

The Lucky One

BY A. A. MILNE

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

CHARACTERS.

GERALD FARRINGDON.

BOB FARRINGDON (his elder brother).

SIR JAMES FARRINGDON (his father).

LADY FARRINGDON (his mother).

MISS FARRINGDON (his great-aunt).

PAMELA CAREY (his betrothed).

HENRY WENTWORTH (his friend).

THOMAS TODD (his friend).

LETTY HERBERT (his friend).

MASON (his old nurse).

ACT I. At SIR JAMES FARRINGDON'S in the country.

ACT II. A private hotel in Dover Street. Two months later.

ACT III. At SIR JAMES FARRINGDON'S again. Three months later.

ACT I

[SCENE.--The hall of SIR JAMES FARRINGDON'S house in the country.]

[It is a large and pleasantly unofficial sort of room, used as a meeting-place rather than a resting place. To be in it pledges you to nothing; whereas in the billiard-room you are presumably pledged to billiards. The French windows at the back open on to lawns; the door on the right at the back will take you into the outer hall; the door on the left leads to the servants' quarters; the door on the right in front will disclose other inhabited rooms to you. An oak gallery runs round two sides of the hall and descends in broad and gentle stairs down the right side of it. Four stairs from the bottom it turns round at right angles and

deposits you fairly in the hall. Entering in this way, you will see immediately opposite to you the large open fireplace occupied by a pile of unlit logs--for it is summer. There is a chair on each side of the fireplace, but turned now away from it. In the left centre of the hall there is a gate-legged table to which trays with drinks on them, have a habit of finding their way; it is supported on each side by a coffin-stool. A sofa, which will take two strangers comfortably and three friends less comfortably, comes out at right angles to the staircase, but leaves plenty of space between itself and the stool on its side of the table. Beneath the window on the left of the French windows is a small table on which letters and papers are put; beneath the window on the other side is a writing-table. The walls are decorated impartially with heads of wild animals and of Farringdons.]

[At the present moment the inhabitants of the hall are three. HENRY WENTWORTH, a barrister between forty, and fifty, dressed in rather a serious tweed suit, for a summer day, is on the sofa. THOMAS TODD, an immaculate young gentleman of twenty-five, is half-sitting on the gate-legged table with one foot on the ground and the other swinging. He is dressed in a brown flannel coat and white trousers, shoes and socks, and he has a putter in his hand indicative of his usual line of thought. The third occupant is the Butler, who, in answer to TOMMY'S ring, has appeared with the drinks.]

[The time is about four o'clock on a June afternoon.]

TOMMY (to the Butler). Thanks, James; just leave it here. [Exit Butler.] Whisky or lemonade, Wentworth?

WENTWORTH. Neither, thanks, Tommy.

TOMMY. Well, I will. (He pours himself out some lemonade and takes a long drink.) I should have thought you would have been thirsty, driving down from London a day like this. (He finishes his drink.) Let's see, where was I up to? The sixth, wasn't it?

WENTWORTH. The sixth, Tommy. (With resignation) Only twelve more.

TOMMY. Yes, that's right. Well, at the seventh I got an absolutely topping drive, but my approach was sliced a bit. However, I chipped on within about six feet, and was down in four. Gerald took it in three, but I had a stroke, so I halved. Then the eighth I told you about.

WENTWORTH. Was that where you fell into the pond?

TOMMY. No, no; you're thinking of the fifth, where I topped my drive into the pond.

WENTWORTH. I knew the pond came into it somewhere. I hoped--I mean I thought you fell in.

TOMMY. Look here, you *must* remember the eighth, old chap; that was the one I did in one. Awful bit of luck.

WENTWORTH. Bit of luck for me too, Tommy.

TOMMY. Why?

WENTWORTH. Because now you can hurry on to the ninth.

TOMMY. I say, Wentworth, I thought you were keen on golf.

WENTWORTH. Only on my own.

TOMMY. You're a fraud. Here I've been absolutely wasting my precious time on you and--I suppose it wouldn't even interest you to hear that Gerald went round in seventy-two--five under bogey?

WENTWORTH. It would interest me much more to hear something about this girl he's engaged to.

TOMMY. Pamela Carey? Oh, she's an absolute ripper.

WENTWORTH. Yes, but you've said that of every girl you've met.

TOMMY. Well, dash it! you don't expect me to describe what she looks like, do you?

WENTWORTH. Well, no. I shall see that for myself directly. One gets introduced, you know, Tommy. It isn't as though I were meeting her at Charing Cross Station for the first time. But who is she?

TOMMY. Well, she was poor old Bob's friend originally. He brought her down here, but, of course, as soon as she saw Gerald--

WENTWORTH (quickly). Why, *poor* old Bob?

TOMMY. I don't know; everybody seems to call him that. After all, he isn't quite like Gerald, is he?

WENTWORTH. Paderewski isn't quite like Tommy Todd, but I don't say "poor old Paderewski"--nor "poor old Tommy," if it comes to that.

TOMMY. Well, hang it, old man, there's a bit of a difference. Paderewski and I--well, I mean we don't compete.

WENTWORTH. Oh, I don't know. I daresay he's as rotten at golf as you, if the truth were really known.

TOMMY. No, but seriously, it's a bit different when you get two brothers like Gerald and Bob; and whatever the elder one does, the younger one does a jolly sight better. Now Paderewski and I--

WENTWORTH. Good heavens! I wish I hadn't started you on that. Get back to Bob. I thought Bob was on the Stock Exchange and Gerald in the Foreign Office. There can't be very much competition between them there.

TOMMY. Well, but there you are! Why isn't Bob in the Foreign Office and Gerald on the Stock Exchange? Why, because Gerald's the clever one, Gerald's the popular one, the good-looking one, the lucky one, the county cricketer, the plus three at golf--

WENTWORTH. Oh Lord! I thought you'd get golf into it. I suppose you were working up to your climax. Poor old Bob is about eighteen at golf, eh?

TOMMY. As a matter of fact, he's a very decent five. And there you are again. In any other family, Bob would be thought rather a nut. As it is--

WENTWORTH. As it is, Tommy, there are about thirty-five million people in England who've never played golf and who would recognize Bob, if they met him, for the decent English gentleman that he is.

TOMMY. I think you exaggerate, old chap. Golf's been getting awfully popular lately.

WENTWORTH. Personally I am very fond of Bob.

TOMMY. Oh, so am I. He's an absolute ripper. Still, *Gerald*, you know--I mean it's jolly bad luck on poor old Bob. Now Paderewski and I--

[Enter GERALD from the garden, a charming figure in a golfing coat and white flannels. Perhaps he is a little conscious of his charm; if so, it is hardly his fault, for hero-worship has been his lot from boyhood. He is now about twenty-six; everything that he has ever tried to do he has done well; and, if he is rather more unembarrassed than most of us when praised, his unself-consciousness is to a stranger as charming as the rest of him. With it all he is intensely reserved, with the result that those who refuse to succumb to his charm sometimes make the mistake of thinking that there is nothing behind it.]

GERALD. Hallo, Wentworth, how are you? All right?

WENTWORTH (getting up and shaking hands). Yes, thanks. How are you?

GERALD. Simply bursting. Have you seen your room and all that sort of thing?

WENTWORTH. Yes, thanks.

GERALD. Good. And Tommy's been entertaining you. (To TOMMY) Tommy, I interrupted your story about Paderewski. I don't think I

know it. (To WENTWORTH) You must listen to this; it may be fairly new.

TOMMY. Don't be an ass. As a matter of fact, we were discussing something quite serious.

GERALD (to WENTWORTH). How long have you been here?

WENTWORTH. About ten minutes.

GERALD. And Tommy hasn't told you that he did the eighth in one this morning?

WENTWORTH. He hasn't really told me yet. He's only mentioned it once or twice in passing.

TOMMY (modestly). Well, I mean it's bound to appear in the papers, so naturally one--

GERALD. Oh, it's a great business. Champagne will flow like water to-night. There will also be speeches.

WENTWORTH. Which reminds me, Gerald, I have to congratulate you.

GERALD. Thank you very much. When you've seen her you'll want to do it again.

TOMMY (looking through the window). Hallo, there's Letty.

GERALD. If you want to tell her about it, run along, Tommy.

TOMMY (moving off). I thought I'd just take her on at putting. [He goes out.]

GERALD (sitting down). You'll stay till--well, how long can you? Tuesday, anyhow.

WENTWORTH. I think I can manage till Tuesday. Thanks very much. Miss Carey is here, of course?

GERALD. Yes, she'll be in directly. She's gone to the station to meet Bob.

WENTWORTH (smiling). And Gerald didn't go with her?

GERALD (smiling). At least six people suggested that Gerald should go with her. They suggested it very loudly and archly--

WENTWORTH. So Gerald didn't?

GERALD. So Gerald didn't. (After a pause) I can't stand that sort of thing.

WENTWORTH. What sort of thing?

GERALD (after a pause). Poor old boy! you've never been in love--barring the nine or ten times you're just going to tell me about. I mean never really in love.

WENTWORTH. Don't drag *me* into it. What is it you can't stand?

GERALD. People being tactful about Pamela and me.... Aunt Tabitha asked me yesterday if she might have Pamela for half an hour to do something or other--as if she were an umbrella, with my initials on it.... And somebody else said, "I've quite fallen in love with your Pamela; I hope you don't mind." *Mind?* I tell you, Wentworth, my boy, if you aren't in love with Pamela by Tuesday, there'll be the very deuce of a row. Your electro-plated butter-dish, or whatever it's going to be, will be simply flung back at you.

WENTWORTH. Well, as long as Miss Pamela understands--

GERALD. Of course she understands. We understand each other.

WENTWORTH (preening himself). Then I'll do my best. Mind, if she does happen to reciprocate my feelings, I wash my hands of all responsibility. (Going towards the staircase) Good-afternoon, Miss Farrington.

[MISS FARRINGDON is coming slowly down the stairs.]

MISS FARRINGDON. Good-afternoon, Mr. Wentworth. Welcome.

(She must be well over eighty. She was pretty once, and sharp-tongued; so much you could swear to now. For the rest she is very, very wise, and intensely interested in life.)

GERALD (going over and kissing her). Good-morning, Aunt Tabitha. Your chair is waiting for you. (He conducts her to it.)

MISS FARRINGDON. I'm a nasty cross old thing before lunch, Mr. Wentworth, so I don't come down till afterwards nowadays. Is Gerald being as charming as usual?

WENTWORTH (smiling). Oh, pretty well.

GERALD (looking at her lovingly and then turning to WENTWORTH). It's having a very bad effect on her, this morning seclusion. She's supposed to be resting, but she spends her time trying to think of nasty things to say about me. The trouble with a mind like Aunt Tabitha's is that it can't think of anything *really* nasty.

MISS FARRINGDON. The trouble with Gerald, Mr. Wentworth, is that he goes about expecting everybody to love him. The result is that they nearly all do. However, he can't get round *me*.

GERALD. It isn't true, Wentworth; she adores me.

MISS FARRINGDON. He wouldn't be happy if he didn't think so.

WENTWORTH (gracefully). I can sympathize with him there.

GERALD. The slight coolness which you perceive to have arisen between my Aunt Tabitha and myself is due to the fact that I discovered her guilty secret a few days ago. For years she has pretended that her real name was Harriet. I have recently found out that she was christened Tabitha--or, anyhow, would have been, if the clergyman had known his job.

MISS FARRINGDON. My great-nephew, Gerald, Mr. Wentworth--

GERALD. *Nephew*, Wentworth. I agreed to waive the "great" a long time ago.

WENTWORTH. You'll excuse my asking, but do you never talk to each other except through the medium of a third person?

MISS FARRINGDON (to GERALD). That's how they prefer to do it in the Foreign Office. Isn't it, dear?

GERALD. Always, Aunt Tabitha. But really, you know, we both ought to be talking to Wentworth and flaking after his mother and his liver--and things like that.

MISS FARRINGDON. Yes, I'm afraid we're rather rude, Mr. Wentworth. The Farringdons' great fault.

WENTWORTH (protesting). Oh no!

MISS FARRINGDON. How *is* Mrs. Wentworth?

WENTWORTH. Wonderfully well, thank you, considering her age.

MISS FARRINGDON. Dear me, we met first in 1850.

GERALD. All frills and lavender.

