

BLANCHE [*faintly to herself*]:

I've got to keep hold of myself! [*Stella comes quickly around the corner of the building and runs to the door of the downstairs flat.*]

5 STELLA [*calling out joyfully*]:

Blanche! [*For a moment they stare at each other. Then Blanche springs up and runs to her with a wild cry.*]

BLANCHE:

10 Stella, oh, Stella, Stella! Stella for Star! [*She begins to speak with feverish vivacity as if she feared for either of them to stop and think. They catch each other in a spasmodic embrace.*]

BLANCHE:

15 Now, then, let me look at you. But don't you look at me, Stella, no, no, no, not till later, not till I've bathed and rested! And turn that over-light off! Turn that off! I won't be looked at in this merciless glare! [*Stella laughs and complies.*]

Come back here now! Oh, my baby! Stella! Stella for Star! [*She embraces her again.*]

20 I thought you would never come back to this horrible place! What am I saying? I didn't mean to say that. I meant to be nice about it and say—Oh, what a convenient location and such—Haa-ha! Precious lamb! You haven't said a word to me.

STELLA:

25 You haven't given me a chance to, honey! [*She laughs, but her glance at Blanche is a little anxious.*]

BLANCHE:

30 Well, now you talk. Open your pretty mouth and talk while I look around for some liquor! I know you must have some liquor on the place! Where could it be, I wonder? Oh, I spy, I spy! [*She rushes to the closet and removes the bottle; she is shaking all over and panting for breath as she tries to laugh. The bottle nearly slips from her grasp.*]

STELLA [*noticing*]:

35 Blanche, you sit down and let me pour the drinks. I don't know what we've got to mix with. Maybe a coke's in the icebox. Look'n see, honey, while I'm—

BLANCHE:

No coke, honey, not with my nerves tonight! Where—where—where is—?

STELLA:

40 Stanley? Bowling! He loves it. They're having a—found some soda!—tournament...

BLANCHE:

45 Just water, baby, to chase it! Now don't get worried, your sister hasn't turned into a drunkard, she's just all shaken up and hot and tired and dirty! You sit down, now, and explain this place to me! What are you doing in a place like this?

STELLA:

Now, Blanche—

50 BLANCHE:

Oh, I'm not going to be hypocritical, I'm going to be honestly critical about it! Never, never, never in my worst dreams could I picture—Only Poe! Only Mr. Edgar Allan Poe!—could do it justice! Out there I suppose is the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir! [*She laughs.*]

- 55 STELLA:
No, honey, those are the L & N tracks.
- BLANCHE:
No, now seriously, putting joking aside. Why didn't you tell me, why didn't you write me,
60 honey, why didn't you let me know?
- STELLA [*carefully, pouring herself a drink*]:
Tell you what, Blanche?
- 65 BLANCHE:
Why, that you had to live in these conditions!
- STELLA:
Aren't you being a little intense about it? It's not that bad at all! New Orleans isn't like
70 other cities.
- BLANCHE:
This has got nothing to do with New Orleans. You might as well say—forgive me, blessed
baby! [*She suddenly stops short*]
- 75 The subject is closed!
- STELLA [*a little drily*]:
Thanks. [*During the pause, Blanche stares at her. She smiles at Blanche.*]
- 80 BLANCHE [*looking down at her glass, which shakes in her hand*]:
You're all I've got in the world, and you're not glad to see me!
- STELLA [*sincerely*]:
Why, Blanche, you know that's not true.
- 85 BLANCHE:
No?—I'd forgotten how quiet you were.
- STELLA:
You never did give me a chance to say much, Blanche. So I just got in the habit of being
90 quiet around you.
- BLANCHE [*vaguely*]:
A good habit to get into... [*then, abruptly*] You haven't asked me how I happened to get
95 away from the school before the spring term ended.
- STELLA:
Well, I thought you'd volunteer that information—if you wanted to tell me.
- 100 BLANCHE:
You thought I'd been fired?
- STELLA:
No, I—thought you might have—resigned...
- 105 BLANCHE:
I was so exhausted by all I'd been through my—nerves broke. [*Nervously tamping
cigarette.*]
- 110 I was on the verge of—lunacy, almost! So Mr. Graves—Mr. Graves is the high school
superintendent—he suggested I take a leave of absence. I couldn't put all of those details into
the wire... [*She drinks quickly*]
Oh, this buzzes right through me and feels so good!
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- STELLA:
115 Won't you have another?
- BLANCHE:
No, one's my limit.
- 120 STELLA:
Sure?
- BLANCHE:
You haven't said a word about my appearance.
- 125 STELLA:
You look just fine.
- BLANCHE:
130 God love you for a liar! Daylight never exposed so total a ruin! But you—you've put on some weight, yes, you're just as plump as a little partridge! And it's so becoming to you!
- STELLA:
135 Now, Blanche—
- BLANCHE:
Yes, it is, it is or I wouldn't say it! You just have to watch around the hips a little. Stand up.
- 140 STELLA:
Not now.
- BLANCHE:
You hear me? I said stand up!
- 145 [*Stella complies reluctantly.*]
You messy child, you, you've spilt something on the pretty white lace collar! About your hair—you ought to have it cut in a feather bob with your dainty features. Stella, you have a maid, don't you?
- 150 STELLA:
No. With only two rooms it's—
- BLANCHE:
155 What? Two rooms, did you say?
- STELLA:
This one and— [*She is embarrassed.*]
- BLANCHE:
160 The other one? [*She laughs sharply. There is an embarrassed silence.*]
- BLANCHE:
I am going to take just one little tiny nip more, sort of to put the stopper on, so to speak... Then put the bottle away so I won't be tempted. [*She rises.*]
- 165 I want you to look at my figure! [*She turns around.*]
You know I haven't put on one ounce in ten years, Stella? I weigh what I weighed the summer you left Belle Reve. The summer Dad died and you left us...
- STELLA [*a little wearily*]:
170 It's just incredible, Blanche, how well you're looking.
- BLANCHE: [*They both laugh uncomfortably*]
But, Stella, there's only two rooms, I don't see where you're going to put me!
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175 STELLA:
We're going to put you in here.

BLANCHE:
180 What kind of bed's this—one of those collapsible things? [*She sits on it.*]

STELLA:
Does it feel all right?

BLANCHE [*dubiously*]:
185 Wonderful, honey. I don't like a bed that gives much. But there's no door between the two rooms, and Stanley—will it be decent?

STELLA:
190 Stanley is Polish, you know.

BLANCHE:
Oh, yes. They're something like Irish, aren't they?

STELLA:
195 Well—

BLANCHE:
Only not so—highbrow? [*They both laugh again in the same way.*]
200 I brought some nice clothes to meet all your lovely friends in.

STELLA:
I'm afraid you won't think they are lovely.

BLANCHE:
205 What are they like?

STELLA:
They're Stanley's friends.

BLANCHE:
210 Polacks?

STELLA:
215 They're a mixed lot, Blanche.

BLANCHE:
Heterogeneous—types?

STELLA:
220 Oh, yes. Yes, types is right!

BLANCHE:
Well—anyhow—I brought nice clothes and I'll wear them. I guess you're hoping I'll say I'll put up at a hotel, but I'm not going to put up at a hotel. I want to be near you, got to be with somebody, I can't be alone! Because—as you must have noticed—I'm-not very well....
225 [*Her voice drops and her look is frightened.*]
