

yet. Where I never go. You know we had that big scene: "Louise, baby," "Carrie darling! It's been ages!" And she says, you've got to see my two kids and whips out these practically eight-by-ten color photographs and wouldn't you know they're gorgeous! They're beautiful. I almost burst into tears right in the middle of Mme. Greis' God awful autumn—if ever you could just wish children into being without all the bother they're what you'd wish for. [REDACTED]

CARRIE They're angels—they really are. Five and seven.

LOUISE Five and seven . . . (They smile, amazed at the years, the moment turns first into a musing pause, then an awkward silence. Carrie takes a drink of coffee, smiles to Louise.)

CARRIE (To the audience.) The coffee's swell.

LOUISE Would you rather have a drink? Let's lace it up a bit. I can't really make anything—and this is supposed to be so simple.

CARRIE That's not a bad idea. (To the audience. [REDACTED]) (Louise is pouring brandy into her cup.) That's fine—oh, my!

LOUISE (She has poured rather a lot.) What the hell.

CARRIE (Quickly here.) Yes, it's after twelve.

LOUISE What's that got to do—oh, well.

CARRIE (Immediately back to the audience.) She has really a marvelous position with—well, no names—one of the better dress makers—her own line. Really very successful. Beautiful clothes. She's always had a wonderful feeling for fabric. Weight, drape, and all that—

LOUISE Yes. It's nice. (She has poured herself a straight brandy.) [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Sometimes I feel my clothes are rags. I mean I say that, no one else better, then other times I'm really quite proud. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] oh, well, hash. What are you watching?

CARRIE (By the window.) What's the building?

LOUISE The green one? It's the Planetarium.

CARRIE Have you ever been?

LOUISE Not actually. I understand it's quite ordinary.

CARRIE Damn.

LOUISE Beg pardon?

CARRIE Oh, nothing. I don't think I like it. Could I have a brandy, darling? I don't much . . . (Setting down the cup.)

LOUISE Of course, of course. It's better than anything to take the chill off. The coffee's awful, isn't it?

CARRIE No, no, it's quite good—I— (To the audience.) Why is that, I wonder? I guess it's just so absurdly simple to make good coffee—of course I couldn't cut a dress.

LOUISE (Handing her the glass.) Cheers. Is that OK or do you want rocks?

CARRIE No, this is fine. (To the audience.) That's funny—are you ever a little proud when someone—well, this isn't a good example, but some slang like "rocks" for "ice" and you know what they mean?—I mean it isn't my word for it—of course I don't usually drink—I mean, I'm not a drinker, so my first thought when someone says "rocks" is—rocks. But, well, if I happen to answer immediately like that—"No, this is fine," I'm always just a little proud. I mean when we were in school we didn't say rocks—we said—I don't know—up?

LOUISE No, up is without—

CARRIE Salt? It was . . .

LOUISE I'll think of it—we used it all the time—

[REDACTED]

CARRIE (She has managed to drink the pony of brandy by now.) [REDACTED] All that slang—you know I dread the kids growing up, because I know I won't understand a word they're saying. Remember the way we talked? (To the audience.) My, that's warm—I shouldn't have—well, that damn Planetarium.

LOUISE Another?

CARRIE Just a bit. (Shrug to the audience.)

LOUISE (To the audience.) Drinks like a sieve. Always has. Wouldn't admit it on a stack of bibles. Always was a prig. Good family and all that, you understand—churchmouse poor, but lineage out the ass.

CARRIE (Lifting the glass.) Where on earth did you get . . . ?

LOUISE I don't know. They're not really good—Victorian.

CARRIE They're lovely though.

LOUISE Aren't they? A little musty shop down in the village. I've had them for . . . (Biting her lip, blinking, remembering the circumstances, suddenly almost in tears.) Golly.

CARRIE (Not noticing.) It's a beautiful rug.

LOUISE Needs a good cleaning. How's David doing?

CARRIE (Surprised.) Oh! Marvelously. (At a loss.) He's . . . just built

himself a workroom out from the house . . .

LOUISE (*Trying to be interested.*) Workroom?

CARRIE Shop. He does woodwork.