MISS FARRINGDON. And now here's Gerald engaged. Have you seen Pamela yet?

WENTWORTH. Not yet. I have been hearing about her from Tommy. He classes her with the absolute rippers.

GERALD. Good old Tommy!

MISS FARRINGDON. Yes, she's much too good for Gerald.

GERALD. Of course she is, Aunt Tabitha. But if women only married men who were good enough for them, where should we be? As lots of

young men said to you, in vain--on those afternoons when they read Tennyson aloud to you.

MISS FARRINGDON. She ought to have married Bob.

WENTWORTH (surprised and amused). Bob? Is Bob good enough for her?

MISS FARRINGDON. She would have made a good wife for Bob.

[Enter suddenly LETTY HERBERT and TOMMY from the garden. LETTY is an entirely delightful irresponsible girl of the type which might have shocked Queen Victoria. However, she seems to suit TOMMY. They are not engaged yet, but she has already that air of proprietorship.]

LETTY. I say, Tommy did the eighth in one. Why, there's Aunt Harriet. (Going over and kissing her) How are you, darling? Tommy's done the eighth in one. I know it doesn't mean much to you, but do say hooray, because he's so bucked about it.

GERALD (to WENTWORTH). Do you know Miss Herbert? Letty, come and be introduced. Mr. Wentworth--Miss Herbert.

LETTY (shaking hands eagerly). How do you do? I say, Tommy did the eighth in one. Do you know Tommy--*or* the eighth?

WENTWORTH. Both, Miss Herbert.

GERALD. To a man who knows both, the performance seems truly astonishing.

MISS FARRINGDON. I don't know anything about golf, Mr. Todd. But doing anything in one sounds rather clever. So I say hooray, too.

TOMMY. I wish you'd let me teach you, Miss Farringdon. Lots of people begin when they're frightfully old.

LETTY (to WENTWORTH). This is one of Tommy's polite days.

GERALD. Mr. Todd's famous old-world courtesy is the talk of many a salon.

MISS FARRINGDON (to TOMMY). Don't you mind them. I *am* frightfully old. I am very proud of it. I hope you'll all live to be as old as I am.

GERALD. I only hope we shall be half as nice.

MISS FARRINGDON. Gerald being charming as usual.

GERALD (firmly). I will also add that I hope we shall be kinder to our great-nephews than some.

LETTY (putting her arm in his). Diddums!

GERALD. Yes, I did. I am very much hurt.

TOMMY. I say, you know, Miss Farringdon, I never meant--

LETTY. I love Tommy when he apologizes.

[Enter SIR JAMES and LADY FARRINGDON from the door to front of the staircase. SIR JAMES, in a country check-suit, is a man of no particular brain and no ideas, but he has an unconquerable belief in himself, and a very genuine pride in, and admiration of, GERALD. His grey hair is bald on the top, and he is clean-shaven except for a hint of whisker. He might pass for a retired Captain R. N., and he has something of the quarter-deck manner, so that even a remark on the weather is listened to with attention. Neither of his sons loves him, but GERALD is no longer afraid of him. LADY FARRINGDON is outwardly rather intimidating, but she never feels so. She worships GERALD; and would love a good many other people if they were not a little overawed by her.]

LADY FARRINGDON. Ah, you're here, Mr. Wentworth. How do you do?

WENTWORTH (coming forward). How do you do, Lady Farringdon? How do you do, Sir James?

SIR JAMES. How are you, Wentworth? Come to see Gerald play for the county?

GERALD. He's come to see Pamela. Haven't you, Wentworth?

WENTWORTH. I rather hope to see both.

SIR JAMES. Ah, Aunt Harriet, I didn't see you. How are you to-day?

MISS FARRINGDON. Very well, thank you, James. (He goes over to her.)

LADY FARRINGDON. I hope they've shown you your room, Mr. Wentworth, and made you comfortable? Gerald, darling, you saw that Mr. Wentworth was all right?

WENTWORTH. Oh yes, that's quite all right, thank you, Lady Farringdon.

LADY FARRINGDON. Let me see, you're in the Blue Room, I think.

LETTY. It's much the nicest room to be in, Mr. Wentworth. There's a straight way down the water-pipe in case of fire.

GERALD. And a straight way up in case of burglars.

LADY FARRINGDON (fondly). Gerald, dear, don't be so foolish.

SIR JAMES. Gerald, is it true you went round in seventy-two?

GERALD. Yes. Tommy did the eighth in one.

TOMMY (modestly). Awful fluke.

SIR JAMES (casually). Ah--well done. (To GERALD) Seventy-two--that's pretty good. That's five under bogey, Mr. Wentworth.

LADY FARRINGDON (to WENTWORTH). Gerald has always been so good at everything. Even as a baby.

TOMMY. He did the ninth in three, Letty. How's that for hot?

SIR JAMES (to WENTWORTH). You must stay till Thursday, if you can, and see the whole of the Surrey match. It isn't often Gerald gets a chance of playing for the county now. It's difficult for him to get away from the Foreign Office. Lord Edward was telling me at the club the other day--

LETTY (TO LADY FARRINGDON). Gerald dived off the Monk's Rock this morning. I'm glad I didn't see him. I should have been horribly frightened.

TOMMY (proudly). I saw him.

LETTY. Tommy, of course, slithered down over the limpets in the ordinary way.

LADY FARRINGDON (fondly). Oh, Gerald, how could you?

SIR JAMES (still talking to WENTWORTH). He tells me that Gerald is a marked man in the Service now.

TOMMY (to LETTY). Do you remember when Gerald--

MISS FARRINGDON (incisively). Let's *all* talk about Gerald.

(GERALD, who has been listening to all this with more amusement than embarrassment, gives a sudden shout of laughter.)

GERALD. Oh, Aunt Tabitha, you're too lovely! (He blows her a kiss and she shakes her stick at him.)

[Enter PAMELA from the door In front of the staircase, tall, beautiful and serene, a born mother. GERALD carried her off her feet a month ago, but it is a question if he really touched her heart--a heart moved more readily by pity than by love.]

PAMELA. Gerald, dear, I'd know your laugh anywhere. Am I too late for the joke?

GERALD. Hullo, Pamela. Brought Bob with you?

PAMELA. He's just washing London off himself.

LADY FARRINGDON. Pamela, dear, do you know Mr. Wentworth?

PAMELA (shaking hands). How do you do?

LADY FARRINGDON (to WENTWORTH). Miss Carey--Gerald's Pamela.

PAMELA. I've heard so much about you, Mr. Wentworth.

WENTWORTH. And I've heard so much about you, Miss Carey.

PAMELA. That's nice. Then we can start straight off as friends.

LETTY. I suppose you know Tommy did the eighth in one?

PAMELA. Rather. It's splendid!

LETTY. *Do* say you haven't told Bob.

GERALD. Why shouldn't Bob know?

PAMELA. No, I haven't told him, Letty.

LETTY. Good, then Tommy can tell him.

TOMMY. They do pull my leg, don't they, Miss Farringdon?

[Enter BOB from the outer hall in a blue flannel suit. He has spoilt any chance he had of being considered handsome by a sullen expression now habitual. Two years older than Gerald, he is not so tall, but bigger, and altogether less graceful. He has got in the way of talking in rather a surly voice, as if he suspected that any interest taken in him was merely a polite one.]

GERALD. Hullo, Bob; good man.

BOB. Hullo. (He goes up to LADY FARRINGDON and kisses her.)
How are you, mother?

LADY FARRINGDON. It's so nice that you could get away, dear.

BOB. How are you, father? All right?

SIR JAMES. Ah, Bob! Come down to see your brother play for the county?

PAMELA (quickly). He's come down to see *me*, haven't you, Bob?

BOB. Hullo, Wentworth. Hullo, Letty. I say, I can't shake hands with you all. (He smacks TOMMY on the back and goes over to Miss FARRINGDON.) How are you, dear?

MISS FARRINGDON. Very glad to see my elder great-nephew. I was getting tired of Gerald.

LADY FARRINGDON (protesting). Aunt Harriet, dear.

GERALD (smiling). It's all right, mother. We quite understand each other.

MISS FARRINGDON. I quite understand Gerald.

BOB. I say, aren't we going to have any tea?

LADY FARRINGDON. It's early yet, dear. Gerald, you'd like to have it outside, wouldn't you?

GERALD. Oh, rather. What do you say, Wentworth?

WENTWORTH. I never want to be indoors in the country if I can help it.

SIR JAMES. Quite right, Wentworth--quite right. Gerald, you'll just have time to take Wentworth round the stables before tea.

GERALD. You'll have to see them officially after church to-morrow. I don't know if you'd care about a private view now.

SIR JAMES. He must see your new mare. I should like to have his opinion of her.

WENTWORTH (getting up). I never know what to say to a mare, but I should like to come.

LETTY. She answers to "Hi!" or to any loud cry.

PAMELA. I'm sure you'll be all right, Mr. Wentworth.

GERALD. There's a way of putting one's head on one side and saying, "Ah!" Anybody who's seen Tommy at the Royal Academy will know exactly what I mean.

(GERALD, PAMELA and WENTWORTH move towards the door.)

WENTWORTH (to PAMELA). Ought I to have a straw in my mouth?

GERALD. It's all right, we'll go and see the spaniels first.

WENTWORTH (cheerfully). Oh, I'm all right with dogs.

LETTY (to TOMMY). Come on, Tommy. [They go out behind the others.]

LADY FARRINGDON. Would you like to have tea outside, Aunt Harriet?

MISS FARRINGDON. I'm not too old for that, Mary. Bob will bring me out. I want to have a word with him while I can. Everybody talks at once in this house.

SIR JAMES (picking up his hat). How's the City--hey?

BOB. Just as usual.

SIR JAMES. Coming round to the stables?

ROB. Later on, perhaps.

LADY FARRINGDON. Bob is bringing Aunt Harriet along, dear.

SIR JAMES. Ah, yes. [They go out together.]

MISS FARRINGDON. Smoke, Bob, and tell me how horrible the City is.

BOB (lighting a pipe and sitting down). It's damnable, Aunt Harriet.

MISS FARRINGDON. More damnable than usual?

BOB. Yes.

MISS FARRINGDON. Any particular reason why?

BOB (after a long pause). No.

(MISS FARRINGDON nods to herself and then speaks very casually.)

MISS FARRINGDON. My bankers sent in my pass-book the other day. I seem to have a deal of money lying idle, as they call it. If anybody wanted it, I should really be in no hurry to get it back again.

BOB (awkwardly). Thanks very much. It isn't that. (After a pause) Not altogether.

MISS FARRINGDON. It was a great pity you ever went into the City, Bob.

BOB (fiercely). I could have told anybody that.

MISS FARRINGDON (after waiting for him to say something more). Well, suppose we go into the garden with the others. (She begins to get up and he goes to help her,) There's nothing you want to tell me, Bob?

BOB (looking away). What would there be?

MISS FARRINGDON. I'm a wise old woman, they say, and I don't talk.

BOB. I don't think you can help me. Er--thanks very much.

MISS FARRINGDON (quite naturally, as she turns towards the door). If you don't mind giving me your arm.

(As they get to the door they are met by GERALD and PAMELA coming in.)

GERALD. Hullo, Bob, we were just coming back for you.

MISS FARRINGDON. Thoughtful Gerald.

GERALD. Pamela's idea. She thought that the elder members of the family could discuss life more freely unhampered by the younger generation.

PAMELA. What I really said was, "Where's Bob?"

GERALD. Well, it's the same thing.

MISS FARRINGDON. Bob is looking after me, thank you very much. [They go out together.]

GERALD (after watching them go, to PAMELA). Stay here a bit. There are too many people and dogs and things outside. Come and sit on the sofa and I'll tell you all the news. (He takes her hand and they go to the sofa together.) What ages you've been away!

PAMELA. An hour and a half. And it need not have been that if you'd come with me.

GERALD (taking her hand). If I had come with you, I would have held your hand all the way.

PAMELA. I shouldn't have minded.

GERALD. But just think what would have happened: You would have had to have driven with one hand down all the hills; we should have had a smash-up before we got halfway; a well-known society beauty and a promising young gentleman in the Foreign Office would have been maimed for life; and Bob would have to have walked here carrying his portmanteau. Besides, I love you going away from me when you come back. You've only got to come into the room, and the sun seems to shine.

PAMELA. The sun always shines on Gerald.

