

ACT THREE

SCENE I

KITTY PACKARD'S bedroom. The time is 7:30

DAN and KITTY PACKARD are dressing for the JORDANS' dinner. KITTY is at her dressing table. DAN is in his room. L. The door is open. The conversation is going on between the two as they dress.

KITTY'S dressing table is littered with bottles, jars, atomizers, brushes, toilette articles. Her throat and arms are bare, as she is clad in a chemise and dressing gown. On her feet are mules. She is almost at the point where her dress may be carefully slipped over her head. It is plain that she has spent much time on the details of her toilette. She is maddened, fascinated, monitored, massaged, within an inch of her life.

(Carefully spread out on the bed is the dress she is to wear at dinner. Vivid satin evening slippers, to be worn with her gown, stand near the chair, side by side.)

At the rise of the curtain, KITTY is gazing to her face those last detailed touches—mascara, lipstick, eyebrow pencil. She uses a hand mirror for these operations, but occasionally glances in the larger mirror at the dressing table, in order to get the full effect of her efforts.

From the adjoining room comes DAN'S cheer-

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ful whistle while dressing. After a moment he appears briefly in the doorway. He, too, is only half dressed for the evening. He has on the trousers of his evening clothes, a shirt, patent leather shoes, collar. His hair dress-suspenders dangle behind him. His hair is rumpled. He is cupping his hands on a towel, having just finished shaving.

PACKARD (As he pops in.) How you coming, Kitten? (KITTY, intent on darkening her eyelashes with mascara, does not answer.) Huh? How you coming?

KITTY (Turns, furious, her pencil poised.) I've told you a million times not to talk to me when I'm doing my lashes.

PACKARD O.K. Then don't talk to me when I'm shaving. (He disappears into his bedroom. Immediately TINA enters. She is carrying a small florist's box. From the depths of this she is holding up, for her own admiration, a large cluster of orchids.)

TINA I think these are the handsomest ones you ever bought.

KITTY (Turning her glare upon TINA.) Will you take those back? I'll tell you when I want 'em.

TINA Yes'm. (Goes out quickly.)

KITTY (Loudly, after TINA has disappeared.) Put 'em back in the icebox, you nitwit! (Resumes her carefully detailed work with the eye pencil. DAN, in the adjoining room, now bursts into loud song. He is in high spirits. The sound enrages KITTY, who suspends her work an instant to glare in the direction of the voice. The song, after its first height, drops a little as DAN crosses at a door. He is pulling on his tie. Crosses to KITTY.)

PACKARD Yes, sir, I'd give a thousand bucks to see Jordan's face when he walks into that meeting

Monday. There'll be Whitestone and Baldridge each with a big hunk of stock in their fists, and when they begin to count noses—(*I gesture and a whistle indicating that all is over*)—little Oliver can go buy himself a rowboat and start all over again.

KITTY. I guess this is the last time we'll be invited there to dinner. We'd better eat a good one.

PACKARD. How do you mean?

KITTY. He'll be pretty sore, won't he, when he finds out you double-crossed him?

PACKARD. Huh? Jordan'll never know. Didn't I tell you? I stick in Whitestone for president. Baldridge is the treasurer; my name never appears. We can go there to dinner as long as they've got anything to eat. (*TINA enters R. She is carrying, suspended from its hanger, a magnificent crumie evening wrap. This she places over the back of the chair.*)

KITTY. You're so smart you're going to land in jail some day. Tina, where the hell are my slippers? (*TINA scrambles hastily for the slippers at chair up C; dashes back, knicks at KITTY'S feet, removes the mules, puts on the slippers. KITTY is trying on her bracelets, and is holding up her arm to get the effect of the first two or three.*)

PACKARD. Well, they got to go some to get Dan Packard. They've been laying for me ever since the old Montana days. But I got hold of the Copperhead, and I got the Big Emma, and I came to New York and put it over on 'em, and who's got bigger bracelets than you've got?

KITTY. (*To TINA*) Oo! Look out, will you? What you trying to do? Slice my heel off!

PACKARD. And I'm just beginning. Tootsie. Just beginning. Remember what I told you last week?

KITTY. (*Turning back to her dressing table*) I don't remember what you told me a minute ago. (*TINA goes out R.*)

PACKARD. Washington. Don't you remember that? How'd you like to be a Cabinet member's wife, mungling with all the other Cabinet members' wives, and Senators' wives and Ambassadors', and even the President's wife? What'd you think of that? Huh!

KITTY. Nerts!

PACKARD. You don't know what you're talking about. There isn't a woman living wouldn't break her neck to get in with that bunch.

KITTY. (*With definite defiance in her tone*) Yeah! You don't drag me down to that graveyard. I've seen their pictures in the papers—those girdles. A lot of sour-faced frumps with last year's clothes on. Giving medals to Girl Scouts, and rolling Easter eggs on the White House lawn. A hell of a lot of fun I'd have! You go live in Washington. I can have a good time right here.

