

Greta & Carter

(*He replaces the receiver and sorts the documents on the desk. GRETA enters.*)

GRETA. Shall I make the tea, Mr. Carter?

(*CARTER looks at his watch.*)

CARTER. It's hardly time yet, Greta.

GRETA. It is by my watch.

CARTER. Then your watch is wrong.

GRETA. I put it right by the radio.

CARTER. Then the radio must be wrong.

GRETA. (*Shocked.*) Oh, not the radio, Mr. Carter. That couldn't be wrong.

CARTER. This watch was my father's. It never gains nor loses. They don't make watches like that nowadays.

(*CARTER picks up one of the typewritten papers.*)

Really, your typing. Always mistakes. You've left out a word.

GRETA. Oh, well – just one word. Anyone might do that.

CARTER. The word you have left out is the word *not*. The omission of it entirely alters the sense.

GRETA. Oh, does it? That's rather funny when you come to think of it.

CARTER. It is not in the least funny.

(*He tears the letter in half and hands the pieces to her.*)

Do it again. You may remember I told you last week about the celebrated case of Bryant and Horsfall. Case of a will and a trust fund, and entirely owing to a piece of careless copying by a clerk...

GRETA. (*Interrupting.*) The wrong wife got the money, I remember.

CARTER. A woman divorced fifteen years previously. Absolutely contrary to the intention of the testator, as his lordship himself admitted. But the wording had to stand. They couldn't do anything about it.

GRETA. I think that's rather funny, too.

CARTER. Counsel's Chambers are no place to be funny in. The Law, Greta, is a serious business and should be treated accordingly.

GRETA. You wouldn't think so to hear some of the jokes judges make.

CARTER. That kind of joke is the prerogative of the Bench.

GRETA. And I'm always reading in the paper about "laughter in court."

CARTER. If that's not caused by one of the judge's remarks you'll find he'll soon threaten to have the court cleared.

GRETA. Mean old thing. Do you know what I read the other day, Mr. Carter? "The Law's an Ass." I'm not being rude. It's a quotation.

CARTER. (*Coldly.*) A quotation of a facetious nature. Not meant to be taken seriously. You can make the tea –

(*CARTER looks at his watch. He pauses, waiting for the exact second.*)

– now, Greta.

GRETA. (*Gladly.*) Oh, thank you, Mr. Carter.

CARTER. Mr. Mayhew, of Mayhew and Brinskill, will be here shortly. A Mr. Leonard Vole is also expected. They may come together or separately.

GRETA. (*Excitedly.*) Leonard Vole? Why, that's the name – it was in the paper...

CARTER. (*Repressively.*) The tea, Greta.

GRETA. Asked to communicate with the police as he might be able to give them useful information.

CARTER. Tea!

GRETA. It was only last...

(*CARTER glowers at GRETA.*)

The tea, Mr. Carter.

(*GRETA exits. CARTER continues his arrangement of the papers, muttering to himself.*)