

*She gives a small look upwards, her eyes filling with tears.*

What are you doing? Are you quite all right?

*She is on the verge of sobbing.*

NELL. I'm – I just –

HART. Nell! I'm sorry. It wasn't a criticism.

NELL *sobs loudly.*

Nell?! Nell!

*She drops out of the act immediately.*

NELL. I'm just acting, sir.

HART. Well, blow me down, I thought it was real.

NELL. I was only pretending.

HART. But it was convincing. Moving, even. How very intriguing.

NELL. What's next?

HART. Love.

NELL. Love?

HART. Yes, love. 'Pleasant delight with reference to the object of affection.'

NELL (*cheekily*). You mean your lover?

HART. Yes I do. It's the final and most complex of the attitudes. It's not only on the face, but in the very blood. It must possess your entire being.

NELL (*begins to flirt...just a little*). Show me how to do love.

HART (*touching his heart*). It'll be in there.

NELL. Tell me. I'd like to hear it.

HART. Well. Love is 'complete and utter indifference to everything, except the one you admire'.

*NELL follows his instructions with flirtatious confidence; this is one role she knows how to play. HART, won over, finds it hard to concentrate.*

*Eyebrows raised slightly. Head inclined towards the cause of love. Lips moisten softly with vapours which rise from the heart. Eyes connect with the object of affection.*

NELL. I look into your eyes.

HART (*under her spell*). Yes. Yes, you do.

NELL. Might I step towards my 'object of affection'?

HART. Affection, yes. Step towards / your –

NELL. My object of –

HART. Object of affection.

NELL. Desire.

HART. Or – or desire. Yes.

NELL. I'm good, aren't I?

HART (*mesmerised*). You are – surprisingly good.

NELL. 'Love.'

HART. 'Love.'

*They both stand close to each other, there is a moment of intensity. A beat. He breaks the spell.*

Um, yes. Excellent. Excellent.

NELL. You all right, sir?

HART (*flustered*). What? Yes. No. Exactly.

*She looks out over the audience.*

You like it up here?

NELL. S'all right.

HART. All right? There's nothing like it, when it's full. Packed in, like pippins on a cart; and all of them, looking at you. It's like no other feeling in the world.

NELL. You *do* like it.

HART. Somehow I've never quite felt myself anywhere else. Which is ironic, now I think of it.