

"GLAMOUR"  
.....

John NASH

MILDRED WOODWARD, a young lady not interested in men.  
A PARK-KEEPER.

RAY WHITELEY, a young man interested in drama and girls.  
ANGELA WOODWARD, Mildred's sister.

RUDY THESSALOW, Angela's escort.  
AN URCHIN.

and non-speaking MEN, WOMEN and CHILDREN.

The scene is a secluded corner of a city park.  
The time about six o'clock in the evening.

.....

1.

It is a secluded corner of the park; there is no view of the distant parklands because the background of trees and bushes is thick. The leaves have autumnal tints, and many lie in a thick layer on the grass. It has been a glorious day, and is now a glorious golden evening. From the park-gates off right, nearby, a gravel path runs from downstage right to upstage left, and off to a bandstand where distant music and occasionally applause can be heard. To the right is a park bench seat, and to the extreme left an unsecured iron chair. Between the two, set in a metal ring, is a half-filled garbage-bin. Now and again there is the sound of passing traffic beyond the park gates. The evening song of the birds is loud, audacious, even brazen.

At curtain rise a rather beautiful, well-dressed and mature WOMAN is sitting on the iron chair. She is observant, completely at ease, enjoying the birds, the music, the occasional passers-by, the waiting. Her movements are few and unhurried, her smile a lingering sign of genuine contentment. On the nearer bench seat sits MILDRED WOODWARD, crocheting interminably, introvertedly, so that she doesn't have to look at, let alone mingle with, her terrifying surroundings. She is twenty-four. She is not ugly; merely plain. But shyness and timidity have so deepened and developed her plainness that the effort is manifest in her entire appearance and demeanor. Her hair, which could be beautiful, is cut to cover as much of her forehead and face as possible; her lipstick is an unadventurous, unnatural pink;

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At curtain rise a rather beautiful, well-dressed and mature WOMAN is sitting on the iron chair. She is observant, completely at ease, enjoying the birds, the music, the occasional passers-by, the waiting. Her movements are few and unhurried, her smile a lingering sign of genuine contentment. On the nearer bench seat sits MILDRED WOODWARD, crocheting interminably, introvertedly, so that she doesn't have to look at, let alone mingle with, her terrifying surroundings. She is twenty-four. She is not ugly; merely plain. But shyness and timidity have so deepened and developed her plainness that the effort is manifest in her entire appearance and demeanor. Her hair, which could be beautiful, is worn to cover as much of her forehead and face as possible; her lipstick is an unadventurous, unnatural pink;

her dress is an undistinguished floral, and is pulled well down over knees that might be knee-cuffed - but might, of course, be beautiful. Her feet are plonked parallel side by side on medium heels: an almost imperceptible nervous shuffle is the only movement they make. Mildred's work-basket and handbag occupy the remainder of her seat, to her right, so that Strangers get no encouragement to share her company. She allows herself the briefest of glances at passers-by - but only when they are safely in the distance. She is too frightened by life to want to be attractive: she wants only to repel. That is, as things are: for she knows that though for a majority to attract may mean fulfilment, for a few it means their fate. Thus, with the intensity that she has dined, and taken shorthand, and typed letters all day, so, at curtain rise, she crochets.

Presently a GIRL with her arms around the waists of TWO BOYS lurches quickly on from right. They all stagger, talking, fooling, laughing, up the path, looking briefly back at Mildred over their shoulders. She doesn't see them with her eyes. The woman on the other seat watches them go off left with kind, detached amusement, perhaps wishing she were a little younger. Millie glances after them quickly, not ceasing her work. The cheeky birds assume control again. After a while the woman sees someone entering the gates off right. She gives a graceful movement of the hand, a charming smile, and, completely relaxed, watches him approach. After some seconds a tall, straight, well-preserved MAN, faultlessly dressed in grey, enters from right. He walks gracefully to the woman, bows slightly, assists her to her feet, obviously apologises for being late, offers her



his arm, and escorts her off, smiling, to listen to the music. Peace for Mildred. A quick glance after them. Perfect peace for Mildred.

But not for very long. A grating sound off right gets nearer. A kindly old PARK-KEEPER shuffles on, raking up leaves. He rakes around Mildred's seat.

KEEPER Sorry to bother you, miss....Won't be a minute .... There! .... Have to keep the leaves under control. Otherwise in a few days .... you wouldn't be able to find the seats. Under millions of leaves .... (He rests on his rake.) That's a beautiful thing you're making, beautiful work! A table-mat is it? ... Yes, beautiful. That's what they call crowsheeing isn't it? Not much done, these days ... dying out. Lot of beautiful things dying ... like the leaves ... (He picks up a large leaf, spotted, woven with decay.) Just look at that! Beauty! Natural beauty! Not to be found in the cinemas and handbags and galleries ... Or in the pattern-books ... You'd see it: You'd have an eye for it. I can tell the nice girls, the ones who've been brought up right ... Yes ... You waiting for your friend? - the fair girl?

