

The Dark Tower

(MUSIC: THEME ... IN AND UNDER.)

ANNOUNCER: Roma Wines present...

MAN IN BLACK: ... SUSPENSE!

ANNOUNCER: Roma Wines. Made in California for Enjoyment Throughout the World.

(SFX: GLASSES CLINK.)

1ST MAN: Salud!

2ND MAN: To your health, Señor!

(SFX: GLASSES CLINK.)

ANNOUNCER: Roma Wines toast the world. The wine for your table is Roma Wine. Made in California for Enjoyment Throughout the World.

(MUSIC: THEME. TRIPLETS START, FADE UNDER.)

MAN IN BLACK: This is the Man in Black, here to introduce this weekly half hour of - "Suspense"! Tonight from Hollywood, we bring you Mr. Orson Welles. Mr. Welles will appear as star of the "Suspense" drama called "The Dark Tower" from the play by George S. Kaufman and the late Alexander Woollcott. But before we raise the curtain on this evening's tale of "Suspense," here is a message from your host, the Roma Wine Company of Fresno, California.

(MUSIC: THEME ... OUT; LATIN DINNER MUSIC IN BG.)

ANNOUNCER: Let us picture a scene in the fashionable restaurant El Patio in Havana, Cuba. From the next table, we hear a Cuban judge of fine wines describe in glowing terms the wonderful climate and soil of our own California. When his American guest points out that his Cuban host has never been to the United States, the Cuban answers, "Well, it's true I've never visited your California, but from only such perfect wine country could come sherry of such superb quality as that we have enjoyed. Roma California Sherry!"

(MUSIC: OUT.)

ANNOUNCER: Yes, by their example, wine connoisseurs of many other lands tell you that in Roma Wines are all the great qualities that must be present in a wine for great enjoyment. It's for this reason these wine experts of other lands import Roma Wines from great distances, to be enjoyed as a rare luxury. But for you, this luxury of other lands becomes a daily pleasure. Because you can enjoy any of Roma Wines' many different taste-appealing wine types without additional charge for import duties and expensive shipment from great distance. These two great Roma Wine features -- superb quality and small cost -- have made Roma Wines America's largest selling wines. I'll spell out the name for you. R-O-M-A. Roma Wines! Made in California for enjoyment throughout the world.

(MUSIC: THEME IN, THEN FADE UNDER.)

MAN IN BLACK: And now, with "The Dark Tower" - and with the performance of our star, Orson Welles, as that noted actor Damon Wellington, scion of the celebrated Royal Family of Stage and Screen, we again hope to keep you in ...

(MUSIC: STING.)

MAN IN BLACK: ... SUSPENSE!

(MUSIC: BRIDGE.)

DAMON: (DEEP, RICH THEATRICAL VOICE; DARE WE SAY, A HAM?) You dare?! You dare call me a ham?! Varlet! I will prove to the world there are no brains within that thick, Teutonic skull! I'll cleave it open like an Over Ripe Melon!

(SFX: KNOCK ON THE DOOR.)

DAMON: Who thus profanes the rehearsal of me lines? Enter, if thou art man of woman born! I fear thee not!

(SFX: DOOR OPENS; MAN STEPS IN.)

BEN: (QUIETLY) Hello, Damon.

DAMON: (HIS NORMAL VOICE) Ben Weston, you old son of a gun! I heard you were back from the coast. What news of the Rialto from that Cesspool of the Arts known as Hollywood? Have they turned my picture to the wall at the Brown Derby yet?

BEN: No, it's still there.

DAMON: I despise myself for wanting to know, of course. It's marvelous to have you back, Ben, old boy. Seen Jessica yet?

BEN: Yes, I've seen her.

DAMON: Isn't she looking fine? Feeling better than she has for years, I think. We've got a great thing in this play, Ben. Changed quite a bit from the original, of course, sort of a satire on the family. Perhaps it might be more dignified to say that the family is a satire on the play.

BEN: Yes, I heard about it.

DAMON: For instance, those lines you heard me declaiming as you entered. Actually happened to me once, you know, that German what's-his-name who directed "Macbeth," he called me a ham. And I chased him out of the theatre and for four city blocks, in full costume, with a two-edged sword! (CHUCKLES)

BEN: Damon...

