

Elizabeth and Mrs. Manningham

Act I: Jack has left the house leaving Bella in anguish, collapsed on the settee. Elizabeth, the housekeeper, enters after knocking and receiving no answer, to introduce a gentleman who has called, Inspector Rough.

Elizabeth proves to be a staunch ally of Mrs. Manningham.

ELIZABETH. Madam—Madam— [*She crosses down to back of settee.*]

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Yes!—Yes!—What is it, Elizabeth? Leave me alone.

ELIZABETH. [*Peering through the darkness.*] Madam, there's somebody called.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Who is it? I don't want to be disturbed.

ELIZABETH. It's a gentleman, Madam—he wants to see you.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Tell him to go, Elizabeth. He wants to see my husband. My husband's out.

ELIZABETH. No, Madam—he wants to see you. You must see him, Madam.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Oh, leave me alone. Tell him to go away. I want to be left alone.

ELIZABETH. Madam, Madam. I don't know what's going on between you and the Master, but you've got to hold up, Madam. You've got to hold up.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. I am going out of my mind, Elizabeth. That's what's going on.

ELIZABETH. [*Leaning over back of settee with her arms around* MRS. MANNINGHAM.] Don't talk like that, Madam. You've got to be brave. You mustn't go on lying here in the dark, or your mind *will* go. You must see this gentleman. It's *you* he wants—not the Master. He's waiting to see you. Come, Madam, it'll take you out of yourself.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Oh, my God—what new torment is this? I'm not in a fit state, I tell you.

ELIZABETH. [*Crosses to back of Center table.*] Come, Madam, I'll turn up the light. [*She does so. Then ELIZABETH picks up box of matches and crossing to the desk lamp, lights it.*] There. Now you'll be all right.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Elizabeth! What have you done? I can't have anyone in. I'm not fit to be seen.

ELIZABETH. You look all right, Madam. You mustn't take on so. Now—I'll call him in. [*Goes to the door and can*