

# LOYALTIES

By John Galsworthy

Adapted for The Finborough Theatre 2006

By Phil Willmott

## PERSONS OF THE PLAY

### In the Order of Appearance

Charles Winsor	Owner Of Meldon Court, Near Newmarket
Lady Adela	His Wife
Ferdinand De Levis	A Jewish racehorse owner.
Major Canynge.	A Racing Oracle
Margaret Orme.	A Society Girl
Captain Dancy	Retired
Mabel.	His Wife
Inspector Dede	Of The County Constabulary
Treisure	Winsor's Butler
Robert	Winsor's Footman
Edward Graviter.	A Solicitor's Clerk
Gilman	A Grocer
Jacob Twisden.	Senior Partner Of Twisden & Graviter
Ricardos	An Italian Wine Merchant

### Settings

1. Meldon court, Winsor
2. The offices of Twisden and Graviter  
1922

This adaptation is intended to be played straight through without an interval

## SCENE I

MELDON COURT WINDSOR.

ELEVEN THIRTY AT NIGHT.

WINSOR. Off to bed, Darling?

LADY A. Very Soon.

WINSOR. Win at Bridge?

LADY A. No fear.

WINSOR. Who did?

LADY A. Lord St Erth and Ferdy De Levis.

WINSOR. That young man has too much luck--the young bouncer won two races to-day; and he's as rich as Croesus.

LADY A. Oh! Charlie, he did look so exactly as if he'd sold me a carpet when I was paying him.

WINSOR. His father did sell carpets, wholesale, in the City.

LADY A. Really? And you say I haven't intuition!

WINSOR. Ronny Dancy took a tenner off him, anyway, before dinner.

LADY A. No! How?

WINSOR. Standing jump on to a bookcase four feet high. De Levis had to pay up, and sneered at him for making money by parlour tricks. That young Jew gets himself disliked.

LADY A. Aren't you rather prejudiced?

WINSOR. Not a bit. I like Jews. That's not against him--rather the contrary these days. But he pushes himself. Canynge tells me he's deathly keen to get into the Jockey Club. It's amusing to see him trying to get round old St Erth.

LADY A. If Lord St Erth and Major Canynge backed him he'd get in if he did sell carpets!

WINSOR. He's got some pretty good horses. Ronny Dancy's on his bones again, I'm afraid. He had a bad day. When a chap takes to doing parlour stunts for a bet--it's a sure sign. What made him chuck the Army?

LADY A. He says it's too dull, now there's no fighting.

WINSOR. Well, he can't exist on backing losers.

LADY A. Isn't it just like him to get married now? He really is the most reckless person.

WINSOR. Yes. He's a queer chap. I've always liked him, but I've never quite made him out. What do you think of his wife?

LADY A. Nice child; awfully gone on him.

WINSOR. Is he?

LADY A. Quite indecently--both of them.

WINSOR. [Looking at his watch] Half-past eleven. [Yawns] Newmarket always makes me sleepy. And you're keeping Morison up.

DE LEVIS ENTERS, CLAD IN PYJAMAS AND FLOWERED DRESSING-GOWN.

LADY A. Ah, Mr De Levis. We were just talking about you. I hear Dancy's acrobatics lost you ten pounds..

DE LEVIS. Yes, everyone was most entertained. Look, I'm awfully sorry you two, but I thought I'd better tell you at once. I've just had--er--rather a lot of money stolen.

LADY A. What! How do you mean stolen?

DE LEVIS. I put it under my pillow and went to have a bath; when I came back it was gone.

WINSOR. Good Lord! How much?

DE LEVIS. Nearly a thousand-nine hundred and seventy, I think.

WINSOR. Phew! [THE FAINT TONE OF OUTRAGE, THAT A MAN SHOULD HAVE SO MUCH MONEY ABOUT HIM].

DE LEVIS. I sold my Rosemary filly to-day on the course to Bentman the bookie, and he paid me in notes.

WINSOR. What? That weed Dancy gave you in the Spring?

DE LEVIS. Yes. But I tried her pretty high the other day; and she's in the Cambridgeshire. I was only out of my room a quarter of an hour, and I locked my door.

LADY A. [*In my house amongst friends*] You locked--

DE LEVIS. [*Not seeing the fine shade*] Yes, and had the key here. [*He taps his pocket*] Look here! [*He holds out a pocket-book*] It's been stuffed with my shaving papers.

WINSOR. This is damned awkward, De Levis.

DE LEVIS. Yes. I should like it back.

WINSOR. Have you got the numbers of the notes?

DE LEVIS. No.

WINSOR. What were they?

DE LEVIS. One hundred, three fifties, and the rest tens and fives.

WINSOR. What d'you want me to do?

DE LEVIS. Unless there's anybody you think--

WINSOR. Is it likely?

DE LEVIS. Then I think the police ought to see my room. It's a lot of money.

WINSOR. Good Lord! We're not in Town; there'll be nobody nearer than Newmarket at this time of night--four miles.

DE LEVIS. From under my pillow, Lady Adela, I was in the bath-room...

LADY A. Oh! But Oh! It's quite too unpleasant!

WINSOR. Yes! What are we to do? Fetch the servants out of their rooms? Search the grounds? It'll make the devil of a scandal.

DE LEVIS. Who's in the room next to me?

LADY A. Oh! Mr De Levis!

WINSOR. Next to you? The Dancys on this side, and Miss Orme on the other. What's that to do with it?

DE LEVIS. They may have heard something.

WINSOR. Let's get them. But Dancy was down stairs when I came up. Get Morison, Adela! No. Look here! When was this exactly? Let's have as many alibis as we can.

DE LEVIS. Within the last twenty minutes, certainly.

WINSOR. How long has Morison been up with you?

DE LEVIS. Morrison?

LADY A. My maid, I came up at eleven, and rang for her at once.

WINSOR. [*Looking at his watch*] Half an hour. Then she's all right. Send her for Margaret and the Dancys--there's nobody else in that wing. No; send her to bed. We don't want gossip. D'you mind going yourself, Adela?

LADY A. Consult Major Canynge, Charlie.

WINSOR. Right. Could you get him too? D'you really want the police,

De Levis?

DE LEVIS. Yes, I do.

WINSOR. Then, look here, dear! Telephone to the police at Newmarket. There'll be somebody there; they're sure to have drunks. I'll have Treisure up, and speak to him.  
*[He rings the bell].*

LADY ADELA GOES

WINSOR. Look here, De Levis! This isn't an hotel. It's the sort of thing that doesn't happen in a decent house. Are you sure you're not mistaken, and didn't have them stolen on the course?

DE LEVIS. Absolutely. I counted them just before putting them under my pillow; then I locked the door and had the key here. There's only one door, you know.

WINSOR. How was your window?

DE LEVIS. Open.

WINSOR. You've got a balcony. Any sign of a ladder or anything?

DE LEVIS. No.

WINSOR. It must have been done from the window, unless someone had a skeleton key. Who knew you'd got that money? Where did Kentman pay you?

DE LEVIS. Just round the corner in the further paddock.

WINSOR. Anybody about?

DE LEVIS. Oh, yes!

WINSOR. Suspicious?

DE LEVIS. I didn't notice anything.

WINSOR. You must have been marked down and followed here.

DE LEVIS. How would they know my room?

WINSOR. Might have got it somehow.

TREISURE, THE BUTLER, APPEARS, A SILENT, GRAVE MAN

TREISURE. *[To WINSOR]* Yes, sir?

WINSOR. Who valets Mr De Levis?

TREISURE. Robert, Sir.

WINSOR. When was he up last?

TREISURE. In the ordinary course of things, about ten o'clock, sir.

WINSOR. When did he go to bed?

TREISURE. I dismissed at eleven.

WINSOR. But did he go?

TREISURE. To the best of my knowledge. Is there anything I can do, sir?

WINSOR. Look here, Treisure, Mr De Levis has had a large sum of money taken from his bedroom within the last half hour.

TREISURE. Indeed, Sir!

WINSOR. Robert's quite all right, isn't he?

TREISURE. He is, sir.

DE LEVIS. How do you know?

TREISURE. [*Eyes rest on De Levis*] I am a pretty good judge of character, sir, if you'll excuse me.

WINSOR. Look here, De Levis, eighty or ninety notes must have been pretty bulky. You didn't have them on you at dinner?

DE LEVIS. No.

WINSOR. Where did you put them?

DE LEVIS. In a boot, and the boot in my suitcase, and locked it.

*TREISURE smiles faintly.*

WINSOR. [*Again slightly outraged by such precautions in his house*] And you found it locked--and took them from there to put under your pillow?

DE LEVIS. Yes.

WINSOR. Run your mind over things, Treisure--has any stranger been about?

TREISURE. No, Sir.

WINSOR. This seems to have happened between 11.15 and 11.30. Is that right? [*DE LEVIS nods*] Any noise--anything outside--anything suspicious anywhere?

TREISURE. No, sir.

WINSOR. What time did you shut up?

