

for it— What are you up to with her—aren't you ashamed of yourself, trying to—and with a servant girl only nineteen and dirty at that. Aren't you ashamed of yourself, you pimp? Can't you find any better women in the neighborhood?

CSASZAR [*crosses to right*]. Very nervous, very nervous.

ADELE. Did you give her the money?

CSASZAR. Sure I did, because I sent her to Huttledrof on an errand.

CSASZAR [*crosses left to IRMA*]. To IRMA]. But you, if you **START** ing your mouth off, I'll give you a crack in the jaw, if you go on trying to make people think that. . . .

IRMA. I wasn't trying to make nobody think nothing, I swear by my happiness, and I don't want Mr. Csaszar neither this way nor that.

CSASZAR [*crosses back center*]. I don't want to be wanted by you, but don't you start any talk about me.

[ADELE and CSASZAR cross up stage center.]

IRMA [*crosses below table*]. I don't start any talk. I work like a dog, but everybody is against me, and Mr. Szasz snitched on me that I tried to nurse the cat, because he hates me, for he wanted to mouth with me and I wouldn't let him.

ADELE [*crosses down center*]. He wanted to what—?

IRMA. He tried to mouth a cherry with me—that he'll put the cherry in his mouth and that I should bite off half and he should bite off half and then when we got to the pit we'd have to kiss— He was teasing me for a half hour, saying that I should at least put the cherry in my mouth, but I hate him—even though he promised me a theatre ticket, even

## ◆ THE GLASS SLIPPER

then I wouldn't do it, and now he hates me and tries to turn madam against me—begging your pardon—I don't know what to do any more. I'm going to stick my head in the rain barrel and keep it in there till I choke! That's what I'm going to do. I can't stand it. Why don't you all—leave me alone!

ADELE [*crosses to right*]. To IRMA]. Get out! Of all the. . . . Back to your work!

[IRMA goes out, weeping.]

CSASZAR [*crosses to table, sits on it*]. ~~Say~~, what the hell is the matter with you any way, all the time grumbling and on Sunday, too. You're driving the cook crazy. You're killing this kid; as long as you're getting married, what's biting you?

ADELE [*crosses to right*]. That's just what it is—

CSASZAR. Who are you marrying?

ADELE. Sipos.

CSASZAR. ~~Say~~, are you crazy?

ADELE. I am.

[Pause.]

CSASZAR [*crosses to ADELE*]. Please sit down. It's awful how nervous you are. Maybe you really are crazy after all, I don't know. Tell me. What is this? And this business about the ribbons. . . . And that I'm flirting with the servant girl. . . . [*Passionately embracing her.*] Are you mad? Are you jealous? [*Kisses her.*] You fool. . . you. . . you. . .

ADELE [*draws away*]. Let me alone. Sipos is likely to come home any moment. Now listen to me. Everything is over. What do you want? Everything is over. Can't you understand?

CSASZAR. What is over?

ADELE. That I'm your mistress.

CSASZAR. How. . . . Now all of a

sudden it's ended, without any reason, at exactly a quarter past twelve?

ADELE. At exactly a quarter past twelve. [*Clinch.*] Leave me alone, now and forever.

[*Pushes off CSASZAR.*]

CSASZAR. But only last evening . . . and night . . .

ADELE. But not to-day. And never again. I swear by my mother's life.

CSASZAR. Why? Why?

ADELE. Because I'm in love with you. Detestable, dressed up, conceited drummer, I'm in love with you, terribly in love, and now it's all over because I have brains and strength. I hate you and despise you. But now I'm getting older and I am more in love with you, and now I want to kick you out and marry Sipos, right away, at that, without waiting a day, otherwise I'll go to hell with you. ~~I made a little money in this boarding house, and I'm thirty~~ six years old, and you haven't a cent and you're rotten and twenty-three and impertinent and handsome, and want to marry that rich little idiot. And it's all no use, unless I save myself—I know myself. I know what kind of a woman I am—the end is going to be that I'll beg you not to get married, and bite you in the neck and throw vitriol into your face and stick a kitchen knife into you. But still I won't let you get married,—and then here I'll be, an old — what-you-may-call-it, who has a young lover, and then you'll beat me every day and then I'll hang myself. That is all, my dear boy, no more and no less.

CSASZAR. It's awful, your talking this way—

[*Crosses to left at table.*]

ADELE. Does it hurt you?

CSASZAR [*on table, left sits*]. Terribly.

