SIDE 4 — Miss Willie & Dr. Emmett

THE CURIOUS SAVAGE by John Patrick

Miss Wilhelmina • Dr. Emmett

Focus: Professional chemistry • Dry humor • Listening & quiet authority

(Miss Willie is straightening the room after Mrs. Savage has just left. Dr. Emmett enters.)

MISS WILLIE
Good morning, Doctor.

DR. EMMETT
Good morning. Is Mrs. Savage downstairs?

MISS WILLIE
She just this minute went out to the garden.

DR. EMMETT
What is her state of mind this morning?

MISS WILLIE
The usual pattern. She's already offered me a bribe.

DR. EMMETT
What did she offer you?

MISS WILLIE

(Laughs)

The highest yet. Fifty thousand—the poor dear!

DR. EMMETT
Did she sound confident?

MISS WILLIE
Definitely manic. She talked as if she still controlled her own affairs.

DR. EMMETT
Apparently she does. Read this.

(Hands her a newspaper.)

I've just been talking to her children—they're practically out of their minds themselves. The Senator is leaving Washington at once—he'll pick up his sister in New York and the Judge in Boston and be here by tonight.

MISS WILLIE

(Looking up from the paper)

This is the most amazing story I've ever read. When did they discover it?

DR. EMMETT
I gather this morning. They asked me to confine her to her room.

MISS WILLIE
I don't understand it—how could she get away with so much money?

DR. EMMETT

Apparently her husband left the estate to her. She's been secretly selling out control ever since.

MISS WILLIE

Ten million dollars—that's a typographical error, isn't it?

DR. EMMETT

No, they had it all right.

MISS WILLIE

But what could she have done with it?

DR. EMMETT

As her son says, God knows.

MISS WILLIE

Could she have spent it?

DR. EMMETT

I doubt it. Will you call her, please? I'd better tell her what to expect.

MISS WILLIE

(Calling out the window)

Oh, Mrs. Savage—would you come in, please? Doctor Emmett wants to see you.

(Turns back to him.)

Are you going to place her in seclusion?

DR. EMMETT

Of course not. But sometimes I wish there was a way of placing relations in seclusion. They are always much more trouble than patients.

MISS WILLIE

Do you think she knows what happened to the money?

DR. EMMETT

If she does—she's the only one.

MISS WILLIE

Is there any possibility that there's method in her madness?

DR. EMMETT

Miss Willie, I find it harder every day to say exactly where reason ends and madness begins. For the moment I must accept the presumptive evidence of her step-children.

MISS WILLIE

Well—from what I've heard, her son's record in Congress would give any good psychiatrist a nasty turn.

DR. EMMETT

It certainly would—and the sensationalism of her daughter's six divorces doesn't speak too well for her emotional stability, either.

(Mrs. Savage enters. Side ends as they shift focus to her.)

End of Side