

Always Room at the Top

KEN NILES: Yes, Roma Wines taste better because only Roma selects from the world's greatest wine reserves for your pleasure. And now, Roma Wines, R-O-M-A, Roma Wines present...

MUSIC: SUSPENSE ACCENT AND THEME

ANNOUNCER: Suspense! Tonight Roma Wines bring you Miss Anne Baxter in "Always Room at the Top," a Suspense play produced, edited, and directed for Roma Wines by William Spier.

MUSIC: UP AND OUT

KEN NILES: Suspense! Radio's Outstanding Theater of Thrills is presented for your enjoyment by Roma Wines. That's R-O-M-A, Roma Wines, those better-tasting California wines enjoyed by more Americans than any other wine. For friendly entertaining, for delightful dining. Yes, right now, a glassful would be very pleasant as Roma Wines bring you Anne Baxter in a remarkable tale of...

MUSIC: SUSPENSE ACCENT

ANNOUNCER: Suspense!

MUSIC: FADES

SOUND: OFFICE PHONE BUZZES, RECEIVER PICKS UP

RECEPTIONIST: Reception. ... Yes, she is, Miss Thornton. ... Very well, Miss Thornton, I'll have her come in.

SOUND: HANGS UP PHONE

RECEPTIONIST: Miss Brandt?

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS IN

HELEN: Yes?

RECEPTIONIST: Miss Thornton will see you now. Large corner office at the end of the hall.

HELEN: Thank you.

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS AWAY

MUSIC: IN BG

HELEN: (NARRATES) Jean Thornton was a tall, square-shouldered blonde with high cheekbones and a good figure. And nervous as a cat. More than that. I hadn't been in her office five minutes before I knew that she was afraid of something -- her boss, the responsibilities of her job -- something. I couldn't understand it. She was art director of William J. Farrell and Company, one of the best advertising agencies in town. She had everything I wanted -- professionally and a couple of other ways. And yet she was afraid. I couldn't understand it. Then--

SOUND: FLIPS PAGES OF PORTFOLIO

MUSIC: OUT

JEAN: Yes. Yes, these are quite good. Quite good, Miss, um--?

HELEN: Brandt. Helen Brandt.

JEAN: Ah, yes, Miss Brandt. Quite good. But, um-- Cigarette?

HELEN: Thank you.

SOUND: CIGARETTE BOX OPENS, PLAYS MUSICAL THEME

HELEN: Oh, how cute!

JEAN: (CHUCKLES) Silly thing. Mr. Farrell sent it to me from Mexico. Where else in the world would anybody have the patience to sit down and put together a musical cigarette case?

SOUND: CIGARETTE BOX CLOSES, MUSIC OUT

JEAN: But, as I was saying-- What was I saying? Oh! Oh, yes. Oh yes. These are really very good layouts, Miss, er, Brandt. I like them. But I don't quite see how we can use you just now.

HELEN: You said that before, Miss Thornton.

JEAN: Yes. So I did. Well--

HELEN: (PASSIONATE) Look, Miss Thornton, I don't need the job. I'm not one of those desperate people that's come in to cry on your shoulder. I have a job -- at Maxfield and Ellis. But they're stupid there. I'm not getting anyplace. In a firm like this, where people have imagination, you have a chance. That's all I want. A chance.

JEAN: So do a lot of other people, Miss Brandt.

HELEN: Well, I'm NOT a lot of other people. I think I've got ability - and you know it! Commercial ability. I think I could be professional--

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS

JEAN: Yes, yes. Well, if there's an opening, we'll get in touch with you.

HELEN: (SUDDENLY ANGRY) You'll get in touch! I know what that means. I've been given the brush-off by experts.

JEAN: That will be all, Miss Brandt.

HELEN: I'm sick of being brushed off! I've got ability! As much as you have and maybe more - and I'll show you!

JEAN: Miss Brandt! Will you leave my office or shall I have you thrown out?

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS AWAY

HELEN: (SIGHS, RESIGNEDLY) All right, Miss Thornton. Good day.

MUSIC: AN ACCENT, THEN IN BG

HELEN: (NARRATES) Of course, that would be the last time I'd ever lay eyes on Jean Thornton. That's what I thought.

I went back to my office and worked most of the night, catching up on my own stuff - and doing a little extra that I was peddling around town.

I was standing on the sidewalk, kidding with the night elevator man while I waited for a cab, and looking up at the tower against the early morning sky -- that dark tower, thirty-six floors above the street and three blocks up the avenue, where the William J. Farrell agency had their offices. And where I'd have given my right arm to be working.

MUSIC: FADES

SOUND: CITY CLOCK STRIKES IN BG

CHARLIE: (CHUCKLES) You'll miss all your beauty sleep workin' this late, Miss Brandt.

HELEN: (CHUCKLES) Now, Charlie, who says I need beauty sleep?

CHARLIE: Well, you don't. (LAUGHS)

HELEN: I like to work at night. It's quiet. Think of all the sunrises I see. Look at that sky.

