

*Samuel French Acting Edition*

# Angel Street

*by* Patrick Hamilton

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ANGEL STREET

Copy of program of the first performance of "*Angel Street*"  
as produced at the John Golden Theatre, New York

SHEPARD TRAUBE

(IN ASSOCIATION WITH ALEXANDER H. COHEN)

PRESENTS

## ANGEL STREET

A VICTORIAN THRILLER BY  
PATRICK HAMILTON

STAGED BY MR. TRAUBE

### CAST

(In order of appearance)

MRS. MANNINGHAM.....*Judith Evans*  
MR. MANNINGHAM.....*Vincent Fox*  
NANCY.....*Elizabeth Egan*  
ELIZABETH.....*Florence Egan*  
ROUGH.....*Leo G. Carrol*

The entire action of the play occurs in a house on Angel Street  
located in the Pimlico district of London. The time is 1841.

ACT ONE

Late afternoon.

ACT TWO

Immediately afterwards.

ACT THREE

Later the same night.

of "Angel Street"  
Theatre, New York.

H. COHEN)

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"Angel Street" was first presented under the title, "Gas Light," by Gardner Davies, on December 5, 1938, at the Richmond Theatre, Richmond, London, England, with the following cast:

MRS. MANNINGHAM.....	<i>Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies</i>
MR. MANNINGHAM.....	<i>Dennis Arundell</i>
ROUGH.....	<i>Milton Rosmer</i>
ELIZABETH.....	<i>Beatrice Rowe</i>
NANCY.....	<i>Elizabeth Inglis</i>

...*Judith Evelyn*  
 ...*Vincent Price*  
 ...*Elizabeth Eustis*  
 ...*Florence Edney*  
 ...*Leo G. Carroll*

...on Angel Street,  
The time is 1880.

## STORY OF THE PLAY

It tells the demoniac story of the Manninghams of Angel Street. Under the guise of kindness, handsome Mr. Manningham is torturing his wife into insanity. He accuses her of petty aberrations that he has arranged himself; and since her mother died of insanity, she is more than half convinced that she, too, is going out of her mind. While her diabolical husband is out of the house, a benign police inspector visits her and ultimately proves to her that her husband is a maniacal criminal suspected of a murder committed fifteen years ago in the same house, and that he is preparing to dispose of her. Then starts the game of trying to uncover the necessary evidence against Mr. Manningham. It is a thrilling and exciting melodramatic game.

## DESCRIPTION OF CHARACTERS

MR. MANNINGHAM. He is tall, good-looking, about forty-five. He is heavily moustached and bearded and perhaps a little too well dressed. His manner is suave and authoritative, with a touch of mystery and bitterness.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. She is about thirty-four. She has been good-looking, almost a beauty—but now she has a haggard, wan, frightened air, with rings under her eyes, which tell of sleepless nights and worse.

ELIZABETH. She is a stout, amiable, subservient woman of fifty.

NANCY. She is a self-conscious, pretty, cheeky girl of nineteen.

ROUGH. He is middle-aged—greying, short, wiry, active, brusque, friendly, overbearing. He has a low, warm chuckle and completely dominates the scene from the beginning.



ACTERS

ACT ONE

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## ACT ONE

*The scene is a living-room on the first floor of a four-storied house in a gloomy and unfashionable quarter of London, in the latter part of the last century. The room is furnished in all the heavily draped and dingy profusion of the period, and yet, amidst this abundance of paraphernalia, an air is breathed of poverty, wretchedness and age.*

*Fireplace down Right. Door at Right above fireplace leading to little room. Settee Right, Left of fireplace with stool in front of it. Table Center with chairs Right and Left of it. Window at Left. Desk in front of window with chairs back and above it. Secretary against wall up Right. Lamp on table Center. Sliding double doors at back Left Center leading to hall, to Left the front door, to Right the servants quarters. A circular stair leading to the upper floors is at back up Right Center. Chairs down Right and Left.*

*The Curtain rises upon the rather terrifying darkness of the late afternoon—the zero hour, as it were, before the feeble dawn of gas light and tea. In front of the fire, on the sofa MANNINGHAM is stretched out and sleeping heavily. He is tall, good-looking, about forty-five. He is heavily moustached and bearded and perhaps a little too well dressed. His manner is suave and authoritative, with a touch of mystery and bitterness. MRS. MANNINGHAM is sitting sewing on the chair Left of the Center table. She is about thirty-four. She has been good-look-*

ing, almost a beauty—but now she has a haggard, wan, frightened air, with rings under her eyes, which tell of sleepless nights and worse. Big Ben strikes five. The Curtain rises.

Pause. From the street below, in the distance, can be heard the intermittent jingling of a muffin-man ringing his bell.

MRS. MANNINGHAM listens to this sound for a few moments, furtively and indecisively, almost as though she is frightened even of this. Then she looks toward the sound down in the street. Then to the bell-cord by the Left Center door, which she pulls. Then back to her sewing, which she gathers up and puts into a box, at the same time taking a purse therefrom. There is a knock at the door, and ELIZABETH, the cook and housekeeper, enters. She is a stout, amiable, subservient woman of about fifty. Signalling that her husband is asleep, MRS. MANNINGHAM goes over and whispers to her at the door, giving her some money from the purse. ELIZABETH goes out closing the doors.

MR. MANNINGHAM. [*Whose eyes have opened, but whose position has not changed a fraction of an inch.*] What are you doing, Bella?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Nothing, dear— [*MRS. MANNINGHAM crosses quietly and quickly to the secretary with her sewing and starts back to the doors.*] Don't wake yourself. [*There is a pause. She starts to window.*]

MR. MANNINGHAM. [*Whose eyes are closed again.*] What are you doing, Bella? Come here—

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*After hesitating, going to him.*] Only for tea, my dear. Muffins—for tea— [*She takes his hand.*]

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## 1] ANGEL STREET

MR. MANNINGHAM. Muffins—eh—?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Yes, dear— He only comes so sel-  
dom—I thought I might surprise you.

MR. MANNINGHAM. Why are you so apprehensive,  
Bella? I was not about to reproach you.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Nervously releasing her hand.*]  
No, dear. I know you weren't.

MR. MANNINGHAM. That fire's in ashes. Ring the bell,  
will you, Bella dear, please?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Yes— [*Is going over to bell, but  
stops.*] Is it merely to put coal on, my dear? I can do  
that.

MR. MANNINGHAM. Now then, Bella. We've had this out  
before. Be so good as to ring the bell.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. But, dear—Lizzie's out in the  
street. Let me do it. I can do it so easily. [*She comes  
over to do it.*]

MR. MANNINGHAM. [*Stopping her with outstretched  
hand.*] No, no, no, no, no— Where's the girl? Let the  
girl come up if Lizzie's out.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. But, my dear—

MR. MANNINGHAM. Go and ring the bell, please, Bella—  
there's a good child. [*MRS. MANNINGHAM gives in, and  
goes back to ring the bell.*] Now, come here. [*She does  
so.*] What do you suppose the servants are for, Bella?  
[*MRS. MANNINGHAM does not answer. There is a  
pause; then gently,*] Go on. Answer me. [*He rises.*]  
What do you suppose servants are for?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Shamefacedly, and scarcely audible, merely dutifully feeding him.*] To serve us, I suppose, Jack—

MR. MANNINGHAM. Precisely. Then why—?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. But I think we should consider them a little, that's all.

