

ALL ABOUT EVE

EVE

I was wondering whether you'd come
at all..

KAREN

Don't get up.

(she smiles grimly)

And don't act as if I were the
queen mother.

EVE

I don't expect you to be pleasant.

KAREN

I don't intend to be.

EVE

Can't we sit down? Just for a
minute...

She sits down. Karen remains standing.

EVE

I've got a lot to say. And none of
it is easy.

KAREN

There can't be very much-

EVE

Oh, but there is-

KAREN

- and easy or not, I won't believe
a word.

EVE

Why shouldn't you?

(a pause)

Please sit down.

Karen sits, reluctantly and rigidly.

EVE

You know, I've always considered myself a very clever girl. Smart. Good head on my shoulders, that sort of thing, never the wrong word at the wrong time... but then, I'd never met Addison deWitt.

(another pause)

I remember once I had a tooth pulled. They gave me some anaesthetic - I don't remember the name - and it affected me in a strange way. I heard myself saying things I wasn't even thinking... as if my mind were someplace outside of my body, and couldn't control what I did or said-

KAREN

(leading her on)

- and you felt just like that talking to Addison.

EVE

(nods)

In a way. You find yourself trying to say what you mean, but somehow the words change - and they become his words - and suddenly you're not saying what you mean, but what he means-

KAREN

(sharply)

Do you expect me to believe that you didn't say any of those things - that they were all Addison?

EVE

No! I don't expect you to believe anything. Except that the responsibility is mine. And the disgrace.

KAREN

Let's not get over-dramatic.

EVE

(smiles grimly)

You've really got a low opinion of me, haven't you? Well I'll give you some pleasant news. I've been told off in no uncertain terms all over town. Miss Channing should be happy to hear that. To know how loyal her friends are - how much more loyal they are than she had a right to expect me to be...

She turns away from Karen. Karen's embarrassed.

KAREN

Eve... don't cry.

EVE

(turned away)

I'm not crying.

KAREN

Tell me. How did your lunch turn out - with the man from Hollywood?

EVE

Some vague promises of a test,
that's all - if a particular part
should come along, one of those
things-

KAREN

But the raves about your
performance-

EVE

- an understudy's performance.

KAREN

Well. I think you're painting the
picture a little darker than it is,
really. If nothing else - and don't
underestimate him - you have a
powerful friend in Addison.

EVE

He's not my friend. You were my
friends...

KAREN

He can help you.

EVE

I wish I'd never met him, I'd like
him to be dead... I want my friends
back.

This time she does cry. Softly, miserably. Karen looks
about.

A pause. She puts an arm around Eve.

KAREN

Eve. I - I don't think you meant to
cause unhappiness. But you did.

More to yourself, perhaps - as it turned out - than to anyone else...

EVE

I'll never get over it.

KAREN

(smiles)

Yes, you will. You Theater people always do. Nothing is forever in the Theater. Love or hate, success or failure - whatever it is, it's here, it flares up and burns hot - and then it's gone.

EVE

I wish I could believe that.

KAREN

Give yourself time. Don't worry too much about what people think, you're very young and very talented...

(she gets up, her hand still on Eve's shoulder)

... and, believe it or not, if there's anything I can do-

Eve has reached up to take Karen's hand. She holds it now, as she turns slowly to face her.

EVE

There is something.

Karen stares down at her. Eve's eyes burn into tears. Karen is caught, fascinated by them.

KAREN
I think I know...

EVE
Something most important you can
do.

KAREN
You want to play "Cora." You want
me to tell Lloyd I think you should
play it.

EVE
If you told him so, he'd give me
the part. He said he would.

KAREN
After all you've said... don't you
know the part was written for
Margo?

EVE
It could have been - fifteen years
ago. It's my part now.

KAREN
You talk just as Addison said you
did.

EVE
"Cora" is my part. You've got to
tell Lloyd it's for me.

KAREN
I don't think anything in the world
could make me say that.

She turns away again, but Eve's grip is like a vise.

EVE

Addison wants me to play it.

KAREN

Over my dead body...

EVE

(cold, relentless)

That won't be necessary. Addison knows how Margo happen to miss that performance - how I happened to know she'd miss it in time to call him and notify every paper in town...

(Karen stops struggling)

... it's quite a story. Addison could make quite a thing of it - imagine how snide and vicious he could get and still write nothing but the truth. I had a time persuading him...

(she smiles, now)

... you'd better sit down. You look a bit wobbly.

(Karen sits)

If I play "Cora," Addison will never tell what happened - in or out of print. A simple exchange of favors. And I'm so happy I can do something for you - at long last...