GERALD. Does it? That's a different sort of sunshine. Not the gentle caressing September afternoon sunshine which you wear all round you. (She is looking at him lovingly and happily as he says this, but she withdraws into herself quickly as he pulls himself up and says with a sudden change of tone) Dear me, I'm getting quite poetical, and two minutes ago I was talking to Wentworth about fetlocks.

PAMELA (getting up). Oh, Gerald, Gerald!

GERALD (getting up and smiling at her). Oh, Pamela, Pamela!

PAMELA. I wonder how much you really want me.

GERALD. I'll show you when we're married. I don't think I could even begin to tell you now.

PAMELA (wistfully). Couldn't you try?

(GERALD catches hold of her suddenly, and holding her tightly to him, kisses her again and again.)

GERALD. There!

PAMELA (releasing herself). Oh, Gerald, my darling, you frighten me sometimes.

GERALD. Did I frighten you then?

PAMELA (happily). Oh, no, no, no, no! (Earnestly) Always want me very much, Gerald. Always be in need of me. Don't be too successful without me. However much the sun shines on you, let me make it gentler and more caressing for you.

GERALD. It is so, darling. Didn't I say so?

PAMELA. Ah, but I want such a lot of telling.

GERALD (laughing happily as he goes over to the table by the fireplace and takes a cigarette). Who was the fellow who threw something into the sea because he was frightened by his own luck? What shall I throw? (Looking at a presentation clock on the mantelpiece) That's rather asking for it. In a way it would be killing two birds with one stone. Oh, Lord, I am lucky!

PAMELA (coming to him and taking his arm). As long as you don't throw me.

GERALD. Pamela, you're talking rubbish. I talk a good deal myself, but I do keep within the bounds. Let's go and chatter to Bob about contangos. I don't know what they are, but they sound extraordinarily sober.

PAMELA (gently). Poor old Bob!

GERALD (quickly). Why *poor* old Bob?

PAMELA. He's worried about something. I tried to get him to tell me as we came from the station, but he wouldn't.

GERALD. Poor old Bob! I suppose things are going up--or down, or something. Brokerage one-eighth--that's what's worrying him, I expect.

PAMELA. I think he wants to talk to you about it. Be nice to him, darling, won't you?

GERALD (surprised). Nice to him?

PAMELA. You know what I mean--sympathetic. I know it's a difficult relationship--brothers.

GERALD. All relationships are difficult. But after you, he's the person I love best in the world. (With a laugh) But I don't propose to fall on his neck and tell him so.

PAMELA (smiling). I know you will help him if you can.

GERALD. Of course I will, though I don't quite see how. (Hopefully) Perhaps he's only slicing his drives again.

PAMELA. Oh, I love you, Gerald. (Wonderingly) *Do* I love you, or am I only just charmed by you?

GERALD. You said you loved me once. You can't go back on that.

PAMELA. Then I love you. And make a century for me on Monday.

GERALD. Well, I'll try. Of course the bowler may be in love too. But even if I get out first ball, I can say, "Well, anyhow, Pamela loves me."

PAMELA. Oh, I think I hope you get out first ball.

GERALD. Baby Pamela.

PAMELA. And on Thursday we shall be alone together here, and you've promised to take me out in the boat for the day.

GERALD. You mean you've promised to let me.

PAMELA. What happy days there are in the world!

[Enter BOB from the garden.]

GERALD. Hullo, Bob. Tea? (He moves towards the door.)

BOB. Cigarettes. (He goes over to the fireplace and fills his cigarette case.)

GERALD. Still, I expect tea's nearly ready.

PAMELA (going towards door R. at the back). I'll join you; I'm not going out without a sunshade again. [Exit.]

(There is an awkward silence.)

BOB (to GERALD). I say!

GERALD (turning round). Hullo!

BOB. Just wait a moment.

(GERALD comes back slowly.)

GERALD. I warn you those are rotten cigarettes. (Holds out his own case)

BOB (taking one). Thanks. (Awkwardly) You're so confoundedly difficult to get hold of nowadays. Never less than half-a-dozen all round you.

GERALD (laughing). Good old Bob!

BOB (after lighting a cigarette). I want to talk to you about something.

GERALD. Well, of course.

BOB (after a pause). You've heard of Marcus, my partner?

GERALD (with the idea of putting himself and BOB more at their ease). Good old Marcus and Farrington! It's the most perfect name for a firm. They sound so exactly as though they could sell you anything from a share to a shaving-brush. Marcus and Farrington's pure badger, two shillings--gilt-edged badger half-a-crown.

BOB (fiercely). I suppose everything is just a pleasant joke to you.

GERALD (utterly surprised). Bob! Bob, old boy, what's the matter? (Putting his hand on BOB'S shoulder) I say, Bob, I haven't hurt you, have I?

BOB (hopelessly). Oh, Jerry, I believe I'm in the devil of a hole.

GERALD. You haven't called me "Jerry" since we were at school.

BOB. You got me out of holes then--damn you! and you were my younger brother. Oh, Jerry, get me out of this one.

GERALD. But, of course. (Firmly, as if a little nervous of a scene from BOB) My dear Bob, you're as right as anything. You've got nothing on earth to worry about. At the worst it's only a question of money, and we can always put that right somehow.

BOB. I'm not sure that it is only a question of money.

GERALD (frightened). What do you mean? (Turning away with a laugh) You're talking nonsense.

BOB. Gerald, Marcus is a wrong un. (Fiercely) An out-and-out wrong un.

GERALD. The only time I saw him he looked like it.

BOB. God knows what he's let me in for.

GERALD. You mean money?

BOB. More than that, perhaps.

GERALD. You mean you're just going bankrupt?

BOB. No. (After a pause) Prosecution.

GERALD. Well, let them prosecute. That ends Marcus. You're well rid of him.

BOB (miserably). Perhaps it isn't only Marcus.

GERALD (sharply, after this has sunk in). What can they prosecute you for?

BOB (speaking rapidly). What the devil did they ever send me to the City for? I didn't want to go. I was never any good at figures. I loathe the whole thing. What the devil did they want to send me there for-- and shove me on to a wrong un like Marcus? That's his life, messing about with money in the City. How can I stand out against a man like that? I never wanted to go into it at all.

GERALD (holding out his cigarette-case). Have another cigarette? (They each light one, and GERALD sits down in the chair opposite to him.) Let's look at it calmly. You've done nothing dishonourable, I know that. That's obvious.

BOB. You see, Jerry, I'm so hopeless at that sort of business. Naturally I got in the way of leaving things to Marcus. But that's all. (Resentfully) Of course, that's all.

GERALD. Good. Well, then, you're making much too much fuss about it. My dear boy, innocent people don't get put into prison nowadays. You've been reading detective stories. "The Stain on the Bath Mat," or "The Crimson Sponge." Good Lord! I shall be coming to *you* next and saying that *I'm* going to be put in prison for selling secret documents to a foreign country. These things don't happen; they don't really, old boy.

BOB (cheered, but not convinced). I don't know; it looks devilish bad, what I can make of it.

GERALD. Well, let's see what I can make of it.

BOB (trying not to show his eagerness). I was wondering if you would. Come up on Monday and we'll have a go at it together. Marcus has gone, of course. Probably halfway to South America by now. (Bitterly) Or wherever you go to.

GERALD. Right-o! At least, I can't come on Monday, of course, but we'll have a go at it on Thursday.

BOB. Why can't you come on Monday?

GERALD. Well, the Surrey match.

BOB (bitterly). I suppose as long as you beat Surrey, it doesn't matter if I go to prison.

GERALD (annoyed). Oh, shut up about going to prison! There's not the slightest chance of your going to prison. You know perfectly well, if there were, that I'd walk on my hands and knees to London to-night to try and stop it. As it is, I have promised to play for the county; it's a particularly important match, and I don't think it's fair to let them down. Anyway, if I did, the whole family would want to know why, and I don't suppose you want to tell them that yet.

BOB (mumbling). You could say the Foreign Office had rung you up.

GERALD (earnestly). Really, Bob old boy, I'm sure you're making too much of it. Dammit! you've done nothing wrong; what is there to worry about? And if it's only a question of money, we'll manage it on our heads, somehow. I'll come up directly the match is over. It may be Tuesday night, with luck.

BOB (grumbling). If the weather's like this, it's bound to last three days.

GERALD. Then at the worst, I'll come first train Thursday morning. That I promise. Anyway, why don't you consult Wentworth? He's a good chap and he knows all about the law. He could probably help you much more than I could.

BOB. I suppose you think I *like* talking about it to everybody.

GERALD (getting up and touching BOB gently on the shoulder as he goes past him). Poor old Bob! But you're as right as anything. I'll come up by the first train on Thursday and we'll--good Lord!

BOB. What's the matter now?

GERALD. I am a damned fool! Why, of course, we arranged--

BOB (sneeringly). And now you can't come on Thursday, I suppose.

GERALD. Why, you see, I arranged--

BOB. You *must* keep your promise to the county, but you needn't keep your promise to me.

GERALD. Yes, but the trouble is I promised Pamela--oh, well, that will have to go; she'll understand. All right, Bob, that holds. Directly the match is over I come. And for the Lord's sake, keep smiling till then.

BOB. It's all very well for *you*.... I wish you could have--well, anyhow, I suppose Thursday's better than nothing. You'll see just how it is then. (Getting up) You won't say anything about it to the others?

GERALD. Of course not. What about Pamela? Does she know anything?

BOB. She knows that I'm worried about something, but of course she doesn't know what I've told you.

GERALD. All right, then I won't tell her anything. At least, I'll just say that bananas remain firm at 127, and that I've got to go and see my broker about it. (Smiling) Something like that.

(BOB goes towards the garden, while GERALD stops to wait for PAMELA. At the door he turns round.)

BOB (awkwardly). Er--thanks. [Exit.]

(GERALD throws him a nod, as much as to say, "That's all right." He stands looking after him, gives a little sigh, laughs and says to himself, "Poor old Bob!" He is half-sitting on, half-leaning against the table, thinking it all over, when PAMELA comes in again.)

PAMELA. I waited for him to go; I knew he wanted to talk to you about something. Gerald, he is all right, isn't he?

GERALD (taking her hands). Who? Bob? Oh yes, he's all right. So is Pamela.

PAMELA. Sure?

GERALD. Oh yes, he's all right.

PAMELA. I take rather a motherly interest in Bob, you know. What was worrying him?

GERALD (smiling). His arithmetic again; compound interest. His masters are very pleased with his progress in English. And he wants more pocket-money. He says that fourpence a week doesn't give him enough scope.

PAMELA (smiling). But he really is all right?

GERALD. Well, I've got to go up on Thursday to see his House Master--I mean I've got to go up to town on Thursday.

PAMELA (drawing back). Thursday? That was *our* day, Gerald.

GERALD. Yes, I know; it's a confounded nuisance.

PAMELA (slowly). Yes, it is rather a--nuisance.

GERALD. I'm awfully sorry, darling. I hate it just as much as you do.

PAMELA. I wonder if you do.

GERALD (shaking his head at her). Oh, woman, woman! And you asked me to be kind to Bob.

PAMELA. It is for Bob? He really does want you?

GERALD. He thinks I can help him if I go up on Thursday. (Smiling) We aren't going to quarrel about that.

PAMELA (holding out her hand to him). Come along. Of course we aren't going to quarrel--I don't think I could quarrel with you for more than five minutes. Only--you make me wonder sometimes.

GERALD (getting up and taking her arm). What do you wonder about?

PAMELA. Oh--things.

[They go out into the garden together.]

ACT II

[It is a quiet old-fashioned hotel which SIR JAMES and LADY FARRINGDON patronize in Dover Street on their occasional visits to London. Their private sitting-room is furnished in heavy early Victorian style. A couple of gloomy palms help to decorate the room, on whose walls are engravings of Landseer's masterpieces.]

[MASON, a faithful kindly body, once nurse, now familiar servant, is at the table arranging flowers, in a gallant attempt to make the room more cheerful. As she fills each vase she takes it to its place, steps back to consider the effect, and returns to fill the next one. GERALD, in London clothes as attractive as ever, but looking none rather serious, discovers her at work.]

GERALD. Hullo, Nanny, when did you come?

MASON. This morning, sir. Her ladyship telegraphed for me.