ADELE [*crosses center*]. It hurts me even worse. You'll never know how much it hurts me. And you don't deserve to know. What are you, anyway? A nobody. Have you character? No. Have you money? No. No. Are you honest? I don't even know. You're a handsome boy and you were impertinent, and for ten years I've been the mistress of a cranky old man—and the only thing ~~you've ever done for me was to be~~ fresh— You were fresh to me at Balazsy's, when we first got acquainted, then you got fresh to me at the Nivana Café,—you got fresh twice in succession and that—made me wild and I let you have a room here, and you wouldn't even talk to me, and I bought myself new dresses on account of you.—I'm the most respected woman in the neighborhood, and you wouldn't even take off your hat to me, and I sewed lace on my nightgowns and even bought myself a pair of patent leather slippers, and still you wouldn't notice me and you wouldn't even look at me. You just kept on being fresh, and I bit my hand in my anger, and you laughed in my face,—and then, when you were even more impertinent and made me cry, then you took ~~me into your room. Sipos was at~~ ~~Judaers at my mother's~~—and I slept with you and then I slept with you again and I was crazy about you—and wept because of you, but ~~that~~ ~~was just anger, and still I was un-~~ faithful to Sipos with you always, always, you nobody, you heartless, empty thing. Just because you were fresh and a beggar and handsome and

~~now take off your hat to me~~, is that any reason why I should go to the dogs and die?

[ADELE crosses to chair right of door at center.]

CSASZAR [*stands. Crosses center to chair*]. Good God, it's really terrible, this nervousness of yours. What do you want, anyway? Everything is all right, we're all happy, I'm crazy about you, Sipos doesn't suspect a thing, isn't even thinking of marrying you, your boarding is paying well enough— ~~Well~~, Sipos doesn't pay and I don't pay, but the others all do. You are healthy, you're pretty, you're young; what do you want? What do you want anyway, why are you throwing everything aside all of a sudden?

ADELE [*pushes him center off, moves down right*]. You want to marry Balaszy's daughter.

CSASZAR [*holds up center*]. That isn't true.

ADELE. Oh, what's that to you! Just another lie. ~~Of course, you say it isn't true. You want to marry Balaszy's daughter.~~

~~CSASZAR. Not true, not true.~~

ADELE. Last Sunday you went on a picnic with her. Is that true, or not?

CSASZAR. True. But I told you in advance that . . .

ADDELE. Don't stammer. On Wednesday you went to the movies with the girl; is that true or not?

CSASZAR [*crosses to ADELE*]. Didn't I ask your permission in advance?

ADELE. Did you go to the movies with her? Yes or no?

CSASZAR. Yes.

ADELE. What did you keep on whispering into her ear in the dark? Why did you go with her father to

the Nivana café? Why did you take her ring and her bracelet to be reset?

CSASZAR. Because I'm a jeweler and that's my trade.

ADELE. You're a faker, a marriage hunter; that's your trade!

CSASZAR. But, Adele!

~~ADELE. This morning for an hour you kept on begging Brausz, the butcher, to loan you his wagon for this afternoon. You told him that you wanted to take your fiancée for an outing.~~

CSASZAR. I said my fiancée? An acquaintance, I said . . .

ADELE. Don't lie, you told him it was your fiancée. You're a cheat, a cheat, a cheat. You want to marry Balaszy's daughter, because her father's got nothing but corn, you liar!

CSASZAR. Adele, you call me . . .

ADELE. Liar, liar, liar!!

CSASZAR [*turning front*]. Adele, if I should forget that I am a gentleman. . . .

ADELE. Go on, hit me

CSASZAR [*shrugs, steps back, crosses to right*]. You're crazy! If you go on this way, I'll go away.

ADELE. I could still stop the whole affair. Take it from me, it would take only a word from me. But I know what I'm doing. You can marry the carpenter's daughter. I'm going to marry Sipos. Sipos is a decent, honest man. And once I'm Mrs. Sipos, no other man touches me, ever, I give you my word on that— you ought to know that if you know me. And then I'll be able to breathe again and I'll be rid of you . . . because from the beginning you have been nothing to me but bad luck.

~~CSASZAR. You're going to marry~~

END

## THE GLASS SLIPPER ◆

◆ 635

for things on account of you, and I get only kicks from everybody because no one understands my broken heart. And my soul is panting near your lips and all you want to do is to spank me.

[Leans against wall **START** as she weeps.]

SIPOS [a little embarrassed]. Stop your snuffling and get out of here.

IRMA [bawling]. It's all the same now, anyway.

SIPOS [embarrassed]. Don't you dare let me see you again.

IRMA [starts out, pauses on threshold, crying]. I know, I know: "Door!" [Closes door behind her.]

[SIPOS crosses to window up center, takes pipe, at left of table.

ADELE enters.]

ADELE. Here's the black coffee!

SIPOS. We mustn't keep this child here another moment. She has no mother, no father, you are her nearest relative, we are responsible for her. Now she is beginning to be a woman. She is restless, and all that theatre-going is not doing her any good.

[Crosses back to chair left of table. Sits.]