MILDRED (Shyly.) Yes.

KEEPER I thought so. Not that I'm noseey, but I keep my eyes open as a rule. Often seen you here, waiting for your friend ... Must be your favo<sup>r</sup>ite spot ... your favourite seat ... Your friend's pretty too - pretty as a picture - but I'd say she wasn't half the girl you were. Different type:

sort the young chaps might - (A young COUPLE, unashamedly attracted to each other, come on right and occupy the chair left, she on his lap, kissing, caressing.) - chase after'. Wouldn't see the beauty in that. No time. Young people got no time these days. Motorbikes! Cars! (He has shown discreet interest in the couple: Mildred none.) Oh well, mustn't disturb you: must get on with my work! (He rakes towards the couple. They giggle, struggle, tip the chair, fall to the ground, laughing and struggling.) - Hey! Those chairs weren't put there for that! If you can't behave yourselves properly, you won't be allowed in the park! You won't be allowed - (They run off left, hand in hand.) in the park ... (Stands up chair, returning right to his leaves.) Young hooligans! Don't know what their lives are for. Live the life of a - a rubbish bin. Fill up with rubbish every day, and empty every night. Rubbish or emptiness. Shouldn't have to lock up a park at night, a park at night is a glorious thing, but some people are no better than the animals ... animals. You know, there were over a hundred chairs here when summer started, and now - less than sixty. Unbelievable. Plunderers. So - in modern times, mind - we got to lock up. A disgrace - but we got to do it ... (Seeing Mildred look at her watch.) Oh, not yet, miss, there's plenty of time. Your young friend late? Oh, she'll come, she'll come all right ... No, half an hour's work yet. Rake some more leaves - I could rake leaves forever - beautiful - and then the job I don't like: empty all the bins ... No, you've got plenty of time ...



(The kind old man has raked himself off left, and the noise of his rake on the gravel path gets fainter. A young COUPLE enters right, the man tall and untidy, the girl in gaudy red dress and glamour thick and heavy. They are eating chips from a newspaper the man is holding between them. The girl stops, rummages in her handbag for a mirror, repairs her face including eyebrows, mouthing on grotesquely her vivid new lips. The man has gone on a further pace or two, eaten the remaining chips, screwed the newspaper into a large ball, dropped it on the path, and stood waiting, bored, hands in pockets, as if he does this frequently. The girl gives herself a quick hard testing mirror smile, snaps the bag shut, brushes her dress down quickly, grabs her man automatically, and guides him off left. Pause. Mildred glances after them. Short pause. She sees the newspaper. Refuses to see it. Sees it again. It annoys her. She refuses to see it once more. It challenges her. She refuses to accept the challenge. She looks after the distant couple again and her crocheting slows: she looks at the newspaper. Dare she? She puts down her work in laboured manner, almost totters to her feet, and timidly goes to the rubbish. She stoops shyly and picks it up, and almost afraid to look at it, goes quickly to the bin. RAY WHITELEY, a friendly young man of Mildred's age, wearing casual shoes, grey flannels and a yellow sweater, tiptoes quickly on from right and occupies her seat. He

pretends to be absorbed in a thin volume which he holds on a small box on his knee. She sees him thus when she disposes of the rubbish and turns, like a mouse finding its hole in the wainscot blocked. She hesitates, then goes forward timidly. She takes up her crochet-work, fumbles with the work-basket lid and is about to pack her things when the young man comes to life.)

RAY (Springing up.) I'm so sorry: I've stolen your place! Please sit down!

MILDRED That's all right.

RAY No, no please! I was only fooling - I -

MILDRED I can sit on the other seat - It's just the same -

RAY No, please, I'd never forgive myself! I was just trying to be funny! Sit down! (He gently forces her down onto the seat.) That's right! I'm a nuisance. I saw you get up and - couldn't resist - giving you a surprise. It's my warped sense of humour - everybody tells me about it. What they don't realise is - it's just a clumsy way of covering up my - shyness ... Am I forgiven?

MILDRED (Nervously.) Ye-es.

RAY And you don't think I'm the rudest man you ever met?

MILDRED No, I -

RAY Not even if I asked you to let me watch you work for a while?

MILDRED No.

RAY (Leaning on the seat back) It fascinates me. I couldn't even learn to knit. Tried once in hospital. A mass of



thumbs. And another thing that's so intriguing: who invented it - or started to do it first, rather? Way back in the Dark Ages, with the men clanking around in armour ready to clash swords, women were already - clicking their needles - turning out beautiful things! ... Gee, you're quick at it! ... What will you use it for?