LOUISE God.

CARRIE Makes toys and things.

LOUISE Oh, God.

CARRIE No, he's very good at it. I don't know, it's a hobby. He had it in the basement, but—you can't imagine—

LOUISE I can imagine!

CARRIE I mean aside from the noise, the sawdust—it's much better away from the house.

LOUISE You have land then?

CARRIE We have nine acres—not land.

LOUISE (*To the audience.*) He's rolling in money, it's absurd. (*To Carrie.*) It must be wonderful for the kids . . .

CARRIE Oh, yes it . . . there are trees to climb and David's got David Junior a base—softball diamond, I suppose it is and a tree house—and Alice has a doll house and garden house. He's really marvelous with them.

LOUISE They're such angels.

CARRIE Do you hear from your brother?

LOUISE Sam? He's not one to write all that much. Neither am I for that matter. From time to time. Twice a year. I can always count on him to send me something embarrassing for Christmas. He was here a year ago.

CARRIE Has he ever mentioned a Richard Roth?

LOUISE Richard Roth. R. R.; Roth. I don't think, but then I never pay any attention to what he tells me. I don't know how he's remained single. I guess no one would have him.

CARRIE I thought he was nice.

LOUISE Sam? Oh, he's great. It really delights him that every woman comes equipped—and he thinks they're made that way especially for his own personal enjoyment. I think he's marvelous.

CARRIE Yes, I—ah— (*To the audience, embarrassed.*) I really don't think Louise has changed a bit. I—ah—

LOUISE (*Continuing.*) Of course he's damn good at it. Practice makes perfect—

CARRIE Ah-ha . . .

LOUISE —I know he taught me everything I know about sex.

CARRIE (*Exasperated, to the audience.*) Now, I mean that sort of thing. Even if it's true, you don't—

LOUISE (*Pouring another.*) Who's Roth?

CARRIE (*Stopping short.*) Oh. A friend. Of Sam's. One of his friends.

(*Back to Louise.*) Is it warm in here?

LOUISE It is a little, I can—

CARRIE No, no, I'll just take off my jacket. (*She does, and in a minute, her shoes.*)

LOUISE That's a beautiful suit. Chanel?

CARRIE Umm.
LOUISE (*To the audience.*) I loathe it, right? But then I would. It's a beautiful suit. It's not the sort of thing I do. I drape, Chanel cut. It's a very complicated pattern; you take it apart the jacket alone is in about forty pieces. I mean she made the same damn suit for about fifty years, but what the hell, right?

CARRIE Oooo. That's better.
LOUISE Actually I love the damn suit but it's all wrong for her. That's real, you understand, notice the fabric; that's no rack copy. Money, my dears—

CARRIE I have one of yours.
LOUISE Do you, which?
CARRIE Well, I would, wouldn't I? A black wool with white piping.
LOUISE (*To the audience.*) Oh, God. Well, she could do worse. Actually it should look rather nice on her.

CARRIE Oh, I love it. I didn't bring it with me.
LOUISE (*To change the subject.*) Who's Roth?
CARRIE Oh, well, if you don't know him.
LOUISE I might. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

LOUISE (*Fishing neatly.*) Wait, is this the guy you wrote me—God, that's years ago.

CARRIE I thought I had. The poet.
LOUISE A poet, right.

CARRIE Or he was when he was at Haverford, [REDACTED]

CARRIE [REDACTED] He was a really exceptional poet but with—one of those very intelligent guys with enormous gaps. Like he spoke Greek and Latin. Actually spoke—well, I mean he didn't go around speaking it, but he could and one time I remember I mentioned the Secretary of State and he'd never heard of him. [REDACTED]. And on art, painting at least he was absolutely blank. Never heard of the most obvious: Magritte, Gris...

LOUISE Mmmm.

CARRIE But he was one of the most independent and impulsive and masculine and I don't know, one of—

LOUISE Probably what you mean to say is he laid you.
CARRIE —Well, I don't mean—
LOUISE Without so much as a will you waltz, I know the type.

CARRIE Well, as a matter of fact, but it wasn't that—that's neither here nor—Oh, well, it's silly.

