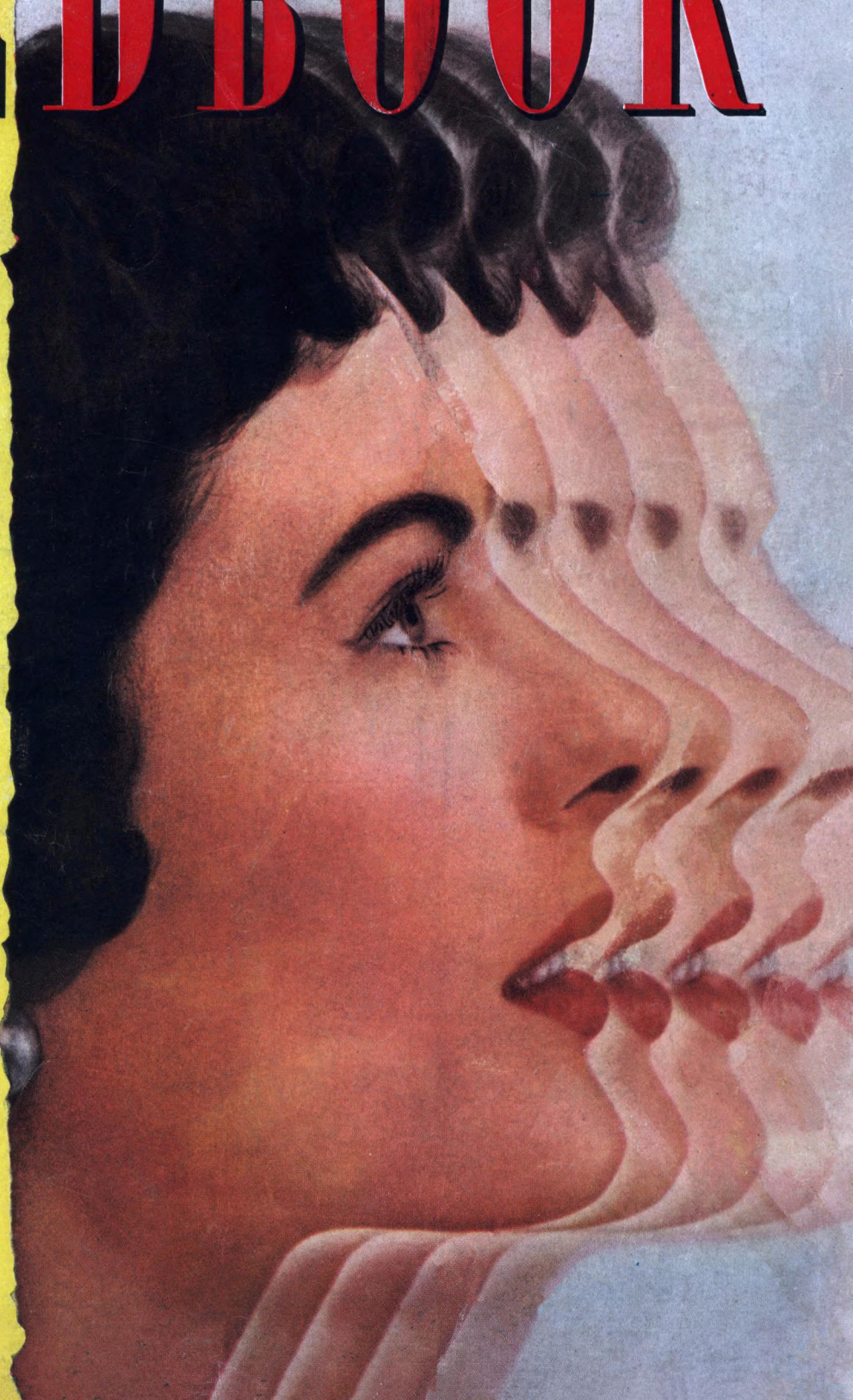
MAY

25 CENTS

REDBOOK



First Preview of the Coming

KINSEY REPORT

ON "SEXUAL BEHAVIOR IN THE HUMAN FEMALE"

BY

MORRIS L. ERNST AND DAVID LOTH

AUTHORS OF

"American Sexual Behavior and the Kinsey Report"

●

YOUTH AT THE HELM

How Young Ideas Won In Arkansas Politics

Written 80 Years Ago...

AS IT SAYS ON THE LABEL:

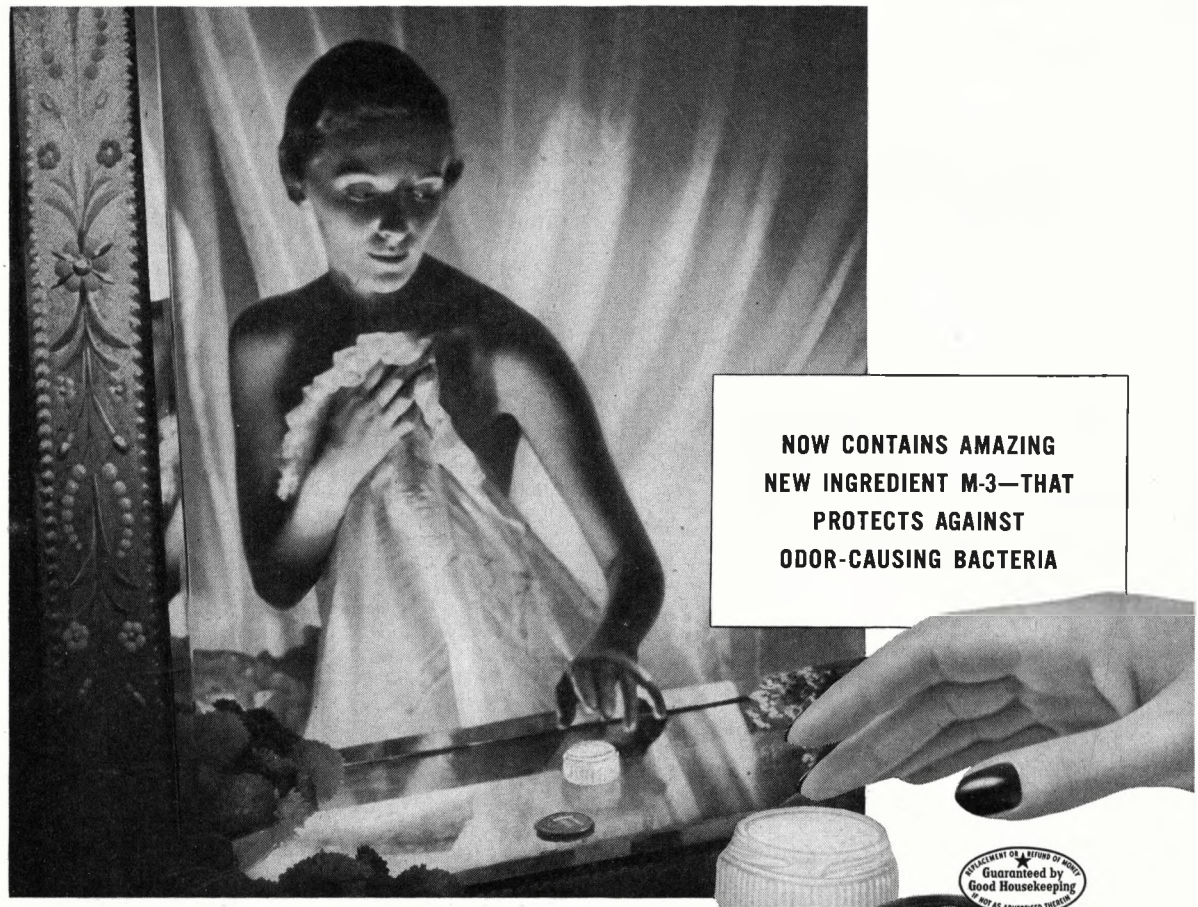
"There is nothing better in the market"

The famous Old Forester you enjoy today still carries the founder's handwritten pledge of quality—still gives you that original elegance of rich whisky goodness, outstanding since 1870.

100 Proof • Bottled in Bond • BROWN-FORMAN DISTILLERS CORPORATION • At Louisville in Kentucky

Wonderful Deodorant News for You!

New finer Mum more effective longer!



New Protection! Let the magic of new Mum protect you—*better, longer.* For today's Mum, with wonder-working M-3, safely protects against bacteria that *cause* underarm perspiration odor. Mum never merely "masks" odor—simply doesn't give it a chance to start.

New Creaminess! Mum is softer, creamier than ever. As gentle as a beauty cream. Smooths on easily, doesn't cake. And Mum is non-irritating to skin because it contains no harsh ingredients. Will not rot or discolor finest fabrics.

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Mum's protection grows and GROWS! Thanks to its new ingredient, M-3, Mum not only stops growth of odor-causing bacteria instantly—but keeps down *future* growth. You actually *build up* protection with regular, exclusive use of new Mum!

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New **MUM** *cream deodorant*

A PRODUCT OF BRISTOL-MYERS

REDBOOK

VOL. 95 NO. 1 MAY 1950

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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.

"Of course it's Mrs. Smith...but don't stop!"

MRS. SMITH probably would never know why Mrs. Adams passed her by . . . would never understand why she, a newcomer to the smug little village, had been repeatedly given the cold-shoulder by neighbors whose friendship she needed. There's one symptom* women won't discuss.

The truth was that Mrs. Smith had made a bad first-impression . . . one that she couldn't live down. The insidious thing about *halitosis (bad breath) is that, guilty of it only once, you may be tagged with it for a long time.

Don't Take Chances

Why take your breath for granted—*ever?* Why risk offending? Listerine Antiseptic is a wonderfully effective, delightfully pleasant, *extra-careful* precaution against this social offense.

You merely rinse the mouth with it, and instantly your breath becomes fresher, sweeter, less likely to offend . . . stays that way, too. Not for seconds . . . not for minutes . . . but for hours, usually.

Remember, when you want to be at your best, never, never omit Listerine Antiseptic.

Use it systematically morning and night, and before any date.

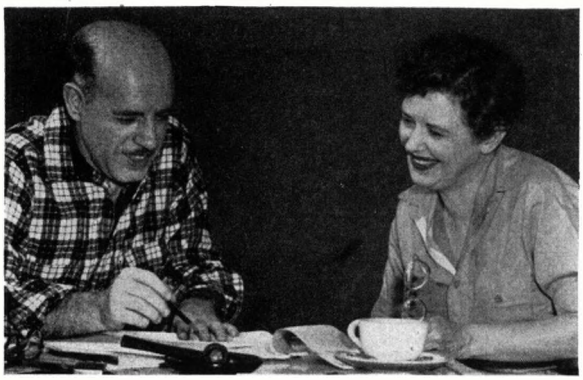
While some cases of halitosis are of systemic origin, most cases, say some authorities, are due to the bacterial fermentation of tiny food particles clinging to mouth surfaces. Listerine Antiseptic quickly halts such fermentation, then overcomes the odors fermentation causes.

Lambert Pharmacal Co., *St. Louis, Mo.*

...the extra-careful precaution against bad breath LISTERINE ANTISEPTIC

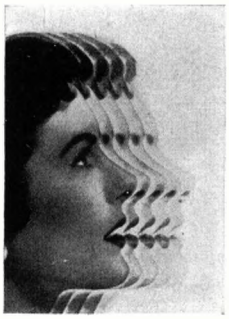
Week-ending? Always take Listerine Antiseptic along. It's mighty comforting to have a good antiseptic handy in case of minor cuts, scratches and abrasions requiring germicidal first-aid.

BETWEEN THE LINES—



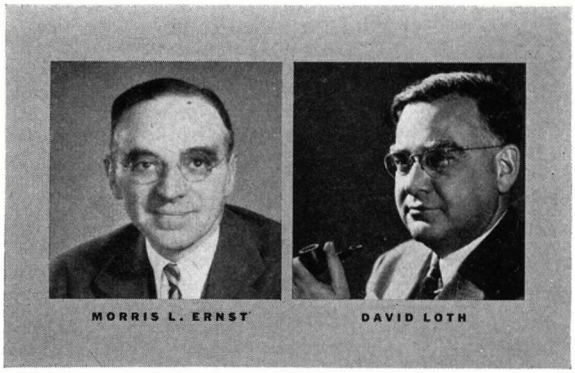
DIVORCE IS FUNNY, the little girl was thinking on her way to her father's house for her monthly visit. Funny, meaning queer — not amusing. The little girl's story is called "Thank You, Daddy," on page 22. and we think you will agree that it is tender and sad and yet, in the end. not without hope for Frannie, who at nine is trying hard to cope with all the problems her parents' divorce has made for her. This touching work of fiction is by Hal and Barbara Borland, who comprise a highly successful husband-wife writing team.

AN IMPORTANT CALL OF WARNING to every REDBOOK family is to be found on page 52 in an article by J. D. Ratcliff. This well-known writer in the field of medical science is calling attention to the layman's casual and therefore perilous attitude toward X-ray, an attitude deplored by experts who know, for example, the dangers a well-meaning mother may be courting simply by taking her child for a shoe fitting by the prevalent X-ray device. Here are some eye-opening facts of real concern to you.



THE COVER'S MULTIPLE PROFILE (Why limit a good thing?) belongs to Dolores Dalzell. Mother of a four-year-old daughter. she comes from California, where she and her husband ran a flying-school. After modeling for three years she still doesn't have ambitions for a stage or screen career. Job she liked best was during the war when she was a riveter in an aircraft plant. "I loved the work and the people and the feeling of doing something important," she says. Photo by Dirone Studio. Imperial Pearl earring.

THE ARTICLE DESTINED to be more talked about than anything appearing in a magazine during 1950 is on page 36. It is a preview of the eagerly awaited report by Dr. Kinsey on the Sexual Behavior of the Human Female. Because of the tremendous importance of Dr. Kinsey's findings, which will not be published officially until next year, REDBOOK sought out the two men who through close association with Dr. Kinsey are in a position to tell *now* the most significant facts of the new study. We are proud to present in the interest of public progress the advance report by Morris L. Ernst and David Loth.



NEXT MONTH: **A great human document by a man who has been called the outstanding novelist and reporter of our times—"A Yearling Family," by John Hersey**

"What Makes It Good for Me?"

Charley, who owns a drug store, wants to know why he should care about a profit for the telephone company

The Scene — *A drug store in any one of thousands of cities and towns in the U. S. A.*

The Time — *Lunch time. A man from the telephone company has dropped in. He's chatting with his friend Charley, who owns the store.*

CHARLEY: "What d'ya mean — it's good for me when the telephone company makes a profit? You give me good service and all that but why should I care whether you make money or not? I'm having my own troubles, trying to put in a bigger soda fountain."

AL: "What d'ya mean, 'trying'? Can't you just up and do it?"

CHARLEY: "I've got to find me a partner with some capital. These things cost money."

AL: "Sure they do! It's the same with us at the telephone company. To keep on giving you good service, and put in telephones for people who want them, we must have a lot more central office equipment and cable and other things. And to buy it, we have to get money from our stockholders. They expect a profit — just like your partner would."

CHARLEY: "I guess you're right. Nobody would invest his money here unless I could earn him a profit."

AL: "And here's something else, Charley. Those girls there at the far end of the fountain. They're telephone girls. They're spending a part of their wages with you — putting money into your till to help you make a profit. Thousands of dollars of telephone payroll money are spent right in this town, every week."

ADEQUATE RATES AND EARNINGS for the telephone company have a far-reaching effect. For only a strong and healthy telephone company can pay good wages, contribute to the prosperity of the community and provide an improving service for telephone users. Only through adequate rates and earnings can the telephone company —like Al's friend Charley in the drug store — attract the new capital that is needed to carry on the business.

It's the dollars from investors—from hundreds of thousands of everyday people—that build, improve and expand the best telephone service in the world for you to use at small cost.

BELL TELEPHONE SYSTEM

Headlines in

Evening Edition

For gala events. The hair is brushed up to the crown of the head. The back is swirled quite high, from left to right, secured with Hold-Bob bobby pins. The sides are brushed straight up, finishing in swirled curls.

Morning Edition

Typical American girl. The hair is parted equally from the crown forward into a high bang effect. The petal ends of the bangs are brushed up in a semi-swirl. The sides are brushed forward. The back is demi-shingled.

Photograph by John Lee • Hair styles by Michel • Decorative objects from

Your Mirror

Extra Edition

Inspired by the Renaissance. Part the hair in the middle with two deep waves on each side, allowing half the ear to show. The back of the hair is about two inches long and is brushed upward, not turned under.

Special Edition

The sleek cap effect. Part hair low on the right side. Place a wide wave slightly over the hairline and then brush upward. Both sides are fringed and close to the head. The back is shingled to a soft point effect.

the private collection of Madame Helena Rubinstein • Earrings by Trifari

LETTERS TO THE

ADDRESS: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, 444 Madison Avenue, New York 22, N.Y.

HOW DO THEY KNOW SO MUCH?

Your article on PROgressive versus CONventional education should settle the dust around the old "either or" arguments and help everyone understand that better schools strive for continuous improvement of the educational program by adopting improved teaching practices as these appear and are proved sound. Mr. Frank has cleared up much of the fuzzy thinking about the public schools.

J. HARRY ADAMS
Superintendent of Schools
Elizabeth, New Jersey

Having assumed the conclusion that they know so much, there is little to say except that the conclusion just is not so. Nor is a smattering of ignorance on a multitude of miscellaneous subjects the equivalent of a basic education . . . As one educator not of that school of thought put it at a meeting I attended recently, parents are "bootlegging" an education to their children.

MATTHEW J. SHEVLIN
Chairman, Americanism Committee
Queens County, N.Y., American Legion

WE'LL EAT O. K. IN 2000 A. D.

REDBOOK's preview of 2000 A.D. was stimulating, even if it ain't so! You tell that Aldous Huxley to quit being so pessimistic, to quit reading Julian Huxley and try on some Louis Bromfield. Tell him to cheer up. By 2000 A.D., the world's farmers will be able to feed three billion people and do it on meat and milk so folks can attain the utmost vigor of both mind and body.

SAMUEL R. GUARD
Editor, Breeder's Gazette
Louisville, Kentucky

THIS IS THE LIFE!

My wife and I had anticipated some mail after your wonderful January article about our family and the small country weekly newspaper we bought recently, but we were not prepared for anything like the avalanche that has rolled in. We are trying to acknowledge it, but are already three weeks behind. We had imagined some of the letters would say, "Drop Dead!" or sentiments to that effect, but without exception they have been kind and encouraging.

You might be interested to learn that January and February — always very slow months in the printing business — have been the most profitable months we have had since we bought our shop. Our job printing has soared. Thank you again!

PENN JONES, JR.
Midlothian, Texas

WARNING: MEN IN DANGER

I have never read REDBOOK before, but believe me I am going to read every single issue from now on, just to protect myself. Of all the subtle but diabolical plots I've ever seen, that March article ("American Husbands: The New Sleep-in Maids") is the worst. To the casual and uninitiated it is supposed to be a warning to men on what to avoid in their marriage. But beneath this flimsy device of pretending to be on the men's team, the authors (and note they are both women) have actually provided ammunition for other women: exact "how-to-do-it" instructions every woman has waited for since the beginning of time.

And there is no defense against any of these capsule formulas of yours. Believe me, I know their effectiveness.

ANONYMOUS BUT IRATE
Brooklyn, N. Y. C.

EDITOR

YOUTHTOWN, U. S. A.

We were in turn curious, then surprised, then dismayed when we read the article on Levittown, N. Y., in February . . . It is a tissue, a very thin tissue at that, of misinformation, quarter-truths, unsubtle innuendo, snide humor, and poor taste. ". . . and the men labored and the women labored and the neat backyards blossomed with thousands upon thousands of diapers." If this is humor, it is low and tasteless and vicious. There is a passage in the piece that mentions in one breath the demand for davenports, television sets, and baby carriages. Link that with the inane comment of one moronic housewife about Milton Berle saving her marriage and what do you have?

A. T. Thibadeau and Others
Levittown, New York

For myself, I found your piece on Levittown almost uncannily accurate, particularly in regard to the general financial status. In my own circle of friends, there is not one who will admit that he can face the mailman without trepidation . . . I have been married for almost six years, yet this is my family's first home. This is the rule rather than the exception. As far as social and economic competition is concerned, nowhere have I found it keener. And in some cases, the spirit of keeping up with the you-know-whos transcends common sense. I am sure Mr. Henderson intended no malice in his writing. I for one found nothing to impugn my character, my credit rating, or my standing as a husband and father.

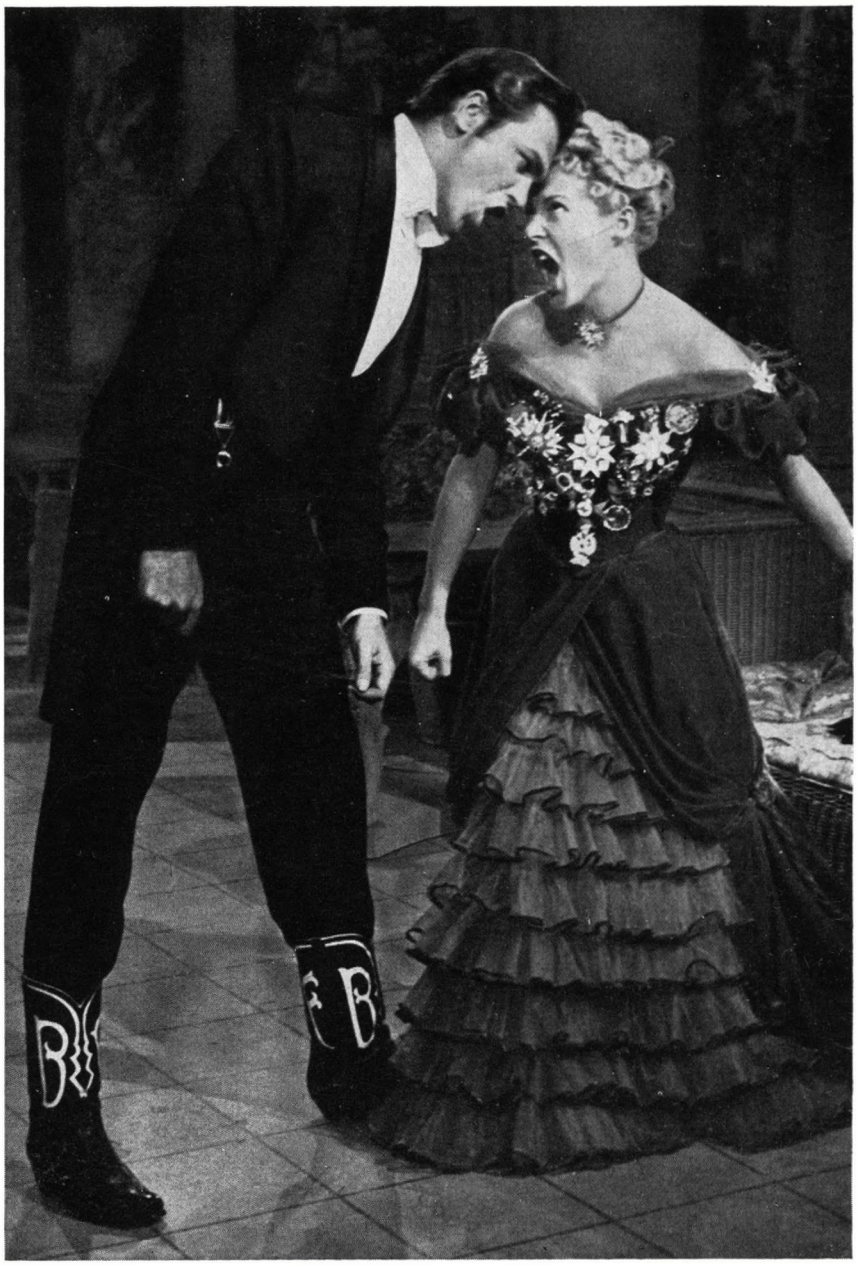
Al Fisher
Levittown, New York

COOKING PORK

We were concerned with a recent statement in Dr. Martin Gumpert's Redbook medical column that, as a precaution against trichinosis, "Bologna should be cooked until well done." Bologna is not a raw product. It is thoroughly cooked in manufacturing, and needs no further cooking in the home.

Norman Draper
American Meat Institute
Chicago, Illinois

"Annie Get Your



When **Frank Butler** *(Howard Keel) begins boasting,* **Annie Oakley** *(Betty Hutton) tries to go him one better, then realizes that's no way to get a man.*

REDBOOK'S PICTURE OF

Gun"

A REDBOOK SILVER CUP CANDIDATE

Here's one of the best entertainment buys in a long while. Several years ago people were using all angles and any kind of money to get tickets for the stage production of "Annie Get Your Gun." Now you can see the same show, produced on a bigger scale, at your local movie. It's one of the few times that a film version turns out to be as good if not better than the play, and "Annie Get Your Gun" was one of the stage's best musicals.

Betty Hutton gives her finest performance as *Annie Oakley,* the legendary feminine sharpshooter. She's a little girl out of the Ohio woods who can't even read. But now she can shoot! *Frank Butler* (Howard Keel) is the star of Buffalo Bill's show and tours the country offering to outshoot anyone. He does all right until he encounters *Annie.* She outshoots him, falls in love with him and then, as she so aptly sings, finds out "you can't get a man with a gun," especially when you persist in outshooting him. *Annie* and *Frank* go their separate ways as stars of rival shows, but hard times eventually bring about a merger of the productions, and all ends happily when *Annie* learns that losing a shooting match will win *Frank.*

With the tuneful Irving Berlin score including such hits as "Doin' What Comes Natur'lly," "The Girl that I Marry" and "They Say that Falling in Love," with exciting Technicolor Wild West show scenes that could never be produced on the stage, and with a capable cast, "Annie Get Your Gun" gives you more than your money's worth of entertainment. Get to the box-office early. There's sure to be a line for "Annie." (MGM)

For three other fine films

turn to page 12

THE MONTH

Three Other Fine Films

"NO SAD SONGS FOR ME"

This title should ring a bell with REDBOOK readers. Here is the film version of Ruth Southard's unforgettable novel, which first appeared in REDBOOK, of the devoted wife who learns she will soon die of cancer. *Mary Scott* (Margaret Sullavan) keeps the secret from her husband (Wendell Corey) as long as she can. She watches him become interested in *Chris* (Viveca Lindfors) and then because *Mary* realizes what changes her death will make in the lives of her husband and child, she brings *Chris* into her home to teach her how to take her place. It is not a morbid story but an inspiring one because, as *Mary* comes to believe, it is not how long you live but how you live that matters. *(Columbia)*

"CHAMPAGNE FOR CAESAR"

Anyone who has ever heard a radio quiz show will get a laugh out of "Champagne for Caesar" because it concerns the quiz show to end all quiz shows. When *Bottomley* (Ronald Colman) is refused a job by soap tycoon *Waters* (Vincent Price), he develops a brilliant plan of revenge. He appears on the quiz program sponsored by *Waters* and, being a living encyclopedia, wins hands down. He refuses the money, says he'll return next week for double or nothing.

Waters builds a big publicity campaign around *Bottomley's* stunt, then finds he's in danger of losing the business to *Bottomley*. His frantic attempts to outwit *Bottomley* are humorously aided by Celeste Holm and Vincent Price. *(United Artists)*

Best Bets in the Neighborhood

The Astonished Heart — Noel Coward wrote this screen play in which he plays the part of a psychiatrist who can't solve his own marital problems. Celia Johnson.

The Reformer and the Redhead — Dick Powell and June Allyson in an amusing comedy dealing with politics, redheads and some mighty smart animals.

Cinderella — A delightful version of the fairy tale with some mice which are almost as good as Snow White's dwarfs.

D. O. A. — Unusual mystery of a man who manages to solve his own murder. Edmond O'Brien. *April

Mother Didn't Tell Me — Dorothy McGuire finds out what the life of a doctor's wife is all about.

Mule Train—Gene Autry Western, involving the famous song hit.

Nancy Goes to Rio — Ann Sothern, Jane Powell and Barry Sullivan in a bright, gay musical of theatrical life. *April.

No Man of Her Own—Barbara Stanwyck and John Lund have to find out who murdered the man they intended to kill.

Our Very Own — Ann Blyth, Farley Granger, Joan Evans are the young triumvirate in a very human, realistic story with an exciting twist. *April.

Outside the Wall — What happens when a man who has spent his youth in prison suddenly finds himself released to the outer world. Richard Basehart.

"STAGE FRIGHT"

***Eve* (Jane Wyman) has stage** aspirations but she becomes an actress rather unexpectedly. A friend of hers, *Jonathan Cooper* (Richard Todd) is suspected of murder. *Eve* helps him hide and then attempts to solve the murder. She assumes the rôle of maid to *Charlotte Inwood* (Marlene Dietrich) who *Eve* suspects is guilty of the crime. She not only succeeds in solving the mystery but also falls in love with a most attractive detective (Michael Wilding) who is assigned to the case.

Alfred Hitchcock has injected some of his unusual touches into the film, as well as the usual quick shot of himself. And Miss Dietrich, as appealing as ever, sings some very sexy songs. *(Warners)*

Riding High—A top comedy cast of Bing Crosby, William Demarest, Raymond Walburn and Percy Kilbride, plus one of the movie's most exciting horse races, make this a winner in the entertainment field. *April

The Sleeping City—Richard Conte as a detective turned interne in order to solve a narcotics mystery in Bellevue Hospital.

Three Came Home—Claudette Colbert in the film version of Agnes Keith's biography of life in a Japanese prison camp. *March.

Twelve O'Clock High—Graphic, exciting story of the attempt to prove the possibility of daylight precision bombing. Gregory Peck, Hugh Marlowe. *March.

Previously reviewed in REDBOOK

New Baby in the Family

The arrival of a baby in the family creates fresh problems. The newcomer's presence demands changes not only in the physical aspects of the house but in the habits of the family. Routine practices are broken as new schedules are set and as room is made for the needs of the baby. All this requires something like rebirth for the members of the family.

If there is a child already set in the family pattern, he must be prepared for the situation he will find himself in as the new baby makes demands on the attention and devotion of his mother, once wholly his. A little child finds this hard to take. He does not understand that love is boundless and that his mother, his father, have enough of it to spread over him and the rest of the children with some to spare.

His mind must be conditioned to accept the baby as someone to love and care for, as one bringing the gifts of affection, loyalty and close companionship. He can be taught to think of himself as bigger and stronger than the little one and to feel he is helping his mother when he helps the baby. This requires a bit of doing; but with sympathy, understanding and affection, it can be done and its accomplishment will prevent a world of grief.

The arrival of each new child complicates family life. How can a father and mother, responsible as they are for the care of children, do their duty by them and still live their own lives in wholesome fashion? How can they do their duty by the children and also to themselves? They have a duty to each other as friends and lovers, a duty to their society, members of their community, a duty to their children to grow along with them in the life of their day. How can they fulfill such demands?

Somebody must substitute for the parents occasionally for a time sufficient to allow them to drop their cares and entrust their responsibilities while they enjoy a share of the fun, the culture, the progress of their day. Children must not eat up the lives of their parents. Living wholesomely, enjoying varied experiences, expanding their personalities, parents exert a finer, surer, more intelligent influence upon their children than they could possibly do if they closed their door against life and devoted the next twenty years to rearing those children.

While we gladly make room for each baby we must save a space of his parents' living—lest he suffer in their deprivation.

BY ANGELO PATRI
ILLUSTRATED BY HERBERT SASLOW

BOOKS

—HARRY HANSEN

A swiftly-paced story of love and battle, loyalty and sacrifice in a patriotic cause, is "Don Gaucho," by Alyce Pollock and Ruth Goode. When the land of the pampas was the football of Spanish-British rivalry 140 years ago, *Don Miguel*, son of patrician families, chose the life of the Gauchos to win freedom such as "Jorge Washington" had bestowed on the republic in the North. These characters and their environment are new to the American reader; their fighting ways are different; their lives are filled with danger; their devotion to patriotism and their loyalty to their friends are refreshing traits in a novel in which the human side bulks larger than the history. *(Whittlesey House, $3)*

Ruth McKenney is an irresistible laugh-provoker. Was her married life of twelve years stormy and blundering? She recalls it so cheerfully that you have to laugh with her. Anything but money-minded, she found a fortune in her lap because she had written a Greenwich Village saga in "My Sister Eileen." But when she remembers her lost sister, she writes sadly and tenderly. She reminds me of a saying of Hugh Walpole's: "It's not life that matters, it's the courage you bring to it." All this will be found in her very personal "Love Story." *(Harcourt, Brace, $3)*

Those who had the good luck to see that remarkable motion picture, "The Last Chance," will understand when I say that "The Embarkation," by Murray Gitlin, should make as good a picture. This tale, packed with thrills and suspense, concerns the doings, in the half-light of dusk and darkness, of *Martin Tester*, who decides that he ought to help some persecuted DP's, hounded displaced persons, get out of Italy. There's a blot on *Martin's* record, and this is the tale of how he redeems himself. Blackmailed by Allied Intelligence men, pursued by Italian *carabinieri*, he carries through his plans and makes good. *(Crown Publishers, $2.75)*

RECORDS

BY GEORGE FRAZIER

KAY STARR

This is a month in which the distaff side — all the way from the barrelhouse **Kay Starr** to the somewhat less frisky **Wanda Landowska** — covers itself with immense distinction. There is, for example. Miss Starr's superb interpretation of "Stormy Weather" *(Capitol F811)* which proves beyond any quibbling that here is indeed the most exciting female vocalist to have come along in several years.

Then, of course, there is Miss Landowska, who has been around for years and years and is still one of the foremost musicians, male or female, of all time. RCA Victor could not have chosen a more propitious way of introducing its long-playing (33⅓ r.p.m.) records than by having Miss Landowska run through Bach's "The Well-Tempered Clavier" *(LM 6100.)* It is a formidable performance.

Somewhere between the heights achieved this month by the Misses Starr and Landowska there are other performances by women which merit your respectful attention. Among them are **Peggy Lee's** "Sugar" *(Capitol F810)*, **Margaret Whiting's** "You're an Old Smoothie" *(Capitol F809)* and **Doris Day's** coupling of "Imagination" and "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered" *(Columbia 1-480)*. These are all remarkable performances, but what endows them with special interest is that the material is, in each instance, nostalgic.

The male element is represented this month, as it has been for several months now, by **Jimmy Dorsey,** whose small Dixieland unit is one of the most acceptable break-the-lease groups to have reached a bandstand or a recording studio in quite a while. Dorsey's contribution to the current lists is "That's a Plenty" *(Columbia 1-499)* which is backed by something called "Rag Mop." No one who professes the slightest liking for worth-while hot jazz can afford to ignore this Dorsey group. For one thing, it offers, in the person of **Charlie Teagarden,** one of the most soulful trumpeters around at the moment.

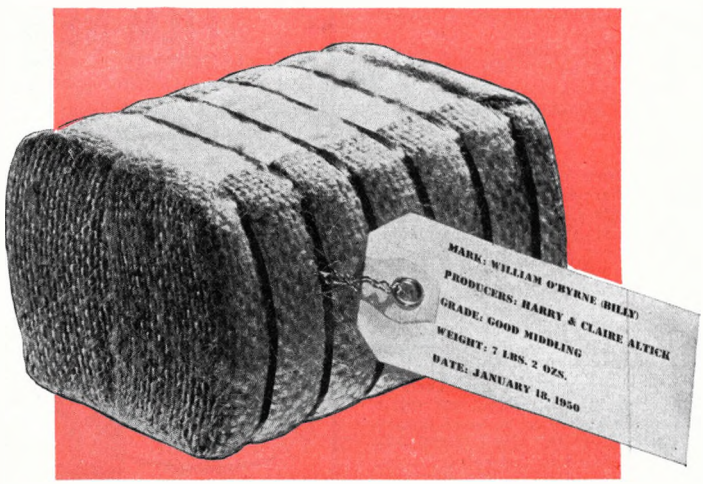
In the children's field, Capitol continues to turn out the best stuff on any label. This month's entry is "Hopalong Cassidy and the Singing Bandit" *(CBXF)* which is presented in the form of a Capitol "Reader" — *i.e.*, the records can be followed in a book which contains both pictures and text.

By way of predictions, the most promising of the material which should be available by the time this piece reaches print is a Columbia LP which constitutes a reissue of some **Mildred Bailey** masterpieces. We think you should be on the watch for it.

WE ARE PROUD TO ANNOUNCE

When our baby boy was born, my husband was so thrilled that he decided to announce the baby's arrival in a new way. Since Harry is a cotton broker, this little bale of raw cotton, tagged with all the particulars about Billy, seemed appropriate. Friends agreed that our announcement was different, and many have kept it as a souvenir.

— Mrs. Harry R. Altick
Memphis, Tenn.



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HARRY M. POPKIN presents
RONALD COLMAN in "Champagne for Caesar" co-starring **CELESTE HOLM**
with **VINCENT PRICE** · ART LINKLETTER and **BARBARA BRITTON** · Produced by **GEORGE MOSKOV**

Directed by **RICHARD B. WHORF** · Story and Screen Play by HANS JACOBY and FRED BRADY · Music Written and Directed by DIMITRI TIOMKIN · A Harry M. Popkin Production · Released thru United Artists

Are You A Good Shopper?

Kathi Norris, shopping expert, discusses the proper fit of shoes with Don Seligman (*above*), department-store buyer. In the studio, Kathi and her husband, Wilbur Stark (*at right*), demonstrate new food containers during a telecast of their show, "Your Television Shopper."

Do you know a good buy when you see it? Kathi Norris does and she's built a highly successful career out of telling people about what to buy. Her show, "Your Television Shopper", over WNBT in New York, has a waiting list of sponsors and an eager, buying audience.

Kathi, a pert, pretty young housewife and mother, talks about the merchandise in an easy-going conversational fashion and doesn't hesitate to point out the bad points as well as the advantages of the product. Here are some things she's found out about shopping.

Before you buy shoes, let the salesman see the soles of those you have on. A good salesman can tell by the wear on them how well they fit you. In buying men's shirts, remember a curved yoke across the back gives the best fit. And a deep, long sleeve placket makes ironing the cuff easier.

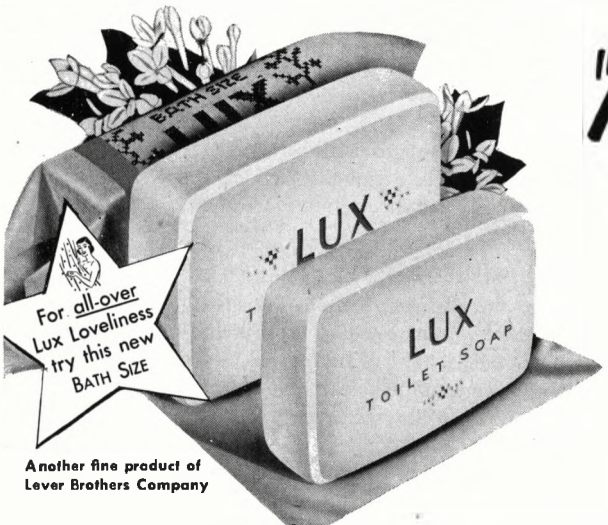
Nylon articles should be sewn and trimmed with nylon; other materials may pucker when washed. And Kathi strongly urges buying crease-resistant fabrics which retain their well-groomed look.

Kathi says most women are good shoppers; they are price conscious, but they should read the labels on merchandise and ask the salesman or buyer about anything they don't understand.

—Florence Somers

"You're beautiful Coleen!"

COLEEN GRAY as she plays opposite BING CROSBY in Paramount Pictures' "RIDING HIGH"



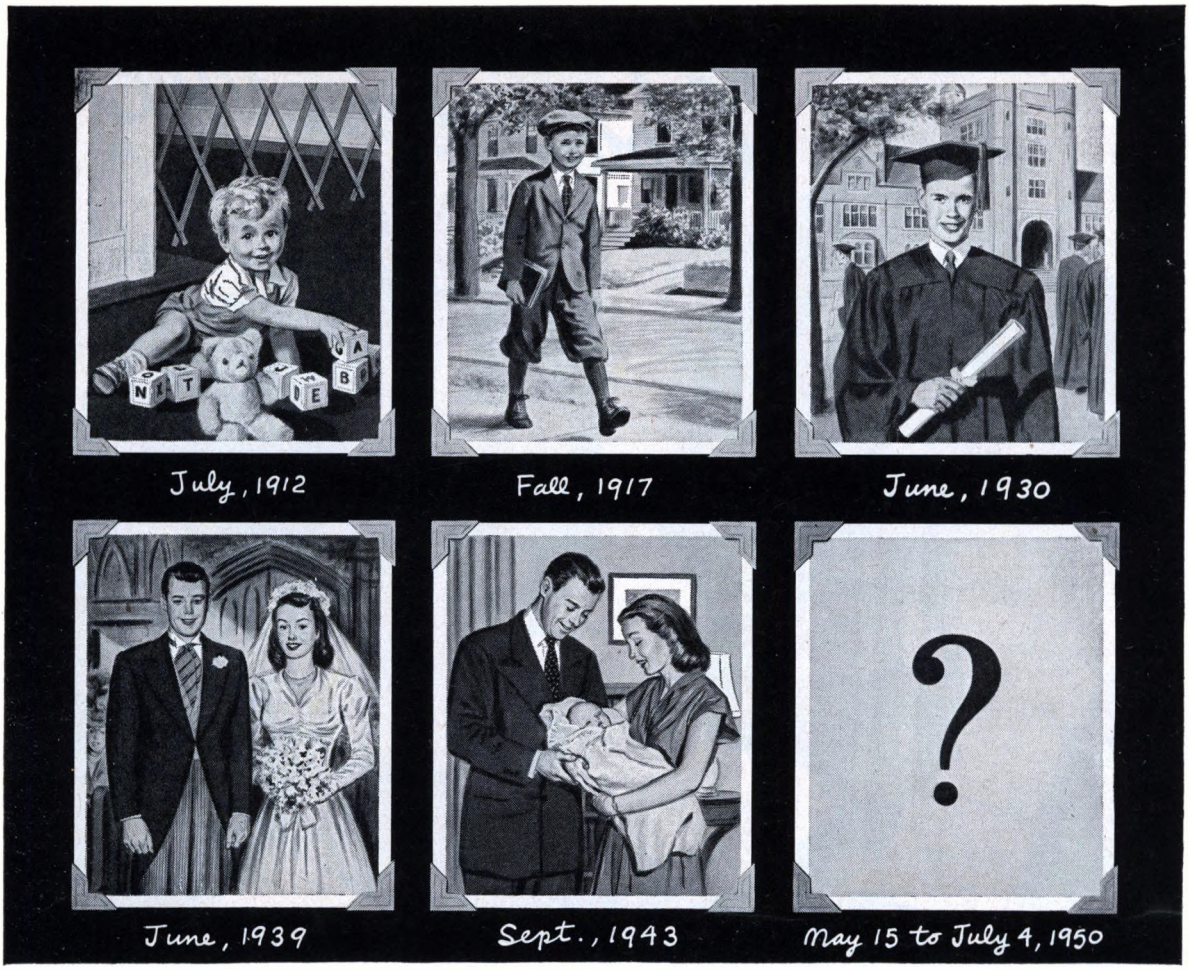
Another fine product of Lever Brothers Company

"I'm a Lux Girl" says COLEEN GRAY

"Lux Soap facials really make my skin softer, smoother," says Coleen Gray. Yes, actually 3 out of 4 complexions improved in a short time in recent tests by skin specialists.

See what this gentle care can do to make *your* skin lovelier. Work the creamy lather in well, rinse, pat with a towel to dry. You'll agree with Coleen Gray, who says: "Skin takes on new beauty so *quickly!*" Try the generous *bath size* Lux Toilet Soap, too—so fragrant, so luxurious!

9 out of 10 Screen Stars use Lux Toilet Soap



The next few weeks may be the most important in your life

Between May 15th and July 4th, you can make a move that may change your life regardless of your age. During these seven weeks of the U. S. Treasury's Independence Drive, you can lay the groundwork for your financial independence.

The next decade will be one of the greatest America has ever seen. The opportunity of a lifetime will come to millions of Americans—it can come to you.

The opportunity to start your own business. To pull up stakes and move to a section where business is booming. Even to take a job that pays less at the start—but has a tremendous future.

Don't let your opportunity pass because you were financially unable to grab it!

If you are *not* now buying U. S. Savings Bonds automatically, this is the time to begin. If you *are*, sign up for *extra* bonds. Sign up and buy up all you can—that golden opportunity in the 50's may be the "one in a lifetime" for you, be ready for it!

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

Here They Come

To his complete astonishment, not unmixed with traces of worried delight, Uncle Sam has just found himself with the greatest batch of nephews and nieces ever presented by our always exuberant birth rate. They are trooping in by the millions. This year will see another bumper crop of more than 3,500,000 babies, nearly a third more than were born in 1945, and only a few less than were born in the record-breaking year of 1947 when 3,699,940 little strangers appeared.

They are welcome, these blessed little tykes, and every single one of them was accorded a reception fit for a king by parents, diaper salesmen, crib-makers, baby-food canners, and the hundreds of others who cater to the whims of junior royalty in toys, paint books and Hopalong Cassidy shirts.

The enthusiasm of young married couples in keeping up baby production is matched all the way down the line by the enthusiasm of manufacturers in maintaining production on those things that will keep the babies fed, clothed, housed and amused. But while Uncle Sam has demonstrated his avuncular pride with a generous hand in these departments, he has been only dimly aware, like most bachelor uncles, of the fact that these nephews and nieces grow up.

The babies of 1945, only 2,734,000 of them, are the kindergarten pupils of today. And the schools are crowded. Yet in 1953 the schools will be swamped with a tidal wave of pupils exceeding by 900,000 the greatest number ever to enroll in our history. The next year will see another 900,000 excess, and the next, and the next, and there is no end in sight. At this moment there are some 19,000,000 children of pre-school age.

It is time to wake up. These nineteen million little guys and gals represent the biggest investment America has ever made, and we'd better take care of it. And soon, too, because here they come.

How could he protect her, a child torn between two loyalties? Bill knew—in that miracle moment when Frannie stepped from innocence into understanding

"Thank You, Daddy"

BY HAL AND BARBARA BORLAND

ILLUSTRATED BY AL BUELL

Frannie stood on tiptoe to ring the bell, then turned to wave as the car drove off. Funny that Mommy never waited long enough to see Daddy. You'd think they'd say "Hello" or "How are you?" or something. And the same thing happened when Daddy took her home. The quick hug, the whispered, "Good-by, Toots! I love you. See you next month!" all in a rush and with his eyes queer and stary, and his foot on the gas as if he couldn't get away fast enough. The wait to see that Frannie was at the apartment-house door, that the door was about to open. Then, whish! off would go the car.

Divorce was funny, she thought for the millionth time, and shifted her weight to the other foot and began to hum tunelessly.

Caroline opened the door. Her smile was fresh and sunny, and her dress was pink. "Hi!" she said, and her voice had a singing sound.

"Hi," Frannie answered and creased her face into her company smile. She was glad that Caroline wasn't going to try to kiss her this time, either. Each time she came, the small doubt plagued her—this time Caroline might try to kiss her. But it was "Hi!" as usual.

In the entry hall Caroline took her things—her blue coat and the straw hat with streamers. This was routine, too.

"A lovely sunny day," Caroline said brightly. Frannie nodded. They always had to say something about the weather. A rainy day, a snowy day, a sunny day. As if it mattered!

"Your daddy's waiting for you," Caroline went on. "And I think there's a surprise

for you." Her voice urged anticipation and delight.

Frannie regarded her stolidly. "I know. The goldfish."

Then she saw Caroline's face go sad. It looked more like Mommy's, except that Mommy's was gray with lines, and cross. Caroline never looked cross. Sad, sometimes, but never cross. That was because Caroline and Daddy had "Happiness." Mommy said. Frannie felt her legs stiffen, and she turned toward the living-room.

"I'll go find my daddy now," she said slowly, and turned away from Caroline. Away from that pink dress, away from that yellow hair, away from the kind of pleading in Caroline's face. What did Caroline matter!

"Have a nice visit." Caroline turned toward the stairs, and her voice was light again. "I'll just run along upstairs and go on with some things I was doing."

This, too, was routine. To give Daddy and Frannie some time with no Caroline around. Frannie nodded. Oh, they all made so much fuss with words.

"Daddy! Daddy!" she called and skipped into the big living-room that opened out onto the terrace.

Caroline half turned from the second step of the stairs. The child's voice had a ring almost of gladness in it. Gladness? She sighed and went on upstairs. No, she thought, it wasn't gladness. Not in Frannie. She took everything for granted—even the goldfish. And before the goldfish the turtle, and the canary, and the guppies, and the hamster. The living-room was beginning to look like a zoo. If only Bill drew the line at elephants or giraffes!

She hung up Frannie's coat in the guest-room closet, laid the little straw hat on the bed, smoothing the long streamers into place. The room, with its maple furniture and yellow-flowered chintz and pale green walls—"Like a daffodil," Bill had said when she finished it. "Frannie will love it. We'll call it her room."

Caroline sighed as she looked around. Laura had refused to let Frannie stay overnight. Not once had Frannie been able to snuggle into the deep bed, or wake to see the framed kitten pictures on the walls, or the sun stream in the casement window, or cuddle into the deep window seat with books and puzzles handy on the table. Frannie had taken one look the time Bill showed her through the house. "What a funny way to build a couch," she had announced in a disinterested voice. "We don't have couches made into the wall." No, she wouldn't take any of the books home. Mommy had said she wasn't to bring anything home, thank you. And puzzles were too young, thank you.

She was so damnably polite! In a superior, unchildlike way. And quoting Laura always as the clinching argument: Mommy says this, Mommy says that. And Bill's eyes would go to Caroline's, over Frannie's small head, and in his eyes would be baffllement.

Caroline stood in the guest-room now—Frannie's room—and put her hand to her mouth at the remembrance of Bill's eyes. Begging her, Caroline, to help. As if it was something Caroline, out of the fullness of their love, could change.

If only I could, she thought. But every time they tried to talk it out they came up against the same wall. "Laura has full custody." Bill would say. "I can't do a thing, Caroline, except see her once a month, whenever Laura feels like letting her visit."

Caroline went into the sewing-room. The machine was set up with a pillowcase ready for hemming. She tried to concentrate on the edge, but the line was jagged. She got up and walked into the upstairs study. Letters were on her desk, waiting to be answered. "Dear Sis:" she thought. "Bill and I are idyllically happy. Almost a year, and life is a song. . . . Dear Sis: Bill's brat is here, by his brat of a first wife, and both of them are being more brattish than usual." She shook her head. This was no way to think. This was no peace, no love, no charity.

She picked up the tan sleeveless sweater she was knitting for Bill. But her tension on the yarn was uneven. She put it down, picked up a book. The words jiggled on the page. What were Bill and Frannie like when they were alone? Was there any communication, or ease, or delight between them? Or was Frannie stiff and polite, Bill baffled and overeager?

It had been going on for six months. Before they were married, Bill had asked his firm to transfer him to the office in another city. "We'll start all fresh, both of us," he had said. They had bought the house, furnished it, laughed and delighted over it and over their love and their life. For almost six months. Then Laura had moved here, "so Frannie can be near her father." And the house had become a shell with a worm at its core. A shell in which to entertain and amuse a nine-year-old for two hours once a month, at the convenience of another woman. A woman who was supposed to be gone and finished and out of their life.

