AUGUST 25 CENTS

REDBOOK

SUMMER FICTION NUMBER

BOOK-LENGTH NOVEL

"The Bright Coin"

BY ELIZABETH SEIFERT

A story of a doctor's dilemma of love

TOPS IN SHORT STORIES

PROGRESS IN CANCER CONTROL

Leroy Clayton, at left, is a 25-year Studebaker veteran. His sons, Lawrence G. and George C., came back from war service to resume the Studebaker work they began in 1941.

"You wait and see, Dad...you'll have grandsons on this Studebaker team some day!"

YOUNG George Clayton works the same way he talks —with tremendous pride in being a Studebaker craftsman.

Just to watch him or his brother Lawrence do a job of metal finishing would make you want to buy a Studebaker car.

That Clayton kind of painstaking care is standard practice in the Studebaker plants—and it's one reason why a Studebaker buying wave is sweeping the country.

For generations, the men in family after family of Studebaker's home community have been following their fathers, and even grandfathers, into jobs at Studebaker.

This continuity of interest has built up a Studebaker reputation for top quality workmanship that has spread around the world.

The Claytons, and the thousands of other solid citizens who man the Studebaker production lines, uphold that reputation today—add new luster to it with every Studebaker car and truck they manufacture.

They're more than master craftsmen, these men of the Studebaker working force. They're just about the most effective salesmen Studebaker cars and trucks could have.

"Try the IPANA way—dentists say it works!"

... say dance stars Marge and Gower Champion—who show how it can work for your smile

Taking a bow! Marge and Gower Champion's dazzling dances—and smiles—have really paid off! A starring role before the television camera is their latest triumph.

"We know how important firm, healthy gums are to sparkling smiles," Marge explains. "So we follow the *Ipana* way to healthier gums and brighter teeth—*because dentists say it works!*" Try this professionally approved Ipana dental care yourself—see what it can do for *your* smile . . .

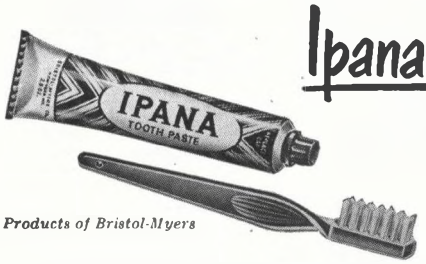
Marge demonstrates the Ipana way—so pleasant, and easy as 1, 2:

1. *Between regular visits to your dentist,* brush all tooth surfaces with Ipana Tooth Paste at least twice a day.
2. Then massage gums the way your dentist advises—to stimulate gum circulation. (Ipana's unique formula actually helps stimulate your gums. You can *feel* the invigorating tingle!)

Do this regularly for healthier gums, brighter teeth—an *Ipana* smile. Ipana refreshes mouth and breath, too. Ask *your* dentist about Ipana and massage. Remember, a good dentifrice, like a good dentist, is *never* a luxury.

YES, 8 OUT OF 10 DENTISTS SAY:

Ipana dental care promotes Healthier gums, brighter teeth*



Products of Bristol-Myers

P.S. For correct brushing, use the DOUBLE DUTY Tooth Brush with the *twist* in the handle. 1000 dentists helped design it!

***In thousands of recent reports from dentists all over the country.*

The LION'S ROAR

Published in this space every month

The greatest star of the screen!

"In the good old summertime,
In the good old summertime..."

★ ★ ★ ★

"In The Good Old Summertime" was certain to become the title and the inspiration for a film musical some day. M-G-M got there first. We've seen the finished production and it's a knockout!

★ ★ ★ ★

It has the Judy and the joy, the lilt and the look of "Meet Me In St. Louis" which all of us so fondly remember. But it has a better story, more bounce.

★ ★ ★ ★

"Strolling through the shady lanes
With your 'baby mine'..."

Judy Garland and Van Johnson are the sweethearts of "In The Good Old Summertime". Judy is even better than she was in "Easter Parade". And Van is always good... but he's surprisingly good in this one.

★ ★ ★ ★

Spring Byington, S. Z. "Cuddles" Sakall, Clinton Sundberg, and a beautiful violinist, Marcia Van Dyke, lend lustrous support.

★ ★ ★ ★

The story is set in the bicycles-built-for-two era, yet it has freshness, gaiety and up-to-the-minuteness!

★ ★ ★ ★

"You hold her hand and she holds yours
And that's a very good sign..."

★ ★ ★ ★

It's also the most whistleable picture ever. You've heard many of the songs before, but you wouldn't have a new one for anything in the world. (Incidentally, they're on M-G-M Records.)

★ ★ ★ ★

"That she's your toolsie-wootsie
In The Good Old Summertime."

★ ★ ★ ★

It was written for the screen by Albert Hackett, Frances Goodrich and Ivan Tors, from a screen play by Samson Raphaelson and a play by Miklos Laszlo. Excellent direction by Robert Z. Leonard. And producer Joe Pasternak kept an eye on his Technicolor package.

★ ★ ★ ★

In the lyrical words of the lyric-writers, "In The Good Old Summertime" is our tootsie-wootsie!

— Leo

REDBOOK MAGAZINE

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The short stories, serial and novel herein are fiction and intended as such. They do not refer to real characters or actual events. If the name of any living person is used, it is a coincidence.

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Printed in U.S.A.

Two energetic French nuns stir up more than just enthusiasm when they start a hospital in Connecticut.

Sister Scolastica (*Celeste Holm*) *plays a fast double match, hoping to win money for their project.*

"Come to the Stable"

Clare Boothe Luce has fashioned a charming idyl in "Come to the Stable," a Twentieth Century-Fox picture featuring Loretta Young and Celeste Holm.

Told with humor and gentle pathos, the story deals with the trials, the forbearance and the steadfastness —in the face of what to the ordinary mortal would be insurmountable obstacles—of two nuns from France who seek to establish a hospital for children in the Connecticut hills. It is a mountainous task, but they have faith which moves mountains.

Whether by coincidence or not, the fact remains it is a town named Bethlehem which figuratively rears itself in their path and becomes the compass for their activities. This hamlet, being truly rural, has its stable, now an artist's studio, whither the sisters are guided through the snow-ridden New England night. Coincidence it may be, for at the moment of their arrival a local artist, *Amelia Potts* (Elsa Lanchester), is surprised in the act of painting a portrait of the Holy Family, using neighbors and their children as props.

The nuns go about their plans for raising money with a confidence that is out of this world. The more horrendous the task, the more blandly they tackle it. They do not hesitate to go after *Mr. Rossi* (Thomas Gomez), a gambling czar who owns some land which they want. *Mr. Rossi* resists but eventually melts.

So it goes all along the line. A neurotic song-writer (Hugh Marlowe), who lives on a modest estate adjoining the site of the proposed institution, flies into a rage when, on a return from Hollywood, he finds his property overrun with bustle and activity. He *(Please turn to page 6)*

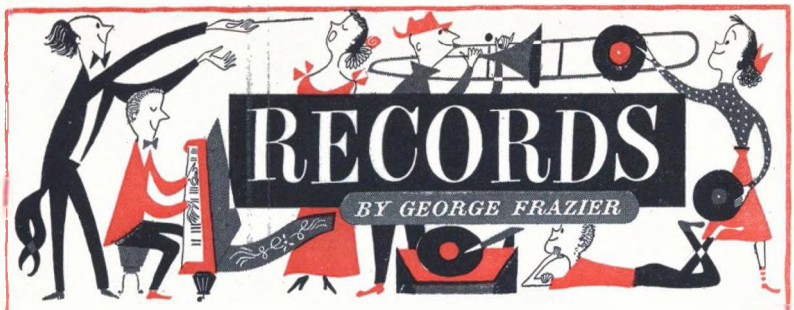
The countryside is a little startled to see* Sister Scolastica *and* Sister Margaret (*Loretta Young, right*) *driving around in a jeep; they learned all about running jeeps and fixing tires from the G.I.s during the war.

Neighbor* Mason (*Hugh Marlowe*), Sister Margaret *and* Kitty (*Dorothy Patrick*) *watch the tennis match with keen interest since the outcome may bring the nuns the money needed to buy the hospital building.

(This review is continued from page 4)
becomes an adamant foe of the religionists, not on religious grounds but because he wants his bucolic peace.

The picture might easily have been cloying were it not for a kind of robust humor which pervades it. The nuns are no sanctimonious puppets; they are delightfully rugged in their way, able to deal equally with the vagaries of a jeep and with the paternal skepticism of the bishop. When, toward the end, it seems that their project is doomed to failure, they take defeat in their stride. The sporting spirit is high in them, and it is this quality which brings them ultimate triumph.

Notes on more of the best current pictures appear on page 57.



The shaky state of the record business these days is apparent from the unconventional nature of a number of current releases. The companies appear to be willing to try just about anything in an effort to come up with a resounding hit.

BUDDY MORENO

Buddy Moreno's "Drop Daid, Little Darlin', Drop Daid" *(RCA Victor 20-3435)* is a case in point. For here is a disavowal of all the tenets preached in the hillbilly catalogue—tenets which happen to be among the record industry's most dependable sources of revenue. All in all, it strikes us as a diverting item, although we feel that the exercise of a bit more subtlety might have raised it to the level of incisive social commentary.

Another example of unorthodoxy this month is **Ray Anthony's** "The Wreck on the Highway" *(Capitol 57-577)* which is a brash flouting of the theory that records are made to entertain. This essay on the consequences of reckless driving is so gory that **J. C. Furnas'** "—And Sudden Death" seems as restful as a lullaby in comparison.

Less grisly, but every bit as challenging is "Open the Door," a polka which is not to be confused with the plaint of a few years ago addressed to Richard. Our favorite version on records is the one by Blue on *MGM 10412*, which has diverting chatter by Phil Goulding and a baby-voiced ingenue named **Judy Valentine**, whose "Kiss Me Sweet" on the same label may restore the dear dim days of Helen Kane.

JUDY VALENTINE

In a month like this, we have every reason to be grateful for the normalcy of an album called simply "Jazz, Ltd." Aside from three bleating faces by the cloying **Sidney Bechet**, this is a stunning achievement. Moreover, there's no bop nonsense about it. Instead, you get the irresistible drive of a cornetist like **Muggsy Spanier** in "Washington and Lee Swing" and "A Good Man Is Hard to Find." You also get, by an underrated trumpeter named **Doc Evans**, the stirring affirmation that "Tipperary," far from being neutral, is a truly international anthem. This is a fine album, even to the accompanying notes by **William Leonard**, which are simply swell.

MARY MARTIN

At this point, it should hardly be necessary to remind you that the Columbia long-playing record of "South Pacific" *(ML 4180)* with **Ezio Pinza** and **Mary Martin** is superlative. To pass it up is to forego one of the real treats of our time.

TEX RITTER

Not so celebrated as Mr. Pinza, but nevertheless a formidable man in his own field is **Tex Ritter.** If you happen to be the parent of a small child, this rough-voiced cowhand is your man. We know of no pleasanter fare for kids than his offering in two Capitol albums *(DC-91* and *BD-14)*.

Home Glamour Party

All girls want to look their loveliest, and that is the reason for the latest thing in parties, the Home Glamour Party, a new, exciting adventure in allure. Housewives and business women, college girls and teen-agers are discovering this new-style party, a party with an object: to make you look your most attractive.

With the many home aids to beauty that are available, American women have become increasingly conscious of the care that they owe to their good appearance, and they are finding in the Home Glamour Party the most effective way to use these aids to the best advantage.

A typical Home Glamour Party is built around the latest aid to home beauty care, the home permanent wave. There is plenty of opportunity for friends to help in applying the waving lotion, putting the hair up in curlers, and saturating the hair in lotion after all curls are up. While the wave is processing is the time for a pickup treatment for the complexion—a soothing facial.

Helping each other to drench each curl in neutralizing solution before it is taken down, the girls are soon ready for the two final rinses, the first in solution, the final one in water, before the fun of setting the hair, then waiting for it to dry. The final step is a thorough manicure, shaping the nails, special attention to the cuticles, selecting a polish in the color that's most becoming.

Here is the story in pictures of one typical Home Glamour Party. On a Saturday afternoon Peggy invited her two friends, Kathy and Jane, over to her apartment. "One o'clock! Be prompt," she reminded them. "The boys are picking us up at seven, and we'll want to be looking our best!"

—Joseph W. Hotchkiss

1. **Kathy arrives** to find Peg shampooing before starting her home permanent. Jane has brushed her hair well and massaged her scalp before washing.

2. **Soaking each twist** of Peg's hair with waving lotion before winding it on a curler comes first. When all the curls are up, each one will again be soaked.

3. **While the wave is processing,** the girls smooth on face cream or mask, and relax. After removal, a lotion patted on will give the skin a clear radiance.

4. **Drenching** each curl in a neutralizing solution fixes the wave. Two rinses follow, one in solution, and one in water. The hair is then set normally and dried.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL D'OME STUDIOS

5. **While their hair dries,** Kathy and Jane exchange manicures. Polish is applied over a base coat, and followed by a coat of fixative. A soothing cream or lotion softens the hands.

6. **After bathing,** the girls have sprayed with cologne. Lipstick, powder, perfume—rouge and mascara too, if desired—completes the makeup. Their hair is smooth and natural.

Their escorts appreciate the final results of the Home Glamour Party, and the girls know that the evening ahead will be one to remember, for they know they look their loveliest because of the care they have taken. By helping each other in the routines essential to good appearance, they have done a better, more thorough job. And it's been fun, too!

Eleanor and Anna Roosevelt

Here's how America's best-known mother and daughter carry on their radio program even when they are miles apart

Eleanor and Anna Roosevelt are not only the most famous mother-and-daughter combination in the country but, because of their personal experiences and backgrounds, are excellently equipped for radio commentating. Mrs. Roosevelt's wide acquaintanceship and her participation in national and international affairs, as so well revealed by her memoirs now running in *McCall's Magazine*, gives her a knowledge of people and problems few can match. Anna, having lived in the West for years, knows what interests that section of the country, and her newspaper training gives her a keen sense of what is newsworthy and timely.

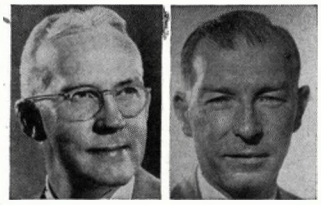
The Roosevelts are seldom together when they broadcast (ABC, 4:30 P.M. EDT Mon.-Fri.). Anna, usually in Los Angeles, always broadcasts in person. Mrs. Roosevelt may be in Paris, Hyde Park or anywhere, so her part of the program may be transcribed or live. She seldom uses a script and her sense of timing is almost phenomenal; she and her assistant talk over ideas for the program as they drive to various appointments.

Anna and her mother confer with each other about program subjects; sometimes they discuss the same problem, on which they may have different views; or one may talk about a new book while the other interviews a person of interest. Since they are adept at drawing stories out of people and grasping the pertinent facts of a situation, their broadcasts hold the attention of not only busy housewives but men listeners as well.

—FLORENCE SOMERS

BOOKS

—*HARRY HANSEN*



A. GROVE DAY CARL STROVEN

There's no time in our busy lives to read all the good stories. That's what makes a careful selection of some of the best in one book so welcome. You can take up "The Spell of the Pacific," edited by Carl Stroven and A. Grove Day, and dip into it anywhere: live with Gauguin in the Marquesas Islands, read Capt. Bligh's own account of the mutiny on the *Bounty*, travel with Jack London to Polynesia, see what Herman Melville saw of the Typees, test the enchantment of the Pacific as woven by Robert Louis Stevenson, Mark Twain, James Norman Hall and W. Somerset Maugham. As James A. Michener writes: "The Pacific is truly the supreme feature of the earth's surface." *(The Macmillan Co., $6.50)*

The English are very good at describing a man in a quandary, usually a well-intentioned man who is mystified by the behavior of his fellow-countrymen. It's one of the characteristics of an entertaining style. Winston Clewes does it in "Journey into Spring," in which *Godfrey Fletton* comes back from prison-camp to his town and straightens out the troubles of *Ted Sloan*, whose girl, *Sue*, has just turned sixteen, a little too young to wed. *(Alfred A. Knopf, $3)*

Male reporters have been heroes of the movies, but females can get into just as many scrapes, track down murderers, witness disasters, fight against deadlines, interview stars in Hollywood. There's an efficient, "get-the-story" air about Agness Underwood's account of her twenty-one years of reporting in Los Angeles—"Newspaperwoman." *(Harper & Bros., $3.50)*

Everyone has seen motion pictures made from novels, but here is a story that follows a picture—"It Happens Every Spring," which Valentine Davies, who wrote the script, simply had to write because it was an amusing and highly entertaining episode of a chemistry instructor who went haywire when the baseball season opened. No headaches after reading this one! *(Farrar, Straus, $2.50)*

Some hopeful facts about ALLERGIES

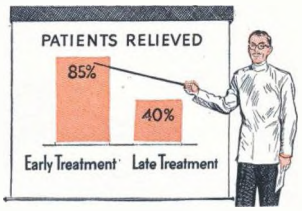
IT HAS BEEN estimated that one out of every two people in our country suffers, or has suffered, from an allergy. These people are unusually sensitive to certain things which are harmless to the average person.

Plants, dust, animals, foods, drugs, chemicals and bacteria are among the most common causes of allergic disorders. When susceptible persons come in contact with these troublemakers, it is thought that a substance called *histamine* is released by the body into the blood stream. This in turn may lead to sneezing attacks, skin rashes, digestive upsets or more serious conditions.

Fortunately, recent developments by medical science make it possible for the doctor to do more than ever before to relieve allergies. New drugs, known as anti-histaminics, are helpful in many cases, especially those caused by substances which are inhaled. This includes hay fever which alone attacks some three and one half million people each year.

The doctor may recommend injections of the allergy-causing substance to help build up resistance to it. He may also suggest steps for avoiding or lessening contact with the troublemaker.

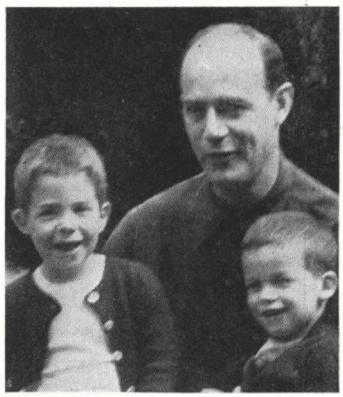
Recent research has shown that some allergic conditions improve when the patient is helped to resolve emotional conflicts. Today, authorities say that, with proper medical care, 3 out of 4 allergy victims can be greatly helped.



For the best results, treatment to increase resistance should be started in advance of exposure to the causes of allergy. Hay fever treatments, for example, are more than twice as effective when given before the pollen season starts rather than after.

There is still no "sure cure" for allergies, but patients who maintain close and continued co-operation with the doctor have the best chance for a great measure of relief. To learn more facts about allergies, write for a copy of Metropolitan's free booklet, 89-R, "Allergic To What?"

NEWS



Surprised his teacher

If there's any truth in the saying, "Like father, like son," Jerrold Beim's four-year-old twins, Seth and Andy, are sure to be smart boys. When Jerrold went to school in Newark, New Jersey, the teacher, inspired by a magazine contest, asked the class to write themes on the subject "My Favorite Character in Fiction." Jerrold picked either of *Cinderella's* stepsisters because he thought they were at least enterprising and got places while *Cinderella* sat by the fire and moped.

Cinderella must have been teacher's pet; anyway, Beim got a failing mark—which made him so indignant he entered his theme in the contest and won first prize.

He's been writing ever since and very successfully, as this issue's "Roses Speak Louder" shows. He collaborated with his wife, Lorraine, on a children's book which turned out so well that they continued writing them, but independently. The twins and their seven-year-old sister, Alice, give Beim plenty of inspiration to write children's books, and their needs and desires furnish reasons to write adult stories to help balance the family budget.

In Our Next Issue—A moving family story, by Claire Wallis, of a mother's strong resentment toward the girl who is HER SON'S WIFE. Summer's heat—and passions—are the subject of HEAT WAVE IN 4-D, by Florence Jane Soman. And THE DANGEROUS AGE, by Don Stanford, tells of a girl, eighteen, in love with an older man. Many other stories and articles of interest.

ABOUT REDBOOK

True to her word

When Elizabeth Seifert of Moberly, Missouri, won the REDBOOK-Dodd Mead $10,000 prize in 1938 for her novel, "Young Dr. Galahad," she said she would use the money to educate her four children. They now have degrees, they were all in the war, they have all married and there are four grandchildren.

Jack, the oldest, returned in July after five years in Germany, first with the Army, then as a civilian worker. Now he plans to get his doctorate in electronics. Dick, graduate of Iowa University, flew four years with the Bomber Command and is still flying. Paul was invalided out of the Army, finished at the University of Mexico and is teaching. Ann studied as a nurse, took a degree in biology and is working for her master's degree.

Mrs. Seifert has continued writing, with special interest in medicine and veterans' clinics. Her husband's illness makes traveling impossible but she finds plenty of material in Missouri, scene of this month's complete novel, and she's been called the most prolific writer about her State. We think her record makes her a prize prizewinner.

Sidewalk artist

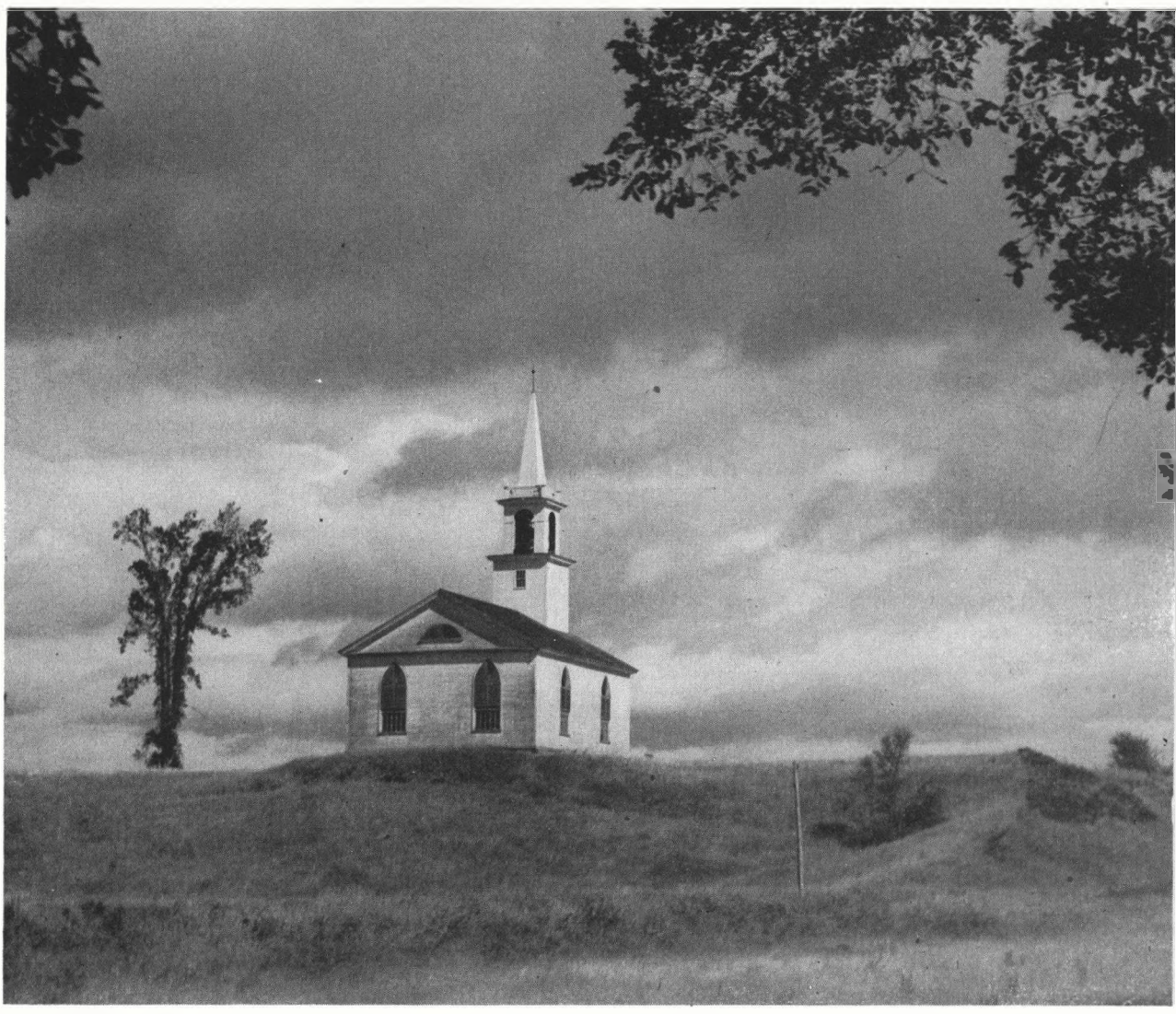
Arthur Sarnoff is not a native New Yorker but he literally started his career on the sidewalks of New York. He was born in Pittsburgh and his family moved here when he was four. His first attempt at illustration was pavement drawings in favor of the Allies of World War I. He won so many prizes in school that he thought the world was anxiously awaiting his graduation; he soon got over that idea and worked for nothing to get art experience.

Sarnoff kept studying and finally got up courage to submit his work again; in 1937 he was accepted by the magazines and has been a free-lance artist for magazine and advertising illustration ever since. He's now doing "Claudia" for us and says he loves her; he also adds he's happily married and the father of nine-year-old twin girls. Too bad Jerrold Beim's twin boys aren't older.

Arthur is a sports enthusiast and indulges in most of them; he also likes good music and finds inspiration in the great symphonies. His spare time is devoted to sketching outdoors in water colors and oils. Most of all, he's a happy man and he appreciates it.

Eloise Sahlen is just the girl to pose for a travel picture; between the time she posed for last March's cover and the present one, she's been to California, Honolulu and Bermuda. Not only that, she's been married too; since her husband is also a model, they were sent on these trips to be photographed as a couple and that's our idea of nice work if you can get it.

Jacket of Shamokin wool worsted by Toni Owen; Suzy hat; Agnew pin; Shalimar gloves; Revlon's "Scarlet Poppy" lipstick; all available at B. Altman and Co., New York. Photo by Zoltan Farkas.



In Accord with the Law...

Sometimes across dunes or meadows you see it standing alone; more frequently you find it is hidden by the trees on a village street; but—you find it. A church; at least one church somewhere near each settlement in America.

We are accustomed to taking their presence for granted; of course they are there; we really can't imagine a village—much less a city—without churches. But some other people can.

We slowly are becoming aware that there is in our land a serious attack upon "our institutions"; but few of us have yet allowed the details and the nature of that attack to bother us. Our opponents within, as well as those without, have been soft-pedaling their intentions against the very first of the freedoms guaranteed under our Constitution.

Did you know which is the first—the first one mentioned and guaranteed in the first section of our Bill of Rights? It is religious freedom. Can you picture America with its churches closed?

Just as buildings they are beautiful structures, so many of them. The one on this page is the old Congregational Church at Head Tide, Maine. I understand there is an original Paul Revere bell in the tower.

At Middlebury College, in the little Vermont town of Middlebury, there is an especially lovely chapel, and you approach it up a slope with a background of distant mountains; and as you come near, you see that there is an inscription cut in a stone across the front of the chapel, and soon you are able to read it: *The Strength of the Hills Is His Also.*

Near the United States Courthouse in downtown New York, where for months now eleven Communist leaders are being tried, there is a beautiful church of Roman architecture; and cut in the stone across the front of this church is another inscription which has seemed to me especially apt for that place. It is in Latin: *Beati Qui Ambulant in Lege Domini* — Blessed are they who walk in accord with the Law of the Lord.

—Edwin Balmer

Do You Agree?

BY HOWARD W. NEWTON *ILLUSTRATED BY HARRY GOFF*

A woman never claims she can fill another woman's shoes.

*

Little lambs often pull the wool over Mother's eyes.

*

A shoulder blade can look pretty deadly in a strapless gown.

*

Never let the point of your finger detract from the point of your argument.

*

If you want people to give thought to what you say, you'd better, too.

A gossip will never let bad enough alone.

The faster your pace, the sooner it catches up with you.

You can get almost as big a headache from a night-club as a night-stick.

*

Many a person has a hard-boiled ego.

*

People get old too soon trying to act young too late.

*

A father is usually more pleased to have a child look like him than act like him.

IT CAN BE DONE ...but don't try it!

Sometimes it's possible to break all the rules—and get away with it.

The famous Tower of Pisa, for instance, has successfully defied both sound engineering practice and the law of gravity for over 800 years.

But for most of us, most of the time, the rules hold.

That is particularly true when it comes to saving money.

The first rule of successful saving is *regularity* . . . salting away part of every pay check, month after month.

Once in a blue moon, of course, you'll come across someone who can break that rule and get away with it. But the fact is that most of us *cannot*.

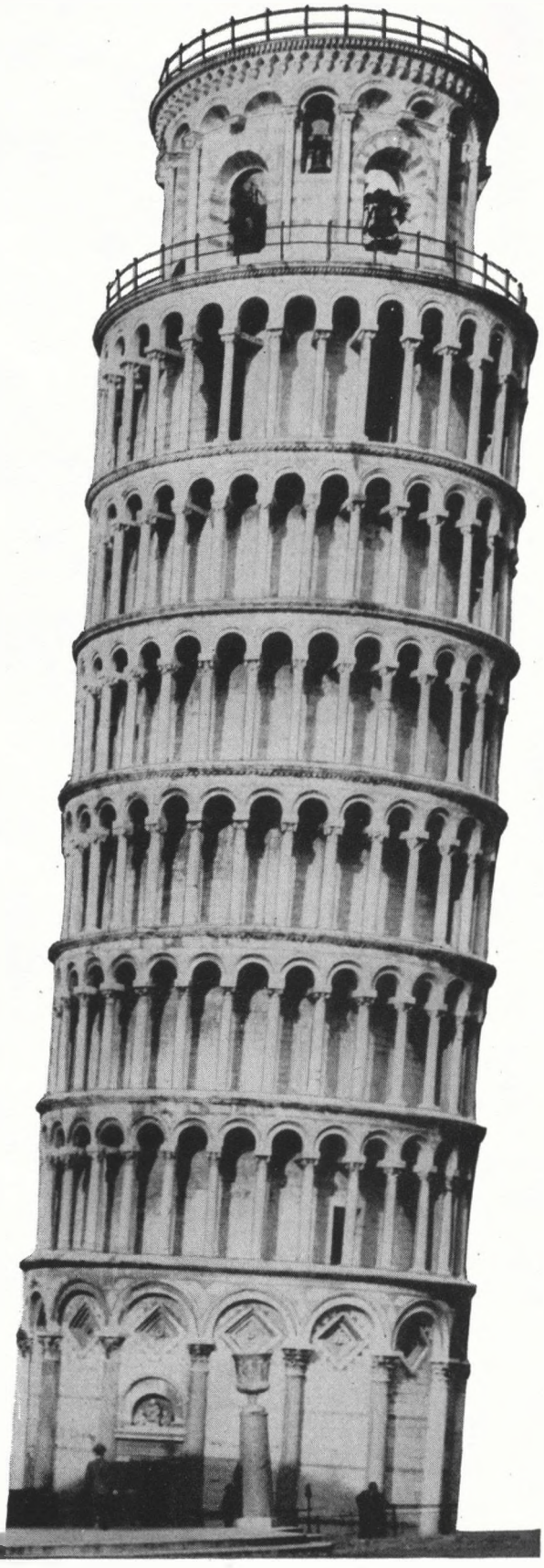
For most of us, the one and only way to accumulate a decent-size nest egg for the future and for emergencies is through regular, automatic saving.

In all history there's never been an easier, surer, more profitable way to save regularly than the U. S. Savings Bond way.

Those of us on a payroll are eligible to use the wonderful Payroll Savings Plan. The rest of us can use the equally wonderful Bond-A-Month Plan through our local bank.

Use whichever is best for you. But—*use one of them!*

AUTOMATIC SAVING IS SURE SAVING— U. S. SAVINGS BONDS



Contributed by this magazine in co-operation with the Magazine Publishers of America as a public service.

Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

1

John Muir found world's largest tree, a sequoia, in the California Sierras, 1902

2

40 years ago today, U. S. Army bought its first airplane from Wright Brothers. Week before, Louis Bleriot had flown the English Channel

3

1923 — Calvin Coolidge sworn in as President by his father, a justice of peace, in Plymouth, Vt. Day before, in San Francisco, Warren Harding died

4

35 years ago today, German army swept thru Belgium, and England declared war on Germany

5

"Damn the torpedoes!" said David Farragut. He won the battle of Mobile Bay - 1864

6

Gertrude Ederle swam the English Channel, 1926

7

George Washington created Order of the Purple Heart, 167 years ago today

8

Esther Williams her birthday

9

4 years ago today, U. S. dropped #3 atomic bomb on Nagasaki; 5 days later Japs agreed to surrender

10

Herbert Hoover's 75th birthday

11

40th annual Baby Parade today, Ocean City, N. J.

12 **13**

August wanders through its days on sticky, lagging feet. Shrubs along country roads are drab with gray dust. In late afternoon, farm boys gather at the creek's willow-shaded pools.

On misty August nights, you can almost hear the cornstalks crackle as they grow taller, while the far-off bark of a fox gives an omen of autumn to come.

Haydn S. Pearson

14

International Soap Box Derby today at Akron, Ohio

15

50 years ago today, Henry Ford quit his job with a Detroit utility, to launch his own auto business

16

Gasoline rationing over; U. S. motorists again took to the highways 4 years ago today

17

One year ago today, thousands passed Yankee Stadium bier of Babe Ruth, 53, who died of cancer *(see page 59)*

18

International Gladiolus Show, 2nd & final day, at Binghamton, N.Y.

19

Gail Borden patented first successful milk condensing process, Aug. 19, 1856

20

1903 New 60-day Pacific-to-Hudson River mark set by a Packard auto. Next day, car welcomed in New York

21

Princess Margaret Rose is 19 today

22

Jelly & Jam Week. If paraffin is kept in a teapot, it pours easily. Heat wax by putting pot into pan of hot water

23

10 years ago today, Nazis and Russians signed treaty. Hitler started World War II 9 days later

24

1,870 years ago today, Mt. Vesuvius erupted and buried city of Pompeii

25

Iowa State Fair opens today *(see page 38)*

26

29 years ago today, all U. S. women assured right to vote. 19th amendment to Constitution became law

27

Ohio State Fair opens today in Columbus

28

90 years ago today, Edwin L. Drake found oil in his 69½-foot well at Titusville, Pa. Petroleum industry was born

29

U. S. Lawn Tennis Championships begin at Forest Hills today

30

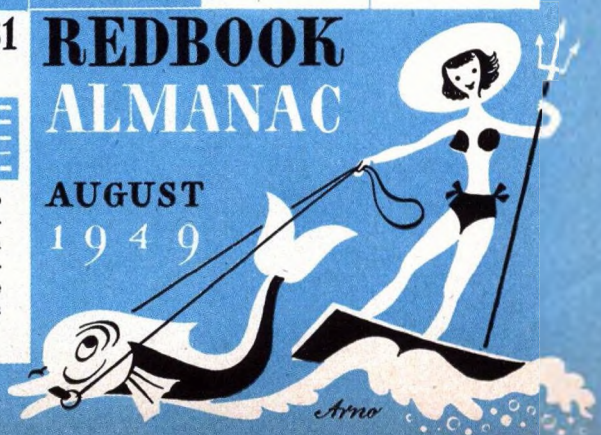
First circus elephant ever seen in U. S. shown 152 years ago today in Salem, Mass.

31

52 years ago today, Frederic March born & Edison's movie camera was patented

REDBOOK ALMANAC

AUGUST 1949



Arno

Sunday Monday Tuesday

Surrender

The song of the sea... the melody of young laughter... and the echo of a love that could not be denied

After Robby drove away down the road toward the city and his office, Judith stood a moment in the drive, troubled. The sun flashed on the blue flanks of the roadster as the car topped a rise a quarter of a mile away, and then, like a thought that vanishes after first brilliance, the car disappeared again—and there was a sadness, as if the blue gleaming had been a swift token of an ending.

She turned and went down the steps that led to the long desolate beach of the sea. The wind gathered her skirts and then billowed them, and she felt suddenly light in body, but she was still heavy in heart.

The day overhead wore fantastic clouds that stood like idle dreams against a blue sky. The water coaxed her in a language she seemed lately to have forgotten —and she listened, anxiously and without hope, for the lost voices of contentment that used to call here in all kinds of weather: exultant in storm, gay in wildness and abandon, calm and untroubled on days when sunny magic held the world against itself.

Strangeness. Until a few weeks ago, she'd recognized her haven here, and it had been as if nothing could basically change; there would only be changes within the pattern: passing years, so that she and Robby would be older, and she would grow into his settled, mature conceptions of life; the birth of a child, or of several. But underneath there would have been the sameness, giving theme to all the other happenings.

She stood by the sea. The wind faded back into its airy garden; and her dress hung limp against her. She looked deflated standing there, as if the wind

BY WILLIAMS FORREST

ILLUSTRATED BY R. G. HARRIS

had taken substance from her spirit, and had run off with it.

She remembered Robby's face as it had been this morning at breakfast: thinner, older, and the gravity native to him was carved deeper. When she looked at him across the table, she had a queer feeling that Robby's face in this hour was the mirror of the way she had felt when he first met her, a little over a year ago:

The same paleness, and the hint of despair and the withdrawn appearance, his whole personality drawing back into its own shadow. The impression startled her, and she looked at him closely. And she saw that it was true: here, then, was the mirror of the way she had been, with only one exception. There was a dark courage (that was not fatalism) in his gaze, while hers had always been a dimness shrouded in deep timidity.

She felt ashamed of the health she wore like an unfamiliar garment, and ashamed of the litheness of her body that had long been tired.

She contemplated him, and wanted somehow to approach him: but the dourness that sometimes came to him of late closed him away from her, and there was no approach.

Then the new, racking cough came again, and he was unable to maintain his aloof pose. She went to him, and he held his side with one hand, and (unself-conscious in his need) took her hand with the other. But, as soon as the spasm passed, he dropped her hand, and she stepped back.

Guiltily, she felt she had to speak. "Robby, why're you working so hard?" she asked, knowing full well he was doing it to hide and forget; it was the only method he knew. It was a foolish question to ask, and they both knew it. And his reply would be foolish, and they knew that, too, before he spoke.

"It's a very important transaction," he said, "and the others are busy right now." But he would not look at her when he spoke; and the lie brought guilt to them, visible in the coloring of her face, in the disappointment that pinched his cheeks.

She remembered how he rose after that, and how he walked slowly to the door. She followed him outside, just as she had always done. But now, when it was time for the morning good-by kiss, they were embarrassed, as if they were forced to a ritual of intimacy even though they were strangers.

He was reluctant to leave, but its reason was not the same as it had been before.

He used to look at her a moment, pensively, with something paternal in his expression; and yet there had been an eagerness, too, that was somehow startling in the quietness.

"I'll call you at ten, darling," he would say each morning.

"I'll be listening to my favorite serial," she'd reply, slyly, "but I might spare the time."

He would smile. She'd be able to tell he was searching for something foolish and happy to say. But he would not find it.

"I love you, Judy," he would say; and his face would have a deeper smile that contained more than mere mirth.

And her answer would always be a hard kiss. He would hold her a moment, waiting; but regardless of the calm and sweetness of his embrace, her kiss would be the only reply she had to give then, just as his nature had no easy playfulness for her.

"Good-by," he would say, lingering.

"Good-by," she'd say, and her eyes would have their laughter; and a pleasant feeling of being loved and needed would make her glad; and, at the same time, make her feel that somehow, some day, she must make amends because she could not tell him she loved him.

But all that had been on other days, and not for the past two weeks. This morning he bent and pecked her cheek, hesitated, and kissed her mouth. She was surprised at the sensation his dry lips gave her: A deep nostalgia.

"Robby!"

He paused. Summer sunlight on his face.

"Robby . . . please take it easier today! Or—or let me take care of that awful cold— Stay home today," she insisted.

A painful quirk to his lips. He was tempted to stay home. But she knew he would not. She could only guess at the pride that made him leave each morning as usual, knowing that during the day he might lose what he wanted above everything in the world.

His hesitation. "Well—maybe if I feel worse I'll come home—" Then he shook his head. "No. I'll be all right. I'll be home at six." Lately, he was always careful to tell her the exact hour of his homecoming.

He got into the roadster and drove off. He looked stiff in such a car; dark coupés had been characteristic of him.

One day, before their marriage, he had come to take her for a drive. He'd appeared in a new light suit, his first departure from somber color.

"I have a new car," he'd said, meaningly. "I think it's more the kind you'd like to ride in."

She thought of that now as he drove off, its meaning; and then she went to the beach. The waves came in. The sand was darkened.

A voice hailed her! She turned as if the wind had turned her like a sail. A young man's hair blew black in the wind. His arm flashed brown and lean and muscular, waving. He started to run down from a dune, leaping the tufts of tall sharp grass.

"Hey! Judy!" he cried; sand spurted under his feet.

Time stood still as he approached. She'd only known him a few weeks, but he was part of ancient memories. Part of the golden age of real youth, a period that had passed by her during the years when her womanhood was dawning. He did not seem to be only a symbol of the laughter and dreams she had wanted to become real: he came as an intimate who had been lost and was found again.

Time stood still, and it was as if she looked through a window at herself as she'd always wished to be, and at a happening that was impossible except in forlorn dreams that had been her only solace.

She never failed to be startled when she realized this young man loved her, that she had become the girl he could love!

Only one event in her life had held enchantment that was even partially equal to this. The first night Robby came to call on her. She had been alone in her room in the boarding-house, and she had been listening to the accents of life around her, knowing that no inflection was hers. And then someone came and told her that a young man was waiting downstairs! Her legs had felt like lead as she went down. She stopped still and amazed in the doorway of the living-room: Robby, the stern young executive from the office, a man of dark suits and crabbed habits!

"I brought you some flowers," he said.

Numbly, she accepted the box, and opened it. It was filled with long-stemmed roses.

"I thought you might like to come for a drive," he said. "It's a nice night for it."

Judith had stood there helplessly, the flowers in her arms. She was afraid she would laugh or cry. She smelled the flowers, and suddenly he looked different, and she was ashamed because she'd been disappointed when she'd seen who it was. Ashamed that she had expected a miracle.

"I—I'll have to put the roses in water," she said.

He looked at her. "Why not take them with you?" he said. "You'd like that, wouldn't you?" he said, as if talking to a child who is afraid of her own innocent wish.

She stared at him. The sweetness of the flowers seemed to enter her and become part of her. Suddenly, she had known she would like to go for a long drive, carrying roses in her arms.

The scent of the flowers seemed to come again as Tom came closer; and she glanced at the house and saw the roses on the trellis, and the old clear warm emotion returned—but it was fixed now on the young man with dark hair and dark engaging grin.

He did not pause when he came abreast of her. He took her hand. They went off down the beach toward the high gray rocks. She heard the short hard panting of his breath; she thought she could run forever.

They tumbled in the sand in the shadow of the rocks, and took great breaths of the salty air. The sea poured against the rocks, and spindrift flashed white. There was a forlorn peace within her.

When he got his breath, he spoke in keeping with their abandoned run, easy and gay for a while: "Today I've decided that I'll be a genius of some kind. I haven't decided what kind."

"Yesterday," she said, "you were going to be an earnest young man, who would develop into a grave thinker on world problems."

"That was yesterday. After all, you can't fight off being a genius. If it's destined, it's destined. Besides, a genius can get away with a lot more than a grave thinker can!"

She was delighted. Something absurd within her was laughing with him. "You change so often," she said; "too often. Life isn't forever, you know."

He shrugged. "Sometimes you have morbid tendencies. Don't you know yet that I'll never die? Dying is propaganda."

He looked at her and was grinning. He liked to talk in ridiculous fashion. And yet, when she looked beyond the grin, she saw that Tom did not think he ever *would* die! That act was for other people. And she knew that his illusion was a usual conceit of young men and women their age, even though its charm had been denied her.

And knowing then how truly young he was compared to her (even though he was a year older), she felt as if they were travelers from different worlds. She felt strangely wise, tired and desperate.

He slapped his open palm down on the sand, terminating aimlessness, and said, "As of next Monday, I have a job."

"Oh?" she said. She saw the grimness entering his manner, and her heart had a faster beat. "But I thought you were going to 'bat around' all summer, as you put it, after all that schooling—"

"That," he said severely, "was before, but it isn't now!" He knelt beside her on the sand. . . . It seemed to Judith that all this had happened once before, in a land of sunrise when she first knew rapture. She thought she recognized the ardor in his glance; thought she had once before known such shy determination, reflecting in his glower and in the sudden darkening of his gray eyes. In a land where things began, and a young man and a young woman met, and all other countries of joy and endeavor were laid out before them under a bronze and promising sun. She thought she had experienced it, even though its familiarity was only of past dream and lonely speculation.

"On Monday," he said, "I'll be a newspaper reporter. Oh, of course, the dough isn't much to start with. . . . But, darling, if you could stand it, I—"

The beat of her heart was stifling, but dismay was mingled with its meaning. She laid a finger on his lips before he could say more.

"No, Tommy, don't say any more now—"

He shifted a little closer on the sand.

"We've got to talk!"

"Not now, my dear, please!"

She spoke quickly, to turn the tide of their reasoning and feeling, her tone the one they used when fanciful subjects were discussed.

"I don't know whether I could," she said. "You see, I'm going away. You see, I've decided. To the South Seas."

Tommy made a grimace of impatience, but grudgingly said, "How?"

(Please turn to page 76)

Elsa Lanchester's wit and comedy are show-stoppers at the Turnabout Theater.

"Turnabout" Is Full of Fun

For an evening full of fun, there's nothing like the little Turnabout Theater in Los Angeles; instead of numbered seats, the audience sits in old trolley benches with such names as "Spic 'n' Span," "Free 'n' Easy" or "Chase 'n' Sanborn," and watches a very clever puppet show. At intermission time, everyone files out to the patio for coffee and, when they return, turn over the benches and face the opposite direction for a gay, satirical revue by exceptionally talented actors.

Elsa Lanchester has been appearing at the Turnabout for seven years and she receives no pay for her sly, seductive ballad singing which brings down the house. Instead, the original humorous songs, such as "Never Go Walking Out Without Your Hatpin," are given to her. Equally amusing are the skits which burlesque all kinds of entertainment. The devoted audience returns often and those who attend ten times get an "Old Timer's" key.

Unique Los Angeles theater where patrons witness puppet show, then reverse old trolley seats to watch intimate revue staged at other end of the hall.

"Colin, I lack enough shame to admit that I'm a girl who's ready for marriage."

Heart Divided

Had it not been for the visit home, she might never have questioned her heart. But now, where there had been only one man in her life, she found there were two

They spread the folders out across the rug in front of the fireplace; then they gathered them up, and like great, gay playing-cards, reshuffled them. "But I've made my choice," Elspeth said. "It's the Caribbean."

Colin shrugged. "I want to go to Hawaii."

"And get married, too, and redecorate this place?" Elspeth slid her hand through his thick brown hair, pulled it down over his eyes. "Don't be greedy."

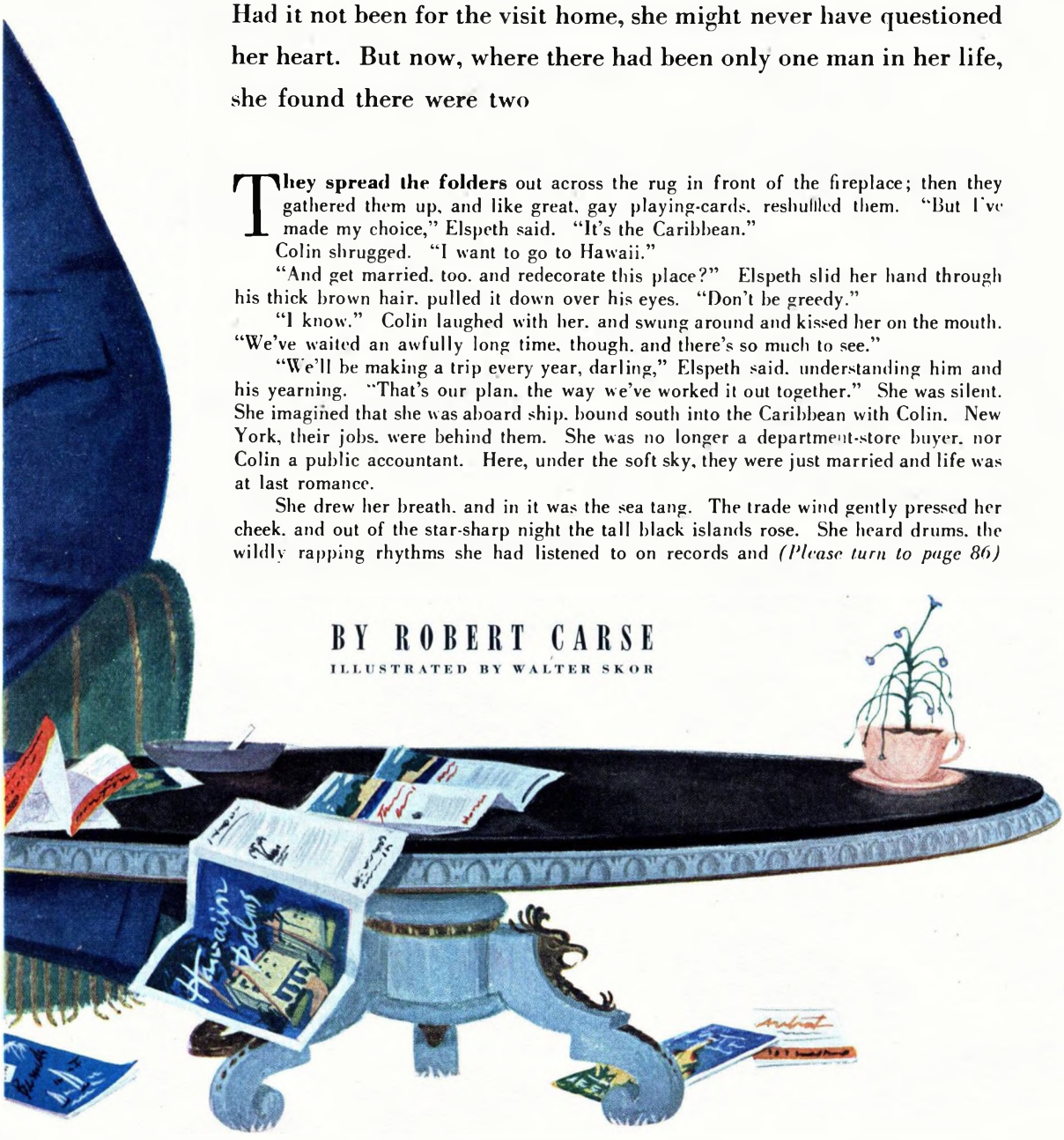
"I know." Colin laughed with her, and swung around and kissed her on the mouth. "We've waited an awfully long time, though, and there's so much to see."

"We'll be making a trip every year, darling," Elspeth said, understanding him and his yearning. "That's our plan, the way we've worked it out together." She was silent. She imagined that she was aboard ship, bound south into the Caribbean with Colin. New York, their jobs, were behind them. She was no longer a department-store buyer, nor Colin a public accountant. Here, under the soft sky, they were just married and life was at last romance.

She drew her breath, and in it was the sea tang. The trade wind gently pressed her cheek, and out of the star-sharp night the tall black islands rose. She heard drums, the wildly rapping rhythms she had listened to on records and *(Please turn to page 86)*

BY ROBERT CARSE

ILLUSTRATED BY WALTER SKOR



"I'm Molly Goldberg"

That's really Gertrude Berg speaking — she's a warm-hearted, neighborly, lovable mother; she's also the hard-headed, slightly stage-struck and talented creator of one of America's best-known families, the Goldbergs

BY JAMES POLING

Gertrude Berg has discovered, after seventeen years of being merely a voice, that having a face can be a disadvantage. As the creator and voice of *Molly Goldberg*, on one of radio's oldest and most successful family serial shows, she achieved fame without losing her status as a private citizen. But now that she has become one of television's outstanding stars, she has entered the public domain. And it isn't the increasingly frequent invasion of her cherished privacy that troubles her most. What worries her is the possibility that an innocent deception she has been practicing for many years may be uncovered.

Ever since the day she began writing the saga of the Goldberg family, in 1929, she has been visiting the Bronx and the pushcart markets of the lower East Side in search of dialect and color, in the guise of a neighborhood housewife on a shopping expedition. And over the years, while parting with the contents of her purse, she has built many acquaintanceships into treasured friendships.

Now that her face has become one of television's nicer ornaments, Gertrude is worried about the day of her unmasking. Will her old friends resent the innocent duplicity she has practiced? She worries particularly about a fiercely proud old lady who is the proprietor of a button-and-thread pushcart. Though her television success has made *Molly Goldberg*, in her own words, "happy beyond my vocabulary to have lived to enjoy such joy," she is not the woman to savor success at the expense of a friend's feelings.

Plump and friendly, with a shyness she can't quite overcome, Gertrude has flashing dark eyes, an

PHOTO BY LEO AARONS

The Goldbergs' rise in popularity increased Mrs. Berg's pay-check from $75 a week to $7,500; for a while her program was being broadcast over three networks at once

Gertrude Berg is not as slim as the mannikin used in one of her television programs but when a substitute once played the part of *Molly*, 11,000 listeners complained.

olive complexion, and an unruly bun of hair that shows no trace of gray after forty-plus years. She has become, in the words of the noted educator Helen Parkhurst, "An American institution, thank God. You get something when you invest your time in her. She has the honesty, directness and integrity of a child." This matronly institution has, for twenty years, written, in longhand, the story of the Goldbergs and enacted the rôle of *Molly*, for stage, television and radio. She has earned fame, fortune and the deep respect of her fellow man.

Her mail, heavy with letters from educators, doctors, ministers, psychiatrists, rabbis and priests, stresses the theme, "Your program is one of the most potent forces in the land for interracial understanding. It's also good fun." Honors of various sorts pour in, but the letters she takes pride in displaying are the ones that read. "My son is to be Bar Mitzvah in two weeks and would appreciate very much if you will send the speech Sammy delivered at his confirmation. Thanking you in advance."

Or the letter from the Mother Superior of a convent: "One of the pleasures that the sisters have given up for Lent is listening to the Goldbergs. We would all be very grateful, however, if you could send us the programs we missed—after Lent."

Or a refugee's haltingly written letter: "Coming from Germany, I could not believe to hear such a program, but today I know that this country really means freedom. . . ."

The Goldbergs, in the unfortunate event you are unacquainted with them, live in a state of perpetual frenzy, confusion or misunderstanding. Sentimental *Molly*, her irascible husband, *Jake*, the two contentious youngsters, *Sammy* and *Rosie*, and mild, bewildered *Uncle David* —the five of them have a genius for creating small family crises, which they then tackle with determined Jewish energy and humor. The family seeks a new apartment, or buys a television set, or tries to persuade *Jake* to take up a hobby. The plots are simple, credible and devoid of the sentimental drivel that oozes from so much domestic comedy.

The Goldbergs became hobby-happy but were cured when *Jake* (Philip Loeb), who took up art, insisted on dressing like an artist.

Mrs. Berg selects her own casts; Philip Loeb (center) is an outstanding character actor. John Garfield and Van Heflin formerly played various rôles on the program.

The Goldbergs' artistic mismanagement of English and the warm charm of their dialect defies reproduction, consisting as it does mainly of eloquent shrugs, a brief fluttering of the hands and skillful inflections. "So tell me what's revolving in the world." . . . "I'm slightly better, dear; extremely slightly." . . . "Out of the lips of babies comes pearls and jewelry." . . . "I'm putting on my bathrobe and condescending the stairs." The full, rich flavor of their language must be heard to be believed.

Gertrude is absorbed with the idea of presenting the Goldbergs with complete integrity. She has never caricatured a Jewish trait to get a laugh. Her only goal has been to present a faithful, honest picture of the minor triumphs, small tragedies and quiet crises that make up family life; the things that within the framework of the family are real and important. It has been said that she speaks a universal language with a Yiddish accent; that the Goldbergs are the prototypes of average people all over America. In any event, she knows that more people buy a piano by saving money in a fruit jar than by writing a check for the full amount.

Gertrude Berg's success is probably due to her rare knack for making two completely divergent aspects of her personality pull together in tandem. There are two distinct Gertrude Bergs, and it is hard to say that one takes precedence over the other.

She is a feminine, maternal, sentimental woman who dwells in a land composed of babies, household problems, love and her husband's sore throat. She is a woman who, according to her daughter, "has started a new diet every Monday for twenty-five years." She has a passion for gay hats—and they are never so gay as when they are on sale. To Gertrude Berg there is no inconsistency in shopping for bargain dresses at Klein's when she is earning $7,500 a week and in buying exclusively from Hattie Carnegie when she is not working. If her husband, son or daughter complains of being tired after a full day's work, they must surely be anemic; call a doctor, get a tonic, drink a quart of milk. Gertrude is a true daughter of Eve.

But . . . There is, also, the professional Gertrude Berg: a hardheaded, realistic woman of great talent, with restless energy and a driving ambition; a woman of apparent composure, with the nervous habit of biting her nails and chewing her underlip.

She is the woman who gets up daily at six-thirty so that she can discharge her household duties and take pencil in hand for her three-hour daily writing stint by nine; the woman who spends three to four hours an afternoon, six days a week, rehearsing. She is the woman her professional colleagues call "a demanding perfectionist," "a consummate actress," and "the best writer of realistic dialogue on the air."

She is the woman who is still so stagestruck that she considers it an awesome stroke of fortune to be accepted by the same hairdresser who, on occasion,

(Please turn to page 84)

The basic appeal of the *Goldbergs* is their naturalness; hilarious television skit depicted *Molly's* (in steam cabinet) experiences when she became a member of a reducing class.

Prelude

BY FRANK BENNETT

ILLUSTRATED BY DONALD TEAGUE

Ray Brunwell was in the garage, tinkering with his power lawn mower, when Judith called him.

"Ray," she called, "do you know what time it is?"

Reluctantly he put down the wrench and sat back on his heels. He was a large man, flat-waisted, a look of the outdoors about his gray eyes and clean, lean-jawed face. For a moment, he was suddenly conscious of the tinkling piano in the living-room, and he smiled a little, thinking how nicely the music sounded, considering the fact that Peggy was just a child.

Judith called again—"Ray!"—and now her voice had a tone of impatience.

He got to his feet and stepped to the door into the fading light of the summer day. Judith stood on the upper porch step, a tall, slender, fair-haired woman with a sweet oval face and very blue eyes. Seeing Ray, her lips came up in a quick smile.

"For a bank president," she said, "you're a sight."

He glanced down at his old clothes and the grease on his strong, brown hands, and grinned sheepishly.

"Well," he said, "I decided to oil the mower, and one wheel led to another. You know how it is."

Of course, Judith knew. A woman soon learns all those little secret things about her man. How he sometimes hates the work he does for a living. How he likes to spend his spare time, fooling with machinery. Or along the river, fishing. Or watching schoolboys scramble over an old football.

"It's almost seven," Judith said, "and the recital begins at eight-fifteen. You'd better get cleaned up and dressed."

A girl-child instead of a boy! Ray felt a little cheated—until in a moment of surging pride he marveled at the wonder of *his* daughter

"Right away," he promised.