CHARLIE: Yeah, 's gonna be a nice day, I guess-- (GASPS) Look!

WOMAN: (DISTANT SCREAM)

MUSIC: VERTIGINOUS

HELEN: (NARRATES) I saw the body falling - and the scream came to us at the same moment. We stood there frozen, horrified, fascinated.

MUSIC: AS THE BODY HITS THE GROUND, THEN OUT

CHARLIE: Oh. Oh, lord. I wish I hadn't seen that.

HELEN: Charlie! That was someone from the Farrell Agency!

CHARLIE: Whoever it was, poor devil--

HELEN: (REALIZES) A woman.

SOUND: HELEN'S RUNNING FOOTSTEPS AWAY

CHARLIE: No, wait, Miss Brandt! I wouldn't go up there! Miss Brandt!

MUSIC: A BRIEF TRANSITION, THEN IN BG

SOUND: POLICE SIREN, CROWD NOISE, ETC.

HELEN: (NARRATES) By the time I got there, a patrol car had appeared out of nowhere, the way they will in this town. And the usual crowd of early birds and night owls standing around gawking. They were trying to cover it up with a blanket.

COP: All right, stand back, stand back there.

CROWD: GASPS, MURMURS, ETC.

VOICE 1: Who is it?

VOICE 2: Aw, you couldn't tell anyway.

VOICE 3: Ah ... a woman.

MUSIC: IN BG

HELEN: (NARRATES) I wanted to look but I - I couldn't. A cop was picking up stuff that had rolled out of her handbag into the street. Going through it methodically, opening things up--

SOUND: CIGARETTE BOX OPENS, PLAYS MUSICAL THEME

HELEN: (NARRATES) And then - I heard it. And I didn't have to look. I knew!

MUSIC: BUILDS TO AN ACCENT, DROWNING OUT CIGARETTE BOX; THEN FADES OUT AS:

SOUND: ANOTHER CROWD MURMURS

REPORTER 1: We've got to get in there.

RECEPTIONIST: Oh, please! I tell ya I don't know when Mr. Farrell's coming in! I don't know!

REPORTER 1: You wouldn't try to kid the press, would you, sister?

RECEPTIONIST: Well, I don't know.

REPORTER 2: You might as well tell us because we'll just sit here anyway until--

SOUND: DOOR OPENS

REPORTERS: Hey, there he is! Hey, there he is now! Mr. Farrell! Mr. Farrell! I'm from the News! I'd like to know--

FARRELL: (FIGHTS THRU MOB) Please! Please, boys, please! I can't tell you anything now.

HELEN: Mr. Farrell, I'm Helen Brandt--!

REPORTER: Mr. Farrell, my paper would like to know if Miss Thornton--

FARRELL: Get your foot out of that door. Now, please! Please! Get out of here, all of ya!

SOUND: DOOR SLAMS; CROWD SILENCED

FARRELL: Get out!

SOUND: AFTER A BEAT, THE DOOR OPENS; CROWD IS HEARD AGAIN

FARRELL: I told ya, I can't talk to any reporters! Now, give me a few minutes--!

SOUND: DOOR SHUTS; CROWD SILENCED; FOOTSTEPS IN

HELEN: I'm not a reporter, Mr. Farrell, I'm Helen Brandt. I'm art director of a small advertising agency but I've got some samples here--

FARRELL: What?!

HELEN: Mr. Farrell, please. Just look at these. You're going to have to have a new art director.

SOUND: OPENS PORTFOLIO

FARRELL: What did you say?

HELEN: Sure. You're shocked. But it can't hurt her - and I've been trying to see you for months and now you're on a spot and if you'd just look--

FARRELL: Take those things out of my face and get out of here!

HELEN: Just look at them first. That's all I ask.

FARRELL: All I ask is that you-- (PAUSE, IMPRESSED) Well.

HELEN: And, uh, this one. For Parker Shoes. I've followed Miss Thornton's general ideas but I've added-- well, that.

FARRELL: Mm hm.

HELEN: (QUIETLY) They're good, Mr. Farrell. (LOUDER) And if you say they aren't--!

FARRELL: All right. All right, they're good. They're very good. But if you think I'd hire a woman who hasn't any more decency than to barge in here at a time like this and try to push--

SOUND: FARRELL'S FOOTSTEPS TO DOOR

HELEN: Decency?! What's decency got to do with it? Do you need an art director or a Sunday school teacher?

SOUND: DOOR OPENS, CROWD BUZZES

REPORTER: Now, look, Mr. Farrell. Now, if you don't mind, my paper wants to know what Miss Thornton was doing in her office at five o'clock this morning.

FARRELL: (SNAPS) She must have been working all night on the new Parker layouts! They have to be out by--! (REALIZES, QUIETLY) They have to be out by three this afternoon.

