

## Plans

*Chicago in the early 20th century... Joe Crown belongs to a family of German immigrants who built a brewing' empire. One day, 25-year-old Fritzzi Crown decides to talk to her father.*

« Plans, Papa. I want to tell you my plans ».

« Please do. » he said, smiling. He crossed his legs, folded his hands over the little paunch developing at his middle. She smelled beer along with his hair lotion. Perhaps he'd celebrated a bit at the brewery. He seemed in a fine mood.

« I'm going to New York » she said.

His forehead wrinkled, « How interesting. You're going to shop? »

« To live. To look for work in the theater ».

Somewhere in the west, dying daylight broke out beneath clouds, striking the office window and painting it red. Joe Crown never changed his posture or expression. Yet Fritzzi fancied the blood had left his cheeks.

« I see. Well. It's good you told me ».

He crossed to the door, which stood open a few inches. He closed it with a dungeon-like bang. He stood with his back to the window and his feet wide apart, like a military officer. She could see nothing but a black silhouette against a rectangle of red.

« When did you decide this, may I ask? »

« Some time ago. I bought my railway ticket Wednesday ».

« Let's discuss this reasonably ». He still sounded calm and, if not exactly friendly, then not antagonistic either. She was emboldened.

« With all respect, Papa, discussion isn't necessary ».

« Permit me to disagree. It isn't healthy for a girl your age to venture to New York for a career in a dubious and risky profession. A career that might not exist at all ».

« Carl's going to Detroit without the promise of a job. You approve of that ».

« Carl is a man. It makes a difference ».

« Oh, Papa. That's so old-fashioned ». The challenge to his authority was blurted' without thought; she was angry.

His voice remained steady, controlled. « New York's a filthy, wretched city, I've seen it many times. It's dangerous for a single woman. It simply isn't safe, Fritzzi. Please reconsider ».

He was adamant. Well, so was she.

« I've considered it carefully, Papa. I'm just informing you as a courtesy »

Joe Crown peered out the window, his profile etched by red light. « Please understand, Fritzzi, I'm not arguing to be difficult, or have my own way ». Oh, no?

He held out his small, well-manicured hands, pleading. « I want the best for you. A husband. A home. Children ».

« I'm hardly the kind of raving beauty a man's going to marry ».

« You underrate yourself, terribly. You'll find someone. Perhaps you mustn't set your sights so high. In any case, a young woman of good character belongs... »

She jumped up. « Kirche, Küche, Kinder? Papa, that was your century. This is mine. My life. »

John JAKES, American Dream