TREISURE. I should say about eleven-fifteen, sir. As soon as Major Colford and Captain Dancy had finished billiards. What was Mr De Levis doing out of his room, if I may ask, sir?

WINSOR. Having a bath; with his room locked and the key in his pocket.

TREISURE. Thank you, sir.

DE LEVIS. [*Conscious of indefinable suspicion*] Damn it! What do you mean? I WAS!

TREISURE. I beg your pardon, sir.

WINSOR. Look here, Treisure, it's infernally awkward for everybody.

TREISURE. It is, sir.

WINSOR. What do you suggest?

TREISURE. The proper thing, sir, I suppose, would be a cordon and a complete search--in our interests.

WINSOR. I entirely refuse to suspect anybody.

TREISURE. But if Mr De Levis feels otherwise, sir?

DE LEVIS. I? All I know is--the money was there, and it's gone.

WINSOR. Quite! It's pretty sickening for you. But so it is for anybody else. However, we must do our best to get it back for you.

*CANYNGE enters.*

Oh! It's you, Canyge. Come in. Adela's told you. What's the first move?

CANYNGE. Mr De Levis presses the matter?

DE LEVIS. Unless you think it's too plebeian of me, a thousand pounds.

CANYNGE. [*Drily*] Just so! Then we must wait for the police,

WINSOR. Adela's calling them. What height are the bedrooms from the ground, Treisure?

TREISURE. Twenty-three feet from the terrace, sir.

CANYNGE. Any ladders near?

TREISURE. One in the stables, Sir, very heavy. No others within three hundred yards.

CANYNGE. Just slip down, and see whether that's been moved.

TREISURE. Very good, Major. *[He goes out.]*

DE LEVIS. *[Uneasily]* Of course, he--I suppose you--

WINSOR. We do.

CANYNGE. You had better leave this in our hands, De Levis.

DE LEVIS. Certainly; only, the way he--

WINSOR. *[Curtly]* Treisure has been here since he was a boy. I should as soon suspect myself.

DE LEVIS. *[Looking from one to the other--with sudden anger]* You seem to think--! What was I to do? Take it lying down and let whoever it is get clear off? I suppose it's natural to want my money back?

WINSOR. Of course, De Levis!

DE LEVIS. Well, I'll go to my room. When the police come, perhaps you'll let me know. *[He goes out.]*

WINSOR. Phew! Did you ever see such a dressing-gown?

*LADY ADELA and MARGARET ORME come in.*

LADY A. I've told the Dancys--she was in bed. And I got through to Newmarket, Charles, and Inspector Dede is coming like the wind on a motor cycle.

MARGARET. Did he say "like the wind," Adela? He must have imagination. Isn't this gorgeous? Poor little Ferdy!

WINSOR. You might take it seriously, Margaret; it's pretty beastly for us all. What time did you come up?

MARGARET. I came up with Adela. Am I suspected, Charles? How thrilling!

WINSOR. Did you hear anything?

MARGARET. Only little Ferdy splashing.

WINSOR. And saw nothing?

MARGARET. Not even that, alas!

LADY A. [With a finger held up] Leste! Un peu leste! Oh! Here are the Dancys. Come in, you two!

*MABEL and RONALD DANCY enter.*

WINSOR. Awfully sorry to disturb you, Mrs Dancy; but I suppose you and Ronny haven't heard anything. De Levis's room is just beyond Ronny's dressing-room, you know.

MABEL. I've been asleep nearly half an hour, and Ronny's only just come up.

CANYNGE. Did you happen to look out of your window, Mrs Dancy?

MABEL. Yes. I stood there quite five minutes.

CANYNGE. When?

MABEL. Just about eleven, I should think. It was raining hard then.

CANYNGE. Yes, it's just stopped. You saw nothing?

MABEL. No.

DANCY. What time does he say the money was taken?

WINSOR. Between the quarter and half past. He'd locked his door and had the key with him.

MARGARET. How quaint! Just like an hotel. Does he put his boots out?

LADY A. Don't be so naughty, Meg.

CANYNGE. When exactly did you come up, Dance?

DANCY. About ten minutes ago. I'd only just got into my dressing-room before Lady Adela came. I've been writing letters in the hall since Colford and I finished billiards.

CANYNGE. You weren't up for anything in between?

DANCY. No.

MARGARET. The mystery of the grey room.

DANCY. Oughtn't the grounds to be searched for footmarks?

CANYNGE. That's for the police.

DANCY. The deuce! Are they coming?

CANYNGE. Directly.

TREISURE enters.

Well?

TREISURE. The ladder has not been moved, Major. There isn't a sign.

WINSOR. All right. Get Robert up, but don't say anything to him. By the way, we're expecting the police.

TREISURE. I trust they will not find a mare's nest, sir, if I may say so.

*He goes.*

WINSOR. De Levis has got wrong with Treisure. But, I say, what would any of us have done if we'd been in his shoes?

MARGARET. A thousand pounds? I can't even conceive having it.

DANCY. We probably shouldn't have found it out.

LADY A. No--but if we had.

DANCY. Come to you--as he did.

WINSOR. Yes; but there's a way of doing things.

CANYNGE. We shouldn't have wanted the police.

MARGARET. No. That's it. The hotel touch.

LADY A. Poor young man; I think we're rather hard on him.

WINSOR. He sold that nag you gave him, Dancy, to Kentman, the bookie, and these were the proceeds.

DANCY. Oh!

WINSOR. Got a good price, he said.

DANCY. He would.

MABEL. Oh! Ronny, what bad luck!

WINSOR. He must have been followed here. After rain like that, there ought to be footmarks.

CANYNGE. You and I had better see the Inspector in De Levis's room,

WINSOR. [To the others] If you'll all be handy, in case he wants to put questions for himself.

MARGARET. I hope he'll want me; it's just too thrilling.

DANCY. I hope he won't want me; I'm dog-tired. Come on, Mabel.

CANYNGE. Just a minute, Charles.

*He draws dose to WINSOR as the others are departing to their rooms.*

WINSOR. Yes, Major?

CANYNGE. We must be careful with this Inspector fellow. If he pitches hastily on somebody in the house it'll be very disagreeable.

WINSOR. By Jove! It will.

CANYNGE. We don't want to rouse any ridiculous suspicion.

WINSOR. Quite.

*TREISURE enters.*

TREISURE. Inspector Dede, Sir.

WINSOR. Show him in.

TREISURE. Robert is in readiness, sir; but I could swear he knows nothing about it.

WINSOR. All right.

*TREISURE shows in The INSPECTOR.*

WINSOR. Good evening, Inspector. Sorry to have brought you out at this time of night.

INSPECTOR. Good evenin', sir. Mr Winsor? You're the owner here, I think?

WINSOR. Yes. This is Major Canynge.

*DE Levis enters*

INSPECTOR. Good evenin', Major. Well, you're wife's filled me in on all the details of the robbery, I understand, a large sum of money?

DE LEVIS. Yes. Shall we go straight to the room it was taken from?

WINSOR. This is one of my guests, Mr De Levis. He is the gentleman who's been robbed.

DE LEVIS. It's the third room on the left at the top of the stairs.

CANYNGE. We've not been in there yet, Inspector; in fact, we've done nothing, except to find out that the stable ladder has not been moved. We haven't even searched the grounds.

INSPECTOR. If I could just go over a few facts. (*To DE LEVIS*) How did you discover the crime, Sir?

DE LEVIS. I got into bed, felt for my watch to see the time. My hand struck the pocket-book, and somehow it felt thinner. I took it out, looked into it, and found the notes gone, and these shaving papers instead.

INSPECTOR. And then?

DE LEVIS. I think I just sat on the bed.

INSPECTOR. Thinkin' and cursin' a bit, I suppose. Ye-es?

DE LEVIS. Then I put on my dressing-gown and went straight to Mr Winsor.

INSPECTOR. Not lockin' the door?

DE LEVIS. No.

INSPECTOR. And at what time did you first retire?

DE LEVIS. About eleven.

INSPECTOR. Precise, if you can give it me.

DE LEVIS. Well, I know it was eleven-fifteen when I put my watch under my pillow, before I went to the bath, and I suppose I'd been about a quarter of an hour undressing. I should say after eleven, if anything.

INSPECTOR. Just undressin'? Didn't look over your bettin' book?

DE LEVIS. No.

INSPECTOR. No prayers or anything?

DE LEVIS. No.

INSPECTOR. Mr Winsor, what time did the gentleman come to you?

WINSOR. Half-past eleven.

INSPECTOR. You're sure, Sir?

WINSOR. I'd just looked at the time, and told my wife to send her maid off.

INSPECTOR. Then we've got it fixed between 11.15 and 11.30. [Jots] Now, sir, before we go further I'd like to see your butler and the footman that valets this gentleman.

WINSOR. Very well, Inspector; only--my butler has been with us from a boy.

INSPECTOR. Quite so. This is just clearing the ground, sir.

WINSOR: We have Mr De Levi's valet standing by. Treisure would you...

