh, no, he won't, my dear young lady.

He will be sent up—to prison—for perhaps *ten years*.

LORNA (*innocently*).—But—what has he done?

BARNES (*looking sharply at her*).—H'm—don't you know the kind of a place you were in last night?

LORNA (*puzzled*).—Why, no. I was taken sick on the train. I think I must have fainted, and that kind lady took me to her home and took care of me. It was very good of her—though I don't understand—

BARNES.—No, you *don't* understand. Listen to me. (*Looks carefully around.*) That place is the headquarters of a notorious gang. Your brother is mixed up in it.

LORNA (*pleading*).—But why did they fight over me? What did they want of me? Oh, please tell me, what was it all about?

BARNES (*secretively*).—That place is an auction mart for girls, where they are *sold* to the highest bidder. Do you understand now? (*Lorna gasps and stands up, the back of her hand to her mouth—then sinks into her chair again.*)

BARNES.—Highbrow, your brother, is accused of being the *leader* of this gang.

LORNA (*stands*).—My brother the leader of criminals? Oh, it can't be true. My poor father and mother (*sobs*), it would break their hearts. Tell me, tell me, what can I do to help him? Is there anything, anything?

BARNES (*with apparent compassion*).—Yes, you can help him. In fact, it all rests with you. (*Motions her to sit down.*) I'm sorry for you, my child, and for your poor father and mother! I'd like to help you, all of you.

LORNA.—Oh, how good you are!

BARNES (*clears his throat*).—You understand, of course, that you must not even mention talking to me—that I'm trying to do you a favor that might cost me my position, just because I'm so sorry for you; yes, you poor child! (*Fatherly manner.*)

LORNA.—I'll never say a word. Really I *can* keep still.

BARNES.—Well, then I'll tell you. You must say you went to this place of your own accord. So far as the law is concerned—just technically speaking, you know—this point would make no difference, but there is a human side to be considered, too, and if this case goes before a jury, as I suppose it will, it would undoubtedly influence them to be told that you went of your *own free will*, that you *knew* the kind of a place it was, and you *wanted* to go. Do you see? You *wanted to go*. (*Lorna draws back in horror.*) That is the only chance there is to save your brother and take him home again. That lets him out and clears him of all responsibility. (*Pause.*) I know it is hard for you, though lots of women have done more for those they loved, and I thought you really wanted to know how to help him. They have a pretty strong case against him, and this is the only loophole, but of course if it can't be done—(*He waits, watching her closely. She struggles with her emotions.*)

LORNA (*finally*).—I *did* go willingly. I was so sick, and the kind lady—

BARNES (*interrupts*).—Now, all you need to say is that you went willingly, then *keep still*. Don't say *another word*. Don't try to explain. (*Starts to leave the room, then turns and comes back and leans over her.*) You understand I am doing this to help you, and you mustn't say I told you what to do. That would ruin everything. You just stick to that story and don't say another thing. You do not have to testify against your brother. They can lead you to the witness stand, but they *can't make you talk*. (*Starts out, saying "Sh!" Enter the Prosecutor U. L. C. He looks at them sharply.*)

RANDOLPH.—Good morning, Miss Holman. Good morning, Barnes. Where is Bell?

BARNES.—He just stepped out to phone, sir. (*Exit*

*Barnes, nodding. Randolph looks after him, then turns to Lorna.)*

RANDOLPH.—How did you rest last night? Were you made comfortable? Did the matron treat you well? I gave orders for you to have special attention, and that no one should be allowed to talk to you or disturb you.

LORNA.—Yes, she was kind, but why did you take me to that dreadful place? What have I done? Why should I be kept in jail? Won't you please take me to my friends?

RANDOLPH.—I thought it wisest to keep you alone last night. It is necessary that I detain you as a witness, but I am your friend. *(Smiles at her reassuringly.)* I will send you to Margaret later.

LORNA.—Margaret? Then you are—?

RANDOLPH.—Clinton Randolph, at your service.

LORNA.—Oh, I did not know. I am so glad, Mr. Randolph. *(Stands and holds out her hand shyly. He takes it in both of his.)*

RANDOLPH.—I have phoned Margaret, and she has notified your mother that you are safe. And now you will believe that I am your friend? *(She nods.)* I must question you about this case, and I want you to remember it, and trust me fully. *(As he speaks he leads her to chair at end of his desk.)*

LORNA *(sitting down and turning her head away a moment)*.—Why—what do you mean?

RANDOLPH *(sitting down at his desk, facing left. She is facing right)*.—Have you any idea where you were last night?

LORNA *(swallowing and staring straight ahead)*.—Yes—I went of my own free will.

RANDOLPH *(in amazement)*.—What?

LORNA *(parrot-like)*.—I went of my own free will.

RANDOLPH *(staring hard at her for a moment. She looks down)*.—Did anyone tell you to say that? *(Lorna shakes her head.)* Lorna—pardon me for calling you that, but I've heard Margaret speak of

you thus so often—Margaret is very fond of you, you know, and Margaret's friends are dear to me, so I'm going to speak very plainly to you, for I believe you do not realize just what you are saying. (*She hangs her head miserably and twists her fingers.*) Do you know that there are organized gangs all over the country—this is one of the largest of them—making a business of enticing girls to their ruin? (*She does not answer.*) Do you realize in the least what a very narrow escape you have had from an unspeakable fate? (*She turns her head away.*) I did not know until after the raid and your rescue last night, that the head of this nefarious business here is—*your brother.* (*Lorna sobs.*) I have convicted a goodly number, both men and women, that I believe had been working under him, but for a long time I've been trying to get the *leader*—and now I've got him. (*Fiercely. Lorna sobs again, but does not speak.*) Lorna, I'm sorry, but I'm afraid you'll have to testify against your own brother. It is strange that Margaret never mentioned him to me.

LORNA.—We don't speak of him. This will nearly kill my mother. He got into a scrape at college, several years ago. They expelled him, and he ran away. He never wrote but once—but oh, Mr. Randolph, he *wasn't* a bad boy—really! You must believe that.

RANDOLPH (*sympathetically*).—I don't doubt it. And now tell me, child—you know I want to help you. Tell me all about it.

LORNA.—Oh, never mind *me*, but please help my brother. I know there's some mistake. (*Pleading.*)

RANDOLPH.—The life of a prosecutor is hard, Lorna. Sometimes we have to prosecute our friends or the relatives of our friends. Sometimes even our very own kith and kin. We must stand for justice, no matter *who* suffers. It will be better for you to tell me the truth, child.

LORNA.—I *have* told it. I went of my own free will.