REPORTER: (MAKES NOTES) Working all night, maybe went to the window for fresh air, tired, got dizzy--

SOUND: DOOR SHUTS; CROWD SILENCED

FARRELL: (SIGHS) Look, Miss, um--?

HELEN: Brandt. Helen Brandt.

FARRELL: Uh, Miss Brandt. Miss Brandt, I think you're one of the most despicable women I've ever had the misfortune to meet. But I've got a very big job to get out this afternoon; my assistant art director's home sick and by the time I interview--

HELEN: Thank you, Mr. Farrell.

FARRELL: You can arrange the details with my secretary -- in there.

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS, DOOR OPENS, CROWD BUZZES

FARRELL: And, frankly, the less I have to do with you myself, the better I'll like it.

HELEN: I think you'll change your mind about that, Mr. Farrell.

REPORTER: Now, Mr. Farrell, if you wouldn't mind. ...

FARRELL: All right, boys.

REPORTER: ... We know things are tough and you don't want to tell us but--

SOUND: REPORTERS GO INTO OFFICE; DOOR SHUTS; CROWD SILENCED; HELEN'S FOOTSTEPS

MARIE: (AFTER A PAUSE) Yes?

HELEN: Are you, uh--?

MARIE: (ALWAYS COOL AND EFFICIENT) Mr. Farrell's secretary? Yes.

HELEN: Oh. Well, I'm Helen Brandt.

MARIE: Marie Harris. How do you do?

HELEN: How do you do? I'm - taking Miss Thornton's place.

MARIE: (SURPRISED) Taking Miss Thornton's place? I see.

HELEN: Yes. Temporarily.

MARIE: Well, you're not one to let the grass grow under your feet, are you, my dear?

HELEN: Mr. Farrell said I could arrange the details with you.

MARIE: To be sure.

SOUND: DESK DRAWER OPENS, PAPERS SHUFFLED

MARIE: I expect you'd better make out one of our regular employment forms.

HELEN: Oh, thank you.

MARIE: Temporarily, you said.

HELEN: Yes.

MARIE: Still, doesn't it feel a bit odd to be filling a dead woman's shoes that are hardly - cold, so to speak?

HELEN: I don't see anything so odd about it, Miss Harris. Somebody would have to.

MARIE: No. Of course you wouldn't.

HELEN: Uh, by previous experience does it mean just in the advertising business?

MARIE: Any experience that might be applicable. ... It has occurred to you, I suppose, Miss Brandt, that when someone like Miss Thornton is cut off in mid-career, so to speak, there's usually a reason for it.

HELEN: They say it was an accident.

MARIE: An accident, do they?

HELEN: Well, will this be all right, Miss Harris?

SOUND: PAPER SHUFFLED

MARIE: Yes. Yes, that'll do. Of course, there's always the possibility of suicide, I suppose you thought of that.

HELEN: I suppose it might have been. Will you show me my office, please?

SOUND: THEIR FOOTSTEPS DOWN HALL

MARIE: Certainly. This way. You might as well have the dead woman's - that is, Miss Thornton's - office. And then of course there IS another possibility. Isn't there?

HELEN: What other possibility?

MUSIC: SNEAKS IN BG

MARIE: The possibility of - murder.

HELEN: Murder?

MARIE: Why, yes.

SOUND: OFFICE DOOR OPENS, FOOTSTEPS IN

MARIE: Here's your office, Miss Brandt. If you need anything, just call me. I want to make you as comfortable as possible -- under the circumstances.

MUSIC: UP; THEN IN BG

ANNOUNCER: For Suspense, Roma Wines are bringing you Anne Baxter in "Always Room at the Top," Roma Wines presentation tonight in Radio's Outstanding Theater of Thrills, Suspense.

MUSIC: AN ACCENT; THEN OUT

KEN NILES: Between the acts of Suspense, this is Ken Niles for Roma Wines. Next time you buy wine, remember more Americans enjoy Roma than any other wine. Yes, Roma Wine is America's first choice -- because there's an important difference in Roma Wine. A difference in fuller bouquet, richer body, better taste. A difference that means more enjoyment, more pleasure for you and your guests.

To bring you wines that are superior, that taste better, Roma starts with California's choicest grapes. Then, Roma master vintners, with America's finest winemaking resources guide this choice grape treasure unhurriedly to tempting taste perfection. Later, along with Roma Wines of years before, these cuvees await selection from the world's greatest reserves of fine wines for your pleasure. THAT'S what makes the difference in Roma Wines. That's why Roma Wines taste better every time. So, for your best buy in good taste, insist on Roma Wines, R-O-M-A, Roma, the greatest name in wine.

MUSIC: THEME, IN BG

ANNOUNCER: And now, Roma Wines bring back to our Hollywood soundstage Anne Baxter as Helen Brandt, with Cathy Lewis as Marie, and Wally Maher as Bill Farrell in "Always Room at the Top," a tale well-calculated to keep you in... Suspense!