GERALD (smiling affectionately at her). Whenever there's any trouble about, we send for Nanny. I wonder she ever came to London without you.

MASON. I told her I'd better come, but she wouldn't listen to me. Dear, dear! there *is* trouble about now Master Gerald.

GERALD. Yes.

MASON. I thought a few flowers would cheer us up. I said to Mr. Underhill before I started, "Give me some flowers to take with me," I said, "so that I can make the place look more homey and comfortable for her ladyship."

GERALD. And you have. No one like Nanny for that.

MASON (timidly). Is there any news of Master Bob this morning? Of course, we've all been reading about it in the papers. They're not going to send him to prison?

GERALD. I'm afraid they are.

MASON. Dear, dear! (She goes on arranging the flowers.) He's not in prison now?

GERALD. No; he's on bail for the moment. Perhaps he'll be round here for lunch. But I'm afraid that to-night--

MASON. Even as a baby he was never quite like you, Master Gerald. Never was there such a little lamb as you. How long will they send him to prison for?

GERALD. We don't know yet; I expect we shall know this evening. But there's no doubt which way the case is going.

MASON. Two of the men were making their bets about it over the supper-table last night. I didn't wait long before giving them a piece of my mind, I can promise you.

GERALD (turning round sharply). Who were they? Out they go tomorrow.

MASON. That wouldn't be quite fair, would it, sir? They're young and thoughtless like.

GERALD (to himself rather than to her). After all, it's only what everybody else has been doing.

MASON. It wouldn't be anything very bad that Master Bob has done?

GERALD (emphatically). No, Nanny. No. Nothing bad; only--stupid.

MASON. I didn't know they put you in prison for being stupid. Some of us have been lucky.

GERALD. They can put you in prison for everything Nanny--being stupid or being wise, being bad or being good, being poor or--yes, or being rich.

MASON (putting her last touches to the flowers). There! Now it looks much more like what her ladyship's used to. If you aren't sent to prison for being bad, it doesn't seem to matter so much.

GERALD. Well--it isn't nice, you know.

MASON. There's lots of things that aren't nice in the world. They haven't come *your* way yet, and I only hope they never will.

GERALD. I wish they hadn't come Bob's way.

MASON. Ah, Master Bob was born to meet them. Well, I'll go up to her ladyship now.

GERALD. Oh, are they back?

MASON. Sir James and her ladyship came back from the police-station--

GERALD. The Old Bailey, Nanny.

MASON. They came back about ten minutes ago, Master Gerald. And went up to their rooms.

GERALD. Tell mother I'm here, will you?

MASON. Yes, Sir.

(She goes out and comes back almost at once with PAMELA.)

MASON. Here's Miss Pamela. (To PAMELA) I was just saying that her ladyship will be down directly.

GERALD (smiling). Not too directly now, Nanny.

MASON. No, Master Gerald. [Exit.]

GERALD. Pamela! Have you just come up?

PAMELA. Mother and I are staying with Aunt Judith. Oh, Gerald! Poor, poor Bob!

GERALD. Have you seen him?

PAMELA. He came down to us last week, and he has been writing the most heart-rending letters.

GERALD. You're a dear to be so good to him.

PAMELA. How can one help it? Oh, Gerald, he *has* been stupid! How he could have gone on as he did, hating it all, understanding nothing, but feeling all the time that things were wrong, and yet too proud or too obstinate to ask for help--hadn't you any idea, *any* of you?

GERALD (awkwardly). You never could get him to talk about the City at all. If you asked him, he changed the subject.

PAMELA (reproachfully). Ah! but how did you ask him? Lightly? Jokingly? "Hullo, Rothschild, how's the City getting on?" That sort of way. You didn't really mind.

GERALD (smiling). Well, if it comes to that, he didn't much mind how I was getting on at the Foreign Office. He never even said, "Hullo, Grey, how are Balkans?"

PAMELA. You had plenty of people to say that; Bob was different. I think I was the first person he really talked to about himself. That was before I met you. I begged him then to get out of it--little knowing. I

wonder if it would have made any difference if you had gone up with him on--Oh, well, it doesn't matter now.

GERALD (defensively). What were you going to say?

PAMELA. Nothing. (Looking at him thoughtfully) Poor Gerald! it's been bad for you too.

GERALD. You're not making it better by suggesting that I've let Bob down in some way--I don't quite know how.

PAMELA (in distress). Oh, Gerald, don't be angry with me--I don't want to hurt you. But I can only think of Bob now. You're so--you want so little; Bob wants so much. Why doesn't he come? I sent a note round to his rooms to say that I'd be here. Doesn't he have lunch here? Oh, Gerald, suppose the case is over, and they've taken him to prison, and I've never said good-bye to him. He said it wouldn't be over till this evening, but how would he know? Oh, I can't bear it if they've taken him away, and his only friend never said good-bye to him.

GERALD. Pamela, Pamela, don't be so silly. It's all right, dear; of course I'm not angry with you. And of course Bob will be here. I rang up Wentworth an hour ago, and he said the case can't end till this evening.

PAMELA (recovering). Sorry, Gerald, I'm being rather a fool.

GERALD (taking her hands). You're being--(There is a knock at the door, and he turns round impatiently) Oh, what is it?

[Enter MASON.]

MASON (handing note). There's a telephone message been waiting for you, sir. And her ladyship will be down directly.

GERALD. Thank you, Nanny. [Exit MASON.] (To PAMELA) May I? (He reads it) Oh, I say, this is rather--this is from Wentworth. He's taken Bob round to lunch with him.

PAMELA (going towards the door). I must go, Gerald. Mr. Wentworth won't mind.

GERALD (stopping her). Look here, dear, it's going to be quite all right. Wentworth rang up from his rooms; they're probably halfway through lunch by now, and they'll be round in ten minutes.

PAMELA. Supposing he doesn't come? Supposing he didn't get my note? It may be waiting for him in his rooms now.

GERALD. All right, then, darling, I'll ring him up.

PAMELA (determined). No. I'll do it. Yes, Gerald, I know how to manage him. It isn't only that I must see him myself, but if--(bravely) if the case is to be over this evening, and if what we fear is going to happen, he must--oh, he must say good-bye to his mother too.

GERALD. Well, if that's all, I'll tell him.

PAMELA. He mightn't come for you. He will for me; No, Gerald; I mean it. None of you understand him. I do.

GERALD. But supposing he's already started and you miss him?

PAMELA. I'll telephone to him at his rooms. Oh, *don't* stand there talking--

GERALD (opening the door for her). Oh, well! But I think you're--
[She has gone.]

(He walks up and down the room absently, picking up papers and putting them down. MASON comes in and arranges the sofa R.)

MASON. Miss Pamela gone, Master Gerald?

GERALD. She's coming back.

[Enter LADY FARRINGDON.]

LADY FARRINGDON. Oh, Gerald, I hoped you'd be here.

GERALD (kissing her). I've only just got away. I couldn't get round to the court. (Seeing her to the sofa) You're all right, dear? [Exit MASON.]

LADY FARRINGDON. Now you're here, Gerald. I telegraphed for Mason. She's such a comfort. How nicely she's done the flowers! (She sits down on the sofa.)

GERALD. I'm so glad you sent for her.

LADY FARRINGDON. I don't think your father--

[Enter SIR JAMES.]

SIR JAMES. Ah, Gerald, I had to take your mother out. She was--ah--overcome. They have adjourned, I suppose?

GERALD. Yes. The judge is summing up directly after lunch. Bob will be round here when he's had something to eat.

SIR JAMES (looking at his watch). Well, I suppose we ought to try and eat something.

LADY FARRINGDON. I couldn't touch anything.

GERALD (going over to her). Poor mother!

LADY FARRINGDON. Oh, Gerald, couldn't *you* do anything? I'm sure if you'd gone into the witness-box, or told the judge--Oh, why didn't you go to the Bar, and then you could have defended him. You would have been so much better than that stupid man.

SIR JAMES. I must say I didn't at all like his tone. He's practically making out my son to be an idiot.

GERALD. Well, it's really the only line he could take.

SIR JAMES. What do you mean? Bob is far from being an idiot.

LADY FARRINGDON. We always knew he wasn't as clever as Gerald, dear.

GERALD. You see, Bob either understood what was going on or he didn't. If he did, then he's in it as much as Marcus. If he didn't--well, of course we know that he didn't. But no doubt the jury will think that he ought to have known.

SIR JAMES. The old story, a knave or a fool, eh?

GERALD. The folly was in sending him there.

SIR JAMES (angrily). That was Parkinson's fault. It was he who recommended Marcus to me. I shall never speak to that man again. (To his wife) Mary, if the Parkinsons call, you are out; remember that.

GERALD. He never ought to have gone into business at all. Why couldn't you have had him taught farming or estate agency or something?

SIR JAMES. We've got to move with the times, my boy. Land is played out as a living for gentlemen; they go into business nowadays. If he can't get on there, it's his own fault. He went to Eton and Oxford; what more does he want?

LADY FARRINGDON (to GERALD). You must remember he isn't clever like you, Gerald.

GERALD. Oh, well, it's no good talking about it now. Poor old Bob! Wentworth thinks--

SIR JAMES. Ah, now why couldn't Wentworth have defended him? That other man--why, to begin with, I don't even call him a gentleman.

GERALD. Wentworth recommended him. But I wish he had gone to Wentworth before, as soon as he knew what was coming.

SIR JAMES. Why didn't he come to *me*? Why didn't he come to *any* of us? Then we might have done something.

LADY FARRINGDON. Didn't he even tell *you*, Gerald?

GERALD (awkwardly). Only just at the last. It was--it was too late to do anything then. It was the Saturday before he was--arrested. (To himself) "The Saturday before Bob was arrested"--what a way to remember anything by!

LADY FARRINGDON (to GERALD). Bob is coming round, dear?

GERALD. Yes. Wentworth's looking after him. Pamela will be here too.

SIR JAMES. We haven't seen much of Pamela lately. What does *she* think about it?

GERALD (sharply). What do you mean?

SIR JAMES. The disgrace of it. I hope it's not going to affect your engagement.

GERALD. Disgrace? what disgrace?

SIR JAMES. Well, of course, he hasn't been found guilty yet.

GERALD. What's that got to do with it? What does it matter what a lot of rotten jurymen think of him? *We* know that he has done nothing disgraceful.

LADY FARRINGDON. I'm sure Pamela wouldn't think anything like that of your brother, dear.

GERALD. Of course she wouldn't. She's been a perfect angel to Bob these last few weeks. What does it matter if he does go to prison?

SIR JAMES. I suppose you think I shall enjoy telling my neighbours, when they ask me what my elder boy is doing, that he's--ah--in prison.

GERALD. Of course you won't enjoy it, and I don't suppose Bob will enjoy it either, but that's no reason why we should make it worse for

him by pretending that he's a disgrace to the family. (Half to himself) If anything we've done has helped to send him to prison then it's we who should be ashamed.

SIR JAMES. I don't profess to know anything about business, but I flatter myself that I understand my fellow men. If I had been in Bob's place, I should have pretty soon seen what that fellow Marcus was up to. I don't want to be unfair to Bob; I don't think that any son of mine would do a dishonourable action; but the Law is the Law, and if the Law sends Bob to prison I can't help feeling the disgrace of it.

GERALD. Yes, it's rough on you and mother.

LADY FARRINGDON. I don't mind about myself, dear. It's you I feel so sorry for--and Bob, of course.

GERALD. I don't see how it's going to affect *me*.

SIR JAMES. In the Foreign Office one has to be like Caesar's wife--above suspicion.

GERALD. Yes, but in this case it's Caesar's brother-in-law's partner who's the wrong un. I don't suppose Caesar was so particular about *him*.

LADY FARRINGDON. I don't see how Caesar comes into it at all.

SIR JAMES (kindly). I spoke in metaphors, dear.

[The door opens and WENTWORTH appears.]

GERALD. Come in, Wentworth. Where's Bob?

WENTWORTH. I dropped him at his rooms--a letter or something he wanted to get. But he'll be here directly. (Nervously) How do you do, Lady Farringdon? How do you do, Sir James?

SIR JAMES. Ah, Wentworth.

(There is an awkward silence and nobody seems to know what to say.)

WENTWORTH. Very hot this morning.

SIR JAMES. Very hot. Very.

(There is another awkward silence.)

WENTWORTH. This is quite a good hotel. My mother always stays here when she's in London.