MR. MANNINGHAM. Consider them? There's your extraordinary confusion of mind again. You speak as though they work for no consideration. I happen to consider Elizabeth to the tune of sixteen pounds per annum. [*Crosses to MRS. MANNINGHAM.*] And the girl ten. Twenty-six pounds a year all told. And if that is not consideration of the most acute and lively kind, I should like to know what is.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Yes, Jack. I expect you are right.

MR. MANNINGHAM. I have no doubt of it, my dear. It's sheer weak-mindedness to think otherwise. [*Pause as he crosses and looks in the mirror and she crosses to window and looks out into the street.*] What's the weather doing? Is it still as yellow?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Yes, it seems to be denser than ever. Shall you be going out in this, Jack dear?

MR. MANNINGHAM. Oh—I expect so. Unless it gets very much worse after tea. [*There is a KNOCK at the door MRS. MANNINGHAM hesitates. There is another knock.*] Come in. [*He crosses and sits on sofa.*]

[*Enter NANCY, the maid. She is a self-conscious, pretty cheeky girl of nineteen. He turns and looks at MRS. MANNINGHAM.*]

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NANCY. [*Stands looking at BOTH, as MRS. MANNINGHAM hesitates to tell her why she rang the bell.*] Oh, I beg your pardon. I thought the bell rang—

MR. MANNINGHAM. Yes, we rang the bell, Nancy—  
[*Pause.*] Go on, my dear, tell her why we rang the bell.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Oh— Yes— We want some coal on the fire, Nancy, please.

[*NANCY looks at her impudently, and then, with a little smile and toss of the head, goes over to put coal on the fire.*]

MR. MANNINGHAM. [*After pause.*] And you might as well light the gas, Nancy. This darkness in the afternoon is getting beyond endurance.

NANCY. Yes, sir. [*With another barely discernible little smile, she gets the matches, and goes to light the two incandescent mantles on each side of the fireplace.*]

MR. MANNINGHAM. [*Watches her as she lights the second mantle.*] You're looking very impudent and pretty this afternoon, Nancy. Do you know that?

NANCY. I don't know at all, sir, I'm sure.

MR. MANNINGHAM. What is it? Another broken heart added to your list?

NANCY I wasn't aware of breaking any hearts, sir.

MR. MANNINGHAM. I'm sure that's not true. And that complexion of yours. That's not true, either. I wonder what mysterious lotions you've been employing to enhance your natural beauties.

NANCY. I'm quite natural, sir, I promise you [*Crosses to light lamp on Center table.*]

MR. MANNINGHAM. But you do it adroitly, I grant you that. What are your secrets? Won't you tell us the name of your chemist? Perhaps you could pass it on to Mrs. Manningham—[*A quick look by NANCY at MRS. MANNINGHAM.*] and help banish her pallor. She would be most grateful, I have no doubt.

NANCY. I'd be most happy to, I'm sure, sir.

MR. MANNINGHAM. Or are women too jealous of their discoveries to pass them on to a rival?

NANCY. I don't know, sir— Will that be all you're wanting, sir?

MR. MANNINGHAM. Yes. That's all I want, Nancy— [*She stops.*] Except my tea.

NANCY. It'll be coming directly, sir. [*Goes out Left Center and leaves door open.*]

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*After a pause, reproachfully rather than angrily, moving to below table.*] Oh, Jack, how can you treat me like that?

MR. MANNINGHAM. But, my dear, you're the mistress of the house. It was your business to tell her to put the coal on.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. It *isn't* that! It's humiliating me like that. As though I'd do anything to my face, and ask for *her* assistance if I did.

MR. MANNINGHAM. But you seem to look on servants as our natural equals. So I treated her as one. [*Pause as he sits down on settee and picks up newspaper.*] Besides, I was only trifling with her.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. It's strange that you can't see how

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ANGEL STREET

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you hurt me. That girl laughs at me enough already.

MR. MANNINGHAM. Laughs at you? What an idea. What makes you think she laughs at you?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Oh—I know that she does in secret. In fact, she does so openly—more openly every day.

MR. MANNINGHAM. But, my dear—if she does that, doesn't the fault lie with you?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Pause.*] You mean that I'm a laughable person?

MR. MANNINGHAM. I don't mean anything. It's you who read meanings into everything, Bella dear. I wish you weren't such a perfect little silly. Come here and stop it. I've just thought of something rather nice.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Something nice? What have you thought of, Jack?

MR. MANNINGHAM. I shan't tell you unless you come here.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Going over and sitting on chair Right of table.*] What is it, Jack? What have you thought of?

MR. MANNINGHAM. I read here that Mr. MacNaughton—the celebrated actor—is in London for another season.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Yes. I read that. What of it, Jack?

MR. MANNINGHAM. What of it? What do you suppose?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Oh, Jack dear. Do you mean it? Would you take me to see MacNaughton? You wouldn't take me to see MacNaughton, would you?



MR. MANNINGHAM. I not only would take you to see MacNaughton, my dear. I am going to take you to see MacNaughton. That is, if you want to go.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Rises.*] Oh, Jack! What heaven—what heaven!

MR. MANNINGHAM. When would you like to go? You have only three weeks, according to his advertisement.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*To back of sofa and over MR. MANNINGHAM'S shoulder.*] Oh—what perfect heaven! Let me see. Do let me see!

MR. MANNINGHAM. There. You see? You can see him in comedy or tragedy—according to your choice. Which would you prefer, Bella—the comedy or the tragedy?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Oh—it's so hard to say! Either would be equally wonderful. [*Crosses around back of settee to Right end and below.*] Which would you choose, if you were me?

MR. MANNINGHAM. Well—it depends—doesn't it—upon whether you want to laugh, or whether you want to cry.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Oh—I want to laugh. But then, I should like to cry, too. In fact, I should like to do both. Oh, Jack, what made you decide to take me? [*Sits on stool and leans against MR. MANNINGHAM.*]

MR. MANNINGHAM. Well, my dear, you've been very good lately, and I thought it would be well to take you out of yourself.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Oh, Jack dear. You have been so

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ANGEL STREET

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much kinder lately. Is it possible you're beginning to see my point of view?

MR. MANNINGHAM. I don't know that I ever differed from it, did I, Bella?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Oh, Jack dear. It's true. It's true. [*Looks at him.*] All I need is to be taken out of myself—some little change—to have some attention from you. Oh, Jack, I'd be better,—I could really try to be better—you know in what way—if only I could get *out* of myself a little more.

MR. MANNINGHAM. How do you mean, my dear, exactly, *better*?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Looks away.*] You know— You know in what way, dear. About all that's happened lately. We said we wouldn't speak about it.

