

JANE:

Is he in? I want to see him while I'm all worked up to the right pitch.

LUCINDA:

You haven't any conscience, Jane. And the worst part of your blackmailing scheme was to have named that child Joe. I believe that you don't know yourself who the father of that child really is... unless it is Lars, the Swede.

JANE, with a sneer:

Lars, the Swede—

LUCINDA:

For you were always running around to dances at Ectord Hall and North Beach, and the Lord only knows— Be careful, Joe, you will rock over and crack your skull— Besides, that child is nearly four years old, and it's only three years since you worked here.

JANE, in her tough way:

That don't cut no ice— Joe Mann had to befriend me after I put little Joe out to board; so he gave me the job of second girl.

LUCINDA:

That doesn't look like his style... Why, he's so generous a man that he doubles my salary now that I'm without help.

JANE:

They're all generous as long as they're interested in a woman.

LUCINDA:

Even as bad minded as you are, Jane— I'm sorry for you, for no girl ever throws herself at a man; but under the influence of a bad one. (Lucinda hops up)— See here you little mischief. Get down. (She takes him down and resumes work).

LITTLE JOE, sticking out tongue at Lucinda:

I don't like you any more.

JANE, affectionately:

Come to mamma, darling.

LUCINDA:

Talk about generosity— What other man would have brought Miss Ruth to his home the day she received her working papers.

JANE:

Most girls marry any old thing with a lot of money; but why did she refuse to marry him? Then, actually die of a broken heart. The poor fool!

LITTLE JOE:

"The poor fool!" (He puckers up his eyes and laughs as children do when they repeat thing at random).

(Lucinda motions toward little Joe).

JANE:

He don't understand.

LUCINDA:

I have never known so honorable a man! He always said that the man as well as the woman should make a clean breast of his past to the woman of his choice, and he doesn't go around preaching one thing and practicing another. If he busybodies around here hadn't gossiped about them I wouldn't have suggested marriage as the only way to save her reputation. Although her character was above reproach. He is such a moral man! Broken heart! Humph, she would have lived six months at factory work.

JANE:

He won't have much use for women now. He was so crazy about her.

LUCINDA:

Oh, he liked her, to be sure—in a way, but up to date, there is no indication that he has become a woman hater through unrequited love... to say nothing of breach of promise cases.

LITTLE JOE climbs on chair and jumps off:

Hoop a la!