

AMANDA: Honey, don't push with your fingers. If you have to push with something, the thing to push with is a crust of bread. And chew !chew! Animals have sections in their stomachs which enable them to digest food without mastication, but human beings are supposed to chew their food before they swallow it down. Eat food leisurely, son, and really enjoy it. A well-cooked meal has lots of delicate flavours that have to be held in the mouth for appreciation. So chew your food and give your salivary glands a chance to function !

TOM: I haven't enjoyed one bite of this dinner because of your constant directions on how to eat it. It's you that makes me rush through meals with your hawk-like attention to every bite I take. Sickening - spoils my appetite - all this discussion of - animals' secretion - salivary glands - mastication !

AMANDA: Temperament like a Metropolitan star ! You're not excused from the table.

TOM: I'm getting a cigarette.

AMANDA: You smoke too much.

LAURA: I'll bring in the coffee.

AMANDA: No, sister, no, sister - you be the lady this time and I'll be the serving boy.

LAURA: I'm already up.

AMANDA: Resume your seat, little sister, I want you to stay fresh and pretty for gentleman callers!

LAURA: I'm not expecting any gentleman callers.

AMANDA: Sometimes they come when they are least expected! Why, I remember one Sunday afternoon in Blue Mountain –

TOM: I know what's coming

LAURA: Yes. But let her tell it.

TOM: Again?

LAURA: She loves to tell it.

AMANDA: One Sunday afternoon in Blue Mountain, your mother received seventeen! gentlemen callers! Why, sometimes there weren't chairs enough to accommodate them all.

TOM: How did you entertain those gentleman callers?

AMANDA: I understood the art of conversation !

TOM: I bet you could talk.

AMANDA: Girls in those days knew how to talk, I can tell you. They knew how to entertain their gentlemen callers. It wasn't enough for a girl to be possessed of a pretty face and a graceful figure although I wasn't alighted in either respect. She also needed to have a nimble wit and a tongue to meet all occasions.

TOM: What did you talk about?

AMANDA: Things of importance going on in the world ! Never anything coarse or common or vulgar.

My callers were gentleman -all! Among my callers were some of the most prominent young planters of the Mississippi Delta - planters and sons of planters! There was young Champ Laughlin who later became vice-president of the Delta Planters Bank. Hadley Stevenson who was drowned in Moon Lake and left his widow one hundred and fifty thousand in Government bonds. There were the Cutrere brothers, Wesley and Bates. Bates was one of my bright particular beaux! He got in a quarrel with that wild Wainwright boy. They shot it out on the floor of Moon Lake Casino. Bates was shot through the stomach. Died in the ambulance on his way to Memphis. His widow was also well provided for, came into eight or ten thousand acres, that's all. She married him on the rebound - never loved her - carried my picture on him the night he died! And there was that boy that every girl in the Delta had set her cap for! That brilliant, brilliant young Fitzhugh boy from Greene County!

TOM: What did he leave his widow?

AMANDA: He never married ! Gracious, you talk as though all of my old admirers had turned up their toes to the daisies ! That Fitzhugh boy went North and made a fortune - came to be known as the Wolf of Wall Street! He had the Midas touch, whatever he touched turned to gold! And I could have been Mrs. Duncan J. Fitzhugh, mind you! But - I picked your father!