

WILLIAMS

I couldn't plead insanity, because you see I'm just as sane as anybody else.

HILDY

(puzzled and worried)
You didn't mean to kill that policeman?

WILLIAMS

Of course not. I couldn't kill anybody -- it's against everything I've ever stood for. They know it was an accident. They're not hanging me for that -- they're hanging me for my beliefs.

HILDY

What are your beliefs, Earl?

WILLIAMS

They're very simple. I believe in the Golden Rule. I'm not the first man to die for preaching it. But if they would only listen to it -- we could have a fine, decent world instead of this mass of hate that makes man do such cruel things.

HILDY

How would you go about applying the Golden Rule, Earl?

WILLIAMS

I'd do away with the profit system and have production for use only. There's enough food and clothing and shelter for everybody if we'd use some sense.

HILDY

(writing)
"Production for use only." Well, maybe that's the answer.

WILLIAMS

It's the only answer. Everything has a use and if we let it be used for its purpose, we could solve all our problems. Food was meant to be eaten, not stored away in restaurants while poor people starved; clothing was meant to be worn, not piled up in stores while people went naked. Doesn't that make sense?

HILDY

(thoughtfully)

Yes, that makes a lot of sense, Earl.

WILLIAMS

Just use things for what they were meant, that's all.

HILDY

Sure.

(she studies him a moment)

What's the purpose of a gun, Earl?

WILLIAMS

A gun?

(he thinks -- then a revealing smile breaks out)

Why -- to shoot, of course.

HILDY

Is that how you came to shoot the policeman?

WILLIAMS

Sure. You see, I'd never had a gun in my hand before and I didn't know what to do with it. Well, when I get stuck, I know that there's an answer for everything in production for use. So it came to me in a flash: what's a gun for? To shoot! So I shot. Simple isn't it?

HILDY

(writing)

Very simple, Earl.

WILLIAMS

There's nothing crazy about that, is there?

HILDY

No, Earl, not at all.

(she indicates the flowers)

Who sent you the flowers, Earl?

WILLIAMS

(reverently)

Miss Mollie Malloy. She's a wonderful person.

HILDY

(pointing to picture pinned on wall)

Isn't that her picture?

WILLIAMS

(turning toward it)

Yes. Isn't she beautiful?

HILDY

If you should be pardoned, are you figuring on marrying Mollie?

WILLIAMS

Oh, no, she's much too good for me.

Hildy stops short, arrested by a sound from the open window. She turns and sees Earl Williams, looking more inoffensive and exhausted than ever, indeed on the verge of collapse. He carries a large revolver. The search-lights that have been playing in the courtyard strike into the windows again.

WILLIAMS

(pointing gun at her)

Drop that phone --

Hildy drops the phone back on the hook.

WILLIAMS
(supporting himself
by holding on to
edge of desk)
You're not going to phone anybody
where I am.

HILDY
(bracing herself)
Put down that gun, Earl.

He advances steadily toward Hildy, the gun aimed at her.

HILDY
You're not going to shoot me, Earl.
I'm your friend, remember? I've got
to write that story about your
"Production for Use".

WILLIAMS
Yes -- that's right. Production for
use.

Hildy starts walking toward him, slowly.

HILDY
Earl, you don't want to hurt your
friends, do you?

WILLIAMS
Don't move!

Hildy stops.

WILLIAMS
Maybe you're my friend and maybe
you're not -- but don't come any
nearer. You can't trust anybody in
this crazy world. Say, I'll bet I
could shoot you from here.

HILDY
Sure you could, Earl -- but you
wouldn't want to do that, would you?
You wouldn't want to kill anybody.

WILLIAMS

No, no, you're right. I don't want to kill anybody. All I want to do is be let alone.

Hildy sneaks another step forward.

HILDY

Earl, there's just one thing I ought to clear up for the interview.

WILLIAMS

What's that? Only -- you're getting too near. I don't trust anybody.

HILDY

I don't blame you, Earl.
(another step forward)
If I were in your place I wouldn't trust anybody, either.

WILLIAMS

(suddenly)
Keep away!

He points the gun at Hildy, pulls the trigger and we hear a faint "click!"

WILLIAMS

(weakly)
I guess I used all the shells.

He drops the gun and clutches at the edge of the desk for support. Hildy lurches forward and she grabs the other side of the desk for support. And at this moment she looks more tired than he does. She looks at Earl and breathes heavily.

HILDY

Earl, you must never do that again.

WILLIAMS

Oh, I'm awful tired. I couldn't go through another day like this.

HILDY

(more her old self
now)
Well, maybe you think I could!

She retrieves the gun and jams it in her purse, jumps to the windows, pulls down the shades.

WILLIAMS

I'm not afraid to die. I was tellin'
the fella that when he handed me the
gun.

Hildy crosses swiftly to the door, locks it and puts out the lights, so that they are visible only faintly in the light from the areaway.

HILDY

Don't talk too loud.

WILLIAMS

(babbling on as she
moves about)

Wakin' me up in the middle of the
night -- talkin' to me about things
they don't understand. Callin' me a
Bolshevik. I'm an anarchist. It's
got nothin' to do with bombs. It's
the philosophy that guarantees every
man freedom. You see that, don't
you?

HILDY

Sure I do, Earl.

Hildy is looking around for a hiding place for him.

WILLIAMS

I wish they'd take me back and hang
me. I done my best.

He abruptly crumples and falls to the floor. Hildy stands for a second, desperate. Then she picks him up and half carries, half drags him over toward a chair and places him in it. Then she makes a quick dash for her phone.