MILDRED It's a table-mat.- But it's not for me. It's a present for my aunt.

RAY Good Lord, you must have patience! All those stitches, all that time, making something for someone else! She ought to appreciate that gift, all right. She must be your favourite aunt.

MILDRED She's my only one. I live with her.

RAY In the city?

MILDRED No: over on Northside.

RAY I see ... Gee, I am the rudest man you ever met - far and away the rudest. I come barging along, pinching your seat, asking questions - and haven't even introduced myself! My name's Ray - Ray Whiteley. And yours - if you don't mind my asking?

MILDRED (Quietly) Mildred.

RAY I beg your pardon?

MILDRED Mildred. Mildred Woodward.

RAY Coh! Whiteley - Wood! Two W's. Know the chances of that? Twenty-six times twenty-six is - um - six hundred and - seventy-six! Our meeting is a six hundred and seventy-six to one pop! What do you know about that?

MILDRED Oh - um - is it?

RAY Figures don't lie. Unlike human beings. They don't find it necessary. Not that I lie very much myself. Only occasionally.

MILDRED (Shyly.) Like you did just now?

RAY Just now? Me?

MILDRED When you said you were shy.

RAY But I am. Very much so. Only I'm bold too. You see, you can be shy and bold or - shy and timid. It depends whether you want to do something about it. Lots of people are shy, but succeed in covering it up - and recovering from it altogether. I think perhaps you're a bit shy - and timid.

MILDRED (Lowly.) I suppose so.

RAY Never mind: people like shy people: I like shy people ... (Seeing Mildred glance at her watch and off right.) I expect you want to get rid of me: You're waiting for a beau.

MILDRED No I - I'm waiting for my sister.

RAY No, it's a beau - you're blushing - it's a beau all right!

MILDRED No it's - my sister! I often wait for her here!

RAY (Laughing.) All right, I believe you, I believe you! ... It's not a bad spot to wait for someone - a bit lonely though.

MILDRED I like the quiet ... It's peaceful ... I like sitting under the trees ...

RAY Have you always lived here?

MILDRED No. We only left Brookford - a country town - about three years ago.



RAY (Pulling out a handkerchief, and pretending to blindfold himself.) Ah, we'll play games to pass the time! Clairvoyancy! Thought transference! You concentrate hard, really hard, on Brookford - and I'll try to describe it to you! ... Ready?

MILDRED Yes.

RAY ... A little hospital, set in trees on the hillside ... looks straight down the main street ;;; At the first intersection is Woolworth's ... at the next - a square with a fountain! Am I right?

MILDRED Yes.

RAY Overlooking it, of course, an old pub ... Then more shops, a garage ... the council chambers ... the children's playground! Am I right?

MILDRED (Her work slowing.) Yes, quite right.

RAY Then another pub, the railway station ... the outskirts, the suburbs getting scattered ... the farms. Chief products: milk, cheese, corn, and pretty girls, am I right?

MILDRED Well - I suppose -

RAY (Taking off handkerchief.) And the pubs are the Queens and the Welcome, and it's Brookford, ten miles from Northport, right?

MILDRED Mm, do you come from there, too?

RAY No. I just - worked there for a while. Nice little town. See, we're under the same star! Our names start with W, we're both shy, we both know Brookford - and we both left there. I take it you've left for good too?

MILDRED (Slowing her needles, recalling a dreadful event.) Yes. Yes, we had to leave - for good ...

RAY (Gently.) Had to leave?

MILDRED A dreadful thing happened - a great - misfortune. I'd rather not talk -

RAY I'm sorry, I'm terribly sorry. I've reminded you of something that hurts. I'm - clumsy.

MILDRED That's all right ...

RAY ... You sure you don't mind my company?

MILDRED I feel I'm - keeping you from - the crowd - enjoying the music.

RAY Not at all. I prefer it from a distance. Anyway I'm not partial to marches, military music, are you?

MILDRED No, I - I'm not.

(The band strikes up with popular music from one of the well-known shows.)

RAY Well, listen to that! That's more like it! Our wish is their command. (He sings a few bars to the music. Stops, coughing. Laughing.) Not my strong point, singing. I wonder what is. Give a guess!

MILDRED (With a shy smile.) Talking?

RAY (Laughing.) You wound me. But you're right. But I've got to be good. Meeting a quiet person like you who doesn't do much talking, I've got to do it all myself. Even if it means behaving like a detective. Here I go again: with hands as nimble as that, I bet you're a - stenographer!

MILDRED I am.



RAY Really? I'm a bit phenomenal, aren't I? Have a go yourself: what would you say I am?

MILDRED (With a quick glance, shyly.) A clerk?

RAY Pretty close: a storekeeper: How'd you guess?

