THE CONSTANT WIFE

by W. Somerset Maugham

AUDITION SIDE — CONSTANCE & BERNARD

Act I

BERNARD. I never wanted to marry anyone but you.

CONSTANCE. Oh, come, you're not going to tell me that you've never been in love since you were in love with me?

BERNARD. No, I've been in love half a dozen times, but when it came to the point I found I still loved you best.

CONSTANCE. I like you for saying that. I shouldn't have believed it if you'd said you'd never loved anybody else, and I should have been vexed with you for thinking me such a fool as to believe it.

BERNARD. You see, it was you I loved in the others. One because she had hair like yours, and another because her smile reminded me of your smile.

CONSTANCE. *(putting her hand lightly on his arm)* I hate to think that I've made you unhappy. *(She withdraws her hand.)*

BERNARD. But you haven't. I've had a very good time; I've enjoyed my work; I've made a bit of money and I've had a lot of fun. I don't blame you for having married John instead of me.

CONSTANCE. Do you remember John?

BERNARD. Of course I do. He was a very nice fellow. I daresay he's made you a better husband than I should have. I've had my ups and downs. I'm very irritable sometimes. John's been able to give you everything you wanted. You were much safer with him. By the way, I suppose I can still call you Constance?

CONSTANCE. Of course. Why not? Do you know, I think you have a very nice nature, Bernard.

BERNARD. Are you happy with John?

CONSTANCE. Oh very. I think I can quite honestly say that ours has been a very happy and successful marriage.

BERNARD. I'm awfully glad to hear that. Do you think it's cheek to ask if John loves you?

CONSTANCE. I'm sure he loves me.

BERNARD. *(stubbing out his cigarette)* And you love him?

CONSTANCE. Very much.

BERNARD. *(rising)* May I make a short speech?

CONSTANCE. If I may interrupt at suitable moments.