LOUISE (*To the audience.*) She's a little tight-assed, but she loosens up. Not such a bad egg really; we had some great times.

CARRIE (*Loosely.*) I am feeling easier. I don't know. I'm only in town for two days; I have a list as long as my arm, I run into Louise in Bergdorf's, of all places, I mean I haven't seen her in what?

LOUISE Six.
[REDACTED]

LOUISE [REDACTED] Bombed, right?

cosmology or something. He was really crazy about it for a while. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] You aren't supposed to, but no one says anything. [REDACTED] You

beach—you couldn't get lost—and you could see the fire with little people running off and dragging up more wood all the time. I even learned a few of the constellations. They're really easy. I mean at first they're just stars, but once you start getting them placed in your mind the whole sky starts dividing up into patterns like a quilt. And you can't look up without seeing, recognizing. Andromeda and Orion and the bears and the seven sisters. It's amazing.

LOUISE I can't even find the Big Dipper.

CARRIE Oh, you could—there's a way—you just have to find Polaris—well, I mean, I couldn't either, but you learn. Orion is the one though, you've seen him, you just didn't know what he was.

LOUISE I don't imagine.

CARRIE No, you had to. He's the one that you say, I'll bet anything that's some damn constellation. This is Orion. See, there are three stars—(On the table, with her finger, dot, dot, dot,) big ones across. That's the belt. And here . . . (To the audience.) Do you know this? (Back to Louise.) . . . perpendicular to the belt there are three more, closer together and fainter. (On the table.) And that's his sword. And this—the center star in the sword is the Great Nebula in Orion.

LOUISE The Great Nebula in Orion.

[REDACTED]

CARRIE Do you know this?

LOUISE No. (To the audience.) Crooked, right? Plastered.

CARRIE Well, it's very interesting. The Great Nebula is a lot of hydrogen gas that's lit up by a couple of stars behind it somewhere, and some by its own heat, because it's condensing. It's moving, like a

whirlpool all the time and getting tighter and tighter—what was that?

LOUISE (Who has uttered a polite "umm" at "tighter.") Nothing.

CARRIE And hotter and hotter—and it will keep getting more and more compact and hotter and smaller—I mean it's vast—and tighter and smaller until it's so hot and compact—just a ball of fire, burning by itself—that it will be a star. And we could actually see that. I mean the center star, we could see that it was fuzzy; a big fuzzy spot. And Dick said that would be a star someday.

LOUISE A star is born.

CARRIE Oh, come on. I thought it was interesting.

LOUISE I think you had to be there.

CARRIE Well, in any case you can't see it in Boston. The sky is so hazy you can't even find the sword.

LOUISE In New York you're damn lucky to find the sky.

CARRIE I was just rattling on. Listen, it's late. . . .

LOUISE Have another drink.

CARRIE Well, I guess. I don't really want to shop. . . . I'm out of the mood. There's nothing I can't really get in Boston.

LOUISE You're here another day.

CARRIE (*Standing, walking about.*) It's really a lovely apartment. You have another room. It's bigger than I— (*Opens the door.*)

LOUISE Oh, don't go in there, darling. It's a mess. You know me. (*Carrie retreats, rather startled, just a little.*) It's just the bedroom.

CARRIE It's large.

LOUISE It's such a mess. Here. Cheers.

CARRIE Yes. (*They sip, Carrie sits back down, looking puzzled.*)

LOUISE I really am a terrible housekeeper. We're both going to be stone drunk in the middle of the afternoon and create a scandal. Boston Society Girl and famed designer arrested for etc., etc.

CARRIE I know. Think of the ladies clubs. Well, I suppose Boston has the best fish markets in the country, that's something. There and Maine, and we have a place in Maine. I really—I really hate fish, I—

LOUISE That's funny.

CARRIE I can't even walk down half the streets.

LOUISE Listen, I want to appear sometimes at work in overalls.

CARRIE What?

LOUISE I don't know, I think I'm a little fuzzy. What did you call that? The great fuzz in Orion—?

CARRIE (*Away.*) Belt. Er, uh, Nebula. The great nebula.

