

From A MAN'S WORLD by Rachel Crothers
Excerpt from Act II
1 F, 1 M

Lione, a singer who is jealous of Fritz's attention to Frank, gossips about Frank.

FRITZ: (Going to look over Lione's shoulder.) What are you looking at?

LIONE: (Hiding the miniature.) Nothing.

FRITZ: Let me see.

LIONE: I've just decided something. Something I've half way believed for a long time.

FRITZ: What is dot?

LIONE: I don't know that I'll tell you.

FRITZ: Please.

LIONE: I've found out something and you'll pretend not to see it.

FRITZ: How do you know that unless you tell me what it iss?

LIONE: Because I know you.

FRITZ: Tell me, please -- please. You have very pretty eyes.

LIONE: Had you forgotten that?

FRITZ: No.

LIONE: It's the last woman who comes along with you, Fritz.

FRITZ: Every woman keeps her own place in a man's heart.

LIONE: What I don't understand about you is how can you let a woman flirt with you when you know she is crazy about another man.

FRITZ: You mean Frank? She does not flirt with me. She iss a friend.

LIONE: Will you admit that she's in love with Gaskell?

FRITZ: She don't want to love any man.

LIONE: Oh, is that what she tells you?

FRITZ: No, no -- she tells me noddng. Dat iss what I tink.

LIONE: You do? Well, you're about as wise as a kitten. I know she's in love with Gaskell and I think she always has been --that is, long before she came here.

FRITZ: Ach! Why? Why you tink dot? She never know him.

LIONE: (Lifting the miniature.) Whom does Kiddie look like?

FRITZ: What do you mean?

LIONE: Look.

FRITZ: No, no -- I will not look.

LIONE: (Catching his arm.) Why won't you look? Are you afraid to?

FRITZ: No, no I am not afraid. Why should I be?

LIONE: Why you are so excited?

FRITZ: I am not excited.

LIONE: You are. Oh! You see the resemblance too, do you?

FRITZ: What resemblance? I don't know what you are talking about.

LIONE: Don't you? Who is he like through the eyes?

FRITZ: Who? He iss like himself.

LIONE: (Holding the picture before him.) It's Malcolm Gaskell!

FRITZ: (Closing his eyes.) Ach Gott! What do you mean?

LIONE: You know what it means. Frank came here alone with this child. There is a mystery about her then Gaskell comes -- they're in love with each other and pretend not to be. I'll bet any thing you like Gaskell is this boy's father.

FRITZ: You have made it all up.

LIONE: You either know it's the truth or you're afraid it is. I'll tell her that I know.

FRITZ: No.

LIONE: I will, I will, I will. There's no reason why I shouldn't and there's every reason why I should.

FRITZ: Listen to me. If you will promise to keep still -- if you will promise to say nodding to anybody about it, I will tell you what I tink.

LIONE: (Looking at him keenly.) What's that?

FRITZ: Frank has told us he is de child of a woman who died.

LIONE: Yes but who is the father?

FRITZ: She don't know who de fadder was. But when Gaskell first came here, see dis resemblance, and believe he is de boy's fadder. Maybe he don't know it, maybe he do -- but Frank don't know it. I am as sure of dat as I am standing here.

LIONE: Fritz, you must think I'm an awful fool. Of all the cock and bull stories I ever heard, that's the worst.

FRITZ: It might -- it might be. Dis iss a strange und funny old world.

LIONE: But it isn't as funny as that. Oh, Fritz, I want to save you from this woman, from her influence.

FRITZ: She iss de best influence dot efer came into my life.

LIONE: What's going to come of it?

FRITZ: Nodding.

LIONE: You love her?

FRITZ: You are two women, Lione. You and I used to haf such good times togedder. I lof your voice, Lione -- you haf someding great in it. I like to play for you when you sing. You are so jolly and so sweet when you when you are nice. Why can't it always be so? Why can't we always be friends?

LIONE: She's changed everything. She's spoiled everything. She's ruining your life and I'm trying to save you.

FRITZ: No, Lione, you don't--

LIONE: I've wasted my friendship on you -- wasted it -- wasted it!