DAMON: There's a little thing I like in the second act, too. Jessica asks me why I don't stop drinking and I say, "What?! Would you have me subsist entirely on food? And reach the Gargantuan Proportions of an Orson Welles?" That ought to needle the "boy wonder," eh, Ben?

BEN: Damon, can't you stop clowning for a minute?

DAMON: Of course I can. "Oh, what a rogue and peasant slave am I..."

BEN: Damon, please. Please be serious.

DAMON: What's the matter, old man?

BEN: You know as well as I do what's the matter.

DAMON: No, frankly, I can't say that I do. To me the world looks rather well.

BEN: Does it? And Jessica "feeling better than she has for years." Is she?

DAMON: Well, isn't she?

BEN: Of course not. How could she be?

DAMON: And why shouldn't she be?

BEN: Damon, don't you realize there's been a murder?

DAMON: Oh, to be sure, so there has, and a good thing, too, if you ask me. What of it?

BEN: "What of it?" Can't you see the thing is hanging over this house like a - like a curse?

DAMON: I hadn't noticed anything hanging over this house, profane or otherwise.

BEN: And what about Jessica?

DAMON: Oh, I suppose it's bound to upset her a little, but she's really in fine shape, Ben. She's going to be marvelous in this play--

BEN: There's more at stake in this than a play, Damon. The thing has never been solved. Perhaps it never will be.

DAMON: Perhaps that's just as well.

BEN: (A BEAT) But Jessica can't remember. Don't you understand, Damon? She can't remember.

DAMON: (SO WHAT?) Well, well, then, Jessica can't remember.

BEN: Listen to me, Damon. I wouldn't mind it if it was just that other people thought she might have done it - but they would do that anyway. But - but SHE does.

DAMON: Aw, come on, Ben, I don't believe it.

BEN: I've talked to her, Damon, I know.

DAMON: Oh, I see.

BEN: Damon, I love Jessica more than anything else in the world, you know

that.

DAMON: Yes, Ben, I do.

BEN: But, this way, I - I couldn't--

DAMON: You couldn't marry a murderess, eh? (CHUCKLES) I should think it would be rather exciting. Now that you mention it, I rather wish I had. Instead of some of those I did marry.

BEN: Damon...

DAMON: (SINCERE) I'm sorry. Pretty serious to you, isn't it, old man?

BEN: Did you think it wouldn't be?

DAMON: To tell you the truth, Ben, I hadn't thought about it at all; that's the trouble with being an actor -- as long as your part's good, you don't give a hang about the rest of the play. Have you told Jessica?

BEN: Yes. We had a long talk.

DAMON: How did she take it?

BEN: You know Jessica, she carried it off, of course.

DAMON: Mmmm. Ben, you know in spite of all our histrionic bickering, I'm rather nuts about Jessica myself.

BEN: I know you are, Damon.

DAMON: I have no very fundamental objections to you, either. I would describe you, my dear Benjamin, as "adequate."

BEN: Thanks.

DAMON: So I think perhaps you and I had better have a nice, long heart-to-heart talk.

BEN: What good will talking do?

DAMON: I think if you'll do the listening and let me do the talking, you'd see. Lend me your ears -- I will a tale unfold! (SNORES!)

(MUSIC: BRIDGE ... THE IN BG)

DAMON: (NARRATES) Well, Jessica, as you know, had been in a sanitarium for nearly a year. She hadn't been on the stage in more than two years. "The Dark Tower" was to be her first attempt to work again in all that time. I know it isn't the greatest play in the world, but it has a surefire box office appeal. Jessica needed that to get her confidence back. Well, we were just polishing up a few last minute changes here at the house. David Torrence, the producer, you know, he was there with us, and of course there were the usual little differences of opinion... (FADES)

(MUSIC UP STRONG, THEN OUT.)

JESSICA: (A FIREBALL) And another thing, Damon. When you kick me in the middle of the second act...

DAMON: (AMUSED) Where?

JESSICA: You know perfectly well where.