SIR JAMES. Ah, yes. We use it a good deal ourselves.

LADY FARRINGDON. How is Mrs. Wentworth?

WENTWORTH. She's been keeping very well this summer, thank you.

LADY FARRINGDON. I'm so glad.

(There is another awkward silence.)

GERALD (impatiently). Oh, what's the good of pretending this is a formal call, Wentworth? Tell us about Bob; how's he taking it?

WENTWORTH. He doesn't say much. He had lunch in my rooms-- you got my message. He couldn't bear the thought of being recognized by anyone, so I had something sent up.

GERALD (realizing what it must feel like). Poor old Bob!

WENTWORTH. Lady Farringdon, I can't possibly tell you what I feel about this, but I should like to say that all of us who know Bob know that he couldn't do anything dishonourable. Whatever the result of the trial, we shall feel just the same towards him.

(LADY FARRINGDON is hardly able to acknowledge this, and SIR JAMES goes across to comfort her.)

SIR JAMES (helplessly). There, there, Mary.

GERALD (seizing his opportunity, to WENTWORTH). What'll he get?

WENTWORTH (quietly). Three months--six months. One can't be certain.

GERALD (cheering up). Thank the Lord! I imagined awful things.

SIR JAMES (his ministrations over). After all, he hasn't been found guilty yet; eh, Wentworth?

WENTWORTH. Certainly, Sir James. With a jury there's always hope.

SIR JAMES. What do you think yourself?

WENTWORTH. I think he has been very foolish; whether the Law will call it criminally foolish I should hardly like to say. I only wish I had known about it before. He must have suspected something--didn't he say anything to anybody?

SIR JAMES. He told Gerald, apparently. For some reason he preferred to keep his father in the dark.

GERALD (eagerly). That was the day you came down to us, Wentworth; five days before he was arrested. I asked him to tell you, but he wouldn't.

WENTWORTH. Oh, it was too late then. Marcus had absconded by that time.

GERALD (earnestly). Nobody could have helped him then, could they?

WENTWORTH. Oh no.

GERALD (to himself). Thank God.

SIR JAMES (to LADY FARRINGDON as he looks at his watch). Well, dear, I really think you ought to try to eat something.

LADY FARRINGDON. I couldn't, James. (Getting up) But you must have *your* lunch.

SIR JAMES. Well, one oughtn't to neglect one's health, of course. But I insist on your having a glass of claret anyhow, Mary. What about you, Gerald?

GERALD. I'm all right. I'll wait for Bob. I've had something.

LADY FARRINGDON. You won't let Bob go without seeing us?

GERALD. Of course not, dear.

(He goes with them to the door and sees them out.)

GERALD (coming back to WENTWORTH). Three months. By Jove! that's nothing.

WENTWORTH. It's long enough for a man with a grievance. It gives him plenty of time to brood about it.

GERALD (anxiously). Who has Bob got a grievance against particularly?

WENTWORTH. The world.

GERALD (relieved). Ah! Still, three months, Wentworth. I could do it on my head.

WENTWORTH. You're not Bob. Bob will do it on his heart.

GERALD. We must buck him up, Wentworth. If he takes it the right way, it's nothing. I had awful thoughts of five years.

WENTWORTH. I'm not the judge, you know. It may be six months.

GERALD. Of course. How does he decide? Tosses up for it? Three months or six months or six years, it's all the same to him, and there's

the poor devil in the dock praying his soul out that he'll hit on the shortest one. Good Lord! I'm glad I'm not a judge.

WENTWORTH (drily). Yes; that isn't quite the way the Law works.

GERALD. Oh, I'm not blaming the Law. (Smiling) Stick to it, Wentworth, by all means. But I should make a bad judge. I should believe everything the prisoner said, and just tell him not to do it again.

[BOB comes in awkwardly and stops at the door.]

WENTWORTH (getting up). Come along, Bob. (Taking out his case) Have a cigarette.

BOB (gruffly). No, thanks. (He takes out his pipe.)

GERALD (brightly but awkwardly). Hullo, Bob, old boy.

BOB. Where's Pamela? She said she'd be here. (He sits down in the large armchair.)

GERALD. If she said she'd be here, she will be here.

BOB (with a grunt). 'M! (There is an awkward silence.)

BOB (angrily to GERALD). Why don't you say something? You came here to say good-bye to me, I suppose--why don't you say it?

WENTWORTH. Steady, Bob.

GERALD (eagerly). Look here, Bob, old son, you mustn't take it too hardly. Wentworth thinks it will only be three months--don't you, Wentworth? You know, we none of us think any the worse of you for it.

BOB. Thanks. That will console me a lot in prison.

GERALD. Oh, Bob, don't be an old fool. You know what I mean. You have done nothing to be ashamed of, so what's the good of

brooding in prison, and grouching about your bad luck, and all that sort of thing? If you had three months in bed with a broken leg, you'd try and get some sort of satisfaction out of it--well, so you can now if you try.

WENTWORTH (after waiting for BOB to say something). There's a good deal in that, Bob, you know. Prison is largely what you make it.

BOB. What do either of you know about it?

GERALD. Everything. The man with imagination knows the best and the worst of everything.

BOB (fiercely). Imagination? You think *I* haven't imagined it?

GERALD. Wentworth's right. You can make what you like of it. You can be miserable anywhere, if you let yourself be. You can be happy anywhere, if you try to be.

WENTWORTH (to lead him on). I can't quite see myself being actually happy in prison, Gerald.

GERALD. I could, Wentworth, I swear I could.

BOB. He'd get popular with the warders; he'd love that.

GERALD (smiling). Silly old ass! But there are lots of things one can do in prison, only no one ever seems to think of them. (He gets interested and begins to walk up and down the room.) Now take this solitary confinement there's so much fuss about. If you look at it the right way, there's nothing in it at all.

WENTWORTH. A bit boring, perhaps.

GERALD. Boring? Nonsense. You're allowed one book a week from the prison library, aren't you?

WENTWORTH. You know, you mustn't think that, because I'm a barrister, I know all about the inside of a prison.

GERALD. Well, suppose you are allowed one, and you choose a French dictionary, and try to learn it off by heart before you come out. Why, it's the chance of a lifetime to learn French.

WENTWORTH. Well, of course, if you *could* get a French dictionary--

GERALD. Well, there'd be *some* book there anyway. If it's a Bible, read it. When you've read it, count the letters in it; have little bets with yourself as to which man's name is mentioned most times in it; put your money on Moses and see if you win. Anything like that. If it's a hymn-book, count how many of the rhymes rhyme and how many don't; try and make them *all* rhyme. Learn 'em by heart; I don't say that that would be particularly useful to you in the business world afterwards, but it would be amusing to see how quickly you could do it, how many you could keep in your head at the same time.

WENTWORTH. This is too intellectual for me; my brain would go in no time.

GERALD. You aren't doing it all day, of course; there are other things. Physical training. Swedish exercises. Tell yourself that you'll be able to push up fifty times from the ground before you come out. Learn to walk on your hands. Practise cart-wheels, if you like. Gad! you could come out a Hercules.

WENTWORTH. I can't help feeling that the strain of improving myself so enormously would tell on me.

GERALD. Oh, you'd have your games and so on to keep you bright and jolly.

WENTWORTH (sarcastically). Golf and cricket, I suppose?

GERALD. Golf, of course; I'm doubtful about cricket. You must have another one for cricket, and I'm afraid the warder wouldn't play. But golf, and squash rackets, and bowls, and billiards--and croquet--

WENTWORTH (in despair). Oh, *go* on!

GERALD. Really, you're hopeless. What the Swiss Family Wentworth would have done if they'd ever been shipwrecked, I can't think. Don't you *ever* invent *anything* for yourself? (Excitedly) Man alive! you've got a hymn-book and a piece of soap, what more do you want? You can play anything with that. (Thoughtfully) Oh, I forgot the Olympic games. Standing long jump. And they talk about the boredom of it!

WENTWORTH (thoughtfully). You've got your ideas, Gerald. I wonder if you'd act up to them.

GERALD. One never knows, but honestly I think so. (There is silence for a little.)

BOB. Is that all?

GERALD. Oh, Bob, I know it's easy for me to talk--

BOB. I wonder you didn't say at once: "Try not to think about it." You're always helpful.

GERALD. You're a little difficult to help, you know Bob. (Awkwardly) I thought I might just give you an idea. If I only could help you, you know how--

BOB (doggedly). I asked you to help me once.

GERALD (distressed). Oh, I didn't realize then--besides, Wentworth says it would have been much too late--didn't you, Wentworth?

WENTWORTH (taking up his hat). I think I must be getting along now. (Holding out his hand) Good-bye, Bob. I can only say, "The best of luck," and--er--whatever happens, you know what I feel about it.

BOB (shaking his hand). Good-bye, Wentworth, and thanks very much for all you've done for me.

WENTWORTH (hurriedly). That's all right. (TO GERALD, quietly, as he passes him on the way to the door) You must bear with him, Gerald. Naturally he's--(Nodding) Good-bye. [He goes out.]

GERALD (going back to BOB). Bob--

BOB. Why doesn't Pamela come? I want Pamela.

GERALD (speaking quickly). Look here, think what you like of me for the moment. But you must listen to what I've got to say. You can imagine it's somebody else speaking Pamela, if you like--Pamela would say just the same. You *must not* go to prison and spend your time there brooding over the wrongs people have done to you, and the way the world has treated you, and all that sort of thing. You simply must make an effort--and--and--well, come out as good a man as you went in. I know it's easy for me to talk, but that doesn't make it any the less true. Oh, Bob, be a--be a Sportsman about it! You can take it out of me afterwards, if you like, but don't take it out of me now by--by not bucking up just because I suggest it.

BOB. I want Pamela. Why doesn't she come?

(PAMELA has come in while he is saying this.)

PAMELA. Here I am, Bob.

BOB (getting up). At last! I began to be afraid you were never coming.

PAMELA. You couldn't think that. I told you I was coming.

GERALD. Look here, Pamela, we've got to cheer old Bob up.

BOB (almost shouting). Good Lord! can't you see that I don't want *you*? I want Pamela alone.

PAMELA (putting her hand on GERALD'S shoulder). Gerald, dear, you mustn't be angry with Bob now. Let me be alone with him.

GERALD (with a shrug). All right. Poor old Bob! (He goes over to his brother and holds out his hand.) Good-bye, old boy, and--good luck.

BOB (coldly). Good-bye.

GERALD. Shake hands, Bob.

BOB. No. I've been nothing to you all your life. You could have saved me from this, and you wouldn't help me.

GERALD (angrily). Don't talk such rot!

PAMELA (coming between them). Gerald, dear, you'd better go. Bob won't always feel like this towards you, but just now--

GERALD (indignantly). Pamela, you don't believe this about me?

PAMELA. I can't think of you, dear, now; I can only think of Bob. [GERALD gives a shrug and goes out.]

BOB. Pamela.

PAMELA (coming to him). Yes, dear?

BOB. Come and sit near me. You're the only friend I've got in the world.

PAMELA. You know that isn't true.

(She sits down in the armchair and he sits on the floor at her feet.)

BOB. If it hadn't been for you, I should have shot myself long ago.

PAMELA. That would have been rather cowardly, wouldn't it?

BOB. I am a coward. There's something about the Law that makes people cowards. It's so--what's the word? It goes on. You can't stop it, you can't explain to it, you can't even speak to it.

PAMELA. But you can stand up to it. You needn't run away from it.

BOB. I think I would have broken my bail and run, if it hadn't been for you. But you would have thought less of me if I had. Besides, I shouldn't have seen you again.

PAMELA. Bob, you mustn't just do, or not do, things for *me*; you must do them because of yourself. You must be brave because it's you, and honourable because it's you, and cheerful because it's you. You mustn't just say, "I won't let Pamela down." You must say, "I won't let myself down." You must be proud of yourself.

BOB (bitterly). I've been taught to be proud of myself, haven't I? Proud of myself! What's the family creed? "I believe in Gerald. I believe in Gerald the Brother. I believe in Gerald the Son. I believe in Gerald the Nephew. I believe in Gerald the Friend, the Lover, Gerald the Holy Marvel." There may be brothers who don't mind that sort of thing, but not when you're born jealous as I was. Do you think father or mother cares a damn what happens to me? They're upset, of course, and they feel the disgrace for themselves, but the beloved Gerald is all right, and that's all that really matters.