Divorce was the right to cleavage and the start of a new life. But not for Bill. Any minute, as soon as he got home from work, the phone might ring. Laura. "Oh, Bill, Frannie has a little sniffle. Better make it next Sunday instead." Or if Caroline answered the phone. "Please give a message to Mr. Brett. Tell him it's not convenient for Frannie to come this week. I'll let him know when."

It wasn't Frannie's two hours a month; it was never having a Sunday of their own, or an evening of their own. It was never knowing when the intrusion would come. It was never owning anything entire, always having *(Continued on page 83)*

When you go broke, you help keep our national economy strong. Here are some astonishing facts you should know about debt

They Want to Lend You Money

Along about the time when a second little bundle of joy is expected at your house, that's when you're most apt to begin to feel the financial pinch. The chances are five to one, the experts tell us, that your income, over and above living expenses and taxes, will be pledged for many months to come. That's because there are necessities, conveniences and comforts that all young couples want—a car, radio, television, an electric washing machine or a fur coat. And you are usually well along toward owning them, via monthly payments, by the time Baby Number Two is on the way. The merchants who have invited you to use their Easy-Payment Plans are betting on your job and your future. You believe in yourself, they believe in you.

So your dream home is becoming more than a dream while you pay as you earn. It is a wonderful system as long as the months roll along smoothly and everything goes exactly as you have planned. But any young head of a family knows that you can't foresee serious illness, major auto repairs or a sudden, unexpected move. For these, or any number of other reasons, you may need money. Your income is already allotted. You hold no stocks or bonds or clear *(Continued on page 80)*

BY WILLIAM S. DUTTON
ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL R. HOFFMASTER

Man Bait

When a girl has her mind on love, a fish on the dock is worth two in the sea

It was George Sinclair, really, who began it all—George Sinclair. A.B., M.A., Ph.D., Fellow of this and that Archeological Society. Director of the Encrido Beach Museum. "It's a wonderful place she has," he told Martin, "and you can do whatever you want, get a good rest. The old girl won't bother you. You'll only see her at meals. It's just that she likes having a celebrity in the house."

"I'm no celebrity," Martin said.

"You've written some books, haven't you? And been a lot of places?"

"Well—"

"To Mrs. Mallory," George said, "that makes you a celebrity, first class, with palm."

"Now look—" Martin began.

"As a favor to me. Such a small thing, really. And it means a lot."

"Well," Martin said again.

"That's my boy," said George.

And so Martin came to Encrido Beach.

The Mallory house was large and sprawling and outrageously comfortable. It faced the water of the bay, the yacht anchorage, the harbor channel, up and down which the small fishing craft plodded relentlessly. And Martin, on that first morning, walked out into the bright warm sunlight and across the small beach and out the length of Mrs. Mallory's pier to the float. And on the float he met the girl, about whom George might have warned him, but had not.

She was stretched out there in the sun. She wore a swimming suit, approximately what the law would condone, and her head was bare, and her hair, short and bright, was rumpled. She opened her eyes and looked at Martin. Turquoise eyes; they studied him gravely. "Hi," she said. "Pull up a piece of float."

Martin sat down cross-legged. "Thank you."

"And now if you have a cigarette— I didn't bring any."

(Continued on page 94)

BY RICHARD STERN

ILLUSTRATED BY ARTHUR SARNOFF

Youth at the

Young men always say, "Let me run this State and I'll—" Here is what happens when youth does get its big chance to take over

BY ED CUNNINGHAM
PHOTOS BY JOHN BLUNDELL

A lot of States have said, "Thank God for Arkansas." That pious gratitude was heartfelt. Arkansas was the State that made other States look good by comparison. It had roads so terrible that mules preferred to go by swamp. It had a form of education that feared a little knowledge as a dangerous thing, and its per-capita income of $710, second lowest in the nation, was a source of gratification to politicians because so few could pay the poll tax. It harbored more big-time gangsters than New York and Chicago combined—often because New York and Chicago gangsters combined there—and much of its land was so poor that a good farmer "couldn't even raise a fuss."

Then, quite lately, a young man said, "Let us change all this."

This is the story of how he made out.

The youth is Sid McMath—Governor Sidney McMath he is called now by strangers, and he won that governor's title in one of the roughest political battles since

There's a happy, young family in the Arkansas Governor's mansion. His wife Ann is a Mississippi girl. Sidney, Jr., is eight; Phillip is four; and James was five months old when this picture was snapped in the McMath living-room recently.

Helm

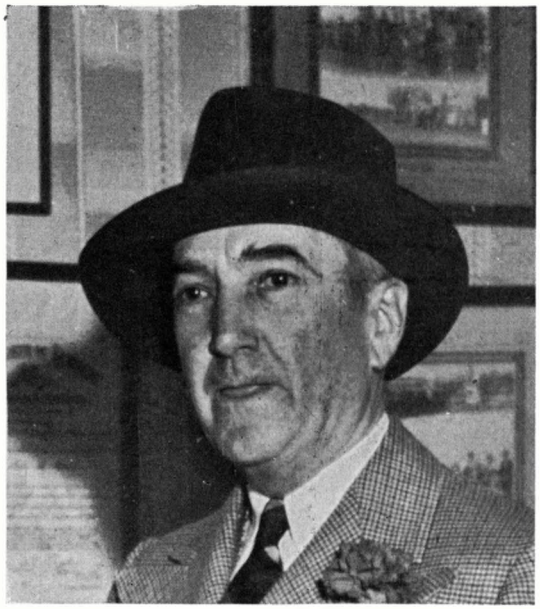
the jayhawker wars in Kansas. He did not win it with armchair strategy, nor has he sat much in the armchair of his new $150,000 Governor's Mansion since he moved in on January 12, 1949.

In the fourteen months since his inauguration, McMath put through a $28,000,000 highway-bond election. shoved through a $4.000.000 yearly increase in local school support, scared the gangster and gambler element into complete docility, just about doubled the number of voters. and is now in a slam-bang battle against the poll tax. Industry, attracted by an energetic State Resources Commission, is moving into this suddenly enlightened country in multimillion-dollar lots and agriculture is surging out of the doldrums under the guidance of a strong State program. The song of the turtle is heard in the land.

McMath began fighting while in high school, and he began campaigning for the gubernatorial election while in college. Down in Hot Springs they remember Barber Hal McMath's only boy Sid as the featherweight who used to belt the hell out of his opponents in the Saturday-night bouts at the old Princess Theater. Sid got five dollars a fight, and a welcome addition it was to the income he picked up selling papers and shining shoes.

Sid likewise belted his way through law school at Arkansas University, hitch-

"You're on your way now!" good friend David Whittington predicted that day in 1947 when youthful Sidney McMath forced the politicians of Hot Springs to admit that he had beaten them.



Quick to recognize the rising political star of young Marine Corps veteran Sid McMath was natty Leo Patrick McLaughlin, long-time political boss of Hot Springs. He declined to battle McMath.

Sid McMath is a young man with a special magic in his President Truman, no amateur politician himself, keeps

hiking to Fort Smith to bat out $25 and $50 purses as a welterweight. The purses helped augment his regular earnings as waiter and dishwasher, and there was never a patron or cook who didn't get the glad hand from the young candidate. One story has it that in his sophomore year, when he was twenty, he took a summer military training course at Camp Robinson, along with other R.O.T.C. students. The last day of camp found Sid at the main gate, vigorously shaking hands with all the departing students. When asked why, Sid is supposed to have replied, "Some day I'll be running for governor. The support of these boys will come in handy."

He did have the politician's handshake early in life, just as now he shakes hands with all he can reach. In high school he was class president for four years, and in college he was president of the freshman and sophomore classes. In his junior year he was elected president of the whole student body, thus eliminating the need of running for a class election. It has been that way ever since. To date he has never lost an election, but now he knows he is moving into rough territory where people can get kicked right in the teeth.

Sid is not afraid of that, either. As a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps he reported for active duty in August, 1940. His wife, a childhood sweetheart whom he had married in 1937, went with him to Quantico, Virginia, where, two years later, shortly after the birth of their first child, she died. Her grief-stricken husband, who still wears the Masonic ring she gave him in college, immediately requested overseas duty.

He got it with the Third Marine Regiment, on Guadalcanal and Bougainville. As operations officer for the Bougainville invasion, he received a battlefield promotion to lieutenant colonel and the Silver Star for bravery. Writing about him in his book "A Ribbon and a Star," author and playwright John Monks said, "Major McMath was the kind of operations officer a regimental commander dreamed about: thoroughly trained, mentally and physically dynamic, humorous, courageous, dogged. . . . When Sid McMath planned an operation, he planned it for himself as well as the men. He was always up there with them when they carried it out."

Teamwork he learned while fighting in the Pacific is Sid McMath's first principle in running Arkansas' government. The Governor earns $10,000 per year, is one of three U. S. Governors under forty years of age.

political personality. Even a friendly eye on Arkansas

McMath was invalided back to the States in 1945 with malaria and filariasis, and assigned to Marine headquarters. There he had time to discover what he had been fighting for—and to decide that Arkansas did not have enough of it. He also had time to meet and marry Ann Phillips, a Mississippi society girl who was then serving as secretary to ex-Congressman Roger Slaughter of Missouri. They now have two sons—Phillip. four. and James, now seven months old. His boy by his first marriage, Sid. Jr., is now eight years of age.

As 1946 rolled around, Sid grabbed his discharge, stuck out his chin, and moved in to liberate Hot Springs as he had moved in as operations officer on Bougainville. Only this time the operation was apt to be a little messier.

A $30,000,000 gambling syndicate provided the finances for the local political machine that controlled Hot Springs and Garland County. The city was known nationally as "the city without a lid."

Bookies ran joints as wide open as grocery stores. The plushy casinos *(Continued on page 78)*


A Sentimental Man

Portrait of a man—suavely ruthless—to whom life was a play. Artfully, with malice masked, he called the cues that could wreck a marriage

Some people thought of Randolph Blunt as a sentimental man. Somewhat capricious, they would concede, and used to having his own way, but at heart a man of warmth and good will. Often when a Blunt production was a hit in a Blunt theater, or when Blunt was casting, they would say, "Yes, Randy can be difficult, but he's a great guy, and underneath he's a softie. Remember what he did for Jack and Ellen Alderby?"

When a man had attained the unquestioned power in the theater that was Randolph Blunt's, it was natural, even imperative, to search for gentle virtues, and if not finding them apparent, to invent them. It was a way of submitting to the power that Blunt represented without an acknowledged loss of free will. Yet the case of Jack and Ellen Alderby, it was generally agreed, disclosed a quality of genuine sentiment in the man.

Jack and Ellen met at rehearsals of a Blunt production, and from the moment he saw her Jack gave little thought to what sort of vehicle the play was. It was the vehicle of their courtship, and that was all that mattered. Ellen was a solid, full-breasted blonde who reminded Jack at first glance of the girl pictured years before on a breakfast cereal box and described as cornfed, like a prize heifer, but after his first impression of robust health Jack felt that this was how all blondes should be, and every other blonde he had ever known seemed artificial and somehow anemic.

The first afternoon, he had coffee with Randolph Blunt and Ellen during a break, and he learned it was her first Broadway part, but that she had toured in the road company of a Blunt show that had run a year on Broadway, which explained why it was already "Randy" and "Darling"

BY EDWIN LANHAM

ILLUSTRATED BY PRUETT CARTER

Jack was not the only husband of an actress, but he wondered if they felt as he did when they watched their wives play a sultry scene.

with them. During that first afternoon Jack asked Ellen to dinner, but she put him off. She was working on her part, she said. She was a slow study and she had to give every moment to it.

A few days later he asked her again and was once more refused. She was apologetic, and gave him a smile that seemed warm and encouraging, but left him feeling balked, so that he said to himself he'd be damned if he'd ask her again. It did not help the next day when she blew her lines at rehearsal and he overheard her say, "Oh, well, I've got a good excuse. I had dinner with the boss last night and he kept me up late."

That settled it, Jack thought. He knew the brush-off when he saw it. He'd pull his neck in, now while there was still time. During a break he went out the stage door and stood in the alley, smoking a cigarette. She found him there, asked for a light, and told him frankly, "When a producer asks a girl out to dinner, girl goes out to dinner. Hungry or not. Willing or not." She gave him an appealing smile. "So don't sulk."

"Tonight," Jack said, "be hungry." His lips tightened and his fingers closed hard on her wrist. "Tonight you're going to dinner with me."

"All right," she said, and blew smoke in his face. "Tonight I'm going to dinner with you. Now you smile and be nice."

He took her suddenly in his arms, and his kiss was fiercely possessive. After a moment she pushed against his chest, stepped back, and looked at him. Her face was pale and the smear of her lipstick was scarlet. In that still moment he could hear her quick breathing; then she turned and went back into the theater.

At dinner that night her color was high and she talked nervously and almost steadily, but all her talk was a thin line of defense, without reinforcements, against the time when they would be alone together, because she knew, and he knew, that she was his. The moment their taxicab had moved away from the curb, she was in his arms and he was telling her that he loved her and she was whispering, "Yes, Jack. Oh, yes, I love you, too."

He bought a ring, but she did not wear it at the theater, explaining that Randolph Blunt could be pretty difficult and that he might not like the idea of a romance interfering with rehearsals. But when the news finally leaked out, what Blunt said was, "Did you kids think it was a secret?" He shook Jack's hand and kissed Ellen's forehead, and insisted that he would give away the bride at the wedding, but they were married quietly in New York the afternoon of the day the play opened, when Blunt was at the theater supervising the hanging of the set.

The play ran only three performances, but Jack had no regrets, because they were left free for their honeymoon. But they began their married life unemployed, and after the first week they began to make the rounds. They both had the actor's faith that something would turn up, but they were in no hurry, and by hoarding their joint resources they made the honeymoon last a full month. Then Jack found work in radio to tide them over, and the week his voice was first heard in soap opera a call came from Randolph Blunt.

Ellen was waiting for Jack in their hotel room to tell him the news. She cried, "I've got a part!" and hugged him and said, "Jack, Randy Blunt is putting on a new play, starring Peter Casslin. He has a part for me."

Jack said, "Wonderful."

"But just me," she said, and stepped back to see how he was taking it. "It's a shame we can't work as a team, Jack, but a bigger and better part will come along for you. I know it won't be long."

"Sure," he said. "Is it a good part?"

"Honey, it's fat as a goose. Isn't it wonderful of Randy? It's because he's a sweet guy deep down. It's because we were married the day that play opened and he's a little sentimental about it. He'd have taken you on if there had been a part for you. He said so."

Ellen, Jack thought, did not even have the actor's ego. She always thought the best of everyone, and any attention given her she regarded as an act of kindness, a favor of the heart. Now she said, "He's taking me to dinner tonight, darling, with Peter Casslin. Okay?"

Jack grinned. "Watch out for that guy Casslin."

She shrugged and said, "Oh, I don't think he's as bad as his reputation. He's like a big, friendly puppy, really."

Jack was surprised. "You know Casslin?"

"Heavens, Jack, I was on the road with him for weeks. Don't you remember? Didn't I tell you that?"

He asked, not quite evenly, "He make a pass at you?"

"He makes a pass at everybody," Ellen said. "You've got to expect that from Peter Casslin. But really, he's harmless."

Jack did not ask the further questions that were in his mind. He walked to the window and looked down at the winter street. He felt a stab of jealousy; he could not help it. He was a possessive man, and he paid the penalty in jealousy, but he recognized it for the futility it was. He turned from the window with a wry grin and said, "Get a good dinner out of him. God knows we haven't been eating too well."

Ellen returned late that night, found Jack wait-

ing at the hotel bar, and talked with enthusiasm about the play and how good her part was and how wonderful it was of Randy Blunt to have remembered her. Jack, with a radio script in his pocket, felt left out of it, but he tried not to let it show. He tried to invoke an enthusiasm to match Ellen's, but all the time the soap-opera script was a clumsy bulk in his pocket.

Rehearsals began the next Monday, and Ellen went to work at once learning her part. As he read her cues to her, Jack secretly questioned the casting. Her part was that of a dissatisfied blonde pretty desperately making her play for the male lead, and there was a scene in a hotel room that might cause trouble in Boston.

Jack thought of Ellen as too robust for the part, too much the cornfed girl in minks, and he paused to wonder if other men had the same impression. He looked at her with new eyes. Yes, he thought, make-up could do the trick—make-up and a low-cut gown. Probably where he saw a healthy, appealing woman, he thought, other men observed a provocative wench.

Ellen said, "What are you staring at?"

"At a wench," he said. "A blonde wench."

"Oh, no, not a wench," she said. "Just a slinky, expensive blonde—a siren. That's what I am."

"For the run of the play, I hope," he said.

She grinned at him. "What's the matter with you? Don't you want an expensive blonde around the house?"

"The girl really means it," Jack said. "Slinky, I don't like to blast your illusions, but do you know how you first impressed me? As a physical-culture girl. A buxom, cornfed physical-culture girl."

Ellen made a face and said, "Even a blonde wench is better than that. Well, let's have my next cue."

Randolph Blunt drove his cast hard, and after rehearsals began Jack saw little of Ellen. Toward the end of the week he went around to see how the play was taking shape and found Randolph Blunt sitting alone in the orchestra, a dozen rows from the stage, watching Ellen and Casslin go through a scene. He extended his thick, limp hand to Jack and said, "Watch this, Jack. They work well together."

From the lines Jack recognized the scene in the hotel room, and his first thought was that Ellen's voice was carrying well. It was vibrant, filling the empty house.

"Sorry I didn't have anything for you, Jack," Randolph Blunt said. "Maybe next time."

Jack, watching the action on-stage, said, "That's okay. We appreciate your remembering Ellen, Mr. Blunt."

(Continued on page 90)

"Tonight, be hungry." His fingers closed hard on her wrist. "You're going to dinner with me." "All right," she replied. "Now you smile and be nice."


Nydorf

What Kinsey Will Tell

BY MORRIS L. ERNST AND DAVID LOTH

The authors of this vitally significant article have long worked closely with Dr. Kinsey and his associates. Their book "American Sexual Behavior and the Kinsey Report" sold more than a million copies. Here they present for the first time the facts to be revealed in the new report. These facts are of the greatest importance to young husbands and wives involved in the problems of domestic adjustment and to young parents charged with the upbringing and instruction of children in these changing times. —*The Editors*

No mass of scientific information is more eagerly awaited by the world than the second Kinsey report, dealing with the sexual behavior of women. Through our study of the work of Professor Alfred C. Kinsey and his associates, we now are able to indicate the most significant of their findings, and to select those heretofore unknown or uncorrelated facts that will be of most value to the public. It is on this information that new concepts of education, both in your homes and in your schools and even new laws on the subject of sex, may well be based.

We are presenting these facts here because it is only through public understanding that progress in education and improvement in family relations can be achieved. There is much evidence that such improvements have long been needed. But not until now, on the strength of Dr. Kinsey's findings, have we been able to revise many of our beliefs about women's behavior, the influences that mold that behavior, and the variations between groups.

It is safe to say also that the report on women will be more widely read and discussed than the first volume, on men. Both men and women are more interested in the sexual behavior of women than in that of men. Men want to know how members of the opposite sex react, but women want to know the sex habits of other members of their own sex.

Already people are asking if the Kinsey report will reveal that women have greater sexual activity, sexual interest and sexual experience than men, whether the facts warrant changes in educational methods or laws, whether those who condemn the modern woman for loose morals are right or wrong. Some of the an- *(Continued on page 86)*

A Room to Herself

The trouble between Mark and Julie Britton began at the Dorhurst cocktail party. It was Midge Marlowe who unwittingly lighted the fuse when she drifted over to Mark and Julie to say, "I'm having some of the crowd up to Kenibrook farm for the week-end. Why don't you two join us?"

Mark grinned at her. Midge was a good scout whom he'd known for years. He liked her. In the departed days of his bachelorhood he had even attended and mildly enjoyed some of her hectic week-ends at Kenibrook—but you'd never catch him taking Julie there! He said with the phony genuineness of a man who has a legitimate excuse, "Gosh, Midge, there's nothing I'd like better, but I'm going out of town on business over the week-end."

"Is Julie going with you?"

"No, but—"

"Then why don't you come, Julie? You could drive up Friday evening with Kell and back Monday morning."

Mark saw several amused glances go between others standing around. Kell Attley was Midge's brother, a well-dressed bum whose chief distinction lay in his ability to wrap himself around a bottle in record time. He had perfected wolfery down to its finest degree, and no husband, let alone Mark Britton, was going to send his wife skyhooting around the country in Kell's demon-propelled car—nor subject her to his passes!

Without pausing to consider the consequences, Mark delivered a flat ultimatum. "Nothing doing! Julie will have to wait until some week-end when we can come up together."

He should have known better. Julie whitened to the lips. She walked silently beside him out of the Dorhurst house, across the graveled parkway. Out of earshot of the others she said furiously, "It was only out of respect to you that I didn't make a scene

BY ALICE LENT COVERT

ILLUSTRATED BY STAN KLIMLEY

"No person can own another person," was her declaration of marital independence. "I'll find out just how free you want to be," was his ultimatum. Then came the showdown

before them all! If it happens again, Mark, I might be less considerate!"

He stared blankly at her. "If what happens again? What's wrong with you, baby?"

"I think"—she pronounced her words with icy deliberation—"we'd better dispense with that *baby* business! It was rather endearing at first, but you're beginning to take it seriously! I am not a baby!"

She opened the car door and got in, disdaining his help. Then she sat glaring at him. Mark swallowed an impulse to laugh. There was something ridiculous in Julie's anger. She was such a little thing, warm-looking, her beautiful mouth and tip-tilted nose so obviously meant for laughter. But he did not laugh, for there was no doubt that she was genuinely angry.

Mark walked around the car and got in. When they were rolling down the tree-lined boulevard he said carefully, "I'm trying to figure this out, but I don't get it. You didn't really want to go to Kenibrook, did you?"

"No." She looked levelly at him. "But whether I wanted to go is beside the point. The thing is, it was my decision to make, not yours. Please understand me, Mark—I will not be dictated to as if I were an irresponsible child! Without giving me a chance to say whether I wanted to go, you said flatly that I couldn't. That wasn't wise. It—wasn't wise at all!"

"Now look, angel." Mark was trying to restrain his own anger. He didn't want to quarrel with Julie, who was little and lovely and dear as a basket of puppies. But when she got off on her tangent about independence, he'd just be damned if he could understand her at all! "If it looked like I was being high-handed, I'm sorry. It didn't occur to me you might want to go—and even if you had. I knew what you'd be letting yourself in for. You heard Midge say Kell would be at Kenibrook, that you'd have to drive up and back with him. And you've heard plenty about what Kell is like—"

Julie interposed scornfully, "I've heard any amount of catty powder-room gossip about him. I've also been around him a few times and I didn't see anything so monstrous about him. In fact, I thought he was rather charming!"

"He happened," Mark said patiently, "to be sober—a rather rare occurrence for Kell. And you can lay odds he'll be fractured from Friday to Monday, and on the make for any pretty face that shows!"

"And you think I can't take care of myself?"

"Why bother with it? I know Kell. Some day, some woman's husband is going to have to take him apart to see what makes him tick. I don't want to have to be the guy."

"Midge is one of your best friends—"

"It's Kell I'm talking about, not Midge. I was just trying to protect *you*, angel!"

Julie was quiet for a block or two. Then she said distantly, "None of which alters the fact that it was up to me to decide whether I'd go to Kenibrook."

Mark's temper slipped. "It isn't too late yet! You can always call Midge and say you've decided to go after all!"

Julie measured him with a glance. "Thanks very much for your kind permission," she said sweetly. "I think I will."

He didn't believe she meant it. He hoped she didn't mean it. But the cool silence lasted all the way home. There, Julie went to her own room. When it became obvious she wasn't coming out again, Mark went to her door. It was locked. When he called to her, she said she was tired and didn't feel like talking any more tonight.

That, he thought, staring morosely at the white wood panels, was what came of two decently married people occupying separate bedrooms! As he turned away he muttered a word under his breath. It was heartfelt and eloquent, but hardly original.

"*Women!*"

From the day of their marriage there had been a number of things about Julie which Mark did not understand—and he doubted, somehow, that they could be filed and forgotten under the general theory that no man ever really understands a woman anyway. Foremost among the items which bewildered him was her unique attitude toward marriage.

In all fairness, she had warned him. At least she had told him what her views were, and they would automatically have served as a warning to any but a man so blinded with love that he would have married her by proxy and made honeymoon love over a long-distance telephone, if that was the way she wanted it!

"Marriage shouldn't rob one of his identity." That was how she put it. "No person can own another person. Falling in love and marrying shouldn't rob one of his right to privacy."

The way she reasoned it, people sometimes married for convenience, or because they hated being alone. It wasn't like that with her. She had an independent income, the ability to hold a good job. Of course, she didn't put it so bluntly, but what it boiled down to was that she didn't need a man to support her. Nor had she any fear of loneliness. At the convent where she was raised, the Sisters had taught her to be dependent upon her own inner resources, and she liked being alone sometimes.

"Because I love you, darling—" she said in her soft, exciting voice that sent little shivers on a wild-goose chase up and down his spine, "—that's why I'm marrying you. *(Continued on page 68)*

PSYCHOLOGIST'S CASEBOOK: No. 2

BY DR. JOHN R. MARTIN

1 **When June was a** little girl, her aunt, pious and precise, lived at her house. The aunt took care of June, because her socially active mother was out much of the time.

2 **June admired** her aunt, tried to be like her. She worried because she didn't feel toward her mother as other girls did. June prayed she would always love her mother.

3 **June avoided** rough play, because she wanted to keep her hands clean. In her teens, she became known for her spotless appearance, and for her neatness.

4 **When June married,** her habits — religion, cleanliness, neat housekeeping — became excessively important in her life. She felt compelled to wash her hands often.

Can You Diagnose this Case?

Everybody knows one "married old maid." She makes you impatient, or you feel sorry for her. But her husband has to live with her. How can he help her?

✓ CHECK YOUR DIAGNOSIS

1 Having become overzealous in her religious devotion, June was symbolically washing away her sins. ☐

2 June's hand-washing reveals an unconscious guilt, because she had not loved her mother as she felt she should. ☐

3 Because of her aunt's influence, June had acquired a distorted sense of the importance of cleanliness. ☐

✓ CHECK TREATMENT YOU RECOMMEND

1 June needs help in discovering and understanding the underlying causes for her unconscious feelings of guilt. ☐

2 June must learn that her aunt exaggerated the importance of cleanliness, that other things in life come first. ☐

3 June must spend less time in religious observance and meditation, concern herself less with the problem of sin. ☐

Turn to page 71 for Dr. Martin's analysis.

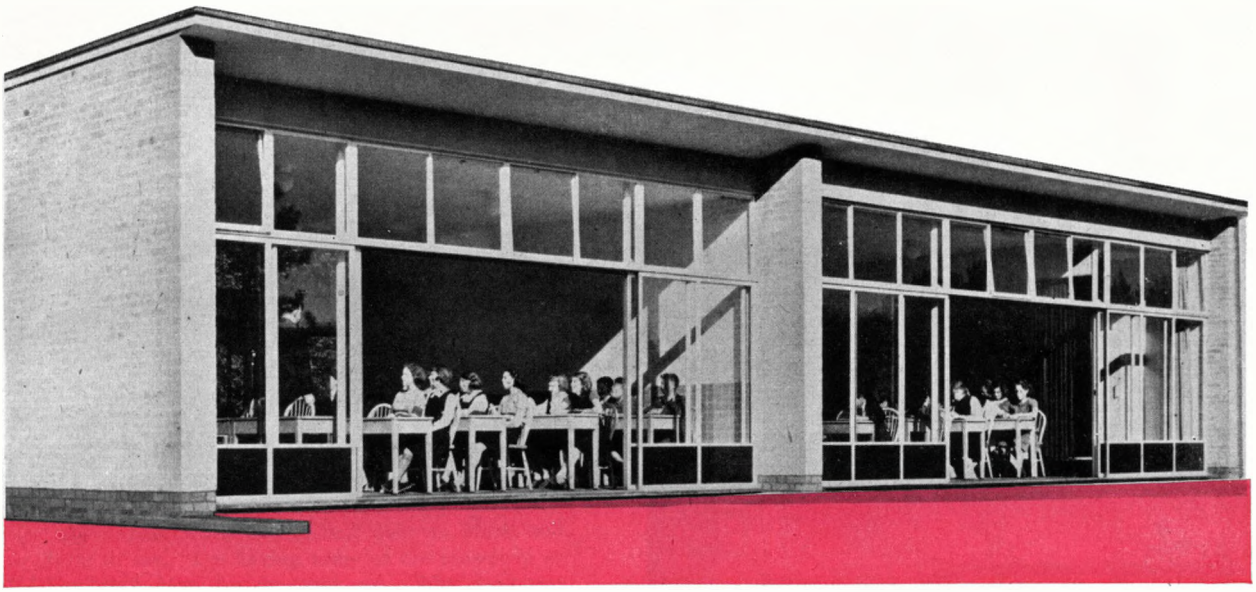
SWITZERLAND is more than Alps, pastry and cuckoo clocks. It's also a proud little nation of precision-minded people, many like the watchmaker above. Perhaps you're a precision-instrument worker. Want to meet him? Write Swiss Tourist Office, Bahnhofplatz 9, Zurich; or when you arrive, dial (from anywhere in Switzerland) Zurich 051-235713, ask for the Director and say you're in town.

Whatever you are — butcher, baker, candlestick-maker — now you can learn and earn while vacationing in Europe. And you'll still have time for fun

Now's the time to go abroad. Travel rates are cheaper, vacations are longer. Europe's a half-day away. The airplane, the steamer, the customs collector have given rates a downward shove. And now something new has been added to travel in Europe: You can learn while you tour, bring home facts, figures and ideas that may help pay for your trip.

It's an opportunity for you — nurse, engineer, foreman or teacher — to meet your European counterpart, see how he lives, works and plays, what makes him tick. How? Easy: just dial a number. On these pages you will find the names, addresses and phone numbers of the persons to call when you arrive, let's say, in Dublin or Vienna. If your city is not listed, drop a line to the European Travel Commission, 122 East 42nd St., New York 17, N. Y. It's worth the time and penny postcard. Recently, 26 farmers from the Midwest reported that they had "learned plenty" from European farmers. An Iowan said he'd "collected enough information to pay for his trip"

HOLLAND offers nearly everything for the U. S. tourist. If you're interested in horticulture or gardening, you'll want to talk with men at the magnificent tulip "factories," below. Maybe you're a jeweler and want to see the diamond industry? The man to write is Mijnheer Nikerk, Rokin 5, Amsterdam (Phone: K-2900-44725). But if you're in the delicatessen business, write Mijnheer Van Dijk, Voorhaven 135, Edam; or phone Edam 108. He'll show you the cheese plants where those famous Edams are made.



ENGLAND. beset by troubles and in the midst of a social revolution, deserves examination by any politician, civil servant, or student of government. If you are a doctor, medical student or nurse, you will have a chance to see how socialized medicine is working. If you are a teacher, then Britain's open-air schools, like the one above, become "must" field work. Want to save time and bother? Write Mr. Alistair McLean, 47 Leicester Square, W.C. 2.; or if you're in London, ring him at Whitehall 4-813. He can arrange almost anything at all.

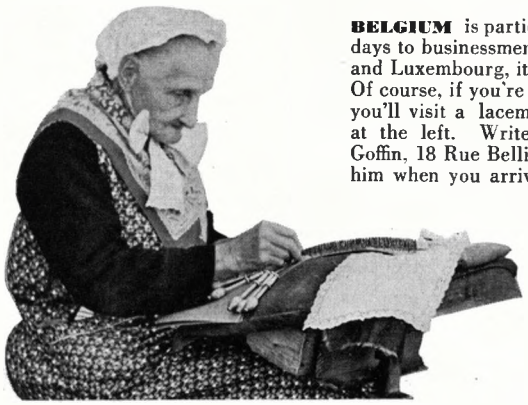
on another trip, a Clay Center, Neb., housewife picked up profitable pointers from a *midinette* in a Paris fashion house. "Remarkable, what can be done with a piece of cloth," she said. A Boise contractor learned a trick or two that increased his firm's profits when he returned to the U.S.A.

You'll find other reasons to make your trip abroad this year. Visas are banished, customs inspections speeded, tariffs relaxed. Devaluation has cut travel costs everywhere.

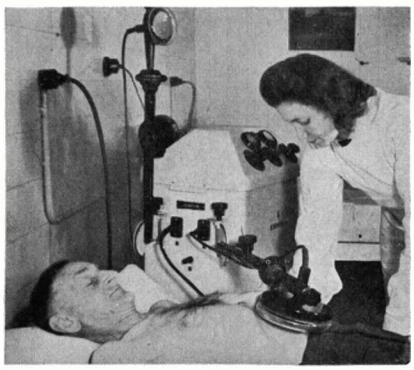
Off-season travel rates now put travel to Europe within the budget of 15 million American families. Ten international airlines, eleven steamship lines and 17 countries co-operate in slashing tourism costs. (You can fly round-trip to Shannon for $353.)

Europe, with a very sharp eye on American tourists as the single richest source of dollars, has the red carpet rolled out. Her tourist industry earned $350,000,000 in 1949 (about 30 per cent of all exports to the U. S.) In 1950, with Holy Year, she hopes to do even better.

You, as a potential traveler to Europe, should be interested, for the dollars you spend abroad help bridge the dollar gap, reduce ECA costs and, eventually, your taxes. Holidays in Europe pay off in many ways.



BELGIUM is particularly interesting these days to businessmen because, with Holland and Luxembourg, it's a partner in Benelux. Of course, if you're interested in the crafts, you'll visit a lacemaker, like the old lady at the left. Write in advance to M. J. Goffin, 18 Rue Belliard, Brussels, or phone him when you arrive at Brussels 12-54-72.

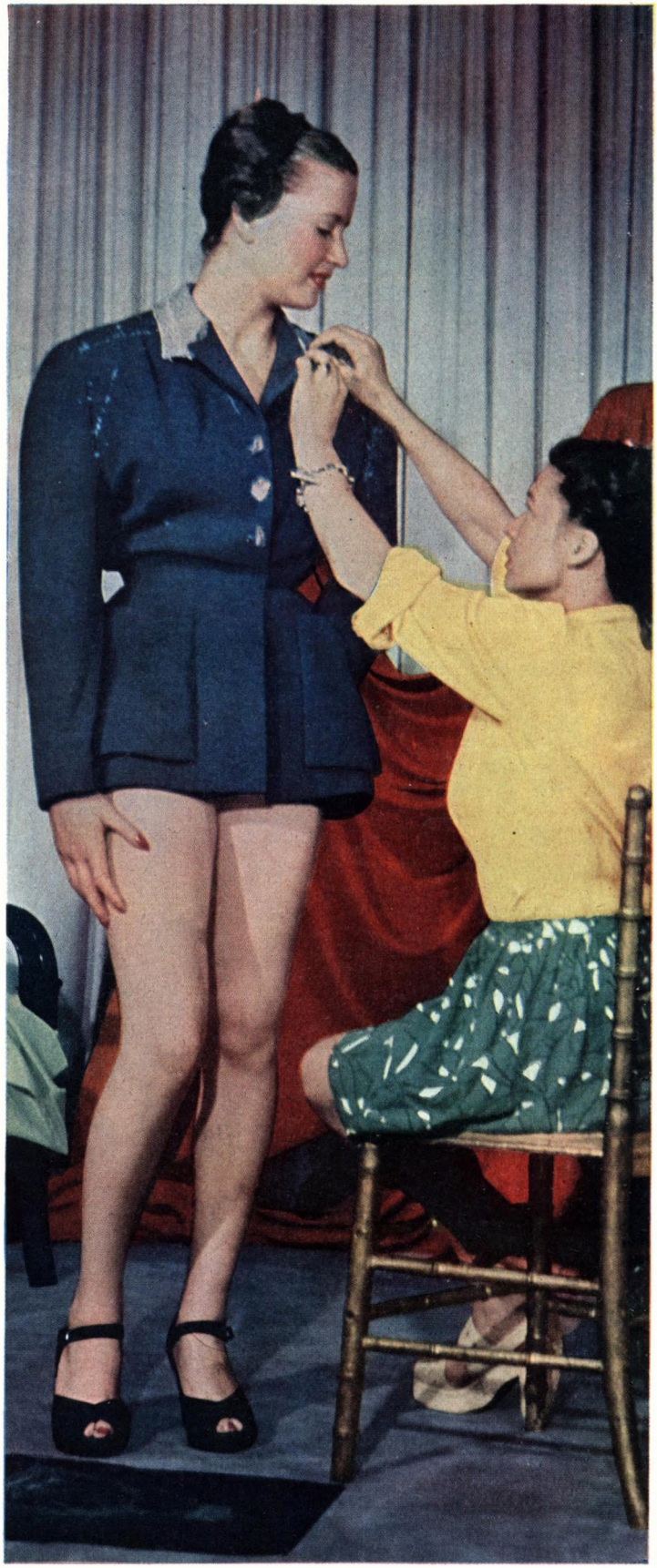


AUSTRIA and the Allied Zones of Germany require military permits. But a visit to one of the clinics or hospitals, like this one in Vienna, compensates for the effort. Write to Director Hanns Ortner, at Stelle fuer den Wiederaufbau der oesterreichischen Fremderverkehrswirtschaft, Vienna 3, Metternichgasse. Or much better, telephone U-17595.

Europe's not all monuments and museums. It's people who have something to offer you. Here's how to meet them

SCANDINAVIA, besides skis and *smörgåsbord*, can mean profitable visits by housewives and interior designers to home like this, above. If you're an engineer, see one of Norway's giant power projects. If you're an architect visit a Swedish "co-op" apartment. But be sure to write Mrs. Oldinikoss, Rosenbad 2, Stockholm. Her telephone number is 200225. She will make sure you are shown around: it doesn't matter—Norway, Denmark or Sweden.

FRANCE appeals, of course, more to the woman. But a man too could appreciate a visit to a *couturier*, such as at the right. The wine caves have *their* fascination, certainly. Whatever you may be—student of wine, woman or design—you can be assured of the very best guidance by writing Mlle. Yvonne Henderson, 2 Rue St. Florentin, Paris. (Phone: Anjou 2910). Like everyone mentioned on these pages, Mam'selle *parle Américain, très bien.*



Hollywood Celebrates

GENE TIERNEY JOHNNY GREEN ANN SHERIDAN RICHARD WIDMARK ANNE BAXTER

The Redbook cup given to Darryl Zanuck by editor Wade Nichols (*right center*), is admired by Linda Darnell, Paul Douglas and Celeste Holm.

Dana Andrews *(left)* greeted movie star Hugh Marlowe and his actress wife, K. T. Stevens, in the tropical gardens of the hotel.

Richard Conte and his vivacious wife did an about-turn from their table to get a glimpse of the merriment on the dance floor.

The Redbook Award

BARBARA BATES WILLIAM LUNDIGAN RUTH ROMAN PAUL DOUGLAS MAUREEN O'HARA

It takes a lot to surprise Hollywood, but REDBOOK did it this year. For the first time an award was given not to a star or a picture, but to a studio. REDBOOK decided the outstanding contribution of the year was the number of fine films turned out by the Twentieth Century-Fox Studios, and so the silver cup went to Darryl Zanuck and that studio.

The actual presentation took place during the dramatization of "Everybody Does It" on the Camel Screen Guild Players program over the NBC network: then Hollywood's celebrities put on their glad rags and romped to the Bel-Air Hotel for REDBOOK's party honoring the winners. Sleek, polished cars deposited stars dazzling in diamonds, mink and ermine. Flash bulbs and champagne corks popped simultaneously. Fans clustered around the doors to watch the festivities.

George Jessel gave an impromptu impersonation of a European representative of REDBOOK. The dance floor took on the appearance of a barn dance as romantic waltzes gave way to a hilarious performance of the Mexican hat dance, as the big names of Hollywood had fun at this year's REDBOOK party.

Loretta Young was swirled about by her husband, Tom Lewis.

Ginger Rogers, her blonde hair and deep tan enhanced by a white gown and pearls, was escorted to the party by Greg Bautzer.

Hedda Hopper, in snow-white ermine, stopped to greet old friends as she arrived with a group including the lovely Arlene Dahl.

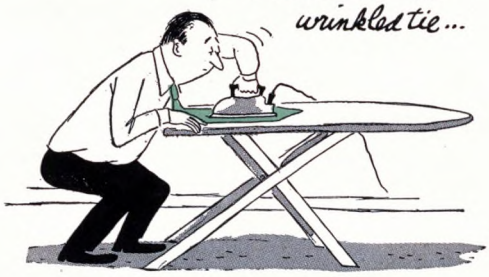
Comes that Saturday when Mommy takes off on an all-day shopping spree . . . "Be good, little darlings, and give this note to Daddy."

DAD'S DAY OFF

BY ERNEST MARQUEZ

"– and be sure to give the children enough breakfast...

"– if you go out to lunch don't wear that wrinkled tie...



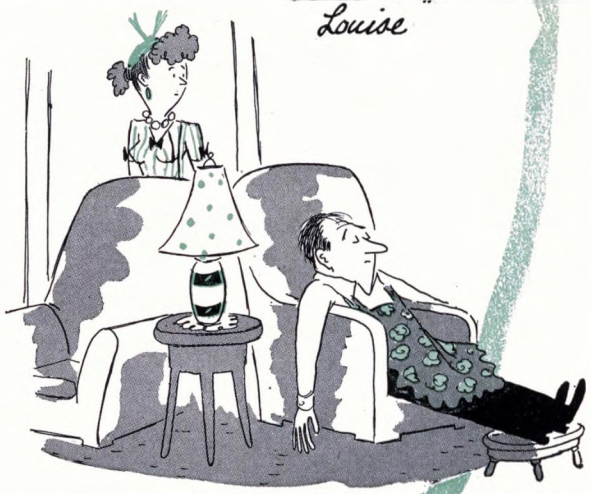
"– take the children to the movies. You'll enjoy that too...

"– stay out of the kitchen! I'll bring something home for dessert...

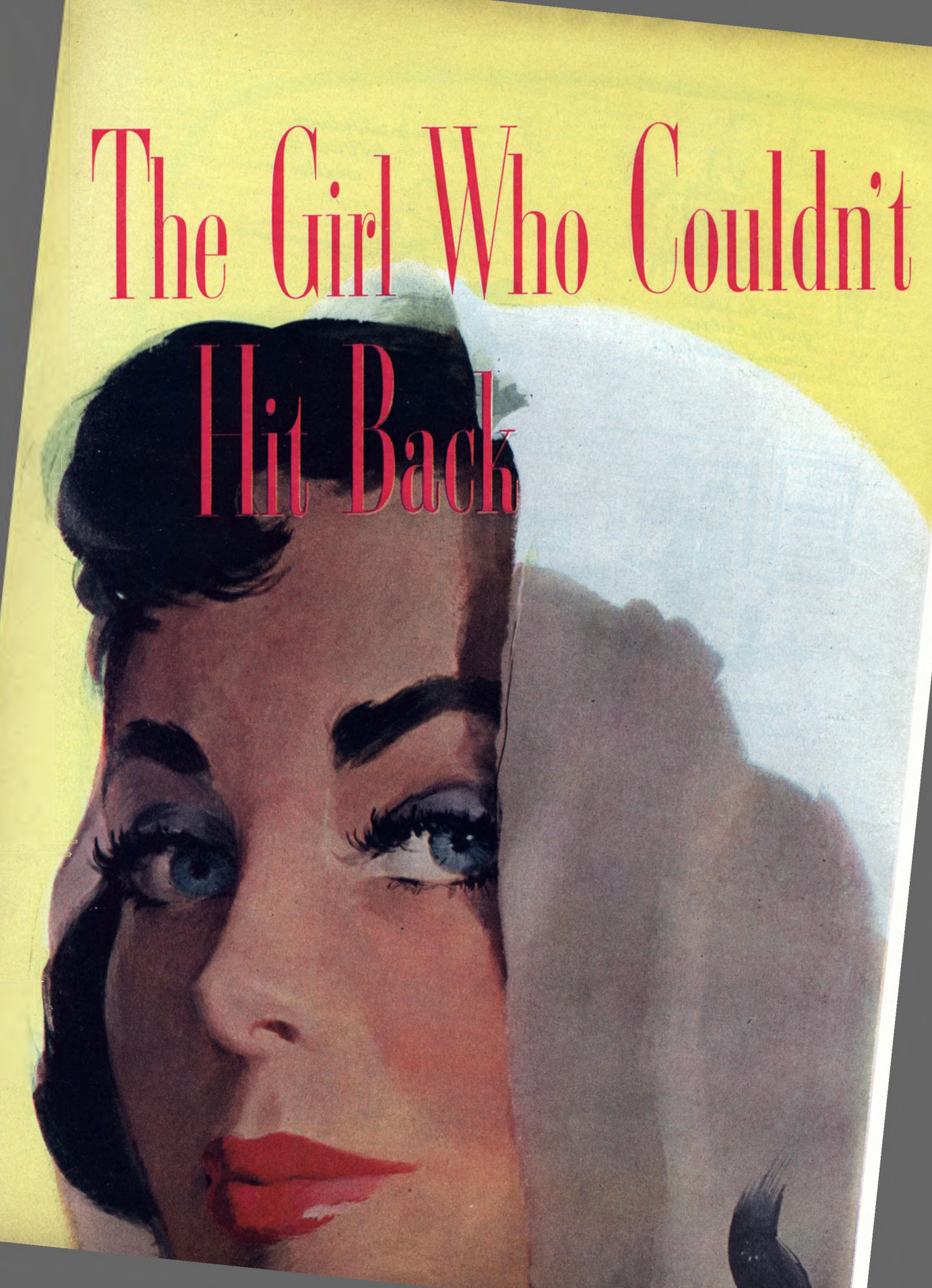
"– there's not much to do so you probably won't be too tired to go to the party at the Hathaways!

Love,
Louise"

"– don't forget to water the flowers around the side of the house...



The Girl Who Couldn't Hit Back



A SHORT SHORT STORY COMPLETE ON THIS PAGE

BY ALEC WAUGH

ILLUSTRATED BY MILTON WOLSKY

He saw her before she saw him, at the far end of a crowded party. He dodged behind a group. He'd dreaded this meeting for a long time now. "I've got to get out of this," he thought. But before he could reach the door, she'd noticed him.

"Why, Jimmie, after all this time!"

Her handshake was firm, her smile was friendly; nothing in her manner could suggest that three years back, abruptly, without a reason, without excuse, he had — just like that — stopped ringing her. No trace of ill feeling was apparent; but then there never had been; that had been half the trouble; she had been so meek; she had put up with everything. When anyone was that patient you were tempted to see how much she'd stand. "The girl who couldn't hit back" — that was how he'd thought of her.

"I knew you'd be here," she said. "That's why I came. How's everything with you?"

"Fine. Everything on the up and up."

"It is? That's grand; I'd guessed it was; I'd hoped it was; but no one seemed to know. You haven't been around much lately."

Inside himself he winced. No, he'd not been around, and things weren't on the up and up — not as they had been when he'd met her first. Everything had been booming then. . . .

He had his excuses ready.

"I'm far too busy to go rushing round; besides, I've got to husband my resources. I'm getting on, you know."

"You getting on!" She said it mockingly, almost affectionately. "You don't look changed any to me."

In her eyes there was a look that he remembered; that sent a nostalgic shiver along his nerves; he had not expected her to look like this; she had bloomed and blossomed in the interval, while he —

It was over three years since she'd seen him last. It was five years since they'd met, he'd been over thirty then and she nineteen, but that had been in '44, when most of the young men were overseas, and anyhow, didn't young girls often fall for older men? Now surely he'd seem different. Surely she couldn't still —

He looked at her more closely. She had been pretty then, but she was lovely now. His pulse began to quicken. It wasn't because she hadn't attracted him that he'd stopped calling her. It was that submissiveness of hers. It had not only goaded him but bored him. Besides, there had been that Mexican.

He glanced at her left hand; there was still no ring on its third finger. Had not a cynic said that women forgive the injuries men do them but not the sacrifices that men make for them? Perhaps there was still a chance. The prospect made his blood race faster. She was really lovely. There was no Mexican around right now.

"I've thought of you a great deal recently," he said.

"In a nice way, I hope."

He nodded.

"I've thought that I was very stupid once."

She shrugged.

"That's ancient history."

Her face wore an amused expression, a look that both challenged and emboldened him. "I'll risk it," he thought, "she can only turn it down."

"Wouldn't it be a good idea," he said, "if we had lunch one day?"

"It might be a quite excellent idea."

"What about Tuesday of next week?"

She hesitated, pondered.

"Thursday would suit me better."

"Where would you like to lunch?"

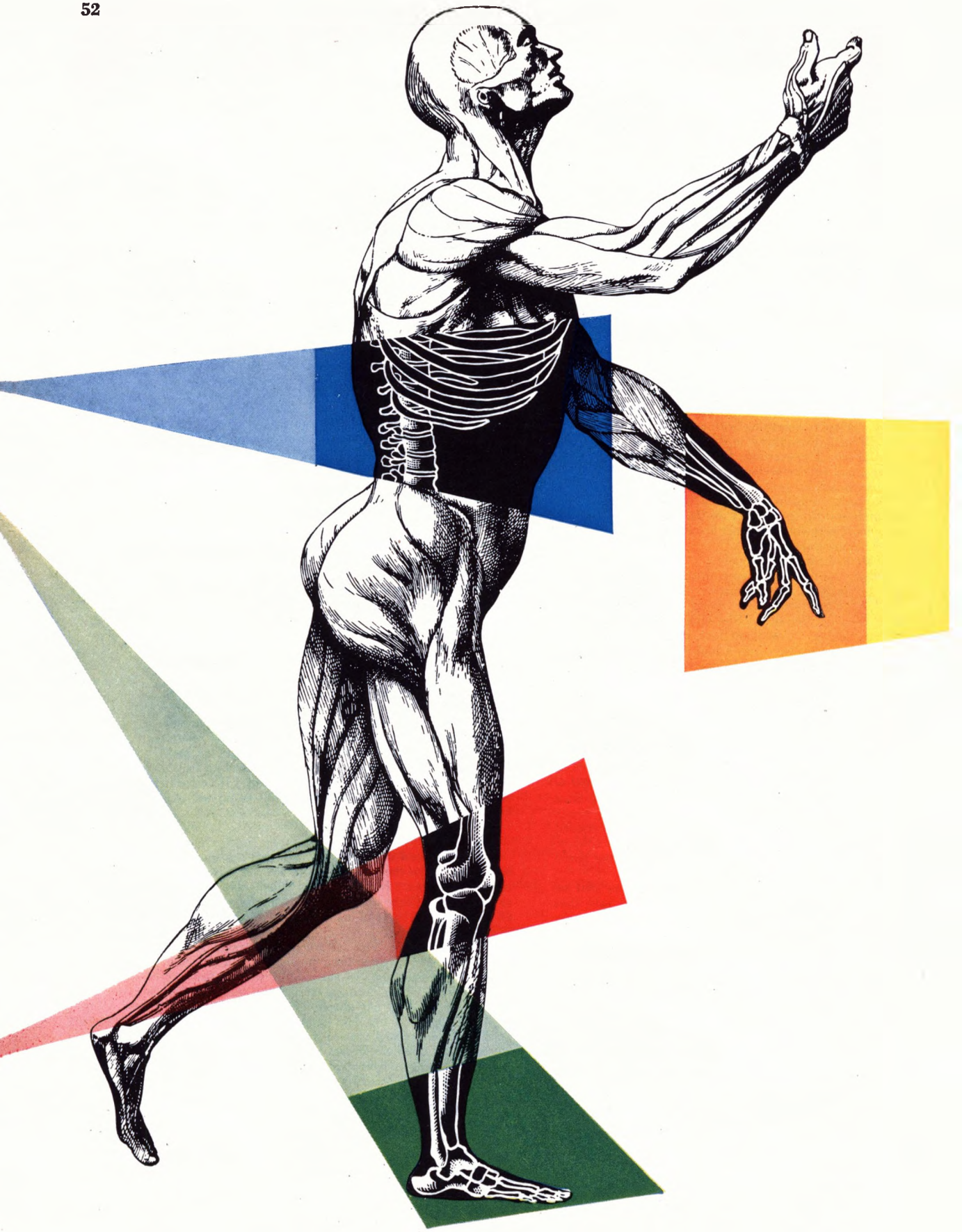
"Our own old restaurant, don't you think, and our own old table." . . . .