DAMON: (AN AMUSED SNORT)

JESSICA: Is it absolutely essential that you boot me halfway across the stage?

DAMON: (IRKED) What do you want me to? Pull my punches? That's one of the high spots in the show!

JESSICA: It may be a high spot to you, "Dahhhling", but it's just a black and blue spot to me.

DAMON: Very well. Henceforth I shall appear for the second act on crutches!
(TO DAVID) You know, Uncle David, that's not a bad idea!

DAVID: Oh, now Damon, let's be serious. There's a lot of work to do.

DAMON: I'm quite serious. I could throw 'em at her.

JESSICA: You might try throwing me a cue once in a while! What's the use of having a play if you just make up the lines as you go along?

DAMON: The critics thought my ad-libbing very witty. Remember, dear?

JESSICA: Oh, Damon, you're such an insufferable ham!

DAMON: A Ham? A HAM?! Me, a HAM!?

DAVID: Now now now, children, please...

DAMON: I fail to see why I should permit that little minx to insult me with impunity, David!

JESSICA: How dare you speak to me that way?!

DAMON: You started it!

JESSICA: I did not!

DAMON: You started--! You called me a ham!

JESSICA: You are! Ham, ham, HAM!!!

DAMON: Minx, minx, MINX!!!

(SFX: MARTHA'S FOOTSTEPS APPROACH)

MARTHA: Stop that brawling!

DAMON: But, soft, what light through yonder window breaks? It is the east, and Martha is the sun!

MARTHA: I quite agree.

DAMON: What?

MARTHA: That you're a ham.

DAMON: Gad! I am beset by Harpies!

MARTHA: David, haven't you any control over these hirelings of yours?

DAVID: Oh, I'm only the producer, my dear Martha. You, at least, are a member of the family.

MARTHA: And you at least can quit!

JESSICA: (CHUCKLES) We're terribly sorry, Aunt Martha. We've been a nuisance, I know, and I apologize. Damon?

DAMON: Eh?

JESSICA: I even apologize to you.

DAMON: Don't be silly, Jess--

JESSICA: I've been much the worse, I know, but - I've really been terribly keyed up, working again, and, you know, Ben is coming east for the opening.

DAMON: (SNORTS) Love rears its ugly head.

MARTHA: Don't be horrid, Damon.

JESSICA: It's all right. I couldn't even be angry if he was. Anyway, I'll have a husband to protect me by this time next week.

DAMON: I can lick him with one hand tied behind me.

JESSICA: Damon, seriously. I know I owe you an awful lot.

DAMON: Me?

JESSICA: I hadn't actually realized how far I'd gone. These last six months have been - like coming alive again. The play and - Ben. (DEEPLY) Thanks, Damon.

DAMON: (MUTTERS, APPALLED) Good lord.

JESSICA: Now, I think I'll dress for dinner. Let's all go out to--!

(SFX: PHONE RINGS.)

JESSICA: I'll get it. Aunt Martha, where would you like to go?

MARTHA: To a rest home.

(SFX: PHONE IS PICKED UP.)

JESSICA: Hello? ... (STUNNED) Who? No. No, he's not here. (STARTS TO BREAK

DOWN) He's not here, I tell you. ... He's... dead.

(SFX: PHONE IS HUNG UP.)

JESSICA: (SOBS)

MARTHA: (SYMPATHETIC) Oh, darling. What is it?

JESSICA: (CALMS HERSELF) It was... for Stanley.

MARTHA: For Stanley?

JESSICA: Yes.

MARTHA: Never mind, darling, it's all right. Just some fool who didn't know.

JESSICA: Of course. (STILL SHAKEN) Damon, you take David and Martha out to dinner, will you? I think I'll lie down for a little while.

DAMON: Ah, come on, Jess, you mustn't let a little thing like that upset you.

JESSICA: I know, but - I'm awfully tired. Please.

(SFX: JESSICA'S FOOTSTEPS AWAY.)

MARTHA: Jessica!

(SFX: DOOR SHUTS.)

DAVID: You'd, er, better leave her alone for a while, Martha.

MARTHA: I suppose so.

DAVID: It was for - Stanley Vance, the husband, huh?

MARTHA: Yes.