PAMELA. Bob, dear, forget about Gerald now. Don't think about him; think about yourself.

BOB. I shan't think about myself or about Gerald when I'm in prison. I shall only think of you.

PAMELA. Will it help you to think of me?

BOB. You're the only person in the world I've got to think of. I found you first--and then Gerald took you from me. Just as he's always taken everything from me.

PAMELA. No, no. Not about Gerald again. Let's get away from Gerald.

BOB. You can't. He's a devil to get away from. (There is silence for a little.) When I was a small boy, I used to pray very hard on the last day of the holidays for a telegram to come saying that the school had been burnt down.... It never had.

PAMELA. Oh, Bob!

BOB. I suppose I've got about ten minutes more. But nothing will happen.

PAMELA (in a hopeless effort to be hopeful). Perhaps after all you might--

BOB. Why can't the world end suddenly now? It wouldn't matter to anybody. They wouldn't know; they wouldn't have time to understand. (He looks up and sees her face of distress and says) All right, Pamela, you needn't worry. I'm going through with it all right.

PAMELA. You must keep thinking of the afterwards. Only of the afterwards. The day when you come back to us.

BOB. Will that be such a very great day? (PAMELA is silent.) Triumphant procession through the village. All the neighbours hurrying out to welcome the young squire home. Great rush in the City to offer him partnerships.

PAMELA (quietly). Do you want to go back to the City?

BOB. Good God, no!

PAMELA. Then why are you being sarcastic about it? Be honest with yourself, Bob. You made a mess of the City. Oh, I know you weren't suited to it, but men have had to do work they didn't like before now, and they haven't *all* made a mess of it. You're getting your punishment now--much more than you deserve, and we're all sorry for you--but men have been punished unfairly before now and they have stood it. You'll have your chance when you come back; I'll stand by you for one, and you've plenty of other friends; but we can't help a man who won't help himself, you know.

Bon (sulkily). Thank you, Pamela.

PAMELA (shaking him). Bob, Bob, don't be such a baby. Oh, I want to laugh at you, and yet my heart just aches for you. You're just a little boy, Bob (with a sigh), on the last day of his holidays.

BOB (after a pause). Are you allowed to have letters in prison?

PAMELA. I expect so. Every now and then.

BOB. You will write to me?

PAMELA. Of course, dear; whenever I may.

BOB. I suppose some beast will read it. But you won't mind that, will you?

PAMELA. No, dear.

BOB. I'll write to you whenever they let me. That will be something to look forward to. Will you meet me when I come out?

PAMELA (happily). Yes, Bob. So very gladly.

BOB. I'll let you know when it is. I expect I'll be owed to.

PAMELA. You must just think of that day all the time. Whenever you are unhappy or depressed or angry, you must look forward to that day.

BOB. You'll let it be a fine day, won't you? What shall we do?

PAMELA (rather startled). What?

BOB. What shall we do directly after I come out?

PAMELA. Well, I suppose we--I mean you--well, we'll come up to London together, I suppose, and you'll go to your old rooms. At least, if you still have them.

BOB (instantly depressed again). My old rooms. That'll be lively.

PAMELA. Well, unless you'd rather--

BOB. I'm not going home, if that's what you mean. The prodigal son, and Gerald falling on my neck.

PAMELA (stroking his head). Never mind Gerald, Baby. (He turns round suddenly and seizes her hands.)

BOB (in a rush). Whatever happens, you mustn't desert me when I come out. I want you. I've got to know you're there, waiting for me. I'm not making love to you, you're engaged to somebody else, but you were my friend before you were his, and you've got to go on being my friend. I want you--I want you more than he does. I'm not making love to you; you can marry him if you like, but you've got to stand by me. I want you.

PAMELA. Haven't I stood by you?

BOB (in a low voice). You've been an angel. (He kisses her hands and then gets up and walks away from her; with his back to her, looking out of the window, he says) When are you marrying him?

PAMELA (taken by surprise). I--I don't know, Bob. We *had* thought about--but, of course, things are different now. We haven't talked about it lately.

BOB (casually). I wonder if you'd mind promising me something.

PAMELA. What is it?

BOB. Not to get married till after I come out. (After waiting for PAMELA to speak) You will have about forty years together afterwards. It isn't much to ask.

PAMELA. Why should it make a difference to you?

BOB. It would.

PAMELA. It isn't a thing I like making promises about. But I don't suppose for a moment--Would it help you very much, Bob?

BOB (from the bottom of his heart). I don't want Gerald's wife to be waiting for me when I come out; I want my friend.

PAMELA (standing up and facing him as he turns round towards her).
All right, Bob, she shall be there.

(They stand looking at each other intently for a moment. Voices are heard outside, and SIR JAMES, LADY FARRINGDON, and GERALD come into the room.)

ACT III

[SCENE.--In the hall at SIR JAMES FARRINGDON'S again. It is autumn now and there is a fire burning.]

[LETTY and TOMMY are on the sofa side by side, holding hands, and looking the picture of peaceful happiness. Indeed, TOMMY has his mouth open slightly.]

LETTY. It's your turn to say something, Tommy.

TOMMY. Oh, I say.

LETTY. Now I suppose it's my turn.

TOMMY. I say, you know, I feel too idiotically happy to say anything. I feel I want to talk poetry, or rot like that, only--only I don't quite know how to put it.

LETTY (sympathetically). Never mind, darling.

TOMMY. I say, you do understand how frightfully--I say, what about another kiss? (They have one.)

LETTY. Tommy, I just adore you. Only I think you might have been a little more romantic about your proposal.

TOMMY (anxious). I say, do you--

LETTY. Yes. Strictly speaking, I don't think anybody ought to propose with a niblick in his hand.

TOMMY. It just sort of came then. Of course I ought to have put it down.

LETTY. You dear!... "Letting his niblick go for a moment, Mr. T. Todd went on as follows: 'Letitia, my beloved, many moons have waxed and waned since first I cast eyes of love upon thee. An absence of ducats, coupled with the necessity of getting my handicap down to ten, has prevented my speaking ere this. Now at last I am free. My agèd uncle--'"

TOMMY (lovingly). I say, you do pull my leg. Go on doing it always, won't you?

LETTY. Always, Tommy. We're going to have fun, always.

TOMMY. I'm awfully glad we got engaged down here.

LETTY. We've had lovely times here, haven't we?

TOMMY. I wonder what Gerald will say. A bit of a surprise for him. I say, it would be rather fun if we had a double wedding. You and I, and Gerald and Pamela.

LETTY (getting up in pretended indignation). Certainly not!

TOMMY (following her). I say, what's the matter?

LETTY (waving him back). Go away. Unhand me villain.

TOMMY. I say, what's up?

LETTY. I want a wedding of my own. I've never been married before, and perhaps I shall never be married again, and I'm going to have a wedding all to myself. I don't mind your being there, but I'm not going to have crowds of other brides and bridegrooms taking up the whole aisle--said she, seizing her engagement-ring and--Oh, bother! I haven't got one yet.

(TOMMY rushes up and takes her in his arms. At this moment GERALD comes in by the garden door. He stops on seeing them, and then goes quickly on to the door in front of the staircase.)

GERALD (as he passes them). Came in and went tactfully out again.

TOMMY (as LETTY frees herself). I say, Gerald, old man.

GERALD (stopping at the door, turning round and coming back in the same business-like way). Returned hopefully.

TOMMY (in confusion). I say, we're engaged.

GERALD (looking at them happily). Oh, hoo-ray!

LETTY. Do say you're surprised.

GERALD. Awfully, awfully pleased, Letty. Of course, when I saw you--er--thinking together in a corner--By Jove, I *am* bucked. I did hope so much.

LETTY. You dear!

GERALD. I feel very fatherly. Bless you, my children.

TOMMY. We shall have about tuppence a year, but Letty doesn't mind that.

GERALD (to LETTY). You'll have to make him work. (Thoughtfully) He's too old for a caddy.

LETTY. Couldn't you find him something in the Foreign Office? He knows the French for pen and ink.

TOMMY. What's ink?

LETTY. At least, he knows the French for pen.

GERALD. Oh, we'll find something. Only I warn you, Tommy, if you dare to get married before Pamela and me, there'll be trouble.

TOMMY. Why don't we ever see Pamela now?

GERALD (gaily). She is coming, my children--*mes enfants*, as Tommy will say when he gets his job as ribbon starcher to the French ambassador. To-morrow, no less. I've just had a letter. Lord, I haven't seen her for months.

LETTY. She's come back?

GERALD. Yes. Egypt knows her no more. The Sphinx is inconsolable. To-morrow at 3.30 she comes; I shall go and meet her.

TOMMY. I say, won't she be surprised about Letty and me!

GERALD. She'll be as bucked as I am. (Looking from one to the other) Has anything else frightfully exciting happened to you since lunch? Because, if not, I've got some more news.

LETTY. What is it? I love news.

GERALD. All ready? Then one, two, three: Bob is coming this afternoon.

LETTY and TOMMY together. No! Rot!

GERALD (Singing to the tune of "Here we go gathering nuts and may"). Oh, Bob is coming this afternoon, this afternoon, this afternoon! Oh, Bob is coming this afternoon, all on an autumn morning! Now then, all together.

(They join hands and march up the hall and back again, singing together.)

ALL TOGETHER (waving imaginary hats). Hooray! Hooray!
Hooray!

TOMMY. It doesn't make sense, you know, coming back in the afternoon on an autumn morning.

GERALD. Who cares for sense?

LETTY (squeezing his arm). Oh, Gerald, I *am* glad. But I thought he had another week or so.

GERALD. They always let you out early, you know, if you're good. We knew he was coming soon, but we didn't quite know when. I've just had a telegram.

LETTY. Poor Bob! he must have had a time.

GERALD. What does it matter? It's over now.

TOMMY (struck by an idea). I say, this puts a bit of a stopper on our news.

GERALD (pulled up suddenly by this). Oh!

LETTY (going over and taking TOMMY'S arm). We'll go to a house where they *do* make a fuss of us, Tommy. (Very politely) Good-bye, Mr. Farrington, and thank you for a very pleasant Friday.

GERALD. Poor darlings! it's rather bad luck for you. Did I announce my news too soon? I'm awfully sorry.

LETTY. It wasn't your fault; you were a dear.

GERALD. As a matter of fact, it will be rather lucky, you know. It will give us something to talk about when Bob comes. (Smiling) Thanks very much for arranging it.

LETTY. Poor old Bob! I wonder what it feels like coming out of prison.

GERALD. Rotten. Now, for the Lord's sake, Tommy, be tactful.

LETTY (to GERALD). I think he'd be safer if he wasn't. Tommy's rather dangerous when he's tactful.

GERALD (thoughtfully). Yes, there *is* that.

TOMMY. It's all the same to me. Only just let me know which you want.

GERALD. Well, as long as you don't overdo it. Don't rub it in that he's just left prison, and--don't rub it out.

TOMMY. I suppose it would be quite safe to ask him to pass the mustard?

GERALD (laughing). Good old Tommy!

LETTY. You'd better talk to me all the time, and then you'll be all right.

GERALD. We'll make it go between us. And, of course, Pamela will help to-morrow. Hooray for Pamela! It makes me quite envious seeing you young people together. By the way, I interrupted you just now.

LETTY. You did rather.

GERALD. Well, I absolutely refuse to go away now. But, of course, if you're longing to show each other the stables or anything--(with a wave of the hand) pray show. Or try anywhere else. Save for Aunt Tabitha's room upstairs and the hall down here, the whole house is at your disposal.

LETTY (sitting down firmly). Then I shall stay here. Isn't Aunt Mary back yet?

GERALD. They are probably still eating. It's the very latest millionaire from London, so they're having the lunch of their lives, I expect. Afterwards father will put him at his ease by talking about crops. (Picking up a book and settling himself comfortably in front of the fire) Tommy, if you can't find a book, sing or something.

LETTY. Oh, come on, Tommy.

[She jumps up and goes out of the door in front of the staircase.
TOMMY following her.]

(Left alone, GERALD closes his book with a slam. He stands up and takes the telegram out of his pocket and reads it again. He suddenly catches sight of MISS FARRINGDON in the gallery above, calls out "Hullo!" and goes up the stairs to meet her.)