TREISURE: Of course sir. (*Calls*) Robert.

*The footman ROBERT, enters.*

INSPECTOR. You valet Mr--Mr De Levis?

ROBERT. Yes, sir.

INSPECTOR. At what time did you take his clothes and boots?

ROBERT. Ten o'clock, sir.

INSPECTOR. Did you happen to look under his bed?

ROBERT. No, sir.

INSPECTOR. Did you come up again, to bring the clothes back?

ROBERT. No, sir; they're still downstairs.

INSPECTOR. Did you come up again for anything?

ROBERT. No, Sir.

INSPECTOR. What time did you go to bed?

ROBERT. Just after eleven, Sir.

INSPECTOR. Now, be careful. Did you go to bed at all?

ROBERT. No, Sir.

INSPECTOR. Then why did you say you did? There's been a theft here, and anything you say may be used against you.

ROBERT. Yes, Sir. I meant, I went to my room.

INSPECTOR. Where is your room?

ROBERT. On the ground floor, at the other end of the right wing, sir.

WINSOR. It's the extreme end of the house from this, Inspector. He's with the other two footmen.

INSPECTOR. Were you there alone?

ROBERT. No, Sir. Thomas and Frederick was there too.

INSPECTOR. Were you out of the room again after you went in?

ROBERT. No, Sir.

INSPECTOR. What were you doing, if you didn't go to bed?

ROBERT. [To WINSOR] Beggin' your pardon, Sir, we were playin' Bridge.

INSPECTOR. Very good. You can go. I'll see the other two later on.

ROBERT. Yes, Sir. They'll say the same as me.

INSPECTOR. Did you notice anything particular about Mr De Levis's clothes?

ROBERT. Only that they were very good, Sir.

INSPECTOR. Very good.

ROBERT. Yes, Sir.

WINSOR. That will be all, Treisure.

TREISURE AND ROBERT LEAVE.

INSPECTOR. [*Looking at DE LEVIS*] Well, sir, there's your story corroborated.

DE LEVIS. [*Stifly*] I don't know why it should need corroboration, Inspector.

INSPECTOR. In my experience, you can never have too much of that. [*To WINSOR*] I understand there's a lady in the room to one side of Mr. De Levis, and a gentleman on the other. Do they know of the affair?

WINSOR. Inspector, do you really think it necessary to disturb the whole house and knock up all my guests? It's most disagreeable, all this, you know. The loss of the money is not such a great matter. Mr De Levis has a very large income.

CANYNGE. You could get the numbers of the notes from Kentman the bookmaker, Inspector; he'll probably have the big ones, anyway.

INSPECTOR. A bookie. I don't suppose he will, sir. It's come and go with them, all the time.

WINSOR. We don't want a Meldon Court scandal, Inspector. What do you say, De Levis? D'you want everybody in the house disturbed?

DE LEVIS. No, I don't.

INSPECTOR. Very well, gentlemen. I'll go down now, and examine the grounds.

WINSOR. [*With relief*] I'll come with you, Inspector.

THEY GO OUT.

DE LEVIS. Major, I know who took them.

CANYNGE. The deuce you do! Are you reading the Inspector's mind?

DE LEVIS. If a man can take a standing jump on to a narrow bookcase four feet high and balance there, he'd make nothing of jumping to his neighbour's balcony.

CANYNGE. But the neighbouring bedroom is young Dancy's, Mr De Levis; a soldier and a gentleman. This is an extraordinary insinuation.

DE LEVIS. Accusation.

CANYNGE. What!

DE LEVIS. I have intuitions, Major; it's in my blood. I see the whole thing. Dancy came up, watched me into the bathroom, tried my door, slipped back into his dressing-room, saw my window was open, took that jump, sneaked the notes, filled the case up with these and slipped downstairs again. It didn't take him four minutes altogether.

CANYNGE. [*Very gravely*] This is outrageous, De Levis. Dancy says he was downstairs all the time. You must either withdraw unreservedly, or I must confront you with him.

DE LEVIS. If he'll return the notes and apologise, I'll do nothing--except cut him in future. He gave me that filly, you know, as a hopeless weed, and he's been pretty sick ever since, that he was such a flat as not to see how good she was. Besides, he's hard up, I know.

CANYNGE. It's mad, sir, to jump to conclusions like this.

DE LEVIS. Not so mad as the conclusion Dancy jumped to when he lighted on my balcony.

CANYNGE. Nobody could have taken this money who did not know you had it.

DE LEVIS. How do you know that he didn't?

CANYNGE. Do you know that he did?

DE LEVIS. I haven't the least doubt of it.

CANYNGE. Without any proof. This is very ugly, De Levis. I must tell Winsor.

DE LEVIS. Tell the whole pack. You think I've no feelers, but I've felt the atmosphere here, I can tell you, Canynge. If I were in Dancy's shoes and he in mine, your tone to me would be very different.

CANYNGE. I'm not aware of using any tone, as you call it. But this is a private house, Mr De Levis, and something is due to our host and to the esprit de corps that exists among gentlemen.

DE LEVIS. Since when is a thief a gentleman? Thick as thieves--a good motto, isn't it?

CANYNGE. That's enough! Now, look here! I have some knowledge of the world. Once an accusation like this passes beyond these walls no one can foresee the consequences. Captain Dancy is a gallant fellow, with a fine record as a soldier; and only just married. If he's as innocent as--Christ--mud will stick to him, unless the real thief is found. In the old days of swords, either you or he would not have gone out of this room alive. If you persist in this absurd accusation, you will both of you go out of this room dead in the eyes of Society: you for bringing it, he for being the object of it.

DE LEVIS. Society! Do you think I don't know that I'm only tolerated for my money? Society can't add injury to insult and have my money as well, that's all. If the notes are restored I'll keep my mouth shut; if they're not, I shan't. I'm certain I'm right. I ask nothing better than to be confronted with Dancy; but, if you prefer it, deal with him in your own way--for the sake of your esprit de corps.

CANYNGE. 'Pon my soul, Mr De Levis, you go too far.

DE LEVIS. Not so far as I shall go if those notes aren't given back.

WINSOR COMES IN.

WINSOR. Well, De Levis, I'm afraid that's all we can do for the present. So very sorry this should have happened in my house.

CANYNGE. There's a development, Winsor. Mr De Levis accuses one of your guests.

WINSOR. What?

CANYNGE. Of jumping from his balcony, taking the notes, and jumping back. I've done my best to dissuade him from indulging the fancy--without success. Dancy must be told.

DE LEVIS. You can deal with Dancy in your own way. All I want is the money back.

CANYNGE. Mr De Levis feels that he is only valued for his money, so that it is essential for him to have it back.

WINSOR. Damn it! This is monstrous, De Levis. I've known Ronald Dancy since he was a boy.

CANYNGE. You talk about adding injury to insult, De Levis. What do you call such treatment of a man who gave you the mare out of which you made this thousand pounds?

DE LEVIS. I didn't want the mare; I took her as a favour.

CANYNGE. With an eye to possibilities, I venture to think--the principle guides a good many transactions.

DE LEVIS. In my race, do you mean?

CANYNGE. I said nothing of the sort.

DE LEVIS. No; you don't say these things, any of you.

CANYNGE. Nor did I think it.

DE LEVIS. Dancy does.

WINSOR. Really, De Levis, if this is the way you repay hospitality--

DE LEVIS. Hospitality that skins my feelings and costs me a thousand pounds!

CANYNGE. Go and get Dancy, Winsor; but don't say anything to him.

*WINSOR goes out.*

CANYNGE. Perhaps you will kindly control yourself, and leave this to me.

*WINSOR comes back, followed by DANCY.*

CANYNGE. For Winsor's sake, Dancy, we don't want any scandal or fuss about this affair. We've tried to make the police understand that. To my mind the whole thing turns on our finding who knew that De Levis had this money. It's about that we want to consult you.

WINSOR. Kentman paid De Levis round the corner in the further paddock, he says.

CANYNGE. Did you hear anything that throws light, Dancy? As it was your filly originally, we thought perhaps you might.

DANCY. I? No.

CANYNGE. Didn't hear of the sale on the course at all?

DANCY. No.

CANYNGE. Then you can't suggest any one who could have known? Nothing else was taken, you see.

DANCY. De Levis is known to be rolling, as I am known to be stony.

CANYNGE. There are a good many people still rolling, besides Mr De Levis, but not many people with so large a sum in their pocket-books.

DANCY. He won two races.

DE LEVIS. Do you suggest that I bet in ready money?

DANCY. I don't know how you bet, and I don't care.

CANYNGE. You can't help us, then?

DANCY. No. I can't. Anything else? [*He looks fixedly at DE LEVIS*].

CANYNGE. Nothing else, thank you, Dancy.

*DANCY goes.*

WINSOR. You see, De Levis? He didn't even know you'd got the money. Young Dancy was an officer and is a gentleman; this insinuation is pure supposition, and you must not make it. Do you understand me?

DE LEVIS. My tongue is still mine, if my money isn't!