MILDRED You're quick at figures.

RAY Eh?

MILDRED You worked out twenty-six times twenty-six so quickly.

RAY Then it wasn't a guess at all: you're a better detective than I am. Golly, I'll have to watch my step! ... (As Mildred looks at her watch again.) I expect the popular music will wind up the programme. The park will be shutting soon. If I had a sister who turned up late, I'd be annoyed with her.

MILDRED She's not very late. Anyway, I'm used to it. And I like it here.

RAY What is she like?

MILDRED (For the first time speaking with any enthusiasm.) Sis? She's marvellous! She's pretty - got the prettiest hair I've ever seen! And she's got a wonderful personality - gets on with everybody. They said she was the loveliest girl in Brookford, and she was the best dancer, too. She's won all sorts of -

RAY (Interrupting.) Wait! Wait! Wait! ... - May I sit down?

MILDRED (Confused.) If you - like. I -

RAY (Laughing at her confusion.) Because at last I've struck on a happy topic! You're actually talking to me! I'll sit down on the very edge of your seat and shut up a

while, and you can tell me all about this wonderful wonderful - though unpunctual - person.

MILDRED (Drawing back into her shell.) Well, she's just - marvellous. A marvellous personality ... And she's clever ... did well in school...

RAY That's fine. What does she do now?

MILDRED She's a model. She's so beautiful, she - does modelling.

RAY And wouldn't you rather do that than type letters all day?

MILDRED Oh, I couldn't, I'm - not good-looking, and - all those people staring at me, I'd be ...

RAY ... as big a success as your sister, believe me! Only provided you wanted to be. If you were ugly I wouldn't say that, Mildred, but there's nothing wrong with your looks. All you have to do is make the most of yourself. Desire the confidence and you'll acquire the confidence: and then you can be just as good a model, or dancer, or personality or actress as your sister. (Comically dramatic.) No, as I see her, your sister is a hard cruel beautiful-but-ugly sister whose virtues you extol and exaggerate, whose faults you are blind to: and she's made a Cinderella out of you, so that you deny yourself everything; sacrifice time, friends, effort, beauty, happiness, everything for her! And she doesn't deserve it!

MILDRED No, it isn't like that at all. She's different from me, she's better than me. She fits into ... various circles ... naturally. I've always been ... quiet ... but I don't enjoy parties and dances and ... good times ...



I like quiet and ... solitude ...

RAY (More serious than he has yet been.) ... And what are your plans for the evening? - Don't think I'm going to be fresh and try to rush you into a date or anything; I merely ... wondered.

MILDRED If my sister is free we may go to the pictures.

RAY Free? You mean if she has no boyfriend?

MILDRED Yes.

RAY And if she has an escort?

MILDRED Well, I suppose I'll ... go home ...

RAY (Slowly, sadly.) You wait here daily for a glamorous sister to let you know whether she can spare her company, and more often than not, she can't. So you are left alone.

MILDRED I don't mind it at all.

RAY Perhaps she'll turn up with two boys.

MILDRED (Quickly.) No, she wouldn't do that; she knows I - wouldn't like that!

RAY (Soberly.) ... No, I - I didn't really think she would ... (More brightly.) Thank goodness.

MILDRED (Awkwardly.) I'm a - disappointing person. It's kind of you to talk to me, but really, I feel I'm keeping you from - an appointment.

RAY Kind of me? Well, I'll soon fix that. I've got a nice name: Ray, sunlight, happiness - but Mildred! Mildewed, murdered, it's awful! - I'm going to call you Millie.

MILDRED They do at home.

RAY Of course they do ... No, I have a rehearsal at 8.30, but until then, if your sister doesn't turn up, I insist on

buying you a feast, or a snack, or an ice-cream - which ever you prefer - and seeing you to your bus.

MILLIE Thank you, I'm - not very hungry.

RAY Ah - wait until they lock us out!

(The COUPLE who were eating chips enter left, and stroll towards the gate, off right. Ray looks after them, smiling. An URCHIN enters left and goes to Ray.)

URCHIN Could you spare us sixpence, Mister?

RAY What do you say?

URCHIN Please.

RAY What ya want sixpence for?

URCHIN To buy a choc-ice.

RAY Ya starving to death?

URCHIN Practic'ly.

RAY Won't your Mum give you one?

URCHIN Nah!

RAY What would she do if she caught you begging?

URCHIN Gimme a beltin', I S'pose.

RAY Ye-es, she would.

URCHIN But how she gonna find out?

RAY (Doubtfully.) Hmmm ... I'll have a look. (He pulls out sixpence.) I'll toss you: heads you win, tails I lose. (He tosses.) Heads. (He chucks the coin to the boy.)

URCHIN (Running off right.) Fanks, mister!

