
(She laughs and goes out through the kitchen.

DANIEL picks up the coffee cup, but thinks twice about drinking it. Then he picks up the telephone.)

DANIEL *(lowering his voice)* Hullo? Police Station? Corban here. Yes, the Inspector's just left. Is there any news from the hospital? . . . Please call me as soon as you hear anything. Thank you.

(He hangs up. MLLE BERTON appears on the terrace. She looks furious.)

MLLE BERTON Where are they?

DANIEL *(savagely)* Oh, so you're back, are you?

MLLE BERTON Where are they? Where's that woman?

DANIEL That woman now, is it? She was my wife a minute ago.

MLLE BERTON Wife nothing. She's a dirty, double-dealing crook, and that goes for her boyfriend, too.

DANIEL So you've changed your tune suddenly. After you'd got what you wanted. How much did they give you?

MLLE BERTON You may well ask. Where is she? She hasn't left the place, I know that, I've been watching the gate.

DANIEL She's out in the garden.

(MLLE BERTON starts to go. DANIEL clutches her wrist.) Oh, no you don't!

MLLE BERTON *(struggling)* You're hurting me!

(DANIEL plumps her down on the chair.)

DANIEL You're not moving from here until you tell me who those two are and why they bribed you.

MLLE BERTON Mind your own business.

DANIEL *(quietly)* I've had a trying time these last twenty-four hours, one way and another. And I'm not quite myself, to put it mildly. I'm going to find out why you identified a perfectly strange woman as my wife if I have to kill you to do it.

MLLE BERTON You couldn't kill a maggot, you aren't the type. You've got to be tough in this world. Those two are

tough. But I'm tough too, they'll find that out. Now get out of my way.

(She tries to struggle off the sofa. DANIEL pushes her down again.)

DANIEL What did they give you?

(He snatches her bag, before she can stop him, opens it, pulls out the envelope.)

Now! You're not getting this back until you've told the police you were lying.

(Suddenly, Mlle BERTON laughs. DANIEL stares at her, fuming.)

Mlle BERTON Oh, it's too funny. You deserve all you get, you're such an imbecile.

DANIEL They paid you to lie, if you want your money, you'll have to tell the truth. *(He marches to the telephone and lifts the receiver.)*

Mlle BERTON Go on, open it. Open that envelope. Whatever's in it is yours. Go on!

(DANIEL, dazed, opens the envelope and pulls out dozens of loose slips of newspaper.)

DANIEL Newspaper!

Mlle BERTON Go on, laugh. It's your turn. *(DANIEL laughs helplessly.)* Right, you've had your fun. The joke's over. Now I want my money.

(She gets up purposefully.)

DANIEL *(stopping her)* And I want your evidence. You're staying here until I call the police.

Mlle BERTON And what then? You haven't convinced them too well so far. What are you going to tell them? That I was lying? I'll say I wasn't, so where does that get you? Mind you, there is a solution. Look at it this way. I've got something to sell. You want it. We could come to terms. They offered me four thousand. I'll sell it to you for six. How's that?

DANIEL The truth for six thousand francs! You can whistle for it!

- MLLE BERTON Do you realise what this means? I've perjured myself, don't forget. I'm not going to the police and admit I was lying unless it's made worth my while. I could get into a lot of trouble over this.
- DANIEL That's for you to worry about. I'm not paying you a cent.
- MLLE BERTON Please yourself. You're a fool. I can stand a villain but I can't abide a fool. You're in trouble. I can get you out of it. If you won't help yourself that's your funeral . . .
- DANIEL You think you're my last chance, well you're not. I've got another witness! And he's honest. He can't be bribed!
- MLLE BERTON What – your tramp? I thought you'd killed him.
- DANIEL Well, you thought wrong! He'll talk! He'll tell the truth!
- MLLE BERTON If he lives. You're taking a big chance on him. I can't see him risking his neck a second time. Oh, come on. What's it worth to you?
- (A pause. DANIEL paces about the room.)
- (hopefully) Five thousand? You're desperate. I'm not. I just want some money. How about it?
- (A pause.)
- Come on, make up your mind! I haven't got all day. I'll give you five seconds, then I'm going out to find your wife. That's who she is as far as I'm concerned.
- (She starts to go.)
- DANIEL Wait, wait! (*Defeated.*) All right. I'll give you a cheque.
- MLLE BERTON Oh, no. Sorry. Cash.
- DANIEL Cash? Where am I going to get five thousand in cash?
- MLLE BERTON Or kind. You must have something of value here.
- DANIEL (*desperately*) I haven't! Look I'll get you the money! I'll wire my bank in Paris. I swear! If you tell the police that –

- MLLE BERTON *(sharply)* I want it now.
- DANIEL Wait! There's a ring. It's worth at least five thousand.
(He goes to the desk drawer.) It's a diamond. It belongs to my wife. Here.
(He gives her a ring.)
- MLLE BERTON *(examining it)* Hm. Very nice. Bit careless of her. wasn't it, leaving that behind?
- DANIEL She doesn't like it. It's an heirloom. I was going to have it reset for her . . .
(MLLE BERTON is about to put the ring in her bag. DANIEL takes it from her.)
Just a minute. What about your evidence?
- MLLE BERTON What about it? I gave you my word.
- DANIEL Pardon me for laughing.
- MLLE BERTON I'll give you a statement, then.
- DANIEL Yes, and you'll do it now.
- MLLE BERTON What do I say?
(He hands her paper and pen and dictates over her shoulder.)
- DANIEL I . . . then your full name.
- MLLE BERTON *(writing)* I, Yvonne Berton . . .
- DANIEL . . . declare that the woman I identified today was not Mme. Corban. Now sign it.
-
- (FLORENCE has appeared. She watches the dictation with a smile.)*
Now give me the paper.
- MLLE BERTON Give me the ring. By the way, you're sure it's valuable? Because if it's just paste –
- FLORENCE You're hurting my feelings, mademoiselle. That ring belonged to my mother.
- DANIEL Quick! Give me that statement!
- FLORENCE Stay where you are!