

LAURA: Horn!

It doesn't matter. Maybe it's a blessing in disguise.

JIM: You'll never forgive me. I bet that that was your favourite piece of glass.

LAURA: I don't have favourites much. It's no tragedy, Freckles. Glass breaks so easily. No matter how careful you are. The traffic jars the shelves and things fall off them.

JIM: Still I'm awfully sorry that I was the cause.

LAURA [*smiling*]: I'll just imagine he had an operation.

The horn was removed to make him feel less - freakish!

[*They both laugh.*]

Now he will feel more at home with the other horses, the ones that don't have horns...

JIM: Ha-ha, that's very funny!

[*Suddenly serious.*]

I'm glad to see that you have a sense of humour.

You know - you're - well - very different!

Surprisingly different from anyone else I know!

[*His voice becomes soft and hesitant with a genuine feeling.*]

Do you mind me telling you that?

[LAURA is abashed beyond speech.]

I mean it in a nice way...

[LAURA nods shyly, looking away.]

You make me feel sort of - I don't know how to put it!

I'm usually pretty good at expressing things, but -

This is something that I don't know how to say!

[LAURA touches her throat and clears it - turns the broken unicorn in her hands.
Even softer.]

Has anyone ever told you that you were pretty?

[PAUSE: MUSIC.]

LAURA looks up slowly, with wonder, and shakes her head.]

Well, you are! In a very different way from anyone else. And all the nicer because of the difference, too.

[*His voice becomes low and husky. LAURA turns away, nearly faint with the novelty of her emotions.*]

I wish that you were my sister. I'd teach you to have some confidence in yourself. The different people are not like other people, but being different is nothing to be ashamed of. Because other people are not such wonderful people. They're one hundred times one thousand. You're one times one! They walk all over the earth. You just stay here. They're common as - weeds, but - you - well, you're - *Blue Roses!*

[IMAGE ON SCREEN: BLUE ROSES.]

MUSIC CHANGES.]

LAURA: But blue is wrong for - roses...

JIM: It's right for you! - You're - pretty!

LAURA: In what respect am I pretty?

JIM: In all respects - believe me! Your eyes - your hair - are pretty! Your hands are pretty!

[*He catches hold of her hand.*]

You think I'm making this up because I'm invited to dinner and have to be nice. Oh, I could do that! I could put on an act for you, Laura, and say lots of things without being very sincere. But this time I am. I'm talking to you sincerely. I happened to notice you had this inferiority complex that keeps you from feeling comfortable with people. Somebody needs to build your confidence up and make you proud instead of shy and turning away and - blushing - Somebody - ought to -

Ought to — kiss you, Laura!

[His hand slips slowly up her arm to her shoulder.

MUSIC SWELLS TUMULTUOUSLY.

He suddenly turns her about and kisses her on the lips.

When he releases her, LAURA sinks on the sofa with a bright, dazed look.

JIM backs away and fishes in his pocket for a cigarette.

LEGEND ON SCREEN: 'SOUVENIR'.]

Stumble-john!

[He lights the cigarette, avoiding her look.

There is a peal of girlish laughter from AMANDA in the kitchen.

LAURA slowly raises and opens her hand. It still contains the little broken glass animal. She looks at it with a tender, bewildered expression.]

Stumble-john!

I shouldn't have done that — That was way off the beam. You don't smoke, do you?

[She looks up, smiling, not hearing the question.

He sits beside her a little gingerly. She looks at him speechlessly — waiting.

He coughs decorously and moves a little farther aside as he considers the situation and senses her feelings, dimly, with perturbation.

Gently.]

Would you — care for a — mint?

[She doesn't seem to hear him but her look grows brighter even.]

Peppermint — Life-Saver?

My pocket's a regular drug store — wherever I go . . .

[He pops a mint in his mouth. Then gulps and decides to make a clean breast of it. He speaks slowly and gingerly.]

Laura, you know, if I had a sister like you, I'd do the same thing as Tom. I'd bring out fellows and — introduce her to them. The right type of boys of a type to — appreciate her.

Only — well — he made a mistake about me.

Maybe I've got no call to be saying this. That may not have been the idea in having me over. But what if it was? There's nothing wrong about that. The only trouble is that in my case — I'm not in a situation to — do the right thing.

I can't take down your number and say I'll phone.

I can't call up next week and — ask for a date.

I thought I had better explain the situation in case you — misunderstand it and — hurt your feelings. . . .

[Pause.

Slowly, very slowly, LAURA's look changes, her eyes re- turning slowly from his to the ornament in her palm.

AMANDA utters another gay laugh in the kitchen.]

LAURA [faintly]: You — won't — call again?

JIM: No, Laura, I can't.

[He rises from the sofa.]

As I was just explaining, I've — got strings on me.

Laura, I've — been going steady!

I go out all of the time with a girl named Betty. She's a home-girl like you, and Catholic, and Irish, and in a great many ways we — get along fine.

I met her last summer on a moonlight boat trip up the river to Alton, on the *Majestic*.

Well — right away from the start it was — love!

[LEGEND: 'LOVE'!]

LAURA swings slightly forward and grips the arm of the sofa. He fails to notice, now enrapt in his own comfortable being.]