CANYNGE. You're a member of three Clubs; you want to be member of a fourth. No one who makes such an insinuation against a fellow-guest in a country house, except on absolute proof, can do so without complete ostracism. Have we your word to say nothing?

DE LEVIS. Social blackmail? H'm!

CANYNGE. Not at all--simple warning. If you consider it necessary in your interests to start this scandal--no matter how, we shall consider it necessary in ours to dissociate ourselves completely from one who so recklessly disregards the unwritten code.

DE LEVIS. Do you think your code applies to me? Do you?

CANYNGE. To anyone who aspires to be a gentleman, Sir.

DE LEVIS. Ah! But you haven't known me since I was a boy.

CANYNGE. Make up your mind.

DE LEVIS. I'm not a fool. I know perfectly well that you can get me outed. Well, I shall tell people that you and Lord St Erth backed me up for one Club, and asked me to resign from another.

CANYNGE. It's a matter of indifference to me, sir, what you tell people. You seem a venomous young man.

DE LEVIS. I'll tell you what seems to me venomous, chasing a man like a pack of hounds because he isn't your breed.

CANYNGE. You appear to have your breed on the brain, sir. Nobody else does, so far as I know.

DE LEVIS. Suppose I had robbed Dancy, would you chase him out for complaining of it?

CANYNGE. My God! If you repeat that--

WINSOR. You make this accusation that Dancy stole your money in my house on no proof--no proof; and you expect Dancy's friends to treat you as if you were a gentleman! That's too strong, if you like!

DE LEVIS. No proof? Bentman told me at Newmarket yesterday that Dancy did know of the sale. He told Goole, and Goole says that he himself spoke of it to Dancy.

WINSOR. Well--if he did?

DE LEVIS. Dancy just told you he didn't know of it. You can't deny that, if you want to. You saw how he can jump; he won ten pounds from me that same evening betting on what he knew was a certainty. That's your Dancy--a common sharper!

CANYNGE. You'd better get Dancy out here again.

WINSOR. Yes.

CANYNGE. But don't say anything to him.

WINSOR. [*To DE LEVIS*] You may think yourself damned lucky if he doesn't break your neck.

HE GOES OUT.

DE LEVIS. [*Smouldering*] I have a memory and a sting too, since you are good enough to call me venomous. I quite understand--I'm marked for Coventry now, whatever happens. Well, I'll take Dancy with me.

CANYNGE. So far as I could understand it, there were a dozen ways you could have been robbed. It seems to me you value other men's reputations very lightly.

WINSOR and DANCY RETURN

WINSOR. Captain Dancy, a serious accusation has been made against you by this gentleman.

DANCY. What is it?

WINSOR. That you robbed him of that money.

DANCY. [*Hard and tense*] Indeed! On what grounds is he good enough to say that?

DE LEVIS. [*Tense too*] You gave me that filly to save yourself her keep, and you've been mad about it ever since; you knew from Goole that I had sold her to Kentman and been paid in cash, yet I heard you myself deny that you knew it. You've the next room to me, and you can jump like a cat, as we saw that evening;

CANYNGE. Well, Dancy?

DANCY. I'll settle this matter with any weapons, when and where he likes.

CANYNGE. It can't be settled that way--you know very well. But you may take it to the Courts, unless he retracts.

DANCY. Will you retract?

DE LEVIS. Why did you tell Major Canynge you didn't know Kentman had paid me in cash?

DANCY. Because I didn't.

DE LEVIS. Then Kentman and Goole lied--for no reason? I should like to hear what your wife says about it.

DANCY. Leave my wife alone, you damned Jew!

CANYNGE. Captain Dancy!

DE LEVIS. *[White with rage]* Thief!

DANCY. Will you fight?

DE LEVIS. You're very smart--dead men tell no tales. No! Bring your action, and we shall see.

*DANCY takes a step towards him, but CANYNGE and WINSOR interpose.*

WINSOR. That'll do, Mr De Levis; we won't keep you. Oh and kindly consider your club membership suspended till this matter has been threshed out.

DE LEVIS. *[Tremulous with anger]* Don't trouble yourselves about my membership. I resign it. *[To DANCY]* You called me a damned Jew. My race was old when you were all savages. I am proud to be a Jew. Au revoir, in the Courts.

HE GOES OUT

CANYNGE. Well, Captain Dancy?

DANCY. If the brute won't fight, what am I to do, sir?

WINSOR. We've told you--take action, to clear your name. It's for De Levis to prove what he asserts.

DANCY. I might prefer to look on the whole thing as beneath contempt. Look, I'd better get back to Mable. Can we talk about this in the morning?

WINSOR. Of course, old chap.

CANYNGE. And don't you worry. We'll sort this out.

*CANYNGE puts a comforting hand on Dancy's sleeve.*

*Goodnights*

DANCY LEAVES

WINSOR. The Courts are beastly distrustful, don't you know. What'll be his position even if he wins?

CANYNGE. *(PREOCCUPIED)* Damages and a stain on his character. Unless they find the real thief.

WINSOR. People always believe the worst. There is no decent way out of a thing of this sort.

THE INSPECTOR RETURNS.

INSPECTOR. I'm just going, gentlemen. The grounds, I'm sorry to say, have yielded nothing. It's a bit of a puzzle.

CANYNGE. You've searched thoroughly?

INSPECTOR. We have, Major. We'll see what we can do with the bookmakers about the numbers, sir. Before I go, gentlemen--you've had time to think it over--there's no one you suspect in the house, I suppose?

WINSOR. *[Emphatically]* No.

INSPECTOR. If you're coming in to the racing to-morrow, sir, you might give us a call. I'll have seen Kentman by then.

WINSOR. Right you are, Inspector. Good night and many thanks.

INSPECTOR. You're welcome, sir. *[He goes out.]*

WINSOR. Look here, we must stop that's Jew's tongue. Imagine this going the rounds. They may never find the real thief, you know. It's the very devil for Dancy.

CANYNGE. Winsor! Dancy's sleeve was damp.

WINSOR. How d'you mean?

CANYNGE. Quite damp. It's been raining.

WINSOR. I don't follow--

CANYNGE. It was coming down hard; a minute out in it would have been enough...

WINSOR. He must have been out on his balcony since the robbery.

CANYNGE. It stopped before I came up, half an hour ago.

WINSOR. He's been leaning on the wet stone, then.

CANYNGE. With the outside of the upper part of the arm?

WINSOR. Against the wall, perhaps. There may be a dozen explanations. I entirely and absolutely refuse to believe anything of the sort against Ronald Dancy in my house. Dash it, we must do as we'd be done by. It hits us all--it hits us all.

## SCENE 2

Morning of the following day. MABEL DANCY and MARGARET ORME

MABEL. But it's monstrous!

MARGARET. Of course! De Levis might just as well have pitched on me, except that I can't jump more than six inches in these skirts.

MABEL. It's wicked! And Ronny didn't say a word, just upped and left in the middle of the night. Why?

MARGARET. Doesn't want you bothered.

MABEL. But---Good heavens!---Me!

MARGARET. Haven't you found out, Mabel, that he isn't exactly communicative? No desperate character is.

MABEL. Ronny?

MARGARET. Gracious! Wives are at a disadvantage, especially early on. You've never hunted with him, my dear. I have. He takes more sudden decisions than any man I ever knew. He's taking one now, I'll bet.

MABEL. That beast, De Levis! I was in our room next door all the time. I should have known if...

MARGARET. Well, you can say so in court. Not that it matters. Wives are liars by law.

MABEL. What do you mean--Court?

MARGARET. My dear, he'll have to bring an action for defamation of character, or whatever they call it.

MABEL. It's terrible, such a thing--terrible!

MARGARET. If only Ronny weren't known to be so broke.

MABEL. I can't imagine-- I simply can't. If there's a case would it be all right afterwards?

MARGARET. Do you remember the St Regis scandal -- cards? No, you wouldn't-- you were in high frocks. Well, St Regis got damages, but he also got the cold shoulder. He lives in Ireland. There isn't the slightest connection, so far as I can see, Mabel, between innocence and reputation. Look at me!

MABEL. We'll fight it tooth and nail!

MARGARET. Mabel, you're pure wool, right through; I'm so sorry for you.

MABEL. It's for him you ought--

MARGARET. You don't mind my being beastly frank, do you?

MABEL. No. I want it.

MARGARET. Major Canynge was awfully silent at breakfast.

MABEL. I hate half-hearted friends. Loyalty comes before everything.

MARGARET. Ye-es; but loyalties cut up against each other sometimes, you know?

MABEL. I must talk to Ronny. I'll try telephoning the club again.

MARGARET. Rather.

[MABEL goes out]

Poor kid!

LADY ADELA arrives.

Enter the second murderer! D'you know that child knew nothing?

LADY A. Where is she?

MARGARET. Telephoning. Adela, if there's going to be an action, we shall be witnesses. I shall wear black georgette with an ecru hat. Have you ever given evidence?

LADY A. Never.

MARGARET. It must be too frightfully thrilling.

