

SCENE: *Hunter's camp in forest.*

*James.*—Here I sit, a prisoner of war. Well, no; not of war—for it would be an honor to be taken prisoner fighting for your country; but I am the prisoner of a lot of vagabonds and robbers. But I feel I have a duty to perform to my late master. Yes, I will restore Claudine to her friends or die. This heart will cease to beat, and this arm lose its last strength on your behalf, ere I give up. But, poor Norah; I have almost forgotten you. I'll write to her now, if I can find paper, and tell her the hairbreadth escapes I've had. But where is the use of writing? There is no post office about here. Faith, I'll write anyway; I'll be bound I'll find some way of sending it. I'll look in the Hon. Hubert's coat pockets. *(Takes Hubert's coat and takes out papers and diary).* What's this; his diary? I'll look through and see what balance he has at the banker's; or, in other words, the state of his finances *(turning over the leaves).* Bad writing, and half the words spelled wrong; I'd like to give thee a few lessons. I think I'll read some of his jottings; I may gain something by it. *(He reads from diary).* "Robert Free, your good luck has never forsaken you. Safe in England again, this 18th of August. I take a hansom and drive through Hyde Park, side by side with dukes and earls; and why shouldn't I? Yes, I say, why shouldn't I? I have only transplanted ten thousand dollars out of Hubert Derrell's pocket into my own. But when I marry some rich lady (for my good looks will win me lots of female hearts), I will pay him back with interest."

*James.*—Pay him back with interest in female hearts! Well, I always take interest in female hearts myself; but to steal a man's money, and then say he will pay with interest in them sort of things—I don't believe in it. And it seems I have heard that name before, Robert Free. Well, he makes mighty free, at any rate.

(Enter DICK).

*Dick.*—What is this you are doing; robbing my master? *(Snatches diary and runs out at one side of stage. Re-enters at the other side, followed by James. Dick's coat torn in rags, with cover of diary clenched in his hand).*

*Dick.*—Now, if you keep quiet I'll give you half. *(Opens the book, and finds he has nothing but the cover. Both men stare at each other, and laugh).*

*James.*—We have lost it in the scuffle; let us away and find it. *(Exit).*

(Enter HUBERT).—*Low music.*

*Hubert.*—If there is a place on earth where wolves and tigers congregate, it must be here; for of all the unearthly noises and howling I ever heard, I hear them in these woods as soon as I lay down my weary head. Or is it my guilty conscience that haunts me? But how came my diary and papers scattered about? *(taking up the books).* Could they have dropped out of my pocket? I hope no one has seen them; there are secrets in this book for no eyes but mine; yes, and when I shut the cover, I close in the history of Robert Free. My course these last few years has been a downward one. Since you became the wife of Howard, Maud Mayford, the last spark of manhood has died out of me, and I am an outcast of society and a fugitive from justice. Oh! Maud, would to God your heart had been true as mine. But, no; you trifled with my affections, blighted my life, and lost my soul. Oh! no; I must not say it; I will repent yet, if there is still time. *(Puts his hand on his brow).* Oh! too late, too late, I fear; with the abducted daughter of Sir Maxwell Car-