"Our own restaurant." Long and dark and narrow, with a French cuisine, it was one of those places that for some unexplained cause was taken up by socialites and became expensive. He had not been here since his last lunch with her; at first because he had not wanted to be reminded, later because it was beyond his means. In a mood of sentimental reverie he leaned back at a banquette table. How good life had been in the days when he had lunched here two or three times a week. New York in wartime — what a paradise for the man in the middle thirties who had a valid excuse — slight lung trouble in his case — for being out of uniform. Too much a paradise. He had not recognized, had not appreciated his own good fortune. Everything had been so easy; so many girls unattached, money so easily earned. It was very different now — all the young men home, new keen competition, and himself upon the brink of forty: "The girl who couldn't hit back." He'd been almost contemptuous of her then, but now, with life itself hitting him pretty hard, he was in a mood to welcome a girl who made no demands.

At the sight of her in the doorway he had the sense of something under his heart going round and over. How pretty she was, how good life was going to be, from now on. He moved up to make room for her, looking away, letting his hand fall on the banquette. It was a pretense that had its origin in a day at the very beginning of their friendship when she had arrived a little late to find him looking across the room so absent-mindedly that he had not noticed she was actually beside him till she pinched his thumb. "And who's the blonde you're dreaming of?" she asked. It had become a routine between them — he pretending to be in a trance, she finding some new question. He closed his eyes, waiting for the sharp nip of her nails; waited, but it did not come.

He looked up, puzzled, to see that she was past his table. From the far end of the room a young man rose to greet her. He was tall, broad-shouldered, narrow-waisted. There was an aura of success about him, an air of the ball being at his feet. His eyes were shining as he welcomed her.

She sat beside him, let her glance travel slowly round the room; it rested for a moment on himself. She bowed in recognition as she would to a twice-met acquaintance. Then, leaning across the table on her elbows, she took off her gloves, the right one first; on the third finger of her left hand was a large square emerald. She turned toward the man beside her, laying her hand upon his sleeve. Himself, he was too far off to hear the actual word she used, but from the way her lips formed he could read it, and he knew — who better — the precise intonation with which she would pronounce that one word "Darling." . . . THE END



Are You Getting Too Much X-RAY?

This magic ray can work miracles—so many, in fact, that it is often overworked. And then, without warning, it can strike!

BY J. D. RATCLIFF
ILLUSTRATED BY GIUSTI

Most people regard with terror the threat of radiation from an atom bomb. Yet those same people casually expose themselves to radiations *just* as dangerous. They have shoes fitted with X-ray machines, submit minor skin blemishes to X-ray treatments, have X-ray pictures made of various organs in the body. Spaced at long intervals, these X-ray exposures may be safe enough, provided experts operate the machines. Grouped together, they can be highly dangerous, because radiation has a cumulative effect.

Unaware of danger, a well-intentioned mother may drag her child from shoe store to shoe store, exposing him at each stop to radiation which would alarm any physician. To top matters off, that same day, the child may have X-ray pictures of his teeth made, plus perhaps a radium treatment for some throat ailment.

We live in a radiation age, and we'd better learn its hazards. Carelessly used, radiation can cause a wide assortment of human miseries—including invalidism, crippling, death.

A generation ago, hundreds of women were disfigured by beauty-shop X-ray treatments supposed to remove superfluous hair from their faces. They got weekly treatments, given by beauty-parlor operators. To qualify to operate the machines, the operators took a two-weeks training course—which was something like giving a five-year-old boy a license to fly a jet plane.

Only after months or years did damage, in some cases, show up on victims—roughened, horny skin that often ulcerated and developed into cancer. Today, these beauty-parlor machines are creeping back on the market. The American Medical Association recently warned:

"A new monster is lurking around the corner. The harm that was done to girls and young women in the 1920's is about to be repeated. It is hoped that the danger can be forestalled; that girls and young women can be saved the agonizing pain suffered by their sisters two decades ago. . . ."

In the hands of a competent radiologist, X-ray treatment is safe enough. The radiologist (also called a roentgenologist) is one of the most highly trained of all specialists. After graduation from an approved medical college and serving a year's internship, he must take three years of additional training, then pass rigorous examinations. He knows how much radiation he can safely give. No one is more acutely aware of the dangers. He will use his mighty scientific tool *only* when benefits to be derived are far greater than any possible damage that might be inflicted.

Understandably enough, the radiologists themselves are quickest to criticize the layman's casual approach to X-ray. They are particularly critical of the shoe-fitting machines. Let's look at those machines.

(Continued on page 71)

Sallie Lippincott's daily life in northeast Arizona is fascinating and varied. As partner with her husband in a trading post, she has become an expert on weaving rugs, and has helped the Navajos revive many of their lost crafts.

Sallie and Bill Lippincott have built up a thriving business as dealers in silver work and rugs, two chief products of the Navajo craftsmen who are their neighbors. Sallie and Bill met when students at the University of Chicago.

In the Lippincotts' store, a Navajo housewife can purchase anything her family needs. And like other country stores, it's a social meeting-place for its customers. Navajos enjoy talking and joking with their friends.

THIS

BY DON SAUNDERS
PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROY PINNEY

For 200 miles across the sandy wastes of northern New Mexico and Arizona, the nearly parallel routes of U.S. Highway 66 and the Santa Fe Railway skirt the boundary of the home of the largest Indian tribe in the U. S.

There, on a reservation greater in area than the State of West Virginia, live 63,000 Navajo Indians. And on that reservation young Sallie and Bill Lippincott have found a way of life that is unusual, always interesting, and deeply satisfying. Sallie and Bill Lippincott operate the Wide Ruins Trading Post.

Sallie is a pretty red-haired girl from Wheeling, West Virginia. Bill is a native of Kansas and a graduate of the University of California. They met in an anthropology class at the University of Chicago.

On a busy day at Wide Ruins, their store is crowded with Indians. The Navajo women dress in purple or dark blue velvet blouses and ankle-length full skirts of brilliant colors. The men wear blue levis and work shirts, black Stetsons or headbands, and high-heel boots or moccasins. Behind the counters, Sallie and Bill wait on the customers.

The Wide Ruins Post is a rambling, single-story building, with adobe and rock walls two feet thick. In this structure are the retail store; an arts and crafts room for display of Navajo rugs and silver jewelry and a wool-storage room.

Sallie and Bill have comfortable quarters in the south wing—a combination living- and dining-room, thirty-four by seventeen feet; two bedrooms and bath; Bill's shop and darkroom (for his photography hobby); and a modern kitchen. They need no central heating plant, because there is a fireplace in every room. Winters are fairly open. In summer, the Lippincotts eat on their large screened porch overlooking a high-walled

IS THE LIFE!

MEET BILL AND SALLIE LIPPINCOTT OF ARIZONA

Exciting and satisfying are the lives of this young couple, as operators of a trading post in the beautiful land of the Navajos

THIS IS THE LIFE!

Fortune smiled on this young couple the day they chose sunlit Arizona for their home

patio which encloses a green lawn that is carefully tended and constantly watered.

For Sallie and Bill, "the city" is Gallup, New Mexico, sixty-eight miles away. But they receive up-to-the-minute news via radio, and their mail brings them the latest magazines and books every week.

The Lippincotts tackled Western-style life together immediately after their marriage. Bill then got a job as forest ranger with the National Parks Service, and was assigned in Arizona. The Lippincotts' nearest neighbors were a man-and-wife team who operated a trading post, where Sallie and Bill spent much of their spare time. They learned how a trading post works, and were impressed by the importance of its services to the Indians.

Bill liked his work as forest ranger well enough, but he wanted something more difficult and challenging. After many discussions, Bill and Sallie decided to buy a trading post. They took over the Wide Ruins Post in 1938. They have been there ever since, except during the war, when Bill was a Navy commander.

So bright is the summer sun at her home that Sallie Lippincott must shade her growing vegetables. But the climate is always comfortable because the air is dry. The Lippincotts get their water from an artesian well.

Contrary to legend, as Sallie and Bill have learned, the Navajos aren't dour or uncommunicative. They are friendly people, and enjoy the visiting which goes with shopping.

In addition to groceries, the Navajos buy many sweets in the Lippincott store. Sometimes a Navajo will spend long, silent minutes before the candy case, weighing the respective merits of a Milky Way or a Tootsie Roll. They buy soda pop by the case.

Among young Navajo women there is considerable interest in two items upon which the older generation frowns: cold-wave hair preparations and pink panties.

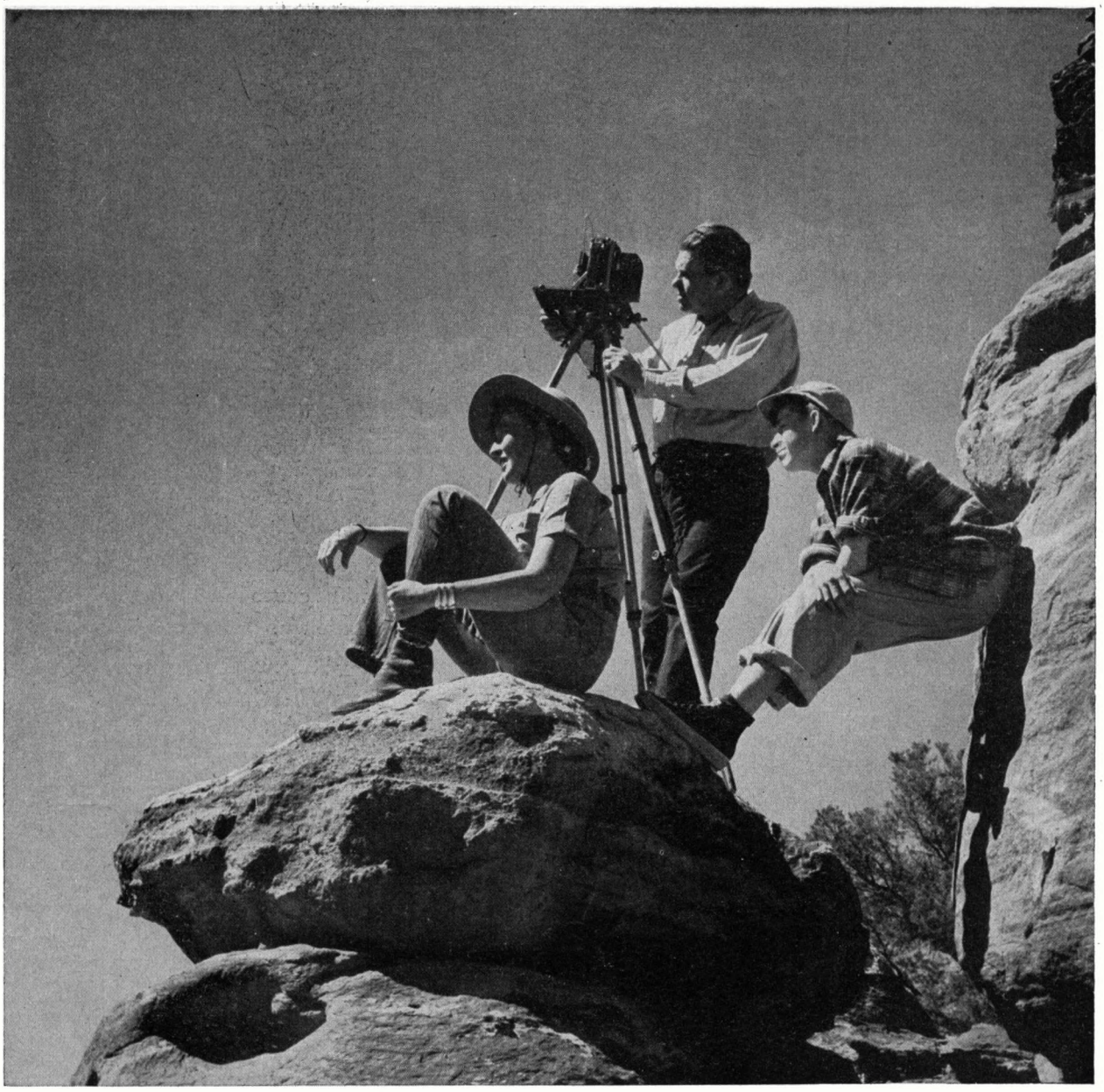
To the Navajos of the Wide Ruins region, the Lippincott store is a Marshall Field, a Sears-Roebuck and an A. and P. all in one. And, in addition, the Lippincotts are sales agents for the Navajos' wool and craft goods.

Of all their accomplishments at Wide Ruins, the Lippincotts are proudest of their success in raising the standards of craftsmanship among their Navajo neighbors. When Sallie and Bill took over there, they found the Indians were using packaged commercial dyes for their rug yarns. Slowly, the Lippincotts succeeded in persuading them to return to vegetable dyes and to weave more conservative patterns. And so now, as in olden times, the Navajos of Wide Ruins are making their yarn dyes of sage, wild privet root, black walnut bark, juniper berries and rock lichen.

The Lippincotts believe that Navajo rugs will be in greater demand when home-planners discover that these rugs are ideally suited to many modern decoration motifs. They believe that Indian rugs—Wide Ruins rugs, at least—compare favorably with the best creations of fine craftsmen in any field.

Sallie and Bill have security and enjoyment in their work. But there's something additional to keep them interested—their concern for the Navajos. During the past eighty years, the Navajo population has increased from 9,000 to nearly 63,000. But Navajo resources haven't increased, and a vast area of grazing land has been lost through erosion. Almost all Navajos rely on sheep herds for livelihood.

The Lippincotts want to help the Navajos, because they feel an affection for these people and for their vast and lonely land, a strangely beautiful



Sallie and Bill always take their visitors to this high place which, centuries ago, was a sentry post for the Navajo Indians.

place of bright skies and far horizons, shadowed mesas, great canyons and painted deserts. It is a land of mystery and history. This was impressed on Sallie and Bill Lippincott one night recently when they were driving home from Gallup, New Mexico. The headlight beams reached far ahead and fanned out over the sagebrush on either side. The car came over a rise, and there, caught in the shaft of light, was a sight they will never forget.

For an instant, on the plain ahead, they saw a galloping pony. The rider was naked to the waist and daubed with war paint. Sallie and Bill recognized him as an old Navajo who lived quietly near Wide Ruins. For one night, he was being a warrior, as his ancestors had been. For a few brief hours, he was reliving the glories of another time.

. . . THE END

Girl On the Spot

BY BRUCE BRIGHAM
ILLUSTRATED BY PHIL DORMONT

Inescapably the web of scandal bound them—scandal which would accuse Margaret of deceiving the man who loved her, and David of deceiving the man who trusted him

PART III

The story thus far

It all began when JIM SHERBRIDGE—"that wolf"—turned into a little wood and stopped, instead of driving MARGARET WRISTIN straight home, as he should have done. LARRY SENLEY wouldn't be pleased, as Margaret very well knew. Larry, her fiancé, had been called to Washington on a day when they had arranged an outing with friends on the Sound, and Jim had turned up unexpectedly to take Larry's place. Larry didn't like Jim.

What happened after Jim stopped was less simple. From a house near by came the sound of six shots. A woman paused at the door, then drove wildly away in a car. A phone rang, unanswered; the house seemed empty except for a lazy cat and a young man in a bright, gay room lying dead on the floor.

Jim wanted to get away. Margaret bravely insisted on staying. Jim wanted to lie about parking in the wood. Margaret insisted on telling the truth—as she did when DR. DAVID GRENBY drove up, wearing pajamas, saying DEBORAH SEAMORE had summoned him. The Seamores lived in the house—but the man on the floor was not Mr. Seamore. Nobody knew who he was. Nobody knew where Deborah Seamore had gone.

Waiting for the police, Margaret saw a picture of a lovely girl in a garden—"Mrs. Seamore," the doctor told her. "Your situation is false. You don't have to tell me that. But hers is equally false—and far more frightful!"

Larry (back now from Washington and told by phone what had happened) came with Margaret's father and drove her home at daybreak, after a long session with the police. He jeered about "the medico and the pretty wife," accused Dr. Grenby of using Margaret to establish a "nice, neat alibi."

"You weren't there, Larry!" Margaret said. "It wasn't like that in the least!" Exhausted, she fled upstairs and into her room.

At what hour she fell asleep, Margaret never knew. She opened her eyes to see the sun shining on her side of the house. That meant afternoon; and she was lying on her bed in her slip and with a summer blanket lightly over her.

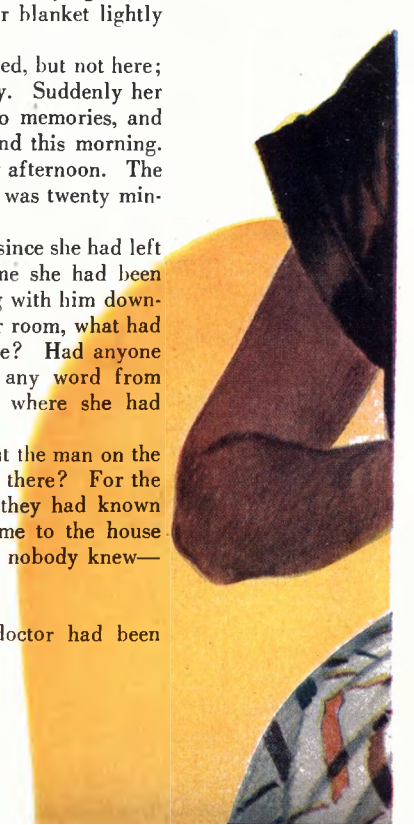
Some awful thing had happened, but not here; not in this house nor to her family. Suddenly her sensation of disaster dissolved into memories, and Margaret recollected last night; and this morning. But now it was afternoon—Sunday afternoon. The little clock on her desk told her it was twenty minutes past two.

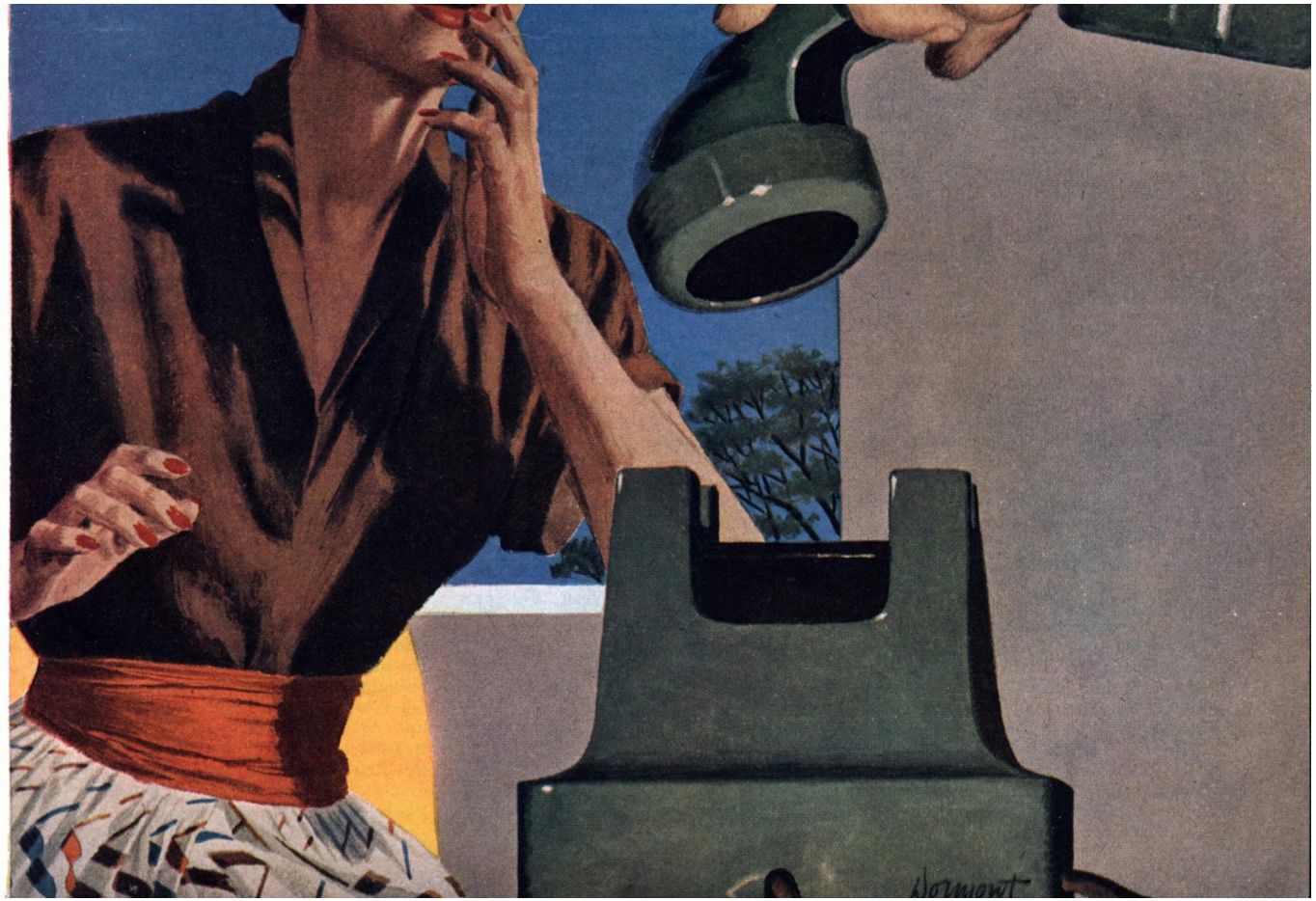
So it was more than six hours since she had left the Seamores'; and during the time she had been riding beside Larry and quarreling with him downstairs and then sleeping here in her room, what had been happening in that other house? Had anyone found Deborah Seamore, or had any word from her? Had anybody yet guessed where she had gone?

What had they found out about the man on the floor—what more than that he was there? For the sum and substance of everything they had known last night was simply: he had come to the house—whether by appointment or not, nobody knew—and he had been shot.

Who had shot him?

Not Deborah Seamore, the doctor had been





very sure; not that delightful, gentle girl of the garden who'd never hurt anyone in her life, and couldn't! But there had been other opinions about that.

Not Dr. David Grenby. Margaret had been completely sure six hours ago when Larry had accused him and had laughed at her for being so gullible and simple as to have let the doctor deceive her.

Her row with Larry had been as much over the doctor as over Jim. Larry was wrong about the doctor; but it was less easy for her to feel so absolutely certain in the broad sunlight of the day and after she had slept and was awake again and thinking things over. If she, for herself, hadn't formed an entirely different idea of Dr. David Grenby, she'd have to admit that Larry had fitted together a case against him. It had made sense to Larry, and also—as Larry had more than hinted—to one of the police officers.

So where was Dr. David Grenby at twenty-two minutes after two on this sunny afternoon? Was he still at that big, bright, gay house and still trying to help the police? Or had his position with the police changed? Was he with them because they were holding him as a suspect, or as a "material witness"?

Margaret sat up and gazed about her room and listened for sounds. The house was quiet, and she realized that it was being kept quiet so she could rest. Her door was closed, but at least once during the morning it had been opened; her mother must have come in and got her out of her dress and stockings and loosened her bra and laid this summer blanket lightly over her.

Here was a mother in a million! Most mothers would have come in, as soon as a daughter had run up to her room and shut herself in; but her mother had known that even an offer of sympathy would only keep feelings stirred up and would put off the moment when a girl could get to sleep.

Margaret went into her bathroom and started the shower. The sound of the water would signal that she was awake; but she was ready to talk with her mother now. Suddenly she felt famished, and she had to know what had been discovered since she left the Seamores' six and a half hours ago. While she dried herself, she decided neither to dress nor to return to bed. She found a beach-robe and tied it about her and went to a window and looked out over the lawn and the lane.

Nothing appeared in the least different from any day before. Babs Foley, who was fifteen, strolled by with the Davis boy; they were interested only in each other; neither of them gave so much as a glance at the Wristins' house.

"They haven't heard; nobody's heard —yes," Margaret thought.

"**Here's breakfast!**" she heard her mother's voice at her door; and Margaret opened it to her mother, who had a tray in her hands. Orange juice—a tall glass. Toast and coffee and scrambled eggs. Plenty of eggs. Her mother knew she was hungry.

"No news!" her mother told her as soon as their eyes met. "No message, dear. Nothing at all—from Crenmoor way. But Larry dropped in."

"Larry! When?" Margaret halted in taking the tray.

"An hour ago, dear. But he'd no news. I asked him. He just wanted to see you."

"He was here?" Margaret asked. She laid the breakfast tray on her bedside table and glanced at her clock. "At half past one? Didn't he go to bed?"

"Not Larry, dear. He'd come from the golf club. He'd played all the way around in his regular foursome, just as usual—and he shot a seventy-nine, he wanted me, and especially you, to know. Didn't you think he would?"

"Shoot a seventy-nine?" Margaret asked. She sat on the edge of her bed and drank half her orange juice.

"Play around just as usual," her mother answered. "and—yes, break eighty, no matter what happened."

Margaret finished her orange juice. "Just as if nothing had happened, you mean, Mother," she said. That was Larry! He'd keep everything inside himself and hold his head high as ever. The other three of his foursome—and also the rest of the club members—would properly appreciate his "breaking eighty" today, when later they would learn of the conditions under which he'd been playing. There was something slightly splendid in stubbornness and pride like that.

"Yes, just as if nothing had happened," her mother agreed and let her lips break into the barest smile.

"Did Father play?" Margaret asked.

"Father?" Her mother dropped onto the nearest chair. "No, I'm afraid not."

"Did either of you get much sleep?"

"Oh, I did," her mother assured her. "Your father's sleeping now."

There was something slightly stupid, as well as splendid, in stubbornness like Larry's, Margaret was thinking as she went on with her breakfast. Her mother sat comfortably near and was satisfied merely to be close by. She never was a chatterer, and she said nothing more in reference to last night until Margaret was nearly finished with her breakfast. Then her mother said, "It's awfully exciting, isn't it?"

Margaret almost cried. She could have hugged her mother, for there was not a breath of blame, not a syllable of reproach. Just this feeling from her mother that she was in it with her! And she was! No more than her daughter would she merely have run off after she'd heard the shots and seen the car driven away from the Seamores'.

"It's the most exciting thing in my life, Mother!"

"Of course it is! Do you think the doctor did it?"

Margaret pushed away her tray. "Did Larry tell you about him?"

"Your father told me about him this morning, and on his way back from the golf club, Larry gave me the benefit of his ideas."

"About Dr. Grenby?"

Her mother nodded and watched her. "Yes; about Dr. Grenby and Mrs. Seamore—and you."

"Were they much like Father's ideas?" Margaret inquired.

Her mother shook her head. "Especially not about the doctor and Mrs. Seamore. Larry seems to have an opinion about the doctor that's no less than lurid."

Margaret laughed. "But he's not lurid in the least, Mother. You'd like him."

"I think I would," her mother agreed. "Your father did; and you did—evidently."

She means, evidently from the way Larry acted, Margaret thought, and she admitted, "I did. And I've complete confidence in him—complete!" she repeated and astonished herself with her own sudden positiveness. For she felt it again! "He's going to phone me the minute they find out anything important at the Seamores', Mother. And he will!"

"Nobody's phoned—from Crenmoor," her mother reminded.

"You said so; so I guess they've got nothing more."

Unless they've got something more against Dr. David Grenby! she thought, as her feeling of certainty failed her. For if he was under arrest as a suspect or being held as a "material witness," would he be free to telephone to her?

"Do you want to see Larry when he comes back?" her mother asked her.

"He's coming back this afternoon?"

"What else," her mother replied, "would a young man who was surer every minute that you were making a frightful mistake—what else would he do with the rest of the day?"

Margaret was dressed and downstairs before Larry returned. Twice the telephone had rung, and twice Margaret had jumped to answer it. The first call had been about a church matter and was for her mother; the second had been for herself, but it was only from Fan Clarke on the other side of the Lane. Fan had had nothing on her mind; she probably didn't even know that Margaret had been up late last night—much less that she had been away all night and had become a witness to a murder and a witness from a parked car, on top of that.

Larry came in just after three. He was terribly tense and tired, Margaret saw, but he was determined not to show it.

"I heard about your 'breaking eighty,' Larry!" she told him at once, and she had more feeling for him than she'd expected. "That was something to do without any sleep at all; or did you get a little?"

"Sleep? How could I?" he answered her. "But d'you suppose I was going to let 'em see that what you'd done had got me? It would be a rotten slap at you —wouldn't it?—when it all comes out and they could look back and say that I'd been so low over you that I couldn't even show up this morning? Our date was ten; we teed off at ten, and I broke eighty!"

As he'd played each shot, he'd been telling himself he was helping her, protecting her!

"Always wear green, Reddie!" he said to her approvingly and affectionately. He was looking her over in a way that brought her back to the first time he'd taken her in his arms, after she'd grown up. As upon that long-ago day, she was wearing light green; but not a sweater, this time. She'd put on her green nylon dress, which was suitable for going anywhere on a Sunday afternoon.

They were alone; he wanted her in

Are you in the know?

How to decide about a Spring suit?

- ☐ *Buy it and diet*
- ☐ *Pick a pastel shade*
- ☐ *Take a stroll*

You *adore* the suit! But how about *fit?* Does the new narrow skirt defy your figure? If in doubt, stroll around the store. Try sitting; then see the mirror. Budget-wise bunnies shun suits too large or small—or delicate shades that "live" at the cleaner's. (Choose checks; navy; any smart medium tone.) Be perfectly suited, too, as to sanitary protection needs. Decide on the right-for-you *Kotex absorbency*. How? By trying *all 3!*

If you'd stop going steady—

- ☐ *Start feudin' and fightin'*
- ☐ *Send him his class ring*
- ☐ *Tell him your sentiments*

Suddenly, your heart—or noggin—tells you the "one and only" deal is not your dish. Should you "sledge-hammer" the issue? Or just silently break away? Ixnay! Tell him your sentiments, *tactfully*. Then no-one's bitter and your rating's still tops. Beware of making enemies . . . and on "those" days be wary of that foe of poise: embarrassment. Kotex defends you, with a special *safety center* designed for your *extra* protection!

What's the newest eye-catcher?

- ☐ *The nape of her neck*
- ☐ *The dangling earrings*
- ☐ *The hiked hemline*

Get *you!* Echoing your *Mom's* prom get-ups (almost)! You're daring the new "twenties trend." But with that shingle—sister, the nape of your neck's showing. So, when applying makeup base and dazzle-dust, don't stop at the chin line. Give your *neck* a break—all around. Prom time need never hold problem-time "nightmares"; not if you've chosen Kotex. That's because those *flat pressed ends* prevent revealing outlines!

If you were stepping into this taxi, should you sit—

- ☐ *Beside the belle*
- ☐ *On the opposite side*
- ☐ *On your squire's lap*

Maybe you've heard that a gentleman's place should always be on the outside. You guess that goes for all occasions. 'Tain't so, though, in wheeldom. Stepping into this taxi, you should choose the opposite side, so either squire can sit between you wimmin.

And when you step out—to a dance, or wherever—cancel calendar "woes" with Kotex. For Kotex is made to stay soft while you wear it. Gives dream-cloud softness that *holds its shape*. You're at ease from the first rhumba to the goodnight waltz!

More women choose KOTEX than all other sanitary napkins*

*T. M. REG. U. S. PAT. OFF.

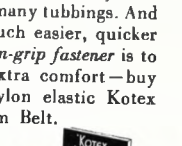
3 ABSORBENCIES: REGULAR, JUNIOR, SUPER

For extra comfort on "those" days, should you—

- ☐ *Stay in bed*
- ☐ *Go square-dancing*
- ☐ *Buy a nylon belt*

Comfort doesn't call for coddling—or "square" fests. Your best bet's a new Kotex Wonderform Belt. It's made with *DuPont nylon* elastic—won't twist, won't curl, won't cut! Gives 118% stretch, yet it's *strong*, smooth-feeling; wisp-weight. Dries fast. Stays flat even after many tubbings. And see how much easier, quicker the new *firm-grip fastener* is to use! For extra comfort—buy the new nylon elastic Kotex Wonderform Belt.

2 TYPES: Pin style and with new safety fastener



Kotex Wonderform* Belt

Buy two—for a change

his arms and she did not refuse him; but it was not like the last time they were alone, in this room on the evening he left for Washington—and before she drove to the Sound with Jim Sherbridge. It was so much less satisfactory to him that he complained, "Can't you just think of *us* for a few minutes?"

The telephone rang, and at once she freed herself from him and answered it; but it was only another local call and for her mother.

Now he'll be more hurt and angry, she thought as she started back to him; but Larry wasn't. "I see, Reddie," he petted her. "Darling, you can't help being jumpy. You can't help feeling you're living on borrowed time—till the papers come out, or it breaks some other way."

It was how he felt, she knew. That wasn't her feeling, but she didn't tell him.

The phone rang again about five minutes later, and this time it wasn't local, and it wasn't for anybody else. It was Crenmoor, and for her. Dr. David Grenby's voice was asking for Miss Margaret Wristin.

"Here I am!" she told him.

"Thought it was you. You're all right, I hope."

"Yes. What's happened?"

Then she heard him say (she thought), "Mrs. Seamore's home."

"Mrs. Seamore!" Margaret cried. "Oh, that's good! That is wonderful! How is she? What happened? Oh, tell me, please!"

"*Mister* Seamore! Her husband. Mister!" she heard the doctor's voice correcting her. "I'm afraid it's not so good. For nothing's been heard of her. There's practically nothing developed since last night—since you left. Except Mr. Seamore got back. He flew early this morning from Texas. I met him at La Guardia; we got here about an hour ago."

"At his house," Margaret said.

"Yes."

"**Are the police** still there?" she asked, for she had to know whether Dr. Grenby had been kept all day under guard or, at least, under watch.

"No, they've left at last. The Chief drove with me to La Guardia, and we took Mr. Seamore to the undertaker's to see the fellow who was shot. Mr. Seamore couldn't identify him. He'd never seen him before. He's no idea what went on in his house last night. You can imagine his mental condition, can't you?"

Margaret thought that she could only partly imagine what it must be for Mr. Seamore to be there in his house and not have the slightest knowledge of what had been between his wife and the stranger who had been shot in his house; not even know who the fellow was, and to have to wonder whether his wife had killed the man or whether some one else had been with her and she—or he—had shot him. And why? And Mr. Seamore could not know whether his wife—whatever she had or had not done—was dead or alive, nor where she had gone. Nor could he *know* whether, whenever he had been away, his wife had been carrying on an affair with the doctor—or with some one else.

"I'm calling you to ask if you can possibly come over here this afternoon," Dr. David Grenby was saying. "Right now—if you possibly can."

"Why?" she asked.

"So he can talk to you."

"To me?"

THE ROSE IS RED

BY DANIEL A. POLING

On Mother's Day I wore a deep red rose.
He smiled at me and said,
"The color should be white as custom goes."
I smiled but shook my head.

"I do not mourn today, for she is here,"
I answered him and said,
"Now always she is by my side and near.
She lives, she is not dead."

"You're the one person who can help him in the least. You're the last one who saw his wife—or if it wasn't she you saw, you were here and heard and saw something of what went on. At least, you can tell him more than anybody else. And he wants to hear it from you. He has to hear it from you! I told you he's a heart condition. So far, his heart's holding up remarkably well—but it depends on his emotional disturbance. He keeps going over and over what happened here, and about his wife. . . . You can help him more than anybody else. Can you possibly come over?"

"I'll come," Margaret said.

She put down the phone and looked up at Larry. "That was Dr. Grenby at the Seamores'."

"That wasn't hard to gather."

"Mr. Seamore's home now."

"I gathered that, too."

"He didn't know the man who was—on the floor. They'd taken him away, but they had Mr. Seamore see him. Mr. Seamore couldn't tell them anything. He's terribly, terribly upset. He wants me to come back to the house."

"Just Mr. Seamore?"

"The doctor, too, Larry."

"The doctor, period; and you know it. So he needs a little help from you again!"

"He doesn't! The police aren't even there any longer. They've left him with Mr. Seamore."

"Who said so?"

"He did, Larry."

"Do you think for a minute I'm letting you go to him?"

Margaret was in a car, and with nobody beside her. Not Jim Sherbridge and not Larry. He had done everything short of physically preventing her from driving her car out of the garage. He could have taken her keys away from her, but before that point was reached, he had started to stand on his rights. She must follow his decision on a matter of her association with another man.

Well—she hadn't followed; so here she was alone in her little runabout on a cement road spotted with September shadows—the road to Crenmoor, to the Seamores' and to Dr. David Grenby.

Larry would never forgive her this—not until he became most awfully hungry to have her in his arms again. But today she had not liked his lovemaking as she had before.

She wondered if she would recognize the woods into which Jim had turned last night, but when she approached them she found she needn't have worried over that. A long row of cars stood on the soft shoulder of the highway, and one was turning onto the road through the trees and was stopped and sent out again. Crenmoor, of course, had heard what had happened last night; Crenmoor didn't have to wait for papers to print the news. The curious of Crenmoor had come to look the place over, and a policeman was stationed to keep them far from the house.

So Larry was right about the police not having left.

Margaret stopped beside the road through the trees, and the policeman inspected her carefully. She had not seen him before and he had not seen her, but he seemed to fit her to some description, for he came close to her car and little more than whispered, "Miss Wristin?"

Before she answered he waved her in, and everybody stared at her, but they were left behind. No one was in the woods where Jim and she had been, no one in front of the house. A single car was standing where the doctor had left his car last night. Margaret parked her car beside it and went up to the front door, which was open—except for its screen—just as it had been before.

A stout, placid woman wearing the starched white dress and cap of a nurse was waiting in the silver-and-yellow hall. She stepped forward, as soon as she had taken a good look at Margaret, and opened the door.

"Come right in. Mr. Seamore and Dr. Grenby are expecting you. Mr. Seamore's to be saved, I'm sure you know,"

the woman cautioned, "from any excitement."

How do you do that? Margaret asked herself as she glanced about. The bright, cheerful hall was in the same perfect order as when Jim and she had entered in the night. The door of the little room in which the telephone had rung—in which she had phoned to Larry and where she had found the photograph of the lovely girl of the garden—that door was closed.

There was no door to the big, gay room of yellow and silver and blue; that room couldn't be shut off; Margaret could stare in, if she wished.

She didn't, though she knew that the figure which had been sprawled between the big blue couches no longer lay on the floor. No one would be in there now; surely not Mr. Seamore. The nurse nodded toward the stairs, and Margaret went up with her.

Opposite the top of the stairs was a door, and it was open a few inches. As Margaret's head came level with the floor of the upper hall, eyes met hers from near the floor and through the open inches of the doorway. The cat again. As lazily, as aloofly, as contemptuously as last night, the orange-striped cat came out of the room and stretched itself in the hall.

Margaret caught her breath; she couldn't help it, for death, last night, had lain behind this cat. It was not death today in this room on the second floor, but it was danger of death and fear and dreadful anxiety.

The nurse had opened the door of the bedroom—for that was what it was. It was a wide, cheerful bedroom with one bed, a double bed. Windows were on three sides, and through the windows to the west the sun was shining in. At the edge of the sunlight half sat, half lay Mr. Seamore. Of course this was he—this fine-looking man with a pink face and brown hair who was stretched out on a chaise-longue with pillows behind him. In a chair close beside him, Dr. David Grenby was seated.

The doctor was wearing the same blue suit as last night, but today he wore shirt and tie also. He was properly dressed; and Mr. Seamore was dressed, also. His shirt collar was loosened and so was his tie; he had on a brown suit.

The doctor stayed seated and tried to stop Mr. Seamore when he started to rise, as Margaret approached; but Mr. Seamore insisted on standing, so the doctor arose, too.

"You're very good—you're more than good to come, Miss Wristin," Mr. Seamore said to her in a slightly unsteady voice. "Sit here, please. And please, please tell me all you can about—about my wife!"

He had pulled a chair in place for Margaret, and she sat down on it quickly, since it was plain he would not return to his pillows until she was seated.

"I wish I could tell you much more than I can," Margaret replied, and her feeling for him almost choked her. For she liked him on sight; and he seemed to count on so much help from her, and she had so little to give him.

"You never knew my wife!" he was saying now. "You never even saw her—

except perhaps for an instant—for part of an instant—last night."

"No," Margaret answered. "But I saw a picture of her."

"Yes," Mr. Seamore said. "Yes, Grenby told me." He made an effort and reached over and grasped the doctor's forearm in a gesture of gratitude. "And he told you something about her, he says."

"Yes."

"She has the gentlest, loveliest nature in all the world!"

"Yes," Margaret said again, as he lay silent and spent, suddenly, by the force of his own feelings; but he kept his right hand resting on the doctor's arm, depending on this doctor, betraying no doubt whatever concerning him. If he was a deceived husband—Margaret thought—never, never was a husband more thoroughly deceived; and never was there a deceiver more contemptible than this doctor.

But it wasn't that way! It couldn't be that way, no matter what Larry thought and said.

Mr. Seamore clearly was a man of consequence and of character. He was not a large man; when they had both been standing, he was not nearly as tall as the doctor. He was short but not stout; he had kept himself in good trim for a man of fifty years—except for his heart, which was racing so, at this moment, that the pulse in his temple was almost continuous.

Dr. Grenby—Margaret noticed—also was watching that pulse, but he did and said nothing. For a moment, his eyes met Margaret's. Help keep him quiet, Dr. Grenby's eyes silently said.

Mr. Seamore sat up a little straighter. He had placed himself so as to be able to look out at the approach to the house, and now he stared out the window at the road—the road upon which his wife must return, if she were to come back to the house. No car and nobody was in sight.

"Dr. Grenby tells me," Mr. Seamore said to Margaret, "that you are sure that someone else besides—besides that fellow who was shot and my wife, was here last night."

"I think there was another person present," Margaret said.

"Another man—you think—or another woman?"

The telephone bell rang. It rattled with muffled sound in this bedroom, but it shrilled from below. The telephone, in this room, was beside the bed.

Mr. Seamore jumped up. He had pushed himself from his pillows and he tried to get to the instrument beside his—and his wife's—bed; but the nurse was nearer, and she had it before him.

"It's for Dr. Grenby, Mr. Seamore!" she told him instantly. "For you, Doctor!" she said.

"Who is it? Who's calling him here?" Mr. Seamore demanded, and the nurse could not hold him off; he fought her for the phone, and she let him have it. He steadied himself as he put it to his ear, but as he listened, his strength went out of him.

"Sorry, Grenby; sorry," he apologized to the doctor, and handed over the telephone. Mr. Seamore slowly took himself back to the chaise-longue and lay down and gazed out at the road.

The doctor listened to the telephone, but his eyes—Margaret noticed—never left Mr. Seamore. The doctor said quietly into the telephone, "As soon as I can make it," and he put down the receiver. He returned to the chaise-longue, and his fingers found Mr. Seamore's right wrist. "That was Mrs. Wardlow," he said, when he took his hand away.

"She wants you," Mr. Seamore said. "For Bobby."

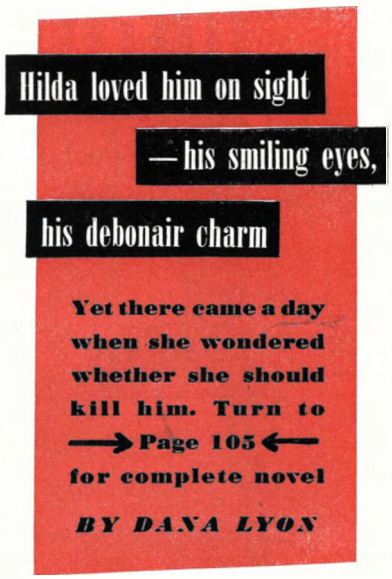
"Then why don't you go? Go, by all means!"

Margaret watched the doctor as he turned from Mr. Seamore to her.

"Don't you go!" Mr. Seamore suddenly appealed to her. "Don't you go!"

"She's not going," the doctor replied to Mr. Seamore for her, but he had not a word for her. Merely—he met her eyes for a moment; then he stepped to the nurse and spoke to her, and he left the room.

"I'm not going," Margaret assured Mr. Seamore; but she no sooner said it



than she followed the doctor. She had to speak to him alone at least for a few seconds. And he wanted to speak, alone, to her. For here he was in the hall, waiting at the head of the stairs; and it was almost like last night, when they were alone together and it never had entered her head to doubt him.

"After I'd phoned you," he said, as soon as she came near him, "I almost phoned you again not to come."

"Why?" Margaret caught her breath. "You wish I hadn't?"

"Only for your sake—you know that. You'd got away from this—and I dragged you into it again."

"I never got away from it," Margaret denied. She could see more plainly, now, how tired he was. Like Larry, he couldn't have slept at all; but how unlike Larry's was his reason! "And I wanted to come back here!" she said.

"All right, then! Stay with him—will you?—every minute I'm away. Mrs. Cleburne'll be right by, if he needs anything medically. I've told her what to do. But he won't take sedatives, if I wanted to give 'em. He means to have his faculties so as not to miss anything that happens—any news that comes."

"What's he been told?"

"All we know. There's a little more that you don't know. I couldn't go into it over the phone. I was keeping it till you got here. Now, he can tell you. You see, of course, the one thing that's essential to him."

"What?"

"His faith in his wife. He had—he has—complete confidence in her. Complete; he couldn't live with anything less concerning her. You'd have to know her to understand. As long as he keeps it, he'll not collapse, I think, whatever else has happened to her—whatever else she's done."

The doctor was driving away, and Margaret found Mr. Seamore watching the car when she re-entered the bedroom. He waited until the car disappeared before he turned to her.

"Deborah sent for him," Mr. Seamore said. He seemed suddenly to realize that he had spoken aloud. "My wife sent for him—and then she went away," he continued. "Then you were here; thank God, you were here."

"I was here," Margaret assured him. It seemed so necessary to him.

"When Grenby came?"

"Yes; when Dr. Grenby came."

"The fellow—down there—he was dead?"

"Yes."

"But he hadn't died at once. Did you know that? He would have lived at least for a few minutes, I'm informed. Not only by Grenby. Everybody says so."

"Yes," Margaret said. "I heard them say so last night."

"Then it makes sense, doesn't it? Deborah—my wife—sent for the doctor for him, because he wasn't dead yet. She called Grenby, not for herself, but for—the fellow. That makes sense to me."

"And to me," Margaret agreed.

"Does it make sense, if she'd shot him, that the next thing she'd do was call a doctor for him?"

"Of course not," Margaret said.

"Of course not," he repeated; but he had found no satisfaction in it, nor had Margaret. For at the moment after a girl like Deborah Seamore had shot a man—if she had done it!—her next action need not make sense. At such a moment, how could it?

"Nobody ever saw the fellow before! I never saw him—until they showed him to me, dead. And shot in my house, they said; and by my wife, probably. They didn't say that, but that's what they thought. But she never killed anybody; she just couldn't; Deborah couldn't even hurt anyone!"

Almost the identical words of the doctor last night! The feeling of the two men was identical where Deborah Seamore was concerned; they shared an identical adoration of her—this man who was her husband and the doctor who was—what, to her?

Margaret wanted enormously to know.

"So some one else shot him," Deb-

orah Seamore's husband was saying "Some one else was with her last night. You think it was a woman!"

"It must have been a woman!" Margaret said.

"If it wasn't Deborah you saw leaving this house!"

"Yes."

"So it all depends on that! It all depends on you!"

Margaret nodded, for at the instant she could not speak; suddenly she was sick inside. At the distance she had been, when the woman—or the girl—had come out of the house, could she have more than guessed whether she was watching a girl or a woman? And her guess would have been based—Margaret realized—on the way that the woman, or the girl, moved. She had not appeared like a light, lovely thing such as the girl of the garden; but the lovelier and gentler a girl was, the more confused she must have become and the more clumsily she would have moved—after just shooting a man or having been present at the killing.

So wasn't it Deborah Seamore whom Margaret Wristin had seen come out of the door and stop and call back to someone inside the door, before she finally fled?

"Nobody knows him; I don't know him," Mr. Seamore had returned to the riddle of the identity of the man killed in his house. "But Deborah knew him. They think—because of cigarette stubs and other signs in the room—that Deborah and he were in the house about twenty minutes. He was looking for her in the afternoon. Did you know that?"

"No."

"Jake Scranley has the filling station between here and the village. About three o'clock yesterday, a young man drove up and asked directions to my place. Bennie Trawl was there—he's a pathetic boy whom Jake lets do little jobs for the money he can pick up—Bennie gave the directions. The man tossed Bennie a quarter and drove away. Jake told the police about it and they had both him and Bennie see the body. It's the same man. That doesn't add much but it shows he didn't just drop in. And he was alone—at least when he was at the filling station.

"He drove away in the direction of this place. My wife wasn't here in the afternoon. She was at the Warrens' until about five. She drove home then; and she seems to have been here alone until seven when she went to the Wilsons' for dinner.

"If that fellow looked in here at three o'clock, I don't think he stayed; and I don't think he came back before seven. The Wilsons are sure Deborah wasn't in the least disturbed about anything when she was with them. But when she came home from the Wilsons' he was waiting for her—and he followed her in."

Mr. Seamore raised himself a little higher on his pillows. His face flushed ruddier; his hands—Margaret noticed—clenched and clenched again.

"The police are convinced Deborah knew him. They say—certainly the newspapers are going to say he must be a man out of my wife's past. They'll have to

supply a 'past' for her that she never had —that she simply never could have had. No one will recognize her for the sincere, gentle person she is—and always has been."

"Neither you nor I," Margaret said, "will particularly appreciate newspapers tomorrow."

He looked at her. "We are in much the same spot, aren't we? For who will guess, from what he reads tomorrow, the sort of person you are? . . . I've been married to Deborah Mathers for less than two years. I met her less than two years before that. So what do I *know* about her life before I married her—and especially before I met her?"

Clearly this was a question which had been put to him and he had been helpless before the offense of it; but he had had to make an answer which had not satisfied him, Margaret thought. He was making another answer now.

"I've a friend named Long living in New Jersey. I drove to his house rather early for dinner one Friday afternoon in May three years ago. One of his children was having a music lesson; beside the little boy on the piano bench was a slight, lovely girl. . . ."

Did he realize—Margaret wondered as she listened to him—that he was admitting how little he, himself, ever had actually known about that gentle, lovely girl he had found in his friend's house that day? He repeated to Margaret—as undoubtedly he had related to the police —what Mrs. Long had told him about Deborah Mathers; but all that Mrs. Long had known—all that she could have known—was what Deborah Mathers had told her about herself.

Her father and mother had been missionaries. Deborah had been born in the Philippines, but, by the time she was ten, her father and mother and her little brother and herself were living far in the interior of China. The brother died of disease; Chinese soldiers, who had turned bandit, killed the father. Her mother's health was broken by hardship and she succeeded, at last, in getting her daughter and herself out of China. They reached the United States and in a little place in Oregon called Cleggstown—the mother died. Deborah was alone and she decided to come East. She'd selected the village in New Jersey from a woman —a friend of Mrs. Long's—whom she met on the train and who'd helped her get started as a music teacher. She wasn't much of a musician but she had a marvelous knack with children.

