

are on your program! No day so meatless but shall show you leopards nesting in your hair! Hear voices, indeed! Ha! ha! ha!

MARY: Oh, Jack, you're crazy!

SQUIFF: 'Tis she that's smitten with the dread dementia of drink! Dre-hink! Dre-hink! She thinks others crazy, she must then be crazy herself. 'Tis all Prehoo! Prehoo! Prehoo!

JACK: Mary, we've been good friends and more for over three years now. Won't you trust me? I'd cut off my hand to save you from this ghastly thing that has come to you. Tell me the truth. Let's face it together!

MARY: Is this a practical joke?

JACK: Oh, don't try to put me off. I know you have become a secret drinker. I have proof.

SQUIFF: Pre-hoo! Prehoo! Pre-hoo!

MARY: It is a voice. It is familiar, too. Oh, this must be a joke.

JACK: Mary, you are right. It is the voice of Slyman Squiff, the master detective!

SQUIFF: The man who arrested Edward Kelly!

MARY: Then I understand. You wretch! You abandoned wretch! How low must have I fallen to have loved you! Oh, mother, mother!

JACK: Hey, what's this? That's no answer!

MARY: It is for you to answer me! Here have I been, dragged from a happy home into this cheap flat, not a rag to my back, not even a new hat, and there's a lovely one in —'s (*use name of local milliner*) at three seventy-five, marked down from eight thirty-eight; no girl help any more; no more dinners in restaurants; oh, those blondes! I suppose Laura Brown's in an apartment at a thousand a month; the little beast!

JACK: Laura Brown! Mary, you're raving.

SQUIFF: Ha! he thinks others crazy, he's crazy himself. Such is the fate of all unfaithful husbands. It is Prehoo! Prehoo! Prehoo!

JACK: Shut up, Squiff, you ass!

MARY: Then you hear voices, too! What does this all mean?

JACK (*in a low, thrilling, sinister voice*): This is a stratagem of Slyman Squiff!

MARY (*equally intense*): Traitor, it is. A stratagem of the master detective!

SQUIFF: The man who arrested Edward Kelly!

MARY: Jack, it won't do. Your best chance is to confess. Otherwise I go straight home to mother. Oh, mother! mother!

JACK: Stop talking nonsense!

MARY: Confess! I have proof.

SQUIFF: Pre-hoo! Pre-hoo! Pre-hoo!

MARY: He knows about it all — he knows — he knows! He, Slyman Squiff, the master detective.

SQUIFF: The man who arrested Edward Kelly.

JACK: Confound Edward Kelly!

MARY: He did. And he may yet arrest you, John Sampson, you and your Laura Brown!

JACK: I haven't exchanged three words with the girl in my life, except good-morning.

MARY: Ah! good-morning! A clever scoundrel can do much with such materials. Why, I fell in love with you myself, poor fool I was, because of the way you used to say, "What a pleasant afternoon, aren't we, Miss Mary?" You Beast!

JACK: For God's sake be reasonable. You can't stall like that. If you're not soaking whiskey like an Irish bog, perhaps

you'll explain what you do with all the money you get? Where's the necklace I gave you on your birthday? And your engagement ring? And the sixty-four dollars you took from my wallet this morning?

(*Silence. Mary, pale as death, clenches her teeth and fists. A pause.*)

SQUIFF (*in a hollow voice*): Caught out! Prehoo!

(*A pause.*)

MARY: Jack, it's no business of yours what I do with my money. You never asked me before. You're only asking now to anticipate my asking you. And I do ask you now. What do you do with your money, if you don't spend it on that vile, low creature, Laura Brown?

JACK: She's a perfectly nice girl, and I won't hear you slander her.

MARY: Ah! you defend her, of course. Oh, men are all alike! Mother! Mother!

JACK: You want it both ways. Women are all alike. If I don't defend her, that would be a confession; if I do, it's proof that I'm a more hardened sinner still!

SQUIFF: Prehoo! Prehoo! Prehoo!

MARY: Oh, well; explain how you do spend all your money! I happen to know that you've been branch manager four months, and you never told me! Explain that!

JACK (*stammering*): Mary, dear, it's a — it's a — a — a sort of — er — sort of secret. A — er — kind of a — er — surprise for bye and bye.

MARY (*sneering*): Your manner is convincing, and your explanation most luminous.

JACK: Bah! you're only stalling. Look here, Mary, I believe you loved me once, before this drink got hold of you. I'm going to tell you something. I saw the doctor again today. That weakness of mine was only temporary. I'm fit. They've accepted me for the Aviation Corps, and I'm off to camp next month.

MARY (*between joy and anxiety*): Jack!

JACK: How can I leave you, knowing this about you?

MARY: How can you leave Laura Brown, you mean! Here's your memorandum, with notes of all this money spent on her.

JACK: Laura Brown? L. B. Good God!

SQUIFF: Prehoo! It is enough. Now comes the supreme moment, the triumph of Slyman Squiff, the master detective, the man who arrested Edward Kelly. (*He comes out and presents his cane at them.*) Hands up!

Both of you, hands up!

(*Amazed, they obey.*)

Behold the triumph of the strategist! I was employed by both of you, I have convicted both of you. No more shall whiskey and Laura Brown absorb your superfluous funds! I will annex them, or — by the Great Horn Spoon — I expose the pair of you.

JACK: But, you great thundering ass —

MARY: Oh, Jack, be careful! Don't defy him!

JACK: Defy your grandmother! You silly baby, here's L. B. that I spent all my money on. (*He unlocks a cabinet and pulls out papers, which he throws on the table.*) Here's L. B. LIBERTY BONDS!

MARY (*laughing wildly*): Why, that was my secret, too! (*She rushes to the cupboard and throws her bonds with Jack's.*)

Wilson — that's all!

(*They embrace.*)

SQUIFF: The Bonds of Marriage! And I thought I had Prehoo!