She hurried back into the house, but he stood there in the garage doorway, feeling the sharp edge of the frame against his shoulder, listening to the nice exactness of his child's playing, thinking restlessly—

Sometimes when you look back, you wonder at the strange tricks life has played on you. Like making you president of a bank at forty. Like giving you a girl child instead of a boy.

You weren't cut out to be a banker. There's too much of the outdoors in you for that. Too much restlessness. Too much of wanting to take things apart to see what makes them run.

Neither were you patterned to be the parent of a girl child. From the first moment you knew that you were to become a father, you were sure that the child would be a boy. Proudly you went about among your friends, telling them about this wonderful boy who was soon to be yours.

"Look, old boy," they said, grinning at you, "it's a fifty-fifty chance that the baby will be a girl."

You laughed at them, said, "This one's going to be a boy."

"Want to bet on that?" they asked good-naturedly. "A box of cigars? A new hat?"

"Sure," you said. "Save me buying cigars to hand out after the event occurs. Save me from buying a new hat this spring."

"Ray," Judith had said once, looking up worriedly at you, "but suppose it is a girl? It could be, you know."

"Darling," you said, taking her in your arms, "sure, I know it could be a girl. And if it is, okay. But can't a man dream? We'll name him Jim, or Tom, or Bill. Those are all good boy names. We'll let him grow up outdoors. We'll give him a football, and—"

"Perhaps," she interrupted, her blue eyes shining softly, "we'll name her May, or Peggy. I think Peggy will suit her better. And we'll give her dolls and teach her to play the piano."

Peggy had stopped playing the piano, he noticed, and the gathering darkness told him he'd better get around, scrub off the grease, and get into some decent clothes. Judith would want to go early to the recital.

Whistling tunelessly, Ray crossed the strip of lawn, climbed the steps, and went into the kitchen. It was a nice kitchen, done in white, with yellow-flowered curtains at the wide windows. What he saw stopped him in the doorway.

"Hey," he asked, "no dinner?"

"There are some sandwiches in the icebox," Judith told him. "We'll eat dinner after the recital. Peggy loves to go to Grayson's, and I've arranged for a table there for us."

"That fool recital won't be over before nine," he growled. "That's no time for a kid to eat. Or for me."

"It won't hurt you and Peggy this once," Judith smiled. "Go wash your hands."

Frowning, thinking how this recital business was upsetting the routine of their lives, he started toward the bathroom when Peggy came flying toward him.

She was twelve. She was all legs and arms and awkwardness. Her dark hair lay pinned up in tight little rings against her small head. Her blue eyes danced with the excitement she felt, and the band of freckles across her small, straight nose gave her a look of impudence.

"Daddy," she cried, "for goodness' sake, hurry! You know we can't be late tonight."

He smiled down at her, thinking vaguely that when she grew up, she was going to be pretty like her mother.

"Here," he said teasingly, holding a greasy hand toward her, "let me add some color to your cheeks."

She drew back in horror. "Don't you dare!"

Chuckling, he went on to the bathroom, ran water into the lavatory and began to wash.

Sometimes you have days like this when you feel cheated. When you wish you could live your life over again.

So few things have worked out the way you had planned. There was a time when your ideal was Babe Ruth, and because you were big and husky, you were going to be a slugger like the great man. But, although you were the best player on the hometown team, your best wasn't quite good enough. So that dream died.

However, it didn't really matter a lot, for you were young and already you had discovered the wonder of tools and machines. You were always tearing up and rebuilding old automobiles, dreaming as you worked of the time when you would make racing cars that would break the world's speed record. But time for going to college came rushing upon you.

You were going to take engineering, but your uncle, who ran the bank and paid your tuition, advised a business course. You admired and respected your uncle, so you followed his suggestion. Not altogether happily, but there was football.

You made the team. You sparked it through one undefeated season. You had visions of becoming a great coach. But in your senior year, you broke your right ankle and didn't make the All-American. Maybe you wouldn't have made it, anyway. Maybe you weren't as good as you thought. But a great sadness filled you as you limped forward to receive your business diploma, for you knew this day marked the end of another dream.

Your uncle had a place for you in the bank. You accepted the position willingly enough, for there was a girl with whom you had fallen in love. Her name was Judith, and she sang and played the piano beautifully. You worked hard. You let go of old dreams and settled into the binding routine of making money to buy the things you wanted this girl to have. And it was right to do this, for had she not surrendered her own dreams of a musical career?

Life moves along nicely for the two of you. You are happy. People call you successful. They invite you to join the best clubs. They take your advice on business matters. They envy your golf game. But there are days like today, when you must put on old clothes and tear up the lawn mower—

"**Ray,**" Judith said, coming to the door. "I set a lunch out on the table for you."

Looking at her, he felt a warmness steal through him. Judith's loveliness and vitality always amazed him, sent the blood pounding fiercely through his body. She was the one thing in his life that made up for his many disappointments.

"Thanks, honey," he said. "Peggy isn't worried, is she?"

"Excited, but not worried." Judith chuckled. "She can hardly wait until eight-fifteen."

Judith hurried on through the hall, and Ray finished shaving and then went into the kitchen. He ate standing up, staring through the window into the darkness, thinking how glad he'd be when this recital was over. He supposed there would be a few people at the church to hear Peggy play, for he and Judith had many friends, and some of them would feel obligated to come. He hoped they wouldn't be too bored with it. After all, even if Peggy had talent, she was only twelve, and you couldn't expect much from a kid.

Of course, she had been fooling around on the piano ever since she was big enough to walk and had taken countless lessons, but still— He sighed, thinking how he'd had to give up going to the ball game tonight. Thinking—

The doctor was a chubby little man with a fringe of graying hair around a pink bald spot. He had come into the hallway of the maternity hospital, smiling broadly at you as he fumbled for a cigarette.

"Congratulations!" he said. "You're the father of a fine baby girl."

"A girl!" you said, feeling stunned. "But, Doc—"

The doctor read disappointment in your face and chuckled. "A girl, as you'll eventually discover, is a pretty wonderful addition to any family. I ought to know. I have three of my own."

"But," you say, sitting down on the nearest chair. "a girl—who ever heard of a girl making the All-American—"

"Come to think of it, I guess I never did," the doctor grinned. "But there was a time when I thought my second girl might turn out to be the world's champion lightweight. At nine, she had all the boys in our neighborhood scared to death of her. Of course, she outgrew that at ten when she fell violently in love with the boy who drove the grocery wagon."

"But a girl," you said again. "Looks like I've had one slipped over on me, Doc. But next time—"

"That's something I wanted to speak to you about," the doctor said, sobering suddenly. "There isn't going to be a next time."

Later, when you stood looking

through a glass partition at the tiny baby who, so the nurses said, was yours, your disappointment lessened, and you began to feel a certain pride. There was no doubt about it, you felt—this particular baby was superior to all the others, even if she was a girl. Of course, you were going to have to take a lot of ribbing from the boys around town, buy nine boxes of cigars and four new hats; but if the doctor's daughter could lick all the boys in her block, so could your daughter. Maybe she wouldn't make much of a football player, but she could play tennis and basketball. She could fish and hunt and play golf. She could—

The doorbell rang shrilly, and Judith called, "See who that is, Ray. I'm dressing."

He hurried to the door and opened it.

"For Miss Peggy Brunwell," a messenger boy said, holding out a large basket of red roses.

"You sure?" Ray asked in surprise.

"Positive," the boy grinned.

Ray carried the roses into the front room, and shouted, "Come see what's here."

Eyes wide, Judith and Peggy ran into the room.

"Are they really for me?" Peggy asked; and Judith found the card and read it.

"How nice!" she said. "They're from the bank employees."

"There wasn't any sense of them doing this," Ray growled, although he was highly pleased. "Just because they work for me, they didn't need to—"

Judith stopped him with a little lift of her head. "These are for Peggy," she said, "not for you."

"But you can have one to wear in your buttonhole," Peggy offered.

"Thank you, my darling daughter," he said, laughing down at her, wanting to run his fingers through her tight brown curls. But he knew better than to do that, for Judith had evidently spent hours working with Peggy's straight hair.

He went into the bedroom and changed into his new blue suit. He put on the necktie which Peggy had given him for his birthday, knowing she would be pleased.

"Pretty gay for a man whose hair's thinning out on top," he thought, smiling faintly at his reflection, remembering—

The thing about this necktie that had fascinated your daughter were the five red stripes across it.

"They're just like a music staff," she'd explained. "Maybe we can get Mother to sew some red notes on it. Wouldn't that be pretty?"

You had had quite a time, talking her out of putting notes on the tie.

Musical notation always had held a fascination for your child. Even before she had learned to play and had merely pounded the piano with her baby fists, she had insisted on having a sheet of music on the rack. Of course, half the time the music was upside-down—

(Please turn to page 65)

Experts in their field are Anna (left) and Louisa Wilke whose New York pipe and tobacco shop is known to smokers all over the world.

Pipe Dreams Come True

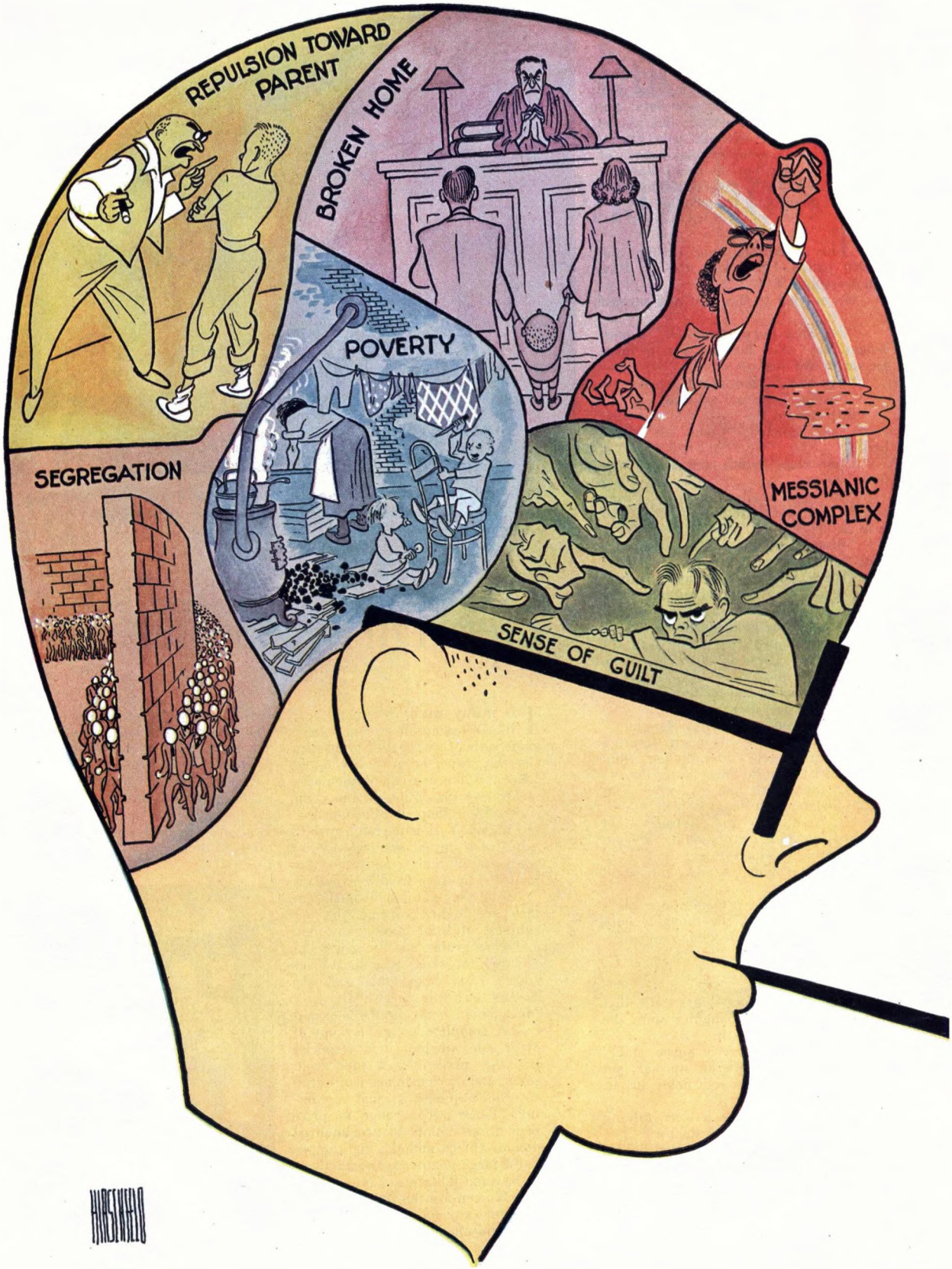
To many men there's nothing like relaxing in a comfortable chair with a favorite pipe filled with just the proper mixture; Anna and Louisa Wilke are two women who make these masculine dreams come true. Their shop on Madison Avenue in New York is the outgrowth of a business started over seventy-five years ago by their grandfather and inherited by them from their father.

And they know their business; they are highly informed on the subjects of briar roots, seasoning and wood grains, and are experts at blending tobaccos. The finest briar comes from Macedonia and the Wilkes own the largest stock of Macedonian briar in the country.

A complete record is kept of every sale, whether it is a special smoking mixture or a pipe from stock, and any customer can duplicate his purchase by just reordering. Their pipes range in price from three dollars to two hundred dollars apiece and the eight pipes in the large picture are worth about a thousand dollars.

Women are the fussiest buyers but they buy mostly for men, seldom for themselves; the Wilkes carry small pipes for ladies but feel that pipe-smoking should be left to the men. Names such as Herbert Hoover, James Forrestal and John Charles Thomas appear in their customers' file and autographed photographs of many celebrities who are satisfied clients line the walls of their shop.

The sisters are experts at blending tobaccos and keep a cross-index of their sales so customers may easily reorder their brands.


REPULSION TOWARD PARENT
BROKEN HOME
POVERTY
SEGREGATION
MESSIANIC COMPLEX
SENSE OF GUILT

Your child is the object of Communist designs! Communism plots to kidnap the minds of American youth. By understanding the home influences that have caused others to fall for Communism, you may save your child from becoming a victim

BY BRUCE BLIVEN

Why They Fall for Communism

The average American probably thinks of the average American Communist as someone brought up in deep poverty in the slums of a great city—someone probably of recent European origin, who revolts against the American system because of the conditions of his own life.

This notion is completely wrong.

Thousands of American Communists, who once were openly and admittedly pledged to fight on the side of the enemy in the case of a war between the United States and Russia, come from old American stock, have well-to-do parents, and have enjoyed the best educational facilities that this country has to offer.

Elizabeth Bentley, for example, who openly confessed having acted as a spy for Russia, not for money but for ideological reasons, came of fairly prosperous parents, attended good schools, and is a graduate of Vassar. Whittaker Chambers has a parallel history.

Earl Browder, who was long the leader of the American Communist Party and, while temporarily in eclipse, still adheres to that philosophy, was born and brought up in the heart of the American midland, in Kansas, and educated in the public schools of that State.

Benjamin J. Davis, Jr., Negro member of the National Board of the Communist Party, is a graduate of Amherst and Harvard Law School. Eugene Dennis (real name Frank Waldron), a general secretary of the Party, is a graduate of Franklin *(Please turn to page 80)*

She asked, "Aren't you going to introduce me to the young lady, Mel?" Mel colored and said, "This is Constance Redbey. My wife—Allison."

Roses Speak Louder

BY JERROLD BEIM

ILLUSTRATED BY DOROTHY MONET

The choice was hers. She could wait for messages or roses; she could be his wife—or the other woman

The wire came, just as Allison knew it would come: CANNOT MAKE DINNER DON'T WAIT UP FOR ME LOVE MEL. She wondered, smiling wanly, if the telegraph company had form wires for husbands sending excuses just as they did for birthdays, Christmas and Mother's Day. And if so, why didn't Mel choose another form to send for a change? Something like BUSINESS DETAINS ME WONT BE HOME TONIGHT DEVOTEDLY MEL or UP TO MY NECK IN WORK SORRY CANNOT COME HOME YOURS MEL. Or, she thought, crushing the paper with a savage gesture, why for once didn't he say the truth: AM WITH CONSTANCE REDBEY LOVE MEL.

She threw the hard ball of paper into the fireplace. She could not bear staying alone in this isolated house another evening; she decided to go to Frances'. Perhaps Frances, who looked at the world with such wise, objective eyes, could help her.

She packed a bag, got the car out of the garage, and was soon skimming over the highway. The light was fading, but glancing at herself in the car mirror, she was just able to discern her features. The sight did nothing to cheer her.

A few years ago, looking in this same mirror, she had been radiant, actually stunning. Her hair was still good, soft and brown, her mouth rich and full, her eyes dark and deeply set. "But neat is the best one could call you now, Allison m'lass," she thought. Neat like a tidy housewife. No threads on her shoulders, no buttons loose. Five years of marriage to Mel had done this to her. But no—she turned from the mirror, narrowly escaping a ditch—in all fairness, Mel had cut her allowance only during the past year. "Business bad," he had mumbled, evading

again the real issue: Constance Redbey.

That gnawing ache suddenly tightened at her heart; her bravery crumpled, and she bit her lips to fight back her tears. "I mustn't cry, I mustn't cry," she told herself; "I won't be able to see the road; I'll have an accident," and then wondered if that wouldn't be a way out, an easy way out. But she drove on, her hands gripping the wheel as she thought of Mel, of the past five years, of Constance Redbey.

Of Mel, she thought of the beginning, of when they had met. Before her marriage Frances and she ran a decorating shop, living in a little apartment upstairs. The morning she met Mel she had been trimming the window, practically wrestling with a chest to set it straight, when she was conscious of being stared at. She turned around, and there stood a young man grinning widely. She did look funny, her hair disarrayed, her face as pink as the smock she wore, but she did not see the humor of it then. Without forethought she screwed up her face and stuck her tongue out at him. And was aghast the very moment she did it.

But it was done; the young man's grin vanished, as did he—into the shop! She left the window to see the fireworks, and sure enough, there he was reporting her to Frances.

Frances, with her "the customer is always right" philosophy, was properly shocked.

"Allison," she called to her, "this gentleman has a complaint to make."

He wasn't as young as she had supposed—a good-looking thirty with light hair and what seemed suspiciously like an amused twinkle in his eyes.

"I stuck my tongue out at him," Allison confessed. "And I'm not sorry. He deserved it—"

His eyes met Allison's, full of warm apology. "I'm sorry if I offended you, but you did look funny—"

His smile was infectious, she had to return it. Frances, always the mercenary wench, sold him a cigarette box. While waiting for her to wrap it, he turned to Allison. "Can't I make up for my bad behavior? Won't you have dinner with me tomorrow night?"

His eyes met hers now, and a warm, disturbing glow surged through her being. She managed to answer lightly, flippantly, "All right. Though I promise to order a very expensive dinner!"

That was how it began, and it ended in marriage. Looking back on the years of that marriage, she thought that, until recently, they were as happy as two people could be. They lived out in the country, and since Mel did not want her to work, she found herself rather bored by day. But the hours spent with Mel more than compensated.

They had such fun together, those first years. To be sure, they had occasional, only human, spats, but none great enough to cause even a slight rift. Why then did a man after almost five years of marriage seek another woman? She was sure she could find the answer in books on the psychology of men, something about age and the urge for adventure, but, reduced to the simplest terms, another woman had come along and taken Mel from her.

"She and Mel are seen everywhere," Frances told her.

"Is—is this Constance very good-looking?" Allison asked.

"If you like the type. Flaming red hair, and she knows how to wear clothes. Mel must be buying them for her, too, because she never flashed such outfits before. What do you intend to do about it, Allison?"

"I—I don't know," Allison said. She only knew that she was dazed, stunned; that everything had suddenly gone dead within her, her whole world had collapsed.

"Better have it out with him and find out where you stand," Frances suggested.

Of course. That was the thing to do. Raise the roof! That was what most wives would have done a long time ago. Demand an end to Constance Redbey or demand a divorce. But she was afraid even to mention Constance. Because a showdown might end in divorce, and no matter what Mel did to her, she could not help loving him; she did not want to give him up.

She was at Frances' now; she parked the car and stopped to look at the window of the shop before going upstairs. The display was simple, effective—a brocaded fabric draped across a chair, an interesting ceramic, a silver bowl with calla lilies. Yet she had an irresistible desire to adjust the folds of the brocade so its design would show to better advantage, to spread the calla lilies just a bit, to set the whole display into better focus.

She climbed the steps to the apartment, and a cheery "Come in!" answered her knock.

"Allison, darling!" Frances greeted her. "I'm so glad it's you. I was just saying to Russ—"

Allison saw Russ Wilcott, an old beau of Frances', standing in the center of the room. They were both in evening clothes, apparently ready to go out.

"We were thinking of driving out to see you," Frances went on. "History is being made, darling: Russ and I are going to be married. And we were just going out to celebrate, so you can come and help us—"

Allison looked from Frances to Russ; their faces were beaming. "I'm so happy, for you both," she said. "But run along without me, please. I—I'll just make myself comfortable here and—"

"Nothing of the sort!" Frances flashed Russ a plea for aid. "We're going to a new place, very noisy and exciting and just what you need. Say 'yes,' Allison!"

She suddenly realized that she did want to go, that she wanted to be with people.

"But I haven't an evening dress—"

"You'll wear my blue. The one with all the glitter." Frances was leading her into the bedroom. She looked at Allison, her eyes filled with understanding: "The same old thing?"

"The same old thing," Allison nodded with a queer smile, and that was all they said about it.

The blue dress was a wonderful froth of absurdity. Shoulderless, with a wide swirling skirt and all splashed with sequins. It did something to her. It made her feel lightheaded and giddy, and that gnawing at her heart seemed to ease.

"Behold the siren!" Frances laughed, bringing her into the living-room, and they started on their way. They taxied, and Allison found herself laughing at all of Russ' jokes, though she knew they weren't particularly funny.

The place was just as Frances said—noisy and exciting. They had a table close to the floor, and Allison sat watching the gaudy show, the tableaux and revolving stage effects, with proper enthusiasm. It seemed to her that she was walking through a wild, fantastic dream, and the blaring music and champagne cocktails heightened the illusion. When the floor cleared for dancing, she said, "You take care of Frances, Russ; don't mind me," and she sat watching the procession of people, not quite part of it all, yet strangely happy in this escape from reality.

Someone asked her to dance, and who he was or what he looked like she did not know. Nor care. He told her she was very beautiful, and then she was back at her table alone again. She suddenly arose and went to the ladies' room. Such a silly ladies' room, she giggled, all done up in red and white with a mirrored ceiling. Funny that she had never been asked to decorate a ladies' room. Her life was so incomplete!

She laughed at her reflection and did a pirouette to see the sequins on her dress glitter, and then started back to her table. She had to pass a bar, also done in red and white with gleaming mirrors. She saw the row of people perched on high stools, and then her eyes became fixed on one particular back. She thought, "Funny, how out of all those backs I can find Mel," and then came the sudden realization that she wasn't here with Mel at all! But that was he, and of course!—that flash of red hair beside him was the Miss Constance Redbey.

In the next moment she was sliding on the stool beside Mel. A white-coated bartender asked, "What will it be?" and she said, "A champagne cocktail, please."

Mel turned around at the sound of her voice, his dark eyes widening. "Allison!" he exclaimed. "What are you doing here?"

Her heart began to pound furiously and she was angry at herself, for she actually felt calm and poised. Her eyes met his, and she laughed and said, "Having fun. How are you, Mel?" and then the bartender set the drink before her.

She was aware, as she held the glass to her lips, of a pair of eyes beyond Mel staring at her—bluish-green eyes below a fluff of red hair. She said then, setting her glass down carefully, "Aren't you going to introduce me to the young lady, Mel?"

Mel colored; he cleared his throat and said, "This—this is Constance Redbey. My wife—Allison—"

Allison leaned over. She smiled—

such a very cordial smile. "How do you do," she said, and said it well. "I've been wanting to meet you for a long time."

And Constance, her eyes glittering, determined not to be outdone, said, "Yes, I've been wanting to meet you, too, Mrs. Stevert."

Mel looked from one to the other, his eyes flaring with indignation. "I don't think this is the least bit funny," he said.

"Oh, but it is!" Allison looked up at him. "Very funny. Don't you think it's funny, Constance?"

Constance said, "Of course I think it's funny. Though Mel is in a spot, I should say."

"Are you in a spot, Mel?" Allison looked up at him again. Why am I doing this? she wondered—hurting him, making a fool of him. I don't want to hurt him; I love him. But I don't want to be hurt, either; I don't want to be made a fool of, either. And so she went on, "But it couldn't have been better if we had made this an appointment to meet. And we had to meet, the three of us, sometime, didn't we?"

"Did we?" Mel asked.

"Yes, we did," Allison went on. "And I'm sure Constance will agree. I mean, Mel, something had to be decided. Now—now what is it that must be decided?"

She knew, even as she spoke, that this was the end. She could do it this way, in this gay, mirrored place, with hundreds of people about them and a loud orchestra furnishing musical accompaniment to their little drama, with the three of them perched on stools, sipping drinks; she could do it better this way than to face Mel alone and show him how much she loved him and let him see how he was hurting her and making her suffer. This way he thought she was being hard and callous, and thought she was a little drunk. But she wasn't drunk at all—drunk perhaps from lights and sounds, the confusion and faces, but not from liquor. And if he but softened his expression the least little bit, if he put his hand on hers and said, "Please, Allison, don't, not here," she would stop and she would burst into tears and cry on his shoulder.

But she went on, "Now where were we? We were talking about a divorce. Or hadn't we gotten to that point? A divorce. I divorce Mel and Mel marries Constance and that's all there is to it. Isn't that right?"

Mel was looking at her, his eyes cold with shock, but Constance, the opportunist, said, "That's all there is to it. And you'll divorce Mel?"

"Of course I will. So that's that. A day's work done, as my mother used to say. Mel, you don't mind paying for my drink, do you? I haven't a cent with me. Good-by, Constance. I'm so glad to have met you. Silly place, this, isn't it?" and she slipped off the stool and left them.

It took her an awfully long time to get back to the table. But she didn't mind; she wasn't in any hurry. And she liked being lost in the throng of people. "Happy New Year!" someone shouted, and that was very silly because it wasn't New Year's at all. But something was new. What was new? She was new! Of course. She wasn't Mel's wife any more. There was the divorce still to get, but actually, back at the bar, she had ceased being Mel's wife. She was a new woman, walking alone in a crowd.

And here, finally, was the table, Frances and Russ waiting for her. "Happy New Year!" she greeted them, waving a hand, grinning broadly.

"I guess we'd better take her home," Frances said.

She cried in the taxi, cried all the way home. They thought it was too many champagne cocktails, and she let them think so.

She stayed with Frances that night and went into the shop the very next morning. Adjusting that brocade, rearranging those calla lilies, getting into harness again so that there was neither time nor energy for tears.

Mel tried to see her. He phoned, he came to the shop, but Frances handled him, conveying Allison's sentiments: "Yes, she meant what she said. She insists on the divorce. You'll hear from her lawyer." Allison was in the back room then. The sound of his low, husky voice as he talked to Frances upset her for hours afterward.

They met again in the lawyer's office, where in quiet, modulated tones they discussed the divorce. She refused alimony; she could support herself. She hardly allowed more than a glance at Mel. But all through the interview she was aware of his eyes on hers. She did not meet them because she was afraid to.

When Frances married, Allison took over the shop. And she was wrapping a piece of crockery with the morning paper when she caught the words "Mrs. Janice Redbey announces the marriage of her daughter Constance to Mr. Melvin Stevert." She went right on wrapping that piece of crockery.

The shop became her life again; she had not realized how much it meant to her. She worked hard and thrived, taking time off only to indulge in a shopping spree. For a while she was too exhausted to do anything evenings, but as the months passed things ran so smoothly that she felt fresh and eager and ready to go. And discovered that she was alone.

She tried to find peace and happiness in her work, but could not deny the truth. The shop alone was not enough to fill her life. She missed Mel's companionship. She was not fool enough to forget the neglect she endured the last months of her marriage, but neither could she forget the wonderful times they had together the years before.

It was almost a year after her divorce that she was in the shop window, trimming it and quite enraptured with its progress. White and gold it was to be, with a touch of pale green. She was on her knees spreading a soft rug when she suddenly became conscious of eyes staring at her. She turned—and there was Mel.

Her cheeks flamed with color, her heart beat loudly, madly, and there flashed back to her that first time she had seen him through this very window. And of how she had thrust her tongue out at him. She had the impulse to do that now, and he would laugh and she would laugh—

He was standing there, staring at her, smiling. His eyes, still so dark, seemed to ask, "May I come in and talk to you, Allison?" And as if the question had really been asked, she nodded her head. He was already turning, to enter the shop.

She was trembling all over as he stood before her now in the aisle of furniture. She thought, "How gray his hair has turned. Yet it is becoming—" She held her hand out and said, "Mel, I'm so glad to see you—"

"I was passing by, and I couldn't help looking into the window—and there you were."

Allison said, "Sit down, Mel, if you're not in a hurry."

He sank into a chair. Mel was here; Mel was before her, talking to her again. And she knew she should not have let him come. She said then, as if a reminder to them both, "And how is Constance?"

"Connie? Oh, she's fine, busy these days with some charity work."

"How nice."

"You've done things to the shop, haven't you?" he said, desperately trying to make conversation.

"Yes, a few things. These model rooms are new—"

"You're happy in your work, aren't you, Allison?"

"Yes, Mel, very happy."

He arose now. They could not sit on like this, afraid of each other, not able to talk to each other. She walked with him to the door. He said, "That's a good-looking table," and she said, "Isn't it though? Duncan Phyfe. They're so adaptable—" and then he blurted suddenly, "Will you have lunch with me some day, Allison?"

"Why, I'd love to—" The words came spontaneously. But she did not want to lunch with him; she would not—

"I'll ring you up sometime."

"Yes. Good-by, Mel. So nice of you to drop in."

When he left, she went back to the window. White and gold with a touch of green—but she had lost all interest in it.

She did not mean to dine with him one night, a week later. But she was being led to a table in a restaurant when there he was, standing before her. "Allison! Are you alone? I am, too. Won't you join me?" And she could not bring herself to refuse.

She sat opposite him at a little table. She wore a new hat, topped by a coq of gay feathers, and it gave her a feeling of assurance. They talked lightly, blithely of many things and of nothing important. Dinner was delicious—red snapper and white wine. They were both more at ease—and why not? Allison thought. They could still be friends.

"And why not?" she answered when he suggested going to the theater. He seemed like a stranger to her, a charming new acquaintance rather than anyone she

(Please turn to page 70)

It may be the age of jet planes but Marilyn and Jack still feel it's fun to ride in a Ferris wheel at the Iowa State Fair.

STATE FAIR

Marilyn Hutchcroft of Mediapolis, and Jack Lang of Brooklyn, Iowa, met at the fair where their families were exhibitors. Jack grooms Pine Crest Nan, whose milk production record attracted attention.

Marilyn spruces up while she visits Betty Stephenson in the tent city; Betty's family took turns attending the fair and running their farm.

No fair is complete without the noise and excitement of a midway; the one at Des Moines covers ten acres and offers sideshows, death-defying acts and thrilling rides. There's also a horse show and dancing at night with big-name bands.

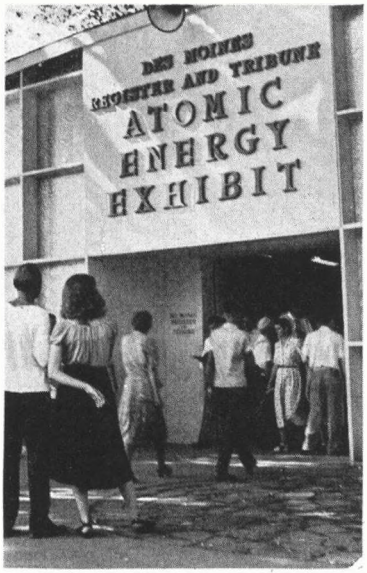
Gay flags fly, bands play and everyone is in a gay mood, heading for the fair-grounds. As typically American as apple pie is a State Fair, and one of the best in the country is the Iowa State Fair at Des Moines, scheduled for August 25th to September 3rd this year. Attendance runs as high as 80,000 people a day, and families come back year after year and consider a trip to the fair the finest kind of vacation.

For those who want to camp out, there's a tent city, in a wooded grove, equipped with water, electricity and a day nursery. Over three thousand young people will compete in contests ranging from cattle raising to calf scrambling. For the older folks, besides the usual culinary and agricultural competitions, there are horseshoe pitching and old fiddlers' contests.

Well-known radio programs broadcast from the fair; bands, choirs and choral groups give concerts. At night the midway sparkles with fun and gayety but some prefer visiting the stalls where exhibitors like to sit and chat.

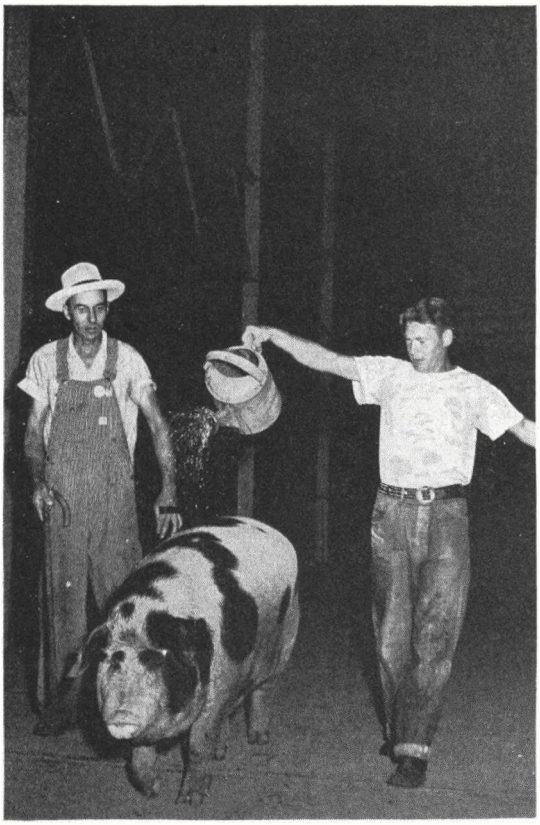
CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Wayne Davis has been an exhibitor at the Iowa Fair for twenty-one years and to make sure nothing happens to Sparkler, his prize Poland-China hog, Wayne sleeps in the stall next to hers during the fair.

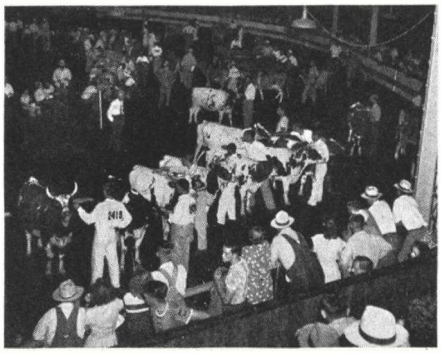


Scientific Exhibit shows farm uses and future possibilities of atomic energy, such as corn growing in radioactive soil.

Iowa is hot in August and the most popular places on the fair-grounds are the drinking-fountains; eating is no problem for excellent meals are served by charity organizations who benefit by the proceeds, or families may bring their own food.



How can you keep hogs happy in the heat? They can't perspire so James Foster sprinkles Sparkler while Wayne Davis leads his carefully tended prize to the show ring.



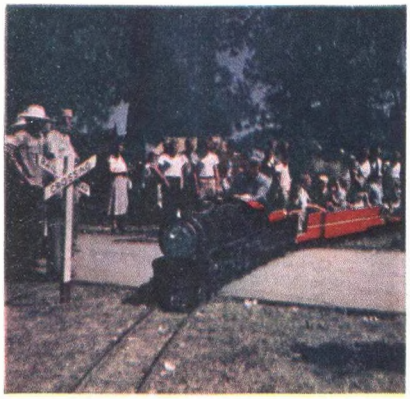
Intense interest centers around the show ring where cattle are judged; it's confusing to non-farmers but exciting for rival exhibitors.

Marilyn Hutchcroft and Jack Lang are fine examples of young Americans. They were born and brought up in Iowa, both on farms specializing in cattle. Marilyn has been coming to the fair since her family first carried her there; she has her own cattle and show horses but she came to the fair to help her brother show his heifers. She plays in the school band, sings in the chorus and hasn't missed Sunday school for over six years.

Jack, whose family are prominent in the State, exhibited Ayrshire cattle and helped his father show his hogs. Jack is one of five children; he has been State Historian of the 4H clubs and was one of four members chosen from Iowa to go to the national camp. He and Marilyn had the time of their lives at the fair, whether they were showing their stock or riding the Ferris wheel.

Marilyn and Jack *(right)*, both outstanding 4H club members, get just as excited about the farm machinery exhibit as most teen-agers would about buying an old jalopy.

There's always a line of grownups and children waiting to ride on this miniature train *(below)*. It is owned and run by a retired railroad man who operates trains at other fairs throughout the country.



Quietest place on the fair-grounds is the State checker tournament, where anxious contestants concentrate while competing.

Marilyn, who organized her own 4H group and who has been a prizewinner every year, visits the 4H food exhibit which stresses "Better balanced meals through home-canned foods." Jane Sears, in uniform, talks with her about various projects of the group; 4H club members take turns giving demonstrations in the exhibit.

PHOTOS BY SAM VANDIVERT

How To Take Better Snapshots

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY ROY PINNEY

Happy memories of a vacation or a family picnic or a weekend in the country are worth keeping. And there is no better way to keep them than in snapshots.

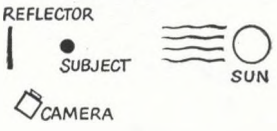
Good outdoor snapshots can be taken with an inexpensive box camera — if you remember the 7 Basic Rules illustrated here, in Do and Don't pictures. With a box camera, using ordinary film in average sunlight, the best speed is 1/50th of a second.

With a more expensive camera, you can shoot at 1/100th of a second, and thus get fast-action pictures. You can get also sharper pictures, and this permits making enlargements. If you use a very light yellow filter over your lens, you will get strikingly richer pictures. But remember to adjust for distance by focusing.

And remember, too, that an expensive camera will not make good pictures unless you remember these 7 Basic Rules for better snapshots.

1. Keep pictures simple. A solid-color dress *(above)* is preferable to one with figures or stripes *(left)* when the subject is posed against a colorful background. Otherwise, there will be no contrast between subject and background *(left)*.

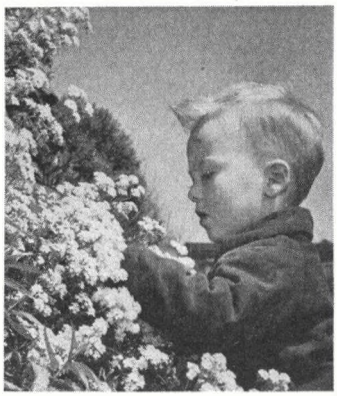
2. Avoid "foreshortening." This happens in close-ups when hands or feet extend toward camera *(right)*. Note also in the beach picture above how the horizon's sharp line provides an eye-catching background to add interest.



3. Keep the subject's eyes open. If direct sunlight makes your subject squint *(above)*, place her back to the sun. Then put indirect sunlight onto her face with a white cloth used as a reflector. *(See diagram.)* But don't let sun shine into your lens. Shade it with your hand. This reflector method produces excellent portraits.

4. Show your subjects in action. The usual group photograph *(above)* lacks dramatic movement which tells something about event.

6. Try for closeups. This makes possible catching facial expression *(right)*, most interesting feature of children's pictures.



5. Avoid unflattering poses. Make subject graceful. Hips always seem slimmer when they are photographed from a good angle *(right)*.

7. In closeups, don't let background become "busy." Then it distracts from subject *(above)*. Safest background is sky *(right)*.

"Let's talk about you—" He hitched Mr. Farwith's massive desk chair close to hers. "If only you weren't so everlastingly tied up with the Old Man!"

His Father's Secretary

BY KATHERINE GREER

ILLUSTRATED BY MILTON WOLSKY

"Yes, Mr. Farwith—"

"And if the little hussy has the nerve to call again—"

"I understand, Mr. Farwith—you'll talk to her yourself."

"You bet I will! I'll tell her a few things! I'll tell her if she knows what's good for her, she'll leave my son alone! That if it's money she's after, he doesn't have a cent! I'll tell her—oh, hell—you'd better talk to her, after all, Julie—you know what to say—without bursting a blood vessel—"

"Very well, Mr. Farwith," Julie Adams said sweetly. "And now about that wire you were going to dictate to Ken—" She held her pencil above her pad.

"No use calling his fraternity house on the phone," Cyrus Farwith grumbled. "What the devil he does with his time—we knew as much about his schedule when the war was on!"

"I should think he'd spend a lot of time in the library." Julie put in cautiously, "with all the hard subjects he's taking—"

"Bah!" His thick gray eyebrows met in a single line. "Engineering is twice as hard as business administration, and *I* didn't stay out until two A.M. *studying!* It's that fool college newspaper he and that Tink Something-or-other edit; it's more of these predatory hussies!"

"I—I suppose so," she agreed, reluctantly. "And now about the wire—"

"Oh, make it a letter—air mail; he'll get it soon enough. A week before he's getting his sheepskin—whatever synthetic stuff they're made of nowadays—tell him I'll fly down for the ceremonies, if he insists. Seems a waste of two good business days—when he's twenty-five years old and stood up alone to have medals pinned on him in Germany. Still—"

"I think you should," Julie said. "Twenty-five isn't so old, and, after all, you're all the family he has."

"Okay—tell him I'll be there. Tell him to be ready to fly back with me, that Brownlee is waiting for him in the Public Relations Department—he should be pleased with that, because

She was the girl around the office who knew all the answers. But when the boss' son put the question to her, it left her speechless—almost

it's the closest thing there is in the steel business to this newspaper stuff he's so hipped on. And remind him again that he's to make no plans for fishing trips or house parties this summer, that he'll have no vacation due until—oh, never mind about that till he gets here. And about that hussy who's been phoning, don't mention her—"

"Naturally not. Is there anything else?"

"Oh, the usual thing. Tell him my liver is better but my sinus is worse; and we're going full capacity, orders piling up—not that he gives a hang! I'm due at a conference—"

"Yes, Mr. Farwith." She knew as well as she knew that her eyes were blue and her hair was chestnut, that if he had a conference, she would have had it scheduled and would have had to remind him of it. She knew that he was merely going across the street to the restaurant to neutralize with a cup of strong black coffee all the dangerous gases he had been generating. She could have told to the second how long it would take him, but no jackpot reward could have dragged it out of her—she was that sort of secretary.

"Old Farwith's Girl Friday," they called her. All, that is, except Ken Farwith, who called her "Pop's yes-girl."

She had worked for Cyrus Farwith two years before she met his only son. She had written plenty of letters to him, though—letters from his father. Even with his son away at war, Mr. Farwith, his agile executive's mind always impatient with detail, had given her no more than a skeleton of facts upon which to hang an interesting parental letter.

From Ken's letters, which his father usually turned over to her so that she could answer questions, she learned a lot about Germany and almost nothing about Ken Farwith. It was plain that Ken and Cyrus Farwith had never known each other intimately—still didn't. She supposed it was because Mr. Farwith had been past middle age when his son was born; that upon the death of his wife he had felt unequipped to cope with a ten-year-old boy, had promptly shipped him off to boarding-schools and summer camps.

Cyrus Farwith was not the type to carry an album of pictures along with his billfold, nor to clutter his colossal mahogany desk with framed photographs. But from an occasional snapshot enclosed in a letter, Julie knew that Ken was tall and dark, that he had his father's broad shoulders minus their massive padding. But she wasn't prepared for the way his deep-set brown eyes had of releasing a barrage of sparks aimed straight for your heart, for the way his smile had of warming you like an embrace. Even for the way his eyebrows—

She would have gone off the deep end that day he came home three years ago, if she hadn't known so well ahead of time what he was like beneath his disarming exterior charm. "Headstrong . . . stubborn . . . reckless . . . pampered . . . hell-bent on getting his own way . . ." were only a few of the descriptive terms Mr. Farwith had used. And: "Actually boasts he'll never be worth a nickel in the steel business!"—which, to Cyrus Farwith, was worse heresy than a disbelief in God.

As it was, forewarned was forearmed. Julie Adams took Cyrus Farwith's son with the same businesslike complacency, the same poise and competence with which she took his board of directors, his general sales manager, his chief metallurgist, his spokesman for the union—each was important to her only in relation to her boss.

She slipped a sheet of paper into the roll of her typewriter and tapped out rapidly: "My dear son:" The salutation had always seemed stilted to her, a bit ridiculous, as Ken must be aware by this time that the letters weren't dictated, word for word. "This is to advise you"—it was Mr. Farwith's favorite introductory line—"that I am looking forward . . ."

Her slim tapering fingers curved above the keys, while she pondered: should she add "with pleasure"? From the information she had acquired through newsreels and picture magazines, she could think of nothing much more stirring than witnessing the graduation exercises at a tradition-steeped Eastern university, especially if there were someone you cared a great deal about in the academic procession, especially if—

"Don't tell me the High Priestess of All the Experts is stumped!"

She would have known without turning to whom the teasing voice behind her belonged; she swung around instantly. "Why, Ken—what are you doing here?" she gasped. "I—why, I was just writing you a letter!"

"Go right ahead, my dear Miss Adams!" He enveloped her with that disturbing grin of his. "And for once, I wish you'd put a little *feeling* into it—you seemed to be having trouble with it—if you'd stop copying the Old Man's Nineteenth-Century style and branch out into a style of your own—imitation is a very bad fault in a writer, my dear Miss Adams—"

"I'm not a writer—and I'm not your dear Miss Adams!" ("Egotistic young upstart" was another of his father's epithets.) "I am your father's secretary—"

"His *perfect* secretary! His right—and left—hand, while I, his son, am nothing more than a wart on his nose—but never mind! Let's talk about you—" He hitched Mr. Farwith's massive desk-chair close to hers. "I like the way you're wearing your hair—different, isn't it?"

"Shorter," Julie admitted grudgingly.

"And glintier—you always did have the prettiest hair I ever saw!"

"Why, thank you—" If she hadn't had on file a complete color-chart of his line with girls—

"The prettiest just about everything, if you'd ever encourage me to an adequate tabulation! If you weren't so everlastingly tied up with the Old Man! Where is he, by the way?"

"Having his midafternoon cup—conference. He'll be back any minute. He didn't expect you—I hope nothing is wrong?" she became suddenly anxious.

"On the contrary — everything's swell! Passed my exams with room to spare. Now all I have to do is pick up my ticket of admission to the larger theater of business administration—the Madison Square Garden of the Farwith company. Had a couple of free days, so thought I'd drop around to look over my part—"

"Then you haven't changed your mind again about coming into the plant?" Julie gave a mental sigh of relief. "I was afraid that was why—"

"No—I haven't changed. Though I certainly was tempted when Tink Ewing bought a little old newspaper up in a little town in northern Michigan without me. If I hadn't promised Pop I'd try it out for a year—and a promise is a promise, I guess—"

"You'll like it—I'm sure you will!" she encouraged eagerly.

"Because you and Pop do? Well, anyway, I'll try." He sounded strangely docile. "But I had another reason for popping up—a few loose ends to tie together in an affair of the heart."

"Oh—I see." Julie looked down at the keys on her typewriter—the letters appeared to dance back and forth in a disconcertingly unorthodox way. She thought, it's "that little hussy," that Beatrice Colbrook, with her dulcet telephone voice! No wonder she had the nerve to keep calling— She murmured. "Your father will be terribly upset."

"Mmmm—maybe," he said. "I thought if *you* broke it to him gently, Julie—you always know what to say."

"Not—" She had been about to fling out a distressed "Not while I'm conscious!" The "Not" was all she had time for before there was the familiar booming:

"Kenneth—what the hell?" from the doorway.

"Hi, Pop—good to see you! You're looking great—younger every day—"

When the pair of them, father and son, returned to the office, after a brief talk with Mr. Brownlee in Public Relations, Mr. Farwith turned to Julie.

"Guess there's no way I can get out of attending that bankers' dinner tonight. I told Ken you'd call Mrs. Moffitt, but he said he'd rather take you to Patucio's—on *me*, of course—"

You mean *you* said he'd take me to Patucio's, Julie transcribed, so that I could keep an eye on him *in your place!* Obviously, he hasn't worked up nerve enough to break the news to you about the hussy. Aloud she murmured, "I have things to do tonight."

"They'll keep—"

It occurred to Julie as she let Ken help her into the car that this dinner tonight might well go under the heading "extra-curricular activities." A sort of employer-employee good-fellowship banquet in reverse. The trouble was, she was afraid she would have a hard time keeping the true facts in mind, if Ken continued to be so solicitous and charming, so amazingly like an ordinary

"date," yet at the same time out of the ordinary.

Just wait until he begins pouring his heart out about that Bee person, she schooled herself for the worst. *Then* you'll know that you're earning your salary—and more—for overtime. *Then*—

"I suppose your father has told you," she began, because it was the only piece of unfinished business she could think of, "that he is looking forward—*with pleasure*—to coming to your graduation?"

"Yeah—he told me he was coming," he said. "Seemed considerably reluctant, though, to break away from here—I thought maybe if he brought *you* along he'd feel better about it."

"Me!"

"Sure—you might have fun out of it—oh, I don't mean just watching a stuffy academic procession! There'll be a dance and—"

Her laugh tumbled out then.

"Hey!" Ken tried to stop her. "What's so funny about that? Don't you like to dance?"

"Of course! But"—she swallowed a last giggle—"it—dancing, I mean—would be very bad for Mr. Farwith's arteries!"

"**Oh, so that's** it!" He chuckled belatedly. "I wasn't thinking of *Pop;* I was thinking—but I might have known *you* would be! Don't you *ever* think of anything else?" The chuckle was gone; only a sudden impatient roughness was in bis voice.

"Of course! Lots of things—"

"What—for instance?"

"Oh, silly hats and scented lipsticks and thick steaks and—"

"I can take care of the steak, anyway—"

As they followed the headwaiter to a table, Julie thought, I'd almost rather he'd talk about Beatrice Colbrook than about *me!* Why *doesn't* he talk about her?

"Did I ever tell you, Julie,"—he leaned toward her, after he had given their order—"the way I pictured you those two years before I met you?"

"No-o—" So he still wasn't ready to talk about Bee.

"I pictured you with a high forehead and a square jaw—and *character.* You turned out to have the *character,* all right, but—"

"Thanks," Julie murmured. He was getting to Bee now—when a man told you you had "character," that you were the sort his mother would approve of—only in this case it was his father—then you knew as well as you knew your name was Julie Adams that he was building up to a bird-brain with six dimples and eyelashes you could step on—

"Don't thank *me!* I had nothing to do with it! Fact was, I wished for a while you *had* turned out to be a prim, pedantic little piece with an astigmatism and thick ankles. I don't now, though—you're gorgeous—"

"Why—thanks—" Julie repeated helplessly. She was positively grateful for the hovering waiter.

(Please turn to page 66)

NEWS ABOUT MEDICINE

ADVANCES ON THE HEALTH FRONT • BY MARTIN GUMPERT, M. D.

Another Weapon against Sleeping Pills

There are every year many fatal cases of sleeping-pill overdoses. Now doctors have available a drug called "Nikethamide" which can be injected into the veins of a patient who has taken an excessive amount of a barbiturate. Injections of this drug are given every five minutes. The treatment is halted when the patient becomes sufficiently conscious to answer questions. Doctors who have used this new drug (and only qualified physicians should use it) report good results in many cases where other treatment had failed.

Drinking Water and the Salt Diet

Diet which is low in salt is often prescribed for victims of high blood pressure, of heart failure, or of kidney disease. Such persons should not neglect to have the water which they drink tested. The tap water of many cities contains sufficient salt to do harm to these people.

Relief from the Black Widow Bite

In some parts of the nation, people are frequently bitten by black widow spiders. The black widow's bite can be fatal. It causes severe cramp-like abdominal pain. If the victim is unable to tell his doctor about the spider bite, the symptoms may be mistaken for those of a perforated stomach ulcer or an acute attack of appendicitis.

A physician recently reported on the use of injections of calcium gluconate for black widow victims. He said this drug, given in solution, provided instant relief from pain and muscle spasms, and that all patients given it were back to normal within four days.

Best first-aid counsel on black widow bites is to keep the victim lying down and quiet, with an ice bag on the area of the bite, until a physician arrives. No alcohol should be given.

A Drug for Virus Pneumonia

One of the most serious infections of the pneumonia family is the form known as virus pneumonia. Against virus pneumonia, the new drugs such as penicillin and the sulfa compounds have proved ineffective. These drugs, of course, are effective in treating the bacterial pneumonias.

Now comes news of a drug, called aureomycin, which shows favorable results when given victims of virus pneumonia. This new drug, like streptomycin, is one of the antibiotics. It proved effective in a recent test with nineteen of twenty virus pneumonia patients.

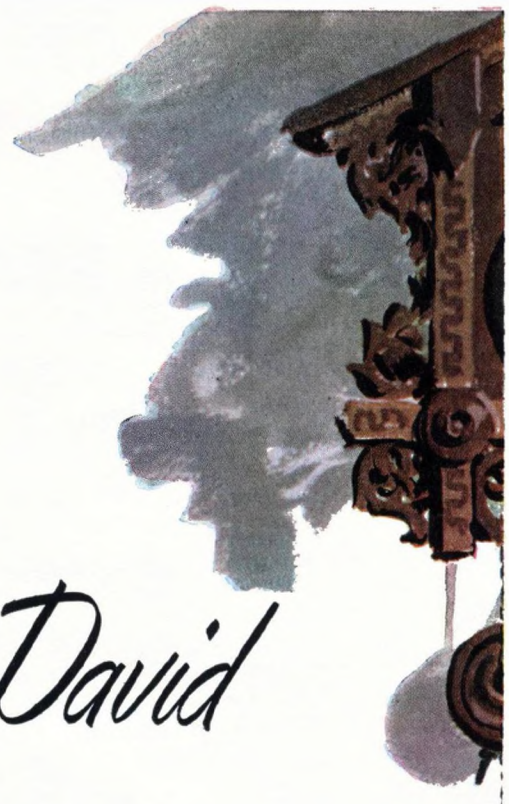
Calcium in the Mother's Diet

During pregnancy and during the breast-feeding period, it is especially important that women's diets include sufficient calcium and phosphorus. Tablets of bone powder, containing these two important minerals in a natural form are now available. The amount taken should be determined by a physician familiar with a patient's special needs.

A Malady Which Should Not Be Neglected

Thousands of persons suffer unnecessarily because they have small hernias which, they believe, do not require treatment. The commonest form of hernia is an opening in the muscles of the abdomen, mostly in the region of the groin. Men are more likely to have hernia than women. In most cases, a hernia should be operated upon as soon as it is discovered. If the operation must be delayed (or, if, in rare cases, an operation is not possible), a truss which has been fitted under a physician's supervision may be worn. No matter how small, a hernia should not be "let alone."

As David grew better, Claudia felt a steady rise of her own spirits—until the day she saw fear in his eyes. She knew then she still had not won



From Claudia to David

BY ROSE FRANKEN

ILLUSTRATED BY ARTHUR SARNOFF

The story thus far

Two tragedies have darkened CLAUDIA NAUGHTON'S otherwise happy life—one when her deeply-loved mother died, one when she lost a baby at birth. Now a third has threatened: her architect husband, DAVID, has shown symptoms of tuberculosis.

When the symptoms appeared, Claudia and David had sold their Connecticut farm and were living in a New York apartment. Forthwith, they went to the Adirondacks—first to the boarding-house of a MRS. JENKINS, then to a small cottage where there was a sleeping-porch for David and he would be under the care of a specialist, DR. GEGLIN.

With the doctor's dubious permission, the whole clan came—the boys, BOBBY and MATTHEW; MICHAEL, the new baby; devoted BERTHA, technically the maid but really one of the family; BLUFF and SHAKESPEARE, the dog and cat (the latter an irresponsible feline who worried his best friend, Bobby, by vanishing into the night).

They got messages of anxiety and solicitude from HARTLEY and JULIA, David's brother and sister-in-law; found an echo of the past in a couple named TRENLY, one of whom was related to an "old beau" of Claudia's, PHILIP DEXLOWE; were visited by JOHN PAYNTON, David's young partner, and CANDY, John's wife. When John and Candy went home, the cottage seemed empty.

PART IV

The January thaw came in February that year, and Matthew, who always took for granted that the elements functioned for his especial enjoyment, was immensely diverted by the sudden onrush of spring. He wallowed through rivers of melting snow, flung off his coat during intervals of baking sun, and promptly got himself pneumonia. Of course nobody knew what he'd been up to, until he came down with a cold, and then one damp shoe led to another until finally the whole series of his indiscretions came to light.

It was Bobby who wakened Claudia early that bleak, chill morning when all of a sudden the cold slipped down from Matthew's nose into his chest. "Mother!" he called urgently, from the doorway of her room.

Sleep—a fugitive visitor at best these past months—vanished instantly. She sat up in bed with her heart pounding against her eardrums. "What is it—what's wrong?"

"It's Matthew. He's coughing and he says it hurts."

"Shhh. Don't let Dad hear us from the porch." Already she was fishing for her slippers, with her bathrobe half-flung across her shoulders. She noticed that Bobby was barefoot, and shivering a little in his gaping pajamas. She pulled back the blankets of the empty bed beside her. "Here—pop under the covers

Dr. Geglin gave one of his warm and unexpected smiles. "Try not to worry too much. I'll look in again around noon."

and try to go to sleep again," she whispered. "It's only half past six."

"Is Matthew putting on?"

"I hope so."

"Can I help you?"

"No, I don't think so, dear."

"First I didn't want to call you. I gave him a drink of water. Then I was going to call Bertha, but he said he didn't want Bertha."

"You were right to call me. Now go back to sleep until it's time for school."

She was used to Matthew cutting up shenanigans in the middle of the night. Sometimes he'd waken with a bad dream; sometimes he'd complain of excruciating aches and pains that were invariably gone by morning. One look at him now, however, told her that this time he was not crying wolf. "It hurts," he whimpered. "It hurts."

"Where, darling—show me."

His hand fluttered vaguely toward his chest. "I want Daddy."

"Daddy's asleep; we mustn't disturb him."

"Who says 'Daddy's asleep; we mustn't disturb him'?"

The sound of his voice was, as always, like a strong arm around her. He moved to Matthew's side, jerking the cord of his dressing-gown into a knot against his flat, firm waist. She knew that she ought not to feel this wave of relief at his presence; she ought to protect him, as she protected Bobby. She watched him in trembling conflict as he lifted Matthew's wrist and silently gauged the shallow quickness of his breathing. "It might be nothing but a heavy bronchitis," he said at last.

"A heavy bronchitis is bad enough. I'm going to call the doctor."

"What doctor?"

"I don't know. We haven't needed a doctor for the children since we've been here." She had an impulse to knock on wood, but it seemed ironic under the circumstances. "What about Dr. Geglin? He'll recommend someone. Or come himself, perhaps."

David glanced at his watch. "Better wait until seven before you call him. I'll get some clothes on."

"David, please," she begged him. "Go back to bed. You oughtn't to be up for another hour."

"Fat chance," he said. It went through her mind that he was his old self again, strong and commanding, with a contagious assurance. It was as if the core of him had remained whole and healthy, and only the outer shell of his being was touched by a fleeting sickness. After long months of standing alone, it was good to know once more this sense of leaning and reliance.