That seemed to be the sum of what Mr. Seamore learned about Deborah Mathers at the time; and it was all he had known of her earlier experience when he married her eighteen months later. It was plain that he fell completely in love with her; that he never questioned her: his confidence in her was absolute. And it scarcely was shaken now!

"There's a theory about last night different from your idea—and mine—about the third person who was here. Have you heard it?" he challenged Margaret.

"Yes."

"It makes the third person a man, not a woman."

"Yes," Margaret admitted again.

"In other words, Grenby."

"Yes."

"Do you believe it?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because I was here when he arrived."

"Or when he returned," Mr. Seamore carefully corrected and watched her closely, "if the other theory about him—and my wife—holds!"

"It doesn't hold with me."

"How can it with me? For he couldn't cheat me alone; she'd have to've been cheating me, too!"

The nurse bent over him again. Twice she had drawn near him and twice retreated. Now she did not retreat and she made it plain his visitor ought to leave.

When Margaret was downstairs, for the first time she went into the dining-room which had a window overlooking the rear of the house where, as in front, was a grove of oaks and maples a hundred yards away. Two uniformed men, a small distance apart, walked slowly under the trees. Plainly they were searching the ground for something and Margaret stood at the window watching them for several minutes before she realized that she was being watched herself; for a swinging door, which had been closed, now was pushed a little open and a boy was peering at her. He let the door close and hide him; she pushed it open from her side and found him in the pantry.

She'd frightened him, she saw, as he stood before her with a half-eaten chicken drumstick in his hand. He was a scrawny, ill-nourished boy of twelve perhaps, with a pale, thin face and light, unkempt hair; his faded blue shirt was soiled and his trousers were too big for him but he had on good new shoes.

"Why, hello!" Margaret said, as unalarmingly as she could.

"Hello," he returned and, because he had seen her notice his shoes, he seemed to feel he had to explain them. "She give'm t'me; an' she lets me eat when'ver I want," he explained with a difficulty in his enunciation that was due, Margaret realized, to an impediment in his speech.

Margaret nodded. "Mrs. Seamore," was all she said and the boy became hysterical. The chicken bone fell from his fingers; his hand thrust into a trouser pocket, pulled out a coin and flung it on the floor. "There's it! He gave me, for I tol' where she live! There's it!" he screamed and fled to the far end of the pantry where he butted the swinging door and stumbled through it into the kitchen. When Margaret followed him, he had the back door open and he was out, slamming the door behind him. Through a kitchen window, she watched him running away.

In the pantry she picked up his coin, a quarter. It was a quarter, she remembered, that the stranger who wanted direction to the Seamores' had tossed to the boy at the filling station.

Margaret returned to the front hall. She had nothing more to do in this house but she had not the smallest desire to leave it. . . . A half-hour ticked itself out. There, at last, was the doctor's car.

She knew, as she watched him come up from his car, that something depressing had happened. She opened the screen door and he changed as he saw her. "Hello! You're still here. I hoped you'd be!"

"You've found out something," Margaret said; but he avoided answer to that by asking her: "How're things upstairs?"

"Quiet enough, I think."

"Good girl! Then nothing's been going on here?"

She wanted to know what had happened to him; but she told him about the boy in the pantry.

"That was Bennie—Bennie Trawl," this tired man said; for suddenly he was tired, very tired again. "The poor handicapped kid. Deborah Seamore was always looking after him, and seeing that he had enough to eat."

"He told me so; and he said she gave him his shoes."

The doctor nodded. "The poor kid exploded, I suppose, because he got the idea he's to blame for giving directions to this place!"

"What have you found out, Doctor?"

"One good thing, thank God! Bobby Wardlow hasn't polio. The parents were in a panic that he had; but I could tell them definitely, no!"

Margaret could not keep herself from catching his sleeve. He was so glad to have something good, today! He covered her hand with his other hand and his fingers held hers firmly. "But that has nothing to do with—this," he said; for "this" was the trouble involving Deborah Seamore and her husband; and himself; and Margaret Wristin, too! "How did it go with you—at home?" he was asking her.

"My parents—both of them—couldn't have been more wonderful!"

"I wasn't asking about your parents!" he said; and when she had no answer for him, he took both her hands in his and drew her closer. "I was afraid it would be that way! I mean, I hoped it!"

"Hoped it?" Margaret repeated. "Why?" And she made no move to free herself; it was he who freed her; but this —and in a moment she saw it—was because the nurse had come downstairs.

"Doctor, Mr. Seamore saw you return," the nurse said. "Naturally he's very impatient to know if you've heard anything."

"I'll be right up," he promised the nurse and hardly waited for her to be out of sight before he had Margaret's hands in his again. "The news isn't good, Margaret."

"They've found Mrs. Seamore?"

"Not that. But they've word back from the Oregon town where she lived before Seamore met her—where she told him she lived. The police wired the police of Cleggstown—it's a little place— for information about anybody who might molest a Deborah Mathers who formerly lived there and whose mother died there in 1946. The Cleggstown police replied so far as can be found no Deborah Mathers ever lived there and they can guarantee no one named Mathers died in Cleggstown in 1946 or in any recent year. It's something to have to take upstairs, before the police take it to him, isn't it?"

Dr. David Grenby's clasp of her

hands did not relax; but hers of his, did. Momentarily, she could not help it. She tightened it, again; and she met his eyes, as he looked down into hers. Of course, this news made him no different. It made Deborah Seamore different; but not him! Not to her, who had been here in this very hall when he had hurried in last night, with his trousers and coat over his pajamas—and knowing nothing of the shooting. But to the man upstairs, he would be different! For Mr. Seamore had not doubted him because to doubt him was to dishonor his own wife. In Mr. Seamore's mind, the honor of his wife and of the doctor—their honor or dishonor—were tied together.

"Margaret!" Dr. David Grenby exclaimed to her.

"Two men — two policemen — have been searching the woods in back of the house all afternoon," she said to him.

"I know it. They're looking for the gun."

"Why are they looking for it there?"

"On the theory we're right, Margaret."

"We're right?"

"Yes; you and I; for we both believe a third person was present—who must have left by the back door; and might have had the revolver and dropped it or threw it away in the woods. Now I've got to go upstairs."

Margaret felt once more the pressure of his fingers over hers; once more she responded to it; and then she let him go.

It was beyond belief—she thought, as she watched him on the stairs—that from the first second he saw her and up to this last moment, he had been fooling her, using her.

Now she had no reason at all for remaining in the house; but she did not go. After a few minutes, she wandered again into the dining-room and stood at the north window. The two policemen were still searching in the woods. . . . One of them found something. He stooped over his find, whatever it was; he went down on one knee beside it; he did not pick it up.

The other policeman joined him and bent over the find. The first man took a handkerchief from his pocket and opened it and slowly, carefully picked up some object with the handkerchief and wrapped the handkerchief around it. He stood up and the other man straightened. They looked at the house and they seemed to be arguing. Then they agreed. Together they left the woods and disappeared around the end of the house.

From the front door, Margaret caught sight of them again; they were avoiding the house on their way out to the road.

Margaret went to the foot of the stairs and, after a moment, she went up. The door of Mr. Seamore's room was closed and she tapped on it. The nurse opened it a few inches.

"Dr. Grenby," Margaret said. "I have to speak to him."

He came out and closed the door behind him; and she saw it had not been easy for him in that room; it had been far, far from easy.

"They've found the revolver, I think!" Margaret told him.

"How do you know?"

"I saw them!"

"Behind the house, you mean?"

"In the woods. They found something they wrapped in a handkerchief. I couldn't see it; but it must be the revolver. They've stopped searching, you see!"

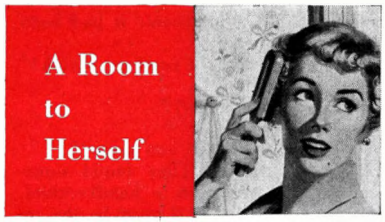
"Yes; I saw," he told her. "Thank you."

She went down the stairs and now she went out of the house. She got into her car and drove it away.

Behind the house, in the direction the doctor lived—in the direction he would have fled if he had left by the back door after the shooting—the police had found what they had searched for. So a third person surely had been present last night; "in other words, Grenby." That was what not Larry but Mr. Seamore himself had said; and he would have accused Grenby if he hadn't been obliged to accuse also his wife. But what was Mr. Seamore thinking about his wife—and about Grenby—now?

Police were still on guard at the end of the entrance road but they did not even question Margaret, leaving. She turned past the cars parked beside the cement road and she pointed for home.

It wasn't Grenby; it wasn't; it wasn't! she denied over and over to herself. And if it was—well, she had warned him! **. . . To be continued next month**



(Continued from page 40)

It's the only *real* reason there is—two people want to spend their lives together. They demand nothing of each other but love and companionship; they don't impose obligations nor conditions on each other—"

It sounded a little like something out of a book, but reasonable enough. He knew she loved him, and in the beginning he figured her you-go-to-your-church-I'll-go-to-mine attitude was a sort of precautionary thing which would pass.

Certainly on their honeymoon he had no cause for apprehension. They spent two weeks in the mountains. Mark was so happy he was practically idiotic. Mornings, he would wake and turn his head to gaze at Julie, sleeping curled up like a kitten beside him; and he'd have to assure himself all over again that he wasn't dreaming.

The way he felt about Julie was something for the books, all right; and what made him just about the luckiest guy in the world was that she seemed to feel the same way about him. She was the most beautiful creature he had ever looked at—and whether people could *own* other people or not, *she* belonged to *him*, and no mistake about that!

It was when they began furnishing their house that Mark began to come down to earth a trifle. Julie loved the house, a little ranch-type hidden away in a small jungle of its own. She planned happily with Mark. The living-room would be here, with big doors opening onto the patio. Here there would be a study for Mark. And in the playroom, a good, smooth terrazzo floor for dancing.

"I think it's silly for people to feel they have to dress up and go out to do something they can enjoy right in their own home, don't you?"

Mark agreed, and kept thinking what a lucky devil he was. Then she tossed her first bombshell. There would be, she announced calmly, a bedroom for Mark, a bedroom for her. With a connecting door, of course.

Mark was flabbergasted. They were living in a small apartment which had only one bedroom, and Julie had given no indication that she objected to sharing it with him. On the contrary—

He let out a minor howl. She said reasonably, "Darling, lots of married couples have their own rooms. You sound as if it were utterly unheard-of!"

Mark answered weakly. "I once read where an expert of some kind said twin beds are the indirect cause of a large percentage of divorces." He eyed her unhappily. "And *you* want separate rooms!"

She was nice about it, but firm. It was one of the tenets of her philosophy concerning marriage privacy and independence, and she was adamant.

The new house was completed, and they moved in. Mark's bedroom was roomy and comfortable and just about the lonesomest place he had ever known. But it was not an issue he could force. She was so sweetly reasoning about it—*Darling, what's so outrageous about one's wanting a bed all to herself?*—that he was stymied. Julie slept in her own room, and whenever he attempted to argue about it, he got the *freedom* angle, the no-person-can-own-another-person business.

Other things—small, but carrying their faint warning—kept popping up. He never knew, for instance, whether Julie would be at home when he got in from the office, evenings. He tried not to be unreasonable about it. Perhaps she couldn't be expected to rearrange her whole schedule just because Mark sat and dreamed, daytimes, how nice it would be to have Julie to come home to *every* evening. She didn't tell him where she was going or when she'd be back—and after a while he began to get the idea. She had no intention of making any concessions which even smacked of asking his permission to do things! She was in dead earnest about those theories of hers, and all of a sudden they didn't sound quite so reasonable as they had when he'd been trying to persuade her to marry him.

There was, moreover, one major item which worried him considerably. He wanted a family. Maybe not right away, but at least he wanted to rest happily in the assurance that they would have one, some day. Julie never said outright that she didn't want children. But whenever Mark attempted to discuss the possibility of their having one, it was as if he had come up against a smooth, blank wall; and invariably she steered the conversation quickly into another channel.

He tried not to worry. Even with its minor annoyances, life with Julie was too sweet to allow it to be overshadowed. She gave up her job. That was her own idea, for which Mark was intensely grateful, because he had a hunch if he'd suggested it she might have hung onto her position and maybe even started putting in overtime.

She got along swell with all his friends. She ran her house smoothly and charmingly. Always in the evenings she made herself lovely, just for him; and in his arms her sweet warmth responded quickly to his need for her. She looked after his personal needs so diligently and tirelessly that he sometimes reflected it was probably childish of him to feel that she neglected him in other ways. After all, he was a big boy and he wasn't *afraid* to sleep alone—but sometimes, waking in the dark loneliness of his own room, he felt cheated because her small, warm presence was not there beside him; and he knew an overwhelming desire to arise and kick down the door which shut him away from her.

In the beginning he comforted himself with a degree of success by regarding it as a strictly temporary arrangement. Maybe one of these days they'd need Julie's room for a nursery, and she'd forget her nonsense about wanting a whole bed to herself! Meanwhile, though, he was uncomfortably aware that it might take a blow-up to jar Julie from her firm stand. Well, it looked as if that was what had begun this afternoon at the Dorhursts'—and he reflected gloomily that he could only hope to land on his feet!

Julie went to Kenibrook. Mark went out of town, but his heart wasn't in it. He kept thinking about Julie with that wolf, and he fully expected to have to give Kell a trimming when he got back. Well, maybe it would be worth it; maybe then Julie would get it through her lovely little head that there were times when it was Papa who knew best! He was, therefore, surprised and somewhat disappointed at returning to learn that Kell had behaved like a lamb.

Julie was triumphant, her anger with Mark forgotten. "Darling, he was really sweet. I do think people are quite unfair to him."

Mark said lamely, "Well, I'm glad you had a good time."

"I didn't, actually. It was dull. I missed you terribly—and I was bored."

"Kell wasn't drinking?"

"No. As a matter of fact, he and I were the only ones who weren't. We played tennis, and rode—" Then she snuggled up to Mark. "*Drat* the party!" she said. "You're home again and that's the important thing. Darling, I'd no idea I'd miss you so much—"

For once, he was almost too preoccupied to make love to Julie. He couldn't figure it out. Kell's behavior was completely beyond comprehension—until he learned from someone else that Kell had been on the wagon recently. "Doctor's orders, you know. Stomach condition or some such thing. Only temporary—I give him a week at the outside, before he's off on another bender!"

It was, actually, a bit longer than a week. In that time, to Mark's knowledge

and his intense dissatisfaction, Julie saw Kell twice. Once she bumped into him downtown by accident, and they lunched together. The second time, they lunched by mutual consent. Mark attempted, cautiously, to approach Julie on the subject, and she immediately grew unapproachable.

"I told you how wrong you were about him. I see no reason why I shouldn't lunch with him, unless—Mark! You're not *jealous* of poor Kell!"

He said stiffly, "Don't be silly!"

"Well, I should think not! I feel terribly sorry for him. Do you know, I think he suspects people don't like him—"

"If he doesn't," Mark uttered, "he must have a hide like a rhinoceros."

Something in his tone made Julie study him again. She said sharply, "You are jealous!"

Instead of being calm and self-contained, Mark gave utterance to some pointed remarks about his wife chasing around with the worst wolf in town—*"Poor Kell, my eye! Hah!"* and how did she think it made him feel? Julie countered with the assertion that she wasn't "chasing" with anybody, and that she wasn't going to argue about it. Perhaps he didn't trust her. Very well, he'd have to make up his own mind—and as for jealousy, she simply would not tolerate it! It was a real, two-way quarrel, and maybe it should have cleared the air, but it didn't. Julie golfed with Kell the next day.

The pay-off came at the monthly country-club dance.

To begin with, Kell was off the wagon—but good. Mark chuckled inwardly as he watched Julie's reaction at seeing her "charming" playmate lit to the eyebrows.

Julie was an outright vision in swirling white net, her golden hair swept high on her queenly little head—but for once Mark was less absorbed in her lovely face than in the emotions which played across it. Kell made a beeline for them the moment they came in. He was already weaving slightly on his feet and his tongue was a little blurred. He slapped Mark on the back, took Julie's hand with a proprietary air.

"'Bout time you got here with my girl! C'mon, baby, le's dance!" He encircled her waist with his arm and cuddled her against him.

Julie gave a little gasp and tried to free herself. Mark gritted his teeth. Then he grinned at them both and said, "Have fun, kiddies." He moved away, leaving Julie in Kell's eager hands. He could feel her angry, incredulous stare burning into his back, but he shrugged mentally and kept walking.

It was a pretty grim evening. Kell never let Julie get more than an arm's length away from him, although it was painfully obvious that she was trying desperately to get away. Early in the evening she sent Mark several appealing glances, but she gave up and moved with her head high and scarlet spots blazing in her cheeks.

Mark danced and talked, and he kept his glance carefully impersonal whenever he glanced at his wife.

Kell made several trips to the bar,

dragging a thoroughly unwilling Julie with him. Her face was so miserable that Mark could hardly stand it. He thought, This is Independence Day, baby. Maybe you'll never forgive me, but I've got to find out once and for all just how free you want to be!

It was tough. It was tough as hell. There were moments when he wanted to throw caution to the winds and push Kell's face in, just for luck! He took a drink to strengthen his resolve.

Once Nell Alder and Gert Folsolm paused near him. Nell said irritably, "Mark Britton, what's gotten into you, letting Kell maul Julie like that? Can't you see the poor kid is ready to drop dead with shame? I can tell you right now, if that was *me* out there, Bob would murder someone!"

Gert was less sympathetic. "If you want my opinion, Julie's been asking for it!"

It was during the waltz that Kell kissed Julie. He kissed her very thoroughly, right in front of the bandstand, with everyone looking amusedly on.

With an outraged gasp that could be heard above the music, Julie tore herself out of his arms and hurried through the crowd, her face white. She collided with Mark, near the bar, and said breathlessly, "I want to go home!"

"What's the matter, angel? Tired?"

"No—yes! Oh, what does it matter. I just want to leave, that's all!"

He said easily, "Okay, take the car. I can get a taxi."

"You're—not coming with me?"

It was hard to meet her hurt eyes with nonchalance, but he managed it.

"Oh, I think I'll stick around a while. The evening's young yet. You run along, if you want to. I'll see you later."

It was like slapping her, and it hurt inside.

She said tonelessly, "When will you be home?"

"Oh, I don't know. Maybe midnight, maybe later—"

She turned on her heel and walked out.

She was lying on the divan in the living-room when he came home. some time after one. He said, "Oh, hello—you still up?"

Julie sat up. Her cheeks were pale and there was moisture on them, but he pretended not to notice. "Too bad you left so early. The party got good. Rae Gillis came by with the Michaels and she sang some of the songs from her new show. She's quite a gal."

Julie said stiffly, "I'm glad you enjoyed yourself," and Mark's brows lifted.

"Why—didn't you? I noticed you a time or two and you seemed to be having quite a time."

"You noticed me a great deal," she exclaimed indignantly, "and you knew I was having a ghastly time! Mark,"—her voice rose to a wail—"how *could* you?"

He was proud of the innocence his tone achieved. "How could I what?"

"You deliberately let that dreadful Kell make a fool of me, in front of all those people, and you never lifted a finger to help me! You could at least have asked me to dance, helped me get away from him—"

"Wait a minute. If Kell made a fool of you, maybe it was because *you* let him. I'll admit I thought he was getting pretty fresh, even for Kell, but what could *I* do? You've been pretty explicit about my interfering with your freedom. Besides, you've been seeing quite a bit of him lately, and maybe he got the wrong idea—"

"Look here, Mark Britton!" Her voice shook. "If you think you were teaching me a—a lesson of some kind, I think it was beastly of you. You knew how horribly embarrassed I was. I couldn't get rid of Kell, and everyone was watching and laughing at me—" She began to cry, helplessly, the tears streaming down her face.

Mark watched her expressionlessly. He said, "Well, I'm not sure what you expected me to do. I'll admit I had an urge to flatten him. Maybe we ought to work out some sort of signals—signals or something. Otherwise, I get a little confused as to when you want to be completely independent, and when you'd like me to make like a husband. Me, angel, I'm strictly from the corn country. I've got ideas about marriage, too, but they're not much like yours. Mine are about taking care of the woman I love, protecting her, but how can I, if she won't let me? That's *my* idea of the meaning of marriage, but if you accepted the sort of care I want to give you, I guess you'd feel you were sacrificing your independence, and believe me,"—his mouth tightened—"you would be! If we were operating on my terms, when you first began this fool business with Kell I'd have turned you across my knee and warmed your fanny!"

Julie continued to cry, drearily. Mark watched her. After a long time she said, "I don't know—I'm all confused." She twisted her fingers together. "I was so—humiliated! Kell was so awful, and you seemed so far away from me, so—so impersonal, as if you were watching some perfect stranger make a fool of herself. I guess I should have listened to you, but after that week-end at Midge's. I did think you were wrong about Kell. He seemed—nice. Maybe I've been wrong about a lot of things."

"Maybe you have."

"Maybe you wouldn't believe me if I told you I've taken the attitude I have to protect us—our marriage—"

"You might try. That's quite a set of ideas you've got, baby. Where did you ever pick them up?"

"It was—Jeannie. My sister. I never told you very much about her, Mark. She was married and living in Los Angeles; when I left the convent, I went to stay with her. That was just before I came here to go to work. I couldn't bear it at Jeannie's. She was good to me, but it was dreadful for me, because she was so unhappy. Paul—that was her husband—was—I loathed him. Mark! He was awful to Jeannie, and she was frightened to death of him. His word was absolutely law, and he was crazily jealous, although heaven knows she never gave him any cause. She was

afraid even to turn around without his permission." Her voice was low and she talked swiftly, as if anxious to get it over with. "They kept having children—Jeannie could never have gotten away from him, not with all those youngsters to take care of. Anyway, he'd have tried to take them from her. He always acted as if they were his property, just as she was, and—I guess none of this makes much sense to you."

Mark said slowly, "I guess it makes a lot."

"Well, it seemed to me that so much of it was Jeannie's fault, for letting him get the—the upper hand! He *must* have loved her once—and I know she was in love with him. But when I knew him he didn't have any consideration for her at all, and I think she almost hated him. She told me once she actually dreaded for him to touch her—" Her voice wobbled and quit.

Mark waited silently. Presently she said, "I made up my mind that I'd never let my marriage be like that. It seemed to me that if a woman let a man know she was—well, independent, he'd never begin to take her for granted, nor act as if he owned her. And when I married you, I loved you so *much*—I couldn't bear to think that anything might happen to change it, that our love would grow old and—commonplace. So I took steps."

"Baby—" said Mark, reaching out to take her in his arms, "you did. You *really* did!" After a long moment of not exactly inactive silence, he said with a deep breath, "As of now, we're dealing ourselves a new hand, and Papa is taking the upper one! Any objections?"

She shook her head with surprising meekness.

Mark continued determinedly, "And tomorrow I'll stay at home and help you."

She looked puzzled. "Help me with what?"

"Move the things from your room to our room."

She said, "Oh," in a very small voice.

"We can use yours for a guest-room, until we need it for something else. A nursery, maybe." He grinned down at her. "Don't worry, I'm not going to insist on flocks of children, but we should be able to work out a compromise."

"*I* want babies," she said. "I always have. I wouldn't even care if we had *flocks* of them, as long as we both want them and I didn't have to have them whether I wanted them or not, and—"

"Come up for air," said Mark, "before you strangle!"

Julie leaned against his shoulder. After a time she asked dreamily, "Darling, did you really want to flatten Kell?"

"Oh, that. I guess I forgot to tell you. I did."

"You *hit* him?"

"Uh-huh. Right after you left, I invited him out on the terrace and knocked him into a hydrangea bush." Mark chuckled, and added, "He looked so peaceful there, sleeping with white blossoms in his hair."

She sighed happily. "Oh, darling, you do love me, don't you?"

He said nothing. There were ways for a man to answer a question like that without talking his head off. . . . THE END

PSYCHOLOGIST'S CASEBOOK

continued from page 41

DR. JOHN R. MARTIN'S ANALYSIS:

June's life — like all our lives — has been made up of a series of decisions. This process of choice-making begins when we are very young, and often we must choose between objects and beliefs of high emotional significance. In childhood, June was faced with such a choice. Who deserved her devotion—her neglectful mother, or her conscientious aunt?

Unable to make this decision, June tried to forget the matter. However, she felt restless. Indecision generates nervous energy. We may deny the existence of our inner conflicts, but our nervous habits give us away.

In June's case, frequent hand-washing, because she "can't help it," is the nervous symptom of a deep-seated inner conflict. As a little girl, she was puzzled, because she did not love her mother as other girls did. These feelings stood in direct conflict with her religious convictions and social observations. The idea of rejecting her mother was so incompatible with her religious training, and with the "normal" relationships between her little playmates and their mommies that she banished the thought. Because of this, she felt restless and guilty. Diagnosis #2 is correct.

The nervous energy arising from June's conflict found an outlet in increasing neatness and cleanliness. It was finally focused in the compulsive habit of hand-washing. In June's case Treatment #1 is recommended. She needs professional help in discovering and understanding the causes for her feelings of guilt. When her inner conflict is resolved, her spic and span house will take on a new quality. It will become a comfortable, livable home.

PERSONALITY POINTERS

1 **When you can't make up your mind, don't try to forget the matter.**

2 **Persist until you reach a decision, then act upon and live by that decision.**

If someone close to you is the victim of a nervous habit, don't be critical. Help him to understand that it may be a sign of inner conflict; help him to help himself.

Are You Getting Too Much X-Ray?

(Continued from page 53)

A recent study in and around Boston, conducted by Dr. Charles R. Williams of the Harvard School of Public Health, dredged up some unpleasant facts. Some of the machines peppered children's feet with nineteen times as much radiation *per second* as the U. S. Bureau of Standards considers safe for X-ray workers to receive in a *week!*

Further, many of the machines lacked adequate timing devices. Some gave off radiation as long as fifty-five seconds each time the starter button was pushed. Others had no timing devices whatsoever. A child, fascinated by the bones in his feet, could keep the machine operating as long as his mother's or the salesman's patience held out.

Further, many of the machines, poorly shielded, scattered radiation in all directions—a threat to the health of store clerks and customers alike. One salesman interviewed by Dr. Williams reported that on busy days he supervised as many as 400 shoe fittings, all presumably with some exposure to radiation.

What happens to a child overexposed in a shoe-fitting machine? The radiation can cause tissue destruction which may show up ten or twenty years later. Then blood vessels may thicken, become unsightly, or may ulcerate and become infected. Or cancer may develop.

A second danger in the X-ray machine is the effect on bones. Children's growing bones have soft, cartilagelike ends. Damage to this soft tissue stops bone growth.

Polio often stops the growth of an affected leg. Physicians sometimes stop growth of the other leg with X-rays—so the two legs will match in later life. In a recent *New England Journal of Medicine* article, Dr. L. H. Hempelmann, of Boston, suggests that the shoe-fitting machines might have a similar effect on young feet, stopping bone growth.

One young woman, a model, had an even more serious effect. This girl worked for shoe manufacturers, and she exposed her feet repeatedly to X-rays from shoe-fitting machines. She was so severely burned that partial amputation of one foot was necessary.

To prevent such possible damage, makers of the shoe-fitting machines are carefully regulating dosages of new models, keeping it within safe limits. Several cities—Detroit and Boston, among them—require that all machines be inspected and licensed.

New York City demands that exposures from such machines last no more

NEWS ABOUT MEDICINE

Doctors Learn More Secrets of Common Heart Malady

In children and in young adults, the leading cause of heart disease is rheumatic fever. Today, medicine is making great strides in conquering this malady. The death rate in rheumatic fever was dropping fast even before the use of the antibiotic drugs. Recently, three Chicago doctors discovered that in a group of children, all victims of rheumatic fever, not a single relapse occurred after treatment with penicillin. In Boston's House of the Good Samaritan, a study was made of 1,000 patients who had suffered rheumatic fever attacks ten years previously. Almost 800 of these people were virtually unrestricted in their activities.

A Warning on Thyroid Drugs

A warning to persons who are trying to lose weight by taking thyroid extract — unprescribed by a physician — has recently been issued by the American Medical Association. Unfortunately, many persons taking thyroid for metabolic disorders have discovered that the drug is markedly effective in reducing unwanted excess weight. They were treated originally with proper doses, but have increased their daily intake without the knowledge of their doctors. Others have heard of the drug and have purchased it without a physician's advice. They do not realize that by reducing weight in this way they may be exposing themselves to serious heart, liver or nervous disorders. Patients with thyroid prescriptions should report to their physicians if they are suffering from palpitation, nervousness, sweating or excessive loss of weight. These may be signs that they are receiving an overdose, and temporary discontinuance of the treatment may be ordered. Thyroid is a powerful substance with a slow cumulative effect. It should only be taken under the closest medical supervision.

Children Who Grind Their Teeth at Night

Children who grind their teeth in sleep are suffering from the same type of disturbances that causes nightmares or sleep-talking. The cause may be either physical or psychological. Digestive troubles, wet diapers or bed clothes, excessive heat or cold are all discomforts which might cause a child to grind his teeth at night. Tension and anxiety, especially in children who are overactive and nervous in the daytime, can also be responsible. Doctors advise that tooth grinding may also sometimes be caused by enlarged adenoid tonsils. If your child grinds his teeth in his sleep and no physical disturbance is apparent, you should consider sources of worry or insecurity which might be the cause of emotional tension.

Relief for Shingles

Until recently medical science could offer little relief for the victims of shingles, a painful skin eruption usually afflicting the upper body or face. Now tests indicate that aureomycin, one of the new antibiotic drugs, may bring quick, dramatic relief when administered in frequent doses during a two-day period. This treatment, of course, must be given under the supervision of your physician.

New Liquid Cream for Baby's Skin

A new liquid cream for baby's skin attacks free ammonia in the diaper area which is the cause of diaper rash. The new cream serves the double purpose of relieving the rash and deodorizing diapers.

BY MARTIN GUMPERT, M. D.

than five seconds, and that total X-ray dosage be small. Secondly, every machine must carry a warning sign: REPEATED EXPOSURE TO X-RAYS MAY BE HARMFUL. EXAMINATIONS FOR SHOE FITTING SHOULD BE LIMITED TO NO MORE THAN 12 IN ANY ONE YEAR.

But such regulations affect a relatively small percentage of the estimated 10,000 shoe-fitting machines in use in the country. If there are no municipal ordinances governing their use, and if a shoestore owner won't spend $100 or so to have old machines rebuilt to meet modern safety standards, *there is no way* of forcing him to take this step.

Another alarming use of X-ray is gaining favor. For years, physicians have known that X-rays damage ovaries, thereby producing sterility in women. In some cases, careful dosage could produce temporary sterility. This knowledge was put to good use by doctors—in preventing pregnancy in women physically or mentally unfit for childbearing. But now, X-rays are being used as a long-lasting contraceptive. No practice could be more dangerous.

Each year, the use of radiation expands. We have beams from cyclotrons, radioactive isotopes. X-ray has put on overalls and gone to work in industry—inspecting castings and looking into packaged goods for foreign material.

Medical uses have similarly widened. X-ray is employed to remove warts, blemishes, and to treat eighty-odd other skin diseases. In cases where the human egg fails to erupt from the ovary, doctors use a small X-ray dosage to break down the fragile membrane that holds back the egg, thereby permitting pregnancy. Radium is also used to shrink congested nasal passages and to destroy tonsil fragments left after surgery.

As a more conservative attitude toward the use of radiation gains favor each day, even some medical devices are coming under criticism. One is the radium applicator for treating various nose and throat ailments—infections, overgrown tissue which clogs passages, and such. Not long ago, Dr. Laurence L. Robbins and Dr. Milford D. Schulz, of the department of radiology of famed Massachusetts General Hospital, took a critical look at such devices and noted that such applicators deliver 150 roentgens per minute to delicate nasal tissues, and are usually used for twelve minutes—giving a total dosage of 1,800 roentgens. (The roentgen is the measurement unit in radiation work.)

From hospital files, Dr. Robbins and Dr. Schulz dug out cases showing possible end results from such massive applications of radiations. As an example, a baby girl got X-ray treatments for a small lump on her nose, and the growth went away. But thirteen years later, her face became ugly, rough and ulcerated, and required extensive plastic surgery. Another patient, a man, got X-ray treatments for a "port wine" stain on his face. Twenty-three years later, tissue atrophied and his whole face had to be rebuilt in a series of costly, painful operations. The two physicians concluded that radium applicators should be used in the nose-throat area of children only after other methods of treatment had failed, and then only with greatest caution.

The fluoroscope can be dangerous. This is simply an X-ray machine equipped with a viewing screen. The screen is coated with a fluorescent material which glows when the X-ray tube is turned on, giving a shadow picture. To see how dangerous these machines can be—when improperly used—look at a case that came up in a California shipyard during the war. A hospital attendant "entertained" patients by letting them see leg, hand and arm bones with the hospital fluoroscope. Sixty-three men were seriously burned, eighteen so severely that amputations were necessary.

What about dental X-rays? Be absolutely clear on one point—dental X-rays are dangerous to one person alone: the dentist who takes the picture, if he holds the film in the patient's mouth. Doing that, day after day, he may get severely burned fingers, and so most dentists ask patients to hold their own film. There is no danger for the patient. As a rule, a dental X-ray delivers a safe two roentgens. Danger from infected teeth is far greater than any possible harm from this tiny dose of radiation.

Chest X-rays for tuberculosis also deliver only safe, small doses of radiation. Even a series of pictures of the gastrointestinal tract exposes the patient to a small dosage. And, of course, danger from some hidden illness is far greater than any possible X-ray damage. Besides, the competent radiologist always makes certain his patient hasn't had other recent radiation exposures. In this way, he avoids any damaging cumulative effect.

When a patient has cancer, however, consideration of possible damage from X-ray is secondary. The physician knows that a cancer left untreated will inevitably take a life. To destroy the cancer—which is more susceptible to X-rays than normal tissues—he will often use enormous doses of radiation, perhaps up to 16,000 roentgens. He knows that the patient has more chance to live with his burn than he has with his cancer.

Such enormous doses of radiation are applied only to leg, arm or body organ. A person whose whole body is exposed to perhaps 500 roentgens will usually die within a few weeks.

In the early days of X-ray and radium, these enormously valuable weapons against diseases were often used on "strawberry" birthmarks, warts and other benign conditions. Gradually, the radiologists learned that they were dealing with red-letter danger—often at their own cost. Dozens paid with their lives. Not long ago, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* editorialized: "Roentgen treatment for benign conditions should be used only with a vivid appreciation of its capacity for harm."

X-rays pose yet another danger—possible damage to sex cells. These cells carry chromosomes, which contain thousands of submicroscopic genes, strung together like beads. The genes determine that a baby shall have his mother's blue eyes, that he shall inherit his father's red hair, that he shall be tall or short, light or dark in skin. The genes are highly sensitive to radiation.

This would not be too important, except for the fact that chromosomes and genes are *immortal*.

Years ago, Dr. Herman J. Muller, Professor of Zoology at Indiana University and Nobel Prize winner, peppered fruit flies with X-rays and produced bizarre monsters—flies with extra heads, legs, wings, off-color eyes, twisted bodies. Further, he showed that the speed with which such monsters could be produced was directly proportional to the amount of X-ray given them.

Research men at the University of Washington recently irradiated fish and produced freakish offspring.

Showering the earth from outer space, cosmic rays will at sea level give the average human radiation equal to two roentgens in his lifetime. Perhaps these powerful energy bullets do sometimes smash human genes. The chances of such a happening are, of course, remote. The chromosome target is minute—and so is the bullet. Uncounted billions of cosmic rays could strike millions of human beings before a single hit was registered. Yet the law of probability indicates that a few such collisions must take place.

If X-rays do damage human sex cells, many generations might pass before the damage would show up. Fortunately, damaged genes are dominated by healthy genes. However, it is possible that a man carrying a particular faulty gene will mate with a woman also carrying a faulty gene for the same characteristic. The result may be a baby that dies before birth or is deformed.

Dr. Muller sums up his beliefs:

"X-ray treatments for certain diseases, and even brief exposures to X-rays in examining the abdominal region, bring small but definitely calculable chances of producing permanent hereditary deficiencies in descendants who will not be born for generations. The damage to be expected is the same kind as that wrought by radiations from an atom-bomb explosion. Exposure to radiation repeated generation after generation could in time succeed in destroying the human gene system beyond recovery."

In other words, too much radiation could wipe out the human race.

It is worth noting, for example, that shoe-fitting machines aim radiation directly upward at the pelvic area—and at susceptible sex cells. The use of X-rays to induce a temporary sterility is a potential source of genetic disaster. In this case the *target* is the reproductive system, the storehouse of the chromosomes which will be passed along to future generations if a pregnancy occurs later. Dr. Muller stresses a point here: "There is no recovery from the effect, even though the reproductive organs may regain apparently normal functioning."

Many radiologists quarrel with Muller's conclusions—contending that too few people are damaged by X-rays to become a considerable factor in human heredity. Yet the fact remains that we are now living in a radiation age. More and more X-rays are used in industry, more and more radioactive materials in research laboratories; more and more atomic plants are turning out radioactive wastes. And the more widespread the use, the greater the potential damage.

... THE END

BY RUTH DRAKE
PHOTOS AND MURAL BY PLUCER

Frosted white jacket over a cool camisole-top sundress of Everfast's printed cotton. By Kay Dunhill. Sizes 12-20. Colors: orange, gold, and blue. About $13. Betmar hat. **A summer-conscious** dress in Arthur Beir's crease-resistant chiffon voile. Tebilized. Petal neckline and shirred pockets. A Town and Country Club design. Sizes 12-20. Colors: gold and gray, beige and rose, and two-tone blue. About $13. Betmar hat. **Cued for dates.** Rippling bertha on a dress by Sacson in Dan River satin-striped plaid tissue gingham. Sizes 10-18. In green on navy, tan on green, and blue on coffee. About $11.

Cotton belle. Crisp and cool dress of Bates Picolay. Portrait neckline and pocket accents of net and embroidery. By Lampl. Sizes 10-18. Colors: maize, white, pink, blue, aqua, mint, green, violet. About $15. Echo scarf. Madcaps hat. **Sheer cardigan** over tank-top sundress. Designed by Stanley Wyllins of Ciro in Wamsutta's cotton broadcloth and voile. Sanforized. Sizes 12-20. Colors: turquoise green, navy, brown, and sulphur. About $17.95. Betmar hat. All cotton gloves by Dawnelle. Gold jewelry by Coro. All other jewelry by Sandor-Goldberger. Heineman Flowers. Lubar parasols.

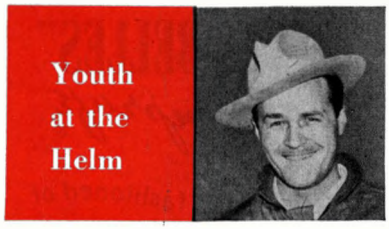
Turn the page for more cotton fashions ➡

Left: Bare arm and high neckline dresses are summer, 1950, news. Here a **scrumptious sheer** bold plaid dress designed by Claire Smith of Serbin in Lonsdale's tissue gingham. Wrinkle-resistant. Sizes 10-18. In mauve and blue, brown and green, and two-tone green. About $13. Betmar hat. **City-bred white,** belted in red. A Betty Barclay design in Lonsdale's weldon pique. It's Sanforized. In white only. Sizes 9-15. About $11. Madcaps hat.

Right: **Mother and daughter** are sun followers. They wear matching sun-dresses with trim little fitted jackets for cover-up. Plenty of skirt fullness for action. Betty Barclay designs in Henry Glass star pattern waffle pique. Sanforized. In blue or red with white. Sizes: Mother 9-15; Daughter 3-6X. Mother's dress about $9. Daughter's dress about $5. Madcaps hats.

Settings inspired by the Memphis Cotton Carnival

For answers to your shopping queries, write to the Fashion Department, Redbook Magazine, 444 Madison Avenue, New York 22, N. Y.



(Continued from page 31)

in the Belvedere and Towers clubs provided all gambling games for a hodgepodge of wealthy vacationists down for the famed mineral baths, gamblers down for the money, and gangsters down to cool off. Under a gentlemen's agreement with the city the gambling syndicate paid regular, semimonthly "fines" for the right to operate. During the year 1946 these "fines" came to $31,600. According to a grand jury's report, in this same year the syndicate's own profit was $1,671,928. Under these profitable circumstances, McMath's idealism was not apt to be particularly welcome.

McMath decided he could move fastest against the situation as prosecuting attorney. He had about enough money for groceries, and he knew the political machine had such quaint practices as slapping Administration critics into the local jug, raising taxes, destroying credit and kindred pleasantries. He also knew he stood a good chance of getting some knots pounded on his noggin, but more than that he wanted to clean out a rotten setup that permitted joints catering to teen-agers. Furthermore, he was still burned at the recollection of men like Al Capone, Lucky Luciano and others of their ilk who wandered the streets in brazen openness and maintained suites at the Arlington Hotel. Another rankling memory was the misguided hospitality of the police chief who was later convicted in Federal Court for harboring the Alvin Karpis gang.

McMath's reception by the about-to-be-rescued populace was what might be called cool. The voters too well knew the penalties for bucking the machine. But McMath did manage to get a young crew together, and he launched into a series of speeches at doubting PTA meetings, Rotary luncheons, church socials—any meeting that would have him.

"Remember," McMath demanded, "there were 4,000 Garland County boys who left their homes to fight for democracy, and individual rights, and human decency all over the world. Why can't they have it at home?"

There was no answer, but there were some uneasy stirrings.

McMath carried his campaign closer to the political machine. He sent his men around to collect house-to-house evidence of poll-tax purchase violations. They found proof that the machine was buying whole blocks of poll-tax receipts, but they were waylaid by party henchmen and robbed of their records.

Next, the GI reform candidate for county judge got a phone message threatening his baby daughter.

That was when McMath really moved. Early the next morning he was at the office of Mayor Leo P. McLaughlin, the machine boss. Slick, immaculate Mayor McLaughlin, delighting in the title "the Jimmy Walker of the Ozarks," was smooth.

But Sid could purr, too, in a smooth Arkansas accent like the caress of a Southern breeze. Said he, "We're doing everything we can to avoid violence. We intend to beat you legally at the polls. But if there is any more of this rough stuff, we'll get rough, too." Then he looked the mayor straight in the eye. "Only we won't start with the boys in the street. We'll start at the top, and work our way down. I think you know what I mean."

That did it. But the machine did not give up the fight. Its grip on Hot Springs was based on a then-existing Arkansas law permitting party hacks to buy blocks of poll-tax receipts. The law said those receipts, theoretically bought by proxy for legitimate voters, had to be turned over to the legal owners within five days of purchase. This provision was ignored. Ward leaders held the receipts—actually permits to vote—and turned them over to petty criminals, town drunks and prostitutes to be voted on election day. One such leader was proven to have held 2,100 poll-tax receipts in 1946, almost a fifth of the 10,797 voters qualified to vote in the July primary.

McMath, through Federal court action, managed to get 1,607 out of 3,825 poll-tax receipts invalidated, but despite the Federal order a legal loophole was found and the nullified receipts were used in the July primary. Six of the eight reform candidates were overwhelmed. McMath slid through with a lead of a mere 525 votes.

McMath had won the primary but he had lost his supporting candidates. Even if he won again in the general election, he would be just a prosecuting attorney in courts where machine men would hear him, and machine law-enforcement officials would collect evidence. The machine could stop him cold. But if the machine was slick, it was not slick enough to outsmart youth and fighting spirit. McMath stuck his chin out farther, rallied his defeated candidates, and in the face of tradition entered them all over again as independents in the general election. He was called everything under the sun, but he made it stick. Here was something new—defeated candidates who would not admit defeat. Suddenly the populace, up to now hardly daring to take sides, dared to hope that maybe this fighting prosecution candidate not only meant business but fully intended to make the grade.

More than 16,000 voters turned out, 4,000 more than ever before, to elect McMath by a majority that was tantamount to an ovation. The gambling syndicate shut up shop for the first time in twenty-two years. Some small-time gamblers and bookies who evidently had not received the word tried to stay open, and were promptly slapped into jail. Mayor McLaughlin found himself indicted by a grand jury on fourteen counts. Said the grand jury's report, "The extent of graft and corruption in this city is unbelievable. It has touched our school system, our social, religious, and business lives." McMath at this time was thirty-four.

McLaughlin at once withdrew from the 1947 mayoralty race, and a GI reform candidate became mayor. McLaughlin won a change of venue on his trial, shifting it to another county. He was tried twice on separate charges of bribery and misuse of public funds. Both times the jury disagreed. Failing to get a conviction, Prosecutor McMath finally agreed to nol-pros the other charges. His objective had been obtained.

It was only natural that after cleaning up Hot Springs McMath was pushed into the State political spotlight. He was of hill-country stock, having been born on a small farm near Magnolia, Arkansas, on June 12, 1912. He was curly-haired and handsome, he had a drawl, and he had a Scotch-American grand-uncle who had died in the defense of the Alamo. Add to that the fact that he had taught a Sunday Bible class at the Methodist Church, and you had a natural for any political aspiration in Arkansas.

One tragedy marred the groundswell of the growing wave of "McMath for Governor." One summer afternoon in 1947, during the absence of McMath, his father came to his home much the worse for drink. Ordinarily a quiet, kindly man, Hal McMath had been overcome by the heat of the day and the liquor. He insisted, over Mrs. Sid McMath's protests, in riding his son's prize Tennessee walking horse. When the beast neared exhaustion in the summer sun, Mrs. McMath protested again. That enraged her father-in-law. He struck her several times and followed when she fled to the house.

Panic-stricken, she picked up her husband's revolver and tried to frighten him off. When he still continued toward her, she became hysterical and fired. The shot proved fatal. A grand jury acquitted the grief-stricken daughter-in-law on a self-defense plea.

Letters and telegrams of sympathy came from all over Arkansas, together with pleas that the tragedy not be allowed to interfere with McMath's gubernatorial plans. In time the flood of letters reached mandate proportions. McMath decided to make the race.

There was more behind his decision than popular request. His clean-up job in Hot Springs was about done, and from now on the prosecutor's job would be not to toss out an entrenched machine but

Page 4, Between the Lines—Eve Harrison, N. Y., Blackstone Studios, Inc.; Pages 8 & 9, Letters to the Editor — Lisa Larsen-Scope; Page 16, We Are Proud to Announce — Leo Aarons; Page 21, Here They Come — Constance Bannister, N. Y. C.; Pages 42-45, Pay-Off Holidays — Roger Coster-Rapho-Guillumette, Courtesy of Watchmakers of Switzerland, Courtesy of Belgian Tourist Bureau, Black Star, Courtesy of Associated Bulb Growers of Holland, Goran Algard, Courtesy of British Information Services; Pages 46 & 47, Hollywood Celebrates the Redbook Award — Globe Photos, Inc.

simply to see that it did not become entrenched again. It had become a defensive, vigilant position, and McMath was a six-foot, 190-pound fighter.

Only his tremendous strength and staying power enabled McMath to complete his campaign. In a six-week swing through the State's 75 counties he spoke in 300 communities, shook hands with more thousands than he thought lived in the State, and ate more chicken dinners than he thought he could hold. But he won.

He was high man in the preferential primary, and then won the runoff contest by 10,000 votes. In Arkansas, that was tantamount to election.

Then there appeared the Dixiecrats. Governor Ben Laney wanted to substitute J. Strom Thurman for President Truman on the Democratic ticket in Arkansas. But McMath, as Governor-nominee and president of the State's Young Democrat clubs, rebelled. He led the showdown fight against the Dixiecrats. It developed into a prestige battle between McMath and Governor Laney, and since Laney was the founder and initially-suggested Presidential nominee of the Dixiecrats, it was no small battle.

Some political observers hold that McMath's victory over Governor Laney broke the back of the Dixiecrats. Certainly it slowed down a movement that might have snowballed with historic effect. Ever since, Governor McMath has been a welcome visitor in Washington, President Truman going so far as to preside at a preinauguration reception for McMath in the nation's capital. Later he sent Treasury Secretary John W. Snyder as personal representative to McMath's own inauguration, and there have been rumors, which McMath disclaims, of a proffered Cabinet post.

In his inaugural address the young Governor asked the Legislature's approval of his packaged plan for a better Arkansas. His three major requests were for an emergency highway-construction program, increased educational aid and an election-reform bill. In his eyes the need for each was obvious, and he fully expected the enthusiastic support of all progress-minded legislators.

Bang! Youthful idealism ran smack into political realism. The majority of the State senators were either hostile or indifferent to his proposals.

"There's only one solution," an aide warned. "If you want to keep your major campaign promises, you've got to hand out some patronage in return for senatorial support."

That was McMath's first lesson in big-league politics. He might have his own high objectives, but there were other legislators who also had objectives of their own. One of these objectives was to keep in good with the voters who had put them into office. McMath found that if he was to get the support of the legislators who were opposing him, he would have to provide them with the wherewithal to get the support of their voters. Patronage was the answer, but horse-trading with the opposition meant sacrificing some of his own loyal supporters who were expecting jobs. McMath made the sacrifice, and now some of his old friends don't speak to him these days.

"It was a question of personal loyalty or public loyalty," he ruefully admits. "The public had to win."

McMath sheared through the old musty order like a new plow through old sod. Five weeks after he took office he had the Legislature's okay on the $28,000,000 highway-bond election, the voters of the State had endorsed it, and the contracts were signed for emergency construction work. The first plank of his campaign platform had been nailed down.

The campaign promise closest to his heart, however, was his proposal to increase local aid for education. As a grade-school boy in the hill country, he had walked four miles each way to a one-room schoolhouse where a single teacher taught all eight grades. Most of his schoolmates quit before the sixth grade.

Talking about it now, McMath says, "Poor educational opportunities have been a main reason for Arkansas's comparatively slow progress. We can't develop our natural resources until our human resources have been developed. Give the people education, and they will develop the rest."

McMath had already indicated the trend of his thinking when, in 1948, he had jumped into the fight to consolidate the school districts. Educators freely admit that it was his support that made possible the consolidation of the State's 1,500 school districts into 423 units. The consolidation, in turn, made high-school facilities available for the first time to 125,000 children. More than half of these were Negroes, and thus Arkansas became first, for once, of all Southern States to provide a high-school education for all Negro children.

After becoming governor, McMath worked harder than ever on education. Late in 1949, school elections endorsed his proposal for increased local aid for schools. Since this meant a vast yearly increase in local taxes, the proposal did not go unchallenged, but this time McMath was ready to meet the opposition.

Two weeks before the school elections he turned loose his Educational Caravan. A fleet of thirty new school busses, led by a sound-jeep playing college songs, rolled into Arkansas cities and villages. At each stop crew members swarmed into schools and playgrounds for a giant demonstration of what modern education could be like. Modern desks were installed, new blackboards were set up, schoolrooms were repainted to remove drabness, and the floors were sanded. Out in the playgrounds swings and jungle gyms were set up and the yards cleaned. Then McMath, his shirt sleeves rolled up, his tie unfastened and his curly hair mussed, would drive home his message: "Education is the price of freedom, and freedom is above price."

That talent for the neatly turned phrase, plus showmanship, plus boundless energy brought victory to McMath's school-aid proposal, and the second plank of his platform was nailed down.

And then he got his ears pinned back.

His election-reform bill got hit right on the head. He had said, "When the majority of people qualify to vote, and do vote, the decision will always be right.

