

LAURA: Mom, I can't do anything— No, Mom, please! I have to say this. I can't go outside these walls. There's just too much pain! I can feel everyone staring at me—staring at this. (She points to the braced leg.) The noise it makes, it's just so loud! That's why I dropped out of high school! I felt everyone's eyes staring at me, heard all the giggles they tried to suppress as I clomped and limped down the hall. Especially when I would enter the choir room! Jim would never want to be around me again. Sure, we talked sometimes, but he wouldn't want to be around me any more than those few occasions—not around the limping girl who makes such a racket! Nobody would want to be near me. So I tuned out from the rest of the world before it could cause me any more pain than I have already suffered. And it seems that whatever crippled my leg— (Amanda opens her mouth as if about to interject.) —yes, Mom, you might as well admit that I'm crippled!—has crippled the rest of my being throughout time. It seems I just got worse and worse at school. And then at business college, in that confined typing room, that quick clacking of keyboards surrounded me as I stumbled and fat-fingered all the letters. It felt as if the professor was breathing down my neck, silently mocking me as I continued to fail. Until finally, all that pressure poured out of me—and into a toilet. Mom, secluded from the world in this home listening to phonograph records and dusting my glass collection—this is where I belong! I fail everywhere else in the outside world. Here, there's nothing to fail at! I'll never succeed at finding a husband or a job, so I might as well give up trying now and just be content in my bubble with at least having no additional failure for the rest of my life! I can't see Jim! (Tears are welling in her eyes.) It would only result in the ultimate failure—rejection from the only person I have ever loved! Mom, I can't! Just have dinner without me. Please, Mom.