

CATHERINE

THESE SHINING LIVES

1

Darkness.

The ticking of a clock.

Stars sparkle across the night sky ...

The ticking continues.

Light up on Catherine.

START

→ CATHERINE. This isn't a fairy tale, though it starts like one.
It's not a tragedy, though it ends like one.

It's something else.
We're something else.

We're the wonder.
We're the curiosity.
The heroes.
The cure.
The failures.
The alchemy.
We're progress and history.
We're news.
We're the new world.

But we're just girls who wanted to work.

9

Ordinary girls.

I live in Ottawa, Illinois.
In a brick house on a quiet street.

I grow tomatoes and peas and pansies.

I have two children that I love.
I have a husband that I love.
When he touches me, I know I can fly.

They say you see your life flash before your eyes.
That you see a light.
That you move toward it.

But you don't.

You see your story.
Beginning and middle.
As they were written.
And the end.
As it comes.

And when you've told it, then you can rest.
Then you can go home.
Then your real work is done.

I'm Catherine Wolfe Donohue.
And I'm telling you now. (*The ticking of the clock takes us into ...
music. Something from the time period. A slide appears.*)

END

*SLIDE: Chicago in the Gilded Age
The Roaring '20s*

The other women appear ...

FRANCES. Mayor "Big Bill" Thompson is running the city.
CHARLOTTE. So are Johnny Torio and Al Capone.

CATHERINE

4

START

CATHERINE. You know, Tom was right. Work does cost you something ... and home's never really the same. It was hard being away from our babies. I never got used to it. Maybe I missed them more than they missed me. As for the women at work, I found out Mr. Reed had left out a few details. He had said that Pearl told jokes.

~~PEARL. Well, I'm kind of like people.~~

19

CATHERINE. He didn't mention that they were painful. And that we'd laugh anyway.

~~PEARL. Remember your eggs!~~

CATHERINE. He said that Frances was the moral backbone of the place.

~~FRANCES. I saw Dolly Frances with her husband. No husband though. Not a word at all. Dirty damn. The sek sek sek.~~

CATHERINE. He didn't say it's one of the most flexible backbones in town.

~~FRANCES. Guess he's you'll see me. I knit her some booties. And a little sweater. And a blanket. And a teeny —~~

CATHERINE. As for Charlotte, he said she was tough.

~~CHARLOTTE. You're just floating into my space. I can't paint with your dust floating into my space.~~

CATHERINE. And that ...

~~CHARLOTTE. Clear your desk if you wanna keep it.~~

CATHERINE. Was an understatement. But we didn't mind any of it. We knew what we were all there for. We made good money. We made a good team.

— FND —