RAY He'll get on. Knows a kind face ... Hey, did you notice the couple that passed?

MILLIE No.

RAY Just a second ago?



MILLIE

No.

RAY

They really gave us the once over: I thought they were going to ask for a quid. D'you mean to say you didn't see them?

MILLIE

(Doubtfully.) Was the girl in red?

RAY

The red to end all reds! Dressed up to kill, and common as dirt. The most vivid thing for a thousand miles ... (Quietly.) Millie, if you don't look at people, you don't look at life. People are worth looking at; it doesn't hurt them a bit so they can't prosecute; and every little gesture shows you a bit of life. Life is interesting, Millie, and you've built yourself a castle with only slits in the walls, and locked yourself in! Come out! Do battle with your shyness! It's worth beating!

MILLIE

I know, but - I - can't. There's nothing I can do about it, I'm -

RAY

Nothing you can do? There's all sorts of things you can do. Take myself. As true as I'm sitting here I was as nervous as a babe. And not so long ago, either. My earliest memory was lying in a pram surrounded by a bunch of delighted women crying "Isn't he shy?" And it's lived with me ever since. Well, what did I do? I took up acting - or got bullied into it rather. It's marvellous for giving you confidence: it opened up a new world for me. And in the beginning the thought of walking a stage appalled me.

MILLIE

My sister once tried to get me into a play. It's the

one time she ever bullied me.

RAY Good for her. Next time let her bully you into it. If she doesn't, I'll do it myself!

MILLIE Ha! (Evasively.) You said you had a rehearsal.

RAY (Showing her his script.) That's it. "Blood on Laminex." It's better than it sounds. Very modern and all that - about a fellow called John Cronin, who steals his best friend's wife. I should be brushing up my lines right now. Funny, at the start our producer, Barry Thomas, was real concerned about me. "Ray," he kept saying, "How'm I going to make you nasty, I must make you nasty: look what you do to this fellow: you're too decent, too nice!" - But at the last rehearsal he changed his tune. "Ray," he said, "Um - perhaps you're a bit too ruthless." (They laugh.) ... So you can see what confidence I've gained; and believe me it spills over from your stage part into your real life. - I tell you what: you help me learn my part. Here - end of Act Two. You're Stella, the wife - !

MILLIE Oh, I couldn't, I'd be awful. I'd - !

RAY Just see if I know my lines; after all, I encouraged you with your crocheting! (He forces the script on her, and she puts down her work.) You're sitting alone, your husband is out, and I enter left - here, the bin is the door ... (He assumes the role of <sup>John</sup> George Cronin, and is convincingly ruthless.)

Good-evening, Stella.

MILLIE (Quietly.) Good-evening.



RAY A bit louder.

MILLIE (The same.) Good-evening.

RAY I wanted to discuss the Tablex production plan with George.

MILLIE (Nervously.) I'm afraid he's out; knocking down the same old pins - in the same old alley - with Steve and Ross.

RAY Funny, I've been drinking all evening with Steve and Ross. But George wasn't in sight.

MILLIE Perhaps they changed their minds and he's found other partners.

RAY Perhaps ... And perhaps you've built up a vast myth around your husband's name.

MILLIE (Flatly.) What do you mean by that?

RAY I mean the myth of a plump, solid, faithful, open-and-above-board husband who goes bowling five nights a week! There's no such person! George has found different bowling partners all right! He's parked along the North Road with the Benedicts and Edith Mountstephan - in separate cars!

MILLIE I don't believe it.

RAY (Quietly.) I can show it to you. (Quickly.) And then there's a pause while Stella decides to put her cards on the table. - Okay.

MILLIE As if it was necessary. I've known long enough. My performance of devoted unsuspecting wife must have been convincing. But it's you who created a myth about him - the myth of friendship!

RAY (Moving slowly to her.) I did ... But for purely personal

reasons.

MILLIE The business, of course - a partnership perhaps.

RAY Not at all.

MILLIE Then why?

RAY Right from the first: for this! (Quicker.) And of course he grabs her and there's a long kiss as the curtains close, and John Cronin has bitten off more than he can chew. Splendid! You were very good, very good indeed.

MILLIE Oh, I wasn't, I was awful.

RAY You were a marvellous help. You might have spat out the line about friendship more bitterly, but - fine! Did I make any mistakes?

MILLIE Only one ... where was it? Oh, yes, new bowling partners.

RAY What did I say?

MILLIE Different partners.

RAY Blow me down, I did too. Could we try it again - from that speech?

MILLIE All right.

RAY (Going left.) Try and speak out a bit: there's nobody about. Mm - I mean the myth of a plump, solid, faithful, open-and-above-board husband who goes bowling five nights a week! There's no such person! George has found new bowling partners all right! He's parked along the North Road with the Benedicts and Edith Mountstephan - in separate cars!

