

Cut #1

MARGOT. (*Interrupting.*) Max, before Tony comes I ought to explain something.

MAX. Yes?

MARGOT. I didn't tell him anything about us.

MAX. Oh.

MARGOT. When you rang up yesterday, I just said that you were a television writer I'd met when he was in America.

MAX. Well, that's true enough.

MARGOT. I said I'd met you again just before you went back to New York and you promised to look us up if you ever came back.

MAX. I see.

MARGOT. Max, I know you think it's silly, but when you get to know Tony, you'll understand why.

MAX. Margot, I'd like to get one thing straight. (*Rises and sits on arm of sofa.*) Things are O.K. now between you and Tony?

MARGOT. They couldn't be better. And I want to keep them that way.

MAX. I'm very glad—at least I guess I will be when I get used to the idea.

MARGOT. There's something else, Max.

MAX. Yes?

MARGOT. I wasn't going to tell you but . . .

MAX. Come on, let's have it . . .

MARGOT. Well, you remember those letters you wrote me?

MAX. Of course.

MARGOT. After I read them I burnt them. I thought it best. All except one. You probably know the one I mean.

MAX. I can guess. I never should have written it.

MARGOT. I know. But I loved it just the same. I used to carry it round wherever I went. Then one day Tony and I were going to spend the week end with some friends in the country. While we were waiting on the platform I noticed my handbag was missing . . . and the letter was inside.

MAX. I see. . . . Where was this?

MARGOT. Victoria Station. I thought I must have left it in the restaurant but when I went to look for it, it had gone.

MAX. You never found it?

MARGOT. I recovered the handbag about two weeks later from the lost and found. But the letter wasn't there. (*Pause.*) Then a



week after I received a note. It told me what I had to do to get the letter back.

MAX. Go on.

MARGOT. I was to draw fifty pounds from my bank in five-pound notes, then change them for used one-pound notes. It said that if I went to the police or told anyone else—he would show the letter to my husband.

MAX. May I see it? (*Margot exits into bedroom. Max gets up and paces uneasily around the room. He takes a cigarette from the silver box on table behind sofa and lights it. Then Margot enters from bedroom holding two white envelopes. She hands one of these to Max who takes out the note and examines it.*) Printed—all capitals. Anyone could have done this. (*Margot hands him the other envelope.*)

MARGOT. Then—two days later—I got this one. (*Max takes out the second note.*)

MAX. (*Glancing at the postmarks.*) Both mailed in Brixton. (*Reading.*) "Tie up money in a package and mail to John S. King, 23 Newport Street, Brixton, S.W.9. You will get your letter by return." Well, of all the . . .

MARGOT. That's a little shop. People use it as a forwarding address.

MAX. Did you mail the money?

MARGOT. Yes, but the letter was never returned. . . . So after waiting two weeks I went there. They said they'd never heard of a man by that name, and the parcel was still there. It had never been opened.

MAX. Well, I suppose that's something. (*Max puts the notes back in the envelopes and puts them into his wallet.*) May I keep these?

MARGOT. (*Hesitates.*) Yes. . . . If you like.

MAX. You didn't tell Tony?

MARGOT. No, I didn't tell anyone. (*Pause.*) I can't understand why the man didn't collect the money.

MAX. He was probably in jail by that time. (*Pause.*) You never heard from him again?

MARGOT. No.

MAX. Well, let me know if you do. I'll find him and fix him so he can't read, let alone write. (*Pause.*) Is that why you asked me to stop writing?



MARGOT. Yes. I was in an awful panic. I imagined that every letter you wrote me would be opened and read by someone.

MAX. Why didn't you tell me?

MARGOT. You couldn't have done anything. You would probably have made me tell Tony and the police. As it was only fifty pounds I thought I'd pay up and have done with it.

MAX. Margot, are you ever going to tell Tony—about us?

MARGOT. (*Horried.*) No. I couldn't possibly tell him. Not now.

MAX. Why not? Don't you think we'd all get on better in the end if . . .

MARGOT. Please, Max, I know Tony—you don't.

MAX. You don't have to tell me. Just the thought of meeting him makes me, shall we say, uncomfortable.

MARGOT. Oh, you'll get on fine. He's changed a lot this last year. . . . Now, he's a model husband. (*Slowly and thoughtfully.*) In fact, it was exactly a year ago that it happened.

MAX. What happened?

MARGOT. Tony suddenly grew up. He seemed to change overnight from a rather selfish little person into a perfectly reasonable grownup. You remember that night—I came to say good-bye?

MAX. How could I forget? Tony had gone off to play in a tennis tournament.

MARGOT. He did—but he came back. I'm not much good at writing about things like this, so I didn't try. But when I left you that night I came back here. I sat down on the sofa and had a good cry. Then I fell asleep. When I woke up he was standing in the hall with all his bags and tennis rackets. He just said that he had decided to give up tennis for good and settle down.

MAX. Just like that? (*Margot gets up. Takes Max's glass and hers to drink shelf in R. bookcase and pours out drinks.*)

MARGOT. Just like that. Of course I didn't believe him at first. I'd got so used to tagging around after him wherever he went, I could see no end to it. But he meant it all right. He went out the very next day and got himself a job. (*A church clock chimes.*) What were we doing—exactly a year ago?

MAX. I was putting the mushrooms into the spaghetti. I nearly turned round and said, "I can't go through with this. Let's find Tony and have it out with him."

MARGOT. I felt that way, too. I wanted so much to say some-