

- 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

- KIPPS You see? There you are. To you, Ann's a "servin' girl." To me, she's a friend from me childhood. We grew up together. Shouldn't I have spoken to me old pal?
- HELEN Why didn't you explain that?
- KIPPS I shouldn't have to. If I choose to be friendly to anyone, servant or king, why should I have to explain?
- (MRS WALSINGHAM *has returned.*)
- MRS WALS. Explain what?
- KIPPS Helen and I think we should call off the wedding.
- HELEN Not call it off, we . . . we just want to delay it.
- KIPPS But —
- HELEN Please, Arthur. *
- KIPPS Very well. We want to delay it.
- MRS WALS. This is a catastrophe.
- MR MAXWELL Does that mean we must delay the building?
- KIPPS I'm afraid so.
- MR MAXWELL You will receive my bill in the morning!
- MRS WALS. What about your business affairs? Is James to be cast out, too?
- KIPPS Not if he doesn't want to be. Mrs Walsingham, I'm not your enemy.
- HELEN Of course he's not.
- KIPPS I'd better go.
- HELEN But we'll meet soon. And talk.
- KIPPS If you think we should.