Bertha must have met him in the hall, because she came bustling in a moment later, full of alarm. She was on her way to the kitchen to start breakfast, neat as a pin in her blue house-dress, bulging with tidy bosom and girdled thighs. It was a gift in itself, something Bertha had learned throughout the years, to wear each morning the freshness of a new day, with no harried leftovers of the day before. Claudia was suddenly conscious of her tousled hair and trailing bathrobe; she could feel strain and apprehension pulling her face into distortion. "Stay with him, Bertha, while I get dressed."

"Never again will I sleep with my door closed," Bertha blamed herself.

"You have to, or there's a dreadful draft," said Claudia. "Besides, he was all right at bedtime."

"Have you called the doctor yet?"

"We're waiting until seven."

"It is seven o'clock now," said Bertha.

Dr. Geglin recommended a physician, but it turned out that he was laid up with a broken leg, so Dr. Geglin came himself because he said he didn't like the sound of Matthew's symptoms over the telephone. "You've got a pretty sick child," he told Claudia bluntly after a brief examination, "but you've got an equally serious problem with your husband. Any physical setback at this stage of his cure is apt to add months to his eventual recovery. See that he stays out of the room, and that he doesn't relax in any detail of his daily routine."

"I understand," said Claudia. "Would it be better for him if we moved Matthew to the hospital?"

"Under ordinary circumstances, yes. But we're overcrowded at this time of the year and low on facilities; I think the boy will rate a better chance where he is. Your maid seems a very capable woman."

"She's family," Claudia corrected him instinctively. "She's been with us on and off ever since we were married."

Dr. Geglin gave one of his warm and unexpected smiles, which changed his face completely, and always changed her opinion of him, too. "Well, my child, you're fortunate in one department, anyway." He patted her shoulder. "Try not to worry too much. I'll look in again around noon. In the meantime, the penicillin ought to begin to do its work."

It was hard to keep David from feeling that he was nothing but an added responsibility to her. "A lot of help I am," he accosted her bitterly at lunch, "stuck out on the porch, building up my damn' strength."

"There's nothing for you to do," said Claudia. "Nothing for Bertha or me to do, either, except watch and wait." A lump blocked her throat. "The worst part is seeing him lie there so terribly sweet and docile. I'd give anything in the world for him to cut up and throw things around. I wish I hadn't ever scolded him for being naughty."

"He'll be plenty naughty again," David promised her, "and you'll be wanting to wring his neck."

She gave a watery smile. "Who said you weren't a help?"

When Bobby came home from school that afternoon, he asked in a muted voice, "Is Matthew very sick?"

"Yes," said Claudia, "but he's going to be all right."

"Did the doctor say so?"

"Daddy said so," Claudia told him.

"Oh," said Bobby. He, too, gave a watery smile. "I believe Dad, don't you?"

"Yes, I believe Dad," said Claudia. "And by the way, Dr. Geglin came back a while ago, and before he left he examined Dad, to save him a visit to the office, and said he could have fifteen minutes more exercise, starting today."

Bobby's face brightened. "Boy, that's pretty good, isn't it?"

"It's more than pretty good; it's wonderful," said Claudia—and so psychologically astute, she reflected silently. "The nice part of it is," she went on aloud, "that you're just in time to go with him."

"Aren't you going to go with him?"

"I can't leave Matthew."

She watched them from the window as they walked down the path to the road. It was the first walk with David that she had missed. How they had looked forward to this extra fifteen minutes. She was glad that he did not have to go alone—that Bobby could take her place.

At the gate, they turned and whistled for Bluff. He bounded after them. It was a picture to treasure in her mind for always.

The several weeks of Matthew's acute illness and recuperation passed in a beneficent blur, and faded quickly into something to look back upon with a reminiscent shudder and a wonderment that somehow all was well that ended well. He got up from bed, mildly interested to note that winter once again lay piled in white drifts outside the door and windows, but content to sit in an easy chair and play with the books and games that Candy and Julia had sent on from New York.

Claudia couldn't get used to his quietness. "He's like a stranger around the house," she said. "He looks as if he's lost pounds and grown inches. He gives me the rather awed feeling that he's gone places and done things."

"He very likely has," said David, and added with a grin, "I guess wherever he went, they didn't want him and sent him back."

"Well, I wish he'd take off his hat and decide to stay, and settle down in his skin again."

Eventually, Matthew did just that, and it became increasingly difficult to observe the fitting vigilance of tongue toward one so recently returned from the very threshold of death's door, as it were.

Bobby was the first to revert to normal reflexes.

"You used my toothbrush!" Claudia heard him shout hoarsely the evening before Matthew was due to go back to school.

"I did not!" Matthew's voice rose in an affronted whine. "Let go—you're hurting my arm!"

"Then why did you use my toothbrush!"

"I said I didn't!"

"And I say you did. Mine is blue and it's wet!"

"I only began to use it," Matthew defended. "I thought it was green."

"You're a little liar—you knew it was green. I mean blue!"

Matthew came off the easy victor.

"You don't even know what you're talking about!" he hooted.

Bobby was rendered speechless with indignation. A chair turned over. "Now see what you've done!" cried Matthew virtuously.

Claudia sought out David in the bedroom, where he was rubbing oil on his heavy boots. "Well, the house has returned to normal," she reported cheerfully. "They've just had a good fight."

He looked up. "Do you know what tomorrow is?"

"Yes, Wednesday," she returned promptly, "and exactly four weeks to the day that Matthew took sick."

"It also happens to be seven months to the day that we landed in this God-forsaken place." He placed the boots on the floor beside the chair that held his heavy sheepskin coat, and corked the bottle of oil. "Seven months," he reiterated with grim emphasis, "and I haven't had a set of comparative X-rays yet."

"That's only because of Matthew," she pointed out. "Dr. Geglin examined you up here to save you a trip to town, and his X-ray machine is in his office."

"The doctor," he replied, "is giving me a fine run-around. First it was three months that I'd have to lay low, and then it was six months. And now where am I? Kidded along until I'm in exactly the same boat as all these poor devils up here. Well, I've had my fill. I'll give the Herr Professor Geglin until the first of April to stop shilly-shallying around, and then, by all that's holy, I'm kissing this place good-by."

She was unaccountably happy at his outburst. Perhaps Matthew's illness had jolted him out of that puzzling acquiescence that had been apparent even to John and Candy during their visit. In fact, the six months' mark had passed just before Matthew had taken sick, and David seemed to have forgotten that it was half a year since he had left New York. He had been chiefly concerned, that day, with an inexplicable rise of temperature that had turned out to be nothing more than a passing deviation he would never have noticed under normal circumstances. Claudia had refrained from making any mention of the day, torn between dismay and relief that he had forgotten to remember. And now, a month later, he was showing a tonic impatience, a healthy impulse to return to work.

She played along with it. "I'm sure Dr. Geglin intends to X-ray you the next time he sees you, but, after all," she reminded him reasonably, "there really isn't any great rush about it. Nobody ever goes back to New York in the middle of the nastiest, rawest season. Besides which, we haven't even talked about a place to live yet. We haven't got a roof over our heads at this point."

"We'll find a roof," said David. "Don't you worry about that end of it. All I want to do is get back to the office. If worst comes to worst, we can live at Julia and Hartley's until we find an apartment. . . . Is His Royal Highness out of the bathroom yet?"

"I don't know; I'll see."

Matthew was reading. She could have hugged him. It was wonderful that he was well enough to be that disobedient. God had been so generous—surely, she gave up a little prayer, He wouldn't be a piker when it came to David's X-rays.

Matthew's first day at school was fruitful with all sorts of exciting incidents. For one thing, "a boy" gave him a fountain pen; for another, "a lady" came up to him on the street while he was waiting for the bus, and said she knew him and sent her love to his mother and father.

Claudia felt his forehead. "Begin from the beginning," she suggested. "What boy and what lady?"

"I told you already!" he resisted indignantly.

"But it doesn't make sense. Firstly, why should a boy give you a fountain pen? And secondly, we don't know any lady who would know you and send us her love. What was her name?"

"I don't remember," said Matthew. "But she did."

Claudia wondered if it could have been anyone from the boarding-house; yet it couldn't have been, because they'd left Mrs. Jenkins' before the children arrived from New York. "I think you're imagining things," she said.

In answer, he dug the fountain pen out of his rear pocket, and showed it to her. It was a very excellent fountain-pen—one that she wouldn't have minded owning. She went in search of Bobby, who was bolting a glass of milk and sharing a plate of cookies with Bluff. "Don't drink so fast," she adjured him, "and Bertha will be insulted if she finds you giving her good butter cookies to Bluff. What's this about a fountain pen and a lady?"

Bobby disclaimed all knowledge of the pen. "Let's see it," he demanded distrustfully. "I don't believe it."

"I saw it, and you can believe me. However, we'll get to the pen later. What about the lady?"

The lady he admitted to be true. "She heard me yell Matthew's name because he was going too near the gutter, and she stopped and looked at us and then she asked me if my name was Bobby."

"And what did you say?"

"I said it was."

"That was extremely knowing of you," she complimented him dryly. "I mean, what happened after that, silly?"

"Nothing. She just said we'd grown a lot, but she recognized us anyway after she heard Matthew's name, and she wanted to know why we were in the mountains instead of on the farm."

Claudia's curiosity was biting its nails. "Well, who was it? Certainly if she knew you at the farm it must have been someone you knew, too?"

Bobby looked blank. "If it was, I don't remember her. I forget who she said she was, too," he added helpfully, "because we had to hurry; the bus driver almost went without us."

"I can't bear it," said Claudia speechlessly. "Was it Nancy Riddale, by any chance?"

He regarded her in disgust. "You must think I'm dumb," he said.

"Frankly, yes; a little."

"As if I didn't know Mrs. Riddale. She has red hair."

"Didn't this person have red hair?" she wheedled, as if she might surprise some information out of him behind his back.

He thought a moment. "It was sort of gray, with glasses."

"Sort of gray with glasses," she mulled. "Fat or thin?"

He thought another long moment. "I couldn't see. She had a coat on."

"I'm going crazy," said Claudia.

She appealed to David. "Who on earth do you think it could be?"

"I wouldn't know," said David, not at all interested. "What difference does it make?"

"The same difference as when the telephone bell stops ringing before you answer it, and you never find out who rang you."

"And?"

"There are times when I could cheerfully murder you. It's inhuman not to care."

"Go ahead and brood about it," he invited her cordially.

"I shall," she said.

She certainly expected some sort of communication from this unknown woman who seemed to know the whole family so intimately, but several days passed without a single clue to her identity. The mystery of the fountain pen, however, was cleared up the following afternoon. It appeared, according to Bobby's sober tale when he came home from school, that the registrar had had her pen taken from her desk, and a general assembly of the lower grades had been called to trace the culprit. Claudia listened to the story with enlightenment. "That accounts for the pen's being such an expensive one," she concluded. "What an awful blow it must be to parents to have a thing like that happen."

David cleared his throat. "It's nothing to get tragic about. All children go through a stage of thieving, in one form or another."

"Did I?" Bobby asked in a small voice.

"No," said Claudia flatly, "you did not."

"I stole a tennis racket from the boy next door when I was a youngster," David volunteered, actually with an air of bragging about it.

"You mean you borrowed it," Claudia corrected him icily, not wanting to give Bobby any ideas. She didn't want to give Matthew any ideas, either. "I sort of hate to explain that whoever gave him the pen wanted to get rid of it so he wouldn't be found out. I suppose it'd be better if Matthew returned the pen tomorrow without mentioning any names. At least let the boy have the chance to own up."

"It seems a little involved," said David quickly. "I'd better talk to Matthew."

"I'd rather do it," said Claudia. "You seem to have gotten a little mellow

(Please turn to page 92)

THIS IS

Eugene Kenney had a wife and four children when he decided five years ago to buy and operate a small hotel, a business he knew nothing about. Kenney's business experience had been in petroleum. He had worked for the Standard-Vacuum Oil Company for many years; was that firm's assistant treasurer, and he liked his job.

No wonder, then, that relatives and friends bluntly told him he was foolish to risk all his money and his family's security in a hotel. But his wife, Helen, encouraged him, and so he took a chance.

Since then, Helen and Eugene Kenney have never once regretted the risk they took.

Last year, the revenues of their hotel came to almost $180,000. A reasonable amount of this was profit, and so the Kenney family is living comfortably.

Their hotel is the Bernards Inn, in Bernardsville, a friendly town in central New Jersey. It is

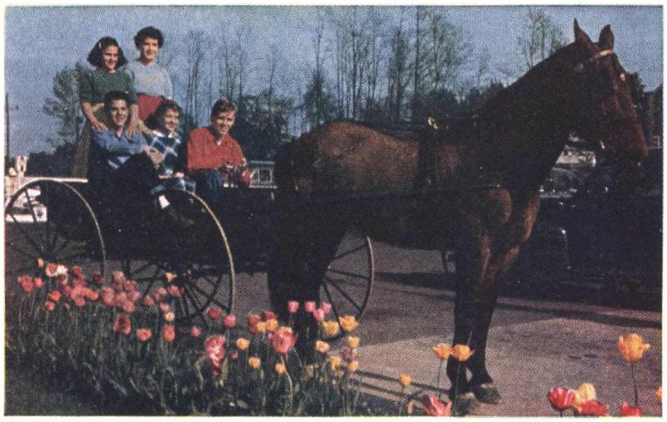
BY JOE WHITLEY

Helen and Eugene Kenney have four children — Martha, 12; Ann, 13; Bill, 16; and (between her mother and father in this photograph) Helen, who is 10.

THE LIFE !

The story of an American family which has found the ideal combination of satisfying work, independence and security. Eleventh in this series.

MEET HELEN AND EUGENE KENNEY OF NEW JERSEY



The Kenney family pet is a gentle horse named Dutchess. Here are the Kenney youngsters and their friend, Richard Johnston. *Below*: Helen Kenney wants her girls to be skilled homemakers. She is teaching her three daughters to cook.

His hotel keeps Eugene Kenney busy. But it is close to his home and he is able to spend more time with his family than most men. *Below:* The Kenney children have responsibility for keeping the inn decorated with flowers.

Pride in accomplishment, recognition, hope for the future, financial security—these are the essentials of happiness, and the Kenneys of Bernardsville, N. J., have achieved them

Last summer, Helen and Eugene Kenney took a four-week auto trip to Grand Canyon and Yellowstone Park. They say that independence is one of the nicest things they have achieved through their new way of life.

Eugene Kenney holds a discussion meeting with the key members of his hotel's staff every morning. Each employee shares in the inn's profits. They are as interested in the inn's success as are the Kenneys themselves.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SCOTT-D'ARAZIEN

an attractive building which blends with Bernardsville's old homes. It is a neat hotel, the kind in which guests quickly feel at home.

When the Kenneys took over, however, the inn was in a bad state of repair from war-year shortages. Employees were hard to keep, and good-quality food was difficult to get.

How did the Kenneys make a success in their first and only business venture? They confess they don't know. They say, "We just opened the front door and people walked in. And, bless them, they have never stopped coming."

But there are more tangible reasons. From the beginning, the family has worked together.

Mrs. Kenney is "in" on all the problems. Most of the policies that have resulted in the success of the Bernards Inn have been worked out by Helen and Eugene in their daily two-hour conference in the Kenney living-room.

Every family member helps during emergencies. One Sunday, there was a scarcity of desserts, and, after church, Mrs. Kenney called a "conference." In the hotel's back yard are several fine apple trees, then loaded with fruit. The four Kenney children picked; Mother made apple pies, and the dessert problem was soon solved.

On the first Sunday after the Kenneys took over, guests filled the dining-room. Suddenly, the

One evening a week, the Kenneys have dinner together at the inn. This gives Mother a change of routine. But the Kenneys don't permit the hotel to interfere with their pattern of normal family life. The children like the hotel, but feel there is no place like their own home. *Below:* The Bernards Inn.

Parties within the family are the Kenneys' idea of fun. It was while hunting a home their children would like that Helen and Eugene Kenney accidentally found a hotel for sale. They surprised everybody — including themselves — by buying and making a success of it.

The lobby of the Kenneys' Bernards Inn has fixtures from New York City's famous old Plaza Hotel. Since taking over, less than five years ago, the Kenneys have made many improvements, paid for out of profits. The Bernards Inn did a $180,000 business last year.

dishwashing machine broke down. Dad and son Bill rolled up their sleeves and started washing. In a few minutes, service moved on again. That incident began a happy relationship with the hotel's staff; in more than four years, no regular employee has quit.

Helen and Eugene Kenney give credit to the American Hotel Association as their chief source of advice. This Association's help is available to everyone in the business—including newcomers like the Kenneys. The Association has counseled the Kenneys on renovating their kitchen, on laying carpet, on the best-sized blankets to purchase, and on how to keep paint from peeling off bathroom walls.

The inn's patrons have also contributed ideas—such as *smaller* cocktail glasses. Mrs. Kenney thought with large glasses, not filled to the brim, cocktails would not spill so easily. But the patrons didn't like "partly-filled glasses." They said they wanted a "full cocktail," and would take their own chances on spilling.

When the Kenneys took over the inn, the patronage was almost entirely transient, and this trade has grown. Now, the Kenneys also have a thriving local business. Such organizations as the Bernardsville Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs, the Bernardsville Women's Club and the local organization of the New Jersey League of Women Voters hold their luncheon meetings at the Bernards Inn.

The history of the Kenney family is not unusual. Eugene was earning $265 per month when he and Helen were married on September 20, 1930. Until then, she had been a kindergarten teacher. Eugene did well in business, and his salary rose accordingly through the years. They had a pleasant home in Summit, New Jersey. Eugene commuted to work in New York City every day.

But the Kenneys thought their town was building up too fast.

One December day in 1944, while looking at houses, Helen and Eugene stopped at the Bernards Inn. They were having dinner in front of the inn's fireplace when the owner stopped to talk. The Kenneys told him they were house-hunting. The innkeeper said he had a house for sale. But there was one "catch"—the purchaser would have to buy the Bernards Inn, too.

That evening, while driving home, Helen and Eugene talked over the offer, jokingly at first. But the idea grew fascinating. Eugene would not have to go to New York City every day. The children would be living in a small town. If the inn were a success, the Kenneys would have independence in their own business.

There were grave risks, chiefly in Eugene's giving up a position he liked and the security which went with it. His yearly salary was well above the ten-thousand-dollar mark. And what about moving to a strange community?

All the Kenneys favored the hotel idea. Helen Kenney said, "If you have faith in yourself, you can't lose. And we all have faith in each other." They decided to make the plunge.

The Kenneys sold their home, in which they had an equity of $8,000. To this, they added $4,000 from Eugene's annuities. They drew their $2,800 bank savings, and cashed a life-insurance policy for another $1,200. This gave them their $16,000 down-payment. From a bank they borrowed $10,000.

Now, when Helen and Eugene look back at the risk they took, they say it was like betting on a horse, and then wondering if he would get into the race.

Since then, the Kenneys have paid off the original $10,000 loan, and have been able to buy much new equipment and furnishings for the inn out of their profits. Last year, their revenue from food and beverages was more than $160,000. The inn has twenty-five rooms, and these brought in $14,000. The lobby's cigar stand and rental of shops in the inn produced additional revenue of more than $5,200.

Now that war shortages are over, there are fewer headaches in hotelkeeping. But a small hotel owner must still be a combination accountant, chef, dishwasher, bartender, advertising writer and mechanic.

Eugene and Helen Kenney found a new and better way of life for themselves and their children through ownership of their own small hotel.

A typical Kenney family day starts at seven o'clock, when daughter Ann prepares breakfast, and Mrs. Kenney sees that the four children eat and get off to school. Then follows a more leisurely breakfast for Helen and Eugene. He goes to the inn, a few blocks from their home, at 9:30 A.M., and calls his employees together for the daily staff meeting. The problems of the day before are discussed, and the new menu is worked out. Eugene has a profit-sharing system which gives each worker a financial stake in the inn's success.

Eugene spends the rest of the morning seeing salesmen and checking maintenance. From noon until 2:30 o'clock, he visits with luncheon guests. During the next two hours, he works on new ideas for staff training, advertising and management. Then he goes home for what he considers his most important business—his daily conference with his wife on the inn's problems.

Eugene is back at the inn, of course, to supervise during the dinner hour.

The Kenneys have a plan for the future. Son Bill wants to study agriculture, and when he is through college the family will buy a farm. Some day, Helen and Eugene will sell their hotel and retire to Bill's farm. But that is a long way off, because it is not going to be easy for the Kenneys to part with the hotel, which, to them, represents their family achievement. . . . THE END

Redbook's Recommended Movies

Best Bets in Your Neighborhood

Blue Lagoon — Colorful tale of two youngsters, shipwrecked on a desert isle, who grow up in a South Seas paradise.

Champion — Realistic story of a prizefighter who stops at nothing to win the championship. Kirk Douglas. *(June)

Don't Take It to Heart — Refreshing, delightful fantasy concerning a 16th Century ghost, released by bombing, who attempts to set things to rights in an old English village.

Edward, My Son—Spencer Tracy in the portrayal of a man who sacrifices everything to give his son advantages he never had in his own life. *(July)

The Girl from Jones Beach—Light, entertaining musical of the search for a model who turns out to be twelve girls.

Home of the Brave — Outstanding story of personal relationships between five men on a dangerous mission. Excellently acted. *(July)

Johnny Allegro — A reformed criminal helps Treasury aides in tracking down a ring of counterfeiters. George Raft.

Lust for Gold — Adventure story of an exciting search for a legendary mountain of gold in Arizona. Ida Lupino.

Roughshod — Better than average Western with a different approach and good performances.

The Secret Garden — Margaret O'Brien and Dean Stockwell in Frances Hodgson Burnett's well-known fantasy. *(June)

Sorrowful Jones — Bob Hope as an amusing bookie who is a bit bewildered by a tiny girl left with him as security. With Lucille Ball. *(July)

The Stratton Story — Warm, inspiring story of Monty Stratton, the baseball pitcher who lost a leg but was able to continue his career. James Stewart, June Allyson. *(July)

The Window — Tense, dramatic drama of a young boy who can't convince anyone that he was the only witness of a murder. Bobby Driscoll. *(June)

**Previously reviewed in REDBOOK*

"LOOK FOR THE SILVER LINING"

This lively musical is based on the career of the late Marilyn Miller, and it offers a rich setting for the songs and the dance numbers which made the Ziegfeld star unforgettable.

The story recounts the rise and fall in the fortunes of the talented young girl who is bent on following the theatrical tradition of her parents and sisters. Her tragic marriage to Frank Carter and her subsequent romances provide the framework for her dazzling success with her dancing partner, *Jack Donahue* (Ray Bolger). June Haver plays the Marilyn Miller rôle and sings Jerome Kern's enduring melodies. (Warner Brothers)

"IT HAPPENS EVERY SPRING"

From every angle this is a screwball comedy and Ray Milland makes the most of it. The story deals with a brilliant but unsuccessful chemistry student (Mr. Milland) who accidentally discovers a chemical which, applied to a baseball, makes any pitcher invincible.

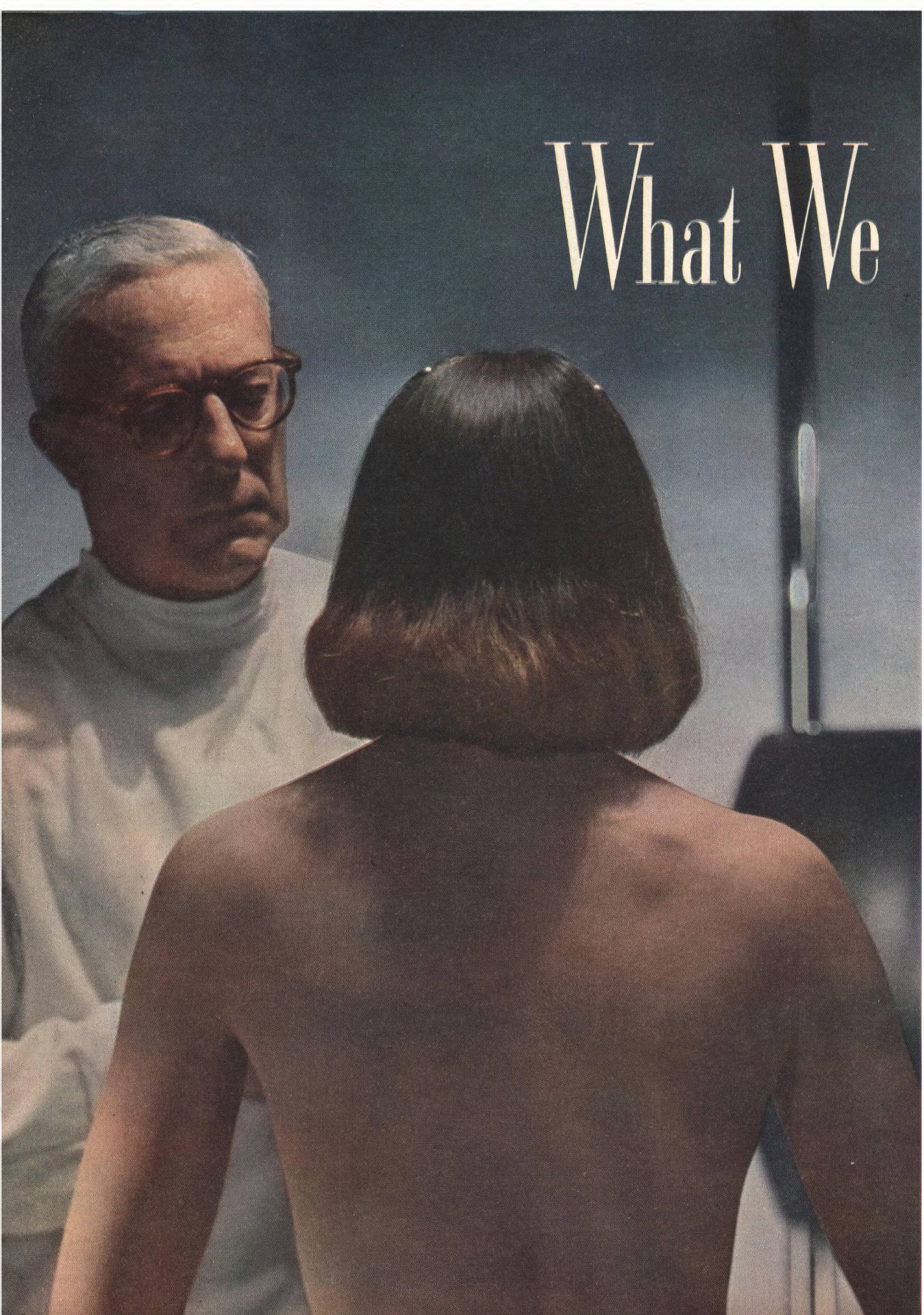
The student tries it out on the college players and then, incognito, takes on the big-leaguers. His success is dizzy and so is his coed (Jean Peters), who does not know why her suitor has disappeared until, her suspicions aroused, she visits the ballpark and learns the truth. Paul Douglas is the third principal in the cast. (Twentieth Century-Fox).

"AGAINST THE WIND"

Adventure in a wild degree is the lot of the characters in this English film which shows how saboteurs went about their hair-raising business in the late war. Six people from widely different walks of life work together feverishly in nerve-shattering undercover activities.

The picture shows the secret headquarters of the group in London, and it reveals in fascinating detail the methods by which they sought to disrupt enemy morale in Belgium. It is an exciting document, particularly in the climax when the saboteurs come to grips with the Gestapo. (Eagle Lion)

Thornton Delehanty


What We

Can Do About Cancer

The real tragedy of cancer is that one of every three victims dies needlessly—either because of faulty diagnosis or delayed treatment. Here are some vitally important facts about the dread disease: how it is detected and how the death toll can be cut

BY SELWYN JAMES
ILLUSTRATED BY HENRY WAXMAN

Every day more than 500 people—men, women and children—die of cancer in the United States. Ironically, at least one-third of these tragic deaths are the result of self-neglect, superstition, lax examinations or defective medical care.

That is the real tragedy behind the distressing forecast that cancer will murder 200,000 Americans during 1949. More than one-third of them could have been saved, their lives restored to usefulness, their tortured minds freed of worry—if the dread malady had been discovered in time.

Cancer still is one of humanity's greatest scourges—a medical enigma perhaps as baffling as the mystery of life itself—and it claims as many lives in the incredibly short period of eighteen months as were lost by the U. S. during World War II. Yet in the absence of a universal cure, medical skills today are so far advanced—in surgery and in the use of X-ray and radium—that cancer in its early stages is among the most curable of all insidious diseases.

Thousands of once-doomed Americans are alive, healthy and normal because prompt treatment revoked unreasoning Nature's sentence of slow death. Last year, for example, 65,000 cancer patients who were rushed to hospitals emerged a short time later happily walking on their own two feet. They were the lucky ones.

But this year nearly 70,000 will succumb needlessly to cancer. The reason is both shocking and remediable: these unfortunates will fall prey to cancer's trusted allies—*delay* and *inaccurate diagnosis*. And the responsibility will lie squarely on the shoulders of the patients themselves, and their family physicians, or both. Second only to heart disease among the major causes of mortality in America, the yearly cancer-death increase could be slowed, perhaps halted, if we all exerted a little more effort. The plain truth is that neither the layman nor many medical men are taking full advantage of what is known about cancer.

Through fear and ignorance many a sufferer recklessly disregards the first signs of a malignant growth, even endures

months of ever-mounting pain before the doctor—or the undertaker—is finally summoned. Some simply fail to take note of the enemy's early signals of attack. Others, horror-stricken by a verdict of cancer, retreat into a private world of fear and unreality, refusing to accept sound medical advice, which, if acted upon immediately, would give them a real chance of survival.

Equally at fault are those doctors—a sizable minority—who err in their diagnoses, mistaking the symptoms of cancer for those of some comparatively trivial disease; who give hasty, inadequate examinations and overlook a fast-growing malignancy when it is still small enough to conquer on the operating-table, under the X-ray machine or with the radium seed; or who prescribe medication to alleviate a supposedly minor condition —which weeks later proves to be cancer.

The detection of early cancer is not necessarily a matter of chance; neither is it always easy. Hope of a cure is brightest when the patient knows the danger signals and consults a doctor who checks them with zealous concern. It is vitally important to be able to identify possible clues to some forms of the disease in yourself, and to know the standards—approved by recognized cancer specialists—by which you can judge the competence of your own doctor in spotting the disease early. Certainly you should be suspicious of the physician who laughs at your concern about cancer, ridicules your request for a more exhaustive examination, and says, "Forget it! You're not the cancer type." This doctor's advice may be as lethal as the sickness itself.

Only about one in eight lumps in the breast turns out to be cancerous, but no doctor—not even a specialist—can be unhesitatingly sure about it merely by touch and naked sight. Don't be reassured by the complacent doctor who says, "If the lump doesn't bother you, don't bother it." Pain is usually a late symptom of cancer, not an early one. Make an appointment with another doctor if yours—even after watching the growth through a menstrual cycle—remarks, "Let's wait and see if the lump grows." If it *is* cancer, it surely will grow; for the disease is the anarchistic growth of abnormal cells which kill healthy tissues and finally life itself.

Dr. Emerson Day, director of New York's Kip's Bay Cancer Detection Center, told me, "No doctor who finds signs or symptoms that *could* mean cancer should be satisfied with the easiest answer. He should make the most thorough check before arriving at a final diagnosis; and he should think of cancer first, not last—especially in women over thirty-five. Procrastination, and treatment of the symptoms rather than the disease, is the reason for a large number of cancer deaths."

Dr. Madge Thurlow Maklin of Ohio State University Medical School puts it this way: "The most urgent need is a medical profession which utilizes to the fullest extent what we know of cancer diagnosis and early recognition."

None of this is said to frighten you, for by and large America offers the finest medical care on earth. There is a doctor in your neighborhood or near by who *will* take you seriously when you demand a cancer check-up. The purpose of this article is to direct you to him, as well as to save you from the possible folly of your own indifference. Finding a good doctor isn't difficult if you're willing to devote to the problem the same time and care you would normally spend in choosing a new spring wardrobe.

Don't fall for an excessively suave bedside manner if it isn't accompanied by an unchallengeable record of achievement. Don't be afraid of young doctors; many of them are better trained, more painstaking and more familiar with the newest medical discoveries than the old-established practitioner. Your county medical society will help you find a physician who meets your needs.

Remember that a competent doctor will never shrug off any surface lesions which may be causing you anxiety; or any odd departures, however slight, from your physical norm which may mean the beginning of a malignancy. His examination will be meticulous and all-embracing involving the latest diagnostic techniques. He will urge you to see a specialist if that step is warranted. And if you're wise you will not reject his counsel. Delay can be disastrous.

Take, for example, a young matron in an Eastern city who visited a hospital clinic with a tumor the size of a walnut on her neck. The tumor had been growing steadily for a year; now it had become a real nuisance—unsightly and uncomfortable—and she wanted it removed. Cutting out the tumor was a simple surgical procedure, but when the hospital pathologist peered down his microscope at a sliver of the tissue he pronounced it cancerous. The woman then submitted herself to a series of exacting tests to determine if there were any other manifestations of the disease.

The doctor was looking for evidence of small cancerous particles which might have broken off from the tumor, entered the blood stream or the lymphatic system, and started a secondary growth in some other part of the body. This diabolical process, medically termed "metastasis," is one reason why the best chance of destroying cancer is while it's all in one place. The surgeon found no metastases and wisely emphasized the necessity of a physical check-up every three months. Should there be a recurrence, modern medical science could prolong her life and ease her pain.

Like thousands of other patients who harbor a cynical disbelief of doctors' warnings, this foolhardy young woman, whose early delay had allowed her condition to become serious, stayed away from the hospital for two years. When she did return she came in an ambulance—an emergency case of cancer involving the digestive system. The patient was beyond help; too many vital organs were now afflicted by the disease. Within six weeks she was dead—a victim of her own neglect and a grim example of the penalty of delay.

This instance is stark evidence that the first line of defense against America's climbing cancer mortality is not the research laboratory, but rather a high degree of intelligent alertness on the part of patient and physician alike. That there is ample room for improvement is made obvious in a now-classic study by Dr. A. C. Ivy, one of the country's outstanding cancer specialists, who assembled nationwide medical statistics to point up the growing percentage of cures when the disease is attacked in its early stages. On the basis of his findings—confirmed by the country's foremost cancer authorities—about 14,500, or more than seventy-five per cent, of the estimated 18,000 women who died last year of breast cancer would be alive today if they had gone to a physician in time and received proper treatment.

Approximately 87,000 men and women perished from cancer of the digestive system and peritoneum in 1948; early treatment would have rescued more than 40,000 of them.

Available techniques in the treatment of cancer of the uterus—one of the commonest sites of the malady in women —can save as many as 13,000 of the 17,000 who are killed by it every year.

Simple skin and lip cancers of which any individual should be aware can be easily halted ninety-five per cent of the time, yet personal neglect and faulty diagnosis annually condemns over 5,000 people to unnecessary death.

Cancer of the bladder and rectum are curable in fifty per cent of the early cases; and even lung cancers—almost always fatal until quite recently—can be stopped in their tracks in thirty-five per cent of those cases reaching the operating-room soon enough.

Medical records abound with cures of patients once called inoperable. There are many men and women today who can say, "I've had cancer," and who work and play as contentedly as before. Some of them have only one lung, or half of their stomach or a small piece left of their pancreas, but they are walking testimony to the fact that cancer can be cured.

But what tends to temper the optimism aroused by these dramatic facts and figures is the wide gap between the potential cure rates and the actual ones. Experience shows that medical science, especially surgery, could keep twice as many cancer patients alive as it does today. The only means of bridging the gap is the encouragement of a wider "cancer-consciousness"—a keener ability to identify this voracious killer before it invades the surrounding tissue, and, graver still, spreads through the body and gnaws at organs essential to life.

Significant strides in this direction have been made in the past decade, thanks chiefly to a nonstop educational campaign by the American Cancer Society, which reaches private homes, citizens' groups and doctors' offices with pertinent literature; to a program of postgraduate courses on cancer for practicing physicians; to the pioneer efforts of doctors who devote themselves to the cancer-detection clinics—of which this country still has lamentably few; and to local committees of progressive doctors who investigate every cancer death in their counties, thus bringing into sharp

"Mend this for me, will you, Kate? I've got to wear it tonight. 'By."

The Elected One

In every family there is one child, sometimes a son, usually a daughter, who seems to be elected Burden Bearer. When she is young she is the one who is told to mind the baby and to forget the games going on outside the gate. As she grows older her mother, finding her more dependable, more helpful than the others, turns to her in emergency and more and more responsibility comes to rest on her shoulders.

Sister flits through the picture gayly, with no demands made upon her. She too, leans hard on Kate, the Elected. "Mend this for me today, will you, Kate? I've got to wear it tonight to the dance. And give it a press when you've finished with it so it looks fresh. 'By."

Brother, rushing off to the game, calls over his shoulder: "I'll be bringing Jane home, maybe Bill and Cutie too, after. Have a couple of sandwiches ready, Sis, with plenty of insides in them."

After a moment of irritation, maybe a voluble complaint to Mother, Kate mends the frill and presses the dress and between chores manages the platter of sandwiches for the after-the-game snack. Why doesn't the Elected One rebel? She does—but the stage is set against her. Mother needs her help and depends on it. Father looks so tired when he gets home and is so distressed when he has to listen to complaints that he can do so little about. Now and then he says a sharp word or two to the heedless ones but that is as far as it goes.

"Now," asked the Elected One, "is this fair?" No. It is not fair, it is not just; but, Kate, you may just as well know now that there is no such thing as justice in this life. And a good thing too, for if justice were meted out to the selfish, the heedless, the stupid, none of us would escape.

There must always be one who bears the burdens for the others. That one is bound to be the richer, the better for the experience. "He who loseth his life shall find it." Service may be galling at times but every difficulty overcome adds strength to the mind and character, power to the personality. It results in authority and leadership. Life belongs to those who use it most. In that lies the compensation of the Elected Ones.

Fathers and mothers, knowing this situation, should do their best to show their Elected child the love and gratitude due the trust and dependence they enjoy. Such children merit all the love that can be showered upon them. And the selfish ones should be prodded occasionally for their own good. Selfishness eats the soul that harbors it.

BY ANGELO PATRI
ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL RADER

focus the good and the bad in the handling of cancer patients.

Alarm at the annual upsurge in the number of cancer deaths must be viewed in conjunction with (1) America's increasing population, and (2) the broadened life span of the people, which has brought many more of us to the age at which degenerative diseases tend to strike. The cancer mortality rate, when adjusted for different age groups, actually is falling slightly; among women, for instance, the rate has dropped from 127.5 to 121.9 per 100,000 since 1936.

This hopeful picture, true to a lesser degree in male cancer, is due primarily to a heightened awareness among average Americans that cancer can be arrested. The record of the general practitioner in this respect looks less commendable. Today doctors do not appear to be improving their diagnostic technique at the same rate.

A recent survey by Drs. John E. Leach and Guy F. Robbins of New York's famous Memorial Hospital shows that the physician failed to make any diagnosis, gave wrong advice, wrong treatment or none at all, in 27.9 per cent of 500 cancer cases under study. Yet thirteen years ago, in a similar inquiry at the same hospital, the doctor was at fault only seventeen per cent of the time. The less impressive record today is due in part to more difficult diagnostic problems in early cases.

Surprisingly, it is the patient who has made headway in getting to the doctor as soon as the disease flashes danger signals. Only thirty-two per cent of patients in the later study delayed treatment until their condition was far advanced, as compared to forty-four per cent in the earlier survey. But this hardly entitles you to the belief that the average citizen knows more about cancer recognition than his doctor does.

The Memorial Hospital study doesn't claim to be representative of the entire country. A national poll by the University of Michigan showed this year that half of the American people wouldn't know a single cancer symptom if they felt one! Another twenty-five per cent know only one symptom, and a bare three per cent are aware of four symptoms.

Nevertheless, the conclusion reached by Drs. Leach and Robbins indicts at least a segment of the medical fraternity: "The hope of making an appreciable reduction in cancer mortality lies with the individual physicians. . . . The average patient is improving, *i.e.*, reducing the delay, whereas the physician has not made the progress the public has a right to expect. . . . The culpability of the physician has increased appreciably. . . . The means of reducing morbidity and mortality due to cancer are at hand now. They remain to be used."

Doctors who slip up in their diagnosis usually are guilty of giving their patients an incomplete examination. When the Leach-Robbins survey is broken down into the various types of cancer, the negligence of some practitioners looks even more astonishing. Superficial lip, skin and tongue cancers, which most doctors catch easily at the begin-

ning, were passed over in 19.8 per cent of such patients. Detectable breast cancers, half of which were visible, were dismissed in 17.8 per cent of the cases as benign growths which needed no attention. The worst showing was among the more serious types of cancer—lungs, stomach, kidney, bladder, upper rectum and colon—which were missed at first by the doctors in 48.5 per cent of their patients.

Of these results the Memorial Hospital survey said, "Many physicians are still unaware that early cancer in a relatively inaccessible part of the body can imitate a wide variety of functional and benign disorders. The old saying 'more is missed in medicine by not looking than by not knowing' is particularly applicable in the diagnosis of cancer today."

The tendency of some doctors to classify a patient's trouble with a slipshod examination is often the reason why many cases prove inoperable or have only a slim chance of recovery after they reach the hospital. For instance, a brilliant Memorial Hospital surgeon told me how stomach cancer can be mistaken for ulcers. Let's say the patient has chronic indigestion, tires easily and has lost interest in his food. The doctor prescribes a diet, tells the patient to report in a month. As it happens, the diet does give the patient some relief, and the doctor is satisfied with the response to his treatment, happy that it has reinforced his diagnosis. Then comes the relapse.

Three weeks later the patient returns complaining of periodic abdominal pain, and now the physician begins to make the kind of examination the patient was entitled to seven weeks before. The doctor X-rays the digestive tract, finds a lesion in the stomach wall and, if the possibility of cancer still escapes him, he may still believe the patient is suffering from an ulcer.

One or two more weeks may pass before he refers his patient to a specialist—and a cancerous growth is found. Is such a delay serious? Well, Dr. Charles S. Cameron, medical director of the American Cancer Society, told me, "Stomach cancer is a surgical emergency. A few weeks may well mean the difference between success and failure in the operating-room. Indigestion of innocuous source should clear up in about two weeks of treatment."

Another example of how symptoms can mislead the unwary physician came to light recently at the famed Mayo Clinic, where 444 cases of bowel cancer were studied. The specialists, tracing the histories back to the neighborhood doctor, found that 102 of these patients had been incorrectly treated because the symptoms—irregular bowel habits, difficulty in elimination and blood-spotted stool—happened to be identical to those of other sicknesses, including hemorrhoids. No special instruments or above-average skill were needed to make an accurate diagnosis; the failure was due to a lack of cancer-consciousness.

The same sort of diagnostic error is sometimes made with rectal cancers, which may go unheeded when they are associated with hemorrhoids and produce rectal bleeding. Some doctors never

examine the rectal passage or pelvic region unless the patient specifically complains of discomfort. One physician told me that his patients were amazed when he included these simple procedures in a general examination. But the reputation of this physician soared when, in the first year of his practice, he detected three unsuspected rectal cancers.

Breast malignancy is among the easiest to find, yet it accounts for about one-fifth of all cancer deaths in women. Usually the patient delays; but the Memorial Hospital reports that at least half of the doctors who were mistaken in their diagnosis of breast cancer discovered small painless lumps which they advised their patients to ignore.

No physician worthy of his degree will adopt a wait-and-see attitude when he feels a tumor or dimpling in the breast, or any retraction of the nipple. He will look-and-see within a few days of his discovery. He knows that the only foolproof method of determining whether cancerous cells are on the march (or whether the lump is a harmless fibroid tumor or cyst) is to have a piece of the suspected tissue examined microscopically by a skilled pathologist. This is called a biopsy—the clincher in diagnosing most kinds of cancer, although in some deep-seated internal growths an exploratory operation may be done to get a specimen of the tissue.

When breast cancer is localized—that is, has not spread to some other organ—removal of the breast by surgery yields the most favorable results. But many women, upset at the prospect of losing a symbol of their womanhood, wonder how many breast operations are done unnecessarily—just as tonsils, adenoids, appendices etc. are cut out by unscrupulous surgeons.

Five renowned cancer specialists assured me that, if anything, the radical mastectomy is not performed often enough. A few well-intentioned surgeons, with limited experience in the cancer field, are content to amputate only a small part of the breast. The patient may be grateful that she came out of it unmaimed—until the cancer recurs and spreads to the lung, as many metastasizing breast cancers do. At this late stage the hope of a cure is lessened drastically.

Since early diagnosis holds more immediate promise than research activity in the offensive against cancer, thousands of "well" men and women flock yearly to the nation's 240 cancer-detection centers, where they get every known check for the disease. Cancers are found in approximately one per cent of the cases, nearly always in time for successful treatment. Although the need is being met in some areas by a program of office examinations sponsored by local physicians, hundreds more of these clinics are needed before they can make a sizable reduction in cancer mortality.

The American Cancer Society suggests that you inquire of your doctor and local health department whether such a clinic or program might be established in your own community. Many towns are large enough to support one.

The control of cancer must necessarily be a co-operative undertaking between the patient and his doctor. The entire responsibility cannot be placed on the overburdened practitioner, who is preoccupied with dozens of different ailments and, according to medical statistics, sees only four cancers a year among the hundreds of patients he examines.

The University of Michigan poll indicates that the American people are woefully unaware of what they can do to help themselves. To counteract this sort of "cancer-ignorance," three specialists—Drs. Frank E. Adair, James Ewing and Burton Simpson—have drawn up a layman's checklist of danger signals which, if followed regularly and faithfully, can save thousands of lives. Here it is:

1. Watch for any persistent lumps or thickening, especially in the breasts, lips or tongue; about the neck, armpit or groin.
2. Look for any irregular bleeding or discharge from any natural body opening.
3. Progressive changes in the color or size of a mole, wart or birthmark are worth checking with a good doctor.
4. Sores that don't heal within ten days, especially about the tongue, mouth or lips should be checked. The same applies to white patches inside the mouth or on the tongue.
5. Note persistent hoarseness, unexplained cough or difficulty in swallowing that lasts more than two weeks. Don't ignore blood in the sputum.
6. Never try home remedies for chronic, unexplained indigestion after meals, particularly if you've had little distress from food before.
7. Note alternate periods of constipation and diarrhea, with no change in diet to account for it; also rectal bleeding and difficulty in urination.
8. Watch for a sudden loss of weight and unaccountable fatigue.

Self-examination should never lead to self-diagnosis; it cannot replace a check by a reputable practitioner. Some internal tumors give no hint of their presence, no pain until they've reached a perilously late stage of growth. That is why a complete health examination once a year—every six months if you're over forty—is a minimum precaution against cancer. Don't permit any doctor to get away merely with tapping your knee with his little rubber hammer, taking your blood pressure, and sliding his stethoscope once lightly across your chest and back. The shame is that some ostrich-minded patients do not want a more elaborate examination because they fear what the doctor may find. Too often false modesty prevents them from removing their clothes, an essential prerequisite to a routine check for any serious malady.

The capable physician, partly guided by your own observation of symptoms, goes over the skin surfaces from head to toe and examines closely any warts, black moles, unhealed scars, breast lumps and indentations. His sensitive fingers, quick to pick up abnormalities you may have missed, will also pay attention to the glands of the neck and armpits. The lips, tongue, cheeks, tonsils and pharynx will be inspected for ulceration, the larynx for hoarseness and the lungs for habitual coughing. Suspicious-looking ulcerations probably will be biopsied, and any uncertainty about the health of the lungs will be investigated with an X-ray picture.

Careful examination of the abdomen by touch and deep manual pressure will detect any change in the normal size or character of those internal organs which can be felt. The doctor will determine, by what you have told him and by what he feels, if additional tests are needed.

The pelvic region, seat of many cancers in women, will get an especially painstaking examination: the cervix, uterus and ovaries will be felt for any unusual swellings or tumors. Ideally, a vaginal smear will be taken and sent to a pathologist for analysis; and if it happens to show cancerous cells a biopsy will be performed before diagnosis is final. The doctor will double-check for early cancer of the rectum. By manual examination and the use of a simple instrument called the proctoscope, the doctor will be able to feel or see any obstructions in the rectal passage. Finally, he will take a blood test and ask for a specimen of your urine for analysis.

Man's eternal optimism puts faith in an eventual sure-fire cure for cancer, but that admirable human quality should not prevent men and women from fighting cancer now. Meanwhile, fundamental research never stops. Millions of dollars are spent every year to support the scores of cure-seeking medical centers, laboratories and individual scientists.

A few recent hopeful leads: An extract made from mandrake root, used not long ago by a physician to treat a wart, came to the attention of the National Cancer Institute in Washington. Experiments indicated that the stuff checks cancer in mice. A Chicago urologist developed sex-hormone injections to the point of moderate success in slowing down prostate cancer in men. Three separate research teams, believing that a virus may cause breast cancer in mice, hope one day to develop an immunizing vaccine for breast cancer.

But America's foremost medical authorities warn that we cannot afford to wait for the absolute cancer cure. Every year the cost of the disease is staggering in both monetary and spiritual terms—in loss to industry, reduced incomes, in pain to the stricken, and in heartache to their loved ones. But through militant use of the weapons we have today the layman and the doctor are offered a better chance than ever before of catching cancer before it kills.

. . . THE END

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Prelude

—BENNETT

(This story is continued from page 31)

It was surprising how quickly she had learned to read music. But she did a lot of things that surprised you. When you decided to make an outdoor girl of her and took her for walks through the woods, she always wanted to hurry home to play the songs of the birds on the piano. You took her fishing, and the part of it she enjoyed most was the sound of the water running over the rocks.

"Why," she said, "it sings a regular little tune!"

You took her to a night baseball game, but she went to sleep, her small head warm against your shoulder. You took her to a football game, but at the half while you were talking with old college friends, she slipped away from you. You started to search frantically for her, and then you saw her. Somehow she had found her way to the field and was dancing along behind the famous university band, stealing the whole show. That was when you gave up trying to make her into something different from what she really was.

"How do I look?" Peggy asked, posing in the bedroom doorway.

She wore a long blue dress that matched her eyes. There was a pink bow at her throat, and a corsage of pink rosebuds. There was color in her cheeks. The freckles across her nose had disappeared under a generous application of powder, and her leggy awkwardness seemed no longer a part of her.

He rubbed his eyes in mock astonishment, and said, "Judith, who's this strange young lady in our house?"

Judith chuckled; and Peggy said, "You know who I am. Do you like my new dress?"

"You bet!" he answered. "You look good enough to eat!"

They arrived at the church fifteen minutes before time for the recital to begin. Peggy and Judith went into a little room that opened out on the platform where the piano stood, and Ray found a seat in the back.

He was surprised to see that quite a few people were already in the church, and he was further surprised as the room steadily filled. He guessed that Judith must have done considerable high-pressuring to get so many to come.

He opened his program and read through the list of numbers. Mozart, Bach, Chopin, Liszt—he knew next to nothing about music. For years, he'd been hearing Peggy hammering away on the piano, but he hadn't paid much attention to what she played. A man who ran a bank had other things to think about. Of course, it was different with Judith. She understood music and loved it. She—

Someone punched him in the back. He turned around and saw the doctor grinning at him. The chubby little man hadn't changed much in the last twelve years.

"A great night for you, eh, Ray?" he said.

"What are you doing here, Doc?" Ray asked.

"My wife said that if I didn't come, I'd really miss something," he answered. "I've heard a lot about how well your girl plays."

"Hope you won't be disappointed," Ray murmured. "Of course, she's no Heifetz, but—"

"Mr. Heifetz," the doctor's wife said quietly, "is a violinist."

"Oh," Ray said, and turned around quickly.

He glanced at his watch and saw that it was almost eight-fifteen, and for the first time, began to feel nervous. This was quite a crowd for anyone to face, let alone a twelve-year-old child. He began to sweat. He ran a finger around inside his suddenly too tight collar.

"Poor kid," he thought. "She'll be scared to death. Probably forget all she knows. Can't understand why Judith would let her in for something like this."

He suddenly realized people were watching him, and he stopped squirming. He wished this business was over. He wished he'd gone to the ball game. Never should have given in to coming here to—

The door in front opened, and Peggy stepped into the lights. A flutter of polite applause arose, and she smiled.

For some reason, she looked taller than he remembered her. In fact, she looked quite grown-up, and certainly very charming, and if she were frightened, she didn't show it.

She sat down at the piano with an assurance that astonished him. She sat very still, waiting for the room to become quiet, and for a panicky moment, he was sure that she couldn't remember how her first number began. Then she leaned forward a little, lifted her hands, and began to play.

For the first time in your life, you are hearing your child play. Of course, you have heard her thousands of times before, but this is the first time you have listened with your entire mind. Always before, you were reading the paper, or thinking about business, or wondering if tomorrow would be a good day for golf.

Her skill amazes you, and like all the others, you fall under her spell. You marvel that such a small head can hold the memory of so many notes. That those long, slim fingers can find the right keys so easily.

The number ends with a great burst of sound. Applause thunders about you, and you see people smiling and nodding their approval. So her playing was as good as you thought. Even better. What do you know, you think—the kid's really good! In fact, she's quite wonderful!

She smiles and bows, and you try not to look too proud and pleased. She sits down carefully, smoothing out her long blue dress, and waits until the room grows quiet. You find yourself tensing. Perhaps the next number won't be played

as well as the first. After all, you can't expect too much from a child.

But the second number seems to go as well as the first, and you find yourself relaxing and falling under her spell again. You lose all track of time. You soon give up trying to follow the program, for you realize that some of the numbers are encores, but you're not quite certain which are and which are not. The music goes on and on, clear-toned, lovely, touching you, warming you, making your eyes blur.

But now, something seems to be wrong. Your child has left the stage and has closed the door behind her. People are stirring and beginning to talk. Startled, you lift your head.

"**Quite a girl** you have, Ray," the doctor said, holding out his hand.

"A marvelous performance," his wife smiled. "You've every right to be proud of her."

People came toward Ray from all directions, hemming him in. They shook hands with him, and his close friends slapped him on the back.

"Congratulations," they said; and he stood there, smiling, trying to look modest, and saying, "Don't congratulate me. I didn't have anything to do with it."

"Oh, yeah?" Pete Marlend said. Pete was president of a grain company and, next to Ray, the best golfer in town. "You're her father, aren't you?"

"So what?" Ray said, grinning at Pete, remembering that Pete had two boys and feeling a little sorry for him because he didn't have a daughter like Peggy.

At last, the crowd thinned out, and he strutted toward the front of the room, where Peggy and Judith stood. He slipped an arm about Peggy's small shoulders and gave her a hug.

"It was a wonderful recital, baby."

Her blue eyes sparkled up at him. She was pleased and proud because of his praise, but she was still a child.

"I'm hungry," she said.

As usual, Grayson's was crowded, and many of these late diners had been to the recital. They smiled and nodded to Peggy as Ray led her to the table reserved for them. He held her chair and pushed it forward for her—something he hadn't done since she had been a baby.

Some of her friends came over to the table to congratulate Peggy on her playing. Ray watched the child anxiously, thinking all this praise might be a bad thing for her. But he soon saw that there was nothing to be alarmed about. Peggy was happy and excited about all this attention, but at the moment, her main interest was in food, and she was worried about the corsage.

"It's kind of wilting," she said, "and I wanted to wear it to Sunday school."

"It'll freshen up," Judith assured.

Ray watched the child as she ate. Strange, he thought, but he had never noticed before how well-mannered she was. Or how grown-up she acted. Then it struck him with shocking surprise that he was considering her for the first time as an individual, rather than someone who was a part of his own life. Why, Peggy didn't really belong to him and Judith. She belonged to herself. She was a personality apart from all other personalities. She had her own ideas and secret thoughts and dreams, and there was no way of knowing exactly what was going on inside her.

They drove home in silence, for now tiredness had caught up with Peggy, and Ray and Judith seemed to find little to talk about. By the time he had put up the car, locked the garage, and finished his cigar, Peggy was ready for bed.

She kissed him good night sleepily, and said, "Gee, that was a swell dinner!"

Soon after that, Ray and Judith went to bed, but he could not sleep, for there was a new kind of restlessness in him.

Suppose you had been a great ballplayer? Suppose you had built racing cars? Suppose you had made the All-American team? Suppose all your dreams had come true? What then? You have no answers to these questions, for the roads your life might have taken are closed, their ends shrouded in mystery. It is the road which you did take that has importance and meaning.

This road gave you Judith. It made it possible for there to be a blue-eyed, brown-haired child with strong, quick fingers and a fine, sensitive mind. The why of it is beyond your understanding, but you do know now that you would not change the pattern of your life if you could.

Of course, you'll go on playing golf and watching schoolboys kick an old football and wishing you were outdoors when you're shut up in an office. But never again will you feel cheated. You are proudly satisfied and humbly grateful for being what you are and for having what you have.

Judith, Ray knew, was sleeping soundly. He could tell that by her quiet, even breathing. Carefully he arose and tiptoed from the room.

The light burned in the hallway and threw a pale glow into Peggy's room. She, too, was sleeping soundly, her small face turned toward him, one slender arm curled beneath her dark hair.

Quietly he drew a chair up close to her bed. For a long time that night, he sat there, watching over his child, smiling, marveling at the wonder of her.

... THE END

His Father's Secretary

—GREER

(This story is continued from page 47)

For a man who had flown home to see a girl—*another girl*—Ken Farwith certainly behaved strangely all through dinner. The only excuse Julie could find for him was that this was a rehearsal, that he was using her for an understudy, and that, she thought, was a technique she had not seen employed before by a Farwith. Then why—

By the time they sat back, drawing deeply on their cigarettes, Julie had stopped asking why—or caring. She was simply savoring it with her coffee.

"More coffee?" Ken asked.

She shook her head. "No—one cup is enough for me."

"Me, too—another difference between me and the Old Man—"

Why, she had actually forgotten about him!

She pushed back her chair. "Hadn't we better be going? This has been fun, but you probably have a lot more important things to do tonight."

"I'll say I have!" He said it with fervor. "Come on!"

The Lakeshore Boulevard was a circuitous route on which to take her home. A dead-end offshoot and a parked car headed straight for Canada was even more so.

Ken turned the ignition, then the light switch, before he faced her.

"Julie—look at me!" A new impelling note in his voice—or had it been there all the time?—a passionate vibrance. "*Help me!* For a girl who's supposed to be the best secretary in town, you've a lot to learn when it comes to love—"

"Lo-ove!" she gasped, her heart playing havoc with her vocal cords. "You can't mean—" She was learning fast.

"I mean I've given up—I've been trying for three years to sell myself on the idea that I hadn't fallen in love at first sight with Pop's paragon yes-girl! I even tried playing the field in the hope that I'd find a girl all my own just as good, but it was no go! *You* were the one—*the only one*, Julie, darling—"

"I—I guess I've been trying to sell myself something, too," Julie murmured. "I didn't, though—"

Julie Farwith wouldn't have believed the time could pass so quickly just being a housewife. She and Ken were so terribly in love, so blissfully happy. Mr. Farwith had been marvelous to them—setting them up housekeeping in a lovely apartment, presenting her with a car of her very own, as what he called a bonus wedding present.

Naturally, he had to be the first guest they had to dinner after the curtains were hung and the intricacies of the stove under control.

Putting the last touches to the table, Julie unaccountably developed butterflies in her stomach. Not, she assured herself, on account of the meal—she had planned a simple menu which had been successfully accomplished. Then why—it wasn't the first time she had dined with Mr. Farwith—

He and Ken arrived together.