MUSIC: AN INTRODUCTION, THEN IN BG

HELEN: (NARRATES) I'd met Marie Harris' type before: jealous of her authority as the boss' secretary, resentful of every newcomer, and determined to make them uncomfortable.

So it was only natural for her to resent someone like myself, a total stranger who walked into the job of art director for one of the best advertising outfits in town, the William J. Farrell Agency.

And even though Mr. Farrell had said "temporary," I knew that I had the job. I knew it before the first campaign was over. I was in.

And then, one night, the first of those funny little things began to happen.

I was just taking off my hat and coat when I saw it there on my desk. A picture. A big, framed picture of the dead girl, Jean Thornton.

And written across the face of it, it said: "Bill, darling! To the swellest guy and the swellest boss any girl ever had."

MUSIC: AN ACCENT, THEN OUT

SOUND: MARIE'S FOOTSTEPS APPROACH

MARIE: Admiring your predecessor, Miss Brandt?

HELEN: Where did that come from?

MARIE: I'm sure I haven't the faintest idea.

HELEN: It wasn't there when I left last night. Somebody put it there.

MARIE: Possibly some well-wisher, Miss Brandt. Some sincere well-wisher. As a sort of - warning.

HELEN: A warning of what? What are you driving at?

MARIE: Miss Thornton and Mr. Farrell were quite close. At one time, they--

HELEN: And what's that got to do with me?

MARIE: You know what happened, Miss Brandt - to Miss Thornton.

HELEN: Look, Marie. Are you hinting that female art directors in this office have a habit of falling for the boss and then falling out the window?

MARIE: I'm not hinting anything, Miss Brandt. You asked me for an explanation of how the picture got there. I've given you one. Doubtless, it IS far-fetched. Certainly, it must seem so to you.

HELEN: It's crazy.

MARIE: Of course. Will that be all, Miss Brandt?

HELEN: Listen, Marie. Let's you and I cut out the formality and let down our hair. Is there anything around here that I - well, OUGHT to know?

MARIE: I'm sure I don't know what you mean, Miss Brandt.

HELEN: All right. The girl who used to have my job is dead. You've been hinting around enough about it. Is there anything that you know that I don't?

Now, is that plain enough?

MARIE: Quite. I can only say that I've not hinted at anything. I have perhaps engaged in certain idle speculations on matters which were better left - as they are. That's all.

HELEN: Okay, Marie. But the way things look now, I'm liable to be around here for quite a while.

MARIE: Oh, I should think it likely.

HELEN: And you and I ought to learn to get along.

MARIE: You'll have no trouble getting along with ME, Miss Brandt.

HELEN: But you mean I may with - him?

MARIE: I can only say, Miss Brandt, as your sincere friend--

HELEN: And well-wisher?

MARIE: Yes. That you're working for a man who's subject to singularly strong enthusiasms. Sometimes, these enthusiasms are apt to be carried to - extremes. It is essential to appreciate this in dealing with Mr. Farrell.

HELEN: I don't suppose this picture gag would be one of Mr. Farrell's little - enthusiasms?

MARIE: Under the circumstances, I should think it most unlikely.

HELEN: And it wouldn't be one of yours - my little well-wisher?

MARIE: No, Miss Brandt. It would not.

MUSIC: AN ACCENT, THEN IN BG

HELEN: (NARRATES) You couldn't help but believe her, she was so prim and proper. But I was determined to have a showdown anyway on the whole thing ...

SOUND: HELEN'S FOOTSTEPS DOWN HALL

HELEN: (NARRATES) ... my job and everything. I stalked into Bill Farrell's office with the picture in my hand and without benefit of knocking.

SOUND: DOOR OPENS, FOOTSTEPS IN

FARRELL: Oh, hello, Helen. Come in.

SOUND: DOOR SHUTS, FOOTSTEPS

HELEN: Something that appears to be from your desk seems to have popped up on mine.

FARRELL: Mm?

HELEN: Here.

FARRELL: Where did you get that?

HELEN: I just told you. On my desk. Your ever-tactful Marie has suggested that some "well-wisher" left it as a warning.

FARRELL: Ah, poor Jean. She gave me that when--

HELEN: That explanation still seems to leave several questions unanswered, Mr. Farrell.

FARRELL: Look, Helen -- you'll hear a lot of funny things in this office, like any other office. Take my word for it, they don't mean a thing. Just do your job the way you've been doing it and you'll, uh -- you'll be all right.

HELEN: How right is that?

FARRELL: You like the job, don't you?

HELEN: I like the work. I haven't got the job.

FARRELL: Do you want it?

HELEN: What do you think?

FARRELL: Well, you've certainly earned it, Helen.

HELEN: Will you stop beating around the bush? Am I the new art director of the William J. Farrell Agency? Or not?

FARRELL: (CHUCKLES) All right, you are! You are hereby officially the new art director of the William J. Farrell Agency ...

HELEN: (TRIUMPHANT CHUCKLE)

FARRELL: ... from this day forward until--

HELEN: (AFTER A BEAT) Until what?

