

ANN Sorry, Mr Foster.
 (She closes the door in KIPPS' face.)

KIPPS Ann!

SCENE SIXTEEN
A Street in Folkestone.

Music continues. KIPPS strolls along the pavement.

KIPPS 'Course I'm not blaming her. What did I think would 'appen? That she'd fall in me arms with a swoon and a kiss? No, sir. The person who's responsible for this mess is Arthur Kipps and no one else but . . .

WHY DO I NEVER GET ANYTHING RIGHT?
 WHERE DO I KEEP GOING WRONG?
 JUST WHEN I THOUGHT THAT THE FUTURE LOOKED BRIGHT
 THERE'S A VOICE IN MY HEAD SAYING I DON'T BELONG
 I FEEL I'M JUST A SHAM
 I DON'T KNOW WHO I AM
 ALL I KNOW IS I WANT TO TAKE FLIGHT
 IT'S SAFER TO SEVER
 ALL TIES WITH WHOEVER
 I NEVER GET ANYTHING . . . RIGHT

(KIPPS has arrived at his house when he sees a familiar figure.)

SID Hello Arthur, what've you been up to?

KIPPS Hello, Sid. Are you waiting for me?

SID I am, Arthur. I've got some news and I wanted you to be the first to hear it.

KIPPS Go on.

SID I've found the girl I'm going to marry.

KIPPS I am glad, Sid. Who is she? Do I know her?

SID No. She come to work at Shalford's after you left. She's a cracking girl, Arthur. Always on my side.

KIPPS What about your politics?

SID She shares them, too. We both want to build a decent life for working people and help others do the same.

KIPPS What might that life be?

SID Well, I'd like to work at something where I feel valued. Does that make sense? We both want to feel I'm making a difference. I'd have been scared before but I know I can make it work with Mary by my side.

KIPPS So she makes you feel capable of anything?

SID She does, Arthur. Like Miss Walsingham does for you, I'm sure.

(But KIPPS is not sure.)

KIPPS I could set you up in something if you like.

SID I don't think so, Arthur. I'd feel I were taking advantage. Maybe if it were a joint venture . . . but I don't suppose you want to work these days.

KIPPS Helen wouldn't like it.

SID No . . . So, how's it going with you? Is the wedding all planned?

KIPPS Yes, not by me. And now me future ma-in-law wants me to build a big house. Helen likes . . . entertaining and that.

SID Yes, well, she would. Being a lady an' all.

KIPPS How 'bout you? Everything settled?

SID Not yet. We'll have to save a bit. But we thought we'd have a knees-up in the Hope & Anchor. You'll come, won't you?

KIPPS 'Course I will.

- SID With Mrs Kipps? Or won't it be her sort of thing?
(They both know this is not HELEN's idea of fun.)
- KIPPS I'm sure she'll come . . . if she can get away. What about a nightcap?
- SID No thanks. I just wanted you to hear the news from me.
- KIPPS I'm happy for you, Sid. Some men decide these things before they're ready to. But it sounds to me as if you've made a really good choice.
- SID I think I have, Arthur. I truly think I have. Goodnight.

Music No. 17a: ON MY SIDE

SCENE SEVENTEEN

A plot of building land. Day.

MRS WALSINGHAM, JAMES, LADY PUNNET and MR MAXWELL are eagerly discussing plans for the house, while HELEN hangs back. The architect starts pacing out the land.

- MRS WALS. Now you are quite sure the site is ours?
- JAMES The owner's ready to sell. With three hundred acres to start with and more land if we want it.
- MRS WALS. And there won't be any . . . difficulty?
- JAMES There's plenty of money. And the property will only gain in value.
- MRS WALS. It's quite safe, then?
- JAMES Everything I do is safe, Mother dear.
- MAXWELL Lady Punnet, Mrs Walsingham . . . the house!

Music No. 18: WE'LL BUILD A PALACE / I ONLY WANT A LITTLE HOUSE

MRS WALSINGHAM
WE CAN REBUILD THE FAMILY NAME