MILLIE (With surprising life.) I don't believe it!

RAY (Quietly.) I can show it to you.

MILLIE (Allowing the pause, and reading much better this time.) I've known long enough. My performance of devoted



unsuspecting wife must have been convincing. But it's you who created the myth about him - the myth of friendship!

RAY (<sup>MOV</sup> Drawing slowly to her.) I did ... But for purely personal reasons.

MILLIE The business, of course - a partnership perhaps.

RAY Not at all.

MILLIE Then why?

RAY Right from the first: for this! (He seems about to kiss her, but doesn't.) Terrific! You were a hundred per cent; I've never known such an improvement. You see, you're breaking out of the castle already!

MILLIE Oh ...

RAY And you said you couldn't. Didn't you? Now didn't you say you couldn't?

MILLIE Yes, I - think I did.

RAY You did, and it 's not true! - Okay, I've made my point: we'll take a spell.

(He suddenly lies with his knees up and his head in her lap. Millie is most confused. She tries to take up her work.)

MILLIE Please, I - can't do my crocheting - with your head in my lap.

RAY I'll get up on one condition.

MILLIE What will <sup>my</sup> ~~be~~ sister think if she comes?

RAY Promise to join our drama group.

MILLIE No, I - Please, there are - people coming!

RAY Promise!

MILLIE

No, I - can't. I'm all right as I am - contented ...  
Please!

(The elderly COUPLE stroll past from left to right,  
absorbed with each other, yet absorbed too with the  
beauty of the park. Pause.)

RAY

(Quietly.) ... They are contented, Millie.

(He sits up and looks after the couple. So does she.)

Not you. Not I. But they are. They've got everything  
that's worth while. Millie, let's be friends.

MILLIE

(Nervously.) I couldn't. I'm sorry. I couldn't.

RAY

What are you afraid of?

MILLIE

I'm not afraid. I - exasperate everyone in no time.

I'm just - not a good mixer. Don't bother with me, please.

RAY

(Quietly.) What on earth has frightened you?

MILLIE

(Strangely.) Brookford! What can happen in a nice quiet  
little town like Brookford! What caused my mother's  
illness. And her death. What made us leave there ...  
But I'm not afraid any more. I just want - peace -  
peace and quiet - to be left alone.

RAY

(Jumping up.) It can't be done, Millie, it can't be done!

Not in this city, not in this world! Get rid of me,  
there's someone else, get rid of him, there's someone  
else! Become a nun, there's other nuns! Castles have  
never been safe: there'll always be invaders! As long  
as people mix, ~~y~~you'll have to mix or feel you're -  
missing life; feel you're - sinning! (Seeing her bend  
once more over her crochet work, resignedly picks up  
his things.) ... All right, you win. I'm the kind of  
chap that molests lonely girls in parks. I'm sorry, Millie.



MILLIE I know you were only trying to help me.

RAY Never mind. Good-bye, Millie.

MILLIE (Sadly.) Good-bye.

(He trudges unhappily left, and notices the bin.

Suddenly he plucks out the newspaper ball, and throws it over his shoulder. Turns sharply.)

RAY And, by God, I will help you! You're not afraid, you say! When I came along it took you a minute, a whole minute, to pluck up enough courage to put a paper in a bin! Someone might see you, someone might see you! Well, what if they do? People aren't that bad! To hell with them! What if they see you standing on your head?

(He goes to the paper, picks it up, punches it into the air several times, balances it on his toe, kicks it up several times, attempts to head it, almost collapses, and, breathless, becomes aware that he is blocking the path of the PARK-KEEPER, who is watching him with an air of amused tolerance. He stands aside and bows as the keeper wheels his empty barrow past.)

KEEPER (Ironically, as he goes off right.) Ten minutes to lock-up time!

RAY (Flopping in the seat.) See! People don't mind! If you're not causing any harm, people don't mind what you do!

(Millie makes a sudden **decision**, puts down her work, shoots to her feet, takes the paper from him, puts it in the bin, marches back, sits, folds her arms.)

MILLIE (Boldly.) How's that?

RAY Terr - ific! Best bit of scavenging I've seen. You're my favourite scavengeress!

MILLIE But even you won't make me stand on my head!

RAY Stop nagging: let's listen to the birds!

(They sit listening for a few moments.)

Your sister's not going to turn up ... I'm in luck.

(Millie smiles; and crochets. Silence.)

Do you like the pictures?

MILLIE It's about my only entertainment: yes, I like them.

RAY Only you could act better yourself: there wasn't a movie fan yet who didn't think - subconsciously anyway - that she'd make a topline star If Only.

MILLIE Not I.

RAY You too. If only those directors with dark glasses wandered your way, and if only they didn't wear dark glasses ... Well, I tell you the first thing you do: join our group! Act! And that screen test might be just round the corner!

