

THE GLASS MENAGERIE

church, or rather her father would if her father was living, and sort of feel him out on the young man's character. That is the way such things are discreetly handled to keep a young woman from making a tragic mistake!

TOM: Then how did you happen to make a tragic mistake?

AMANDA: That innocent look of your father's had everyone fooled! He *smiled*—the world was *enchanted*! No girl can do worse than put herself at the mercy of a handsome appearance! I hope that Mr. O'Connor is not too good-looking.

TOM: No, he's not too good-looking. He's covered with freckles and hasn't too much of a nose.

AMANDA: He's not right-down homely, though?

TOM: Not right-down homely. Just medium homely, I'd say.

AMANDA: Character's what to look for in a man.

TOM: That's what I've always said, Mother.

AMANDA: You've never said anything of the kind and I suspect you would never give it a thought.

TOM: Don't be so suspicious of me.

AMANDA: At least I hope he's the type that's up and coming.

TOM: I think he really goes in for self-improvement.

AMANDA: What reason have you to think so?

TOM: He goes to night school.

AMANDA [*beaming*]: Splendid! What does he do, I mean study?

TOM: Radio engineering and public speaking!

Tom

SCENE FIVE

AMANDA: Then he has visions of being advanced in the world! Any young man who studies public speaking is aiming to have an executive job some day! And radio engineering? A thing for the future! Both of these facts are very illuminating. Those are the sort of things that a mother should know concerning any young man who comes to call on her daughter. Seriously or—not.

TOM: One little warning. He doesn't know about Laura. I didn't let on that we had dark ulterior motives. I just said, why don't you come and have dinner with us? He said okay and that was the whole conversation.

AMANDA: I bet it was! You're eloquent as an oyster. However, he'll know about Laura when he gets here. When he sees how lovely and sweet and pretty she is, he'll thank his lucky stars he was asked to dinner.

TOM: Mother, you mustn't expect too much of Laura.

AMANDA: What do you mean?

TOM: Laura seems all those things to you and me because she's ours and we love her. We don't even notice she's crippled any more.

AMANDA: Don't say crippled! You know that I never allow that word to be used!

TOM: But face facts, Mother. She is and—that's not all—

AMANDA: What do you mean "not all"?

TOM: Laura is very different from other girls.

AMANDA: I think the difference is all to her advantage.

TOM: Not quite all—in the eyes of others—strangers—she's terribly shy and lives in a world of her own and those

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things make her seem a little peculiar to people outside the house.

AMANDA: Don't say peculiar.

TOM: Face the facts. She is.

[The dance hall music changes to a tango that has a minor and somewhat ominous tone.]

AMANDA: In what way is she peculiar—may I ask?

TOM *[gently]*: She lives in a world of her own—a world of little glass ornaments, Mother. . . .

[He gets up. Amanda remains holding the brush, looking at him, troubled.]

She plays old phonograph records and—that's about all—
[He glances at himself in the mirror and crosses to the door.]

AMANDA *[sharply]*: Where are you going?

TOM: I'm going to the movies. *[He goes out the screen door.]*

AMANDA: Not to the movies, every night to the movies!
[She follows quickly to the screen door.] I don't believe you always go to the movies!

[He is gone. Amanda looks worriedly after him for a moment. Then vitality and optimism return and she turns from the door, crossing to the portieres.]

Laura! Laura!

[Laura answers from the kitchenette.]

LAURA: Yes, Mother.

AMANDA: Let those dishes go and come in front!

SCENE FIVE

[Laura appears with a dish towel. Amanda speaks to her gaily.]

Laura, come here and make a wish on the moon!

[Screen image: The Moon.]

LAURA *[entering]*: Moon—moon?

AMANDA: A little silver slipper of a moon. Look over your left shoulder, Laura, and make a wish!

[Laura looks faintly puzzled as if called out of sleep. Amanda seizes her shoulders and turns her at an angle by the door.]

Now! Now, darling, wish!

LAURA: What shall I wish for, Mother?

AMANDA *[her voice trembling and her eyes suddenly filling with tears]*: Happiness! Good fortune!

[The sound of the violin rises and the stage dims out.]

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