

LEONARD. Well, yes. I mean I've always been a friendly sort of chap – get on with people and all that. I mean, I'm not the sort of fellow that does – well, anything violent. *(He pauses.)* But I suppose it will be – all right, won't it? I mean you don't get convicted for things you haven't done in this country, do you?

MAYHEW. Our English judicial system is, in my opinion, the finest in the world.

LEONARD. *(Is not much comforted. Crossing above the desk to left.)* Of course there was that case of – what was his name – Adolf Beck. I read about it only the other day. After he'd been in prison for years, they found out it was another chap called Smith. They gave him a free pardon then. That's a thing that seems odd to me – giving you a "pardon" for something you haven't done.

MAYHEW. It is the necessary legal term.

LEONARD. *(bringing the chair from left of the fireplace and setting it center)* Well, it doesn't seem right to me.

MAYHEW. The important thing was that Beck was set at liberty.

LEONARD. Yes, it was all right for him. But if it had been murder now – *(He sits astride the chair center.)* if it had been murder it would have been too late. He would have been hanged.

MAYHEW. *(dry but kindly)* Now, Mr. Vole, there is really no need to take a – er – morbid point of view.

LEONARD. *(rather pathetically)* I'm sorry, sir. But you see, in a way, I'm rather getting the wind up.

MAYHEW. Well, try and keep calm. Sir Wilfrid Robarts will be here presently and I want you to tell your story to him exactly as you told it to me.

LEONARD. Yes, sir.

MAYHEW. But meantime perhaps we might fill out a little more of the detail – er – background. You are at present, I understand, out of a job?

LEONARD. *(embarrassed)* Yes, but I've got a few pounds put by. It's not much, but if you can see your way...

MAYHEW. (*upset*) Oh, I'm not thinking of – er – legal fees. It's just the – er – pictures I'm trying to get clear. Your surroundings and – er – circumstance! How long have you been unemployed?

LEONARD. (*answers everything readily, with an engaging friendliness*) About a couple of months.

MAYHEW. What were you doing before that?

LEONARD. I was in a motor servicing firm – kind of mechanic, that's what I was.

MAYHEW. How long had you worked there?

LEONARD. Oh, about three months.

MAYHEW. (*sharply*) Were you discharged?

LEONARD. No, I quit. Had words with the Foreman. Proper old b – (*He breaks off.*) That is, he was a mean sort of chap, always picking on you.

MAYHEW. Hm! And before that?

LEONARD. I worked in a petrol station, but things got a bit awkward and I left.

MAYHEW. Awkward? In what way?

LEONARD. (*embarrassed*) Well – the boss's daughter – she was only a kid, but she took a – well, a sort of fancy to me – and there was nothing there shouldn't have been between us, but the old man got a bit fed up and said I'd better go. He was quite nice about it and gave me a good chit. (*He rises and suddenly grins.*) Before that, I was selling egg beaters on commission. (*He replaces the chair left of the fireplace.*)

MAYHEW. Indeed.

LEONARD. (*crossing and standing above the desk, boyishly*) And a rotten job they were, too. I could have invented a better egg heater myself. (*catching MAYHEW's mood*) You're thinking I'm a bit of a drifter, sir. It's true in a way – but I'm not really like that. Doing my army service unsettled me a bit – that and being abroad. I was in Germany. It was fine there. That's where I met my wife. She's an actress. Since I've come back to this