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THE BOOMERANG

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THE BOOMERANG

("Love Doctor")

BY
Winchell Smith and Victor Mapes



SAMUEL FRENCH, 25 West 45th St., New York

PRICE 90¢

THE BOOMERANG

A Comedy
in Three Acts

BY

WINCHELL SMITH and VICTOR MAPES

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New York:
SAMUEL FRENCH
Publisher
25 West 45th Street

London:
SAMUEL FRENCH, Ltd.
26 Southampton Street
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THE BOOMERANG.

Produced in New York at the Belasco Theatre,
August 10, 1915, with the following:

CAST.

DR. GERALD SUMNER, *age 32*.....ARTHUR BYRON
BUDD WOODBRIDGE, *age 24*.....WALLACE EDDINGER
PRESTON DE WITT, *age 28*.....GILBERT DOUGLAS
EMILE.....RICHARD MALCHIE
HARTLEY.....WILLIAM BOAG
MR. STONE.....JOHN CLEMENT
VIRGINIA XELVA, *age 21*.....MARTHA HEDMAN
GRACE TYLER, *age 22*.....RUTH SHEPLEY
MARION SUMNER, *age 24*.....JOSEPHINE PARKS
GERTRUDE LUDLOW, *age 22*.....DOROTHY MEGRUE
MRS. CREIGHTON WOODBRIDGE, *age 50*.....MRS.
HARRIET O. DELLENBAUGH

GUESTS AT PARTY

SYNOPSIS.

ACT I. *A Doctor's office.*
ACT II. *A living room.*
ACT III. *Same as ACT I.*

PLACE:—Hartford, Conn.

TIME:—Early autumn.

THE BOOMERANG

ACT I.

SCENE:—*A handsomely furnished physician's consulting room, with doors down R. up R. and up L. Large window up C. showing view of house extension up L. and a tree or two and distant view of other houses and lawn.*

Door down R. leads to waiting room. Door up R. leads to small retiring room. Door up L. leads to the interior of the house.

There is a large handsome desk C. with series of drawers—with desk telephone, writing materials, electric light, etc. L. of desk is a doctor's chair—this chair is large and luxurious. A smaller chair R. of desk. Another chair R. C. Another chair down R.

Below door L. a handsome glass cabinet filled with instruments. Below this cabinet an electric heating apparatus for sterilizing instruments. L. C. a nickel-finished operating chair—with white-covered cushions. An electric light with reflector near this chair. Between doors R. a large handsome book-case filled with medical works. Up C. a small solid table, on which stands microscope and box of glass slides, etc. In upper L. corner, a good

THE BOOMERANG.

sized medicine cabinet, fully stocked. Underneath medicine cabinet a wash-stand, towel rack, towels. A refuse receptacle with automatic cover down L. below electric heater. On walls, handsome pictures. Over instrument cabinet, are three framed diplomas. Hard wood floors with handsome rug.

At rise, stage empty. After a moment, door up L. is opened and GERALD (DR. SUMNER) enters, humming a song. He closes door. GERALD is a well-dressed, attractive young man of about thirty-two. He wears straw hat and gloves and carries a stick. Crosses down L. of operating chair, goes to desk c., idly picks up and glances at two or three letters, tosses them back on desk. Crossing up R. puts down hat and stick, takes off gloves, looks out of window, looks front, slight pause—yawns—crosses left of desk, sits, takes out cigarette case. It is empty. Unlocks drawer of desk, takes out large box of cigarettes, throws three or four on desk, lights cigarette, leaves open cigarette case on desk—yawns, picks up medical book, turns to marked place, reads a moment, disgustedly throws down book, swings discontentedly in chair, takes pack of cards from drawer of desk and begins playing solitaire.

Knock on door up L. after three cards have been dealt.

GERALD starts half guiltily, throws away cigarette, puts cards back in drawer, picks up medical book.

GERALD. Come in.

(Enter up L. MARION (GERALD'S sister) closing door. She is a pretty girl in the early twenties,

dressed stylishly in light spring gown, without hat or gloves. She crosses c. back of desk.)

MARION. (*Mockingly*) Ah! Dr. Sumner's in!

GERALD. Oh, it's you—

MARION. (*Coming L. c.*) I'm sorry—if I'm interrupting your office hours—brother dear!

GERALD. I wish something would interrupt brother dear's office hours! I thought it was the governor—Watson said he came home to lunch.

MARION. Father came home—because he wasn't feeling well.

GERALD. (*Rising*) That so? Where is he?

MARION. Gone to see a doctor. (*GERALD glances at her*) Not altogether complimentary to you—is it?

GERALD. That's all right. (*Picks up medical book and puts it in book-case R.*) It's what I was going to advise him to do.

MARION. He couldn't have consulted you, if he'd wanted to. You weren't here. Your office hours are supposed to begin at two. It's after three now.

GERALD. (*R.*) I hear enough of that sort of thing from the governor. (*During following speech, he saunters back to desk, lights fresh cigarette and fills cigarette case, sits R. of desk*)

MARION. (*L. c.*) But, Jerry, you don't seem to *realize* how much you mean to Father. If you could have heard him planning for you, months and months before you finished your studies in Europe—you must have the very best office in town and all the finest things to work with—the largest medical library—so much depended on the right start. Then when he got the idea of building this addition on to the house for your office, you should have seen the way he watched over it—why, Jerry, he came home two or three times a day, to

see how it was getting on—he was so afraid it wouldn't be all finished before you got back.

GERALD. (*Lightly*) And I'm a complete failure! Back from abroad and practicing medicine for two whole weeks—and not a patient to practice on.

MARION. Oh, no one can blame you for not having patients—yet. The trouble is, Jerry, you don't seem to care. (*Sits L. of desk*)

GERALD. (*After a moment's thought*) By Jove, for once, I believe you're right.

MARION. That's not what I came for—(*Turning to him*)

GERALD. Oh! Well, what did you come for?

MARION. Preston De Witt wants you to play golf this afternoon.

GERALD. (*Rising*) Ah—that's different! Who's Preston De Witt?

MARION. You met him at the club, last Saturday—don't you remember?

GERALD. Oh, yes!

MARION. He and Grace Tyler were having tea with me. He's a splendid player—about the best in the club.

GERALD. Yes, I remember—he admitted that. I'm afraid he's too good for me. (*Turns up R.*)

MARION. Nonsense. Anybody who's won a cup abroad—

GERALD. But I haven't had a club in my hand since I left Edinboro. (*Coming down R. C.*)

MARION. That's nothing.—Besides it's to be a foursome—

GERALD. (*Face falling—sits again R. of desk*) Oh—

MARION. You and I against them.

GERALD. Who's "them?"

MARION. Why, Preston De Witt and Grace Tyler—the girl who was with him—at tea.

GERALD. Oh, that peach!—What kind of a game does she play?

MARION. She's very good—but I beat her four down yesterday.

GERALD. (*Hesitating*). Well—I suppose it won't hurt us to try.

MARION. (*Rising*) That's fine. Grace is coming here. (*Starts for door up L.*) I'll call Preston up—and ask him to take us all over in his car. You'll be ready after your office hours?

GERALD. I'm ready now. (*Rising*)

MARION. (*Turning at door*) You're a great doctor. (*Exit MARION up L., closing door*)

(GERALD, left alone, takes out his watch, sighs, puts it back again. Then, with sudden thought takes off coat, goes out up R., returns without coat, brings back a large golf bag filled with clubs and a smaller golf bag empty—leans them both against lower end of desk—selects brassie from larger bag and places it in small bag—takes driver—about to place it in small bag—stops—handles it—swings, then puts it in small bag—draws out three iron clubs together—places them in small bag—then takes out two putters of distinctly different type—looks them over, one in each hand—puts them on desk—takes two golf balls from pocket of large bag—takes ash-tray from desk—places it down L. C.—places balls on floor down R. C. Putts one ball to ash-tray. While he is thus engaged, EMILE (the DOCTOR'S French valet) enters R., stops in astonishment on seeing DOCTOR.)

EMILE. Oh—I thought you have not come back!

(GERALD pays no attention—takes deliberate aim and putts second ball—watches ball with interest, till it stops.)

GERALD. (*Not looking at him*) I came in through the house, Emile—[pronounced "ay-meal"] (*Prepares to putt again*)

EMILE. (*Excitedly*) But I do not know that!

GERALD. What of it? (*Turns and looks at him—seeing EMILE'S air of excitement*) What's the matter? Has anything happened?

EMILE. (*Nodding his head excitedly*) Oh, oui, monsieur—(*Speaks loud enough to fear he is being overheard—checks himself—turns back to door R. and closes it softly, GERALD watching him with much interest*) Outside, is a patient!

GERALD. (*With mock seriousness*) No!

EMILE. Yes!—She wait now for some time.

GERALD. She?

EMILE. Oui, oui!—I show her in. (*Starts for door*)

GERALD. No—hold on! Get my coat! And put these away! (*Indicating clubs. EMILE hastily gathers clubs and bags and puts them in room up R. while GERALD picks up golf balls and ash-tray. Puts ash-tray on desk and balls in drawer. EMILE returns with GERALD'S office coat which is more dignified than the one he wore on his first entrance. He helps GERALD on with it. GERALD seats himself, with air of importance, in chair L. of table—takes up pen and pretends to be writing. EMILE R. of desk facing DOCTOR*) Now, Emile.

EMILE. Oui, monsieur. (*Opens door down R. and speaks off R.*) The Doctor should see you now, please—

Enter VIRGINIA down R. Exit EMILE down R., closing door very softly. VIRGINIA is a girl of about twenty—extremely winsome, simply but attractively clad, with a touch of the foreign in her looks and dress. She comes R. C. stops and stands waiting. GERALD does not look up for a moment, but pretends to be bus-

ily writing. He then glances at her, about to rise—is struck by her appearance, and remains an instant gazing at her, then assuming professional air rises and bows.)

GERALD. (*Indicating chair R. of desk*) Won't you be seated—(*VIRGINIA slowly goes to desk and sits, not taking her eyes from him. When she is seated, GERALD resumes his seat, opens drawer in desk and takes out index card—placing it on table, takes up pen*) Your name, please?

VIRGINIA. Virginia Xelva.

GERALD. (*Writing*) Address?

VIRGINIA. (*Smiling and shaking her head*) I haven't any.

GERALD. (*Giving her a look*) You must live somewhere.

VIRGINIA. Just now I'm at a boarding-house.

GERALD. (*A trifle disappointed*) Oh—

VIRGINIA. It's three streets down—(*Pointing and looking off R.*) then that way.

GERALD. On Willow Street? (*She nods—he writes it down*) I know the place—married?

VIRGINIA. Oh, no! (*GERALD writes*)

GERALD. Children? (*VIRGINIA laughs—he looks up*) No, of course—pardon me—Nationality?

VIRGINIA. My father was Swiss, but my mother was an American. I was born in Lucerne.

GERALD. Indeed! A charming spot— isn't it?

VIRGINIA. Have you been there?

GERALD. I put in most of my summer there—last year—

VIRGINIA. Really!

GERALD. (*Resuming professional air—consulting card*) Now, let's see—parents living?

VIRGINIA. No—I lived with my aunt, until—well—until she got married.

GERALD. Oh—I see—That makes a difference

—doesn't it? (*With a smile of understanding. Reading card*) Cause of Father's death—cause of Mother's death—can you tell me?

VIRGINIA. My mother died of a fever, when I was a baby. My father was killed in an accident four years ago——

GERALD. Have you any relatives, or friends here——?

VIRGINIA. No. I came to find my grandmother, but—but——

GERALD. But she's not living here——?

VIRGINIA. She's not living *anywhere*. When I arrived, I found she'd been dead for years.

GERALD. (*Leaning forward slightly over desk*) Then you're here—in this country—all alone? (VIRGINIA *nods*) Indeed! (*Pause—resumes professional attitude and refers to card*) Let's see—what's next? (GERALD *reads to himself half audibly, several questions from index card, without putting them to VIRGINIA: "Color—age—occupation;" writes answers as he goes along*) There—that'll do for that—(*Putting down pen—leaning slightly over table, with hands clasped before him*) Now—suppose you tell me what seems to be the trouble——?

VIRGINIA. (*Perplexed*) Trouble——?

GERALD. Yes—the nature of your—ailment?

VIRGINIA. (*Suddenly comprehending and laughing in spite of herself*) Oh!—You ask me all these questions because you think I am sick?

GERALD. (*Flabbergasted*) What?!

VIRGINIA. Oh, no, I came from the agency——

GERALD. What agency? (VIRGINIA *takes letter out of hand bag and hands it to him. He looks at the envelope*) Oh—the Employment Bureau! (*Pauses—sits back—looks at her*) Do you know—you're a great disappointment!

VIRGINIA. (*Starting to rise*) You don't think I'd suit——?

GERALD. No—no—I meant, I thought at last I had a patient! (*She gives him a puzzled look*) You see, I'm a very distinguished doctor—and I've got a fine new office—but up to the present time, I haven't had any patients!

VIRGINIA. No patients?

GERALD. Not one single, solitary patient—not so much as a sick cat!

VIRGINIA. (*After a pause—rising, crossing to R. C.*) Then, of course you'd have no need for me.

GERALD. (*Quickly—Crossing back of desk to L. of VIRGINIA*) Oh, wait a minute. I asked the agency to send me some one—(*She looks at him—not understanding*) As long as I've got an office I ought to have somebody to look out for it. My man is filling the position temporarily, as a favor—but it's a little out of his line.

VIRGINIA. I didn't understand what it was you wanted. I thought I might have a chance to get experience as a nurse.

GERALD. (*Crosses to desk*) Oh—you'd like to be a nurse?

VIRGINIA. (*Fervently*) Yes!

GERALD. Ever tried it?

VIRGINIA. Only at home. But to take care of the sick—has always made me happy.

GERALD. That's all very fine—but when it comes to spending your entire life in a sick room—

VIRGINIA. I'd love it—if I only knew how! It's always seemed to me that a great doctor does the noblest work of all—

GERALD. (*Looking at her reflectively*) Humph—I wish I could feel that way—(*Crossing to VIRGINIA*) Then, you wouldn't care to consider this office work?

VIRGINIA. If there were only some way I could learn nursing—

GERALD. Well—possibly I could help you—

VIRGINIA. Oh—do you think you might—?

GERALD. I don't see why not. I'll make inquiries. I suppose there is no great hurry about it?

VIRGINIA. (*With a smile*) Well—I've got to earn my living——

GERALD. Oh, then, I suppose—I—Sit down. (*Both sit—he after her, VIRGINIA R. of DOCTOR. His chair now faces VIRGINIA*) Well, in that case, suppose I offer you this position here with me—for the present—and we can be on the lookout for the sort of thing you're after? What do you say?

VIRGINIA. I'd like to try very much—if you really think I am—I am——

GERALD. (*Looking her over*) Oh, yes! I think you are!

VIRGINIA. But, at the agency, they told me you would probably require references.

GERALD. Yes.

VIRGINIA. Well, when I came to this country—I had no idea—that I—I—I mean I haven't any references.

GERALD. Oh?—That's all right—I haven't any either. We'll both take a chance, eh!

VIRGINIA. (*After a little laugh*) You're—
—you're *very* kind.

GERALD. Nothing of the sort. (*Rising, places chair a little up-stage near desk*) All I want is to have someone here—and if that's any service to you, I'm only too glad——

VIRGINIA. Thank you——

GERALD. Well—then we'll call it settled! Oh, as to terms——

VIRGINIA. (*Smiling*) I don't suppose I'm really worth anything——

GERALD. I'll give you twice that!

VIRGINIA. Then I'd rather leave the terms to you——

GERALD. Good!—When would you like to begin?

VIRGINIA. I'm ready any time.

GERALD. Want to begin now?

VIRGINIA. Why, yes.

GERALD. All right. (*Crossing front of desk, presses button on desk, VIRGINIA rises*) You can put your things in there. (*Opens door up R. VIRGINIA, who has followed him up c., passes out up R. with a slight glance of the eye at the DOCTOR. This is the beginning of their love affair*)

VIRGINIA. (*As he passes out*) Thank you.

(EMILE enters down R., as VIRGINIA exits, in answer to bell and stands down R.)

GERALD. (*Turning to him. He has crossed to L. of desk, well up*) Don't you know a patient when you see one?

EMILE. (*A little puzzled*) No, monsieur—

GERALD. Well, neither do I. That young woman was looking for a job and what's more she got it. She's going to take charge of the office. (*EMILE grins*) You like that, eh? (*EMILE nods*) I thought you would! (*VIRGINIA enters up R. She has removed her hat*) Emile, this is Miss Xelva. (*EMILE bows*) Straighten up the desk for her out there. (*Indicating off down R.*) and show her where things are kept.

EMILE. Bien, monsieur—(*Goes off down R. The door stays open for a moment, then is closed softly*)

GERALD. Now, Miss Xelva, don't hesitate to let me know if there's anything at all you want.

VIRGINIA. (*With hesitancy crossing to R. of desk*) Well—when you have time, if you could give me an idea of what I am to do?

GERALD. Oh—I hadn't thought of that. Let me see—Do you ever play solitaire? (*She looks surprised*) —or how about reading? I've got plenty of books. I'll tell you what—(*Going to book-case, R.*) There's a fine book here—on nursing. I'm

sure that would interest you! (*He takes book from book-case*)

VIRGINIA. But will there be no work?

GERALD. I hope so—but I don't see any immediate prospects. No patients, no work.

VIRGINIA. (*Suddenly interested*) Is there no way to get patients?

GERALD. I can't think of any! If you can, I'll divide with you! In the meantime, if you'll just be here from ten till five—so that you're on hand, in case anyone does come—take any messages—answer the telephone—(*Telephone bell rings on desk c.*) Speaking of telephones, there we are now! Perhaps that's a patient—? (*Goes to receiver, checks himself*) This is your department! Suppose you see—

VIRGINIA. (*Taking up receiver—GERALD crosses to L. of desk*) Hello—yes—Yes, the Doctor's in—

GERALD. (*Taking golf balls from drawer of desk*) But, very busy, at present. (*VIRGINIA glances at him*) We must always try to make it look as if I had a lot to do. (*He exits up R. and comes back, closing door. He carries small golf bag which he places below book-case—returns above desk—L. of it*)

VIRGINIA. He's very busy—But if it's important—Oh, no—wait a minute—I'll get him to speak to you—Oh, please don't ring off—(*GERALD laughs*) Won't you give me the name?—About who? A dog? Oh, about a dog?—Well, what seems to be the matter with it? (*Her expression changes suddenly—face falls*) Oh, just a minute, please—(*Puts hand over receiver, to GERALD*) It's a man who wants to sell a dog—

GERALD. (*Eagerly*) Oh, that setter! Let me speak to him—(*Takes receiver from her*) Hello—that you, Tim? You landed him, eh? Good! Phew! That's a pretty stiff price! I guess I'd



THE STAGE OF THE BELASCO THEATRE, NEW YORK, SET FOR ACTS I AND III OF "THE BOOMERANG"

better look him over first! He is, eh? Well, keep him there—will you? I'll be right down! (*Hangs up receiver, goes quickly up R. and gets hat, speaking meanwhile*) I've got to run out for a few minutes. If there's a rush of patients while I'm gone, I count on you to hold 'em. If they're in a hurry, prescribe for them yourself. (*Exit GERALD up L. VIRGINIA left alone, glances about office curiously. Crosses L. to instrument cabinet, peeps in—looks at sterilizer—looks about—crosses R. front of desk to R. of desk. Sees book on nursing, which GERALD has left there—takes it up eagerly as knock on door down R. VIRGINIA looks up. EMILE enters, closing door*)

EMILE. (*In a low tone*) Where is the Doctor?

VIRGINIA. Gone out.

EMILE. Out! Oh! That's too bad!

VIRGINIA. Why? It isn't a patient, is it?

EMILE. (*Nodding*) Two—(*Hesitates, then starts for door down R.*) I'll tell them he is out—

VIRGINIA. (*Stopping him*) No—no—they might go away. Did they come together?

EMILE. (*Nods*) Just now.

VIRGINIA. We must get the doctor back—

EMILE. Where did he go—?

VIRGINIA. He went somewhere to buy a dog.

EMILE. (*Breaking in*) Ah—I know where it is!

VIRGINIA. Do you? (*He nods excitedly*) Could you go there—and tell the doctor?

EMILE. Oui, mademoiselle!

VIRGINIA. Then try to get him back quickly!—And show them in here! (*She crosses to desk—gets L. of it*)

EMILE. (*Willing*) Oui, mademoiselle—(*He goes to door R. and opens it, passing out*)—this way, please. (*After a moment, enter MRS. WOODBRIDGE, followed by BUDD. MRS. WOODBRIDGE is a*

well-bred, sweet looking woman of fifty, with a decided motherly air. BUDD is about 24, nice looking and well dressed—shy and retiring in manner, over-sensitive—quaintly polite, but very genuine and sincere. EMILE closes door after them. MRS. WOODBRIDGE goes to chair R. of desk. BUDD stops front of chair R. C.)

VIRGINIA. (*Trying to recall GERALD'S manner at the moment of her own first entrance*) Won't you have seats, please—

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. (*About to sit—glancing about in search of DOCTOR*) Isn't the Doctor here?

