

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 keep 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 bit 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

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when 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

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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~~ ~~bedside 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— ~~is 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 . . .

ADELE. 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

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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