

ask you to suggest someone else whom you think suitable for the part. But mind this, Mr. Grant here and I must approve of her. Our last show was a failure. We can't afford to have another on top of it. Whom d'you want? Out with it!"

He stared, and Grant stared too, but with more sympathetic eyes.

"I don't want anyone in particular."

"Oh. I thought you'd got some girl up your sleeve."

"Nothing of the sort!" said Dale hotly. "I don't mix up art and—and—sex stuff."

"Then you're about the only playwright in London that doesn't, I should say," said Champion, blandly.

"If I'm to choose straight away I should say engage Miss Mulholland."

"I veto her!" said Grant. "I wouldn't give her twenty pounds a week in any theatre of mine."

"Very well then!" said Dale, throwing out his hands.

A long silence followed, only broken for an instant by Leslie Grant gently sucking his false teeth.

"What's to be done?" at last said Grant in an unperturbed voice.

"Done? Mr. Dale must find someone for us and be quick about it. We must start rehearsing Monday morning. To-day's Thursday."

"Well, Mr. Dale? What d'you say?"

"I'll do my best."

"Haven't you anyone at all in mind?" asked Grant, with a sort of fat gentleness that wasn't unsympathetic.

"Really I haven't. But I'll find someone."

He paused, then repeated, as if to reassure himself:

"I'll find someone."

"And remember this, Mr. Dale," said Champion, with authority, "none of your intellectuals will go down here. We cater for the big public. Women who are successful in holes and corners are no good to us. We don't want soulful girls who play Ibsen and Tchekov and God knows what in bandboxes. We want someone who'll make the last boy in the gallery know he's a he-man. Understand?"

"Oh, yes! I understand!" said Dale desperately.