VIRGINIA. (*After hesitation*) He'll be disengaged very soon. (*MRS. WOODBRIDGE still undecided whether to sit, looks at BUDD*) Won't you take this chair? (*Indicating chair R. of desk*)

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. (*Still undecided*) Thank you. (*Sits. BUDD sits resignedly R. C. VIRGINIA hesitates, between BUDD and MRS. WOODBRIDGE, looks first at BUDD, then at MRS. WOODBRIDGE*)

VIRGINIA. (*With sudden thought, half to herself*) Oh—(*She goes out quickly down R., back of BUDD, leaving door open. A long pause. No action—attitude of waiting*)

BUDD. Mother—(*Rising, crosses to MRS. WOODBRIDGE*)

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Yes, dear?

BUDD. Couldn't we come back later?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Why—we've come at a very lucky time—There's evidently no one ahead of us.

BUDD. But they'll be waiting for you at Aunt Jennie's.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. (*Decidedly*) I want to make sure you see him—now that I've managed to get you here.

(*BUDD sighs and gives it up. Crosses back to chair and sits. Re-enter VIRGINIA down R. She*

carries a number of magazines, newspapers and periodicals.)

VIRGINIA. (*Going to MRS. WOODBRIDGE*)
Would you like to look over any of these——

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. No, thank you.

VIRGINIA. (*Going to BUDD*) Would you?

BUDD. (*Taking the magazine on top*) Thank you, very much. (*Puts it on his lap, without looking at it*)

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Do you think the Doctor will be very long?

VIRGINIA. Oh, no! I—I—hope not——

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. I suppose there is no way you could find out?

VIRGINIA. (*With hesitation*) Well—I——

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. You couldn't interrupt him, of course——

(*VIRGINIA crosses up c. puts down magazines.*)

BUDD. (*Rising—placing magazine on chair—turning to VIRGINIA*) My mother is rather pressed for time—if you could make an appointment?

VIRGINIA. (*Quickly—down to BUDD*) I should advise you not to go now—and you really won't be wasting time, because—the card must be filled out and—(*Crossing L.*) I can do that—(*Goes to DOCTOR'S chair, opens wrong drawer looking for index card, then opens right drawer, looks in right corner, finds it in left corner, looks at it puzzled, takes up pen*) The first question is—your name?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Mrs. Creighton Woodbridge——

VIRGINIA. (*Filling out card*) Address?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Harrison Avenue.

VIRGINIA. Age?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. (*Stiffening slightly*) I'm

not the patient. It's my son, Mr. Budd Woodbridge.

VIRGINIA. Oh, I beg your pardon. (*Tears up card and takes another one*)

BUDD. (*Coming to MRS. WOODBRIDGE*) What's the use of your waiting, Mother?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. I want to explain your case to the Doctor myself.

BUDD. But you did explain to our Doctor—and he couldn't find anything.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. It may be different with Dr. Sumner. He's modern! You know what Mrs. Ludlow said about his studying with all those great men abroad—

BUDD. If you don't mind, I'd rather see him alone.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Of course I won't stay—if you'd prefer not to have me.

BUDD. I would.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Very well. (*Rising and crossing R.*) And after you've seen him, you'll come right over to Aunt Jennie's and let me know what he says?

BUDD. All right, I'll do that.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Don't think I'm silly, Budd—but I can't help feeling anxious.

BUDD. Now, please don't worry. There's nothing the matter with me.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. That's what you always say.

BUDD. I'll put you in the car. (*Goes out down R.*, MRS. WOODBRIDGE *following him*.)

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. I'll send it back for you—(*They exit down R.* MRS. WOODBRIDGE *stopping in door*) And, Miss—eh—I didn't get your name.

VIRGINIA. (*Rises*) Xelva.

(MRS. WOODBRIDGE *crosses R. C.* VIRGINIA, *who has picked up card, crosses to her.*)

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Miss Xelva, would you please be sure to tell Dr. Sumner—

VIRGINIA. I'll write it down.

(MRS. WOODBRIDGE *looks R.*)

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. That I'm afraid my boy is on the verge of a nervous breakdown.

BUDD. (*Off R.*) Come along, mother—

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Yes, dear. (*Starts for door R., speaking as they exit*) And, Miss Xelva—if you'd tell Dr. Sumner that he was so highly recommended to me by Mrs. Ludlow—

(VIRGINIA *makes note on index card. MRS. WOODBRIDGE and VIRGINIA are now off R. and the door down R. closes. After a moment's pause, knock on door up L.*)

MARION. (*Off L., speaking as she knocks. She now wears golf clothes*) Jerry—(*Opens door*) May we come in—the girls want to see your office. (*Enters*) Jerry—(*Crossing c. looking around, sees that room is empty*) Well—I never—(*Crossing up L. c.*) Come in, girls.

(GERTRUDE LUDLOW *enters from L.—GERTRUDE carries a new novel, box of bon bons, small hand bag.*)

GERTRUDE. Oh! So this is it. (*Looking at office, moving as she speaks in front of MARION to R. of desk—places candy and book on desk*)

MARION. Yes, this is it. (*Looking off*) Come along, Grace.

(GRACE *enters carrying parasol, crosses L. c., stands a moment, sees instrument cabinet. Crosses to it around operating chair.*)

GERTRUDE. Where's your brother, Marion?

MARION. (*Leans on back of DOCTOR'S chair*) Don't ask me! His office is the one place where he's not to be found during office hours! How do you like it?

GERTRUDE. (*Down R. C. looking about, back to audience*) Peachy, isn't it?

GRACE. It gives me the creeps! I hate a doctor's office.

GRACE. Whenever I see barbarous things like that, I don't get over it for a week. (*Etc. ad lib.*)

MARION. I suppose I'm used to it—I've been in here so much.

GERTRUDE. Oh, I don't! I've always thought I'd like to be a doctor's wife. (*Etc., ad lib.*)

Together

GRACE. A doctor's wife—would you really? I can't imagine anything more dreadful. (*Crossing up c.*)

MARION. (*Down around operating chair—leans on it—L. C.*) I wouldn't mind it a bit, if he was the right kind of a man. (*Etc., ad lib.*)

GERTRUDE. (*c. below desk*) I don't feel that way at all. I think they lead such interesting lives. (*Taking a piece of candy, crossing over to book-case, looking at books*)

GRACE. Never knowing where your husband's going to be—never being able to make an engagement. (*Etc., ad lib.*)

....Together

GRACE. (*Above desk*) Speaking of engagements, I suppose your brother's forgotten all about our golf match?

MARION. Oh, no—he'll be back—after office hours! They seem to bore him to death.

GERTRUDE. Then why does he have them?

MARION. Because Father had it put on his shingle—Office hours 10 to 12 and 2 to 4.

(GERTRUDE *laughs and examines book in lower case.*)

GRACE. (*Sits in chair R. of desk*) I always thought your brother was practicing abroad—

MARION. (*Crossing to L. C.*) No. He was studying abroad—or supposed to be—he's been studying for ages—in Paris, Berlin, Geneva, Edinboro—and Heaven knows where else! Why he hasn't laid eyes on Hartford for eleven years.

GERTRUDE. (*Crossing to R. of GRACE*) Eleven years! Is it that long?

MARION. (*Crossing to desk, leans on desk front of chair*) I don't think he'd ever have come home if Father hadn't made him. (*GRACE picks up clock casually holding it so GERTRUDE can see time*) Why, Father wrote him that if he didn't hurry up he'd be in his second childhood before he began practicing.

GRACE. Why should he practice if he doesn't want to? Goodness knows, he doesn't need the money!

GERTRUDE. Need the money! I should say not! O look at that clock—I'd love to meet him, but I really mustn't wait. (*Picks up book and candy—crosses up R. above desk*)

MARION. Why can't you come with us?

GRACE. Do! We'd adore having you.

GERTRUDE. Thanks, but I couldn't possibly. I've simply got to go to Mrs. Stuyvesant. I told her I'd pour for her. (*Crossing L. to MARION*) She's such a nice old thing!

MARION. And isn't it marvelous to see her dance!

GERTRUDE. Isn't it!

GRACE. I should say so!

}*Together*

GERTRUDE. Just what I was thinking last night.

MARION. (*To GRACE*) Why weren't you there, Grace?

GRACE. (*Crossing R., taking magazine from chair R. C.*) I was going, but I didn't feel quite up to it. How was it? Any fun?

MARION. (*Crossing to L. of operating chair*) Yes—rather nice.

GERTRUDE. Oh, I thought it was deadly!

MARION. Did you?

GERTRUDE. The only decent dance I had was with Budd Woodbridge.

MARION. Was Budd there? I didn't see him.

GERTRUDE. No wonder! I must have had an awful effect on him. He didn't say two words—then left me flat, and cleared out, as soon as our dance was over!

MARION. (*Slyly, with a glance at GRACE*) By that time, I suppose he'd found out Grace wasn't coming.

GERTRUDE. Oh—that was it! (*Crossing to L. of desk, leans over it*)

GRACE. Marion—don't be silly. (*Puts magazine on desk*)

MARION. You know perfectly well Budd's crazy about you.

GRACE. (*With a touch of sincerity*) I'd feel very much flattered, if he were. (*Turns to MARION*) Budd's a fine fellow.

MARION. (*Laughingly*) Yes—Budd's a fine fellow—but, oh, you, Preston De Witt—(*Door down R. opens on the last words and Budd appears in doorway. MARION takes a step back in surprise*)

Budd! Where in the world did you come from?
(With a glance of understanding from BUDD to GRACE) Oh! Now I see, you found out Grace was here—

(GRACE turns up R. C.)

BUDD. I—I am waiting to see your brother.

MARION. I didn't know you'd met him—You don't know where he is—do you?

BUDD. He's engaged with a patient.

MARION. *(With amazement)* A patient!
(Crosses up L. C.) Did you hear that, girls? My brother has a patient! *(To BUDD)* Are you sure?

BUDD. I was told so.

MARION. I've a good mind to call up Father!
(Turns to GERTRUDE)

BUDD. *(Going to GRACE with meaning—)* I'm glad to see you're feeling better to-day.

GRACE. Much better, thank you.

GERTRUDE. Well, it's time for me to skip. I know I'll be awfully late. *(Starts to door L.)*

MARION. *(Going with her)* If you must—

GERTRUDE. Oh, I can find the way.

MARION. Oh, no—I'll go with you. *(GRACE turns to go with them)* You wait here, Grace.
(Exchanges a sly glance with GERTRUDE)

GERTRUDE. Sorry I can't see the match—but good luck to all of you.

(Exit GERTRUDE up L. accompanied by MARION.)

GRACE and BUDD are left alone. BUDD stands nervously and ill at ease. GRACE feels this without looking at him.)

BUDD. You've got a golf match on? *(Crosses R. of desk—puts hat on desk)*

GRACE. *(Strolling about L. C. looking at instrument case)* Yes. With Marion and her brother—that is it's a foursome.

BUDD. Oh—*(Pause)* Who's the fourth?

GRACE. (*Casually—back turned to BUDD*) I'm playing with Preston De Witt—(*An expression of pain comes over BUDD's face. He sinks into chair, as if overcome by sudden weakness, then as GRACE turns to him, he rises, making great effort to pull himself together*) Oh, Budd—those bridge scores were just the kind I meant. Where did you manage to find them. (*Sits on arm of chair L. of desk*)

BUDD. I sent to New York.

GRACE. Oh! Thanks so much. I hear you left the party early last night—

BUDD. Yes.

GRACE. Wasn't it amusing?

BUDD. I—I thought you were going to be there—(*Turns to GRACE*)

GRACE. Yes, I was!—Your flowers were lovely.

BUDD. But—you didn't come—?

GRACE. No—somehow, I didn't feel quite up to it.

BUDD. (*Turning away*) "Somehow!"—

GRACE. What do you mean by that?

BUDD. (*Looks at GRACE*)—I passed by your house on my way home—

GRACE. That isn't on your way home!

BUDD. I went around that way to—to ask if you were ill—

GRACE. (*Crosses front of desk*) Did you come to see me, last night?

BUDD. I didn't stop—because I saw you were engaged. (*GRACE gives him a look*) His run-about was outside.

GRACE. Well—what of that?

BUDD. Nothing.—Only then I knew why you hadn't come to the dance.

GRACE. I'd given up the dance long before Preston called. I hadn't the slightest idea he was coming!

BUDD. (*R. of desk,*) But he must have known you'd given it up—

GRACE. (*Showing exasperation, crossing R.*)
Now you're beginning again!

BUDD. (*Turning to GRACE*) I didn't mean to say anything——

GRACE. You may not *mean* it, but you always do!—And I tell you, once more, that I won't have it! I've a perfect right to do what I please—and go where I please! You said you understood that.

BUDD. I do. But—lately—you seem to be with De Witt all the time——

GRACE. That's not true! And if it were, it's entirely my own affair! And it's too awfully exasperating to have you always reproaching me and making scenes and——

(*Enter MARION up L.*)

MARION. (*At door up L.*) Grace—here's your partner! (*Turns and speaks off L.*) Come in, Preston——

(*Enter PRESTON DE WITT, a stylish young man—in very natty golf clothes. He enters quickly, goes down L. C., R. of operating chair.*)

PRESTON. (*Meeting GRACE and shaking hands*)
Ah—partner! Ready for the battle?

GRACE. Yes—rather! (*After shaking hands, GRACE is L. of desk, front of desk chair*)

PRESTON. (*Sees BUDD*) Ah—Woodbridge!

BUDD. (*With effort—in unnatural voice trying to be easy*) How do you do? (*Crosses up R.*)

MARION. Isn't Jerry through with his patient yet?

GRACE. He hasn't been in here——

PRESTON. (*Leans against operating chair*) Well, we'll wait for him—but I was in hopes we could get an early start.

GRACE. Why, you're not thinking of going, now?

MARION. Yes—as soon as Jerry's ready.

GRACE. But I've got to go home first.

MARION. What!—

GRACE. (*Referring to her clothes*) I can't play in these things!

MARION. Oh—then you'll be forever!

GRACE. No—I can change in a jiffy!

PRESTON. Can't I be of assistance?

GRACE. Just how do you mean?

PRESTON. I'll run you over to the house—

GRACE. Is your car here?

PRESTON. Yes!

(GRACE crosses up L.)

MARION. Then, for heaven sakes, hurry up!
(GRACE turns as if to speak to BUDD) You'll excuse us, won't you, Budd?

(*Exeunt MARION and GRACE up L.*)

PRESTON. (*Crossing up c.*) Shall we see you at the club, Woodbridge,

BUDD. No, I don't think so—

PRESTON. Sorry.

GRACE. (*Off L.*) Preston.

PRESTON. So long. (*As he exits*) Yes, Grace.

GRACE. (*Off*) May I drive your car?

PRESTON. (*Speaking off*) Why, of course; I'd love to have you, etc. (*Exits L. closing door*)

(BUDD looks after them, sinks into chair, R. of desk, head in hands. He holds this position a moment, when door down R. opens quietly and VIRGINIA enters, with index card in her hand. She stops suddenly on seeing BUDD and stands looking at him, with sympathy.)

VIRGINIA. (*Quietly*) Mr. Woodbridge—(BUDD rouses himself) The Doctor will be here in just a

moment. (BUDD rises quickly) Oh, don't get up!

BUDD. I'm all right, thank you.

VIRGINIA. Please sit down.

(BUDD sits. She goes up quickly to carafe and pours water in glass, comes to him, offers water.)

BUDD. I'm not thirsty, thanks.

VIRGINIA. I thought you seemed a little faint—(Enter GERALD L. leading setter dog on leash. He is surprised to find BUDD there. He has his hat on and carries stick) Here's the doctor—now! (BUDD rises)

GERALD. How do you do!—(VIRGINIA goes to him L. C. and relieves him of his hat and stick. To VIRGINIA) Thank you—(She takes them to room up R.) Just a moment. (Pushes button on desk, pats dog—EMILE enters from down R. GERALD crosses with dog to R. speaking in French)

GERALD. Voila, Emile, je l'ai acheté!

EMILE. A la bonheur!

GERALD. (Handing leash to EMILE) Mettez-le au garage—

EMILE. (Starting R. with dog) Très bien, monsieur!

GERALD. Emile—il s'appelle "Challenge."

EMILE. (Repeating) "Challenge"—Compris, Monsieur.

GERALD. Gardez-le bien—

EMILE. Fiez-vous à moi—

GERALD. Dépêchez-vous!—

GERALD. (Exit EMILE down R. closing door. GERALD turns and assumes professional air) Have a seat, Mr.—(GERALD doesn't know name. Starts up L. to wash his hands)

BUDD. Woodbridge—

GERALD. Mr. Woodbridge—I'll be with you in just a minute. (BUDD sits R. of desk. GERALD washes hands. While drying hands) Beautiful

day—isn't it? (*Pause*) Yes—(*Throws towel in receptacle*) There we are. Now—(*Takes out index card and sits L. of desk*)

VIRGINIA. (*Entering up R. and coming down to above desk c., picks up index card which she has left there, before getting water*) Here's the card, Doctor.

GERALD. (*Looking at it—with surprise*) Ah—you took the history for me?

VIRGINIA. Yes—Mrs. Woodbridge gave it to me.

GERALD. (*To BUDD*) Your wife—?

VIRGINIA. Mr. Woodbridge's mother—she wanted to see you—but she couldn't wait. (*Picks up glass from desk c. and places it up c.*)

BUDD. Doctor—there isn't a thing the matter with me—(*VIRGINIA stops and turns, listening*)

GERALD. Good! Then you've come to the right man.

BUDD. I had to promise I'd come and be examined.

GERALD. Cheer up—we may be able to find something the matter.

BUDD. You won't, I'm sure.

(*VIRGINIA takes an undecided step toward desk. GERALD notices it.*)

GERALD. (*Politely*) That's all, thank you, Miss Xelva—

VIRGINIA. (*After a second's hesitation*) Excuse me, Doctor, but I have—a message—for you

GERALD. Ah? Who from?

VIRGINIA. (*Hesitates and glances at BUDD*) Mrs. Woodbridge—

GERALD. (*Inquiringly*) Well—? What was it?

VIRGINIA. (*Coming to above desk c.*) Mrs.

Woodbridge asked me to be sure and tell you that her son is in an extremely nervous condition—*(As if trying to remember details)* He doesn't sleep—has no appetite—no interest in anything—he's completely different from what he used to be—and that he'd promised to put himself in your hands, if you thought you could help him.

GERALD. *(Looking at her—nodding his head)* Thank you, very much. *(VIRGINIA starts R. As she reaches door, GERALD stops her)* Miss Xelva—*(She turns. He eyes her with mock seriousness)* No more appointments, until to-morrow, please. *(VIRGINIA restrains an impulse to laugh and exits quickly R., closing door. GERALD picks up index card and scrutinizes it carefully. BUDD twists in seat uncomfortably, wipes perspiration from his face. GERALD, looking up from card, watches BUDD for a moment, in silence)* So, you're off your feed, eh?—and can't sleep?

BUDD. I've been a little nervous lately, that's all.

GERALD. Mm—any special cause for it? *(BUDD, hesitating and shifting his gaze with increased nervousness, after a pause, shakes his head)* Mm—have you any idea whether you've been running a temperature?

BUDD. *(A trifle hang-dog, looking at Doctor after slight pause)* No, sir.

GERALD. Never conscious of feeling a little feverish?

BUDD. *(Looking away)* Sometimes.

GERALD. Feel feverish—now?

BUDD. *(Looks at Doctor)* Why?

GERALD. Your face looks a trifle flushed—*(Rises, takes thermometer from desk, shakes it)* Well, let's see. *(Goes around above desk and comes down on BUDD's right, looks at thermometer—inserts it in BUDD's mouth—looks at watch)* Will you unbutton your waistcoat, please—*(GERALD goes up C., pours water into a glass, goes to cabinet*

up L. puts antiseptic from bottle into glass—BUDD watches him nervously over his left shoulder. He comes down between the desk and BUDD, placing glass on lower end of desk—touching BUDD's arm motions him to rise, picks up sounding hammer from desk)

BUDD. (*Talking indistinctly, with thermometer in his mouth*) There isn't the slightest use of all this.

GERALD. I know—but it won't do any harm. (*Proceeds to tap him on the chest—listening closely. At the third tap, BUDD gives a nervous twitch. GERALD taps harder in same spot. BUDD repeats twitch*) Is that sensitive?

BUDD. (*Shaking head*) No.

GERALD. It's just because you're nervous?

BUDD. (*Indistinctly*) I suppose so.

(*After a few more taps, GERALD pauses, puts hammer on desk, looks at watch, then removes thermometer from BUDD's mouth, examines it, shakes it down, places thermometer in glass on desk and crosses to L. of desk.*)

GERALD. (*During the above business—pleasantly*) No alarming symptoms, so far—(*BUDD takes hat from desk and starts for door*) Just a moment—

BUDD. Anything more?

GERALD. Oh, I haven't half earned my fee yet! Would you mind removing your coat and waistcoat—(*Goes to instrument cabinet—opens door—picks up a saw which is over stethoscope*)

BUDD. (*Removing coat and waistcoat, placing them on chair L. of desk—hat on desk*) What are you going to do?