PACKARD. Listen, Stupid, if I get this appointment, I'm going to Washington. And if I go to Washington you're going, too. Understand!

KITTY. (*Rising slozzy*) Do you mean you're really going to get it?

PACKARD. You're right, I am!

KITTY. (*At bay*) I won't go!

PACKARD. Oh, yes, you will!

KITTY. I will not! I won't go 'way from New York! All my friends are in New York!

PACKARD. You'll go if I go!

KITTY. Oh, no, I won't! You can't boss me around! I can yell just as loud as you can.

PACKARD. (*A snarl of rage*) Oh-h-h-h! (*Plunges off L. KITTY stands, victorious, glaring after him. She picks up the buffer from her dressing table, bur-nishes her nails with vicious energy, glares again after him, seals herself before her mirror, drops the buffer with a little clatter. Sits, doing nothing.*)

thinking a way out of her situation. DAN re-enters L, buttoning his vest. One finger pointing menacingly, he gestures toward KITTY. KITTY, in quietly contempt following her victory, picks up her hair-brush, ignoring DAN. Begins to smooth her hair. DAN stands at threshold a second. You've been acting damn funny lately, my fine lady. And I'm getting good and sick of it.

KITTY. Yeah? And so what?

PACKARD. I'll tell you what. I'm the works around here. I pay the bills. And you take your orders from me. *(Crosses to C.)*

KITTY. *(Rising, brush hanging idle in her hand)* Who do you think you're talking to? That first wife of yours out in Montana?

PACKARD. You leave her out of this!

KITTY. *(Continuing)* That poor mealy-faced thing, with her flat chest, that never had the guts to talk up to you!

PACKARD. Shut up, I tell you!

KITTY. *(Not stopping. Crossing to him.)* Washing out your greasy overalls, cooking and slaving for you in some lousy mining shack! No wonder she died!

PACKARD. God damn you!

KITTY. *(Still continuing. Gesticulating with the hair brush)* Well, you're not going to get me that way! You're not going to step on my face to get where you want to go—you big windbag! *(Turns away from him, drops her brush among the bottles and jars on the dressing table.)*

PACKARD. Why, you cheap little piece of scum! I've got a good notion to drop you right back where

*(Together)*

I picked you up, in the check room of the Hortentot Club, or whatever the dirty joint was

KITTY. Oh, no, you won't!

PACKARD. *(Continuing)* And then you can go home and live with your sweet-smelling family, back of the railroad tracks in Passaic. That drunken bum of a father and your jail-bird brother that I'm always coming through for. The next time he can go to the pen, and I'll see that he gets there.

KITTY. *(Crossing to him)* You'll be there ahead of him—you big crook!

PACKARD. And get this! If that sniveling, money-grubbing mother of yours comes whining around my office once more, I'm going to give orders to have her thrown the hell out of there and right down sixty flights of stairs, so help me God! *(Tina has entered & as DAN is almost at the end of this speech, in her hand is KITTY'S evening bag, jeweled and metallic, and containing KITTY'S powder compact, lipstick, cigarette case, etc. Finding herself in the midst of a storm, she hesitates briefly. DAN, on his last words, and coincident with TINA'S entrance, snatches the bag from TINA'S hand, dashes it to the floor, gives TINA a shove that sends her spinning out of the room R.)*

KITTY. *(White with rage)* You pick that up!

PACKARD. Pick it up yourself!

KITTY. You pick that up! *(For answer DAN gives the bag a violent kick, sending it into a corner of the room. Beside herself.)* Bracelets, eh? *(She takes off a three-inch jeweled band, drops it onto the floor, and kicks it viciously across the room.)* You think if you give me a bracelet— Why do you give 'em to me? Because you've put over one of your dirty deals and want me to lug these around to show what a big

guy you are! You don't do it to make me feel good; it's for you!

PACKARD Oh, it is, is it! What about this place and all these clothes and fur coats and automobiles? Go any place you want to, money to throw away! There ain't a wife in the world got it softer than you have! I picked you up out of the gutter, and this is the thanks I get!

KITTY Thanks for what? Dressing me up like a plush horse and leaving me to sit alone, day after day and night after night! You never take me anywhere! Always playing poker and eating dinner with your men friends—or say you are!

PACKARD That's a nice crack.

KITTY You never think about me, or do any of the nice little things that women like—you never sent me a flower in your life! When I want to wear flowers I got to go out and buy 'em! *(With a gesture toward a door where Tisa has lately stood with the orchids)* What woman wants to buy herself flowers? You never sit and talk to me, or ask me what I've been doing, or anything!

PACKARD Who cares what you do? Do anything you like—I ain't stopping you!

KITTY You bet you ain't! You think I sit home all day looking at bracelets! Hah! Of all the dumb bunnies! What do you think I'm doing while you're pulling your crooked deals? Just waiting for Daddy to come home?