DAVID: He's dead, you say?

DAMON: Might as well tell him about it, Martha.

MARTHA: I was always for telling about it.

DAVID: Well, you don't have to.

MARTHA: I'd rather. He was the cause of her breakdown, of course.

DAMON: Should have been an actor. That's why Jessica married him.

MARTHA: She married him because he forced her to marry him.

DAMON: (GRUNTS)

MARTHA: He controlled that girl's mind like some sort of fiendish hypnotist.

DAMON: My dear Martha, I've always said that if Jessica was fool enough to marry a psychoanalyst--

MARTHA: Damon, stop playing the heartless brother. You saw what Stanley did to her.

DAMON: I was in Hollywood.

DAVID: Perhaps that's why Damon went to Hollywood, eh?

DAMON: Welllll... what could one do? She was legally married to the man. She'd listen to no one but him.

MARTHA: Here's what happened, David. She went to this fellow to be psychoanalyzed; and in the process, something happened. I don't know what it was, but Vance acquired a power over Jessica's mind that was utterly inhuman. He married her, quite frankly, to have her support him. Then he found he'd overplayed his hand and sent her into a complete mental collapse. When he found he couldn't snap her out of it, and she was no longer a source of revenue to him, he simply decamped.

DAVID: Hmm. You say Vance is now dead?

DAMON: We heard the happy news about six months ago. Some public benefactor had shot him. I've always meant to look that fella up.

MARTHA: From that very day, she began to get better. From the moment she heard the news. It was as though a spell had been lifted.

DAVID: Hmm. And now she's practically all well.

DAMON: You know, it's odd at that someone phoning for him after all these months.

MARTHA: Probably the Sheriff, just catching up.

(SFX: DOOR BUZZER.)

DAMON: Oh, I wonder who that could be.

MARTHA: (WORRIED) Damon ... you - you don't suppose...?

(SFX: DAMON'S FOOTSTEPS.)

DAMON: I'll go. It may be a peasant with a petition.

(SFX: DOOR OPENS.)

(MUSIC: STING!!!)

STANLEY: (OILY CHARM) Good evening!

DAMON: My dear Martha, you are positively psychic! The Honorable Stanley Vance.

(SFX: DOOR CLOSES.)

STANLEY: (SMUG) Thank you. I trust the shock will not be too great.

DAMON: One knoweth not the place nor the hour when the bridegroom cometh, does one?

STANLEY: My luggage will be here shortly.

MARTHA: Listen to me, Stanley Vance--

STANLEY: (INTERRUPTS) Good evening, Martha! I regret to arrive so unceremoniously; I have been ill.

DAMON: So we have been told. We had been assured, however, that your illness was fatal.

(SFX: DOOR OPENS.)

JESSICA: (FADES IN) Damon, I thought I--

(SFX: DOOR CLOSES.)

JESSICA: (SHOCKED) Stanley.

STANLEY: Jessica! My poor, poor darling!

JESSICA: (OVERJOYED) Stanley!

STANLEY: Oh, but you're ill, my dear, aren't you? You're ill. You should be resting. You're tired and exhausted, aren't you? Terribly, terribly, tired.

JESSICA: (IN A TRANCE) Yes. I am - tired.

DAMON: Oh, great!

JESSICA: Terribly tired.

STANLEY: I'll take you up to your room, darling. I take it we still have the same room, Martha?

MARTHA: Listen to me, Stanley Vance--

STANLEY: The poor girl. You can see how weak she is.

MARTHA: If you think you're going to stay under this roof for a single minute -- GET OUT!

STANLEY: Very well.

MARTHA: GET OUT!!!

STANLEY: Very well, if you insist on being inhospitable, Martha. (TO JESSICA) You'll pack your things, Jessica. We'll go to an hotel.

JESSICA: (A ZOMBIE IN LOVE) Yes. Yes, Stanley.

MARTHA: Jessica...

JESSICA: But I'm - so tired. Will you help me, Stanley?

STANLEY: Of course I will, my dear. Come along.

MARTHA: Stanley.

STANLEY: Yes, Martha?

MARTHA: All right, Stanley. You win.