GERALD. (*Coming back with stethoscope*) Kindly get into this chair—(*Indicates operating chair. BUDD gets into chair. GERALD flattens out*



"THE BOOMERANG"

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chair. He puts the back down first. BUDD looks around. Then GERALD raises the front part of chair and pushes BUDD back into a reclining position. BUDD lies face up. GERALD puts stethoscope to ears and applies it to BUDD's chest) Now take a deep breath—again—once more—Now, exhale—again—once again—Now fill the lungs—hold it—(Telephone rings on desk c. GERALD puts stethoscope on desk, takes up receiver, puts it back, glances at BUDD who has started to get up) No—no—stay where you are—Miss Xelva is answering it. (Comes back to BUDD. Now, turn over, please—(BUDD does so. GERALD places handkerchief on BUDD's back) Now say, "Ah-h——"

BUDD. (*Lifting head*) What?

GERALD. Say—"Ah-h"—(*BUDD does so. GERALD applies ear to BUDD's back*) Again—once more—Now say—one, two, three—(*BUDD says "one—two—three"*) Again—(*BUDD repeats*) Now keep it up—

BUDD. One, two, three, four, five, six—

GERALD. No, no—Just say one, two, three—one, two, three—(*BUDD keeps repeating "One, two, three, one, two, three"*)—GERALD *drops foot-piece and raises head-piece of chair. BUDD quickly rises, puts on waistcoat and coat, buttoning up waistcoat—Crosses R. of desk as he does so. GERALD writes notes on index card L. of desk, then crosses R. of BUDD*) Now sit down and let's have a little chat. (*BUDD sits resignedly R. of desk. GERALD draws up chair on BUDD's R.*) Have you lost any weight lately?

BUDD. A little.

GERALD. How much?

BUDD. Oh, about ten pounds.

GERALD. (*With slight exclamation, taking out watch*) Phew! Ten pounds—since when?

BUDD. The last month or so.

GERALD. How about the pulse?

BUDD. (*Wearily—holding out hand*) Oh, my pulse is all right—everything's all right—

GERALD. (*Holding BUDD's pulse*) I'll have to admit I haven't found anything—

BUDD. I was sure you wouldn't!

(*GERALD holds BUDD's pulse, consulting watch, as knock on door R.*)

GERALD. Come—(*Enter VIRGINIA R.*)

VIRGINIA. Excuse me, Doctor, but Miss Tyler is on the wire—she says that she and Mr. *De Witt* have been delayed—and she wishes to know whether they'll meet you at the club or call for you here?

(*On the word "delayed," GERALD raises his eyes and looks front with an expression of great surprise. After VIRGINIA finishes speaking, a pause; GERALD's manner showing as far as possible, that BUDD's pulse has become very rapid. He steals a surprised glance at BUDD.*)

GERALD. (*After pause*) Who did you say?

VIRGINIA. Miss Tyler—(*GERALD looks at watch*)—What shall I tell her, please?

GERALD. (*Preoccupied*) Say I'll be ready when they call. (*VIRGINIA exits R. closing door. GERALD still holding BUDD's pulse, eyes him curiously*) I've got a golf match on, this afternoon—

BUDD. Yes, I know—

GERALD. (*Showing surprise—then, with meaning, to watch the effect*) Oh—then you are a friend of Preston *De Witt's*? (*GERALD looks at watch, then raises his eyes and stares front—suggesting that BUDD's pulse is thumping*)

BUDD. (*Very quietly after long pause*) I know him.

GERALD. (*Convinced, lets go of BUDD's wrist*)

and pockets watch) Know what sort of a game he plays?

BUDD. Very good——

GERALD. (*Watching BUDD*) I'm afraid my sister and I will be snowed under. (*BUDD hesitates, then, without a word, rises, picks up his hat and crosses to door R.*) You're not going?

BUDD. (*Near door R.*) You've finished with me, haven't you—and found there was nothing the matter——

GERALD. (*Rising*) Nothing the matter! You've lost ten pounds in one month—you have insomnia—your appetite's gone—you're so nervous you can't keep still a moment—and you say there's nothing the matter!

BUDD. (*Looks at GERALD a moment, then drops his eyes and fingers hat nervously. Speaks with change of tone*) Well—at least there's no help for it—nothing a doctor can do, I mean.

GERALD. You think so, eh? (*Crosses to L. of desk*)

BUDD. Why, Doctor, I'm positive no treatment could do me the slightest good.

GERALD. Like to make a little bet on that?

BUDD. Then you think there is?

GERALD. I'm willing to risk money on it.

BUDD. You'd lose, Doctor. You can't do anything for me.

GERALD. Very well. If you feel that way, why there's the end of it.

(*BUDD starts R.—hesitates near door R. GERALD waits. Pause.*)

BUDD. (*Turning*) The trouble is I promised my mother——

GERALD. Oh, yes, you promised your mother—you'd put yourself in my hands—if I thought I could help you——

BUDD. Yes.

GERALD. Well, how are we going to get around that?

BUDD. I hoped you'd see there was nothing you could do.

GERALD. And unfortunately—for you—I think I can do a great deal.

BUDD. Then, I suppose, I'm in for it. (BUDD puts down hat on book-case)

GERALD. Good!

BUDD. What kind of treatment do you think I need?

GERALD. (*Crosses to him*) Well—that depends. First, I shall have to ask you a few questions. You may find them—a trifle embarrassing—(*Sits L. of*

BUDD. BUDD gives him a look and sits) But, they're necessary. Will you answer them?

BUDD. Certainly.

GERALD. (*Pause*) How long have you been in love with Grace Tyler? (BUDD looks at him stupefied, rises) You said you'd answer—you know—(BUDD sits again—then speaks with effort)

BUDD. (*Looking front*) Ever since I met her

GERALD. When was that?

BUDD. Last year—the 24th of August.

GERALD. Love at first sight, eh?—Does she—love you?

BUDD. Is that question necessary?

GERALD. I shouldn't dream of asking it, otherwise.

BUDD. I—I think she did.

GERALD. But her love's grown cold. (BUDD gives him a look) Does your mother know about this?

BUDD. Certainly not. I've never mentioned it—to anyone.

GERALD. Good for you. Now, Preston De Witt (BUDD shudders)—Is he attentive to Miss Tyler?

BUDD. I'd rather not speak about that! I—

(Rises—very agitated yet suppressed—crosses quickly up to window—an instant's pause, starts down for hat: as he reaches out for it, GERALD speaks)

GERALD. (Looking at him, with sympathetic smile—chuckling) It's hell, isn't it? (BUDD stops and gives him a look. GERALD rises and speaks as he goes to him) Oh, I know how you feel, old man, and exactly what you're going through—but—you mustn't let it get the best of you.

BUDD. (Breaking out violently) Doctor, it has got the best of me!

GERALD. (Putting hand on his shoulder) Nonsense!—That's not the way to go on!

BUDD. (Drawing away from him slightly) Do you think I don't know that? I've said it to myself a thousand times! She knows how I feel toward her and if she doesn't care for me any more, I ought to be man enough to let her alone—But I can't—! (He crosses to up L. C.)

GERALD. (Sits R. of desk) When did you find out she's stopped caring for you.

BUDD. I don't know—but I've felt it—ever since—he began coming around. I didn't think much of it at first—and then—then they were together more and more and after a while, she seemed to prefer him to me. I made up my mind—over and over again—that the only decent thing for me to do was to get out of her way! But I couldn't help hanging around, just the same. Why, I keep telling myself I won't go near her, while I'm on my way to her house. And all the time I know perfectly well what an idiot I'm making of myself. And—when I am with her—my attempts to conceal this—this damned jealousy—to appear light-hearted and be jolly—(With gesture of derision, then to GERALD with quiet intensity) And now—little by little—in spite of myself, I've begun to hate him! No matter how I fight against it, I can't keep him out of

my mind! At times, I imagine I see him somewhere alone—standing and waiting—and I try to hold back and keep from springing on him—and then—she's there—coming down a path—and before I know it—I have him by the throat, strangling the life out of him—strangling—strangling! (*All at once he becomes conscious of GERALD, gathers himself with an attempt at a sickly smile*) That's the kind of a fool I am! (*He sinks into chair L. of desk and buries his face in his hands*)

(*A pause. GERALD looks at him sympathetically then goes to him and puts hand on his shoulder.*)

GERALD. It's tough—awfully tough—however, if you will fall in love, you've got to be prepared for such things. But there's no need to call yourself names. Under the circumstances, you've behaved remarkably well—

BUDD. (*With a gesture of disgust*) I know how I've behaved!—Snivelling like a school-boy! Why, if I were any good, do you think I'd have told you all this?

GERALD. You didn't tell me—you only answered my questions. I'd already found out what the trouble was. (*Leans against operating chair*)

BUDD. How could you find out? (*Rises and goes to him*) Who told you? Preston De Witt?

GERALD. No—you did.

BUDD. (*Incredulous*) I did!?

GERALD. Yep. By your manner. (*BUDD gives him a startled look*) Why, anybody with half an eye could see what's the trouble with you.

BUDD. (*Flabbergasted*) Good Lord! Do you mean to say I've been going around, making an exhibition of myself! Letting everyone know!—What I need is a nurse! (*Sits. A pause. GERALD, with a sudden thought, looks front—then looks toward door down R.*)

GERALD. It's quite likely we shall require the services of a nurse.

BUDD. Why don't you give me a rattle and a baby carriage and a bottle?

GERALD. (*After a little laugh*) No—I'm serious——

BUDD. Now, that you know what my trouble is—you don't mean to say you still think you can cure me?

GERALD. I've already told you that.

BUDD. I don't believe it—but I wish something could cure me!

GERALD. Are you willing to place yourself in my hands for one month?

BUDD. Yes.

GERALD. And for one month, you'll do exactly as I say, whether you agree with me, or not?

BUDD. I'll do anything!

GERALD. All right. (*Goes to medicine cabinet, gets graduated glass and bottle of colorless liquid—places them on stand down L. which holds electric heater. Note: Phial of colorless liquid—medicine dropper and instrument tongs are already on this stand*) Then we'll begin now. I'll give you your first treatment. (*Goes to instrument cabinet—gets hypodermic syringe—pretends to unscrew needle and to drop it in electric heater—turns on electricity*)

BUDD. Treatment! Do you think medicine is going to cure love and jealousy?

GERALD. I think it is going to cure you. (*He pours a little liquid from bottle into graduated glass*) Love and jealousy isn't the root of your trouble.

BUDD. Then what is?

GERALD. Bugs.

BUDD. Bugs.

GERALD. Bugs! Germs! Microbes! Your nervous system is being shattered by them. You

imagine jealousy is causing your nervousness. No—nervousness is causing your jealousy. (*Puts bottle and glass back on stand. BUDD sits staring at him blankly a moment, then bursts out laughing. This laughter continues until it becomes uncontrollable and ends in a hysterical sob. GERALD goes to him with great sympathy*) You see what your nerves have brought you to.

BUDD. It was the idea of my being full of germs!

GERALD. (*Returning to stand down L.*) Everybody's full of 'em—most of them are harmless—you've got some bad ones—(*Picks up medicine dropper and fills it from phial*) But we're going to knock 'em out! Why, we'll have you in such shape that you won't know what trouble looks like!

BUDD. (*After a pause—shaking his head*) I wish I could believe it. (*GERALD drops three drops from medicine dropper into graduated glass*)

GERALD. You'll see—it's going to be a little hard for you—especially as first!

BUDD. The harder the better!

(*With instrument tongs, GERALD pretends to take needle from heater and to screw needle on to syringe. As he opens heater, steam issues forth.*)

GERALD. Do you drink?

BUDD. Not much.

GERALD. Smoke?

BUDD. Yes—quite a little.

GERALD. You must cut them out. (*With hypodermic syringe he draws up liquid from graduated glass*) You mustn't even look at a high-ball. Why, one teaspoonful might spoil the whole value of these microbes—(*Holding up syringe*)

BUDD. You're going to put microbes in me?

GERALD. Billions of 'em—to fight your nerve bugs!

BUDD. (*After a pause—meekly*) All right.

GERALD. The next thing is exercise. (*Goes to BUDD, syringe in hand*) You must be up every morning at six rain or shine, and take half an hour's run, at a brist dog trot. Then a cold shower and breakfast. In the forenoon, two hours in a gymnasium and no loafing about it. After lunch, a nice long stroll—six or seven miles—in the evening, if you feel up to it, a short go at the punching bag. In other words, all the exercise you can stand—and for one month, no social engagements whatever! Do you know what I mean by that?

BUDD. (*Looking at DOCTOR*) Keep away from—her?

GERALD. (*Looking front*) Yes—and all your friends. Last, and most important of all, this serum—(*Holding up syringe*) once every day. Now, if you'll—(*Going to him, suddenly stops and thinks*) Oh, just a moment—(*Goes to desk and presses button. Door down R. opens almost immediately and enter VIRGINIA*) Come in, please, Miss Xelva—(*VIRGINIA comes to R. of desk*) Will you take off your coat, Mr. Woodbridge? (*GERALD goes up to medicine cabinet, gets bottle of alcohol and absorbent cotton—comes down L. of operating chair—puts hypodermic syringe on stand down L.*)

BUDD. (*To VIRGINIA as he takes off coat and places it on desk*) Pardon me—

GERALD. Sit down, please—(*Indicating operating chair*) And roll up your sleeve—(*BUDD, after glance at VIRGINIA, rolls up right sleeve—sits in operating chair*) Miss Xelva—(*VIRGINIA crosses to R. of operating chair*) I want you to do this so you'll know how to give Mr. Woodbridge his treatment when I'm not here. First, saturate this—(*Handing her cotton*) with the alcohol—(*Handing her bottle. VIRGINIA does so. He gets hypodermic*

from stand. VIRGINIA rubs arm with cotton) Now, take hold of the arm and press it tight—(VIRGINIA, after a glance at him, does so, shyly and with right hand. Taking cotton from her) No—the other hand—(She changes hands) That's the way! Next, take the syringe and hold it—so—(Illustrates. VIRGINIA, a little frightened, takes hypo and holds it as he did) That's right! Now, jab it in!—

VIRGINIA. Oh—

GERALD. Let me tell you—(He illustrates without the syringe) Give a quick push with the needle—like this—then press the thumb-piece down—slowly. Then, twitch it out. Now let's see you do it. Hold the arm tight and then it won't hurt—(VIRGINIA gives BUDD a frightened look, then glances at GERALD, nerves herself, takes hold of BUDD'S arm—squeezes it violently—BUDD winces) Not too hard—just firmly. Now—

VIRGINIA. (Rather breathlessly. To BUDD) I hope it won't hurt you.

BUDD. I don't mind.

GERALD. You won't hurt him if you jab it quickly.

(VIRGINIA, after some hesitation, sets her jaw and pushes needle into BUDD'S arm.)

VIRGINIA. (Excitedly. To BUDD) Was it very bad?

BUDD. I didn't feel it.

VIRGINIA. Very nice of you to say so.

GERALD. Come along—press down—slowly! Give it time. That's the way!—splendid. Now, out quick! (VIRGINIA pulls out needle) Very neatly done—(He wipes BUDD'S arm with cotton) Now, rub it with the palm of your hand—(He takes syringe from her. She proceeds to rub BUDD'S arm gently. GERALD drops cotton into refuse receptacle

—then puts hypo on stand—then picks up graduated glass and the two bottles. VIRGINIA gets BUDD's coat) Feeling a little dizzy?

BUDD. I don't think so. (GERALD takes glass and bottles back to medicine cabinet. BUDD goes to VIRGINIA a little up L. C.) You will—but it will pass off presently.

BUDD. (As VIRGINIA helps him on with coat, L. of desk) Thank you, very much.

GERALD. (Turning and seeing them—suddenly) Here—I wouldn't try to stand up just yet! (VIRGINIA quickly catches BUDD by the arm—GERALD crossing to L. of BUDD)

BUDD. (Looking with surprise from VIRGINIA to GERALD) I feel all right. (To VIRGINIA) You're very kind—but you needn't trouble. (VIRGINIA lets go of his arm. GERALD takes hold of him quickly)

GERALD. You should always lie down for five minutes after each treatment—there's a couch in there—Miss Xelva—(Indicating up R. VIRGINIA opens door up R.) Try to lie quietly, until I let you know—

BUDD. Funny—but I don't—feel—anything—at all—

GERALD. Splendid! (Exit BUDD up R. GERALD comes down L. of desk. VIRGINIA closes door up R. and comes down facing GERALD R. of desk) Well, you've landed my first patient for me!

VIRGINIA. I had nothing to do with it! You were recommended because you're a modern doctor!

GERALD. Anyhow, it's our first case, and together we've got to make a success of it!

VIRGINIA. (After a little laugh) Have you found out what the trouble is?

GERALD. (With mock seriousness) I have.

VIRGINIA. Oh—good!

GERALD. Eh?

VIRGINIA. Mrs. Woodbridge said the family physician hadn't the faintest idea what it was.

GERALD. (*With playful contempt*) Oh—well—of course—the—family physician—what can you expect?

VIRGINIA. (*Apprehensively*) Do you think you can cure him?

GERALD. I'm going to try—but it's an awful disease.

VIRGINIA. Could you tell me what it is?

GERALD. Jealousy.

VIRGINIA. Jealousy!

GERALD. Plain, old-fashioned jealousy. (*She looks at him with an incredulous smile*) Oh, I mean it. And here's a great opportunity for you. (*Both come down front of desk*)

VIRGINIA. Me?

GERALD. Yes. (*Impressively*) He needs a nurse! (*VIRGINIA gives him a look*) You want to be a nurse—don't you? You said you were dying to be—

VIRGINIA. I am—but not that kind of a nurse! (*Laughing*) Trying to cure a man of jealousy.

GERALD. (*After a pause*) Have you ever been in love? (*She looks at him, smiles and shakes her head*) Then you don't know anything about jealousy?

VIRGINIA. I didn't know it could be treated by a doctor.

GERALD. Not by the family physician! But a modern doctor can treat anything—

VIRGINIA. But if it's only jealousy—why did you put that medicine in his arm?

GERALD. That was pure distilled water—with three drops of pure distilled water added to it. Now don't think I'm not taking this case seriously—I am. This boy's in a dangerous condition. He's right on the brink of a nervous collapse—and all because he's got girl on the brain.

So you and I have got to get her off. And the first thing to do is to give him something else to worry about. Now I'm trying to transfer his attention from love to microbes. And there's where nurse comes in. He must be made to believe she's keeping a strict record of his condition. And, all the time, she must be doing her best to amuse him and keep his mind constantly occupied. And, believe me, that's just as worthy and difficult a task as nursing a patient through typhoid. (*Gets chart out of drawer*)

VIRGINIA. Then I'd love to try it!

GERALD. That's fine. (*Knock on door down R.*)
Come in—

(EMILE enters down R.)

EMILE. Excuse, please, but the Doctor's sister say that Miss Tyler and Mr. De Witt are waiting now, some time, outside, in the automobile.

GERALD. Oh! Tell 'em I won't be able to go—(*EMILE starts to exit down R. GERALD crosses to EMILE*) Hold on! (*EMILE stops. To VIRGINIA*) Miss Tyler's the girl he's in love with—and De Witt's the one he's jealous of—

VIRGINIA. Oh—

GERALD. (*Thinking—half to himself*) I'll be through here in a moment—and it might be useful to get acquainted with Miss Tyler and De Witt. (*To EMILE*) Oh, Emile, say I'll be there in two minutes—

EMILE. Bien, monsieur—(*VIRGINIA goes up to window and looks off*)

GERALD. And—Emile—throw my golf clothes in a bag and put them in the car and get my cap—(*EMILE exits, closing door*) Now, Miss Xelva, I'll show you how to keep a chart. (*VIRGINIA sits R. of desk*) The date goes here—the hour, here—do you know how to take a pulse?

VIRGINIA. (*Nodding*) Yes.

GERALD. Good!—Temperature?

VIRGINIA. I'm not sure—

GERALD. (*Taking thermometer from glass*) I'll show you—you put this under the tongue and leave it there a minute, then, look at it—shake it—and write down 99—(*Indicating place on chart*)

VIRGINIA. Yes, sir—

(GERALD *puts thermometer back in glass then goes up and opens door up R.*)

GERALD. (*Speaking off R.*) Will you come in now, Mr. Woodbridge! (*After a pause, BUDD appears in the doorway*) Has the dizzy feeling passed off yet?

BUDD. I don't think I've had any—

GERALD. Good! (*Crosses down R. of BUDD. To VIRGINIA*) Make a record of that on the chart. (*VIRGINIA writes on chart*) I think you're going to be able to stand the treatment very nicely. Oh, let me present you to Miss Xelva—(*They bow—BUDD solemnly—VIRGINIA, with a curious smile*) Miss Xelva is going to look after your case.

BUDD. (*His face falling*) How do you mean —?

GERALD. You've got to have a nurse, you know.

BUDD. (*Very forlornly*) Have I—?

GERALD. Oh, that's absolutely essential. But no one need to know anything about it. In fact it's better that no one should suspect that you are ill. Except, of course, your mother.

BUDD. I should prefer that.