"Hiya, baby!" Ken called. It was one of a dozen ridiculously inappropriate terms of endearment he used for her. She adored them—the crazier, the better—but tonight, somehow, with Mr. Farwith to overhear—

"Good evening, Julie." Merely a time-concession to his routine office "Good morning."

She held out her hand. "Nice to see you—" Try as hard as she would, she hadn't been able to master the "Pop." Only recently had she managed to leave off the "Mr. Farwith." "Let me have your hat—"

"Mmmm—smells good," Ken filled the breach. "I was telling Pop you're the best cook in the State of Ohio—the *best-looking*—"

"Everything's ready, Ken—if you want to mix a cocktail for—for your father—"

"I need one, all right!" Mr. Farwith said. "I've had a hell of a day. That girl you dug up, Julie—she's driving me crazy!"

"She was very highly recommended," Julie murmured absently, her mind reverting to the roast. She'd better turn the oven off, in case they lingered too long over their drinks. "Can't she read her notes?"

"Sure she can—the trouble is, she never knows what to say, unless I tell her word for word! And worse than that, the little fool is *scared* of me—she's actually cried twice—over nothing—"

"Oh, she'll get used to you when she's been there a while—"

"I don't see that I'm anything to get used to," Cyrus Farwith grumbled. "I wish you'd go in and have a talk with her; you should know how to knock some sense into her. Drop in tomorrow—"

"**T**omorrow I have my laundress," Julie said. "I'll do what I can, though, as soon as I can."

"I've got a board meeting, ten to eleven, tomorrow; that would be a good time—"

"Hey, toots, I thought you said you'd sliced an orange! Where—"

"Excuse me, Mist—a minute!"

It was like that all through dinner, Mr. Farwith bringing up something about the office or the mill, Ken interrupting to talk about her and her housekeeping, Julie swaying like a weathervane from one to the other.

She thought, as she set a piece of the really professional lemon pie before Mr. Farwith, that she should have had a gelatine dessert. Not that he wouldn't like the pie, but it would make it all the harder for his jittery secretary tomorrow. She'd have to try to find time to explain to her—

Mr. Farwith hadn't eaten all his pie; he had even left a few drops of coffee in his cup—which meant, of course, that there was something which rested not quite comfortably on his mind.

Julie thought: He'd be happier if I were holding a pencil instead of a fork, if I had a typewriter beside me on the table instead of a coffeepot, if—oh, it's just another time when he doesn't know what to say—*to a daughter-in-law*—when he's depending on me! And I've let him down. I don't know what to say, either—*to a father-in-law*—

Then, suddenly, as though in direct answer to a vital need, it came to her. She lifted the graceful silver pot, tilted its long slender spout. She asked, "How about another cup of coffee—Pop?"

He gave her a look, which was probably as close as Cyrus Farwith ever

came to a grin, as he held out his cup. He said, "Very good coffee—*my dear*—very good indeed!"

It was as though a reconversion—a factory retooling process—had been accomplished overnight. The wheels now turned as smoothly as before, except that they operated a bit spasmodically. And only in emergencies, when Pop got in a jam with the sort of work he couldn't trust to any one of the chain of secretaries he had in Julie's place, did he call on her.

Ken was the wheel which began to need a spot of oil occasionally.

He grumbled, "Funny to me, you didn't marry the Old Man in the first place—the way you two have of seeing eye to eye! The way you still jump when he crooks his little finger!"

"He never crooks his finger—he pounds his fist!" she managed lightly. "And I wanted to marry *you*, darling, from the very first sight—the very first letter, I believe now—"

She would have worried a little about Ken from time to time, if she hadn't known that he had always been high-strung and had a restless temperament. He didn't talk much about his job at the plant, but she kept having the feeling he still didn't like it. She tried to reassure herself by admitting that all readjustments took time and patience, that you couldn't expect someone like Ken to develop into a solemn, single-track superexecutive overnight — she wouldn't want him to. It hadn't been a year—

Very nearly, though—

Julie was glancing over the headlines of the morning paper two days before their anniversary, while she waited for the custodian of the apartment building to come to take drastic measures with the stopped-up sink, so that she could wash the breakfast dishes, when the phone rang.

It was Cyrus Farwith. He came straight to the point: "This is an S.O.S., my dear. I have an important conference today with a customer from South America—just discovered he's brought his wife along. I wish you'd come right down and take her in tow, for shopping and lunch and—oh, you'll know what to do with her!"

"Why, I—" she began, then stopped. An insignificant bit of grease in a sink drain wouldn't interest Cyrus Farwith. "Why, yes, Pop, I'll be glad to—"

Julie's shoes were too small for her feet, and the car's gas gauge registered "empty," when she finally said good-by to the señora at her hotel at five o'clock. She had incipient laryngitis from seven hours of being a guidebook, and she had a growing feeling of frustration ever since she had called Ken's office directly after lunch, only to hear the suave voice of the switchboard operator saying, "Mr. Kenneth Farwith will not be back today."

Gone? Where— If he had been going out of town, surely he would have told her. Had he gone home ill? She had called the apartment twice during the afternoon in a panic of anxiety; there had been no answer.

She was in such a hurry to get home, that she forgot she had intended to pick up a steak and some rolls and the makings of a quick salad for dinner.

As she hurried up to the apartment door, she heard voices. Ken was home and had the radio on, she was about to sigh thankfully, when words, which no soap-opera heroine could possibly be uttering, came out to her: "But, Kenny, darling, *you owe it to yourself!* You can't go on like this forever!"

"Bee is right." A man's voice, now—not Ken's. "You may as well make a clean break—"

"Bee—break! Break—Bee—" The two syllables pounded against her senses, like the strident *tum-tum* of a persistent tuner on a pair of flat piano keys.

With enough pressure to blow up a bank vault, she turned the lock.

"Julie—where were you?" Ken sat facing the door, came toward her the instant she opened it. "I've been paging you all day—"

"Ever try calling your father's office?"

"Sure, I did—*first thing*—but that Gladys is such a bird-brain—well, never mind—come on in and meet some swell people—" He actually had his arm around her, when *only a minute before*—"You've heard me speak of Tink Ewing, the well-known newspaper editor! And this is his wife, Charlotte. And of course you've met Bee—"

—and talked to her plenty of times over the phone, before I met her, the hussy! Julie seethed. Aloud she murmured, "Oh, yes—nice to see you all—sorry I'm late—hope you've been making yourselves at home."

Obviously they had. All the ashtrays were overflowing, glasses were deposited at random with and without coasters, newspapers and sheets of scratch paper full of figures were strewn around. It occurred to her that without doubt they'd all been in and out of her kitchen, enough times certainly to have noted the unwashed egg cups—and the thought did nothing to mitigate the turmoil inside her.

"Certainly a nice place you have here," Tink Ewing's wife was saying amiably. "Up in the wilds where we are, we were lucky to locate an abandoned farmhouse—"

"But Char did all right by it!" Tink put in proudly. "That's what you call a helpmeet! And that reminds me," —he took a look at his watch—"we've got to be making tracks to it this minute! We'll be driving practically all night as it is. You can't go off and leave a printing press the way you can a cushy office —especially when you're shorthanded—"

"It's been great seeing you, Tink," Ken said. "You, too, Charlotte—I'll run Bee home when she's ready—"

"It won't delay Tink and Char two minutes to drop me off." Bee seemed to sense—as she should have!—that Julie wanted her out of her house—and fast!

"Ken promised to bring you up to see our setup very soon." Tink Ewing turned again to Julie. "So I hope—"

"Sure—we'll come," Ken cut in. "I'll drop you a line—"

A **line** to let Tink know *what he's decided*—Julie required no special clairvoyance to fill the gaps. A line—*on paper*—because Ken knew—they all knew—that, to bring it out in the open before his wife now would cause a scene —a too-realistic soap opera of domestic dialogue—

As soon as Ken came back from seeing his guests to their car, he began it: "I swear, hon, I've been trying to get in touch with you ever since Tink phoned me around eleven that they were in town. I rang you here, then called Pop's office on a chance that he'd know your whereabouts—he was doing busi-

"Skip it. I have changed my mind."

ness with some foreigner on the golf course, and that vague Gladys 'guessed' you were out shopping—"

"I was—part of the time," Julie murmured.

"I'd told Tink I'd bring you along to lunch, so naturally he brought Charlotte and—"

"—and Bee," Julie supplied caustically.

"No—not Bee!" Ken's dark brows telescoped into a straight line—reminded her for the first time of his father's. "Charlotte took their car and dropped around to see her—they went to boarding-school together, it seems—while Tink and I sat on and on in Patucio's, talking shop. So naturally I had to tell Charlotte to bring her along when I said Tink and I would meet her here—"

"Oh—naturally." Julie picked up her cue, all the while thinking fearfully, Is this really Ken and Julie Farwith? The honeymooning lovebirds in Apartment C? It can't be—

"I tell you I only brought them out here *to meet you!*" he shouted at her. "I thought surely you'd be here by that time—I wanted them to see how lucky I was—what a prize I'd drawn!"

"What a millstone around your neck, you mean! What a ball-and-chain!" she flung back. "Oh, you may as well know I *heard* them—before I opened the door! They were all condoling with you—telling you you owed it to yourself to make a break—calling you—"

"Oh—that!" A wave of sheer relief swept over Ken's handsome flushed face, washing away the incredulity and anger. "Why, they weren't referring to you, hon—they were talking about my job with Father. They remembered that my year was nearly up; they were urging me to cut loose—"

"And are you?" She held her breath.

"I don't know yet—I'm tempted. Matter of fact, that was the reason Tink made the trip down here—he's found that this paper he's bought has potentialities for expansion he never suspected, that it's too big for one man to handle, so he wants me—"

"Ken—you can't!" Desperation supplanted Julie's anger. "Way up there in the wilds—when all the Farwith interests are here!"

"*Pop's* interests—not *mine!*" he argued. "Let him have them—"

"He'd have a stroke—simply die—"

"Better to die of a stroke than from an occupational hazard," he muttered. "But I might have known I couldn't talk to *you* about it—couldn't make *you* understand—any more than I could the Old Man. You're still his yes-girl, always were, always will be—but, oh, hell, come on—let's go out and have something to eat—there doesn't seem to be much around here!"

"There isn't," she admitted. "I didn't have time to do any of the things I'd planned to do today—I spent the whole time showing the city to the wife of Pop's customer. And if you think it was *fun*—"

"I think it's your life work—that's all! But come on—let's eat!"

She said dully, "I'm not hungry—you go."

She couldn't have told how long it was she sat there, scarcely moving a muscle, after he had slammed the door behind him. How long she sat there thinking—listening, rather, to a jangling bull-session of voices in her mind.

One of them cracked pointedly. Remember the play—what play was it—which ended with the slamming of a door?

Certainly, I remember. But this isn't the end, she told the suspicious prying voice. He's merely gone out to eat his dinner—the way his father used to go out for a cup of coffee. He'll be back.

He'll hold me in his arms and kiss me. He'll apologize for losing his temper and he'll ask me how much I love him and I'll say "More than anything." And I'll ask him, and he'll say "More than anything." And we'll kiss again—and everything will be all right. And he'll forget this crazy idea of helping Tink Ewing run his paper—he *had* forgotten until Tink came down here to stir him up. All Tink cared about was Ken's money in it—if I talk Pop into putting some money into it, that will satisfy everyone.

It satisfied her—a brilliant idea—but it didn't satisfy that nagging voice in her mind.

It shrilled shrewishly, So your husband will come crawling back with apologies and kisses! But what about *you?*

She answered patiently, Me? Oh, I'll kiss him—I'm very affectionate—he never complains about that. And I'll apologize, too—for the dishes in the sink, for being jealous of Bee and ungracious to the Ewings, for flaring up because my feet hurt—

And for what else? The voice persisted devilishly.

Why, for nothing else! What else is there?

What about being out all day with the señora?

Well, what about it? I could have been wasting my time gossiping over the phone or at a silly bridge club. I was only helping Mr. Farwith out—only doing my duty—my—

She leaped up suddenly, piled the ashtrays and glasses onto the tray, walked briskly to the kitchen. The custodian had done a good job with the sink, it seemed—the hot water ran in and out like a miniature Niagara; she liked the pace of it, the sound, the feel. She turned on the cold for an instant, when the dishes were done—it felt good, too.

She hung the damp towels on the rack with a long sigh of satisfaction—something else, less tangible, more vital. She didn't put it into words—she didn't need to—she *knew*, though—

"Julie—darling—where are you?" Ken called from the front door. She could tell by the husky vibrance in his voice that it would be the way she'd thought it would be.

"Here I am—"

He swung her around as she was taking off her apron. "I couldn't swallow a mouthful—I've been such a heel, hon—forgive—"

"Hush—I was the one!" She put her hand over his mouth. "I have something important to tell you—"

"So have I—"

Neither had time to say anything more, before the phone rang.

"I'll get it," Julie said. She had a hunch it would be Cyrus Farwith.

It was.

"You did a great job today, Julie!" he cracked into her ear-drum. "The señora was crazy about you—I promised you'd take her in tow again tomorrow—"

"Tomorrow? Tomorrow is out, Pop—I have an important engagement."

"Then break it—who is it with?"

"It's none of your business—" She looked around at Ken, saw that his mouth was hanging open in mingled bafflement and consternation. "It's none of your business, Pop, but I'll tell you! I'm going on a little business trip with my husband! We're going—"

"But he hasn't any business out of town—what the dev—"

"Oh, yes, he has! I mean *we* have—we're buying a newspaper! While he's closing the deal, I'll spend the time house-hunting. I'd like an old farmhouse, or a barn might—"

"Julie—have you lost your senses?" This was Ken shouting in her other ear. Mr. Farwith for the moment was struck dumb.

"No, dear—just *found* them!" She pushed him away gently, but firmly.

"I thought he had this cockeyed journalism bug out of his system," Mr. Farwith found his voice then. "I thought *we* knocked it out of him, once and for all, when—"

"You mean when he married me—your Girl Friday?"

"Sometime about then," he hedged gruffly.

"The catch is, I've just discovered I'm *not* your Girl Friday, or any other Girl-of-the-Day or -Week! I'm Ken's wife—and I don't give a hoot about your interests—only his—now and forever!"

"Why—why—" She didn't need a video hook-up to know that his trick brows were a steel gray line, that his steel-blue eyes were sending out a shower of sparks. "Why, you little—"

"—hussy!" she finished. It slipped out naturally, relieved the tension.

"You're not going to buy a newspaper with *my* money!" He made a last stand.

"Of course not! With Ken's—*and mine!* All the money I saved being your yes-girl—"

"Stay right there—I'm coming over!"

"Sure, we're staying, but—"

He had hung up.

Ken's arms were waiting for her. He pressed his hands hard into her soft shoulders, turned her toward him.

"Look, hon," he began earnestly. "It was a swell gesture and I'm bursting at the seams with pride that you care that way about me. But it's too much to ask of any girl. I like my job fine—I swear I do—that's what I was going to tell you—I have a lot of advertising copy to write—ideas to work out—in time, I'll probably like it a whale of a lot better than getting out a dinky news sheet of my own—"

"You won't—you have typewriter ribbon and printer's ink running through your veins, and I know it! I've always known it—but I've been too darned soft and spoiled to admit it. Pop had me sold on the idea that *you* were the one hell-bent on having your own way—but *I'm* the one really—*he and I both*—"

"Darling—you're terrific!"

The phone rang again.

Julie nuzzled her nose into his coat collar, murmured, "Let it ring!"

"Oh, the Old Man's not such a bad guy—"

Ken picked up the instrument.

She could hear her father-in-law's voice as though it were in the same room.

Then Ken's answer: "Sure, she meant it! She's my wife, isn't she? The darned best wife—" He whispered to Julie, "The Old Man wants to talk to you again."

And she whispered back, "You talk for me, darling—you know what to say."

... THE END

Roses Speak Louder

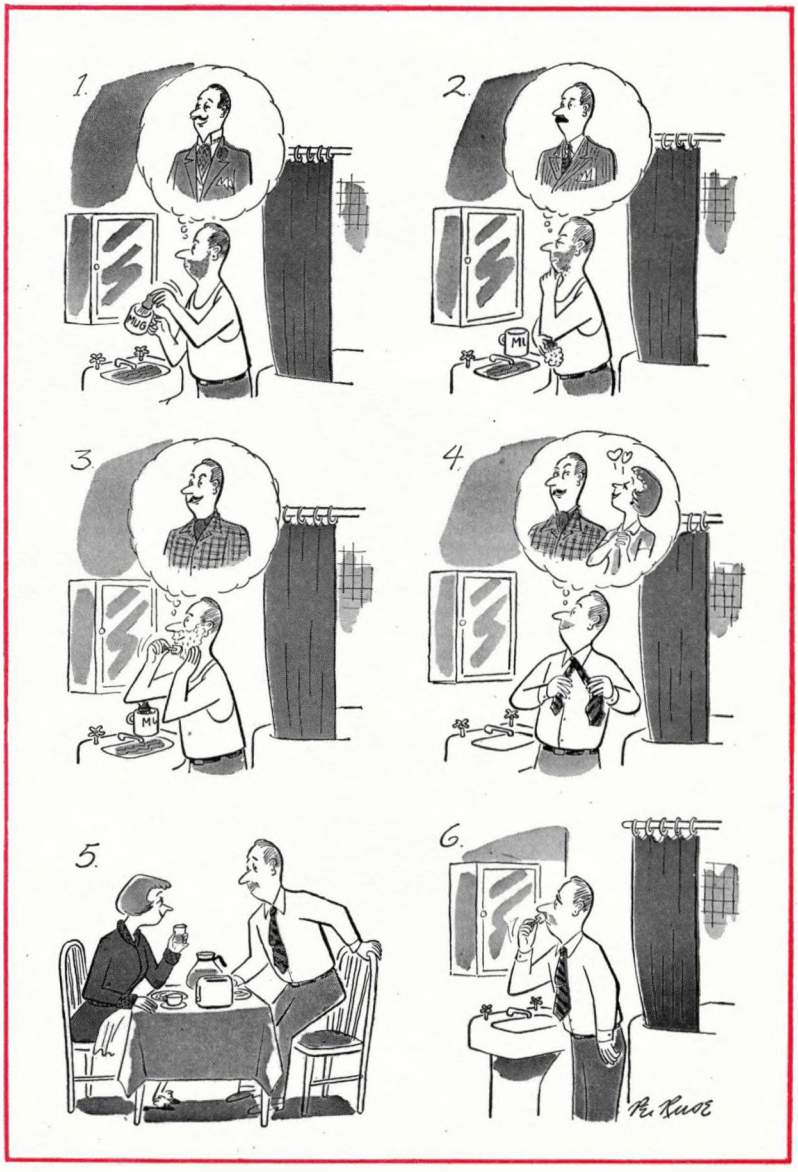
—BEIM

(This story is continued from page 37)

had ever known intimately. The show was a musical, good fun, and afterward they went to a small night-club and danced. And laughed, laughed as she hadn't in ages, over such silly things, as only two people well adjusted to each other's moods and temperaments can.

When he took her home she knew he would have liked to be invited into the apartment to chat a bit. But she merely said, "It was so nice. Thank you, Mel, and good night."

He seemed amused; there was a



challenging look in his eyes. He said, "Perhaps we'll do it again sometime?"

"Perhaps. Maybe next time we can make it a foursome. Connie, and I'll bring someone—"

It was unkind of her; she knew that. But she felt the little dash of cold water was good for him—and for her, too.

She had dinner with him again the following week. Not by accident this time. She told herself she would have accepted anyone's invitation, because she was so depressed. The market had taken a slump and several orders for decorating had been canceled. By the end of the evening he had her laughing again.

It became a habit, his dropping into the shop, his taking her to lunch, to dinner. And one evening he was invited into the apartment to chat. He sat beside her, in front of the fireplace, his long legs stretched out, his dark eyes searching her. He said, suddenly, quietly, "We never should have been divorced, Allison."

Her heart contracted. She did not answer him. She sat there, staring at him. Was this what she had wanted him to say all the time? Was this why she had allowed herself to see him again? Had this hope always been alive in her heart?

"I love you, Allison; I'll always love you!" His arms were about her now; he drew her close, his lips on hers. All that had been dead within her kindled to life again. She clung to him desperately, knowing now that she would always love him.

"Allison, I'm not happy with Constance. I need you. I'll get Constance to divorce me, we'll remarry—"

"Mel, you don't know what you're saying!"

"I know that we belong together, you and I. I know that I'm lost without you. You love me, Allison, don't you?"

"Yes! Yes!" she cried. "I love you, Mel!"

"Then what's to prevent us from marrying again—"

"I don't know. Except it doesn't seem right to juggle lives around—your life, my life, Constance's life. I don't know, Mel." She looked at him, dazed, bewildered. "I—I can't think now. You must go—"

She could not sleep that night; she was shaken, stunned. She lay in bed, staring into the infinite darkness, trying to think, to work things out. Should she go back to Mel? This much she knew—that she wanted to be with him again, to enjoy life as only they could enjoy it. But there were other things to be considered. Her work was important to her; she knew that now. And if she had not kept Mel happy, contented, before, what made her think she could now?

By morning she did not reach any decision, and the day was such a hectic one she did not have time to think. In the afternoon Frances came to see her, chatting about many things—Russ, her luck at bridge, of the baby that was coming soon. Allison wanted to tell her about Mel, of Mel wanting her back, but thought, no, this was something she must work out for herself.

Mel came to the apartment that night, as she thought he would, and still she did not know what she would say to him. He came flushed, laughing and happy, and the sight of him warmed her very soul. What was she fighting against? She did not know. Why didn't she tell him, right now, that she would marry him again; she would start over with him again, because she loved him, because they needed each other?

He brought her flowers, dozens of exquisite roses.

"Mel, you shouldn't have been so extravagant!"

"For you, why not?"

She put the flowers in a vase and set them on the mantel. She looked about the room with pride. How lovely it was with its pale walls, the blinds down, the candles flickering.

"I thought we'd go out for dinner, Allison—"

"Oh, no, let's stay here. I'll fix something—"

"All right; it would be nice. And may I use the phone a moment?"

"Certainly. You know where it is, don't you? In the hallway."

She checked up on dinner, and coming into the living-room to set the table, she heard Mel's voice. He was saying, enunciating carefully, "Will you repeat the address, please? Yes, that's right. And now the message, 'Cannot make dinner. Don't wait up for me. Love, Mel—'"

When he came back into the room he smiled and said, "I've charged a wire to your phone, Allison. I'll pay you—" and then suddenly, staring at her, "What's the matter, Allison? Has anything happened?"

Her eyes met his. She steadied her voice and laughed lightly, nervously. "Why, no, Mel. Nothing has happened. We're about ready—"

They sat to dinner facing each other before the fireplace. Mel was animated, telling her about something that had happened during the course of the day.

Now, across wires, a message would be flashing CANNOT MAKE DINNER DON'T WAIT UP FOR ME LOVE MEL, *and it would be delivered neatly typed on a yellow slip of paper to a woman who sat waiting. The woman would read the wire and would believe it, because most likely it was the first time she had ever received such a message. But they would come again and again. . . .*

"It was really funny," Mel was saying. "And I told him—"

Allison saw the tall roses on the mantel, and suddenly she was smiling. Mel thought she was smiling at his story. But she smiled because in those roses she saw her answer.

She saw that Mel liked complicating his life, that he liked the adventure and intrigue another woman afforded him.

She knew what it meant to be his wife and what it meant to be the other woman. She could make her choice.

She would have him as he was now, at his best, an amusing companion, making such an effort to please her. She would keep the shop, the work she loved so much, and she would even have him help with her financial difficulties.

She would stay here, not as his wife, but as the woman in his life. To receive roses rather than wires. . . . THE END

It's Time to Plan that Fall Wardrobe!

Don't hesitate. Every girl starts with one good, faultlessly tailored suit in a fine fabric. And two if it's possible. After that she chooses separates. Practical, wonderful, interchangeable separates. Each one shown here collaborating with the other to make a big wardrobe at a minimum expenditure

LEFT: **Your special suit** tailored by Handmacher in Miron's "Winesap Red" worsted gabardine. It has fashion's high pockets, gently curved hipline, slim skirt. Wear as shown for daytime, or soften with a pretty blouse and dressy jewelry for dates. Sizes 9-15, 10-16. About $60. Dajon hat; about $16. At Lord & Taylor, New York; Marshall Field & Co., Chicago; J. W. Robinson Co., Los Angeles.

RIGHT: **Daytime into evening** in five parts designed by Toni Owen. Cardigan jacket ($12.95) shown over sleeveless princess-line dress of Crompton velveteen—turn the page to see how the dress goes to a party; blouse of Wyner's wool jersey ($7.95) tops a Shamokin plaid wool worsted skirt ($16.95). Jacket, blouse, and skirt together make a colorful suit. Sizes 9-15. At B. Altman & Co., New York; Marshall Field & Co., Chicago; Ransohoffs, San Francisco.

BY RUTH DRAKE
FASHION EDITOR

PHOTOS BY HAL REIFF

Here's that princess-line dress by Toni Owen of Crompton velveteen in forest green or gold. Versatile neckline; flaring skirt. Sizes 9-15. $22.95. Matching velveteen stole lined in Shamokin plaid; $10.95. At B. Altman & Co., New York; Marshall Field & Co., Chicago; Ransohoffs, San Francisco.

"Mix 'n' Match" sweaters in quick-drying Nylo-Fleece (65% nylon; 35% wool). By Jantzen. High fashion colors: dubonnet, blue, brown, amber, green, lemon yellow. Sizes 34-40. Long-sleeved cardigan; $11.95. Short-sleeved pull-over, Kent collar; $8.95. At Bloomingdale Bros., New York; Mabley & Carew Co., Cincinnati.

Little "fake fur" jacket simulates broadtail. By Ciro Sportswear. Trimly fitted, it has a collarless neckline and high-placed pockets. Colors: gold, navy, rust, and green. Sizes 10-16. $19.95. At B. Altman & Co., New York; Mabley & Carew Co., Cincinnati; Titche-Goettinger Co., Dallas.

Casual suit in wonderful weight, crease-resistant wool flannel. By Sacony. Green, gray, fawn, royal, black. 10-20. $25. Madcaps beret. Glentex scarf. All at Bloomingdale Bros., New York. Suit and scarf at Higbee Co., Cleveland.

"Go-Everywhere" coat of pure wool chinchilla; interlined. By Ciro Sportswear. Gray, navy, red. 10-18. $45. Pleated skirt. $12.95. B. Altman & Co., New York; Mabley & Carew Co., Cincinnati; Titche-Goettinger Co., Dallas.

"Yes, ma'am. How did you wanna finance it?"

Surrender

—FORREST

(This story is continued from page 21)

Airily, she said, "On my personal yacht."

There was the bleakness in her; and she knew he could see her unsureness, and that it made him feel easier and not yet rejected.

"Where," he asked, "is the dough for this yacht?"

"I'll save my lunch money," she said.

He meditated. "Maybe if I tossed in my pittance . . ." And in a moment they were off, on a miraculous tour of the globe.

They talked on, and the sun moved. The conversation covered amazing miles of gayety and conjecture. Its basic serious dream was only partially concealed by their light touch.

All at once Judith felt that she knew youth's immortality, too, and that all they spoke of was possible, if you just waited and let it happen—

And when the illusion came, she understood she'd found the emotion Robby had hoped to give her when he bought this house as a surprise, when, expecting to gain her whole heart, he drove her here after their honeymoon; past the diminutive pine forests, past the fields of sprawling dunes, to the sight of the sea and the spaces of the horizon.

"I thought you'd like it here," Robby had said proudly. "I thought it would —well, meet something that's within you. Something that's been caged up too long!"

That day (that seemed so long ago, but was not) when the roadster came to the crest of the hill south of the house, Robby had said, commandingly, "Stand up, Judy, so you can get a good view of your kingdom!"

She rested her arms on the sun-warmed edge of the windshield, and the ocean air brushed her cheeks with soft color.

The windows of the house shone. It was as if there were golden beacons inside. And the house stood in aloneness on the brink of the sea.

"Oh, Robby, darling," she cried, "it's glorious!"

She was filled with wonder that he should understand. The wild and barren poetry here seemed foreign to him.

Hand in hand, they went through all the rooms, probed each closet. She would not wait until they finished unpacking to explore the grounds; and she put on her flowing dirndl and leather sandals, and they walked along the beach toward the gray rocks.

Judith stretched her arms toward blue and golden space; the sea smelled of brine and coolness. Judith knew she could expand here, and forget the cramped emotions of the past, and the tiny shadowed rooms of her loneliness.

She chattered on, and Robby listened with a smile, but he had nothing to add. And then she looked at him, and for some reason he did not seem to fit here, on the endless beach in the ocean music.

He stopped a moment and balanced himself while he tidily emptied sand from his shoe. He still wore his gray suit, and there was a neat three-cornered handkerchief in his lapel pocket. They walked on, and misgiving came to her, a shy child of regret.

Misgiving was routed by an impulse to run against the wind, toward the hard stones and the wild blown spray—

"Robby! If you beat me to those rocks, you can treat me like a brute! And if I beat you, I'll kiss you madly!"

She laughed and ran. It was good to feel the muscles of her legs stretch, to feel the warm blood in her body, the air scalding her lungs.

I'm alive, she thought; I'm so alive —I'm strong!

But when she looked at Robby's face as she ran, she saw he was concentrating on their game as seriously as if it was an office ledger; and something winged and free slowly left her.

They came to the rocks, and Robby took his reward for winning. His kiss was tender, but it was not the kiss one would expect beside the rough stones by the sea when her heart beat like the pound of the surf; when twilight was curving around the sides of the world with odd colors.

Quietly, "Shall we go back to the house?" she said.

Robby lifted his shoulders, as if there was a weight he didn't understand and could not remove.

"It's—it's lovely, Robby—" she said, contrite.

"I'm glad."

They went back to the house. While she prepared supper, Robby made a fire in the fireplace. Wind came coldly now from off the ocean. The murmur of the ocean was deep-throated.

Through broad windows, as they ate, they could see the banners of afterglow; and the legions of dark followed, and the sea vanished to wait for the moonlight, but its rumbling was there with them.

It was better after supper; Robby was more at home here in the heavy leather chair by the fire. She sat on his lap; there was a wine-glow inside her; and, watching the fire, she imagined there was a slow dancing flame deep within her.

Robby put his arm around her. The firelight made designs on the walls and ceiling. Robby's thin arm was strong and protective around her.

Robby said, "I wasn't any good at the game. I'm sorry."

"It doesn't matter," she said: it didn't seem to now.

"I've been caged up too long, too," he said, "in my own way. But maybe after a while I can learn, just as you seem to. It's strange—I can feel things through you, I can try to help you . . . but I can't help myself.

"Do you know why I first wanted you," he asked, "why I knew I would love you? It seemed to me when I first saw you in the office that we were comrades who had gone along somewhat the same route and would be able to

understand each other. I could tell that you'd been sick and that you were physically better, but that part of you was still lost. I—I wanted to make your cheeks shine, and your eyes smile—"

As he spoke she saw the rooms of her illness, the windows through which only odd gleamings of life filtered, the brush of leaf, the golden laughter of youth. She met again the enemy who'd banished her to the hills of pain for four years.

She saw also the rooms of poverty in which Robby's sensitiveness had grown, the stifled houses of his longing, which had bred rebellion that somehow remained as stunted as they.

"I'm sure I can make you happy," he had told her once when they confessed their exiles; "I'm sure that if you marry me we can discover how to live the way we want to!"

"I—I would like to," she had said. "But I can't tell you I love you. I don't know. . . . I'm afraid."

"I'm willing to take the chance," he said strongly. "And if I fail I won't cry traitor! Only—maybe some day you'll be able to tell me you love me. I'm glad it isn't something you could say only because I would like to hear it."

They had married, and soon, as months went by, contentment stole upon her, and when she realized it was there, she was ready to accept and desired no change.

But one day she met Tommy, and he recognized her, too, but in a different way than Robby had. And, most important of all, she knew that Tommy was the one she would have loved, without doubting, if the chance had first been given.

"Judy," he said now as they sat by the rocks, "we've had enough of this kind of talk, haven't we?" Maturity welled up from the springs of his love and determination; and she could tell the game was over, and something else must begin.

Hand in hand, they walked back toward the house. There was a silence between them, and within it the future was being molded. He let her know his thoughts by pressing her fingers with his, and Judith responded. The sea spoke in commanding monotone. The high blue air contained its own persuasion, transmitted in its beauty and endlessness.

Yes, she thought, it is time to make a decision; and loyalty waned beside the power of her need. And it was simple to find cause to leave Robby, even though it would be the most difficult thing she had ever done, even harder than the long struggle with her illness. But how could she expect to make Robby happy if she was not completely happy? How could things be the same between her and Robby now? He knew, just as she knew! If she denied Tom, a specter of what might have been would forever be present.

They stopped below the house, still hand in hand. They looked out over the water, as if they scanned the vista of the life they were silently forming. She felt the touch of his fingers, and there was a reality to that touch. She was supremely conscious of herself, because she was so conscious of Tom standing beside her.

Tom spoke, his voice heavy, as if he spoke after sleep: "You're going to tell him?"

And her voice was as sleepy with dreams, and in her eyes was the reply before she answered:

"Yes. I'm going to tell him."

Now the words were spoken. She imagined that the low-voiced commitment rolled out over the sea in long intonations and could be heard at the ends of the earth.

Tom gently swung her around. He took her in his arms against him. There was a rush of feeling within her. Her arms slid up around his neck, feeling the warm strong flesh.

Here, then, was the flesh and reality of all she had wished: the dream standing strong against her, belonging to her. And she knew this was not just a dream of love—but was love itself. She was tasting it slowly—with appetite that had grown in the slow years when her womanhood came to her timidly in empty rooms.

I am young, and Tom thinks I am beautiful.

His lips were coming close. She waited for his kiss.

And then, beyond him, she saw the light flashing on the blue sides of a car parked beside the house. In the

same instant, her glance drawn, she saw the pale glimmer of a face behind the broad windows of the house.

Robby! her mind told her, as if the word exploded.

She stiffened in Tom's arms. His expression changed, and he looked at her anxiously.

"Judy?" It was Tommy's voice, but she thought she heard its echo coming down past the roses from the house, low and quiet and filled with the same pain she had known so long.

"Judy?" he said; and she could not answer.

The pale face turned from the window, but it was still there in her mind; and not just Robby's face, blurred by the glass and the stain of the sunlight crossing it; but her face, too, pressed against bright glass in the shadow of a room, staring out at youth holding hands in the light, against the ceaseless call and roll of the sea.

Something was happening to her. It was as if Robby were standing naked in heart before her, and she could read the stark outlines. It was as if she saw herself in Robby, and found it hard to tell them apart; because in their nakedness of the spirit they were the same.

She was drawing back from Tommy, although he tried to hold her. She was looking at him, and now he was not as familiar as before. The pale half-seen outline at the window carried more reality than the strong planes of Tom's face. Beyond his features, laden now with a sudden fear, she could see nothing. It was as if she looked upon light alone and could find nothing of dimness, shading or change.

"No, Tommy, please, no—don't—"

But in a dumbness of appeal, and not because of fierceness or frustration, he would not let her go. His fingers were fixed upon her arms. She struggled against them. Then, with an abrupt motion, she pushed him away, and he stood mute before her.

Now that she was released, gentleness came through her, for Tommy, for Robby. "Oh, my dear, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, dear—but, Tommy, I can't. . . . I know that now.

"I do love you! But I love someone else more. I can see now what I always knew, and must have taken for granted. He found me, created me—the girl you can love. He understood me because the same things had happened to him. He helped me, and it was up to me to help him. But I didn't."

She contemplated him with gentle eyes, and in them was a wisdom that hadn't been there before.

"I would have loved you more a long time ago," she said. "I know that time has come between us. But it hasn't come between Robby and me . . . it brought us together. My dear," she said softly, "do you understand?"

He was struggling with himself. He did not want to answer. But he did, nodding assent. Dismal light in his face perceptibly brightened, and his resiliency came to help him. There was a wry grin on his lips. And there was affection in his eyes, hidden in the silent healing of his laughter.

"Do you understand?" she repeated.

He nodded again, and his grin was soft as tenderness around his mouth, and his maturity was clear in his eyes. "I know you love him," he said. "But I don't know why. I knew you loved him as soon as your expression changed. I saw it—everything between us—vanish, as if someone had brushed a beautiful picture off a sheet of glass, and then both of us could look through it and see another picture. And for you, at least, it's a better one."

They stood together there a while. Judith felt the sadness come, because he, too, was wiser, and it was her fault. She wanted him to be the same as he had always been, until time brushed clear his window as it must; but not yet. But it was too late now; it was done. There was no immortality, even of illusion. There was the valley of time, and within it were certain mansions, and once you lived in their walls you could never be free again.

"Good-by, Tommy," she said.

He stood before her; the grin was gone. He looked at her a long time. He gave her a gay little salute of the hand.

"Good-by, Judy," he said.

She walked up the wooden steps, and came to the flagstones. She went to the trellis where the roses blushed. Their sweetness seemed to enter her and become a part of her. Carefully, she selected a rose. She held the rose against her, and entered the house.

Robby was in the shadow at the rear of the room. He coughed when she came in, and then there was no sound but their breathing.

"I pretended I was coming home because I was sick," he said. "But it wasn't true. I came home to make you choose. That is the way I want it to be —now—"

She went to him. She took his hand. She led him to the windows where the light played. The air from the endless sea was a song on leaves. The ocean sang, too, in its undertone.

She handed him the flower. And he took it and looked baffled a moment. He looked into her face. He saw there things he had longed to see, and they were alive and sweet on her face. Then he understood the rose and held it to his nose and smelled its sweetness.

In the pale tired lines of his face, the figure of youth awoke. Judith thought she could see it arise. She thought she could see it reflecting the sun's brightness.

She saw the phantom of Tommy's grin, arching and triumphant, there on Robby's face. She knew suddenly that in her heart she held the figure of all men, their sadness and their gayness, their love and their passion. She held all men of her dreams and her desire—and she held them by her love for one!

"I love you," she said.

The sound of the ocean. She heard the voices of contentment once more. Above them, she heard the repeated tale of the future, and its story was good.

. . . THE END

Ice Cream in Party Dress

ADAMS STUDIOS

Frozen custard dresses for dinner in a trio of party toppings. Butterscotch with chocolate sauce. Peaches with almonds or brandied cherries are super sundaes.

BY BERNICE BURNS

A **pretty girl** is lovelier with a flower in her hair. So does our most popular summer dessert take on glamour when it appears in party dress. Ice cream is lent enchantment by a spoonful of sauce and a dash of imagination.

Keep on hand the ranking favorites in sauces: Chocolate and Butterscotch. Make a super sundae by pouring butterscotch, then chocolate over pecan-laden ice cream. (We stole the notion from that lush "turtle" candy.)

Scoop ice cream into ball. Roll in chopped nuts or coconut, and serve with sauce. Stick spears of almonds into surface and surround with sliced peaches.

Chop and sweeten the dark fresh cherries. Soak in a tablespoon or two of brandy or sherry. Serve on ice cream.

Make your ice cream or buy it—but serve it in style!

● FROZEN CUSTARD

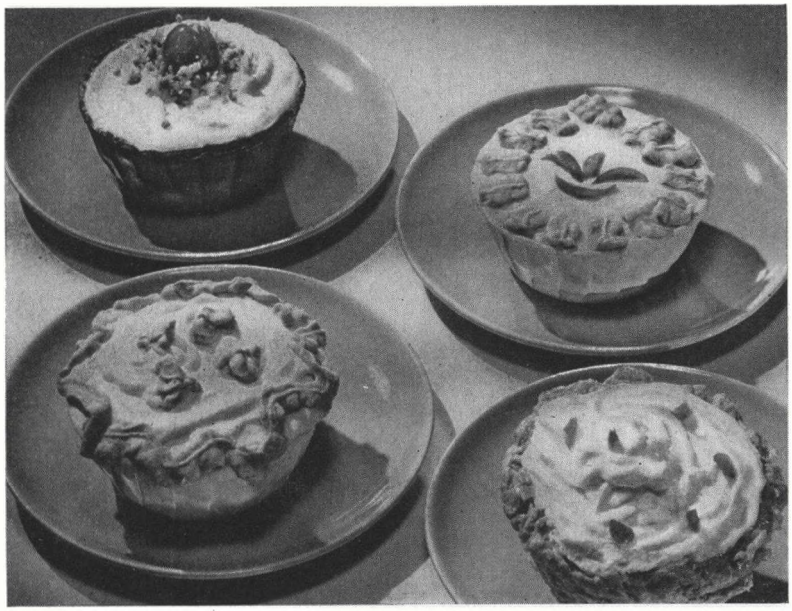
Mix in top of double boiler:
⅓ cup sugar
1 teaspoon cornstarch
Combine:
1 beaten egg yolk
Add: **1 cup milk**
Stir thoroughly. Cook, still stirring, until slightly thickened. Cool in ice tray.
Beat: **1 egg white**
Whip: **1 cup heavy cream**
Add: **1 teaspoon vanilla**
Pour cooled custard onto cream and fold in egg white. Pour into ice tray. Freeze quickly, beating mixture once or twice with a spoon. Serves 6 (or 4 teen-agers).

● CHOCOLATE CREAM SAUCE

Mix together in saucepan:
¾ cup sugar
1 tablespoon cornstarch
Add: **2 tablespoons corn syrup**
¼ teaspoon salt
Pour in:
1 cup hot water
Add: **2 sq. chocolate, chopped in bits**
Cook, stirring well, until mixture comes to a boil and thickens. Remove from heat.
Add: **1 tablespoon butter or margarine**
1 teaspoon vanilla
Beat until smooth. To keep on hand, cover tightly. Refrigeration unnecessary.

For other recipes turn to page 80

Ice Cream in Party Dress—*continued from page 79*



Magic Mousse acquires glamour plus flavor in a chocolate or cornflake shell. Frozen in paper dishes, a design of leaves or garlands adds a party air.

● BUTTERSCOTCH SAUCE

Combine in saucepan:

¼ cup butter or margarine
¾ cup brown sugar
¼ cup corn syrup
⅓ cup milk

Cook until thickened (325°). Or until a drop in cold water will hold shape (not quite soft-ball stage).

Decorated ice-cream tarts can be bought in wondrous designs. They can be easily made too, if you've a roomy freezing compartment in your refrigerator. Swirl in the filling with a pastry-tube, or add leaves and flowers to the surface.

● MAGIC MOUSSE

Beat until stiff: **2 egg whites**
Fold in: **¼ cup sugar**
Whip: **1 cup heavy cream**
Add: **1 teaspoon vanilla**

Combine with egg whites. Freeze without stirring.

PARTY TARTS: Freeze mousse in paper dessert dishes. Decorate with nuts, candies, cereal or macaroon crumbs, candied fruit. Tint portion of mousse and decorate top, using pastry-tube.

CHOCOLATE TART SHELLS:
Melt as directed on box:

1 pound "dot" or dipping chocolate

Pour generous tablespoonful into pleated paper dessert dish. With knife spread a smooth layer of chocolate over inside of dish. Fill with mousse. Freeze firm. Loosen paper around edge, unpleat. Pull off gently.

CORNFLAKE SHELLS:

Melt over hot water:

3 tablespoons butter
½ pound marshmallows

Stir until melted and syrupy.
Add: **¼ teaspoon vanilla**

Beat thoroughly. Pour into buttered bowl:

5 cups cornflakes

Add marshmallow mixture and stir briskly. Oil individual custard cups and line with cornflake mixture. Fill with mousse. Freeze. Run knife around edge to remove shell from cup. Makes 4.

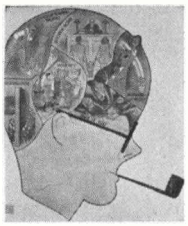
PARTY PARFAITS: Fill parfait glasses with layers of mousse or ice cream, alternately with sauce, berry-jam, sweetened fresh fruit or chopped nuts.

Tip for New Cooks

Refrigerator Ice Creams should be quickly frozen to cut down formation of icy crystals. Turn control to "Fast Freezing" until mixture is well frozen. Turn back to normal to store ice cream until served.

Why They Fall for Communism

—BLIVEN



(This article is continued from page 33)

High School, Seattle. I could name many more.

I hope I do not need to argue at this late date that this is a serious matter which urgently requires attention. All the strength that democracy has exists inside the heads of the people who live in democratic countries. If their faith is being eroded away, for any reason, democracy in the long run is a dead duck.

There is no reassurance in the argument so often heard that the Communists at present are only a small minority of the population. It is true that the party members and fellow travelers together (and there is little real difference between the two) probably number not more than one million and perhaps substantially less. But this argument assumes that the only real danger from Communism lies in the possibility of a violent revolution sometime in the fairly near future. On the contrary, the real danger lies in the possibility that the Communists may be winning the battle of ideas in the mind of American youth —and winning it largely by default.

Moreover, even in mere power terms, the Communists are more important than their numbers—about one in a hundred adult Americans—would imply, for these reasons:

Since there are very few Communists among the elderly, the concentration is almost certainly much more than one in a hundred among the younger and more active elements in the population.

The proportion is far higher than one in a hundred among college undergraduates and recent graduates, who are an important and influential group.

It is enormously higher than that in the leadership of influential trade unions, and in certain key communication industries, such as newspaper and magazine editors and writers, college professors, and creative workers in radio and television, motion pictures, and the like.

Communists have been working in certain key industries where they could exert maximum damage as saboteurs in case of a war between the United States and Russia. Such sabotage was actually practiced during the early days of the Second World War, when Russia and Germany were still allies. Communist leaders called strikes in plants making war materials for the Western powers—strikes which went beyond legitimate trade-union grievances to attempts to hinder output of military goods. (This historic fact has tended to be obscured because, after Germany went to war with Russia in June, 1941, the Communist leaders reversed themselves and made

every possible effort to speed up production.)

Clearly, then, we are faced with a problem of enormous importance. Why is it, when the world is divided into two camps, the democratic and the totalitarian, that many thousands of Americans, exposed fully to our democratic system, supposedly taught democracy at home, in school and elsewhere, deliberately repudiate the traditions and culture of their native land, to adhere to an alien culture and tradition, one which rejects contemptuously almost every moral standard which the average American considers important, one which has as its chief spokesman a country now engaged in a bitter, world-wide struggle with the United States?

Communists, of course, have their own answer for this question. They will say that Communism is the hope of the world; that it offers the only prospect of bringing about the brotherhood of man; that all other theories of human behavior are sordid and degraded, and that therefore every reasonable and magnanimous person, once he has any understanding of Communist doctrine, is certain to embrace its faith.

But this theory can readily be proved to be false. If Communism appealed to people solely on a basis of logic and intelligence, it would reach a far larger proportion than one in a hundred, and especially since the entire one hundred are brought up in substantially the same cultural pattern. (And I am not forgetting how much stronger emotion is than reason.) Perhaps it would not in that case convert the entire one hundred, but it would certainly appeal to seventy-five—or fifty—or twenty-five. The fact that only one in a hundred accepts the doctrine shows very clearly that the conversion is the result of *something in the individual, and not something in the doctrine.*

What is that something?

For light on this subject, I have recently been talking to a number of the leading psychiatrists and sociologists of the United States, who have discussed the question freely with me on the understanding that they would not be quoted by name.

As most people know, psychology in general and psychiatry in particular have made enormous strides in recent years. Collectively, these experts have accumulated vast knowledge about all types of mental disturbance and their physical consequences. As a result, thousands of people are today going about the daily tasks of living who, only a few years ago, would have been left as more or less incapacitated lifelong mental and physical invalids, a burden on themselves, their families and their friends.

The leading experts in this field whom I have consulted are unanimous in saying:

> That, certainly, the reasons which make one American in every hundred repudiate Americanism and engage in a secret conspiracy against the prevailing culture of this country are varied and complicated. It may easily be that in any one individual, some of these causes might not apply, or would be far less or more influential than in others.
>
> But that with this qualification, there is no doubt that in the overwhelming number of instances, the American who today turns against the cultural pattern in which he has been reared is displaying definite neurotic symptoms.
>
> That some of these symptoms, and the situations which cause them, are susceptible to medical help.
>
> That in practically all cases, if we could apply what is now known about mental illness to the upbringing of children, literally from birth, the great majority of these symptoms could be avoided.

This does not mean for one moment that we should not do all we can to cure the social and economic ills by which our society is afflicted. Poverty is an important conditioning cause toward the emotional situation which turns an American boy or girl toward Communism. So are discrimination and segregation on grounds of race, color or religion. Only too often, our political democracy is ineffective, or is partly nullified, by our failure to accompany it by economic democracy. We must do everything in our power to reduce and eliminate these evils.

Yet it remains true that since at least ninety or ninety-five out of every hundred brought up in poverty and discrimination do not, even if exposed to Communism, turn to it as the answer, we must look for the reason, in the case of the others, within the individual himself.

What are the factors which make for neurotic personality, and how does it happen that the neurotic personality sometimes turns to Communism for the answer?

These factors are associated with conditions which cause in the individual, and usually very early in life, doubt and fear about his own security and his place in the only group he knows—his family. The psychiatrists have learned in recent decades, in the very hard school of close observation of many thousands of patients, to attach enormous importance to the need for love in the child, beginning literally at birth. The baby needs the repeatedly demonstrated love and protection of both mother and father. He must not, if it can humanly be avoided, be exposed during the period of infancy and childhood to any doubts about the solidity and stability of his home.

In every family which has more than one child, it is natural and inevitable that the parents should have favorites. They should, however, do everything they can to keep the children from knowing of this; a sense of being rejected can do the child enormous harm. When his security is damaged, he may overcompensate for it by coming to have a too passive dependence upon one parent or the other. Unconsciously, he knows this is wrong and tries to free himself

from it, but (without outside help) in vain. As he grows older, he can symbolize his problem into a rebellion against society itself. His passivity and desire for protection can become a wish for surrender to a totalitarian state which undertakes to solve all problems, to do all his thinking, for him.

Insecurity can arise from any one or from several reasons. A broken home can do it, in which the parents are divorced, or one or both of them are dead. Great poverty and economic uncertainty can have the same result; the child, seeing his parents worried because the father has lost his job or fears that he will do so, imagines the situation to be even more serious than in fact it is. He can grow up with feelings of anxiety easily producing in him a notion that the prevailing organization of society is unendurable and must be changed. In many individuals, not only Communists but political liberals and progressives of all sorts, this lies back of what is popularly called "a Messianic complex," a feeling that the individual has somehow been elected to "save the world." (I am not suggesting that the world doesn't need saving, which it obviously does, but only that these individuals react excessively as regards their personal responsibility and as to the time schedule.)

Another common factor in the psychology of the radical is a general feeling of guilt, not applied to any particular situation. Most people know by now that the moral standards of Western civilization put a pretty severe strain on the normal, instinctive human animal. Practically nobody ever lives up to these moral standards 100 per cent, and most people are able to shrug off their failure without letting it get them down. But this is not true of everyone. A certain proportion of small children, bitterly reproached by their parents for doing what they shouldn't, develop a morbid sense of guilt. They are ashamed not only because they sometimes do what is wrong, but even of wrongful wishes, however sternly and successfully these wishes may be suppressed. The resulting sense of guilt can be driven down into the unconscious with harmful results. One of them may be a sense of inadequacy which is often compensated for by an attitude of superiority. (The Communist Party, of course, gives the individual a chance for the *direct* release of his aggressions, with the approval of his associates.)

The child who finds himself in a world of insecurity, doubtful of the love of one or both parents, perhaps dethroned by a younger brother or sister, shaken by economic vicissitudes which he is too young to assess at their proper importance, can respond with abnormal aggressiveness or with too much submissiveness, or for that matter by alternating between the two attitudes. He is quite likely to carry over into his supposedly adult life an infantile desire to leave all important decisions to someone else, to surrender his personality to some other, stronger individual, or to accept some faith which offers a simple, clear-cut explanation for everything.

Whole nations can develop this sickness of the soul; the Germans did it when, morally damaged by their defeat in the First World War, they made a "father-image" out of Hitler and a way of life out of the ridiculous yet vicious Nazi philosophy.

There is no doubt whatever that many American Communists parallel this development. They find in Marxism, what no non-Communist ever does, the solution for everything. They find in Stalin a father-image to take the place of the actual father who, for any one of a dozen reasons, may not have fulfilled his normal rôle in their development. If Stalin were to die, they would without any serious difficulty substitute a new father-image, the individual who succeeded him.

The young man or woman who joins the Communist Party renounces the necessity of making any more decisions for himself except at the lowest level. The Party tells him where he shall live, how he shall earn his living, and almost literally, how he shall spend every minute of his so-called "leisure" time. Like the child cradled in his mother's arms, he can lie back and surrender to the joys of passivity which would be no joys at all, but an unendurable ordeal, to one who does not have this particular neurotic personality.

It is no news to anyone, any more, that many people will believe practically anything they want to believe, and that they can be indoctrinated with the most extraordinary nonsense, which then can be canceled only after years of effort, if at all. Hitler's absurd, completely unscientific racial theories were sincerely believed by a very large proportion of all Germans, and as far as anyone knows, are still believed by most of them.

It is not surprising that the American Communists are able, by their skillful and effective indoctrination, to persuade large numbers of bright, attractive young Americans of both sexes of the truth of a picture of the world which, in substantial part, is false. What is more remarkable is that these many thousands, even hundreds of thousands, of Americans can be trained to accept the repeated mental somersaults which are necessary to follow the party line. In August, 1939, Hitler is a fascist beast; in September, he is a "true leader of national socialism," which has many elements similar to those in Communism. And so on.

The psychiatrists can throw a good deal of light on the processes which make possible such mental acrobatics. In general, this mental docility is a sign of infantilism carried over into adult life, of people who have not grown up. This again is evidence of neurosis. Says Dr. Brock Chisholm, Director General of the World Health Organization and in private life an outstanding Canadian psychiatrist:

"Maturity is a developmental process in mentality. . . . A considerable degree of immaturity prevails in large

numbers of people [who show] inability to live with other people, inability to adjust to changing circumstances."

The immature person, in the psychiatric definition, is one who is narrow, rigid, literal-minded, intolerant, unable to face facts—especially facts which do not fit his preconceived mental pattern. Anyone who has ever tried to argue with a Communist, who has bruised his mind against the monolithic rock of prejudice and distortion which takes the place of the reasoning faculty, will know how completely this definition fits. (The Communist, of course, has no monopoly on stubbornness, prejudice and refusal to face the facts. All of us are guilty of these things in varying degrees.)

One of the frightening things about the doctrine of American Communism is its wholesale hypocrisy. Party members are taught to deny their membership. They go under assumed names. In trade-unions and many other bodies they work secretly together for unadmitted ends. They live like spies in an enemy country in time of war—and to some extent that is how they consider themselves. But as every psychiatrist knows, it is a recognized neurotic symptom to consider yourself superior to the moral code of the society of which you are a part. Such an individual readily accepts the idea that he is dedicated to a higher good which sets up its own ethical standards, and that no outsider has the right to challenge his behavior.

While the neurosis of the individual explains a great deal about why young Americans join the Communist Party, this is of course not the whole explanation.

The Communists pay a great deal of attention to selecting recruits for their ranks. There is plenty of reliable evidence that loyal party members are always on the lookout for likely material. Communist college professors and students look over undergraduates; Communists in office and factories study their fellow workers. When a likely candidate is discovered, he is courted and flattered with great skill and care. Often he is taken up socially by a Communist group. Since the Communists in this country do not practice any racial discrimination, this social experience may be enormously important—in the case of a young Negro intellectual, for example, who finds himself for the first time in his life going to a party and sitting in a room with twenty or twenty-five attractive, intelligent white people of both sexes for whom his black skin simply does not exist. (There are also plenty of non-Communist American liberals who are without race prejudice; but they almost never work at it as the Communists do.)

The picture of Communism which the potential recruit gets is, of course, completely different from that which is set forth in the conservative American press. Both are distorted, in opposite directions. Communism is presented by the Communists in the most idealistic terms, as a pure and selfless brotherhood like early Christianity—and, indeed, it appeals to the same qualities in idealistic youth which brought many patrician young Romans into the Christian fold at a time when Christianity was outlawed in Rome and its practitioners were subject to death in the arena. The absence of individual freedom in Russia today is partly denied, partly glossed over as a temporary necessary expedient in the fulfillment of the revolution in a hostile world. So is the demand for complete obedience to party discipline, even in this country.

The Communists tell the neophyte that he cannot believe what he reads about Russia, or American Communists, in the American newspapers. The prospective Communist is then exposed, as far as possible, to the American Communist press, which is exclusively a propaganda mechanism.

In comparison with this highly expert, often sensationally effective, work on the part of the Communists, what do the advocates of American democracy do in the way of propaganda and indoctrination?

The psychological experts whom I have consulted recognize that almost nothing is being done, and some of that is so bungling and incompetent that it quite probably does more harm than good.

They point out that our traditional doctrine of freedom of thought and expression in itself handicaps us in any attempt to inculcate our children with a uniform pattern of ideas, even a faith in the system which most of us believe in—or say we do.

On the contrary, we open the doors to all sorts of ideas, some sound, some foolish, some dangerous.

Broadly speaking, we make no attempt to teach our teachers the meaning of democracy, to teach them to teach it to our children, or to follow up and find out whether they do. Moreover, often we do not give our teachers conditions which justify any enthusiasm on their part toward their and our way of life. While their lot is better than that of teachers in almost all other countries, it is still true that the richest nation on earth pays most of its teachers miserable wages, far below those earned by manual laborers in a dozen trades. Often they have no old-age security in any sense adequate to their needs, and even the little that they do get in the form of pensions has been heavily reduced by inflation.

If **psychologists** are pessimistic about the anti-Communist activities in the classroom, they are even more strongly opposed to the propaganda campaigns put out by various business firms and organizations to try to "sell the American way of life." It is obvious, the psychologists say, that these campaigns seldom are based on intelligent study of the mental attitude of those it is desired to reach, or of the necessary steps that must be taken to reach them. Such campaigns, in general, are calculated to convince no one except those already convinced. While this may be desirable in a limited sense, it completely ignores the main problem by which Americans are confronted: how to keep the Communist Party in this country from getting any bigger; how to prevent further loss of the allegiance of so many of our brightest and potentially best young people.

The following points are made specifically against the bulk of the anti-Communist advertising, speeches, pamphlets and other material:

> That it never answers the seemingly most damning charge leveled against it: namely, that it is put out by extremely prosperous people in favor of the system which has made them prosperous.
>
> That it paints a far too rosy picture of the total situation in this country, omitting many important facts to the contrary.
>
> That much of it is written in a mood of only partly justified complacency, and lacks pledges that the bad aspects of our civilization—of which there are certainly plenty—will be improved.

It is extraordinary, the experts say, that such large sums of money are poured out in regard to such an important matter without any real attempt to find out whether these campaigns are correctly conducted, and are having the effect that is intended. No commercial advertiser, certainly, would engage in such an important effort—or in any effort—without first making a study of his potential market, the "consumer resistances" that may be expected, and, as demonstrated by small trial runs, whether his proposed copy will be effective in overcoming those resistances.

While these criticisms are serious, there is no need for anyone to be defeatist about our total situation. It is only very recently that Americans began to awaken to the idea that democracy needs to be defended in "the marketplace of ideas," as Morris Ernst calls it. We had always taken its superiority for granted; it never occurred to us that it needed to be fought for. It is not surprising that our first efforts should be crude and bungling.