FARRELL: (EXHALES, WEAKLY) As - long as you want the job - Helen.

MUSIC: OMINOUS, IN BG

HELEN: (NARRATES) "Until death do us part" is what he'd started to say.

MUSIC: AN ACCENT, CONTINUES IN BG

HELEN: (NARRATES) I forgot it, though. I forgot it almost the moment he'd said it. And for the next twenty-four hours I was walking on air. It wasn't just the job, it was something even better. I knew Bill Farrell was falling in love with me. I knew THAT was just a matter of time, too.

MUSIC: OUT

SOUND: HELEN'S FOOTSTEPS

HELEN: (HUMMING AS SHE WALKS)

SOUND: DOOR OPENS AND SHUTS

HELEN: (CHEERY) Morning, Marie! Mr. Farrell in?

MARIE: Not yet, Miss Brandt.

HELEN: I wish you wouldn't be so formal with me, Marie. Everybody calls everybody else by their first names around here except you.

MARIE: I'm used to more - conventional methods in most things, Miss Brandt.

HELEN: Okay, okay. Ah, let me know when he comes in, though, will you? I'll want to see him.

MARIE: Yes, Miss Brandt.

SOUND: HELEN ENTERS HER OFFICE: FOOTSTEPS, DOOR OPENS AND SHUTS, CHEERFUL HUMMING, SITS AT DESK, PAUSE ...

SOUND: CIGARETTE BOX MUSICAL THEME, CONTINUES IN BG

JEAN'S VOICE: (FILTER) Hello, Bill, darling! ...

HELEN: (GASPS IN SURPRISE, THEN WHIMPERS IN FEAR AS SHE LISTENS TO FOLLOWING)

JEAN'S VOICE: (FILTER) ... Do you hear it? ... Yes, it's that silly little thing you sent me from Mexico. I got it just this morning, darling. And so I wanted to tell you how sweet it was...

SOUND: HELEN RISES, FOOTSTEPS HURRY TO DOOR

JEAN'S VOICE: (FILTER) ... and thank you this way for this ...

SOUND: CIGARETTE BOX THEME FADES

HELEN: (PANICS) Marie? Marie? Marie!

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS SLOW TO A STOP

MARIE: Yes, Miss Brandt?

HELEN: Marie, I - I just heard her voice!

MARIE: Whose voice, Miss Brandt?

HELEN: Hers! Jean's! Miss Thornton's!

MARIE: Why don't you lie down on the couch for a moment, Miss Brandt? You've been working too hard lately and I'll get you some water.

HELEN: No! I tell you, I heard it! Right in this room.

MARIE: In this room?

HELEN: Yes! I know it was because - there was that - that music box, too. That cigarette case of hers.

MARIE: Oh, yes. Yes, I remember.

HELEN: So do I. 'Cause the last time I heard it was - down there when they were picking up her things.

MARIE: There's no one here now, Miss Brandt. No one but you and me.

HELEN: I know but I heard it!

MARIE: Was she - was it speaking to you, this voice?

HELEN: No. To Bill. To Mr. Farrell. Something personal.

MARIE: Oh, yes, I dare say.

SOUND: MARIE'S FOOTSTEPS TO CLOSET

MARIE: (MOVES OFF) Have you ever looked in this closet by the door, Miss Brandt?

HELEN: Why, not especially, no.

MARIE: I think there's probably a perfectly logical explanation for what you heard, Miss Brandt.

SOUND: CLOSET DOOR OPENS

MARIE: Yes. Yes, you see?

HELEN: (SURPRISED) Oh!

MARIE: A Dictograph. It used to be Miss Thornton's. They use Dictographs for everything in this office; they say it saves them forty thousand dollars a year in stenographic help.

HELEN: (RELIEVED) I see.

MARIE: Something must have turned it on. Yes, there, you see? This box of pencils that has fallen off the shelf; it must have been that.

HELEN: What turned it off, Marie?

MARIE: I'm sure I don't know. But it's quite simple, isn't it?

SOUND: SWITCH CLICKS

MARIE: Here's the switch.

SOUND: CIGARETTE BOX MUSICAL THEME, CONTINUES IN BG

JEAN'S VOICE: (FILTER) Hello, Bill, darling! Do you hear it?

HELEN: (UNNERVED) Oh! Stop it! Stop it!

MARIE: Yes, Miss Brandt.

SOUND: SWITCH CLICKS, VOICE AND MUSIC OUT

HELEN: Now get it out of here!

MARIE: Certainly, Miss Brandt. Is there any particular place you--?

HELEN: I don't care what you do with it! Do anything you like! Throw it out the win--! (STOPS HERSELF FROM SAYING IT)

MARIE: (AFTER A BEAT) What was that, Miss Brandt?

HELEN: (QUIETLY) Just - get it out of here. And leave me alone!

