

Harvey by

buzzer.) I gave the driver a dollar to watch him, but I didn't tell the man why. You can't tell these things to perfect strangers. (Enter WILSON, c. He is the sanitarian strongarm. He is a big burly attendant, black-browed, about 28. KELLY crosses in front of desk toward bookcase.)

KELLY. Mr. Wilson, would you step down to a taxi in the driveway and ask a Mr. Dowd if he would be good enough to step up to Room number 24—South Wing G?

WILSON. (Glaring at L. upper corner of desk.) Ask him?

KELLY. (Above table R., with a warning glance toward Veta.) This is his sister, Mrs. Simmons. (KELLY crosses to cabinet R. for card.)

WILSON. (With a feeble grin.) How do—why, certainly—be glad to escort him. (Exits down L.)

VETA. Thank you.

KELLY. (Coming c. to R. of Veta—handing her printed slip.) The rates here, Mrs. Simmons—you'll find them printed on this card.

VETA. (Waving it away.) That will all be taken care of by my mother's estate. The late Marcella Pinney Dowd. Judge Gaffney is our attorney.

KELLY. Now I'll see if Dr. Sanderson can see you. (Starts toward office L.)

VETA. Dr. Sanderson? I want to see Dr. Chumley himself.

KELLY. (Backs down c.) Oh, Mrs. Simmons, Dr. Sanderson is the one who sees everybody. Dr. Chumley sees no one.

VETA. He's still head of this institution, isn't he? He's still a psychiatrist, isn't he?

KELLY. (Shocked at such heresy.) Still a psychiatrist! Dr. Chumley is more than that. He is a psychiatrist with a national reputation. Whenever people have mental breakdowns they at once think of Dr. Chumley.

VETA. (Pointing.) That's his office, isn't it? Well, you march right in and tell him I want to see him. If he knows who's in here he'll come out here.

KELLY. I wouldn't dare disturb him, Mrs. Simmons. I would be discharged if I did.

VETA. Well, I don't like to be pushed off onto any second fiddle.

KELLY. Dr. Sanderson is nobody's second fiddle. (Crosses to back of desk, her eyes aglow.) He's young, of course, and he hasn't been out of medical school very long, but Dr. Chumley

Mary Chase

tried out twelve and kept Dr. Sanderson. He's really wonderful—(atches herself.) to the patients.

VETA. Very well. Tell him I'm here.

KELLY. (Straightens her cap. As she exits into door L., primps.) Right away.

VETA. (She rises, takes off coat—puts it on back of chair R. of desk, sighs.) Oh dear—oh dear (and crosses to table R. WILSON and ELWOOD appear in corridor. ELWOOD pulls over a little from WILSON and sees VETA.)

ELWOOD. Veta—isn't this wonderful!—(WILSON takes him forcefully off up-stairs. VETA is still jumpy and nervous from the surprise, and her back to door L. as—enter DR. SANDERSON. LYMAN SANDERSON is a good-looking young man of 27 or 28. He is wearing a starched white coat over dark trousers. His eyes follow MISS KELLY, who has walked out before him and gone out c., closing c. doors. Then he sees VETA, pulls down his jacket and gets a professional bearing. VETA has not heard him come in. She is still busy with the compact.)

SANDERSON. (Looking at slip in his hand. Crosses to c.) Mrs. Simmons?

VETA. (Startled—she jumps.) Oh—oh dear—I didn't hear you come in. You startled me. You're Dr. Sanderson?

SANDERSON. (He nods.) Yes. Will you be seated, please?

VETA. (Sits chair L. of table R.) Thank you. I hope you don't think I'm jumpy like that all the time, but I—

SANDERSON. (Crossing in front of table to chair R.) Of course not. Miss Kelley tells me you are concerned about your brother. Dowd, is it? Elwood P. Dowd?

VETA. Yes, Doctor—he's—this isn't easy for me, Doctor.

SANDERSON. (Kindly.) Naturally these things aren't easy for the families of patients. I understand.

VETA. (Twisting her handkerchief nervously.) It's what Elwood's doing to himself, Doctor—that's the thing. Myrtle Mae has a right to nice friends. She's young and her whole life is before her. That's my daughter.

SANDERSON. (Sits R. of table.) Your daughter. How long has it been since you began to notice any peculiarity in your brother's actions?