MR. MANNINGHAM. [*Drawing away and looking away.*] Oh, no—don't let's speak about that.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. No, dear, I don't want to—but what I say is so important. I *have* been better—even in the last week. Haven't you noticed it? And why is it? Because you have stayed in, and been kind to me. The other night when you stayed in and played cards with me, it was like old days, and I went to bed feeling a normal, happy, healthy, human being. And then, the day after, when you read your book to me, Jack, and we sat by the fire, I felt all my love for you coming back, then, Jack. And I slept that night like a child. All those ghastly dreads and terrible, terrible fears seemed to have vanished. And all just because you had given me your

time, and taken me from brooding on myself in this house all day and night.

MR. MANNINGHAM. [*As he raises up her head off his shoulder.*] I wonder if it is that—or whether it's merely that your medicine is beginning to benefit you?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. No, Jack dear, it's not my medicine. I've taken my medicine religiously—haven't I taken it religiously? Much as I detest it! It's more than medicine that I want. It's the medicine of a sweet, sane mind, of interest in something. Don't you see what I mean?

MR. MANNINGHAM. Well—we *are* talking about gloomy subjects, aren't we?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Sitting on settee.*] Yes. I don't want to be gloomy, dear—that's the last thing I want to be. I only want you to understand. Say you understand.

MR. MANNINGHAM. [*Turns to her.*] Well, dear. Don't I seem to? Haven't I just said I'm taking you to the theatre?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Close to him again.*] Yes, dear—Yes, you have. Oh, and you've made me so happy—so happy, dear.

MR. MANNINGHAM. Well, then, which is it to be—the comedy or the tragedy. You must make up your mind.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*With exulting solemnity.*] Oh, Jack, which shall it be? [*Rising and crossing to down Center and showing her pleasure with delighted gestures.*] What shall it be? It matters so little! It matters so wonderfully little! I'm going to the play! [*To Left Center then to back of Center table and to back of settee and throws her arms around him and kisses him.*] Do

you understand that, my husband! I'm going to the play!  
*[There is a KNOCK on the Left Center door. MRS. MANNINGHAM crosses to the fireplace.]* Come in. *[Enter NANCY, carrying tray. Pause, as she starts to desk Left.]* No, Nancy, I think we'll have it on the table to-day.

NANCY. *[Still with impudence.]* Oh—just as you wish, Madam.

*[Pause, as she puts tray on table Center, arranges cups and puts books, etc., on one side.]*

MRS. MANNINGHAM. *[At mantelpiece.]* Tell me, Nancy—if you were being taken to the play, and had to choose between comedy and tragedy, which would you choose?

NANCY. No, Madam? Oh—I'd go for the comedy all the time.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Would you? Why would you choose the comedy, Nancy?

NANCY. I like to laugh, Madam, I suppose.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Do you? Well—I daresay you're right. I must bear it in mind. Mr. Manningham's taking me next week, you see.

NANCY. Oh, yes? I hope you enjoy it. I'll bring the muffins directly. *[Goes out, leaves the doors open, and turns to the Right.]*

*[As NANCY goes out, MRS. MANNINGHAM puts out her tongue at her. MANNINGHAM sees this.]*

MR. MANNINGHAM. My dear—what are you doing?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. *[As she crosses to the foot of the*

*stairs.*] The little beast! Let her put that in her pipe and smoke it.

MR. MANNINGHAM. But what has she done?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Ah—you don't know her. She tries to torment and score off me all day long. You don't see these things. A man wouldn't. [MR. MANNINGHAM rises.] She thinks me a poor thing. And now she can suffer the news that you're taking me to the theatre.

MR. MANNINGHAM. I think you imagine things, my dear.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Oh, no, I don't. We've been too familiar with her. [*Arranging chairs, in an emotionally happy state.*] Come along, my dear. You sit one side, and I the other—like two children in the nursery.

MR. MANNINGHAM. [*Stands with back to fire.*] You seem wonderfully pleased with yourself, Bella. I must take you to the theatre more often, if this is the result.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Sitting Left of table.*] Oh, Jack—I wish you could.

MR. MANNINGHAM. I don't really know why we shouldn't. I used to like nothing so much when I was a boy. In fact, you may hardly believe it, but I even had an ambition to be an actor myself at one time.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Lifting tea pot.*] I can well believe it, dear. Come along to your tea now.

MR. MANNINGHAM. [*As he moves up back of the settee.*] You know, Bella, that must be a very superb sensation. To take a part and lose yourself entirely in the character of someone else. I flatter myself I could have made an actor.

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ANGEL STREET

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MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Pouring tea.*] Why, of course, my dear. You were cut out for it. Anyone can see that.

MR. MANNINGHAM. [*Crosses slowly Left behind settee.*] No—do you think so—seriously? I always felt a faint tinge of regret. Of course, one would have required training, but I believe I should have made out—and might have reached the top of the tree for all I know.

“To be or not to be. That is the question.  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms—against a sea of troubles,  
And, by opposing, end them.”

[NANCY enters, sets the muffin dish down on table during the recitation and goes out.]

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*After NANCY exits.*] You see how fine your voice is? Oh—you've made a great mistake.

MR. MANNINGHAM. [*Crosses to Right of table. Lightly.*] I wonder.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Then if you had been a famous actor, I should have had a free seat to come and watch you every night of my life. And then called for you at the stage door afterwards. Wouldn't that have been paradise?

MR. MANNINGHAM. [*As he sits Right of table.*] A paradise of which you would soon tire, my dear. I have no doubt that after a few nights you would be staying at home again, just as you do now.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Oh, no, I wouldn't. I should have

to keep my eye on you for all the hussies that would be after you.

MR. MANNINGHAM. There would be hussies after me, would there? That is an added inducement, then.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Yes—I know it, you wretch. But you wouldn't escape me. [*Lifting cover of muffin dish.*] They look delicious. Aren't you glad I thought of them? [*Passes the salt.*] Here's some salt. You want heaps of it. Oh, Jack dear, you must forgive me chattering on like this, but I'm feeling so happy.

MR. MANNINGHAM. I can see that, my dear.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. I'm being taken to the play, you see. Here you are. I used to adore these as a child, didn't you? [*Offers muffin to MR. MANNINGHAM.*] I wonder how long it is since we had them? [*MR. MANNINGHAM looks up Center at wall.*] We haven't had them since we've been married anyway. Or have we? Have we?

MR. MANNINGHAM. I don't know, I'm sure. [*Suddenly rising, looking at the wall upstage and speaking in a calm, yet menacing way.*] I don't know—Bella—

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*After pause, dropping her voice almost to a whisper.*] What is it? What's the matter? What is it now?

MR. MANNINGHAM. [*Walking over to fireplace in front of settee, and speaking with his back to her.*] I have no desire to upset you, Bella, but I have just observed something very much amiss. Will you please rectify it at once, while I am not looking, and we will assume that it has not happened.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Amiss? What's amiss? For God's

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ANGEL STREET

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sake don't turn your back on me. What has happened?

MR. MANNINGHAM. You know perfectly well what has happened, Bella, and if you will rectify it at once I will say no more about it.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. I don't know. I don't know. You have left your tea. Tell me what it is. Tell me.

