

Laura / Jim

JIM. Uh-huh. I know, but I wasn't impressed by that—propaganda!

LAURA. It wasn't—the truth?

JIM. It was only true in Emily's optimistic opinion!

LAURA. Oh . . . *(Turns R. of Jim. Jim lights a cigarette and leans indolently back on his elbows smiling at Laura with a warmth and charm which lights her inwardly with altar candles. She remains by the glass menagerie table and turns in her hands a piece of glass to cover her tumult CUT MUSIC #16-A.)*

JIM. What have you done since high school? Huh?

LAURA. What?

JIM. I said what have you done since high school?

LAURA. Nothing much.

JIM. You must have been doing something all this time.

LAURA. Yes.

JIM. Well, then, such as what?

LAURA. I took a business course at business college . . .

JIM. You did? How did that work out?

LAURA. *(Turns back to Jim.)* Well, not very—well. . . . I had to drop out, it gave me—indigestion. . . .

JIM. *(Laughs gently.)* What are you doing now?

LAURA. I don't do anything—much. . . . Oh, please don't think I sit around doing nothing! My glass collection takes a good deal of time. Glass is something you have to take good care of.

JIM. What did you say—about glass?

LAURA. *(She clears her throat and turns away again, acutely shy.)* Collection, I said—I have one.

JIM. *(Puts out cigarette. Abruptly.)* Say! You know what I judge to be the trouble with you? *(Rises from day-bed and crosses R.)* Inferiority complex! You know what that is? That's what they call it when a fellow low-rates himself! Oh, I understand it because I had it, too. Uh-huh! Only my case was not as aggravated as yours seems to be. I had it until I took up public speaking and developed my voice, and learned that I had an aptitude for science. Do you know that until that time I never thought of myself as being outstanding in any way whatsoever!

LAURA. Oh, my!

JIM. Now I've never made a regular study of it—*(Sits armchair R.)* mind you, but I have a friend who says I can analyze people better than doctors that make a profession of it. I don't claim

that's necessarily true, but I can sure guess a person's psychology. Excuse me, Laura. (*Takes out gum.*) I always take it out when the flavor is gone. I'll just wrap it in a piece of paper. (*Tears a piece of paper off the newspaper under candelabrum, wraps gum in it, crosses to day-bed, looks to see if Laura is watching. She isn't. Crosses around day-bed.*) I know how it is when you get it stuck on a shoe. (*Throws gum under day-bed, crosses around L. of day-bed. Crosses R. to Laura.*) Yep—that's what I judge to be your principal trouble. A lack of confidence in yourself as a person. Now I'm basing that fact on a number of your remarks and on certain observations I've made. For instance, that clumping you thought was so awful in high school. You say that you dreaded to go upstairs? You see what you did? You dropped out of school, you gave up an education all because of a little clump, which as far as I can see is practically non-existent! Oh, a little physical defect is all you have. It's hardly noticeable even! Magnified a thousand times by your imagination! You know what my strong advice to you is? You've got to think of yourself as superior in some way! (*Crosses L. to small table R. of day-bed. Sits. Laura sits in armchair.*)

LAURA. In what way would I think?

JIM. Why, man alive, Laura! Look around you a little and what do you see? A world full of common people! All of 'em born and all of 'em going to die! Now, which of them has one-tenth of your strong points! Or mine! Or anybody else's for that matter? You see, everybody excels in some one thing. Well—some in many! You take me, for instance. My interest happens to lie in electrodynamics. I'm taking a course in radio engineering at night school, on top of a fairly responsible job at the warehouse. I'm taking that course *and* studying public speaking.

LAURA. Ohhhh. My!

JIM. Because I believe in the future of television! I want to be ready to go right up along with it. (*Rises, crosses R.*) I'm planning to get in on the ground floor. Oh, I've already made the right connections. All that remains now is for the industry itself to get under way—full steam! You know, *knowledge—ZSZZppp! Money—Zzzzzppp! POWER!* Wham! That's the cycle democracy is built on! (*Pause.*) I guess you think I think a lot of myself!

LAURA. No—o-o-o, I don't.

JIM. (*Kneels at armchair, R.*) Well, now how about you? Isn't