VETA. I noticed it right away when Mother died, and Myrtle Mae and I came back home from Des Moines to live with Elwood. I could see that he—that he—(Twists handkerchief—looks pleadingly at SANDERSON.)

SANDERSON. That he—what? Take your time, Mrs. Simmons.

Don't strain. Let it come. I'll wait for it.
VETA. Doctor—everything I say to you is confidential? Isn't it?

SANDERSON. That's understood.
VETA. Because it's a slap in the face to everything we've stood for in this community the way Elwood is acting now.

SANDERSON. I am not a gossip, Mrs. Simmons. I am a psychiatrist.

VETA. Well—for one thing—he drinks.

SANDERSON. To excess?

VETA. To excess? Well—don't you call it excess when a man never lets a day go by without stepping into one of those cheap taverns, sitting around with riffraff and people you never heard of? Inviting them to the house—playing cards with them—giving them food and money. And here I am trying to get Myrtle Mae started with a nice group of young people. If that isn't excess I'm sure I don't know what excess is.

SANDERSON. I didn't doubt your statement, Mrs. Simmons. I merely asked if your brother drinks.

VETA. Well, yes, I say definitely Elwood drinks and I want him committed out here permanently, because I cannot stand another day of that Harvey. Myrtle and I have to set a place at the table for Harvey. We have to move over on the sofa and make room for Harvey. We have to answer the telephone when Elwood calls and asks to speak to Harvey. Then at the party this afternoon with Mrs. Chauvenet there—We didn't even know anything about Harvey until we came back here. Doctor, don't you think it would have been a little bit kinder of Mother to have written and told me about Harvey? Be honest, now—don't you?

SANDERSON. I really couldn't answer that question, because I —

VETA. I can. Yes—it certainly would have.

SANDERSON. This person you call Harvey—who is he?

VETA. He's a rabbit.

SANDERSON. Perhaps—but just who is he? Some companion—someone your brother has picked up in these bars, of whom you disapprove?

VETA. (*Patiently.*) Doctor—I've been telling you. Harvey is a rabbit—a big white rabbit—six feet high—or is it six feet and a half? Heavens knows I ought to know. He's been around the house long enough.

SANDERSON. (*Regarding her narrowly.*) Now, Mrs. Simmons, me understand this—you say—

VETA. (*Impatient.*) Doctor—do I have to keep repeating myself? My brother insists that his closest friend is this big white rabbit. This rabbit is named Harvey. Harvey lives at our house. Don't you understand? He and Elwood go every place together. Elwood buys railroad tickets, theater tickets, for both of them. As I told Myrtle Mae—if your uncle was so lonesome he had to bring something home—why couldn't he bring home something human? He has me, doesn't he? He has Myrtle Mae doesn't he? (*She leans forward.*) Doctor—(*She rises to him.*) I inclines toward her.) I'm going to tell you something I've never told anybody in the world before. (*Puts her hand on his shoulder.*) Every once in a while I see that big white rabbit myself. Now isn't that terrible? I've never even told that to Myrtle Mae.

SANDERSON. (*Now convinced. Starts to rise.*) Mrs. Simmons—

VETA. (*Straightening.*) And what's more—he's every bit as big as Elwood says he is. Now don't ever tell that to anybody Doctor. I'm ashamed of it. (*Crosses to c., to chair R. of desk.*)

SANDERSON. (*Crosses to VETA.*) I can see that you have been under a great nervous strain recently.

VETA. Well—I certainly have.

SANDERSON. Grief over your mother's death depressed you considerably?

VETA. (*Sits chair R. of desk.*) Nobody knows how much.

SANDERSON. Been losing sleep?

VETA. How could anybody sleep with that going on?

SANDERSON. (*Crosses to back of desk.*) Short-tempered over trifles?

VETA. You just try living with those two and see how your temper holds up.

SANDERSON. (*Presses buzzer.*) Loss of appetite?

VETA. No one could eat at a table with my brother and a big white rabbit. Well, I'm finished with it. I'll sell the house—the appointed conservator of Elwood's estate, and Myrtle Mae and I will be able to entertain our friends in peace. It's too much, Doctor. I just can't stand it.

SANDERSON. (*Has been repeatedly pressing a buzzer on his desk. He looks with annoyance toward hall door. His answer now to VETA is gentle.*) Of course, Mrs. Simmons. Of course it is. You're tired.