MR. MANNINGHAM. Are you trying to make a fool of me, Bella? What I refer to is on the wall behind you. If you will put it back, I will say no more about it.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. The wall behind me? What? [*Turns.*] Oh—yes— The picture has been taken down — Yes— The picture— Who has taken it down? Why has it been taken down?

MR. MANNINGHAM. Yes. Why has it been taken down? Why, indeed. You alone can answer that, Bella. Why was it taken down before? Will you please take it from wherever you have hidden it, and put it back on the wall again?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. But I haven't hidden it, Jack. [*Rises.*] I didn't do it. Oh, for God's sake look at me. I didn't do it. I don't know where it is. Someone else must have done it.

MR. MANNINGHAM. Someone else? [*Turning to her.*] Are you suggesting perhaps that I should play such a fantastic and wicked trick?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. No, dear, no! But someone else. [*Going to him.*] Before God, I didn't do it! Someone else, dear, someone else.

MR. MANNINGHAM. [*Shaking her off.*] Will you please



leave go of me. [*Walking over to bell.*] We will see about "someone else."

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Crossing to front of settee.*] Oh, Jack—don't ring the bell. Don't ring it. Don't call the servants to witness my shame. It's not my shame for I haven't done it—but *don't* call the servants! Tell them not to come. [*He has rung the bell. She goes to him.*] Let's talk of this between ourselves! Don't call that girl in. Please!

MR. MANNINGHAM. [*Shaking her off violently.*] Will you please leave go of me and sit down there! [*She sits in chair above the desk. He goes to fireplace.*] Someone else, eh? Well—we shall see. [MRS. MANNINGHAM *in chair, sobs.*] You had better pull yourself together, hadn't you?—[*There is a KNOCK at the door.*] Come in. [*Enter ELIZABETH Left Center and leaves the doors open.*] Ah, Elizabeth. Come in please, Elizabeth— Shut the door—[*Pause as she does so.*] well, come in, come into the room.—[*Pause as ELIZABETH crosses to the back of the chair Left of the table.*] Now, Elizabeth, do you notice anything amiss in this room?—Look carefully around the walls, and see if you notice anything amiss—[*Pause as ELIZABETH looks around the room and when she sees the space of the missing picture she stands still.*] Well, Elizabeth, what do you notice?

ELIZABETH. Nothing, sir— Except the picture's been taken down.

MR. MANNINGHAM. Exactly. The picture has been taken down. You noticed it at once. Now was that picture in its place when you dusted the room this morning?

ELIZABETH. Yes, sir. It was, sir. I don't understand, sir.

I] ANGEL STREET

19

MR. MANNINGHAM. Neither do I, Elizabeth, neither do I. And now, before you go, just one question. Was it you who removed that picture, Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH. No, sir. Of course I ain't, sir.

MR. MANNINGHAM. You did not. And have you ever, at any time, removed that picture from its proper place?

ELIZABETH. No, sir. Never, sir. Why should I, sir?

MR. MANNINGHAM. Indeed, why should you?—And now please, Elizabeth, will you kiss that Bible, will you as a token of your truthfulness—fetch that Bible from my desk? [*Pause. ELIZABETH hesitates. Then she does so.*] Very well, you may go. [*She starts to the desk with Bible and MANNINGHAM motions to her to put it on Center table.*] And please send Nancy in here at once.

ELIZABETH. Yes, sir. [*Opens doors, goes out, closes doors, looking at BOTH.*]

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Going to him.*] Jack—spare me that girl. Don't call her in. I'll say anything. I'll say that I did it. I did it, Jack, I did it. Don't have that girl in. Don't!

MR. MANNINGHAM. Will you have the goodness to contain yourself? [*There is a KNOCK at the Left Center door. MRS. MANNINGHAM sits in chair below fireplace.*] Come in.

NANCY. [*Opens doors, enters and leaves doors open. Crossing to settee.*] Yes, sir. Did you want me?

MR. MANNINGHAM. Yes, I do want you, Nancy.—If you will look at the wall behind you, you will see that the picture has gone

NANCY. [*Going up-stage.*] Why. My word. So it has.  
[*Turns.*] What a rum go! [*Turns to MANNINGHAM.*]

MR. MANNINGHAM. I did not ask for any comment on your part, Nancy. Kindly be less insolent and answer what I ask you. Did you take that picture down, or did you not?

NANCY. Me? Of course I didn't. [*Comes to him slyly.*] What should I want to move it for, sir?

MR. MANNINGHAM. Very good. Now will you kiss that Bible lying there, please, as a solemn oath that you did not—and you may go.

NANCY. Willingly, sir. [*She does so, and places Bible on Center table again with a little smile.*] If I'd done it I'd've—

MR. MANNINGHAM. That is all, Nancy. You may go. [*NANCY goes out and closes doors. Going to Bible as if to replace it on the desk.*] There! [*As he crosses down Left and faces MRS. MANNINGHAM.*] I think we may now be said to have demonstrated conclusively—

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Rises; crossing Left to him.*] Give me that Bible! Give it to me! Let me kiss it, too! [*Snatches it from him.*] There! [*Kisses it.*] There! Do you see? [*Kisses it.*] There! Do you see that I kiss it?

MR. MANNINGHAM. [*As he puts out his hand for the Bible.*] For God's sake be careful what you do. Do you desire to commit sacrilege above all else?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. It is no sacrilege, Jack. Someone else has committed sacrilege. Now see—I swear before God Almighty that I never touched that picture. [*Kisses it.*] There! [*She comes close to him.*]

MR. MANNINGHAM. [*He grabs Bible.*] Then, by God, you are mad, and you don't know what you do. You unhappy wretch—you're stark gibbering mad—like your wretched mother before you.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Jack—you promised you would never say that again.

MR. MANNINGHAM. [*Crosses Right. Pause.*] The time has come to face facts, Bella. [*Half turns to her.*] If this progresses you will not be much longer under *my* protection.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Crossing to him.*] Jack—I'm going to make a last appeal to you. I'm going to make a last appeal. I'm desperate, Jack. Can't you see that I'm desperate? If you can't, you must have a heart of stone.

MR. MANNINGHAM. [*Turns to her.*] Go on. What do you wish to say?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Jack, [*Crosses to front of settee.*] I may be going mad, like my poor mother—but if I am mad, you have got to treat me gently. Jack—before God—I never lie to you knowingly. If I have taken down that picture from its place I have not known it. *I have not known it.* If I took it down on those other occasions I did not know it, either. [*Turns and crosses to Center.*] Jack, if I steal your things—your rings—your keys—your pencils and your handkerchiefs, and you find them later at the bottom of my box, as indeed you do, then I do not know that I have done it— Jack, if I commit these fantastic, meaningless mischiefs—so meaningless—[*A step toward him.*] why should I take a picture down from its place? [*Pause.*] If I do all these things, then I am certainly going off my head, and must be

treated kindly and gently so that I may get well. [*Crosses to him.*] You must *bear* with me, Jack, *bear* with me—not storm and rage. God knows I'm trying. Jack, I'm trying! Oh, for God's sake believe me that I'm trying and be kind to me!

