

ROMAINE. In *spite* – of me.

SIR WILFRID. You don't deny, do you, that you did your best to hang him?

ROMAINE. Would they have believed me if I had said that he was at home with me that night, and did not go out? Would they?

SIR WILFRID. (*slightly uncomfortable*) Why not?

ROMAINE. Because they would have said to themselves: this woman loves this man – she would say or do anything for him. They would have had sympathy with me, yes. But they would not have *believed* me.

SIR WILFRID. If you'd been speaking the truth they would.

ROMAINE. I wonder. (*she pauses*) I did not want their sympathy – I wanted them to dislike me, to mistrust me, to be convinced that I was a liar. And then, when my lies were broken down – then they believed... (*in the Cockney accent of the WOMAN who visited SIR WILFRID at his office.*) So now you know the whole story, mister – like to kiss me?

SIR WILFRID. (*thunderstruck.*) My God!

ROMAINE. (*as herself*) Yes, the woman with the letters. I wrote those letters. I brought them to you. I was that woman. It wasn't *you* who won freedom for Leonard. It was *I*. And because of it I shall go to prison. (*her eyes close*) But at the end of it Leonard and I will be together again. Happy – loving each other.

SIR WILFRID. (*moved*) My dear... but couldn't you trust me? We believe, you know, that our British system of justice upholds the truth. We'd have got him off.

ROMAINE. I couldn't risk it. (*slowly*) You see, you *thought* he was innocent...

SIR WILFRID. (*with quick appreciation*) And you *knew* he was innocent. I understand.

ROMAINE. But you do not understand at all. *I* knew he was *guilty*.

SIR WILFRID. (*thunderstruck.*) But aren't you afraid?

ROMAINE. Afraid?

SIR WILFRID. Of linking your life with a murderer's.

ROMAINE. You don't understand – we love each other.

SIR WILFRID. The first time I met you I said you were a vrey remarkable woman – I see no reason to change my opinion. (*crosses and exits up center*)

WARDER. (*off up left*) It's no good going in there, miss. It's all over.

(*There is a commotion off up left and then a GIRL comes running on up left. She is a very young strawberry blonde with a crude, obvious appeal. She rushes to LEONARD through the Q.C.'s bench and meets him down right center.*)

GIRL. Len, darling, you're free. (*She embraces him.*) Isn't it wonderful? They're trying to keep me out. Darling, it's been awful. I've been nearly crazy.

ROMAINE. (*with sudden violent harshness*) Leonard – who – is – this girl!

GIRL. (*to ROMAINE, defiantly*) I'm Len's girl. I know all about *you*. You're not his wife. Never have been. (*She crosses to right of ROMAINE.*) You're years older than him, and you just got hold of him – and you've done your best to hang him. But that's all over now. (*she turns to LEONARD*) We'll go abroad like you said on one of your cruises – to all those grand places. We'll have a wonderful time.

ROMAINE. Is – this – true? Is she your girl, Leonard?

LEONARD. (*hesitates, then decides that the situation must be accepted*) Yes, she is.

(*the GIRL crosses above LEONARD to right of him.*)

ROMAINE. After all I've done for you... what can *she* do for you that can compare with that?

LEONARD. (*flinging off all disguise of manner, and showing coarse brutality*) She's fifteen years younger than you are. (*He laughs.*)