

Billie, Devery, Hedges, Mrs. Hedges (Eddie)

~~with brief-case.) Take it easy.
BILLIE. (At liquor cabinet up r.) Look now, don't you start.
DEVERY. Better if you drink later, Billie, after they've gone.
BILLIE. What's the deal, anyway?
DEVERY. (Crossing back to L. of table.) No deal. Just important people, that's all.
BILLIE. (U. r. of table.) Who? This Senator guy?
DEVERY. And Mrs. Hedges.
BILLIE. Harry told me this fella works for him.
DEVERY. In a way.
BILLIE. So what's he puttin' it on for?
DEVERY. I suppose he wants him to keep working for him.
BILLIE. (After a moment.) Too deep for me. (Buzzer sounds.)
DEVERY. (Wishes a step to her, lowering his voice.) All you have to do is be nice and no rough language.
BILLIE. (Does not like being coached. Crossing to sofa.) I won't open my mouth! (Pronounced to rhyme with 'push' Eddie comes downstairs, goes to door.)
DEVERY. I didn't mean that.
BILLIE. I don't have to be down here at all, y'know. I could go up stairs. In fact I think I will. (SHE starts out, having decided she has been insulted.)
DEVERY. (Intercepting her.) I'm telling you, Billie. Harry wouldn't like it.
BILLIE. (Making violent about face.) All right all right all right! (SHE moves to sofa, bristling, and sits. EDDIE opens door to admit SENATOR NORVAL HEDGES and MRS. HEDGES. DEVERY moves to greet them.)
DEVERY. (Washington joviality.) How are you, Norval?
HEDGES. Can't complain. (Comes down into room.)
DEVERY. (To MRS. HEDGES.) Haven't seen you for a long time, Anna.
MRS. HEDGES. (Sweetly.) No, you haven't.
DEVERY. Come on in. (HEDGES is a worried man of sixty. Thin, pale, and worn. MRS. HEDGES bears out Fanny Dixwell Holmes' comment that Washington is a city filled with great men and the women they married when they were very young. Except that the Senator is not a great man. He merely looks like a great man.)
HEDGES. (C., to BILLIE.) Good evening.
BILLIE. Good evening.
DEVERY. (Moving between HEDGES and MRS. HEDGES.) Senator,~~

you ought to remember this little lady. A great first-nighter like you. She used to be Billie Dawn?
HEDGES. (Vaguely.) Oh, yes — yes, indeed.
DEVERY. Billie, this is Senator Norval Hedges I've told you so much about. (HEDGES offers his hand as HE crosses to her. BILLIE takes it.)
HEDGES. How do you do?
BILLIE. How do you do? (HEDGES crosses back to C.)
DEVERY. And this is Mrs. Hedges, Billie.
MRS. HEDGES. (Sitting beside BILLIE.) Glad to meet you.
BILLIE. Glad to meet you.
DEVERY. What do you say to a drink?
MRS. HEDGES. Love one.
HEDGES. Sounds all right to me.
DEVERY. Bourbon?
HEDGES. Be fine.
DEVERY. (To EDDIE.) Bourbon all around, Eddie. (Motions HEDGES to sit in chair L. of table.)
EDDIE. Right. (HE goes to sideboard to fix drinks.)
HEDGES. (Crossing to chair L. of table.) That's going to hit the spot just fine. (Sits.)
MRS. HEDGES. (To BILLIE.) He's awfully tired.
DEVERY. (To HEDGES, jocularly.) What've you been doing? Standing over a hot resolution all day?
HEDGES. (With a wan smile.) Just about.
MRS. HEDGES. (To BILLIE.) How do you like Washington, Mrs. Brock? (DEVERY steps quickly toward BILLIE. A tiny pause. BILLIE, turned slightly away, does not realize for an instant that she is being addressed. DEVERY, having taken such pains to avoid identifying her too exactly during the course of introductions, is afraid BILLIE may now correct MRS. HEDGES and ruin his careful diplomacy. BILLIE catches his eye. DEVERY nods.)
BILLIE. Oh . . . I haven't seen it yet.
MRS. HEDGES. You mean to say this is the very first time you've been here?
BILLIE. That's what I mean. (Grandly.) I never went on the road. HEDGES. Well, we must show you around. Beautiful City.
MRS. HEDGES. (To BILLIE.) Too bad the Supreme Court isn't in session. You'd love that. (A pause.)
BILLIE. What is it? (MRS. HEDGES is at a loss. Looks over at HEDGES to see if he has any ideas. DEVERY jesses the moment by