

Scene 2

(1924: Same room a month or so later. Mamie is dusting a Tiffany lamp. Marie enters.)

MARIE

Never could read by that thing. Good riddance!

MAMIE

It is pretty, though.

MARIE

You think so? (Beat) Oh, who am I kidding? It's gorgeous! When "The Century Girl" was such a hit, I went straight to Tiffany's and made it mine. Breaks my heart to sell it, that's the truth.

MAMIE

Still in all, it's just a lamp.

MARIE

Oh, Mamie, what are we to do? The farm's gone, my jewelry and furs are gone. The only thing I haven't sold is my soul, and I'd probably sell that, too, if I could find a buyer! (Beat) I haven't even been able to pay you and—

MAMIE

Hush, now. Jerry and I have a little nest egg, and we'll be just fine. In fact, we were thinking we could maybe help you with—

MARIE

Don't even say the words! I would never, ever, allow that to happen.

MAMIE

You're too proud, Marie, if you don't mind my saying. Sometimes it gets in your way.

MARIE

Well, that's who I am, and I'm too old to change. (Beat) I just hate asking for help is what it is. I feel... ashamed.

MAMIE

You helped Frances once, and now she wants to return the favor. People *want* to help because they love you.

MARIE

Love! What an over-used word. I thought Jim loved me, and you saw where that led.

MAMIE

Well, when all was said and done, did you really love him?

MARIE

Of course I loved him! (Beat) In my way. (Beat) You know what the worst of it is? It's not even the money. It's being so totally, utterly, completely forgotten. No one remembers my name. It's like I never existed. Oh! It's all gone to pieces! (Marie starts to cry.)

MAMIE

When Henry died and I couldn't stop crying, you told me it might not seem like it, but there'd be better days ahead. Well, I'm saying the same thing to you now ... (SONG: MAMIE – BETTER DAYS AHEAD)