

DWIGHT. But I want you to help it. I want you to promise me that you won't shame us like this before all our friends.

LULU. You want me to promise what?

DWIGHT. I want you—I ask you to promise me that you will keep this with us—a family secret.

LULU. No! No! I won't do it! I won't do it! I won't do it!

DWIGHT. You refuse to do this small thing for us?

LULU. Can't you understand anything? I've lived here all my life—on your money. I've not been strong enough to work they say—well, but I've been strong enough to be a hired girl in your house—and I've been glad to pay for my keep.... But there wasn't a thing about it that I liked. Nothing about being here that I liked.... Well, then I got a little something, same as other folks. I thought I was married and I went off on the train and he bought me things and I saw different towns. And then it was all a mistake. I didn't have any of it. I came back here and went into your kitchen again—I don't know why I came back. I suppose it's because I'm most thirty-four and new things ain't so easy any more—but what have I got or what'll I ever have? And now you want to put on to me having folks look at me and think he run off and left me and having them all wonder. I can't stand it. I can't stand it. I can't....

DWIGHT. You'd rather they'd know he fooled you when he had another wife?

LULU. Yes. Because he wanted me. How do I know—maybe he wanted me only just because he was lonesome, the way I was. I don't care why. And I won't have folks think he went and left me.

DWIGHT. That is wicked vanity.

LULU. That's the truth. Well, why can't they know the truth?

DWIGHT. And bring disgrace on us all?

LULU. It's me—It's me—

DWIGHT. You—you—you—you're always thinking of yourself.

LULU. Who else thinks of me? And who do you think of—who do you think of Dwight? I'll tell you that, because I know you better than any one else in the world knows you—better even than Ina. And I know that you'd sacrifice Ina, Di, mother, Monona, Ninian—everybody, just to your own idea of who you are. You're one of the men who can smother a whole family and not even know you're doing it.

DWIGHT. You listen to me. It's Ninian I'm thinking about.

LULU. Ninian....

DWIGHT. Yes, yes...Ninian!...Of course if you don't care what happens to him, it doesn't matter.

LULU. What do you mean?

DWIGHT. If you don't love him any more....

LULU. You know I love him. I'll always love him.

DWIGHT. That's likely. A woman doesn't send the man she loves to prison.

LULU. I send him to prison! Why, he's brought me the only happiness I've ever had....

DWIGHT. But prison is just where he'll go and you'll be the one to send him there.

LULU. Oh! That couldn't be.... That couldn't be....

DWIGHT. Don't you realize that bigamy is a crime? If you tell this thing he'll go to prison...nothing can save him.

LULU. I never thought of that....

DWIGHT. It's time you did think. Now will you promise to keep this with us, a family secret?

LULU. Yes. I promise.

DWIGHT. You will?...

LULU. Yes... I will.

DWIGHT. A...h. You'll be happy some day to think you've done this for us, Lulu.

LULU. I s'pose so....