

## SCENE 2

TIME: *The next morning.*

AT RISE: *Hannibal stands in c. of room playing his violin. His music consists of only two notes, sawed monotonously on a single string. Fairy sits on floor at Hannibal's feet swaying to the imaginary rhythm. Mrs. Paddy is silent and intent upon her work behind easel. Florence sits on sofa. Turns to doll beside her and puts a warning finger to her lips. Jeffrey sits to L. of Hannibal listening with rapt attention. Mrs. Savage comes to door carrying her bear. She stands on threshold looking from Hannibal to his listeners. The violin noises cease with a flourish from Hannibal's bow.*

FLORENCE. (*Applauding.*) Beautiful—beautiful! What would we do without you, Hannibal? You bring melody to the morning.

JEFF. You could be in the concert field, Hannibal—if you worked at it.

FAIRY. Oh, you're so right, Jeff. Golden fingertips. (*Still carried away.*) I simply surrender to it. I'm a rag.

FLORENCE. (*Turns and sees Mrs. Savage.*) Do come in, Mrs. Savage.

JEFF. I trust you had a pleasant sleepless night?

MRS. SAVAGE. Lovely, thank you. Not a wink.

FLORENCE. You've just missed Hannibal's recital.

MRS. SAVAGE. I heard it. As a matter of fact, it's what brought me out of my room.

FLORENCE. You wouldn't believe it, Mrs. Savage, but Hannibal never touched a violin until last year.

MRS. SAVAGE. What makes you think I wouldn't believe it, my dear? (*Props teddy bear on sofa.*) Was it something you composed yourself, Hannibal?

HANNIBAL. Bach. With variations of my own.

FAIRY. Mathematics' loss was certainly our gain.

MRS. SAVAGE. Now, I don't quite follow that, Fairy.

HANNIBAL. Fairy knows that I used to be a statistician.

MRS. SAVAGE. Thank you—now I'm straight. (*Sits c.*)

FAIRY. Give him a fraction to multiply.

MRS. SAVAGE. I'm afraid I wouldn't know whether he was right or not.

HANNIBAL. My last position was with the government, charting trends. I was supposed to keep my finger on the pulse of the public and my ear to the ground.

MRS. SAVAGE. A rather vulnerable position, was it not?

HANNIBAL. Very. I was fired and replaced by an electronic calculator.

MRS. SAVAGE. I should think you'd hate electricity, too.

HANNIBAL. No—but I did want to make money with my brains. So I spent the next two years trying to think of something that could be made for a dime—sold for a dollar—and was habit-forming. (*Crosses to put violin on piano.*) I'm afraid my education was wasted.

FLORENCE. I'm going to send John Thomas to Princeton. Their boys aren't very bright, but they're such gentlemen.

FAIRY. Oh! That reminds me. May we ask you a personal question, Mrs. Savage?

MRS. SAVAGE. They're the only ones worth asking, my dear.

FLORENCE. A little bird told us that you used to be an actress. We're bursting with curiosity. Is it true?

MRS. SAVAGE. Oh—that. Well, if being on the stage makes you an actress—then I guess it's true.

FAIRY. Miss Willie—she's the bird Florence mentioned—told us that you'd been on the New York stage.

HANNIBAL. I wonder if we've ever seen you, Mrs. Savage?

MRS. SAVAGE. Not unless you were quick. Actually I was only in two plays. The first was *Macbeth*.

FAIRY. Oh, I adore *Macbeth*. All that blood. I sent a pint of my blood to the Red Cross once. They sent it back.

JEFF. I should think you would have been a novel departure as Lady Macbeth.

MRS. SAVAGE. I can't tell you how much I agree with you—but they cast me as a witch.

FAIRY. But you're a perfect witch!

MRS. SAVAGE. Thank you, dear.

FAIRY. Please speak some witch talk for us.

MRS. SAVAGE. I didn't have any lines. If I had it probably would have cost me twice as much.

JEFF. Why did it cost you *anything*?

MRS. SAVAGE. I backed the show. If I hadn't put up the money—I couldn't have played even the mute witch. But we made history. It's the first play that ever closed *before* the reviews were out.

FAIRY. Was it expensive?

MRS. SAVAGE. Extremely—but worth it.

FLORENCE. What a pity. Weren't you discouraged?

MRS. SAVAGE. Bitterly. But man is by nature optimistic. If he weren't he'd eat his young. So I decided I'd write a play and star myself.

FAIRY. (*Stops—aghast.*) You wrote a play!

MRS. SAVAGE. I did indeed. With a courage born of ignorance and a plot out of wedlock.

FLORENCE. What part did you play then?

MRS. SAVAGE. Naturally—the lead. (*With a sweep of her hand.*) *Not Guilty*—starring Ethel P. Savage.

JEFF. What does the "P" stand for?

MRS. SAVAGE. I haven't the faintest idea. My numerologist said I needed it in my name for luck. He was right. We ran a year.

FAIRY. What was the play about?

MRS. SAVAGE. A mother who'd murdered a man and was defended by a young woman lawyer who turns out to be her own daughter. I had red hair and died in my daughter's arms every night and two matinees a week just as the curtain came down and the jury whispered—"Not Guilty." (*Rises to her own applause.*) Oh, I've never had a better time in my life.

HANNIBAL. I gather the notices were good that time?