

TOM [hoarsely]: Mother. ! - I apologize, Mother. I'm sorry for what I said, for everything that I said; I didn't mean it.

AMANDA [sobbingly]: My devotion has made me a witch and so I make myself hateful to my children!

TOM: No, you don't.

AMANDA: I worry so much, don't sleep, it makes me nervous!

TOM [gently]: I understand that.

AMANDA: I've had to put up a solitary battle all these years. But you're my right-hand bower! Don't fall down, don't fail!

TOM [gently]: I try, Mother.

AMANDA: Try and you will succeed! Why, you -you're just full of natural endowments ! Both of my children - they're unusual children! Don't you think I know it? I'm so proud! Happy and - feel I've - so much to be thankful for but - Promise me one thing, Son!

TOM: What, Mother?

AMANDA: Promise, Son, you'll - never be a drunkard!

TOM: I will never be a drunkard, Mother.

AMANDA: That's what frightened me so, that you'd be drinking! Eat a bowl of Purina!

TOM: Just Coffee, Mother.

AMANDA: Shredded wheat biscuit?

TOM: No. No, Mother, just coffee.

AMANDA: You can't put in a day's work on an empty stomach. You've got ten minutes - don't gulp! Drinking too hot liquids makes cancer of the stomach. Put cream in.

TOM: No, thank you.

AMANDA: To cool it.

TOM . No! No, thank you, I want it black.

AMANDA: I know, but it's not good for you. We have to do all that we can to build ourselves up. In these trying times we live in, all that we have to cling to is - each other. . . . That's why it's so important to - Tom, ! - I sent out your sister so I could discuss something with you. If you hadn't spoken I would have spoken to you.

TOM [gently]: What is it, Mother, that you want to discuss?

AMANDA: Laura!

TOM: - Oh. - Laura ...

AMANDA: You know how Laura is. So quiet but - still water runs deep! She notices things and I think she - broods about them. A few days ago I came in and she was crying.

TOM: What about?

AMANDA: YOU.

TOM: Me?

AMANDA: She has an idea that you're not happy here

TOM: What gave her that idea?

AMANDA: What gives her any idea? However, you do act strangely! - I'm not criticizing, understand that! I know your ambitions do not lie in the warehouse, that like everybody in the whole wide world - you've had to make sacrifices, but - Tom - Tom - life's not easy, it calls for - Spartan endurance ! There's so many things in my heart that I cannot describe to you! I've never told you but - I loved your father. . . .

TOM [gently]: I know that, Mother.

AMANDA: And you - when I see you taking after his ways! Staying out late - and - well, you had been drinking the night you were in that - terrifying condition! Laura says that you hate the apartment and that you go out nights to get away from it! Is that true, Tom?

TOM: No. You say there's so much in your heart that you can't describe to me. That's true of me, too. There's so much in my heart that I can't describe to you! So let's respect each other's –

AMANDA: But, why - why, Tom - am you always so restless? Where do you go to, nights?

TOM: I - go to the movies.

AMANDA: Why do you go to the movies so much, Tom?

TOM: I go to the movies because - I like adventure. Adventure is something I don't have much of at work, so I go to the movies.

AMANDA: But, Tom, you go to the movies entirely too much!

TOM: I like a lot of adventure.

AMANDA: Most young men find adventure in their careers.

TOM: Then most young men are not employed in a warehouse.

AMANDA: The world is full of young men employed in warehouses and offices and factories.

TOM: Do all of them find adventure in their careers?

AMANDA: They do or they do without it! Not everybody has a craze for adventure.

TOM: Man is by instinct a lover, a hunter, a fighter, and none of those instincts are given much play at the warehouse!

AMANDA: Man is by instinct! Don't quote instinct to me! Instinct is something that people have got away from! It belongs to animals! Christian adults don't want it!

TOM: What do Christian adults want, then, Mother?

AMANDA: Superior things! Things of the mind and the spirit! Only animals have to satisfy instincts! Surely your aims are somewhat higher than theirs! Than monkeys – pigs

TOM: I reckon they're not.

AMANDA: You're joking. However, that isn't what I wanted to discuss.

TOM: I haven't much time.

AMANDA: Sit down.

TOM: You want me to punch in red at the warehouse, Mother?

AMANDA: You have five minutes. I want to talk about Laura.

TOM: All right! What about Laura?

AMANDA: We have to be making some plans and provisions for her. She's older than you, two years, and nothing has happened. She just drifts along doing nothing. It frightens me terribly how she just drifts along.

TOM: I guess she's the type that people call home girls.

AMANDA: There's no such type, and if there is, it's a pity! That is unless the home is hers, with a husband!

TOM: What?

AMANDA: Oh, I can see the handwriting on the wall as plain as I see the nose in front of my face! It's terrifying! More and more you remind me of your father! He was out all hours without explanation! - Then left! Good-bye! And me with the bag to hold. I saw that letter you got from the Merchant Marine. I know what you're dreaming of. I'm not standing here blindfolded. Very well, then. Then, do it! But not till there's somebody to take your place.

TOM: What do you mean?

AMANDA: I mean that as soon as Laura has got somebody to take care of her, married, a home of her own, independent?- why, then you'll be free to go wherever you please, on land, on sea, whichever way the wind blows you ! But until that time you've got to look out for your sister. I put her in business college - a dismal failure! Frightened her so it made her sick at the stomach. I took her over to the Young Peoples League at the church. Another fiasco. She spoke to nobody, nobody spoke to her. Now all she does is fool with those pieces of glass and play those worn-out records. What kind of a life is that for a girl to lead?

TOM: What can I do about it?

AMANDA: Overcome Selfishness! Self, self, self is all that you ever think of!

TOM: I'm too late to—

AMANDA: Down at the warehouse, aren't there some - nice young men?

TOM: No ! AMANDA: There must be - some

TOM: Mother.

AMANDA: Find out one that's clean-living - doesn't drink and - ask him out for sister!

TOM: What?

AMANDA: For sister! To meet! Get acquainted

TOM: Oh, my go- osh!

AMANDA: Will you? Will you? Will you? Will you, dear?

TOM: YES.