

GAMMA, with hand over ear:

It hurts. Boo—oo—o—.

MINA looks distressed:

Maybe we ought to have stayed in Turtle Tracks. (With a look of reproach at Joe) We were so well "acclimated."

JOE MANN, pacing floor:

My new liability is beginning to rest heavily.

MINA:

No one'd ever think you a—

JOE MANN:

H'm—h'm—Mina!

MINA:

Getting discouraged so quick. You can't transplant cabbage in a flower pot and make it grow without some trouble.

LUCINDA:

Why not have a tutor come to the house?

JOE MANN:

That's a good suggestion.

(Exit Lucinda with vacuum sweeper. Joe Mann paces floor. Mina and the girls speak in undertones).

LUCINDA, entering:

Now that you have your sister, Mr. Mann, you may be able to dispense with my services. (Under her breath) Absence makes the heart grow fonder.

JOE MANN:

She isn't the kind to resort to blackmail). My family having increased, I am well aware that you will need help.

LUCINDA:

I dare say, Mrs. Larson can take my place with the assistance of a cook and a second girl.

JOE MANN:

You may have a cook, a parlor maid, and a laundress— I'm not taking any chances on having you snapped up. In aternum— Not much.

LUCINDA:

There's not much danger of that at my age — I'm no chicken.

JOE MANN:

If that's the way you feel, stay. How much do you want added to what you are now getting?

LUCINDA:

It isn't a question of money. You have been kind and generous to me.

JOE MANN, patting her shoulder:

Settle down— You know that I have always liked you. (Under his breath) What can I do to keep her. Such a wonderful cook. Yum-yum. LUCINDA, looks enlightened at the words "always liked you":

I suspected it when you discharged Mrs. Graham and gave me full charge I couldn't have done better if I had been Mrs. Joe Mann.

(Mina who has stepped into the next room reenters, and turns aside to smile).

JOE MANN:

I appreciate your services. That is why I intended to make you my—

LUCINDA:

Of course, that alters my decision. I suspected that you intended—

JOE MANN:

I can't make you heir to the full extent of my property now that I've found my next of kin; but you will get a good slice.

LUCINDA:

I'll make a change for a while anyway.

JOE MANN:

That means my death, Lucinda. You know that only the bread and the salt would stay on my stomach when I was in Paris. (Glancing at Mina) Ragout Blair— Ragout Blair. (Lucinda looking at Joe through the corner of her eye).

LUCINDA: