

QUENTIN. But they've investigated you, what more damage could they do?

LOU. Another attack might knock me off the faculty. It's only Mickey's vote that saved me the last time. He made a marvelous speech at the Dean's meeting when I refused to testify.

QUENTIN. Well, that's Mickey.

LOU. Yes, but Elsie feels . . . I'd just be drawing down the lightning again to publish now. And yet to put that book away is like a kind of suicide to me—everything I know is in that book.

QUENTIN. Lou, you have a right to publish; a radical past is not leprosy—we only turned Left because it seemed the truth was there. You mustn't be ashamed.

LOU. *(In pain.)* Goddamit, yes! . . . Except . . . I never told you this, Quentin. . . . *(He holds his position, de-animated.)*

QUENTIN. *(To Listener, as he comes down to the edge of the stage.)* —Yes, the day the world ended and nobody was innocent again. God how swiftly it all fell down!

LOU. *(Speaking straight front.)* When I returned from Russia and published my study of Soviet law . . . I left out many things I saw. I lied. For a good cause, I thought, but all that lasts is the lie. *(Elsie and Louise enter, talking together intimately and un-beard.)* And it's so strange to me now—I have many failings, but I have never been a liar. And I lied for the Party, over and over, year after year. And that's why now, with this book of mine, I want so much to be true to myself! You see it's no attack I fear, but being forced to defend my own incredible lies! *(He turns, surprised, to see Elsie.)*

ELSIE. Lou, I'm quite surprised. I thought we'd settled this. *(Father and Dan appear u.)*

LOU. Yes, dear, I only wanted Quentin's feeling. . . .

ELSIE. Your shirt's out, dear. *(He quickly tucks it into his shorts. And to Quentin.)* You certainly don't think he ought to publish.

QUENTIN. But the alternative seems . . .

ELSIE. *(With a volcanic, suppressed alarm.)* But, dear, that's the situation! Lou's not like you, Quentin; you and Mickey can function in the rough and tumble of private practice, but Lou's a purely academic person. He's incapable of going out and . . . *(Mother appears beside Father.)*

LOU. *(With a difficult grin and chuckle.)* Well, dear, I'm not all that delicate, I . . .

ELSIE. *(With a sudden flash of contempt, to Lou.)* This is hardly the time for illusions!

MOTHER. You idiot!! *(Quentin is shocked, turns quickly to Mother, who stands accusingly over the seated Father.)* My bonds?

QUENTIN. *(Watching Mother go.)* Why do I mourn things falling apart? Were they ever whole? And who's to blame? *(Mother exits, Father and Dan stay on in darkness, frozen. Louise now stands up.)*

LOUISE. Quentin? I've decided to go into psychoanalysis.

QUENTIN. *(To Listener.)* I don't believe in blame, but if all of us are innocent where does all this evil come from?

LOUISE. I want to talk about some things with you.

QUENTIN. *(Glancing at Louise who is facing empty air.)* Or am I calling evil what is only truth breaking out?

LOUISE. *(At a loss for an instant.)* Sit down, will you? *(She gathers her thoughts. He hesitates, as though pained at both the memory, and also because at the time he lived this it was an agony. And as he approaches his chair . . . to the Listener.)*

QUENTIN. It was like . . . a meeting. In seven years we had never had a meeting. *(Sitting.)*

LOUISE. We don't seem . . . *(A long pause while she peers at a forming thought.)* married.

QUENTIN. We?! *(It is sincere, what she says, but she has had to learn the words, so there is the faintest air of a formula in her way of speaking.)*

LOUISE. You don't pay any attention to me.

QUENTIN. *(To help her.)* You mean like Friday night?—When I didn't open the car door for you?

LOUISE. Yes that's part of what I mean.

QUENTIN. But I told you; you always opened the car door for yourself.

LOUISE. I've always done everything for myself, but that doesn't mean it's right. Everybody notices it, Quentin.

QUENTIN. What?

LOUISE. The way you behave toward me. I don't exist. People are supposed to find out about each other. I am not all this uninteresting. Many people, men and women, think I am interesting.

QUENTIN. Well, I . . . *(Breaks off.)* I . . . don't know what you mean.