STANLEY: Ah. You're asking us to avail ourselves of your hospitality, Martha?

MARTHA: Yes. You can stay.

STANLEY: That's very sweet of you, Martha. (TO JESSICA) Isn't it, darling?

JESSICA: Yes. Yes, Stanley.

MARTHA: But somehow, someday, there'll be a Time of Reckoning for you, Stanley Vance! And until it comes -- keep out of my sight!

STANLEY: The pleasure will be all mine.

(SFX: STANLEY & JESSICA'S FOOTSTEPS AWAY.)

STANLEY: Come, darling, we'll go to our room now.

(SFX: DOOR OPENS.)

JESSICA: Yes, Stanley.

(SFX: DOOR CLOSES.)

MARTHA: Damon.

DAMON: Yes, my agèd Auntie?

MARTHA: Damon, what are we going to do?

DAMON: I dunno what you're going to do, Ducky, but I'm going down to the Lamb's Club and have a quadruple Scotch and soda.

(MUSIC: BRIDGE; ESTABLISH, THEN UNDER.)

DAMON: (NARRATES) You may think it heartless of me, but during the next few days I simply stayed away. I think you'll understand my reasons later. As for Jessica, she was of course completely in his power again, and about a week later there appeared upon the scene a gentleman who was destined to play a very substantial role in our little drama. I think you've already met him; at least on one occasion.

(MUSIC: OUT)

(SFX: PHONE RING.)

STANLEY: I'll get it, Jessica darling.

(SFX: QUICK FOOTSTEPS TO PHONE; PHONE PICKUP.)

STANLEY: Hello? ... No, Mr. Damon Wellington isn't here. Can I take a message, please? ... Mr. Max Hartsfeld. Hartsfeld. Uh, I'll tell him you called, Mr. Hartsfeld. ... I really couldn't say. Well, you can come up and wait, if you like, of course, but I can't promise he'll see you. ... Very well; goodbye.

(SFX: PHONE HANG-UP; SLOW FOOTSTEPS FROM PHONE.)

STANLEY: Jessica?

JESSICA: Yes, Stanley?

STANLEY: Do you know any friend of Damon's named "Max Hartsfeld"?

JESSICA: No, Stanley.

STANLEY: He seemed extremely eager to see him; he said he'd come up here and wait.

JESSICA: Oh. I see.

STANLEY: It's no matter. Tell me, darling, have you been feeling a little stronger these last few days?

JESSICA: Yes. I think perhaps I am, Stanley.

STANLEY: But of course you're not ready to go back on the stage again -- are you, darling?

JESSICA: No. Of course not, Stanley.

STANLEY: Poor darling.

(SFX: DOOR OPENING; DAMON'S FOOTSTEPS.)

DAMON: (SINGS) "... no more love, no ..." (SPEAKS) Well, my little lovebirds! How are you two? How are you, Jessica?

JESSICA: A little stronger, I think. Am I a little stronger, Stanley?

STANLEY: Of course you are, my dear. Uh, Jessica, I think you'd better leave us now. There's something I want to talk over with Damon.

(SFX: JESSICA'S FOOTSTEPS AWAY.)

JESSICA: Yes, Stanley.

(SFX: DOOR OPENS.)

STANLEY: I'll see you again very shortly, darling.

JESSICA: (OFF) Yes, Stanley.

(SFX: DOOR SHUTS.)

STANLEY: (SIGHS) Well, Damon, I've been wanting to talk to you for some time.

DAMON: Really? I wish I could say the same.

STANLEY: I suppose you realize, Damon, that it's out of the question for Jessica to go on in the play in her present condition.

DAMON: Oh, come to the point, will you, Vance? I have a pressing engagement with a pin-up girl, and I have got to change into my zoot suit.

STANLEY: No, seriously, Damon. I know that you somehow connect me with Jessica's condition.

DAMON: By an odd coincidence, I do; what of it?

STANLEY: I know it would make you and everyone very happy if Jessica could go on in the play.

DAMON: Ah ha, the light at last illuminates me addled wits. (ANGRY) So it's a shakedown! A shakedown, is it, Stanley?

STANLEY: My dear Damon, I really don't know what you're talking about.

