

NETTIE

ACT TWO, Scene 3

Money was never plentiful in our house. We weren't poor like his people, you understand. Never without rent, or food, or tickets to the opera, or nice clothes. But still we weren't well to do. . . . My father brought home stories from the hotel about the various bigwigs who came in and what they wore and how they talked and acted. And we went to the opera. And we had friends who were cultured. Musical Sunday afternoons. Those were papa's happiest moments. . . . Yes, I liked good things. Things that the baker from Paterson and the others could never give me. . . . But your father surely would. The way he was going he would be a millionaire. . . . That was his dream, you know – to be a millionaire by the time he was forty. . . . Nineteen twenty-nine took care of that. He was never quite the same afterwards. . . . But when I met him, he was cock of the walk. Good looking, witty young Irishman. Everyone liked him, and those who didn't at least feared him because he was a fierce fellow. Everyone wanted to go into business with him. Everyone wanted to be social with him. . . . He was immediately at home on a ship, a train . . . in any bar. Strangers thought he was magnificent. And he was . . . as long as the situation was impersonal. . . . At his best in an impersonal situation. . . . But that doesn't include the home, the family. . . . The baker from Paterson was all tongue-tied outside, but in the home he would have been beautiful. . . . Go to bed now.