RANDOLPH (*looking hard at her again. She can't stand scrutinizing*).—Do you realize that this isn't a question of just *you*, and *me*, and *your brother*—but of all the wretched girls who don't escape the fate that you've escaped—of all who are walking blindly into this awful trap—blindly and innocently? (*She shudders.*) Your testimony, alone, might save a hundred. You can't tell how many. Isn't it worth while? (*He waits for her to answer, but she turns her head away again.*) Have you any conception of what these people are doing—of the enormity of their crimes? Why, that woman was once a school-teacher in Arkansas. She has the advantage of education. A woman like that is the worst sort of a criminal—sharp as a steel trap, and just as cruel. Your kind friend would sell you into *slavery* for a few dollars. These men and women work along the lines of least resistance. They know human weaknesses. They know just how to approach their prey. The entrapping of a wayward or bad girl is easy for them, and I realize that many of them are bad, and willing victims. Do you want me to believe you are that kind? (*She sobs bitterly, but does not speak.*) The pursuit of an innocent victim adds zest and sport to the hunt. (*She still sobs.*) These traffickers go into the factory communities, and the department stores, and the tenement districts, where they find the poor working girl, whose crying need is *money*. They show her how to get it. They go to the dance-halls and amusement parks, and summer resorts, where they find the pleasure-loving girls, whose besetting weakness is vanity. They go into the country and the small towns, where they find the girls ambitious to reach out beyond their narrow environment, to see something of the great, big glittering world of their dreams. They promise them everything! Greed, vanity, ambition! Those are the traits they appeal to—the universal weaknesses—except when they hide their vile intentions behind the mask of *love*, and make a hellish mockery of the holiest

things of life. And that is how they lure their innocent victims. They make love to them—pah! they even promise to marry them, to gain their awful ends. (*Stops and looks at her steadily. She is watching him, appalled, and does not look away this time.*) Lorna, perhaps you have a sweetheart—perhaps some one has deceived you? (*Barnes opens door U. R. C. just a crack, and puts a finger to his lips. Lorna sees him and shakes her head to the Prosecutor's question. He waits a moment, then tries a new tack.*) You never knew this woman until you met her on the train? (*She shakes her head, then nods, then shakes it again, in doubt how to answer.*) That is one of the favorite methods of procuring innocent girls—picking up an acquaintance in a train or railway station. They usually drug them! (*Watching her closely. She starts in surprise.*) You say you were ill? (*She nods.*) Did this woman give you anything?

LORNA.—Why—only a little candy.

RANDOLPH.—Ah, candy, eh? Did you notice anything peculiar about it?

LORNA.—No, it was just chocolates.

RANDOLPH.—Were you ill before you ate it? (*She shakes her head doubtfully.*) How were you taken ill? Were you dizzy? Did you faint? (*Barnes knocks and announces.*)

BARNES.—Attorney Marcus, on a matter of importance. (*He is ashen, and shakes his head at her warningly. She is just about to speak, but sinks back and reiterates monotonously.*)

LORNA.—I went of my own free will.

RANDOLPH (*motions Barnes out*).—Tell Marcus to wait a minute. I'll ring when I am ready. And send Jim here. (*Barnes withdraws and a moment later Bell appears U. R. C. Closes the door carefully behind him.*)

RANDOLPH.—Jim, take Miss Holman into the inner office for awhile. (*Points to door U. L. C.*) I want to give her a little time to think. You stay with her.

(Rises and leans over her and says) Lorna, I want you to think of all the others while you wait. (She turns away and he politely leads her to Bell, who takes her out. He rings.) What does this mean? Why, that girl can't be speaking the truth. Some one has been talking to her. Some one has instructed her what to say. Could it be—? (Looks toward door U. R. C., clinches his fist. The filing case U. C. opens slowly and Kid McKoo steps out.)

RANDOLPH.—You here? How long have you been here?

KID.—Since early this morning.

RANDOLPH.—Good. Get back quick.

KID.—I want to tell you something.

RANDOLPH.—Not now. Get back. Some one has reached that little fool (angrily)!

KID.—I was just trying to—

RANDOLPH.—Quick! Listen to every word carefully. (Pushes him in. Knock is heard.)

KID.—I've got an earful now. (Steps in case again.)

RANDOLPH (closes case quickly. Pulls out top drawer and stands there looking through letter files).—Come in. (Barnes ushers in Marcus. Randolph, apparently reading letter, nods over his shoulder.) Hello, Marcus. Sit down. I'll be with you in a minute. (Marcus sits near desk. Randolph's back is toward Marcus. He faces R., and, holding letter, pretends to read, all the while watching the door through which Barnes has gone. Strolling over to it, with letter still in his hand, he opens it suddenly. Barnes almost falls in. He has evidently been listening. He just looks at him for a moment. Barnes is white and shaking. He puts his hand to his throat but does not speak.) Oh, Barnes—I was just going to call you.

BARNES (swallowing hard).—Yes, sir. I was just coming.

RANDOLPH.—H'm! I want you to run over to the Identification Bureau and look up Holman's record and see if he has ever been arrested before. Hurry

up. (*Waves him out. Waits a second, then turns to Marcus.*) Well, Marcus, what can I do for you?

MARCUS (*a little nervous*).—Well, I—I just wanted to have a little confidential talk with you—just a little confidential talk.

RANDOLPH (*inattentively*).—Yes, all right.

MARCUS (*hitching his chair up a little closer and getting confidential*).—Now, you know, don't you, I've been a good friend of yours, Rand. (*Randolph looks at him.*) I've voted for you myself, and I've got all my friends to vote for you and—I've been a good friend, now, ain't I?

RANDOLPH.—Well?

MARCUS.—Now, I'm going to talk straight out to you, Rand., but of course I don't want it repeated.

RANDOLPH (*tersely*).—Go ahead. (*Sits at desk.*)

MARCUS.—Now it's nothing to me, you understand, but I got a friendly feeling for you and I want to tell you you're making a big mistake.

RANDOLPH.—How so?

MARCUS.—Why, you ought to get in line, Rand. You ought to go along with the boys. You hadn't ought to turn against your friends. They stood by you and voted for you, and now they think you are turning against them—that's what—prosecuting these cases like a demon the way you are doin'.

RANDOLPH.—Oh, that's it.

MARCUS (*nods*).—Now, come, you know, you don't have to be so hard on 'em. "Live and let live," that's what I say. Let 'em off with a fine.

RANDOLPH (*wearily*).—Now, Marcus, there's no use talking to me that way. You've talked to me before and you know my position perfectly. I never intend to railroad anybody. I mean to give everybody a fair deal, but I won't protect crooks and criminals. (*Pounds his desk and puts his face close up to Marcus.*)

MARCUS (*shrugs and sits back*).—Too bad you couldn't be a little bit blind, once in a while. (*Looks*

*furtively at him and away again. Then sits on edge of chair and starts over.*) Now, look here, Rand. You've got the chance of a lifetime, right now. Right now it's pushing your front door bell. If you go with the boys and *stand by 'em*, you can be the next governor of this State. That's right! I'm giving it to you straight! You know, yourself, the majority of the voters want this thing.