GERALD. (*Going between them*) Now, let's see; Miss Xelva, you will go to Mr. Woodbridge's at eight to-night. If you find him at all restless—well, I'll give you full instructions later.

VIRGINIA. Oh, then I won't—

GERALD. Oh—that won't interfere with your work here—you'll be here every day, during office hours—and the balance of the time with your patient—(To BUDD) Remember, to-morrow morning, you'll be called at six—after your gymnasium, you'd better drop in here—we'll make it eleven-thirty—?

BUDD. Any time—

GERALD. (To VIRGINIA) Try to squeeze Mr. Woodbridge in at 11:30. (VIRGINIA writes it down) That's all for to-day, Mr. Woodbridge—(Goes above desk—hearing voices, watches BUDD. BUDD starts to go R., reaches out for hat but does not take it)

PRESTON. (Off up R.) I say, Doctor, has your watch stopped?

GRACE. (Off up R.) Don't Preston—(Laughs) He'll come as soon as he can. (BUDD quickly gets hat, starts to open door R.)

GERALD. Oh, Mr. Woodbridge—one minute—(To VIRGINIA) Before he goes, Miss Xelva, take his pulse and temperature—to see if there's any reaction—

MARION. (Off down R.) Jerry! Jerry!

GERALD. Yes?

MARION. Do come on—

GERALD. I'm coming—(Picks up golf-bag. To BUDD) Excuse me for running away—but I've got an important operation—these are my instruments! (Exits down R.)

MARION. (Off R.—indistinctly) It's a shame to keep us all waiting like this. It'll be dark before we get half way around! etc.

PRESTON. (Off up R. calling) Grace—Grace

GRACE. (Off up R. calling) Preston may I turn the car around?

PRESTON. You can try! (*Pause*) Look out! Grace! Grace!

GRACE. Oh! (*Laughingly*) I nearly hit the lamp-post! (*Laughs harder*)

PRESTON. The best way for you to turn is to go around the block!

GRACE. Then get in with me and I'll give you a ride!

PRESTON. Right—o! We'll face death together!

(*GRACE laughs. As soon as GERALD exits and GRACE'S voice is heard, BUDD goes up to window and looks out off R. VIRGINIA looks at him, sympathetically; gets thermometer—rises, crosses R. C.*)

VIRGINIA. Mr. Woodbridge—Mr. Woodbridge

BUDD. Excuse me—

VIRGINIA. May I take your temperature now?

(*BUDD comes down and sits R. C., looks at her and opens his mouth. She puts in thermometer—holds out her hand for his pulse. He extends hand—she takes pulse.*)

GERALD. (*Off*) Where are they?

MARION. (*Off—*) Here they are.

GRACE. (*Off*) Hello—did you think we'd gone?

MARION. (*Off*) Where were you?

GRACE. I've been turning the car around—I'm going to be the chauffeur, Dr. Sumner—

GERALD. Then, I'll walk.

DE WITT. All aboard—

(*Auto door slams.*)

GRACE. You ride in the front seat with me, Preston—

(VIRGINIA stands holding BUDD'S wrist, looking down at him sympathetically—BUDD slowly looks at her—she smiles encouragingly)

(MEDIUM CURTAIN.)

ACT II.

SCENE:—A living room at MRS. WOODBRIDGE'S. Fireplace down R. A French window (practical) above it—doors up C., up L. C. and larger double door down L. Table C. Settee up L. C. with work table in front of settee, work basket, piece of embroidery, silk yarn, thread, etc. Above settee a standing lamp, back of settee and against scene L. a small table with telephone—up R. C. against scene another small table with lamp and small vase of flowers. Up in BUDD'S den off up C. desk with writing pad, blotters and three magazines, one *The Architectural Record*. A large easy chair up R. C. A collapsible card table down R. C. with chair R. of it and chair L. of it. On card table a lighted lamp—score card and pencil. Cards arranged for *Ruhm*—seven cards for VIRGINIA Jack, Queen, King of Clubs—three 10's, and odd card—rest of pack half with faces exposed. A footstool under this card table. The fender at the fireplace is upholstered on top—so that it can be used to sit on. Chandelier and wall brackets—on table C. is a small medicine bag, absorbent cotton, alcohol bottle, syringe and thermometer—two account books and fountain pen; medical chart in little book. All doors

closed at rise except double doors on veranda, which are slightly open.

TIME:—About 9 P. M. One month later than Act. I.

DISCOVERED.—VIRGINIA, in white nurse's costume, with cap, is seated L. of card table—BUDD, in every day sack suit, is seated R. of card table. They are playing cards. MRS. WOODBRIDGE is seated on settee L. C. embroidering. One pack of cards lies face down on card table ready for next deal—the other pack is in play. VIRGINIA has a score pad and pencil beside her. She and BUDD have each seven cards in their hands. The pack they are playing with lies face down in C. of table, with one card, face up beside it. VIRGINIA takes card from deck and then plays a card from her hand, face up. BUDD draws card from pack—plays three cards—discards one.

VIRGINIA. What! Already!

BUDD. Yes, you'd better hurry up. (VIRGINIA draws card from deck and throws it down disgustedly. BUDD draws card from deck and plays one card on the three he had previously played) That closes those—(Gathers up the four cards played and places them C. then discards one)

VIRGINIA. (After hesitating) I think I'll take that—(She takes it and discards the 10 of Spades. BUDD, without drawing, lays his three cards down)

BUDD. (Laughs) Out!

VIRGINIA. Oh, dear! (Counting cards in her hand) Forty-eight—that's game! (Puts cards in center of table. She writes on pad) You've won seven times in succession!

BUDD. (Looking at her and shaking head as he shuffles cards) Lucky at cards—

VIRGINIA. (*With a warning gesture*) Now—
now——

BUDD. All right——

(HARTLEY enters up c. with photograph album.)

HARTLEY. (*Bringing album to VIRGINIA*) Is that the one, Miss?

VIRGINIA. (*Taking it—turning over pages*) Yes—this is it—Thank you, Hartley—(HARTLEY exits up c.)—There—that's the Inn——

(BUDD takes book and looks at pictures.)

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Doesn't it look attractive, Budd?

BUDD. Yes—fine!

VIRGINIA. Oh—you'd love it—I'm sure! It's so quaint and primitive and far-away!

BUDD. When were you there?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Virgie was there winter before last—with her aunt.

VIRGINIA. (*Turning over pages*) That's the Funicular—and here's the little post-office—and here's the market—and the cunning little Alpine shop!

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. If we decide to take a trip, I think it would be just the place for us—don't you, Budd?

BUDD. Yes. And let's decide right away. (MRS. WOODBRIDGE laughs: BUDD turns pages of album)

VIRGINIA. Is it my deal?

BUDD. (*Assenting*) M'm—m'm—(She begins dealing. He looks at another picture)—What place is this?

VIRGINIA. That's my aunt's villa at Lucerne. (*Looking across at it*)

BUDD. By Jove! Quite a place!

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Yes. Isn't it charming!—
And that's Virgie on horse back!

BUDD. (*Surprised—to VIRGINIA*) Is that you?
(*VIRGINIA nods*)

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Doesn't she look smart—in
her riding habit!

BUDD. I should say so! (*Clock on mantel
strikes nine*)

VIRGINIA. Oh—nine o'clock! (*Gathering up
cards*) Now for your punching bag! (*Places
chair L. of table c., cards and pad in drawer*)

BUDD. (*Rises*) Time to go to work again—
(*VIRGINIA goes up c. presses button and turns up
light of chandelier. BUDD places lamp from card
table on mantelpiece, turns it out after chandelier is
lit, then folds up card table*)

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Budd, I should think you
would be ready to drop!

BUDD. Why, I am not a bit tired. (*He folds up
card table*)

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. I hope you are not over-
doing it.

VIRGINIA. The doctor always wants him to take
a little exercise just before his treatment. (*Moves
other chair to R. of table c.*)

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Yes, I understand, that's
the regular routine—but it does seem as if you
might make an exception to-day.

VIRGINIA. Oh, no! With the treatment, birth-
days are no different from other days.

BUDD. (*Card table is folded—he starts up c.*)
Oh, it's just the thing for me! Makes me feel fine
and sleep!

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. You really do feel like your
old self?

BUDD. Of course.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. And you've had a happy
birthday?

(VIRGINIA sits R. of table and begins working on account books.)

BUDD. Why, yes—and a great birthday dinner!—It's going to be an awful blow to you, mother, when you realize that I am well and you can't worry about me any more. (*Exits up c. with card table*)

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. If anyone had told me, a month ago, that my boy could stand such terrific exercise from morning till night——!

VIRGINIA. But see the results!

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. I know it. And those *nerve hypodermics!*—Well! When I looked at Budd tonight, across the table, and saw him peaceful and contented, enjoying his birthday dinner, with his face lighted up by those little birthday candles, I could hardly believe it was the same boy that I took to Dr. Sumner's office a month ago!—Oh, I realize what the Doctor's done, and I can never be grateful enough to him.

VIRGINIA. And the Doctor feels he can't be grateful enough to you—Just think of all the patients you've sent him!

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Oh, he's bound to get patients! Why everyone who goes to him sends somebody else.

VIRGINIA. Yes, and he is beginning to like his work so much! (*Takes open book to MRS. WOODBRIDGE*) Look!—He made all these calls to-day—(*Telephone rings. MRS. WOODBRIDGE goes to it*) And this afternoon we had five people in the waiting room at one time.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. (*At phone L.*) Hello—yes—hold the wire—it's for you Virgie—from Dr. Sumner's office—(*She holds receiver for VIRGINIA to take*)

VIRGINIA. (*Crossing above sofa to phone. Taking receiver*) Thank you—(*In phone*) Is

that you, Emile? (MRS. WOODBRIDGE *crosses up to work table. Puts her sewing away*) Oh, yes—it's that package on my desk—And, oh, Emile, let me speak to her, please—Good-evening, Mrs. Webster—have you got the medicine?—yes—just as he told you—(MRS. WOODBRIDGE *goes up and closes window*)—and Mrs. Webster, the Doctor paid for it—I say he paid for it—ninety cents—(HARTLEY *enters up L. C. with telegram on tray—brings it to MRS. WOODBRIDGE up R. C.* MRS. WOODBRIDGE *motions HARTLEY to remove work table which he places R. above fireplace—also moves arm-chair down R. of stool. During this MRS. WOODBRIDGE has opened telegram, shows pleased surprise, glances over at VIRGINIA curiously—hesitates*)—Yes—Oh, Emile will get it changed for you—How is he to-night? That's good—Oh, there is no need of that till morning. I'll stop on my way to the office and show you—not at all—good-bye—(VIRGINIA *comes L. of table c.*)

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. (*Up R. c.*) Hartley—that gentleman who called to-day wasn't Mr. Grant, was it?

HARTLEY. (*Trying to remember*) Mr. Grant?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Yes, Mr. Theodore Grant, the lawyer?

HARTLEY. Oh, no, ma'am. (HARTLEY *exits up L. c.*)

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Well, he'll probably be here later in the evening—Virgie!

VIRGINIA. (*Looking up at her*) Yes—?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Perhaps—I'd better not tell you now—but when Mr. Grant comes I may have some good news for you!

VIRGINIA. Oh, how nice!

(HARTLEY *opens doors—does not enter. MARION enters up L. c. HARTLEY closes doors.*)

MARION. Good-evening!

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Marion! What a stranger you are—(*Meets MARION and kisses her down R. C.*)

MARION. Why, Miss Xelva—(*VIRGINIA nods in acknowledgment. MARION turns to MRS. WOODBRIDGE*) Is anybody ill?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Oh, no!

MARION. I thought—seeing Miss Xelva here

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Oh, I see—Miss Xelva and I are great friends! (*Crossing around arm-chair—sits—MARION near and to L. of her. VIRGINIA sits L. of table C.*)

MARION. Really? Where's Budd?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. He's in his den—with his punching bag!

MARION. Punching bag! (*She looks up C. Bag is punched three times very loud, then crescendo and stops. She turns back to MRS. WOODBRIDGE, after a slight pause*) Why—er—oh? Was the punching bag a birthday present?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. What? Oh, no, he's very fond of exercise nowadays!

VIRGINIA. He'll be through in a few minutes.

MARION. (*Places chair and sits L. of MRS. WOODBRIDGE, slightly above her*) Well, I must tell you before he comes back! A few of Budd's friends are going to give him a birthday surprise to-night!—We are all coming together at just ten o'clock—

(*VIRGINIA is busy with account book again.*)

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. (*Rising*) Oh, no!—I am afraid that wouldn't do—it wouldn't do at all. (*Looks front—hesitates—then turns to MARION—impressively*) Marion—you must make some excuse and stop them from coming!

MARION. Why?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. We've kept it a secret from everybody, but Budd hasn't been at all well.

MARION. Oh—I didn't know that—I am so sorry—

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Oh, he's greatly improved! But your brother's given positive orders that Budd must be kept from all excitement—

MARION. (*Amazed*) My brother!

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Yes—Budd's been under his care—and he's done wonders for him!

MARION. Well—I can't understand that.

MRS. WOODGRIDGE. Why, Marion—!

MARION. I don't mean it that way—But the surprise party was Jerry's idea!

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. What!

MARION. Yes—he got up the whole thing and told me just who to invite! (MRS. WOODBRIDGE *looks at* MARION)

VIRGINIA. Oh, yes, Dr. Sumner's—(MRS. WOODBRIDGE *crosses to* VIRGINIA *r. of table c.* MARION *crosses front of arm-chair*) had this in mind for a week—he thinks it is just what Mr. Budd needs now.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Well, of course, I have every confidence in Dr. Sumner—

MARION. He was coming over to tell you about it himself—but he had an emergency call—(VIRGINIA *shows interest*) just as we were sitting down to dinner, so he asked me to tell you and to say that he'd be here before the crowd came and to keep Budd occupied—so he wouldn't suspect. (MARION *sits in arm-chair*)

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. It seems dreadfully sudden! I do hope it won't be too much of a shock for Budd.

VIRGINIA. Oh, the Doctor knows best about that!

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Of course, it *will* be lovely, if Budd can have a little fun again—poor boy—(Looking at MARION)—he hasn't seen any of his

friends for nearly a month!—and he's never complained about it!

VIRGINIA. He never complains about anything.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Perhaps you've had something to do with that——

MARION. Why—have you been taking care of Budd, Miss Xelva?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. *Has she? (Back of VIRGINIA'S chair a little to R.)* Why, your brother says that Virgie's done more for Budd than he has!

VIRGINIA. Did he? Really?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. He told me that Budd simply couldn't get on without you—and that *he* couldn't either.

VIRGINIA. That was one of his jokes.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. *(Crosses to arm-chair. MARION rises)* Marion, you know this a secret and you mustn't mention it.

MARION. You mean about Budd?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Yes—and why Miss Xelva's here—or any of it!—Your brother's very particular that no one should know!

MARION. *(Crosses to up L. c.—front of MRS. WOODBRIDGE)* Of course, I won't! Not a word! Well, I must get back—*(Turning)* Oh—we've some music coming—couldn't Hartley be on the lookout for the men? *(Crossing back R. c.)*

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Certainly!

MARION. I'll bring everybody out there—*(Indicating window up R.)* on the veranda—and we can sneak in through the windows——

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. All right! I'll leave it unbolted. *(Turns up to window and unbolts it)*

VIRGINIA. Miss Sumner—Did you say the Doctor hadn't had any dinner?

MARION. Yes—he was called away, just as—*(BUDD enters up c. He wears rubber-soled tennis shoes—flannel trousers—athletic shirt with*

short sleeves—a jersey coat, unbuttoned, and boxing gloves.)

BUDD. Why—good-evening—Marion—(*Goes to shake hands, then removes right hand glove—shakes hand—MARION draws him a step down R. C. MRS. WOODBRIDGE crosses to door up L.*)

MARION. I haven't seen you for ever so long!—How wonderfully you're looking!

BUDD. Yes—I'm fine—thanks—how are you?

MARION. Why, I—oh—I just came over on an errand and I must hurry back. (*Starts up L. C. VIRGINIA rises*)

BUDD. Are you going home alone?

MARION. (*At door L. C.*) Oh, no—I came in the motor. (*To MRS. WOODBRIDGE*) Oh, please don't bother!

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. (*Standing in open door*) I want to ask you something—

MARION. Oh! Good-night. (*Exits up L. C. after MRS. WOODBRIDGE who closes door*)

VIRGINIA. Good-night. }Spoken together
BUDD. Good-night. }

(BUDD. (*As door up L. C. closes*) Marion looks natural—what brought her over? (*Crosses to R. of table—takes off gloves*))

VIRGINIA. (*Sitting L. of table—taking out chart*) She came—to see your mother—what was the weight to-night?

BUDD. (*Crossing back of table to L. of table—throws gloves on settee*) Seven and three-quarters. (*Taking off jersey-coat*)

VIRGINIA. Another half pound. I'm proud of you—Now your exercise. Before breakfast?

BUDD. Three miles.

VIRGINIA. Gymnasium?

BUDD. Same as usual—two hours and a half.

VIRGINIA. Afternoon?

BUDD. I walked over the mountain to-day.

VIRGINIA. (*Rises—gets thermometer from bag on table c. BUDD puts coat on settee*) You really enjoyed your birthday dinner to-night—didn't you?

BUDD. Wasn't it funny that one candle didn't blow out—(*VIRGINIA comes to him*)—that's supposed to mean I'm going to get married.

VIRGINIA. (*Putting thermometer in his mouth quickly*) That's a dangerous subject—we're not to talk about Miss Tyler, you know! (*Goes back to table—saturates cotton with alcohol—brings cotton and filled hypodermic to BUDD—gives him treatment as indicated in ACT I in a very matter of fact way. Takes thermometer out of his mouth—looks at it—shakes it*)

BUDD. Ninty-nine again?

VIRGINIA. M'm—(*Writes on chart. MRS. WOODBRIDGE enters up L. C. VIRGINIA puts syringe in case*)

BUDD. Come in, mother—we've finished. (*Takes up coat and gloves from settee and starts up c.*)

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. But you are not going out, Budd? (*Sits on settee L. C.*)

BUDD. (*At door up c.*) I've got to lie down for five minutes—you know—(*BUDD exits up c. HARTLEY enters up L. C. with card on tray which he brings to MRS. WOODBRIDGE. VIRGINIA takes up medicine case*)

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. (*Looking at card*) Is it Mr. Grant?

HARTLEY. No, madam, Mr. De Witt—

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Mr. De Witt?

VIRGINIA. (*With sudden anxiety*) Preston De Witt?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Why—do you know him?

VIRGINIA. No. (*Pauses—glances at door where BUDD has gone off*)—But—I know who he is.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. He probably wants to see Budd.

VIRGINIA. Oh, that wouldn't do!—I mean Mr. Budd ought not to be disturbed while he is lying down!

HARTLEY. Mr. De Witt asked to see you, ma'am.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. To see me? Why, what in the world—? Show him into the library.

VIRGINIA. (*Stopping HARTLEY*) No! No! (*To MRS. WOODBRIDGE*) Mr. Budd's lying down in there.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Very well—I'll see him in here.

(*HARTLEY exits up L. c. leaving doors open.*)

VIRGINIA. (*Going to door up c.*) Mrs. Woodbridge—it's just as well—if Mr. Budd doesn't know that Mr.—er—anyone is here.

(*HARTLEY appears in doorway to usher DE WITT in.*)

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. What?

(*PRESTON enters up L. c. VIRGINIA exits up c.*)

PRESTON. Good-evening.

(*HARTLEY moves standing lamp at end of settee to L.*)

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. (*Shaking hands*) How do you do, De Witt—Won't you sit down? (*He sits in chair L. of table—she sits again on settee. An embarrassed pause. With sudden thought*) Oh! You've come for Budd's surprise party!

PRESTON. Have I?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Well—don't you know?

PRESTON. I don't know exactly what it is——?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Why, it's Budd's birthday and a few of his friends are coming over to surprise him—but they won't get here till ten o'clock——

PRESTON. Oh—then I'd love to join them!

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. That's awfully nice! And Budd will be so pleased!

PRESTON. (*Uncertainly—looks front*) Um—yes! The fact is I haven't seen anything of your son for quite a while. I've wondered what had become of him——

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Why—he—er he's been devoting nearly all of his time lately to athletics!

PRESTON. Athletics? What for?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Oh, just training, you know—(*Looking away from DE WITT so's not to see his look and rise*)

PRESTON. (*Rising—with look of anxiety—takes two or three steps down-stage*) Oh!——

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. (*After a pause*) Am I to flatter myself that this call was meant for me?

PRESTON. Well, I—I think so. (*Sitting again*) I really don't know *what* it's about, but I am here in place of Mr. Grant——

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Oh! How stupid of me! You're in Mr. Grant's office, of course!

PRESTON. Well—I am a member of the firm—in a way——

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Indeed!

PRESTON. Oh, yes—and—er—Mr. Bruce Gordon wired us this afternoon to call here—about something or other—naturally any word from Mr. Gordon is of the utmost importance to us—so I imagine Mr. Grant thought best to place the matter in my hands.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. (*Looks at PRESTON—taking up telegram*) I received this telegram from Mr. Gordon, not half an hour ago—(*Hands it to him*)

PRESTON. (*After reading it*) What does it mean?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. It means that I have found his niece.