(An attractive, well-dressed GIRL comes down the path and off right.)

MILLIE I'll leave all that - to the likes of her!

RAY Well, that means you! I'll make you like her in thirty seconds! (Whipping the cover off his small box.) Easy! Just making the most of yourself! (Springing to his feet.) Relax, it's only a screen test: I'm the director. Huh! Glamour? - Nothing to it! Let's see, hair off the forehead, beautiful forehead!

MILLIE Please - !



RAY Uh uh uh uh! Eyebrows to match ... And the eyes, the eyes, the eyes!

MILLIE Please, I -

RAY Hold still! There! Marvellous eyes! ... And pink lipstick? No no no no no! If you're gonna use it, use red! Ah, the very shade! You can spread it quicker than me!

MILLIE What are you trying to -

RAY The complexion? Healthy as an apple, pale as china, makes no difference, we'll leave it. (Stepping back from her.) Now the dress? Presentable. The legs? Crossed, please, Miss La Stranza! ... Please.

MILLIE I don't see why anyone -

RAY (Pleadingly.) Please! (When Millie has reluctantly crossed her legs.) Now, Miss La Stranza, zee kneeeees! Despite my very dark glasses, I like to see zee kneeeees!. It should be - how you say - auto-matique!

MILLIE But -

RAY Now head up, crochet forgotten about. That's it! Arms back ready to welcome life, welcome beauty. Smile or serious, happy beauty or sad beauty, makes no difference. Perfect! (He starts his imaginary movie camera. Millie of course, whether she likes it or not, has been pushed well over the border twixt repulsion and attraction: she is transformed.) Magnifique, Miss La Stranza!

MILLIE Why must you bother me -

RAY Perfect! Zee perfect caption! 'Why must you bother me?' Vait: a slight improvement, no! (Languorously.) 'Why must you bother me?' (Suddenly.) Enough of that! (He

sits, leaning forward on his knees, frowning.) I've finished!

MILLIE

(Slowly.) And now I'm like all the others.

RAY

Yes.

MILLIE

You're a funny man.

RAY

No, No, I'm not funny ...

(Silence. Ray sits in a strange serious mood, Millie glancing at him.)

(Sighing.) ... Glamour is an attitude to life ...

(Sadly.) I've made a new Millie, full of attraction ... for someone else to win ...

MILLIE

(Quietly.) Why must you bother me?

RAY

(Quietly.) Because I'm lonely ... I assume others hate loneliness, because I hate it myself ... So I become a nuisance ... because I'm hopelessly, hatefully lonely ... You build fortresses, I invade them ... I hurt ... and get hurt ... (Glancing at her for the first time since sitting.) I like easy conquests ... and never get them ...

(Silence.)

MILLIE

(Slowly.) I'm not a new Millie.

RAY

I beg your pardon.

MILLIE

(Sadly.) I'm the old Millie. I haven't - liked anyone for three years...

RAY

(Turning to her.) What happened to you?

MILLIE

(Strangely.) You're curious, aren't you? I think I'll tell you. Nothing happened to me. But one black night, when my sister was coming home ... a man followed her. (Not seeing Ray's start.) She was - assaulted.

RAY

(Gripping the seat and his script tighter, hoarsely.)



You mean - raped?

(The word stings Millie's eyes closed. Agonised, she nods. Pause.)

MILLIE

(Lowly.) It made us all sick ... It got in the newspapers, and we couldn't walk the street ... It killed my mother ... Soon afterwards, we came to live with my aunt. The man was never traced ... My sister - seemed to recover - but I remained ... nervous ... All I wanted was ... peace and quiet ...

(Her voice, and her sad dark look at the past, falter. Ray has risen, forgetting his make-up box, a look of dreadful understanding on his face. Something off left surprises Millie: she rises.)

Why, there's Angela! She never comes that way! I thought she wasn't -

RAY

(Squinting grimly at Angela.) Angela! Did you say your name was - Wood?

MILLIE

No, Woodward. Millie Woodward.

RAY

Angela Woodward! (Taking her hands.) Millie, I - would you - excuse me, I - I must rush. I've remembered something, I'll - I'll come back -

(He backs awkwardly away from her, half turning, and goes rapidly off right.)

MILLIE

But, Ray - what's the matter? Won't you - ?

(She watches him leave the park, her face absolute confusion. Her face lights momentarily as he waves to her, and she gives an anxious little answering wave. Her hand falls to her side. ANGELA WOODWARD enters left, hugging the arm of RUDY THESSALOW. He

is a tall slick dude, looking faintly disreputable:  
she is a blonde slick chick, vivacious, oozing sex,  
hard as nails, happy as a lark.)