When we eliminate the poll tax in Arkansas, we'll have 750,000 qualified voters. That's insurance of good government. As it is now, we had 325,000 in the last election. When a minority vote prevails, wrongs can begin to creep in, and entrenched interests can gain control as they did in Hot Springs."

But the 1949 State Legislature had been elected by a poll-tax system and saw no need to change. It refused his request for abolition of the poll tax. It refused his request for the establishment of a permanent registration system. It refused his request for the enactment of an anti-lynching law. The injection of racial issues in the anti-lynching debate resulted in a filibuster that slowly strangled the bill to death. Said McMath, in disgust, "I thought we were above that sort of thing."

Even while admitting temporary setbacks, McMath was out marshaling his forces for a new fight. He aimed directly at youth, and youth responded. His get-out-the-vote campaign, spearheaded by the Young Democrats Clubs and the Junior Chamber of Commerce, combed every city, village and Ozark peak. "If we can get the majority of eligible people to vote, the decisions will always be right," he repeated time and again. And the eligible voters responded by the thousands. More than 500,000 purchased their poll-tax receipts, more than half again as many as had ever turned out before.

Now McMath is going to the people on the poll-tax question. He will offer them a constitutional amendment at the next election in which, if approved, a simple registration will replace the poll tax as the State's vote-qualifying procedure. This same election will find McMath running again for re-election, his term as governor lasting but two years. If re-elected, and there seems to be little doubt about it, he will then resume his fight for the anti-lynching bill.

McMath's political future is still problematical but no less bright. Daydreaming friends see the U. S. Senate in the distance, but the Governor will not commit himself on that. All he claims to see is the big job to be done in Arkansas, and he wants another term to complete his program. With slightly more than half of his first term behind him, he has some reason to be confident that he will be able to carry out his projects. He has won two out of three of his major battles, and the indications are that he will not lose the poll-tax fight a second time.

In the meantime a dynamic State Resources Commission has been luring industry into Arkansas, and the per-capita income is climbing steadily. Agriculture, too, is booming, helped in part by the commission, in part by education, and to a large extent by improved rural roads. Oil, lead, coal, zinc and even diamonds are there to add luster to the State's future, and the Resources Commission is in there adding more polish every day.

All told, the score in favor of youth is good. And Governor McMath has learned another important lesson: Youth will be served—as long as it serves everybody. . . . THE END

They Want to Lend You Money

(Continued from page 25)

real estate against which to borrow. And according to people who deal with these family crises daily, your deadline is usually tomorrow.

Last year, some 15,000,000 American families faced just such emergencies. Most of them needed money within twenty-four hours. The grand total that they had to raise in order to remain solvent, or to meet some pressing demand, was a thumping four billions of dollars, plus! The sum in need almost equaled one-sixth of all the money in circulation in the country.

What happened to all these hard-pressed couples? They simply went out and borrowed the money, all of it, and they borrowed it as casually as you charge groceries at the corner store. Some called in person at a near-by neighborhood bank or loan office, where up to that moment they were complete strangers. Others merely made a telephone call there. Next morning they dropped around to pick up the cash.

They were welcomed in the money marts, made to feel at home. And all the security that these borrowers-in-a-pinch had to offer was their personal note backed only by a job, or perhaps by a used car that had seen better days, or by some household goods.

Interest charges on those 15,000,000 rescue loans were probably a good round six hundred million dollars. One look at that interest bill clearly shows that this financial first-aid service is one of our most thriving big businesses. Returns are such that a majority of our 14,000 banks and some 5,000 licensed loan offices are competing hotly for a share of them.

Lenders find the personal-loan business an exceptionally safe venture. Nobody gets into financial difficulties intentionally. Everybody who is in debt wants to remove this potential threat to his home and future as quickly as he can. Only a few borrowers require even such mild prodding as a polite letter reminding them to keep up their loan payments. Losses on this whole gamble of getting in debt, and then going in deeper to get out, are less than a penny on the dollar. In the well-managed personal-loan departments of some large banks, unpaid accounts are as low as twenty-five cents on every $100 loaned.

The rescue process is simple. You have, say, debts that must be paid in monthly installments over the next six months. The emergency arrives, and suddenly you must raise twice as much as you possibly can pay in that time. You borrow on a plan worked out jointly by you and the lender. Your plan enables you to meet the emergency, lump all of your debts into one sum, and pay them off at once. Repayment of this single sum is made over a period of a year, two years

or even longer. Under this plan, maybe you can even save a few dollars monthly, though of course in the end interest and charges bring the amount you pay the lender to something more than your original debt.

The loan shark of ill fame is fast becoming extinct as a result of this kind of refinancing of family money burdens. Rarely nowadays does a family in debt lose its possessions or get thrown into the street by the sheriff. Meanwhile, billions of dollars in family debts, which would have been doubtful or unpaid a short time back, are being paid off like clockwork.

Of course, the best rule is still the old copybook maxim: Stay out of debt—credit always costs more. But if you do get into debt over your depth and must borrow to get out, an equally good rule is to go about it intelligently.

A generation ago, if you got into money trouble, about your only hopes for help were relatives or friends, and as last resorts pawnbrokers or loan sharks. Personal debt was looked upon as pretty much of a disgrace, to be kept hidden. Today there is a new conception of the man who gets into debt for worthy purposes, such as buying a car, setting up a home or meeting any real family need. It began after World War I, when the time-payment plan became an accepted sales technique. Increasingly the idea gained acceptance that a reasonable amount of family debt might be both respectable and a good thing, if a cushion could be found against the inevitable family financial crises that the idea invited.

One ready-at-hand cushion was the loan-shark business. It was thriving, waxing fat at huge interest rates. Recognizing the need for controlling these loan businesses, State after State began legalizing them and putting them under the rigid supervision of their banking departments. All but eleven States—Alabama, Delaware, North and South Carolina, Mississippi, Texas, Missouri, Kansas, Montana and the two Dakotas—have since enacted fairly uniform small-loan laws.

The new laws established for the first time a licensed, controlled retail moneylending system, wholly apart from the banks and pawnshops. Loans were limited to $300 or less, a limit that has been raised steadily to bring it in line with higher living costs. Following the rule that it costs more to sell potatoes by the peck than by the truck load, interest was fixed at monthly rates, instead of the annual rates charged by banks making wholesale loans. The interest rates for small loans were, and still are in most States, about three per cent per month on the first $100 loaned, on down to one per cent per month on larger amounts. Generally, today, the interest trend is downward.

Under such inducements, licensed lenders popped up like mushrooms during the 1920s. People of vision got into the business. Lenders hung out electric signs and advertised. The largest companies, such as Household Finance Corporation, the Personal Finance and Family Finance groups, and a few more, soon expanded into substantial national institutions. They now operate chains with hundreds of local offices each.

For a long time, the banks were skeptical of this new kind of lending, often in driblets of ten or fifteen dollars, at an actual loss. Then one or two big Eastern banks began exploring it—and they made an astonishing discovery in the bleak years after the 1929 bust. It was that an "I promise to pay" signed by a man with a steady job and maybe some kids and a wife at home was a safer security than some stocks and bonds.

By the time World War II broke, many banks had gone into the personal-loan business. With the coming of peace, many more expanded in that direction. Today the banks are more than a billion dollars ahead of the small-loan agencies in their volume of lending. By introducing the annual interest rate into the field, they have cut the cost of small loans by one-half or more.

The old belief that only ne'er-do-wells owe money has been torn up by the roots. The exact opposite is true in the America of today, bankers will tell you. To get into debt you must have standing, a record of paying your bills, and a dependable income. People with doubtful earnings, dim prospects and a poor reputation with credit managers can't get into debt in the first place. They must pay cash.

A second exploded belief is that bad times are when you are most likely to get into money difficulties. Actually your danger period is when all the world about, at home and on the job, appears most rosy to you. Then you are most confident, bursting with optimism, and most likely to say, "To hell with the cost—let's buy it now and enjoy it!"

During the depression of twenty years ago, the small-loan business hit bottom with everything else. People sold their cars, had telephones taken out, quit buying, doubled up in crowded living-quarters, in order to keep income and outgo in balance. The boom in small lending started at the end of the war, with peacetime earnings at a new high. It has been booming upward ever since. And what's more, say the lenders, there isn't the slightest reason for anybody to get worried about it. The boom shows public confidence, the fact that people are getting ahead, doing well.

The most common mistake that people make when facing a pending financial jam is to put off doing anything about it until the very last minute. You keep hoping against hope that something will turn up and suddenly right the situation. When that does not happen, panic sets in. You grab at the first chance to borrow, like a drowning man at a plank.

This procrastinating is not only silly today, but it may cost you money. With time on your side, you can shop around for the best loan bargains, choose the type of service that you prefer. It is a borrower's market.

Once New York City was the toughest touch in the land, if you couldn't show gilt-edged security. Today loan offices are as thick as movie theaters and as eager for you to drop in.

Two of the largest New York City banks—the National City Bank of New York and the Manufacturers Trust Company—each operate around seventy-five loan offices. Each bank handles up to 3,000 loan requests daily and grants most of them. Forces of night workers get your money ready for you by the next morning. You get up to two or three years to pay. There is no red tape. You may be a total stranger when you apply, but your credit is good if you have a steady income, a legitimate need and the ordinary qualifications of a good citizen. The one other condition is that you must live in New York.

"Here comes your four cupfuls of rice!"

Industrial or Morris Plan banks also have personal-loan services. At your place of employment there may be an employees' credit union. Or you may prefer one of the big loan chains or, perhaps, an office of one of the hundreds of independent small-loan agencies. By shopping around, taking your time, you will find that costs and services vary widely in the loan business, though generally the personal requirements are the same.

Either of the two big banks just mentioned will lend you $300, for example, repayable in monthly installments over one year, and include life insurance in the amount of the loan, for a total charge of $11.50 for both interest and insurance. That is the lowest rate in New York. Under the State laws, other banks and lenders may and probably will ask you more. Generally speaking, their legal limits, without life insurance, are:

State banks	$18.00
Industrial banks	$23.50
Small-loan companies	$45.80

As the amount of the loan increases, the difference in cost becomes less marked. New York's laws are fairly typical of those that prevail generally. If you are at all in doubt about your own State, particularly if you live in a State lacking a small-loan law, an inquiry at a good bank or any Better Business Bureau office will set you right. They are warring on loan sharks and illegal lending in general.

In practice, loan costs go down as the volume of loans rises, and as the percentage of losses decreases. The result is a paradox. The largest banks and loan companies are the cheapest from which to borrow, with rare exceptions. The most costly service is that furnished by the small independent loan offices.

The small-loan companies, of course, vigorously defend their rates. Many of the loans they make are for less than $100, and therefore profitless. This is because it costs them just as much to lend $10, say, as it does $100. The profits they make on the larger loans must make up their losses on the small ones.

Small-loan men claim that their costs include an advisory service which will help the lender avoid frittering away money. Long ago, smart loan men learned that the surest way to get their money back is to keep the debtor in a state of financial health.

Banks are adopting this service, and the big loan chains have training courses that teach employes the small tricks of making you susceptible to suggestions, which otherwise might be resented as meddling. On your file card are noted small facts, like the name of the new baby that upset the budget. Next time you call, somebody will get hold of that card and talk to you like an old family friend.

Checking up on applicants has been made a science. As you talk in one office, somebody in another office is making discreet, disguised inquiries by telephone about your job and standing. In all larger towns, banks and loan companies alike maintain co-operative central credit-information offices. There, all data on past and present loans is pooled. If you have borrowed before, there is a card on you. It can be produced, on call, in a minute's time. The central office also has just as quick access to the records of the retail-credit bureau in your town. If you have a charge account at a local store, or an installment-purchase contract, the facts about them can be produced instantly.

Once your good standing is established—it is fatal to lie about your job, your income or your debts—future loans are granted almost automatically, providing you are not getting into debt over your depth. That, for loan purposes, is generally estimated at about seven or eight times your weekly income.

Oddly enough, the man who is slowest in getting a good credit rating is the one who has always paid cash. On him there is no quick record. Moreover, the suspicion exists that perhaps he pays cash because nobody will trust him. So, even though you have no intention ever of borrowing, it is often a good plan—a guard against the unforeseen need—to establish a credit account somewhere and use it occasionally. That account is always a reference.

If you are married, the general rule is that your wife must sign with you for a loan. By sad experience, loan men have learned that it is risky to lend money to couples who won't co-operate in paying back or who conceal debts from each other. Couples with several children are looked upon as being fully as good risks as couples having the same income but no children. The reason is that childless couples usually spend their extra money on themselves anyway.

That ancient competition, keeping up with the Joneses, is still the main reason why most families get into debt beyond safety. A newer reason is the growing tendency among young couples to try to keep up with their parents. Renting a "little place near Mother" usually means a better neighborhood and higher rent. Both demand better clothes and furniture, more entertaining.

The advice of loan men is to live where your neighbors are in the same income class as you are. Then, plan a rising living scale, starting low and going up *after* you get that boost in pay. Have some "extras" in prosperity that you can readily do without in adversity. Allow a cash cushion always, even if you must limit it to life insurance. You can always borrow in need against the paid-up portion of a life policy, direct from the insurance company at low rates.

Getting out of debt is the most common reason for which people borrow money. Lenders call this "consolidating overdue bills." Buying automobiles and paying medical and dental bills are also principal reasons for borrowing. Help to relatives in trouble, urgent repairs to the car or home, funerals, necessary long trips and moving expenses constitute the principal unforeseen needs that upset budgets. You can borrow for any sensible purpose, and that, in the loan-man's lexicon, includes everything from taxes and coal to new teeth for Grandma.

People who pay a merchant on an installment basis should consider borrowing from a bank instead and then paying the merchant cash. This is often cheaper.

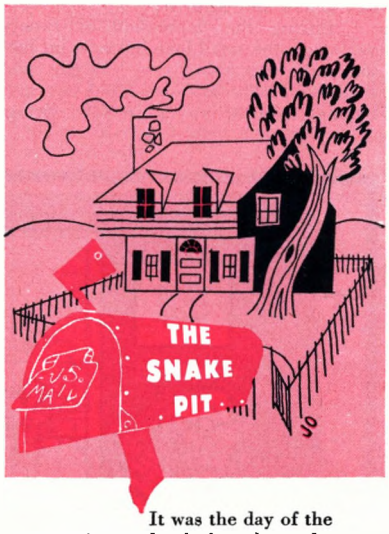
The danger of being gypped by loan sharks is almost nil today, if you take ordinary precautions. The legitimate lender is easy to recognize even when his office is humble. He may be one or two flights up in a building off Main Street, but there is nothing clandestine about him. The cop on the beat knows him. His name and business are in the telephone book. He is quick to explain his rates, itemize them, and see that you understand the law under which you borrow. If he asks you to take out life insurance, the amount will be no larger than your loan. He has no off-the-record fees. And he wants to lend you money. So do most banks.

The big thing to remember is that you, the borrower, have attained the status of a corporation. Your job and your good record are gilt-edge securities. The family auto is a blue-chip stock. The new refrigerator and stove and other family goods over which you sweated out the payments are assets as good as the machinery in a going factory.

In short, you are no longer plain Joe Doakes. You are Joseph Doakes, Inc., a going business in your own right. And you have established the credit of that business in the land, to the tune of billions of dollars. . . . THE END

THE CUSTOMER IS ALWAYS RIGHT?

BY FRANCES RODMAN

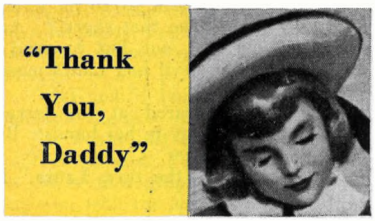


It was the day of the semi-annual sale in a large department store. While the customer shouted her name and address above the din, a weary salesgirl made out the sales slip.

As she handed the book to the customer for signature, the clerk remarked:

"It's a madhouse, isn't it?"

"Certainly not," snapped the customer. "It's a private residence!"



(Continued from page 24)

the shadow of Laura and Frannie hovering, days and nights and weeks and months.

"Oh, God, don't let me blame Frannie!" Caroline whispered fiercely to herself. She felt the quick tears and brushed her fist against her eyes to stop them. She picked up the sweater again and forced herself to loop one thread over the next thread, slowly, evenly. Two hours was nothing, in terms of time. And after Frannie was gone, perhaps this time—perhaps she and Bill could reach a little further, try a little harder.

Bill watched Frannie dart from the canary cage to the turtle to the guppies to the hamster. The goldfish were already forgotten. Frannie lifted the hamster out of its cage and held it squirming for a moment, watching its whiskers vibrate. Then she put it back, as if she had done her duty, and closed the lid. It was as if she was reassuring herself that all this world was in place. In place, but of no real consequence.

Funny little kid, Bill thought, and he smiled, watching her. That first eager leap into his arms, the way she had clung to him, the words, "Daddy, my Daddy!" Then the way she soberly loosened herself and turned to her zoo. Now she wore that little air of stiff uncertainty; she would be a stranger for a while, solemn and distant, till something wore off. Till what wore off?

"Look, Frannie," he tried again. "Don't you want to feed the goldfish?"

"You do it, Daddy," she said absently. "Or let Caroline."

He crumbled up a wafer for the fish. She seemed more indifferent than ever, this time. His mind flashed to himself and Caroline—Caroline laughing and eager, holding the coffee can of goldfish in both hands so the water wouldn't slop over as they trailed from hardware store to ten-cent store to gift shop where they found the perfect bowl. Curved, clear glass, on an ebony stand with an ebony kitten curved over it. "Nobody else would have bought the fish first!" Caroline had giggled. And he had said, "Nobody but you would have tramped all over town to find that bowl!" And Caroline had hugged his arm. "It's worth it, Bill. Frannie will love it."

Love it? One glance and Frannie was disinterested.

She had seated herself in a chair, waiting for him to speak. Her whole body was stiffly waiting. He pulled a chair over and sprawled his six feet lazily. Maybe she would relax if he did.

"How's school going, honey?"

"All right," she said listlessly.

"Spinksey giving you any better marks in arithmetic?"

"I don't want to talk about school!"

He shrugged, then smiled at her. "All right, let's talk about something that's fun. You going to learn to sail a boat at camp this summer?"

"Camp's no fun." She was staring at the fingers of one hand.

Bill straightened up in his chair. Before he could stop them, the words shot out of him. "Isn't anything fun to you?"

She looked at him, startled; there was a glimmer of interest in her eyes. Then she blanked her face. "What do you mean, fun, Daddy?"

"Why, doing things! Playing, yelling, jumping, skipping—enjoying life!" He caught himself. Every time he tried to talk to her, get even a scratch beneath the surface, she froze up. She was freezing now. But even a child ought to know the—well, the exuberance of work, and play, and life—yes, and sweat, and tears, and accomplishment. Was she as much of a baby as she seemed? Some day she must learn about those things.

She had risen slowly from her chair, as if to brush him and his thoughts away from her. She walked over to the open French doors and looked out at the flagstone terrace where the sun streamed on the green deck chairs and yellow cushions and white iron table.

"Want to go outside?" Bill got to his feet. "There's a robin's nest that Caroline found yesterday. With three tiny eggs, all sky-blue." He reached for her small hand. It lay limp in his.

He led her outside. By gum, he would give her something, even if it was only a robin's nest, to remember, to mark the visit! The kid was entitled to something, love, or tenderness, or—he seized her other hand, too, and swung her around on the flagstones, as if to transmit, or generate, at least the semblance of gayety.

Frannie laughed suddenly, then pulled away. "What time is it, Daddy?"

He looked at his wrist watch. "Ten of three."

She nodded. "In just a little while Caroline will bring the party."

Food. Caroline would bring a tray heaped for two—fancy cakes, ice cream—bring it and make some excuse, and leave them.

"She was making things mysteriously in the kitchen for you yesterday," he said. "You want the party, don't you? Or don't you want to see Caroline?"

"She's all right," Frannie said slowly.

Oh, Caroline, my Caroline, Bill thought. You get no thanks but mine. But you do get mine! What you do for my child, you do for me, out of the graciousness and the warmth of your heart! Even if the surly child I sired treats you like a servant— Oh, skip it! She's just a kid.

"We have over an hour before I take you back," Bill said. "What shall we do? Play checkers? Take a walk? Look at the brook? Don't you want to see the robin's nest?"

Frannie's intent eyes narrowed with thinking; then suddenly, amazingly, her laughter rang out. It was high, childish, spontaneous laughter. "Oh, Daddy, I want to make spit-curls! Here I come!"

And she threw herself upon him, wetting her forefinger between shrieks of laughter.

He let her tumble him down, vanquished, on the green chaise longue. "No, no! Let me be!" he laughed at her, pretending to fend her off with one arm while he hugged her close with the other. She burrowed at him, unbuttoned the collar of his sport shirt, and, still laughing, began to twist her wet finger in the wiry blond hair on his chest. Then she cuddled in the curve of his arm and lay quiet.

"Daddy," she said, "do you remember?" She began to giggle. "Do you remember, do you remember, do you remember?" Her voice came full and chuckling with warmth.

"Remember what?" he asked, hugging her.

"Just do you remember? Not remember anything. Just remember?"

"You're a silly!" He grinned. "A baby!"

"Just a little baby, not two days old." Then she stopped, frowning, puzzled and reaching for something. "Daddy," she said in a different tone, "do you remember the time you and Mommy and I were out in the boat and it tipped over and I almost drowned?"

Did he remember! That was the summer they'd taken the cottage in Maine. Would he ever forget the iciness of the water as he went down, churning, knowing he must get to the top quickly, to find Laura and the baby? He got Laura to the canoe, told her to hang on, then looked frantically for Frannie's red dress or pink skin. And as he swam desperately to the spot where he saw a gurgle, Laura screamed, "The baby! Get the baby, Bill! For God's sake!"

"Of course I remember," he said slowly. "But how could you remember, Frannie?"

Frannie laughed. "Mommy told me. She said you looked so-o-o-o funny trying to pick the water lily just before you tipped the boat over. And I would have drowned, but she had hold of my dress."

"What! Oh, yes." Yes, those water lilies. Laura had insisted that he pick one for her. He said it was dangerous, with the baby in the canoe. And Laura had insisted. "Just one. Pretty please —get a water lily for Laura!" Wheedling. And if wheedling didn't get her way, she would threaten. If he didn't risk their lives reaching for a water lily, Laura would. "Get it for Laura! Laura *wants* it!" He could hear her yet. What did it matter how much it cost—in money or anything else? "Laura *wants* it!" Vain, selfish Laura. The wheedling, the threats, the tantrums. Laura wants a bigger apartment. Laura wants to throw a party. Laura wants to have fun. Laura wants to live her own life. . . . Laura wants a divorce. . . . It was beyond the tantrum stage, by then. It was at the cold, unreasoning, furiously selfish stage. "If you don't give me my freedom to marry Ned,"—or was it Bob, or George?—"I'll go anyway!" So she got the freedom; but she didn't marry Ned, or Bob, or George, or whoever it was. Not that it mattered, by then. . . . Remember the water lily? *Did* he remember?

"You look funny, Daddy." Frannie was peering into his face. She sat up in his lap. He gave a start, and smiled at her.

She smiled back. Then, "Do you remember, Daddy? The cute li'l' old puppy we had when we lived in Grenople? His name was Napoleon, and I called him Rolly-Poleon. Wasn't he cute, Daddy? Why did you give him away to those mean old people?"

"I had to give him away," Bill said absently. "We were moving."

It was supposed to be a fresh start. He could see the way Laura's black hair waved at the temple over one small ear. She was still pretty, despite the pout, which hadn't yet become a scowl of sourness and whining. No, her mouth didn't droop then. It was firm, tight-lipped, as she said, "You'll not bury me in the country, Bill Brett! All right, get another job! I'm going to get to the city, where I can live!" So they had given up the little white house, and his only lasting protest had been about the dog. "Frannie's attached to the pup, Laura. You can't rip her away from something she loves, just like that!" And Laura had snapped, "She'll get over it. Would you rather have a dog than a wife?" So the puppy had gone, to that farmer and his wife, down the road.

"It was a very nice puppy," Frannie was saying.

"Would you like another puppy?" Bill asked.

She shook her head. "Mommy won't let me take any presents. She says it's not decent."

Not decent? he thought wryly. But the alimony was, and the car, and the furniture, and the whole extravagant runaround. The phone calls to the office. "Oh, Bill, something's come up and I need an extra hundred." Or, "I've got to have the car overhauled." Or, "Do you want Frannie's mother to go on relief? I know you can't be that short!" And there was no way out but to send a check. Why the devil had Laura moved here, anyway? . . .

Caroline appeared at the terrace door, the loaded tray in her hands. Bill leaped up to help her.

"Let me take the tray, Laura," he said.

Caroline stared at him and almost dropped the tray.

Then he realized his words. Laura. He had called Caroline Laura!

Caroline stared at him, her eyes wide with disbelief. The dull thud of sickness in the pit of his stomach was a physical ache. He choked as he tried to speak. Then Caroline's white face above the pink dress looked past him to the child. Frannie had run to stand beside him, looking puzzledly from his face to Caroline's.

Caroline carefully set the tray on a low table.

"Oh, my darling, my darling!" Bill whispered. "Oh, forgive me, Caroline!"

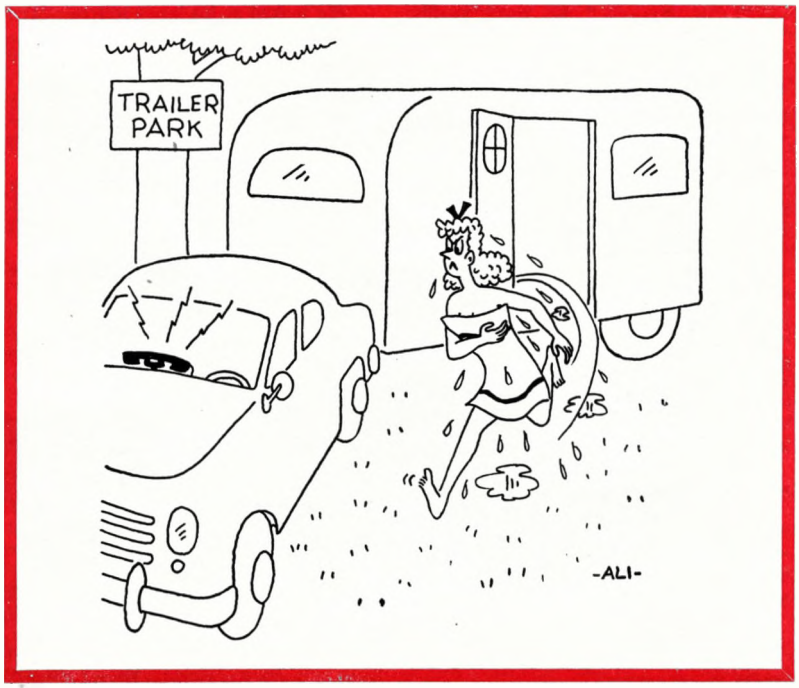
"Skip it," Caroline said softly and nodded toward Frannie and shook her head. To Frannie she said, "Here's your tea-party. I hope you enjoy it. If you will excuse me now— See you next time!"

"Caroline!" Bill's voice was hoarse. "Don't go! Stay with us!"

Caroline shook her head, her face white and gray and all the laughter gone. "Later, Bill. . . . It's—it's all right. And it's almost three-thirty." She mustered a smile and went swiftly back upstairs.

Frannie was bending over the tray, peering into a cornucopia filled with tiny cinnamon candies. "*And* strawberry ice cream. *And* tarts," she was chanting. "Hurry, Daddy—hurry and pour the tea!"

Bill's hand was shaking as he filled



the cups. "Lemon, or milk?" he asked.

"Lemon, please. May I? Mommy says lemon is just for grownups. Oh, look at the cherries and the cloves Caroline stuck in the lemon!" She heaped her plate and began to eat.

Bill sipped at his tea. Why had that "Laura" slipped out? A hurt that couldn't be undone! He had been thinking of Laura, and he had looked up and there was Caroline. He had called her Laura, the name of a woman who meant only pain and hurt to him. He set down his cup and pushed it away from him.

"May I have more tarts?" Frannie asked.

"All you want." He forced a smile, then really smiled. "But don't dawdle. It's almost time to take you home."

"'Dawdle' is a funny word."

"Yes, dear."

"I want to dawdle. I don't want to go." She made a pout, then held up one hand and counted the fingers. "Two other things I want to visit with you about, Daddy. Remember the thunderstorm and how you and Mommy and I got under the bed to play afraid?"

"Yes, dear." He scarcely heard the question. Why did Laura have to follow them here? With all America to choose from. For what reason? To make him unfit for life with the woman he loved, the woman who loved him? To rip Caroline's heart apart?

He glanced at his watch. "Let's go, Frannie."

"Okay." She scooped a handful of cinnamon drops into a paper napkin. "I'll eat them on the way, and Mommy won't even know."

He held her coat for her, and she dumped the cinnamon drops into the pocket. Caroline had brought the coat downstairs. And the hat. Frannie went over to the pier glass to put the hat on.

Bill watched her. You'll grow up, one of these days, he said to himself. You'll grow up, Frannie, and you'll marry, and have children of your own. You'll do a good job, or a bad one, by your man. And Frannie, Frannie, as you grow up there's not much I can do about it, or anybody, one way or another. Except be around if you need me. And help you think straight when you're a little older.

"Ready?" he asked.

They got in the car and he started the motor. Across to the Boulevard, and down. Frannie was munching cinnamon drops and looking out the window. Quiet, as always on the return trip. As if breaking off something, and struggling back to something else, putting the pieces back together in another pattern before she returned to Laura. Tough, Bill thought, for a kid to have to shift back and forth that way. Make an adjustment for two hours once a month. He wondered what it was doing to her, inside.

He couldn't figure it out. Frannie was all right. Basically. Look at the way she suddenly let down this afternoon and laughed and played and was really herself. That wasn't any pose, like this rôle she was assuming now, sedate, intent, strange.

They had turned into Laura's street. Only five blocks, now. Suddenly Frannie began to laugh again, as she had out on the terrace. He glanced at her. She was counting her fingers.

"Oh, Daddy, I forgot one thing I was to visit with you about, and now I remember. Remember, Daddy, the time you took your banjo on the picnic? Remember? . . . Ooooh, it was lucky I remembered! Mommy would have been awful mad."

"What?" Bill was so startled that he almost hit a parked car. He jerked the wheel. "Did you say there were certain things your mother told you to ask me?"

"Yes, Daddy. She always tells me five things to play with you. It's the remember game, and I wasn't supposed ever, ever to tell. But this time I couldn't remember my last finger, and I had to keep counting till I got it."

Bill swung sharply to the right, into a cross-street that led to a little park.

"Where are we going, Daddy?" Frannie asked in alarm. "This is the wrong street! Mommy will be mad if I'm late!"

"Let her be mad," Bill said between tight lips. "We haven't quite finished our visit, Frannie. There are some things I want to ask *you*." He drew up at the curb by the park. "There are a couple of things I want to get straight."

"Okay." Frannie watched him with worry in her eyes.

"Does your Mommy tell you of five things to remind me of, every time you come to visit?"

"Yes," Frannie said. "But I'm not supposed to tell you."

He sat there gripping the wheel. He had to let the anger drain out of him before he vented it on the child. So that was it. If you set out to destroy the happiness of two people, what better way than to ask over and over, "Do you remember? Do you remember?" Remember what? Other days, other heartaches, another life—memories better forgotten, not kept alive and festering, gnawing at a new life. Memories you gladly left behind.

And to do it through a child! What was she doing to *Frannie?* Feeding her on twisted memories. Deliberately throwing her into the past. Making her a baby, keeping her a baby, refusing to let her grow up!

"**What's the matter,** Daddy?"

"Nothing." He relaxed his hands on the wheel. "Frannie," he whispered, and he put one of his big brown hands over her small white one. "Frannie, I'll take you home in a minute. But first I want to tell you that we aren't going to play the remember game any more."

"Why not?"

"Because," he said gently, "we don't live in the past." He patted her hand. "You are growing up. We've got to think about the future, Frannie, not the past. You aren't going to be a little girl all your life, are you?"

"No!" She laughed.

"Of course not. You're old enough to understand things, and we aren't going to talk baby things. We are going to talk about what you are going to do, in the future. Camp, and school next year and the next, and college. And we are going

to have good times together, when you come to visit. All three of us, you, and Caroline, and I. All three of us. Because Caroline is my wife. You like Caroline, don't you?"

"She's nice."

"I love Caroline, Frannie. We're not living in the past, any of us. We're not going to any more."

"All right," Frannie said soberly. "What shall I tell Mommy?"

"You are a big girl now, Frannie," he said slowly. "You figure out what to tell her. It's time you started to grow up."

"I'll be ten in October."

"Right!" He started the motor and went back to Laura's street.

Frannie got out of the car and called back politely, as she always did, "Thank you, Daddy, for a wonderful time." But as she ran up the walk she turned, as she never had done before, and blew him a kiss. He was waiting. He waved, and as she reached the door of the apartment house he drove away.

The latch clicked on the big entrance door. Mommy must have been watching from the window. Frannie wished that Daddy would come in, just once, so Mrs. Whelan, in Number Eight, and nice old Mr. Clark, in Number Nineteen, could see him.

Mrs. Todd's white puppy poked an inquiring nose out of Number One, and Frannie bent to pat him just once. The puppy licked the hand with the smear from the cinnamon drops on it. As she started to climb the stairs Frannie wiped that hand with her handkerchief. A big girl has clean hands.

At the turn of the stairs she saw Mommy's face bending over the stair well. She looked cross, as she always did on visit-days.

"For heaven's sake, Frannie, hurry a little!"

Frannie kept trudging up the stairs. "I am hurrying."

Mommy had her hair curled and fresh make-up on. And the green dress. That meant she was going out. Oh, dear, Frannie thought, it was going to be hurry, scold, hurry, scold.

Mommy caught her by the shoulder and hurried her into the apartment. "How are you? Are you all right?" Mommy demanded.

"'Course I'm all right!" Frannie laughed. What did she think would happen, just because she saw Daddy and Caroline? She always asked, "Are you all right?" And then, "How did they treat you?"

"How did they treat you?"

There it was. . . . Frannie saw supper set for one on the gateleg table. "Oh, Mommy, are you going out?" It was a moan in spite of herself.

"Yes, I'm going out. You didn't answer me, Frannie. Did you get all tired out? What did you do?"

Frannie hung her coat in the closet and carefully hung her hat on a hook by its elastic. Babies don't hang up their own clothes.

Mommy was staring at her with that bothered look. "Cat got your tongue?" The question was vinegary. Suddenly she reached out her arms and pulled Frannie close. "Oh, my poor, fatherless baby! My poor little doll, with nobody but your mother to love you!" She hugged Frannie fiercely, kissed her, hugged her again.

Frannie suffered it for a moment, then pulled away. "Don't say that, Mommy. Daddy loves me. So does Caroline."

Mommy's face was furious. "I've told you never to mention her name to me! What's got into you?"

"Nothing," Frannie said coolly.

Mommy frowned at her wrist watch. She forced a smile. "All right, Baby. Now sit down and start your supper."

"I'm not hungry."

Mommy sighed angrily. "I suppose they stuffed you with all sorts of things far too rich for your stomach. Well, sit down and drink your milk."

Frannie sat down and sipped at the milk. Mommy sat down opposite her and glanced at her watch again.

"That's a good girl. Now, Baby, did you remember to ask Daddy about the lovely things we used to do? The puppy, and the boat—let's see you count your fingers."

Frannie set down her milk glass. "I'm not going to play that silly game any more. That's for babies. I'm almost ten years old."

"Ten years old is still a baby." Mommy was laughing, but not as if it were funny.

Frannie looked at her. "I am growing up. I can understand things. Mommy, how do you get to grow up faster?"

"Of all the silly things I ever heard!"

Mommy was getting her hat and jacket from the closet. She put on her hat in front of the mirror, her mouth smirking the way it did when she talked to a man. Frannie watched her smooth out the wrinkle between her eyes and wet her lips. Then she put her jacket around her shoulders.

"Now eat your supper like a good little girl, and get to bed early. Mrs. Phelps will leave her door open so she can hear you. Don't play the radio after nine o'clock, and be quiet and don't disturb anyone."

She was putting on her gloves, smoothing them over her hands.

"No nonsense now, Frannie. You're always upset after you've spent a Sunday there."

Frannie watched her pick up her purse and look in it, and peer into the mirror again.

"Do you *have* to go out, Mommy? Can't you stay home tonight?"

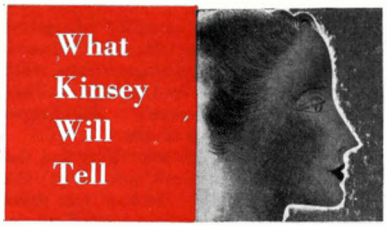
"Don't be a silly!" Mommy said with her polite air. "I've got a right to my life."

She left the door ajar so Mrs. Phelps could hear, from down the hall. Frannie heard her footsteps going down the stairs, light, tapping, eager.

Frannie sighed and went over to the radio and turned it on. A harmonica lilted a tune.

Frannie straightened up. "Almost ten is not a baby!" she announced.

She went to the closet and dug into her coat pocket and found two cinnamon drops. She put one into her mouth and went back to the radio. . . . THE END



(Continued from page 37)

swers, as we can expect them to develop in the Kinsey report on women, follow:

What is woman's sex capacity?

The amount or frequency of sexual gratification varies even more greatly among women than among men, so this is a very individual thing. Dr. Kinsey illustrated this in a recent lecture to a professional audience. He pointed out that the "normal" frequency of sexual outlets for males ranges from once a month or less to four times a day averaged over many years. He represented this graphically on a blackboard by a line two or three feet long, the dot at the left of the line representing the least and the dot at the right the greatest frequency. The range for women, he said, would start at the same point at the left for least frequency, but would extend for women representing the greatest frequency "to here," and he walked to the other side of the stage.

Do women mature earlier than men sexually?

The sexual development of women is slower than that of men, a fact which poses some difficulties for our educational system, which is geared to handling students by age. In the report on males, it was shown that 92 per cent have experienced orgasm by the time they are fifteen. Dr. Kinsey has said that only about 25 per cent of females have done so at this age. It is anticipated that his figures will show that not until the age of nearly thirty can it be said that 90 per cent of women have experienced orgasm.

At what age do women reach the peak of sexual activity?

It was a considerable surprise to most readers to learn from the first Kinsey report that males attain their maximum sexual drive in their teens and are beginning to decline by the time that, in our society, we consider them old enough to marry. It will be an equal surprise to learn that women reach their peak of sexual drive several years after the average age of marriage. Based on what Dr. Kinsey has said, we expect his figures to show that this peak is reached at about the age of twenty-nine. Unlike that of men, it does not decline at once but rather remains at an average high level, a sort of plateau, for five or six years.

This peak never is as high as that of men, taking the average of both sexes. But the frequency of sexual outlet is about the same for men and women from the age of twenty-five on, as shown in a chart authorized by Dr. Kinsey for Dr. Robert L. Dickinson's "Human Sex Anatomy." This shows that if parallel curves are projected for both sexes, that of the

males rises steeply in the teens and then declines gradually until it meets the rising curve of the females at about the age of thirty-five. From that point, the two curves descend together.

The percentage of women who are still active sexually in their fifties, sixties and seventies, therefore, should not differ appreciably from that of the men. In his report on the males, Professor Kinsey found that in his sample, the average frequency of outlet was 0.9 per week for men of fifty-one to fifty-five, and 0.3 for those of sixty-six to seventy, and the same averages can be expected to apply to females.

Is it true that the more educated women have fewer inhibitions?

Actually, it would appear that almost the exact opposite is true, and perhaps this will cause some reaction among college authorities. Dr. Kinsey noted in his first report that the woman with a college education is likely to have even more inhibitions than the college man, and in males it was shown that inhibitions *increased* with education. (It should be stressed that it is not believed education itself made all the difference; rather, variations were due to the sum of all the influences that go with more or less education.) This does not mean that every inhibition appears more frequently among college women. There are certain inhibitions, such as those that bar nudity or variations in sex play, that are more common among the relatively unschooled.

Does sex activity increase with education?

The one sex activity that seems to increase with education is "petting" and, to a lesser degree, homosexual experience. When it comes to actual intercourse, the Kinsey figures may be expected to show that there is greater frequency among the women who had a grade-school education or less.

Furthermore, we can expect general confirmation of earlier studies showing that one-third of college women who marry never attain orgasm. This seems true in spite of the fact that in recent years college women have been taught that it is possible for wives to have sexual satisfaction equal to that of their mates. As reports by Dr. Dickinson and others have shown, their grandmothers never thought of such a thing, and so were not disappointed. But when the modern college graduate fails to achieve satisfaction with her marriage partner, she is likely to blame either him or herself. In either case, her dissatisfaction contributes to the increase in divorce, for she is more apt than her grandmother would have been to seek a change in partner so that she may experience the satisfaction of which she has heard or read.

Has female sexual behavior changed with changing customs?

When someone suggested recently to Professor Kinsey that the sex behavior of the modern young woman has been altered by new styles and freedoms, he looked doubtful. He said he was not sure there had been as much of a change as was popularly supposed. He pointed out that many women who talk very differently about sex than did an older generation, really may not be acting so differently. There is a distinction between action and enjoyment, too. The experience of marriage counselors shows that in the days of strictest sex taboos few "nice" women would have admitted sexual satisfaction, while nowadays it is sought for. Therefore, women are willing to talk more freely to others, while their behavior remains very much the same as those who lived in a day when they could confide only in a doctor, if then.

Are women more frank than men about sex?

The Kinsey interviewers have not had much difficulty in inspiring complete frankness in both sexes. In the interest of a scientific study and because many have heard that interviewees derive a great emotional benefit from the interview in many cases, there is a willingness to talk freely. Commenting on this point, Dr. Kinsey said:

"I find that women always think that it would be difficult to have men agree to be interviewed, and men think that women would be difficult to get for interviews." He grinned. "Another proof of the fact that they just don't understand each other."

Incidentally, much of the second Kinsey report, he says, will be devoted to measuring the differences between men and women in their sexual behavior, and not just recording statistics about the female.

What is sexually stimulating to women?

It was well known before Kinsey that some of the things that arouse men sexually have little effect on women. Men can be stimulated by reading, by pictures, by all sorts of "eye appeal." This is less true of women. For example, a study that was financed by the Rockefeller Foundation, as was the work of Dr. Kinsey in large part, reveals that out of 1,200 women questioned, fewer than 10 per cent were aroused by books or pictures. Dr. Kinsey has put it succinctly; he says that most males are definitely aroused on seeing things associated with sex; most females are not so aroused.

Since one of the arguments for close censorship of supposedly obscene writings and pictures is that they will have a stimulating effect upon the sex impulses of women, who must be protected, this finding is important. There is a negligible sale among women, he says, for magazines that feature nude men.

On the other hand, there are many parts of a woman's body where touch may be sexually stimulating, far more than in men. In fact, we should find that the Kinsey data on this point shows that there is hardly a single area of the skin that is not for some woman a source of sexual arousal.

Is homosexuality greater among women?

One of the startling features of the Kinsey report on men was that for bachelors of thirty-one to thirty-five, homosexual contacts accounted for as much as 22.6 per cent of their total sexual outlet, this being all sexual activity carried to the point of ejaculation. The Kinsey figures on women, it can be anticipated, will show an even greater incidence of

homosexuality among women. However, they probably will not bear out the statements of such earlier authorities as Havelock Ellis that there is twice as much homosexuality among women as among men.

Obviously this is a problem of great concern to parents and teachers. Not only is the amount of homosexuality high, but we may expect to find that in women, as in men, it increases among adults as compared with adolescents. Furthermore, the adolescent girl who had only a single homosexual contact in her teens is more likely to become a practicing homosexual as an adult than the girl who had none. Whether or not this is because the girl who had the single contact was already disposed to it—rather than just experimenting, as is so often believed—the fact presents a problem for the schools.

A larger proportion of women than men revert to homosexuality after achieving a satisfactory heterosexual relationship, we should find. One reason suggested is that the woman does not need to fear a pregnancy in this relationship. Also, it has been noted by Ellis and Dickinson that the female lover is generally more considerate than the male.

However, we doubt that there will be anything in the Kinsey report on women, any more than there was in that on men, to indicate that a single homosexual experience in youth brands the experimenter as a homosexual for life.

Do women follow sex-behavior patterns of men?

To the extent that they are influenced by the cultural level—education, economic status and environment generally—this probably is true. But there are fundamental differences.

Dr. Kinsey finds that women prefer intercourse while dressed and in the dark to a far greater extent than men. He links this in part to the fact that they are not stimulated by what they see. Especially in families of relatively low income and little schooling, nudity is frowned upon, far more than among the more sophisticated. This is an obvious culture pattern, since probably half the human race customarily enjoys mixed bathing in the nude without any sexual implications.

It also has been reported in the works of Dr. Abraham Stone and others that many more wives of industrial workers, for example, report never having been nude in the presence of their husbands, than wives of business and professional men.

Dr. Kinsey has written that women are less interested than men in variety, both as to method of sexual outlet and as to the partner for it. That is at least one reason why the percentage of extramarital experience among women probably will be a good deal lower than it is for men, although still high enough to indicate a very wide gap between principle and practice. The complete figures may show that some of the extramarital sexual activity of married men is due to a reluctance on the part of their wives to experiment sexually, which Dr. Kinsey already has indicated.

It is also safe to say that the Kinsey report will explode the myth, still held in some quarters, that masturbation is pri-

marily a male method of sexual gratification.

Is the sex behavior of unmarried women like that of bachelors?

The final Kinsey figures may very well show one important difference in the sexual behavior of the unmarried woman and the bachelor. As has been said, Dr. Kinsey thinks there is more difference in talk than in action between the woman of today and the woman of previous generations. Fear of pregnancy is one powerful block to the unmarried woman's indulgence in intercourse. Another is the training (informal but none the less potent) in the game of "petting" for those in higher education brackets. In "petting," the game for the girl is to resist actual intercourse, since if she does not she has lost points in the "game." This influences her attitude toward other sexual activities, too. Of course, this habit also has its effect when she gets married. Then, by our standards, she is supposed to reverse immediately her entire attitude toward the sex act and yield readily to her husband. The files of marriage counselors are full of the cases of frustrated women who say that the marriage ceremony did not change their attitude; they could not get over trying to resist intercourse.

What is the attitude of women toward children's sex activities?

Dr. Kinsey has said that mothers of small children are much less disturbed by sex awareness and sex practices on the part of their offspring, and take it more reasonably than do the fathers or older relatives or unmarried friends. He suggests that this is because the mothers are with their young children so much more than anyone else that the whole process seems natural to them, as it does to the children, too, and therefore less frightening.

The mother, more than the father, sees the little signs that show an awakening to sex, so she is not so much surprised or shocked by an overt manifestation.

What are the normal childish sex activities?

The Kinsey findings show that the individual reaction of the child hardly fits into any rigid "normal" pattern. The one thing he has found common to all is that sex activity in small children is prompted by curiosity, not eroticism. He has not been prepared to say whether this is because of the taboos on sex which arouse that curiosity.

Such psychiatrists as Dr. Flanders Dunbar, however, have pointed out that a child is praised for his inquiring mind as long as it sticks to such things as the number of fingers or the feel of the bumps on the back of his head. But as soon as this same innocent curiosity extends to penis or vagina, the elders are likely to be shocked.

Is there a difference in the sex activity of boys and girls?

In his first report, Dr. Kinsey wrote that some sort of sex play "is not improbable" for virtually all boys before adolescence. With the same reservation, he found that about one out of five girls indulged in such sex play. For both sexes this includes mutual display of the genital organs, touching the organs, and for perhaps half of those who engage in it, attempts at genital union.

Are there variations due to race, build, color, etc.?

We can anticipate that Professor Kinsey will report that among the races he has studied, the variations are those of the varying cultural level. That is, for example, Negroes who are college graduates have the same sexual pattern as white college graduates; illiterate Negroes have the same sexual pattern as illiterate whites.

It is reasonable to suppose that the same will hold true of other factors—that redheads, for example, will vary in sexual activity in accordance with their environment and not with the color of their hair.

Further confirmation of this is found in reports of a study of sexual behavior in Finland, which gives results surprisingly similar to those of the Kinsey investigators on cultural differences in sex behavior.

This would indicate that college men in Finland are much more like college men in America than they are like Finns with only a few years of schooling. Probably, in spite of legends, this would be true of other peoples, too.

How valid are the Kinsey findings?

If anything the report on women should be more accurate than the one on men because it represents a larger sample. The book on males was based on 5,300 interviews, in number alone about half as many again as a nationwide election poll. The number of women interviewed will be perhaps twice as great. Also, the report on women represents an elaboration of the careful interviewing techniques which impressed the observers of his earlier work.

Furthermore, there are some definite checks which were not available before. In the course of their interviewing, Dr. Kinsey and his associates have taken down the experience of many hundreds of husbands or wives of those previously interviewed. The stories they tell coincide with surprising exactitude, although told under circumstances which rule out possibilities of collusion.

One of the doubts as to the reliability of the Kinsey findings was a suspicion that individuals through feelings of guilt or shame or fear would exaggerate some things, suppress others. The check of wives upon husbands and vice versa proves that, as other observers had held, the Kinsey interviewing technique prevents this.

It is surprising to find that there still are scientists who believe that if a scientific study is expressed in terms that ordinary people can understand, it isn't science. The chief criticism of the Kinsey project has come from those who think that it is dangerous for people to know the truth, or that people cannot grasp the truth. Yet it is Dr. Kinsey's achievement that he has contributed greatly to the knowledge of average citizens. Many scientists have recognized this; in the 100 years of its existence, the American Association for the Advance-

ment of Science has devoted a whole session to only one book—Kinsey's.

While the answers to these questions—and the many more that the Kinsey data will provide—are highly interesting and important to the scientist, they are even more useful to the ordinary man and woman, especially the parents of young and adolescent children. For the sober facts of what human sexual behavior really is—not what we think it ought to be or would like it to be—furnish a basis for the intelligent handling of vital problems in our own lives and in the lives of our children as well.

It is natural that we in this country should have a great curiosity, perhaps an excess of curiosity, about sex. The subject has been taboo for so long in our culture that ignorance has been inevitable. Ignorance is bound to increase shame and guilt and fear, all obstacles to the intelligent handling of sex. The only way to remedy this situation is by spreading the facts soberly and objectively before the people.

This is the greatest value of Professor Kinsey's work. It gives facts upon which to found opinions as to our future course. Even more important, it enables us to talk about a subject which many of us were ashamed to discuss.

One of the greatest destroyers of marriage has been the inability of a couple, even in the intimacy of matrimony, to tell each other what they really feel about sex. The very facts of the Kinsey report and the widespread interest in it have created communication between husband and wife. This was true of the book on men. It will be even more true of the book on women, which will deal with the area of sexual experience which has been most taboo of all.

Of course Dr. Kinsey is not going to solve all sexual problems. One of the most common criticisms of his subject has been: "This is all very well as far as it goes, but why didn't Kinsey take up . . ." and then the critic names his own pet subject. It may be the emotional basis of sex. It may be the difference in sexual behavior between, say, Communists and Democrats. In fact, many of these questions may be answered by the time Dr. Kinsey has completed his full project of 100,000 interviews—he has done probably less than one-fifth this number as yet.

Meanwhile, it has been a great service that he shares with the world the results of his studies as he makes them. It gives us an opportunity to profit both from the data he provides and the new freedom of speech his work encourages.