PRESTON. His niece! I didn't know he'd lost one.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. (*Smiles*) Did you never hear of Mr. Gordon's sister?

PRESTON. Oh, yes—there was some scandal about Mr. Gordon's sister, wasn't there? She eloped with someone or other and the family disowned her—and all that sort of thing!

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Well, her daughter is here!

PRESTON. In Hartford?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. In the next room! She's been Budd's—that is—our guest—for some time—I met her through Dr. Gerald Sumner—Oh, he is such a wonderful man, Mr. De Witt—if you are ever ill you really must go to him! Well, Virgie's studying in his office—to be a trained nurse.

PRESTON. Oh——

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. And it was only the other day, by the merest accident, that I found out who she was!

PRESTON. Pardon me—just what did you find out?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. I found out she came here in search of her grandmother——

PRESTON. Old Mrs. Gordon—why, she's been dead for years.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Yes, but Virgie didn't know that. And she knew nothing else about the family! Why, when I asked her why she hadn't gone to her uncle, she said she didn't know she had one!

PRESTON. She'd never heard of Bruce Gordon!

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Never! I was on the point of telling her—when I remembered about her mother—so instead, I wrote to Mr. Gordon! That telegram is in reply to my letter.

PRESTON. And you *believe* this story?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Oh, there is no doubt about it! I noticed a family resemblance the moment I found out who she was!

PRESTON. My dear Mrs. Woodbridge—if you'd knocked about as much as I have, you'd know the world is full of people who make a business of trumping up claims against men of wealth—

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Oh, you wouldn't say that if you knew *her*.

PRESTON. (*Rising and indicating telegram—going to MRS. WOODBRIDGE*) You see—Mr. Gordon wants her to come to New York—*only* on condition that she is able to bring substantial proof of her identity.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Which she can of course.

PRESTON. (*Laughing*) I must be the judge of that. (*Backing up-stage a couple of steps*)

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Would you like to see her?

PRESTON. Naturally.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. She's in the library with Budd. I'll call her in.

PRESTON. (*Crossing down L.*) Good! And we'll find out whether her story's straight—once I ask her a question or two, believe me.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. (*Opening door up c. and calling off*) Virgie—oh, you're alone!

VIRGINIA. (*In BUDD's den*) Yes—Mr. Budd's taking his shower.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Will you come in here a minute, please? (*Crossing a little down R. c. Enter VIRGINIA up c. PRESTON is struck by her appearance—MRS. WOODBRIDGE goes to VIRGINIA*) Mr. De Witt—this is Miss Xelva.

PRESTON. (*With entire change of manner, going to her, shaking hands. MRS. WOODBRIDGE moves down R. c. a step*) Delighted—Miss Xelva—delighted! You're quite right, Mrs. Woodbridge

—there is a resemblance—undoubtedly! Miss Xelva, I hope you will consider me as a friend!

VIRGINIA. (*Surprised—then with a touch of sarcasm*) Indeed!

PRESTON. I assure you I am going to do all in my power to be of assistance.

VIRGINIA. (*Looks at him puzzled—then glances at MRS. WOODBRIDGE. To PRESTON*) I'm afraid I don't quite understand—

PRESTON. Oh—I am here as a representative of Mr. Bruce Gordon.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Your uncle.

(VIRGINIA goes to MRS. WOODBRIDGE.)

VIRGINIA. Oh? The one you told me about —?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Virgie, we've glorious news! I have been dying to tell you all the evening! Your uncle wants to see you!

VIRGINIA. (*Laughs*) Well—that's awfully nice of him—but I don't see—

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. She doesn't know who Mr. Gordon is!

PRESTON. Doesn't know—

VIRGINIA. (*To MRS. WOODBRIDGE*) I know you said he was my mother's brother—

PRESTON. Why, my dear Miss Xelva, he's one of the greatest financial powers in the country—worth millions and millions!

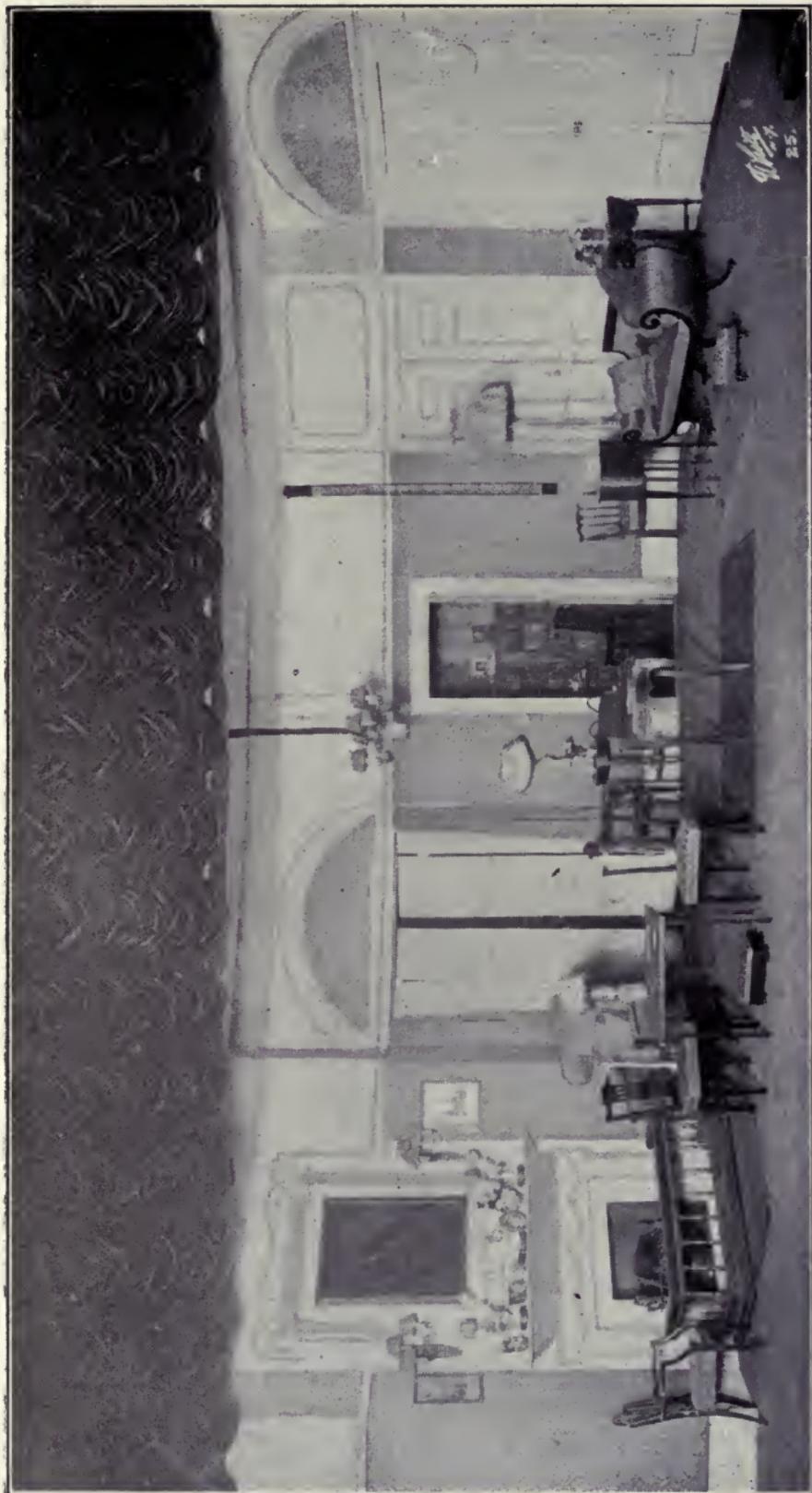
VIRGINIA. Oh—

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. And you're his nearest relative! Virgie, just think of it!

VIRGINIA. I'm trying to—

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. You'll be a great heiress! Won't she, Mr. De Witt?

PRESTON. It certainly looks that way! (*Takes three steps backwards down-stage L. C.*)



THE STAGE OF THE BELASCO THEATRE, NEW YORK, SET FOR ACT II OF "THE BOOMERANG"



VIRGINIA. I—I—should say it was glorious news——

PRESTON. Of course, Miss Xelva, it will first be necessary to establish your claim——

VIRGINIA. (*Crossing down R. of table. During scene MRS. WOODBRIDGE keeps R. of and slightly below VIRGINIA*) My claim?

PRESTON. That's what I am here for, you know.

VIRGINIA. —So you want to find out if I'm a humbug.

PRESTON. I've no fear of that, now I've seen you, but—er——

VIRGINIA. But you must have proof!

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. And then Mr. De Witt will take you right on to New York!

VIRGINIA. (*With sudden change of expression*) —New York?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Yes—to Mr. Gordon! Oh, Virgie, his house is—well—it's really more like a palace, and he lives there all alone! But now—now it will be your home, too!

VIRGINIA. Oh, no——

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Of course it will! He'll want you to live with him—I'm sure!

VIRGINIA. But—I couldn't leave here—you see, it wouldn't be fair to Dr. Sumner——

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Dr. Sumner wouldn't stand in your way, for a moment! Why, he won't think of *allowing* you to stay, when he knows!

(VIRGINIA looks at her, crosses R. MRS. WOODBRIDGE crosses to L. of table.)

PRESTON. (*Crosses R. C.*) Of course he won't. Don't concern yourself about that in the least! And now, if you'll answer me a few questions—(*She sits R. C. in arm-chair—MRS. WOODBRIDGE sits L. of table. PRESTON takes chair R. C. with a quick glance to see if MRS. WOODBRIDGE has a chair, and places*

his chair L. of VIRGINIA—*sits*) Can you tell me any of the circumstances connected with your parent's marriage?

VIRGINIA. That was before my time.

PRESTON. Quite so—you see, I must have something to establish the identity of your mother—

VIRGINIA. Oh—must you?

PRESTON. Now, you probably have a picture of her? (*She shakes her head*) No old photograph? (*She shakes her head*) Well, have you any of her letters or papers—or documents—that would show her handwriting?

VIRGINIA. (*As before*) No—

PRESTON. Nothing at all to substantiate your claim?

VIRGINIA. I haven't made any claim—

PRESTON. (*Rises—puts chair back of arm-chair*) But, my dear Miss Xelva, I'm trying to help you—and I must make a report to Mr. Gordon—what can I say?

VIRGINIA. You can say I haven't given you any proof at all and that I'm not going to make any claim—(*VIRGINIA rises—MRS. WOODBRIDGE rises*)

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Virgie—(*VIRGINIA looks at her*) Surely—you don't realize—

VIRGINIA. Oh, yes—yes, I realize—(*Crosses to fireplace*)

PRESTON. And you really wish me to send that message to Mr. Gordon?

VIRGINIA. If you will, please—

PRESTON. (*After a pause*) Very well. (*To MRS. WOODBRIDGE*) I'm afraid there's nothing more I can do—

VIRGINIA. Thank you so much for all the trouble you've taken.

PRESTON. Not at all!—I can only say I—I'm sincerely sorry. (*Shakes hands with MRS. WOODBRIDGE to whom he says*) Good-bye. Of course—this is only an *au revoir*. I shall be back shortly for

the—er—surprise party—(To VIRGINIA) Good-evening. (MRS. WOODBRIDGE *crosses to R. C. PRESTON starts for door up L. C. stops and turns at door, speaks to VIRGINIA who has crossed L. of arm-chair*) Oh—until I communicate with Mr. Gordon—May I ask that you both treat this matter in confidence—(VIRGINIA and MRS. WOODBRIDGE *bow*) Thank you. Good-evening. (*Exits up L. C., closing door*)

(MRS. WOODBRIDGE *stands staring at VIRGINIA who returns her look.*)

VIRGINIA. You wrote to my uncle—didn't you?

(MRS. WOODBRIDGE *crosses down R. and sits in arm-chair.*)

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. I thought it was my duty.

VIRGINIA. (*Sitting on foot-stool below MRS. WOODBRIDGE—taking her hand*) Please don't think I'm ungrateful—But—but—

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. But, Virgie, it was such a wonderful opportunity! Why in the world you want to throw it all away—I can't imagine. (*Turning away from VIRGINIA*)

VIRGINIA. You said,—if Dr. Sumner knew, he wouldn't let me stay.

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Dr. Sumner? (*She looks up glances at VIRGINIA, then looks front*) Oh— (*Smiles understandingly*)

VIRGINIA. Mrs. Woodbridge—I don't want to live in New York—I just want to go on with my work—!

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. (*Smiles with understanding*) And have Dr. Sumner say he couldn't get along without you?

VIRGINIA. I'd rather have that than—the other

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. (*Looks at her with sympathy—smiles, puts arm about her*) Then I won't say another word about it——!

VIRGINIA. (*Archly*) Not even to the Doctor——?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. (*Smiling*) Not even to the Doctor——

VIRGINIA. (*With a sigh of relief*) That's all right—(*Rises and puts foot-stool above fireplace. Enter BUDD up c.*)

BUDD. Where's Doctor Sumner?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Dr. Sumner——?

BUDD. I thought I heard him—(*To VIRGINIA*) You said he was coming over to-night—(*Crossing to settee L.*)

VIRGINIA. (*Crosses c. above table*) Yes, and he ought to be here very soon now—and, oh—Mrs. Woodbridge—his sister said he hadn't had any dinner!

(*BUDD sits on settee L.*)

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. (*Crosses to VIRGINIA*) Well—why not tell Hartley to have some sandwiches ready for him?

VIRGINIA. May I?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Of course!

VIRGINIA. Thank you—I'll tell him now—(*Exits up L.*)

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. (*After VIRGINIA has closed door—with mystery, R. of BUDD*) Budd—I've just made a discovery—I think Virgie has fallen in love!

BUDD. In love—poor girl! (*Rises*) What make you think that?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. I'm sure of it!

BUDD. Who is she in love with?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Dr. Sumner!

BUDD. (*Crossing to L. of table—sits*) Oh—that's too bad——

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Why, Budd! I——

(Enter VIRGINIA down L. with envelope in her hand. MRS. WOODBRIDGE motions to BUDD to say nothing about it.)

VIRGINIA. Mrs. Woodbridge, Hartley would like to see you——

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. (To VIRGINIA) Did you tell him about the sandwiches for Dr. Sumner?

VIRGINIA. Yes—thanks—(To BUDD) This just came for you—by messenger—(Hands him envelope—then goes to above table c. and gathers up books back of table)

(BUDD opens envelope.)

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. (L. of BUDD) A birthday card? May I see it? (BUDD looks at it—shows agitation—hands it to her) From Grace Tyler! (VIRGINIA looks at BUDD quickly) That's awfully sweet of her—when you think of how she's been neglected!

BUDD. Eh——?

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Why—you haven't seen her for ever so long!

VIRGINIA. —He hasn't seen any of his friends

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. (Handing card back to BUDD) But it's different with Grace—(Sighs—crosses L.) Poor girl—I'm afraid you don't care about her as much as you used to. (Exits down L. closing doors)

BUDD. (With a sickly smile—VIRGINIA stands R. of him) That's funny—but I'm glad she doesn't know—(Looks at card—nervousness increases—reading card)

May joy and love

In your life ne'er cease
But grow and grow
As your years increase.

(*Repeating bitterly*)—Joy and love! (*He stares at card*)

VIRGINIA. (*Reaching out her hand*) You'd better let me take that—(*He looks at her—hands her card*) Now, let's talk of something else! (*Takes chair from R. C. and places it R. of table*)

BUDD. (*Rises and crosses to fireplace*) If I could only be sorry that she sent it!

VIRGINIA. Why, it's nothing but a printed birthday card—that doesn't amount to anything—(*Sits R. of table placing card on lower end of table*)

BUDD. I've got to acknowledge it—haven't I?

VIRGINIA. The Doctor will tell you what to say—just as he always does—

BUDD. That's what I'm afraid of—

VIRGINIA. What do you mean?

BUDD. Do you know the replies he made me send to the two letters I got from her?

VIRGINIA. No—you never showed them to me

BUDD. Would you like to see them?—

VIRGINIA. Why, yes—if you want me to—

(BUDD *unbottons waistcoat and takes two creased and well-worn letters from inside pocket of it—next to heart.*)

BUDD. (*Handing her one*) This was the first one—it came two weeks ago—(*He sits in arm-chair R. C.*)

VIRGINIA. (*Reading*) “Dear Budd—Where are you *keeping* yourself?”

BUDD. No—See, she's got a line under the “are”—it's—“Where *are* you keeping yourself”—like that—

VIRGINIA. (*Continuing her reading*) “I've

been afraid you were ill—and was so—” (*Hesitates trying to decipher word*) “So—

BUDD. (*Without looking at letter*) “Glad”—
“I’ve been afraid you were ill—and was so glad to hear you were out walking yesterday—

VIRGINIA. (*Continuing*) “I’m giving a Bridge Party, Thursday evening, and you must come. As ever, Grace.”

BUDD. (*Rises—goes to her and turns over page of letter*) There’s some more—

VIRGINIA. Oh—(*Reads*)
“P. S. Come early”—(*Hands letter back to BUDD—smiles*)

BUDD. This is the answer the Doctor made me send—(*He recites from memory*) “Grace dear: So nice to hear from you—don’t count on me for Thursday, but you know I’ll come, if I can—Awfully busy. Affectionately and hurriedly—Budd.” Then the day after the party—he made me write her—“Awfully sorry I missed party—can you forgive me?—Terribly ashamed—forgot all about it.” Imagine what she must have thought! (*He crosses L.*)

VIRGINIA. Did you tell the Doctor you didn’t want to send it?

BUDD. Yes—of course. But he told me I’d promised to do anything he said. I didn’t think she’d write again, after that, and I suppose that’s what he thought—but she did—a week later—this came—(*Takes out another letter—reads*)

“My dear Budd—you’re a bad boy—and I’m dreadfully angry with you—But, for once, I’ll forgive you—just because you’ve asked me to—isn’t that good of me?—If you’ve nothing better to do, drop in to-morrow for tea—Grace”—Be here at four—some people are coming at five—” Then, the Doctor made me call her up, when he knew she was out—and leave word that I couldn’t manage to get there, and that I’d explain later. But he never let

me do anything more about it—(*He sees card on table, slowly picks it up and looks at it*)—And now she's sent me a birthday card—(*Crosses R. to fireplace*) Of course it doesn't mean anything to her—but every time I hear from her it brings it all back again—

VIRGINIA. (*Rises, crosses a step R.*) Then—you must try not to think about it.

BUDD. Not think about it!—Hm—You don't know what love is! (*Sits in arm-chair*)

VIRGINIA. (*Trying to pacify him*) Oh, yes, I do.

(*BUDD pauses—looks at her.*)

BUDD. Oh!—then—then—it's true—?

VIRGINIA. What?

BUDD. That you're in love with Dr. Sumner?—

VIRGINIA. (*Aghast*) Oh!—

BUDD. (*Rising*) I didn't mean to say that—I'm sorry—I know how it makes you feel to have anybody speak about it—But—it's only me—and I'd never tell anybody—any more than you would—you don't mind my knowing, do you?

VIRGINIA. But—but—what made you think—?

BUDD. Isn't it so? (*VIRGINIA looks at him about to deny it—can't bear to lie to him—drops her eyes—sits R. of table. BUDD speaks with great sincerity*)—I'm awfully sorry—

VIRGINIA. (*Looking at him—with surprise*) Sorry?

BUDD. Oh—you mean—he cares for you?

VIRGINIA. He doesn't know anything about it—and he never will—if he ever found out, I'd die—I'd just die—!

BUDD. He's bound to find out—

VIRGINIA. Oh—no—

BUDD. Yes he will—you make up your mind you'll never let him know—then—then, you can't help yourself—I've been all through it—and I know—(*Crosses down a bit then back to her*) There's

only one thing to do—only one—and *you* ought to do it—go away—(VIRGINIA *gives him a look*) That's what I'm going to do——

VIRGINIA. Oh, no.

BUDD. Yes—I've made up my mind. The Doctor's month is up Sunday and I'm going Monday morning.

VIRGINIA. Could you go away from the one you love?

BUDD. Why there's no hope of my getting her.

VIRGINIA. There are lots of things in the world we love but can't have—That's no reason why we should run away from them——

BUDD. (*Looking at her*) Is that the way you feel—about Dr. Sumner?

VIRGINIA. (*After pause, nods head*) Um-hum.

BUDD. How can you? (*Goes to arm-chair and sits*)

VIRGINIA. Why, to be near him—hear his voice—just to know he's under the same roof gives me a feeling of—peace and contentment—like—like birds—singing—(*Puts hand to her breast*)—Can't you understand that?

BUDD. Birds?—(*Putting hand to heart*) In here? (*Shaking his head*) Bugs! It makes me feel like—like—(*Pauses—looks at her—rises—goes to her*) Have you ever heard of people dying of thirst? How they beg for water and go mad thinking about it? How they imagine they see it, just beyond their reach? And stretch out their arms towards it—and then find there isn't any there? Now, suppose you were dying of thirst, what would you think, if someone came to you with real water—fresh, pure water, and said: "Now you mustn't drink this, but just to have it near you ought to give you a feeling—like birds singing!" (*Crosses to fireplace*)

VIRGINIA. But—but I'm not thirsty—(*Rises and stands at R. corner of table*)

BUDD. (*Turning*) I am——

(*Enter GERALD up L. He wears evening clothes. HARTLEY closes door after him.*)

GERALD. Hello—this looks cosy—(*Nods to VIRGINIA—comes down R. of arm-chair*) How are you to-night, young fellow?