GERALD (as he goes). You're just the person I wanted, Aunt Tabitha. I'm full of news. (He kisses her at the top of the stairs.) How are you, dear? (He offers her his arm.)

MISS FARRINGDON. If I had wanted help, down the stairs, Gerald, my maid could have given it me.

GERALD. Yes, but your maid wouldn't have enjoyed giving it you; I do.

MISS FARRINGDON. Charming Gerald. (She comes down the stairs on his arm.)

GERALD. No, happy Gerald.

MISS FARRINGDON. Is that part of the news?

GERALD. It's all because of the news.

(He arranges her in her chair by the fire and sits on the coffin-stool near her.)

MISS FARRINGDON. I heard Mr. Todd and Letty just now, so I suppose I shan't be the first to hear it. What a pity!

GERALD. Ah, but they don't count.

MISS FARRINGDON. Why not?

GERALD. Well, that's part of the news. They've just got engaged.

MISS FARRINGDON. In my young days they'd have been engaged a long time ago. When are we going to see Pamela again?

GERALD. That's more of the news. She's coming down to-morrow.

MISS FARRINGDON. That will save you a lot in stamps.

GERALD (laughing). Aunt Tabitha, you're a witch. How did you know?

MISS FARRINGDON. Know what?

GERALD. That Pamela and I haven't been writing to each other.

MISS FARRINGDON (very innocently). Haven't you?

GERALD. No. You see--oh, I hate discussing Pamela with anyone, but you're different.

MISS FARRINGDON. I always like that sort of compliment best, Gerald. The unintended sort.

GERALD. I think, you know, Pamela felt that Bob's doing to prison might make a difference. I don't mean that she didn't like the disgrace for herself, but that she was afraid that I mightn't like it for her; and so she went away, and beyond a letter or two at the start there hasn't been a Pamela.

MISS FARRINGDON. But Gerald went on being successful?

GERALD. Oh, Aunt Tabitha, Aunt Tabitha, if ever I were going to be conceited--and I don't think I am really--you'd soon stop it, wouldn't you? I wonder if you *do* know me as well as you think. You think I'm all outside, don't you, and inside there's nothing?

MISS FARRINGDON. Oh, you've got brains, I'll grant you that. You're the first Farringdon that's had any. Of the men, of course.

GERALD. Oh, brains--I don't mean brains. But you think that everything only touches me on the surface, and that nothing ever goes deep inside. You don't believe I ever loved Pamela; you don't believe I love her now. You don't believe I've got a heart at all.

MISS FARRINGDON. Well, you've never shown it. You've shown a lot of delightful things which silly people mistake for it--but that's all.

GERALD (curtly). No, I've never shown my heart to anybody. Some people can't. (Gently) Perhaps I'll show it to Pamela on my wedding-day.

MISS FARRINGDON. Dear me, have I been wrong all these years? I shouldn't like to think that. (After a pause) Any more news?

GERALD (taking his thoughts off PAMELA). Yes. Now *this* time, Aunt Tabitha, you'll really be as pleased as I am.

MISS FARRINGDON. I wonder.

GERALD. Oh yes, you will, because it's about your favourite--Bob.

MISS FARRINGDON. So Bob's my favourite? I'm learning a good many things to-day.

GERALD. He's coming back this afternoon.

MISS FARRINGDON. Poor Bob! I'm glad he's finished with that part of it.

GERALD. You think he's got the worst part coming? (Smiling at her) Aunt Tabitha, have you got any influence with your nephew?

MISS FARRINGDON. You or Bob? (GERALD smiles and shakes his head.) Oh, you mean James?

GERALD. It seems hard to realize that one's father is anybody else's nephew, but you *are* his aunt, and--Oh, don't let him do anything stupid about Bob.

MISS FARRINGDON. Bob's his own master; he's old enough to look after himself.

GERALD. Yes, but he's got in the way of being looked after by other people. I wish *you* would look after him and tell him what to do. It's

going to be difficult for him. I expect he'll want to get away from all of us for a bit. Where's he going, and what's he going to do?

MISS FARRINGDON (after a pause). When did you say Pamela was coming here?

GERALD. To-morrow. *She'll* help, of course.

MISS FARRINGDON. Gerald, you've been very nice to me always; I don't know why I've been rather unkind to you sometimes.

GERALD. What an idea! You know I've loved our little skirmishes.

MISS FARRINGDON. That's because you've been happy, and haven't minded one way or another. But if ever you were in trouble, Gerald, I don't think I should be unsympathetic.

GERALD. You dear, of course you wouldn't. But why do you say that now, just when I *am* so happy?

MISS FARRINGDON (getting up slowly). I'm feeling rather an old woman to-day. I think I'll go and lie down.

GERALD (jumping up). I'll ring for your maid.

MISS FARRINGDON. No, no; I'm not going upstairs, and I don't want a maid when I've got a great big nephew. Come and tuck me up on the sofa in the drawing-room; I shall be quite happy there.

(She puts her hand on his arm, and they go together towards the door in front of the staircase.)

MISS FARRINGDON. Poor Gerald!

GERALD (laughing). Why poor? [They go out together.]

[The door on the right at the back opens quietly and BOB comes in. He stands there for a moment looking at the hall, and then speaks over his shoulder to somebody behind him.]

BOB. It's all right, there's nobody here.

PAMELA. I wonder where Gerald is.

BOB. You're sure he's down here?

PAMELA. Yes, I had a letter from him; he told me he was going to be.

BOB (going up to her). Pamela, you can't see him alone.

PAMELA. I must. You can see him afterwards, but I must see him alone first. Poor Gerald!

BOB. He never really loved you.

PAMELA. I don't think he did really, but it will hurt him.

BOB (eagerly). Say you're not sorry for what you're doing.

PAMELA. Aren't I doing it?

BOB. Say you love *me* and not Gerald. Say you really love me, and it's not just because you are sorry for me.

PAMELA. Oh, I have so much in my heart for you, Bob. I'm glad I'm marrying you. But you must always love me, and want me as you want me now.

BOB (seizing her in his arms). By God! you'll get that. (He kisses her fiercely.)

PAMELA (satisfied). Oh, Bob! Oh, Bob! I'm glad I found you at last. (She goes away from him and stands looking into the fire, one hand on the mantelpiece.)

BOB. Shall I go and look for Gerald?

PAMELA (looking into the fire). Yes. No. He'll come.

BOB. You won't let him talk you round?

PAMELA (looking up at him in surprise). Oh no; I'm quite safe now.

BOB. I can never thank you for all you've done, for all you've been to me. When we are out of this cursed country, and I have you to myself, I will try to show you. (She says nothing, and he walks restlessly about the room. He picks up a hat and says) Hullo, Tommy's here.

PAMELA (quickly). I don't want to see him, I don't want to see anybody. We must just tell Gerald and then go.

BOB. Anybody might come at any moment. You should have let me write as I wanted to. Or waited till he came back to London.

PAMELA. We've given up being cowards. Perhaps you'd better try and find him. We'll only tell Gerald. If we see the others, we'll just have to make the best of it.

BOB (moving off towards the door in front of the staircase). All right. If I find him I'll send him in here. [He goes out.]

(PAMELA drops into a chair and remains looking at the fire.
GERALD, coming down from the gallery above, suddenly catches sight of her.)

GERALD (rushing down the stairs). Pamela! Why, Pamela! (Excitedly) Why are you--You said tomorrow. Pamela, you said-- Never mind, you're here. Oh, bless you! (PAMELA has got up to meet him, and he is now standing holding her hands, and looking at her happily.) Pamela's here; all's right with the world. (He leans forward to kiss her, but she stops him.)

PAMELA (nervously). No, no; I've something to tell you, Gerald.

GERALD. I've got a thousand things to tell *you*.

PAMELA. Bob's here.

GERALD (excited). Bob? Did you come down with him?

PAMELA. Yes.

GERALD. I had a telegram, but it didn't say--Did you meet him? Why didn't he tell us? Where is he?

PAMELA. He just went to look for you.

GERALD. I'll soon find him.

(He turns away to go after BOB, but PAMELA stops him.)

PAMELA. Gerald!

GERALD (turning round). Yes.

PAMELA. Never mind Bob for the moment. I wanted to see you alone.

GERALD (coming back quickly). Of course. Hang Bob! Come on the sofa and tell me everything. Jove! it's wonderful to see you again; you've been away for years.

(He takes her hand and tries to lead her towards the sofa, but she stops.)

PAMELA. Gerald, you're making it very hard for me; I've got something to tell you.

GERALD (afraid suddenly and speaking sharply). What do you mean?

PAMELA. Oh, don't look at me like that--I know it will hurt you, but it won't be more than that. I want you to release me from my promise.

GERALD. What promise?

PAMELA (in a low voice). My promise to marry you.

GERALD. I don't understand. Why?

PAMELA (bravely). I want to marry Bob.

(Keeping his eyes on her all the time, GERALD moves slowly away from her.)

GERALD (to himself). Bob! Bob! But you knew Bob first.

PAMELA. Yes.

GERALD. And then you promised to marry me. You couldn't have been in love with him. I don't understand.

PAMELA (sadly). I don't understand either, but that's how it's happened.

GERALD. And to think how I've been throwing you in Bob's way, and wanting you and him to be fond of each other. (Fiercely) *That* didn't make you think that I didn't love you?

PAMELA (faltering). I--I don't--you didn't--

GERALD. I was so confident of you. That was your fault. You made me.

PAMELA. I think you could have made me love you if you hadn't been so confident.

GERALD. I trusted you. You had told me. *I* knew I should never change, and I thought I knew *you* wouldn't.

PAMELA. I was wrong. I never did love you.

GERALD. Then why did you say--

PAMELA (looking at him rather wistfully). You're rather charming, Gerald, you know, and you--

GERALD (turning away from her furiously). *Damn* charming! That's what you all say. I'm sick of it! You think that if a man's charming,

that's the end of him, and that all he's good for is to amuse a few old ladies at a tea party. I'm sick of it! The rude rough man with the heart of gold--that's the only sort that can have a heart at all, according to some of you.

PAMELA (utterly surprised by this). Gerald!

GERALD. I'm sorry, Pamela. Of course you wouldn't understand. But we were just talking. (With a sudden disarming smile) I don't know whether an apology is overdoing the charm?

PAMELA (in distress). Oh, Gerald, you couldn't really have loved me; you don't really now. Of course, it will hurt you, but you'll soon get over it. Oh, what's the good of my talking like this? I've never really known you; I don't know you now.

GERALD (quietly). It's no good now, anyway. (He walks away from her and looks out through the windows at the back.) Just tell me one or two things. Were you in love with him when he went to prison?

PAMELA. I don't know--really I don't know. I was so dreadfully sorry for him all that time before, and I felt so very friendly towards him, so very--oh, Gerald, so motherly. And I wanted to be wanted so badly, and you didn't seem to want me in that way. That was why, when he had gone, I went right away from you, and asked you not to write to me; I wanted to think it all out--alone.

GERALD. But you wrote to Bob?

PAMELA. Oh, Gerald, he wanted it so badly.

GERALD. I'm sorry.

PAMELA. I wrote to him and he wrote to me. I met him when he came out--he told me when to come. I suppose I had decided by then; we came down here to tell you. I had to come at once.

GERALD. You do love him, Pamela? It isn't just pity?

PAMELA. I do, Gerald; I think I found that out this afternoon.
(Timidly) Say you don't hate me very much.

GERALD. I wish to God I could.... What are you and Bob going to do?

PAMELA. Canada, as soon as we can. I've got friends there. We've a little money between us. Bob ought to have done it a long time ago.
(Coming up to him) Just do one more nice thing for me before we go.

GERALD (moving away from her on pretence of getting a cigarette).
What is it?

PAMELA. Bob will want to see you before he goes.

GERALD. I don't want to see him.

PAMELA. Ah, but you must.

GERALD. What have we got to say to each other?

PAMELA. I don't know, but I feel you must see him. Otherwise he'll think that he ran away from you.

GERALD (with a shrug). All right. You'll go back to London at once, I suppose?

PAMELA. Yes. We hired a car. We left it outside at the gates. We didn't want to see anybody but you, if possible.

GERALD. Father and mother are out. Aunt Harriet knows--oh, and Tommy and Letty--that Bob was coming to-day; nobody else. But I can make up something. We'll keep Tommy and Letty out of it for the moment. Of course, they'll all have to know in the end.

