

garden, Stephen." (*Looks down demurely, folds her hands in her lap.*) "She—may not return for some time."

BILLY. "I see." (*Moves closer.*) "Would you mind if I waited for her . . . here?"

VIOLET. "Naturally not."

BILLY. "Might I . . . sit?"

VIOLET. "If you are so inclined."

BILLY. (*Sits beside her.*) "Diana—"

VIOLET. (*Eyes still downcast, turns head away.*) "Yes, Stephen—?"

BILLY. "Would you take offense if I were to—to—?"

VIOLET. "Stephen, what are you trying to say?"

BILLY. "Oh, dash it all, Diana, must we play at words? You *know* the message that longs to cry out from within my heart!"

VIOLET. (*Raises her eyes, looks at him.*) "Is it possible—do I dare for a moment imagine—that the message in your heart is the selfsame message that cries out from within my own—?"

BILLY. "Diana—do you mean—do I dare to dream—?" (*Takes her hands.*)

VIOLET. "Have a care, sir—have a care—you know that I am betrothed to another man!"

BILLY. "And yet—you do not draw away . . . ?"

VIOLET. "Oh, Stephen—can you not reason out why?"

BILLY. "I—I am almost afraid to!"

VIOLET. "Then *cease* your noble trepidations, Stephen Sellers. For—though I am a high-born lady—I am also a woman!"

BILLY. "Oh, Diana!" (*Kisses her lightly on the lips.*)

VIOLET. "Oh, Stephen!" (*Lays her head against his shoulder.*) "If Doctor Forbes should come upon us—!"

BILLY. "Hang your illustrious fiancé! He shall not

have you!" (*Kisses her again, a bit more firmly.*) "Oh, Diana—!"

VIOLET. Oh—Billy!

BILLY. Oh—Violet! (*And they go into a real clinch, clutching and caressing and swaying, the metal chairs rattling until:.*)

LOUISE. (*Enters.*) What's all that clattering—?! (*They spring apart and come to their feet.*) Ha! No wonder you want a real sofa!

VIOLET. Now, Louise—!

LOUISE. I didn't see a thing. Not a thing. (*Gives a happy cackle of amusement and exits.*)

VIOLET. Billy—do you think she suspects?!

BILLY. How could she? I didn't suspect, *myself*, till just a moment ago!

VIOLET. Oh, darling, neither did I! (*They almost embrace, but break decorously apart and try to look innocent as they hear:.*)

PHYLLIS. (*Off.*) Yoo-hoo—?! Anybody here—?!

VIOLET. Billy! That sounds like Miss Montague!

BILLY. Tonight? But she promised not to come back till dress rehearsal!

(*OTHERS reappear Onstage via various routes, all wearing the same apprehensive look as our duo.*)