ANGELA Sorry I'm late, Mill, 'fraid I can't come with you after  
all. You see, I've - (As Millie turns.) Why Mill, what  
have you done with your face, it's all - Oooh - was that  
a friend you were sitting with as we - ?

MILLIE (Awkwardly.) No, just someone - someone passing.

ANGELA I don't believe you, you naughty girl! Anyway, (kissing  
her.) - I think it's a big improvement; you look  
marvellous! - Oh, this is Rudy Thessalow - what a name,  
huh? - My sister Mildred.

MILLIE How d'you do.

RUDY Delighted.

ANGELA He's a speedway rider, has a marvellous time! He's  
taking me to the track on Saturday. He says by then I'll  
be calling him Rude for short! (Great joke - except for  
Millie.) Tonight we're dining at Fomenko's and going to  
the Paladium. (Digs Rudy, as a reminder of something.)

RUDY - Would you care to tag along - um - Mildred?

MILLIE No, thank you, I've - made other arrangements.

RUDY Oh, well - shall we - clatter the platter?

ANGELA Okay. (Kissing her.) See you later, Mill. Sorry you  
can't come. (Hugs Rudy a few steps, stops, turns.) Can  
we see you to a bus or something?

MILLIE No thanks I'll - be all right.

ANGELA (Waving.) Well, goo'-bye.

RUDY (Waving.) See you.



MILLIE

(With a little wave, quietly.) ... Good-bye ...

(Millie sits hesitantly, her legs crossed, looking after them. Pause. A little wave, which they don't see. Pause. She continues to look off right, searching, troubled. Presently a LOUT in leather jacket slouches and swings on left. He passes Millie, his gait slows almost to a stop as he rudely considers her, decides no, and goes off right. Millie has turned front, uncrossing her legs; her hands fidget to her lap. She nervously opens her bag and looks in her mirror. She swallows and licks her lips, then wipes them with one slow movement of her handkerchief, like someone wiping out a memory. She closes her bag without looking at it, shivers, gradually hunches, staring. Her hands go almost automatically to her crochet-work, and begin to work slowly, then faster. Her eyes gradually glaze, become bleak with grief. A whistle screams off right. Millie doesn't hear it. After a while it screams again, but Millie doesn't hear it. A little BOY scampers past to the gate, but Millie, in her castle, doesn't see him. Peace for Mildred. Perfect peace for Mildred.

But not for very long. A grating sound off right gets nearer. The old PARK-KEEPER enters, wheeling his barrow, half-filled with garbage. He leaves it between the seat and the bin, and turns back to Mildred.)

KEEPER

(Very gently.) Didn't you hear the whistle, Miss? I have to lock up.

MILDRED

(Starting, then bundling up her work.) Oh I'm - sorry -  
I -

KEEPER (Still gently.) That's all right, miss. No hurry, don't hurry.

(Mildred puts her things away, closes her work-basket, rises, takes a hesitant step to the right, turns.)

MILDRED (Looking at his feet, awkwardly.) Excuse me, did you -  
KEEPER Yes?

MILDRED Did you happen to see - where the young man in the yellow sweater went?

KEEPER (Smiling sadly at her. Gently.) Yes, miss, I did ...  
He went out through the gates, crossed over the square and ... caught a bus.

MILDRED Oh, thank you, I - (Awkwardly.) He - he left his make-up box. - He's an actor -

KEEPER (Taking out his keys, slowly. Gently.) So he has. An actor, eh ... Well, just leave it to me. I'll see to it ...

MILDRED (Turning to go, very quietly.) Thank you.

(She goes off right, her head bowed, the old man following her like a gaoler. A car roars past, drowning the song of the birds. There are the distant cries of boys off left. Presently TWO BOYS chase each other, shouting, down to the gates. Soon the gates clang shut, and there is the rattle of keys in the lock. A wood-pigeon adds its sad note to the song of the birds. Presently the PARK-KEEPER trudges back. He goes to the bin, lifts it from its frame, and dumps the contents on the barrow. He replaces the bin, and turns, looking off right.)

KEEPER Poor little girl. Felt like I was locking her up ...



Maybe I was, maybe I was. For some it's a narrow place,  
the wide wide world ...

(He notices the make-up box and goes to it, picks it  
up off the seat. He lifts the lid and looks  
whimsically at the few miserable sticks and pencils.)

An actor, eh? Well ... who isn't? ...

(He slips the box gently onto the rubbish, and speaks  
his last sentence with a smile and a sigh.)

Ho, the glamour of it all!

(He lifts the handles, and wheels the barrow off  
left. The grating of the barrow and the footsteps  
gradually dies, leaving the faint song of birds. A  
car passes on the road. The sad cooing of the wood-  
pigeons is heard again, and it's curtain

CURTAIN