It is obvious—even the few facts presented in this article show—that sexual behavior is governed largely by the cultural pattern of the individual. The variations as between individuals and groups show us the tremendous gulf between practice and what we have said we believe should be practice. This is a challenge for parents and teachers especially. It is for them to use the Kinsey findings, especially when they have read his full report, as a tool to make the sex life of future generations healthier than that of the past. . . . THE END

(Continued from page 35)

"Who'd forget her?" said Randolph Blunt. "Anyhow, Casslin wanted her. He knows her pretty well, you know, and he asked for her. He thought she was just the type. Just what we wanted for the part."

Jack was thinking that Ellen's voice did sound slinky, and even without make-up or back-drop she looked sleek and seductive there on-stage. And Casslin must think of her so, since he had suggested her for the rôle.

Jack watched Peter Casslin. He was a big, alert man with a caress in his voice. As they played the scene, picking up their cues fast, his hand lingered on Ellen's shoulder, stroked her hair, and then she was in his arms and he kissed her forehead and her throat and the climax was a long, possessive kiss.

Jack wet his dry lips and Randolph Blunt said, "At this point the telephone rings. A shame to break it up, isn't it?" He grinned at Jack.

Jack was not the only husband of an actress; there were other men who watched their wives play love scenes, but Jack wondered if they felt as he did, if they watched their wives play a scene so sultry as this one. Casslin and Ellen had broken and moved away from each other on-stage, but Jack could not forget the caressing, insistent hands and how Ellen had responded to them, even though she had only been acting a part.

Jack had a radio program that afternoon, but before he left the theater he had a chance to say to Ellen, somewhat diffidently, "Honey, you were superb. And you surprised me. I guess you qualify as an expensive blonde, all right."

"It's a joy to play with Casslin," she said. "He's so good, he keeps you on your toes."

Jack said, "You didn't tell me how you got this part. You didn't tell me Casslin asked for you."

"Did he?" Her eyes opened wide. "I didn't know that. Gee, that's nice. That's quite a compliment, coming from Casslin."

"That's one way of looking at it," Jack murmured.

"What do you mean by that? My point was that Casslin is terribly fussy about the women he plays with. What was *your* point, Jack?" She inspected his face, and smiled, and gave him a teasing push with the palm of her hand. "I believe you're jealous."

"Why should I be jealous?"

She was still smiling. "I guess that *is* quite a scene for a husband to watch. But, honey, we're theater people, after all."

"I know," he said. "I was just thinking, a kiss at home might seem a little bit stale after that kind of stuff."

She laughed, patted his shoulder lightly, and said, "You'd better not watch rehearsals, darling, if they're going to make you act like a jealous husband. Don't become a stock character on me."

Later, as he walked to the broadcasting studio, Jack thought that she hadn't said that kisses *weren't* stale at home. She hadn't given him much reassurance, and he did need some kind of reassurance. It was a good deal to stomach, a scene like that, just after learning that Casslin, with whom she had appeared on the road, in daily propinquity, for weeks, had particularly asked for Ellen to act this rôle of a seductive, sophisticated blonde.

These, Jack thought, were morbid thoughts. Ellen was right. He was behaving like the stock character of a jealous husband. He determined to make an earnest effort to control his imaginings, and he made up his mind that he would attend no more rehearsals. This jealousy was a morbid thing he must control.

He did stay away, and Ellen commented one morning, toward the end of rehearsals, "You're not showing much interest in this thing, Jack. You never come around."

"I've been up to my ears in soapsuds," he said.

"We open in New Haven in three days, you know."

"Yes, I know," he said. "Maybe I'll stop in tomorrow."

It was a matter to be decided; he had to pace the sidewalk, slapping a rolled-up newspaper against his palm. He had to inhale deeply, pushing out his chest wall, and he had to murmur, "Now don't be a damned fool," before at last he took the final steps that led him into the theater.

In the lobby he met Randolph Blunt, his glasses shining in reflections from the marble, his round, plump face serenely expressionless. But the customary gleam was in his eyes as he said, "Haven't seen you around, Jack. I thought you'd be checking up on the little woman."

"Checking up?" Jack said.

"Why, sure. It's her first big part."

"I'll be at the opening in New Haven," Jack said. "And I thought I might take a look at rehearsals today."

"Not today," Blunt said. "I gave the kids the day off. Nothing on until dress rehearsal in New Haven tomorrow night."

Jack returned to the hotel, expecting to find Ellen, but she was not in their room, and had left no message. He waited there, studying a script, and when she called late in the afternoon he demanded, "Where have you been? I've been waiting to hear from you."

"Waiting? Why? Don't you know I'm a busy, busy girl?"

"There weren't any rehearsals today," he said.

"That's right. But how did you know?"

"So I waited to hear from you," he said.

"Darling, I have a million things to do. I've been getting my hair done. I'm terribly busy. I called to see if we couldn't have dinner together, then I've got to rush off and shop. Okay?"

It was a breathless, hurried dinner. The stores were open until nine and she had to eat as quickly as possible, she said, to get her shopping done before closing.

"Honey, bear with me, will you?" she pleaded. "Until after the opening, I just won't be human."

"If you want to get in touch with me later," he said. "I'll be at the hotel bar."

He was in the bar well before nine o'clock, and ordered a Scotch. He was still in the bar at ten, and he was drinking double Scotches by then. At eleven o'clock Ellen had not come and he still had not heard from her. His forehead was wet with sweat by then and the glass felt like ice in his hand. All the imaginings he had shut away had returned, and he sat staring into the back-bar mirror and thinking of those large, questing hands of Peter Casslin's, thinking of those weeks on the road together.

At midnight he had begun to worry and was thinking about calling hospitals. He went up to their room, to sit by the telephone, and when he turned on the light he stood quite still, staring at Ellen's bed. Anger and relief were explosive in his emotions.

Ellen turned her head on the pillow and murmured, "Where have you been, Jack?"

"Me?" he said. "Where've *I* been? Where have *you* been?"

"Right here," she said. "Since half-past nine. You said you'd meet me at the hotel."

"At the bar, I said. At the hotel *bar*."

She sat up in bed. "You've been down there all this time? Oh, you poor baby. I'm sorry, Jack. I never thought of calling you there. I'll give you a great big kiss," she said, with a tender smile. "You want a great big kiss?"

The kiss was soft and sleepy, and she patted his shoulder and murmured, "I'm sorry, Jack. I just can't think straight these days. What I need is sleep. After the opening I'm going to sleep every day straight through." She sighed. "Except matinees."

"Okay," he said. "Get some sleep."

He went to his own bed, dropped down on it, and lay staring at the ceiling. He lay measuring the degree of her contriteness. Was she contrite because of the misunderstanding or was there a secret reason? He shut his eyes hard, and that night he went to sleep fully clothed, with the lights still burning.

The next morning, flowers came for Ellen. Jack heard the bellboy's knock and opened the door. Ellen was still asleep, and he put the box on the bureau and stood looking at it. He told himself it would be nice to have the flowers arranged for her, so that she would see them as soon as she awakened. Yes, he thought, he'd open the box, and he did so with revealing haste. The flowers were long-stemmed roses, and there was a small florist's envelope. He did not hesitate now. He opened the envelope and read the writing on the card: *Until New Haven.* No name was signed.

Ellen's sleepy voice said, "What have you got there?"

He said, "Flowers," and handed her the card. She read the note, yawned, and said, "That's nice of him, whoever he is."

Jack said, "Well, it's Casslin, isn't it?"

"It could be."

"What's the idea, sending you flowers?" Jack demanded. "What's he talking about—'Until New Haven'?"

"We open in New Haven," she said. "Hadn't you heard? And, hey—what's the idea opening my flowers and reading my notes?"

"I was going to arrange them in a vase," he said, incomprehensibly on the defensive. "So I opened the box."

"It's all right, dear," she said, and stretched her arms. "I guess I'd better get up. I have some packing to do."

He sat down heavily on the edge of his bed, aware of the dull throbbing of his hangover and the slovenly discomfort from the clothes he had slept in. He watched Ellen take two suitcases from the closet and asked harshly, "What time are you leaving?"

"At noon."

He thought a moment, grunted, and said, "Behave yourself."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean don't let it get to be a habit."

She was at the mirror, brushing her hair. She turned and looked at him. "Jack, what are you talking about?"

"I'm talking about his sending you flowers," he said. "I'm talking about that 'Until New Haven' crack. I'm talking about the way he can't keep his hands off you in that scene. I just said don't let it get to be a habit."

"Oh, be yourself," Ellen said.

"Unless it already is a habit," he said. "Unless it's always been a habit, ever since you were on the road together."

Ellen turned, and looked at him as if he were a small boy caught writing words on the sidewalk, and then the hairbrush came hurtling at him across the room. He dodged, and the brush struck the wall with a loud, flat sound. He said, "Hey—that might have hit me."

"I wish it had!" she cried. He had never seen her before in anger. Her face was pink and her eyes were bright with a shine that looked like hatred. "Get out of here," she said.

"I'm getting out," he said. "You bet I'm getting out. Good-by."

"Good-*by*."

Then he was in the corridor, his hat jammed down on his head. It had happened lightning-fast, and afterward he thought that they had played it like a scene from a play. It had seemed only half-serious, and there had been emotional posturings to suit the scene. They were typical quarreling lovers, but unfortunately they were also actors, and they had played the scene with a consuming emotionalism because perhaps after all it was true; perhaps the curtain was coming down for keeps. There had been a finality about it, and the slamming of the door behind him was like the ringing down of a curtain; it was the end of make-believe.

These thoughts came long after Jack's temper had worn off. They came as he sat in a railway coach on the way to New Haven and watched the winter darkness settle on Connecticut. They came long after he had reminded himself of a simple axiom of felicitous relations between the sexes—never let a woman go away mad, particularly not in the company of the cause of the quarrel. A woman, he thought, required very little to justify her conduct; it was her great advantage over a man. A little pinch of anger in a woman's emotions could carry all before it, like garlic in a salad dressing. It was a thing some men knew by instinct and others learned too late, in the divorce courts.

Jack thought that they must talk the situation over calmly, with no posturings and no temper, positively no temper, and he knew it could be the last chance. When he asked for Ellen at the hotel in New Haven he had prepared a tentative apology, for use if he was met halfway, and it was a let-down when her room telephone did not answer. He tried the theater. Backstage he found Randolph Blunt, with his hat and coat on, inspecting a set. Blunt waved a hand and said, "Come over here, Jack. Tell me what you think of this set."

Jack moved toward him, saying. "I'm looking for Ellen, Mr. Blunt. Have you seen her?"

"We start early tonight, Jack. She's probably having dinner at that place across the street." Blunt glanced at his watch. "Matter of fact, I ought to get a bite myself. I'll walk over with you."

Blunt led the way, and when he pushed ahead of Jack through the crowd at the bar his expansive back shut Ellen from Jack's sight until they nearly collided in the narrow space between the bar and the first of the tables. She was on her way out, with Peter Casslin.

Jack caught her wrist and said, "Ellen, I want to talk to you."

Her eyes met his and her face seemed pale and angry. "What is it now, Jack? I'm in a hurry."

"Give me a minute," he said. "Honey, let's straighten this out."

Peter Casslin had moved on a few steps and waited near the door; Randolph Blunt was watching imperturbably.

Ellen's voice dropped low. "Of course I want to straighten it out, too, Jack, but there's nothing we can do unless you control this insane jealousy of yours. I'm pretty angry with you, Jack."

"I know," he said. "I'm sorry."

"See me after the dress rehearsal," she said, and pulled her wrist free, but gently. "I'll wait backstage for you."

Then she was gone, and Casslin took her arm at the door. Randolph Blunt said heartily, "Come on, Jack. Let's eat."

Blunt covered a good share of the leather cushion on his side of the booth when he sat down. After they had ordered cocktails he leaned back and looked down his nose at Jack, his eyes twinkling. "Wife trouble?" he asked.

Jack said, "Oh, we had a little spat."

Blunt waited until the waiter had brought the drinks; then he said softly, "Maybe I didn't do you any favor when I cast Ellen opposite Peter Casslin in the play."

Jack produced a pale grin. "I don't see how I can blame it on you," he said, and gulped his cocktail. "The trouble is I'm a pretty jealous guy."

"I noticed that," Blunt said. "In the last show, before you two got married."

Jack had not known it showed, and it occurred to him that Randolph Blunt was a pretty observant man; not much got past him. He had not intended to discuss it with Blunt, or with anyone but Ellen, yet Blunt's manner was so friendly, with an undertone of sympathy, that he found himself admitting that there had been a scene with Ellen about Casslin. Trying to look at it objectively, he said, "I guess I was all wrong from the start."

"I don't know," Blunt said softly. "It's a problem, with a guy like Casslin. You're working in radio, aren't you? You can't follow the show." He pursed his lips. "A week here," he said. "Then two weeks in Boston. You ought to get up once in a while, Jack, when you can make it." His smile was solicitous. "Just for insurance."

Jack thought that over while Blunt ate a sandwich in silence, gazing contemplatively over Jack's head. Jack ordered another cocktail and said, when the glass was in his hand, "I can't get away. I've got to stay in New York and make a living."

Blunt said thoughtfully, "Jack, you know that scene, in the hotel room, when the telephone rings? I've been thinking about that scene. I never like to use a telephone on-stage." He wiped his thick lips carefully with his napkin. "Jack, I don't want you to think I've got a heart as big as Minnie the Moocher's, because it's

not so. It's business with me. But I've got a hit here. I'm sure of it. What do you say I make a place for you in the show?"

"But how?" Jack said. "You open tomorrow night."

"It would just be a walk-on," Randolph Blunt said. "A couple of lines, to get rid of that prop telephone. It will keep you with the show, Jack, and after we open in New York you can step out, if you want, and go back to radio."

Jack was already thinking of how he could cancel out his radio commitments for a couple of weeks. Blunt went on, "You'd be a bellhop. Instead of the telephone, you walk in with a message. We could get you a costume tomorrow, Jack, and you could go on tonight as you are. What do you say? Want to do it?"

"Yes," Jack said. "Yes, I want to do it."

Blunt looked at his watch. "I'd better get back to the theater. Eat something, Jack, and come on over."

Left alone, Jack became excited about it. It was a solution. Day by day he could work this out with Ellen. He would be a part of the show, not left out of it. He would have good reason for attending every performance and he would be with Ellen almost every moment offstage. Yes, he thought, it solved everything, and he felt very grateful to Randolph Blunt.

Blunt had left a message at the stage door for him to wait in the wings, and when he moved into the theater Jack saw Peter Casslin in the wings, waiting for his cue. Casslin motioned to Jack and whispered as he approached, "You're Alderby, aren't you?"

Jack nodded stiffly, and Casslin said, "Well, listen, I don't want to butt in, but fix things up with Ellen, will you?"

Jack's hands clenched to fists, and if they had not been in the theater when the curtain was up he might not have controlled himself. He said, "Is that any of your damned business?"

"No, it's not," Casslin said. "But how she plays a scene with me is my business, and it's not helping her acting, you know."

He seemed remote, preoccupied, and clearly he was concerned only with the play. Now he gave his head a shake and said, "Maybe I shouldn't have spoken, but Ellen's a great girl, and she can act. She'll get good notices, Alderby, and between you and me, I thought at first she was miscast for the part. I didn't think she had it in her."

The tone was matter-of-fact, and the words disassociated Casslin from the root of the problem; he even seemed unaware of what it was about. But a phrase he had used brought Jack up short. He said, "*You* thought she was miscast? I understood you asked for her in the part."

"No, she was Randy's idea, and he was right. The old boy is pretty sharp about casting."

A voice was saying, "Your cue, Mr. Casslin," and on a rising note, "Mr. *Casslin*." He said, "Forgive me if I spoke out of turn," and moved on-stage.

Blunt had said that Casslin had asked for Ellen; had Casslin entered the casual denial to allay a husband's suspicions? Jack reminded himself that Casslin was an actor, a very good actor, and he was sure what Casslin said had been planned in advance.

Casslin's deep voice was speaking now on-stage; it was the scene in the hotel room.

The big, thick hand of Randolph Blunt came down on Jack's shoulder. "Okay, Jack," he said. "Your line is, 'Excuse me, sir. The manager said to tell you there's a lady on her way up.' It's his wife, you see. You enter over here, Jack. Got it?"

Jack repeated the line in a mumble. Blunt's hand was heavy on his shoulder, and Blunt was giving further directions, but Jack was listening to the voices on-stage, the deep caress of Casslin's voice and now Ellen's warm responses. Then there was silence.

"There's your cue, Jack," Blunt said. "Go on—surprise the lovers."

Jack stared at Randolph Blunt. Light struck reflections from his glasses, concealing his eyes. His thick lips were parted. He gripped Jack's shoulder hard and said, "You're on."

Jack moved on-stage, and saw Ellen there, still in Casslin's arms, but breaking away from the long kiss, and he felt a shock like a blow in the stomach. She was staring at him in amazement, and there was silence. He heard Blunt's prompting whisper, "Excuse me, sir . . . ."

Jack knew the line, but he could not speak it. He had no voice, no air in his lungs. He swung about and moved off-stage, brushing past Randolph Blunt, and then he was outside in the alley, feeling cold air on his face.

It had been a bad mistake. He saw it now. He could not walk on-stage night after night, interrupting that fervent kiss, feeding his jealousy. He couldn't do it; he'd explode. Blunt should have known that. By God, he thought, Blunt *did* know it. *Surprise the lovers,* Blunt had said, and he hadn't meant the lovers in the play. It had been intentional, malicious. What did Blunt have against him, Jack thought angrily. What had he ever done to Randolph Blunt?

He heard a creaking door and turned. Ellen stood a moment at the stage entrance, then moved quickly toward him. "Jack, he didn't tell me it would be you," she said. "I knew he'd changed the scene, but he didn't tell me it would be you. I didn't know what to think when I saw you standing there."

"Ellen," Jack said, "what was between you and Randolph Blunt?"

"*What?*"

"What was between you two?"

"Darling, get hold of yourself. First it was Casslin, now it's Randy Blunt. Jack, what's wrong with you?"

"You didn't answer my question. Was it Blunt?"

Her chin came up; in her pallor in the cold she was like an ice maiden. "If you want to believe it was Blunt, Jack, all right. Believe what you like."

"I'm just trying to figure this out," he said.

"There's nothing to figure out, Jack. It's all in your mind."

His shoulders came limply to rest against the brick wall of the alley.

"What's in my mind Blunt put there," he said. "He kept putting things in my head. I was wondering what he had against *me*." He looked at her. "And he knew I couldn't take it, walking in on you and Casslin night after night. He knew I'd blow up eventually, and he was going to sit by and enjoy it. He'd have had some kind of evidence for me, fresh evidence, if it didn't work out. Like those flowers. That's it," he said. "Blunt sent those flowers."

"**Oh, stop it,**" Ellen said. "What difference does it make who sent the flowers? Anyhow, Randy always sends flowers to the women in the cast before an opening."

"Yes?" Jack said. "With a note saying, 'Until New Haven,' on each bouquet? Without even signing his name?" He straightened abruptly, pushing himself away from the wall. "Ellen, it was a pretty subtle plot to break us up. Don't you see that? Casslin could deny he sent the flowers, but would I believe him? Blunt could admit he sent them, but would I believe he wasn't covering up for you and Casslin? He knows how to work on a jealous guy, because he's a jealous guy himself. The fact is, Ellen, it's not me who's jealous. It's Randolph Blunt."

"Well," she murmured, "yes, I suppose Randy is capable of it. But, darling," she said, and put her hand on his arm, "let's get one thing straight. It's because I turned him down, not because there was anything between us. Please believe me, Jack."

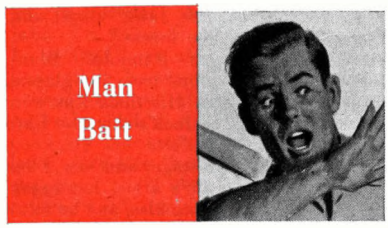
There was warm color again in her cheeks, and her eyes appealed to him. "Honest, Jack, I'm just—that thing you called me. I'm not a slinky-type blonde. I'm just a physical-culture girl. I always was."

Then she was in his arms, and his jealousy was forgotten. He kissed her as he had that first time, just outside that other stage door in that other Randolph Blunt production. Still in his arms, she whispered, "But, Jack, you mustn't take everything so seriously. Maybe Randy *has* behaved badly, but you have to make allowances for creative people like Randy. Darling, he's just spoiled. Just spoiled and capricious and very, very human. He was making quite a play for me when you came along—calling me up all the time and deluging me with flowers, and when I told him it was no go, he was furious. He tried to get back at me, Jack, but just like a spoiled boy. Don't you see?"

What Jack saw was something else. What he saw was that Ellen was inventing a character for Blunt, as everyone did. What else could she do, if she was to be a star in a Blunt production?

A low voice reached them. "I don't like to interrupt this tender scene," it said. "But hadn't we better get on with the play?"

Randolph Blunt stood at the stage door, his bulky shoulders against the jamb. His face was expressionless, but in his eyes was that gleam some said was a twinkle. It was this twinkle, they said, which betrayed that, deep down, Randolph Blunt was a sentimental, even a warm-hearted man. Take the case of Jack and Ellen Alderby, they would say. Didn't he make a place in the show for Alderby just so those kids could be together? . . . THE END



(Continued from page 27)

Martin had cigarettes. He lighted them. They smoked in silence for a time, Martin studying the water and the yachts and the fishing boats, concentrating upon these. Out of the corner of his eye he was conscious of the girl. The girl said, "You don't look as if you had two heads. Maybe you keep one hidden."

"I beg your pardon?" He looked full at her now.

"The last one Aunt Grace lured down here was a yogi or a swami or something. Wore a sort of diaper arrangement and ate nuts. Meditated all through lunch. What's your pitch?"

"I don't have a pitch," Martin said. "Why should I?"

The girl smiled. "They all do. Every one of them. They want money for a new waterfall in darkest somewhere, or the ancestral lamasery needs a new roof, or there ought to be a mission to teach the natives canasta. I've heard them all."

"Now see here—" Martin began.

She got to her feet, all in one long wiggly sort of motion. She adjusted what there was of the swimming suit. She looked down at Martin. "Never mind," she said. "Don't waste the spiel on me. I'll hear it at lunch." She was gone.

There were fourteen people at lunch. Martin watched them arrive, and they kept on arriving. Martin cornered George in the hall. "What kind of a deal is this?" he said. "What have you—"

"Relax," George said. "Good food, good company, a rest, like I told you." He smiled at Mrs. Mallory, who moved past under full sail, headed for the dining-room. "Are we ready?" he said. He seized Martin by the arm.

Martin sat at Mrs. Mallory's right hand, George at her left. Martin stared at his soup. Mrs. Mallory said, "Do you find it dull here after the jungle, Mr. Stewart?"

Martin made an inarticulate sound, part strangle, part gurgle. He got the mouthful of soup swallowed. He looked at George. George's face was bland.

"You mumble, Mr. Stewart," Mrs. Mallory said. "Speak up. I couldn't understand a word." She looked down the table. "Could you hear him, Tracy?"

Tracy, Martin thought; that was her name. The turquoise eyes were turned upon him. "Not a word," she said.

"There," said Mrs. Mallory. "Eat your soup, Mr. Stewart." She watched him for a moment. "Doctor Sinclair tell me you have had many thrilling adventures."

"A hero," Tracy said.

"Tell us, Martin," said George.

It was, of course, a trap, he thought; and he should have seen it. It was what came of trusting someone, anyone, and, most particularly, George Sinclair. He was conscious of the silence of the table,

"Their mother said they could stay and play with me all day. They give her a headache."

conscious of Mrs. Mallory, conscious of the girl, Tracy, who was watching him. He glared at his soup and tried to hold down his temper.

"The cat has his tongue," said Tracy. "That must be what it is."

George Sinclair sprang into the breach. "I remember once in Africa—" he began. The tale lasted well into the main course.

Martin cornered George Sinclair after luncheon. Martin was breathing hard. "If you think—" he began.

"I knew you wouldn't mind, old man. It only needs a little push, just to get the old girl in the mood." He paused. "Tell her about the snakes and the poison arrows and maybe a shrunken head or a zombie or two, like in your books." He spread his hands, palms up. "After all, I'm only trying to shake her down for twenty thousand. Just a small expedition."

"Why, damn you," Martin said, "I'd have given you the money. All you had to do was ask."

"You don't get it," George said. "I want her to get into the habit of supporting the museum. After all, she's got all the money in the world." He paused there. "Except what you have. You use yours. Hers just sits and breeds, and we can use some of it. Our collection of Africana—"

It was then that Tracy found them. The turquoise eyes were more than faintly contemptuous. "As a hero," she said, "you're a bust. The swami did better."

"Did he?" said Martin. "Did he, indeed?"

"You might at least put on a show. That's what you're here for, isn't it? Rub two guests together and make fire, or something. I'm sorry I'm going to miss it."

"You are?" Martin said.

"We have just ordinary garden-variety heroes around here," Tracy said. "They come in and donate blood. For free, and without publicity." And then she let the contempt come out. "Go on in; your public's waiting." She walked away.

George said, "Well?"

"Man-eating orchids," Martin said; "shrunken heads. Let's go."

It was two hours before he left the house, talked out, leaving behind him the shining light of adventure gleaming in many tired old eyes. George Sinclair, beaming, closed in for the kill. Martin walked quickly in the cool air, his anger unabated.

He found the blood-donor station. Tracy was at a desk, and she looked up smiling when he came in, and then the smile disappeared. "Wrong place," she said. "No audience here."

"I have blood, too," Martin said. "I can spare a little."

She got up from her chair. She looked out at the sidewalk. "No cameramen," she said. And then she turned to him again. "We're not proud." There was a change in her eyes, scarcely perceptible, but it was there. "Come on—we'll fade your bet." She crossed the room, opened a door. "More grist for your mill, Miss Larsen," she said. "Real hero blood." She watched Martin walk through, and she frowned a little in small perplexity.

He was not gone long. He came back out, carrying his coat, one sleeve rolled up and the arm bent.

"Coffee?" Tracy said. "Sit down. I'll get it for you."

Martin was smiling a little, watching her; the smile looked hollow, false, like something painted upon his face. He shook his head, trying to clear it, seeing many turquoise eyes staring at him. "You—" he said, and then he went down, all in one piece, like a tree falling. His heels came up a little when he hit the floor, but that was all.

It was after dinner that night. Martin sat alone on the Mallory porch, smoking a cigarette, looking into the darkness. Before him, the bay was spread, black and silent; a solitary red light moved up the channel, the sound of an engine was faint. In a way it was like the jungle, and he took comfort from the thought. He wished he were back there. His anger seemed to have faded away. He flipped away his cigarette, got out another. He sat.

It was there that Tracy found him. She came along the walk from her own house. She came up the steps and sat down. "How do you feel now?"

"I'm all right," Martin said.

"Sure?"

"I'm sure."

"It's funny," Tracy said. "It happens to some people and not to others, and size and strength don't have anything to do with it." She paused. "Or nerve," she said.

"That's nice."

"Yes," Tracy said, "it adds variety." She was silent for a little time. "I've been at the library," she said. "Reading. About a man named Stewart—Martin Stewart." She stopped there. She waited.

"Why?" said Martin.

"I wouldn't know. Curious, I guess." She wondered. "Quite a guy," she said, "if you can believe what you read. Can you?"

"That I wouldn't know."

"Been a lot of places, done a lot of things, seems to be well thought of in certain circles."

There was a fragrance to her, Martin thought; the darkness seemed to be filled with it. Or maybe it was only imagination. "So?" he said.

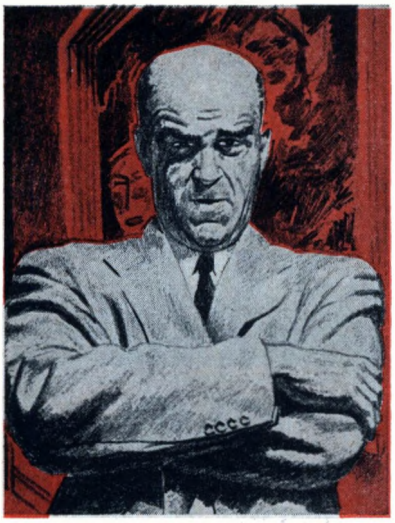
"Inherited a lot of money and has had sense enough to use it for something—financing expeditions, endowing grants, scattering good all over."

"Sounds like a drip," Martin said. It was a new concept; it came to him just like that.

Tracy went on as if she had heard nothing. "In short," she said, "a storybook character, the sort of bird young girls like awake and dream about at night." She paused. "A hero."

Martin smoked in silence. The fragrance was there; it was real; he could taste it. And he could feel her warmth, like the glow of a fire on a cold night. He wondered what was happening to him.

"You looked pretty silly, lying there on the floor," Tracy said.



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"I guess I did."

"You did." She stood up. "The things you read," she said. She paused. "I hear Aunt Grace came through with a big fat check. Congratulations." She was gone.

Martin sat on. He stared at the bay. He sniffed the salt air. He thought of George Sinclair, and a little of his anger returned. He thought of Tracy, but the warmth was gone now, and the fragrance was no longer around him. He got up and went inside. He found Mrs. Mallory in the library, playing solitaire.

"About this afternoon—" he began, and there he stopped, wondering precisely what it was he was going to say.

"Speak up, young man," Mrs. Mallory said. "Don't mumble." She looked at the card in her hand. "Damn," she said. "It must be buried." She looked up at Martin again. "Well?"

"It—it was a put-up job," Martin said. "George got me down here and—"

"I realize it." She turned another card, looked at it, muttered softly under her breath. She looked up at Martin. "I discovered a long time ago," she said, "that one gets in this world what he pays for, and pays for what he gets. If I want to play godmother to George Sinclair's little museum, that's my affair, isn't it?"

"Well," Martin said, "I suppose it is." Whichever way he turned, he thought, he was being deflated; people sticking pins all over him.

"I enjoyed your talk this afternoon, young man, but you don't make much sense now." She turned over one more card, glowered at it. "Now go to bed," she said. "And close the door when you leave. I'm going to cheat and I don't want to be watched."

Martin fled.

Martin breakfasted alone. The butler brought fruit juice and coffee. He wished Martin a good morning. "Eggs, sir?" he said.

"No, thank you. Just toast."

The butler hesitated. "Eggs, sir, are highly salubrious."

"I don't like eggs."

"Eggs, sir, make blood."

"Go away," Martin said.

"Yes, sir. Very good, sir." He disappeared quietly. Martin drank his coffee.

And then Dr. Sinclair appeared, bright-eyed and shining. He sat down. "The rumor is," he said, "that you have it bad."

"Have I?" Martin said.

"The local malady," said Dr. Sinclair. "It is called Tracy-worship, and it usually runs to hot and cold flashes and mental vacuity, and, occasionally, nightmares. Did you sleep well?"

"Ar," said Martin.

Dr. Sinclair nodded. "Just so." He helped himself to a cigarette, lighted it carefully. "I came by," he said, "to see if you would care to examine our collection of Melanesian war relics. Some of them are—" He stopped there, watching Martin ladle sugar into his coffee. Martin's eyes were fixed upon some distant object. "No," Dr. Sinclair said, "I see how it is." He stood up. "Tracy is out on the wharf. I saw her just a few moments ago. She is fishing."

"Fishing?"

"Fishing," Dr. Sinclair said. "On the wharf."

"Thank you," said Martin.

"Not at all," said Dr. Sinclair. "I'll see you again sometime." In the doorway, he stopped. "By the way, your talk yesterday was just what we needed. Mrs. Mallory came through. Handsomely. Thank you." And then he smiled a little. "The hero approach frequently works wonders," he said. "In many ways."

Martin's spoon stopped in mid-air; his eyes returned to that distant object. "Fishing," he said.

Tracy was sitting on the edge of the float, her bare feet dangling in the water. She wore a new bathing suit with conscious dignity, and she kept her back carefully turned toward the Mallory house. She concentrated on her fishing, using a large hook and a red feather lure, wondering all the while if there were any fish in the bay larger than minnows. She doubted it, but the question was unimportant. She was thinking of the enigma of Martin Stewart, thinking of what she had read and what she had seen and what she had heard, trying to fit them together, finding that they did not match. It was confusing. And what Aunt Grace had told her on the telephone, about Martin's visit to the library—that was confusing, too, and she wondered about it. She fished on, dangling her feet, waiting.

He came out at last, walking slowly. He was smoking a pipe; the thing bubbled and whistled and gave off a foul stench. His manner was calm, apparently filled with dignified assurance. In his mind there was uneasiness. He leaned against the float railing. "Ah," he said, "fishing, I see." He puffed on the pipe. He waved his hand airily. "I recall once, in the Lake Tanganyika district—near Victoria Falls, you know—" He paused there, conscious that the turquoise eyes seemed to be looking right into his mind. He gathered himself. "Beautiful country," he said.

"Is it?"

Martin nodded. "Beautiful."

Tracy looked at her feet. She gave the rod a tentative jerk. Nothing happened. "What did you catch," she said, "in the beautiful Lake Tanganyika district near Victoria Falls?"

"A fish." Something *had* happened to him; he knew that now. He thought of what George had said about the local malady.

"Marvelous."

"I mean," Martin said, "I shot it."

"Make up your mind."

"Well," Martin said, "you do. Shoot them, I mean. With a bow and a sort of an arrow, only it's really a spear."

"Wonderful," Tracy said.

"They do it in South America, too. In Brazil. The same technique."

"Fascinating."

Martin nodded. "They have no feathers," he explained.

"Who?"

"I mean, on the arrows—"

"—that are really spears."

"Yes."

"Astonishing," Tracy said. "I never would have believed it." She shook her

head, staring still at the water, at her bare feet. There was no expression on her face, but in her mind a smile was growing, spreading—a quiet little smile, without rancor, without amusement. "Think of it," she said. "No feathers."

"Well," Martin said, "they don't really need them."

"Is that a fact?" She raised her head and regarded him gravely. "I thought everybody needed feathers."

"Well, not under water," Martin said.

"They get wet?"

"No," Martin said. "It's—it's like a penguin."

"I see," Tracy said. The smile was growing; it broke through the wall of her mind, appeared for a moment upon her lips. She kept her face turned away from him. "You'd better sit down," she said. She patted the float beside her. "Here." She watched him. "Don't put your feet in the water. You have shoes on."

He sat down tailor-fashion. He sucked desperately upon the pipe. It bubbled.

"Now about penguins," Tracy said. The smile was back in her mind once more, filling her thoughts, coloring them, lending them warmth and ease. "I like penguins," she said. "I saw one once at the zoo, walking around with his arms down at his sides and his eyes fixed on a big yellow butterfly just out of reach. She shook her head, remembering. "Such a patient little character. Just walking around, sort of waddling after the butterfly, like a little man chasing a dream."

Like me, Martin thought, *waddling ridiculously with my arms*—"They don't have arms," he said. "That was what I meant."

"So that was it," Tracy said. "That was what you meant." She reeled in a little line, gave the rod another jerk. Nothing happened again. "You did have me a little confused for a moment."

"Well, in a sense they do." Martin said. "I mean, wings and arms are very similar." He paused there, wondering how this had started, wishing it would stop.

"Very similar," Tracy said. "I see." It was, she thought, a new experience, entirely novel. She had an insane impulse to reach out and pat him on the head, tell him that everything was all right.

"**Like bats,**" Martin said. "They have wings, but they're really not."

"Not bats?"

"Not wings."

"Oh."

"You see, each bat has a finger—" He stopped. "I mean," he said, "each bat has two fingers, one on each side."

"You had me worried for a moment there."

"They have more, but only one counts. The others are just hooks."

"I can see how that would be," Tracy said.

Martin nodded in relief. "Well, that's it," he said. "About wings, I mean."

"But it still leaves feathers and penguins." She reeled in a little more line, sat there, waiting; waiting and smiling inside. "You haven't told me about them yet. In Lake Tanganyika, I mean."

"I'm confused." Martin said. He took his pipe out of his mouth and held it in both hands, turned it this way and that, staring at it. He shook his head. There was a reason for the confusion, he thought—an underlying cause, filterable and capable of isolation; and as he thought about it, the words formed on his tongue and uttered themselves. "I guess I'm just in love," he said. "I can't think of any other reason." He looked up, almost aghast.

Tracy was watching him, and the smile had broken through again, lifting the corners of her mouth, bringing a sparkle into her eyes. "I didn't think you were always like this," she said. "Nobody could be."

"You're laughing at me."

"No."

"I can't say that I blame you," Martin said. "I've made myself sort of ridiculous."

"I don't think so." Her smile had a curious gentle quality, secret as thought. "I don't think so at all."

"Thank you," Martin said.

"Why, you're welcome."

Martin was silent for a long time. He stared at his pipe; he rubbed its bowl against his palm. Back in the jungle, he thought, amongst primitive peoples, life was a great deal simpler. One obeyed local mores and ground rules, one got along fine. Here, in this civilized morass—he shook his head. A man could flounder around almost indefinitely, sinking deeper by the minute, achieving nothing. And a man, any man, had his pride. "Well," he said. He stood up, slipped the pipe into his pocket.

Tracy said quickly, "I think I have a fish." She tugged at the line. "See?"

He ignored it. He was watching her instead of the rod. "I think," he said, "that you are the most beautiful woman I have ever seen."

"That's nice." Her head was turned away from him. "Sit down and tell me more."

"I—" Martin began. He shook his head again. "I don't know any more. I—I just wanted to tell you that."

"Maybe if you thought real hard—" She was facing him now, smiling still that secret smile.

Martin straightened himself. He looked down at her. "No," he said. "I think I have made myself silly enough." He made a little bow. He turned away, toward the Mallory house.

Tracy said, "Hey—wait a minute." He turned. He watched her.

"Look," Tracy said, "you've got me all wrong." With one hand she tugged at the rod. "Dam. this thing. It isn't a fish; it's— Whoops!" And it happened then, all at once. The hook appeared, and the red feather lure, dripping silvery water, whipping through the air. "Look out!" Tracy said.

Martin jumped back. He threw his hand up before his face. The red feather stopped abruptly, quivered a little. Martin lowered his hand and regarded it gravely.

"Oh, good heavens," Tracy said. "Your thumb." She dropped the rod and

jumped to her feet. She rushed to him. She seized his elbow. "Don't faint. Just be calm." She looked at his hand, at the point of the hook protruding through the flesh and skin at the base of his thumb. "Oh," she said. "I didn't mean—" She stopped there, staring at the ugly thing. "Sit down," she said. "I mean, lie down. Right here. No, not here, over here. I'll —I'll go get a doctor. Now don't faint, or, if you do, put your feet up, so the blood—" She stopped again, remembering hard. "I think that's the way. After you faint, you put your feet up higher than your head, and it makes your blood do something, it says in the book, doesn't it?" She looked up into his face, and her voice was desperate. "Doesn't it? Isn't that what you do?"

Martin was staring at her, staring and shaking his head. "You know," he said, "you sound like me."

"I—what do you mean? Don't I have it right? Or is it for fractures—skulls, I mean, not bones; for bones you don't do anything, except maybe get a blanket." She paused. "For shock, I mean, isn't it?"

"More and more resemblance," Martin said. "It's—it's astonishing." He was even smiling a little, watching her, and the stiffness, the uneasiness in his mind faded away all at once.

"You're hysterical," Tracy said. "There's something about that, too, except it's been so long I can't remember. I think I slap you. Or cold water."

"Neither," Martin said. His smile was very gentle.

"Well, there's something."

He patted her bare shoulder, found it smooth and warm to his touch. "Everything's going to be all right," he said. He patted again. "Do you have pliers in that fishing box?"

"Yes, of course." She started for the box, bent over it, stopped and looked up at him. "What are you going to do?"

"Give me the pliers," Martin said.

She handed them to him, and she watched him wonderingly.

"Maybe you'd better sit down," Martin said. "And put your head between your knees."

"Why?"

He said nothing. He just watched her. She sat down. She put her head between her knees. She felt better. She said, "What are you doing?" She heard a click, a vicious snapping sound. "What's that?"

"Be quiet," Martin said. He had cut off the shank of the hook. He had the point in the pliers now, and he was drawing it through, working it gently, pausing once or twice to shake away the blood. And then the barb was free, and the rest of it followed easily.

"Oh, good Lord," Tracy said. She was still sitting there, but her head was up now, and she was watching him, and as she watched, a thought began to grow. "Is that," she said slowly, "—is that how you get an arrow out, too?"

Martin smiled at her. "I never tried." He leaned through the railing, washed the pliers in the salt water, dipped his thumb deep and watched the blood flow, felt the sharp clean sting. He straightened up and got out his handkerchief, wrapped it around the wound.

"But if you had to, you would?" Tracy said. The thought persisted. "You could?"

"Perhaps." He was thinking of other matters now, thinking that maybe the local mores, the local ground rules, were not so difficult after all; thinking that it was, in all probability, a question of approach, of attitude, of confidence. People, he thought, despite color and climate and regional variations, were pretty much alike. He should have remembered that.

"*You* could," Tracy said suddenly. "*You* would. If you had to." The manifestations of adolescence, she thought—hero-worship; but she didn't seem to care.

She thought of jungles, ambushes. She watched him as he sat down, tailor-fashion, facing her. "You were going," she said.

"Why, so I was." He smiled at her.

"I mean, if you went now, a doctor."

"I wouldn't doubt it."

She shook her head. "It's—it's like nails."

"Now, I never would have thought of that," Martin said.

"Rusty." She spread her hands, indicating rust.

"Of course," Martin said. "They do, don't they?"

"Like stepping on, I mean, or falling."

Martin said nothing. He smiled, sitting there relaxed and easy, the tension entirely gone now from his mind. He got out cigarettes, lighted two of them, handed one to her.

Tracy subsided, staring at him still, still seeing dark jungles, black water. "I guess I'm just confused, that's all."

Martin nodded. "I didn't think you were always like this," he said. "Nobody could be."

"You're laughing at me."

"No."

"I—I can't say that I blame you," Tracy said. "I did make myself sort of ridiculous."

"I don't think so. I don't think so at all."

"Well," Tracy said. She drew hard on her cigarette. She looked at Martin's hand. "Does it hurt?"

"Not any more."

"Well." She looked at the rod lying on the float, at the length of line and the leader and the cut shank of the hook. And she remembered her vague motives for sitting here in the first place. She said, "Fishing—" She stopped there. She shook her head. "I mean—" she began.

"Speaking of fishing," Martin said, "did I ever tell you about an experience I had once?"

It came to her as if from a great distance, and she raised her head, and looked at him, and he was smiling, and his eyes were bright, and she felt a smile begin in her own mind, felt it spread to her lips. "Where?" she said.

"The Lake Tanganyika district," Martin said. "Near Victoria Falls."

So this, she thought, was the way it was when it happened. Not the way the books said, neither frantic nor tortured, merely easy and relaxed and comfortable. She felt her smile spreading, growing. "No," she said. "You never did." She drew up her knees and wrapped her arms around them. She settled herself. She looked at Martin, and her eyes were very bright indeed, and the laughter in her mind was warm and happy. "I'm listening," she said.

"It's a long story, and there are lots of others after it."

"I'll be listening," Tracy said. "Take your time. There's all the time in the world." . . . THE END

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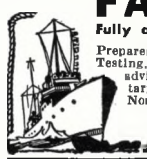

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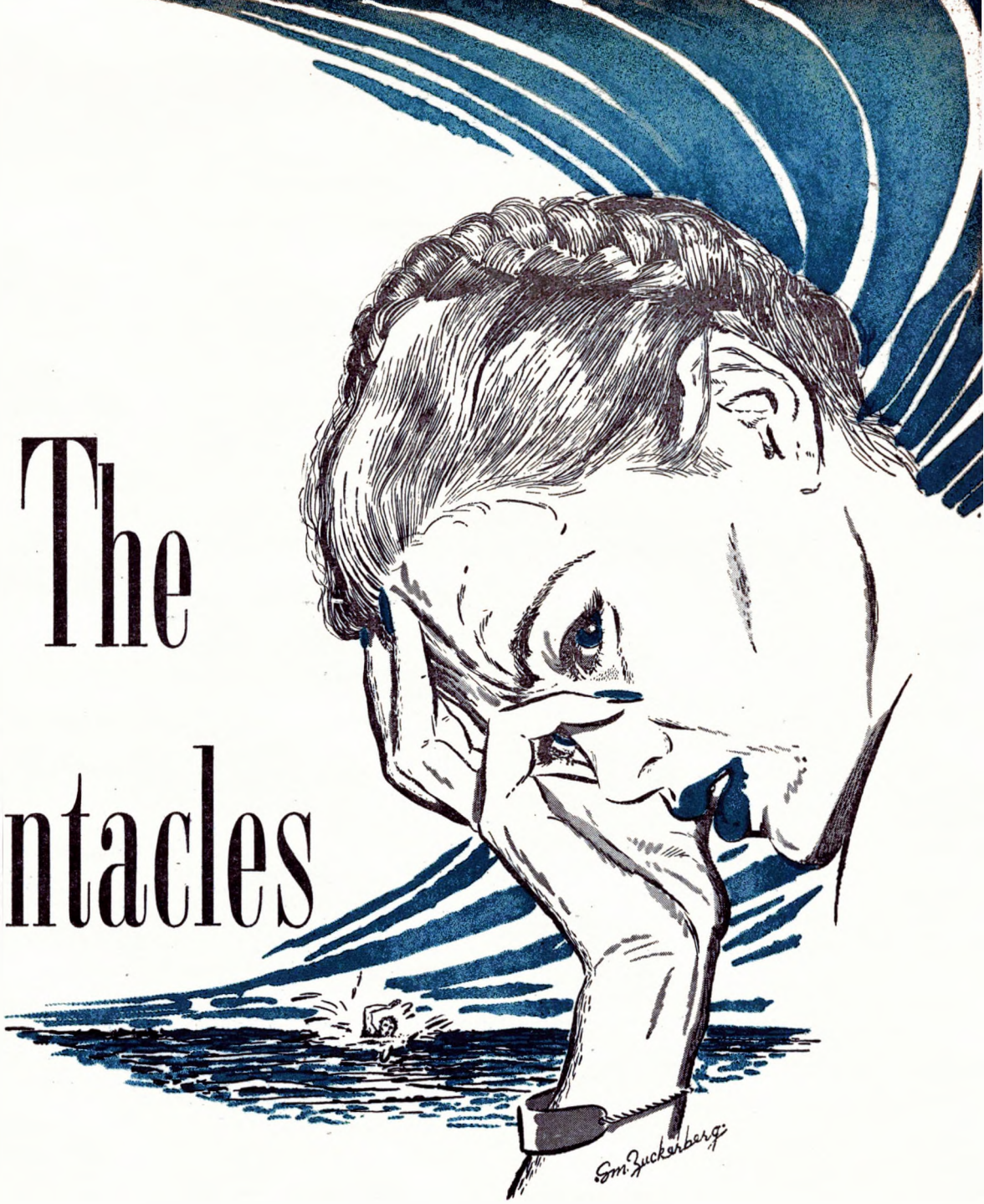
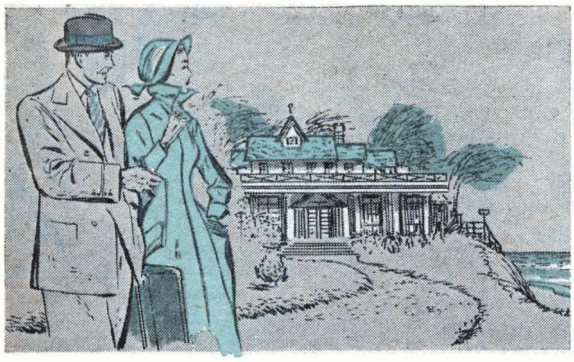


"You'll love Father," Roger said, "and Mother; well, Mother—" Hilda, so newly married, so much in love, believed him. But slowly, with growing fear, she realized that Roger was caught in the tentacles of a love that not only threatened their marriage—but also her very life!

BY DANA LYON

REDBOOK'S COMPLETE MAY 1950 NOVEL

CHAPTER 1



The beach was small and secluded, a half moon of pale sand lying beneath the gaunt austerity of the house on the cliff, with the dwarfed and distorted branches of Monterey cypress waiting like watching figures in the distance, the sharp cry of an occasional sea gull rising raucously above the roar of the breakers.

A woman was lying on the beach, alone, her head in her arms, her long body as brown as if it had been turned on a spit. The thick braids of her hair were bleached the color of the sand she was lying on, and her thoughts were dark as the depths of the sea that pounded at her feet.

She was wondering how she could kill a man she once had loved.

She was thinking: He is out there now, swimming—but he is a good swimmer and he will not die that way. But why doesn't he die? Why doesn't he die and let us go?

And while she lay there, her head in her arms, wishing for him to die, she heard his cry for help. It was a terrified, mounting scream, and she leaped to her feet instinctively, all of the civilized years of her life prompting her to go to the aid of a person in distress. Poised for the dive, her arms thrown back, she was held motionless by the part of her that was not civilized.

The high, panicky scream came again and a ripple went through her still body. Let him die, let him die! *He has taken more from us even than our lives. Let him die, so that we can live!*

But still she strained forward, fighting herself, fighting the murderer that lies close beneath the surface of all civilized people.

And thus she was caught frozen in a moment of time, while the past rushed to meet her and a man struggled for his life.

The house stood on a jutting cliff of the Monterey Peninsula. It was neither forbidding nor yet welcoming; a house old but well cared for, with fresh white paint and formal gardens, with its full quota of cupolas for its period and a wide veranda that seemed to lend itself to gay outdoor parties in the summer. And yet, Hilda felt as she went up the walk beside Roger, it was used for no such purposes.

What a huge place, she thought, glancing up at its bay windows and small balconies, to shelter so small a family. Roger, his father, his mother, servants; and yet here was a home that should have hovered over a whole family of boisterous children; it was a house that should have been filled with laughter and young voices and a carefree way of living. But there was not a dead blossom on any of the rose bushes that bordered the path, there was not a footprint on the smooth gravel which surely must have been raked that very morning. There was not a sign of living in this house that had stood for almost seventy years, above its beach of clean white sand, the gardens and paths and gazebo, the crooked, crazy little cypress trees forever bowed by the wind from the ocean. Hilda felt that this house before her, so quiet, so immaculate, so unused to the violent ways of life, had received no impression from those whom it had sheltered because it had never grown old with living.

Roger, holding her arm, said gently, "What is it, dear?" for unconsciously, almost imperceptibly, she had hesitated; and yet, as faint as the unwillingness was on her part, he had been sensitive to it, had felt merely by touching her, that something was holding her back.

"It's so—big," she faltered; and was relieved when he laughed, for she knew that while he might be sensitive to her physical reactions, he did not yet know her well enough to penetrate the deep emotional fountainhead from which they sprang. She had wanted, more than all else from the time she first knew him, a perfect union of their hearts and minds as well as bodies; and yet now, in a dim way, she was aware of a small measure of relief in knowing that she was still an entity that no other person's thoughts or perceptions could ever reach.

Ascending the broad steps, unmarred by so much as a fleck of peeling paint, Roger pushed open the big white door with its gleaming glass panes. In the dimness of the interior Hilda stood for a moment, blinking her eyes until they could adjust themselves to the change from sunshine to gloom, and feeling, without knowing why, a heavy fog of depression settling over her. The spacious hallway was immaculately clean, with no dust motes, even, dancing in the one ray of sunlight that came through a small window on the stair landing; there were hundreds of books lining the walls of the library on the right of the entrance, but no magazines strewn about. There were occasional bowls of flowers in the sitting-room on the left, but no petals lying loosely underneath; and faintly, mixed with the fragrance of roses, Hilda could detect the odor of furniture polish. It was all quiet, perfect—and dead.

"Roger," Hilda whispered as he led her into the living-room, "I'm afraid."

