

From A MAN'S WORLD by Rachel Crothers
Excerpt from Act II
2 F

Clara Oakes, a painter of miniatures and her roommate singer Lione Brune, prepare their room for a show of Clara's work & gossip about Frank.

CLARA: (Going to take a work-basket from the table to put it on bureau.) Oh, dear! I hope it pays for all the trouble. Cousin Mabel may have one of her headaches at the last minute and not come at all. She's really awfully pleased with her miniature. It flatters her horribly. I do want to be honest and true in my work, but what are you going to do? No woman will accept a miniature unless it does flatter her.

LIONE: I hope to goodness somebody gives you an order after this affair. I'm ruining my hands cleaning these things.

CLARA: Don't do them well. We'll never be ready by four o'clock. It's two now.

LIONE: If your cousin doesn't come, I'd never speak to her again in all my life, if I were you.

CLARA: (Getting flat on the floor to reach a dress box under the bed.) Oh, pooh! She wouldn't care whether I did or not.

LIONE: Your cousin Mabel's a damned snob – that's what she is.

CLARA: (Taking a shabby afternoon gown from the box.) Oh, she doesn't mean to be. She's just like everybody else in her world. (Examining the gown.)

LIONE: I hate 'em. Ignorant, idle, society women. That's all they are.

CLARA: You'd give your ears to be one tho'.

LIONE: (Rising and leaving candles on couch, as she goes to look at herself at bureau.) I wouldn't. I wouldn't give up my career for anything on earth.

CLARA: Yes, that's what I used to think but somehow, I'm not so keen about my -- Goodness, this is mussed and shabby! Absolutely the only rag I've got to wear. (Hanging the gown on the chandelier below the fireplace she pushes the box back and arranges the cover on couch.) Oh, I must get the rest of the miniatures up. Here's Kiddie's picture. Where's the best place to put this?

LIONE: I think Frank's got an awful nerve to let you display it at all.

CLARA: Why?

LIONE: Why? Because people will ask who he is.

CLARA: Oh, well, I'll just say he's a little boy that Frank Ware adopted.

LIONE: (Going to put a candle stick on mantel.) Yes, that sounds well.

CLARA: Well, it's plausible. (Putting the miniature on the screen and standing back to see how it looks.)

LIONE: Not to me. The men say she isn't in love with Gaskell. Why, she is, head over heels and sometimes I think--

CLARA: What?

LIONE: Sometimes I think... (Going to Clara.) ...he is Kiddie's father.

CLARA: What? Oh, horrible, Lione. She never saw Gaskell till she came here.

LIONE: Yes, so they say. Let me see Kiddie's picture. Frank used to live in Paris, and so did Gaskell.

CLARA: Oh, Goodness! I never dreamed of such a thing.

LIONE: (Going to sit at R. Of table and looking closely at miniature.) Several times I've thought--

CLARA: You'd better keep on working. The tea table isn't ready at all. I hope to goodness no body looks behind this screen.

LIONE: (Starting as she looks at picture.) It isn't imagination. I do see it as true as I live.

CLARA: What's the matter?

LIONE: Look! Come here.