

MRS. LOVING

(Half to herself):

I was afraid — of just that. — I wonder — if I did the wise thing — after all.

RACHEL

(With a gesture infinitely tender, puts her arms around her mother):

Yes, Ma dear, you did. And, hereafter, Tom and I share and share alike with you. To think, Ma dear, of ten years of this — all alone. It's wicked!

(A short silence).

MRS. LOVING

And, Rachel, about that dear, little boy, Jimmy.

RACHEL

Now, Ma dear, tell me tomorrow. You've stood enough for one day.

MRS. LOVING

No, it's better over and done with — all at once. If I had seen that dear child suddenly any other day than this — I might have borne it better. When he lifted his little face to me — and smiled — for a moment — I thought it was the end — of all things. Rachel, he is the image of my boy — my George!

RACHEL

Ma dear!

MRS. LOVING

And, Rachel — it will hurt — to see him again.

RACHEL

I understand, Ma dear.

(A silence. Suddenly)

Ma dear, I am beginning to see — to understand — so much.

(Slowly and thoughtfully)

Ten years ago, all things being equal, Jimmy might have been — George? Isn't that so?

MRS. LOVING

Why — yes, if I understand you.

RACHEL

I guess that doesn't sound very clear. It's only getting clear to me, little by little. Do you mind my thinking out loud to you?

MRS. LOVING

No, chickabiddy.

RACHEL

If Jimmy went South now — and grew up — he might be — a George?

MRS. LOVING

Yes.

RACHEL

Then, the South is full of tens, hundreds, thousands of little boys, who, one day may be — and some of them with certainty — Georges?

MRS. LOVING

Yes, Rachel.

RACHEL

And the little babies, the dear, little, helpless babies, being born today — now — and those who will be, tomorrow, and all the tomorrows to come — have *that* sooner or later to look forward to? They will laugh and play and sing and be happy and grow up, perhaps, and be ambitious — just for *that*?

MRS. LOVING

Yes, Rachel.

RACHEL

Then, everywhere, everywhere, throughout the South, there are hundreds of dark mothers who live in fear, terrible, suffocating fear, whose rest by night is broken, and whose joy by day in their babies on their hearts is three parts — pain. Oh, I know this is true — for this is the way I should feel, if I were little Jimmy's mother. How horrible! Why — it would be more merciful — to strangle the little things at birth. And so this nation — this white Christian nation — has deliberately set its curse upon the most beautiful — the most holy thing in life — motherhood! Why — it — makes — you doubt — God!

MRS. LOVING

Oh, hush! little girl. Hush!

RACHEL

(*Suddenly with a great cry*):

Why, Ma dear, *you know*. *You were a mother, George's mother*. So, this is what it means. Oh, Ma dear! Ma dear!

(*Faints in her mother's arms*).