As for the ideas of the psychiatrists, they are beginning to make substantial headway. Thousands of young mothers today have been put on guard about the necessity of making their children feel loved, wanted and secure, and thereby at least partly immune from those hidden anxieties and thwarted aggressions which damage the personality later in life. Thousands of people in addition to mothers are being told how to handle these problems when they arise, at all ages, in themselves or in others.

Our problem can be simply stated. It is:

First, to make our democracy a living reality to the utmost extent and in every possible way, both for stability and happiness at home and for peace abroad.

Second, to teach our children why we think ours is the ultimately satisfactory way of life.

Third, to spread our ideas, by force of example and not by coercion, throughout the world.

If we will give proper attention to these, we may face the future with reasonable confidence. . . . THE END

"I'm Molly Goldberg"

—POLING

(This article is continued from page 27)

has sheared the locks of Rita Hayworth and Beatrice Lillie.

These disparate Gertrudes have in common a great heart, and they prove, conclusively, that the whole is greater than any of its parts. The artist and the intellectual in her has turned to the matriarch for source material and guidance; and the simple, honest sentiment of the matriarch has led the artist, unerringly, along a respected path to success.

Gertrude's latest triumph is, in many ways, her most astounding. When she retired from radio in 1946, to write the play she had been mulling over for twelve years, she had achieved an audience of ten million listeners, and the unique distinction of being broadcast over three networks at the same time. If she hasn't yet reached an equivalent audience on television, it is only because of the scarcity of sets.

Within a month of her television program's inception she was being called "The First Lady of Television," and her show was the talk of the industry. The first telecast of this half-hour, weekly show sent the critics scrambling for superlatives. The third telecast snared a sponsor and, after the sixth performance, a CBS survey gave the show a 56.5 rating. This, in television's scoring system, placed the show at that time in second place behind front-runner Milton Berle, and a few decimal points ahead of third-place Arthur Godfrey.

Gertrude finds all of this particularly gratifying because—irrationality being a major by-product of the entertainment world—she literally had to battle to get even an audition for her show; a situation which parallels the occasion, twenty years ago, when the first radio executive to read her serial script said, "It has about as much entertainment value as the telephone book." Since she isn't unschooled in the technique of network infighting, Gertrude finally got her audition. Present indications are that the life-expectancy of the Goldbergs on the American scene is approximately the same as Gertrude's—and she is a robustly healthy woman.

Many of the factors that served to make the radio show unique have contributed to the success of the television program. Despite the fact that the Goldbergs can now be seen as well as heard, Gertrude insists that her scripts today are in no way different from her old radio scripts.

Actors who were with her on radio explain how this can be possible. "Working for her could be a damn' nuisance," they say. "She had a fetish for realism. She gave you so much stage business to do that you frequently had to memorize your lines—for radio, mind you—because you didn't have time to turn the pages of your script. You were acting all over the studio, for the exclusive benefit of a sound engineer and a janitor. If the script called for the sound of eggs being broken into a frying pan, you broke 'em—while the sound-effects man relaxed. If *Rosie* was supposed to have her hair shampooed, Gertrude filled the air with flying lather. It was really great stuff."

This meticulous attention to detail and insistence upon fidelity is, of course, one of the main reasons the Goldbergs are so completely believable and convincing.

Gertrude has always done her own casting, and she is as insistent upon typecasting as she is upon the realistic performance of all stage business.

One of radio's classic stories concerns, the time she wrote a villainess into a script, describing her as a blonde, Southern girl. Dozens of candidates auditioned for the rôle. Some were blondes, natural or otherwise; some spoke with a Southern accent, real or simulated, but Gertrude would have none of them. As associates wearied of the search, they pointed out to her the obvious fact that the radio audience would only hear the girl's voice. Gertrude was unimpressed. She clings to the belief that she can't write really satisfactory lines for an actor to speak unless the actor actually resembles the character she has in mind. At last, a deep-South, genuinely blonde villainess was found.

Gertrude, to whom everyone quickly becomes "Darling," soon became friendly with the girl, and, some three or four scripts later, it was noticed that, for a villainess, the girl was getting some remarkably noble lines to speak. This was called to Gertrude's attention and she wailed, "But I like her! How can I make her say nasty things?" Since she seems constitutionally incapable of disliking anyone, actors who are engaged as villains now take it for granted that, in time, their microphone characters will steadily undergo a change for the better.

If Gertrude Berg insists upon typecasting, once she has evolved a character in her mind, she can, and frequently does, create a character for her show from an actor she is auditioning. Arnold Stang, the young comedian who plays *Junior* on the Milton Berle show and *Gerard* on the Henry Morgan show, is an example of a Berg-made product.

Some years ago, when Stang was a serious child actor unschooled in comedy, he was asked by Gertrude, at the conclusion of an audition, to "Do a very little boy." He protested that he'd never done little boys. "Then extemporize," she said. "Pretend I'm a flint-hearted old aunt, and you're trying to wheedle five cents out of me."

Stang begged for a nickel, and Gertrude finally said, "And who said you couldn't do it? Go away, little boy; I'll send for you when I've built you a part."

As a result, for the next seven years, Stang played the rôle of *Seymour, Rosie's* playmate, on the Goldberg show. Stang now says, "I learned more from working with her than from any other experience I've ever had. She made a comedian out of me, and both *Gerard* and *Junior* are outgrowths of *Seymour*. I'm making a good living today, just from what she taught me."

Stang also claims that working for Gertrude can sometimes be pretty disconcerting. "If my mother was sick, I'd find my stage mother was sick. If I was having a little difficulty with a girl, I'd suddenly find I was having girl-trouble on the air. Why, facets of my character that I tried to hide from everyone, including myself, started to pop up at me from my script lines. Brother, does she know people!"

She also knows talent: John Garfield, Van Heflin, Richard Widmark, Shirley Booth, Joan Tetzel, Allan Jones, Garson Kanin, Jan Pierce, Canada Lee, Minerva Pious and Marjorie Main are only a few of the many actors who got their start with her. And, knowing talent, Gertrude insists on surrounding herself with it.

The producer and the director of her show are, respectively, Worthington Miner and Walter Hart, both veterans of Broadway and Hollywood. Philip Loeb, who plays *Jake*, is one of our finest character actors. Eli Mintz, who plays *Uncle David*, has been a prominent performer in the Yiddish-language theaters of Europe and America. *Sammy* is played by Larry Robinson, a young alumnus of "Life with Father." And "Fuzzy" McQuade, recently of Tennessee Williams' play "Summer and Smoke," is back with the show again.

The source of Gertrude Berg's dramatic artistry remains a mystery. She has never had any professional training, so, like Topsy, she must have "just growed." She was born in New York City, the only child of a family that owned a resort hotel in the Catskills. It was customary for the hotel's guests to perform amateur theatricals, and she contracted writer's itch at the age of sixteen, when a skit she wrote was played on the hotel's wide veranda. From that time on she was irrevocably committed to the theater.

She studied dramatic writing and did some amateur acting at Columbia University, and then met and married Lewis Berg, a young chemical student, in 1918. From then until 1929 she was preoccupied with rearing two children, and produced no salable manuscripts. In that year the sugar factory that employed her husband burned down just at a time when Gertrude had concluded that "with my children at school, housekeeping wasn't keeping me busy enough."

Having more time than money available, she turned to radio writing and—drawing on her parents and grandparents for inspiration—evolved the Goldbergs. She arranged an appointment with an executive at NBC, and appeared with a handwritten manuscript—quite aware that her writing was practically indecipherable. Since the NBC man couldn't read the script, she generously read it for him—with gestures. She sold the script and, also, sold herself as the obvious one to play the rôle of *Molly*, which was exactly what her handwritten manuscript was meant to accomplish.

"**T**he Rise of the Goldbergs," as it was then called, went on the air as a weekly sustainer at $75 a week, out of which she was to pay the cast. Four weeks after the first performance—November 20, 1929—a substitute played the rôle of *Molly* when Gertrude had a sore throat; 11,000 listeners wrote in and uncounted calls jammed the station's switchboard, demanding the return of the original *Molly*.

In 1931 a manufacturer began making sponsorship gestures. He talked in terms of six programs a week. Gertrude didn't think she could write six programs a week. When he mentioned $2,000 a week, Gertrude was pretty sure she could write six programs a week. In publicity releases sent out at that time it was said that she fainted when she heard the sum she was to be paid. She claims that she only broke out in hives.

She finally got to the point where she could endorse a weekly check for $7,500 without flinching. And, when the Goldbergs left the air in 1946, she had written, directed and starred in something like 4,500 radio shows and her family saga ran to around seven and one-half million words—which is approximately fifteen times as long as "Gone with the Wind" and ten times as long as the combined plays of Shakespeare. No wonder everyone said, "It's about time she took a rest."

She rested for the next two years by writing, revising and performing in her play, "Me and Molly," which was chosen one of the "Ten Best Plays of 1947-'48." When "Me and Molly" closed in the summer of 1948, she turned at once to the preparations which led to her television debut in January, 1949. This was no unexpected development. From its earliest days she had been alert to television's progress and had laid her plans for the new medium. Even as early as 1937 she had spoken of her experience in writing a motion-picture script for RKO as valuable training for the work she eventually planned in TV.

She is returning to radio in the fall and hopes it won't interfere with the routine into which she has happily settled. This routine consists of week-ends spent in her comfortable but unpretentious Westchester country house, days of writing and rehearsal, and nights spent in the company of a few close friends, her affable husband and her children: Cherney, twenty-six, a talented musician and a member of the faculty of the Contemporary Music School; and Harriet, twenty-two, who is on the editorial staff of the *United Nations World Magazine*. It isn't a routine everyone would choose, but Gertrude finds it very satisfactory—particularly its weekly climax, when the hands of the clock read 8:59½ on Monday nights and the stage manager calls out: "*Thirty seconds! Quiet in the studio!*"

That's when Gertrude cautions the waiting cast, "On your toes, darlings." This leaves her twenty-seven seconds in which to take a final bite of her underlip. Then a camera, trained on a credit card, flashes to countless television screens the announcement:

THE GOLDBERGS
starring
Gertrude Berg

The next shot shows a smiling woman, clothed in a house-dress and a gingham apron, leaning out an open window. As she speaks she accents her words with an expressive shrug, or the flutter of a plump hand:

"I'm Molly Goldberg, and this is the house I live in: 1038 Tremont Avenue, Bronx. In a big thirty-family house you can well imagine that many things are happening at any time and the same time from morning until night. In the ten years I'm living here, I've seen plenty: children born, married, in love. My! I could tell you stories . . . . But my situation is desperate. We must find a larger apartment. We are four people in four rooms. Sammy sleeps in the living-room. When Sammy wants to study, Rosie has to practice the piano; and if Mr. Goldberg wants to listen to the radio . . . and if accidentally company falls in on us, it means Sammy has to wait until they leave before he can go to sleep. It's a situation not to be envied, believe me. Come will and come may, we are at the crossroads of the parting of the ways. So . . . we are looking for a bigger apartment. If you hear of something let me know, and I'll do vice versa. Believe me, I'm not making a Rocky Mountain out of a molehill. So. . . ."

Another camera picks up the family assembled in an apartment set decorated with artificial flowers, fretwork, ivy in hanging pots, plaster statuettes and a picture of a naked baby kicking its heels on a bearskin rug—but the effect is far from ludicrous. This is, you quickly sense, a home and a haven.

The camera moves in on the Goldbergs—and the play begins. Then, in the words of Molly at the dinner-table, "What comes next will be visible when it is served."

As long as Gertrude Berg is doing the cooking you know that the dish she sets before you will be palatable and digestible, as well as visible.

. . . THE END

Heart Divided

—CARSE

(This story is continued from page 23)
in night-clubs for years. But now they were part of the mysterious fabric of the tropic dark: palm fronds dryly rattled, on some distant ridge a burro brayed, surf smashed the beach and alongside the ship men called in strong, foreign voices as the anchor cable went roaring down.

With Colin close, she rode the trail to La Citadelle. The air carried a fragrance heavy with mangoes, papayas, sugar cane and coffee. Reaching out over her horse's neck, she plucked a small red banana from a tree as she passed. Above, massive and quite terrible in its sheer power, was the fortress former barefoot slaves had built to defy Napoleon.

Then she and Colin walked the neat, narrow streets of Curaçao. They wound along the mountain road to Caracas, the gorges below the car umber and violet and orange, stippled with swift cloud shadow. In Caracas, the matador stood motionless in the center of the bull ring, only the muscles of his legs within the smooth lime-green stockings slightly jerking as he set himself to make the kill.

"Come on home. El," Colin said. He took her hand. "You're far away."

She lifted his hand and kissed it. "I was," she said. "Colin Cummill, I lack enough shame to admit that I'm a girl who's ready for marriage."

He brought her to him over the rug, scuffing the travel folders aside.

"We'll be very happy, won't we?" she said.

"Yes," he said, kissing her throat, her eyes. "I don't much like the idea of your working afterward, but that's your choice as well as mine."

"Don't be silly," she said. "You convinced me long ago. What would I do all day alone here? And who wants to raise a child in a New York apartment?"

The shrill of the telephone came as though in answer to her. "Off-stage noise," she said laughing.

But she was grave-faced when she returned. "It was Western Union," she said. "Mrs. Cisneros, Mother's next-door neighbor in Brenport, sent me a message saying that Mother isn't at all well. I guess I'll have to leave for there tonight, Colin." She crossed the room quickly striding, opened a closet and pulled down a suitcase. "You can call Miss Mitchell for me at the store in the morning and explain to her what's happened."

Colin came over and placed his considerable bulk beside her as she packed. "I should be able to do something more," he said.

"No," she said. "I'd rather be by myself, darling. I'll get to the station all right. You run along and catch your sleep."

He slowly gathered the travel folders, put them in a neat stack on the mantelpiece. She was able to see his face in the wall mirror. The regular, strong features were perturbed; taut lines held his mouth. "Let's never," he said, "have our plans broken up. I love you very much, Elspeth."

"Nothing could keep me away but Mother's health," Elspeth said. "I'll be back just as soon as she's better."

"Fine." Colin was at the door. "Good night now, and wire me if I can possibly help in any way."

"I'll manage," Elspeth said. "But why don't you take the folders with you to look over while I'm gone?"

He shook his head. "They're for you and me together. I'll leave them here." He came from the door to kiss her once more, and she trembled with the force of his passion. "Please, go," she said, her hands against him.

"I'm sorry," he whispered, and then the latch clicked and he was gone.

She leaned down over the suitcase, her hands spread for support, and told herself almost desperately, "Get well soon, Mother. Get well soon. . . . I really love that man."

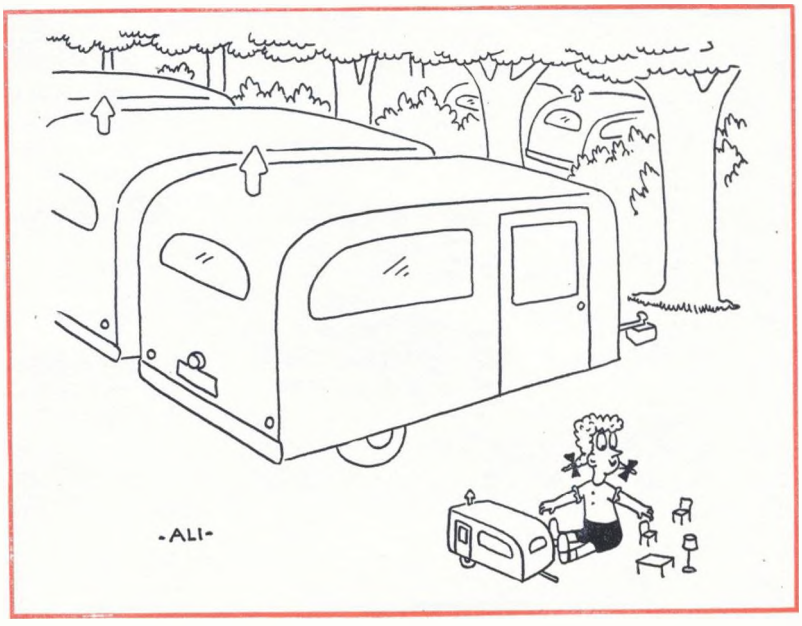
Elspeth smiled at her action as she pulled back the curtain. This was a typical small-town gesture, and she had returned to it after only a few days at home. Behind her in the room were the familiar sounds: her mother's dry, hacking cough, the uneven squeak of the rocker her father had always promised to fix and never had, the click of the knitting needles and the rustling, dim boom of air up from the furnace through the register. Nothing had changed here, she thought, except that her mother had become increasingly frail. Even the street was the same as her childhood memories had established it.

She stood by the window sill and saw Mrs. Bighurst, two doors down, at her usual vigil, and Mrs. Patras, across the way, peering from an upstairs bedroom vantage. It's terribly drab, Elspeth realized with a sensation of melancholy. What a way to spend your life. . . . You're very glad you left, and, if it weren't for Mother, most unhappy that you had to come back. She gazed at the street almost with hatred, remembering how hard she had fought to get away from it and Brenport.

In the mauve-shaded November dusk it possessed a faint beauty. The fine old white houses stood symmetrically straight, each door-yard guarded by its picket fence and the great rows of elms and maples along the sidewalks. Some few houses still had hitching posts and carriage blocks at the curbs; the Bighurst yard bore a giant pair of whale jawbones brought more than a hundred years ago from the South Pacific by old Captain Alonzo with a cargo of prime oil in his own vessel. But the whalebones were rotted at the base and about to fall over, Elspeth recalled, and the fog in from the bay hid the lack of paint, the broken railing of the captain's walk on the roof, the shabby clapboards and the Rooms-for-Rent signs on that and nearly every other house the length of the block.

The old families were gone, or at least the reason for their pride had long since departed, Elspeth told herself, and slightly shuddered. Don't be so morbid, chum. You don't have to stay here, and Mother still likes the place. She was about to turn back into the room toward her mother when she saw Jared Dendry. He passed beneath a street lamp and she was able to study him.

Her first feeling was one of excitement. Jared Dendry had been the handsomest boy in Brenport High, the best football player there and at the university. She had once thought she was deeply in love with him, and until this moment held his image in sentimental memory. The man walking under the street lamp was a bit stooped. He wore



steel-rimmed glasses and there was gray in his hair. His suit was of cheap, dark material and indifferent cut. An Army officer's field-coat was around his shoulders, and she noticed that one pocket was ripped and that it needed cleaning.

She felt shock and surprise. She and Jared had spent many evenings discussing their "ideals"; there had been a secret pact between them to leave Brenport far behind. get out into the world beyond. It was unbelievable to her that Jared could have let himself go so much. He looked tired. worn. and fifteen years more than his age. She dropped the curtain and crossed the room to where her mother sat.

"**What's happened** to Jared?" she said. "He seems to have fallen all apart."

"Don't say anything against Jared." Her mother had stopped knitting. The needles were in her lap, and her cheeks, drained by the heart ailment from which she suffered, were touched by a small flush of color. "He was in one of those armored divisions during the war, and he was badly wounded. That accounts for his glasses. A tank burned while he was in it. But he's been doing too much here at home. He's assistant principal at junior high, and he also teaches classes at the senior school. Top of that, he's football coach and goodness knows what else. Jared is one who's trying to keep this town together."

"Well." Elspeth said weakly, "you might have told me before." She had the sudden impression that she was back in her girlhood, and, blushing. she remembered the time that she had insisted upon wearing the very short dress and a great deal of make-up to the Junior Class Dance. Her mother treated her now with an almost identical amount of scorn.

"I guess I'll go do the shopping," she said, "if you have your list ready."

"It's on the kitchen table." Her mother's glance slowly lifted. "Have a good walk, and say hello to Jared."

Elspeth's coat hung in the closet of the room that had served her father as his dentistry office. It was her idea that there was still the smell of drugs around the place, and she hurried to get out into the street. Most of Brenport had passed up this walk, she thought, and half of them could never pay their bills. So Dad died in debt, and you went through the university and to New York the hard way. Now, down in the chain store, the women will tell each other that your let-out muskrat is mink. Small triumph, Elspeth. . . . But this isn't what counts; it's New York.

The chain store was noisy, warm and crowded. Children scampered down the aisles among bright heaps of groceries while their mothers stood in conversation beside the wire-framed carrying-carts. Jared Dendry was at the meat counter. apparently lost between the choice of lamb or pork chops. He pulled off his hat to Elspeth, tightly took her hand. and she was aware that Mr. Yatzler, the manager, and the group of women bunched by the cash register were watching. "You've been in New York, haven't you?" Jared said. Then, before she could answer, "Gosh, you're looking fine."

"Thanks. Jared," she said, and grinned back. But the white glare of the overhead lights showed the burn marks along his jaws and brow. There was a jagged scar also up along the right temple; still he wore no service emblem or miniature medal in his lapel. Instinctive sympathy and admiration for him rose in her, and she promptly checked it. Colin had been a combat pilot with the Eighth Air Force; the fact that he had come back unwounded was due only to outright, tremendous luck. He had shared just as much danger as Jared or any man.

But Mr. Yatzler, his pencil jauntily poised, was waiting for her order. "What'll the little girl from the big city have?" he said.

Ridiculous, Elspeth thought. The humor here hasn't progressed a bit since you were a kid. She handed Mr. Yatzler the list. "You're used to reading Mother's writing. There it all is." Jared had picked up his pork chops, moved away toward the front of the store, and she half turned, interested in the way he was received by the people around him.

He was greeted with an odd, yet easy respect. Young Portuguese fishermen asked him about the veterans' Halloween Ball. Girls and boys of high-school age took him by the arm or hand. spoke of the football game tomorrow. "You think we're gonna whip Ottfield, coach?"

"Sure," he told them; "haven't we got the best team in this part of the State?"

"Aw, shucks," one big, dark-haired boy said. "Ottfield is real rugged. They should beat us easy."

"I know it, Tony." The laughter had left Jared and he held the boy affectionately by the shoulder. "If we win, you'll be the one I'll have to blame."

That must be Tony Lazzetti, of the North End brood, Elspeth thought. He's grown tremendously, and he seems to think that Jared is something very special. Maybe Mother's right. . . . Mr. Yatzler had her purchases ready, and she placed them in the cart, wheeled it forward to the cash register and the close, steady scrutiny of the coat.

When she walked out into the street, Jared was waiting for her. She was both pleased and amused. After that inspection, she decided, it was nice to find that you were attractive to men. "How about the movies tonight, Elspeth?" he said.

"I'd better tell you now, Jerry," she said, "that I'm engaged to a man named Colin Cummill in New York."

Jared laughed. "Colin wouldn't mind my taking you to a movie. Shall I call for you at seven-thirty?"

"Right." she said in a low voice, for the usual after-dark crowd was staring at them.

The picture was a good one, and afterward, as they went along Division Street, she discovered that her mind was excited by it. "I could drink a glass of beer," she said, "and talk about that."

"The school board," Jared said,

wryly grinning, "is against public drinking on the part of its teachers. But we might stop by my place and have a short snort of something."

His apartment was on the top floor of a former private home, and a long, covered outside staircase led to it. The steps were dark, creaking. She was angry with herself for having accepted his invitation, expected to enter into some meanly furnished and miserable room. But when he turned on the light she was greatly surprised.

The furniture was all authentic Hitchcock except for the big studio couch. A Benjamin Franklin stove with fragile fluted columns was in the corner, and he bent and lit it. Strange, she thought; you never imagined Jared living in a place like this alone. She started to move toward him to get the warmth of the stove, then was arrested by the photographs he had on the wall over the couch.

They were three-dimensional scenes of Paris, and they brought her from the partly-lit room right to the banks of the Seine. "Those are magnificent," she said.

"They aren't bad," he said. He was heating rum and water; the odor of spice was through the room. "Sit down and take off your coat. Tell me of New York."

"I'd rather hear about Paris," she said. She had underestimated Jared, she realized. He was much more of a man than even her mother had given her to think. In this moment, she had something much like respect for him. It was obvious, too, from his manner that he had never fallen out of love with her. She was somehow quite deeply disturbed by the recognition, almost failed to hear the words he said.

"I've given up talking about the war," he told her, "and for me Paris is part of it. I just kept the pictures because they're really fine, and I don't know when I'll ever get back there again."

Elspeth took the glass he brought and sat down on the edge of the couch, her coat close about her. Jared was keenly aware of her clothing, of her accent and bearing, all the changes that had been made in her during the years they had been apart.

She was glad that she had the coat. It reminded her of New York and Colin. There were times when Colin had made love to her while she wore the coat, slipping his strong arms inside it and embracing her. "New York," she said, her breath a bit short, "is a different city to everybody who lives in it. My city is really very small."

"But you visit the museums," he said. "You go to the art shows and the concerts and theaters. Tell me about them."

She spoke diffidently, rather awkwardly at first. But what she evoked took possession of her, and her self-consciousness was gone. She told of the Gauguin designs, done in his last extremity when life and materials were short and he had used both sides of the same piece of cloth to delineate his magnificent, brooding South Seas women.

Then it was the Ballet Russe, and John Gielgud, and the Polish pianist who had been saved from the concentration camps to play Chopin superbly at Carnegie Hall.

Jared walked the room as she talked. His tension gave her sudden understanding of how much he had lost by living here. What was for her reality was to him a shadow world. He found it only in magazines and newspaper accounts, scraps taken from the movies, the radio. His existence was bordered by blackboards and bleak halls, filled with the constant, unthinking aggravations of half-grown youth who in the main cared little for education and resented nearly all they were forced to receive of it.

The spell was broken, she knew, and felt a bit of nostalgic regret for what might have been. Jared had retreated back in her mind to his true perspective. He was small-town and had chosen to stay so, although she wasn't exactly certain why.

"Colin's a public accountant," she said, "and has to work like a beaver for his firm. My job is pretty hard, too, and I scurry around like mad. But we manage to keep culturally alive. It's a shame you couldn't have broken loose from here and gone to New York. You'd be very happy there, Jerry. Don't mind my asking. We're old friends; otherwise I'd shut up. But what's kept you here?"

"A number of things." Jared blinked behind his glasses in the lamplight. Then his voice took a deep tone, became grave and contained. His gaze stayed steadily on her. "The war started me. I found, out there, that only a very few men knew why they were fighting, or the meaning of victory. So I figured I'd been badly educated, and the others, too. It had a simple answer. If the kids of the next generation weren't to be forced to fight a new and incredibly terrible war, they'd have to understand the world in which they live. I became a teacher to try and help them with what little I know. Perhaps that isn't the sort of ideal you and I used to share, Elspeth, but it's as close as I can reach. . . ."

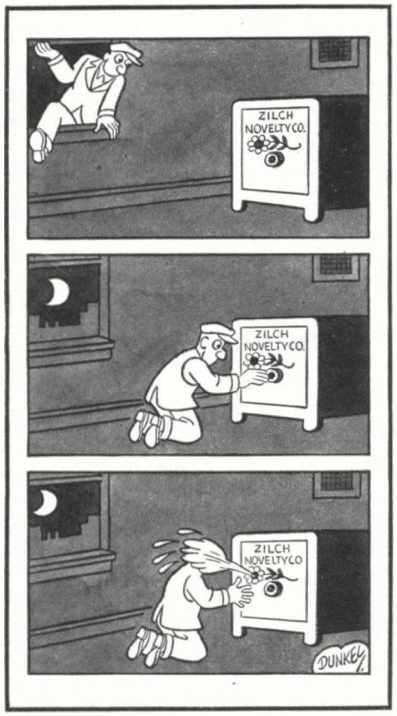
His sincerity, the unadorned expression of his purpose, profoundly touched her. There was the warmth of tears up in back of her eyelids. She wanted to put her hands on him, bring him into her arms. This was fine; this made great sense. Here was a man who for very practical reasons was devoting his life to a dream.

But don't let emotion trap you, she thought with sharp alarm, and rose from the couch. Colin's your man, not Jared. Just because Jared is sincere and unself-seeking doesn't deny Colin his place. It would be a bitter mistake if you ever let yourself fall in love with Jared. Imagine life in Brenport and bearing the children he'd demand of you. On a teacher's salary with never enough of anything except the memories of what you missed. . . .

"I think you're doing a very excellent thing, Jared," she said stiffly. "It's late, though, and Mrs. Cisneros has been sitting with Mother. I have to get home. Thanks a lot for the rum, and for the movie. This has been fun."

He stood by the door, held it open for her. "Good night, Elspeth," he said. She could see his hand where it grasped the knob. Trembling was through it, and she knew that if she stayed another moment he would reach out and kiss her.

"Good night," she said, then ran rapidly down the stairs.



Above the clack of the knitting needles she heard the band's blat, the echoes of cheering. Her mother squinted up in the pale afternoon sunlight. "Elspeth," she said, "you've made me drop three stitches with your prancing around. Go on to the football game. It'll do you good."

"You want me to see Jared, don't you?" Elspeth said.

"Of course," her mother said, flat-voiced. "Jared's one of my great favorites. And wear your old cloth coat. The whole town's talking about the muskrat; they think it's mink."

Elspeth stood for an instant in puzzled anger. Her mother had met Colin several times and seemed to like him. But New England loyalties ran mysteriously deep, Elspeth remembered, and Colin, born on Riverside Drive, would be forever in her mother's estimation an "outsider."

She took the old cloth coat from the closet, and she hurried along the street to the high school and the game. Her love for Colin was very great and very safe, she told herself. Meeting Jared again could do nothing to it, and in fact she welcomed any test that Jared might represent.

A bitter wind blew in from the sea across the field. It had rained during the night, then frozen, and the boys out there were haggard with pain. The bare knees of the young girl cheer-leaders had

turned purple; Elspeth felt a vague sort of pity for them as they jumped and yelled. Brenport was way behind. The bigger and faster Ottfield team was scoring touchdowns almost at will. Jared sat rigidly on the Brenport bench watching every play.

Yet he made room for her beside him. "We're taking a bad shellacking," he said. "Tony Lazzetti is the only real player I have, and he's being unmercifully banged."

An opposing halfback, beautifully screened by running interference, had just turned the Brenport end, was in the open. But Tony slid in, made the tackle. Elspeth discovered that she was on her feet with Jared and the substitutes. She was joining in the cheer for Tony, and in the Brenport school song; she slapped Jared hard on the shoulder when Tony reeled clear and made a thirty-five-yard run.

But Tony was spent. There was less than a minute to play, and the Ottfield tacklers held him yards away from first down. He gave a quick glance over at Jared, went into kick formation. The pass from center was very bad, joggled along the ground. Tony grabbed it, faked right, veered back left. Then it seemed as though the whole Ottfield team was through and on him.

Elspeth was barely conscious that Tony had gone down under a gathering mass of the players. A trick of memory had taken her to Jared making that same play. It had been against a powerful and rampant Cornell team which Jared alone had been able to stop. But his center pass had been good. He had kicked forty-eight yards, and after a Cornell fumble had gone over for the winning touchdown. Now a much older Jared was murmuring, "Tony's hurt, Tony's hurt." She ran forward with Jared onto the field.

The bone showed clearly through the ripped wool of the stocking. Tony gasped and writhed until Jared got him on the stretcher. "Tough luck, kid," Jared said. "But the game's over and you certainly played a corker."

Tony was crying. The tears ran down his cheeks through the dirt smears. "Yeah," he said. "I gotta drive that laundry truck, though, or the folks will have a bum time."

"I know," Jared said. He took the handkerchief Elspeth held out and wiped away the tears. "I'll talk to Ben Miller and see that you still get your pay for the job. Now be quiet. We're going to take you to the doc's and then home."

The Lazzetti home was gray from want of paint. A cracked swordfish bill and an old clam rake were in the dooryard; seaboot socks dried behind the stove. Mrs. Lazzetti, four or five various-sized Lazzettis milling around her, was at least six months pregnant, and on the table by the window Elspeth saw the Mason jar packed with dimes. She knew the meaning of the jar, and a kind of cold horror went through her. The dimes were Mrs. Lazzetti's savings; when the jar was full, the Lazzettis could afford to pay the doctor for another child. . . .

The thought numbed her when she realized the implications of Tony's accident. It was profound tragedy for the family. His father and elder brothers worked in the fishing fleet, but what they brought home couldn't provide more than necessities for this brood. Elspeth fumbled in her pocketbook, took out and closely folded a ten-dollar bill. "Here," she whispered, and tried to give it to Mrs. Lazzetti.

"Oh, no, *signorina!* Thank you much, but we"—the words were hoarse—"we ain't the ones to take charity."

Tony heard that in the back bedroom where Doc' Smith and Jared attempted to make him comfortable. The boy reared up between them. "Don't you take it, Ma," he fiercely called. "We can get along."

Jared came stooping into the parlor. "I guess we'd better be going," he told Elspeth. "Doc' will tend to Tony."

"The money," Mrs. Lazzetti said, her sweaty face uplifted to Elspeth. "You forgot it."

Elspeth had left the bill on the table. "I'm a Brenporter," she said slowly, "like the rest of us. Call it a loan, Miz' Lazzetti, and pay it back whenever you want."

Outside, Jared turned on her. He grasped her by the shoulders and shook her so hard her hairpins fell to the ground. "It looks," he said, "as though you've been away from here too long to recall how we act. Brenporters don't like—"

"Be still!" she said in a furious voice. "I'm just as Brenport as you are. But you're a fool, and if the boy hadn't tried to imitate *your* old play he'd be all right."

Her desire was to cry, or slap his face, so she wheeled away into the street. Behind her, she heard him cursing. He cursed very well, she was forced to admit, but that only heightened her anger. She was in wild revolt against everything that had attracted her to him. I hate his entire way of life, she thought. I even loathe the sound of his voice. . . .

She was standing in the post office reading the letter that had come from Colin in the late afternoon mail when she met Haim Kepnel. It seemed as if the rosy little man had materialized as a part of Colin's letter, for to her he was the quintessence of New York. The composer wore a Basque beret and Norwegian ski mittens, and was smoking one of his famous Havana *puros*.

"Darling!" he cried. "Who but Elspeth! Come straightaway and see Sonya. She is in front in our jeep. Yes, we have a jeep that Sonya drives like a demon, and we have been hiding out at Rocky Cove while I finish my score. Today it is done and tonight we will have *shashlik* and you to dinner. Then I must play to you and Sonya my new tunes. It's marvelous to come upon you here—marvelous."

Sonya looked like a queen bee within her cocoon of blankets in the grocery-laden jeep. "Yes, surely you must join us," she told Elspeth. "First, though, I must go and argue with that butcher about the *shashlik*, and if possible find a dinner companion for you. We will stop by your house in half an hour."

Elspeth took a great deal of care with her dressing. She put on the one dinner gown she had brought from New York—amber-colored velvet with long sleeves and a tight bodice. She hummed to herself with happiness before the mirror in the bathroom. There passed through her mind all the times she had dressed here, and she saw a parade of images from scrawny to pigtails and the highly-fluffed hair and plucked eyebrows of her senior high-school year. Tonight, she knew, she looked lovely. The shade of velvet peculiarly suited her fair skin, blonde hair. Colin had given her this string of pearls. With Colin, she had met Haim and Sonya. In another day or so she'd be returning to New York and Colin. and she would tell him when she kissed him how much she had missed him, how deep was her love. . . .

The street light was out in front of the house. For an instant, climbing into the jeep, Elspeth wasn't aware of the man in the rear seat. Then, as Sonya banged the gears, Haim said, "Perhaps you two have already met each other. Anyhow, this is my very good friend, Jared Dendry."

"Yes," Elspeth said in a dull voice, "we know each other." She sat stiffly, staring at the black sweep of the road and feeling a bit sick. But you can't go back, she thought. You simply refuse to be denied hearing Haim's music because of him. Why, oh, why, though, did Haim and Sonya have to invite him tonight?

She forgot most of her constraint during dinner. Jared said very little, kept as far away from her as possible, and soon after coffee and liqueurs were served. Haim sat down at the piano.

"I think of it as a dance on the dunes," he said to them, his chubby, sensitive face slightly tense. "It is meant to evoke summer, summer here on this beautiful coast, and in the show there will be a ballet who will dance some of the numbers. Now . . ."

His short fingers lifted, flexed. They dropped, and his whole upper body went forward over the keyboard. The music was at first soft and light, nearly tremulous in the room.

Elspeth shut her eyes, stretched back on the broad divan. Led by the lilting, now sweeping patterns of notes, she was experiencing all the sensuous delights of the season of sun on the Cape.

She heard the berry pickers and their laughter, the jangle of the ice-cream man's bell as he drove along the beach. Boys and girls played ball there; they sprang over each other shouting at leapfrog. A portable radio squawked. and to it was added the only partly frightened squeal of a girl as she rode a boy's shoulders out into the surf. There was the sound of splashing, the greater, more regular sound of the sea itself.

That threnody remained as the day advanced. It was night; a beach fire cracked and lisped. Voices were strong in song. They lifted in laughter, became murmurous with love. They faded, faded. It was just the sea, and the breeze across the pines.

Haim took his hands from the keys. "Wine, woman!" he shouted while the others laughed. "Give me wine!"

But Elspeth got up and went with unevenly guided steps to the huge window that looked out upon the sea. She stared at the fog which lay shieldlike before it. Her body shook, and she had to bite her lip to keep her teeth from chattering. Under the power of Haim's music, she realized, she had identified herself with those people on the beach. She had been one of the girls who had run and swum and sung and made love. But the man with whom she had made love wasn't Colin. It was Jared.

Get hold of yourself, she silently said. You must be a bit off your head. Never, never can you marry him. He has no people; they're dead. Marry him and he'd come to live with you and Mother. The room that's been yours all your life you'd share with him, and, I suppose, after a few months you'd have a Mason jar like Mrs. Lazzetti's hidden away downstairs. . . .

Start out of here. You're going back to New York, and thank God you have Colin to meet you there. Make any excuse you please to these people. It doesn't matter. Haim and Sonya are old friends, and you can explain to them later. As for Jared—if his name comes into your mind again, you'll scream.

Sonya drove her back, leaning over occasionally to pat her hand. "I understand," Sonya said. "You have been under a strain with your mother. But now she's better, and you can go back to New York and your job and your man."

"Yes, to my man," Elspeth whispered. "You've been very sweet, and I hope I didn't ruin your evening."

Sonya laughed, making a slashing U-turn to park alongside Elspeth's house. "Impossible," she said, "with *shashlik* like that and Haim for a husband. Good night, my dove."

Colin sat holding her hands. "You've been back weeks now," he said, "and the whole thing is ready. All we have to do is put down our money and get our tickets. Then when we're through with the minister, we go right aboard ship. Think of it. . . . The stars at night, and the sea, the wind."

Elspeth rested very still. Somewhere, far inside of her, it began. There were no notes as yet, or a melody—simply the rhythms that Haim had played. But they became clearer, more powerful. Her thought was dominated by the song the young people at the fire had sung. She stared around the room as though she had never been here before.

My money, she thought, and his. But, for what? As she had in the mirror at Brenport, she saw herself, although this time she looked forward into the future. She and Colin would come back here each year, a little older, a bit more tired, and enter emptiness. The travel folders will pile up in the desk until you throw them out. All the staff captains of the big passenger ships will know you. "Yes, of course, Mr. and Mrs. Cummill. Been with us for years." Her girdles would get tighter and Colin's jackets brighter. At night, when the young people climbed to the boat-deck to watch the stars, she and Colin would

go to the room which was just as much home to them as the apartment in New York. . . .

"Colin, I can't," she said.

Colin stared at her. "Why not?"

"I'm afraid."

"Of what?"

"Loneliness. Our life would be filled with it."

Colin smiled. "But we'll have each other, El."

"I want more," she said. "I want to have children. Life without them in the end means loneliness."

"Are you trying to say," Colin said carefully, "that you don't like the idea of marrying me? You've known all along that I'm opposed to our having children. They'd wreck our plans."

"Yes," she said. "I'd rather not marry you." It was difficult for her to speak. The music of the song ran along her nerve centers and filled the recesses of her brain. "I'll write you a letter from Brenport later, and explain to you about it. I'm very sorry, Colin."

Colin said nothing. But when he got up he kicked the travel folder with his foot. He was still staring at her when he went out the door. . . .

Tony Lazzetti came upon her at the crossroads where she waited to get a taxi. He was driving the laundry truck, cast and all. "Climb in," he yelled. "It looks like you're going my way."

They crossed Division Street just in time to meet Jared in front of the high school. Tony honked the horn and leaned out. "I got your girl here, coach. Gosh, how she can sing."

"Move over and let me drive." Jared leaped the fender. "That's a song you'll have to learn." But then he was kissing Elspeth, and Tony squeezed into a corner and whistled the chorus for them. . . . THE END

From Claudia to David

—FRANKEN

(This story is continued from page 51)

about dishonesty. It might be the modern approach, but according to my old-fashioned ethics, stealing is stealing, and there's no two ways about it."

"I'm sorry you feel like that," said David quietly.

Bobby fiddled nervously with the top button of his shirt. "I think maybe you'd better let Dad talk to Matthew."

Claudia looked from one to the other of them. What were they trying to tell her? What were they trying not to tell her? She felt sick in the pit of her stomach. From the next room, she could hear Matthew lavishing extravagant endearments upon Bluff, as if a few hours' separation had caused him untold anguish. "Good old beautiful Bluffy, did you miss me, good old Bluff?" She shook her head numbly. It was difficult to speak. "I don't believe it. I just don't believe it."

"I'm afraid it's true, dear, from what I can piece together."

She clutched for a flaw in his reasoning. "But how did Matthew get to the registrar's office? What would he be doing in there?"

"Bringing his excuse for being absent," Bobby explained without triumph. "That's where he had to take the note you wrote his teacher."

She wet her dry lips. "It still could have been someone else."

"It couldn't, Mother. Because when nobody confessed in assembly, the principal had to go through the notes that were brought in yesterday, and Matthew's was the only one. She told me I shouldn't worry Dad about it, though, on account of being up here for his health, but I thought maybe I'd better tell him anyway."

"And very right you were," David assured him.

Claudia sank down in a chair. "Does Matthew know you told us?"

"No, he doesn't know I know. He didn't say anything coming home, so I didn't say anything, either."

"I'm glad," said Claudia. "I'd rather he told us himself."

Bobby seemed doubtful. "He won't, I don't think. He was pretty fresh on the bus. I don't think he cares."

"**Get your** things on, darling," David said. "It's after four; we'd better get started if we want a walk." He put his hand on her shoulder. "Sure, it's a little tough to take—I know that. The youngster needs some handling. He's always been a little of a problem; we might as well face it."

"I'm facing it," she said.

She had to pass Matthew's room to get her coat. He was alone, singing loudly as he took off his shoes. He caught sight of her. "Bertha says I have to rest. How long do I have to keep on going to bed in the afternoon?" he demanded belligerently.

Claudia regarded him with a great and incredulous sadness in her heart. He was born of her, and yet how little she knew of him. What vast mistake had she committed to have caused him to become this small, complex creature with no awareness of right, no awe of evil? Could it be so easy an explanation as being the middle child? Or the insecurity of giving up the farm, and David's illness? Or was it rather some pattern within Matthew's own soul that needed to be worked out?

It was as if he felt the weaving of her thoughts about him. Vigilance masked his face like a curtain. "How long are you going to make me rest?" he repeated angrily, putting her in the wrong instead of himself.

"Until you're strong," she told him in a low voice.

"I'm strong." he declaimed with arrogance. "I can lick any boy in my class. I can even lick Bobby, if I want to, I can."

He was so transparent in his swaggering, so pitifully frightened underneath his bold front. She moved swiftly to him, and knelt beside him, not daring to take him in her arms. "Oh, Matthew—" she whispered. "Matthew darling—"

Suddenly his poor little defenses vanished. He crumpled against her and began to cry. It wasn't ordinary crying; it was a ripping open of the tightness in him, and the fear. David and Bobby came to the door. After a moment, they tiptoed down the hall again, leaving her to know the way to Matthew's heart.

Actually, his moral crisis seemed to take more out of her than his bout with

pneumonia, for she woke up the next morning with—of all ignominious ailments—an earache. She'd never had an earache in her life; moreover, she'd always taken pride in the fact that none of the children was given to earaches, either. If Michael had been the sort of baby who had an ear with every tooth, he'd have complicated the entire winter. As it was, he merely developed very red cheeks, and sucked his thumb like mad. "Let him," Bertha advised succinctly. "It is time enough to worry about his character after his molars are through."

"Yes'm," said Claudia.

Fortunately her ear lasted only a day or two, but it was enough to make her appreciate what an earache could be like, and more than sufficient to keep her in the house out of the blistering March winds. David took his eleven-o'clock walk alone that Friday, and said it was very dull. He said he'd take a taxi to the village instead of his afternoon walk, and get a haircut.

"You need it," Claudia approved. "But don't get it cut too short."

Pain must have blunted her thought-processes, because she wasn't in the least suspicious when he came back, well over an hour later, without the haircut. "Both barbershops were busy," he told her. "I thought you'd worry if I waited around, so I didn't." Like a fool, she not only believed him, but she thanked him for being so considerate. "Sensible, too," she added. "I didn't know you had it in you."

She wasn't even suspicious when Dr. Geglin put in an appearance the following morning, quite out of the blue. She heard voices on the porch, and there he was, talking to David. She rushed out to see what it was all about, but they hustled her back in again. "A bad ear is nothing to trifle with," said the doctor. "Let's have a look at it."

"David ought to be kicked," she protested, "to drag you all the way out here for nothing. The pain is almost gone."

Dr. Geglin opened his satchel and withdrew the usual paraphernalia. "I rather enjoyed the drive," he said easily. "It's Saturday, you see, and I don't have office hours. Matthew coming along all right?"

"Fine. He's out sledding with Bobby, just as if he'd never been sick—Ouch!"

"Hurt?"

"Just a little."

He withdrew the light. "There's a slight inflammation, but there's no bulging. Stay indoors over the week-end, and I'm pretty sure it'll clear up."

She threw a disgusted look at David. "There. I hope you're satisfied. It would serve you good and right if Dr. Geglin went over you, too, while he's here."

"That won't be necessary." The doctor closed his satchel with a decisive click. "I examined and X-rayed your husband yesterday, in my office."

Suddenly she knew exactly what David had been up to. He hadn't had the slightest intention of getting a haircut; he'd merely taken advantage of her ear to steal a march on her; he'd wanted to spare her the agony of waiting for the X-rays to be developed. She felt dizzy, as if she were going to faint; no wonder people fainted—it was a good way to duck out of facing the things you didn't want to face. "Don't you dare—" she commanded herself furiously.

She met David's eyes. They were very blue. "It's good news, darling!"

Her voice was little more than a croak. "How good?"

"Cured."

"Now just a moment," Dr. Geglin objected quickly. "I didn't say that. I said that the pictures showed a definite healing of the lesion—"

"And you couldn't hear any more *rales,* and the tests were negative," David finished jubilantly. "What more can you ask for?"

"Nothing," the doctor admitted. "I'm very much pleased with your improvement. However—" He stood a long time on the word, and made it say a lot of things. "All of this adds up to nothing more than a reasonable assumption that the immediate progress of the disease has been arrested. But as for a cure—" He shook his head. "Some day, with the perfected use of surgery and drugs, we might be able to say that we've found a cure, but at the present time no honest physician will let a patient return to normal living with that assurance."

"Just the same," David broke in again like an incorrigible schoolboy, "Dr. Geglin says we can go home around the middle of May, or the first of June, depending on the weather. . . ."

She couldn't take it in. It was too much to take in. She knew that she ought to say something, but when she began to speak, she found that she was crying, instead. She cried, and cried. Like Matthew.

The doctor smiled one of his rare and wonderful smiles. "Let her alone," he said. "I don't blame her in the least."

Bertha didn't cry, exactly, but she acted pretty silly, too, and burned the spinach. "Yippee!" said Matthew, when he saw canned corn.

"Chew it well," she adjured him with a worried frown. "It is lucky I have some strained peas left from yesterday for the baby."

"I hate strained peas," Matthew threw in gratuitously. "Can we take an airplane home?"

"We'll need a truck," said David.

"Or Julia's limousine," said Claudia. "It seems like yesterday that she drove up with the children, doesn't it?"

"Yes, and no," said David. "Mostly no."

Claudia smiled. How aptly that summed up her feelings, too. This long winter in the mountains was a moment in time, and an eternity in living. It had been the same with the war. Perhaps all great experiences boiled down to just that. They tore you to pieces while you lived through them, and then all at once, you were put together and made whole again, ofttimes better than before. Certainly, David had never looked as happy as this, as if the world were laid at his feet. It was only Bobby,

she noticed suddenly, whose eyes held no looking-forward. She was pretty sure that she knew what was bothering him. He poked listlessly around his plate a little longer, and then put his fork down and came out with it. "If Shakespeare comes home and doesn't find us here, what will he do?"

"He's been gone so many weeks, Bobby, I don't think he's going to come back," said David gently.

"I keep hoping," said Bobby.

"I keep hoping, too," said Claudia.

"So do I," said Matthew. "Could I have some more corn?"

"Please—" Claudia supplied mechanically.

"Please."

"No, you had enough. . . . Remember, Bobby, we're not going to leave here for another couple of months."

Bobby brightened. "That's right. I bet one of these mornings we'll wake up and find that crazy cat waiting for us at the kitchen door."

"I bet we won't," said Matthew. "Pass the pepper—please."

"You can get along very nicely without pepper," David interposed.

Matthew gave up. As far as he was concerned, life was just one frustration after another.

"Oh, shoot," he said.

Claudia refrained from admonishing him that "shoot" was a bad word, since, strictly speaking, it wasn't, really. "How would you like to go walking in my place this afternoon?" she offered, purely on behalf of his psyche.

Matthew could see no particular pleasure to be derived from marching along the countryside. "Is Bobby going, too?"

"Yes," said Bobby. "Any objections?"

He pondered it, trying to decide whether there was more éclat in going with or without Bobby.

"Make up your mind," David remarked curtly. "You're not doing us any favor, you know."

"Oh, all right, I'll go," Matthew finally elected. His tone implied that although it was no great shakes of a way to spend an afternoon, it was, nevertheless, the best offer he'd had to date. Had he known that he was going to miss out on a lot of company dropping in unexpectedly, wild horses could not have dragged him from the spot.

It wasn't five minutes after they started off that Claudia heard a car drive up to the gate. She wondered who it could possibly be, and concluded that it couldn't be anybody, except someone looking for some place else.

A moment or two later, Bertha knocked at the bathroom door. "Mrs. Naughton, it is a lady to see you."

Claudia opened the door on a cautious crack, but Bertha was too quick for her. "Mrs. Naughton, you are not going to wash your hair with a bad ear!" she decried, aghast.

"No, I was going to take it off first," said Claudia jauntily. "Who is it?"

"She says to tell you it is 'Miss Carey.' . . . It is the worst thing for an earache to shampoo!"

"Don't be silly—it won't hurt me, and besides, I have to do it while I can get a whack at the bathroom. . . . I don't know any Miss Carey—unless— Say, Bertha, is it the trained nurse who took care of me when I had the miscarriage?"

"That I could not say," said Bertha. "That was the year my Lisa died and Fritz took sick."

"Yes, of course, I had Jane then. Well, tell whoever it is I'll be right in."

"I am glad whoever it is stopped you from taking a shampoo," Bertha had the last word as she went off.

The first thing Claudia noticed was that Miss Carey's hair had turned quite gray in the past four or five years, and she wore glasses, which cleared up once and for all the mystery of the unknown woman who had accosted the children earlier in the week. Miss Carey was also smaller than Claudia remembered her to be, but that might have been because the starched white of a nurse's uniform lent stature to even the shortest of women. Miss Carey was admittedly plain, lost in the undistinguished brown of hat and coat, but her brusque handshake and forthright voice could have belonged to no one else.

"I made it my business to find out where you lived, and here I am," she began without preamble. Her eyes held a candid interest as she searched Claudia's face. "A lot of things have happened to you since I last saw you. How are you? You're fine," she answered herself immediately. "I don't have to ask."

"Yes, I'm fine," said Claudia. Miss Carey was looking deeper than ears. Miss Carey had helped her find the way through a long black tunnel that had led from the hospital bed back to the wide sunny meadows of the farm. It was incredible, and a little disturbing to realize that this quiet stranger knew more about her than any other living creature, including David. David had only glimpsed the agony of those nightmare weeks, but he could not share in the fullness of knowing, because he had never experienced fear, and weakness and confusion. David was strong; he would always be strong.

"And how is your husband?" Miss Carey went on.

"Wonderful!" Claudia told her jubilantly. "If all goes well"—she wasn't taking any risks, and bent to knock loudly and firmly on the wooden rung of the sofa—"we can go home around the first of June."

"That certainly is wonderful." Miss Carey acknowledged. "He really wants to go home," she added, more in question than in statement.

"Really wants to? I'm going to have my hands full keeping him here until the weather gets warm."

"I'm glad to hear it. You'd be surprised how many patients stay on whether they have to or not. Their fear of going back to normal living is worse than the disease itself."

"Well," said Claudia with a little laugh, "that's one thing I don't have to worry about with David. He just can't wait to get to work again. . . . Do you know," she digressed abruptly, "that I haven't had a chance to ask you what

you're doing up here in the mountains?" She hesitated. "You aren't ill, are you?"

"No, I'm taking care of a little girl—one of the babies I helped bring into the world twelve years ago."

"Twelve years—" Claudia echoed. "Poor child, she's only a little older than Bobby; how dreadful—"

"It isn't good," Miss Carey conceded briefly. "I'll tell you more about it the next time I see you—" She glanced at her watch. "May I take a peep at Michael before I go?"

"Of course. I wish you could stay until David and the children get back from their walk—I'll tell Bertha to bring the baby in; I expected she would before this, she's such a showoff—" She started for the hall, and then hurried to the window at the sound of a car pulling up in front of the door. It was a very smart-looking sport car, with its exhaust pipes springing out of the motor like great hernias. It came to a stop behind Miss Carey's meek little coupé, and made the driveway look very social indeed. "This is silly," said Claudia. "We haven't had company since we've been here, and now look— Excuse me while I see who it is—"

It turned out to be the Trenlys, who had driven down to see some friends. "I told Byard we simply had to drop by, if only for a minute; I'm so thoroughly ashamed, all these months, but you know how it is, one thing and another—what a sweet little place—we drove past it twice, looking for it—" Lydia paused for breath. "Byard, dear, don't take off your coat; I see Mrs. Naughton has company, and anyway, we can't stay; it's really naughty of us to have barged in without letting her know we were coming—"

"I have to take off my coat; it's warm in here," Byard broke in a trifle petulantly. "Where's your husband—taking his exercise like a good lunger?"

Claudia winced. "Yes. Do come into the living-room, won't you?"

Lydia clung to the clear spaces of the hall. "Julia told me you had a cat. I simply loathe cats— I mean to say, I'm terrified of them—"

"Relax," said Claudia ironically. "We've lost our cat."

"Oh, good," said Lydia Trenly, which endeared her immeasurably to Claudia's heart. She didn't care very much for Byard, either. He was a sullen-looking man, with a dark mustache and a round, full chin. He would have to be awfully well-bred—which he undoubtedly was, being Phil Dexlowe's cousin—not to have looked ill-bred with that kind of a face. Lydia had a lot of chin, too, but it went in a different direction. It was quite long, and jutted out, making her face look like the profiles that Claudia drew on telephone pads. Even her hair had that look—a stylish, unbecoming pompadour that rolled up off her forehead and gave her face an unfurnished expression, as if she hadn't had time to move into it and settle down.

Claudia introduced Miss Carey, who said she was just about to leave; in the flurry of incoming and outgoing, Bertha appeared, with Michael dangling nonchalantly from her hip; just as if she hadn't spent the last twenty minutes or so making him look beautiful. He did look beautiful, too, in the blue silk rompers that Candy had sent the day before, with a note pinned on the sleeve: "To be returned in one year for further use."

Miss Carey won Bertha's heart at once, by reaching out her arms. "Bless it!" she cried, in the vibrating tone of a cello.

"Sweet," Lydia piped, like the chirp of a bird. "How old is he?" She didn't wait for an answer. "Oh, dear," she said, "it's beginning to snow. I think we'd better shove off, Byard; we haven't any chains on the car."

Byard said they certainly had better, and hustled back into his coat. "Wouldn't like to get stuck on a hill," he said.

A few minutes later, both cars were driving off. Lydia took one well-gloved hand off the wheel to wave it back. "We'll drive down to see you again some day soon, now that we know how to find you!"

"Do!" Claudia shouted back, and added in a good-sized voice, "I hope you find us in New York!"

David turned in at the gate while she was still standing in the doorway. He said, "I could have sworn I saw two cars drive out of here."

"You could have sworn right," said Claudia. "Two cars just did. Some people have all the luck. You missed the Trenlys."

"Splendid," said David. "They've been hanging over our heads ever since we've been here. Did they drive down in separate cars, or what?"

"No, but I wouldn't put it past them. Guess who it was at the bus."

"The bus-driver."

"Idiot—Miss Carey."

"Who's she?"

"My old trained nurse. Remember?"

'Oh," said David, and recollected gravely, "Yes, I remember. She was quite a guy. . . . Matthew, stop kicking at that chair!"

Matthew desisted sullenly. The chastening effect of pneumonia and fountain pen seemed to have worn off entirely. "Why did I have to take a walk when company was coming?" he demanded.

"I didn't know company was coming," Claudia explained sweetly, "or I'd have gone for a walk, too. The Trenlys are definitely not our type," she elucidated to David in an aside.

"I could have told you that before they came," said David.

He slept indoors that night. "I might as well get used to it," he said. "I can't take a sleeping-porch back home with me."

Claudia nodded. She couldn't speak. She was happy for herself, and frightened for him. He sat down on the bed beside her, and turned her face toward his. "Don't look so worried," he said in a low voice. "Everything's all right."

"I'm not worried," she denied.

"You are." Slowly, he placed his lips on hers. "I'm well, darling," he said huskily.

"Oh, David, David—" she whispered.

He held her close. "What's more, I'm staying well," he promised.

(Please turn to page 100)

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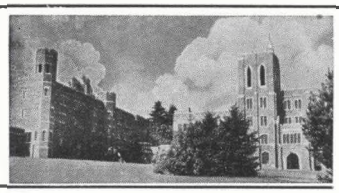

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(Continued from page 95)

It was a load off her mind that he didn't get too big for his breeches. She didn't dare hope that he would continue to be prudent once he had worked up to an hour's exercise twice a day. An hour walk was really as much as anyone could wish for—certainly more than they'd ever walked in New York, or at the farm, either. It carried them past the north gate of the sanitarium, through the grounds as far as the Administration Building. Once in a while they stopped to talk to various patients they happened to meet. David liked particularly a professor of physics from a Midwestern university. The professor had been almost ready to go home, too, but he'd had a flare-up, and was back to fifteen minutes. "Poor devil, that must be tough," said David. "We ought to ask him over to our place as soon as he's able to make the trip."

"I'm afraid we'll be back home by that time," said Claudia. It occurred to her how much David must have missed male companionship during all these months. "You've had an awfully big dose of two females and three children," she sympathized.

"It wasn't so bad," he told her. "The dog helped."

"Thanks," she said.

He gave himself away, however, when Phil Dexlowe drove down a couple of weeks later, with the Trenlys. They had just come back from their morning walk, and David was resting on the porch when the car drove up. He seemed actually glad to see them, and when Bertha, in a burst of hospitality, asked them to stay for lunch, he said it was a good idea; why not?

"I don't have a very fancy lunch," Bertha warned them.

"We don't need anything fancy," Byard accepted at once. "Got plenty of milk?"

"Plenty," said Bertha. "Milk we always have."

"Fine," said Byard. "Pop an egg in mine."

Claudia followed Bertha to the kitchen. "Haven't you got enough to do without inviting three extra people to cook for?"