RANDOLPH.—The majority of the people have voted for representatives to enact laws for *decency* and order, and it is my duty to see that they are enforced.

MARCUS (*sneers*).—Yes—it would keep you busy enforcing the forty thousand laws passed in the United States in one year alone. (*Emphatically.*) The people don't *want 'em* all enforced. What you ought to do is to get your ear to the ground. Why, you are making enemies every day. You can't get anywhere that way. You're one great, big fool, Rand! You got a chance to make a fortune right here in this office, and nobody be the wiser. They all do it! You needn't take it direct.

RANDOLPH (*angrily*).—Now, stop that—

MARCUS.—Now—keep off your high horse. I'm talking *business*. You got two things comin' to you right now if you keep in with the bunch. You get their vote for the Fall election—the governorship, if you want it—and you get a nice fat pile, and no one know a thing about it—just a favor between friends. (*Randolph sits back looking at him. Marcus pulls a roll of bills from his pocket.*) Now, there is twenty-five thousand dollars—no marked money—look it over. No checks. Cold cash. You let up on this business and it's yours. There you are! (*Slaps it on the desk and sits back.*)

RANDOLPH (*furious, jumps up and grabs the money and slams it on desk*).—You cur! Take your money! You've tried to bribe me before. You ought to know you can't reach me. I've never taken fees where the money was coined from the tears of women. I've

never defended those arch-enemies of society—those vampires living on the heart's blood of others. I've never taken a cent of hush money in my life, and so long as the sobs and the prayers of the innocent ring in my ears, by Heaven, I never will! (*Strikes the desk which is between them and pauses.*) You low-lived pup! I could send you up for this.

MARCUS (*pointing a threatening finger*).—You just try it! You wouldn't dare. I'll tell 'em what I've got on you. I know what kind of a lying sneak you are. Talk's cheap! But I've got something here that will shut you up. The whole gang knows. You've been going down to Madam Martell's. There's a dozen sworn witnesses. (*Reaches in his pocket.*)

RANDOLPH.—Why, you confounded liar! What do you mean? (*Starts toward him.*)

MARCUS.—I'll show you what I mean. A breach of promise—that's what I mean. I've got the affidavit right here (*shows it*) that you promised to marry Maisie, a girl at Madam Martell's, and that all the time you were prosecuting these cases you were sneaking down there on the sly. You'll have the law on me, will you?

RANDOLPH.—Why—you lying sneak! You—you—lying pup!

MARCUS.—Lying, am I? Why, this is so well known that the *Evening Advocate* has the story on the press, right now, with all the sworn *proof*—the picture of the girl, her affidavit and all—ready to grind out the minute I give the signal. You'll have the law on me, will you?

RANDOLPH.—The *Advocate*! Your right bower! That yellow sheet! As yellow as you are, you black-mailing—

MARCUS.—Now, see here—you needn't to call me names. I'll show you whether I am yellow. I'll give you one more chance—just between friends, you understand. You can take that money or let it alone—it's nothing to me what you do—but either you prom-

ise you'll let up on these convictions, or that story goes right now. (*Threateningly.*)

RANDOLPH.—Why, damn you! (*Flings money at him toward door R. 3.*)

MARCUS (*taunting*).—How would your intended wife like to see that, eh?

RANDOLPH.—(*Cursing under his breath, rushes at him, chokes him and flings him bodily toward door R. 3. Marcus picks himself up on his hands and knees, looking terror-stricken. Gathers up money on floor as fast as he can. Randolph starts toward him again, and he scrambles up on all fours, grabs another bill and, still crouching, gets out double quick, closing door after him. Kid has opened door of case and poked his head out.*)

KID.—Do you need me? (*Knock on door U. R. C.*)

RANDOLPH.—No, get back. (*Enter Mr. VanCleve.*)

MR. VANCLEVE (*looking sharply at Randolph and seeing that he is excited*).—Is anything the matter?

RANDOLPH (*sinking into chair at right with his head in his hands*).—Yes, everything. I was just wondering if I could not manage to kill off a few of the inhabitants.

MR. VANCLEVE.—Anything new?

RANDOLPH.—Yes. One might think the whole world was rotten.

MR. VANCLEVE.—Oh, no. There nothing new about the Seven Deadly Sins except that nowadays we talk about them.

RANDOLPH.—Yes, that is true. Perhaps we talk too much. But that little girl is one thing that is bothering me just now. She won't talk at all. She insists that she went to that infamous place of her own free will—and that is all I can get out of her.

MR. VANCLEVE (*puts his thumbs in his armpits and rises on his toes*).—Didn't I tell you? You can't convince me!

RANDOLPH.—Why, Mr. VanCleve—you wouldn't believe such a thing about your daughter's friend?

Some one has posted that little girl, there is no doubt in my mind.

MR. VANCLEVE.—Well, I am not so sure. There is something very queer about all this. If the girl says so, it is probably true. But, for heaven's sake, man, keep it quiet—keep it quiet! Whatever you do, keep it out of the papers. I'll pay.

RANDOLPH.—I am afraid it is too late.

MR. VANCLEVE.—Too late? Why, this is an awful mess! Just before your wedding, too. Margaret's maid of honor found in such a place!

RANDOLPH.—It certainly is a mess, Mr. VanCleve, but I believe that little girl is absolutely innocent, and I want to send her to Margaret to see if she can get the truth out of her. She needs a woman's tact and sympathy—just such broad-minded sympathy as Margaret can give her. Will you take her?

MR. VANCLEVE (*clearing his throat*).—Well—h'm—I can't say I like the idea of taking such a person into my house.

RANDOLPH (*angrily*).—There has been many a *man* entertained in your home and introduced to your wife and daughter, whose moral character was *known* to be shady.

MR. VANCLEVE (*looks at him in surprise*).—Well—er—er—I suppose, for the sake of *appearances*—yes, yes—I believe it would *look* better. Margaret, in fact, sent me to get her.

RANDOLPH (*goes to door U. L. C. and opens it*).—Jim, bring Miss Holman in. (*Enter Lorna, Jim close behind her. He hands her over and returns to other room at signal from Randolph.*) Lorna, this is Margaret's father—Mr. VanCleve. (*Both bow, but do not shake hands.*) Mr. VanCleve is going to take you to Margaret. She will look after you now, and I will be up later to talk to you. (*He leads her to Mr. VanCleve, saying aside*) I hope you have thought this over and decided to tell the truth.

