

LORD ARTHUR SAVILE'S CRIME - NELLIE'S AUDITION PIECE

It is a dull wet morning. A large vase of arum lilies stands on the mantelpiece.

BAINES is C. NELLIE is RC holding a vase of June roses.

BAINES: There - no, there, I think. (He gestures to the mantelpiece)

NELLIE: What shall I do with the lilies, Mr. Baines?

BAINES: Remove them. They might depress his lordship if he came down and saw them.

NELLIE: But Lady Julia sent them the moment she heard his lordship was ill, Mr Baines.

(She takes the vase of lilies from the mantelpiece)

BAINES: I am aware of it. Her ladyship's expression of sympathy appears to border on the macabre or the hopeful. I am not sure which.

NELLIE: (putting the vase of roses on the mantelpiece) Oh, you do talk beautifully, Mr Baines. It's better than a lantern lecture to listen to you.

BAINES: Thank you, child. It is pleasant to be appreciated.

NELLIE: I appreciate you, Mr Baines. I really do.

BAINES: Do you, my child?

NELLIE: Ever since I came here I've looked up to you, as it were.

BAINES: Er - Nellie, you have an evening out, I suppose?

NELLIE: Oh, yes, Mr Baines. It's Thursdays.

BAINES: No. My first duty is to his lordship.

NELLIE: Duty?

BAINES: His lordship has a difficult task to perform. He looks upon me as a friend and adviser. Such confidence require single-mindedness. I must not think of dalliance.

NELLIE: (disappointed) Oh. (She moves to him) Will you always have to advise his lordship, Mr Baines?

BAINES: I trust his lordship will shortly be able to bring his task to a satisfactory conclusion.

NELLIE: Well, then—it'll still be Thursdays, Mr Baines.

ACT 2, Scene2

Nellie & Arthur. Book pages 57/58

NELLIE enters R carrying a tray with a decanter of brandy and a glass which she places on the table RC)

ARTHUR: Thank you, Nellie. Just leave it, will you?

NELLIE. Yes, my lord. Are you all right, my lord? You don't look well.

ARTHUR: That is scarcely to be wondered at. (He tries to pour the brandy )

NELLIE: Oh, let me do that, my lord. Your poor hands are shaking like anything.

(She takes the decanter and pours some brandy into the glass)

There. You drink that and you'll feel a lot better.

(She puts the decanter on the tray)

ARTHUR: (taking the glass) Thank you, Nellie. You're very kind.

NELLIE: You learn to be kind, my lord, when you're alone in the world.

ARTHUR: Alone? Haven't you any relatives?

NELLIE: Not a single one, my lord. They all popped off from one cause or another.

ARTHUR: Extraordinary. My relatives have a hold on life I can only describe as tenacious.

NELLIE: (proudly) My dad drank himself to death.

ARTHUR: Drank? (He thinks a moment) Is it a long process?

NELLIE: Depends how much you take at a time, my lord.

ARTHUR: Yes, I suppose so. Would it take longer than three weeks?

NELLIE: Oh, yes, my lord. My dad took all mum's married life, and that was fifteen years.

ARTHUR: Oh, no. I don't think I could wait as long as that. A pity. That's all. Thank you, Nellie.

NELLIE: Thank you, my lord.

(NELLIE curtsies and exits )