

ROEDER     MRS ROEDER

ROEDER. Very bad?

MRS. ROEDER. You didn't read it?

ROEDER. I make a point not to, these days.

MRS. ROEDER. If only other people would do the same. Mrs. Mitchell from across the street. She walked right past me this morning, didn't say a word to me. I know she saw me. And the women at the market. And the green grocer.. the way they glance at each other.. and at the club, Mrs. Middleton and the other ladies. The whispers.

ROEDER. You women think you can go around and fix the world's problems.

MRS. ROEDER (overlapping). I can't. I'm sorry—

ROEDER (overlapping). —while your husbands go out and make a living. You're going to quit that club.

MRS. ROEDER. Quit the club!

ROEDER. And stop talking to that idiot Mrs. Middleton. // She doesn't know anything.

MRS. ROEDER (overlapping on //). You're not making any sense.

ROEDER. None of those women know anything!! You don't know anything. (Silence.)

MRS. ROEDER (quiet determination). Did you lie to the Department of Labor?

ROEDER. What? (MRS. ROEDER holds out the news paper. He takes it, looks at it.)

MRS. ROEDER. Did you lie?

ROEDER. I didn't lie. I just... Didn't agree with Drinker's results.

MRS. ROEDER. Arthur.

ROEDER. I have a fiduciary duty to the company.

MRS. ROEDER. I can't listen to this.

ROEDER. Diane! I have documents— I have articles—People with tumors the size of baseballs. Radium therapy—the tumors disappear. Diane.

MRS. ROEDER. I'm tired. I'm going upstairs.

ROEDER. We save lives. We make lives better—mild radium therapy—invigorates. You can't really think I'm a liar. Diane. You can't really believe I would set out to poison people. Can you? Diane?

MRS. ROEDER. No.

ROEDER. Do you think I would ever do anything to hurt you? Or to hurt Harriet?

MRS. ROEDER. Certainly not.

ROEDER. Then?

MRS. ROEDER. Thirteen girls have died.

ROEDER. People die every day. The newspapers are full of death notices—young, old—infants. Children, younger than Harriet. Die every day.

MRS. ROEDER. But they worked for you!

ROEDER. They also worked other places. Diane. I have a report from Columbia University—an expert in industrial hygiene, just like Drinker—who says there is no connection between our plant and these illnesses. Would you like to see the report?

MRS. ROEDER. Then. What...what could the cause be?

ROEDER. I don't know. Diane. I really don't know. I've done everything I could to find out. No one knows.

(Beat.) Please say you believe me. If you don't believe me, there's no point to anything.

MRS. ROEDER. Artie. (She goes to him. With relief he embraces her.)

ROEDER. You remember the day I told my father I wasn't going into the ministry? What you said to me that day?

MRS. ROEDER. You can do as much good in a boardroom as you can in a church.

ROEDER. You remember.

MRS. ROEDER. You think I would forget?

ROEDER. I was such a scared kid. And he—he was an icon. If it weren't for you. I don't think I could have stood up to him.

MRS. ROEDER. I'm sure you would have, Artie. I know you would have