LORNA (*half in tears*).—I have told the truth. (*They leave R. 3.*)

KID (*stepping out of case and going toward Randolph*).—Was that yarn of Marcus' true? Have they really got it on you like that?

RANDOLPH (*sorrowfully*).—You, too, Kid? Why, I would have taken my oath on your loyalty, and you could believe that lie? Why, boy, I thought you were my friend. I don't like to remind you of it, but I think I have made you what you are. I have helped you in every way I could. We have stood shoulder to shoulder, like good pals, through many a fight. I have put my very life in your hands at times—I have trusted you—

KID (*covers his face in shame and hangs his head*).—Oh, you can trust me. I didn't mean it. I don't believe it—

RANDOLPH.—If you could work beside me day by day and not know that blackmailing tale could not be true—

KID (*interrupts, following him, and almost weeping*).—I do know. I'll prove it. You're the best friend a fellow ever had, and if you'll only forgive me for that break, I'll—go smash Marcus' old oily face for him. (*Holds out his hand in entreaty.*)

RANDOLPH.—It's all right, Kid. We will forget it.

KID (*eagerly*).—Shall I go lay him out?

RANDOLPH (*smiling*).—No—not so soon. We'll let him live a while longer. What I want to know now is, who talked to Miss Holman. Do you know?

KID (*excitedly*).—Yes; I was trying to tell you, when you pushed me back in my box so quick.

RANDOLPH.—Who? (*Kid winks, then motions with his thumb toward U. R. C., and says the word "Barnes" with his lips. Randolph stands silent listening. Door opens. Enter Barnes.*)

BARNES (*hurriedly*).—Beg pardon, may I speak to you alone, sir?

RANDOLPH.—That is not necessary. Say what you have to say.

BARNES (*looking doubtfully at Kid*).—Very well, Mr. Randolph. I want to tell you that the rumor is all over the place that Marcus has sold you out to the *Advocate*. They are getting ready to print facts about you that will ruin you forever.

RANDOLPH.—So he did it? I didn't think he would dare!

BARNES.—Shall I go and stop it, sir? There must be some way.

RANDOLPH.—No, there is no way. Besides, it's a lie out of whole cloth, and I wouldn't lift a finger to stop it.

BARNES (*insultingly*).—But they've got the proof, Mr. Randolph. I saw it—and you can't get back of the proof, you know. They've got affidavits that—

KID (*starting toward him with his fist doubled*).—Why, you miserable traitor! Do you *believe* that cock and bull yarn? You repeat that story to any one and I'll make you *eat it*. Do you hear? You'll *eat it*!

BARNES (*blustering*).—What business is this of yours? I attend to Mr. Randolph's affairs.

KID.—Yes—you attend to them fine, you do! This is how you attend to them. Mr. Randolph, *there* stands the man who is tampering with your witness. There stands the man who told Miss Holman what to say. There stands the man who is selling you out to Marcus and his gang and taking their dirty money. I've got him with the goods on him. Arrest that man!

RANDOLPH (*rings a bell. Jim Bell appears in the doorway U. L. C.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

SCENE.—*The same as Act. I.*

TIME.—*The afternoon of the same day.*

CURTAIN.

*Newsboys outside the house are heard calling "Extra papers." The call is heard from a distance or near, occasionally during the act. Lorna is discovered in a big easy chair in front of the fire. She wears a negligee gown and seems very tired.*

MARGARET (*fussing over Lorna*).—There. Are you comfy? Shall I get you a cushion?

LORNA.—Oh, no, thanks. This is perfectly comfortable.

MARGARET.—A footstool? (*She draws it up.*)

LORNA.—No. You sit there near me. (*Margaret sits beside her on low stool, holding her hand. She wears a handsome afternoon gown.*)

MARGARET.—You're sure you don't want tea? (*Lorna shakes her head.*) Did you manage to get a little nap, dear?

LORNA.—No, I could not sleep, but I rested. I was so tired.

MARGARET.—Yes, I know, you poor dear! It has been a dreadful experience for you. Do you feel able to tell me about it yet? How did it all happen? How did that dreadful woman manage to persuade you to go with her?

LORNA.—She was very kind—(*Falters and stops.*)

MARGARET.—Kind! Oh, you poor lamb! I don't see how she could have deceived you so. How on earth did she induce you to accompany her, a perfect stranger?

LORNA (*very nervously*).—She—she—wasn't a stranger. She was a friend of mine.

MARGARET (*dropping her hand and looking at her*).—A friend of yours! Why, Lorna Holman—how could you meet a person like that! I did not live in your home two years without knowing how carefully you have been brought up and how strict your father was.

LORNA.—Yes—he was strict, wasn't he?

MARGARET.—Why, he scarcely wanted you out of his sight. I was so afraid he would not let you come for my wedding.

LORNA (*grasping at the thought*).—Yes—that was just it—he was so strict that—that I could not have any pleasures at all—and—and so you see, I wanted to get away—and—and have a gay time—(*tries to laugh*.) You see, don't you?

MARGARET (*draws away coldly*).—No. I'm afraid I don't quite understand.

LORNA (*desperately*).—Why—why—see life, and—be gay—and—*oh, everything*.

MARGARET (*regards her with silent horror. Lorna tries to look back and smile, but she cannot. Then Margaret grasps her shoulder and looks right in her face*).—Lorna, I don't believe you. You are not telling the truth for some reason. Why, you *couldn't* do such a thing.

LORNA (*terribly frightened*).—Oh, yes—I could. I *did*. I—I understand it's—quite common.

MARGARET.—Oh, you don't know what you are saying. Don't lie to *me*, Lorna. Why, all these years I've loved you like a little sister. You can't deceive me, dear. I know how sweet and innocent you've always been. I know your purity and goodness. (*Lorna sobs*.) Why are you saying these things? I don't understand. Are you trying to protect that awful woman?

LORNA (*in terror*).—Oh, no—no—no.

MARGARET.—Lorna, it is only a few months since I left your home. You had no such thoughts then, I'm sure. Why, we told each other all our hopes and

dreams. You had no such friends, either. Where did you meet that woman, and why should you go with her, and then *lie* about it?