PAMELA. We'll write, of course.

GERALD. Yes. Tommy and Letty are engaged, by the way.

PAMELA. Oh! (Understanding how he must feel about it) Oh, Gerald! (She makes a movement towards him, but he takes no notice.) I'll send Bob to you; he's waiting outside, I expect. (Timidly) Good-bye, Gerald.

GERALD (still with his back to her). Good-bye, Pamela.

PAMELA. Won't you--

GERALD (from the bottom of his heart). Go away, go away! I can't bear the sound of your voice; I can't bear to look at you. Go away!

PAMELA. Oh, Gerald! [She goes out.]

(GERALD looks up as she goes out, and then looks quickly down again. When BOB comes in he is still resting with his arm on the mantelpiece looking into the fire.)

GERALD (looking up). Hullo.

BOB. Hullo. (After a pause) Is that all you've got to say?

GERALD. I've just seen Pamela.

BOB (trying not to show his eagerness). Well?

GERALD. Well--isn't that enough?

BOB. What do you mean?

GERALD (bitterly). Do you want me to fall on, your neck, and say take her and be happy?

BOB. You never loved her.

GERALD. That's a lie, and anyhow we won't discuss it. She's going to marry you, and that's an end of it.

BOB (very eagerly). She *is* going to?

GERALD (sharply). Don't you know it?

BOB (mumbling). Yes, but she might--Ah, you couldn't charm her away from me this time.

GERALD (with an effort). I don't know what you mean by "*this* time." I think we'd better leave Pamela out of it altogether. She's waiting for you outside. Last time I offered to shake hands with you, you had some fancied grievance against me, and you wouldn't; now if there's any grievance between us, it's on *my* side. (Holding out his hand) Good-bye, Bob, and--quite honestly--good luck.

BOB (ignoring the hand). Magnanimous Gerald!

(GERALD looks at him in surprise for a moment. Then he shrugs his shoulders, turns round, and goes back to the mantelpiece, and takes a cigarette from the box there.)

GERALD. I'm tired of you, Bob. If you don't want me, I don't want you. (He sits down in a chair and lights his cigarette.)

BOB. And now I suppose you're thoroughly pleased with yourself, and quite happy.

GERALD (looking at him in absolute wonder). Happy? You fool! (Something in BOB'S face surprises him, and he gets up and says) Why do you suddenly hate me like this?

BOB (with a bitter laugh). Suddenly!

GERALD (almost frightened). Bob!

BOB (letting the jealousy that has been pent up for years come out at last). You're surprised! Surprised! You would be. You've never stopped to think what other people are thinking; you take it for granted that they all love you, and that's all you care about. Do you think I liked playing second fiddle to you all my life? Do you think I've never had any ambitions of my own? I suppose you thought I was quite happy being one of the crowd of admirers round you, all saying, "Oh, look at Gerald, isn't he wonderful?"

GERALD (astounded). Bob, I had no idea--I never dreamt--

BOB. They thought something of me when I was young. When I first went to school they thought something of me. I daresay even *you* thought something of me then; I could come back in the holidays and tell you what school was like, and what a lot they thought of me. They didn't think much of me when *you* came; you soon put a stop to that. I was just young Farringdon's brother then, and when we came home together, all the talk was of the wonderful things *Gerald* had done. It was like that at Eton; it was like that at Oxford. It's always been like that. I managed to get away from you a bit after Oxford, but it went on just the same. "How do you do, Mr. Farringdon? Are you any relation to Gerald Farringdon?" (With the utmost contempt) And you actually thought I liked that; you thought I enjoyed it. You thought I smiled modestly and said, "Oh yes, he's my brother, my young brother; isn't he wonderful?"

GERALD (hardly able to realise it). And you've felt like this for years? (To himself) For years!

BOB (not noticing him). And that wasn't enough for you. They got you into the Foreign Office--they could have got me there. They could have put me into the Army (Almost shouting) Aren't I the eldest son? But no, it didn't matter about the eldest son--never mind about him; put him in the City, anywhere as long as he's out of the way. If we have any influence, we must use it for Gerald--the wonderful Gerald.

GERALD. If this is an indictment, it's drawn against the wrong person.

BOB (more quietly). Then at last I found a friend; somebody who took me for my own sake. (Bitterly) And like a damned fool I brought her down here, and she saw *you*. I might have known what would happen.

GERALD. Pamela!

BOB. Yes, and you took her. After taking everything you could all your life, you took *her*. She was Bob's friend--that was quite enough.

She must be one more in the crowd of admirers round you. So you took her. (Triumphantly) Ah, but I got her back in the end. I've got her now--and I think I'm square, Gerald.

GERALD. Yes, I think you're square now.

BOB (rather jauntily, as he leans back against the end of the sofa and feels for his cigarette-case). I seem to have surprised you rather.

GERALD. You've thought like that about me for years and you've never said anything? You've felt like that about Pamela and you've never said anything?

BOB. I've been thinking it over, particularly these last few months--in prison, Gerald. You have a lot of time for thinking in prison. Oh, I know; you advised me to stand on my head and waggle my legs in the air--something like that. You were full of brilliant ideas. I had a better idea--I *thought*.

GERALD (realising his state of mind). My God, what a time you must have had!

BOB (furiously). Damn you! I *won't* be pitied by you.

GERALD (coolly). And you're not going to be. You've talked about yourself and thought about yourself quite long enough; now I'm going to talk about *myself*.

BOB. And it won't be the first time either.

GERALD (quickly). It will be the first time to *you*. You say I've never tried to understand your feelings--have you ever tried to understand mine? My God, Bob! I've thought a good deal more about you than you have about me. Have I ever talked about myself to you? When a boy does well at school he likes talking about it; did I ever bore *you* with it? Never! Because I knew how you'd feel about it. I knew how *I'd* feel about it, and so I tried to make it easy for you.

BOB. Very noble of you.

GERALD (angrily). Don't be such a damned fool, Bob. What's the good of talking like that? If whatever I do is wrong, then you're only convicting yourself; you're not convicting me. According to you, if I talk about myself I'm being conceited and superior, and if I don't talk about myself, I'm being noble and still more superior. In fact, whatever I do, I can't please you. That doesn't condemn me; it condemns yourself. (Wearily) What's the good of talking?

BOB. Go on; I like to hear it.

GERALD. Very well. We'll take the definite accusations first. Apart from the general charge of being successful--whatever that amounts to--you accuse me of two things. One you didn't mention just now, but it was more or less obvious the last time I saw you. That was that I neglected to help you when you were in trouble, and that through me you went to prison.

BOB. Yes, I forgot that this time. (With an unpleasant laugh) But I didn't forget it in prison.

GERALD. You had a sense of humour once, Bob. I don't know what's happened to it lately. Don't you think it's rather funny to hate a person steadily for fifteen years, judge all his acts as you'd hardly judge those of your bitterest enemy, and yet, the first time you are in trouble, to expect him to throw everything on one side and rush to your help--and then to feel bitterly ill-used if he doesn't?

BOB (rather taken aback). I--you didn't--I didn't--

GERALD (quietly). That's been rather like you all through, Bob. You were always the one who had to be helped; you were always the one who was allowed to have the grievance. Still, that doesn't make it any better for me if I could have helped you and didn't. However, I'm quite certain that I *couldn't* have helped you then. We'll take the other accusation, that I stole Pamela from you. I've only got two things to say to that. First, that Pamela was not engaged to you, and was perfectly free to choose between us. Secondly, that you never told me, and I hadn't the slightest idea, that you were the least bit fond of her. Indeed, I don't believe you realized it yourself at that time.

BOB (rather shamefaced). I've realized it since.

GERALD. Yes, and you've taken Pamela back since. I think if I were you I would keep her out of it. (BOB looks away and GERALD goes on) Now we come to the general charge, which seems to be (very deliberately) that I'm better than you at games, that I've got better manners than you, that I'm cleverer than you--in fact, that I'm superior to you in every outward way, and am only inferior to you in--well, in the moral qualities. (Quietly) Bob, what are these moral qualities in which I am so deficient and you so endowed? You judge me by the qualities I am supposed to have shown to you; now what have you shown to *me*? Have *you* been generous, have *you* been friendly, have *you* been sympathetic? No; you've just told me that for fifteen years you've hated me and been jealous of me. Things have been rotten for you, I admit; have you ever tried to make the best of them? You've had disadvantages to fight against; have you ever fought against them? Never! You've turned every trouble into a grievance, and hoarded it up. I said just now I was sick of you. I am--utterly. You said just now you didn't want my pity. You haven't got it; you've only got my contempt.... (He turns away, and then suddenly turns back, and, holding out his hand to BOB, says utterly unexpectedly) And now, damn you! will you shake hands?

BOB (incoherent with surprise). What do you--I--you didn't-- (GERALD'S hand is still held out, and he is smiling.) Oh, Jerry! (He takes the hand.)

GERALD. That's all right. Good-bye, Bob, and good luck.

BOB (bewildered). Good-bye. (He tuns round and goes towards the door. Half-way there, he looks over his shoulder and says awkwardly) Had rather a rotten time in prison. (GERALD nods. At the door BOB says) Pamela and I--

[With rather a forced smile, GERALD nods again, and BOB goes out.]

(Left alone, GERALD stands looking into the fire and thinking. He tries sitting down to see if that will make thinking any pleasanter; then he tries standing up again. He goes to the door in front of the staircase

and opens it to see if there is anybody there; then he goes to the windows at the back and looks through them. Evidently he sees somebody, for he beckons and then returns to his old place by the fire. In a few moments LETTY and TOMMY come in.)

TOMMY (excitedly). I say, has Bob come?

GERALD. Why?

TOMMY. I could have sworn we saw him just now as we were coming in. At least, Letty swore she did--

LETTY. I *know* I did.

TOMMY. So I gave him a shout, but he fairly trekked off. Was it Bob?

GERALD. Yes. Now look here, I want you to be two nice people. Don't say anything to anybody. He came, but he didn't want to see the whole crowd of us. He's going to Canada. I'll do all the explaining, if you two just say nothing. Do you see?

LETTY. Of course, Gerald.

TOMMY. Rather, old boy. Besides, it will make it much better for Letty and me.

LETTY. No rival attraction, Tommy means.

[Enter SIR JAMES and LADY FARRINGDON from the outer hull, having just returned from their lunch.]

SIR JAMES. Ah! here you all are.

GERALD. Had a good lunch?

SIR JAMES. Lunch was all right, but the people were dull, very dull.

LADY FARRINGDON. There were one or two nice ones, I thought, dear. They all knew about *you*, Gerald.

TOMMY (proudly). Of course they would.

SIR JAMES. Oh, one or two were all right, but *he* was--well, I was discussing shorthorns with him after lunch, and he hardly seemed interested at all. Dull, very dull. I've got no use for that sort of man.

(During this speech the Butler has come in with a telegram for GERALD.)

GERALD (taking it). Just a moment. (He reads it quickly.) No answer. [Exit Butler.]

(GERALD reads his telegram again more thoughtfully.)

LADY FARRINGDON. From Pamela, dear?

GERALD. From the office. I shall have to go up at once.

LADY FARRINGDON (very disappointed). Oh, Gerald!

SIR JAMES. Something on?

GERALD. Rather an important thing really. I never thought I should get it, but there was just a chance. (Looking at his watch) Oh, I can do it comfortably.

SIR JAMES (obviously proud that GERALD is in the thick of things). What is it? I suppose you mustn't tell us.

GERALD. Something abroad.

SIR JAMES. Diplomatic mission, eh?

GERALD. Yes.

LETTY. That does sound so frightfully exciting.

LADY FARRINGDON (proudly). Oh, Gerald! (Thoughtfully). I wish we had known about it this morning, we could have mentioned it at lunch.

SIR JAMES. That ought to lead to something.

GERALD. Yes. I think it will. It's rather an opportunity:

(They are all round him now, just as they have always been. The buzz begins.)

SIR JAMES. Aha! you'll be an ambassador yet. What do you think of that, Letty?

LETTY. Well done, Gerald.

LADY FARRINGDON. How like you, Gerald!

TOMMY. Good old Gerald! I never knew such a chap. You really *are*!

GERALD (softly). I wish I weren't, Tommy! Oh, I wish I weren't!

(They don't hear him; they are still buzzing.)