LADY A. Oh! Why did I ever ask that wretch De Levis? I used to think him pathetic. Meg did you know---Ronald Dancy's coat was wet? Canynge happened to feel it.

MARGARET. So that's why he was so silent.

LADY A. Yes; and he telephoned those bookmakers, and Goole--what a name!--is sure he told Dancy about the sale.

MARGARET. [Suddenly] I don't care. He's my third cousin. Don't you feel you couldn't, Adela?

LADY A. Couldn't--what?

MARGARET. Stand for De Levis against one of ourselves?

LADY A. That's very narrow, Meg.

MARGARET. Oh! I know lots of splendid Jews, and I rather liked little Ferdy; but when it comes to the point--! They all stick together; why shouldn't we? It's in the blood. Open your jugular, and see if you haven't got it.

LADY A. My dear, my great grandmother was a Jewess. I'm very proud of her.

MARGARET. Inoculated. Prejudices, Adela--or are they loyalties--I don't know--cris-cross--we all cut each other's throats from the best of motives.

LADY A. That poor child! I quite agree. I shall tell every body it's ridiculous. You don't really think Ronald Dancy--?

MARGARET. I don't know, Adela. There are people who simply can't live without danger. I'm rather like that myself. They're all right when they're getting the D.S.O. or shooting man-eaters; but if there's no excitement going, they'll make it--out of sheer craving. I've seen Ronny Dancy do the maddest things for no mortal reason except the risk. He's had a past, you know.

LADY A. Oh! Do tell!

MARGARET. He did splendidly in the war, of course, because it suited him; but--just before--don't you remember--a very queer bit of riding?

LADY A. No.

MARGARET. Most dare-devil thing--but not quite. You must remember-- it was awfully talked about. And then, of course, right up to his marriage—

LADY A. Meg, you're very tantalising!

MARGARET. A foreign-looking girl--most plummy. Oh! Ronny's got charm --this Mabel child doesn't know in the least what she's got hold of!

LADY A. But they're so fond of each other!

MARGARET. That's the mistake. Canynge isn't mentioning the coat, is he?

LADY A. Oh, no! It was only to Charles.

MABEL returns.

MARGARET. Did you get him?

MABEL. No; he's not at Tattersall's, nor at the Club.

LADY A. Nobody's going to believe this, my dear.

MABEL. [Looking straight at her] Nobody who does need trouble to speak to us again.

LADY A. That's what I was afraid of; you're going to be defiant. Now don't! Just be perfectly natural.

MABEL. So easy, isn't it? I could kill anybody who believes such a thing.

MARGARET. You'll want a solicitor, Mabel, Go to old Mr Jacob Twisden.

LADY A. Yes; he's so comforting.

MARGARET. He got my pearls back once--without loss of life. A frightfully good fireside manner. Do get him here, Mabel, and have a heart-to-heart talk, all three of you!

*DANCY comes in.*

MABEL. Ronny!

DANCY. What have they been saying?

MABEL. Ronny! Why didn't you tell me? That wretch! How dare he? Darling!

*[She suddenly clasps and kisses him. He does not return the kiss, but remains rigid in her arms, so that she draws away and looks at him]*

LADY A. We'll see you both at lunch.

*LADY A and MARGARET leave.*

MABEL. It's hurt you awfully, I know.

DANCY. Look here, Mabel! Apart from that muck--this is a ghastly tame-cat sort of life. Let's cut it and get out to Nairobi. I can scare up the money for that.

MABEL. *[Aghast]* But how can we? Everybody would say--

RONNY. Let them! We shan't be here.

MABEL. I couldn't bear people to think--

DANCY. I don't care a damn what people think, monkeys and cats. I never could stand their rotten menagerie. Besides, what does it matter how I act; if I bring an action and get damages--if I pound him to a jelly-- it's all no good! I can't prove it. There'll be plenty of people unconvinced.

MABEL. But they'll find the real thief.

DANCY. Will staying here help them to do that?

MABEL. Oh! I couldn't--it looks like running away. We must stay and fight it!

DANCY. Suppose I didn't get a verdict--you never can tell.

MABEL. I know you could never...

DANCY. Yes. But you're my wife.

MABEL. Ronny, I don't understand--suppose I'd been accused of stealing pearls!

DANCY. I can't.

MABEL. But I might--just as easily. What would you think of me if I ran away from it?

DANCY. I see. *[A pause]* All right! You shall have a run for your money. I'll go and see old Twisden.

MABEL. Let me come! *[DANCY shakes his head]* Why not? I can't be happy a moment unless I'm fighting this.

DANCY. You are an angel!

MABEL. Do you know what Margaret called you?

RONNY. No.

MABEL. A desperate character.

DANCY. Ha! I'm not a tame cat, any more than she.

*DE LEVIS comes in.*

DE LEVIS. Captain Dancy, alas Canynge and I have failed to reach an understanding and my business is concluded in this house but before I leave... you threatened me yesterday. I don't choose for you to suppose I'm afraid of you.

MABEL. Mr De Levis, you are robbing my husband of his good name.

DE LEVIS. I admire your trustfulness, Mrs Dancy.

MABEL. How can you do it? What do you want? What's your motive? You can't possibly believe that my husband is a thief!

DE LEVIS. Unfortunately.

MABEL. How dare you? How dare you? Do you accuse me too?

DANCY. Mabel -

DE LEVIS. No, Mrs Dancy.

MABEL. But you do. I must have seen, I must have heard.

DE LEVIS. A wife's memory is not very good when her husband is in danger.

MABEL. In other words, I'm lying.

DANCY. Mabel -

DE LEVIS. No. Your wish is mother to your thought, that's all.

MABEL. Mr De Levis, I appeal to you as a gentleman to behave to us as you would we should behave to you.

DE LEVIS. Mrs Dancy, I am not a gentleman, I am only a--damned Jew. Yesterday I might possibly have withdrawn to spare you. But when my race is insulted -

MABEL. I think what you are doing is too horrible for words.

DANCY. I want you to sign this. I had it drawn up in London this morning.

DE LEVIS. I will sign nothing.

DANCY. Let me read it: "I apologise to Captain Dancy for the reckless and monstrous charge I made against him, and I retract every word of it."

DE LEVIS. Not much!

DANCY. You will sign.

DE LEVIS. I tell you this is useless. I will sign nothing. The charge is true; you wouldn't be playing this game if it weren't. I'm going. You'll hardly try violence in the presence of your wife; and if you try it anywhere else--look out for yourself.

DANCY. Mabel, I want to speak to him alone.

MABEL. No, no!

DE LEVIS. Quite right, Mrs Dancy. Black and tan swashbuckling will only make things worse for him.

DANCY. So you shelter behind a woman, do you, you skulking cur!

*DE LEVIS takes a step, with fists clenched and eyes blazing. DANCY, too, stands ready to spring--the moment is cut short by MABEL going quickly to her husband.*

MABEL. Don't, Ronny. It's undignified! He isn't worth it.

DANCY. Get out of here, you swine!

*DE LEVIS goes.*

DANCY. Well! Do you agree with him?

MABEL. What do you mean?

DANCY. That I wouldn't be playing this game unless--

MABEL. Don't! You hurt me!

DANCY. Yes. You don't know much of me, Mabel.

MABEL. *[Her face averted]* Ronny! *[Turning to him suddenly]* Ronny--you--didn't? I'd rather know.

DANCY. Ha! I thought that was coming.

MABEL. Oh! How horrible of me--how horrible!

DANCY. Not at all. The thing looks bad.

MABEL. If I can't believe in you, who can? Ronny! If all the world--I'd believe in you. You know I would.

DANCY. That's all right, Mabs! That's all right! Well, what shall we do? Let's go to that lawyer--let's go--

MABEL. Oh! at once!

### SCENE 3

*Three months later. MR JACOB TWISDEN'S offices in Lincoln's Inn Fields.*

*GILMAN is visiting GRAVITER, TWISDEN'S clerk.*

GRAVITER. Good day, Mr Gilman. What can I do for you? I'm Graviter, Mr Twisden's Clerk.

GILMAN. Mr Twisden's not in, then?

GRAVITER. No. He's at the Courts. They're just up; he should be in directly. But he'll be busy.

GILMAN. Old Mr Jacob Twisden--I've heard of him.

GRAVITER. Most people have.

GILMAN. It's this Dancy-De Levis case that's keepin' him at the Courts, I suppose?

*GRAVITER nods.*

Won't be finished for a day or two?

*GRAVITER shakes his head. No.*

Astonishin' the interest taken in it.

GRAVITER. As you say.

GILMAN. The Smart Set, eh? This Captain Dancy got the D.S.O., didn't he?

*GRAVITER nods.*

Sad to have a thing like that said about you. I thought he gave his evidence well; and his wife too. Looks as if this De Levis had got some private spite. Searchy la femme, I said to Mrs Gilman only this morning, before I--

GRAVITER. By the way, sir, what is your business?