DAMON: Look here, my Larcenous In-Law, I've been shaken down by experts on every conceivable count including the Mann Act in my time and I can smell 'em a mile away. What you propose is that for certain "financial considerations," you will leave this happy home, Jessica will recover, and she can go on in the play. The answer is no!

STANLEY: There won't be any play without her, Damon.

DAMON: Are you suggesting that my name is not sufficient to draw the suckers? I can get a dozen people to play Jessica's part. Margaret O'Brien, Marjorie Main, Daisy, Agnes Moorehead, makes no difference to me; anybody at all.

STANLEY: Don't try to bluff me, Damon. After all this build-up, hmph, you won't dare to go on without Jessica.

DAMON: You little know me, Stinky. You may consider your little farce as having closed on opening night. As for Jessica, I'm very much afraid that she's made her bed and now she'll have to lie in it. There's no cure for her, short of murder, with yourself as victim, and I do not propose to put my neck in the hangman's noose. Good night.

STANLEY: I think you'll see things my way a little later, Damon.

DAMON: Bard Forbid! By the way, did I have any calls?

STANLEY: Oh, yes. A Max Hartsfeld called.

DAMON: (DISAGREEABLY SURPRISED) Max Hartsfeld?

STANLEY: Said he was coming up here to wait for you.

DAMON: Good heavens, when?

STANLEY: He's on his way now, I imagine.

DAMON: Look, tell him I'm out, will you, or gone to Hollywood or something?

Fella's been pestering me all week, wants to buy into the show and I simply don't want to see him!

STANLEY: So he wants to buy into the show?

DAMON: Yes, he does not share your lamentable lack of faith in my talents, Stanley, and he's dying to buy into the show.

STANLEY: Does he know Jessica won't be able to appear?

DAMON: Of course he does, you idiot. Everybody does; don't you read the trade papers?

(SFX: DAMON'S FOOTSTEPS AWAY; DOOR OPENS.)

DAMON: And now, good night, Repulsive. I have Other Fish to Fry. Toodle-oo, Flattop!

(SFX: DOOR SHUTS.)

STANLEY: (AFTER A BEAT) Jessica? Oh, Jessica, my dear?

JESSICA: (OFF) I'm coming, Stanley.

(SFX: DOOR OPENS; FOOTSTEPS IN; DOOR SHUTS.)

STANLEY: Tell me, Jessica. "The Dark Tower" -- the play you were going to appear in with Damon -- you have an interest in it, don't you?

JESSICA: Yes. Yes, I think I do.

STANLEY: An equal interest with Damon?

JESSICA: With Damon, yes.

STANLEY: How much do you suppose that interest is worth, Jessica?

JESSICA: A hundred thousand dollars. I think.

STANLEY: A hundred thousand dollars, huh?

JESSICA: Yes. That was it.

STANLEY: Have you thought about what you're going to do with it now that you can't appear in the play yourself?

JESSICA: No, Stanley. I haven't.

STANLEY: You see, I'm not at all sure the play will be a success without you, Jessica.

JESSICA: I don't know, Stanley.

STANLEY: And so it might be wise to sell your share of it before it opens. Don't you agree, Jessica?

JESSICA: Yes. Yes, I do agree.

STANLEY: And, Jessica, if I could find a buyer -- and I think perhaps I can -- it might be best if I were to handle the details for you; don't you think?

JESSICA: Yes, Stanley. You handle it.

STANLEY: The fact of the matter is, there's a man coming up here this evening, a friend of Damon's. Max Hartsfeld. Do you remember, I asked you about him?

JESSICA: Yes.

STANLEY: It won't be any trouble to you, darling. All you'll have to do is sign the necessary papers.

(SFX: DOOR BUZZER.)

STANLEY: Oh.

(SFX: STANLEY'S FOOTSTEPS TO DOOR; DOOR OPENS.)

MAX: (WHEEZY GERMAN ACCENT) Excuse me. Is this the residence of Mr. Damon Wellington?

STANLEY: Mr. Hartsfeld?

MAX: Yes.

STANLEY: Oh, come in, please.

(SFX: FOOTSTEPS IN; DOOR SHUTS.)

