

COUNTESS, MARY (NANCY, PEGGY)

COUNTESS. (Whispering.) Mary, can I trust you?

MARY. Of course, Flora!

COUNTESS (To others.) You will keep this just between the four of us?

MIRIAM. Shoot, Flora, it's a nationwide hookup!

COUNTESS, (Settling herself beside Mary on foot of bed.) Well, you know how Buck was? (Wistfully.) So-so impassioné?

MIRIAM. That boy had something,

COUNTESS (Tartly.) Well, he hasn't got it any more, Miriam! First, I thought it was just gin, interfering with his libick- (Tear fully.) But now I think Buck is deceiving me

NANCY. How incredible!

COUNTESS. Well, I have no proof. Except he comes home every afternoon smelling of a strange perfume.

MARY. Where does he say he's been?

COUNTESS. Visiting his horse. But Trixie was shipped to Hollywood last week. You remember, I was photographed with her in the baggage car? Now he says he's been going to the Grand Central Gymnasium. But I telephoned today. Some great oaf answered. I said: "Is Buck Winston there?" He said: "Who? No." So I said "My dear good man, he comes every day." So he said: "My mistake, lady, he's inside now boxing with James Bond."

MARY. Poor Flora!

COUNTESS. (Practical.) That's why I think it's safer just to keep floating around.

MARY. I understand l'amour.

COUNTESS. L'amour, yes, but jamais, (She has her lucid moments.) jamais lopsided amour!

MARY. (Coughing.) Lopsided amour is better than no amour at all Hora, let him make a fool of you. Let him do anything he wants, as long as he stays. He's taking the trouble to deceive you (Hall to herself.) And if he took the trouble, he really must have cared

NANCY. The Voice of Experience.

MIRIAM. (To Countess) Come on, chin up.

NANCY. That's right. Both of them! (Enter Peggy and Edith.)

COUNTESS. (Rising.) Oh, cheries, you missed it! I was just say. ing now you will keep this just among the six of us - suspect Buck of being unfaithful. Of course, it's my own

fault. I should have had him watched. The way I did all the others. I wish I'd found out where he's had that apartment!

PEGGY. An apartment-?

COLINTESS. Where would you expect him to go? Central Park? Why, it's winter.

PEGGY. Oh, I've always heard people went to hotels

COUNTESS, But, cherie, Buck couldn't go to a hotel. You know what would happen. At the most inopportune moment someone would say: "Mr. Winston, may I have your autograph ?" It happened to us on our wedding night. I would have sent for the manager, but it was the manager asking for the autograph. (Exits r.)