GILMAN. Well, my business here--No, if you'll excuse me, I'd rather wait and see old Mr Jacob Twisden. It's delicate, and I'd like his experience.

GRAVITER. *[With a shrug]* Very well; then, perhaps, you'll wait through here. *[He moves towards the door, Left Back].*

GILMAN. Thank you. You see, I've never been mixed up with the law--

GRAVITER. No?

GILMAN. And I don't want to begin. When you do, you don't know where you'll stop, do you? You see, I've only come from a sense of duty; and --other reasons.

GRAVITER. Not uncommon.

GILMAN. This is my card. Gilman's--several branches, but this is our main store. Grocery--I daresay you know me; or your wife does.

*WINSOR and MARGARET enter.*

They say old Mr Jacob Twisden refused a knighthood. If it's not a rude question, why was that?

GRAVITER. Ask him, sir; ask him.

GILMAN. *(Laughs)* I said to my wife at the time, "He's holdin' out for a baronetcy."

*Week smiles all round.*

*GILMAN leaves*

GRAVITER. How d'you do, Miss Orme? How do you do, Winsor?

WINSOR. Twisden not back, Graviter?

GRAVITER. Not yet.

WINSOR. I hear they've just subpoenaed Canynge after all. His evidence is to be taken to-morrow.

GRAVITER. Ah!

WINSOR. Oh! by the way, the numbers of those two notes were given, and I see they're published in the evening papers. I suppose the police wanted that. I tell you what I find, Graviter--a general feeling that there's something behind it all that doesn't come out.

GRAVITER. The public wants it's money's worth--always does in these Society cases; they brew so long beforehand, you see.

WINSOR. They're looking for something lurid. It's becoming a sort of Dreyfus case--people taking sides quite outside the evidence.

MARGARET. There are more of the chosen in Court every day. Mr Graviter, have you noticed the two on the jury?

GRAVITER. No; I can't say--

MARGARET. Oh! but quite distinctly. Don't you think they ought to have been challenged?

GRAVITER. De Levis might have challenged the other ten, Miss Orme.

MARGARET. Dear me, now! I never thought of that.

*JACOB TWISDEN arrives.*

TWISDEN. Ah! How are you, Charles? How do you do, my dear?

MARGARET. *[Taking out a cigarette]* Dear Mr Jacob, I'm going to smoke. Isn't it disgusting? They really should allow it in here you know. The Judge might have a hookah. Oh! Wouldn't he look sweet--the darling!

TWISDEN. *[Firmly]* It does not become everybody as it becomes you, Margaret.

MARGARET. *[Replacing cigarette]* Mr Jacob, how charming!

GRAVITER. There's a man called Gilman waiting to see you.

TWISDEN. Try and find out what he wants, Graviter.

GRAVITER: Of course. Excuse me.

*He goes.*

WINSOR. Look here, Mr Twisden--

TWISDEN. Sit down; sit down, my dear.

WINSOR. Canynge knows something which on the face of it looks rather queer. Now that he's going to be called as a witness, oughtn't Dancy to be told of it, so that he may be ready with his explanation, in case it comes out?

TWISDEN. Without knowing, I can't tell you.

MARGARET. Tell him, Charles.

WINSOR. Well! It rained that evening at Meldon. Canynge happened to put his hand on Dancy's shoulder, and it was damp.

TWISDEN. I take it that Major Canynge won't say anything he's not compelled to say.

MARGARET. No, of course; but, Mr Jacob, they might ask; they know it rained. And he is such a George Washington.

TWISDEN. No harm in your telling Dancy.

WINSOR. I'd rather you did it, Margaret.

MARGARET. I daresay. [*She mechanically takes out her cigarette-case, catches the lift of TWISDEN'S eyebrows, and puts it back.*]

WINSOR. Well, we'll go together. I don't want Mrs Dancy to hear.

MARGARET. Do tell me, Mr Jacob; is he going to win?

TWISDEN. I think so, Margaret; I think so.

MARGARET. It'll be too--frightful if he doesn't get a verdict, after all this. But I don't know what we shall do when it's over. I've been sitting in that Court all these three days, watching, and it's made me feel there's nothing we like better than seeing people skinned. Well, bye-bye, bless you!

*TWISDEN rises and pats her hand.*

WINSOR. Half a second, Margaret. Wait for me.

*She nods and goes out.*

Mr Twisden, what do you really think? Should I go and see Canynge?

TWISDEN. Better not.

WINSOR. If they get that out of him, and recall me, am I to say he told me of it at the time?

TWISDEN. You didn't feel the coat yourself? And Dancy wasn't present? Then what Canynge told you is not evidence--he'll stop your being asked.

WINSOR. Thank goodness. Good-bye!

WINSOR goes out.

*TWISDEN, crossing to the door, throws it open and says -*

TWISDEN. At your service, sir.

*GILMAN comes forth.*

Be seated.

GILMAN. Mr Twisden, I believe? My name's Gilman, head of Gilman's Department Stores. You have my card.

TWISDEN. What can we do for you?

GILMAN. Well, I've come to you from a sense of duty, sir, and also a feelin' of embarrassment. [*He takes from his breast pocket an evening paper*] You see, I've been followin' this Dancy case--it's a good deal talked of in Putney--and I read this at half-past two this afternoon. To be precise, at 2.25.

*[He rises and hands the paper to TWISDEN, and indicates a passage]*

When I read these numbers, I 'appened to remember givin' change for a fifty-pound note--don't often 'ave one in, you know--so I went to the cash-box out of curiosity, to see that I 'adn't got it. Well, I 'ad; and here it is.

*[He draws out from his breast pocket and lays before TWISDEN a fifty-pound banknote]*

It was brought in to change by a customer of mine three days ago, and he got value for it. Now, that's a stolen note, it seems, and you'd like to know what I did. Mind you, that customer of mine I've known 'im--well-- eight or nine years; an Italian he is--wine salesman, and so far's I know, a respectable man-foreign-lookin', but nothin' more. Now, this was at 'alf-past two, and I was at my head branch at Putney, where I live.

I want you to mark the time, so as you'll see I 'aven't wasted a minute. I took a cab and I drove straight to my customer's private residence in Putney, where he lives with his daughter--Ricardos his name is, Paolio Ricardos. They tell me there that he's at his business shop in the City. So off I go in the cab again, and there I find him. Well, sir, I showed this paper to him and I produced the note. "Here," I said, "you brought this to me and you got value for it." Well, that man was taken aback. If I'm a judge, Mr Twisden, he was taken aback, not to speak in a guilty way, but he was, as you might say, flummoxed. "Now," I said to him, "where did you get it--that's the point?" He took his time to answer, and then he said: "Well, Mr Gilman," he said, "you know me; I am an honourable man. I can't tell you offhand, but I am above the board." He's foreign, you know, in his expressions. "Yes," I said, "that's all very well," I said, "but here I've got a stolen note and you've got the value for it. Now I tell you," I said, "what I'm going to do; I'm going straight with this note to Mr Jacob Twisden, who's got this Dancy-De Levis case in 'and. He's a well-known Society lawyer," I said, "of great experience." "Oh!" he said, "that is what you do?"--funny the way he speaks! "Then I come with you!"--And I've got him in the cab below. I want to tell you everything before he comes up. On the way I tried to get something out of him, but I couldn't--I could not. "This is very awkward," I said at last. "It is, Mr Gilman," was his reply; and he began to talk about his Sicilian claret--a very good wine, mind you; but under the circumstances it seemed to me uncalled for. Have I made it clear to you?

TWISDEN. Perfectly, Mr Gilman. I'll send down for him. [*He goes to the door and apparently calls through to a clerk*]. A gentleman in a taxi-waiting. Ask him to be so good as to step up. Oh! and send Mr Graviter here again. [*He returns to Gilman*]

GILMAN. As I told you, sir, I've been followin' this case. It's what you might call piquant. And I should be very glad if it came about that this helped Captain Dancy. I take an interest, because, to tell you the truth, [*Confidentially*] I don't like--well, not to put too fine a point upon it 'Ebrews. They work harder; they're more sober; they're honest; and they're everywhere. I've nothing against them, but the fact is—they get on so.

TWISDEN. [*Cocking an eye*] A thorn in the flesh, Mr Gilman.

GILMAN. Well, I prefer my own countrymen, and that's the truth of it.

*As he speaks, GRAVITER comes in.*

TWISDEN. [*Pointing to the newspaper and the note*] Mr Gilman has brought this, of which he is holder for value. His customer, who changed it three days ago, is coming up.

GRAVITER. The fifty-pounder. I see.

*RICARDOS appears*

TWISDEN. Mr Ricardos? My name is Jacob Twisden. My partner. [*Holding up a finger, as RICARDOS would speak*] Mr Gilman has told us about this note. You took it to him, he says, three days ago; that is, on Monday, and received cash for it?

RICARDOS. Yes, sare.

TWISDEN. You were not aware that it was stolen?

RICARDOS. [With his hand to his breast] Oh! no, sare.

TWISDEN. You received it from--?

RICARDOS. A minute, sare; I would weesh to explain... in private.