He laughed. "Afraid, darling?" he said in a normal voice. "Of what, for heaven's sake?"

Hilda did not know. There was nothing sinister about the house, nothing fearsome about the atmosphere.

"I don't know," she said at last, trying not to whisper. "We shouldn't have done it this way. They won't like it."

"But, honey," he said gently, "we decided on that before we did anything about it. How could we have a regular wedding when—"

When she had no home of her own but a furnished room. When neither of them had any money of their own, to speak of. When neither of them, so impassionedly in love, could bear the thought of pre-wedding festivities. They had said, confidently: Let's get married and get it over with so that we can belong to each other forever. And tell the family afterward. Tell his mother afterward, was what they had meant. Tell his mother, who would have insisted upon days and weeks of preparation for a formal

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wedding which would have left both of them too exhausted to understand or appreciate the wonderful, the beautiful thing that had happened to them: belonging to each other.

For that was all that really mattered—a few words by a minister in a little mountain town and a few days of complete belonging, the rest of the world forgotten, in the seclusion of the Sierras. Rest and peace and a whole long life to look forward to, with people if necessary, without them preferably. . . .

They knew, and had faced the fact, that telling his father and mother afterward would be even more difficult than telling them before they were married; but they had weighed the advantages and disadvantages carefully before they had taken the step at all, knowing what they would gain and lose in either decision, and had chosen the one which, they felt, would start their marriage on its way more safely. It meant deception, yes, for neither of Roger's parents had ever heard of Hilda; but better, even so, than the superficiality of the customary wedding trappings of the world in which his mother lived.

And so Hilda was afraid of the quiet, stern dignity of a house that had perhaps seen gayety but never accepted it, and of a woman whose dignity and lack of gayety were even greater. And if she was afraid of Roger's father it was only because of the fact that she and Roger might have hurt him deeply, and not from any apprehension as to what his attitude toward her would be.

She smiled and turned to her husband. "I'm not really afraid, darling; it's only that I feel as if we were two naughty children, preparing to meet our punishment."

Roger squeezed her arm. "That's my fault, Hilda. I should never have tried to explain Mother and Dad to you. I might have known I'd get it all wrong. Where in hell is that Bonnie?"

He pulled a bell cord, and in a moment a middle-aged woman, in maid's uniform, came into the room, her gray hair neat, her blue eyes sharp, her face neither grave nor smiling.

"Well, Mr. Roger!" she said. "Where on earth did you come from? I didn't hear a sound." She glanced at Hilda with what would have been curiosity if she hadn't obviously schooled herself against such a failing.

"Bonnie," said Roger, and though his face was gay, his voice held a little schoolboyish embarrassment, "prepare yourself! Show a brave front to the world. This is my wife."

Bonnie's face grew even more still than it had been. "Pleased to meet you," she said, borrowing some of the house's dignity. "We didn't know Mr. Roger was—er—"

"It was very sudden," said Roger gravely. "I saw her slinging hash the other night in one of the dumps where I hang out and I thought, hell, this business of eating out all the time is getting me down. Why don't I get married? Here's a dame looks as though she might know how to cook. So I said, 'Look, miss, how about marrying me?' and she put down my boiled prunes and said, 'Don't mind if I do,' so—"

Bonnie's face relaxed, as if the muscles had finally overcome the courageous vigilance that controlled them. "Oh, go 'long with you, Mr. Roger," she said. "How did such a nice girl ever come to put up with you?"

Hilda warmed a little and wondered how Bonnie could know she was a nice girl.

"Where's Mother?" Roger asked.

"Your mamma's in her upstairs sitting-room," said Bonnie, prim again. "And your pa's out knocking some golf balls around, I think. They wasn't expecting you in the middle of the week like this."

"They wasn't expecting me married, either, I'll bet," said Roger, mimicking her. "What'll I do, break the news suddenly, or fetch out the smelling salts first?" It was obvious to both of them that it was necessary to prepare only his mother. (His father, Roger had already explained to Hilda, was the most wonderful guy in the world, and anything that his only child wanted was good enough for him. "He's spoiled the hell out of me," Roger told her ruefully, and she had smiled and rubbed her face against his shoulder and murmured, "He did a wonderful job on you, darling. Let's let him spoil all our seven children!" "Eight," said Roger. "Two of 'em's going to be twins.")

Hilda looked at him now, and felt tears burning behind her eyelids. She wondered if it were safe to feel about anyone the way she felt about Roger. She remembered the gay and happy camaraderie between her own parents, but until she had married, herself, she had not comprehended any deep and passionate love between them; and now she realized that this was because she had not been able to conceive of a sex relationship between two people who were, first and always, her father and mother. But at last, belatedly, she knew that they were lovers even more than they were parents, and that perhaps it was this fact that had made them such good parents. Mamma and Papa. Such childish names . . . such lovely people . . . such wonderful appreciation of life and such careless prodigality with it. . . . They had loved life up to almost the last moment of it, and now they were dead, and Roger's father and mother were living, and this house that sheltered them was dead with their own dead hopes, just as the houses where Hilda had lived with her own parents, had been gay and happy up until the very end. . . .

Roger said, and Hilda could hear the trepidation he tried to hide. "Well, let's go up and get it over with."

Hilda thought: He is more frightened than I am because he knows his mother, and I don't. She walked beside him up the deeply carpeted stairs, holding his arm and pressing it a little to show him that as long as they were together nothing could ever harm them.

Roger knocked on the first of four or five doors opening off the upper hall, and then, in answer to a "Yes, who is it?" opened it and led her in. It was a large room, with sunshine pouring into it, a slightly more informal room than the ones downstairs, and yet still not haphazard with daily living.

Roger's mother said, "Why, son!" and rose from her chair by the window to come toward him. He stooped and kissed her on the cheek, and Hilda, in that brief moment, saw that her mother-in-law was a tiny woman who seemed tall because of the immense dignity she carried in her square shoulders, her erect posture, her proudly-held head—a head crowned with beautifully coiffed white hair above a face as old as time itself. Hilda was not prepared for this. She knew that Roger's mother was older than his father, but she also knew that his father was not yet old, and she was therefore prepared for a well-kept woman of middle age and not for one whose face had deep lines verging into wrinkles, whose mouth was bitter, whose eyes were tired but unyielding.

"Mother," said Roger, as Mrs. Trenton turned her gaze questioningly on Hilda, "there must be a thousand or so ways I could have broken this to you gently, but I can't think of any except to say that this is Hilda."

"Oh?" said Mrs. Trenton. She smiled, and Hilda could almost see the apprehensive grip she was taking on herself.

"My wife," Roger added belatedly.

His words were a shock, undoubtedly. But Mrs. Trenton scarcely winced.

"May I welcome you into our family?" she said, holding up her cheek to be kissed. And as Hilda leaned down she added lightly, "Such a big girl, you are. Roger has always said he liked small women."

Roger, Hilda knew, had said nothing of the sort. He had told her once, while they were lying on the beach near the Cliff House, "Hilda, you have the most beautiful body I've ever seen." And she had laughed and retorted, "All

five feet eight of me—and one hundred and thirty pounds of me?" "If you were six feet tall and just as well proportioned I'd still think you had the loveliest body in the world." And then he added, "I've never liked small women—they have too much nervous energy." And now Hilda knew why he did not want to marry a small woman, even though she herself seemed small beside his six feet two.

"Sit down, children," said Mrs. Trenton, her voice held carefully under control, "and tell me all about it. Why didn't you let us know beforehand? Surely," and her eyes raked Hilda politely, "there was nothing—urgent about it?" Hilda's face flamed and her lips clamped together before she could say, No, Roger and I didn't *have* to get married in a hurry, if that's what you're driving at.

"No," said Hilda pleasantly. "There was nothing urgent about it. We don't intend to have children right away."

It was now Mrs. Trenton's face that flamed, and she sat up even straighter in her straight-backed chair. "I am afraid you misunderstood me," she said stiffly, and turned to her son in such a manner that it seemed unavoidable that her back should be turned to Hilda at the same time.

"I would have loved to have you get married here, Roger," she said. "I know how young people are, but did you have to do this—this thing so impulsively?"

"Mother," said Roger, his voice trying to be gentle, "I didn't want you to be hurt, but you know how unimportant social trappings seem to me. I couldn't take much time off from the office, and Hilda and I just decided one day that there was no sense in waiting. We had a long week-end over Labor Day so we just thought, Why not?"

"I understand, son," said his mother, looking as though she didn't. "Does your father know yet?"

"No." Roger's voice was relieved now that there seemed to be no more probing. "Bonnie said he was out knocking golf balls around."

"An old man's sport." His mother laughed tinklingly. "But wouldn't he be enraged if I mentioned it? Dear, why don't you go out and break the news while—er—Hilda"—as if she could not quite recall her daughter-in-law's name—"and I get acquainted."

Oh, God, thought Hilda, and looked at her husband pleadingly; but he, imperceptive to undercurrents, jumped up hastily and said, "I'll do that, Mother," and off he went. Mrs. Trenton turned to her, smiling, and Hilda shivered a little.

"Suppose I order some tea?" she said pleasantly. "Or would you prefer a highball?"

"Tea, thanks," said Hilda, who would have welcomed something stronger.

Mrs. Trenton pulled the bell cord, gave instructions to Bonnie, then turned back to the younger woman.

"These things are always so difficult, aren't they, my dear?" she said in a friendly voice. "I mean, getting acquainted after the *fait accompli*. If Roger had only brought you to me at the beginning of your acquaintance with him, we could have gotten all this over with and had it out of the way."

"All what?" Hilda asked guardedly.

"Why, getting acquainted. After all, you are part of our family now and we must learn to know each other. I suppose you know a good deal of Roger's father and myself, but we know nothing at all about you, and since I suppose you and Roger will be here a good deal, we ought to fill in the background, don't you think?"

Bonnie came in with a large tray containing tea, hot muffins and jam. She glanced at Hilda with curiosity, at Mrs. Trenton with speculation, noticed Roger's absence with complete lack of surprise, and departed.

"Lemon? Cream? Sugar?" Mrs. Trenton handed Hilda a steaming cup. "I daresay you *would* have preferred a highball," she added ruefully, "but I always take everyone at his word."

I doubt that, thought Hilda, scalding her mouth with the hot tea in the hope that it would bolster her slipping morale. I doubt that very much, my dear mother-in-law.

"How did you happen to meet Roger?" the pleasant, tinkling voice went on.

How did I happen to meet Roger? Hilda said, but not aloud. How would you like it if I told you the truth, that it was a pick-up? How would you like it if I told you I was lying on the beach, asleep, getting red as a bullfighter's cloak, when your son came by and woke me up and said, "Turn over, pal; you're done on that side," and then sat down beside me and looked me over and said, "Hey, what are you, anyway—a female lifeguard?" because my shoulders were overdeveloped from swimming so much. How would you like it if I told you that when I looked up into his face and saw the gentle eyes and the kind and laughing mouth, my heart turned over inside me and something—a voice, a thought, an impulse—said, This is my man. But I can't tell you that, you sweet and proper little mother-in-law, because the only thing you'd get out of it would be Sex. It was sex all right, but it was something so much more, something so deep and big and beautiful and all right, that no one in all this world could ever understand it or believe it.

"We met through mutual friends," said Hilda.

"In San Francisco?" Mrs. Trenton sipped her tea, her eyes smiling, her mind chiseling through the layers of Hilda's tightly held reserve.

"Yes," said Hilda without thinking.

"Ah." Mrs. Trenton put down her cup with the air of a gladiator unsheathing his sword. "The Bybees, perhaps? The Nicholsons? We know all of Roger's friends in San Francisco."

Hilda thought, Why do I bother? She put down her own cup, none too quietly. If Mrs. Trenton could fight with a sword, she herself could fight with her fists. "I did not meet him in society circles," said Hilda in a scathing voice. "I met him through friends in his office."

"Oh?" Mrs. Trenton gathered herself quickly together, and applied the proper amount of distaste to her next question. "You—er—worked in his office?"

"No," said Hilda. She felt as she once had at a fortune teller's, determined to get her five dollars' worth without contributing one particle of information that would make it easy for the other.

For a moment the older woman seemed baffled. She waited for Hilda to continue, but when Hilda lit a cigarette and leaned back in her chair, Mrs. Trenton, undismayed, went forth into battle again. "Are you a native Californian?" she ventured tentatively, and Hilda knew that she meant: Who *are* you, anyway?

Hilda sighed and said, "We lived in Alameda."

"Oh," said Mrs. Trenton as if she thought Alameda was passé. As if people of wealth no longer used it as a suburb of San Francisco. Who ever heard of anyone who lived in Alameda?

Alameda. The huge house with the polished stairs down which she and Spanker used to slide to the billiard-room below. The faint memories that drifted back only when she wasn't searching for them. Trips to Idora Park in Oakland, to Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. Trips to the opera, during which she and Spanker squirmed and whispered, and Papa's thunderous voice afterward, coming from the small den off the billiard-room: "Those damn' kids! Easier to get castor oil down them than culture," and Mamma's voice, amused, saying, "Me, I got no culture and look at me now! I married a millionaire." Hilda and Spanker sitting quietly, gravely, on the polished stairs, listening. Glasses tinkled from within the den, and smoke drifted outward, and the voices whispered and laughed and fell still, and then Papa's voice came, different, a little tight and strange. "Darling," it said, "let's go to bed." That was the night when Hilda and Spanker got to their feet

too quickly, and she fell against him with the awkwardness that was even now a part of her, and they both rolled to the bottom of the stairs and Mamma and Papa had come flying out of the den and found a tangle of flannelette nightgowns, and Papa had roared, "I'll skin the little heathens alive!" and Mamma had laughed and said, "Let's have a dozen more just like them." But there hadn't been any more. Now there wasn't anyone, just Hilda.

"**Where are your family** now?" came the persistent voice.

"Where were they? Hilda did not know. Were they clouds or dust or atoms, or the wind that whispered through the trees at night? Or perhaps they were only memories left in the heart of a young girl who, weary and alone, had had for a time only a past and no future. . . .

She remembered, now, the hot, itchy feeling she had had that morning long ago. The sore throat. The headache. The darkness and pain and tossing, the doctor going first into Spanker's room and then coming back to hers. And later, the strange stillness of the house, and Mamma sitting beside Hilda's bed with tears on her cheeks and her trembling mouth that was always so ready to break into laughter, trying to smile again. The tears and the smile together. The tears for the small son who would never be anything, now, but a memory; the smile for the small daughter whom she seemed to be holding to her by sheer force of will. Papa standing beside her, his arm about her shoulder, his face looking so old, his own shoulders sagging; both of them standing there looking at the child Hilda who was struggling to live. Hilda realized now that, in their own way, they were praying. And so she had come back to them from the scarlet fever that had taken Spanker; but nothing was ever quite the same again. . . .

The memories dimmed and then became clearer, for Hilda was older now and the big house was gone and so was most of what had kept it going. There was another house, nice but smaller, and then another still smaller but not so nice, and there were no Japanese servants to run it any longer, just Mamma. But some of the gayety, some of the laughter, had come back, and in time Hilda forgot that she had ever been anything but an only child. She remembered the shabbiness of the houses as they got progressively smaller and she remembered—would remember always—the warmth and laughter and love that her father and mother brought to them. . . .

And then the terrible holocaust of the last small house, the fierce flames, the fearful noise, with, at last, all of them safe in the street and Papa soaking wet from a fireman's hose, and the cold that turned into pneumonia, the pneumonia that turned into tragedy for all of them. She had been eighteen then, just finishing her first year at Cal., and after the first frozen grief for her father had subsided, she had somehow managed to get her mother and herself established in a tiny apartment in San Francisco and herself in business college. And then Mamma finally giving up, turning her eyes toward the other world that meant so much more to her than the one she lived in.

"My family are dead," Hilda said quietly.

"Oh, I'm sorry," and she could feel the unaccustomed kindness in the other woman's voice, a kindness so unexpected that momentarily it threw her off balance, for every one of her quivering nerves was rigidly on guard against this woman who was probing too deeply into a past that Hilda wanted to forget. . . . She glanced up from her teacup and saw the older woman's eyes on her appraisingly.

"You must consider this your home now," said Mrs. Trenton. "Roger is our only son, as you know, and of course we do not wish to lose him. I understand that—er—there will be many things for you to learn—" She stopped a moment, searching for tact. "If, perhaps, I had a better picture of your background I would then know better how to help you." And the probing voice went on. "Were you living in Alameda at the time you met Roger?"

"No," said Hilda. "After my father died my mother and I moved to San Francisco where we had an apartment. I worked." She thought, I might as well give it to her straight—she'll get it out of me some time, anyway.

"Oh." Mrs. Trenton looked at her speculatively, and sipped her tea. "Well," the cool polite voice went on, "it is surely not your fault that you were thrown on your own resources so young."

Hilda wondered how the older woman could have survived two wars and still retain such an unbending attitude toward class distinctions. She wondered even more why she herself didn't put an end to this ridiculous conversation and why on earth Roger didn't return and give her an excuse to escape from it. Why must she, who had always prided herself on her independence, allow herself to be vanquished by a woman whose breeding was only skin deep and whose courtesy was a form of *noblesse oblige*, stemming from habit and not from warmth. "Mother's family had the money," Roger had told her once, "but Dad's had the background. So," with a cynicism rare to him, "they both got something out of it." Hilda thought, remembering, "Strange how thin the veneer of acquired breeding actually is!"

Mrs. Trenton stirred her cold tea, and said smoothly, "We have great things in mind for Roger, of course, and naturally the right wife will have a great deal to do with his future success. . . . How old are you, my dear?"

"Twenty-four."

"Twenty-four." Mrs. Trenton smiled a little. "You are very young, but we must try to understand each other, for Roger's sake," and for a fleeting instant Hilda felt that Mrs. Trenton was almost as baffled and bewildered by this tête-à-tête as she herself was. "I have no desire to pry into your private life, but surely you must realize that you will have certain responsibilities as Roger's wife, and that you will need me to help and guide you with them—"

Hilda leaned over and set her teacup on the tray before glancing up to meet the other woman's eyes. "Mrs. Trenton," she said, "I have no responsibilities except to make Roger happy, and therefore myself happy. And although you may be the arbiter of social affairs in this particular vicinity, you seem to forget that Roger is a beginning architect with a small income—"

"But that is exactly why," the older woman broke in, "it is so necessary for you, as his wife, to take your rightful place among our friends. It is usually the wives who bring success, by their social relationships, to the men of today who have accomplished something."

Hilda said nothing, and wished for a sickening moment that she could dispel the cold rage that was mounting in her. She rarely, in fact never that she could remember, lost her temper or flew into rages over trifles. But she wanted to get up and face this small, erect, imperious old woman, and tell her what she thought of her, and then leave this house forever. But her knees were trembling and her throat was locked with anger, so that all she could do was to sit quite still and force her mind to numbness.

The door opened and Roger came in; and slowly, beat by beat, Hilda's heart came back to life again.

"Found the old man in a sand trap, cussing his head off," Roger said, dropping a kiss on one of Hilda's gleaming braids. "Wife, meet Pa," and Hilda found herself looking up into the smiling eyes of a man she liked on sight. He was tall and youthful-looking, his body only slightly thickened through the waist, his hair still abundant and just beginning to show more gray than black, his skin ruddy and healthy. His eyes were gentle, like Roger's.

"If there's anything I like," said Gerald Trenton, "it's to kiss a pretty girl, especially when I have a good excuse." He leaned down and kissed Hilda, whispering in her ear, "Although I don't always wait for an excuse!"

Hilda laughed. "You liar!" For no one, knowing Gerald, could ever believe he was a philanderer—Roger

had told her enough about his father for her to be certain on this score; he was too kindly, too gentle, too thoughtful. Hilda felt good now. The cold black rage had left her and she felt warm and happy and at peace. For a moment.

"What do you think, Gerald," Mrs. Trenton's precise voice asked, "of our son's getting married without letting us know?"

"It's *his* marriage," said her husband. And Hilda noticed, with relief, that although the words sounded like a rebuke, his voice was kind. She wondered why and how this obvious *mésalliance* had taken place.

Gerald said, "For heaven's sake, what are you drinking? *Tea?*" He might have used the same tone in saying "Poison?" He pulled the bell cord, and, when Bonnie appeared, "Fetch some Scotch and soda, like a good girl."

Gerald pulled up a chair beside Hilda and said, "Let me look you over, girl. Want to find out what Roger saw in you."

Hilda laughed, now wholly at her ease, and said, "It's hard to tell. I was red as a lobster all over the first time he laid eyes on me."

"Blushing?" asked Gerald, and the two of them went into gales of laughter. Too late, she realized that after her version to Mrs. Trenton of how she had met Roger she could not go into details of their first meeting on the beach. She leaned over and whispered, "I'll tell you later," knowing that these undertones of confidence were in anything but good taste, yet driven to defiance by her mother-in-law's addiction to good form. She turned to the older woman, a little ashamed, and said, smiling, "I like your relatives, Mrs. Trenton," and then was appalled at the implication in her words. Oh, God, she thought, won't I ever learn not to say the wrong thing?

Bonnie fortunately made her entrance at this moment, and Hilda gratefully took the glass of Scotch and soda that Gerald handed her.

Gerald said to his wife, "Have some, dear?"

"You know I don't drink, Gerald."

"You should try it sometime. It's wonderful for relaxation."

"Obviously," said his wife dryly.

And Hilda thought again how strange it was that while his words were light and almost impudent, the tone held a kindly respect entirely devoid of any intentional hurt.

Gerald turned to Hilda again. "Roger told me why you got married the way you did," he said. "Can't say I blame him. When Teresa and I were married I was a wreck for days afterward. Parties, rehearsal, all kinds of hullabaloo. Didn't know whether I was coming or going."

"I thought that was the bride's prerogative," said Hilda, glancing smilingly at the older woman. But the smile died quickly, for Mrs. Trenton was not looking at any of them, and Hilda saw that her eyes were seeing other things, other days, and that there was a strange softening in them, a rather heartbreaking sadness. Hilda was surprised, and once more baffled. She thought, again, Why, she's human after all. She's suffering. She's remembering her wedding day, remembering what she used to be and what she now is.

She said gently, speaking to the older woman, "It's going to be nice, being married to Roger. I hadn't realized how easy it would be to meet you both—I was a little afraid at first, but now I'm not."

The sadness and the softness disappeared from Mrs. Trenton's eyes and she said in her brittle voice, "Things will work out very well, I'm sure. But I hope that next time Roger will take us into his confidence first," and all three of the others broke into laughter.

"*Next* time!" said Roger at last. "Don't worry, Mother. You're stuck with Hilda for life!"

Mrs. Trenton had the grace to smile a little, herself. "I hope you will forgive me, my dear. I didn't realize—"

But Hilda, not quite so happy now, wondered if she didn't.

When finally Mrs. Trenton announced that it was time for her pre-dinner nap, Gerald ushered the two of them out into the hall and down the stairs. "Go find out when dinner'll be ready," he said to Roger, and, when he and Hilda were alone:

"Was it very bad?" he asked anxiously.

"Very bad?" She looked at him for a moment, and then understood. "Oh. The inquisition. I'm sorry," she added hastily. "I have such an unfortunate way of putting things. Roger's mother did question me pretty thoroughly, and I wasn't used to it so I got—upset. But," she faltered, "I didn't do anything about it."

Gerald squeezed her arm. "Good girl," he said. "We shouldn't have left you alone with her for so long, but the boy and I had a lot to talk about. Teresa's all right," he added hastily, "but people don't always understand her the first time they meet her."

Hilda liked him at that moment more than she had ever liked anyone on so short an acquaintance. She liked his deference to his wife, his kindliness when in her presence; and she liked his loyalty toward her now—his acceptance of his wife for what she was, but his tolerance of it nonetheless.

"Hilda," he said, and now she saw that his eyes were a little tired, a little lonely, "Roger's all I have. Up until now, I've been all that he's had. He has you, from now on, but I have no one. So make him happy, won't you? He's never had a woman to love him, and every man needs one—I've needed a woman to love me, too—"

Hilda, her eyes flooding, whispered, "You have me, from now on—Gerald." For she could not bring herself to call him Dad. She had only one father and he was dead. Gerald, to her, was a friend who needed warmth and love and tenderness, all that she had to give that had not already been given to his son, but he was not her father and she could not call him so. "Don't worry about Roger," she said. "I love him, too, you know. He's all I've ever wanted. I'll make him happy if I can." And did not think it strange that neither of them spoke about *her* happiness.

CHAPTER 2

Off in the distance the terrified cry for help came again; and still the tall woman with the magnificent body and the wheat-colored braids stood poised, her arms outflung, while an invisible force held her powerless to heed the cry. . . .

They had started their life together in a small bungalow in Burlingame. Roger had said, "Darling, some day I'll design and build you a castle, complete with moat and towers, but while those bloated capitalists who employ me (and don't I wish I were one of them!) persist in underpaying me, you'll take this dump and like it!"

"My hero," Hilda murmured. "Don't you know that any place that has you in it is home to me?"

"Hey," said Roger, "that's supposed to be *my* line. This script is sour."

They were hanging curtains in the living-room, and Hilda felt an upsurge of joy at her first experience in homemaking.

"Darling," she said critically, "that drape is crooked. Here, let me do it."

"Let *you* do it?" he exclaimed in horror. "You couldn't even get to the top of the stepladder without breaking your neck!" She laughed ruefully, knowing that he was undoubtedly right; and remembered how her father and mother had struggled to eradicate from her the coltish awkwardness that was so inherent a part of her nature.

"The hell with this curtain-hanging deal," said Roger. He got down from the stepladder and took Hilda in his arms and kissed her eyes and her nose and the hollow at the base of her throat. "Darling," he murmured, "what have I ever done to deserve you?"

"N-nothing," she admitted. "You can't even hang curtains right." And then she began to cry and to cling to Roger and to whisper, "I love you. I love you."

Roger said gently, "What is it, darling? Why are you crying?"

"Because I feel so safe," she whispered. "And so happy. And so loved. After Mamma died I built up a wall around myself so that nothing could ever hurt me again, and here I am vulnerable once more. Everything I am is yours, darling—I won't let myself be afraid any longer—"

"Afraid of what?" he asked. He wiped her eyes and kissed her again and they went outdoors and sat on the bench in the garden. The night was warm and the air was sweet and the lamplight fell softly on the lawn. Their house and their lawn and their light in the window. . . .

"Afraid of being unhappy," she said at last. "This is so much more than I ever hoped for or expected that I am afraid of it. So few people seem to be happy, Roger. They start out young with the world waiting for them, and then the years go by and the world is still as far from being their oyster as it ever was, and pretty soon they realize they are middle-aged or old and that all their lives they've searched for the wrong thing. . . . Tell me what you want, darling," she pleaded.

"You," he said.

"What else? You have me, but what do you want eventually?"

He took out his pipe and filled it, and the homey smell of the tobacco seemed just as natural in this small garden as did the fragrance of the flowers. "I want," he said at last, "to be the finest architect in this country. I want to be flexible, so that I won't be too governed by my own theories of house-building. I want to build small houses that are perfect, and large houses that aren't ostentatious. I want my designs to fit the personalities of the people who are to live in them."

Hilda smiled. "That's such an easy thing to want, darling. You have talent and you're young, and you have integrity and ambition. . . . You'll be the greatest designer of houses in this country, and it won't even be hard. Not for you."

"It should be," said Roger. "Nothing's any good that comes too easy. . . . I'm even glad things were tough for me at college."

"They were?" asked Hilda, surprised. "But I thought—what do you mean?"

"Mother wanted me to study law and I loathed it." He laughed shortly. "I said I wouldn't study law and that I wanted to be an architect. She said the equivalent of Mother knows best and that unless I studied law I could go to college on my own. So I did. I was tending furnaces until Dad caught on to what was cooking—he didn't know Mother wasn't sending me any money—and somehow or other he managed to dig up enough to keep me going."

"You mean a lot to your father, don't you?" Hilda asked thoughtfully.

"Too much," Roger admitted. "He's concentrated every hope and dream and ambition of his life in me, and it's too much responsibility. I'm the only person, now, who has the power to make Dad unhappy; I'm the only one who could ever disappoint him or hurt him or ruin his life. . . . Sometimes I wish," he added unhappily, "that he'd find some other interest."

"But he seemed pleased when you married me—he's not possessive," Hilda commented.

"He was pleased when I married you," Roger said, "because that was what *I* wanted. He sent me money at college because he wanted me to have what *I wanted*. The damn' guy spoiled hell out of me," he muttered.

"He did a wonderful job on you," Hilda murmured, rubbing her face against his shoulder. "I'm going to give him a medal next time I see him."

"Only reason I'm not a worse stinker than I am," Roger went on, "is that Mother used to take it out of my hide. She had a strap. . . ."

"Oh, *no*," cried Hilda, appalled.

"She used it on me just once, out in the garage. I yelled like a Comanche and Dad came running and snatched it out of her hands and for a moment I thought he was going to use it on her and I was scared to death. I was about twelve at the time, and I can still feel the way my heart hammered. Dad said, 'Don't you ever lay a hand on that child again as long as you live!' That was the only time I ever heard him anything but polite and courteous to my mother."

"How did she take it?" asked Hilda, still shaken.

"She looked at him directly, and said, 'Gerald, you are ruining the boy.' Then she turned and walked out of the garage—and she never touched me again."

Hilda said slowly, "In a way, your father was as bad as your mother. One of them trying to discipline you, the other counteracting the discipline. It must have been an—unfortunate—sort of upbringing."

"It'll be different for *our* kids," Roger said; and at the thought of children for herself and Roger, her heart began to pound and she moved closer to him, as if already his child might be growing within her.

She made friends with the neighbors on their left, Dot and Frank Nesbitt, chatting over the fence when she was hanging out the few pieces of laundry she did at home. The two men, supposedly working in the garden on Saturday afternoons, would lean on their hoes and chat just as much as their wives did, and once Dot winked at Hilda and said, "And they talk about women being gossips!"

"Ever hear us making catty remarks about anyone?" her husband asked humorously.

"Ever hear *us?*" Dot retorted pertly.

And then the four of them would laugh and make a date for a barbecue the following week or a game of bridge in between week-ends.

Hilda loved it, all of it. She loved the suburban community, the near-by neighbors, the unelaborate social life, the friendliness.

She found plenty to keep her busy, in those early days of establishing a home. The kitchen was small and white and spotless and, while she was working in it, she loved this room best in all the house, just as she loved each different room best when she was working in it. She experimented continually with new dishes, trying to make of herself a good cook, she who scarcely had been able to manage anything other than chops and steaks until now. "Anyone can cook," she told him proudly, "who likes to eat as much as I do.

"Now this little item," she commented one evening, as she set down the casserole before him, "is something the

butcher calls short ribs, but which looked definitely like horsemeat until I gave it a dash of Burgundy and a few mushrooms."

Roger took off the lid of the casserole and sniffed at the fragrant steam. "Darling, you're wonderful," he said.

She sat down opposite him and said bluntly, "Your folks have a very poor cook, haven't they?"

"No worse than the others we've had. The food there always tastes the same."

"It doesn't taste at all," Hilda grumbled. "Gets all the flavor cooked out of it. Honestly, that leg of lamb falling apart until at first I thought it was soup meat. Fresh peas cooked for an hour, everything boiled to death. I wonder if that—" She stopped suddenly.

"Wonder what, honey?"

"If that's why Gerald comes to see us so often," she went on slowly. She *was* crazy about Roger's father—she had admitted it often enough—but at the same time, after all, she and Roger were still a honeymoon couple, and it seemed as if Gerald dropped in on them for a day or two every time he got the opportunity. Or else he *made* the opportunity. He was always gay, cheerful, good company; but he didn't seem to realize that perhaps she and Roger would rather be alone more.

Roger laughed at her suggestion. "Oh. I don't think it's the food," he said. "I think it's the company. Dad's the best friend I've ever had—up until I met you. He's helped me and encouraged me and given me my own way in too many directions, and he's lonely as hell. He and Mother don't have the same interests any more—if they ever did—" he added, not too happily. "Dad wanted more children, but Mother wasn't strong enough—he said he wanted a whole stableful of boys just like me—"

"No girls?" asked Hilda, smiling.

"No girls. In some respects he's a little soured on women."

"Because of your mother?"

"Not entirely. . . . Let's go into the other room, shall we?"

But out in the other room he forgot what he had been talking about: he lit the fire and took Hilda in his arms and they sat there for a long time, looking into the flames and being content.

It was later, and rather piecemeal, that she found out from Roger what had given his father the lonely, lost look when he wasn't smiling; the same thing that made him friendly and kind to her and yet which she could not help but realize did not go deeply into friendship or affection.

Gerald, Roger told her, had always hated his own mother, who had lofty ambitions for her two daughters, and little time or attention for the small son who had come at a later period in her life when the raising of another child was just an unwelcome chore. Early, she had been divorced from her husband and had managed to get control of his business and his money and at the same time to keep him from ever seeing his children.

Roger said moodily, "Dad used to tell me about how his father—always seedy and run-down—would meet him after school and take him to the circus, or for a walk in the woods, and how his mother always found out and thrashed him for it, even though that didn't stop him. I think," Roger added slowly, "that that was when Dad's—contempt, I guess you'd call it—for women began." Gerald's sisters, he went on, were sent to the best finishing schools and were given a debut offering them as marriage bait to the highest bidder. His mother almost impoverished herself, so that when the time came for Gerald to go to college, he had had to work for his board and room.

"Oh, Roger," said Hilda pityingly, her love, which had been static for a time, once more flowing out to Gerald who had suffered so from women. "It's strange that there's so little bitterness in him, under the circumstances. He always seems so gay and loving, and always so kind to your mother. . . . Strange," she added thoughtfully, "that he should have married someone like her, who seems to be so much like his own mother."

Roger said: "He told me the whole thing was manipulated. She was the daughter of one of his mother's 'society' friends, with a whopping big income, and I understand she was quite handsome in her day—regal, patrician, that sort of thing—and Dad's mother simply managed to throw them together at every opportunity. Mother was older than he was, and I guess he was so used to being pushed around at home that he just let her push him into marriage. He was young and had a good background, and she was past thirty and still husbandless though well-to-do, so I guess she figured he was a good catch—and about the only one left for her."

He added, "Dad told me once that I had given him the only happiness he'd ever had in his life." And Hilda could see her husband's face changing almost imperceptibly until, strangely, it made her think of a child's face, round and untouched. . . . For a moment he did not look like Roger, but like the child she and Roger might some day have. The thought appalled her; grown people should not look like children, she thought, frightened. She moved closer into his arms—they were strong and hard and not like the arms of a child at all.

At five-thirty every afternoon Hilda got out the car and drove to the station to meet the five-forty-five from San Francisco. Even now, months after her marriage had taken place, she was unable to quell the rising excitement of anticipation at the thought of seeing Roger again. She realized that sometime the newness would wear off, the never-ending wonder of the closeness of the bond between her and Roger; but she knew that something else would take its place—children, companionship, contentment. Not boredom. Not dissatisfaction. Never, never regret.

And so, wanting children, she was almost frightened when she found that she was going to have a child; frightened because of what it might do to her relationship with Roger, frightened even more as she gradually began to realize how much she was depending on that relationship. She thought once, cold prickles coming out all over her body: If Roger should die, I would die, too. It never occurred to her that she could lose him in any other way.

Roger was working one night in the extra bedroom, which he used as a drafting-room for work he did at home, when she told him. She looked over his shoulder at the design he had been working on and said, without thinking, "Darling, what is it?" He took his pipe out of his mouth and answered coldly, "It's a gopher burrow," and then laughed and put his arm around her. "Honey, that's why I do so much work at home—at the office they think I'm nuts and that sort of thing can be catching, you know; if they think I'm nuts then pretty soon *I'll* think I'm nuts."

Forgetting for a moment what it was she was going to tell him, she examined the design carefully. After a few moments she said, "It's beautiful, Roger. It's beautiful when you take time to study it and understand it. It's—"

"It's modern planning," he finished for her, "without its harshness." He pointed to the design with his pipe. "See where I've softened the roof line? And where I've rounded the corners of the house instead of making them always and eternally sharp? The windows are mullioned in front, because that's what that particular type of house demands; but in back, where there's a view, I have a picture window. But hell," he added in disgust, "you think I can make the firm see it? No, I have to design houses that are either a conglomeration of every style of architecture that's been used for the last thousand years, or I have to make a house so damned 'modern' that a self-respecting goat wouldn't be caught dead in it."

She said hesitantly, "Roger—"

"Yep?"

"We have a double garage and only one car."

"Is that news? What are you doing, honey, leading up to the fact that there should be two cars in every garage?"

"Uh-uh. Just that there should be one baby in every house."

"I see no reason," said Roger simply, "why I should think *I'm* nuts! Just what is the connection between the garage and a baby?"

"Because I thought," she went on with a rush, "that perhaps a little later you could use the other half of the garage for your workshop so that—so that we could use this room for—for—"

Roger looked up from his work, grinning. "You trying to break some news without benefit of tiny garments?"

Hilda's voice was faint. "Darling, do you mind?"

Roger said. "Heck, what do you think I married you for?" He put his arms around her, and again she felt safe and secure. "I was afraid," she whispered. "I was afraid things might be—different—between us."

"They won't be if you don't let them. What'll we have—a boy or a girl?"

"Which do you want?"

"You mean there's something we can do about it? Why, they'll write us up in the medical journals!"

Hilda laughed. She said, "Roger, I wish I could live on the moon with you."

"The moon, for heaven's sake! Why?"

"Because then we'd be alone."

But she did not tell him that it was Gerald who made her want to be alone with Roger. . . .

Gerald was always and eternally kind. He was gentle and warm and loving, so affectionate in his own approach to them that it never occurred to him that they could be anything else toward him. Hilda sometimes thought that if only Roger would occasionally show some impatience at the frequent visits of his father, she could endure them better herself. And yet endure was not quite the right word. Gerald was never any trouble.

She asked once, hesitantly, if he hadn't ever been in business, and he said, not too happily, "Oh, yes, I was in the real-estate business for several years, but it took me away from home a lot and Teresa didn't like it. . . ." He stopped suddenly and Hilda, glancing up at him, saw a fleeting expression on his face—bitterness? hatred? "I play golf a lot," he said; and she didn't know whether that was merely a statement, or an excuse, or an ironic comment upon his way of life. "Roger and I used to play a good deal before he was married," he went on. "Does he ever go out now?"

Hilda said, "N-no. A country club is expensive and, well, we just haven't the money for that sort of thing."

"You used to work before you were married, didn't you?" he asked, his voice pleasant but the tone not that of one who is merely changing the subject.

"Yes. I was in an office."

"Don't you find a lot of idle time on your hands now? I should think—" He didn't finish, but he didn't have to.

"I'm pregnant," she said shortly, knowing what he was driving at.

"Well!" said Gerald. "Well, that's nice. Roger pleased?"

"Very," said Hilda, her voice still cold.

"Lot of responsibilities for a young fellow like that." He sighed. "But that's the way life is, I guess. Biological urge gets us all, sooner or later."

"Would you like a drink?" she asked in desperation; and tried, not too successfully, to remember Gerald's kindness—his unspoken championship of her when Roger's mother was putting her through the initial inquisition, his warm acceptance of their marriage.

Hilda said gently, "I'll have one with you," and smiling, clicking their glasses, they forgot their momentary disagreement and let understanding take its place.

It was not long after this visit that Roger came home one evening, his eyes dancing, and showed her a check for one hundred dollars that his father had given him.

"For heaven's sake," said Hilda, "what's *that* for?"

"Dad says I look 'kind of peaked,' " Roger said, grinning. "Implied that married life was getting me down. Says we should take off for Lake Tahoe for a few days, when my vacation comes up."

Hilda made a little face. "Who am I to look a gift horse in the mouth?"

He put his arms around her, and looked into her eyes, his own still smiling. "Let's cheat a little, baby," he said. "Let's go back to the mountains instead of Tahoe—back to where we had our honeymoon."

"Let's," she said, her heart lifting. "It will be even better this time!"

And so it was. For now, while there was no longer the awed delight of a new possession, there was something deeper and richer in their relationship, something that still retained the passion of the honeymoon and yet now held, in addition, the closeness of spirit that had come with months spent together. . . .

One evening, after the sudden darkness of the mountains had swallowed up the dusk, and they were sitting by the campfire smoking, Hilda said lazily, "When did you first know you were in love with me, Roger?"

She felt the amusement in his voice when he answered, without a moment's hesitation, "The first time I heard you giggle, darling."

"Oh, that giggle," said Hilda. "It belongs to a bird-brain, not an intellectual like me," and the giggle came forth again, rippling up and down with a cadence like a small chuckling brook.

"It's the loveliest laugh in the world," Roger murmured dreamily. "It's the most wonderful part of you, except, of course," he added thoughtfully, "the way you look in a sweater, and the way your nose stops just in time and the way your eyes get green flecks in them when you're mad. And the way you look like a frowsy little girl in the morning till you put up your hair and then all of a sudden you turn into a woman of reserve and dignity. Until you laugh. Ah, me," and he fell over on his back, staring up at the sky. "So many women in one! I even like your silly awkwardness, the way you ram into a door jamb without even one little drink, and the way you fall over footstools, so we can't have any fancy ornaments around the house because you bust them all. You could never be a strip-teaser, darling," he added with a grin. "You're nothing but a mass of bruises. How come you never know where you're going?"

She didn't answer for a moment, and when she did her voice was serious. "I never did until now. Perhaps this running into furniture is kind of—well—psychological. The inner me never knew where I was headed for. It does now. So perhaps there won't be any more bruises. Come on, darling, let's get to bed." She jumped to her feet, started toward their sleeping-bags, and fell flat on her face over a log. Neither of them could move for at least five minutes, and if there had been any wood creatures near by they would have scrambled for shelter at the howls of laughter that shattered the air. . . .

Hilda rose slowly from a deep pool of sleep; the early morning air was fragrant and clean, the giant redwoods throwing their branches like lace across the fresh blue of the sky. Roger was leaning over her, resting on an elbow, smiling; and it took her back swiftly to the morning after their wedding. She had wakened then, as now, to find Roger leaning over her, his eyes tender, his mouth passionate, his whisper almost frightened: "Darling, I couldn't hear you breathing!" She smiled sleepily and now, as then, said "I'm still breathing," and for a moment he looked blank and then laughed. "You remembered!" he said. "Darling, don't ever stop breathing." "That's ag'in'

the law of nature," she murmured, and stretched lazily. "Let's never go home, Roger. Let's just lie here under the sky forever and not eat or drink or anything."

"Not anything?" asked Roger, and they both laughed and he took her in his arms.

Driving back, down the long hot Sacramento Valley, he said, "Look, honey, do you mind if we pretend we went to Tahoe?"

"For heaven's sake, why?" she asked, astonished.

"Well—Dad gave me that check for Tahoe and he might feel kind of hurt if we didn't go there."

"You're joking!" said Hilda, but she saw he wasn't. "Surely he's not the kind to tie strings to his gifts."

"No, it isn't that. But I think he kind of felt you'd get a kick out of putting on the dog at a fancy resort, and he might feel as if we were—well, casting reflections on his judgment."

Hilda shrugged. "Suit yourself, dear. I've never been to a classy joint at Tahoe, even though I've heard about them—, so you'll have to do all the ad-libbing if he starts asking questions."

This was exactly what happened. As usual, on the following Sunday they drove to the house on the cliff, and Gerald could hardly wait to talk about the trip to Tahoe.

"Have a good time, kids?" he asked. "How'd you like Tahoe, Hilda?"

"Oh, it was—beautiful," she said.

"Where'd you stay?" he asked, smiling.

Hilda hesitated and glanced at Roger, who was talking to his mother. "Uh—Tahoe Tavern," she said.

"How was the fishing? Do any trolling?"

Good Lord, thought Hilda, who had never fished from a boat, what's that—a game? And looked pleadingly at Roger who had finally caught on to what was happening.

"Sure," he said easily. "Can't you tell? The little girl's nose is peeling."

"What else did you do?" asked Gerald, enjoying himself hugely.

"Gerald," his wife broke in with restrained exasperation, "if you wanted a trip to Tahoe, why didn't you go there yourself, instead of getting it vicariously from Roger and Hilda?"

Gerald subsided, as he always did when his wife reprimanded him, and Hilda thought tiredly that most of the pleasure of the trip, in retrospect, had been spoiled, for he was looking a little sullen at his wife's rebuke.

CHAPTER 3

At first Hilda had found it difficult to visit the home of the older Trentons. Each Sunday, as she and Roger started out in their car for the two-hour drive, she felt a wincing inside her, a subconscious strengthening of her own will that must be pitted against the older woman's and yet tempered with courtesy at the same time.

It was the custom, after dinner, for the two men to have their cigarettes and coffee on the veranda, and for Hilda to have hers with Mrs. Trenton in the upstairs sitting-room, where they would sit, making polite small talk.

One time the older woman said, "I hope you'll let me help you in little ways, my dear—"

"What little ways?" asked Hilda.

Mrs. Trenton smiled faintly. "Do you think you have nothing to learn? After all, I'm a good deal older than you are and have certainly had much more experience."

"I understand that," Hilda said carefully. "But I don't quite understand what you mean about helping me in little ways—"

"You see, my dear," and the older woman paused delicately, "no matter how we might uphold the principle of democracy, the fact remains that—well—there *are* different walks of life—"

Hilda set down her coffee cup with a *ping*. "Mrs. Trenton," she said in a deadly voice, "don't you ever, as long as you live, say or even imply a criticism of my parents—" She stopped suddenly.

"Why, Hilda, my dear, you must be mistaken in what you think I said. I wouldn't dream of making any such implication. But you've said so little about them."

"Very well," said Hilda with tight lips. "My father was worth half a million at the time of his marriage to my mother, although I was always taught," she added scornfully, "that to speak of money was the height of vulgarity," (now it was the older woman's turn to wince) "but since that is what you seem to be interested in about my background I thought it best to mention it. He and my mother traveled in Europe on their honeymoon; they built a beautiful home in Alameda when they returned; my brother and I were sent to public school not because my father couldn't afford tutors but because he believed implicitly in the fundamental soundness of democracy. My parents entertained a great deal, and I was given, I assure you, the correct training in manners. But I was also taught that good manners stem from thoughtfulness toward others and that never, by any stretch of the imagination, should they be superficial. I was taught to be honest, but to temper my honesty with courtesy; I was taught to show respect to older people whether I actually respected them or not; and I was also taught"—her voice trembled in spite of herself—"that to pry into other people's lives was the height of ill breeding!"

She stood up, ground out her cigarette, said politely, "May I be excused, Mrs. Trenton?" and left the room, sick and white with anger.

Hilda wanted never again to see her mother-in-law; she wanted never again to visit the house by the sea. But after all, she told herself unwillingly, they were Roger's, they were the roots from which he had sprung, and if she tore him bodily away from them, as she had no doubt she could, would she have the Roger she had now, would she have the same amount of respect for a man whom she could uproot bodily and, moreover, would he be the same man?

And so she did not speak to Roger of her talk with his mother, and the following Sunday they drove to the Trenton home and went swimming, and had dinner. Afterward Hilda accompanied her mother-in-law to the upstairs sitting-room, stiff with anticipation, waiting for the shock of another sickening scene; and found herself, astonished, listening to a woman whose voice was kind and whose eyes held new respect for the girl sitting opposite her.

Mrs. Trenton said, handing Hilda a cup of freshly brewed coffee, "My dear, I feel that the time has come to introduce you to some of our friends and relatives, and so I would like to have a small dinner for you soon. But only," she added hastily, "if that is what you and Roger want. After all, you have your own life now, and your own way of living it, and I don't want to intrude on it too much. You have been very kind, coming here so often—"

She stopped and sipped her coffee, and Hilda, looking at her, realized that here was no dig beneath the surface, that here was no subtle mask for insult. . . . She felt that she could never completely understand this woman sitting opposite her. She sensed that somewhere, so deep as to be almost hidden, there was a softness in the older woman, a kindness that she could not let come to the surface.

And so Hilda, knowing that since she had taken a definite stand as to where she stood regarding her own independence of spirit, felt that she could afford to be generous with the older woman, and agreed to being fêted at a dinner. But she realized, too, that the struggle between them was not yet over. . . .

The dinner, honoring the bride and groom of seven months ("wouldn't the guests be surprised." Hilda told Roger, "if they knew the bride was two months along?") was just about what she thought it might be—deadly. Mrs. Trenton, proud and aristocratic in her stiff rustling black taffeta, greeted each guest politely by name, introduced Hilda as her new daughter, said, "You know my son, of course," and ignored Gerald for the most part, although he stood beside her. And while each of the guests greeted Mrs. Trenton just as politely, they unbent when they spoke to Gerald, exchanged small pleasantries, and above the subdued hum of conversation Hilda could occasionally hear his hearty laugh and the contagious laughter echoing it.

A young woman standing beside Hilda said, "I hope you can bring some life into this mausoleum. It's the most wonderful place for entertainment, and yet what do we get? These absolutely poisonous dinners. One cocktail, boring conversation, frightful food, and mental indigestion."

Hilda glanced at her appraisingly. She said, "Oh, you're Lila Donovan," and the girl made a face and said, "Yes. Roger's second cousin. On his father's side, thank God. Isn't Uncle Gerald a darling? He's my only consolation for ever coming here." She looked at Hilda curiously. "How do you get along with the old dragon?"

Hilda felt herself stiffening subconsciously. "Mrs. Trenton and I understand each other," she said quietly. "We get along quite well."

"H'm," said Lila. "I wish the rest of us knew the secret. I'm scared to death to say anything but 'How do you do' and 'Good-by' for fear it'll bring forth a lethal stab in the back."

Smiling politely, Hilda moved away, wondering, astonished, why she should feel so outraged at criticism of a woman to whom she owed nothing, a woman who had the sharpest tongue and the greatest dignity of anyone she had ever known, and yet a woman whom she was forced to respect and a woman for whom she felt infinitely sorry.

At dinner she sat between a shirt that was obviously stuffed, and a man who looked definitely out of place in this gathering of the clan—a man who was big and rugged and about thirty years old. He appeared to be completely uncomfortable in his dinner clothes; his eyes were blue and he had a small mustache.

Hilda tried to draw him out. "Are you one of the Trenton relatives?" she asked tentatively, and he turned to look at her.

"D'you think I'd come otherwise?" he demanded. "Wouldn't have even then except I'm hungry."

"Hungry?" asked Hilda.

"Hungry," he said. "I'm not a close enough relative to make a touch, so I simply come to dinner whenever I'm invited and try to stuff up enough to last for a week." He glanced down the table at his host. "Boy, he really had something on the ball. Married money and never did another lick of work. I'll bet *he's* not hungry!"

"I'll bet he is," said Hilda, and the young man looked at her in surprise. "There's more than one way of being hungry."

He turned to look at her as if he were just aware of her. "How come you married Roger?" he demanded.

"For the usual reason. I fell in love with him."

"Well, you're sure not out of the same kennels. Roger's a chip off the old block."

Hilda said, "Roger's father is a very charming person."

The young man fell to again. "Now you're being stuffy," he said. "I thought maybe you had something."

"What are you doing—slumming?" she asked, scorn in her voice.

"You're not kidding. Seeing how the other half lives. Frankly, I'm hoping to get some material for a book."

"Oh. You're a writer?"

"Yeah. That's why I'm hungry all the time. Aunt Teresa got me a job with a friend of hers, in an office, and I wouldn't take it, so now she asks me for dinner once in awhile so I can see what I missed. Thank God I missed it."

"Tell me something," Hilda said. "Doesn't anyone come here just because he likes to?"