BUDD. (*Holding out birthday card*) I just got this—(*Handing it to GERALD*)

GERALD. (*Taking it and looking at it*) M'm—(*Glances at VIRGINIA*) Pretty—isn't it? (*Sees letters in BUDD's hand*) Those came with it?

BUDD. No—they're her letters—(*Starts to put them back in pocket*)

GERALD. (*Taking them from him*) I didn't know you were keeping them—(*He turns to fire-place—tears them up—throws letters and card into fire*)

VIRGINIA. Oh!——

(*BUDD sinks into arm-chair, watches letters burn—*

GERALD, noticing him, steps between him and fire. BUDD slowly looks up into his face.)

BUDD. (*Speaks timidly*) What shall I do about the card?

GERALD. Nothing—(*A pause—he looks at his watch*) Just you get into your evening clothes—quick——

BUDD. Evening clothes?—(*Rises*)

GERALD. Yes—you and I are going to have a great time to-night—How long will it take you to dress?

BUDD. Ten minutes. (*Starts up c. near his door*)

GERALD. Make it nine and a half.

(*Clock now 9:45.*)

BUDD. (*At door*) Are we going out?

GERALD. I'll explain everything later. (BUDD *exits up c. opening door just wide enough to let himself through. GERALD stands a moment looking at him, thinking, then turns to VIRGINIA*) Has he been that way—long? (*Comes to R. of VIRGINIA*)

VIRGINIA. Only since he got that birthday card.

GERALD. Too bad! I wanted to have him in good shape to-night—

(HARTLEY *enters up L. with tray, containing sandwiches, knife, fork—small decanter of claret and wine glass.*)

VIRGINIA. Mrs. Woodbridge was afraid the party would be too much for him.

GERALD. That's all right! I've just had a talk with her—and convinced her it's a fine idea! (*Turns up R.*)

HARTLEY. Beg pardon—but—(*Sets tray on table—VIRGINIA scans tray. To VIRGINIA*) Mrs. Woodbridge thought you'd like it in here, Miss—

VIRGINIA. Thank you, Hartley—You've forgotten the English mustard—

HARTLEY. Oh—beg pardon—(*Exits up L.*)

GERALD. Haven't you had your dinner?

VIRGINIA. (*Places chair R. of table for DOCTOR*) Yes I have, but you haven't. Sit down.

GERALD. How in the world did you know that?

VIRGINIA. Your sister told me—

GERALD. (*Goes up to window—opens it—looks out for guests*) But I haven't time now. I've got to be on the look-out for the guests.

VIRGINIA. Why—they won't be here for fifteen minutes yet. You have plenty of time—sit down.

GERALD. Well—this is thoughtful of you! I'd forgotten all about it! (*Sits and takes napkin*)

VIRGINIA. (*Pours wine*) But you shouldn't forget all about it.

GERALD. I had to get through with my calls early to-night anyhow so I could be here—(*Cuts food and takes bite*)

VIRGINIA. Where's the list?—(*GERALD takes slip of paper from pocket, hands it to her*) And you've been to all these places? (*Sits L. of table and takes up her small blank book*)

GERALD. (*With mouthful*) M'm—m'm—all of them—

VIRGINIA. (*Looking over list*) How was the little Smith girl? (*Begins checking off list*)

GERALD. Took the cast off to-night—

VIRGINIA. Splendid!—What about this consultation with Dr. Griggs?

GERALD. Oh, that's not until ten-thirty—at the hospital. (*HARTLEY enters with pot of mustard from up L.*) We'll be through here, by then.

VIRGINIA. Did you think to order the car?

GERALD. (*Looking at her and smiling*) No—I didn't—(*VIRGINIA smiles at him as if it pleased her*) By Jove, I was hungry! (*Drinks*)

(*HARTLEY places mustard on table.*)

VIRGINIA. Oh, Hartley, will you please call up Dr. Sumner's garage and tell them to have his car here at quarter past ten—

HARTLEY. (*Repeating*) Quarter past ten—Very good, Miss—(*Exits up L.*)

VIRGINIA. (*Referring to list*) John Hull—he's a new one—?

GERALD. Don't charge that—he paid me—cash! (*Takes bank note out of pocket and hands it to her*)

VIRGINIA. (*Taking money and opening another book*) Oh—good! We must try to hold on to him—(*Makes entry in book and puts bank note in it*)

GERALD. (*Chuckling and eating*) Now let's talk about your patient.

VIRGINIA. I've just been talking with him.

GERALD. Well?

VIRGINIA. (*With mock seriousness*) Bad news! Poor fellow!—He's as much in love as ever!

GERALD. (*Eating*) That's no news at all! I decided, a week ago, we'd never get him over that.

VIRGINIA. Then, I suppose it's no news—that he's going to leave us?

GERALD. (*Looking at VIRGINIA*) What?

VIRGINIA. So he said—as soon as the month is up—

GERALD. Don't let that worry you. I think he'll change his mind—after he's seen Miss Tyler.

VIRGINIA. (*Quickly*) Oh! Is Miss Tyler coming to his party to-night?

GERALD. Yep.

VIRGINIA. You told me she refused to come—when your sister asked her.

GERALD. That's right—(*Looks at VIRGINIA*) First she said she couldn't—but then she said she would—telephoned Marion this afternoon.

VIRGINIA. Don't you think seeing her again is going to set him back?

GERALD. I think it's going to set him back for life. That's what I'm counting on, anyway—if he can't be happy without her, the next best thing is to see if he can be happy with her. (*Eats*)

VIRGINIA. But I thought she was in love with Mr. De Witt—

GERALD. I don't believe it.

VIRGINIA. (*Incredulously*) You surely don't believe she cares for Mr. Woodbridge?

GERALD. I don't believe she thinks she does now—but I believe she used to, and if she did, she can be made to again—

VIRGINIA. Made to?

GERALD. Yes. Made to.

VIRGINIA. If she's that kind of a girl, I think he's better off without her. (*Puts paper in book*)

GERALD. She's not that kind of a girl. She's an awfully nice girl. (*VIRGINIA looks at him*) Oh—yes, she is!

VIRGINIA. (*Puts book down*) Then how could she have treated him so?

GERALD. Don't blame her—it really wasn't her fault.

VIRGINIA. It certainly wasn't his!

GERALD. Yep. The fault was Budd's. (*Drinks*)

VIRGINIA. Oh—you can't mean that! Why his devotion to that girl is perfectly beautiful.

GERALD. Yes. And see where it's landed him. So, you've got those high-falutin notions, too. They're attractive and romantic, I know. The trouble is that, some day, you may be unlucky enough to fall in love yourself—(*VIRGINIA laughs*) You don't think that's possible, I suppose.

VIRGINIA. It might be.

GERALD. Then you ought to know the truth, (*Eats*)

VIRGINIA. I'd like to.

GERALD. Well, the truth is it's a game.

VIRGINIA. A game?

GERALD. Yes—that's what love is—a game! Not the beautiful, heaven-sent blessing we're told it is—but a mean, selfish, rotten game! (*VIRGINIA bursts out laughing*) You don't believe it?

VIRGINIA. Believe it! Humph! It's too ridiculous!

GERALD. It may be ridiculous, but it's a fact—And as soon as you fall in love, the game begins and you've got to play it—whether you want to or not. Only most people play it without knowing it—like Budd—and get the worst of it. Now, why not play it with your eyes open? (*Eats*)

VIRGINIA. I don't think I'd care to play it at all.

GERALD. (*Leaning toward her*) If you were in love, wouldn't you like to know how to bring your victim to your feet?—How to make him adore you—believe you're the most charming and wonderful woman in the world?—Make him hope for nothing, think of nothing, dream of nothing, but you?

VIRGINIA. Could you tell me how I could do that?

GERALD. (*Takes a drink—looks front*) I'll guarantee it—You've only to avoid all the blunders Budd made.

VIRGINIA. What were they?

GERALD. Well—in the first place—he showed her that he loved her honorably, devotedly and exclusively—exclusively! That's enough to queer anyone.

VIRGINIA. (*After laughing heartily*) You mean he shouldn't have told her?

GERALD. On the contrary! He should have *told* her, whenever he got the chance! Instead, he probably didn't tell her at all, but let her see it, by everything he did. That's the first rule of the game. If you fall in love, say so as often as you like, but never let the loved one be quite sure you mean it—Budd's next blunder was being too good to her—(*VIRGINIA laughs*) Yes—he paid her too much attention, hung about her incessantly, until his visits became about as exciting as the milkman's. Another rule: swear you're the original, devoted slave, but don't always be on hand. Under those circumstances, it was only natural for her to take notice of somebody else. Then along came jealousy. It's next to impossible to keep jealousy out of a love affair. But there's hardly a case where both people get it. One is jealous and the other isn't. Rule number three: be sure to get your opponent a little

jealous—or you'll get it yourself. And in Budd's case, after jealousy, came desperation, then despair—then Doctor—

VIRGINIA. Well, I can't say I think it's a very nice game!

GERALD. I told you that. But it's justified. Because if you fall in love with a man—and you let him see your devotion is so great you can't think of anything else—curiously enough, he'll begin to care less and less about you.

VIRGINIA. Will he?

GERALD. Every time. Well, if ever I fall in love, you can bet I'm going to play it!

VIRGINIA. You are?

GERALD. To the limit!

VIRGINIA. (*Takes up decanter about to pour*) Have some more wine.

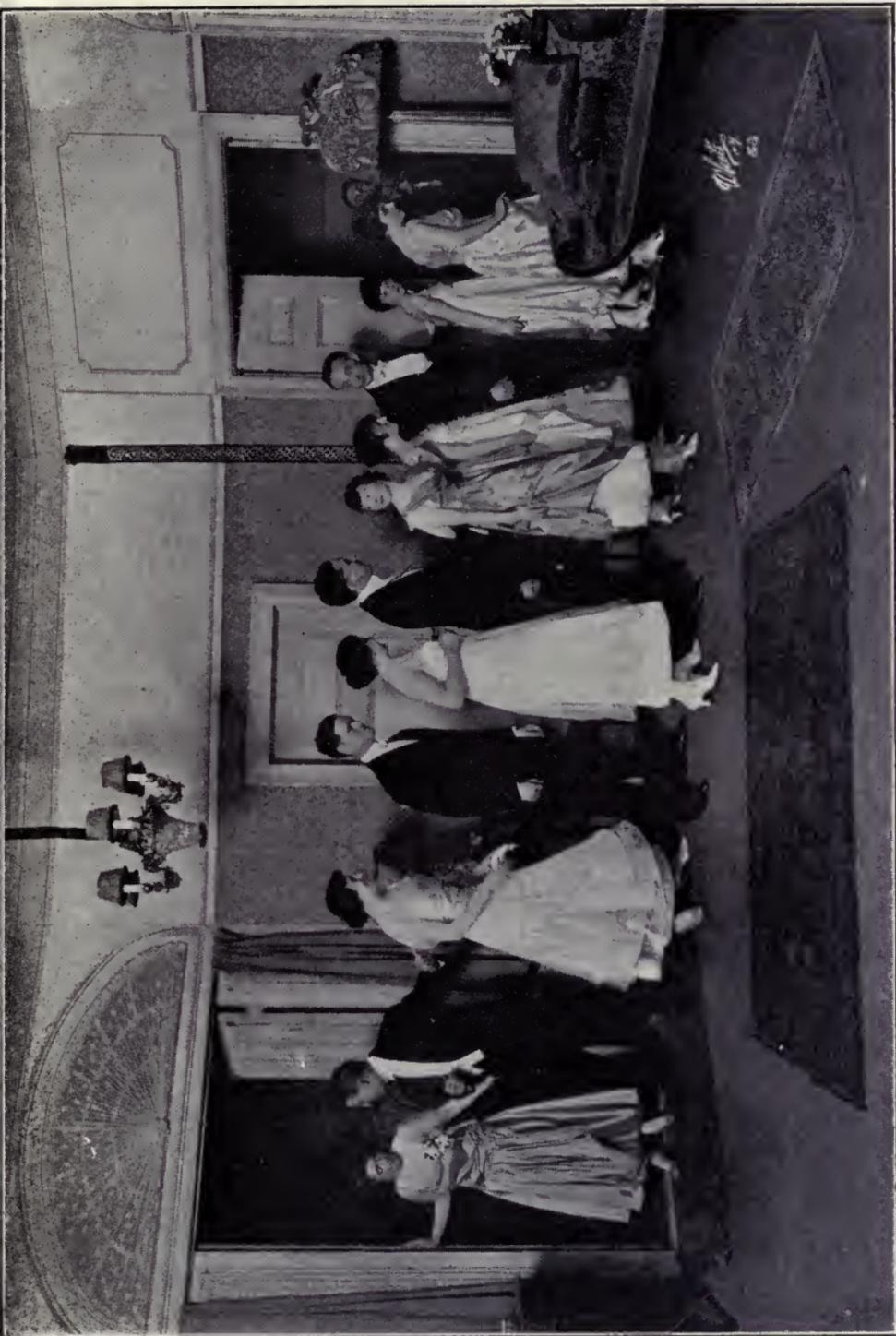
GERALD. No thank you. I've finished. (*He rises and goes R. C. VIRGINIA goes up—rings bell and comes back to him*) Why there are thousands of poor creatures all over the world whose lives have been ruined, just because they loved too much and didn't know it was all a game! And that's what may happen to Budd, unless we prevent it.

VIRGINIA. And you think you *can* prevent it?

GERALD. If my theories are any good, I can. You see, when Miss Tyler found out a month ago that Budd was keeping away, it puzzled her. Those letters she wrote prove that. And the answers I made him send puzzled her all the more. Her deciding to come here to-night, proves that. I only got up this party because I felt sure she'd come. And now, as usual, I'm depending on you to help me. Will you?

VIRGINIA. Of course! What do you want me to do?

GERALD. I want you to be in love—I mean, pretend to be in love.



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VIRGINIA. Oh—you want Miss Tyler to think I am in love with Mr. Woodbridge?

GERALD. You've hit it the first time! I want her to think you and Budd are crazy about each other!

VIRGINIA. (*Laughing*) You'll never get Mr. Woodbridge to consent to that!

GERALD. I'm not going to try. All I want is to have Miss Tyler see Budd laughing and jolly—and have you make her believe Budd belongs to you. Do you think you can?

VIRGINIA. (*Laughing*) Do you think *he* can?

GERALD. Oh—I'll brace him up—give him a slap on the back and a good stiff drink!

(*Enter HARTLEY up L.*)

VIRGINIA. You may take the tray, Hartley. (*She crosses R.*)

(*HARTLEY takes tray.*)

GERALD. Oh, Hartley—could you bring some brandy and soda?

(*Clock strikes 10.*)

HARTLEY. Very good, sir.

GERALD. Thank you. (*Crosses to VIRGINIA. HARTLEY exits up L.*) Let's see. Of course you're to be one of the guests. Have you got something you can wear? (*Start murmur of voices off R.*) I want you to look as pretty as you can!

VIRGINIA. I'll do my best!

(*MARION raps on window up R.*)

GERALD. By Jove, there they are! (*Voices louder—but low*) Keep watch and see that Budd doesn't come in here, for a moment. (*VIRGINIA*

exits up c. GERALD *opens window.* *Guests enter, wearing wraps, etc.* MARION *first*) Hello—Come along, everybody.

MARION. Where is he?

GERALD. He's all right!—Show them where to leave their wraps, Marion.

MARION. In here—this way. (*She crosses to up L. c. the other guests following, giggling and whispering*)

GERALD. (*Going to window—speaking off*)
Come in, Miss Tyler—

GRACE. (*Entering by window*) Is Budd here?

GERALD. He will be presently. They're all in there—(*Pointing up L. c.*)

GRACE. (*Laughing*) I'm so excited! (*Runs off up L. MARION who has followed her, closes door behind her. VIRGINIA enters quickly up c.*)

VIRGINIA. He's coming down the stairs!
(*Crosses down to table.*)

GERALD. Let him come! (*Closing window*)

VIRGINIA. Will I have time to change my gown?

GERALD. Take all the time you need—I don't want them to see you till the dancing's going on. Come in here—and I'll send Budd for you. (*VIRGINIA opens door up c. Enter BUDD, up c. VIRGINIA exits quickly c. closing door. BUDD is now in full evening dress, with silk hat, white gloves, overcoat, muffler and stick. Crosses to L. of table c. GERALD turns and sees him. Enter HARTLEY up L. directly after BUDD, with decanter of brandy, siphon and tall glasses, on tray which he sets on table c. GERALD, pouring out brandy and soda*) Hartley, take Mr. Budd's coat and hat. (*BUDD looks at GERALD, then allows HARTLEY to help him off with coat: gives him hat, stick and muffler. GERALD looks BUDD over critically*) And, oh, Hartley, bring his dressing gown in here, will you?

(HARTLEY turns and glances at GERALD. BUDD gives GERALD a look of astonishment.)

HARTLEY. Very good, sir—(*Exits up c.*)

GERALD. (*Behind table*) Sit down—(BUDD sits L. of table) We're going to celebrate to-night! (*Holds out drink to him*) Here!—

BUDD. But won't that interfere with—

GERALD. (*Stands above table*) It won't interfere with anything now! (*Pours drink for himself*) We're all through with your treatment!

BUDD. You mean—I'm cured?

GERALD. (*Heartily*) That's the idea, exactly! (BUDD gives him a look—places glass back on table, without drinking—looks front) Now you can have all the fun you want—see all your friends again—

BUDD. (*Looks at him—shows excitement*) Then the first chance I get, I'm going to tell Grace Tyler the truth about those letters.

(GERALD gives a start of alarm.)

GERALD. In Heaven's name, what for?

BUDD. Because I don't want to lie to her.

(GERALD looks at him—picks up glass and drinks—crosses to R. a little, then back to table—thinking—suddenly makes up his mind—turns to BUDD.)

GERALD. I thought you'd given up hope that Miss Tyler would ever care for you again?

BUDD. I have. That's all over. But her opinion of me matters just the same—and always will.

GERALD. Then you didn't mean what you said about wishing her joy and not wanting to stand in her way—?

BUDD. Yes, I did mean it—every word of it!

GERALD. Not if you tell her about those letters—you didn't!

BUDD. Why?

GERALD. Why? Do you know the reason I got you to send them?

BUDD. I thought it was to offend her—so she wouldn't write me any more.

GERALD. Offend her! Why, it was for her sake entirely. (BUDD looks at him) Don't you see that if you let her know you're going on, suffering and hopeless, loving her always, she can't help being unhappy and miserable—it's bound to make her feel that she is the cause of wrecking your life!

BUDD. You think that she—?

GERALD. Why, of course! She's still worrying about you—her birthday card shows that! Now if you really mean what you say and want to make her happy, there's just one thing to do—the big, generous thing—the noble thing—the heroic thing!

BUDD. What is that?

GERALD. Sacrifice your own feelings for her!

BUDD. How?

GERALD. Show her that she hasn't wrecked your life. Let her believe your jealousy is all gone—that your mournfulness is gone—and that your love is gone—That's the thing to do!

BUDD. Is it?

GERALD. Certainly! (Getting above table) Make her happy by showing her you are happy!

BUDD. I—think—I see, now—what you mean

GERALD. That's the boy—(Crosses L. of BUDD) I thought you would—Now I'll tell you something: the reason I asked you to dress up, is because you're going to have a little party to-night—a birthday surprise—(BUDD looks at him) Some of your guests are in the next room, now—

BUDD. Who?

GERALD. Grace Tyler, for one—



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BUDD. Grace? Here?

(GERALD *nods*. BUDD *stares at him—starts to rise—stops, looks front, with expression of alarm, eye catches glass of brandy, picks it up and drinks.*)

GERALD. (*Taps him on shoulder*) Now, there's nothing to be frightened about—here's your chance to show her you're happy—chat, laugh, and be merry—

BUDD. I don't know how—(*Rises—crosses R.*)

GERALD. (*Up c.*) Make a bluff—wear a smile—look as if you were enjoying everything—have a good time if it kills you. Will you do that for her?

(*Re-enter HARTLEY, up c., with dressing gown.*)

BUDD. I'll try—

GERALD. Good. Here, put this on, quick. (*Taking gown quickly from HARTLEY. BUDD nervously removes coat. HARTLEY takes it. GERALD helps BUDD on with dressing gown*) Take that coat, and throw it on that sofa—and push the sofa back against the wall. (*HARTLEY takes coat, puts it on sofa L. pushes sofa well back—goes to door up c.—stands there with door opened until dismissed by GERALD*)

BUDD. What's that for?

