

AMANDA: As you know, I was supposed to be inducted into my office at the D.A.R. this afternoon. But I stopped off at Rubicam's business college to speak to your teachers about your having a cold and ask them what progress they thought you were making down there.

LAURA: Oh....

AMANDA: I went to the typing instructor and introduced myself as your mother. She didn't know who you were. "Wingfield," she said. "We don't have any such student enrolled at the school!" I assured her she did, that you had been going to classes since early in January. 'I wonder,' she said, 'if you could be talking about that terribly shy little girl who dropped out of school after only a few days' attendance?'

-while I was working at Famous and Barr, I suppose, demonstrating those - Oh! Fifty dollars' tuition, all of our plans - my hopes and ambition for you - just gone up the spout, just gone up the spout like that.

Laura, where have you been going when you've gone on pretending that you were going to business college?

LAURA: I've just been going out walking.

AMANDA: That's not true.

LAURA: It is. I just went walking.

AMANDA: Walking? Walking? In winter? Deliberately courting pneumonia in that light coat? Where did you walk to, Laura?

LAURA: All sorts of places - mostly in the park.

AMANDA: Even after you'd started catching that cold?

LAURA: It was the lesser of two evils, Mother. I couldn't go back up. I threw up -on the floor!

AMANDA: From half past seven till after five every day you mean to tell me you walked around in the park, because you wanted to make me think that you were still going to Rubicam's Business College?

LAURA: It wasn't as bad as it sounds. I went inside places to get warmed up.

AMANDA: Inside where?

LAURA: I went in the art museum and the bird-houses at the Zoo. I visited the penguins every day! Sometimes I did without lunch and went to the movies. Lately I've been spending most of my afternoons in the jewel-box, that big glass-house where they raise the tropical flowers.

AMANDA: You did all this to deceive me, just for deception? Why?

LAURA: Mother, when you're disappointed, you get that awful suffering look on your face, like the picture of Jesus' mother in the museum!

AMANDA: Hush !

LAURA: I couldn't face it.

AMANDA: So what are we going to do the rest of our lives? Stay home and watch the parades go by? Amuse ourselves with the glass menagerie, darling? Eternally play those worn-out phonograph records your father left as a painful reminder of him? We won't have a business career - we've given that up because it gave us nervous indigestion! What is there left but dependency all our lives?

I know so well what becomes of unmarried women who aren't prepared to occupy a position. I've seen such pitiful cases in the South - barely tolerated spinsters living upon the grudging patronage of sister's husband or brother's wife! - stuck away in some little mousetrap of a room - encouraged by one in-law to visit another - little birdlike women without any nest - eating the crust of humility all their life! Is that the future that we've mapped out for ourselves? I swear it's the only alternative I can think of! It isn't a very pleasant alternative, is it?

Of course - some girls do marry! Haven't you ever liked some boy?

LAURA: Yes. I liked one once. I came across his picture a while ago.

AMANDA: He gave you his picture?

LAURA: No, it's in the year-book.

AMANDA: Oh - a high-school boy.

LAURA: Yes. His name was Jim. Here he is in The Pirates of Penzance.

AMANDA: The what?

LAURA: He had a wonderful voice and we sat across the aisle from each other Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays in the Aud. Here he is with the silver cup for debating! See his grin?

AMANDA [absently]: He must have had a jolly disposition.

LAURA: He used to call me - Blue Roses.

AMANDA: Why did he call you such a name as that?

LAURA: When I had that attack of pleurosis - he asked me what was the matter when I came back. I said pleurosis he thought that I said Blue Roses ! So that's what he always called me after that. Whenever he saw me, he'd holler, 'Hello, Blue Roses!