

too, huh? Oh, he's not perfect. Of course he has a weakness. He has the most terrible weakness in the entire world. He just drinks too much. What? Oh, no, honey, don't let them burn. You go take a look in the oven and I'll hold on... Why, that woman! Do you know what she did? She hung up on me.

*Dining-room and living-room lights dim in. Reading lamp lights up at same time.*

LAURA. Oh, Mother, Mother, Tom's trying to write.

*Laura rises from armchair where she was left at curtain of previous scene, goes to curtain between dining-room and living-room, which is already open.*

~~AMANDA. Oh! So he is. So he is.~~

*She crosses from phone, goes to dining-room and up to Tom.*

START → TOM. (At table.) Now what are you up to?

AMANDA. I'm trying to save your eyesight. (Business with lamp.) You've only got one pair of eyes and you've got to take care of them. Oh, I know that Milton was blind, but that's not what made him a genius.

TOM. Mother, will you please go away and let me finish my writing?

AMANDA. (Squares his shoulders.) Why can't you sit up straight? So your shoulders don't stick through like sparrows' wings?

TOM. Mother, please go busy yourself with something else. I'm trying to write.

AMANDA. (Business with Tom.) Now, I've seen a medical chart, and I know what that position does to your internal organs. You sit up and I'll show you. Your stomach presses against your lungs, and your lungs press against your heart, and that poor little heart gets discouraged because it hasn't got any room left to go on beating for you.

TOM. What in hell...!

*Inner curtains between living-room and dining-room close. Lights dim down in dining-room. Laura crosses, stands c. of curtains in living-room listening to following scene between Tom and Amanda.*

AMANDA. Don't you talk to me like that—

TOM. —am I supposed to do?

AMANDA. What's the matter with you? Have you gone out of your senses?

TOM. Yes, I have. You've driven me out of them.

AMANDA. What is the matter with you lately, you big—big—idiot?

TOM. Look, Mother—I haven't got a thing, not a single thing left in this house that I can call my own.

AMANDA. Lower your voice!

TOM. Yesterday you confiscated my books! You had the nerve to—

AMANDA. I did. I took that horrible novel back to the library—that awful book by that insane Mr. Lawrence. I cannot control the output of a diseased mind or people who cater to them, but I won't allow such filth in my house. No, no, no, no, no!

TOM. House, house! Who pays the rent on the house, who makes a slave of himself to—!

AMANDA. Don't you dare talk to me like that!

*Laura crosses D. L. to back of armchair.*

TOM. No, I mustn't say anything! I've just got to keep quiet and let you do all the talking.

AMANDA. Let me tell you something!

TOM. I don't want to hear any more.

AMANDA. You will hear more—

*Laura crosses to phonograph. Tom crosses through curtains between dining-room and living-room. Goes upstage of door R. where, in a dark spot, there is supposedly a closet, as—*

TOM. Well, I'm not going to listen. I'm going out. *(Gets out coat.)*

AMANDA. *(Coming through curtains into living-room, stands c.)* You are going to listen to me, Tom Wingfield. I'm tired of your impudence.—And another thing—I'm right at the end of my patience!

TOM. *(Putting overcoat on back of armchair and crossing back to Amanda.)* What do you think I'm at the end of, Mother? Aren't I supposed to have any patience to reach the end of? I know, I know. It seems unimportant to you, what I'm *doing*—what I'm trying to do—having a difference between them! You don't think that.

AMANDA. I think you're doing things that you're ashamed of, and

that's why you act like this.

*Tom crosses to day-bed and sits.*

I don't believe that you go every night to the movies. Nobody goes to the movies night after night. Nobody in their right minds goes to the movies as often as you pretend to. People don't go to the movies at nearly midnight and movies don't let out at two A.M. Come in stumbling, muttering to yourself like a maniac. You get three hours' sleep and then go to work. Oh, I can picture the way you're doing down there. Moping, doping, because you're in no condition.

TOM. That's true—that's very, very true. I'm in no condition!

AMANDA. How dare you jeopardize your job? Jeopardize our security? How do you think we'd manage—? (*Sits armchair R.*)

TOM. Look, Mother, do you think I'm *crazy* about the *warehouse*? You think I'm in love with the Continental Shoemakers? You think I want to spend fifty-five years of my life down there in that—*celotex interior!* with *fluorescent tubes?*! Honest to God, I'd rather somebody picked up a crow-bar and battered out my brains—than go back mornings! But I go! Sure, every time you come in yelling that bloody *Rise and Shine!* Rise and shine!! I think how lucky dead people are! But I get up. (*Rising from day-bed.*) I go! For sixty-five dollars a month I give up all that I dream of doing and being *ever!* And you say that is all I think of. Oh, God! Why, Mother, if self is all I ever thought of, Mother, I'd be where *he* is—GONE! *\* END* *on back of armchair.* As far as the system of transportation reaches!

*Amanda rises, crosses to him and grabs his arm.*

Please don't grab at me, Mother!

AMANDA. (*Following him.*) I'm not grabbing at you. I want to know where you're going now.

TOM. (*Starts crossing to door R.*) I'm going to the movies!

AMANDA. (*Crosses C.*) I don't believe that lie!

TOM. (*Crosses back to Amanda.*) No? Well, you're right. For once in your life you're right. I'm not going to the movies. I'm going to opium dens! Yes, Mother, opium dens, dens of vice and criminals' hang-outs, Mother. I've joined the Hogan gang. I'm a hired assassin, I carry a Tommy gun in a violin case! I run a string of cathouses in