"It is nothing," said Bertha. "The children are in school, and the baby is asleep. What shall I do—sit in a rocking chair and rock myself? Besides, Mr. David likes a little company: it does him good to talk to somebody new for a change. Mr. Dexlowe is such a lovely man," she added. "He said he is only visiting his cousins for a few days, but he could not leave without seeing my baby again."

Claudia lifted a pile of dishes down from the cupboard. "You fall for anyone who falls for Michael," she observed. "Not that I don't like Mr. Dexlowe. But the Trenlys give me as much of a pain this time as they did last time."

"Shhh—" Bertha cautioned, glancing toward the living-room.

"Nobody will hear me; Lydia Trenly is talking too much."

"She talks a lot," Bertha admitted. "And she doesn't like babies."

"Or cats. The first thing she asked was, did Shakespeare come back. 'No,' I said, 'we've given up hope,' and she seemed very pleased about it."

Bertha was shocked into silence. She broke an egg into a dish, and reached tentatively for another. "Shall I beat one up into Mr. David's milk, too?" she asked in a stage whisper.

Claudia thought about it. "No," she decided. "He'd be wild." David was rather proud of the fact that he'd gained six pounds, and kept his shape.

A **feather** could have knocked her over when he asked for an eggnog before he went to bed that night. "Byard says he's discovered that it's the most painless way of putting on weight," he explained. "Would you believe it, that fellow's gained twenty-two pounds?"

"He seems to be making a career of getting well," she commented lightly.

"I wouldn't say that." David returned quite seriously. "It's just that he knows what this game is all about. He took sanitarium treatment, you know, for six months. And then stayed here a year before he decided to settle in town for good."

"Yes, Lydia was telling me all about it." Claudia tried to rule the irony out of her voice. "She says it is simply marvelous, so many people from New York are building or buying—she hasn't been out of a dinner-gown the whole season."

He didn't seem to catch the banter behind her words. He sat on the bed and drew her down beside him—slowly, and a little gravely, like the evening that Dr. Geglin had told them they could go home around the first of June. Another few weeks, and it would be the first of June. . . .

"Claudia," he said, "what would you think of changing our plans and spending the summer up here?"

At first she thought she hadn't heard him correctly, and then she thought he was joking. "I can think of nothing more thrilling!" she answered flippantly, in Lydia's rhythm.

"It would certainly be extra insurance for me, and a good rest for you before you begin looking for a place to live," said David.

She stared at him, wetting her lips, which had suddenly gone dry. "Do you mean it?" she asked with difficulty.

"Of course I mean it. The whole thing makes very good sense. It'd be excellent for the boys, there's not much activity in the office over the summer, and there happens to be a lot of building going on, as Lydia told you. I could undoubtedly get a commission or two, and gradually begin to work myself back into the swing of things before fall."

It all sounded so glib, as if he had rehearsed his little speech, over and over. The whole thing made very good sense, too; he was right in saying that it did. She had every reason to jump at the suggestion, and be happy that he was being so sensible about not plunging back into normal living. She probably owed a great debt of gratitude to Byard Trenly, and the professor of physics as well. Except for one thing. David's lips were eager and smiling, but fear looked out at her from his eyes.

. . . To be continued next month

THE BRIGHT COIN

BY ELIZABETH SEIFERT

Joel was a doctor—and a good one—but he was also a man in love—in love with Rainy, who rejected him. Had he loved her less, he might not have rebelled against his code of honor, and there might not have been a Donna—Donna, alluringly feminine, wise in the ways of men, and willing to gamble the bright coin of love to get what she wanted.

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THE BRIGHT COIN

BY ELIZABETH SEIFERT
DECORATIONS BY GEORGE WITHERS

CHAPTER 1

Joel did not welcome the task which the Chief of Staff put upon him that spring day. Though as far apart in birth and environment as two men may be, Dr. Roblane, pediatrician of the hospital at Lonti, and Dr. Pellestri, its resident surgeon, managed their friendship by a mutual show of tact and tolerance.

It would have been easy for Mario to condemn Joel as a rich man's son, and a snob, to call him stuffily conventional, just as Joel might have felt and shown distaste for Mario's catholic taste in diversions.

Mario Pellestri was a member of the local Italian colony, a striking-looking man, liked by all; at forty, he often passed for twenty-five; there was a sparkle to the man, a swagger of youth eternal. He was a good doctor, and possessed besides the general characteristics of his people, that engaging mixture of suspicion and childlike naïveté, that sunny, let's-go-fishing strain which could be underlaid with a black moroseness, a sweet kindliness which could be replaced in a flashing minute by a steel-like severity.

Joel, on the other hand, was what he appeared to be, a straight, tall, handsome chap, the good-taste-bound son of wealth and fine breeding, whose own choice had been to train and work hard in medicine.

But these two were friends, and Joel wished that he did not have to go up to the suite of the resident surgeon and—say what he'd been told to say.

He found Mario in the bathtub, up to his armpits in warm, soapy water, a dark blue book propped upon an ingenious rack before his eyes.

He glanced up at Joel, and waved a hand. "Sit down. Cigarettes in the pink jar. Thought you'd gone home. . . ."

Joel was dressed in a tan gabardine suit, a dark green bow tie under his chin; his thick black hair was brushed until it shone like a grackle's wing. "Findron had some things to talk over."

"Yes?"

"What are you reading?"

Mario held up the book. It was a medical treatise on edema. Joel made a face.

"What'd you expect? One of the new sexy novels?"

"From the gossip now current."

Without a word, Mario slid down into the suds, bobbed up with water streaming from his head and face. "Findron had *that* to talk over?"

"He didn't say much. But there's always a chance that the Board will get on his neck. . . ."

"I know. What is it this time?"

Joel lit a cigarette, gave it to Mario, took another, shaking his head over the pinkness of the jar. "It seems Dr. Pellestri parks too long, and too often, under the covered bridge."

"And there's imminent danger of its falling down."

"Well, there is, but that wasn't the complaint."

"I didn't imagine it was. I do wonder why our local ladies want to keep the bridge as quaint and full of color and romance—and then squawk when it's put to proper use."

"The story as told is true, you think?"

"Sure to be. I am mildly curious as to who told it. Was there a formal complaint?"

"There could have been—I didn't ask particulars, but I got a general idea of an outraged woman registering a protest."

"Then it was Cleota Minnent."

"Mm-hm. Could be."

Mario sat upright in the water, his eyes flashing; he spoke in a tense, furious fashion.

"That one! She thinks she's a great writer. She's a sham—including her conviction that one published book sets her apart from ordinary mortals! Take this book; you've spoiled my bath."

Joel took the book into the sitting-room, lounged against the door frame while Mario lunged, dripping, out of the tub. Meticulously, he scrubbed the porcelain with a long-handled brush, then reached for a towel in which he draped his hips. He turned on Joel, his finger accusing. "Her farming is just as phony as the rest of her! Any

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Italian could take that acreage and raise several crops upon it; but under Cleota's management, what happens? The chickens molt, the apples fall off the trees, and the rabbits get more carrots than she does. But she's a farmer!" He attached his razor, glared at Joel. "I do not like that woman of ten acres and a book!"

He pulled his fine nose to one side, shaved his upper lip, and continued with unabated fury. "My compatriots are apt, any day now, to get after her for the way she trims her grapevines."

Joel laughed aloud. "They content themselves with nastily watching no grapes appear. My dad says that farmers on any scale should be licensed. He doesn't like her, either."

"Of course not. Your dad's a very swell guy."

"You'll not quarrel with me on that!"

Mario flashed a smile over his shoulder. "I don't want to quarrel with you on anything, boy," he said sweetly. "I'll even apologize for the bridge."

"The bridge is O.K. It's what you do on it."

"Then I apologize for that, though it was a very natural development, what with the first soft breeze of spring, the peepers out, the full moon upon the water."

"You can't see much of any moon under that bridge."

Mario laughed; he was selecting socks from a tier of drawers. "But you must understand what I mean, Joel. You are younger than I am. And in love. You and Rainy surely—" Something in Joel's face stopped him. He took a step toward Joel, and leaned forward from the waist. "Don't you?" he asked in the hushed tone of disbelief. "Ah, surely, *surely*, Joel! She is so lovely, and so warm. She loves you, so—she would—" Mario's hands lifted, his shoulders drew together, his eyes were bright. "Don't you ever make love to her?"

"Not in the way you mean."

"But she is so free, so natural, so unrestrained—"

"I know," said Joel tightly. "I want to marry Rainy, you know."

"Why don't you?"

"I'm going to."

"When?"

Joel laughed uneasily. "I think she wants to wait until her mother is better."

"Meanwhile she wishes, perhaps, that you would assert yourself with her. Women are affected by the moon, too, you know. And, personally, I have found the direct approach most effective."

"With girls like Rainy Pearsett?"

Mario's smile flashed. "Maybe you're right. But, still, I'd try it, Joel."

Joel shrugged, smiling. "I'm going home. I'll be late for dinner. Be good."

He had a date with Rainy that night, as he did four nights a week. He had liked Rainy since she and Loro had first come to this valley, a year ago. Her mother—Lorraine Pearsett, a concert pianist—was recuperating from a plane accident in which both arms had been broken. It was now, the doctors said, a matter of practice, of painful use; Loro gradually would become able to play again, could eventually resume her career.

Meanwhile, she and Rainy must live as economically as possible. Influenced by various books on the subject, they had decided that a living could be earned on the land, and had bought these few acres in the grape country of Missouri. Loro labored over the piano, and amused herself by furnishing and decorating the ugly, square farmhouse. Rainy tried valiantly to become a farmer. Loro's cross-country-traveling friends fell into the habit of stopping off in Lonti, to amuse poor Loro in exile—and to be amused by her.

The valley had been shocked by the things done to the house and the farm, but Joel's quick interest in Rainy, and the Pearsetts' own personalities, had made things pleasant for Loro and her daughter in the town.

Loro liked Joel and was always glad to hear his step on the porch. Although he didn't approve of the things she'd done to their house, and certainly not of some of Loro's friends, he would come in and speak as politely to an interpretive dancer curled up on the thick pile of the gray rug as he would to one of his mother's friends properly seated in a wing chair in their handsome Palladian room.

He glanced at Rainy, his dark eyes warm, then sought Loro. She was at the piano, and he came to stand beside her, to watch her efforts. His strong hand held one arm at the elbow. "Do the De Falla one, where you bounce your hands up and down," he directed.

"Where who bounces what?" Loro asked, but she made the attempt.

"You've done wonders in a year," Joel praised her.

"Goodness, has it been a year?" Loro protested, getting up from the piano, guiding him back to the living-room, where her guests were eating dinner from plates in their laps. Walter Von der Hamp, her agent, was there in his almost monthly attempt to get Loro to sign up for some kind of work. She introduced Joel, and Walter immediately asked for a professional opinion on his client's arms.

Loro intervened. "Joel's sparking Rainy, not attending me."

"Oh," said Walter, looking like a bearded owl. "I see."

"You do not," Loro assured him. "Have you had dinner, Joel?"

"Yes, thank you."

Rainy sent him a smile through the white-enameled bars of the bird cage which, filled with ivy, hung in the bay window. "I'll be through soon," her lips said; she was making coffee, and Joel watched her.

"I haven't seen anything as nice as those two since 'Blossom Time' had its premiere," said Walter when, finally, Rainy caught Joel's hand in hers and they went out by the front door.

A soft breeze lifted the hair on their foreheads; Joel's arm went around Rainy's shoulder, and she lifted her lips for his kiss. They had been "engaged" for two weeks. "You taste good," he told her.

"But the salad was full of garlic."

He chuckled.

They walked along; Rainy's head was six inches below Joel's, and she walked with a free, easy step. Her hand was warm in his, her eyes were on the stars playing hide and seek with the clouds. "The moon will be up any minute. . . ."

"It's going to rain. Barometer is down to here."

Such were their words, but love beat like a left-hand boogie within their voices. They watched the "handy" man pour the night's milking into cans, set them away in the cool interior of the stone springhouse. Against the blackness of the night, his lantern's rays picked out the blades of grass upon the hank, a feathery dandelion head, made a gold filigree of the pussywillows. Finishing his work, Ben picked up his pails and departed, taking his lantern with him.

"Let's sit here, if you'll be warm enough," said Joel, indicating the broad stone steps.

"Loro says I look like the devil, but I'll be warm," Rainy laughed, sitting down. "She threatens to burn all my sweaters and jersey dresses."

"You look good to me."

She rubbed her head against his shoulder, and laughed happily. "You should hear her on the subject."

"Well, you're interested in other things. And everyone doesn't have Loro's gift for clothes, for always looking right."

"You think I look like the devil, too, don't you?"

"Well," he said warily, "this dress is a little sprung."

She laughed aloud, good-naturedly, and his arm drew her close, his free hand going into his coat pocket, bringing forth a small box which he held out to her. "What is it?" she asked in surprise. "I thought you were getting cigarettes."

Now he produced a pencil-slim flashlight, which he turned upon the little box. "Open it."

Rainy did, the light flashing upon the diamond, drawing sparks of red and blue fire. She didn't speak.

"It's your ring," Joel told her. He turned the light to her face. "Don't you like it?"

She closed the box. "I don't know," she said slowly.

"But, Rainy—"

"I like *you*," she said soberly. "I like being—yours. But, the ring—"

Joel had not moved, but he seemed to sit a little apart from her.

"A solitaire diamond is the conventional thing—"

"You didn't want a diamond?"

She glanced up into his troubled eyes. "Oh, Joel—"

"I know you're disappointed." His voice was quiet, controlled. For the minute the difference in their ages was plain. Joel was thirty-four, a man grown; Rainy was twenty-three, with her ideas still waving around like loose strings—and she had a lot of ideas. Many of them would be snipped off and forgotten before she got much older. Joel had done his snipping years before, and had forgotten the process. He loved Rainy, took each thing she did, each word she said, with worshipful seriousness. So—"I'll get you another ring, if you like."

He reached for the box, but she held it away. "Wait," she said quickly. "It's a beautiful ring, and I know I'm queer in the head not to love it. But I don't want a conventional diamond. Nor any engagement ring, maybe."

"You said you loved me, and would marry me."

"I do love you. And I'm proud that you picked me out to love. I want that, darling. I want your love, a real, shining thing—" Her uplifted face was pale in the faint light from the rising moon, her eyes were shining, her brown hair fell against the back of Joel's hand where it lay upon her shoulder. "But our love can be real, it can be shining—without a ring to say so. Our love is not a matter of a piece of jewelry."

It was a silly way to talk about such a ring, but Joel loved her, and took her silliest word seriously. Now, earnestly, he tried to tell her how he felt about his ring on her finger. "Any ring, Rainy, just to mark you as mine, to tell the world that you're mine."

"That's pretty atavistic, Joel."

"Are you going to refuse to wear a wedding ring?"

"No, though I could feel just as married without one."

He rose, his gesture angry. "Well, I wouldn't," he cried. "In a year, you should have learned to know me, and the way I feel about important things like marriage. I have waited a long time to select a certain girl to whom I'd give a diamond ring—and as long as I live, I'd like to look back at the night when I put it upon your finger."

"And I spoiled things."

"Yes, you did." He stood, tall and stubborn, beside her, his dark head up, his rather truculent underlip outthrust.

Rainy laughed softly, and touched his arm. "You're precious," she said warmly, "but I do wonder sometimes how you can be so sure of what you want."

"Don't you know what you want, Rainy?"

"In a general way. Not so specifically as you do."

"Don't you want the same things I do?"

She considered this, took a few slow steps along the path, Joel beside her. "I don't know," she confessed. "Maybe I do. Only—I'm not as sure as you are."

"Mm-hm. Mind if I smoke?"

She flashed a smile at him. "Of course not." But he would always ask her. As they walked, her hand was caught through his arm, and they didn't talk much.

They went up through the small orchard, taking the path made by Ben, who lived on an acre and a half adjoining the property. His domain was a hobbledehoy collection of rigged-up fences, sagging buildings, woodpile and lilac bushes. A white horse gleamed in the moonlight; a shepherd dog barked warningly, but silenced when Rainy spoke to him.

At the top of the hill, Joel and Rainy leaned their elbows against a stile and looked back into the valley through which they had come. The moon was shining from a break in the heaping clouds; the farthest hills seemed as thin as dark blue tissue paper; even Ben's outhouses were beautiful in that light and shadow. The white horse—

"A unicorn with silver hoofs and horn," murmured Rainy, and Joel kissed her.

"I don't know if I want you to grow up, or not," he said.

"But I am grown, Joel!" She boosted herself to a seat on the top step of the stile, and Joel leaned against the post, his arm across her knees. Rainy stroked the dark thickness of his hair.

"Mother—" he began diffidently. "Tonight, she asked which house I thought you'd prefer—to live in, you know, when we are married."

Rainy's hand stilled; then her forefinger lifted a lock of his hair, twisted it. "You don't mean Brookside?"

Joel nodded. "Dad means to give us either Brookside or the town house."

"Goodness," breathed Rainy. "They're both so big—"

Brookside was the charming, colonial "farmhouse" which Mrs. Roblane had lovingly restored, and maintained in all the beauty of the period in which it was built. The other choice offered Rainy was the tall, Victorian mansion in town two blocks from the hospital. If Staley Roblane gave either house to his only son, he would provide for its upkeep; Rainy had only to choose into which hall she would step as a bride—the white paneling, gold leaf and mahogany of Brookside, or the dark oak and the gold-and-green damask of the town house.

"You know what I'd really like, Joel?" she asked softly.

"A new house near the Club?"

"Oh, no! But I would like our *own* house. We're starting out together, Joel. And if I'm asked what I'd like—"

"You're being asked."

"Well, I'd like to take one of the brick houses the Italians build for themselves—set on the side of a hill among their grape vines, the kitchen and dining-room on the low side, the cool brick floors, the wide porch—"

"The wine barrels and the gnats," he said gruffly, and she laughed.

"No—but you see, what I want is the simple, the real, the genuine—things that are our own. Not the house your mother would give us, finished and done, with not a single dish yet to buy as our own taste. I'd like to marry you and go with you into our own house, an empty house. . . ." She was all animation and excitement.

"Ever sleep on a bare floor?" he asked.

"Oh, Joel, can't you see what I mean?"

"I see. You're saying 'no' to Dad's offer."

"Well, yes. Just as I'd be inclined to say 'no' to the grand piano Mother will want to give us. I want simple things in our house—uncluttered, plain things. Original with us so that they are our own; I want our own friends—real and interesting people."

"Like that woman at your house tonight?" asked Joel gloomily. "Sitting on the floor with a dozen chairs avail-

able. What makes you think it's any more real to sit on the floor than—"

"I didn't mean that sort," she broke in. "I don't mean Loro's friends."

"Maybe Cleota Minnent!" he cried savagely. "She lives simply. And I guess it's real, too. Up to and including the mosquitoes breeding in her moss-grown well-bucket."

Rainy began to laugh, then decided he was calling her ridiculous. "I don't mean Cleota!" she cried. "Nor Mother's friends—though there's a wide difference between them. But I don't mean them when I say I want to know 'real' people."

"Whom do you mean, then?"

She looked at him consideringly as she straightened his bow tie. "Oh, people like—like Mario, for instance."

Hurt to his innermost nerve by the things she had said this evening, Joel pulled away from her. "That bum!" he cried angrily.

"Why, Joel! You know he's not. He's a genuine, real man. There isn't an ounce of pretense in Mario."

"There isn't much in any bum."

"Why do you have him in your hospital if he's a hum?"

"Because he's a very good surgeon, and it isn't my hospital."

"Oh, now, listen, Joel—"

"It isn't. Dr. Findron is Chief of Staff."

"And your father is president of the board, of which your mother is also a member."

"They were members before I went to college."

"I know. But aren't they always buying some sort of equipment—and don't they do that for you?"

Joel's broad shoulders sagged a little. "Yes," he admitted. "They do a lot for me."

He walked away from her, going perhaps twenty-five feet, came back. Lightning flared, casting his figure in sharp focus, gleaming blue-white upon his hair, the ridge of his cheek and jaw, upon his shoulders, the white line of cuff above his lifted hand. "Rainy," he said seriously, "are you saying you think my father's money is a handicap to me? As a man and as a doctor? Would you love me more if I were not able to buy a diamond ring for you?"

"I told you that the ring was no measure of the way I love you."

"All right. And this is even more important. Do you think Dad's wealth and influence is, has been, or will be, a handicap to me as a doctor?"

She did not quibble over the distinction in importance which he made. "It makes a difference, Joel," she said thoughtfully, "in the sort of man you are, and in the doctor. But I don't think that difference constitutes a handicap. For instance, could you buy your M.D. degree?"

His shoulders lifted, his smile flashed. "That's right!" he agreed. "I had to do the work; I had to pass the exams."

"Certainly," said Rainy warmly. "Oh, Joel, can't you see that that is what I've been saying tonight? That there are certain, real things a person can and should get for himself? I know I've hurt you, about the ring, and the house—and the friends I hope we'll have."

"But I like people on whom I can count to do the conventional thing, a table set with shining linen and sterling silver— You know those are my tastes. Maybe I don't have to have those things, but I *like* having them!"

"I know you do, Joel—but we can have those things, live graciously in our own small house, the floors waxed and shining, a linen cloth on the little table, flowers in a pewter bowl—and interesting friends."

"Mario drinking his coffee from a cereal bowl," said Joel dryly.

"Yes! Making a sop of bread and wine. And talking with the vivid interest he puts to each subject! That is what I want, Joel—real people, real emotions—everything real!" She stood down from the stile, her face lifted to the moon. "Our love, Joel, all human relationships, cut down to the bone! Not a matter of a ring, nor wedding presents—but a matter of you and me, a man and his woman, loving each other—"

Her hair blew in the rising wind; her face was rapt. Joel watched her, remembering what Mario had said. Excitement rose within him, quickened his blood; he took two long steps to Rainy's side; his hand caught her shoulder, turned her toward him; he put his mouth down against hers, drawing her body up against his.

For a long, sweet minute she clung to him, surrendered to him. Her lips answered his urgency, her heart thudded against his breast—then, she pushed against him, her eyes wide, frightened. "No!" she cried hoarsely. "Oh, no, Joel! No."

The Joel she thought she knew so well would have released her. This man did not. He held her close, even when she beat with doubled fists against the wall of his chest. "Please, Joel—" she begged.

"Rainy, you said—"

Tears which her reasoning mind would have despised, tears, the weapon of women, poured from her eyes, raced down her cheeks.

"I love you, Rainy." Joel's voice was deep. "I want you—it's the realest thing in the world—"

She hid her face against his coat, unable to meet his eyes. "I didn't mean—" she gasped.

His arms loosened then, and she ducked away from him and started down the path. The first drop of rain splattered into the dust. That, or Joel's step behind her—something made her run, faster, down the hill, her hair streaming behind her. He watched her, his face as still as if carved from brown wood, a line of white showing around the beadlike iris of his dark eyes. He kept her in sight, but did not run—the rain was coming hard now, lancing up from the ground, shining in the light from the front door. He came up to the house; a glow of pink lamplight came through the curtained windows, and the sound of the piano. Rainy, playing very noisily—Chopin, Khatchaturian—anything that would drown out the emotions of the last fifteen minutes, emotions that were new, and frightening. Joy, and surrender, and fear— The music slowed, quieted. By then, Joel had put himself, in his soaked clothing, into his car, and had driven away.

Loro saw his headlights sweep her ceiling as he turned and went down the drive; she reached up her hand and made the effort necessary to snap off the lamp beside her bed. When Rainy had played her mind and heart clear, she would come upstairs. . . . Loro listened critically to her performance; the girl could be a musician—a professional—if she wanted.

She repeated this conviction to Rainy when, at last, the girl came to her mother's room to say good night. She wore red-and-white striped pajamas; her hair was braided and tied with red ribbons.

She perched on the foot of the bed, her fingers worrying a tuft of the turquoise spread. "How do you know what you want, Loro?"

Loro gaped at her.

"I know, but saying you want a certain thing isn't enough—maybe you don't know what you're talking about. And then, isn't it possible that you really want something, but aren't brave enough to take it? *It isn't easy, Loro!*"

Her profile was childlike against the creamy walls of the lighted hallway. "You don't have too wise a mother, darling," Loro attempted. "I do know that a woman can usually be what she wants to be—"

"I guess I'm talking about having instead of being. *Having* what she wants—"

"Well, she can usually have what she wants. Only—"

Rainy's head lifted alertly. "Yes?"

"You—a woman—has to *know* she wants it."

"But that's what I mean. How does she know?"

Loro looked up at the ceiling. "With me, it's like selecting clothes. I see a thing—a suit or a dress—something clicks, and I know it's right for me."

Rainy got off the bed, as if she were tired. "But I don't have any clothes sense," she said mournfully, "so you can see the fix I'm in."

She went off to her own room. snapping off the light in the hall. Loro lay listening to the rain, and tried to imagine what it was Joel had said, or done. She could have asked, and Rainy might have told her. But ever since she was born, Loro had respected her child as a personality. They loved and admired each other, with forbearance and courtesy displayed as necessary. Probing questions have no place in such a relationship, and Loro had a mortal fear of slobbering sentimentality, so—she lay in her bed and worried. Across the hall, Rainy did the same. Talking might have helped—but they didn't talk.

CHAPTER 2

For the next two weeks, Rainy was hard to live with; she was feverishly active, talked a blue streak—and avoided being alone with Joel. Sometimes she wore his diamond; she was more apt to leave it on her dressing-table, with the plausible excuse that one could not clean a brooder-house with that sort of ring on one's finger.

But Loro reminded her of it on Sunday afternoon when she was dressing to go to Brookside for tea. "And don't wear that sweater!" she said sharply. "It makes you look like a college sophomore."

Rainy laughed explosively. "The worst thing you can say about anyone is to suggest intellectuality."

Her sweater had been white, originally, but the valley water was heavily mineral, and the wool now had a reddish cast that made it look dirty.

"Mrs. Roblane will think I didn't teach you how to dress fittingly."

"Are you afraid of what she'll think?"

Loro was, but— "That isn't it. You yourself should want to dress suitably. Suitably to the occasion, and suitably to your position as the fiancée of a rising young doctor."

"*Wheee!*" cried Rainy impudently. "You don't ever mean Joel?"

"I do mean Joel. You don't ever think of him as anything but a nice young man in love with you. You forget he is a doctor; you don't realize that he'll be a big man one day."

"Oh, Mother, I appreciate Joel. . . ."

"No, you don't. I wish you'd gone with us Thursday."

"I had turkeys hatching. Besides, I was surprised that *you* went. Club meetings aren't usually your dish."

"The luncheon was lovely, and Joel made a wonderful speech."

Rainy whirled about. "Joel made a speech? At a women's-club luncheon?"

"I told you he had."

"I guess I wasn't listening. What did he talk about? Woman's place in the home?"

Loro didn't answer her for several minutes, and finally Rainy said, "Come on, Loro. Don't pout."

"I'm not pouting. I'm being ashamed of my child."

"You mean he was good?"

"I mean he was very good. He had every feather-headed woman in the room considering what he said, and determining to do what he suggested."

"What did he suggest?"

Loro still did not have her full attention, but she wanted to talk about Joel. "The point of his speech was the power a woman could wield in getting such things as hospitals and doctors especially trained and equipped to care for children—he mentioned special surgical techniques, special anesthetics—the right psychological approach—he said we women should demand that for the children. That we failed in our duty and our privilege—"

Rainy yawned aloud. "He must have been simply wonderful!"

"Rainy, if you're going to marry a doctor you should be interested in these things."

"If he's the kind to make speeches to clubwomen, maybe I'm not even interested in the doctor."

The day of the luncheon, listening to Joel, looking up at him, Loro had come near to breathing a prayer of thanks that she'd raised a girl this decent man could love. But Rainy— "You'd better change your dress," Loro said crossly. "It's too warm for a sweater."

Rainy got up, bent over to kiss her. "Joel is coming in the gate—and don't worry, Loro. Joel fell in love with me in jeans and sweaters. My clothes won't make any difference." She was out of the room, out of the house, before Loro could say another word. . . .

If Joel felt any shock at sight of Rainy, he made no sign. He kissed her, and they went off, Rainy as always asking if she might drive, and Joel shaking his head.

She laughed, and relaxed against his shoulder. "Loro was telling me about your speech to the women's club."

"Oh?"

"What made you do a thing like that, Joel?"

"What's wrong with doing it?"

"Oh— Those women in their black and gray and lavender dresses, their pearls and their flower toques—I can just see and hear them. You must have sounded like Cleota Minnent; you acted like her."

Joel let the car coast down the road's short incline to a graveled turnout. The water of the pond rippled like blue silk; he and Rainy looked down through the delicate pink blossoms of a crabapple tree; at the far side of the pond a sandy beach gleamed silver in the sunlight. "Those clubwomen," Joel said patiently, "of whom you're so scornful, can be a big help in getting better facilities for children in our hospital. In all hospitals."

"But they won't be. All those two hundred women will be enough like Loro—enthusiastic while you talked, while you were waving your nice eyelashes at them—and tomorrow—*pouf!*—they'll be just as enthusiastic about flower arrangements."

Joel drew himself up stiffly. "I consider your attitude unnecessarily frivolous," he declared, sounding like his mother. "I can assure you that I did *not* wave my eyelashes. I made an honest job of that talk; I felt it was a subject which needed discussion before such a group."

"That's the way Cleota talks about the speeches she makes. She has a *message*."

Joel looked for a minute as if he wanted to put Rainy out of the car; but he only started the engine, and as stiffly as two dolls set into a child's toy car, they rode on to Brookside.

It was the finest home in the valley, though there were others more impressive at first sight. As one came upon

Brookside from the main road, one saw a somewhat low house of weathered brick, its sloping roof of hand-hewn slate, two tall chimney stacks at either end of the roof ridge, white-framed dormer windows. Fine old box hedges almost concealed the lower windows and the round porch. The gardens were laid out in the manner of wealth, each rose bush carefully hedged in, and the walks defined, by low evergreen borders. Beyond the house were stables, and a garden-house approached by a box-bordered alley.

Rainy sighed with pleasure. "It is beautiful, Joel!" she said warmly, and he kissed her before he got out of the car and went around to open the door for her. "I'll he a good girl," she promised, her eyes contrite for the quarrel she had brewed between them.

And perhaps if Cleota Minnent had not chosen that same afternoon to call upon Mrs. Roblane—

But she was there, established in the Palladian room, Mrs. Roblane serving her tea from a lace-covered table. Cleota was a rather large woman who took pride in her erect stature, and having decided that her eyes were her best feature, she used them continuously. She was fifty and looked it, and had a domineering manner which made people believe her when first she told them what a great writer she was.

Cleota had been in the valley for several years, but Mrs. Roblane knew her just well enough still to be impressed. She sat now, a truly great lady in her lovely home, and listened to that other woman tell her that she was allowing herself to become encumbered with *things*. "A person should own no more possessions than he can carry in a basket in either hand," she was pronouncing when Joel and Rainy came in. Staley Roblane had just swallowed a snort, and was polishing his pince-nez.

The young people spoke in a well-mannered way to their elders. Beatrice Roblane poured them each a cup of tea; Staley disappeared.

"Of course, if you're going to have this house," Cleota continued her monologue, "I feel that you should not have *ventured* to strip the damask from this paneling."

"I had it taken off," said Mrs. Roblane, occupied with her tea things, "in an effort to more nearly approach the original house."

"Oh, dear!" cried Cleota with her elephantine coyness. "There goes an infinitive! *Splintered* all over the floor!"

Joel drew his lips back against his teeth, and stirred his tea furiously. "I'm sorry," his mother murmured. Rainy glared.

"I know you think it is more emphatic to split one," said Cleota airily. "But really it is not. Here! I'll show you. You said—"

Rainy put her cup down on a side table and walked out of the room, through the white-paneled hall; she banged the front door behind her and stalked across the porch, down the graveled alley to the garden-house where Staley Roblane sat, sucking contentedly upon a short-stemmed pipe. "Move over," she told him. "I can't take it, either."

He chuckled and indicated a second chair. "My wife tells me," he said gently, "that great people must be allowed a few—eccentricities."

Rainy snorted. "Cleota isn't great. And rudeness isn't eccentricity. That's a powerful word, by the way."

She grinned at Joel's father, who nodded. "Beatrice uses that sort. . . ."

"She's O.K. But Cleota's a fake." She went on to tell of the ruptured infinitive, and Staley sat smoking and chuckling, his eyes on the garden. He and Rainy visited for a half-hour, quarreling amiably about turkeys, their hatching and raising.

Staley Roblane owned a produce company. In his plants poultry, eggs, and fruits and vegetables raised upon the farms in the area were processed and packed, then shipped to markets all over the world. They dried eggs, they froze strawberries, they did all sorts of things with chickens and turkeys.

The president of this enterprise listened to Rainy's explosive comments on her turkey-raising venture, and promised that "his man" would come round one day soon, and confer with her.

She thanked him, watching Joel come out of the main house, stride down the alley. "How did you happen to make Joel a doctor instead of a turkey-canner?" she asked.

"He's a pretty good doctor, don't you think?"

"Oh, yes, but—"

"Most fathers want their sons to fill their shoes—that what you mean?"

"I suppose so."

"I'm a fairly typical father, Rainy. But I've no wish to live my son's life."

"You're sweet," she told him warmly and Joel heard her.

"Just like all women—making a play for the rich old men."

"Who's old?" demanded Staley, his eyes warm upon his beloved son.

"Just the same, I knew where to find Rainy. But I'll have to break up your little twosome. Mother wants to see her. She said she was sorry you'd left, she had hoped you'd be the only visitor this afternoon—and that she had something for you."

"Oh?" said Rainy. "The family pearls, no doubt. They'll look like hell, too, on my sunburned neck."

The men chuckled, and she ran up the walk, bursting through the front screen almost into the arms of Joel's statuesque mother.

Mrs. Roblane was perhaps a little too perfect; her gray hair was always dressed beautifully, her voice was modulated, her clothes were just right. She had never been a girl like Rainy, as natural as a cocker pup, and sometimes just as awkward and dismaying.

Understanding between those two was a thing to be striven for; it would never exist, warmly, naturally, of itself. Beatrice realized this, and her efforts were sincere, even if her methods did not always achieve the desired end. She put a hand on Rainy's shoulder, and led her back to the Palladian room, where she seated herself beside the tea table.

Rainy accepted her cup of tea. "This place is always so lovely," she said, almost wistfully.

"Your home is one of the many things I thought we could talk about this afternoon, dear," said Beatrice. "I don't want to be too possessive, and I'm sure you realize how important Joel's marriage is to his father and me. Our only son and—heir." She let the last word fall softly.

"Of course it's important," said Rainy quickly. "And I don't want to act hedgehoggish about the house. Only—this place is so dear to you, and the one in town is so—so overwhelming. . . . Couldn't we, perhaps, start out in a smaller way, and let me get used to being Joel's wife before I take on anything like a mansion?"

"Of course, dear. The main thing, certainly, is for you to make Joel happy, to let him he free to meet the exacting demands of his profession. A doctor's wife has a bigger job than most women, but I'm sure you'll rise to any occasion, do for him the many things his profession and his social position here in the valley will demand of you. And then you two must have a family. You do want children, don't you?"

"If I didn't, I wouldn't bother to marry."

"Er—yes," said Beatrice. "You're such a healthy, wholesome girl, my dear. Joel's father and I admire that in you quite as much as we do your musical talent and your other—er—abilities."

"You can't mean my farming!"

"You've made an honest effort, dear. You're willing to learn; that's why our local people like you and want to help you. Just as I do, my dear. I've put your name up for DAR and UDC; I hope you don't mind."

Rainy looked up, startled, and Beatrice swept on, happy in her idea of kindness. "We have young folk in both organizations, and you'll be such an asset. You've traveled extensively, you're used to meeting people, and then you play the piano so very nicely. . . ."

Rainy sipped her tea and said a meek, "Thank you."

"Joel says you could be a professional," Mrs. Roblane went on, kindly, "but I think you're too—well—normal to go that far."

"Are you suggesting that my mother—" Rainy's voice was soft; expensive schools had taught her how to be polite, and dangerous.

Mrs. Roblane had attended the same sort of schools. "Oh, dear, no! Certainly not. But some of your mother's friends are—perhaps—" She smiled and shrugged.

Loro's friends were often a trial, an embarrassment, a nuisance to Rainy. So there was not much the girl could say in reply to this.

Beatrice continued her discourse, sweetly. "Here in the valley, you know, Rainy, a doctor is selected and judged by more than his medical training and skill. The sort of home he has, the way his wife and children look and behave—those things are all significant. Joel says such things should not matter, even as he acknowledges that they do. We're a small-town community, with an Italian settlement. And as Joel's wife, you will have to accept the fact that these people will feel a proprietary interest in his wife. If they don't approve of the way you act and dress, that dislike will be reflected in their attitude toward Joel. Naturally, you don't want them to disapprove. So— You're not offended, my dear?"

"Oh, no. I know you don't approve of my wearing jeans on the street, and I know I should have worn a pretty dress and a flowery hat this afternoon, high-heeled pumps and gloves. To please you, and to please Joel's patients. Only—maybe it isn't as important as you think to please those patients."

Mrs. Roblane looked her question.

"I mean, does Joel intend to spend his whole life here in this valley?"

"Why not?" cried Joel's mother, anxious, and indignant, and surprised.

"Why, because it *is* a small town, a small hospital—and Joel could do bigger things. He should not waste his ability in a place where his wife's clothes determine his success."

"How old are you, Rainy?" asked Mrs. Roblane patiently.

"I'm twenty-three. Why?"

"Because, when you are only a little older, you will realize that appearances are important anywhere. You plan to be a good, helpful wife to Joel, I am sure. So—you will want to look like the proper wife of a serious, successful doctor."

"Will a badly-washed sweater keep me from being that sort of wife?"

"To people who know you slightly, yes, it will, dear. I wish you could take my word for that. I'm sincerely trying to help you."

Rainy was a sweet girl, though headstrong, and a little young. So she assured Joel's mother that she recognized good intentions, and also that she meant to do all she could for Joel, wherever he lived and worked.

"I'm sure of that, dear," the older woman said, rising, going across the hall to the other, more elaborate drawing-room. At her nod, Rainy followed her, and watched curiously as she lifted the lid from a huge box laid upon the square piano. Her hands rustled tissue paper, then brought out a bulk of brown satin and fur. She shook this out, and displayed a coat before Rainy. Sheared beaver, full pelt, silky and soft, a lovely, luxurious thing. Rainy's dream had long been to possess such a coat.

"I bought it at a bargain," confessed her future mother-in-law. "Spring, you know. But it looked so like you, dear, and I wanted you to have it."

"Oh," cried Rainy, "I couldn't—"

"Of course you could, dear." She laid the coat upon Rainy's shoulders. "There!" she cried triumphantly. "*That's* the way you should look!"

Rainy looked suspiciously at Joel's mother. "What way?" she asked frostily.

"Why, like the wife of a successful doctor!"

"Does it take a fur coat?"

"No, of course not. But, well—details *are* important. And—I am sure you want to do anything you can to help Joel. . . ." Mrs. Roblane meant well; she was essentially kind—and right. But she sounded condescendingly critical, and Rainy caught that sound clearly enough that her anger exploded redly, blotting out all other things.

"You can take that fur coat right back where you bought it!" she said furiously. "I want no part of it. If I'm ever Joel's wife it will be because we love each other. I'd marry a man on no other basis. He knows that, and wants things that way. I'm afraid you don't know your son very well. You make him sound like a stuffed shirt, and he isn't. He's warm, and sincere, and he loves me the way I am. In jeans, or this sweater—and you'll have to take me that way, too."

She glared at the astonished Mrs. Staley Roblane, cast the coat from her shoulders; it slid, shining, soft, to the piano bench, to the dark red carpet. Her face white with fury, Rainy stalked out of the room, out of the house.

From his mother, Joel had a fevered account of the afternoon's scene, and he was glad that Rainy had stood up to Beatrice, yet sorry, too. When he came to the house that night, and asked her to walk with him, he could offer no apology as such; his whole plea must be for understanding and co-operation. And those qualities seemed the last that Rainy wished to acquire.

She spoke only in monosyllables as they crossed the drive, and walked up through the pasture to the far fence. Joel leaned upon the weathered rail and tried to tell Rainy how he felt about her, and how he felt about his mother.

"If you'd only look at me!" he blurted. "Or let me touch you! I don't feel that you are listening to me!"

"But I am, Joel," she said quietly. "It's just—there isn't much to say. This thing happened, and I'm sorry it had to—but I can't see how it could have turned out any other way. I mean—"

"Mother should not have ventured to criticize you. She admits that."

"She didn't criticize me, Joel. Not really."

"She told me that she had, and that you had resented it."

Rainy sighed. "Do we have to talk about it?"

"I think perhaps we do, Rainy. Because I love you, I want you—you know that! And yet," said Joel, "I want to please my mother. I want you to please her."

"We're not very much alike, Joel."

"I know. . . ."

"Your mother is possessive; she loves a thing because it belongs to her. I love a thing for what it is in itself."

"Yes," he agreed, "but can't you both be right?"

"Maybe. I think your mother is wrong to hold you so tightly, to try to live the life of her grown son."

"She doesn't, Rainy—"

Rainy whirled on him. "Oh, but, yes, she does, Joel! She keeps you here, urges your father to equip your small hospital until it is a place good enough to interest and hold you. Isn't that true? Why, you even dress to suit

her. The clothes you have on are ones you bought and wear because your mother considers them suitable. *'Fitting'* was the word she used to me." Her tone was bitter.

"Oh, Rainy . . ." Joel protested. "I said she should not have criticized you."

"It isn't that. I did look awful. What I resented was her effort to mold your wife into something which she will approve. It almost amounts to her selecting your wife. And it is not right for you to let another person live your life to that extent. It's never right—for any person."

"But we all try to please the ones we love."

"Pleasing is one thing—your mother's hold on you goes much deeper. My mother loves me, too, Joel, and would like to decide my life for me. But I feel that my own personality is important. That's why I'm raising turkeys instead of playing the piano, as she wants. I want to be myself—independent."

"And marriage?"

"When I marry it will be for the most primitive reasons!" she asserted. "I give you my word I'll never submerge my personality in that of my husband, and I'd hate the man who would submerge himself in me."

Joel laughed a little, and leaned against the fence, stood and rubbed a leaf through his fingers. "Mother's love may be possessive," he said thoughtfully, "but I'm not the submerged gentleman you describe. I do the things I do because they are what I honestly, deeply want to do. I like my home, and I like my family. And there is a small hospital here of the sort in which I want to work —I am free to develop my own ideas, I am developing them, and can do more of it in the future. Our place is small, but it is growing, and I can help it grow in the way I want it to do. It is my ideal to build a wing especially for children, to equip it according to my notions of what such a place should be. My ideas would run into considerable money, and it will take time to accumulate enough—"

"Ask your father to build your wing, He would." Rainy's tone was only reasonable.

But Joel shook his head. "Ah, no! I won't be a rich man's son leaning on that rich man. Rainy, you can't accuse me of ever—"

"I don't accuse you of anything. I think you're swell." She should have let him go on and talk to her about his hospital, but certain things have to be learned by each girl, and Rainy, unfortunately, had to learn them on Joel. "But," she insisted, "you do dress to please your mother! Black shoes at night—"

"My shoes are brown!"

"Tonight you're wrought up."

His hand on her shoulder gave her a shake. "Now listen to me!" he said roughly. "I've told you this before. I *like* to be properly dressed. It's my own taste—a man can defend his position, if he knows he's right. Though—I hope I'm not too stodgy about it."

"You aren't stodgy at all, Joel," she said quickly. "You're sweet."

He caught her to him, and kissed her. "Oh, I *do* love you, Rainy," he cried. "Why do we have to quarrel? We want the same things; you know we do—"

"But maybe not in the same way, Joel," she said.

"What difference does that make?"

"It may make all the difference. Enough, anyway, that one must ask, *'Do* we love each other? *Do* we want the same things?' "

"Now, listen, Rainy . . ."

"How do we *know?* You *say* we love each other, but how can we be sure? We've known each other for a year; there's a biological appeal—"

He released her, profanity blurting from his lips. She had read too many books, talked at midnight to too many schoolgirls with half-baked ideas about men and life.

She laughed a little but was quickly serious again. "But how far *does* our love go? We haven't talked very much, nor thought very much, about the sort of life we want if we marry. You say you want the *right* things. I believe I want the *best* things for you and for me. But are they the same things? Right now, it wouldn't seem so. Not if you mean you want to stay here in this small hospital, and I mean making a name for yourself in your profession."

"Can't I make that name here?"

"Stay in a small town and impress the world? You know you can't."

"I don't know it, and I'm not sold on the name thing, anyway. I want to do the best possible work, hut what honors I get don't feature."

"I know they wouldn't, Joel. And perhaps I'm wrong about such a goal—for a doctor."

He kissed her gently. "I'd like to think you'd try my way," he said gently. "I do love you so much, Rainy. I want you for my wife, with all that means. . . ."

"You ask me to try your way," she said in a cool voice. "Why shouldn't you try mine?"

"What does your way mean?" he asked quietly. "Define it to me, Rainy. And to yourself."

"Well," she began, "it isn't definite in a sense that the one you are living could be described. But, in a general way, I'd say I want you to go out and make a name for yourself, independent of these people here who seldom even call you 'Doctor,' and certainly independent of your family."

"I'm doing good work here, Rainy," he said quietly. "It is a thing difficult to explain, but I know that I want to continue my work here, in and for our hospital. And I can assure you that the decision is entirely my own."

A sudden little breeze blew her hair across Rainy's face; she jerked it back, impatiently. "All right!" she said ringingly. "I hope it is your own decision. Anyway it isn't what you decide that is important, Joel—it's that you make the decision on your own! Be your own man, darling, not a shadow of what others think you should be! Don't so much as shave because the other fellow thinks you should."

In the half-light, Joel's eyes glinted, and she continued hastily:

"I know—you feel better shaven. Well, do it then. But don't you ever want to break over?"

"Yes," he said deeply. "Occasionally I want to beat you."

"Then maybe you should do it." But she eyed him warily.

He laughed, and shook his head. "I suppose then, the other night, I should have forced myself on you—"

"If it was your personality to do such a thing. That's what I'm urging on you, Joel—to be your own personality."

"A man doesn't live alone in the world, however. I had you to consider that night."

"You did consider me. But whether you should have —and lots of people do live alone, as you call it."

"For instance?"

"Your pal Pellestri. He drinks when he wants to, and as much. Loves the girl he chooses to love, with no dictation from anyone, not even that of public opinion. He does just as he pleases, is completely himself."

"But that won't last long," Joel said mildly.

"He's forty years old."

"I know, and the war helped him have five more years of not giving a damn—but he's a good doctor, and he's soon going to have to choose what he wants, his work or his play."

"Not Mario."

"Maybe not. But—I'm not Mario. If it's a man like that you want, perhaps you should go after the original. He admires you very much!"

Rainy stared at him, aware that he was angry. "I didn't mean to offend you, Joel," she said uncertainly.

"You've shown pretty plainly that you don't want the man I happen to be. I'm sorry—but I suppose you know what it is you do want. So—good night, Rainy." And Joel strode down the hill, leaving her up there, alone.

She stood leaning against the fence until she saw his headlights sweep up and over the house, straighten into the drive, and turn into the main road. Then she sighed, and picked her way through the grass, down the hill. In her room, alone with this thing she had done, she took Joel's ring from her finger, carefully put it into its little velvet box. She must send it back to him. . . .

Joel had every right to resent the restless night which Rainy had insured him; he and Mario had a difficult operation scheduled for the next day. Sternly, he tried to make himself sleep. Let him be sane about this thing. He loved Rainy—of that he was sure. He wanted her, wanted to love and to cherish her. But—he also respected her judgment.

Rainy could be right. She knew nothing of medicine, and she hadn't let Joel fully state his case, with details. But she could be right—only, first, he must get through that job waiting for him tomorrow.

"It was big-time, Joel," Mario told him when they finished in the operating-room. "Your diagnosis was right on the nose. You could take your kind of doctoring to any big hospital in the country—"

"If I wanted to do that."

"Why don't you want to? I've often wondered why you stay here. We won't get that sort of case in another five years."

"What we do get will be important."

"But not big-time. And you're a big-time child specialist. My surgery couldn't have helped that kid without your diagnosis."

"I was here—I made the diagnosis."

"So you did. But why? Why do you stay here?"

"Why do you?"

"That's easy. It's a hospital and a neighborhood where I can combine my work and my pleasure. As I couldn't in a big place, with an overcritical staff, and very many six-hour jobs."

Joel smiled, and combed his thick hair back from the peak in which it grew. "You won't be able to keep it up here, will you?"

Mario made a wry face. "You're so right," he said bitterly. "And certainly I won't be able if, as I suspect, you make our little hospital into a big one."

"What are you talking about?"

"Or even into a medium-sized hospital," Mario continued gloomily. "I'm talking about success, boy. I can smell it on you. A thick, greasy, sweet smell. Sometimes I wonder how I stand you."

"*You* wonder?"

CHAPTER 3

Joel did his work that afternoon, the next day and the next, and amused himself after hours, without making any effort to see Rainy, but thinking of her most of the time, pondering the things she had said to him. He considered his patients with her criticism in the back of his mind. Was he too much the rich man's son? Did he too much consider what people thought of him? Did he, or did he not, do the things he himself wanted to do?

Especially about his work, he made an effort to feel like a poor man, to project himself into the personalities of his less-affluent patients. He determined to be, if not a poor man, at least a real one, to conquer the inhibitions he knew were his.

Thus began his closer association with Dr. Pellestri. They had always liked each other, and had got along well in their work; but Joel's friends were not Mario's, and though their social orbs were sometimes tangent, and even overlapping, they had been separate circles. Mario, for his good looks, his gay manner, had entree anywhere; Joel, by his own tastes, had never indulged in the gay gatherings some of the local groups provided. Now, with Mario, he began to attend these things.

"Tonight," said Mario one evening, as Joel was leaving the hospital, "we should go to the Viviano wedding feast."

"We should?"

"I mean to, and you'd like it."

"If I'm free, and you think I should. I mean, I could be out of place. . . ."

"Nothing is out of place at a wedding," Mario told him. "Bring Rainy—she'd love it. Music and dancing, food and wine—"

"Why don't you ask her instead of me?"

Mario looked sharply into Joel's face. "What's with you and Rainy?"

Joel's foot purred the engine. "Nothing. And I mean just that." His jaw was tight.

"You don't mean that, really?" Mario asked with concern.

"That's what she says." Joel slid the car away from the step.

But he went to the wedding feast with Mario, still wondering if he should. The son of his parents, he had grown up among the valley people without ever being a part of them. Until tonight. They welcomed him naturally, happily, as one of their own, a popular young man. Girls were ready to dance with him, to teach him the steps if he cared to embark upon a tarantella, laughing, teasing, when he refused. He ate enormously of saffron cake, of frozen yellow cream heaped with crushed berries, and especially of *Capelletti.* Because the minced chicken within the little cones of pastry was highly seasoned, as was the tomato sauce, he drank and drank—and what he drank was the potent *vino* from the bottles and kegs ranged in cellars dug into the sides of the hills, brought out cobwebbed, and delicious. Joel's hand spilled a glass of it upon his white shirt front, and he hardly noticed, because sitting close beside him was a dark-eyed girl, anxious that he have a good time at their fiesta, honored that Joel should be their guest.

Mario, having his own fun, still kept an eye on his friend; at midnight, or a little after, he suggested that Joel had better go home. "While you're able to drive."

"I'm not drunk," Joel told him with dignity.

"No—just a little fuzzy—but it wouldn't do to get any more chummy with the bride's sister."

"Lucia is a beautiful girl."

Mario's eyes sparkled. "But I don't want to take Jim Somebody's knife out of your ribs. So—you go home, Joel. That's a good boy. Isn't that right, Lucia?"

Reluctantly, Lucia withdrew her hand from Joel's arm. "I guess so, Mario. A cutting would sort of spoil the wedding."

"It would considerably mess up Joel, too," agreed Mario, walking through the farmyard with Joel. Indoors,

the music throbbed from concertinas and violins, dancers whirled and stomped, laughter lifted in waves.

Mario had eaten and drunk as much as Joel, but not so unwisely. Mario had been weaned on *vino*. "If you're sleepy, pal," he said when Joel had got into the car seat. "I'll drive you home."

"I'm not sleepy. Just a little headache. Gonna rain."

Mario glanced up at the sky; lightning flared from the heaped purple clouds. "You'll make it home, I think. But watch yourself, Joel."

"I'm fine. Kiss Lucia—for me—nice girl—"

Mario grinned and stepped back; he hoped Joel could get himself and his red-stained shirt front home without meeting his mother. She'd have a fit. . . .

That evening, Rainy was alone; Loro had gone into the city to a concert. Moody as she was those days, at the last minute Rainy had announced that she didn't want to go. She had gone to bed and, when thunder rolled over the roof shingles, she jumped up, anxious for the rest of her young turkeys—and for the second cow, in the pasture with her new calf. Though Ben had said they'd be all right, even if rain did come up—

She rolled the legs of her striped pajamas up to her knees, pulled on a raincoat and a little round hat, took the big flashlight, and went out. The turkeys were all right, the silly things. On an impulse, she decided to open the barn and the gates leading into the lane and the pasture. Then if the cows wanted man-made shelter for themselves, and the calf—

She stood for a moment there on the hilltop, enjoying the wild beauty of the tumbling clouds, the lightning, the hills. Then she turned—and down at the road saw car lights, tilted at a crazy angle. Someone had his wheels off the narrow road at the culvert; she'd go down and investigate.

She was almost on the car before she recognized it as Joel's. Her heart leaped like a frog in her throat, stifling her cry of terror. One back wheel was off the road, the car was tipped upward, the lights on, the radio droning—Joel leaned out of the door swinging on its hinge, and he was being extremely sick at his stomach.

Rainy clutched at his arm, shook it, screaming at him. Was he hurt? Could he get out? Let her help him—

He managed to crawl out of the car, his hair across his forehead, his eyes dazed, his speech mumbling. Lightning showed a stain dark upon his breast, and Rainy bit her lip with fear. The rain was coming down now; trees bent swishing before the wind. Here was Joel, hurt—she must take care of him, get him up to the house. . . .

Tugging at him, screaming and sobbing in her panic, Rainy urged him up the drive, and finally into the house. He collapsed on the red sofa like a half-empty sack of grain.

Rainy ran for a basin of water, a cloth—bathed his face, sobbing like a frightened child. She remembered that Loro had smelling-salts—when she came downstairs with them, Joel was sprawled flat on the cushions, snoring loudly, and the room stank of wine.

"Pffff!" said Rainy, in disgust.

She curled up in a low chair, her chin in her hand, and watched him. She had never thought to see Joel thus, his black hair in disheveled strings, his lips swollen, his clothes stained. She was shocked, and surprised; she was disgusted to find that he could be like other men; she was a little worried—perhaps he was ill. She considered telephoning to Mario—but if this was simply a drunk, it was better that no one knew. If she could get him out in the morning—but Ben came pretty early. Ben wouldn't give a second thought to anyone's being drunk, but he would leer when he knew, or guessed, that Joel had spent the night alone with Rainy. He might respect Rainy a little more, but—

Oh, darn Ben! Darn anything but the fact that Joel—

As if he heard his name in her thoughts, he groaned and rolled over on his stomach, his hands thrown above his head, one of them clenched. His breathing was deep, steady. Did he always sleep so, his black hair clinging to his forehead? Rainy's hand lifted as if she would brush that hair back; she held it poised, a tender little smile about her lips. She leaned closer, until her lips brushed his cheek; it was hot, and moist—a little rough. The thick lashes lifted, one brown eye regarded her.

"Oh," he said, as if relieved, "it's you, Rainy." He sighed a little, turned his head away, slept deeply.

Rainy dropped to a heap upon the floor beside him, her eyes thoughtful. What if he had not turned away? He had awakened at her kiss—well, not a kiss exactly— Yes, it was too! He'd recognized it as such, and—what if he had not turned away? What if one arm had drawn her to him—would she have blundered this time? She sighed, and rested her cheek against the couch arm. How was a girl to know? When to blunder, when to be brave? Life was very confusing. Her own eyelids drooped.

Before six, she stirred her cramped limbs, and stood up. She ran upstairs for a quick shower, dressed in jeans and T-shirt, came down again to start coffee, then put determined hands on Joel, shook him.

He groaned, and cursed, and sat up. "Mouth tastes like a rat-run," he growled, and looked indignantly at Rainy, as if she were to blame.

"Why wouldn't it?" she asked coolly. "Now, you go upstairs, and shower—and shave."

He made an effort to stand, yelled and sat down clutching his head. "Are you hurt?" Rainy asked, in new alarm.

"Head like a haystack," he mumbled. "Full of hay forks. . . ."

She went for coffee, brought it, steaming, in a blue cup. "Try this."

He did, scalding his tongue. "I'll be O.K.," he told her. "I think. Too much *vino*—too much *Capelletti*—" He made a wry face, drained the cup, staggered to his feet. "How'd I get here?"

"Your car got off the culvert—I brought you here to sober you up."

He frowned, and plodded painfully up the stairs. She heard the shower going, went to squeeze oranges, to make toast. He came down, his stained shirt in his hands.

"You can't go to the hospital in your undershirt," she told him.

"I've a sweater in the rumble. I don't want food."

"There's more coffee—and if you could manage some toast . . ."

"My tongue must grow on the north side of me," he said, sitting down, "from the moss on it."

She giggled, and pushed the cream pitcher toward him. He shook his head. "Your mother must think—"

"Loro's in the city."

His eyes snapped. "You mean, you and I—" He glanced around.

She nodded. "Maybe I could sue you for something."

He grinned, and tried a piece of toast. "I'm sorry," he began, then sat looking at Rainy. "Only, of course, you're to blame."

"Me?"

"Sure. You told me to act like Mario—and I did—and it about finished me."

Her mouth was a red *O* of protest, and surprise.

"Why, sure," he argued. "You advised me to be real, to go out and get my shirt dirty—and I did."

Rainy gasped. Had she really? "I didn't mean—"

"You told me to conquer my inhibitions. Well, last night I did—and from your face you don't like me one bit better without 'em."

Rainy didn't. She sat silent, unhappy. She recognized the texture of the cloak of misery which enfolded

her, and struggled to free herself of the encumbrance. "Joel!" she cried in anguish, "I didn't mean for you to do *this* sort of thing!"

"What sort of thing?" His dark eyes were watchful.

"Oh, getting drunk, and wrecking your car. It's bad for you and for your work."

"Heck, Rainy, one drunk won't hurt a healthy man. I'm feeling fine already, thanks to your coffee." He smiled.

But she would not be mollified. "It isn't like you—"

"It's like the man I'm trying to be, the one you said you'd prefer."

"That's what is wrong!" she cried tensely. "Doing things that are not *you*. I didn't mean that—or if I did, I was crazy. You're a fine, decent man, and— Oh, Joel, you frightened me! If I thought— You mustn't, Joel! You mustn't!"

His big hand fell upon her wrist, and he leaned toward her. "Calm down! Last night wasn't that important."

"It was important! No! Listen—and this I mean. I talked like a fool, the other night—so much so that I didn't say the thing I meant to say! And my crazy talk is to blame for what happened last night. It is!"

