

TOMORROW THE WORLD

LEONA: That's the first time I ever struck a child.

MICHAEL: What happened?

LEONA: It doesn't matter, really.

MICHAEL: Come on -- tell me.

LEONA: No -- just another of his nasty little deeds. He wanted to make me angry and like a fool I let him succeed.

MICHAEL: Maybe it will do him good.

LEONA: It never does any good to lose your temper.

MICHAEL: Don't let it throw you. On the whole, I think the kid's improving.

LEONA: You don't say.

MICHAEL: I talked to him for a long time this afternoon.

LEONA: Sure. I talk to him for a long time every afternoon.

MICHAEL: Maybe you don't know how to handle him.

LEONA: Do you?

MICHAEL: Well -- he asked if he could pay for having the picture mended. He's going to mow the lawn to earn the money.

LEONA: Isn't that just ducky.

MICHAEL: He also asked me about his father. I haven't talked to him about Karl, you know. I've waited for him to ask. And today he asked. Do you realize what that means? Curiosity for the facts is beginning to percolate in that little brain. I told him Reiss's story of Karl's death. And I really think it got him.

LEONA: You do?

MICHAEL: Of, of course, he had reservations, but for the first time he began to wonder.

LEONA: Or he's just getting more clever. Asking you to tell him about his father was a stroke of genius.

MICHAEL: Now wait a minute, Lee --

LEONA: After today's exploits, he knew there'd be repercussions. So he gets ready for them by ingratiating himself with you. And, my God, he succeeds!

MICHAEL: You're way off, darling. You're way off. By the time I got through with him --

LEONA: You mean by the time he got through with you.... We've got to see this thing clearly, Mike. We've considered him a child, more or less like other children. Being rational people, we've treated him as if he were a normal human being. And he isn't. Oh, I grant you he's changing --outwardly. He's given up clicking the heels and heiling Hitler. But inwardly, he hasn't changed at all. He's just become more cunning, more shred. As far as he's concerned, we're still the enemy. So, he's got to split us up. He's got to turn us against each other. Divide and conquer!

MICHAEL: Now you're really way off! Come on, relax. Let's wait until we're married before we get divided and conquered.

LEONA: I haven't got any handkerchief. I'm sorry, Mike. It's silly to get emotional, and I'm ashamed of it. But that child frightens me. He never cries. No matter what happens to him, he won't cry.

MICHAEL: Old Teasdale's theory of the regenerative value of tears.

LEONA: Exactly. Whatever he feels, he keeps locked up inside of him. That isn't healthy. And there's nothing spontaneous about his being bad. He plans it. There's something evil about him.

MICHAEL: Sure. He's a bad boy. But you're talking as if he were a monster.

LEONA: Just a Nazi.

MICHAEL: Darling, he's a child. You've handled problem children before.

LEONA: Plenty of them. But I could always get to the root of the problem. Malnutrition -- a drunken father -- a neurotic mother. We understand those things. We know how to remove the cause, or how to help the child overcome his obstacles.... But Emil isn't just a case of maladjustment. He's perfectly adjusted --but to a Nazi society! He's been taught contempt for people who don't use force. He's been taught that Americans are soft. And sure enough, we've been soft with him. He's found that he can push us around. And he'll go on pushing us around until we give him the one answer he understands -- a licking.

MICHAEL: That's what you said on the telephone.

LEONA: And I'm still saying it.... Oh yes, I know. We don't beat children. It's passe, outmoded. A great way to relieve the feelings of the parent, but no good for the child. I can quote you three dozen child psychologists. But it's long overdue, Mike. A licking. Not in anger, not in haste. But a deliberate, carefully planned licking.

MICHAEL: Sure, revert to that good old American custom.irate papa takes recalcitrant offspring to the wood-shed. Do you favor the harness strap or the peach whip, Mrs. Gilhooley? All right -- so we give him a beating. And what does that do? It's merely a confession of failure. And I don't think we've failed yet.

LEONA: Well, we're pretty close to it.... May I quote a Michael Frame proverb of five years ago? --"The democracies must stand together and take action."

MICHAEL: I'll give you one more ancient than that. Old Chines saying. "Beat your child at least once a day. If you don't know the reason, the child does."

LEONA: Aren't you funny. Very funny.

MICHAEL: Hm-hm. I'm funny and you're stubborn.

LEONA: I'm stubborn? Oh, my God! (She laughs; Michael kisses her.) Thank you.

MICHAEL: Oh, it's nothing, really.

LEONA: You're too damn charming. That's the trouble with you.

MICHAEL: Sure.

LEONA: I mean it. You've always found it very easy to make people love you. Just use your charm, and you can persuade them to your point of view -- you think. Of course, it's a wonderful method when it works. It's why you've been the most popular teacher on the campus.

MICHAEL: Why, Miss Richards.

LEONA: With college students, it's fine. Amuse them, charm them. make them admire you as a witty fellow.... But Emil Bruckner isn't one of your students.

MICHAEL: Oh, oh. Here it comes again.

LEONA: Mike, for once you're going to have to get tough.

MICHAEL: Great! Instead of using my head, I get out the rubber truncheon and start playing Storm Trooper!

LEONA: Don't be stupid! Are the Nazis the only ones who can use force? Do you think our soldiers in Europe will be Storm Troopers?

MICHAEL: Our soldiers won't go around beating up children!

LEONA: All right, Mike. All right. If you're so squeamish about it --

MICHAEL: Squeamish, hell! I'm not squeamish! This is a matter of principle!

LEONA: You're exactly right! It is a matter of principle. But I've got principles, too!

MICHAEL: I see. Would you be willing to give him a beating?

LEONA: You're damn right! In fact, if you don't, I will!

MICHAEL: You don't mean that?!

LEONA: Oh, don't I! Just give me the chance!

MICHAEL: Do you realize, Lee, you sound as if you wanted to get even with the child.

LEONA: That's a hell of a thing to say.

MICHAEL: I mean it. You're taking it personally.

LEONA: Of course I take it personally! You should, too! On Saturday I'm coming to live in this house. I'm going to be your wife. Or am I?

MICHAEL: Now, Lee, take it easy. We can work this out.

LEONA: Can we? I thought we could. That's why I came here this afternoon. But we don't seem to be working it out, do we?

MICHAEL: Well we haven't tried yet. So far, you've simply delivered an ultimatum.

LEONA: All right. An ultimatum. That's it exactly. I can't live in the same house with that boy!

MICHAEL: That's a fine way to work it out. Just take an absolute attitude.

LEONA: What are you doing?

MICHAEL: What do you expect me to do? Say yes to anything you propose, whether I like it or not? Remember, I'm responsible for the boy, too. Much more than you are.

LEONA: All right. You be responsible for him. You can count me out. I'm sorry Mike. I'm sorry.

MICHAEL: Lee!