

for you to say it isn't so—to say it's just a whim or something. You're used to being one of them. What are you going to change for? How—how do I know you are my mother? I'm still lonesome—I'm going!

(At this the girl turns and runs out by the way she entered, knocking over a chair in her mad flight. Margot drops to her knees catching the chair in her arms as she does so. She has held herself somewhat in restraint up to this point, but the doubt in her child is more than she can stand. Hysterical, she clutches the chair, screaming until it is taken from her.)

Margot—Don't let her say that—don't! Don't!—Oh, Claire, my baby! Claire! Claire!

(The guests all move slowly to the door with the exception of Mr. Barter, who lays down his hat and cane and starts with the maid who has come in, to the crazed woman. The curtain descends as her calls rend the air.)

Scene 2.

Same room at dusk. There is still the sound of the ocean. The window curtains are partly drawn. Margot is lying on the chaise-longue in negligée. A small stand bearing medicines and glasses is near by.

In the center of the room Mr. Barter is talking in whispers to a group of seamen in oil skins. The maid is attending the woman. As the seamen start out, their coats rattle, and Margot starts up wildly.

Margot—Go back to the ocean! Why are you here? The ocean! The ocean! Don't you hear it laughing, blustering, crashing out there! Why are you here? Ah—

Barter—It is all right, Madame, it is all right. They will find her. You must be quiet.

Bertie—Oh, Madame, you must be calm. The doctor said you must be quiet or—Oh, Madame you will be quiet?

Margot—You have not brought Claire. Why?

Seaman—Our men are searching steadily, ma'am. The water is rough to-day. We've sighted a drifting skiff and we're trying to reach it. We think—

Second Seaman—Don't worry ma'am we'll reach it.

Third Seaman—(Looking through window)—The water's getting rougher.

Barter—All right, men, let's go. Reach that skiff! (Turning to maid) I'll run over

to the theatre, then I'll come back. Take care.

Bertie—Yes sir.

(She returns from seeing the men out to Margot who has sat staring hard since she last spoke. Bertie gets her to lie down then sits by her side. The ocean grows louder.)

Margot—(Sitting up)—Listen, Claire, listen!

Bertie—Yes, yes, Madame, it is the ocean. Do lie down. Don't listen to it.

Margot—No, no, child, it is applause. Hear how they call for me. More! I must get back into my part. (Bertie looks on, frightened, while Margot goes into acting.) Ah, sir, and here's a rose; it has a symbol. Know you it? 'Twas mine, 'tis yours. No go, sir, and ponder o'er the symbol. (She waits for an imagined cue, pantomining all the while.) Ah, but if you stay our secret is given away! It is not yet time for that. Ah, you will go! Here comes my cousin Clara. (Changing from acting at the sound of the name she has spoken.) Clara—Clara—Claire! Claire! Claire!

Bertie—(Running to her)—Madame Cotell! Please! Come!

Margot Cotell—Madame Cotell! Why, I am Marjorie Meade, you know, but of course I shall take another name for my work. Go, Claire, darling, sit there and hear my new lines.

Bertie—Now, now, Madame, do come. I am Bertie. Come, lie down before the doctor returns.

Margot—There now, they're applauding again. I must get back into the part. (Acting again)

Rush on, my brain—I cannot comprehend things infinitesimal!

I cannot grasp the things that sweep me on.

I cannot leave the cloud-realms,—yet The abstract drowns me—utterly, utterly. Poor despairing mortal, I. This is madness!

(Hearing the waves again) Why do they applaud in the midst of my lines! Why do they not—Ah, they have gone, and left the ocean in their place! And it is laughing—shouting at me! Stop it!—Oh, my baby! Claire!—Baby! Bring her back! She falls screaming to the floor.)

Bertie—(Running to her)—Oh, poor, poor Madame If you had just kept quiet. Oh—oh—I can't do a thing! (Wringing her

hands and running to the window and opening it.) Hey! Mister! Please come in here at once. Yes! To the front; I'll let you in! (Over the woman) You poor, poor darling. Anyhow you've showed 'em you could be great. I know you suffered. (Goes to let the man in. He is one of the seamen.)

Bertie—Just help me get her on the chaise longue.

Seaman—Right! There y'are. Now what're you gonna do? Give'er some more medicine? Too much dope in this here.

Bertie—Thank you I can manage now. She's coming to. If she just didn't hear those waves! They do sound awful.—Poor Madame (tending her). (To seaman) Are people stirring much?

Seaman—Wa'al, they ain't just up on what's happened. They know we're searching for someone. We don't know awrsef whether the miss is out there or whether she run away. They're nearin' that skiff though.

Bertie—Do they know Madame Cotell is connected with the affair?

Seaman—Oh, well, I guess it's 'bout sneaked around now that she's—she's colored. Course this here's a kind of swellish neighborhood, whole place is in fact, and I guess—

Bertie—(Flaring up)—Well, what'n the devil's that got to do with it! She didn't bother a darned soul unless they came after her. She never told nobody what she was because nobody asked her. I'd like to tell these white guys something around here. I may not be so doggoned high-up, but I certainly know the real stuff when I see it. Margot Cotell's got in her what a lot o' folks around here need, and need bad! She took the chance that came to her, and she's let 'em know what she is.

Seaman—(Noticing Margot stirring)—Hey! Yer wakin' her up! (He goes out while he can.)

Bertie—(Turning quickly to Margot)—Oh, I'm sorry! I didn't go to make all that fuss, Madame.

Margot—What is the trouble Bertie? Shouldn't I be at the—What is it?—Why—

Bertie—(Giving her something to quiet her)—Now, Madame, you must be very still.

(The bell rings sharply. Bertie answers and returns with Mr. Barter who is a bit excited.)

Barter—How do you feel now Madame? Fine, fine! I'll just tell you this right now. The people screamed for Margot Cotell! The understudy can't hold them. Madame must return regardless.

Margot—(As though it were all just dawning on her) Did you tell them Margot Cotell is colored?

Barter—It is never to be mentioned again. Margot—Has my child been found?

Bertie—(She has been looking out of the window.) Pardon, Madame, but the—the men are—are coming.

(Barter and Margot both turn, asking the same question with their eyes.)

Bertie—Yes—yes—they—they have something! It's—it's the wrap she wore—and—a shoe—and—Oh! (Hiding her face in her hands)

(Margot sits very still. She is strangely calm.)

Margot—(Motioning to Mr. Barter)—Go meet them, Mr. Barter. (He leaves the room hesitating) I am all right.

(This calm surprises Bertie, but as soon as the man has left the room Margot changes.)

Margot (Rising)—Come here, Bertie, quick! Away from the window! Now sit here! Stay! If you follow me I'll strangle you. (She is wild again and talking in loud whispers. She flings the long window open.) You dare! (This as Bertie starts after her. The girl is too frightened to start again.) Old waves, you have not called in vain! You led her through this door and out again. Now I'm coming, and we'll have our holiday together. (Her wild laughter floats back as she dashes away. Mr. Barter and the other men come as she vanishes. They and the maid run to the long window. The men go after her. Bertie stands on the stoop outside the long window, staring after them. A final, wild, victorious scream comes back, and Bertie falls, fainting where she stands. The men do not overtake Margot. Only the roar of the ocean is heard as the curtain falls.)

MOCKING BIRD

CHARLES BERTRAM JOHNSON

LYRIST of the solemn hour,
Day's onfall brings thy power

With a deluge of delight,
All enravishing the night.