He looked at the half-inch of cold coffee in his cup. "I've been trying, since that night, to follow your advice, Rainy. I've been trying to be the sort of guy that would please you. Last night I drank and ate a combination of Italian stuff; it hit me when I wasn't looking. I'm sorry about that—but the going to the wedding, the mixing more with people—that's what you told me to do, and I believe your advice was right. I am stiff, and too conventional—"

"But it's right for you to be!" she broke in intently. "That's what I mean, Joel—and I'm not speaking on impulse now. You're *you*, Joel; you've grown up, made yourself the sort of man people respect and admire, and you've developed the personality which is *you*. And it's wrong to try to change that personality because someone says you should. Why should my decision be better than yours?"

Joel looked bewildered. "You sent my ring back, Rainy. I certainly thought you meant your criticism of me."

"It wasn't criticism."

"What then?"

"Oh, must we have more analysis? Well—we—you and I, Joel, we may not be meant for each other. We may be too different—but be yourself! Work out your own line of endeavor, of behavior. Be the sort of doctor you can defend before the world!"

"You wanted—"

"But that's *my* idea. *You* believe in the work you are doing here in the valley. The only important thing is to know what is right for you, and do it!"

Joel had listened to her thoughtfully. "You claim that I misunderstood you the other night, Rainy. Do you mean what you are saying this morning? That you and I may not be for each other?"

"If we are so different in what we want—I'm sorry, Joel. I like you so much. But our aims should be the same if we—and they don't seem to be."

He stood up. "I'd do a lot to please you, Rainy."

"I know you would, Joel. But it would be wrong for you to change on my account, and very wrong for me to let you."

"I see." He picked up his shirt, ducked his head to look out of the window. It was a misty, gray morning, but not raining. "I'll go look at the bus; I may have to phone for a wrecker. I— Thanks, Rainy. I'm sorry I was a bother."

"Our friends are never a bother," she declared grandly.

Joel pressed his lips together and went out through the hall, seeing, the minute he opened the front door, that Ben had a mule and was getting his car back on the road. Without looking again at Rainy, Joel strode down the drive. She had meant what she said—he had lost Rainy, and the loss was like a hollow gnawing at the pit of his stomach, but some of the things she had said this morning held comfort. If he was free—and he was!—he could go back to being Joel Roblane. What was it she had called him? A fine, decent man. He could do his work, and in his own way. . . .

He did a full day's work at the hospital, went home that night, worked the next day, and the next, adjusting his thoughts and plans to an acceptance of Rainy's decision. He was not for her. He should be himself, do the things in which he believed.

Well, then he was free to get the children's wing he wanted for the hospital. He would try to make the getting of it a substitute—for Rainy.

He talked to his father, saying that he wanted this thing for the children of the valley, asked if it could not be a project developed by the local people. His father thought it could be, and Joel spent the next two weeks calling upon rich and influential people, a large number of them the heads of prosperous Italian-American families, and promises of donations were forthcoming. He went to Loro about a benefit concert, and found her co-operative. Something big could be arranged for such a purpose—indeed, yes! She had friends. . . .

About the time that Loro planned her party to discuss the benefit, Joel got his first exciting results from the speech he had made before the clubwomen in the spring. That increased Joel's faith in his ideas, and intensified Loro's interest.

There were certain people she thought might be helpful; she had played enough benefits to feel no qualms about asking her professional friends to perform. Joel's manners were so charming, his interest so sincere, that she felt he could add weight to her request. Also, a party would bring Joel into their house, whereby, Loro hoped, some sort of relationship might be re-established between him and Rainy.

Perhaps Rainy entertained a faint hope of the same sort, because when Mario showed up alone, she was excessively snippy about his apology for Joel's absence.

Rainy was arranging pink roses in a wooden chopping bowl when Mario came over to the table, and repeated what he had told Loro—that Joel would probably not make the party.

"Snobbish, no doubt," said Rainy, her attention upon the fringe of glossy leaves she was placing about the rim of the bowl.

"What did you say?" Mario demanded.

Rainy tossed her hair back from her face. "I know what Joel thinks of these clambakes," she said bitterly. "*He* likes damask and silver candlesticks." She bit the final word off with a snap.

Mario's brown hand lifted, clenched itself, then opened into a flat, hard palm which he regarded speculatively as he talked. "Joel is a very busy man these days. He has these ideas about hospital accommodations for children—" He glanced swiftly at Rainy. "Did you know that he was offered a job in New York?"

Rainy looked up, her eyes bright.

"No," said Mario dryly. "If he wouldn't leave for you, he won't go just to make himself famous. But—he is busy. He's said something about hiring a secretary." His bright eyes searched Rainy's face.

She put a rose into place. "I'm glad Joel is doing so well," she said primly. "His profession is his whole life."

Mario rubbed his hand down the side of his flannel trousers. "Rainy, why don't you take that job?"

"Me?"

"Yes. Why don't you?" A note of pleading enriched his voice.

She straightened and looked at Mario. "I don't *want* to!" she said coldly.

"O.K.!" shouted Mario. "I hope he gets a redhead!"

Rainy smiled at him sweetly. "That would be very nice," she purred, "for both of you."

Mario stepped back to look at her. "Do you know where Joel is at this minute?"

"No, and I don't especially care to be told."

"But I'm going to tell you, and you're going to listen!"

Uncertainly, Rainy's hand went up to brush her hair away from her face. Mario stepped toward her until he had her backed into a corner. "Joel," he said firmly, his eyes holding her gaze, "is not here tonight because he is in the hospital nursery. He is saving babies who have an infectious trouble some doctors call fatal. But *Joel is one who saves his babies!* Saves them by work so hard, so painstaking, that you know nothing of such work!" His strong hand pressed her arm. "Just as you know nothing of Joel!"

"As I suppose you do know him." Her cheeks were pink, her eyes bright with the emotions Mario was mixing for her.

"I know him," Mario agreed. "The sort of doctor he is, the profound medical judgment he shows—the integrity of the man he is. Yes, I know Joel, Rainy. But I don't matter. *I* am not in love with him."

"And you think I am?"

"I know very well you're in love with him!" His voice crackled with anger. "I know the symptoms—I'm a man who has a wide clinical knowledge of such things. When a girl loves a man—especially a girl who does not have that man—the symptoms are these: she is short-tempered; her bed is too wide at night; she gets up and sits by the window; she rises at dawn, and goes upon the hilltop; she walks along the streets of town, and does not greet her close friends; she is restless and unhappy; her limbs ache. . . ."

To escape, Rainy had to brush him out of the way. Mario let her go by this method. When she reached the swinging door into the kitchen, he shouted after her so that all in the room could hear, "I guess you know you can lose him!"

The door flapped behind Rainy.

"I *guess*," said Loro at Mario's shoulder, "Rainy doesn't know much of anything."

His face was angered. "She's due to learn!"

"Oh, dear, yes," Loro agreed. "I'm afraid so."

When Joel got his secretary, she was not a redhead, but she was striking in appearance. Ironically, it was Mrs. Roblane who, on a trip to the city, asked a secretarial school to send a "suitable" young woman to Lonti.

Things might have gone differently had Joel's mother seen and talked to Donna; she might have seen immediately what the girl was. Or she might have looked at the girl's appealing eyes, noted her low, eager-to-please voice, her earnest manner, and decided that she was exactly what Joel needed. But she did not see her, and things went—as they went.

The head of the school had no choice—Donna Feress was the only one who wanted this job "in the sticks."

Donna was a girl who had pulled herself up by her bootstraps; she had learned to dress, to slick her hair back from the fine bones of her face, to talk grammatically and, usually, to stick to the vocabulary of a lady. In her ambition to rise, she had saved the money she had earned as a shopgirl to take a secretarial course. She had moved from her family's crowded home to a room in a city boarding-house where, during the war, she had met Mario Pellestri.

A captain in the Army Medical Corps, handsome, bright-eyed Mario had come to St. Louis to take certain surgical courses in the great hospitals there. Because Mario had always had drains upon his income, he had lived as economically as possible. The boarding-house was near the medical center, he was not often in his small, cheap room—and the concentrated course gave him little time except for a few laughing mealtime interchanges, a couple of dates, with the thin blonde girl who sat next to him at table. Mario forgot Donna immediately he went back to camp.

Donna never forgot him. She remembered him, and when the name of Lonti was presented to her, her decision was immediate. Mario was a doctor, and if she got a job in the hospital of his home town, the chances were good that she would meet him again, and certain that she would discover where he was, if he was not in Lonti.

She had been attractive to this man once; let her but see him—he was a man to work for, and get!

Donna looked the secretary Mrs. Roblane had specified when she stepped off the express at Lonti that noon. Rainy and Loro had driven in with Walter Von der Hamp, who had been with them over Sunday. It was pouring rain.

Their station wagon was old, and used to transport chicken feed and assorted junk. Rainy was wearing jeans; her hair was tied back with a twisted handkerchief. Loro had gone, temporarily, native in a full, flowered skirt, a ruffled white blouse, gold-hoop earrings, and a kerchief.

The girl had no coat or umbrella—she'd have to walk a half-block from the station to get a taxi. . . . "Could we give you a lift?" Rainy called.

Those huge, dark eyes were as thankful as a dog's would be, allowed to come in out of the rain. "If it isn't too far. I'm going to the hospital."

The Pearsetts thought she was a patient, or the relative of someone sick; she thought they were local people. A natural misunderstanding, in either case.

At the hospital, Donna asked a passing nurse to direct her to Dr. Roblane's office. Her manner was timid, demure. Her eyes were dark with her determination to make good. She'd get this job, and then start her still hunt for Mario.

The strange sounds and smells of the hospital put a flush in Donna's hollow cheeks, a glitter in her eyes; she was almost breathless when she knocked upon the door marked DR. ROBLANE, and, at a growl from within, turned the knob and entered. "I'm sure I never expected to find a cute boy," she said later, speaking of her surprise at finding Joel—what he was.

He was particularly handsome in the white clothes he wore at the hospital. He rose slowly from his chair, towering above Donna. She was a thread over five feet, as slim as a pencil, but not skinny. A miniature woman, with golden skin, a full-lipped, inviting mouth, huge, dark eyes above high cheekbones, hair the color of amber.

Under her right eye was a tiny, exactly round mole; she spoke in a breathless, eager fashion, her manner and speech as demure as that of a kitten. She kept a surprised and speculative eye upon Joel as he put her into the chair beside his desk. He was asking his first questions when Mario popped into the room.

"Sorry!" he cried, seeing the little round blue hat on the smooth golden head; he was half through the door again, when he turned for a second look, and a low whistle trembled upon his lips. "Well, *well!*" said he, letting the door slip shut behind him.

His tongue in his cheek, he came toward Donna, his hand outstretched. "Look who's here!" Laughter gurgled in his throat.

Donna's face flushed peony pink; the point of her tongue flicked her lips. "How do you do, Dr. Pellestri?" Her tone was warm, friendly.

"What are you doing here?" asked Mario bluntly.

"I'm applying for a secretarial job." Her mint-cool voice challenged him. "With Dr. Roblane."

Mario's eyebrows went up.

Donna looked at Dr. Roblane. "I met Dr. Pellestri when he was in St. Louis several years ago. It is certainly a surprise to find him here."

"Surprise!" cried Mario irrepressibly. "You knew I lived here."

Donna smiled. "I'd forgotten. It's been so long."

Joel doodled on his memo pad.

"I see," said Mario. "I'll come back later, Joel."

When he had gone, Joel was all business for five minutes, Donna prim and quiet. The hours were satisfactory; yes, she could work in this office; she'd never done hospital work, nor had she any knowledge of medical terms. But if he had a dictionary. . . .

Smiling, Joel pointed to a thick red book on the corner of his desk. "With that and a bottle of castor oil, you can almost practice medicine." He rose. "Well, Miss Feress, it seems to me that the job is yours—if you want it."

Donna fairly leaped with joy. She did—jumping to her feet, throwing herself at the surprised young doctor, her arms about his neck, her lips upon his cheek. "Oh, thank you, thank you, *thank* you!" she cried ecstatically. And she kissed him again.

"Well!" said Joel.

Donna fell back, her cheeks scarlet, tears welling into her eyes. "Oh, dear," she mourned. "I tried so *hard* to make the right approach!"

Joel laughed, his eyes bright, his manner showing his shock, and his delight. "I think you used the right approach!" he said loudly. "Anyway, the job's yours. It'll be a pleasure!" Then he hooted, and Donna giggled.

"Promise," she begged, "that you'll forget my awful break?"

"It wasn't awful from my point of view," said Joel fatuously.

Her prim manner slipped smoothly into place. "When will you want me to start work, Dr. Roblane?"

"Any time!" said Joel loudly. "The sooner the better!"

"Yes, Dr. Roblane," said Miss Feress.

CHAPTER 4

Joel found himself coming eagerly to his office, aware of the excitement Donna created in him, examining the feeling, and sometimes deploring it—more often gladly giving in to it. He would awake in the cool of the sweet summer morning, and think about that kiss, about the feel of her soft, boneless body in his arms—and wonder when next— Sternly he told himself that he had hired her to do some work for him—and she did work, in her own fashion. But she, too, remembered the kiss, and waited for its sequel. She could type neatly and accurately, but she was incorrigible in her comments upon the subject of Joel's dictation—and provocative.

For her part, Donna had never known a man just like Joel—she soon knew that his family was rich; she carefully tabulated his handsome person. But the thing went deeper—he was the first real gentleman she had ever known. He *was* gentle and considerate—and interested in her. He asked her a thousand questions about the room she had in the nurses' quarters, about her ways of filling her free time. Yes, sir, he was quite a lad. Why hadn't some dame snagged him, long ago?

Mario had avoided Donna since her coming into the hospital. She knew that he had, just as she sensed his growing concern over Joel's excited interest in her. He'd say something soon.

One night she was still at her typewriter when Dr. Pellestri came into Joel's office; she felt his presence rather than heard any sound he made, and she glanced up. "Long time no see!" she said in her husky, breathless voice.

"You've been busy. How about a date tonight?"

He took her by surprise. "Really?"

"No—just a date. Wait. I'll see if I can fix it up."

He took the phone, spoke Loro's number to the switchboard, waited, his eyes exploring every inch of Donna's figure. "Hello, Loro! Could I bring a friend to your party? No—it's Joel's new secretary. He's tied up, but I'd like you to meet Miss Feress. And Rainy, too."

"What'll I wear?" asked Donna when he put the phone down.

Briefly he told the girl who Loro was, why she was here. "These friends stop off here as they go between New York and Hollywood. She usually asks a few local people—it's a dinner tonight, buffet—wear what you like. Everyone does."

She wore a black taffeta dress, sprigged in little coral flowers, made demurely enough, with a bustle, and a ruffle from which her head and shoulders rose with the effect of Aphrodite; her golden hair was slicked into a knot of curls atop her head. Mario smiled when she came out to his car.

"Am I all right?" she asked anxiously.

He looked at the toes showing through the straps of her gold sandals; he touched her bare shoulder. "That thing anchored?"

She grinned. "If not . . . ?"

"I hope I'm around."

"You will be. I'd bet on that."

He nodded, and started the car. "I wonder if Dr. Roblane is watching us," Donna murmured.

"He's busy with a case. And in such a situation—he is *Doctor* Roblane." He glanced at her. "Look, kid. Get me right. I'm Joel's friend, and his professional associate. You can do a lot for Joel, good or bad. I'm asking you to make it good. Because—well, he'll appreciate it, for one thing. He's that kind of guy. He's a doctor, and gossip can hurt him. His family—well—*they* could hurt you."

"You're telling me to play it smart, huh?"

"I guess that's what I'm doing. I don't know. I haven't known much of anything since I first saw you sitting in Joel's office. I didn't know what you wanted that first day; I don't know now."

"Why, darling,"—she exaggerated her throaty drawl—"I came to be near you."

He laughed.

"Why won't you be nice to me, Mario?" she asked plaintively. "I came to Lonti hoping you would be—"

"Yes, I know."

"You *know?*"

"Sure."

"Then—if it was so plain—"

"Why didn't I—reciprocate?"

She tossed her head. "Other men find me attractive. . . ."

"So do I." "Then, at the pleasure in her face: "Don't get your hopes up," he drawled. "I know what your sort of excitement gets a man into, and—I'm not having any."

Her little hands hooked into claws. "You're *really* out for yourself!"

He shrugged. "You knew that before you came here, didn't you?"

She sat at his side, anger and frustration a sickness in her breast. Finally she could lift her head. "Oh, well," she said brightly, "I saw at once that there were better men here—"

Mario laughed. "Lonti's quite a place," he agreed, and pulled the car up before the Pearsett house, which Donna declared to be a crumby-looking joint. Once indoors, though, her eyes widened, and they kept getting wider all evening.

That evening, Loro had chosen to dress up. Her long gown was of draped black jersey; she wore her diamonds. Mario had brought this girl around for Rainy to see; Loro meant to give the visitor something to observe in return. So she broadened her *A* to its limit as she presented Donna to her collection of guests. Donna was too confused at Loro's metamorphosis and by the presence of Klieg-light royalty to say much of anything.

Their maid having succumbed to the miseries, Rainy served supper. Just before Mario and his guest arrived, she had been clowning about "living her part, if it's only a walk-on." To that purpose, over her simple black dress, she had tied a frilly white apron, and Bud Harlon—a local young man—had pleated a paper napkin into a cap for her head.

She recognized Donna, and with one glance dared Loro to introduce the visitor to her. Loro shrugged and abandoned Donna, noting that Mario hovered watchfully. So did the other men.

Donna seated herself prettily upon a hassock, and smiled warmly at Bud Harlon when he brought her a cocktail. Rainy offered the tray of canapés. She looked like a maid, acted like one—in Donna's book, she was a maid. "They look very nice," the girl said condescendingly.

"Oh, thank you, mum!" Rainy bobbed a ridiculous curtsy.

After supper, Loro was coaxed into doing a duet with Rainy, still in her apron and cap. "You play very well," Donna praised the pianist when she left the instrument to Rainy.

Loro smiled in gratitude and asked how Joel was. "I didn't know you were his new secretary when we gave you that lift at the station."

Mario was staying close to Donna; Loro had noticed that, and so had Rainy. Sometimes he had practically to tackle one of the other men to hold his position. The girl was a clever operator; by a glance from her big eyes, a murmured request for her drink to be refreshed, a timely remark, she held the men close.

She now told her audience how she had mistaken Loro for a "native" that first day. "I was as shocked to see you tonight, Mrs. Pearsett," she said ingenuously, "as I was to see the inside of your house."

"I've fixed both of us up a little," said Loro dryly.

"Isn't it marvelous," asked Donna, in her soft, husky voice, "what a little paint will do?"

Loro stared; Rainy's head snapped up; the men howled. They were to learn later all about Donna's devastating breaks. At the time, Loro took it, as did the other women, for cattiness or rudeness, or both. The men considered it a huge joke; Rainy could hear the story being carried away and repeated; she shaped her lips for a retort. Loro knew that Rainy would be no match for this Donna in open combat. So did Mario. . . .

He caught Donna's bare arm about the elbow. "Come along," he said firmly. "I'll show you the rest of the house." He leaned over and kissed the mole on her cheek. "That's for doing today's good deed!" he said.

Rainy's lips curled with scorn as she watched Mario take Donna out of the big living-room and toward the stairs, his arm about her incredibly slender waist. Panic darkened her eyes: she glanced at Loro in bewilderment, as if asking, "Is that what men want? That—that *animal?*"

Donna looked at the house—at Loro's bedroom with its gun-metal walls, its white furniture and azure bedspread, at Rainy's flower-splashed blue walls and the rosy drift of her bed—all products of an imagination which she completely lacked; then she went to a mirror and freshened her lipstick. "Why does Mrs. Pearsett let her maid play the piano?"

"She's not a maid," said Mario gruffly. "She's Rainy Pearsett, the girl Joel Roblane is going to marry."

Donna whirled. *"Her?* I don't believe it."

"Well, she's the one he wants to marry."

"Oh, well," said Donna, "that's different."

Mario cursed himself for having said too much. Rainy had strikes enough on her without his giving Donna that bit of information. "You'd better watch your step, my girl," he said gruffly. "You're among very smart people here."

"You mean this Rainy?"

"And her mother."

She shrugged. "They're women. I can do anything they can."

"You can't play the piano," drawled Mario. Donna glanced up at his face, and was frowning when she came down the stairs.

The next two weeks whirled by, with only an occasional pattern forming in the kaleidoscope of colors. Donna seemed to be deliberately "working on" Joel. She did this by being herself—a naïve person, of simple emotions, freely expressed. She took Joel out of himself by the direct process of demonstrating that she was not adapted to his old ways, his old friends, and then offering an adequate substitute for those familiar things.

On Sunday evening they went dancing at the hotel, a custom frowned upon by the town's more sober citizens. Joel had never taken Rainy, but with Donna one did what came into a man's head to do. She was a wonderful dancer, this thistledown girl, her head cradled against Joel's breast, her feet skimming the floor. Every male eye in the room was appreciative, and envious.

Their table became the center of the evening's crowd; the preponderance of the talk and laughter was masculine, and as time went on, the talk roughened and the laughter rang more loudly.

Donna was pretty in a dress of yellow-flowered swiss; for three hours she nursed a single beer, listened eagerly to the men when they talked, spoke eagerly herself on occasion. Nothing ever shocked Donna. Bud Harlon's hand on her knee beneath the tablecloth brought no response; but when his hand moved, she put her own down to cover it, to bring it up into view. "Your intentions are showing, darling," she said in her demure voice.

Bud turned purple; the other men leaned against the nearest support, and rocked with laughter. Bud's wife, her face gleaming white, stalked out of the dining-room.

Bud looked reproachfully at Donna. "Now see what you've done!"

She gave him a grave, self-possessed smile.

In a fuzz of emotion, Joel took her home, kissed her in the shadow of the nurses' quarters, his hand upon her bare shoulder, her softness pressed close. Her kiss was eager, warm. . . .

Donna was real, Donna was exciting, but it was being borne in upon Dr. Roblane that she was not cut out for hospital work. The shockingly frank things which, said in her demure voice, could be so rockingly funny bar-side, were downright embarrassing when said in a hospital. Joel hardly ever forgot himself as a doctor, even when he was most deeply involved with Donna. So there was not much he could say when Dr. Findron finally demanded that Joel get that girl out of the hospital.

It never occurred to him to send her back to St. Louis, out of his life. By that time, Joel had tasted enough of the

glass that was Donna to want, to need, to tip it farther to his lips.

That afternoon, he asked her to "go for a little drive." A half-mile out of town, he pulled to the side of the road and told her that Dr. Findron had asked him to—replace—his secretary.

Donna was angry at first, and said biting things about Dr. Findron. Then, seeing the sternness of Joel's face, she wept a little, said she loved it here in Lonti, she had hoped she could stay—she'd told them she was not skilled in hospital work! Oh, she just couldn't leave Joel, and all her new friends—

"I didn't say one thing about your leaving the town."

"What do you mean?" Donna looked up hopefully.

"You can get another job. My dad hires lots of girls."

Donna snuggled against his side. "I'll have to move out of the nurses' convent." She mused. "And no weeping about that!"

"I'll help you find a room, or an apartment," Joel promised. "I expect that would be the first thing to do." He freed himself enough to turn the car back toward town.

Dick Bates, who ran a real-estate and loan office, was a friend of Joel's; he welcomed his callers and took them into his air-conditioned office for a drink. "It's hot enough out to singe a cat," Donna declared, pulling her sharkskin dress away from her small body.

Joel asked for plain soda, said he had to go back to the hospital, and did Dick know of an apartment for Donna.

Dick looked at Joel, who explained that Donna was not working at the hospital any longer, and so would need to move.

"Mrs. Graznack has a one-room," said Dick, then added hastily, "She's O.K., Joel. . . ."

"I'm not interested in the landlady," said Donna, "and a one-room would be fine—if I had my own entrance—and I'd want a room big enough to entertain my friends. . . ."

Joel jerked to his feet. "We've got to get going," he said roughly. "Maybe you could call Mrs. Graznack, Dick?"

"I'll do that," Dick agreed. . . .

The next morning, in the scrub-up room, Joel was not surprised when Mario mentioned Donna and inquired: "Has your mother ever met her?"

"Why do you ask?"

"I just wondered. I'd like to be around when she does."

"I don't especially care for the things you are suggesting about Donna," Joel said tensely, his voice held low.

Mario smiled. "And you know what? I don't give a damn what you care for! I'll say my say when I think it's called for. Maybe you'd better count on that, Doctor. Consider it."

Joel did consider it, somewhat. That evening, planning to ride, he took Donna out to Brookside, and he watched the girl as the panorama of the estate revealed itself to her.

"You live here?" she asked breathlessly.

"Why not?"

"Why *not?* It looks like a cemetery. Hedges, and statues, and roses."

Joel considered asking Donna not to repeat this opinion to his mother. Beatrice came out of the back room as they drew up in the yard. Donna, slim as a boy, but not looking anything like one in her T-shirt and jeans, slid out of the car, her eyes taking in the red-roofed stables, the clock tower, the grooms circling the yard with their sleek horses. "Hot dog!" she cried, as she turned to acknowledge her introduction to Joel's mother.

Beatrice murmured Donna's name, nodded at Joel's explanation that they planned to ride—she held up the box of sugar in her hand. "I was going to spoil Faraway's digestion," she said smiling. "Would you like to come, too? Faraway's a five-gaited harness horse—or do you know?"

"No . . ." said Donna, uncertainly. She and Joel fell in with Beatrice as she went along the lane which led between the white fences, and talked graciously of her interest in show horses.

Joel's hand was on his mother's arm, his attention and hers on the golden-brown horse which had come nickering to the rail; all three of them were startled at Donna's shriek—the horse reared; Mrs. Roblane said "Goodness!" in a coldly disapproving tone, and Joel tried to disengage himself from Donna.

"That—that *animal!*" she panted, still clinging to Joel. On the other side of the lane, a curly-headed Hereford bull watched the proceeding with small, red-rimmed eyes.

"His pen's tight—he can't reach you!"

"I'm deathly afraid of an animal!" cried Donna.

"You must be a country girl, Miss Feress," said Beatrice.

"Oh, no!" cried Donna, hastily, as if Mrs. Roblane had made an embarrassing accusation.

"City girls," said Beatrice, thoughtfully, "call a bull a *bull*, or"—she smiled—"a *cow*."

"I've lived in a city all my life," said Donna sulkily. Then she tugged at Joel's arm. "If we're going riding, hadn't we better get our goats, and start?" She flashed a smile at Beatrice. "Isn't that what you call horses—*goats?*"

"*Some* horses," said Beatrice, turning to Faraway.

It was the next evening, at dinner, before Joel had any time alone with his mother. He waited for her to speak of Donna, and she did not—unless he could so construe her asking if he thought she was in any way to blame for Rainy's never coming to see them.

"I sent her a note of apology," said Beatrice thoughtfully.

"She told me."

"Fine young woman, Rainy," Staley Roblane announced.

"Yes, she is," said Joel, and there the matter dropped.

After dinner he moved restlessly about; his mother knitted, his father smoked a cigar. Finally Joel dropped into a chair and lit a cigarette. "Mother, you haven't said what you thought of Miss Feress."

Beatrice glanced at her son.

"You usually tell me what you think of girls I bring around."

"I didn't know she fell into that category, Joel. I knew she was your secretary—is she satisfactory?"

Joel laughed a little, his dark cheeks flushed. "She doesn't fit in at the hospital—so I've fired her." He glanced at his father. "Hospital work is a bit special—but she's a good stenographer, Dad. I thought you might have a place for her."

"Olson manages those things. Have the girl come 'round, Joel."

"Yes, sir." Then Joel turned to his mother. "You're holding it against her," he accused. "What she said about goats. . . ."

The handsome gray head lifted in sharp protest. "Oh, no, Joel!" Then she smiled. "But I am—surprised—at that girl being a secretary."

Whatever protest Beatrice may have made to Staley about hiring Donna, and so keeping her in Lonti, it made no difference. The next day Donna told Joel that she had got herself a job—with Dick Bates. "He said he would be glad to have me in his office."

Joel looked black and she teased him about jealousy.

Naturally, other men found Donna attractive. To Loro, Mario was specific in his description of their behavior.

"What about you?" she asked.

He shrugged. "I'm the interested bystander. Joel hasn't a prayer, Loro. Donna likes him—she wants him, evidently—and he's flattered that she chooses him."

"She seems a bit on the extrovert side for Joel."

"He's being pretty extrovert himself these days."

"Oh, dear," she mourned. "Shouldn't somebody do something? You—or Rainy?"

"You might suggest it to Rainy." He was grinning.

"You won't help your friend?"

"No. Let him have his fun."

"*Fun!*"

Mario's smile was indecent, and Loro didn't sleep that night, thinking of what it implied. She determined to take some steps of her own, the minute the occasion to do so could be created—but by morning the damage was done, for Joel had taken his own step. . . .

The full moon of July was a wonderful time; the days were hot, and the nights little better, though no one complained. Grapes ripened richly in the heat; corn would not grow if the nights were cool. Lovers took over the little park in the evening, and the patches of grass, black-shadowed under the tall trees and thick shrubbery, were alive with their murmurings.

Donna turned her feet naturally to the park paths when she came out of the movie with Joel. Yes, she wanted a cold drink, but she wanted it at home. She had some Burgundy on ice.

Mrs. Graznack's house was a frame cottage, painted yellow, with its window frames and the jigsaw embroidery upon the eaves a dazzling white. Flower beds were luxuriant upon the lawn, and the porches were shaded with sweet-smelling hop vines. Donna had her own porch, her own front door.

The minute they were inside, she kicked off her shoes, and bade Joel take off his coat. "I'll get our drinks, and turn off the light—we can have the blinds up; it'll be cooler."

She moved about like a child playing house, busy, concentrated. Joel studied the room; the bed was wide, with a spread of blue chenille; there was one armchair, a small radio on a table, a large dresser crowded with toilet accessories. Joel was frowning over these when Donna came in with the icy wine, and laughed at him.

"Sit down, big boy, and hold the glasses while I turn off the light." A faint shadow in the sudden dark, she perched on the arm of his chair. Gradually the moonlight lighted a path of quicksilver through the opened blind, across the flowers on the windowsill, across the bed.

They drank their wine slowly, not talking; Joel rose to take the glasses to some table-top; when he came back, Donna stood at the window, elfin in the moonlight, her hair shining. Smiling, Joel joined her, and she lifted her face to his ready kiss.

CHAPTER 5

At four in the morning, the street was deserted. Joel had left his car at the hospital—perhaps someone had wondered why he had not claimed it, perhaps not. . . . He went to the doctors' room to change.

He took a shower, doing so slowly, using the water warm, soaping his body, conscious of it as he seldom was—its leanness, its brownness, the length of his limbs. He soaped his hair, turned on the shower again, and stood under it, his eyes closed, his mouth turned upward at the corners.

"I thought I'd find you with a hangover," drawled Mario's soft voice when Joel finally turned off the cascading water.

Joel shook the water from his head, reached for a towel. "And *I* thought you'd still be in bed."

"Haven't been to bed."

Joel glanced at him alertly. "What did you have?"

"Accident. Important enough that I tried to call you at home. Not so important that I cared to interrupt you—at Miss Feress'."

Joel combed his hair in stony silence.

"I'm not going to moralize," drawled Mario, shucking out of his crumpled whites, going into the shower stall. "But—do spare me any gentlemanly defense of the lady. Let's take a couple of things for granted. You're a gentleman, and I know what you've been up to. But—as I say—I won't moralize."

Mario's shower had been a quick, cold one. He only glanced at Joel, who was putting on his socks.

"You didn't invent the show, remember," Mario said roughly. "You haven't done anything other men haven't done before you."

Fingers of bright color lay upon Joel's cheeks. He looked around, and there was that in Mario's bright eye which made Joel think he should punch his friend in the jaw. But Mario laughed, and waved his hand. "Sit down, boy," he advised. "Your radiator's boiling. You'll be all right, though."

"Cut it!" cried Joel. "What's on the schedule?"

"Skull fracture, possible intercranial injury— And you don't want to get caught in that trap, do you, Joel?"

"Look," said Joel, coming to stand close to Mario, to look into his impudent, grinning face. "Donna feels as I do about last night; she puts a proper valuation upon emotion."

Mario regarded him, frowning with concern. "O.K., Joel. Maybe things are just the way you think they are. I'm wrong as often as I'm right. But—if I were you, and thank God I'm not, as of this morning, I'd keep an eye open for complications." He lifted his hand and went out of the room. "See you upstairs in a half-hour!"

He had managed to jerk Joel completely out of his cloud-borne mood. Joel went into the hospital, checked the night charts, and then sought coffee before going up to the operating-room.

The skull fracture was a boy who had been injured by a Roblane truck. So his father, too, had known, or would learn, that Joel was unavailable last night. Well, why hadn't Mario called him? Mrs. Graznack had a phone. Mario seemed to have known where Joel was. Joel stirred the coffee and frowned. A fine thing for him to do! A complete abandonment of self, and all that Joel Roblane had ever claimed for his standard in life.

What had got into him? Complications, indeed! What did he know of Donna Feress? She could nick him and his father for plenty. He should have thought of that. He should, in fact, have been one-half as wise by night as he was being by the hard light of morning. Virtue lay in such wisdom. Safety. What if Donna did . . .

Agh, she wouldn't! Only because Joel was a doctor, did the thing look so black this morning.

He was a doctor, though, *and* the sort whose personal life must be governed to a considerable extent by his profession. Sure, other men did as he had done, and worse. But that answered nothing. No one was apt to judge Joel by the standards which applied to somebody else.

With Mario there was no other girl involved—as there was with Joel. Rainy had dismissed him, a clean-cut break, but Joel had loved Rainy sincerely, and he had let her go only because she had said she did not want a man governed always by his sense of the right thing to do. Now, where he had refused to change for Rainy, to become a man of impulse rather than ethical convention, with Donna, he had stripped himself of all inhibition for the sake of satisfying his momentary need. And he despised himself!

At noon while the three staff doctors were eating lunch, Dr. Findron asked if that Feress girl really was still in town. His cold blue eyes regarded Joel's flaming cheeks. "I see that she is," he said. "I thought perhaps the rumor was—exaggerated." He left the room.

Mario chuckled, and Joel sat staring blankly into space. "How shines a little deed upon this naughty world," murmured Mario. "It falleth like the rain from heaven, and the weed flourisheth where no flower bloometh."

"Will you please shut up!" said Joel furiously.

"I've *been* shut up, and what good has it done?" said Mario virtuously. "If you think I've been telling tales . . ."

"I suppose everyone in town knows."

"The whole damn' town! People blame the lady. They are angry at the trap she laid for you."

"For heaven's sake . . ." breathed the incensed young man.

"Look, Joel," said Dr. Pellestri. "Consider the facts. Our Donna is a working girl; she has her way to make in the world. Right? And now look at yourself. Outside of a key to Fort Knox, a girl couldn't do better for herself. So, any smart girl on the make would try to get you in the quickest, surest way."

Joel did not answer. He got up and stalked out of the room. Mario shook his head in concern. On Donna's first day in town he should have strangled her!

That afternoon, Joel worked encased in a strait-jacket of shock and protest. He read leers into every smile, a double meaning to every word. So determined was he to maintain the inviolability of his own affairs that he spoke to his patients only in terse monosyllables. People who had heard no breath of rumor wondered what had happened to Dr. Roblane.

Leaving the hospital, Joel drove to Mrs. Graznack's house, went up between the flower beds, crossed the vine-dark porch, knocked on the door, and turned the knob—the door was locked. But he heard someone moving about, and he waited.

Donna opened the door, and stood expectant within the screen. "Oh, Joel—"

He laughed a little, and shifted his feet. "May I come in?"

"I'll come out. The room's hot." She slid through the door, went over to the swing, sat on it. Joel joined her, feeling the swing sag under his weight. He leaned down and brushed Donna's cheek with his lips; his hand lay upon her knee, and she took it into her hand, as once he had seen her do to Bud Harlon.

"You're going to be late for dinner," she suggested.

"Yes. And I should go home. I was away last night. . . ." He looked at her, but her face was cameo-calm.

"I'm going to wash my hair," she announced, after a pause. "You'd better run along, Joel. Everyone knows your car—if it stays parked out there, people will talk." Her mouth drew down comically, but when he seemed about to kiss her, she was on her feet, her hand on the screen-door latch.

"Donna," he said uncertainly, "I didn't come here—"

"I know," she answered quickly. "But maybe it's time to stop and think a bit. Gossip is a bad thing, Joel," she said thoughtfully. "It can hurt a doctor, I'd think. It sure can hurt a girl."

"But, last night—"

"Yeah—last night, we didn't stop to think about gossip. Tonight's—different. Tonight I'm going to wash my hair. 'By, now. Give me a ring in a day or two."

The gay Lothario Joel had decided he might be collapsed like an inflated beach toy. Baffled, rebuffed, suspicious, Joel went out to his car, and drove home. If Miss Feress thought she would gain anything by playing cat and mouse with him. . . . He went to sleep that night, deciding to let Donna make the next move, if any. Thus his conscience might rest.

Though Dr. Pellestri had had a date, when he left the hospital he turned his car toward Ewing Street. Donna sat upon her little porch, her sandaled foot pushing the creaking swing into motion; she moved to let Mario sit beside her, but showed no surprise at his coming.

"You act as if you were expecting me," said Mario.

"How could I be? You've never come around before."

"Well, there were reasons . . ."

"And you have one for coming tonight?"

"Yeah, sure. Want a smoke?"

"Please."

Recognizing the mannerism as one she had acquired from Joel, Mario's brown eyes glinted in the flare of the match. "You going to stick around town?" he asked.

"You mean, you don't want me to?"

"I mean, I don't think it will do you a lot of good."

"In what way?"

"If it's your game to marry Joel Roblane you won't get him by—er—doing as you have been doing. If marriage *is* your game."

"It's a pretty interesting game."

"Not the way you're playing it," he rasped.

"You know all about the way I play it?"

"What do you do to keep it secret?"

She giggled and crossed one knee over the other. Mario smoked, and sat quietly at her side. "The thing you don't have any way of knowing, Donna, is that Joel's been nicely raised for the past thirty-four years. He's no prig, but he knows that a man of his sort and station doesn't wait at the head of a church aisle for a girl who plays your sort of game."

She stretched her arms high above her head, extended her limbs out before her, so that her heels pushed against the floor boards, glanced at Mario to see if he was looking at her. He was not.

"I can get Joel," she said smugly, "if I decide I want him."

Now Mario did look at her, his face astonished.

"A woman with any appeal at all," said Donna softly, "can always get a man—if she wants him."

"A woman with no heart," said Mario gruffly, "can make a fool of a man without a head. But being headless is a temporary state with Joel. So you'd better work fast. Even then, my money says you won't get him."

"I'd admire to see you eat them words, Doctor—and I believe you will eat them. Unless—" Her hand ran up his arm. "Unless you'd offer me something better."

"Like this?" He leaned toward her, and kissed her.

"Oh, Mario, you big lug!" she cried. "Why can't you be nice to me?"

He laughed a little and she seemed to melt against him. "Can't you . . ." she murmured. "Oh, Mario, couldn't we—well—couldn't you and I get married?"

"Not me!" he said quickly.

"Then," she screamed, "will you shut up about Joel? He'll marry me, you know."

"You're sure of that?"

"I'm sure. I'll show you. I know how to work that guy."

"Yes, I suppose you do. And, I suppose you will." His dark face was somber.

Donna got off the swing, confronted Mario. "By the way, what ever happened to the girl you said Joel *wanted* to marry?"

Mario's small, white teeth showed between his lips. "Nothing," he answered meaningly. "Nothing has happened to *Rainy*. She's the same as she always was."

In the light from the street, Donna's face looked too thin; fear lay in her eyes for a second, then anger blazed. "Will you please get out of here!" she cried in a shrill whisper.

His fingers touched her arm; she jerked as if his touch were hot. "Just remember what I've told you," he urged. "You won't get Joel Roblane—your way." He stepped down the two steps, strode along the walk. "Or anybody," he called over his shoulder when he reached his car. . . .

The Pearsetts lived well out into the country, and they had not been in the neighborhood long enough to be a member of the inner circle. It took a while for gossip to trickle through to them, so it was the end of that week before Loro heard the tale. . . . In the course of a long afternoon at the beauty parlor, she heard plenty, and it shocked her.

She went home and worried all that evening about how and when Rainy would hear this, and on Sunday afternoon she decided that she should be the one to tell the girl.

Her story reached Rainy where it hurt—and that bothered her mother, who had rather hoped that Rainy really was over Joel. She had said enough to make Loro accept her decision that she and Joel could not marry with any success, and Loro had begun to dream anew of a career for Rainy. But if this story hurt so—perhaps Rainy was not over him. Loro ignored what that meant.

"The really big scream of the situation," she said swiftly, "is that someone's going to say he should marry the girl. And his mother is the old-fashioned sort who may *demand* that he marry her—do the right thing, is the term—even though it will hurt like sixty to take the little—" She coughed. "And *I* believe that the little blonde counts on the town's working around to the same opinion. She's the cool type—"

"Maybe Joel is in love with her," said Rainy tightly.

"Oh, I expect he is running quite a temperature. She's the type—not predatory, and even rather attractive—smart, too. As for her morals, I'd say they were not so much loose as—expedient. The little lady knows what she wants, and in these days of inflation she expects to pay a good price to get it. He sounds like a gone goose to me," she concluded. "The only thing which could save him would be a nice girl with a prior claim."

"That's a fine way to talk!" Rainy was on her feet, then, confronting her mother. She stood with her fists doubled on her hips, her gray eyes flashing. "My mother, mocking love, saying expediency is different from looseness, implying a marriage need not be an important thing! What is there then that *is* important to you? What purpose is there in living, and working, if you don't consider *those* things important?"

"I don't say that, my darling," Loro pleaded. "I don't make a mockery of marriage. I—er—just approve of divorce, the possibilities it opens for a man to make a mistake—and get over it."

"*Agh*, it's all the same thing! It's the same cheap way of looking at the fine things of life. Isn't it? *Isn't* it?" Rainy's eyes stabbed at Loro.

"Yes," Loro said meekly. "Maybe it is, dear." She glanced at Rainy obliquely, found her face bleak, all color drained from her flat cheeks, her eyes dull.

She smoothed a hand down the leg of her jeans, spoke in an odd voice. "This Donna—d'you suppose *she* dresses in a manner befitting a rising young doctor?"

"Evidently," said Loro, "it isn't the way she *dresses!*"

Walking like a dazed person, Rainy left the room.

Shocked until her limbs were stiff and her skin prickled with gooseflesh, she walked up the hill, along the path which she and Joel had taken one evening, up to the fence which overlooked Ben's cluttered yard. She hunched over the top rail, the rain pinging gently against her oilskin coat; she remembered the feel of Joel's arms, the touch of his cheek, his kiss—she was remembering the night he had wanted *her*, and she had refused him—had sent him away. She had thought love was a coin to be hoarded, and spent later. To some, it was not. Its brightness was to be seized when offered, or be forever lost.

She knew that Joel's love was lost to her, just as she knew that she had loved him, that she loved him still. She had herself lost happiness—for a principle. She had wanted "real" things. . . . But what was more real than a man's love?

There was nothing she could do now except take this blow. Her loss of Joel was as great as it was final. . . .

Though Donna was being a model of decorum, gossip of a certain sort feeds upon itself, and grows fat. Enough came to the ears of Joel's father, that one evening Staley brought up the subject on their customary walk in the garden after dinner. "Does Mrs. Gray take care of things for you?" he began. Mrs. Gray was the secretary who had replaced Donna.

"She's a wonder."

"Er—yes," said his father. "The other young woman—"

"She got a job at Bates'—I told you."

"Yes, I know you did. And perhaps it is just as well, from the—stories—I hear about her."

Joel stood very still, his cigarette hanging from his lip. Then he lifted one hand and took it from his mouth.

"I've been thinking, Joel," said his father, "that you've given me less cause to worry than most fathers can say of their sons."

"Perhaps that's your fault." Joel spoke gruffly.

"No—I'd have worried with the best of them, given cause. Lately—I've worried a great deal."

"I'm—sorry," said Joel stiffly.

"Are the stories true?"

"I don't know what you've heard."

"I'll show you. This—this letter came to the house while you were away over the week-end, Joel. As you will see, it is addressed to S. J. Roblane, Brookside, Lonti. That is my name—and yours."

"Yes. Of course. I'm usually called *Doctor.*"

"That is how I came to open this. It was not meant for me. I—I have not been indulging in any—er—relationships which would cause a—er—young woman to write me a letter assuring me, in somewhat plain language, that there would be no—er—complications from—a certain—episode."

Joel crushed the letter in his hand.

"I'm sorry I read that letter, Joel. Having done so, I should perhaps have sent it back, marked 'Opened by mistake.'"

Yes, that would have been better. Joel would not then have felt this way toward his father, before him. Shamed—black-angry at Donna. Nor would he have felt the need to defend himself—and her. . . .

"Your mother is—upset, Joel."

"Yes."

"She feels that this—this girl may try to make you marry her."

Joel did not speak.

His father sighed. "If you love her, and *do* marry her, we would of course try to adjust ourselves to the situation."

"Look, Dad . . ."

Staley put up a hand. "I'm not going to put you in a position to quarrel with me, son. I'll content myself with

saying that I am a little disappointed in your—er—choice of ladies. Although I know nothing of this young woman, I'll venture the opinion that Rainy was a much better breed."

"Your opinion would be correct," said Joel tightly. "But Rainy refused me, Father. She didn't want to marry me; she didn't want the things I had to offer her."

"They were pretty good things, son."

"Not in Rainy's eyes. And Rainy knows what she wants. I could not argue my side any farther."

CHAPTER 6

It was about this time—or near enough that Joel was still feeling stiffly angry with Donna about that fool letter—when Loro summoned him to her house to discuss definite plans for the benefit she was going to put on for his hospital wing.

Loro had inexorably gone on with these plans, behaving as if nothing had occurred in Joel's life, or her own.

That evening when he came into the house, Rainy's up-thrown head and stiff shoulders showed that Loro had not warned the girl of his coming. She did not leave, but there was a wariness about her, and about Joel, which under other circumstances would have highly amused Loro.

Ignoring the chill in the room, she chattered busily about the performers she had secured—the affair was set for the Saturday before Labor Day.

"Mother said to tell you that you could use Brookside," Joel offered.

"Oh, no!"

Loro and Joel looked across at Rainy.

"Why not?" Joel asked.

Loro bit the smile from her lips.

Rainy's face was scarlet. "Well," she faltered, "I just don't think—now—it would be the thing."

Joel's face set into the defensive lines it had assumed so much lately. "I see," he said coldly. "Then—where should we have it?"

Rainy got up and stalked out of the room, while Loro brightly described the advantages of using the sloping hill down from her house to the creek. Local curiosity about the Pearsett house, she assured Joel, along with the big names she had garnered, would draw the desired crowd.

He agreed to her suggestion, to all her plans, and went away.

Loro stuck her head through the kitchen door. "Come on out," she called to Rainy. "He's gone."

"The big—*oaf!*" cried Rainy, flouncing into a chair. "Brookside! As if he hadn't already embarrassed his family enough. If—if she appeared *there*—"

"*And* if she didn't!" chuckled Loro. "She's going to offer us competition, of course. . . ."

Rainy sat up straight in the chair. "You consider this a joke!" she cried. "Can't you see this is all *wrong*, Loro? Joel—and that blonde. . . ."

"I don't think it's natural," said Loro, "—her hair."

"Oh, for Pete's sake!" cried Rainy. "*None* of it's natural! None of it's right. That girl—and Joel—and it's all my fault!"

"Now how do you figure that? She set out to get him. . . ."

"D'you suppose she's the first to set out to get Joel? He's thirty-four years old. No, sir! I told him to stop thinking of what was the right thing to do, to follow his impulses—"

"And he did."

"Do you think," Rainy asked earnestly, "it would do any good if I go to Joel and offer to help him out of this thing?"

"You really want to know what I think about that, Rainy?"

"Yes. You know men better than I do."

"Yes. Well, I'm pretty sure Joel would ask you what you meant."

"But, Loro, he can't like this—this—"

Loro gave her a look.

"She wants to marry him," said Rainy disconsolately.

"I'm afraid so."

"But that would be worse than the other."

"Much worse. Because no one could argue against that."

But Joel's mother tried on that Sunday evening when she drove in with him while he made rounds at the hospital. When she had said what she had to say, and Joel had taken her home, he drove back to Donna's.

There was a light; he went up on the porch, knocked.

"Come in!" she called. He found her seated before the mirror, studying the effect of her hair drawn up on her head in a thick twist. "Like it?" She wore a negligee of white silk, her bare feet in high-heeled green mules.

"D'you call *come in* to everyone who knocks?" he asked, leaning against the wall.

"I know your step. Did you want something?"

"Sure. You got something for me?"

She made a face at him, and took up the hand-mirror.

"I—" He moistened his lips. "I— Mother is asking me about you, Donna."

"Yes?" The word fell like a little smooth steel bead.

"She—I myself—would like to know just where I stand with you. What comes next."

She laid the hand-mirror down, turned and rose to her feet, the white stuff of the robe slithering to the floor. "Come here," she said softly, huskily. "I can tell you better—with gestures."

He came to her; of course he came. His only protest against her allure was to seize her roughly in his arms, to lift her, to kiss her with lips that burned like hot coals. She clung to him, laughing a little in her throat, her hand tangled in his hair. But when he moved, she stiffened. "Wait," she said quickly.

"Wait?" he shouted.

"You'll wait." She slid, as cool, as slippery as a shining fish, out of his grasp. "I've things to say, big boy. Now seems the time."

"Donna, I—" He looked at her with angry, puzzled eyes.

"You said you came here to find out where you stood. Let's talk about that."

He walked to the door, stood there, mopping his face, his back toward her. "I wish I knew your game," he growled.

She laughed. "It's so simple, everyone knows what it is."

"*Everyone* says you plan to marry me."

She did not answer or comment; he looked at her over a shoulder, then came to stand directly above her. "You don't want that, do you?"

Her big eyes widened. "I'd *love* to marry you," she drawled.

"Arrgh!" He flung himself into the armchair. "It wouldn't work—you know it wouldn't."

"*I* know it would have to work." Meticulously, she brushed ash into the glass tray. "The—other thing—hurts a doctor."

He made an angry gesture. "A doctor has as much right to his personal privacy as anyone else!"

"We're talking about *you*, remember. About Joel Roblane." Then she giggled. "Us, and a lot of other folks." She gazed earnestly at Joel. "Oh, why not face it, honey? You're a doctor, and gossip can burn you." Her mouth hardened. "I know damn' well that it's scorched me."

He stood up, came to Donna, put his hand on her shoulder. "I'm sorry," he said miserably. "Tonight—I only wanted—"

"It's what I want, too, Joel. But—you're being hurt, honey, and I can't go on letting that happen. *I* don't matter, but your career, your work is too important to be hurt by a little tramp. . . ."

"Don't say that!"

She shrugged. "It's what the town says."

"We can leave the damn' town!" he shouted.

"But—is that what you want? What about your children's wing? And the benefit Mrs. Pearsett is giving—with movie stars and all?"

"Oh—let me think!" He went back to gaze through the screen door; he could see the lights on in the operating-room atop the hospital. His hospital. Perhaps he should be helping there, instead—

Instead of talking about leaving that hospital, and his big plans for it, ready to give up his very life's meaning, because he wanted—

He'd given up Rainy to stay and prove he could do important work here in Lonti. He had assured her that a man *could* make his mark in a place like this. Now, at any cost, he must stay and make good his boast. He must do so in the eyes of his parents, of the town, of the world. He must make good in his own estimation, and in Rainy's. He must show Rainy that he had not idly let her go.

He turned to look at Donna, a little, soft woman. The desire for her was like a poison burning in his blood. "I'll get you a ring—" he said thickly. Marrying her would be the worst of all mistakes, but it was a price, seemingly, which must be paid.

She smiled widely, and went to him, her arms about his neck. "Now," she cried, "you can have that kiss!"

On the day of the benefit, the weather was perfect, sunny but not humid. An earlier threat of frost had turned the sumac and the ground oak into a mass of brilliant color. The grapes were ripening, their curled leaves a rich bronze. Ben freshly mowed the long slope which extended from the side of the house down to the wide stretch of water at the foot of the hill.

The party was to begin at three, with entertainment features offered every hour into the evening; a platform had been erected and the piano brought out; tables were set down the slope; bright umbrellas added a festive note. There were two bars, milk, and the other kind. Local wine-makers vied with each other in supplying evidence of their skill. Mrs. Roblane sent turkeys and hams from the Roblane plant; Loro kept coffee and bread available.

She had called it an autograph party, and the papers of near-by towns had advertised it by feature articles on her, on the farm, on the celebrities she had garnered. Warning was given that this was to be a benefit—each autograph would cost money. She had a good program to offer. Two singers and a monologist, a movie star. . . . Rainy was to play.

People began coming before Loro and Rainy were dressed, and instead of coming-and-going, they came and stayed, settling down like gypsies at an English race meeting. Though it was Saturday, all Lonti closed up shop and came out.

Donna came, looking like an exquisite doll in a simple dress of turquoise crepe, a gold belt clasped about her tiny waist, gold sandals on her feet, her hair brushed and shining, exactly the same shade of gold. Loro took time to speculate if Donna's serenity was due to ignorance or just plain brass. She was inclined to decide the latter. . . .

Joel had agreed to speak in behalf of the hospital wing; his talk was planned for the peak of the crowd. At six, it looked as if the peak had been, and would be, with them permanently; money was rolling in, and a speech was hardly required.

But the master of ceremonies announced that Dr. Roblane would tell a little of the project they were all so generously supporting, and Joel came out upon the platform, tall, darkly handsome, earnest. He was wearing a suit of white flannel, with a dark green tie; he spoke easily and enthusiastically about his purpose.

While he talked, Loro stood within the house, having gone in to help Rainy change into the long white dress she would wear when she played. She was on for Rachmaninoff's "Second" immediately after Joel's speech. She stood listening, watching him. "He never talked to me about these things," she murmured, as if she were alone, as if she spoke within her heart.

Loro could have told her that she had been so engrossed in telling Joel that he and she were not right for each other, in urging him to go after the real things in life, in short, so busy getting rid of that knight in white armor —for so he looked as he stood there bathed in the light from the setting sun—that she had not heard what he probably had said on the subject. And since the break, Joel and Rainy had avoided one another.

But her hurt was good for her at the moment; she went out upon the platform, seated herself on the bench, her proud head rising from the corolla of the frock's neckline, the long skirt flaring from her reedlike waist, full and shining, its brocaded pattern gleaming in the pink light—and she played as beautifully as she looked.

Joel stood below the platform, his thoughtful eyes never leaving Rainy. Donna saw his absorption, came up and spoke to him. He turned and looked at her protestingly, as if at a rude, and interrupting, stranger.

Rainy was called upon for an encore, for two—which she did well—and smiling, refused to play more. But she was the darling of the minute—people swarmed about her for autographs, denying her protest that she was not a celebrity.

Joel's talk and Rainy's playing constituted that interlude of entertainment, and they were coupled in people's minds. The photographers asked them to pose together; and the autograph books were out for both of them. Donna saw all this, and a determination to assert herself grew within her. She feared this Rainy.

By the time Joel was called to the hospital, another determination was in force—Joel was aware of it, and suggested to Donna that she ride into town with him; she refused brashly. Loro had brought the telephone message to Joel, acknowledging Donna's presence with a curt nod; she heard him say, uneasily, "I'll take you over to Mother."

Donna shook her head. "I'll get along," she assured him.

Joel glanced at Loro, worry in his eyes.

"She'll get along," Loro repeated coolly.

So he strode off, and Loro turned her back on Donna —she must gather the performers for the next interlude. That done, she sat down for a minute in a chair beside Joel's mother, and said something complimentary about Joel's speech.

"The whole party is a great success," Mrs. Roblane countered graciously. "Our community realizes how great a contribution you have made to our hospital, Mrs. Pearsett; we're very grateful."

Both women were watching Donna move uncertainly up the slope and come to a stand beside Cleota Minnent, of all people. Cleota had talked most about Donna—"that awful girl"—indeed, she seemed ready to snub her tonight, but Donna evidently asked for an autograph, and Cleota scrabbled wildly for the pad of paper which had been provided. Loro was called away, and left Mrs. Roblane thoughtfully listening to Donna's gush over Cleota.

In any case, her gush was enough that Cleota made an opportunity to move on to Beatrice and say what a lovely girl Donna was. "I understand there's a romance brewing . . ."

Joel's mother answered with a faint smile.

"The girl's positively exquisite," said Cleota, sitting on a slatted chair. "That lovely, smooth hair—it makes one want to outlaw permanents! Her coloring is so unusual—don't you agree?"

Beatrice said something in a remote tone about Donna's being an—unusual—girl.

"Oh," burbled Cleota, "she's unconventional, and, at times—a little—clumsy. But aren't we all?"

"Yes!" said Beatrice, looking about for Staley.

"She's a child of nature, I'm convinced," declared Cleota, "the way she walks, the way she stands—people should be nice to her!"

Beatrice rose, murmured an apology, and crossed the lawn to the bar where Donna was standing. As she approached, she saw the way people turned and left the vicinity; Donna saw them, too, but she was not ready to be rescued by Joel's mother.

"Mrs. Pearsett said something about parodies on the operas," said Beatrice. "Shall we go down to the chairs where we can listen?"

Surely the girl could not have guessed the effort it cost Mrs. Roblane to touch her arm, to give her invitation! "I'm close enough to hear all the opera I can take." Donna answered coolly. Then she turned to the man behind the bar. "A Martini—dry—without." She leaned toward him. "If you're a local boy, that means without an olive."

"Or an onion," said Mrs. Roblane frigidly, walking away.

But it was with a diffidence she recognized for what it was that she joined the group in which Rainy was standing. Remembering—and regretting—her criticism of this girl, almost shyly, she told her how beautifully she had played.

"I couldn't help it," said Rainy warmly. "I was inspired by the things Joel had said; there just had to be warmth and feeling in my playing."

Beatrice smiled and nodded, then spoke graciously to Mario, who confessed he had arrived too late to hear Rainy play. "But I gather that she is the star this evening."

"You know," said Mrs. Roblane, "when the Pearsetts came here, they were somewhat condemned as sophisticates, the term implying a lack of warmth and all the better genuine qualities. I've decided tonight that they are the most *real* people ever to live among us."

She could not have known what the term would mean to Rainy. But Mario knew; he saw the girl's happy, vivid face go still, and pale. The lights had gone on over at the platform, and Mario touched Rainy's arm. "Want to stay for this? Or would you like to take a little walk?"

They went down the grassy hill, behind the barn, down under the orchard trees to the bank which sloped to the creek.

Rainy caught her full skirts up into her hands; the soles of her white slippers were adequate, but—"You'll ruin your dress," said Mario, spreading a handkerchief upon the seat of a beached boat.

"It belongs to Mother," she said. "I don't have clothes like this."

"I've been noticing that you're paying more attention to your clothes."

"That is called locking the stable after the horse has been stolen," said Rainy, with a bitterness, and a frankness, which surprised Mario.

"Horse named Joel?" he asked, reaching for cigarettes.

"Yes. A thoroughbred."

"If you've been changing for Joel . . ." Mario began unhappily.

"Oh, I haven't!" she cried quickly. "I've been doing it for myself! I've been correcting a mistake. There's nothing wrong with that, is there?"

Mario's clear brown eyes were very bright behind the smile he turned upon Rainy. "Nothing wrong at all, dear," he said softly.

