

F - Jim (& Kate)

ACT III

Two o'clock the following morning, Kate is discovered on the rise, rocking ceaselessly in a chair, staring at her thoughts. It is an intense, slight, sort of rocking. A light shows from upstairs bedroom, lower floor windows being dark. The moon is strong and casts its bluish light.

Presently Jim, dressed in jacket and hat, appears from the L., and seeing her, goes tip beside her.

JIM. Any news?

KATE. No news.

JIM. (*Gently.*) You can't sit up all night, dear, why don't you go to bed?

KATE. I'm waiting for Chris. Don't worry about me, Jim, I'm perfectly all right.

JIM. But it's almost two o'clock.

KATE. I can't sleep. (*Slight pause.*) You had an emergency?

JIM. (*Tiredly.*) Somebody had a headache and thought he was dying. (*Slight pause.*) Half of my patients are quite mad. Nobody realizes how many people are walking around loose, and they're cracked as coconuts. Money. Money-money-money-money. You say it long enough it doesn't mean anything. (*She smiles, makes a silent laugh.*) Oh, how I'd love to be around when that happens!

KATE. (*Shakes her head.*) You're so childish, Jim! Sometimes you are.

JIM. (*Looks at her a moment.*) Kate. (*Pause.*) What happened?

KATE. I told you. He had an argument with Joe. Then he got in the car and drove away.

JIM. What kind of an argument?

KATE. An argument, Joe...he was crying like a child, before.

JIM. They argued about Ann?

KATE. (*Slight hesitation.*) No, not Ann. Imagine? (*Indicates lighted*

window above.) She hasn't come out of that room since he left. All night in that room.

JIM. (*Looks at window, then at her.*) What'd Joe do, tell him?

KATE. (*Stops rocking.*) Tell him what?

JIM. Don't be afraid, Kate, I know. I've always known.

KATE. How?

JIM. It occurred to me a long time ago.

KATE. I always had the feeling that in the back of his head, Chris... almost knew. I didn't think it would be such a shock.

JIM. (*Gets up.*) Chris would never know how to live with a thing like that. It takes a certain talent...for lying. You have it, and I do. But not him.

KATE. What do you mean...he's not coming back?

JIM. Oh, no, he'll come back. We all come back, Kate. These private little revolutions always die. The compromise is always made. In a peculiar way, Frank is right—every man does have a star. The star of one's honesty. And you spend your life groping for it, but once it's out it never lights again. I don't think he went very far. He probably just wanted to be alone to watch his star go out.

KATE. Just as long as he comes back.

JIM. I wish he wouldn't, Kate. One year I simply took off, went to New Orleans; for two months I lived on bananas and milk, and studied a certain disease. It was beautiful. And then she came, and she cried. And I went back home with her. And now I live in the usual darkness; I can't find myself; it's even hard sometimes to remember the kind of man I wanted to be. I'm a good husband; Chris is a good son—he'll come back. (*Keller comes out on porch in dressing-gown and slippers. He goes upstage—to alley. Jim goes to him.*) I have a feeling he's in the park. I'll look around for him. Put her to bed, Joe; this is no good for what she's got. (*Jim exits up driveway.*)

KELLER. (*Coming down.*) What does he want here?

KATE. His friend is not home.

KELLER. (*His voice is husky. Comes down to her.*) I don't like him mixing in so much.

KATE. It's too late, Joe. He knows.