MAX: Thank you. Mr. Wellington is at home?

STANLEY: No, and we don't expect him, but he's discussed with me the reason for your visit, and I think perhaps you and I can reach a satisfactory agreement.

MAX: Uh huh. You are... ?

STANLEY: Stanley Vance. I'm Miss Wellington's husband. This is my wife.

JESSICA: How do you do?

MAX: How do you do? (MUMBLES)

STANLEY: Sit down, please, Mr. Hartsfeld. May I have your hat and coat?

MAX: Thank you.

STANLEY: And your gloves, please.

MAX: Heh, I'm sorry. It's an eccentricity, perhaps -- I always keep them on.

STANLEY: Oh. (BEAT; PRESSES ON) Now, Mr. Hartsfeld, Damon tells me that you wish to buy an interest in the new Wellington play, "The Dark Tower."

MAX: Yes, I have been seeking an interview with Mr. Wellington.

STANLEY: Yes, so he's told me. However, Damon has very definitely made up his mind not to sell any part of his interest in the play.

MAX: You are sure of this, Mr. Vance?

STANLEY: Oh, yes, quite sure. I had a long talk with him about it only this evening.

MAX: I see. I will not conceal from you that this is a source of great disappointment to me, Mr. Vance. I have such a deep admiration for the talents of Mr. Wellington. I ventured in a few previous theatrical enterprises, now at last, I hoped, er--

STANLEY: I quite understand your feelings, Mr. Hartsfeld, and I think that I may be able to help you.

MAX: Yes?

STANLEY: Yes; you see, Damon owns only half of the Wellington interest in the play.

MAX: (CHUCKLES)

STANLEY: My wife, Miss Jessica Wellington, owns the other half. And she -- we -- if the offer were sufficiently attractive...

MAX: Ahh, indeed. You are willing to sell, then, Miss Wellington?

JESSICA: Yes. Whatever Stanley says.

STANLEY: Good. Then, perhaps we should get down to details, eh?

MAX: Yes, Mr. Vance. Uh, Miss Wellington, I'm afraid you will think me very rude, but--

STANLEY: Not at all. What is it?

MAX: Since the talents of Miss Wellington's brother must be considered the very essence of our bargaining, and since you are acting as her agent in any event, I wonder if she would forgive me if I ask that you and I conclude this part of our business - alone, Mr. Vance?

STANLEY: Oh, of course! Jessica will understand perfectly. Won't you, my dear?

JESSICA: Yes, Stanley.

STANLEY: Run along then, darling. I'll call you when we need you.

(SFX: JESSICA'S FOOTSTEPS AWAY.)

JESSICA: (OFF) Yes, Stanley.

(SFX: DOOR OPENS AND SHUTS.)

MAX: Now, Mr. Vance, I imagine you will wish to know a little more about the man with whom you are dealing. Here's my card, I'm staying at the Waldorf,

I've written the room number on the card for you.

STANLEY: Oh, there's no need, really.

MAX: Yesss. But before we discuss terms, there is one other thing.

STANLEY: Yes?

MAX: I wonder -- you do not know me, do you, Mr. Vance?

STANLEY: Know you? Why, I--

MAX: You do not know why I have been looking forward with such pleasure to an interview with you? Alone?

STANLEY: Why, no. I - I--

MAX: Well, it is very simple. It's very simple, really, Mr. Vance. (DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO SAY IT) It's, uh-- It's just that I-- (JUST BLURTS IT OUT) I'm going to kill you.

STANLEY: (BEAT, PUZZLED) Pff. To kill me? (MUST BE A JOKE) Really, Mr. Hartsfeld--

MAX: With - these two hands. And before you die... (VOICE BEGINS TO CHANGE) Before you die... (IT'S DAMON'S VOICE!) I want you to know the reason.

STANLEY: (GASPS IN SURPRISE)

DAMON: Jessica!

STANLEY: No! No, no, you ca--- (STRANGLED TO DEATH)

(MUSIC: A STING TO DIE FOR! INTO BRIDGE, THEN OUT.)

DAMON: So, you see, Ben, there is your murderer -- Mr. Max Hartsfeld. And I hope you're duly grateful to him. An elusive fellow, Hartsfeld. The police have been trying to find him for two weeks. They never will. (IN MAX'S VOICE:) Left no fingerprints, you see... he always kept his gloves on. It's an... eccentricity. Heh heh heh heh...

BEN: (HORRIFIED) Damon... Wait a minute...

DAMON: (MUTTERS; ENJOYING THE ROLE) An eccentricity...

BEN: Do you mean you-- ?

DAMON: (STILL IN MAX'S VOICE) My dear Mutt-- (ABRUPTLY SWITCHES TO HIS OWN VOICE) My dear Muttonhead! Listen, darling, the whole thing's perfectly clear. It's as plain as the putty nose on Max Hartsfeld's face.

BEN: I still can't get it into my head--

DAMON: Benjamin, if you don't know who Max Hartsfeld is by now, you are the only person - within the sound of my voice - who does not.

BEN: You mean you impersonated--? Then it wasn't Jessica!

DAMON: Jessica? (CHUCKLES) She never could have done it; the girl has talent, but no genius.

BEN: But, Damon -- murder?

DAMON: "Murder," he says. Dear friend: you share with me a guilty secret. Your lips are sealed. Come! In the words of "Hamlet": Never, so help you mercy, note that you know aught of me. Swear by my sword!

BEN: What?

DAMON: Swear!

BEN: I swear.

DAMON: Well said, Old Mole. Well, I think that winds up the case, Watson. Er, Jessica will receive by registered post a signed confession by Max Hartsfeld -- bound in vellum! That should end her worries. You may consider it as my wedding present. 'Twill be a work not without literary merit, although written "lefty." I should prefer it to be published posthumously. I look forward to a long and brilliant career in the theater. I should not care to terminate it abruptly upon so paltry a characterization as the late Max Hartsfeld. Music! Curtain!

(MUSIC: TO A FINISH; IN AND OUT)

MAN IN BLACK: And so closes "The Dark Tower" by Alexander Woollcott and George S. Kaufman, and starring Orson Welles, tonight's tale of ...

(MUSIC: STING)

MAN IN BLACK: ... "Suspense"! "Suspense" is produced and directed by William Spier.

(MUSIC: OUT.)

ANNOUNCER: If we could bring to this microphone a man typical of all Roma Wine dealers, this is what he might tell you:

DEALER: I sell a lot of the good Roma Wines. They are, you know, America's largest selling wines. My Roma Wine customers, I've noticed, are sociable people who enjoy entertaining friends. Talking with me, they give a lot of credit for the success of their entertaining to the enjoyable Roma Wines they serve. They're thrifty people, too, these buyers of Roma Wines. What else could offer so much enjoyment for so little cost? Only pennies a glass, by actual check.

ANNOUNCER: Now, that doesn't leave much for me to add, except this, perhaps. If you are not already one of the millions enjoying Roma Wines regularly, make your own "taste test" of any of Roma Wines' many different taste-delighting California wine types - such as the delicious, tangy Roma sherry or the hearty Roma burgundy or the sweeter, heavier Roma port. And discover for yourself why Roma Wines are winning international praise, voiced in this phrase: "Roma Wines are truly magnificent." Let me repeat the name: R-O-M-A. Roma Wines. Made in California for Enjoyment Throughout the World.

ORSON WELLES: This is Orson Welles, ladies and gentlemen. Next week, "Suspense" will, as is its policy, from time to time, do the unexpected in the way of casting - because you're going to hear the country's leading comic juvenile, Mr. Eddie Bracken, as a dramatic actor. I look forward to hearing that and I know you do, too.

ANNOUNCER: Ensure your baby's future by ensuring your country's future. Buy war bonds for your baby today.

MAN IN BLACK: Don't forget then, next Thursday, same time, you will hear Eddie Bracken in...

(MUSIC: STING.)

MAN IN BLACK: Suspense!

(MUSIC: OUT.)

ANNOUNCER: Presented by Roma Wines. R-O-M-A. Made in California for Enjoyment Throughout the World.

(MUSIC: THEME.)

ANNOUNCER: This is CBS, the Columbia Broadcasting System.

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