MR. MANNINGHAM. Bella, my dear—have you any idea where that picture is now?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Yes, yes, I suppose it's behind the cupboard.

MR. MANNINGHAM. Will you please go and see?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Vaguely.*] Yes—yes— [*Crosses below him, goes Right to upper end of secretary and produces it.*] Yes, it's here.

MR. MANNINGHAM. [*Reproachfully. As he crosses to the desk, places the Bible on it and crosses up Left.*] Then you did know where it was, Bella. [*Turns to her.*] You did know where it was.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*As she starts toward him.*] No! No! I only *supposed* it was! I only supposed it was because it was found there before! It was found there twice before. Don't you see? I *didn't* know—I didn't!

MR. MANNINGHAM. There is no sense in walking about the room with a picture in your hands, Bella. Go and put it back in its proper place.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Pause as she hangs the picture on wall—she comes to the back of the chair Right of table.*] Oh, look at our tea. We were having our tea with muffins—

MR. MANNINGHAM. Now, Bella, I said a moment ago

that we have got to face facts. And that is what we have got to do. I am not going to say anything at the moment, for my feelings are running too high. In fact, I am going out immediately, and I suggest that you go to your room and lie down for a little in the dark.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. No, no—not my room. For God's sake don't send me to my room! [*Grabbing chair.*]

MR. MANNINGHAM. There is no question of sending you to your room, Bella. [*Crosses to her.*] You know perfectly well that you may do exactly as you please.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. I feel faint, Jack— [*He goes quickly to her and supports her.*] I feel faint—

MR. MANNINGHAM. Very well— [*Leading her to settee and she sinks down with her head to Left end.*] Now, take things quietly and come and lie down, here. Where are your salts? [*Crosses to secretary, gets salts and returns to her back of settee.*] Here they are— [*Pause.*] Now, my dear, I am going to leave you in peace—

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Eyes closed, reclining.*] Have you got to go? Must you go? Must you always leave me alone after these dreadful scenes?

MR. MANNINGHAM. Now, no argument, please. I had to go in any case after tea, and I'm merely leaving you a little earlier, that's all. [*Pause. Going into wardrobe and returning with undercoat on.*] Now is there anything I can get for you?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. No, Jack dear, nothing. You go.

MR. MANNINGHAM. Very good— [*Goes toward his hat and overcoat which is on the chair above desk, and stops.*] Oh, by the way, I shall be passing the grocer and

I might as well pay that bill of his and get it done with. Where is it, my dear? I gave it to you, didn't I?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Yes, dear. It's on the secretary. [*Half rising.*] I'll—

MR. MANNINGHAM. [*Crossing to secretary.*] No, dear—don't move—don't move I can find it. [*At secretary and begins to rummage.*] I shall be glad to get the thing off my chest. Where is it, dear? Is it in one of these drawers?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. No—it's on top. I put it there this afternoon.

MR. MANNINGHAM. All right. We'll find it— We'll find it— Are you sure it's here, dear? There's nothing here except some writing paper.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Half rising and speaking suspiciously.*] Jack, I'm quite sure it is there. Will you look carefully?

MR. MANNINGHAM. [*Soothingly.*] All right, dear. Don't worry. I'll find it. Lie down. It's of no importance. I'll find it— No, it's not here— It must be in one of the drawers—

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*She has rushed to the secretary.*] It is not in one of the drawers! I put it out here on top! You're not going to tell me *this* has gone, are you?

MR. MANNINGHAM. [*Speaking at the same time.*] My dear. Calm yourself. Calm yourself.

} [Together]

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Searching frantically.*] I laid it out here myself! Where is it? [*Opening and shutting*

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ANGEL STREET

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*drawers.*] Where is it? Now you're going to say I've hidden this!

MR. MANNINGHAM. [*Walking away to Left end of settee.*] My God!—What new trick is this you're playing upon me?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*At Right lower end of settee.*] It was there this afternoon! I put it there! This is a plot! This is a filthy plot! You're all against me! It's a plot! [*She screams hysterically.*]

MR. MANNINGHAM. [*Coming to her and shaking her violently.*] Will you control yourself! Will you control yourself! [*Pause until she calms down.*] Listen to me, Madam, if you utter another sound I'll knock you down and take you to your room and lock you in darkness for a week. I have been too lenient with you, and I mean to alter my tactics.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Sinks to her knees.*] Oh, God help me! God help me!

MR. MANNINGHAM. May God help you, indeed Now listen to me. I am going to leave you until ten o'clock. [*He lifts her up.*] In that time you will recover that paper, and admit to me that you have lyingly and purposely concealed it—if not, you will take the consequences. [*Pause as he places her in the chair down Right and he crosses Left to above desk.*] You are going to see a doctor, [*He stops and turns to BELLA.*] Madam, more than one doctor—[*Puts his hat on and throws his coat over his arm.*] and they shall decide what this means. Now do you understand me?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Oh, God—be patient with me. If I am mad, be patient with me.



MR. MANNINGHAM. I have been patient with you and controlled myself long enough. It is now for you to control yourself, or take the consequences. Think upon that, Bella. [*Goes to Left Center doors and opens them.*]

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Jack—Jack—don't go—Jack—You're still going to take me to the theatre, aren't you?

MR. MANNINGHAM. What a question to ask me at such a time. No, Madam, emphatically, I am not. You play fair by me, and I'll play fair by you. But if we are going to be enemies, you and I, you will not prosper, believe me. [*Goes out.*]

[*Short pause and then a DOOR slams. Whimperingly, MRS. MANNINGHAM rises, aiding herself by the mantel and crosses up to the secretary searching through the drawers, then crosses to Center, looks at the picture at up Center and shudders. Then turning to Center table, she takes up the pitcher of water from the tea tray, crosses to the secretary, opens the upper door of the secretary, gets a glass, then opens a drawer and takes out a paper of medicine. She takes this medicine and follows it with a drink of water. This is obviously, incredibly nasty and almost chokes her. She staggers over to the Center table and replaces the pitcher of water and then turns down the table lamp. Then crossing to the settee, she sinks down on it with her head toward the fireplace and sobs. She mutters, "Peace—Peace—Peace." She breathes heavily as a CLOCK in the house strikes 6.00. Pause. There is a KNOCK at the door. She does not hear it. There is another KNOCK and ELIZABETH enters Left Center.*]

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

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ANGEL STREET

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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 be heard calling "Will you come in, please, sir?"*]

[*The door is heard to SLAM. MRS. MANNINGHAM rises, half paralyzed, then runs over to the mirror above the mantelpiece and adjusts her hair. Stands with her back to the fireplace, waiting. ELIZABETH returns, holding back the door. DETECTIVE ROUGH enters. He is middle-aged—greying, short, wiry, active, brusque, friendly, over-bearing. He has a low warming chuckle and completely dominates the scene from the beginning.*]

ROUGH. Thank you—Ah—good evening. [*As he crosses down to Left end of settee.*] Mrs. Manningham. I believe—How are you, Mrs. Manningham? [*Chuckling, offers his hand.*]

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Shaking hands.*] How do you do? I'm very much afraid—

ROUGH. You're very much afraid you don't know me from Adam? That's about the root of the matter, isn't it?