LORNA (*wildly*).—I'm not lying. (*Stands.*) I went—because I wanted to. (*Raises her arms.*) I wanted to be *gay—gay—gay*. (*Is choked by sobs. Sinks back in chair, buries her face in her arms and weeps bitterly. Enter Andrew, who coughs discreetly behind his hand, lays a newspaper on table and withdraws on tiptoe. Outside a voice calls, "Extra papers." Margaret stands aloof on the hearth and watches Lorna, much puzzled.*)

MARGARET.—If that is the truth, I think I would rather you had lied to me! (*Pause. She sighs.*) Oh, don't cry so—it won't help. Mr. Randolph will be here directly. You would better go bathe your eyes and dress, for he will want to see you. And, Lorna (*Lorna has risen and started toward stairway. Margaret follows to table in center of room*), please tell him the truth. He is so good and kind, and he will help you. (*Exit Lorna up stairway, wiping her eyes. Margaret stands leaning on table and looking after her. Her hand rests on newspaper. As Lorna disappears she looks down—sees headlines—stares—gasps and picks up paper and goes back to chair near fire and sits down. Spreading it out, she reads.*)

MARGARET.—Clinton?—Breach of promise—Madam Mar—(*Gives a stifled scream and jumps to her feet. Looks around to see if any one has heard. All the horror of the discovery shows on her face. She looks once more at the sheet and reads.*) Her picture! (*Crumples the paper up, then in rage she tears it up, and throws the pieces in the fire, one by one, muttering between set teeth.*) Maisie—Maisie—Maisie! (*She brushes off her hands as she watches it burn, then covers her eyes and stands with her head thrown back. Enter Mrs. VanCleve. She wears street clothes and is drawing off her gloves.*)

MRS. VANCLEVE.—Oh, there you are, Margaret. I

want to talk to you. Dear me, I've been rushing every minute this day. I don't get time to catch my breath. I've just come from the florist's and he suggests—

MARGARET.—We shall not need the florist, mother.

MRS. VANCLEVE.—Not need the florist? Why, how absurd, child! I have only one daughter to marry off and I shall do it properly. I want the decorations to be the talk of the town.

MARGARET.—The town has something else to talk about, mother (*bitterly*).

VOICE.—Extry papers. All about the big scandal. (*Dies away outside.*)

MRS. VANCLEVE (*pauses, listening, then comes toward her*).—You mean this nonsense about Lorna has leaked out? Oh, dear me, dear me! In my day girls were not so careless of appearances.

MARGARET.—It is not Lorna—though I suppose that will come next.

MRS. VANCLEVE.—She has explained everything, of course?

MARGARET.—No—she explains nothing.

MRS. VANCLEVE.—What? Why, she *must* explain satisfactorily. This is most embarrassing! You can't have a young woman for your bridesmaid who—

MARGARET.—There will be no bridesmaids. There will be no *bride*—

MRS. VANCLEVE (*alarmed*).—Why, what do you mean?

MARGARET.—I mean I shall not marry Clinton Randolph—ever—ever—O mother, mother! (*She breaks down.*)

MRS. VANCLEVE (*comes over and puts her arms around her. Margaret is seated and rests her head against her mother*).—O my child—my child! Mother's baby girl! There, there, dearie, don't cry. The men are not worth weeping over, anyway. (*Speaks fiercely, but wipes her own eyes.*) Lot of silly, worthless jackanapes. (*Snorts scornfully.*) Never know

what they are doing when they are out of your sight! Where is your father?

MARGARET.—In the smoking room, I think.

MRS. VANCLEVE (*rings. Andrew appears*).—Andrew, tell Mr. VanCleve I want him. (*Exit Andrew.*) Where is Lorna?

MARGARET.—I sent her up to dress. Mr. Randolph is coming soon.

MRS. VANCLEVE.—You will see him?

MARGARET.—I must this time.

MRS. VANCLEVE.—My dear, I don't know what it is all about, but Clinton is a fine man, and he has a splendid position to offer you. His family is excellent, you know—and I hope you will not be influenced by trifles. You know you must learn to bear and forbear—and then the wedding invitations all out and everything—what will people say? You will have to return all your presents, too. Think carefully, my child. Lover's quarrels, you know—

MARGARET.—This is not a lover's quarrel, mother. (*Enter Mr. VanCleve, R. Slips into room, holding newspaper behind him and looking very uncomfortable. Wears spectacles pushed up on his forehead; slippers and house coat on. Evidently does not know whether they have seen paper or not.*)

MR. VANCLEVE.—You wanted me, my dear?

MRS. VANCLEVE.—Don't be stupid, James. (*Glares at him irritably.*)

MR. VANCLEVE.—You have seen this? (*Holding out paper doubtfully to Margaret.*)

MARGARET.—Yes, father. (*Mrs. VanCleve goes over to him and takes paper from his hand and reads. She gasps and Mr. VanCleve puts his arm around her waist and pats her absent-mindedly, watching Margaret nervously.*)

MR. VANCLEVE.—I would not be too hard on him, Margaret. Young men will sow their wild oats, you know.

MARGARET (*coldly*).—Those who sow wild oats may

reap wild oats, but they can't sell them—not in my market.

MR. VANCLEVE.—Well, now, you must take into consideration the temptations he has in his work—

MARGARET.—And why should I, pray? No—he has been false to his position—false to the trust reposed in him—false even to *that creature*—and false to me! Why should I be lenient with him? I believed in him. I thought he was different from other men. I put all my faith in him. I—I loved him—(*Enter Randolph. He looks at Margaret and holds out his arms to her.*)

RANDOLPH.—Margaret!

MARGARET (*shrinks back*).—Don't touch me! Don't come near me!

RANDOLPH (*looks from one to the other. Father has put paper behind him again and turned away. Mother draws herself up haughtily*).—Surely you don't believe this thing?

MR. VANCLEVE.—Margaret is waiting for your explanation, Randolph.

MARGARET.—No, father, I do not wish explanations.

RANDOLPH.—But, Margaret, you *can't* believe it.

MARGARET.—How can I help believing it, Mr. Randolph? There is the sworn testimony. The evidence seems extremely clear. No doubt this accounts for the many times you've pleaded important business as an excuse for not coming when I expected you.

RANDOLPH.—You don't mean that—

MARGARET.—I do mean it—and I mean, too, that you need never feel obliged to make excuses to me again. I release you from that obligation. (*Removes her ring and places it on the table.*)

RANDOLPH.—You would take the word of such creatures? You could think that of me?

MARGARET.—You yourself have told me the percentage of men of that character. I *did* trust you. I thought you were different.

RANDOLPH.—My God, Margaret, I *am*. I swear it. Why, I never dreamed that you—

MRS. VANCLEVE (*fiercely*).—Men are all alike!  
(*Glares at her husband.*)

MARGARET.—No, you never dreamed that I would find you out. *I* have been dreaming—foolish, happy dreams—but I am awake, thank God, before it is too late.

RANDOLPH.—You are wrong, I tell you. They can't prove this thing. This is a blackmailing scheme. Margaret, what can I do—

MARGARET (*bitterly*).—There seems to be but one thing for you to do, Mr. Randolph. You are perfectly free. Go, and marry your Maisie!

RANDOLPH.—Stop! Don't let that name pass your lips. (*Draws himself up indignantly.*) This is the crowning insult!