MUSIC: AN ACCENT, THEN IN BG

HELEN: (NARRATES) It's silly, I know that. It could have happened that way. It MUST have. Just as Marie said. But all the time in the back of my mind was a lurking horror, a nameless thing that I felt hanging over that office. And over me. Something about a girl who was dead. A girl who had plunged to her death from that same dark tower - that was now MY dark tower. Plunged screaming to her death only a few short weeks ago.

The next night, I had to work late again to make up. I'd been out to supper, alone. I was conscious of the light still burning in Bill's office when I got back. I wasn't particularly anxious to see him just then. To be truthful, I was avoiding him, I suppose. I'd been in my office about an hour and a half ...

SOUND: PHONE RINGS, CONTINUES IN BG

HELEN: (NARRATES) ... when the phone rang. I thought it was strange because I was certain that I'd asked to have my night line disconnected. Out of habit, I picked it up to answer it.

SOUND: PHONE PICKS UP

MUSIC: OUT

JEAN'S VOICE: Hello, Bill?

HELEN: (GASPS)

JEAN'S VOICE: Bill? Is that you?

HELEN: (GASPS)

JEAN'S VOICE: Bill?

SOUND: PHONE HANGS UP, HELEN RISES, RUNNING FOOTSTEPS DOWN HALL, DOOR OPENS

HELEN: Bill! Bill!

FARRELL: What, Helen? What - what is it?

HELEN: Oh, Bill! (SOBBING INCOHERENTLY)

FARRELL: Helen, darling! Here, tell me. Baby, baby, what is it? What's happened?

HELEN: (COMPOSES HERSELF) I heard her. Again.

FARRELL: Heard who, dear?

HELEN: Jean! Jean Thornton!

FARRELL: Jean?

HELEN: Yes! On the telephone. I know it was! I swear it!

FARRELL: But, darling, it couldn't have been.

HELEN: Oh, Bill, I think I'm going mad!

FARRELL: Oh, Helen darling, listen to me.

HELEN: The picture, the Dictograph -- all right. But this!

FARRELL: Helen, Helen, look at me.

HELEN: Yes, Bill?

FARRELL: I love you, Helen. You know that, don't you?

HELEN: Yes. Oh, yes, darling, I do. But I'm afraid.

FARRELL: There's nothing to be afraid of, darling.

HELEN: No, not that. I'm afraid because now I know that - YOU'RE afraid.

FARRELL: I am?

HELEN: Yes. ... You are, aren't you?

FARRELL: Helen, I--

HELEN: Bill, please. You've got to tell me - now.

FARRELL: Now, look, darling, I'm in a jam -- a bad jam, an awful bad jam.

HELEN: Yes, it must be.

FARRELL: It's - it's nothing that YOU have to worry about. It's nothing that isn't going to straighten itself out. It's nothing that I'm going to let affect us EVER.

HELEN: Bill, if it affects you, it DOES affect us.

FARRELL: Darling, darling, you've got to trust me just a little longer.

HELEN: Oh, Bill, I do; I will. But it's - about Jean, isn't it?

FARRELL: (SIGHS) Yes. Yes, it's about Jean.

HELEN: Then it was--? She didn't just -- fall?

FARRELL: It was a terrible thing, Helen, terrible. About as terrible as it could be. But, Helen, just remember this, darling, there's nothing to be afraid of. It'll all be over soon. Very soon.

HELEN: Is that - all? All you can tell me?

FARRELL: It's all I can tell you now. Oh, darling, I know what this is like for you but please, please go home now and forget all about it.

HELEN: How can I forget all about it?

FARRELL: Well, try. Try anyway. I've got some things to finish up here and then I'll call for you and we'll start making our plans. Oh, you will marry me, won't you, Helen?

HELEN: Oh, Bill. Yes.

FARRELL: Then - then everything's all right. Go on, now, go on.

HELEN: All right.

MUSIC: SNEAKS IN BG

FARRELL: Good night for now ... my dearest.

HELEN: Good night.

MUSIC: BUILDS TO ACCENT, FILLS A PAUSE, CONTINUES IN BG

HELEN: (NARRATES) I went out. I didn't go home. I couldn't. I walked -- walked

for miles, trying to think. But nothing made any sense. Except that I was in love - and in an agony of fear for what might happen to spoil it. And suddenly I realized that I had to know everything -- now! Tonight! Whatever it was! So I went back to the office. Bill's light was still on and I was just at the door, when I stopped--

SOUND: HELEN'S FOOTSTEPS TO DOOR

MUSIC: OUT

SOUND: VOICES SLIGHTLY MUFFLED BEHIND DOOR

FARRELL: (MUFFLED) You were insane to come here! Insane, crazy! Suppose somebody saw you and recognized you?

JEAN'S VOICE: (MUFFLED) You sent me a message. You said you were--

FARRELL: (MUFFLED) I did not! I gave no message to no one. Why do you lie to me like that?

JEAN'S VOICE: (MUFFLED) I'm not lying to you.