[*ELIZABETH goes out Left Center, closing the doors.*]

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Oh, no—it's not that—but no doubt you have come to see my husband?

ROUGH. [*Who is still holding her hand, and looking at her appraisingly.*] Oh, no! You couldn't be further out.

[*Chuckling.*] On the contrary, I have chosen this precise moment to call when I knew your husband was out. May I take off my things and sit down? [*Starts to remove his coat.*]

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Why, yes, I suppose you may.

ROUGH. You're a good deal younger and more attractive than I thought, you know. But you're looking very pale. Have you been crying?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Really—I'm afraid I don't understand at all.

ROUGH. You will do so, Madam, very shortly. [*Goes Left Center and begins to remove scarf.*] You're the lady who's going off her head, aren't you? [*Chuckles. To lower end of desk. He puts his hat on the desk and is removing his scarf and overcoat.*]

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Terrified.*] What made you say that? [*Goes toward him. Stops at Center.*] Who are you? What have you come to talk about?

ROUGH. Ah, you're running away with things, Mrs. Manningham, and asking me a good deal I can't answer at once. [*Taking off coat, and putting it on chair down Left and then crosses to down Left Center.*] Instead of that, I am going to ask you a question or two— Now, please, will you come here, and give me your hands? [*Pause. She obeys.*] Now, Mrs. Manningham, I want you to take a good look at me, and see if you are not looking at someone to whom you can give your trust. I am a perfect stranger to you, and you can read little in my face besides that. But I can read a great deal in yours.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Pause.*] What? What can you read in mine?

ROUGH. Why, Madam, I can read the tokens of one who has travelled a very long way upon the path of sorrow and doubt—and will have, I fear, to travel a little further yet before she comes to the end. But I fancy she is coming towards the end, for all that. Come now, are you going to trust me, and listen to me?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Pause.*] Who are you? God knows I need help.

ROUGH. [*Still holding her hands.*] I very much doubt whether God knows anything of the sort, Mrs. Manningham. If he did I believe he would have come to your aid before this. But I am here, and so you must give me your faith.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Withdraws her hand and withdraws a step.*] Who are you? Are you a doctor?

ROUGH. Nothing so learned, Ma'am. Just a plain police detective.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Shrinks away.*] Police detective?

ROUGH. Yes. Or was some years ago. [*Crossing to chair Left of table.*] At any rate, still detective enough to see that you've been interrupted in your tea. Couldn't you start again, and let me have a cup? [*He stands back of chair Left of table and holds it for her.*]

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Why, yes—yes. I will give you a cup. It only wants water. [*She begins to busy herself with hot water, cup, pot, etc., throughout the ensuing conversation.*]

ROUGH. [*Crosses around above table and to back of chair Right of it.*] You never heard of the celebrated Sergeant Rough, Madam? Sergeant Rough, who solved

the Claudesley Diamond Case—Sergeant Rough, who hunted down the Camberwell dogs—Sergeant Rough, who brought Sandham himself to justice. [*He has his hand on back of chair, as he looks at her*] Or were all such sensations before your time?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Looking up at ROUGH.*] Sandham? Why, yes—I have heard of Sandham—the murderer—the Throttler.

ROUGH. Yes—Madam—Sandham the Throttler. And you are now looking at the man who gave Sandham to the man who throttled him. And that was the common hangman. In fact, Mrs. Manningham—you have in front of you one who was quite a personage in his day—believe it or not.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*As she adds water to the tea.*] I quite believe it. Won't you sit down? I'm afraid it won't be very hot.

ROUGH. Thank you— [*Sitting.*] How long have you been married, Mrs. Manningham?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Pouring tea.*] Five years—and a little.

ROUGH. Where have you lived during all that time, Mrs. Manningham? Not here, have you?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Putting milk in his cup and passing it to him.*] No—first we went abroad—then we lived in Yorkshire, and then six months ago my husband bought this house.

ROUGH. You bought it?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Yes. I had a bit of money. My husband thought this was an excellent investment.

ROUGH. [*Taking cup.*] You had a bit of money, eh? That's very good. And does your husband always leave you alone like this in the evenings?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Yes. He goes to his club, I believe, and does business.

ROUGH. Oh, yes— [*He is stirring his tea, thoughtfully.*]

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Yes—

ROUGH. And does he give you a free run of the whole house while he's out?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Yes— Well, no—not the top floor. Why do you ask?

ROUGH. Ah—not the top floor—

MRS. MANNINGHAM. No—no—will you have some sugar?

ROUGH. Thanks.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Bending over eagerly to answer his questions.*] What were you saying?

ROUGH. [*As he takes sugar. Lightly and chuckling.*] Before I go any further, Mrs. Manningham, I must tell you there's a leakage in this household. You have a maid called Nancy?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Yes—yes—

ROUGH. And Nancy walks out of an evening with a young man named Booker in my employ. I only live a few streets away from you, you know.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Oh, yes?

ROUGH. [*With a chuckle.*] Well, there is hardly anything

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ANGEL STREET

33

which goes on in this house, which is not described in detail to Booker, and from that quarter it reaches me.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. I knew it! I knew she talked. Now I know it, she shall be dismissed.

ROUGH. Oh, no—no such retribution is going to overtake her at the moment, Mrs. Manningham. In fact, I fancy you are going to be heavily in debt to your maid, Nancy. If it were not for her indiscretions I should not be here now, should I?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. What do you mean? What is this mystery? You must not keep me in the dark. What is it?

ROUGH. I'm afraid I shall have to keep you in the dark for a little, Mrs. Manningham, as I am still quite far down in the dark myself. Can I have another lump of sugar in this?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Yes. [*Passes bowl to him.*]

ROUGH. Thank you. [*Pause.*] We were talking about the top floor. [*Helping himself to several lumps.*] There is a bedroom above this, and above that again is the top floor? Is that right?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Yes. But it's shut up. When we first took the house, my husband said we would not need the upstairs quarters—until there were children.

ROUGH. You've never been up to the top floor, Mrs. Manningham?

[*Pause.*]

MRS. MANNINGHAM. No one goes up there.

ROUGH. Not even a servant to dust?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. No



ROUGH. Rather funny?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Pause.*] Funny? [*Pause.*] I don't know— [*But she does think so.*]

ROUGH. I think it is. Now, Mrs. Manningham, to ask a personal question. When did you first get the notion into your head that your reason was playing you tricks?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*About to drink her tea. Pause. Looks at ROUGH and then sets her cup down.*] How did you know?

ROUGH. Never mind how I know. When did it begin?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. I always had that dread. My mother died insane, when she was quite young. When she was my age. But only in the last six months, in this house— things began to happen—

ROUGH. Which are driving you mad with fear?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Gasping.*] Yes. Which are driving me mad with fear.

ROUGH. Is it the house itself you fear, Mrs. Manningham?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Yes. I suppose it is. I hate the house. I always did.

ROUGH. And has the top floor got anything to do with it?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Yes, yes, it has. That's how all this dreadful horror began.