ADELE. Well, why shouldn't she go to the National Theatre? Anyway, I let her see nothing but the classics.

SIPOS. That's where you find most of the dirt.

ADELE [above table]. Well, I didn't write them.

SIPOS. Soon she'll be twenty years old. And some fine morning she will wake up and find that some one has—

ADELE. I think some one has already.

SIPOS. Who?

ADELE. What do I know? Mr. Csaszar . . . Mr. Szasz . . . Perhaps both of them.

SIPOS. ~~Is there sugar in it?~~

ADELE. ~~Two lumps.~~ I want to talk to you.

[Crosses up for chair.]

SIPOS. Well, go on—

ADELE [brings chair and sits]. How are you feeling?

SIPOS. I always feel rotten on Sunday, even after dinner.

ADELE [takes toothpick]. Come to think of it, always. No matter how you feel we must settle this. Within two weeks you'll have to marry me.

SIPOS [puts down the spoon]. Do you mind saying that again?

ADELE. Within two weeks you will have to marry me.

SIPOS. You don't say!

[Continues with his coffee.]

ADELE. This is no joking matter. I am serious. It would be much wiser if you started to think this over instead of arguing about it now. Every moment is precious.

SIPOS. What's the hurry?

ADELE. Because—

SIPOS. Why?

ADELE. Because it's due.

SIPOS. What is it? . . . You mean that . . .

ADELE. No, no. I have just come to realize it. I know that you don't like to think about it, you just keep on letting it go by, day by day. . . . It will be the same to-morrow and the day after . . . but it can't go on. Some day you are up against it.

SIPOS. It isn't possible.

ADELE. Why?

SIPOS. Because I am a poor man.

ADELE. You were always that.

SIPOS. I can't have my wife support me. True, I haven't been pay-

ing for board. But at least I owed it to you.

ADELE. You'll keep on owing it to me. Or what do you think? I've got to maintain my position in this neighborhood. They think a lot of me, but every one knows that we are living together . . . and still you don't want to make me your wife?

SIPOS. We've always said that that was not necessary; you are free, I am free. It was better that way.

ADELE. I am free?

SIPOS. Well, no . . . not that way.

ADELE. In what way, then? You have all kinds of liberty, a woman has only one kind, that's certain. And in that one I am not free.

~~[Door opens, IRMA comes in.]~~

IRMA [excited. Crosses down above table]. Please, Mr. Sipos, Miss Adele told me that I should tell you that I was to the watchmaker's and that the watchmaker said that the watch isn't ready yet.

SIPOS. All right—

IRMA. It won't be ready until next week.

SIPOS. All right. [Long pause.] Well, are you going to stand there until next week?

IRMA. Next week? No.

~~[Goes out. Pause.]~~

SIPOS. Very well, I'll remember this and we'll talk about it in the fall.

ADELE. No, my boy, this isn't a question of the seasons or the way you usually do things. How can you expect to go on the way you're going? You have a few worries, too. Now you are angry because I got you out of the rut. I know you.

SIPOS. I'm not the kind that would make a husband. I am a born bachelor.

ADELE. Well, I'm a born wife. And I gave you my best ten years.

~~SIPOS. But before those ten years, you had eight years which you did not give to me.~~

ADELE. You say that now, when I am reminding you of your duty.

SIPOS. I always said it. If not to you, to myself. Don't excite me. Because that's the most painful thing in my life, don't force me to speak of it.

ADELE. Well, then, when I was twenty, I was chambermaid for the Countess Seeburg and I became the mistress of the son of the Countess Seeburg, and the result of that for me was a house and child. Now you know.

SIPOS. Now I know what you mean when you say it as calmly as that. I can't speak of it as calmly as you do, because the blood goes to my head every time I think of it. Just to show you that I'm not trying to get out of this, perhaps I'll marry you if you want it so badly.

ADELE. It's your damned duty!

SIPOS. Look here, don't excite me any further. I am not damned and I have no damned duties, and I am a free being and I do what I please, do you understand?

[Taking wine glass.]

ADELE. You will marry me.

SIPOS. Are you trying to make me lose my temper?

ADELE. I tell you. You'll—

SIPOS. All right, maybe I'll marry you. It's what I ought to do. It's the moral thing to do. . . .

ADELE. Yes, and I've got the money.

SIPOS. You . . . I . . . I . . .

ADELE. Rest a little, my dear. There isn't a drop of blood in your

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cheeks. Don't stare at me so, I'm not afraid of you. You don't have to act before me. Inasmuch as you're going to marry me, in the end, you could have done it in a nicer way. But because you are a worn-out, old man, you're nasty about asking for my hand. You're nasty, and I had to force you even into that.

SIPOS. You never loved me.

ADELE. That's not true. Once I loved you for a week.

SIPOS. The first week.

