

WHEN THE ILLUSION ENDS HE  
MUST KILL HIMSELF

MERRICK *sketching. Enter TREVES, Mrs. KENDAL.*

TREVES. He is making sketches for a model of St. Phillip's church. He wants someday to make a model, you see. John, my boy, this is Mrs. Kendal. She would very much like to make your acquaintance.

Mrs. KENDAL. Good morning Mr. Merrick.

TREVES. I will see to a few matters. I will be back soon. *(Exit.)*

MERRICK. I planned so many things to say. I forget them. You are so beautiful.

Mrs. KENDAL. How charming, Mr. Merrick.

MERRICK. Well. Really that was what I planned to say. That I forgot what I planned to say. I couldn't think of anything else I was so excited.

Mrs. KENDAL. Real charm is always planned, don't you think?

MERRICK. Well. I do not know why I look like this, Mrs. Kendal. My mother was so beautiful. She was knocked down by an elephant in a circus while she was pregnant. Something must have happened, don't you think?

Mrs. KENDAL. It may well have.

MERRICK. It may well have. But sometimes I think my head is so big because it is so full of dreams. Because it is. Do you know what happens when dreams cannot get out?

Mrs. KENDAL. Why no.

MERRICK. I don't either. Something must. *(Silence.)*  
Well, You are a famous actress.

Mrs. KENDAL. I am not unknown.

MERRICK. You must display yourself for your living then. Like I did.

Mrs. KENDAL. That is not myself, Mr. Merrick.

That is an illusion. This is myself.

MERRICK. This is myself too.

Mrs. KENDAL. Frederick says you like to read. So: books.

MERRICK. I am reading *Romeo and Juliet* now.

Mrs. KENDAL. Ah, Juliet. What a love story. I adore love stories.

MERRICK. I like love stories best too. If I had been Romeo, guess what.

Mrs. KENDAL. What?

MERRICK. I would not have held the mirror to her breath.

Mrs. KENDAL. You mean the scene where Juliet appears to be dead and he holds a mirror to her breath and sees—

MERRICK. Nothing. How does it feel when he kills himself because he just sees nothing?

Mrs. KENDAL. Well. My experience as Juliet has been—particularly with an actor I will not name—that while I'm laying there dead dead dead, and he is lamenting excessively, I get to thinking that if this slab of ham does not part from the hammock of his life toute suite, I am going to scream, pop off the tomb, and plunge a dagger into his scene-stealing heart. Romeos are very undependable.

MERRICK. Because he does not care for Juliet.

Mrs. KENDAL. Not care?

MERRICK. Does he take her pulse? Does he get a doctor? Does he make sure? No. He kills himself. The illusion fools him because he does not care for her.