LOUISE I'd like to be there.

CARRIE Yes. (*Pause.*) David is very chowder; a chowder person.

LOUISE (*Superficially, phony.*) It's really been fun, Carrie.

CARRIE (*The same.*) Hasn't it? I'm so glad I— (*Stops, biting her lip. Covers her eyes with her hand. Louise looks at her, painfully, Carrie sits down. Louise sits down beside her. Carrie is trying very hard not to cry.*)

LOUISE Carrie. Can I get . . . what?

CARRIE (*Shaking her head, not looking up. Weakly.*) No, nothing. (*Now looking at her.*) Louise, I saw her picture, Phyllis' picture in your—I'm sorry, I didn't mean—I didn't know . . . I had no idea . . . I'd . . .

LOUISE (*Looking away.*) Well, we all have our. (*Biting her lip, Carrie begins to cry openly.*) You don't want to go back, do you?

CARRIE (*Breaking down completely.*) No. (*Sobbing openly, audibly, shaking her head.*) No, no, I can't . . . no. (*Louise begins to cry now too. They sit at opposite ends of the sofa. Carrie reaches out her hand, Louise takes it, grasping hard, tightly. They continue crying openly. Not looking at one another. Carrie withdraws her hand, opens her purse, blows her nose.*) Ma-maybe—(*They look at each other now, their faces bathed in tears, both with the same thought, trying to laugh, shaking their beads up and down in agreement.*) Maybe Richard Roth ran off with Phyllis Trahaunt.

LOUISE (*Who has said "Phyllis" with her.*) Yes, yes . . . (*wiping her face.*) Damn my face.

CARRIE What are we going to do?

LOUISE I don't know, Carrie. I don't know. I've not known for six god-damned years.

CARRIE I know.

LOUISE Maybe David'll build us a little rocket ship in his workshop. huh? We'll fly off to your. . . . (*A motion with her hand, crying again.*)

CARRIE (*Crying, trying to laugh.*) Nebula.

LOUISE Do you think he could?

CARRIE No. No. (*They laugh.*) He's a terrible carpenter. He is.

LOUISE I suspected as much.

CARRIE (*Blowing her nose again.*) Oh, he only spends his time out there because he can't understand why I'm always in such a foul mood. I look like hell—Oh, I don't care. (*She stares off.*)

CARRIE Where did Phyllis . . . ?
 LOUISE ~~What a darling.~~
 CARRIE I'd forgotten how lovely . . .
 LOUISE Oh, don't. Her parents wouldn't answer my "enquiries"—she was very ~~kind~~ ~~to~~ ~~them~~, so they didn't think much of me. I stay in this apartment because if . . .
 CARRIE (A long pause. Finally picking up her gloves.) Well.
 LOUISE Oh, don't go.
 CARRIE The thought of that hotel room is a bit—
 LOUISE Stay. We'll fix ourselves up and go out to a film. Have some great fattening dinner—you can have the sobbed; it's miles better than mine. They floodlight the Planetarium at night; it makes a great night-light coming through the window.
 CARRIE I don't know if I need that. (With some humor.)
 LOUISE Take your pick. (Carrie smiles.) Good.
 CARRIE The thought of that hotel . . .
 LOUISE Darling, the thought of anything.
 CARRIE (Neither moves.) ~~It's just a thought of anything.~~
 LOUISE We're better off than most . . .
 CARRIE They keep telling us.
 LOUISE Umm.
 CARRIE ~~It's just a thought of anything.~~
 CARRIE (With a sigh.) Oh, God, Louise. . .
 LOUISE It's all just a great . . . (They sit, huddled in their separate corners of the sofa.)
 CARRIE (Pause.) The ironic thing. . .
 LOUISE (Pause.) Of course it's all . . .
 CARRIE Any other woman would be . . .
 LOUISE . . . Yes.
 CARRIE (A long pause. The lights begin to fade, very slowly. They hardly move, staring off, lost in mixed images.) It's all such a . . .
 LOUISE (A long pause. With just a touch of humor.) The terribly ironic . . . thing. (A long pause. The lights fade out completely.)

CURTAIN