

ENTER CLAY, LISE, MARIANE, FANNY

CLAY: Come out here, it's safer. No one's around who'll spy on us, so we can talk freely.

LISE: Yes, Mariane, my brother has told me how much he loves you. I know the pain and hardships that such difficult circumstances create, and it is, I promise you, with profound empathy that I have become involved in your situation.

MARIANE: It's a wonderful comfort to have someone like you on our side; and, I hope, Lise, that we will always stay good friends, as your friendship will help me handle the cruelties of fate.

FANNY: You are, both of you, crazy not to have told me sooner what was going on between you, then I could have turned things around before we got into this mess.

CLAY: It can't be helped! Situations like this are part of my karma. But, dear Mariane, what are you planning to do?

MARIANE: Oh! What can I do? and given the situation I am in, what other solution is there but to hope for the best?

CLAY: That's all the encouragement you can give me: "hope for the best?" No encouraging gesture? No inspiring emotion? No loving support?

MARIANE: What can I say to you? Put yourself in my place and see how you would act. Advise me, tell me what to do: I place myself in your hands, and I know you are too sensible a person to ask me to do anything that would threaten the little security I have or ruin my reputation.

CLAY: What! You limit my options seriously, if all you care about is your sacred security or your precious reputation.

MARIANE: But what do you want me to do? Even if I was prepared to give up the little safety I have so recently won, I must think of my mother. She brought me up with so much love under such extreme hardships, that I am determined to do nothing against her wishes. You go, talk to her, use all your charm to win her heart: you can say and do anything you want, I give you my permission; and if in the end it rests with me to speak on your behalf, well, I will willingly reveal to her everything I feel for you.

CLAY: Fanny, dear Fanny, would you help us?

FANNY: Heavens! Do you have to ask? Of course I would. You know me, too kind hearted for my own good, always willing to assist in any way I can and with a special soft spot for young lovers in trouble. Now how can we solve this?

CLAY: Think hard, please.

MARIANE: Weave some of your magic.