TWISDEN. [*Nodding*] Mr Gilman, your conduct has been most prompt. You may safely leave the matter in our hands, now. Kindly let us retain this note; and ask for my cashier as you go out and give him [*He writes*] this. He will reimburse you. We will take any necessary steps ourselves.

GILMAN. [*In slight surprise, with modest pride*] Well, sir, I'm in your 'ands. I must be guided by you, with your experience. I'm glad you think I acted rightly.

TWISDEN. Very rightly, Mr Gilman--very rightly. [*Rising*] Good afternoon!

GILMAN. Good afternoon, sir. Good afternoon, gentlemen! [*To TWISDEN*] I'm sure I'm very 'appy to have made your acquaintance, sir. It's a well-known name.

TWISDEN. Thank you.

*GILMAN retreats, glances at RICARDOS, and turns again.*

GILMAN. I suppose there's nothing else I ought to do, in the interests of the law? I'm a careful man.

TWISDEN. If there is, Mr Gilman, we will let you know. We have your address. You may make your mind easy; but don't speak of this. It might interfere with Justice.

GILMAN. Oh! I shouldn't dream of it. I've no wish to be mixed up in anything conspicuous. That's not my principle at all. Good-day, gentlemen.

*He goes.*

TWISDEN. [Seating himself] Now, sir, will you sit down.

*But RICARDOS does not sit; he stands looking uneasily across the table at GRAVITER.*

You may speak out.

RICARDOS. Well, Mr Tweesden and sare, this matter is very serious for me, and very delicate--it concairns my honour. I am in a great difficulty.

TWISDEN. When in difficulty--complete frankness, sir.

RICARDOS. It is a family matter, sare, I—

TWISDEN. Let me be frank with you. We have your admission that you changed this stopped note for value. It will be our duty to inform the Bank of England that it has been traced to you. You will have to account to them for your possession of it. I suggest to you that it will be far better to account frankly to us.

RICARDOS. I received this note, sare, with others, from a gentleman, sare, in settlement of a debt of honour, and I know nothing of where he got them.

TWISDEN. H'm! that is very vague. If that is all you can tell us, I'm afraid--

RICARDOS. Gentlemen, this is very painful for me. It is my daughter's good name—

TWISDEN. Come, sir, speak out!

RICARDOS. The notes were a settlement to her from this gentleman, of whom she was a great friend.

TWISDEN. I am afraid we must press you for the name of the gentleman.

RICARDOS. Sare, if I give it to you, and it does 'im 'arm, what will my daughter say? This is a bad matter for me. He behaved well to her; and she is attached to him still; sometimes she is crying yet because she lost him. And now we betray him, perhaps, who knows? This is very unpleasant for me. *[Taking up the paper]* Here it gives the number of another note--a 'undred-pound note. I 'ave that too. *[He takes a note from his breast pocket]*.

GRAVITER. How much did he give you in all?

RICARDOS. For my daughter's settlement one thousand pounds. I understand he did not wish to give a cheque because of his marriage. So I did not think anything about it being in notes, you see.

TWISDEN. When did he give you this money?

RICARDOS. The middle of Octobare last.

TWISDEN. Mr Ricardos, was it Captain Dancy?

RICARDOS. Gentlemen, I am so fond of my daughter. I have only the one, and no wife.

TWISDEN. Yes, yes; but I must know.

RICARDOS. Sare, if I tell you, will you give me your good word that my daughter shall not hear of it?

TWISDEN. So far as we are able to prevent it--certainly.

RICARDOS. Sare, I trust you.--It was Captain Dancy.

GRAVITER. Were you blackmailing him?

TWISDEN. My partner means, did you press him for this settlement?

RICARDOS. I did think it my duty to my daughter to ask that he make compensation to her.

TWISDEN. With threats that you would tell his wife?

RICARDOS. Captain Dancy was a man of honour. He said: "Of course I will do this." I trusted him. And a month later I did remind him, and he gave me this money for her. I do not know where he got it--I do not know. Gentlemen, I have invested it all on her—every penny--except this note, for which I had the purpose to buy her a necklace. That is the swared truth.

TWISDEN. I must keep this note. You will not speak of this to anyone. I may recognise that you were a holder for value received--others might take a different view. Good-day, sir. Graviter, see Mr Ricardos out, and take his address.

RICARDOS. Gentlemen, I beg you--remember what I said. My daughter--I am not happee. Good-day.

*He turns and goes out slowly, Left Forward, followed by GRAVITER.*

TWISDEN. *[To himself]* Young Dancy!

*[He pins the two notes together and places them in an envelope]*

*GRAVITER returns, carefully shuts the door, and going up to him, hands him RICARDOS' card.*

*[Looking at the card]* Villa Benvenuto. This will have to be verified, but I'm afraid it's true. That man was not acting.

GRAVITER. What's to be done about Dancy?

TWISDEN. Can you understand a gentleman--?

GRAVITER. I don't know, sir. The war loosened "form" all over the place. I saw plenty of that myself. And some men have no moral sense. From the first I've had doubts. It's an awful thing for his wife. By Jove, I don't like losing this case. I don't like the admission we backed such a wrong 'un. What are you going to do then, sir?

SCENE 4

*The same room on the following morning at ten-twenty-five.*

*GRAVITER is ushering in DANCY, whose face is perceptibly harder than it was three months ago, like that of a man who has lived under great restraint.*

DANCY. He wanted to see me before the Court sat.

GRAVITER. Yes, sir. Mr Twisden will see you in one minute.

DANCY. Were you in the war?

GRAVITER. Yes.

DANCY. How can you stick this?

GRAVITER. My trouble was to stick that, sir.

DANCY. But you get no excitement from year's end to year's end. It'd drive me mad.

GRAVITER. But I love to see Mr. Twisden win a case.

DANCY. Why? What is it to you?

GRAVITER. I don't know, sir. It's--it's like football--you want your team to win.

TWISDEN ENTERS

TWISDEN: Captain Dancy. Sorry to have kept you waiting.

DANCY. Winsor came to me yesterday about Canynge's evidence. Is that what you wanted to speak to me about?

TWISDEN. No. It isn't that.

DANCY. By me it's just on the half-hour, sir.

TWISDEN. Yes. I don't want you to go to the Court.

DANCY. Not?

TWISDEN. I have very serious news for you.

DANCY. *[Winning and collecting himself]* Oh!

TWISDEN. After the Court rose yesterday we had a man called Ricardos here. *[A pause]* Is there any need for me to say more?

DANCY. No. What now?

TWISDEN. Our duty was plain; we could not go on with the case. Now I want to talk to you about what you're going to do.

DANCY. That's very good of you, considering.

TWISDEN. I don't pretend to understand, but I imagine you may have done this in a moment of reckless bravado, feeling, perhaps, that as you gave the mare to De Levis, the money was by rights as much yours as his. [*Stopping DANCY, who is about to speak, with a gesture*] To satisfy a debt of honour to this--lady; and, no doubt, to save your wife from hearing of it from the man Ricardos. Is that so?

DANCY. To the life.

TWISDEN. It was mad, Captain Dancy, mad! But the question now is: What do you owe to your wife? She doesn't dream--I suppose?

DANCY. No.

TWISDEN. We can't tell what the result of this collapse will be. The police have the theft in hand. They may issue a warrant. The money could be refunded, and the costs paid--somehow that can all be managed. But it may not help. In any case, what end is served by your staying in the country? You can't save your honour--that's gone. You can't save your wife's peace of mind. If she sticks to you--do you think she will?

DANCY. Not if she's wise.

TWISDEN. Better go! There's a war in Morocco.

DANCY. Good old Morocco!

TWISDEN. Will you go, then, at once, and leave me to break it to your wife?

DANCY. I don't know yet.

TWISDEN. You must decide quickly, to catch a boat train. Many a man has made good. You're a fine soldier.

DANCY. There are alternatives.

TWISDEN. Now, go straight from this office. You've a passport, I suppose; you won't need a visa for France, and from there you can find means to slip over. Have you got money on you? [*Dancy nods*]. We will see what we can do to stop or delay proceedings.

DANCY. It's all damned kind of you. [*With difficulty*] But I must think of my wife. Give me a few minutes.

TWISDEN. Yes, yes; go in there and think it out.

*Dancy exits*

TWISDEN. *[TO GRAVITER]* Tell them to call a taxi.

*[He leaves but quickly returns]*

GRAVITER. Major Canynge is here, Sir. Are you disengaged?

TWISDEN. Yes.

*GRAVITER goes out, and almost immediately he and CANYNGE enter.*

Good-morning, Major. I'm afraid that since the publication of the numbers of those notes, information had reached me which forces me to withdraw from the case. It'll be a great sensation, of course. There'll be a formal verdict for the defendant, with costs.

CANYNGE. I see. Have you told Dancy?

TWISDEN. Yes. He's in there deciding what he'll do.

CANYNGE. This is a dreadful thing, Twisden. I've been afraid of it all along. A soldier! A gallant fellow, too. What on earth got into him?