ROUGH. Ah—now you interest me beyond measure. Do tell me about the top floor.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. I don't know what to say. It all

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ANGEL STREET

35

sounds so incredible— It's when I'm alone at night. I get the idea that—somebody's walking about up there—  
[*Looking up.*] Up there— At night, when my husband's out— I hear noises, from my bedroom, but I'm too afraid to go up—

ROUGH. Have you told your husband about this?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. No. I'm afraid to. He gets angry. He says I imagine things which don't exist—

ROUGH. It never struck you, did it, that it might be your own husband walking about up there?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Yes—that is what I thought—but I thought I must be mad. [*As she turns to ROUGH.*] Tell me how you know.

ROUGH. Why not tell me first how you knew, Mrs. Manningham.

MRS. MANNINGHAM [*She rises and goes toward fireplace.*] It's true, then! It's true. I knew it. I knew it! When he leaves this house he comes back. He comes back and walks up there above—up and down—up and down. [*Turns to fireplace.*] He comes back like a ghost. How does he get up there?

ROUGH. [*Rises, crosses to MRS. MANNINGHAM.*] That's what we're going to find out, Mrs. Manningham. But there are such commonplace resources as roofs and fire escapes, you know. Now please don't look so frightened. Your husband is no ghost, believe me, and you are very far from mad. [*Pause.*] Tell me now, what made you first think it was him?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. It was the light—the gas light—

It went down and it went up— [*Starts to cry.*] Oh, thank God I can tell this to someone at last. I don't know who you are, but I must tell you. [*Crosses to ROUGH.*]

ROUGH. [*Takes her hands.*] Now try to keep calm. You can tell me just as well sitting down, can't you? Won't you sit down? [*He moves back.*]

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Yes—yes. [*She sits down on Right end of settee.*]

ROUGH. [*Looks around.*] The light, did you say? Did you see a light from a window?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. No. In this house, I can tell everything by the light of the gas. You see the mantle there. Now it's burning full. But if an extra light went on in the kitchen or someone lit it in the bedroom then this one would sink down. It's the same all over the house.

ROUGH. Yes—yes—that's just a question of insufficient pressure, and it's the same in mine. But go on, please.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Pause.*] Every night, after he goes out, I find myself waiting for something. Then all at once I look round the room and see that the light is slowly going down. Then I hear tapping sounds—persistent tapping sounds. At first I tried not to notice it, but after a time it began to get on my nerves. I would go all over the house to see if anyone had put on an extra light, but they never had. It's always at the same time—about ten minutes after he goes out. That's what gave me the idea that somehow *he* had come back and that it was *he* who was walking about up there. I go up to the bedroom but I daren't stay there because I hear noises overhead. I want to scream and run out of the house. I sit here for hours, terrified, waiting for him to come

back, and I always know when he's coming, always. Suddenly the light goes up again and ten minutes afterwards I hear his key in the lock [*A look at Left Center doors.*] and he's back again.

ROUGH. [*Lightly—chuckling.*] How very strange, indeed. You know, Mrs. Manningham, you should have been a policeman.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Are you laughing at me? Do you think I imagine everything, too?

ROUGH. Oh, no! I was merely praising the keenness of your observation. I not only think you are right in your suppositions, I think you have made a very remarkable discovery, and one which may have very far-reaching consequences.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Far-reaching? How?

ROUGH. Well, let's leave that for the moment. [*Moves closer to her.*] Tell me, that is not the only cause, is it, which has lately given you reason to doubt your sanity? [*Pause.*] Has anything else been happening? [*Pause.*] Don't be afraid to tell me.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Yes, there are other things. I hardly dare speak of them. It has been going on for so long. This business of the gas has only brought it to a head. It seems that my mind and memory are beginning to play me tricks.

ROUGH. Tricks? What sort of tricks? When?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Incessantly—but more and more of late. He gives me things to look after, and when he asks for them they are gone, and can never be found. Then he misses his rings, or his studs, and I will hunt the place

for them, and he will find them lying hidden at the bottom of my work-box. Twice the door of that room [*Turning and looking at door up Right.*] was found locked with the key vanished. That was also found at bottom of my box. Only today, before you came, that picture had been taken from the wall and hidden. [*looks around at picture.*] Who could have done it myself? I try to remember. [*He turns to her.*] I beat my heart trying to remember. But I can't. Oh, and then there was that terrible business about the dog—

ROUGH. The dog?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. We have a little dog. A few weeks ago, it was found with its paw hurt.—He believes—(God, how I tell you what he believes—that I had hidden the dog. He does not let the dog near me now. He keeps it in the kitchen and I am not allowed to see it! I begin to doubt, don't you see? I begin to believe I imagine everything. Perhaps I do. Are you here? Is this a dress too? Who are you? [*Rises.*] I'm afraid they are going to lock me up.

ROUGH. Do you know, Mrs. Manningham, it has occurred to me that you'd be all the better for a little medicine.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Medicine. Are you a doctor? You're not a doctor, are you?

ROUGH. [*Chuckling.*] No, I'm not a doctor, but that doesn't mean that a little medicine would do you a harm.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. But I have medicine. He makes me take it. It does me no good, and I hate it. How can medicine help a mind that's ill?

ROUGH. Oh—but mine's an exceptional medicine. I have some with me now. You must try it.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. What medicine is it?

ROUGH [*He rises and goes over Left.*] You shall sample it and see. [*At Center.*] You see, it has been employed by humanity, for several ages, for the purpose of the instantaneous removal of dark fears and doubts. That seems to fit you, doesn't it? [*Crosses to Left to coat then turns to her.*]

MRS. MANNINGHAM. The removal of doubt. How could a medicine effect that?

ROUGH. Ah—that we don't know. The fact remains that it does. Here we are. [*Produces what is obviously a bottle of whiskey, and crosses to Left of Center table.*] You see, it comes from Scotland. Now, Madam, have you such a thing handy as two glasses or a couple of cups?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Crosses to Left end of settee.*] Why—are you having some, too?

ROUGH. Oh, yes. I am having some above all things. We could use these cups, if you like.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. No. [*She goes to secretary and brings out two glasses and crosses to Right of Center table.*] I will get two—

ROUGH. Ah—thank you—the very thing. Now we shan't be long.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. What is it? I so dislike medicine. What does it taste like?

ROUGH. Delicious! Something between ambrosia and

methylated spirits. Do you mean to say you've never tasted good Scotch whiskey, Mrs. Manningham?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Whiskey? But I must not take whiskey. I can't do that!

ROUGH. [*Pouring it out.*] You underestimate your powers, Mrs. Manningham. You see, I don't want you thinking you can't trust your reason. This will give you faith in your reason like nothing else— Now for some water— All right this will do. [*Takes water from pitcher and pours it into the glasses.*] There! [*Hands glass to her.*] Tell me— [*Is pouring water into his own.*] Did you ever hear of the Cabman's Friend, Mrs. Manningham?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. The Cabman's Friend?

ROUGH. Yes. How nice to see you smile. Here's your very good health. [*Drinks.*] Go on— [*She drinks.*] There— Is it so nasty?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. No. I rather like it. My mother used to give us this as children when we had the fever.