MR. VANCLEVE.—Perhaps, Randolph—we can hush this matter up—and—er—if you find you can arrange things, why—er—we might discuss the situation again later. (*Lorna is seen coming down stairs.*)

RANDOLPH (*in despair*).—Good Lord! Is there faith in any man?

ANDREW (*appearing at door*).—Mr. McKoo, sir. To see Mr. Randolph. (*Enter Kid McKoo.*)

RANDOLPH (*bowing to Mrs. VanCleve, who turns away from him*).—With your permission.

KID (*nods awkwardly*).—Mr. Randolph, I've got great news. Highbrow is dead. (*Stops and looks at Lorna in embarrassment. All look at Lorna.*)

LORNA (*not quite sure*).—You mean—Jack?

RANDOLPH.—Your brother, yes. (*Goes over to comfort her. She gasps and leans against him. Margaret, who has walked away to window, turns and watches. He puts his arm around her and comforts her. Kid holds in as long as he can, then bursts out.*)

KID.—He left a dying confession, Mr. Randolph, telling the whole thing.

RANDOLPH (*deeply interested. Puts Lorna on settee and Mrs. VanCleve goes over and puts arm around her.*) You saw it?

KID (*in glee*).—You bet I saw it. I witnessed it. I went over to the hospital to have a chat with Highbrow and I got there just in time. The Doc had just told him he was going to cash in, and they asked him if he had anything to say. He seemed all cut up about his little sister here—wanted to know that she was safe. He'd like awful well to have seen you, Miss, but—(*Lorna sobs. Mr. VanCleve blows his nose violently, Margaret at window watches and listens in bewilderment.*) Well, as I was sayin', he knew he was done for and he made a clean breast of it.

RANDOLPH.—There is no higher evidence than a man's dying testimony. It is accepted in any court in the land. A man about to face his God and Maker will tell the truth.

KID.—It's the truth, all right. I know. I was just waiting for something to back up my word—not that it ain't good! Well, I've got it. He told the whole thing. How they got this little girl. How they had a special order to fill for a girl like her—*I've got the letter*. Just how the Queen doped her with candy on the train. *I've got the candy, too*. How he didn't know it was his sister until he saw her, and all about the game that led up to the fight. You see Tony won her (*they are all spellbound with horror.*), and then Tony knifed him when he was trying to protect her. Oh, it's some evidence, you bet! I was right there, too, pretending to be asleep on the couch, and I heard it all.

RANDOLPH.—That's great work, Kid.

LORNA (*sobs*).—It's true. It's true—all of it. They did do that. I *lied*. I lied to save my brother. (*Margaret goes over and puts her arm around her.*)

MRS. VANCLEVE.—There, there, child! (*Turns away and tries to wipe her eyes. Has no handkerchief. Mr. VanCleve goes to her and gives her his, then takes it back in a minute to blow his own nose again. Boys outside call "Extra papers." "All about the scandal."*)

KID (*cagerly*).—And that's not all, Mr. Randolph. I haven't had a chance to tell you that I heard that sneak Marcus tell how they were going to fix up that frameup on you they are calling on the streets, now—only they've given you a stiffer dose than they laid out then. I guess because you wouldn't take their money. Highbrow told all about that, too.

MR. VANCLEVE.—Then—then I am to understand this is not true? (*Picking up paper.*)

KID (*angrily*).—True? What in hell! Say, I thought you was with friends!

RANDOLPH (*intervening*).—You're all right, Kid. (*Turns to others.*) You have heard the story? You may have the proof, of course. (*Goes to Kid and wrings his hands.*) Here's one that has stood by me through thick and thin. He has never asked for proof. We've worked together, day in and day out, and he has never failed me. (*Kid, embarrassed, grins and then twirls his hat. Margaret comes toward Randolph. Mother and Lorna are on sofa. Father has walked to fire, and turned his back while he polishes his glasses.*)

MARGARET.—Clinton—can you ever forgive me? (*Holds out her hands. He takes them but holds her off.*)

RANDOLPH.—You are quite satisfied that this is the truth? There will be no more doubt?

MARGARET.—I am more than satisfied. I did not want to believe it.

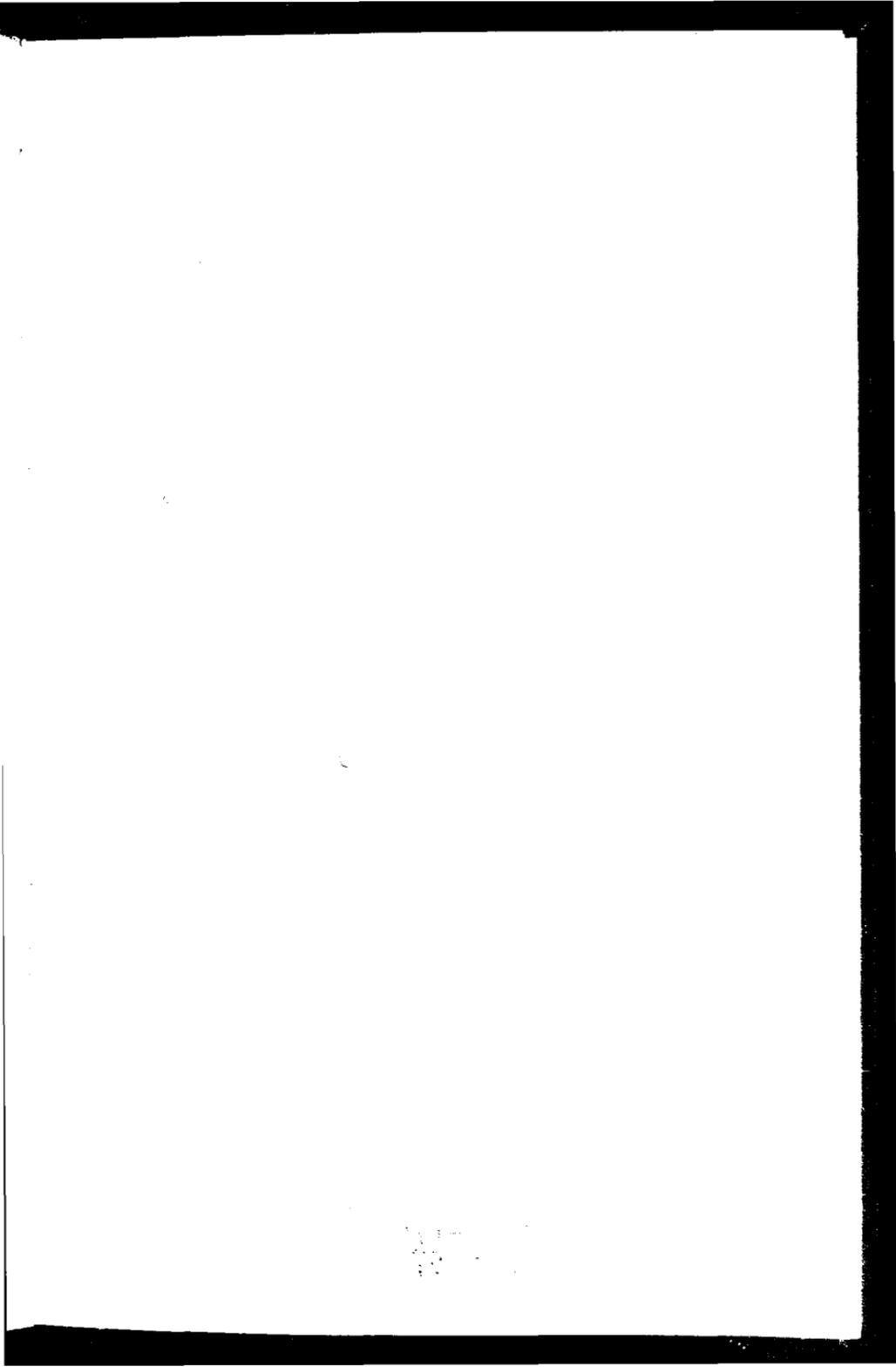
RANDOLPH.—Doubt is the serpent that creeps into Eden. Faith is the rock and the cornerstone of married life. Can our love rest on that rock, dear?

