

Start

LOMBARD. So this is it!

VERA. How perfectly lovely!

ROGERS. Miss Claythorne!

VERA. You're – Rogers?

ROGERS. Yes. Good evening, Miss.

VERA. Good evening, Rogers. Will you bring up my luggage and Captain Lombard's?

ROGERS. Very good, Miss.

(He exits onto the balcony.)

VERA. You've been here before?

LOMBARD. No – but I've heard a lot about the place.

VERA. From Mr. and Mrs. Owen?

LOMBARD. No, old Johnny Brewer, a pal of mine, built this house – it's a sad and poignant story.

VERA. A love story?

LOMBARD. Yes, ma'am – the saddest of all. He was a wealthy old boy and fell in love with the famous Lily Logan – married her – bought the island and built this place for her.

VERA. Sounds most romantic.

LOMBARD. Poor Johnny! He thought by cutting her off from the rest of the world – without even a telephone as means of communication – he could hold her.

VERA. But of course the fair Lily tired of her ivory tower – and escaped?

LOMBARD. U'huh. Johnny went back to Wall Street, made a few more millions, and the place was sold.

VERA. And here we are. Well, I ought to find Mrs. Owen. The others will be up in a minute.

(VERA makes to the hall door. LOMBARD stops her.)

LOMBARD. It would be very rude to leave me here all by myself.

VERA. Would it? Oh, well, I wonder where she is?

LOMBARD. She'll come along when she's ready. While we're waiting, do you think I could have a drink? I'm very dry.

(LOMBARD goes towards the drinking cabinet and starts preparing drinks.)

VERA. Of course you could.

LOMBARD. It's certainly warm after that steep climb. What's yours?

VERA. No, thanks, not for me – not on duty.

LOMBARD. A good secretary is never off duty.

(VERA looks round the room.)

VERA. Really. This is exciting!

LOMBARD. What?

VERA. All this. The smell of the sea – the gulls – the beach and this lovely house. I am going to enjoy myself.

(LOMBARD makes to VERA, holding up a drink.)

LOMBARD. I think you are. I think we both are. Here's to you – you're very lovely.

(ROGERS enters from the balcony with two suitcases.)

VERA. Where is Mrs. Owen?

ROGERS. Mr. and Mrs. Owen won't be down from London until tomorrow, Miss. I thought you knew.

VERA. Tomorrow – but –

ROGERS. I've got a list here of the guests expected, Miss, if you would like to have it. The second boatload's just arriving.

(VERA takes the list. ROGERS exits to the hall.)

VERA. Thank you. How awful – I say, you will be sweet and help me, won't you?

LOMBARD. I won't move from your side.

VERA. Thank you.

(She reads the list.)

It seems silly to have brought only us in the first boat and all the rest in the second.

LOMBARD. That, I'm afraid, was design, not accident.

VERA. Design? What do you mean?

LOMBARD. I suggested to the boatman that there was no need to wait for any more passengers. That and five shillings soon started up the engine.

VERA. *(Laughing.)* Oh, you shouldn't have done that!

LOMBARD. Well, they're not a very exciting lot, are they?

VERA. I thought the young man was rather nice-looking.

LOMBARD. Callow. Definitely callow. And very, very young.

VERA. I suppose you think a man in his thirties is more attractive.

LOMBARD. I don't think, my darling – I know. **Stop**

(MARSTON enters from the balcony. He is a good looking young man of twenty-three or so, rich, spoiled and not very intelligent.)

MARSTON. Wizard place you've got here.

(MARSTON greets VERA; they shake hands.)

VERA. I'm Mrs. Owen's secretary. Mrs. Owen has been detained in London, I'm afraid, and won't be down until tomorrow.

MARSTON. *(Vaguely.)* Oh, too bad.

VERA. May I introduce Captain Lombard, Mr. – er –

MARSTON. Marston, Anthony Marston.

LOMBARD. Have a drink?

MARSTON. Oh, thank you.

(BLORE comes up onto the balcony. He is a middle-aged, thickset man; wearing rather loud clothes, giving the impression of a gold magnate. His eyes dart about, making notes of everything.)

LOMBARD. What will you have? Gin, whiskey, sherry?