GERALD. You've got to be surprised. Now sit here—have a cigarette! (*GERALD throws case on table. BUDD sits above table*) You must be working at something—what can it be? (*Sees magazines in room up c.*) Ah!—(*Goes into room, picks up magazines, three in number—together with writing pad and ink and blotter, places them on table c. front of BUDD. As he re-enters*) That will do, Hartley. (*HARTLEY exits, closing door which he has held opened*) You can be answering ads. in a magazine

—Oh—Here we are! Just the thing! The *Architectural Record*! (*Pulls out plan, spreading it before BUDD—throws all the magazines on settee*) You're thinking of building a house—and you're studying these plans—Be so busy with them that you don't see us when we come in. Understand?

BUDD. Got a match?

GERALD. (*L. of BUDD—giving him match box*) When we yell at you, jump up and be surprised—laugh and shake hands with us—be cordial to Grace—tell her how glad you are to see her—but don't shake hands with her first, or last. Now, I'll go out and join them. (*Starts for door up L. c.*) Oh—Miss Xelva will be one of the guests—she doesn't know the others—so make it a point to be nice to her—very nice to her, won't you?

BUDD. Yes, of course!

GERALD. (*At door up L. c.*) All right—now—remember—mournfulness gone—jealousy gone—love gone! (*Exits up L. c. quickly closing door after him*)

(BUDD *puffs cigarette nervously—feels for handkerchief in pocket of dressing gown—says "mournfulness gone, jealousy gone—love gone—handkerchief gone"*—picks up blotter, presses it to forehead, turns towards door—GERALD enters—cautions him—BUDD puts down blotter—faces front—studies plans—puffs cigarette—as guests enter on tip toe—GRACE, MARION, GERTRUDE, *extra men, and extra girls followed by Mrs. Woodbridge who stands in door-way.* GERALD, *with finger to lips, cautions them not to make a sound.* BUDD, *frightened pretends not to be aware of their presence.* Guests form *semi-circle behind BUDD—At a signal from GERALD, all scream at once.* GRACE *down L.*)

ALL. Happy Birthday! (*This is followed by*

laughter and hand clapping, as BUDD rises, with assumed surprise. He looks bewildered and all become quiet)

BUDD. (*Looking about as if dazed*) Well—well—well—this is great—I don't know—what—(*His eyes rest on GRACE. He stops and stands staring at her. After a moment's pause, GERALD comes to him, swings him toward R. shaking hand*)

GERALD. Congratulations—old chap!

GERTRUDE. (*Shaking BUDD's hand*) Many of 'em!

3RD YOUNG MAN. And mine!

2ND YOUNG MAN. And mine!

(*GERALD swings BUDD around, facing GRACE.*)

BUDD. (*Going to GRACE*) Hello, Grace—(*Holds out hand*) Awfully nice of you to come.

(*Enter PRESTON through window R. He crosses down R. C.*)

GRACE. (*Shaking hands*) Many happy returns

BUDD. Thank you—(*Turns to MARION*)

MARION. (*Shaking hands*) Same here!

1ST YOUNG MAN. Happy New Year!

GERALD. (*Who is up L. of table, sees DE WITT*)
De Witt!—

(*ALL become quiet and look at him—BUDD faces him—an awkward pause. Suddenly BUDD laughs loud and nervously and holds out his hand to PRESTON.*)

PRESTON. Happy Birthday!

MRS. WOODBRIDGE. And your Mother? (*Kisses him joyously as dance music starts up with sudden bang off L.*)

GERALD. Come along—everybody! Take your

partners! (*Offers arm to MRS. WOODBRIDGE. Couples follow, chattering and laughing. PRESTON and MARION go off last, PRESTON glancing back at GRACE. GRACE remains with BUDD who has to change coat, HARTLEY enters, as music begins—helps BUDD change coat—then takes tray and exits up L. BUDD offers arm to GRACE*)

BUDD. Now—(*He laughs loud and nervously, as they exit down L.*)

(*GERALD re-enters immediately down L. looks about to see if VIRGINIA has appeared, then goes to door down L. and stands looking off, watching dancing. Door up C. opens, VIRGINIA enters and comes down R. C. She wears evening gown, the contrast with her previous appearance being as striking as possible. She assumes aristocratic attitude. GERALD, who has been looking off L. chuckles then laughs heartily, but quietly.*)

VIRGINIA. Dr. Sumner—I believe——

(*GERALD turns, looks at her with astonishment, stands dazed gazing at her, as she smiles at him.*)

GERALD. (*After a pause*) By Jove—I wouldn't have known you——

VIRGINIA. What were you laughing at?

GERALD. (*Still looking her over*) Laughing—? Oh, oh yes—look—(*Indicating off L. She crosses him to L.*) They're dancing together. (*Both look off through door L. DR. behind VIRGINIA*)

VIRGINIA. (*Looking off*) Is that Miss Tyler?

GERALD. (*Looking off*) Yes—that's—your rival—watch Budd! See him laugh! Nothing love-sick about that! Gad, he's a little wonder! If he can keep this up, it's a cinch!

VIRGINIA. (*Turning to him*) Did you tell him to dance with her?

GERALD. (*Looking at her*) Why — you're — what did you say?

VIRGINIA. Did you make him dance with her?

GERALD. No, I didn't have to—(*She turns and looks off again*)

VIRGINIA. She's trying to talk to him——

GERALD. (*With satisfaction*) Next, she'll get him off into a dark corner. See if she doesn't. We've got you guessing, young lady! Now, what do you think of the love game?—And when I spring you on her! Oh, there's nothing to it. (*Crosses R. around table and up L. C.*)

VIRGINIA. (*Suddenly*) Look! They've stopped! (*GERALD looks*) she's limping—she's sprained her ankle!

GERALD. Ten to one, it's a bluff!

VIRGINIA. They're coming in here!

GERALD. What did I tell you—let's give them a good chance. Go in here quick. (*Indicating up c. opening door. She hurries out c. He presses electric button by door, snapping out most of the lights—then draws back behind door up c. leaving it slightly open. Enter GRACE down L. limping, clinging to BUDD's arm*)

BUDD. Does it hurt very much?

GRACE. No—it really isn't anything! It'll be gone in just a moment. I wrenched it the other day, and the least little thing brings it back——

(*GRACE has been aiming straight for the fireplace BUDD helps her to sit in arm-chair. Music stops.*)

BUDD. (*L. of her. Anxiously*) I'll get Dr. Sumner——

GRACE. Oh—no—please don't. Just let me sit here—and you go and dance—(*Rubs her ankle.*)

BUDD *hesitates, thinks—turns as if to go L.)* I mean—of course (BUDD *stops and turns to GRACE*) don't go unless you want to—(BUDD *hesitates*) It's right here—(*Indicates spot on ankle*) I don't think it's swollen any—do you?

(*A pause. BUDD, frightened, finally gets up enough courage to touch ankle, then quickly turns up.*)

BUDD. I—I—I—don't know—I'll turn up the light!

GRACE. Oh, no—it's much nicer this way (GERALD *appears from behind door—warns BUDD not to turn up light*) What were we talking about?

(GERALD *motions BUDD to laugh. BUDD does so.*)

BUDD. (*Sits on fireplace fender, lower end*) Your ankle.

GRACE. I mean when we were dancing. Oh, I remember—you were going to tell me what was keeping you so busy—

BUDD. (*Laughs*) Yes—and then you sprained your ankle!

GRACE. Well, whatever you've been doing, it's agreed with you—I never saw you looking so well!

BUDD. (*With great sincerity*) That's what I always think about you. Every time I see you, you look more beautiful than you ever did before—

(GERALD *catches BUDD's eye and motions him to laugh. BUDD laughs.*)

GRACE. Why, Budd, you certainly have changed—but you must have a flower for that pretty speech—(*Looks at him coquettishly, picks out a flower from bunch which she wears. BUDD faces front, fighting to control his emotions*) Come here—(*He rises—she makes him stoop over till his*

face is close to hers, then fastens flower in his buttonhole) There——

BUDD. Thank you—(*He returns quickly to fender and sits*)

GRACE. Now this is a splendid chance for you to tell me what you've been up to this last month——

(*GERALD motions BUDD not to tell.*)

BUDD. I'm sorry—but I can't—(*Pause. She looks front, annoyed, then turns to him*)

GRACE. Budd—aren't we—still—friends?

BUDD. (*With a laugh*) Why—of course——

GRACE. Then why can't you tell me what's happened? Why you've kept away from me? It's worried me dreadfully——

BUDD. Worried you? Why?

GRACE. For fear it was on account of something I had done—you may not believe it, but I've never done anything to hurt your feelings—intentionally—I wouldn't for the world. And the thought of it has made me perfectly miserable—(*She looks into fire. Dance music starts. BUDD hesitates, thinking, glances about, catches sight of GERALD, who nods as much as to say "What did I tell you?" and signals him to do his duty*)

BUDD. Then I'll tell you something that'll make it all right—so you won't ever have to worry about me again—(*GERALD signals BUDD to laugh and be gay. BUDD laughs*) I'm not a bit the same, any more—(*He laughs*) Everything is just as it should be—(*He laughs*) I mean, I'm all over it—(*He laughs*)—my ridiculous jealousy has all gone—my mournfulness has gone—my—my—love—has—has——

(*His tone changes—his voice breaks. GERALD quickly turns electric button—light full on as GRACE jumps up. BUDD jumps up crosses back of GERALD to L. of table c.*)

GERALD. (*Feigning surprise*) Oh—here you are! (*To BUDD*) All your guests are wondering what's become of you.

BUDD. Miss Tyler sprained her ankle——

GERALD. Oh! How fortunate—for me!

GRACE. (*Smiling*) I'm sorry. But it isn't serious at all! It only pained a minute.

(GERALD signals VIRGINIA to come in. *She enters up c. He greets her.*)

GERALD. (*Shaking hands*) Ah—Good-evening, Miss Xelva——

VIRGINIA. Good-evening, Doctor—(*To BUDD, putting her left hand in his*) I am so sorry to be late!

(BUDD looks at her in blank surprise.)

GERALD. Miss Tyler—have you met Miss Xelva?

GRACE. (*Acknowledging introduction*) How do you do——

VIRGINIA. (*Crossing R. of table c.*) Ah—Miss Tyler—I have heard much of you——

GRACE. Indeed——

VIRGINIA. Why is it that none of you are dancing?

GERALD. I'm going to look after Miss Tyler.

(VIRGINIA, crossing front of table, takes BUDD's arm, holds him closely—takes him off L.)

VIRGINIA. (*Talking glibly as they cross*) Then come along—oh, I am dying to dance with you once more—and this is the first time I have—
(*They are off L.*)

GERALD. (*Watches GRACE a moment—she is looking off after BUDD and VIRGINIA in amazement—then he speaks quickly, crosses to arm-chair.*)

Now we'll take a look at that ankle. (*Music stops*)

GRACE. Oh, it isn't anything at all—really—
(*Glances off down L. after BUDD*)

GERALD. (*At fireplace*) Which one?

GRACE. Why—the—er—this one—(*She sits in arm-chair R. C., extends first one foot, then the other—he kneels down—R. of GRACE, picks up foot, puts it on his knee and takes off slipper*) I can't even feel it now—(*GERALD feels of ankle carefully*) What a pretty girl Miss Xelva is—

GERALD. Yes—isn't she?

GRACE. Awfully—er—a friend of yours?
(*Looking toward ball room and back*)

GERALD. Oh, yes—that is I know her—You've seen her before, haven't you?

GRACE. Why—no.

GERALD. Really?

GRACE. Why? Has she been in town long?

GERALD. Oh, a month or so.

GRACE. A month—

GERALD. Just about—I should say. (*GRACE glances off L. again*)

GRACE. Stopping with friends?

GERALD. (*Looking at her—with a laugh*) Don't you know where she's stopping?

GRACE. No.

GERALD. (*Turning away, examining foot again*) Why, she's visiting here—at the Woodbridge's—
(*GRACE gives a little start and looks off L. again*) Did that hurt? (*Looks at GRACE*)

GRACE. Why—just a little.

GERALD. (*Putting on slipper*) It doesn't amount to anything. Might try a hot compress on it before you go to bed. Curious you hadn't heard of Miss Xelva—(*Rising*) I thought everybody knew about that affair—(*Turns to mantelpiece and looks at picture*)

GRACE. (*Starts, looks off L. then towards DOCTOR*) Affair?

GERALD. Yes—she and young Woodbridge—looks like a desperate case—together the whole blessed time—since she came—I've been expecting every day to see their engagement announced. (*Music begins—louder than before*) Do you think the ankle could stand a dance?

GRACE. (*Rising*) Thank you—but I—really ought to go home—I—I have a wretched headache.

GERALD. Oh—that's too bad—(*Looks at watch*) Then, can't I take you?

GRACE. Oh, no—I wouldn't think of dragging you away—

GERALD. I've got to go—appointment at the hospital—

GRACE. Oh—

GERALD. Just a moment—I'll see if the car's come—(*Exits up L. C.*)

(GRACE, left alone, stares front, with a half-dazed expression, then face turns slowly L. and she looks toward ball-room. Slowly and unconsciously she moves c. below table—eyes riveted on BUDD and VIRGINIA off L. Looks front again—face falls—expression forlorn and miserable—again turns L. and slowly goes to ball-room door—gazing off—with sudden revulsion of feeling, turns away and attempts to saunter below table c.—as if trying not to care—stops c.—turns front and in spite of herself again looks off L.—gives a little sob—turns R.—sobs again—crosses to arm-chair R. buries head in arm, sobbing. BUDD enters down L.—to explain to GRACE about MISS XELVA.)

BUDD. (*with a little laugh*) Grace—I want to—(*Sees her—stops short then goes close to her, gazing at her. GRACE sobs hysterically. BUDD softly and unsteadily*) Grace—! Grace—! (*GRACE lifts her head—pauses—makes a great effort to control*

herself—rises slowly)—Why—what's the matter?—You've been—(Suddenly puts arm about her—tenderly—She tries to push him off, with an outraged exclamation. Her face is close to his and, wildly, he kisses her full on the lips, a long kiss—)

GRACE. (*Struggling*) Let me go! Let me go!
(BUDD, swept by fierce emotion, kisses her cheek, repeatedly, holding her tight.)

(*Enter PRESTON with MARION down L. Stops short L. C. GERALD enters up L. C.*)

PRESTON. (*With amused amazement*) Good God!

(*All stand staring. GRACE frees herself, gives a wild look about, rushes off up L. C. BUDD, half dazed by the enormity of what he has done, sees PRESTON—sees GERALD—then rushes out C. slamming door behind him. MARION takes PRESTON'S arm and draws him off into ball-room. GERALD looks off after GRACE—then turns, looks off after BUDD, makes a move, as if to follow him—then faces front—in great amazement—a moment's pause—he suddenly bursts out laughing.*)

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE:—*Doctor's office—same as ACT I. Operating chair moved L. close to instrument cabinet. Small package from druggists on desk, down stage. Large book on desk.*

TIME:—*Morning (About 9.30.)*

DISCOVERED:—*At rise, stage empty. Door up L. opens. GERALD enters, stops abruptly—as if surprised at finding office empty—goes to desk—sees mail unopened and unopened package from druggist.*

GERALD. Humph—(*Goes to door up R. and looks off, comes back and presses button on desk. EMILE enters down R.*) What are you doing here, Emile?—Where's Miss Xelva?

EMILE. She telephone she should be late.

GERALD. (*A little anxiously*) She's not ill, is she? (*Crosses R. below desk*)

EMILE. She say someone come to see her but she be here before office hours.

GERALD. (*Starts L.*) Oh—that's all right—

EMILE. Mr. Woodbridge out there—(*Indicating down R.*) All the time, he walk up and down—and up and down—up and down—

GERALD. (*Going to door down R. speaking off*) Hello, young fellow. Come in—(*BUDD enters down R. crosses GERALD to R. C. He carries traveling bag. EMILE exits down R. closing door. GERALD, indicating bag*) What's the idea?

BUDD. Doctor—I want you to tell my Mother that you've ordered me to take a trip.

GERALD. What for?

BUDD. For my health.

GERALD. Where am I sending you?

BUDD. New York.

GERALD. That's a great place to go for health. How soon are you leaving?

BUDD. By the next train—

GERALD. (*Taking bag from him, placing it on floor R. C. with initials toward front*) Sit down—Now, what's it all about?

BUDD. (*Sitting L. of desk*) You ought to know—you were there.

GERALD. ~~Oh—that last night—?~~

BUDD. Yes.

GERALD. What the deuce became of you, afterwards?

BUDD. I went out.

GERALD. Out where?

BUDD. I don't know.

GERALD. Did you see *her* again?

BUDD. No.

GERALD. Good!

BUDD. I just walked and walked—and at last—I walked home. Then I wrote to her.

GERALD. What did you write?

BUDD. Everything!—

GERALD. Great Scott! Did you tell her you love her still?

BUDD. Yes.

GERALD. That you'd never love anybody else?

BUDD. Yes.

GERALD. (*With sudden thought*) You didn't tell her about me, did you?

BUDD. Yes, that too—(*With a gesture of disgust* GERALD *swings up* R. C.) And that you'd kept me away from her—and made me write those letters—and all the rest!—but it hadn't done any good. I'm worse than ever. What I did last night proved it! But that was no excuse for me—and she wouldn't be annoyed any more—because I'm going away and she'll never see me again!—

GERALD. Did you send it?

BUDD. Yes.

GERALD. You idiot!

BUDD. I know I am—(*Picks up bag and starts for door down* R.)

GERALD. (*Coming down* R. C. *grabbing bag and setting it down again,* R. C.) Here—hold on! You're making a pretty mess of it! Now let me get things straight. That—er—strangle hold we found you two in last night—how did that happen? After you'd told her you didn't love her any more!

Everything was working beautifully up to then. Why in the world——

BUDD. I don't know. I found her crying—and it made me feel—I can't tell you how—but—all of a sudden, I had her in my arms and she was struggling to get away and I couldn't let her go! And I kissed her—a lot of times—and then you were all there and she was gone—and it was terrible! terrible!—(*He crosses to L. c. and up*)

GERALD. I should say so!

BUDD. (*Coming down L. of desk*) And there's one thing more terrible still—much more—I can't help feeling glad I did it! That's why I've got to go!

GERALD. To New York?

BUDD. What else can I do?

GERALD. (*With amusement*) After last night—the honorable thing to do is to marry her—(BUDD glares at him, menacingly) Now, seriously—what I mean is, you ought to see her right away—and propose to her.

BUDD. (*Stares at him a moment—then slowly shakes his head*) You can't mean—no, I mustn't ever see her any more.

GERALD. Why not?

BUDD. I might forget myself again——

GERALD. Oh! (*He laughs*) Well—now that she knows about my part of it, perhaps I'd better see her? I've got plenty of time before office hours—(*Crosses front of BUDD and goes up L.*)

BUDD. Why should you see her?

GERALD. (*Coming down L. c.*) Because I shan't forget myself. And I know what made her cry last night.

BUDD. You do?—

GERALD. Yes.

BUDD. What?

GERALD. Jealousy!

BUDD. (*Incredulous*) Jealousy?

GERALD. Why not? It's made you cry—hasn't it?

BUDD. But what could make *her* jealous?

GERALD. Miss Xelva——

BUDD. Miss Xelva? Miss Xelva! Good heavens, I believe that's it!—(*Sits L. of desk*)

GERALD. Well, then—don't you see—that shows she cares for you! (*He starts up L.*)

BUDD. Oh, no!—It's Preston De Witt!

GERALD. (*Turning to BUDD*) How do you make that out?

BUDD. Why because she thinks Miss Xelva is taking De Witt away from her.

GERALD. What are you talking about? (*Coming down*) Miss Xelva doesn't know De Witt——

BUDD. Oh, yes, she does! But I only just found it out, myself——

GERALD. Found what out?

BUDD. Why—about him—De Witt was with her, last night, before the party—and he was with her again this morning, and he's probably with her—yet. I don't know how long it's been going on, but Grace must have found it out, somehow——

GERALD. Why—oh, it's damn nonsense! (*He crosses R. to door*)

BUDD. I wouldn't have thought anything about it, if it hadn't been for Mother——

GERALD. Your mother——?

BUDD. Yes. I didn't know he was there this morning until she stopped me from going into the library.

GERALD. (*Coming back to R. of desk, leans over it*) What did she say?

BUDD. She said Virgie was a very lucky girl and that there'd be a great surprise when it came out.

GERALD. She—she—I don't believe it! (*Walks up to window—looks off*)

BUDD. When are you going to Miss Tyler's?

GERALD. (*Turning*) What? (*Goes to door up*)

L.) Oh, I'm going now—(*Stops, comes down to BUDD*) What time did De Witt call on her this morning?

BUDD. It must have been early. (*GERALD starts for door down R.*) Perhaps I'd better go with you. If you were there—I wouldn't forget—
were there—I wouldn't forget—

GERALD. (*Breaking in*) No! Go take a walk! Come back in fifteen minutes. (*BUDD picks up bag—GERALD takes it*) Leave that there—(*Sets it R. C.*)

BUDD. You'll tell her how awfully I feel—

GERALD. (*Breaking in again*) Yes—yes—yes—get out! (*Exit BUDD down R. GERALD closes door, stands thinking—looking front—dismisses thought with a laugh and goes above desk—stops laughing, suddenly—stands looking front again—then quickly picks up phone as if to call up the WOODBRIDGE'S—thinks better of it—angry with himself—slams down phone—calls "Emile" forgetting to press button*) Emile! (*Presses button on desk*) Emile! (*Door down R. opens and VIRGINIA appears. She is dressed in dark traveling costume and has medical bag*) Oh—

VIRGINIA. Good morning—

(*He does not answer—but stands looking at her fixedly—she stops and looks at him—notices his expression with growing surprise.*)

GERALD. (*After a pause—quietly*) Is my car outside?