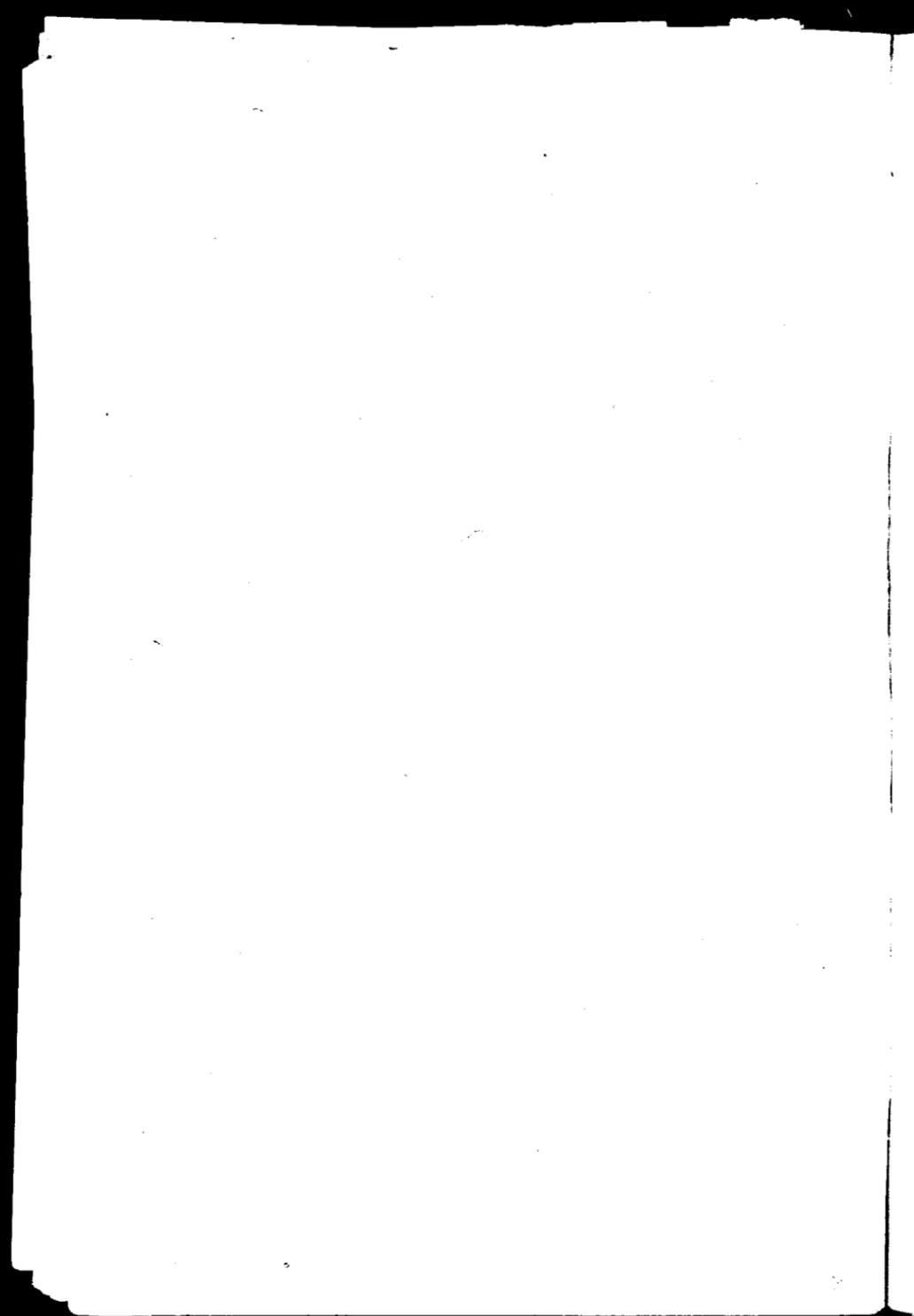
MARGARET.—O Clinton—yes. So long as we both shall live.

