

shall not be able to stay this visit. I must, well, unravel a few things. Nurse Ireland and Snork are—?

MERRICK. Friendly and respectful Frederick.

TRAVES. I'll look in in a few days.

MERRICK. Did I do something wrong?

Mrs. KENDAL. No.

TRAVES. This is a hospital. Not a marketplace. Don't forget it, ever. Sorry. Not you. Me. (*Exits.*)

Mrs. KENDAL. Well. Shall we weave today? Don't you think weaving might be fun? So many things are fun. Most men really can't enjoy them. Their loss, isn't it? I like little activities which engage me; there's something ancient in it. I don't know. Before all this. Would you like to try? John?

MERRICK. Frederick said I may stay here for life.

Mrs. KENDAL. And so you shall.

MERRICK. If he is in trouble?

Mrs. KENDAL. Frederick is your protector, John.

MERRICK. If he is in trouble? (*He picks up small photograph.*)

Mrs. KENDAL. Who is that? Ah, is it not your

mother? She is pretty, isn't she?

MERRICK. Will Frederick keep his word with me,

his contract, Mrs. Kendal? If he is in trouble.

Mrs. KENDAL. What? Contract? Did you say?

MERRICK. And will you?

Mrs. KENDAL. I? What? Will I?

MERRICK silent. *Puts another piece on model. Fadeout.*

SCENE 14

ART IS PERMITTED BUT NATURE
FORBIDDEN

Rain. MERRICK working. Mrs. KENDAL.

MERRICK. The Prince has a mistress. (*Silence.*) The Irishman had one. Everyone seems to. Or a wife. Some have both. I have concluded I need a mistress. It is bad enough not to sleep like others.

Mrs. KENDAL. Sitting up, you mean. Couldn't be very restful.

MERRICK. I have to. Too heavy to lay down. My head. But to sleep alone; that is worst of all.

Mrs. KENDAL. The artist expresses his love through his works. That is civilization.

MERRICK. Are you very shocked?

Mrs. KENDAL. Why should I be?

MERRICK. Others would be.

Mrs. KENDAL. I am not others.

MERRICK. I suppose it is hopeless.

Mrs. KENDAL. Nothing is hopeless. However it is unlikely.

MERRICK. I thought you might have a few ideas.

Mrs. KENDAL. I can guess who has ideas here.

MERRICK. You don't know something. I have never

even seen a naked woman.

Mrs. KENDAL. Surely in all the fairs you worked.

MERRICK. I mean a real woman.

Mrs. KENDAL. Is one more real than another?

MERRICK. I mean like the ones in the theater. The opera.

Mrs. KENDAL. Surely you can't mean they are more real.

MERRICK. In the audience. A woman not worn out early. Not deformed by awful life. A lady. Someone kept up. Respectful of herself. You don't know what fairgrounds are like, Mrs. Kendal.

Mrs. KENDAL. You mean someone like Princess Alexandra?

MERRICK. Not so old.

Mrs. KENDAL. Ah. Like Dorothy.