

JIM. How are you feeling now? Any better?

LAURA. Yes, thank you.

JIM. (*Gives her glass of wine.*) Oh, here, this is for you. It's a little dandelion wine.

LAURA. Thank you.

JIM. Well, drink it—but don't get drunk. (*He laughs heartily.*) Say, your brother tells me you're shy. Is that right, Laura?

LAURA. I—don't know.

JIM. I judge you to be an old-fashioned type of girl. Oh, I think that's a wonderful type to be. I hope you don't think I'm being too personal—do you?

LAURA. Mr. O'Connor, I—don't suppose—you remember me—at all?

JIM. (*Smiling doubtfully.*) You know, as a matter of fact I did have an idea I'd seen you before. Do you know it seemed almost like I was about to remember your name. But the name I was about to remember—wasn't a name! So I stopped myself before I said it.

LAURA. Wasn't it—Blue Roses?

JIM. (*Grinning.*) Blue Roses! Oh, my gosh, yes—Blue Roses! You know, I didn't connect you with high school somehow or other. But that's where it was, it was high school. Gosh, I didn't even know you were Shakespeare's sister! I'm sorry.

LAURA. I didn't expect you to.—You—barely knew me!

JIM. But, we did have a speaking acquaintance.

LAURA. Yes, we—spoke to each other.

JIM. Say, didn't we have a class in something together?

LAURA. I sat across the aisle from you in the auditorium. Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. I had that brace on my leg then. I had to walk in front of all those people. My seat was in the back row. I had to go clumping up the aisle with everyone watching!

JIM. I remember now. And I used to call you Blue Roses. How did I ever get started calling you a name like that?

LAURA. I was out of school a little while with pleurosis. When I came back you asked me what was the matter. I said I had pleurosis and you thought I said Blue Roses. So that's what you always called me after that!

JIM. I hope you didn't mind?

LAURA. Oh, no—I liked it. You see, I wasn't acquainted with many—people. . .

JIM. Say, you know something, Laura? (*Rises to sit on day-bed R.*) People are not so dreadful when you know them. That's what you have to remember! And everybody has problems, not just you but practically everybody has problems. You think of yourself as being the only one who is disappointed. But just look around you and what do you see—a lot of people just as disappointed as you are. You take me, for instance. Boy, when I left high school I thought I'd be a lot further along at this time than I am now. Say, you finished high school?

LAURA. I made bad grades in my final examinations.

JIM. You mean you dropped out?
LAURA. *(Rises.)* I didn't go back.

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

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? 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. 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!

LAURA. In what way would I think?

JIM. Well, Isn't there some one thing that you take more interest in than anything else?

LAURA. Well, I do—as I said—have my—glass collection . . . ornaments mostly. Most of them are little animals made out of glass. Here's an example of one, if you'd like to see it! This is one of the oldest, it's nearly thirteen. *(Hands it to Jim.)* Oh, be careful—if you breathe, it breaks! Go on, I trust you with him! *(Jim takes horse.)* There—you're holding him gently! I shouldn't be partial, but he is my favorite one.

JIM. Say, what kind of a thing is this one supposed to be?

LAURA. Haven't you noticed the single horn on his forehead?

JIM. Oh, a unicorn, huh?

LAURA. Mmmm-hmmmm!

JIM. Unicorns, aren't they extinct in the modern world? Poor little fellow must feel kind of lonesome.

LAURA. Well, if he does he doesn't complain about it. He stays on a shelf with some horses that don't have horns and they seem to get along nicely together.

JIM. They do. Say, where will I put him?

LAURA. Put him on the table.

JIM. Where does the music come from?

LAURA. From the Paradise Dance Hall across the alley.

JIM. How about cutting the rug a little, Miss Wingfield? Or is your program filled up? Let me take a look at it. *(Crosses back C. Music, in dance hall, goes into a waltz. Business here with imaginary dance-program card.)* Oh, say! Every dance is taken! I'll just scratch some of them out. Ahhhh, a waltz! *(Crosses to Laura.)*

LAURA. I—can't dance!

JIM. There you go with that inferiority stuff!

LAURA. I've never danced in my life!

JIM. Come on, try!

LAURA. Oh, but I'd step on you!

JIM. Well, I'm not made out of glass.

LAURA. How—how do we start!

JIM. You hold your arms out a little.

LAURA. Like this?

JIM. A little bit higher. *(Takes Laura in arms.)* That's right. Now don't tighten up, that's the principal thing about it—just relax.

LAURA. I'm afraid you can't budge me.

JIM. *(Dances around L. of day-bed slowly.)* What do you bet I can't?

LAURA. Goodness, yes, you can!

JIM. Is he broken?

LAURA. He's lost his horn. It doesn't matter. Maybe it's a blessing in disguise.

JIM. Gee, I bet you'll never forgive me. I bet that was your favorite piece of glass.

LAURA. Oh, I don't have favorites—*(Pause.)* much. It's no tragedy. Glass breaks so easily.

JIM. Still I'm awfully sorry that I was the cause of it.

LAURA. I'll just imagine he had an operation. The horn was removed to make him feel less—freakish! Now he will feel more at home with the other horses, the ones who don't have horns. . . .

JIM. You know—you're—different than anybody else I know? Did anybody ever tell you that you were pretty? Well, you are! And in a different way from anyone else. And all the nicer because of the difference. Being different is nothing to be ashamed of. Because other people aren't such wonderful people. They're a hundred times one thousand. You're one times one! They walk all over the earth. You just stay here. They're as common as—weeds, but—you, well you're—*Blue Roses!*

LAURA. But blue is—wrong for—roses . . .

JIM. It's right for you!—You're pretty!

LAURA. In what respect am I pretty?

JIM. In all respects—your eyes—your hair. Your hands are pretty! You think I'm saying this because I'm invited to dinner and have to be nice. But I'm talking to you sincerely. Somebody ought to build your confidence up—way up! And make you proud instead of shy and turning away and—blushing— *(Jim lifts Laura up on small table on "way up.")* Somebody—ought to—*(Lifts her down.)* somebody ought to—kiss you, Laura! *(They kiss. Jim releases her)* I shouldn't have done that—that was way off beam. —I'm not in a position to — I can't ask for your number and say I'll phone. I can't call up next week end.

LAURA. You—won't—call again?

JIM. No, I can't. You see, I've—got strings on me. Laura, I've—been going steady!