FARRELL: (MUFFLED) You're a liar--

SOUND: CIGARETTE BOX THEME

HELEN: (NARRATES) And then I heard it!

SOUND: DOOR OPENS

MUSIC: SIMULTANEOUS, IN BG

HELEN: (NARRATES) I threw open the door -- and SHE was standing there! Jean! Jean Thornton! A woman who was dead!

MUSIC: BIG ACCENT, DROWNS OUT CIGARETTE BOX THEME, THEN IN BG

HELEN: (NARRATES) When I came to, I was lying on the couch in Bill's office. At first, it seemed perfectly natural, lying there and Bill sitting beside me, holding my hands, and her there -- Jean -- standing over by the desk, talking to him.

MUSIC: OUT

JEAN: Well, what are you going to do about her?

FARRELL: Do? What do you mean, do?

JEAN: You're going to have to do something. She KNOWS, doesn't she? Or she will, when she snaps out of it.

FARRELL: I'm not going to do anything.

JEAN: I suppose you're in love with her.

FARRELL: What if I am?

JEAN: Because it makes a difference, my sweet -- to me.

HELEN: (GROGGY) Bill?

FARRELL: Oh, darling.

HELEN: (GROGGY) Bill?

FARRELL: Darling, it's all right.

HELEN: Is she--? Is she really--?

FARRELL: Yes. Yes, it's Jean.

HELEN: But I saw her. That morning. I saw her lying--

JEAN: That's what you were supposed to think.

HELEN: Then, who--?

FARRELL: Just a girl.

JEAN: Oh, you might as well tell her. At least, then she'll be in it as deep as the rest of us.

FARRELL: Jean, please--

JEAN: (TO HELEN) Your boyfriend there'd been dipping into the till. About a quarter of a million dollars worth. Of the clients' money. My insurance, what the company had me insured for, was just about enough to cover it. Like a fool, I agreed to it.

FARRELL: You suggested it!

JEAN: I thought he was in love with me -- then.

HELEN: But - there WAS a girl--

JEAN: A girl who worked in the office. No friends, no family. I fired her the day before. Then got her to come up here that night. Another chance. Modeling, I said, with my clothes.

HELEN: The cigarette case?

JEAN: I dug up another one. I knew people would remember that.

HELEN: Oh, Bill.

FARRELL: I told you it was bad.

HELEN: Oh, darling. I don't care, I don't care what it was. As long as--

SOUND: DOOR OPENS OFF; FOOTSTEPS IN

MARIE: (APPROACHES) I think you'd better let me take charge of things now, Mr. Farrell.

FARRELL: Marie!

MARIE: Please don't move. I'm quite prepared to shoot if I have to.

FARRELL: Marie, this is insane.

MARIE: Is it? It's a shakedown.

FARRELL: What do you want, Marie?

MARIE: Quite a lot, I'm afraid, Mr. Farrell.

JEAN: And how do you expect to get it? It's your word against ours. Three of us.

MARIE: You forget, Miss Thornton, that you are legally dead. As for the rest -- do you remember, Miss Brandt, that I said we use Dictographs for practically everything in this office?

SOUND: MARIE'S FOOTSTEPS TO CLOSET

HELEN: It was you, then.

MARIE: I tried my best to warn you, Miss Brandt. I'm truly sorry for you. Listen:

SOUND: SWITCH CLICKS; RECORDING PLAYS:

JEAN'S VOICE: (ON RECORD) You might as well tell her. At least, then she'll be in as deep as the rest of us.

FARRELL'S VOICE: (ON RECORD) Jean, please--

JEAN'S VOICE: (ON RECORD) Your boyfriend there'd been dipping into the till. About a quarter of a million dollars worth. Of the clients' money. My insurance--

SOUND: SWITCH CLICKS; RECORDING STOPS

MARIE: There is more, of course, but I'm sure that would suffice. Now, Miss Thornton, I think you and I had better have a little talk. Alone.

FARRELL: What do you want us to do, Marie?

MARIE: I'll come to you later, Mr. Farrell. For the moment, I must ask you to step into the conference room behind you. You, too, Miss Brandt.

FARRELL: Marie!

SOUND: FOOTSTEPS TO ROOM

MARIE: Please, Mr. Farrell, not now.

SOUND: DOOR OPENS, FOOTSTEPS IN

MARIE: I shall have to lock you in but it will not be for long, I think. You know, of course, that there's no other way out. Except down.

SOUND: DOOR SHUT AND LOCKED

MUSIC: SOMBER, THEN IN BG

HELEN: (NARRATES) We stood there, huddled together by the locked door but we could hear nothing.

SOUND: WINDOW RATTLES OPEN

HELEN: (NARRATES) Suddenly, there was a sound, like a window being opened. And then--

JEAN'S VOICE: (OFF) Oh, please! (BLOODCURDLING SCREAM)

MUSIC: BIG ACCENT

FARRELL: Marie! Marie! MARIE!