(Karen covers her face
with her hands)

Your friendship with Margo - your deep, close friendship - what would happen to it, do you think, if she knew the chap trick you'd played on her - for my benefit? And you and Lloyd - how long, even in the Theater, before people forgot what

happened - and trusted you again?

(now Eve gets up)

No... it would be so much easier on everyone concerned, if I were to play "Cora." And so much better theater, too...

Karen looks up slowly.

KAREN

A part in a play. You'd do all that - just for a part in a play.

EVE

(smiles)

I'd do much more - for a part that good.

She leaves. Karen is alone.

ALL ABOUT EVE (2)

There is a sharp, brisk knock. Eve comes in. She's dressed in a smart suit. She carries a leather portfolio.

EVE

Good morning!

Margo says "good morning," Birdie says nothing. Eve shows off the suit, proudly.

EVE

Well - what do you think of my elegant new suit?

MARGO

Very becoming. It looks better on you than it did on me.

EVE

(scoffs)

I can imagine... you know, all it needed was some taking in here and letting out there - are you sure you won't want it yourself?

MARGO

Quite sure. I find it just a bit too - too "Seventeenish" for me...

EVE

(laughs)

Oh, come now, as though you were an old lady... I'm on my way. Is there anything more you've thought of-?

MARGO

There's the script to go back to the Guild-

EVE

I've got it.

MARGO

- and those checks or whatever it is for the income tax man.

EVE

Right here.

MARGO

It seems I can't think of a thing you haven't thought of...

EVE

(smile)

That's my job.

(she turns to go)
See you at tea time...

MARGO

Eve...

(Eve turns at the door)
... by any chance, did you place a
call from me to Bill for midnight
California time?

EVE

(gasps)
Oh, golly. And I forgot to tell you-

MARGO

Yes, dear. You forgot all about it.

EVE

Well, I was sure you'd want to, of
course, being his birthday, and
you've been so busy these past few
days, and last night I meant to
tell you before you went out with
the Richards - and I guess I was
asleep when you got home...

MARGO

Yes, I guess you were. It - it was
very thoughtful of you, Eve.

EVE

Mr. Sampson's birthday. I certainly
wouldn't forget that. You'd never
forgive me.

(she smiles shyly)

As a matter of fact, I sent him a
telegram myself...

And she's gone. Margo stares at the closed door. Then at
Birdie. Birdie, without comment, goes out. Margo, alone,
looks down at her orange juice. Absently, she twirls it in
its bed of shaved ice...

ALL ABOUT EVE (3)

EXT. ALLEY - CURRAN THEATER - NIGHT

Karen moves toward the stage door. She passes a recess in the wall - perhaps an exit - about halfway.

EVE'S VOICE
(softly)
Mrs. Richards...

Karen hesitates, looks. Eve is barely distinguishable in the shadow of the recess. Karen smiles, waits. Eve comes out. A gooseneck light above them reveals her...

She wears a cheap trench coat, low-heeled shoes, a rain hat stuck on the back of her head... Her large, luminous eyes seem to glow up at Karen in the strange half-light.

KAREN
So there you are. It seemed odd,
suddenly, your not being there...

EVE
Why should you think I wouldn't be?

KAREN
Why should you be? After all, six
nights a week - for weeks - of
watching even Margo Channing enter
and leave a theater-

EVE
I hope you don't mind my speaking
to you...

KAREN
Not at all.

EVE
I've seen you so often - it took
every bit of courage I could raise-

KAREN
(smiles)
To speak to just a playwright's
wife? I'm the lowest form of
celebrity...

EVE
You're Margo Channing's best
friend. You and your husband are
always with her - and Mr.
Sampson... what's he like?

KAREN
(grins)
Bill Sampson? He's - he's a
director.

EVE
He's the best.

KAREN
He'll agree with you. Tell me, what do you between the time Margo goes in and comes out? Just huddle in that doorway and wait?

EVE
Oh, no. I see the play.

KAREN
(incredulous)
You see the play? You've seen the play every performance?
(Eve nods)
But, don't you find it - I mean apart from everything else - don't you find it expensive?

EVE
Standing room doesn't cost much. I manage.

Karen contemplates Eve. Then she takes her arm.

KAREN
I'm going to take you to Margo...

EVE
(hanging back)
Oh, no...

KAREN
She's got to meet you-

EVE
No, I'd be imposing on her, I'd be just another tongue-tied gushing fan...

Karen practically propels her toward the stage door.

KAREN
(insisting)
There isn't another like you, there couldn't be-

EVE
But if I'd known... maybe some other time... I mean, looking like this.

KAREN
You look just fine...
(they're at the stage door)

... by the way. What's your name?

EVE

Eve. Eve Harrington.