

MIRIAM, MARY

MARY. Cigarette?

MIRIAM (Suddenly) Listen

MARY. There's nothing you can say I haven't heard.

MIRIAM Sure? I come from a world where a woman's got to come out on top-or it's just too damned bad. Maybe I got a new slant.

MARY. (Wearily) All right, Miriam. Talk to me about my legal rights. Talk to me about security- What does it all come to? Compromise.

MIRIAM. What the hell? A woman's compromised the day she's born

MARY. You can't compromise with utter defeat. He doesn't want me.

MIRIAM. How do you know?

MARY. How do I know-why else am I here?

MIRIAM. (A pause. Then, mock-tragically.) Because you've got no guts, Mary Haines. It happened to me-I lost my man, too.

MARY. (Smiling.) You?

MIRIAM. Oh, it only happened once. Got wise to myself after that. Look, how did I lose him? We didn't have enough dough to get married. I wouldn't sleep with him until we did. I had ideals God knows where I got 'em. I held out on him- (Sighs) Can you beat it? I liked him a lot better than I've ever liked anybody since. What'd my Romeo do? Got himself another girl. I made a terrible stink, Why shouldn't I? I should. But what I ought not to have done was say-goodbye. I was like you.

MARY. I don't understand.

MIRIAM. Then get a load of this, I should of licked that girl where she licked me-in the hay.

MARY. Miriam!

MIRIAM. That's where you win the first round. And if I know men, that's still Custer's Last Stand. (Mary walks away from her.) Shocked you? You're too modest. You're ashamed, O. K, sister. But my idea of love is that love isn't ashamed of anything.

MARY. (Turning to her.) A good argument, Miriam. So modern So simple. Sex the cause, sex the cure. It's too simple, Miriam Your love battles are for-lovers-or professionals. (Gently) Not for a man and woman who've been married twelve quiet years! Oh, I don't mean I wouldn't love Stephen's arms around me again. But I wouldn't recapture, if I could, our young passion. That was the wonderful young thing we had, "That was part of our youth, like the-babies. But not the thing that made him my husband, that made me his wife Stephen needed me. He needed me for twelve years. Stephen doesn't need me any more.

MIRIAM. I get it. (Phone rings.) That's why I'm marrying this guy Fowler. He sure needs me. If I don't marry him he'll drink himself to death in a month, the poor dope.

MARY. (At phone.) Yes? No, operator, we completed You say New York is calling Mrs. Haines ? She'll take that call--- (to Miriam.) Stephen!

MIRIAM. Listen, make him that speech you just made me!

MARY. (Radiant) I knew he'd call. I knew when the last moment came, he'd realize he needed me.

MIRIAM. For God's sake, tell him that you need him!

MARY. Hello hello? Stephen?

Mary. Yes, I'm very cheerful. It's so good to hear your voice, Stephen I--- Why, yes, the final decree is granted tomorrow at 12---but, Stephen, I can--- (Frightened.) But, Stephen! No of course I haven't seen the papers. How could I, out here? (Long pause.) Yes, I'd rather you told me. Of course I understand the position you're both in. No, I'm not hitter, not bitter at all-I-I hope you'll both be very happy.