TWISDEN. There's no end to human nature, Major.

GRAVITER. You can see queerer things in the papers, any day.

CANYNGE. That poor young wife of his! Winsor gave me a message for you, Twisden. If money's wanted quickly to save proceedings, draw on him. Is there anything I can do?

TWISDEN. I've advised him to go straight off to Morocco.

CANYNGE. I don't know that an asylum isn't the place for him. He must be off his head at moments. That jump-crazy! He'd have got a verdict on that alone--if they'd seen those balconies. I was looking at them when I was down there last Sunday. Daring thing, Twisden. Very few men, on a dark night--He risked his life twice. That's a shrewd fellow--young De Levis. He spotted Dancy's nature.

*MARGARET and WINSOR burst in.*

WINSOR. What's this about you dropping the case. There must be some mistake about this, Mr Twisden.

TWISDEN. Hssh! Dancy's admitted it.

WINSOR. What? If it were my own brother, I couldn't feel it more. Guilty or not, you ought to have stuck to him--it's not playing the game, Mr Twisden.

TWISDEN. You must allow me to judge where my duty lay, in a very hard case.

WINSOR. I thought a man was safe with his solicitor.

CANYNGE. Winsor, you don't understand professional etiquette.

WINSOR. No, thank God!

MARGARET. [Going up to TWISDEN] Dear Mr Jacob--pay De Levis. You know my pearls--put them up the spout again. Don't let Ronny be--

TWISDEN. Money isn't the point, Margaret.

MARGARET. It's ghastly! It really is.

WINSOR. I'm going in to shake hands with him.

TWISDEN. Wait! We want him to go straight off to Morocco. Don't upset him. [To WINSOR and MARGARET] I think you had better go. If, a little later, Margaret, you could go round to Mrs Dancy--

WINSOR. Poor little Mabel Dancy! It's perfect hell for her.

*They have not seen that DANCY has opened the door behind them.*

DANCY. It is!

*They all turn round in consternation.*

WINSOR. Old boy!

DANCY. No good, Winsor. [Gazing round at them] Oh! clear out--I can't stand commiseration; I need to talk to Twisden. Major, could you stay?

*TWISDEN motions to WINSOR and MARGARET to go; and as he turns to DANCY, they go out. GRAVITER also moves towards the door. The MAJOR sits motionless. GRAVITER goes out.*

TWISDEN. Well?

DANCY. I'm going home, to clear up things with my wife. Canynge, I don't quite know why I did the damned thing. But I did, and there's an end of it.

CANYNGE. Dancy, for the honour of the Army, avoid further scandal if you can. I'll write a letter to a friend of mine in the Spanish War Office. It will get you a job in their war.

DANCY. Very good of you. I don't know if I can make use of it.

CANYNGE. Dancy, there's a chance a warrant could be issued for your arrest. the police could be here at any moment. You have no time to lose.

*But DANCY does not stir.*

*MABLE enters.*

TWISDEN. Captain Dancy, may I impress upon you that time is of the essence. (*He sees Mable*) Well.. You have a lot to discuss. We'll be outside.

*MABLE and DANCY are left alone.*

MABEL. Ronny! Do they want me in Court, today?

DANCY. No.

MABEL. What is it? Something's happened.

DANCY. Spun.

MABEL. Spun? What do you mean? What's spun?

DANCY. The case. They've found out through those notes.

MABEL. Oh! Who?

DANCY. Me!

MABEL. Don't, Ronny! Oh! No! Don't!

DANCY. Pity you wouldn't come to Africa three months ago.

MABEL. Why didn't you tell me then? I would have gone.

DANCY. You wanted this case. Well, it's fallen down.

MABEL. But I couldn't--I had to believe -

DANCY. And now you can't. It's the end, Mabel. Forgive me!

MABEL. I think I've known a long time, really. Only--why? What made you?

DANCY. It was a crazy thing to do; but, damn it, I was only looting a looter. I had a debt to pay.

MABEL. To a woman?

DANCY. A debt of honour--it wouldn't wait.

MABEL. It was--it was to a woman. Ronny, don't lie any more.

DANCY. [Grimly] Well! I wanted to save your knowing. I'd promised a thousand. I had a letter from her father that morning, threatening to tell you. All the same, if that tyke hadn't jeered at me for parlour tricks!--But what's the good of all this now? [Sullenly] Well--it may cure you of loving me. Get over that, Mab; I never was worth it--and I'm done for!

MABEL. The woman--have you--since--?

DANCY. No! You supplanted her. But if you'd known I was leaving a woman for you, you'd never have married me. Twisden's chucked up the case. They want me to run for it to Morocco.

MABEL. To the war there?

DANCY. Yes. There a warrant out for my arrest.

MABEL. A prosecution? Prison? Oh, go! Don't wait a minute! Go!

DANCY. Blast them!

MABEL. Oh, Ronny! Please! Please! Think what you'll want. I'll pack go home and pack. Quick! No! Don't wait to take things. Have you got money?

DANCY. [*Nodding*] This'll be good-bye, then!

MABEL. Oh! No! No, no! I'll follow--I'll come out to you there.

DANCY. D'you mean you'll stick to me?

MABEL. Of course I'll stick to you.

*GAVISTON Knocks and enters apologetically*

GAVISTON. It's--it's police.

DANCY. Hold them in check a little. I want a minute or two.

*GAVISTON goes out.*

MABEL: Oh! God! . . . Ronny! I can't bear it.

DANCY. Heads up, Mab! Don't show the brutes!

MABEL. Whatever happens, I'll go on loving you. If it's prison--I'll wait. Do you understand? I don't care what you did--I don't care! I'm just the same. I will be just the same when you come back to me.

DANCY. That's not in human nature.

MABEL. It is. It's in Me.

DANCY. I've crocked up your life.

MABEL. No, no! Kiss me!

MABEL. [Clasping him] Ronny! Oh, Ronny! It won't be for long--I'll be waiting! I'll be waiting--I swear it.

*There's a knock at the Door. DANCY darts into the second room.*

INSPECTOR DEDE enters.

MABEL. Yes?

INSPECTOR. I believe Captain Dancy is in here, madam?

MABEL. I am not quite sure--I don't think so.

INSPECTOR. I should think you must be sure, madam. This is not a big place. [*Indicating the second room*] He'll be in there, then.

MABEL. [*Stopping him*] What do you want, Inspector?

INSPECTOR. Well, madam, it's no use disguising it. I'm exceedingly sorry, but I've a warrant for his arrest.

MABEL. Inspector!

INSPECTOR. I'm sure I've every sympathy for you, madam; but I must carry out my instructions.

MABEL. And break my heart?

INSPECTOR. Well, madam, we're--we're not allowed to take that into consideration. The Law's the Law.

MABEL. Are you married?

INSPECTOR. I am.

MABEL. If you--your wife--

*The INSPECTOR raises his hand, deprecating.*

Just give us half an hour! Couldn't you? It's two lives—two whole lives! We've only been married four months. Come back in half an hour. It's such a little thing--nobody will know. Nobody. Won't you?

INSPECTOR. Now, madam--you must know my duty.

MABEL. Inspector, I beseech you--just half an hour.

INSPECTOR. No, no--don't you try to undermine me--I'm sorry for you; but don't you try it!

*There is the noise of a pistol shot. MABEL rushes to the door, tears it open, and disappears within, followed by the INSPECTOR, just as MARGARET ORME and WINSOR come in. They, too, all hurry to the door and disappear for a moment; then WINSOR and MARGARET reappear, comforting a sobbing MABEL, WINSOR takes from her hand an envelope,*

GRAVITER. *[re-opens the door.]* Sir.

TWISDEN. What is it?

GRAVITER. De Levis is here.

TWISDEN. De Levis? Can't see him.

WINSOR. Let him in!

*After a moment's hesitation TWISDEN nods, and GRAVITER goes out. The three wait in silence. DE LEVIS comes in.*

TWISDEN. You wanted to see me?

DE LEVIS. Yes. I came to say that I am afraid a warrant is to be issued. I wanted you to realise--it's not my doing. I'll give it no support. I'm content. I don't want my money. I don't even want costs. Do you all understand? Don't mistake me. I didn't come because I feel Christian; I am a Jew. I will take no money—not even that which was stolen. Give it to a charity. I'm proved right. And now I'm done with the damned thing.

WINSOR. Oh no, you haven't heard the last of this, Jew. You've done for my best friend.

DE LEVI. I, sir?

WINSOR. He shot himself. Neatly--through the heart.

INSPECTOR. *[TO WINSOR]* I'll need that letter, sir.

WINSOR. *[Grimly]* You shall have it for the inquest. Till then-- it's addressed to me, *[He tears it open and reads it aloud]* "Dear Winsor,--This is the only decent thing I can do. It's too damned unfair to her. It's only another jump. A pistol keeps faith.

MARGARET Keeps faith! We've all done that. It's not enough.

WINSOR. All right, old girl!

*The CURTAIN falls.*