

ALL ABOUT EVE

EVE

I was wondering whether you'd come at all..

KAREN

Don't get up.

(she smiles grimly)

And don't act as if I were the queen mother.

EVE

I don't expect you to be pleasant.

KAREN

I don't intend to be.

EVE

Can't we sit down? Just for a minute...

She sits down. Karen remains standing.

EVE

I've got a lot to say. And none of it is easy.

KAREN

There can't be very much-

EVE

Oh, but there is-

KAREN

- and easy or not, I won't believe a word.

EVE

Why shouldn't you?

(a pause)

Please sit down.

Karen sits, reluctantly and rigidly.

EVE

You know, I've always considered myself a very clever girl. Smart. Good head on my shoulders, that sort of thing, never the wrong word at the wrong time... but then, I'd never met Addison deWitt.

(another pause)

I remember once I had a tooth pulled. They gave me some anaesthetic - I don't remember the name - and it affected me in a strange way. I heard myself saying things I wasn't even thinking... as if my mind were someplace outside of my body, and couldn't control what I did or said-

KAREN

(leading her on)

- and you felt just like that talking to Addison.

EVE

(nods)

In a way. You find yourself trying to say what you mean, but somehow the words change - and they become his words - and suddenly you're not saying what you mean, but what he means-

KAREN

(sharply)

Do you expect me to believe that you didn't say any of those things - that they were all Addison?

EVE

No! I don't expect you to believe anything. Except that the responsibility is mine. And the disgrace.

KAREN

Let's not get over-dramatic.

EVE

(smiles grimly)

You've really got a low opinion of me, haven't you? Well I'll give you some pleasant news. I've been told off in no uncertain terms all over town. Miss Channing should be happy to hear that. To know how loyal her friends are - how much more loyal they are than she had a right to expect me to be...

She turns away from Karen. Karen's embarrassed.

KAREN

Eve... don't cry.

EVE

(turned away)

I'm not crying.

KAREN

Tell me. How did your lunch turn out - with the man from Hollywood?

EVE

Some vague promises of a test, that's all - if a particular part should come along, one of those things-

KAREN

But the raves about your
performance-

EVE

- an understudy's performance.

KAREN

Well. I think you're painting the
picture a little darker than it is,
really. If nothing else - and don't
underestimate him - you have a
powerful friend in Addison.

EVE

He's not my friend. You were my
friends...

KAREN

He can help you.

EVE

I wish I'd never met him, I'd like
him to be dead... I want my friends
back.

This time she does cry. Softly, miserably. Karen
looks about.

A pause. She puts an arm around Eve.

KAREN

Eve. I - I don't think you meant to
cause unhappiness. But you did.
More to yourself, perhaps - as it
turned out - than to anyone else...

EVE

I'll never get over it.

KAREN

(smiles)

Yes, you will. You Theater people always do. Nothing is forever in the Theater. Love or hate, success or failure - whatever it is, it's here, it flares up and burns hot - and then it's gone.

EVE

I wish I could believe that.

KAREN

Give yourself time. Don't worry too much about what people think, you're very young and very talented...

(she gets up, her hand still on Eve's shoulder)
... and, believe it or not, if there's anything I can do-

Eve has reached up to take Karen's hand. She holds it now, as she turns slowly to face her.

EVE

There is something.

Karen stares down at her. Eve's eyes burn into tears. Karen is caught, fascinated by them.

KAREN

I think I know...

EVE

Something most important you can do.

KAREN

You want to play "Cora." You want me to tell Lloyd I think you should

play it.

EVE

If you told him so, he'd give me the part. He said he would.

KAREN

After all you've said... don't you know the part was written for Margo?

EVE

It could have been - fifteen years ago. It's my part now.

KAREN

You talk just as Addison said you did.

EVE

"Cora" is my part. You've got to tell Lloyd it's for me.

KAREN

I don't think anything in the world could make me say that.

She turns away again, but Eve's grip is like a vise.

EVE

Addison wants me to play it.

KAREN

Over my dead body...

EVE

(cold, relentless)

That won't be necessary. Addison knows how Margo happen to miss that performance - how I happened to know she'd miss it in time to call

him and notify every paper in town...

(Karen stops struggling)

... it's quite a story.

Addison could make quite a thing of it - imagine how snide and vicious he could get and still write nothing but the truth. I had a time persuading him...

(she smiles, now)

... you'd better sit down. You look a bit wobbly.

(Karen sits)

If I play "Cora," Addison will never tell what happened - in or out of print. A simple exchange of favors. And I'm so happy I can do something for you - at long last...

(Karen covers her face with her hands)

Your friendship with Margo - your deep, close friendship - what would happen to it, do you think, if she knew the chap trick you'd played on her - for my benefit? And you and Lloyd - how long, even in the Theater, before people forgot what happened - and trusted you again?

(now Eve gets up)

No... it would be so much easier on everyone concerned, if I were to play "Cora." And so much better theater, too...

Karen looks up slowly.

KAREN

A part in a play. You'd do all that - just for a part in a play.

EVE

(smiles)

I'd do much more - for a part that
good.

She leaves. Karen is alone.