DIERDRE

DIERDRE. I'm not your darling! And I'm not married to you anymore! All you do is kill the people I love. Well, no more! I love Beau (!)—and Beau loves me (!)—and we're to be married and I won't let you stop me! The stars have aligned! Sylvia, step aside!

*Sylvia steps aside.*

RICHARD. What do you know of stars?

DIERDRE. I know when they're aligned!

RICHARD. Are you going to kill me?

DIERDRE. I'd sooner kill you than have you kill Beau!

SYLVIA. But what about loyalty?

DIERDRE. *(A quote she's heard.)* "Sometimes we must kill one love to make room for another."

SYLVIA. That's twice now you've made sense.

RICHARD. Has our life together meant nothing to you?

DIERDRE. *(Momentarily thoughtful.)* I don't want to hurt your feelings.

RICHARD. Yet you're pointing a rifle at me.

DIERDRE. *(Letting it all out.)* Fine then! You stifle me! Cooped up all day and night in that dreadful drugstore. At least before I married you, I was free to do as I please.

RICHARD. Before you married me you were living in squalor.

DIERDRE. That's besides the point! I won't let you kill Beau!

*With a scream, she shoots! Nothing happens.*

RICHARD. I can't believe you'd really kill me!

DIERDRE. *(Befuddled, shaking the gun, staring down the barrel, etc.)* What's happened?

SYLVIA. It's not loaded.

DIERDRE. But I heard a gunshot before!

SYLVIA. It was only *slightly* loaded.

DIERDRE. Oh dear!

CLARKE. *(Calling from off.)* Sylvia?!

SYLVIA. *(Calling up.)* Yes, Clarke?

CLARKE. *(Calling from off.)* I heard a scream.



SYLVIA. *(Calling up.)* That was Dierdre.

CLARKE. *(Calling from off.)* Alrighty then…

RICHARD. Dierdre, I wasn't ever going to kill Beau.

DIERDRE. Ha! You've killed all the others!

RICHARD. No!

DIERDRE. No?!

RICHARD. I haven't hurt a flea.

DIERDRE. You said you did!

RICHARD. I only meant to keep you from straying.

DIERDRE. What are you saying?

RICHARD. You have me all wrong. I made up those awful stories to deter you from leaving me. I have a fear of loneliness I'm afraid.

DIERDRE. Is this a joke? I've been living in constant fear of you.

RICHARD. And I of you. I couldn't bear it if you'd left me. I couldn't manage the pain twice. You see, I'd already lost…

DIERDRE. *(Impatient.)* You'd already lost what??!

*The telephone interrupts.*

SYLVIA. *(To Richard and Dierdre.)* Hold that thought.

*Richard and Dierdre ad-lib. ("Oh, of course." "Yes." "By all means." Etc.) They immediately set their intense argument temporarily aside, sit, and turn full attention to Sylvia; she answers the phone.*

Van Kipness residence.
This is Mrs. Sylvia Van Kipness, yes.
Oh! Oh my. When?
Yes, of course. I understand.
No, I'll tell them. Thank you.

*Sylvia hangs up the phone. Richard and Dierdre resume their intense previous position.*

DIERDRE. *(Right back to it.)* What? Richard, what had you lost?

SYLVIA. *(Calling off.)* Beau? I'm afraid I have some news. Can you come out here please? *Beau?*

*Sylvia moves to shout for Beau, then Clarke, then Marjorie.*