VETA. (*She nods.*) Oh, yes I am.

SANDERSON. You've been worrying a great deal.

VETA. (*Nods.*) Yes, I have. I can't help it.

SANDERSON. And now I'm going to help you.

VETA. Oh, Doctor....

SANDERSON. (*Goes cautiously to door—watching her.*) Just sit there quietly, Mrs. Simmons. I'll be right back. (*He exits c.*)

VETA. (*Sighing with relief, rises and calls out as she takes coat.*) I'll just go down to the cab and get Elwood's things. (*She exits out down L.*) SANDERSON, KELLY and WILSON come from c.)

SANDERSON. Why didn't someone answer the buzzer?

KELLY. I didn't hear you, Doctor—

SANDERSON. I rang and rang. (*Looks into his office. It is empty.*) Mrs. Simmons—(*Looks out door L., shuts it, comes back.*) Sound the gong, Wilson. That poor woman must not leave the grounds.

WILSON. She's made with a getaway, huh, doc? (*WILSON presses a button on the wall and we hear a loud gong sounding.*)

SANDERSON. Her condition is serious. Go after her. (*WILSON exits c.*)

KELLY. I can't believe it. (*Above a chair R. of desk.*) SANDERSON sits L. of desk and picks up phone.)

SANDERSON. Main gate. Henry. Dr. Sanderson. Allow no one out of the main gate. We're looking for a patient. (*Hangs up.*) I shouldn't have left her alone, but no one answered the buzzer.

KELLY. Wilson was in South, Doctor.

SANDERSON. (*Making out papers.*) What have we available, Miss Kelly?

KELLY. Number 13, upper West R., is ready, Doctor.

SANDERSON. Have her taken there immediately, and I will prescribe preliminary treatment. I must contact her brother. Dowd is the name. Elwood P. Dowd. Get him on the telephone for me, will you please, Miss Kelly?

KELLY. But Doctor—I didn't know it was the woman who needed the treatment. She said it was for her brother.

SANDERSON. Of course she did. It's the oldest dodge in the world—always used by a cunning type of psychopath. She apparently knew her brother was about to commit her, so she came out to discredit him. Get him on the telephone, please.

KELLY. But, Doctor—I thought the woman was all right, so I had Wilson take the brother up to No. 24 South Wing C. He's there now.

SANDERSON. (*Staring at her with horror.*) You had Wilson take the brother in? No gags, please Kelly. You're not serious, are you?

KELLY. Oh, I did, Doctor. I did. Oh, Doctor, I'm terribly sorry.

SANDERSON. Oh, well then, if you're sorry, that fixes everything. (*He starts to pick up house phone and finishes the curse under his breath.*) Oh — nol (*Buries his head in his hands.*)

KELLY. I'll do it, Doctor. I'll do it. (*She takes phone.*) Miss Dunphy—will you please unlock the door to Number 24—and give Mr. Dowd his clothes and —? (*Looks at Sanderson for direction.*)

SANDERSON. Ask him to step down to the office right away.

KELLY. (*Into phone.*) Ask him to step down to the office right away. There's been a terrible mistake and Dr. Sanderson wants to explain—

SANDERSON. (*Crosses below table to c.*) Explain? Apologize! KELLY. (*Hanging up.*) Thank heaven they hadn't put him in a hydro tub yet. She'll let him out.

SANDERSON. (*Staring at her.*) Beautiful—and dumb, too. It's almost too good to be true.

KELLY. (*Crosses to L. of Sanderson.*) Doctor—I feel terrible. I didn't know. Judge Gaffney called and said Mrs. Simmons and her brother would be out here, and when she came in here—you don't have to be sarcastic.

SANDERSON. Oh, don't I? Stop worrying. We'll squirm out of it some way. (*Thinking—starts toward R.*)

KELLY. Where are you going?

SANDERSON. I've got to tell the chief about it, Kelly. He may want to handle this himself.

KELLY. He'll be furious. I know he will. He'll die. And then he'll terminate me.

SANDERSON. (*Below table, catches her shoulders.*) The responsibility is all mine, Kelly.

KELLY. Oh, no—tell him it was all my fault, Doctor.

SANDERSON. I never mention your name. (*Crossing to door R.*) Except in my sleep.