VIRGINIA. (*Surprised by his manner*) Yes—

GERALD. I've got to make a call before office hours—(*He starts for door up L. EMILE enters down R. carrying a lady's traveling bag, marked V. X.*) What's that?

(*VIRGINIA places medical bag on chair up R.*)

EMILE *stops and looks at him.*)

VIRGINIA. (*Turning*) It's mine. Leave it there, please, Emile. (*Picks up package from desk*)

EMILE. Bien, mademoiselle—(*Sets bag L. of BUDD'S and exits down R.*)

VIRGINIA. (*Coming to GERALD down L. C.—picks up wrapped bottle*) I've got to ask you—to—let me go away for a few days—

GERALD. When would you like to go?

VIRGINIA. The train leaves at 11.40.

GERALD. Oh—You're going to New York, too?

VIRGINIA. Yes—Emile will be able to look after things. I can show him.

GERALD. You needn't trouble.

VIRGINIA. You're not angry with me?

GERALD. Why should I be?

(*She looks at him, wonderingly.*)

VIRGINIA. I shouldn't think of leaving suddenly like this—but it's—it's something so very important—

GERALD. Humph! Really!

VIRGINIA. Yes—and it's something—(*Attempting to smile*) I'm—well; I'm afraid to tell you about—

GERALD. I haven't asked you—have I? I've no desire to pry into your affairs. You're at perfect liberty to go as soon as you like, and stay as long as you like—

VIRGINIA. (*Making an effort to control herself—looks at him reproachfully*) Thank you—

(*VIRGINIA goes to medicine chest up L. unwraps bottle—GERALD crosses R. C. stands thinking a moment, turns and watches her—taking out pocketbook, takes out one note. Walks toward her—stops—takes out another note—goes to her.*)

GERALD. You—you'd better take this—(*Holds out two notes*)

VIRGINIA. Oh—I shan't need any money, thanks—

GERALD. It's coming to you—your month is up.

VIRGINIA. (*Taking it*) Thank you. (*Looks at it*) Oh, this is too much!

GERALD. That's all right—you've earned it. (*He comes down L. of desk*)

VIRGINIA Thank you.

GERALD. (*Pause. Plays with ash receiver—turns it around two or three times—plays with button on end of desk*) Do you—expect to come back?

VIRGINIA. (*Coming down L.*) Do you want me to?

GERALD. (*With effort*) This place will be open for you—always. And whatever it is that's taking you away—I hope it will bring you—happiness. (*He swings up R. C. Enter BUDD down R.*)

BUDD. (*Seeing VIRGINIA*) Good-morning. (*Going to GERALD, anxiously up R. C.*) Well—?

GERALD. (*Swinging around*) Well?

BUDD. Haven't you gone yet?

GERALD. (*Gives him a look—controls himself*) I'm going now. (*Faces VIRGINIA, then goes to door L.*) Wait here—

(*Exits up L. Pause. BUDD and VIRGINIA looks at each other.*)

BUDD. He's gone to see Miss Tyler—I wrote to her I was going to get out of the way. And when I told the Doctor, he called me names.

VIRGINIA. (*Relieved*) Oh—that's why he was so angry—

BUDD. But I'm going—just the same. (*Coming down R. C.*) I'm going to take the next train to New York.

VIRGINIA. (*Crossing down L. c.*) Why—so am I!

BUDD. You—? What reason have you—? Oh—(*With understanding*) Are you going with Preston De Witt?

VIRGINIA. (*Comes to L. of desk*) How did you know that?

BUDD. I just thought it—(*Looking at her reproachfully*) I can't understand you, at all—if you meant what you told me—about you and the Doctor—how can you think of marrying—Preston De Witt?

VIRGINIA. (*Amazed*) Marrying! (*She bursts out laughing*) How perfectly ridiculous!—

BUDD. You wouldn't go away together without being married—would you?

(VIRGINIA laughs louder.)

VIRGINIA. (*Laughing*) Mr. De Witt is only taking me to someone who wants to see me—on—on—business.

BUDD. Oh!—Then that's why he's been calling on you! (*Pauses—looks at her, goes to her, offering hand*)

VIRGINIA. Yes.

BUDD. I thought—forgive me—

(VIRGINIA takes his hand, smiling. Door down R. opened by EMILE. Enter GRACE. EMILE exits, closing door. BUDD and VIRGINIA stand in surprise, still holding hands. GRACE stops short on seeing them. Pause.)

VIRGINIA. (*Dropping BUDD's hand*) Good-morning—did you want to see the Doctor?

GRACE. (*ICILY*) He's not here?

VIRGINIA. He went to your house—he ought to

be back any minute—(GRACE *hesitates*) Won't you wait?

GRACE. (*Icily*) Thank you. (*Turns to go down R.*)

VIRGINIA. (*Going above desk to door up R.*) Will you come this way, please—other patients will be waiting out—there—(*Indicating down R.*) and I'm sure the Doctor would like to see you first—

GRACE. Thank you—(*She turns, about to go up, catches sight of two bags, bends down a little, noticing initials, then straightens up indignantly*)

BUDD. (*Who has not seen her examine bags—catches her eye*) Grace—? (GRACE *looks at him coldly, then, without reply, exits stiffly up R.* VIRGINIA *holds door till GRACE is out—then closes it after her.* BUDD, *forlornly—sitting R. of desk*) She'll never forgive me—

VIRGINIA. (*Back of BUDD's chair R.*) Why not ask her? (BUDD *looks at VIRGINIA—shakes his head*) Oh—do!

(*Door down R. opened by EMILE.*)

EMILE. A gentleman to see you, Miss—

(*Enter PRESTON down R. EMILE exits, closing door. BUDD rises.*)

PRESTON. (*As he enters*) I have some news for you, Miss—(*Sees BUDD, stops short*) Ah—Woodbridge—(*Crosses to him*) I couldn't find you after your surprise party last night—you disappeared—

BUDD. De Witt, I don't want you to think that Miss Tyler—

PRESTON. Oh—don't try to explain! I only wanted to apologize for my unintentional intrusion at such a—(*Glances at VIRGINIA and smiles*) a

romantic moment—and to offer my congratulations!
(*Extends hand to BUDD*)

BUDD. (*Not taking hand*) But you're entirely wrong——

PRESTON. Not a word! What I mean to say is—that you both have my best wishes!

BUDD. You don't understand at all!—Do you want to talk to Miss Xelva?

PRESTON. (*Crosses L. below desk*) If you don't mind——?

BUDD. Certainly. (*Starts for door down R.*)

VIRGINIA. (*Going to door up R. opens it and steps back*) Mr. Woodbridge—(*BUDD stops down R.*) This way please——

(*BUDD looks at her—hesitates—looks defiantly at PRESTON, then braces himself and goes into room up R. VIRGINIA closes door after him PRESTON goes toward her below desk*)

PRESTON. What I said to young Woodbridge may have sounded peculiar—unless you understand that—Miss Tyler and I were—were——

VIRGINIA. (*With a smile*) But I do understand—and what you said sounded extremely magnanimous—(*She crosses down to L. of desk*)

PRESTON. (*Shrugging his shoulders*) You do me too much credit! Woodbridge has really rendered me a service——

VIRGINIA. A service?

PRESTON. How great a service, I've only begun to realize since meeting you——

VIRGINIA. What?

PRESTON. Oh, I shouldn't have said that. Forgive me. But perhaps, some day when you know me better——

VIRGINIA. Did you let my uncle know I was coming to-day?

PRESTON. (*Turns R. c.*) Oh! that's what I

came to tell you! We don't need to go, now. Mr. Gordon is on his way here.

VIRGINIA. You mean he's coming to Hartford?

PRESTON. He's due here at 12 o'clock.

VIRGINIA. (*Crosses below desk to up R.*) Oh, dear!—Then everybody will know——?

PRESTON. Perhaps not. I'll meet him when he arrives—and tell him just what this position here means to you and ask him to say nothing to Dr. Sumner——

VIRGINIA. (*Coming down R.*) No! I'm going to tell Dr. Sumner all about it!

PRESTON. Quite right. And if you wish, I shall be only too happy to explain to the Doctor for you——

VIRGINIA. You're very kind, but——

PRESTON. (*GERALD enters up L.*) Kind! Miss Xelva if you could only understand how great my desire is to be of some real service to you—why I would do anything—anything—(*GERALD slams door.*

PRESTON *turns to DOCTOR. Stops—awkward pause*) Ah—morning, Doctor——

GERALD. (*Coming down L. c. Stiffly*) Good-morning. I'm sorry to interrupt—but I shall be obliged to use this office presently——

(*GERALD turns up stage, puts hat by window up c.*

PRESTON *laughs uneasily. VIRGINIA suddenly looks front, thinking a moment, realizes that GERALD is jealous of her—glances at him to make sure—then with entire change of manner—smiles sweetly at PRESTON. Pause.*)

VIRGINIA. Mr. De Witt was just going——

(*GERALD watches her over his right shoulder.*)

PRESTON. (*Flattered*) Eh—yes—er—unless you want me to explain to the Doctor——

VIRGINIA. (*Shaking head*) I'd better do that——

(Smiling, holding out hand) Au revoir—(He crosses to up R. C. She glances over her shoulder at GERALD, then follows PRESTON up) I'll be at the station—

(GERALD looks away.)

PRESTON. Oh?—I—I'll come here for you!

(GERALD looks at her over his left shoulder.)

VIRGINIA. (Smiling lovingly) I shall be ready.

PRESTON. (Turns to GERALD) Good-bye, Doctor. (Turns happily and starts out door up R. just after he is out, says, "Oh!" off stage, then backs on) I'm awfully sorry! Really—(Closes door)

VIRGINIA. (Trying to suppress laugh, opening door down R.) This is the way out—

PRESTON. Oh, yes—of course. How stupid of me! (Exit down R. VIRGINIA looks after him, sighs, turns back, glances at GERALD roguishly. GERALD goes to desk c.)

VIRGINIA. Miss Tyler's waiting to see you—(GERALD, above desk c. glances at her) in there—(Indicating up R.) And—Mr. Woodbridge is with her—(GERALD turns front. VIRGINIA stands a moment watching him, then turns and sees patients through door down R. Begins greeting them, speaking off) Good-morning, Mr. Stone—(Goes off)

STONE. (Off R.) Good-morning, Miss Xelva—

VIRGINIA. How is the arm getting on? (Closes door)

(GERALD turns and looks after her, walks to desk c. picks up large book, suddenly hurls in on floor, kicks it. Looks at door down R. fiercely—sees VIRGINIA'S bag—kicks it up stage,

violently. Suddenly realizes that he's making a fool of himself—laughs loudly and ironically—goes quickly to door up R. and exits—re-appears immediately—closes door—raps loudly—and exits again up R. Re-enter VIRGINIA down R. She has removed her hat and jacket, wears nurse's apron. Sees room empty. Goes to desk. Enter BUDD up R. He looks radiant with happiness, entirely transformed from his previous dejection. Sees VIRGINIA, comes down to her eagerly. She turns and looks at him.)

BUDD. She loves me!—She loves me! She really—Oh, I forgot—(*Back away from her R. She looks at him surprised*) I ought not to talk to you. She doesn't want me to. She thinks you and I were in love with each other. That's what made her cry last night.

VIRGINIA. But—but—surely you've told her—?

BUDD. Of course I have! And she says she believes me—but, just the same, she doesn't want me to see you.

VIRGINIA. Oh—I can understand that. (*Crosses R.*)

BUDD. Can you? Then, perhaps—(*Coming down R. C.*) you won't mind my asking you something? When you return from New York do you expect to come back to our house any more?

VIRGINIA. I'm not going to New York, now.

BUDD. Not going? Oh—that makes it rather awkward—I promised her you were——

VIRGINIA. (*Smiling*) But if I leave your house to-day—that will make it right, won't it?

BUDD. That might help——

VIRGINIA. Now, I want to ask you something—Did you tell Dr. Sumner what you thought about—Mr. De Witt and me——?

BUDD. (*Coming to her—quickly*) Why? Has it done any harm?

(Enter GRACE up R.)

VIRGINIA. (*Smiling*) On the contrary! (BUDD looks at her puzzled—GRACE stops short up c. on seeing BUDD and VIRGINIA) Oh! (*Exits quickly down R. closing door*)

(GRACE stands staring at him—BUDD turns—sees GRACE.)

BUDD. I didn't mean to talk to her—

GRACE. (*Ironical*) Humph! (*She comes down L. C.*)

BUDD. (*Crosses to GRACE below desk*) But I had to. Er—about her not living at the house—any more.

GRACE. How can she live at the house, if she's going to New York?

BUDD. Well—er—she's not going, now. (GRACE turns to him) I'm awfully sorry—but she said she'd find some other place to live—right away.

GRACE. (*Aghast*) You didn't tell her that I said anything about it?

BUDD. Why—er—yes—in a way—

GRACE. Oh! (*Crosses to R.C.*)

BUDD. (*A little exasperated—going to her*) But what difference does it make! I gave you my word I didn't care for her—and you said you believed me.

GRACE. But *she* loves you!

BUDD. Why no, she doesn't!—

GRACE. (*Positively*) Yes, she does! I could tell by the way she acted, last night.

BUDD. No, she's in love with Dr. Sumner—

GRACE. What?

BUDD. Yes, she is—anyhow what difference does she make—you are the only one that matters to me—the only one in the whole world.

GRACE. (*Looking into his face—tenderly*) Am I?

BUDD. Grace! (*About to embrace her*)

GRACE. (*Restraining him*) Oh—no! Not here—

BUDD. Then—couldn't we go now? (*Starts to open door down R.*)

GRACE. That—that girl's out there—I don't want to see her again. (*Goes to door up R. speaks off*)
Dr. Sumner—

GERALD. (*Entering up R.*) Yes?

GRACE. May we go that way? (*Indicating up L.*) We—we'd like to see Marion.

GERALD. I don't think she's in—

GRACE. Well, may we go and see?

(*VIRGINIA enters from door down R.*)

GERALD. Certainly. (*Goes to door up L.*)

GRACE. (*To GERALD*) Never mind. We can go this way now. (*Goes to door down R.—keeping away from VIRGINIA—haughtily passes between chair R. of desk and desk*) Come, Budd—(*She exits down R. BUDD following. At door, BUDD stops and turns—goes back to VIRGINIA who is standing L. of his bag. GRACE reappears at door*) Budd—

BUDD. Yes—I was only—(*Points to bag and picks it up—with a glance that takes in VIRGINIA and GERALD*) Good-bye—we've had a very pleasant call. (*GRACE takes him by the arm then exit quickly down R.*) GERALD glances at VIRGINIA, goes to desk, sits L. of it—looks over unopened letters. VIRGINIA watches him. *A pause*)

VIRGINIA. There are several patients waiting—

GERALD. Let them wait—

(*VIRGINIA sees book on floor where GERALD has kicked it—picks it up, GERALD watching her. Glances at GERALD—he looks away quickly.*)

She smiles and puts book on book-case, and picks up her bag—places it up c. A pause.)

VIRGINIA. It's after ten——

GERALD. (*Suddenly looking up*) It isn't necessary for you to stay—if you have anything to do before train time——

VIRGINIA. (*Demurely*) I haven't.

(*With a grunt, GERALD turns away and reads his letters. VIRGINIA watches him for a moment then crosses to medicine cabinet up L. humming, gets towel, spreads it on upper end of desk, crosses to operating chair, pushes it out to position same as ACT I—goes to instrument cabinet and takes out of glass jar on top of same—roll of gauze bandage, two small balls of cotton. She leaves the two balls of cotton on little stand down L., goes up L. c., gets jar of ointment—places it with gauze, on towel. During this GERALD has glanced at her once or twice over his shoulder. He looks front as she comes above desk. Pays no attention for a moment, then he glances at her.*)

GERALD. What's this for?

VIRGINIA. Getting ready for Mr. Stone.

GERALD. I'll take care of Mr. Stone.

VIRGINIA. Then—I was thinking——

GERALD. Eh?

VIRGINIA. I was just thinking how happy you ought to be!

(*GERALD gives her a look.*)

GERALD. What do you mean by that?

VIRGINIA. Why—this case of Mr. Woodbridge's—it's turned out just exactly as you said it would! It's wonderful what a perfect understanding you

have of love! (GERALD *smothers an exclamation, rises and paces about*) I've been thinking over all you told me last night.

GERALD. (*Stopping suddenly*) All I told you was damned rot—I beg your pardon. (*Walks again*)

VIRGINIA. (*Going down L. c.*) How can you say that! Just after you've proved it—with Mr. Woodbridge!

(*He gives her a look, goes to her—down L. c.*)

GERALD. Why didn't you tell me that you were in love?

VIRGINIA. (*With a change of manner—sincerely*) Because—I never meant to tell anyone—never, as long as I lived! Then, something happened—something that made me think perhaps he might care for me—and then—what you said about—about the love game all came back to me—and I—well, I've been playing it.

GERALD. (*Looking front*) You certainly worked fast—landed him already.

VIRGINIA. Oh, I haven't—landed him—yet.

GERALD. You ought to be—reasonably sure—if—(*He looks at watch*)—you intend to go away with him at 11:40. (*Goes L.*)

VIRGINIA. I'm not.

(GERALD *stops.*)

GERALD. What!

VIRGINIA. I was going—to New York—but that was to see my uncle. I've just heard he's on his way here.

GERALD. I didn't know you had an uncle in New York.

VIRGINIA. Neither did I—until the other day. He's Mr. Bruce Gordon. (*She goes to R. c.*)

GERALD. Bruce Gordon!—Bruce Gordon your uncle? (*He comes over to her*)

VIRGINIA. I'm afraid so——

GERALD. How in the world——

VIRGINIA. I don't know—only it seems—my mother—was his sister—and he arrives here at noon and Mr. De Witt and I are going to meet him at the station——

GERALD. Oh?—De Witt knew this?—That the rich Mr. Gordon was your uncle?

VIRGINIA. Yes.

GERALD. Oh—huh—I see. (*Turns away. Pulls himself together—with effort—offers hand*) Well—good luck—and God bless you.

VIRGINIA. (*Taking his hand and looking into his face*) You mean I can't stay here—any more?

GERALD. (*Trying to laugh—looks at her*) Stay here? Bruce Gordon's niece work in an office! Oh, come—now.

VIRGINIA. Then—it's good-bye?

GERALD. That's the way it looks. (*Looking front*)

VIRGINIA. Couldn't you—say you'll miss me?

GERALD. (*Turns to her*) Not so you could understand it. (*Turns away. VIRGINIA goes up c. gets hypodermic syringe, comes down and holds it out to him*) What's this for?

VIRGINIA. If I'm not going to see you any more—I'll need the treatment—(*GERALD looks at her—gradually the truth dawns on him. She goes quickly to door down R. opens it, speaks off*) Come in, Mr. Stone——

(*Enter STONE, an old man, with arm in sling.*

VIRGINIA closes door after him and goes to medical cabinet up R. washes her hands, pours liquid into saucer from bottle, takes a towel from rack and crosses down L. of operating chair, places saucer on stool.)

STONE. (*As he enters*) Good-morning, Doctor.

GERALD. (*Not knowing what STONE has said*)

Hum? Oh! (*He watches VIRGINIA all through this scene except when speaking to STONE*)

STONE. Fine weather we're having.

GERALD. Ha, ha! is that so?

STONE. Do you want me in that chair?

GERALD. Eh? (*Turning to STONE*)

STONE. Over there? (*Pointing to operating chair*)

GERALD. (*Looking at STONE's hand, then noticing hypodermic syringe*) Oh, this? (*Starts to insert needle*) Oh, no! No. (*Turns away*)

STONE. In the chair?

GERALD. (*Not heeding*) Oh, yes. (*All the time gazing at VIRGINIA*)

STONE. (*Crossing to chair*) I'm feeling fine now, Doctor. It doesn't pain any more at all. (*GERALD walks over to operating chair and stands R. of it—watching VIRGINIA—She cuts bandage from STONE's wrist and proceeds to wash wound with cotton. She glances at GERALD who smiles—He, unconsciously takes hold of wounded arm and shakes it to and fro—gazing at VIRGINIA who crosses up above desk and takes up bandage. GERALD drops arm and joins her. STONE continues shaking wrist imagining GERALD was testing its flexibility*) See how I can bend it? Look! And notice how the swelling's gone down—and watch my fingers. (*Moves them up and down*) I can move them as well as I ever could. (*Pause*) And the cut, Doctor—see—it's just about healed up. (*Pause*) I tell you, it's wonderful, Doctor—wonderful—just wonderful—

(*During STONE's speech VIRGINIA backs up c. then L., GERALD pulls her to him c., she drops her arms, he takes her face in his hands—a long kiss till curtain is down. A slow curtain which reaches top of STONE's head on his last "wonderful."*)

CURTAIN.

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