ROUGH. Ah, then you're a hardened whiskey drinker. But you'll enjoy it better sitting down.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Yes. [*Sitting down on chair below fireplace. He drinks.*] What were you saying? Who is the Cabman's Friend?

ROUGH. Ah. The Cabman's Friend. [*Crosses to her.*] You should ask me who *was* the Cabman's Friend, Mrs. Manningham, for she was an old lady who died many years ago. [*Pause, as he puts whiskey on mantelpiece.*]

MRS. MANNINGHAM. An old lady years ago? What has she to do with me?

ROUGH. A great deal, I fancy, [*Crosses to Right end of*

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ANGEL STREET

41

*settee.*] if you will follow me patiently. Her name was Barlow—Alice Barlow, and she was an old lady of great wealth, and decided eccentricities. In fact, her principal mania in life was the protection of cabmen. You may think that an extraordinary hobby, but in her odd way she did a lot of good. She provided these men with shelters, clothing, pensions, and so forth, and that was her little contribution to the sum of the world's happiness; or rather her little stand against the sum of the world's pain. There is a great deal of pain in this world, Mrs. Manningham, you know. [*Crosses to upper end of fireplace.*] Well, it was not my privilege to know her, but it was my duty, on just one occasion, to see her. [*Turns to her.*] That was when her throat was cut open, and she lay dead on the floor of her own house.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Oh, how horrible! Do you mean she was murdered?

ROUGH. Yes. [*Crosses to Right end of settee.*] She was murdered. I was only a comparatively young officer at the time. It made an extremely horrible, in fact I may say lasting, impression on me. You see the murderer was never discovered but the motive was obvious enough. Her husband had left her the Barlow rubies, [*Crosses to Left end of settee.*] and it was well known that she kept them, without any proper precautions, in her bedroom on an upper floor. [*Turns to her.*] She lived alone except for a deaf servant in the basement. Well, for that she paid the penalty of her life.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. But I don't see—

ROUGH. There were some sensational features about the case. The man seemed to have got in at about ten at night, and stayed till dawn. Apart, presumably, from



the famous rubies, there were only a few trinkets taken, but the whole house had been turned upside down, and in the upper room every single thing was flung about, or torn open. Even the cushions of the chairs were ripped up with his bloody knife, and the police decided that it must have been a revengeful maniac as well as a robber. I had other theories, but I was a nobody then, and not in charge of the case.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. What were your theories?

ROUGH. [*Crossing up Right.*] Well, it seemed to me, from all that I gathered here and there, that the old lady might have been an eccentric, but that she was by no means a fool. It seemed to me [*Crossing to back of settee.*] that she might have been one too clever for this man. We presume he killed her to silence her, but what then? What if she had *not* been so careless? [*Slowly crossing to her.*] What if she had got those jewels cunningly hidden away in some inconceivable place, in the walls, floored down, bricked in, maybe? What if the only person who could tell him where they were was lying dead on the floor? Would not that account, Mrs. Manningham, for all that strange confusion in which the place was found? [*Crossing back of settee to Center.*] Can't you picture him, Mrs. Manningham, searching through the night, ransacking the place, hour after hour, growing more and more desperate, until at last the dawn comes and he has to slink out into the pale street, the blood and wreckage of the night behind? [*Turns to her.*] And the deaf servant down in the basement sleeping like a log through it all.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Oh, how horrible! How horrible indeed! And was the man never found?

ROUGH. No, Mrs. Manningham, the man was never found. Nor have the Barlow rubies ever come to light.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Then perhaps he found them after all, and may be alive today.

ROUGH. I think he is almost certainly alive today, but I don't believe he found what he wanted. That is, if my theory is right.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Then the jewels may still be where the old lady hid them?

ROUGH. Indeed, Mrs. Manningham, if my theory is right the jewels *must* still be where she hid them. The official conclusion was quite otherwise. The police, naturally and quite excusably, presumed that the murderer had got them, and there was no re-opening of matters in those days. Soon enough the public forgot about it. I almost forgot about it myself. But it would be funny, wouldn't it, Mrs. Manningham, if after all these years I should turn out to be right.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Yes, yes, indeed. But what has this to do with me?

ROUGH. Ah, that is the whole question, Mrs. Manningham. What, indeed? What has the obscure murder of an old lady fifteen years ago to do with an attractive, though I am afraid at present, somewhat pale and wan young woman, who believes she is going out of her mind? Well, believe there is a link, however remote, wild and strange it may be, and that is why I am here.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. It's all so confusing. Won't you—

ROUGH. Do you conceive it possible, Mrs. Manningham, that that man might never have given up hope of one day getting at the treasure which lay there?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Yes. Yes. Possibly. But how—

ROUGH. Can you conceive that he may have waited years—gone abroad, got married even, until at last his chance came to resume the search begun on that terrible night? [*Crossing down to her.*] You don't follow where I am leading at all, do you, Mrs. Manningham?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Follow you? I think so.

ROUGH. You know, Mrs. Manningham, of the old theory that the criminal always returns to the scene of his crime.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. Yes?

ROUGH. Ah, yes, but in this case there is something more than morbid compulsion— There is real treasure there to be unearthed if only he can search again, search methodically, without fear of interruption, without causing suspicion. And how would he do that? [*All at once she rises.*] Don't you think— What's the matter, Mrs. Manningham?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*As she looks at brackets and backs away to Right Center.*] Quiet! Be quiet! He has come back! Look at the light! It is going down! [*Pause as LIGHT sinks.*] Wait! There! [*Pause.*] He has come back, you see. [*As she looks up at ceiling.*] He is upstairs now.

ROUGH. Dear me, now. How very odd that is. How very odd, indeed.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. [*Whispering.*] He is in the house, I tell you. You must go. He will know you are here. You must go.

[WARN CURTAIN]

[1

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ANGEL STREET

45

ROUGH. How dark it is. [*Crosses down to Right end of settee.*] You could hardly see to read.

MRS. MANNINGHAM. You must go. He is in the house. Please go.

ROUGH. [*Quickly coming to her and taking her arms in his hands.*] Quiet, Mrs. Manningham, quiet! You have got to keep your head. Don't you see my meaning, yet? Don't you understand that this was the house?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. House? What house?

ROUGH. The old woman's house, Mrs. Manningham—This house, here, these rooms, these walls. Fifteen years ago Alice Barlow lay dead on the floor in this room. Fifteen years ago the man who murdered her ransacked this house—below and above—but could not find what he sought. What if he is still searching, Mrs. Manningham? [*Indicating upstairs.*] What if he is up there—still searching? Now do you see why you must keep your head?

MRS. MANNINGHAM. But my husband, my husband is up there!

ROUGH. [*Drops her arms.*] Precisely that, Mrs. Manningham. Your husband. [*Going for her drink on mantelpiece.*] You see, I am afraid you are married to a tolerably dangerous gentleman. [*Takes second glass off mantel and crosses to her.*] Now drink this quickly, as we have a great deal to do.

[*He stands there, holding out glass to her. She remains motionless.*]

THE CURTAIN FALLS

RTAIN]