SOUND: LOCKED DOOR RATTLES

FARRELL: Marie!

MUSIC: OUT

SOUND: DOOR UNLOCKS AND OPENS, FOOTSTEPS INTO OFFICE

MARIE: You can come out now.

FARRELL: What have you done to her?

MARIE: Miss Thornton has -- shall we say, taken the easy way out.

HELEN: (GASPS)

FARRELL: You mean you forced her!

MARIE: Very well. If you prefer. I'm sure it can make little difference now.
(TO HELEN) You, Miss Brandt, I take it, are in love with Mr. Farrell. In spite of my warnings.

HELEN: Yes.

MARIE: Then I'm sure I can count on your silence, knowing the results to Mr. Farrell if you were to break it.

HELEN: Yes, yes, anything.

MARIE: But I'm afraid your marital plans will have to wait.

HELEN: What do you mean?

MARIE: I think it's best this way, for my own protection. Of course, if anything were to happen to Mr. Farrell, this way, everything would come to me.

FARRELL: What would? How?

MARIE: The firm - and the money. You see, Miss Brandt, Mr. Farrell is going to marry me.

MUSIC: AN ACCENT, THEN IN BG

HELEN: (NARRATES) I looked at Bill. I knew he'd do as she said. What else? I turned and left the room without speaking. In my own office, I found the little automatic where, lately, I'd always kept it.

SOUND: DRAWER OPENS, FOOTSTEPS

HELEN: (NARRATES) When I came back, Bill was staring out the window and Marie was making up her face from a little compact. They didn't even glance in my direction.

SOUND: THREE GUNSHOTS, BROKEN GLASS, FARRELL AND MARIE GASP AND DIE

MUSIC: AN ACCENT, A TRANSITION, THEN IN BG

HELEN: (NARRATES) I'm waiting for the police. I've been looking over the new

layouts. The Dawsett Soap campaign is particularly good. We did it together, Bill and I. The scene was a bride - and groom.

MUSIC: FOR A FINISH

ANNOUNCER: Suspense!

MUSIC: SUSPENSE ACCENT

KEN NILES: Presented by Roma Wines, R-O-M-A, Roma, America's favorite wines.

MUSIC: OUT

KEN NILES: This is Ken Niles, bringing back to our Suspense audience the lovely, talented star of tonight's play, Anne Baxter. Anne, you did a marvelous job. We're sorry you weren't cast as a sweet young thing tonight ...

ANNE BAXTER: (CHUCKLES)

KEN NILES: ... but then, most of our Suspense characters are pretty rugged, you know.

ANNE BAXTER: Well, I can't be the sweet young thing all the time, Mr. Niles.

KEN NILES: Well, bad or good, to show you how we feel about you, Anne, here's a gift basket of Roma Wines with the compliments of your host tonight, Roma Wines.

ANNE BAXTER: Thank you, Ken. And Roma, too. Let's see, is there a Roma wine in my basket that goes with baked beans? It's a Saturday night favorite.

KEN NILES: Oh, positively, Anne! For a combination fit for a king, try this delicious Roma California Burgundy with old-fashioned baked beans. Mmm! It's a tempting treat! And, whatever the dish, robust Roma Burgundy adds zest to everyday meals.

ANNE BAXTER: Ken, I could use you at home - to help sell my cooking.

KEN NILES: (CHUCKLES) No need of THAT, Anne, when you serve Roma Burgundy. You'll find Roma Burgundy works wonders for the simplest dishes. Brings out the natural flavor goodness of any hearty food. And remember, with Roma Wines, you enjoy an important difference -- an extra goodness in fuller bouquet, richer body and better taste. Yes, that difference in Roma Wines, that better taste, is the reason more Americans enjoy Roma than any other wine.

ANNE BAXTER: It certainly makes sense, Ken. Thank you and good night.

ANNOUNCER: Anne Baxter is currently being seen in the Twentieth Century-Fox Darryl F. Zanuck production "The Razor's Edge."

Tonight's Suspense play was written by Eleanor Beeson.

Next Thursday, same time, you will hear William Bendix as star of...

MUSIC: SUSPENSE ACCENT

ANNOUNCER: Suspense!

MUSIC: OUT

KEN NILES: Produced and directed by William Spier for the Roma Wine Company of Fresno, California.

MUSIC: SUSPENSE THEME

KEN NILES: Until next week, enjoy more suspense thrills as compiled in Suspense magazine.

ANNOUNCER: In the coming weeks, Suspense will present such stars as James Stewart, Eddie Bracken, Howard Da Silva, and others. Make it a point to listen each Thursday to Suspense, Radio's Outstanding Theater of Thrills.

CBS ANNOUNCER: Stay tuned for the thrilling adventures of "The FBI in Peace and War," following immediately over most of these stations.

This is CBS, the Columbia Broadcasting System.

++++
Broadcast: 20 February 1947

Share Page



Get a free website at Webs.com