PACKARD What're you driving at, you little—  
KITTY You think you're the only man I know—you great big noise! Well, you aren't! See! There's somebody that just knowing him has made me realize what a stuffed shirt you are!

PACKARD Why, you—you—

KITTY You don't like that, do you, Mr. Cabinet Member? Somebody else put over a deal.

PACKARD Do you mean to tell me you've been putting it over on me with some man?

KITTY *(She is in for it now. Means to go through with it)* Yes! And what're you going to do about it, you big gas-bag?

PACKARD *(Breating the full breath of the outraged male)* Who is it?

KITTY *(A purr of pure malice)* Don't you wish you knew?

PACKARD *(Seizes her wrist. KITTY screams)* Tell me who it is!

KITTY I won't!  
PACKARD Tell me, or I'll break every bone in your body!

KITTY I won't! You can kill me, and I won't!  
PACKARD I'll find out. *(Drops her wrist)* Tina!

Tina!  
KITTY She don't know. *(There is a moment during which the two stand silent, waiting for the appearance of Tisa. There comes slowly into the doorway and a step or two into the room a Tisa who, in spite of the expression of wondering innocence on her face, has clearly been eavesdropping. She comes forward so that she stands between the two silent figures.)*

PACKARD Who's been coming to this house?

TISA Huh?

KITTY You don't know, do you, } *(Together)*  
Tina?

PACKARD Shut your face, you slut! *(Turns again to TISA)* You know, and you're going to tell. What man's been coming to this house?

TISA *(A frantic shake of the head)* I ain't seen nobody.

PACKARD *(Grasps her shoulder. Gives her a little shake)* Yes, you have! Come on! Who's been here? Who was here last week? Who was here when I went to Washington?

TINA Nobody. Nobody—only the doctor.

PACKARD No—not I don't mean that. What man's been coming here behind my back?

TINA I ain't seen a soul.

KITTY Hah! What did I tell you?

PACKARD *(Looks at her as though trying to find a way of worming the truth out of her. Decides it is hopeless. Gives her a push toward the R. door. Tina exits.)* Get the hell out of here! *(KITTY stands waiting to see what turn events will take. PACKARD paces a step this way and that. It heels suddenly.)* I'll divorce you. That's what I'll do. I'll divorce you, and you won't get a cent. That's the law for what you've done.

KITTY You can't prove anything. You've got to prove it first.

PACKARD I'll prove it. I'll get detectives to prove it. They'll track him down. I'd like to get hold of that guy just once. How I'd like to get my fingers around his neck. And I will, too. I'll get him! I'll kill him, and I'll throw you out like an alley cat.

KITTY Yeah? You'll throw me out. Well, before you throw me out you'd better think twice. Because me, I don't have to get detectives to prove what I've got on you.

PACKARD You've got nothing on me!

KITTY No? So you want to go to Washington, do you? And be a big shot, and tell the President where to get off? You want to go in politics. *(Her tone becomes sarcastic.)* Well, I know about politics. And I know all about the crooked deals you bragged about. God knows I was bored stiff—but I was listening. Stealing from Delahanty, and the Thompson business, and eying old man Clarke, and now this Jordan thing. Skinning him out of his eye-teeth! When I tell about those it'll raise a pretty stink! Politics! You couldn't get into politics. You

couldn't get in anywhere. You couldn't get into the men's room at the Astor!

PACKARD You snake you! You poisonous little rattlesnake. I'm through with you. I've got to go to that dinner, but after tonight we're through. And I wouldn't go there with you, except that meeting Ferncliffe is more important to me than you are. I'm clearing out tonight, get me? Tomorrow I send for my clothes. And you can sit here and get flowers from your soulmate. We're through. *(PACKARD stalks off L. Stuns the door.)*

KITTY *(Stands taking sullenly after him. Then she drifts over to her dressing-table, drops into the chair, regains a measure of composure, picks up her powder-puff, dabs at her face with little angry dabs, glances down at her right arm, and misses the absent bracelet.)* Tina! Tina!

TINA *(Enters R., too promptly.)* Yesin.

KITTY *(Her tone strangely dulcet.)* Tina, would you mind picking up that bracelet? It fell.

TINA *(Glancing around, sees it, goes to it, picks it up, looks at it admiringly as she brings it to KITTY. She holds it too long, so that KITTY reaches toward it. But TINA, instead of relinquishing it, brings it closer to her own gaze.)* My, it's pretty, ain't it?

KITTY *(A little uneasily.)* Give it to me.

TINA Look—it just fits me.

KITTY Give it here, will you!

TINA You've got so many bracelets. I don't see how you can use 'em all.

KITTY What are you driving at?

TINA *(Looking down at it, then up at KITTY with a hard and meaningful eye.)* Nothing. Only I thought with you having so many, maybe you might want to give me one.

KITTY Here, powder my back, will you? *(Hands*