"It hasn't been easy," she confessed. "Not only clothes—I've had to feel my way to the sort of things Joel wanted of me. I used to think carelessness in clothes indicated a free spirit. It doesn't. You've got to decide the kind of person you are, or want to be, and then *be* that sort. In everything. Joel knew that—I didn't."

"He's older."

"And wiser. But I'm learning—a little. Last spring, I told Joel we were not right for each other. We weren't. I was not the right girl, the way I was then. Afterward, of course, I decided that I would like to be the right girl, the sort who could understand and help a man like Joel. I know I've lost him—"

He nodded, and Rainy gasped sharply at this expert's confirmation of her fears. "There are other men, dear."

"I know. And I truly hope—some day—"

He took one of her hands in his. "I—Rainy, if you'd let me— You could make quite a man out of me, you know."

She looked at him in such surprise, such disbelief, that he sighed and put her hand down again.

"Why don't you take steps about Joel?"

"What steps?"

"Well, I don't know. But I'd hate to see things get to the place where Joel would feel he had to leave Lonti."

Rainy turned sharply, a startled gasp parting her lips. "Oh, Mario, you don't really think . . ."

"Like I say, I hope it won't come to that. But he's thin-skinned and proud. And Donna . . . He's a good guy, Rainy. The very best. But he doesn't have a chance with a dame like Donna."

"It's a little hard, for me—for any woman—to judge Donna. To me, her ways are rather obvious. . . ."

"They are obvious and direct. A thoughtful, considerate, *polite* man hasn't a chance with her. Just as I—I'm a good guy, too, you know—but I haven't a chance with Rainy Pearsett."

She laughed warmly. "You almost make me think you're serious."

"I'm serious about knowing what a small show I have with you."

"I do like you, Mario. But—"

"I know. The competition is too fierce. Though *don't* let yourself decide you're through with men."

"I can't deny that this has all been a jolt to me. It happened so quickly—if the stories they tell about Joel and —Donna—are true. . . ."

"Don't you think they are?"

"I don't want to believe them; they are too horrible."

Mario looked down at her; her profile was outlined against the sky, her dress was mothlike in the gloom. "You think—love—is horrible?" he asked silkily.

She whirled. "It's true, then? He does . . .?"

Mario knew that Donna was angling for marriage with Joel; he also thought Rainy still needed a few lessons in growing up. "It's the most natural thing in the world, Rainy," he said quietly, gauging the tenseness of her body. "Joel's a man. You'd want him to be, wouldn't you?"

She nodded, but her slim body sagged upon the seat of the boat. *Was* this what she had wanted?

"None of this is right for Joel, Mario." Rainy's voice was gloomily despairing. "Do you think he might even marry her?"

"Sure, he'll marry her," Mario answered promptly. "Joel being what he is, he's sure to."

"I feel terribly to blame," Rainy said. "I turned Joel down—so that he was ripe for Donna."

"He was ripe for anyone of Donna's sort. *She* just came along."

"But—I never knew another girl like her!"

"You're crazy! Millions of Donnas infest this earth. The woman without conscience or brain, lying in wait for a man on whom to live the rest of her life. Sure, you've known Donnas, Rainy. The odd ones are girls like yourself. For a time I thought Joel was lucky enough to get one of you—but it seems not. Like most poor guys, he'll be saddled with a self-centered little cat—and anything good that comes from him or his career will be in spite of his wife, not because of her. Most men work against that handicap."

"Do you mean that?" Rainy asked, awe in her tone.

"Sure, I mean it. Hey! Where you going?"

Rainy was on her feet, stepping out of the beached boat. "Up the hill. Loro needs me, and if Joel *is* going to marry Donna, I'll see what I can do to help her, too."

"Now there *is* a project to tackle," grumbled Mario, following her.

They found the party about where they had left it: crowds of people, the light of the half-formed moon supplemented by hurricane lamps set upon the little tables, the floodlights over the platform—Donna with Cleota again, looking sulky and increasingly bored by Cleota's flood of bright talk.

Rainy dropped her long skirts and sailed across the littered grass to the blue-and-golden girl, put her hand on Donna's arm. "I want you to meet some of our friends," she said in her warm, clear voice.

Mario stood back and watched the scene unfold. Rainy's warm friendliness, Donna's awe at being taken into a group of what she naïvely, and audibly, called "real big shots." . . . Mario spied Loro also watching, and came over to her.

"What's Rainy up to?" Loro asked him. The M.C. was assembling his finale—he had warned Loro to stay close; he planned to call on her for a last word of appreciation. Against that duty, she had freshened her make-up, checked on her hair; as she and Mario talked, the hillside lay spread out before them like a panorama—lights, people in summer clothes—

Donna was riding the crest of the wave—there were three men in the group about her, friends of Loro's, all clustered close. Joel's car had just driven up the lower road, and stopped. Parking had become a foul mass, long since.

"Rainy's decided to champion Donna," Mario told Loro. "She's going to make her into a proper wife for Joel."

"She'd do a thing like that," said Loro in disgust. She moved on toward the stage, catching a glimpse now and then, of Joel, working his way up the hill, stopped by everyone he met—

By the time they each had attained the platform, the M.C. had herded his performers into the dining-room, and Donna with them. Loro edged to a place where she could see, and be seen. Rainy was standing just inside the window, Donna with her, talking in a bored way that warned Loro what notion had now got into that brain. Heady with her evident success—smart people like writers and actors had singled her out this evening!—Donna was deciding that Rainy, the woman who had lost out with Joel, was ready to be friends with the more successful contender, in short was cultivating the future Mrs. Roblane. Well, Donna could generously let Rainy have the crumbs from her table.

"Call me *Donna*, won't you?" she asked Rainy. "I know Joel wants me to be nice to you."

A gasp of surprise pushed at Rainy's throat—her eyes shone—but before she could speak, the M.C. called to her, and she stepped out through the window, out upon the platform, with the new poise and grace she had lately acquired, and which so became her.

The moonlight, the soft breeze, demanded Debussy, and she looked achingly young and lovely as she played, laid the last chord tenderly upon the keys, dropped her hands, and waited a second before rising. Entranced with her daughter's loveliness, Loro did not see Donna walk out upon Rainy's applause—and then she was too stunned to do more than stare at that gilt-haired paper doll in her blue dress, standing at the edge of the platform, her hand lifted imperiously for silence.

Rainy stood for a moment of indecision, then she shrugged and went into the house. The M.C. waved a helpless flipper at Loro, for by then Donna was making her speech. Loro's speech.

The amplifier carried her soft, husky voice across the heads of the audience, clear to where Joel stood, tall in his white clothes, his dark eyes still. "I would like," Donna was saying with perfect poise, "to take this opportunity to say a word of thanks to all you lovely people." Her manner was gracious. "First, in behalf of Dr. Roblane, I would like to say a *special* word of thanks for the support we have had from the foreign colony—all the dear, kind people whose names end in *i* and *o*."

"As in Pellestri," Mario growled at Loro's shoulder. Donna was going on in fulsome gratitude to "the Italians who have made this neighborhood their home."

"Me," said a Bafara in an angry whisper, "—those other in *i* and *o* may be Eyetalian. I don't know. Me, I'm Eyetalian-American. How about you, Mario?"

"Is right!" said Mario, grimly.

Loro hushed them crossly. "Let me listen to my speech!"

". . . Your support, however small, is *so* appreciated," said Donna. "And then of course those wonderful people—" She mentioned each name in a worshipful tone, her eyes getting bigger. The M.C. was plucking at her shoulder, saying something about Loro; his agonized whisper came over the amplifier, and Loro put her handkerchief to her lips.

Donna's bright head nodded. "Oh, yes, her, too! Everybody! Dr. Roblane, and I for him, do thank you, one and all!" She smiled, she bowed, she left the stage.

Loro blew the breath from her lungs; that was that!

"Should we consider this an announcement?" a local woman asked her.

"Oh, definitely," said Loro. "But you figure out—of what!" She was very tired; all she wanted was for everyone to go home, let her get to bed and sleep the thing off. It had been quite a show, up to and including the grand finale. No term had ever been more appropriate.

Mario and Rainy were laughing together, somewhat ruefully. "It's evident," said Rainy, "that I'm no good at diplomacy."

"Let her fall flat on her face," Mario advised.

"I would, except for Joel. *His* face . . ."

"That guy could look out for his interests better than he does," growled Mario, "but I'll go see what I can do to save his woman from the vendetta."

He grabbed Donna as she came out of the house, still smug from what she considered her triumph. "You come along with me!" he said, roughly.

"I can't come with you! Joel's down there—"

"Joel's got troubles enough without having to rescue you." Inexorably he forced her away from the lights, down along the road.

"Rescue me from what?"

"You and your speeches! I just hope you haven't spoiled everything—all those fat, rich farmers with their hands in their pockets ready to take this snowball Loro started and push it downhill—and you get up there and talk down to 'em."

"I didn't!"

"I know what you did. I was one of 'em. And you—who are you to talk *down?*"

At Mrs. Graznack's, Donna refused to give Mario her key.

"We'll sit in the swing; it's getting late," she said primly, moving away from the arm he would have put around her shoulders.

He glanced at his watch, put his hand on her knee. She lifted it away. He laughed, and leaned over to look into her face.

"Look, Donna—I've known you a long time. Remember? The act you've put on here in Lonti isn't good enough for me."

"A girl can—change, can't she?" Her husky voice sounded strained, and Mario studied her face in the light from the street lamp.

"You haven't changed. You're just choosing the softest satin cushion. You know I can spoil things for you, don't you?" he said softly. "All I need do—"

"But you won't!" she cried tensely; her voice was thinned with terror. "Please don't, Mario. *Please!*"

He caught her thin shoulder, pulled her to him, not gently. He kissed her long and roughly, and she clung to him. . . . "That's what you came here for, isn't it?" he asked harshly.

She pushed him away. "I did not!" she screamed, and he put his hand over her mouth. Her little sharp teeth bit at it, and he slapped her roundly. She fell whimpering into the corner of the swing.

"I'll tell Joel!" she cried. "You big ox!"

"You'll tell Joel *what?* That you came here after me, then decided he was rich, and a soft touch—and that you'd get him, even though you were after me first, and planned to go after me again. Will you tell him that?"

She came at him, spitting like a cat, her fingers hooked into claws. He caught her hands, and held her strongly, laughing at her. "I hate you!" she screamed, managing to get to her feet. "You get out of here this minute! Or—I'll call the police."

He sat, smiling. "What's your game with Joel?" he asked. "And what's your game with me?"

"Do I have to have one?"

"You've got one. You want me—oh, yes, lady, you do!—but you're taking Joel. And I ask you—why? You know you're not Joel's sort. You won't fit in with his family and his friends. . . ."

"I wish you'd go home."

"I mean to. But—first—come here!" Roughly, he again drew her into his arms. "There!" He spoke as if he had confirmed an idea. "Will you marry me, Donna?" he asked briskly.

She stared at him.

"I mean it," he assured her.

"You're doing it to rescue Joel?"

His teeth showed between his lips. "I'm asking you to marry me. What do you answer?"

"*I* say *no.*"

He jerked perceptibly. "Eh?"

"You wouldn't go through with it, Mario. I know you. You'd just mess things up for me with Joel, and then—"

"You don't love him, Donna. Be honest, for once in your life."

"I love him enough. Besides—if you'd been nice to me"—her voice shrilled with venom—"when I first came here—or later—but now— Now I'm sittin' pretty. And I know it!"

Mario's hands were hung, clasped, between his knees. Now he clenched them into fists. "Yes, you're sitting pretty. But I still ask you—*why?* What exactly are you hoping for? It can't be happiness—not your kind. . . ."

"No, it isn't happiness. But—I'll answer your question. I've decided I will be one of Joel's crowd. I mean to be like them, Mario. It's something I never thought about getting until I knew Joel. . . ."

Mario rose and stood in the dappled shadow of the hop vine. "That's not what you came here to get—but it *is* why you're staying?"

"Yes! And I'll do it. I'll be like them if it kills me!"

He whistled, long and low. "So that's it." He moved to the edge of the porch, went along the brick path. "Joel's in a very bad spot."

CHAPTER 7

The next day was a scorcher. The doctors took turns being on duty in the hospital on Sundays and holidays, and this was Joel's duty day. About noon, he had a call from the tourist camp at the edge of town. He went out, and sent back for Mario and a nurse. The injured child was cared for on the spot; leaving the nurse in charge until the patient could safely be moved by ambulance, the two doctors drove back to town, talking only of the case. But Donna, going along the almost-empty sidewalk, was a conspicuous figure. . . .

Joel pulled his car to the curb. "Give you a lift?"

She smiled brightly, and Mario got out to help her into the seat between them. She had, she chattered, been to the show—it had been lousy. Where had the boys been?

Joel mentioned the accident, and she asked her usual probing, unsympathetic questions. And, what were their plans now?

They had reached Mrs. Graznack's house, and Mario held his hand for Donna, who turned to ask Joel if he'd come back after he'd dropped Mario. With a full, black skirt, she was wearing a blouse of thin white stuff, its neck round and low. Joel leaned toward her. "Where'd you get that bruise?" he asked, his finger touching her throat.

She jerked away, and Mario stepped into the car. "You must 'a' kissed her too hard last night," he drawled.

Remembering last night, the day before, and how little he had seen of Donna—"I didn't do that," Joel growled.

Donna stood in the sunlight, her smooth face a little frightened.

Mario shifted his weight in the leather seat. "Somebody kissed her—it's that kind of a bruise. So long, Blondie. . . ."

Her eyes questioned Joel's stern face. "Will you—be back?" she asked hoarsely.

"No. I'm on duty—I'll call you."

At the hospital, the two men got out of the car; each picked up his medical bag and, shoulder to shoulder, walked up the steps, seeing themselves reflected in the long

plate-glass panel of the side door. Joel went steadily down the hall to his office, stepped aside for Mario to enter it first.

"I want a word with you," Joel said tightly. He put his bag on his desk, and began to peel out of his jacket.

Mario watched him. "She'll tell you I was the eager one," he said, in a cool, reflective tone.

Joel whirled on him, a white line about his mouth.

"I'm not going to fight you, Joel," Mario told him quietly.

"You'll have to."

"Oh, no."

"Last night, you—"

"I kissed her. No more. You can believe that or not—I don't much care. But you're crazy to think I'll fight you over Donna."

"You admit you kissed her!"

"Sure." Mario put a cigarette between his lips. "And you know she let me." He shook out the match and looked squarely into Joel's tormented eyes. "Look, boy," he asked, "are you in love with that—that girl?"

His mouth tight, Joel turned away, sat down in his desk chair, his head in his hands. "Don't bother to tell me it's wrong," he groaned. "I know it for myself. I don't even want to love her—but—it's something—"

"It's something you'll get over," Mario assured him.

Joel leaned back in his chair. "Oh, go on, will you?" he asked wearily. "I wish you had let me knock your block off."

Mario opened the door. "Punch your own block off. It's the one that needs it."

"Wait—"

Mario stopped short, his eyes bright, the cigarette held between his short, clever fingers.

"Maybe I should let you advise me," Joel said in a troubled tone.

"Maybe I wouldn't try it," his friend laughed. "You got into this thing—now get yourself out."

"If I can."

"That's a pretty big *if*, I'll grant. What does your mother say?"

"She thinks I shouldn't marry her."

"And you think . . . ?"

"I tell you it isn't *thinking*, Mario! I know it will be like cutting my throat, and yet—"

"You can't get her out of your blood."

"That's it."

"That's bad, but there usually is more than one way out of a trap."

Joel sat hopeless in the chair.

"The next time you're with the young lady, Joel," said Mario quietly. "Look at her eyes. Look only at her eyes. Make them your field of operation. Shut your ears to her voice, forget her soft skin and her—body. Just look at her eyes. It's the only safe way for a man to judge any woman."

Joel looked long at his friend. "I still think I should have punched your jaw."

Mario chuckled.

Next morning, which was Labor Day, Joel's mother called Loro in some slight agitation. It seemed that a certain great doctor and his wife—on their way from San Francisco to New York—wanted to see Joel. He'd invited them to Brookside. Mrs. Roblane thought she should make some sort of gesture at entertaining them—she wanted to do what she was able to further her son's career—she was assembling such interesting people as she could—might she count on Loro and Rainy?

Loro said they would be delighted, and went to inform Rainy.

"Maybe Donna will make a speech." Rainy's smile was a little malicious.

"Oh, not again! Will you be there?"

"With bells on!"

Joel had called Donna about the party, venturing to suggest that she dress carefully. "I want you to look just right. . . ."

When he came for her, she turned gravely about for his inspection. Her dress was simple, and white; her shoes were plain pumps, and white. Her hair was brushed into its usual cluster of soft curls at the back. Her eyes were provocative as she waited for his verdict. "Well?"

His hand went into his pocket, brought out a little box of turquoise velvet; he watched her alertly as she took out the ring, slipped it on her hand. "How big is it?" she asked, then laughed. "Oh, I shouldn't have— It's beautiful, Joel. Me and my breaks!"

"It's all right. But—try not to, this evening. This Dr. Rehmend means a lot to me—and then, Mother and Dad. . . ."

"I understand. I can behave, Joel. You'll see."

And she did surprisingly well. She was shyly demure, shyly awed, shyly possessive with Joel; her manner branded him as her property more than the ring could do. She didn't do more than look smug at Rainy over that ring; Loro contented herself by saying the ring was very nice, and did Donna think she'd like being a doctor's wife?

"She'd better like it," boomed the visiting doctor, glancing across at Joel, who was helping his mother serve tea. "She's getting a considerable doctor. . . ."

Staley Roblane sat down on the couch beside Loro. "I didn't know—Joel—the ring—" he growled, taking off his eyeglasses, polishing them hard. "Beatrice didn't—when she asked Rainy."

Loro smiled at him. "No one knows better than I how unexpected our young folk can be."

"That's so," he said, with relief, cupping his ear to catch what Dr. Rehmend was saying to Donna about Joel. Something about the girl who apparently hadn't had any better luck than he in getting Joel to leave Lonti. "Minute I mentioned it to him, he told me I didn't have a chance. He said he'd refused to do it for the girl he loved. . . ."

Donna's face was blank; Rainy's head lifted in a listening gesture. Joel's face was red with embarrassment. Dr. Rehmend shrugged. "But, maybe, that was another girl. . . ."

Donna flounced to a seat on one of the tapestry chairs, her expression miffed.

"I wonder if you know how big a man you're getting," Dr. Rehmend observed. Then he looked around the room. "I wonder if any of you people know how big Joel is. Or are you living at the foot of the mountain, too close to appreciate it?"

"Do you want me to leave the room," Joel drawled, "so you can tell them about me? I wouldn't want to embarrass you, Doctor."

"You'll not embarrass me, Joel."

"Then, could you be bribed?"

"No, sir! I mean to tell these folks that you're a marked man! Marked where it counts for a doctor to be marked. Among other doctors!" He beamed at Donna. "Young lady, that's your boy! I've been across this land, and halfway back, and many times I heard about this Dr. Roblane and his ideas. I don't know if he's a man to get what he wants for himself, but he sure can get such things for his hospital—and other hospitals!"

"Just how does he do this, Dr. Rehmend?" Rainy asked, her face serene. "And what does he do?"

"Why, young lady, he goes into a hospital, tells 'em new methods of treatment—new approaches—shows 'em—and lectures. I suppose you've read his last article on psychologic-trauma in sick children? Seen that?"

"No," Rainy said in a faint voice. "I didn't know. . . ." She looked around at Joel.

"I'll give you an autographed copy," he said, his eyes holding hers.

"Please do," she said earnestly.

Dr. Rehmend drained his teacup. "And it all started," he said expansively, "with a speech he made before your women's club." Rainy's face was lost, stricken. "That speech was printed in the club magazine—it was reprinted—and—as I say—Joel's famous!"

"Could all this mean that Joel might be leaving us?" asked someone.

"I'm afraid not. The boy won't leave you folks. He says he means to stay here in this small town, build his children's wing—and I guess he's right. He's demonstrating that he can make his own name, and one for his hospital. It's somewhat the harder way to become famous, but it seems to be Joel's way."

"Shall I put up the card for applause?" Joel asked dryly.

The group shifted amid the laughter. New people came in for tea, some left. Rainy and her mother got into their station wagon and drove home.

"Dr. Rehmend," Beatrice worried to Staley, "says he hopes Joel's bride will be a help to him—and you know she won't be. I'm inclined to tell him that Donna is not an accurate indication of Joel's taste. . . ."

"Beatrice! Might I ask that you let Joel manage his own affairs?"

"Staley, I am very unhappy about this girl!"

"So am I. Joel should be marrying Rainy—we both know that. But he isn't marrying her. He told me that she had turned him down, said she didn't want him."

"But it was my fault, and now I feel that I should do something."

"The thing you should do is to keep out of it. You've made enough mistakes—with Rainy. You should have seen her for what she is, but you didn't. You looked at her jeans, and her play-farmer behavior, and decided you would have to coach her into a proper wife for our boy. Now—with this girl—I don't like her, and you don't—but let her alone!"

"Do you think, given enough rope—"

"That's wishful thinking," growled Staley, smiling to himself. "I'm just saying stay your hand. Then you can't be blamed. Joel knows how we feel."

"Yes. He's asked me—to accept Donna."

"Then my advice is to do what your son asks."

Staley strode off, and Beatrice went in search of Donna, determined to try honestly to accept the girl Joel had chosen. As a gauge, she would do for her exactly what she would have done for Rainy.

So, when they were alone at the end of the party, she suggested to Donna that she would want to put the name of Joel's bride up for membership in the women's club, and in the D.A.R.—if Donna were eligible.

"That's where they trace your ancestors?" asked Donna.

"Yes. I suppose your family history is available . . ."

"Well, we aren't rich people, Mrs. Roblane."

"That isn't significant, Donna."

"And the truth is—if you're going to do any tracing—our family name used to be Ferace—way back, you know. I—we don't use it—but if you're going to trace—"

She had pronounced the name in the Italian manner, as if she was ashamed of her own name and blood. Beatrice felt herself freeze. She could not help it.

Donna was talking fast to obliterate the impression she had made.

Beatrice passed the tips of her fingers across her brow. "Sit down," she bade Donna, not caring what thread of talk she broke at the minute. "I want to ask you: Do you love my son?"

"I'm *crazy* about him."

Beatrice sighed. "I'm talking about love."

"Well, you know how it is, Mrs. Roblane. Joel's a very sweet man. And of course he's so good-looking it's no trouble for a girl to run a fever about him."

"Just what are your plans?"

"Well—we're goin' to get married. . . ."

Beatrice tried again. "You understand that I do want the best for Joel."

"Oh, sure. I want that, too. Because the best for him is going to be the best for me."

"A doctor's wife . . ."

"Oh, sure, I know. And I'll do all—everything—I can to help Joel. Don't worry about that. I know there's a lot of angles, and since we're sitting here with our hair down, I'll admit, I wasn't raised to be used to things like Joel's had. But I'll get used to 'em!" Her soft, breathless voice hardened. "Them and *better!*"

Beatrice sat silent while Donna blew a smoke ring.

"Do your people live in St. Louis?"

"No. My dad—well—he's gardener for a rich man over in Senbrook, in Illinois. He's O.K., my dad. People like him and trust him."

"Your mother . . ."

"She's had nine kids, Mrs. Roblane. That takes it out of a woman."

"I—daresay."

"That's why I got out. I had no intention to marry a man who'd never get ahead—and be looking like Mom by the time *I* was forty. I wanted better'n that. I looked ahead, you see. I came to the city, changed my name . . ."

"Are you ashamed of your people?"

"It isn't that. I just don't aim to see anything of 'em. They needn't worry you."

"They don't!" said Beatrice crisply.

"I didn't change my first name," Donna confided, as one woman to another—another accepted perforce as an intimate. "Somebody told me never to alias my first name. It's a dead giveaway should anybody holler to you on the street."

Beatrice felt gooseflesh rise on her chilled arms.

"But I thought *Feress* was enough like *Ferace*. As for my folks—they're O.K. They work too hard, and have too many kids. I wanted to do better—and I'm doing it!" She smiled brightly; her fingers touched the curls at the back of her head. "'Course I got things for Joel, too, remember. Enough men have told me I'm good-looking—and enough women have been jealous of me—that I believe I am. Joel's getting his share."

Beatrice moistened her dry lips. "Nothing matters—if the marriage works out well. I suppose you think it will."

Donna shrugged. "Anyway, Joel and I think it's worth a try."

Beatrice leaned her head against the back of her chair a thing she seldom did. She suddenly felt old and tired

CHAPTER 8

And again, things went along. The Young Marrieds gave a lot of parties, with Joel and Donna noticeably not invited. Rainy was—to every one of them—paired off

with available and eligible men—Mario Pellestri, as often as not—a situation which somewhat startled them both.

Thus things came to the day of the local grape festival, which was the most enchanting episode of life about Lonti. The town had been settled by hungry immigrants from Italy seeking a place where they could work hard and make a living from the land. It afforded that living, and in gratitude for its abundance, the warm-hearted people celebrated in a way which had become a notable occasion.

The fiesta was no sophisticated gathering—the women wore flat shoes and cotton dresses in the peasant tradition; the men went about in shirt sleeves, with their belts looped under sagging abdomens, or with their trousers tied about slimmer waists with twisted silken scarves. Some "dressed up" in the spirit of the occasion—Beatrice Roblane wore a white mantilla on her hair, and looked like a queen. Loro had a Carmenlike costume; Rainy wore a peasant skirt of green and purple, with a full white blouse slipping from her shoulders, ribbons braided into her hair. Even the little dogs were decked with garlands of autumn flowers.

A feast was prepared and served in the town park; men played *boccie;* concertinas throbbed and guitars hummed; children ran and shouted while their busy mothers spread the long tables. In midafternoon, a procession wound out into the country for the blessing of the vineyards. The unmarried young men gathered enough grapes for a token pressing—Mario was one of them; wicker hampers were strapped to their strong shoulders, the tops of the baskets a bit above their heads so that they might bend from the waist and spill their purple burdens into the giant wheeled vat.

This was trundled back to town, where, after the Mass in the dark, cool candle-lit church, the Queen and her attendants—young girls chosen in pleasant rivalry—were lifted high in the arms of the young men, and set into the vat, to tread the grapes into purple juice. On an impulse, Mario seized Rainy, laughing and protesting, held her until she kicked free her sandals, then put her in with the other girls, who greeted her with flashing smiles, showed her how to gather up her skirts—but not too high. . . .

Laughter, impudent shouts—music again—and Rainy, Loro thought, the loveliest of them all. Not too much confused, she said so to Joel.

His brown eyes were sparkling. "You're right!" he said fervently. "Prettiest Eye-talian in the bunch."

"Where's Donna?" Loro asked him.

"She's coming over . . . around suppertime. She thought she couldn't take both afternoon and evening."

Loro had asked her question deliberately, to check on the expression Donna's name brought to Joel's face. It always went completely blank, and a veil of wariness covered his eyes; his shoulders stiffened, his muscles tensed. . . . Still watching him, she saw sudden color streak into his cheeks, and his jaw twitch. Protest hardened in his eyes. "Oh, no!" he breathed.

Loro looked where he was gazing, and saw Donna crossing the street to the park. There was not a tourist, not a visitor, more formally dressed than she was—all the locals were dressed for comfort, for a night of gay fun. Donna was the lady-go-to-see. She wore a tailored suit of white serge, faintly striped in palest gray. The skirt was pencil-slim; her white kid pumps were very high-heeled. A scarf of chartreuse silk was knotted about her throat; she wore no hat, but she did have gloves. So painful was the embarrassment upon Joel's face that Loro moved involuntarily to intercept the young woman, meaning perhaps to tell her to go back and make herself presentable.

But she was stopped dead by a little procession which was making its way out of the church grounds and into the park. The sun was low, and its horizontal rays lay gently upon the children's heads, their smiling faces. There were perhaps a score of little girls, wreaths of flowers upon their hair, their dresses softly rainbow-hued, the skirts long, ribbon sashes about their waists. Each child held a lighted candle, and they sang as they came along the path under the trees. The littlest one took Joel's hand and tried to lead him. He held back, and the old priest spoke up peremptorily: "Go with them, Joel!"

Smiling people gathered about the platform where stood a piano to play for dancing that night. The little girls took Joel to this stage, surrounding him in an enchanting picture. Rainy stood among those looking up, on their faces the same look of delight as lit those of the children. Flashbulbs bloomed in the dusk; the biggest girl came forward, a knotted blue handkerchief in one hand. She cleared her throat, and began her speech, talking very loud, and very fast.

"Dr. Joel Roblane!" she screamed. "We, the children of this parish, have collected this gift—" Her right hand held the handkerchief out to him, her arm stiff. Joel stood blushing and smiling.

"—this gift. It is to be used to build the children's wing of your hospital where you will do so much good for —for—for little chilrun." The child took a deep breath—she could not have been more than ten. "We hope that this money will—will assure the building of that wing and —and its success. We, the Italian-Americans of Lonti, are very proud of you, Doctor Roblane. We trust you—"

Evidently Donna had not spoiled things for Joel. The country people were overlooking her, disregarding her, denying her.

"—we love you, and thank you for—" Terror widened the child's black eyes; she had forgotten her speech. "We love you!" she cried again, and thrust the handkerchief into Joel's hand. "There!"

Whatever Joel must have been feeling, he did the only possible thing; he bent over and kissed the child, then stood smiling before the storm of *bravos* which beat toward him like a great wave. All about the platform were laughing faces, flashing teeth, bright eyes—shouts in English and Italian—words of love and praise.

Before Mario or Loro knew it was happening—they'd been doing an exultant war dance of their own—someone had picked up Rainy, lovely in her disheveled peasant costume, her bare legs stained with the purple of the grapes which she had trod for the luck of the vintage. Strong arms set her up on the platform with Joel. Shouts of "Your old woman, too, Joel!" rang in the air.

In the Italian-American colony, a wife, young or ancient, is called a man's *old woman.*

Loro looked aghast at Mario. "They know she belongs there!" he growled.

Joel, instinctively, put out his hand to steady Rainy. In the bedlam, they could do little but stand, flushed and laughing, waiting for a chance to speak. The little girls were dancing in a circle about them, and the white-haired priest was beaming. The picture they made was like a primitive come to life, its colors, its naïveté—Rainy's pretty flush of embarrassment, the smile which could not help but spread under the things now being shouted at the two of them. It was impossible to speak, to correct the mistake which had been made in the flush of good will toward Joel.

In that bandana there was ten thousand dollars; these people had given generously; they were flushed with their good deed, with love and gratitude for Joel—they wanted all the best things for him. Rainy was their idea of a best thing. . . .

But Rainy saw the clouds that were rolling into Joel's sky; her flush deepened, her eyes blazed with an emotion stronger than happiness. Anger bracing her, she stepped in front of Joel as if to protect him from the small girl in tailored white who was picking her way through the crowd —a woman wholly conversant with the term "old woman."

At her appearance, the crowd fell almost silent, with only a groundswell of murmurs to be heard.

Donna began to speak. She put up one hand for silence—which she had—and, as *the future Mrs. Roblane*—she said this meaningly, her mouth grim: "I am the future Mrs. Roblane, and if you wanted me to accept this gift, and thank you in behalf of the doctor . . ."

Some man shouted a phrase in Italian, at which she widened her eyes, and snickers burst through the crowd. "Poor Joel," Loro murmured.

"Look at him," said Mario. "He could cheerfully do murder."

Joel was not finding Donna's clumsiness amusing. She thanked these people for their "little gift"; she pointed out that Joel had always been a doctor to look alike on all his patients, making no difference in religion or color or—nationality.

Her husky, breathless voice lay like a film of sulphurous smoke over the heads of the people. Such a voice could become very monotonous; no matter what she said, to speak always in that low, pregnant tone—it was getting on Joel's nerves. He gritted his teeth and wondered what he could say to change the effect Donna's ridiculous behavior was having upon these good people.

It was Rainy who rescued him, coming forward into the vacuum of silence which greeted the end of Donna's "few words of thanks." "I'm sorry," she said gracefully, clearly, "that even for a minute it seemed as if I were occupying your rightful place, Miss Feress. Joel knows, these people know, that I am his friend, that I will help him—in any way I can. In any way—"

Mario had come to the edge of the platform, and now lifted his arms to take Rainy down. Joel touched Donna's arm, and led her to the steps. She clung to his arm, and he wished he could have five minutes in which to instruct "the future Mrs. Roblane" on the matter of the way he felt to the people who had so honored him, as well as to the way he felt about Rainy. For one thing, he'd make clear that Rainy needed no patronage from her, that Rainy—

His anger trickled out, his intention to speak so dissolved, in his need to stand, with Donna possessively at his side, and receive the congratulations of a dozen people who came to him for that purpose, unless they came to mark their disapproval of what Donna had done by the way they ignored her. Joel recognized the maneuver, and felt it necessary to defend her, to demand approval of the woman he had chosen. He was remembering that his mother had foreseen this situation, had known that he would have need to defend Donna. . . .

His sensitive mouth settled into a defiant pout, and to each one who came to speak to him he said a little louder, a little more truculently, "You know my fiancée, I think!"

"He won't shout them," Loro said to Rainy, "into liking that little . . ."

Rainy's rebuke was immediate. "Let's not make things worse for Joel."

"That project doesn't need any help," said Loro crossly. "Look at her. Does she do one thing to smooth it out for him? No! The—the—" Rainy's eyes flashed. "The pseudo-lady," Loro substituted with nicety. "She just stands there, looking like a dummy—*the* dummy—in a store window. She just bought that suit; it cost seventy-five dollars. I priced it. Do you suppose she's charging things to Joel? She's not working for Dick any more—"

"I suppose it's none of your business!"

"Only that Joel would so hate such a thing," Loro said inexorably.

"Unless," said Rainy, "his tastes have changed completely since—since I knew him. But—speaking of business, I saw Walter a minute ago."

"What's he doing here?"

"I *hope* he has a job for you."

Loro sighed and went in search of her agent; their bank account said she should be interested.

She ate supper with Walter, having lost sight of Joel and Donna—and of Rainy until she began to play. Even on the upright they'd moved over from the school, she played well, though somewhat stormily. Still with Donna, Joel was sitting quite close to the platform, at the end of one of the long tables. They were somewhat alone; in that crowd, to have empty places so markedly about them was a direct comment on the way these people felt. After the gesture earlier in the evening, had Donna behaved herself, Joel would have sat in an honored place at the main table with the priest and the mayor.

Walter suggested that he and Loro move where they could hear Rainy more clearly, and Loro led the way to a bench behind the table where Joel sat, a glass of wine in his hands.

"Why doesn't she play something popular?" they heard Donna say. "These people won't get that long-hair stuff."

"I want," said Joel coldly, "never to hear you speak so of 'these people' again. They're as good as you!"

Fury blazed like green fire in Donna's face.

But Joel's eyes were upon Rainy. She sat in half-profile to him, the full skirt she wore falling into purplish folds about her limbs, the lights above her head gleaming upon her slender, sun-golden arms and shoulders, upon her hair; a curly lock clung to her flushed cheek, her lips were parted. She was enjoying her music, and Joel smiled. Donna touched his arm to gain his attention.

He lit the cigarette she had asked for, his movements jerky, preoccupied; then he looked again at Rainy, who now was playing "Ciribiribin" with a growing group of singers about the piano, a gay throng. A concertina joined her, and one song followed another. Mario was at the side of the piano, his hair tumbled upon his head, his shirt collar open, his smile flashing. Joel saw him lean toward Rainy and speak; she looked up at him, laughing. Both were having a wonderful time—together.

Again Donna's fingers touched Joel's hand. "Do you wish you were up there?" she said in her low voice.

He picked up his glass. "They're having fun."

"And you're not."

He said nothing.

"I can make a show of myself, if you'd like. . . ."

"No doubt."

She regarded him with eyes as cold as—as—as cold as a jealous woman's eyes. "Mario appreciates your old girl-friend, doesn't he?" she said finally, in a silky drawl.

"What man wouldn't appreciate Rainy?"

"You don't deny she was your—girl-friend?"

"I don't like your term, but she's always been my friend."

"Miss Pearsett can't be as cold and proper—and particular—as she'd have one think." Donna was still holding aloof from all this peasant revelry. "There's only one thing Mario wants from a girl."

She had succeeded in cracking the shell about Joel; light was seeping through, the sting of acid touched him. He turned and looked at Donna—looked at her smooth hair which shone like polished glass in the light of the overhanging bulbs, at her smug lips, and her huge eyes.

And, for the first time, he *saw* the woman who stood like—like a wall of icy strength between him and Rainy. Between him and that warm, lovely creature who sat and played and laughed, her hair against her rosy cheek, while this one—

The sun had glittered upon her briefly, had blinded him, but now he could *see*.

And what he saw, what everyone saw—these Italian folk, giving him their gift, and including Rainy, passing over Donna as something ephemeral . . . Joel realized that

he should not take their gift if he kept on with Donna. Because, if he kept on with her, he could not stay in Lonti. He must lose his hospital, as he had lost Rainy—he had dearly bought a thing which he could not keep.

"How do you know so much about Mario?" he asked roughly. "He's never been especially charmed by you."

"No?"

"Evidently not, from the things he's said about you."

"And you let him!"

"Your doctor-friend," Walter whispered in Loro's ear, "had better watch out. That's a jealous cat he's got there."

Joel's shoulders lifted, dropped. "It was all true. . . ."

Donna was on her feet. "If you think I'm going to sit and watch you moon up at Rainy while she plays the piano—I saw you doing it out at their house— Well, if it was a piano-player you wanted . . ."

Her voice had hardened, lifted, and Joel spoke quickly. "Sit down, and shut up!"

It surprised her to know that he would, that he could, speak so. She sat down as if pushed; then—seeming to remember that there were better cards than being able to play piano, she edged close to Joel, and pressed against him.

"Let's go speak to Rainy," Walter growled. "My blood-pressure won't take this."

"Shut up," Loro urged.

"She'll have that guy—"

"Not this time," Loro said excitedly. "Listen!"

Joel was speaking to his bride-to-be in terms which were a surprise to Donna, though she understood them.

She leaned her elbows upon the table, and her eyes bored into Joel's white, tormented face. "I suppose all that means you'd like your ring back? That you want to be free?"

He wanted it with an intensity which blazed in his eyes.

"Well, you won't be free!" Donna said tautly. "I've a claim on you, Joel Roblane—and you know I have!"

He looked down at his hands, clenched upon the scrubbed, wooden boards. Brown hands they were, and strong ones—he licked his lips with his tongue. How had he ever got into this thing? He thought of how to free himself. And hate was in his heart.

Mario had kept an eye on those two seated in isolation at the end of the far table. He'd watched Joel particularly, and he read the expressions which came upon his friend's face as clearly as if the messages were typed out upon a chattering key. So he came up behind Donna in time to hear all of her threat to Joel:

"You just try a little thing like brushing me off, Dr. Staley Joel Roblane, and I'll put your name in the biggest headlines the newspapers ever saw. Your girl-friend's, too! So she plays the piano! So she sits on a sandbar with Mario and never gets a speck of sand on her la-de-da white dress."

Her voice droned in Joel's ears, that throaty, husky voice, always the same, her big eyes always with the same suggestive, calculating expression. She had about six tricks in her bag, and every one the same. A man got sick of the same thing—bored with it, as a boy at the circus gets bored with the sticky candy offered him then in abundance, though denied him at saner times.

"So you think you want Rainy . . ." Donna was saying. "Well, *want* her! But I'm tellin' you that if you make one move to take her—"

Joel closed his eyes, seeing Rainy against the red lids, so different from the girl there at his side, ding-donging. . . . And he wanted Rainy as that boy at the circus longed for the cool white sheets of home, for the drink of cold, fresh water—and his desire for her was a sickness, too. His need for her frightened him more than his hatred of Donna.

They were isolated in a pocket of self-interest; Mario's hand had seized Donna's arm, lifted her to her feet before either she or Joel realized that anyone was close. "It would be a good thing, Donna," Mario said firmly, "for you to shut your mouth."

"Why—you—" she stuttered in rage.

"Joel's had about all he can take. And a man at that point gets dangerous, sweetheart. Or don't you know that much about men?"

He knew exactly what to say to a woman who thought she had written the book on men. "I was just telling him what to expect if he tried any funny business!" Donna gasped.

"I know." Mario's bright eyes mocked her. "But you've said too much. Your respectability had a blowout 'way back there, and now you're skidding all over the road." He stood tipping up on his toes, rocking back on his heels, while that sank in. "Joel knows what he wants, Donna. He's that sort of man. And what he wants—isn't you. Any more."

She didn't claw his laughing face, nor screech at him. She just hugged her arms across her breast, and walked off—alone. The two men watched her melt into the shadows.

Rainy played on—Chopin, now—the notes dropping like golden bubbles among the people who ate and drank and laughed in the park. Unconscious of the quarrel taking place at her feet, knowing only vaguely that Mario had drifted away—she had an odd sense of fear, of things gone wrong, of trouble. . . .

Joel was never out of her consciousness these days. And when she thought of Joel, there had to be Donna—and this dread. Everyone said the marriage would not work. But it must work! It was not enough for Joel's friends to say that Donna was wrong—Joel had chosen her, and he must build his life about that choice. His friends should help him, and those who loved him—first among them being Rainy, who loved the tall, brown man in a way which filled her very sky.

So, she must help Joel—at whatever cost to herself. The big guy needed help; if he wouldn't fight for himself, she must make the fight for him. Her hands lifted, crashed down. All over the park, heads raised; a storm of music broke above them—exultant, determined, sure of the artist's self—of a woman's ability to save the man she loved.

Rainy found Donna on a far bench where she sat alone, her foot swinging, her head back. At Rainy's brief word, Donna shrugged, and stood up, let Rainy lead her to the table occupied by the very heartcore of the younger social set. They were playing some sort of game, and Rainy firmly drew Donna into the group, though the girl's face remained wary, and the wives looked at each other in a somewhat grim fashion.

Mario sauntered up to join them, threw his leg over the bench, with a nod to his friends, a smile for Rainy, and a grave stare for Donna, who was looking more bewildered by the minute.

She didn't know what Rainy was up to—she seemed to be taking Donna's part against these others who had always snubbed Donna. She seemed kind enough, and friendly. She had hunted Donna out, and had brought her into this group, expecting the others to be friendly—as some of them were being, in a grudging sort of way.

Donna's instinct was to fight anything, anybody, who was different. But how could she fight these courteous people? How could she fight Rainy?—who should be jealous, but didn't seem to be. She looked critically at this very strange girl; her figure was slender, and good enough—her hair was a light brown, cut semi-short, relying upon its own natural wave—her clothes—five dollars would buy every stitch she had on. While Donna—

She looked down at her suit—the thing had cost—But it was wrong! Dead wrong! And Rainy's cotton skirt

was right. Rainy was right! Rainy was king-high here tonight, even with the men. To think that a girl with sunburned skin and tousled hair could beat Donna's time! Something should be done—though Donna still did not know what to do. With guys like Joel—and Mario—preferring Rainy—preferring what they called a "lady." Hadn't Donna tried to be a lady? Hadn't she done her girdled best to look like one, to behave? But people liked Rainy, and they did not like Donna.

So—the hell with it!

Mario was ready for her. He stepped over the bench, came along behind it, his hand out. The music was going full blast by then, and dust rose from the dancing feet on the tarpaulin laid down in the square formed by the double rows of tables. Mario, his dark face handsome, and his manner reckless, led Donna to this open place, called something to the musicians. The music paused, quickened, and he whirled the girl out upon the canvas. She knew how to dance a tarantella, knew every step. Her tight skirt worked its way above her knees, her hair came loose and flew about her head as she stomped and whirled and turned to the shouts of encouragement from the audience. Mario was the best dancer among the Italian menfolk; now the old women gave grudging recognition to Donna's skill. She was having a wonderful time, her head back, her lips parted—the pale green scarf floated behind her, coiling like a snake, and swirling up about her head.

Everyone watched and applauded: Loro—Joel and his mother—Walter Von der Hamp, and Cleota Minnent—they gazed entranced at the—the spectacle. It was truly that.

The exhausted musicians finally brought the dance to an end. Mario lifted a triumphant hand, and with his other at Donna's waist, they ran out of the lighted square, disappeared among the tables, were lost among the shadows. All saw them go, and not many gave a thought as to why or where. The business of eating and drinking, of visiting among friends, could go on now. Except for Cleota Minnent.

She sat uneasily at the table, and after a little interlude of smirking and chirping vague little sounds of concern and wonder, she launched into one of her speeches. All about their being horrid highbrows to that girl—they had been, ever since she'd first come to Lonti. Cleota, of course, had recognized her as an unspoiled child of nature—here Walter snorted, and Loro kicked him. Cleota had not noticed. She went blithely on about that unspoiled child, scared to death of "us sophisticates." . . .

The Italian women who served the table looked knowingly at each other. Joel sat like a wooden image, sipping at his glass of wine. His impassivity inspired Cleota to action.

"I'm going after them!" she announced, getting to her feet, her cheeks flushed, her hair clinging damply to her forehead. "I'll not let that child be hurt by you. I'll go—bring her back!" She looked meaningly, condemningly at Joel.

"Do you have your car?" he asked courteously.

"Does she know where they went?" Walter whispered in Loro's ear.

Cleota had said that she had a car, and she went off as if she did know where to go. "I hope she learns a thing or two she needs to know," Loro said, more loudly than she intended, for Beatrice Roblane heard; she smiled, just a little.

Walter began talking to Loro again about Rainy, and there was a short program up on the platform. People moved around, but it was to about the same group that Cleota returned, looking more agitated than when she had left; her blue eyes were fairly bulging out of her head. She slid into a place at the table, and reached thirstily for a glass of wine.

One of the pillowy Italian women stood on the far side of the table, slicing a long loaf of crusty bread, pulling the thin-bladed, sharp knife toward her breast.

"Did you find the child?" asked this woman calmly. She impaled the slice of bread upon the point of her knife, extended it to Cleota, and began to carve another one.

"Why," said Cleota, panting for breath—or for calm, "yes, I found her—them. She was down at the covered bridge—with that Dr. Pellestri. They—they said they were waiting for the moon to rise. . . ."

Walter touched Loro's arm. "Let's go find Rainy."

Joel sat perfectly still; his handsome face looked like a negative from which all lines had been rubbed. He was drawing deep, deep breaths, like a man just released from an air-poor mine. Just by being still, he had been set free. He had freed himself, just by letting things go along—naturally—

He wanted to laugh aloud in his relief, in his joy at being free. He was enough aware of the people about him, furtively watching him, that he did not laugh—but he did get to his feet; he threw his legs over the bench, and strode off in search of Rainy.

He found her in a quiet spot on the far side of the *boccie* court, and the light cast shadows of branches upon the clothing of the people to whom Rainy was talking. Joel leaned against a tree, content for the minute just to look at Rainy.

She was talking to that big, bearded man who was her mother's business agent, and evidently the man was offering Rainy a contract of some sort. Joel could hear only a phrase here and there—concerts—three short tours—good guarantee—

Rainy seemed pleased, and uncertain what to say. She turned to her mother, evidently asking for advice. Loro patted her daughter's shoulder. "Anything you want is yours tonight! Anything! You think about it, and answer Walter later."

CHAPTER 9

Rainy dropped to a bench which was near; Joel came across the grass to her, and spoke her name softly. She looked up, smiling. "Oh, Joel . . ."

"May I sit down?" In his hour of greatest emotion, Joel would do the courteous thing.

Rainy pulled her full skirts about her. "Of course! I was catching my breath—"

"These things are pretty strenuous."

"Yes, but wonderful. Those children—I was so proud of you, Joel!"

"I was proud of *you*," he said deeply. "You were grand about—you've been grand all evening. As a matter of fact,"—he glanced at her, smiling—"I guess you're always—grand."

She didn't answer, just sat watching the men upon the court, listening to the clunk of the small wooden balls, the spurting arguments which rose.

Somewhat diffident, but determined, too, Joel rose, finally, and put a knuckled finger beneath her chin, searched her eyes. "O.K.," he said. "Let's walk—"

She rose and went with him along a path through a woodlot, into a denser growth of trees; the moon was rising, and its light touched the bronzing leaves.

There was peace in being together again this way, and an exaltation, too; it was like the rich deepness of organ music after the plinkety-plank of jazz on a poor piano.

"It's good to be with you, Rainy," Joel said gruffly.

"Yes." The word fell as softly as a child's kiss.

"It always was good," he went on. "Though tonight is—different. I can't tell if you've changed—or if I have."

She considered this. "Maybe we've both changed. Grown up a little. I know I have. I've had growing pains all summer."

"Rheumatic fever," he diagnosed, and they both laughed merrily. It was the sort of joke they had always had with each other, flattening minutes of threatening emotion or gravity with the absurd.

With that remembered laughter, his arm went about her shoulder as it had used to do; he drew her to him, the warm sweetness of her like food a starving man dreams about, and finally tastes.

"Oh, it is good to have you, to hold you, Rainy—to—" He kissed her, a long, sweet kiss, her lips shy, yet eager against his. Her body strong, and soft and—dear—in his arms. He rubbed his cheek against her hair which smelled of sunlight, and he sighed. "I do love you, Rainy," he cried. "So deeply—so truly—so—completely. Do you believe me?"

Her head pressed into the hollow of his shoulder, and her fingers curled into his hand.

Then they began to talk, ever more eagerly, absorbedly, like any friends, or lovers, who have been separated, with many things to bring up to date—news, opinions, feelings. . . .

A great content filled them both, a satisfaction in being together. Urgency and passion would come—but for now this steady happiness was enough, this quiet joy. They talked of Joel's work—Rainy displaying detailed knowledge of the children's wing which now could be started immediately.

"You're going to be awfully busy," she said with pretty concern, and pleasure.

"How did you become so well-informed on all these things?" he asked her.

"I wanted to understand your work, Joel. I thought I should understand it. Mario teased me about locking the stable after the horse was stolen, but—" In a flash of lightning, she saw that his mouth was grim. "Mario's your friend, Joel," she said earnestly.

"Yes."

"But he *is*."

"I know he is." His tone expressed surprise that the matter should need discussion.

"I—I've been keeping a scrapbook about you," she confessed. "And last week, after Dr. Rehmend told me of the article you'd written, I subscribed to a clipping bureau."

He laughed then, a happy, warm sound. "You're as bad as Mother."

"It's wonderful, Joel—your work for the proper hospital care of children, and your new wing here. But the finest thing about any of it is that it's your own! You've done it yourself; you thought of it, talked it into reality, and you yourself are working it out. The recognition you're getting is not due to your being a rich man's son, nor to filling a position in a big medical center. You got it by being yourself, by believing in the thing you wanted to do—and your faith has been justified.

"I used to laugh at your—your respectability. It was crazy, because that very respectability has paid off. It's your living by your own code that made these canny Italian-Americans trust you; they know you've a solid core of rightness. . . ."

"I can act the fool with the best of them," he growled. "And do."

"They like you for your faults and failings, just as they trust you because they know the inner you is right, wants the right things, and will work for those things. That's why they gave you all that money this evening. They did it to show their faith in you at this particular time." She was thinking of the unpopularity of his alliance with Donna. "You don't catch them handing over a pokeful of money to Mario to finance one of his ideas, do you?"

"He doesn't have that kind of ideas," laughed Joel, and Rainy nodded, happy to have skated successfully over a thin place. She was thinking, then said aloud, "With nobody around to be shocked, it's good to sit this way, Joel."

He looked down at her for a long minute, then bent his head and kissed her. "Very good," he said gravely.

Rainy didn't know what this all meant, what would come—she didn't care. It was enough to sit with Joel, his kiss fresh upon her lips.

"I'm serious," she began again, after a little, "about the significance of these people's help in your work, Joel. They work very hard for their money, sacrifice to save it—and when they give it, they do so after considerable thought. So you—must—stay here in Lonti."

"You think that, do you?"

"I know you should!"

"All right, then. I'll stay. I'll try to justify—everyone's—faith in me."

"Oh, I know you will," she cried. "You'll stay—and do as you have been doing—getting the recognition I thought you deserved, but which I also thought you had to go out into the world to attract. You were right, Joel, and I was so wrong!"

"Rainy—"

"Let me say it! It's been bottled up in me, and—it's working!"

"Then say it, by all means!" he laughed.

"I'm proud of you! I'm proud of the way you've stayed and worked in the sort of hospital you knew was right for you, and still have made yourself important in the world. That's a big thing to do, Joel, and I give you full credit."

"Thank you, Rainy," he said politely.

"You've nothing to thank me for," she said ruefully. "For I advised you wrongly. But you were right, Joel—you always will be right if you stay yourself. It's only when you step out of character that you—do—things—"

He had been watching her, smiling a little at the fervidness with which she praised him, and condemned herself. "That I do disgraceful things," he completed her sentence. "Like that night I spent with you."

She bounced a little in startled surprise. "That was the most respectable thing," she cried tartly, "you ever did in your respectable life!"

He chuckled. "I thought Ben might start a little gossip. . . ."

"He did, but what came after put that adventure—" She broke off. "I'm sorry," she gasped.

"She's with Mario," he said in a wooden tone. "Didn't you know?"

"I—didn't know. I just knew that—you were with me."

His fingers touched her cheek. "I don't love her, Rainy," he said soberly.

She sat, still looking up at him, her lips parted a little, her eyes steady.

"I don't love her," he repeated. "It's you I love, you I want. I hoped that—you still—"

"I do, Joel," she said readily. "I love you, and I want *you*. Oh, darling—"

He caught her close; now their love seemed full, and round, and rich. "Will you try it with me, Rainy? Last spring I asked you that—and it's still the thing I'm asking. To let me love you my way. I'll try so hard—to make it worth while. . . ."

She laughed, and brushed her hair out of her face. She had come with him tonight, ready to take what crumbs of love he might offer. "This time, we'll both try, Dr. Roblane," she said exultantly. "And we'll both like it! I hope—"

"We'll both like it," he agreed, and again they sat silent for a time, Rainy's head against his shoulder, her eyes dreamy on the little clouds which scudded across the moon.

"I hope we live a long, long time, Joel," she said dreamily.

"Why?" he asked, as an older person asks a child to put his thoughts into delightful words.

"**Because it's going to be** a wonderful life, Joel," she said gravely. "I want a diamond engagement ring, and a gold-band wedding ring. I want a white satin dress and a veil. I want to live in the town house, with chintz slipcovers on the furniture, and Spode china on the mahogany dinner-table, and waxed floors. Green carpet on the stairs. . . ." A smile lifted the corners of her mouth. "I *know* they're what I *said* I didn't want. But I've learned that those things mean peace and security, and they are what life is *for*. I want a rose-colored carpet in my bedroom, and books in shelves around one corner, with an armchair and a lamp, and a pot of philodendron. . . ."

"Only one armchair?"

"A big one—but you'll be busy at the hospital, and I'll have to stay alone many evenings, with one ear cocked for the children. . . ."

His arm tightened on her shoulder.

"A grave little girl with fair hair, Joel—long and silky, tied back with a blue ribbon—blue eyes—"

"Hey!" he cried. "What about Mendel?"

"He can keep out of this! The boys can have brown eyes. . . ."

He chuckled, and she turned fiercely to look at him. "I *want* those things, Joel! Those safe, sure things, and the pride in having them."

"Yes, darling. And you shall have them."

"I'll be the most proper doctor's wife. Your home will be gracious, your children well-behaved—"

"And you'll love me."

"Oh, yes, I'll love you!" She lifted herself to kiss him warmly upon the mouth. "Always, Joel. Always!" she promised. She relaxed again at his side, a very happy young woman. "Loro said," she crooned, "that tonight I could have what I wanted."

Joel stiffened. "But weren't you offered a concert contract?"

"Who wants to play the piano when she can be a doctor's wife?"

"A doctor's wife," Joel repeated softly, taking her into his arms. Directly overhead lay a cloud big enough to darken the moon. "How soon, Rainy?" Joel's whisper was hoarse. "I want you so—"

"I know," she whispered. Then she pulled away a little. "What about—Donna?" she asked reluctantly.

"I'm free of her, darling. I promise you that I am. I have been for some time."

"But she—will she . . . ?"

"It's Mario she wants. That's why she came here to Lonti. Then—I seemed to have something she thought she wanted. But it's always been Mario. He's had a hold on her that I've never had. She's in love with him."

"Will she get him?"

Joel sat smiling ruefully. "Donna's caught him at the wrong time. He's at the age where he has to make a decision about his behavior—and he's deciding that the doctor will last him longer. I'm glad—he's a very fine surgeon. And I think Mario's glad he can decide that way. Donna's going to be the big loser—she won't have Mario for keeps, and she won't have the position she thought I could bestow on her."

Rainy's smile was absent-minded. "I had her sized up as a person who knew all about getting the things she wanted. Real things, I used to call them."

"Yes, dear, but real things for Donna were shallow things, a film of water that could dry up in a day's time. What you meant by *real* were deep, lasting things. You think of love in terms of years and children. Donna—" He felt her tremble under his arm, and he leaned down. "I'm sorry about, Donna, darling," he said soberly. "Will you forgive me? Can you?"

Her lifted face was serene. "I have to forgive you, Joel," she said. "I was jealous of her, and I hated her. But I was to blame for what happened."

"That night I spent in your home, Rainy, the night I was sick at my stomach, and a little drunk—a good little—that *most respectable night*, as you call it—and it was! But that night, the comfort you gave me, the comfort I took in you, meant more to me than anything Donna ever gave me, or did. Will you believe that, Rainy?"

She nodded. "Yes. I'll always believe you, Joel." They sat quiet then, looking out over the still water of the pond. The night was silent about them; even the massed clouds hung motionless.

"Donna *was* a person," Joel's voice broke the stillness, "to get the thing she wanted—but only because she cut all human relationships down to the bare bones of want and have."

Rainy ducked her head.

Joel put his finger under her chin and lifted her face for his kiss.

"I told you I'd been having growing pains," she reminded him. "I've done so much adjusting of ideas this summer—about myself, about you—"

"I know, darling. This summer has been hell for all of us. Too much humidity for hell, though. I suspect that's a dry heat."

Rainy laughed aloud. "Oh, Joel, I do love you!"

"That's nice. Because I love you. And if this summer has taught both of us—Mario said it would, at the time."

"Mario is very wise."

"I guess so, if it's from things like this that we learn. And maybe—"

"No," she said gravely, "it was *not* worth it."

. . . THE END

THIS is a special version, prepared by the author, of her longer novel which will be published by Dodd, Mead and Company early in the autumn.

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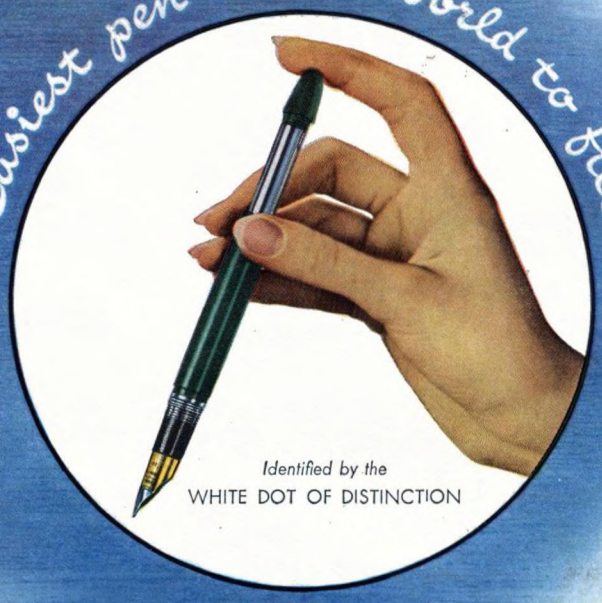

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