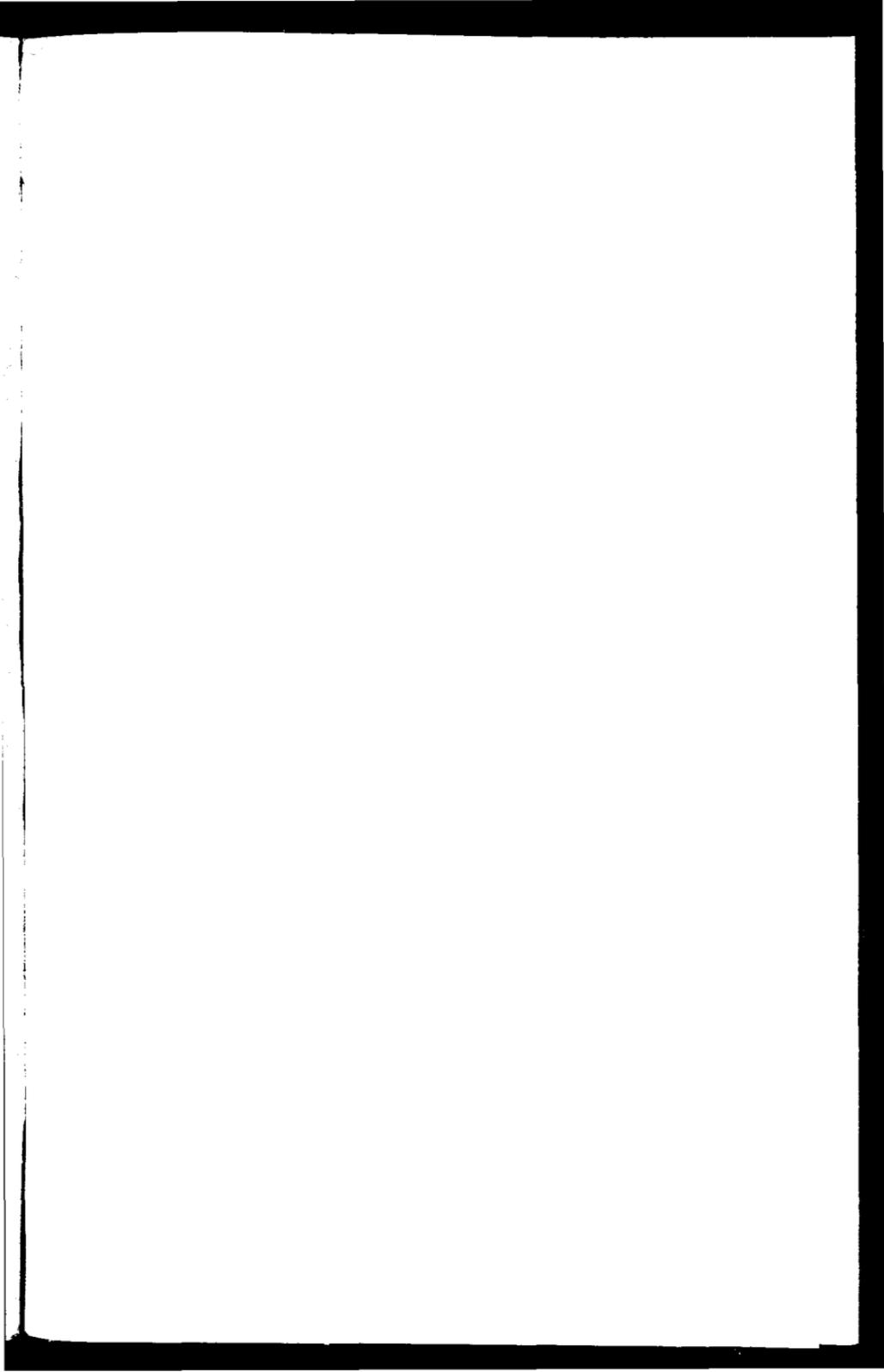
(*He takes ring from table and slips it on her finger. Kid turns and tip-toes out awkwardly. He kisses her as she*)

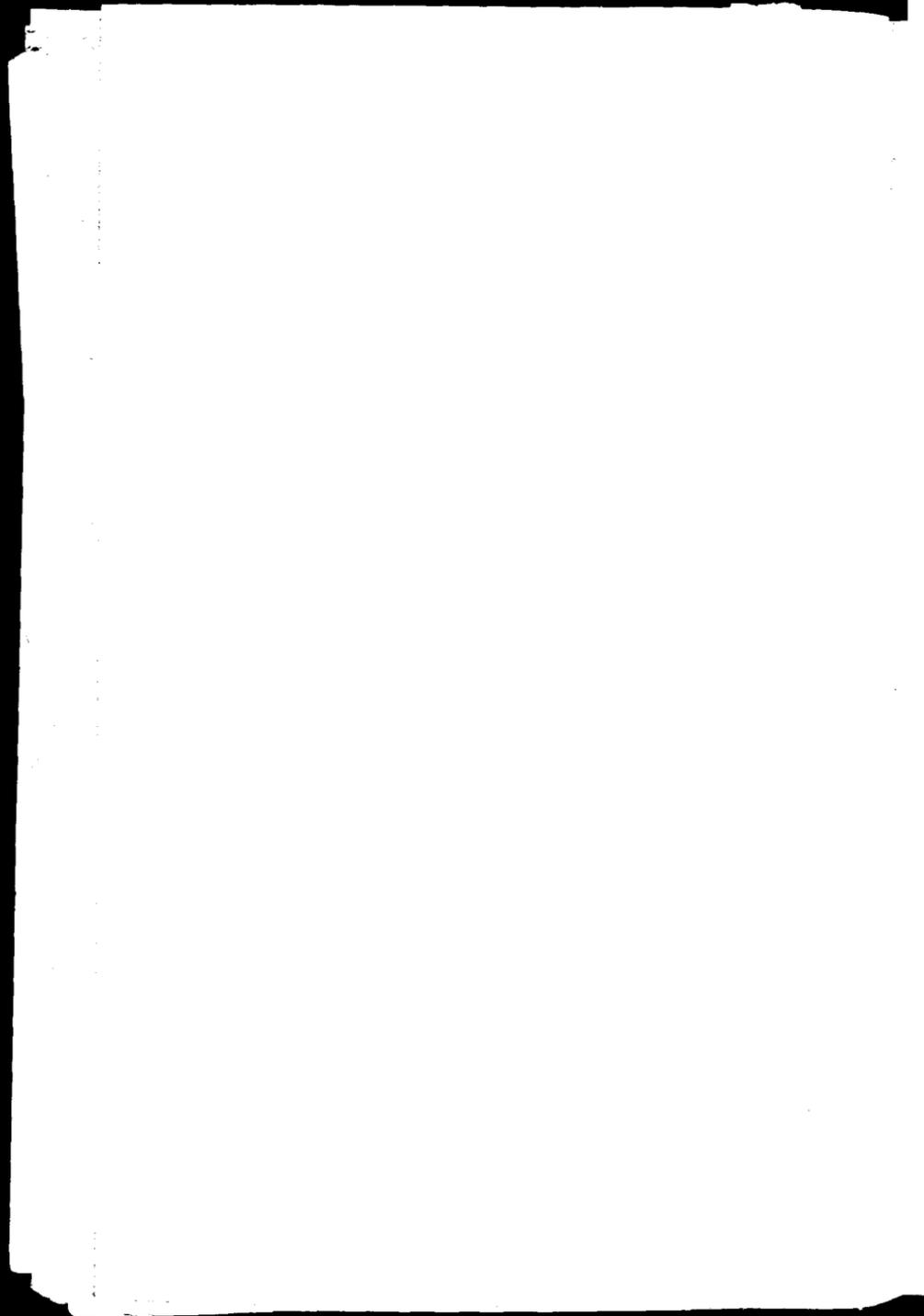
CURTAIN FALLS.

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