

(The CLERK gives the certificate to the USHER, who hands it to MAYHEW. The USHER then crosses and resumes his seat. MAYHEW shows the certificate to SIR WILFRID.)

MYERS. In any event, Mrs. Heilger, are you willing to give evidence against the man you have been calling your husband?

ROMAINE. I'm quite willing.

(LEONARD rises, followed by the WARDER.)

LEONARD. Romaine! What are you doing here? – What are you saying?

JUDGE. I must have silence. As your counsel will tell you, Vole, you will very shortly have an opportunity of speaking in your own defence.

(LEONARD and the WARDER resume their seats.)

MYERS. *(to ROMAINE)* Will you tell me in your own words what happened on the evening of October the fourteenth.

ROMAINE. I was at home all the evening.

MYERS. And Leonard Vole?

ROMAINE. Leonard went out at half past seven.

MYERS. When did he return?

ROMAINE. At ten minutes past ten.

(LEONARD rises, followed by the WARDER.)

LEONARD. That's not true. You know it's not true. It was about twenty-five past nine when I came home.

(MAYHEW rises, turns to LEONARD and whispers to him to be quiet.)

Who's been making you say this? I don't understand. *(Shrinks back and puts his hands to his face. Half-whispering.)*
I – I don't understand. *(He resumes his seat.)*

(MAYHEW and the WARDER sit.)

MYERS. Leonard Vole returned, you say, at ten minutes past ten? And what happened next?

ROMAINE. He was breathing hard, very excited. He threw off his coat and examined the sleeves. Then he told me to wash the cuffs. They had blood on them.

MYERS. Did he speak about the blood?

ROMAINE. He said, "Dammit, there's blood on them."

MYERS. What did you say?

ROMAINE. I said, "What have you done?"

MYERS. What did the prisoner say to that?

ROMAINE. He said, "I've killed her."

LEONARD. (*rising; frenzied*) It's not true, I tell you. It's not true.

(*The WARDER rises and restrains LEONARD.*)

JUDGE. Please control yourself.

LEONARD. Not a word of this is true. (*He resumes his seat.*)

(*The WARDER remains standing*)

JUDGE. (*to ROMAINE*) You know what you're saying, Mrs. Heilger?

ROMAINE. I am to speak the truth, am I not?

MYERS. The prisoner said, "I have killed her." Did you know to whom he referred?

ROMAINE. Yes, I knew. It was the old woman he had been going to see so often.

MYERS. What happened next?

ROMAINE. He told me that I was to say he had been at home with me all that evening, especially he said I was to say he was at home at half past nine. I said to him, "Do the police know you've killed her?" And he said, "No, they will think it's a burglary. But anyway, remember I was at home with you at half past nine."

MYERS. And you were subsequently interrogated by the police?

ROMAINE. Yes.

MYERS. Did they ask you if Leonard Vole was at home with you at half past nine?

ROMAINE. Yes.

MYERS. What did you answer to that?

ROMAINE. I said that he was.

MYERS. But you have changed your story now. Why?

ROMAINE. (*with sudden passion*) Because it is murder. I cannot go on lying to save him. I am grateful to him, yes. He married me and brought me to this country. What he has asked me to do always I have done it because I was grateful.

MYERS. Because you loved him?

ROMAINE. No, I never loved him.

LEONARD. Romaine!

ROMAINE. I never loved him.

MYERS. You were grateful to the prisoner. He brought you to this country. He asked you to give him an alibi and at first you consented, but later you felt that what he had asked you to do was wrong?

ROMAINE. Yes, that is it exactly.

MYERS. Why did you feel it was wrong?

ROMAINE. When it is murder. I cannot come into Court and lie and say that he was there with me at the time it was done. I cannot do it. I cannot *do* it.

MYERS. So what did you do?

ROMAINE. I did not know what to do. I do not know your country and I am afraid of the police. So I write a letter to my ambassador, and I say that I do not wish to tell any more lies. I wish to speak the truth.

MYERS. That *is* the truth – that Leonard Vole returned that night at ten minutes past ten. That he had blood on the sleeves of his coat, that he said to you, "I have killed her." That is the truth before God?

ROMAINE. That is the truth.

(**MYERS** resumes his seat.)

SIR WILFRID. (*rising*) When the prisoner went through this form of marriage with you, was he aware that your first husband was still alive?

ROMAINE. No.

SIR WILFRID. He acted in good faith?

ROMAINE. Yes.

SIR WILFRID. And you were very grateful to him?

ROMAINE. I was grateful to him, yes.

SIR WILFRID. You've shown your gratitude by coming here and testifying against him.

ROMAINE. I have to speak the truth.

SIR WILFRID. (*savagely*) Is it the truth?

ROMAINE. Yes.

SIR WILFRID. I suggest to you that on the night of October the fourteenth Leonard Vole was at home with you at nine-thirty, the time that the murder was committed. I suggest to you that this whole story of yours is a wicked fabrication, that you have for some reason a grudge against the prisoner, and that this is your way of expressing it.

ROMAINE. No.

SIR WILFRID. You realize that you are on oath?

ROMAINE. Yes.

SIR WILFRID. I warn you, Mrs. Heilger, that if you care nothing for the prisoner, be careful on your own account. The penalty for perjury is heavy.

MYERS. (*rising and interposing*) Really, my lord. I don't know whether these theatrical outbursts are for the benefit of the Jury, but I do most respectfully submit that there is nothing to suggest that this witness has spoken anything but the truth.

JUDGE. Mr. Myers. This is a capital charge, and within the bounds of reason I would like the defence to have every latitude. Yes, Sir Wilfrid.

(**MYERS** resumes his seat.)