ADELE. No-o-o-o! Then I really didn't. There was another week. Or two weeks. You men never know these things. It was when you had pneumonia and I thought you were going to die. ~~You had high fever and you couldn't keep the food on your stomach and you said you'd get disgusted with me now, now I disgust you, because you are disgusting.~~ During that one week, I loved you. And then many nights, when you thought that we were almost in heaven together, I hated you so that I cried until morning.

~~SIPOS. For the Count.~~

~~ADELE. Yes, for him.~~

SIPOS. And even now you don't love me.

ADELE. No.

SIPOS. And you want me to marry you?

ADELE. Yes.

SIPOS. Why me?

ADELE. Because I've made up my mind that *you* are to marry me.

SIPOS. And if I don't love you either? And if I hate you as much as you hate me?

ADELE. Even then you will be the one to marry me.

SIPOS [*shouting*]. Why?

ADELE. Don't shout. Because I

want it. I'm not crazy about you, don't be afraid, that's not the reason. You are the lowest man in this world.

SIPOS. You . . . Now, you listen to me. . . . My dear, now the great announcement is going to take place. Calmly and coolly. I'll not marry you. If you want it, everything can remain as it was; if not, I'll take my things and go. Do you understand? I'll show you that even I am a man. And now I've had just enough of all this. And if you'll say another word, I'll—I'll— [*Rises threatening.*] Well! Now you've heard it. I told you that you'd be surprised. Now you've heard it.

~~[*The door opens, IRMA quickly comes in, stands at door a moment and goes out closing door.*]~~

~~ADELE [*pulls him back in chair*]. It's no use working up such hatred in each other. Please sit down for a moment and let's be sensible about this.~~

~~SIPOS. Don't take it so lightly. Don't try to be toxy now. You are very scared now, because you know that you've gone too far and it's all up. It's better to talk nicely, quietly, and it is just as well that things came to a head, ugly or not, because now it's over, at least. It'll hurt you—oh, don't fear, it'll hurt me, too, but now, at least, we'll part, and then somehow we'll patch up our lives, you here, I there—~~

~~[*Pause*]~~

~~ADELE. Well, Lajos. Now, I'll tell you something. It's your fault, that I'm telling you. I didn't want to hurt you, but you're responsible. I've got to tell you something now. I'm in love with Pal Csaszar.~~

~~SIPOS [*starting*]. I know!~~

ADELE. Thank God. At least you can see that until now I was considerate, and now I'm honest.

SIPOS. That isn't true.

ADELE. What?

SIPOS. That you are honest. If you were honest, you would have confessed this the first day.

ADELE. What first day? Was there a first day? Which was the first day? There are days and I am in love and every day is the first day and every day is the last day.

SIPOS. You are his mistress!

ADELE. What a coward you are. How I'd hate you now if I loved you.

~~Is that the way to talk now? Can I be his mistress? Could all this that's happening here have happened if I were his mistress? . . . Lajos . . . Lajos . . . help me, help my old stupid brain . . . help my old heart, help me. I am in love with a young man. Do you know what that means? For love of God . . . don't make me leave you to run after him and lower myself. Don't make me give him money, and don't let him beat me, don't make me kiss his hands for it. . . . Lajos, you are a wise man. . . . I am thirty-six years old and he is twenty-three. . . . Don't you see how this is going to end? Don't you know me? Can't you understand why I cried to you from the depths of my misery asking you to marry me? Take me away, protect me!~~

SIPOS [*wipes his forehead*]. There is only one question. How far did you go with him?

ADELE. Would you dare to ask me that if I had as much as looked at him? Who was it that told you the whole thing? Wasn't it I? Would I have told you?

SIPOS. I am an honorable man. If you want to, you can go to him without thought of revenge, but answer me honestly. Does he know that you love him?

ADELE. If he knew, I wouldn't let him stay a moment.

SIPOS. And there is one more question. He loves you? Does he love you?

ADELE. Don't torture me.

SIPOS. Answer, or I'll— He loves you, doesn't he?

ADELE. Terribly.

SIPOS. How do you know?

**END** A woman always knows that.

SIPOS. And why didn't you throw him out? Why didn't you tell me this?

ADELE. But I did tell you! I just now told you! I can't throw him out. He is acting decently—even though he is suffering. That was just what moved me so.

SIPOS. That's not suffering. Love is not suffering.

ADELE. No? Then what is suffering?

SIPOS. An operation is suffering. Where they don't put you to sleep. That's suffering. And if one is disappointed in some one in whom he believed. And there is still another question.

ADELE. God, why are there so many questions? Don't you know everything already? Don't you understand everything already?

SIPOS. Did you let him think that you love him?

ADELE [*lachrymose*]. I'd rather you beat me than ask me that—

SIPOS. He doesn't even suspect?

ADELE. How can he possibly suspect?

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