Julia, Ernest

Julia: Herr Dummkopf, a word with you, if you please.

Ernest: Beautiful English Maiden –

Julia: No compliments, I beg. I desire to speak with you on a purely professional matter, so we will, if you please, dispense with allusions to my personal appearance.

Ernest: *{aside}* My hopes shattered! The haughty Londoner -- with her bewitching English accent -- still despises me! *{aloud}* It shall be as you will.

Julia: I understand that the conspiracy in which we are all concerned is to develop tomorrow, and that the company is likely to elect you to the throne on the understanding that the posts about the court are to be filled by members of your theatrical troupe, according to their professional importance.

Ernest: That is so.

Julia: Then all I can say is that it places me in an extremely awkward position.

Ernest: *{concerned}* How so?

Julia: Why, bless my heart, don't you see that, as your leading lady, I am bound under a serious penalty to play the leading part in all your productions?

Ernest: Yes, and…?

Julia: AND, of course, the leading part in this production will be the Grand Duchess!

Ernest: My wife!

Julia: That is another way of expressing the same idea.

Ernest: *{aside – delighted}* I scarcely dared even to hope for this!

Julia: Of course, as your leading lady, you'll be mean enough to hold me to the terms of my agreement. Oh, that's so like management! Well, I suppose there's no help for it – I shall have to do it!

Ernest: *{aside}* She's mine! *{aloud}* But – do you really think you would care to play that part? *{Taking her hand}*

Julia: *{withdrawing it}* Care to play it? Certainly not – but what am I to do?

Ernest: It's for a long run, mind – a run that may last many, many years, no understudy...

Julia: Business is business, and I am bound by the terms of my agreement.