

ANN: Oh, Tom—don't! You know that you and Millicent come before everything on earth to me.

TOM: No.

ANN: You do.

TOM: We don't—now. Your ambition comes first.

ANN: *[She rises, going to him]* Tom, I worship you. You know that, don't you?

TOM: I'm beginning to hate this work and everything in connection with it.

ANN: But you taught me—helped me—pushed me on. What's changed you?

TOM: I let you do it in the first place because I thought it was right. I wanted you to do the thing you wanted to do.

ANN: Well?

TOM: I was a fool. I didn't see what it would lead to. It's taking you away from everything else—and there'll be no end to it. Your ambition will carry you away till the home and Millicent and I are nothing to you!

ANN: Tom—look at me. Be honest. Are you sorry—sorry I got this commission?

TOM: I'm sorry it's the most important thing in the world to you.

ANN: Oh! Why do you say that to me? How can you?

TOM: Haven't I just seen it? You're getting rid of Millicent now because you don't want her to interfere with your work.

ANN: No!

TOM: You're pushing her out of your life.

ANN: No!

TOM: You said just now you were going to send her away alone in the summer. I don't like that. She's got to be with you—I want you to keep her with you.

ANN: But that's impossible. You know that. If I stop work now, I might as well give up the frieze entirely.

TOM: Then give it up.

ANN: What?

TOM: Give up the whole thing—forever. Why shouldn't you?

ANN: Do you mean that?

TOM: Yes.

ANN: Tom—I love you. Don't ask this sacrifice of me to prove my love.

TOM: Could you make it? Could you?

ANN: Don't ask it! Don't ask it, for your own sake. I want to keep on loving you. I want to believe you're what I thought you were. Don't make me think you're just like every other man.

TOM: I am a man—and you're my wife. And Millicent's our daughter. Unless you come back to the things a woman's always had to do—and always will—we can't go on. We can't go on.

ANN: *[following him around the table]* Tom—if you're just a little hurt—just a little jealous because I won—

TOM: Oh—

ANN: That's natural—I can understand that.

TOM: Oh—don't—

ANN: But—Oh, Tom!—the other—to ask me to give it all up. I could never forgive that. Take it back, Tom—take it back.

TOM: Good God, Ann, can't you see? You're a woman and I'm a man. You're not free in the same way. If you won't stop because I ask it—I say you must.

ANN: You can't say that to me. You can't!

TOM: I do say it.

ANN: No!

TOM: I say it because I know it's right.

ANN: It isn't.

TOM: I can't make you see it.

ANN: It isn't.

TOM: I don't know how—but everything in me tells me it's right.

ANN: Tom—listen to me.

TOM: If you won't do it because I ask you—I demand it. I say you've got to.

ANN: Tom—you can kill our love by just what you do now.

TOM: Then this work is the biggest thing in the world to you?

ANN: What is more important to us both—to our happiness than just that?

Millicent's unexpected return from school interrupts them, and they now must turn their attention to her.

## The Piano Lesson (1989)

**Setting:** A house in Pittsburgh, 1937

### Characters:

*Boy Willie*, a sharecropper

*Berniece*, Boy Willie's sister

*Doaker*, Boy Willie and Berniece's uncle

*Wining Boy*, another uncle

*Avery*, Berniece's boyfriend, a preacher

*Lymon*, a friend of Boy Willie's

*Maretha*, Berniece's daughter

*Grace*, a woman "dating" Boy Willie and Lymon