

REGINA: (*Sits quietly for a second, stretches*) What do you want to talk to me about, Alexandra?

ALEXANDRA: (*Slowly*) I've changed my mind. I don't want to talk.

REGINA: You're acting very strange. Not like yourself. You've had a bad shock today. I know that. And you loved Papa, but you must have expected this to come someday. You knew how sick he was.

ALEXANDRA: I knew. We all knew.

REGINA: It will be good for you to get away from here. Good for me, too. Time heals most wounds, Alexandra. You're young, you shall have all the things I wanted. I'll make the world for you the way I wanted it to be for me. (*Uncomfortably*) Don't sit there staring. You've been around Birdie so much you're getting just like her.

ALEXANDRA: (*Nods*) Funny. That's what Aunt Birdie said today.

REGINA: Be good for you to get away from all this. (ADDIE enters.)

~~ADDIE: Cal is back, Miss Regina. He says Dr. Sloan will be coming in a few minutes.~~

REGINA: We'll leave in a few weeks. A few weeks! That means two or three Saturdays, two or three Sundays. (Sighs) Well, I'm very tired. I shall go to bed. I don't want any supper. Put the lights out and lock up. (ADDIE moves to the piano lamp, turns it out) You go to your room, Alexandra. Addie will bring you something hot. You look very tired. (Rises. To ADDIE) Call me when Dr. Sloan gets here. I don't want to see anybody else. I don't want any condolence calls tonight. The whole town will be over.

ALEXANDRA: Mama, I'm not coming with you. I'm not going to Chicago.

REGINA: (Turns to her) You're very upset, Alexandra.

ALEXANDRA: I mean what I say. With all my heart.

REGINA: We'll talk about it tomorrow. The morning will make a difference.

ALEXANDRA: It won't make any difference. And there isn't anything to talk about. I am going away from you. Because I want to. Because I know Papa would want me to.

REGINA: (Careful, polite) You know your papa wanted you to go away from me?

ALEXANDRA: Yes.

REGINA: (Softly) And if I say no?

ALEXANDRA: Say it Mama, say it. And see what happens.

REGINA: (Softly, after a pause) And if I make you stay?

ALEXANDRA: That would be foolish. It wouldn't work in the end.

REGINA: You're very serious about it, aren't you? (Crosses to stairs) Well, you'll change your mind in a few days.

ALEXANDRA: No.

REGINA: (Going up the steps) Alexandra, I've come to the end of my rope. Somewhere there has to be what I want, too. Life goes too fast. Do what you want; think what you want; go where you want. I'd like to keep you with me, but I won't make you stay. Too many people used to make me do too many things. No, I won't make you stay.

ALEXANDRA: You couldn't, Mama, because I want to leave here. As I've never wanted anything in my life before. Because now I understand what Papa was trying to tell me. All in one day: Addie said there were people who ate the earth and other

people who stood around and watched them do it. And just now Uncle Ben said the same thing. Really, he said the same thing. (*Tensely*) Well, tell him for me, Mama, I'm not going to stand around and watch you do it. I'll be fighting as hard as he'll be fighting (*Rises*) someplace else.

REGINA: Well, you have spirit, after all. I used to think you were all sugar water. We don't have to be bad friends. I don't want us to be bad friends, Alexandra. (*Starts, stops, turns to ALEXANDRA*) Would you like to come and talk to me, Alexandra? Would you—would you like to sleep in my room tonight?

ALEXANDRA: (*Takes a step toward the stairs*) Are you afraid, Mama? (*REGINA does not answer. She moves up the stairs and out of sight. ADDIE, smiling, begins to put out the lamps.*)

**CURTAIN**