"Uh-uh. Royal command. Nobody ever had any fun here in his life. And if you want to hang onto that husband of yours, stay away from this house. Old lady's sharper than you think, but Gerald's nobody's fool, all appearances to the contrary."

"You seem to know a lot about them, Mr.—er—"

"The name," he offered gloomily, "is Jock MacTavish."

Hilda giggled. "I don't believe it," she said, and he looked at her admiringly.

"That's about the cutest laugh I ever heard," he commented. "I don't blame you for not believing it. I was christened Percival—I don't know what my parents could have been thinking of except Shelley—but after I started school I bloodied the nose of anyone calling me Percy. So that's how I got to be Jock."

"Very clear," Hilda murmured. "Are you finding any good material tonight?"

"Only for the old chassis," he said, grinning.

At Gerald's end of the table things were livelier. He flirted outrageously with Lila, bemoaned the total inadequacy of his golf game, claimed that he was picking up on his bridge and would anyone have another slice of roast beef? But there was no true wit at the table; clichés were substituted for epigrams, and the political situation of the country, the economic chaos of the world, were apparently something that had nothing to do with their daily lives and were not worth giving a thought to. . . .

When the interminable dinner was finally over and the guests had departed, Hilda found that she was utterly depressed. There had not been one person present who interested her, aside from Jock MacTavish, not a word of conversation that stimulated her, nor a moment in which she was exhilarated. She was filled with the utter futility of life and a feeling of waste such as she had never known before—five hours out of her lifetime, she reflected bitterly, that would have been better spent with a book or slumber. Or anything. Better anything than such waste.

"Well, run along to bed," said Mrs. Trenton. "I thought the evening went off very well, didn't you? We must do it again sometime soon."

Never again! Hilda thought and went wearily upstairs to bed. . . .

Mrs. Trenton was failing rapidly. Now, when Hilda had her coffee in the upstairs sitting-room after the heavy Sunday dinner, her mother-in-law would oftener than not be lying on the chaise longue; and somehow the small proud head with every hair in place as always seemed strangely vanquished, lying against the pillows.

Occasionally, on such Sundays, friends of the family would drop in, and Hilda, rather amused, discovered that she could estimate by the way Bonnie announced them just what her opinion of them was.

One afternoon Bonnie announced Lila Donovan and her mother, her tone that of the correct family retainer, her

expression a sniff and a dour pinching together of the lips, so faint as to be discernible only to Hilda, who knew what to expect, as a result.

Lila, small and dark and glowing, leaned over and kissed Mrs. Trenton. "Aunt Teresa, darling," she murmured, "how are you? You look wonderful."

"I look terrible and you know it, Lila," the older woman said sharply. "No use lying to me."

"You'd be even madder if I didn't," Lila retorted.

"Lila, Lila," her mother chided gently. "You shouldn't speak that way to an old lady like Teresa."

"Thank you, Jen," said Mrs. Trenton dryly. "Forgive me for not getting up, but this old body is beginning to rebel. Do sit down. . . . Here's Hilda," she said pointedly, and Hilda was astonished, and rather touched, at the sharpness of the rebuke in her tone because the two women had been in such a flutter to greet Mrs. Trenton that they had completely ignored Hilda. They both turned to her at once, Mrs. Donovan vaguely as if she couldn't quite remember who this tall, serene young woman was, and Lila as if it didn't matter.

"Hullo," said Lila. She let the silver foxes slip from her shoulders, took out a gold cigarette case, neglecting to offer it to Hilda, and said, "Anything to drink around here?"

Hilda said, "I'll ring for Bonnie," and, when the maid appeared, still pinched about the lips, she said, darting a mischievous glance at her mother-in-law, "Tea, please, Bonnie," and was amused at the quickly restrained smile that touched Mrs. Trenton's lips.

"*Tea!*" Lila exclaimed. "Leave it to the women! Tea! Where're Roger and Gerald?"

"Playing golf," said Hilda and lit a cigarette for herself. "What have you been doing lately, Lila?"

"What I usually do," and Hilda felt a momentary twinge of pity for the beautiful little face which would not be beautiful very long; not with the discontent pulling at the corners of the mouth nor the faint scowl that marked her forehead. She remembered what Roger had told her about Lila: a girl who had been one of the most successful debutantes of her day, who had had dozens of proposals, who had laughed and refused them all, secure in her belief that she could marry whatever man she chose when the time came for her to settle down. And now, approaching thirty, she was frightened and bewildered because the many new crops of debutantes were picking and choosing from the eligible males, and the men who were old enough for Lila were all married now. "Does she have designs on *you*, darling?" Hilda had asked demurely, and he had laughed.

"Designs on anyone who's in the market," he said. "She's really plenty scared."

Lila said now, in a low voice although the two older women were engaged in a conversation of their own, "How do you like the Trentons?"

"I married them, didn't I?" Hilda asked, smiling.

"You're not kidding," said Lila. "How come Roger goes off with his father and leaves you to entertain the old lady?"

Hilda stiffened a little, amazed, as she always was, at her resentment when outsiders criticized her mother-in-law. She thought, "It is as if we were allies, in a way, as if we were defending and protecting each other against something that threatens both of us, but why? Against what? Why should either of us, or both of us, be driven to uphold the other? What is it that Mrs. Trenton understands and I don't?" But she did not know. She said, coming back with a start, "I'm sorry, Lila; what did you say?"

"I asked you," Lila answered with obvious boredom, "what the hell you get out of these Sunday gatherings? Does Roger always go off and leave you like this?"

"He and his father enjoy a few hours together each week." Hilda said calmly, "and so do his mother and I." She smiled a little as she saw the look of incredulity on Lila's face.

Bonnie brought in tea and Lila sat brooding, playing with it, her eyes constantly moving to the door. At first Hilda thought she was yearning toward it as a means of escape, but when finally it flew open and Roger and Gerald came in, she realized why Lila had been watching it. Lila put down her teacup quickly, touched a hand to her hair and seemed suddenly to take on another personality.

"Darling!" Lila cried and, somewhat to Hilda's astonishment, threw herself into Gerald's arms rather than Roger's. "You look wonderful, dream man; how've you been?" and then she turned, a little shyly, toward Roger. "Hello," she said, and gave him her hand. Looking up at him, the discontent around her mouth gave way to an upcurled smile, the forehead smooth now, the violet eyes filled with—what?

"Hi, baby," said Roger. "You look wonderful. Got any new men friends?"

"Dozens," said Lila, grinning, "but I still like"—she hesitated (purposely? Hilda wondered)—"Gerald best. He's my one and only."

"What an adult conversation!" Mrs. Trenton remarked dryly. "Well, I suppose you might as well send for some Scotch, Gerald. Lila's been eating her heart out over that tea that she didn't drink, and customs being what they are, I suppose we might as well give in to them. Good heavens, if my father had ever seen me take a drink—"

Roger laughed. "He'd have been just as shocked at lipstick," he reminded her, "or cigarettes, or short skirts. I'll bet *he* stowed plenty of the best bourbon away!"

"Yes, but women—"

"The single standard," said Roger solemnly, "is here to stay!"

After the second drink, with Mrs. Donovan timidly sipping at a glass of sherry, Hilda glanced at her mother-in-law and saw that there were white lines of fatigue around her mouth and that her eyes seemed more deeply sunk than ever in the tired face. "Come on, everybody," she said, "let's clear out of here and make merry in the library," although she herself was not drinking: ("I'd hate to have Junior come into the world high as a kite," she explained to the others. "Have to give the poor kid a break of some sort.") She shepherded them out of the room and down the stairs and, eventually, out of the front door toward home, with Lila first kissing Gerald and once again shaking hands rather shyly with Roger. Hilda thought: *women!* And laughed a little grimly.

But when, another Sunday afternoon, Jock MacTavish showed up, she was left with a feeling of stimulation such as she had not known before in this house. He came into the upstairs drawing-room like an October wind, said "Hi, Toots," to Mrs. Trenton, tossed a look at Hilda and said, "You look pretty good, Madame Hilda; pregnancy becomes you."

Hilda gasped and said, "How on earth did you know?" since her figure was still as trim as ever.

"That strange look of peace and contentment pervades all—"

"Jock," said Mrs. Trenton sharply, "that will do!"

He grinned. "Still evading the facts of life?" he inquired innocently.

"Still too well-bred to discuss them."

"Hell, nothing's any fun if you can't talk about it. . . . Where are the menfolks?—not that I crave their presence necessarily."

"Golf," said Hilda succinctly.

"Huh. Why aren't you out with them?"

"Junior doesn't like it," she said demurely. "But then, neither do I. Would you like a drink?"

"Tea I'll take," he said, and Hilda burst into laughter.

"That goes with Percy," she commented, "and please don't bloody my nose."

"Tea goes with my new book," he corrected her. "Too many hangovers add up to no work getting done. Wait'll I finish and I'll go on the grandfather of all benders. Anything to eat around here?"

Hilda rang and, when Bonnie appeared, "Tea, please," she said, glad to note that Bonnie looked pleased. She wondered if it were the tea instead of Scotch that made her face placid, or if it was the fact that Jock was the visitor today, and not Lila. "Are you always hungry?" she asked, when Bonnie had left.

"Always," he said. "That's because my rich relatives hold out on me," with a sly look at Mrs. Trenton.

"Nonsense," his aunt said briskly. "You have an income of eighteen hundred a year from your mother's estate, so don't talk about starving to *me*."

"Chicken feed," he said. "Gone as soon as I get it."

Hilda looked at him reproachfully. "You implied that you came here to dinner only because you were hungry—" Then she gasped and turned red. She thought, not for the first time, that her natural awkwardness had obviously penetrated even to the social graces, and wished that she would think twice before she blurted out such remarks.

"Look who's blushing!" he said with a whoop. "But don't worry; Teresa and I understand each other all right. Don't we, honey?" and he looked at his aunt.

"I understand that you're an unregenerate young fool with no respect for your elders—or anything else, I imagine."

"Well, there you're wrong," he said, and now his tone was more serious. "Cigarette, Hilda? I've come to the conclusion that I have a lot of respect for those guys I live with—"

Mrs. Trenton snorted. "Those beachcombers, I presume you're referring to!"

Hilda was startled, but before she could say anything Bonnie came in with a tray loaded with popovers and jam and little cakes. Hilda poured for all three of them and, when Bonnie had departed, turned to Jock and said, "Beachcombers?"

He grinned. "Didn't Aunt Teresa tell you? Well, I was looking for material one day—found I didn't have anything more to say about the Peninsula's finest," with bitter sarcasm, "so I began poking around among the other half and finally ended up by living with them. Have a little shack down by the beach near Monterey where I write half the day and loaf the rest of the time, and these characters come wandering in, usually bringing a jug with them or taking nips out of mine, and by God they know more about life than all of Aunt Teresa's social nabobs put together—"

"Depends on what you mean by life," Mrs. Trenton commented acidly. "If you like irresponsible people you have probably chosen the best place to find them. But kindly don't get Hilda too interested in them; she is completely unpredictable anyway and might take to hobnobbing with them herself."

Hilda laughed, genuinely amused. "Oh, come now," she said, "I'm not that bad. I just don't care much about the social life, as is."

"I thought you said your parents were socially inclined," the older woman reminded her, a little maliciously. "I should think you'd have grown accustomed to it by now," and Hilda sighed. She thought, Why can't she stay the same so I'll know what she's like? First she's lovely to me and then just when my defenses are down she comes forth with something like that.

Jock said, amusement in his voice, "Any time you want to come back to the living, precious, I will tell you more about my beachcombers."

Hilda, startled out of her drifting thoughts, turned toward him and her cup fell to the floor with a splash of tea and a tinkle of broken china.

"Hilda!" said her mother-in-law sharply. "Can't you move without knocking something over?"

"You want to scare her baby to death?" Jock demanded. "Now hush up and quit riding the poor girl." He got down on his knees and picked up the pieces, while Hilda's flush of embarrassment died away. . . .

Hilda was touched and alarmed at the growing dependence of the older woman on her—touched because it was so out of character, alarmed because it seemed to herald the end of life for the woman whom she had at first hated and feared, had come to tolerate, and was now, however, unwillingly, learning to like and to understand.

And so between the young woman and the old one there grew a sort of bond, as close as was possible between two women of such divergent backgrounds and attitudes toward life, so that no longer did Hilda wince at the thought of spending an hour or two a week alone with the older woman.

"Hilda," Mrs. Trenton said once, "I would like it very much if you would bear your child in this house."

And Hilda, thinking of the unwelcoming austerity of a home that had never reflected the gayety of a happy and united family, said quickly, "Oh, no, Mrs. Trenton." And then, regretting her bluntness, added, "It's so isolated. If the baby should come suddenly—"

"But childbirth is natural."

"Usually, yes. But when an emergency arises, it's best to be in a hospital. . . . Why would you like it to be born here?" she asked curiously of this woman who had never seemed to have a particle of sentiment in her whole make-up.

"Roger was born here," the tired voice went on. "And so was I."

"Oh—I had no idea the place was so old!" And then she gasped, and the two women laughed together.

"I'm almost as old as it is," said Mrs. Trenton. "This was just one of our homes when I was a child. We had a magnificent place on Pacific Avenue in San Francisco, and another at Newport. But eventually all the houses had to go, all except this one. I think that's what really killed Mother in the end—having to give up her social aspirations."

(And could you? Hilda thought compassionately.) "I always thought your family was very wealthy," she commented.

"Father never let anyone suspect anything else," said her mother-in-law wryly. "Even I didn't until he died, and I discovered how little there was left in comparison with what everyone thought he had. But there is enough, if Gerald would take care of it. He hasn't much head for business."

"Well," said Hilda practically, "he's never had to have, has he?"

Mrs. Trenton said, "No. Shortly after we were married I set him up in a brokerage office of his own, but nothing seemed to come of it. He had no head for stocks and bonds. So then I set him up in the real-estate business in Monterey after we came here to live, but it didn't work out very well. . . ."

Something was wrong here, Hilda thought. She remembered Gerald's words: "I was in the real-estate business once, but Teresa didn't like it . . . didn't want me away from home so much. . . ." Perhaps neither of them was lying, she decided; it was no doubt a different interpretation each put on the other's actions.

"So that's what happened to a good deal of the money I inherited. But," she repeated, "there's plenty for comfort if only Gerald will watch it. Gerald?" she mused, almost to herself. "But why should he have it? What has he ever done with what he had? Why Gerald?" as if a new thought had suddenly occurred to her; and then, realizing that she was not thinking these words but saying them aloud, she brought herself up sharply and looked at Hilda. She said, "Well, perhaps I *was* wrong about your having the baby here," and Hilda thought that this was the most pitiful thing of all: a woman who had always, all her life,

fought tooth and nail for what she wanted, now giving in without even putting up a struggle.

"I'm sorry, Mother Trenton," said Hilda gently, discarding for the first time the more formal address. "I just feel that it's best for me to be in a hospital, near my doctor. And if I came here, the baby might arrive before Roger could get to me."

"I'm sure," said her mother-in-law, bitterness in her voice, "that if he didn't, his father would take over for him. He always has. I'm tired now," she ended abruptly. "Run along, dear, while this old body gets a cat nap."

But there were other talks, other times.

Once her mother-in-law said, "Hilda, watch Roger. His father won't let him grow up—" and Hilda, trying not to understand, said, "But he *is* grown up!"

"He can—he will," the tired voice went on, "if you see that he does. You are strong, Hilda, like me. You will have to be stronger. You are grown up. Not Roger. Not Gerald. I tried to do what I could for my son but I guess it wasn't right." And again Hilda felt pity welling up in her heart. "I punished him because his father wouldn't, and his father indulged him because I punished him. It was bad for Roger; we should have stood together. I should never have married Gerald but I loved him so much. . . . I can hardly remember now . . . and I almost died when Roger was born . . . he was such a large baby and I was so small. . . . I loved him but I kept thinking. 'He must not grow up like his father.' Even then I knew."

"Mother Trenton, why?" Hilda asked, leaning over, thinking that this tired old woman was closer to death than anyone realized. "Gerald is so good. He is so kind. Not strong, perhaps, but good."

"Not strong?" the older woman said, and laughed. It was a bitter laugh, and her words were bitter, too. "Gerald not strong? Stronger far than I, because he has charm. When I fight for something, everyone knows it and is on the defensive. When Gerald fights for something, no one knows it until it's too late. Gerald is fighting now, Hilda. You are a good girl." She reached out and patted Hilda's hand and fell asleep.

CHAPTER 4

The cry came again, fainter now, and again the woman's body quivered and lunged forward, and again it was held back by the dark and murderous impulses that the man who was drowning had brought to life in her.

But, after all, Hilda's child was born in the house on the cliff. . . . Mrs. Trenton was dying. Gerald telephoned early one evening, his voice urgent, and Hilda heard Roger, at the telephone, saying, "But, Dad, I don't know about Hilda—the baby's about due, you know. . . . Oh, I see. Well—" He spoke for a few moments longer, then hung up and turned to her, his eyes worried. "Honey, Dad says Mother's very low and he thinks we should get there as fast as we can. I told him I didn't think you ought to try it, but he said Mother wanted to see you."

Hilda's eyes flooded with tears, sad suddenly for the loss of a friend so newly made, touched by the older woman's affection for her based, she felt, on the fact that she herself was the only person who had a genuine feeling of warm affection for her. "Of course I'll go, Roger," she said quietly, and smiled a little. "If Junior is born in the back of a car, he won't be the first one."

But he wasn't born in the back of the car, and the eighty-mile trip did nothing but give her a slight headache.

Hilda thought she had never seen a living person who looked so much like death: the waxy face almost lost in the deep pillow, the eyes behind which the will to live had fled and left only a great weariness; the small, thin hands, almost transparent now, the waiting quiet of the small body.

Roger leaned over and kissed the waxy cheek, but, uneasy like most men in the presence of a great experience, did not know what to say. He and his father stood on one side of the bed, and Hilda sat on the other, while a nurse hovered in the background. Mrs. Trenton turned her head slightly and looked at the two men, standing together on one side, and then at Hilda, sitting quietly on the other, and if to her there was significant symbolism in this picture of herself dividing Roger and Gerald from Hilda, she gave no sign. She said in a soft but steady voice, from which all strength had gone, "It was nice of you to come. I didn't mean—to have—a deathbed scene—" and she smiled faintly, "but I wanted to see you all together—first." The nurse stepped forward, a tall, ungainly woman with gentle eyes and a determined jaw. "You mustn't talk too much, Mrs. Trenton," she interposed. "You'll tire yourself out."

"What difference does it make now?" Mrs. Trenton answered with her customary logic. "Might as well while I have the chance. . . . Roger," her voice falling again, as if it did, indeed, exhaust her to speak. "Roger, come here, dear," and Hilda felt the hot tears spring to her eyes at the unaccustomed tenderness in the old voice; never before had she heard her use a term of endearment toward her son.

"Roger," the tired voice went on, "I know you feel I have always been unduly strict with you, but some day you will know why, when your own child is born. I wanted you—to be—self-reliant. You have a good wife, Roger; treat her well. Good wives—are hard—to come by. Can make or break you. Your father can tell you that."

She stopped for a moment, gathering her waning strength. "Gerald," she said, lifting her eyes to his, "let Roger go." And Gerald, bewildered, answered, "But, Teresa—" not knowing how to answer what she said; and Hilda, watching him, could not tell whether his bewilderment was genuine or if he were deliberately denying the implication of her words, denying it to himself as well as to her.

Mrs. Trenton reached out blindly on the coverlet toward Hilda, and Hilda took the thin, dying hand in hers and held it. The older woman closed her eyes and murmured, "Your hand is like the rest of you, Hilda. So strong. Will you stay with me—until it's time?"

And Hilda, the tears running over at last, said, "Yes. Yes, Mother Trenton, of course."

"Alone," the tired voice whispered; and Roger and Gerald, impressed by the coming of death but unable to grieve too deeply, turned and left the room.

"Hilda," and now the voice was so faint that the girl had to lean over the bed to hear what it was saying. "Hilda, I made a new will. Holographic—in my own handwriting. For you. Everything."

"Oh, no, no," Hilda said, appalled. "Please, Mother Trenton—"

"I know what is best," and for a moment the voice regained an echo of its former imperiousness. "You are strong, Hilda. They are not. They lean on each other. You lean on no one. You must take the money—not as much as it was—you'll be thankful some day. . . ." And Hilda, bewildered, confused, could only sit still and ponder on the strange long thoughts of the dying. Why? she wondered. I am an outsider. I am not of her blood, nor of her walk in life; we were like two strange panthers when we first met. I hated her, she mistrusted me. . . . But I will not accept it, of course. It must go to Gerald, not to Roger and me. We can make our own way, but Gerald is— She sat quietly, the old hand still clasped in hers.

And suddenly, as she sat there, she felt a long, slow, sudden pain start inside her body and run down it like a finger of flame. Involuntarily she jerked her hand, but the birdlike little claw clung more tightly to it, and the pain passed and Hilda relaxed again, watching the waxy face with the closed eyes, praying that she was mistaken. But in a few moments the pain came again, and this time Hilda tried not to wince, so the woman on the bed wouldn't feel it. As if she knew and understood, Mrs. Trenton opened her eyes once more and said, "I wish I could see my grandchild—first—" And then the eyes closed again, but her hand clung to Hilda's, as if absorbing from it the strength and security that were now all she had left of life.

And so Hilda sat there, watching, her warm, strong hand holding the small one, and waited for the next pain. Inevitably it came and Hilda, biting her lip, bent almost double. But her hand did not jerk, and the dying woman drifted closer and closer to death.

Again and again the pains came, sharper, longer, more frequent; and Hilda thought, I must be patient, there is plenty of time yet—more time for birth than for death.

She opened her eyes to the morning sunlight, her head heavy but her heart and her body light. There was a large rose in a vase on the dresser and rays of sun fell on it and changed its pale pastel to a glorious bright pink. Hilda thought, Where am I? What happened? And then suddenly: My baby! She called, "Nurse! Nurse!" and in a moment the tall nurse came in, smiling, and said, "Yes, Mrs. Trenton? Well, I see you're all ready for the new day. Want to see your son?"

Hilda smiled and relaxed. "My son," she said. "Is he all right?"

"Fine as a button. Little devil weighed ten pounds!"

"No!"

"Gave you one hell of a time—you big women often have more trouble than small ones. Want to see him?"

"But of course! Hurry up."

Hilda, looking at the wrinkled little creature, thought, I will *not* be fatuous and say, "Oh, isn't he beautiful?" because he isn't. But he will be. And he's mine, so he's beautiful to me.

"What happened?" she asked the nurse. "I can hardly remember a thing."

"Doctor had to put you out," the nurse said, picking up the baby again and tossing him onto her shoulder as if he were a sack of meal. "My good grief, woman, why didn't you tell us you were in labor? Going through all that by yourself, almost to the last stages. What guts!"

"I promised my mother-in-law I'd stay with her until the end came," said Hilda.

"Old lady wouldn't have known the difference," said the nurse. "My name's Hyslop—never have been able to change it, and don't know's I'd want to, with what I see of some of the households I've been in."

Hilda laughed and said, "Let me see him again. When will he start to grow young instead of looking like an old man?"

Miss Hyslop let forth a mighty laugh. "They all look old when they come into the world, is my theory," she answered. "Scared to death of what's facing them, and who can blame them for being scared? I'm glad all my children are unborn."

"It's a comfortable way of having them," Hilda said ruefully, moving gently the body that felt as if it had been flogged, "but I'll take my way. The world may not be much of a place to be born into, these days, but perhaps my children can help to make it worth living in, some day."

After a moment she said, "My mother-in-law died, didn't she?" It was a statement of fact, rather than a question, for almost the last memory she had, before she opened her eyes this morning, was the sudden opening of the small hand, a yielding to death, a throwing of the torch to the younger woman who had the youth and the strength to carry it.

"Yes," said the nurse gently. "You are a very brave woman, Mrs. Trenton."

The next week Hilda spent lying in bed, completely happy but impatient to be up and about. She remembered the nursery in Burlingame, the tiny bassinette waiting, the chest of drawers filled with new garments, the bathinette: and was anxious to be out of this dim old house, with its unhappy history and its recent death, and back to her own small but cheerful quarters. She thought: Now we are a family; now we can really begin to live.

Roger came in and leaned over to kiss her. "How's the girl?" he asked.

"R'arin' to go. Where've you been, honey? Seems ages since I've seen you."

Roger sat down beside her. "I've been trying to cheer Dad up. He's pleased about the baby, of course, especially since it's a boy, but I don't know—something seems to have gone out of him since Mother died."

"That's odd," Hilda said thoughtfully. "I thought perhaps he'd—well, have a feeling of freedom. I was very fond of your mother, Roger, you know that. But she had Gerald at her beck and call almost every moment. I know he must miss her, but it's not as though he had been mad about her—"

"I know," Roger said slowly. "All I can figure is that he depended on her a lot, to make his decisions and kind of run things in general. And now he's in a sort of tailspin. I suppose he'll be all right as soon as he gets organized, but in the meantime I have to buck him up and make him take an interest in things. He's nuts about the baby, but seems to be scared to death of him. Say, Hilda—"

"What, dear?"

"Have you made up your mind about a name for our young man?"

"Well," she said, giving the matter some attention, "I'd kind of thought of naming him after my father, James. But heck, the woods are full of little Jimmies." And she giggled. "How about Elystus or Euripides or maybe Herman?"

Roger laughed. "You dope! But if you don't mind, I thought it might please Dad if we named the kid Gerald. That is," he added hastily, "if you have no objections."

She rolled the name around on her tongue for a moment, sampling. "Gerald—Gerry—might work as long as the kids at school call him Gerry. Gerald's kind of a sissy name, and I can foresee a lot of bloody noses for Junior unless he has a nickname—Jock gave me the low-down on that deal."

Roger said, "Nicknames usually stick—but God forbid 'Junior'! Okay, let's call him Gerald."

There was a knock on the door, and Roger's father wandered in, looking, as Roger had said, lost. Not unhappy, Hilda thought; more like a ship that's lost its rudder. She felt infinitely sorry for him, and hoped that it was not too late for him to lay out a chart for what was left of the rest of his life. How old was he? Twenty-five when Roger was born. Roger was twenty-eight now: that made Gerald—why, he was only fifty-three! She thought: Teresa must have been at least ten years older than Gerald! And again she wondered at this strange, uneven marriage.

Roger said, "Have you seen young Gerald this morning?" and his father stopped dead in his tracks.

"Young Gerald!" he echoed incredulously, and to Hilda's fearful embarrassment, she saw tears well up in his eyes. "You kids," he said, trying to control his voice. "Naming your first one after me. But you know you don't have to; I'd have understood."

"We wanted to," Hilda said gently. "We hope he'll grow up to be like his grandfather." (And may God forgive me for *that* lie, she thought; but who's it going to hurt?)

He pulled up a chair and sat down beside Roger. "I hope you kids realize how lucky you are, to have a boy first time. Lord, you might have had half a dozen girls before you ever had a son."

Hilda answered levelly, amazed at her own sudden anger, "I like girls. I would just as soon have had one." and he looked at her with incredulity and, she felt, a little contempt. "Girls!" he said.

She said quietly, "I'm going to try to get up tomorrow, Roger, and I think by Sunday we'll be able to go home. Miss Hyslop said she'll stay with me for a while until I get organized."

Roger did not answer; surprised, she glanced at him and saw a sudden quick look exchanged between him and his father, a look that excluded her completely, that was apprehensive on Roger's part and sly on his father's.

Gerald stood up quickly, said, "Well, I'd better get out and let you two new parents alone," and departed. Instinctively, she felt trouble coming on, for though Gerald as often as not was the instigator of trouble, he never would stay to face it down. She said, "Roger, what is it?"

He said, "Well, look, honey," and stopped. He glanced toward the door as if longing for the partisanship of his father, then went on, not looking at Hilda: "Look, dear, Dad can't stay alone in this big house—he'd go nuts."

"Well, why doesn't he get an apartment, then?"

"He couldn't live alone, you know that."

"What are you suggesting, Roger? That he come to live with us? After all, we have only two bedrooms and one of them's a nursery."

"No, not that." He got up and began to pace the room, his hands in his pockets. With his back toward her, he said, "He wants us to come here to live," and, before Hilda could remonstrate, demanded, "Well, why not? It's a big place, it has two servants, you wouldn't have to do housework any longer, it's a wonderful set-up for the baby; for God's sake, why not?" although Hilda had not yet spoken a word.

"What did you tell him?" Hilda asked in a tight voice.

"I told him of course we would. What else could I do? He's all alone now and he's getting old and he *needs* us. People *expect* to take care of their parents when they're old, nearly everybody does: what do you think I *should* do—turn my back on him now?"

"Don't be a fool!" At the sharp words, the first sharp words she had ever spoken to him, he turned abruptly and faced her.

"Exactly what do you mean by that?" he asked quietly.

"Your father is not old. He is not helpless. He is not poor. He's only fifty-three; he's able-bodied, presumably of normal mentality. Is there any reason why he can't make a new life for himself instead of clinging to us like a leech?"

Roger's face was white in the dusk of the late afternoon. "So that's what you think of my father, is it? A man who has done everything in the world for me, who has given me the only companionship I've ever had, up until I met you! A leech!" The words were cold and hard, but Roger's voice was not steady. "He's not asking anything of us. He's offering us a home that's far better than anything I could afford for a good many years to come, and servants to wait on you; he's even offering me a future at my work that I couldn't get for myself in the next ten years!"

"Yes, your work," Hilda retorted, her voice even less steady than his. "We're three hours from San Francisco. What were you planning to do—come here only on weekends?"

"No, that's what I'm trying to tell you. You know how I feel about that damned outfit I'm with. They don't want new ideas, they just want the same old corn turned out year after year, and I must damn' well do it the way they want it—or else!" He looked at her a little shamefacedly. "I quit them yesterday."

"Roger!" Hilda said faintly. "But why—you didn't tell me—"

"I talked it over with Dad and we decided it was the only thing to do."

She sat up straight in the bed, and a slow rage began to gather inside her. "You talked it over with your father!" she said, her voice deadly. "You took one of the most important steps of your life—you gave up your job deliberately even though you now have a child to support—and you didn't even mention it to me until after it was done. You talked it over with your *father!* What am I, anyway—a fifth wheel? You tear me up by the roots from the way of life that has meant more to me than anything I've ever had—and tell me about it *afterward*. Roger—it's my life too, don't you see? How could you and your father decide it? It's mine, it's mine!"

"Now, Hilda," said Roger, coming over and sitting on the edge of the bed, "don't get worked up like this. Dad said you'd get into a tizzy—"

"Oh, he did, did he! But you went ahead anyway. You quit your job so we have to give up our home and come here, and I hate it, I hate it! And the little nursery," she gasped, suddenly remembering, "the way I worked on it—and now you and your father decide it's best for us to live here. Get out of here!" she screamed. "I hate you! I hate you and I hate your father and I hate this damned house!" She burst into violent tears and lay gasping and sobbing on the bed.

Miss Hyslop came in quietly and said, "What's going on here, anyway? You'd better leave, Mr. Trenton," and in a moment she leaned over Hilda and said, "This means a bottle for the baby tonight, Mrs. Trenton. You must try to compose yourself."

Hilda lay awake through the long deadly night, trying to push the hatred from her heart. And, for the first time, she longed, almost unbearably, for the strength and the wisdom that had been Teresa's.

Hilda did not get up the following day, as she had planned. She was exhausted by the after-effects of her emotional explosion, and by the torments of the night. She had thought: Why do I feel like this? Why am I so afraid? Surely other women have moved from a tiny home into a large one, manned by servants, and felt nothing but relief. Why am I so appalled?

She dozed off during the morning, and when she woke, Roger was sitting beside her, his hand on hers, his tired eyes watching her face.

"How do you feel, darling?" he asked gently, as she opened her eyes. "I'm a damned, mishegotten brute, but I had no idea you'd feel so strongly—"

"I'm ashamed of myself," Hilda whispered. "Not," she added, "for feeling the way I do, but for giving way as I did. I—I've always prided myself on my self-control, and then to act like a fishwife— But Roger, what are you going to *do?*" she asked. "There's no place to get a job with an architect in this part of the country."

"But that's the whole idea, don't you see, darling?" And now she smiled a little and pushed back the tears, for his face was boyish again with enthusiasm and hope. "If we live here, I can have my own office—Dad's going to fix

up the north wing for a sort of combination office and studio for me, and I can do the kind of work I want, free-lancing. And we won't need to worry about living expenses; we'll all be here together—"

"But, Roger," she protested, "we can't live off your father like—like parasites—"

"We don't have to," he said cheerfully, now that he surmised that Hilda was accepting the change in their way of living. "Dad says that now with Mother gone he needs a kind of supervising housekeeper, which he'd have to employ if we didn't come here, so if you take over the reins of the family, why, that'll compensate for whatever our living expenses would be."

"Oh," said Hilda. She was silent for a moment, trying to gather her forces. "Roger," she went on presently, "you and I are husband and wife. We are supposed to have a closer relationship than that existing between any other two people. And yet you have given up your job and your home, you have changed our whole way of living, you have made arrangements for my future and our child's, you have procured for me the job of housekeeper—and all without consulting me. You have done it first and told me about it afterward. Roger,"—and now her voice was very quiet, "couldn't you at least have talked it over with me first? After all, your partnership is with me, not with your father."

He looked at her curiously. "You know, it's the darnedest thing," he said after a moment. "When we were first married it seemed to me that you and Dad got along like a house afire and that you and Mother were at each other's throats most of the time—which didn't surprise me much. Everyone who knows Dad is crazy about him, but Mother—well, she was difficult. And now—well, it's as if you'd acquired Mother's point of view. . . ."

Fear touched Hilda, cold and stark. She could see his mind working. She could see him remembering all of his father's unhappy married life, a martyr to a domineering woman; and wondering if his own was to be the same. She could see fear mounting in him as it was mounting in her, but for a different reason. She could see him wondering if his life was to be as his father's had been, warped and embittered, twisted and pulled and manipulated by a strong-minded woman, whose will had been thrust upon his until his own was gone. She wanted to cry out to him, "Oh, Roger, but your mother wasn't like that! She was strong and domineering, but she wanted to be loved and she didn't know how. . . ." But how could she ever make him see his mother as she herself had seen her?

She said quietly, "Roger, haven't you been happy with me?"

"Darling, of course." He turned back to her, and now the grayness had fled from his face, and the apprehension from his eyes. Looking at her, she thought, he must know that their marriage could never be like his parents', that no matter how much she might understand Teresa she could never really be like her, any more than Roger could be like his father.

"Hilda," Roger said at last, his voice heavy, "I didn't mean to hurt you. I guess I didn't understand. I wanted to talk it over with you first, but Dad was so sure you'd be delighted at living here and not having to do so much housework and having a bigger place for the baby and all, that he thought it would be fun to surprise you. He thought you'd be grateful for the opportunity."

"Grateful?" asked Hilda. "I never minded the work in Burlingame. I liked it. I liked to cook and clean house and tend to the garden; it was all so tiny and sweet and—and it was just ours, Roger, something we'd planned from the very beginning. This house is somebody else's achievement . . . it's a way of life presented to us on a silver platter, without any sense of accomplishment on our part."

Roger walked to the window and stood looking out at the breakers that crashed on the cliff below. "Hilda," he said at last, "I can see your viewpoint—now. But the thing is, we never could have accomplished those things if we'd stayed where we were. I was getting nowhere in the office. I simply could not reconcile my own ideas with the others'; I tried, but the result was a mess."

He turned back from the window and faced her. "Darling, I want to build beauty into my houses. I want them to be as beautiful fifty years from now as they would be today. I want my lines to flow; but I have to do it alone. And here is the only place I can do it alone. Here I can have peace and quiet and freedom from financial worry; but it's for you, darling, as much as for myself. It's for the future we used to talk about: not a humdrum, frustrating existence as an underpaid draftsman in a second-rate architect's office, but a life of freedom in order to develop the ideas that are churning around inside me trying to get born. . . . Hilda—darling—"

She lay looking at him proudly, tears sliding down her cheeks. For this was the Roger she had first known and loved; he was not a by-product of his father's influence but rather a man in his own right, a man who still had dreams in his heart and splendor in his mind.

And so Hilda, as he knelt beside her, smoothed his hair and murmured, "Of course, darling; I understand—I understand," while she let her own dreams die.

Jock wandered in the next day, unannounced, looking sloppy but carefree, a package under his arm, and strolled over to the bassinette. He stared down at it for a moment, and then turned to Hilda and demanded incredulously, "Is *this* what you call your masterpiece?"

Hilda smiled. "What do your books look like in the first draft?" she asked. "Just wait until I polish him up a bit. He'll be a beauty."

"I hope you're right," said Jock doubtfully, and sat down beside the bed. "Here's a present I brought for Junior," and he unwrapped the package he'd been carrying and showed it to her proudly. "Napoleon brandy. Ought to be just about right by the time he's old enough to appreciate it."

Hilda burst into laughter and said, "You perfectly crazy dope! Junior'll never see that bottle, believe me—his pa and ma will polish it off while he's still taking milk."

Jock chuckled and said, "If you'll wait until I finish *my* masterpiece—and I sure hope it won't take me any longer than the nine months yours did—I'll join you in a round. We can at least toast the nipper's health in his own present. H'm," he sighed. "I suppose from now on I'm Uncle Jock."

"Why don't you get married and have a few of your own?" Hilda asked slyly.

"Who—me?" His face was filled with horror. "A woman to tell me what to do?"

"A woman to cook for you."

"A woman to tell me to get to work instead of slopping around the house at a typewriter all the time?"

"A woman to keep you warm at night."

"A woman to plant her cold feet against my back, you mean!"

"A woman," Hilda added, her laughter simmering down to a smile, "to think you're the most wonderful person in the world."

"Any woman who'd think that would be crazy," said Jock. "No, thanks! Cigarette? No?" He lit one for himself and looked at Hilda with penetrating scrutiny. "How you been, monkey? Too bad about Teresa. She was a swell old girl when you got to know her. Boy, the fights we've had! But she knew she could never put anything over on me."

"That's why you got along so well," Hilda pointed out. She was quiet for a moment, and Jock, still looking at her, said:

"Come on, give. What's eating you?"

Hilda said, "We're coming here to live."

Jock jumped to his feet, his face dark with anger. "What do you mean, for God's sake? I thought you were one person in this house with a little sense—coming here to *live?* Are you crazy?"

"Sit down, Jock," said Hilda, not looking at him. "I don't know why you should get so worked up over something that doesn't really concern you, but since you are, please don't give me all the reasons why we shouldn't come here. It's all settled: Roger's given up his job; his father's going to fix up a studio for him here."

"Hilda," said Jock, "I like you. You're the only completely honest person who's ever lived in this house. And I'm warning you—if you throw in your life with Gerald's you'll be taken for a ride that has no round-trip fare."

"I wish," said Hilda, politely, "that you would shut up and mind your own business. I've already said that I don't want to hear your reasons as to why we shouldn't come here. I know them."

"Do you?" said Jock in a strange voice. "Are you sure you do, Hilda? Because if you did you'd go on relief before you'd ever make this place your home. . . . Do I have to draw up a blueprint for you?"

"No," said Hilda, "you do not. Frankly, I don't know what you're talking about. The only reason I feel badly about it is that I like the place in Burlingame and I like being alone with Roger. But there are very good reasons why we should come here."

"Yeah," said Jock. "Like 'I'm a poor old man, all alone now except for my darling son and his dear little family'—"

"Shut up," cried Hilda, her voice hysterical, "*and get out of my room!*" A wail came from the bassinette and she sobbed senselessly, "Now look what you've done!"

Jock touched her hair affectionately and said, "I'm sorry—and not about waking the baby, either."

He walked out of the room, pausing only long enough to give the bassinette a jiggle, and closed the door behind him. The wail broke off, and now it was only Hilda who was crying, and the tears were hard and bitter.

CHAPTER 5

Thirty seconds had elapsed.

The woman still stood there, her body poised, her arms outflung, not thinking of what it was that man was holding her back, knowing it only as one knows without thinking what it is that has brought one up to a certain point in life.

Instinct was driving her to the rescue of the man who was drowning; but knowledge was holding her back.

When the baby was six weeks old, Hilda drove to Burlingame for the preliminary work on the task of breaking up her home. She had expected Roger to go with her, but when he said, a little embarrassed, "Look, honey, Dad is still lost without Mother—he just doesn't seem to know what to do with himself—so I think one or the other of us had better stick around and keep him company," she had acceded with good grace outwardly but with inward impatience. She thought: Gerald is neither a child nor a doddering old man; why must he be cared for as carefully as if he didn't have good sense? Then she felt a momentary twinge of shame.

Hilda pushed open the door of the small house and as all the familiar things, sitting there patiently waiting, met her eyes—the ink stain on the hardwood floor where she had dropped her fountain pen; the beautiful but crazy painting that had been sent for a wedding present; the familiar sag in the overstuffed chair where Roger had always flopped down as soon as he got home from work; all of the lovely, precious, inexpensive furniture that they had bought together, that had witnessed the beginning of their marriage and been a part of it—as she stood there looking, the hot tears burned behind her eyelids and then ran down her cheeks. She thought: Never again. Never. It will never be the same. Perhaps some day we'll have another place of our own, but it won't be this one. . . . Never. Never is a long time, she thought feverishly, and when she gave a sudden jerk at one of the drapes and the seam parted she threw it on the floor and stamped on it and then fell on it and pulled it with her hands until it came apart, then hid her face in its folds and cried without control.

A voice said, "For heaven's sake," and Hilda looked up to see Dot Nesbitt standing over her, her dark hair in curlers, her slacks hanging unevenly, a smudge on her nose, and her mouth, now hanging open, unlipsticked. "Wait a minute—I'll be back," she said, and returned quickly with a bottle of brandy. She poured half a glassful for Hilda and said, "If this doesn't do any good I'll slap your face, but I think brandy's more fun," and she poured some for herself. Hilda drank and Dot squatted on the floor and looked at her searchingly. "What're the hysterics for?" she demanded. "You and Roger bust up?"

Hilda sipped the strong medicine and was rewarded by a feeling of warmth and ease, a relaxing of taut muscles and a tightening of uncontrolled emotions. She wiped her now thoroughly dirty face on what was left of the drapes and said, trying to smile, "You're talking foolishment and you know it."

"Baby all right?" Dot asked anxiously. "I got the announcement, but Susie's had the measles or I'd have been to visit you. I'm dying to see him."

"Baby's all right," Hilda said. "Weighs twelve pounds."

"*Already?*" After a moment Dot said, "Well, what's the matter? Or aren't you talking?"

Hilda said dully, "We're leaving here."

"Well, that's nothing to get hysterical about. This darned street's getting run-down, anyway."

"It isn't the street," said Hilda, "that I mind leaving; it's a way of life."

Dot said gently, "Tell me about it, Hilda. Why are you so unhappy?" But when finally Hilda started to talk, to tell her why they were leaving, Dot said, "I still can't see why you're so worked up. Now if it was your *mother*-in-law—but you always liked the old boy, so what are you squawking about? I'll hate it here without you, though. . . . Lordy, imagine you with a cook and a maid and two fancy cars, just sitting around sewing a fine seam. . . ." She paused, and after a moment added quietly, "There's more to it than that, isn't there, Hilda?"

Hilda nodded mutely, her eyes filling, and wondered why it was that only she could understand what this move meant to her. And then she began to wonder if perhaps she was the one who was out of step and not the others. And then she remembered Jock. She herself was merely unhappy at this move, but Jock had been alarmed, and she had caught the fear—fear more deadly because she was not quite sure what it was she was afraid of. "It's just," she added painfully to Dot, "that I want my own house."

She got up from the floor and dusted herself off. "I have to go down to the basement for the packing-boxes. . . . Do something for me, Dot?" she asked impulsively. "I—I don't want to go into the nursery. Would you pack the things for me? I fixed it up for Gerry and he won't see it now and—and I don't want to see it any more, either." She turned quickly and went down the basement stairs. . . .

The large house by the sea was warm with welcome the day she arrived for the final time from Burlingame. Miss Hyslop was still there, caring for the baby while Hilda had been away, Bonnie's gloomy face lightened in welcome, and Gerald was beaming with happiness.

"Hilda," he said, taking her two hands in his, "this is the only home you have now, and I'm going to see that it's a good one. I—I can't begin to tell you how happy you've made an old man by coming here," and Hilda let it ride.

That first night started off with deceptive smoothness. Hilda and Roger and Gerald sat before the fire in the library, sipping cocktails.

"There's going to be an innovation in this house," Gerald said, his voice genial. "From now on we can have two cocktails if we like—or three!" and Hilda smiled a little, remembering his wife's ultimatum that one drink was socially acceptable but that two were the first signs of incipient alcoholism. "And we can smoke between courses if we like."

Hilda said, "Looks as if the whole family is going to the dogs," and tried to warm her hands at the fire, as if by warming her hands she could also warm her heart. She took the second cocktail that Gerald proffered her and sipped it silently, while the two men talked.

"This place is going to be a lot different from now on," Gerald continued. "It needs a little life in it; soon as we get two or three little boys running around here you won't know it. . . . I guess it'll seem pretty good to you two kids not to have to be punching any time-clock, with Roger having to catch that early train to the city and Hilda having to wash dishes and scrub the kitchen floor."

Hilda said, "The dishwashing didn't take me half an hour a day, and believe me, the floors got mopped. not scrubbed. The house was so small I had a hard time finding ways to keep myself busy."

"**Oh, well,** you two can spread out a bit here," Gerald said comfortably. "Have another cocktail. Roger?"

Hilda said, without thinking, "He's had three already," and there was an instant's silence in the room. An instant only, in which one could hear the loud tick of the minute hand of the grandfather clock; and then Roger said, "Thanks, Dad," and held out his glass. Hilda said, her voice level, "I think I'll have one, too," and held out her own glass. She thought, appalled: From now on I'll have to watch every word I say. I must remember that Gerald's wife was a despot, that his mother was a tyrant; I must make myself over into a demure little housewife who gives no orders, expresses no opinions and looks up to her menfolk.

Bonnie announced dinner, and, at the table, Hilda hesitated for a moment, not quite knowing where to sit since she was now a member of the household rather than just an occasional visitor. Gerald took the seat usually accorded Teresa, at the head of the table, motioned Roger to the seat opposite him and Hilda, too astonished to say anything, took the remaining seat, between them. Dimly, unwillingly, the thought came to her that here was the pattern for their future lives, a symbolism that was to live on in this household, of Gerald as head of the family for the first time in his life, of Roger as next in line and herself as the least important member of the family.

Bonnie served the tepid soup, the bedraggled salad and finally the roast that was falling off its bones from overcooking, and Hilda suddenly heard herself ask, "Has the cooking always been like this?"

"Like what?" asked Gerald in surprise.

"Lousy," said Hilda, determined for once to express an opinion that was not carefully thought out in advance so as not to call forth a look of hurt from Gerald.

He glanced at Roger. "I guess *she's* the one who had too many, eh, boy?" and chuckled. Roger glanced apprehensively at Hilda who laid down her fork and said calmly, "Let's get this thing settled right now. When Roger first told me about this arrangement he said that you wanted me to act as supervising housekeeper, to take over the reins of the household, manage the servants and so on. Isn't that so?"

"I merely thought," Gerald said between bites of the tasteless food, "that you would feel better about accepting —well, a home like this, if you had certain responsibilities toward maintaining it. After all, you know, my dear, I am far less prosperous than most people think, and this will be quite an establishment to keep up from now on."

Hilda said, "I don't believe I understand. I gathered from what Roger told me that you wanted us to come here to live—that, in fact, you urged us to. Certainly I had no impression that you were doing it as a favor to us, and that we were under obligations to be grateful to you as a result of being offered a home. After all, we *had* a home!"

Gerald said gently, "Hilda, I don't know what's gotten into you. What brought all this up, anyway?"

"I'll tell you what brought it up: I commented on the food—not, perhaps, in the most ladylike way imaginable, but nevertheless in my own inimitable way—and you implied that I had too much to drink. What I'm driving at is that if I am the titular housekeeper in this establishment I have a right to comment on the food, and to do something about it."

"Certainly you have, my dear. This is your home from now on; it is up to you to run it as you see fit—God knows it's a woman's job and not a man's—the only part I'll take in it will be to pay the bills."

"As soon as Roger gets established." Hilda said tightly, "we'll pay our own."

"But I *want* to," Gerald remonstrated. "After all, you came here for my sake and it's the least I can do for you, although of course it has its advantages for you, too—less housework, more room, no financial strain and so on. But I do want you to believe," he added, distress in his voice. "that it really is your own home and that you are free to run it as you wish."

Roger said quietly, "Aren't we talking about it too much? We knew what the arrangements were when we came here; they were all settled before we moved in, so why bother to discuss it?" He added, his voice gentle, "I think Hilda's pretty tired, Dad. She had a tough time of it with all that packing, and it was kind of a wrench for her to leave the first place we'd lived in since our marriage."

His voice was so tender, so understanding, so loving. that Hilda said, steadying her own voice, "Excuse me for a minute—I think I hear the baby," and hurried for the stairs before the tears could spill over.

Nellie was undeniably queen of the range. Hilda feeling the responsibility of keeping the house running as smoothly as in the days of her mother-in-law, tried to reason with the cook as pleasantly as she could, which was a good deal of an effort. "Nellie," she said, "I think that a plain French dressing—olive oil and wine vinegar, seasoned—would be better than that pink stuff and mayonnaise you always serve."

"Mr. Trenton ain't never complained," Nellie retorted, slamming her pots and pans around.

"*I'm* complaining," Hilda said pointedly. "Also, I think if the food were cooked a little less it would taste better and retain its vitamins—"

Nellie looked at her. "Food's got to be cooked thoroughly," she said. "I been cookin' for thirty years. How long you been cookin'?"

"Not so long that I'm not willing to learn something new. . . . Nellie, I'm running the household now, not Mr. Trenton. I'd appreciate it very much if you would follow my suggestions." She smiled pleasantly. "I'm sure we'll get along fine together as long as you understand that I'm responsible for the way the house is run." and she marched out, the smile still fixed on her face, but her teeth gritting together.

That night the broccoli was a discolored mush from overcooking, and with it was served mayonnaise instead of the hollandaise Hilda had ordered. The steak was gray all the way through, and the salad had pink dressing on it. Gerald ate with his customary zest, Roger with less appetite than usual, and Hilda with rage. After dinner, sitting in the library with her coffee and cigarettes, Hilda said, "Gerald, I think we should let Nellie go. She's getting simply impossible."

He took the expensive cigar from his mouth and glanced at her quizzically. "Well, well, the new broom's already starting to sweep clean, eh?"

"Only where it's necessary," she responded pointedly. "Nellie can't cook. She's sloppy. She's impudent. Surely we could find someone better?"

"Very difficult to get anyone, out this far," he said. "I think we'd do well to keep her."

"Then will you please speak to her and let her know that she is to take orders from me?"

He laughed indulgently. "Of course, my dear. If it's going to make you any happier."

But when, the following morning, Hilda suggested to Nellie that it might be better to fry the eggs a little more slowly, so there wouldn't be a hard crust on them, Nellie snapped, "This is the way I always cooked 'em and it's the way I'm going to keep on cookin' 'em!"

Hilda didn't speak for a moment while she grappled with her temper. Then, "Didn't Mr. Trenton talk to you?" she asked.

"He's got sense enough to keep out o' my kitchen," retorted Nellie. "Mr. Trenton and me—we get along fine. When we're left alone," she added ominously.

Hilda found her father-in-law inspecting some golf balls in the living-room, while Roger was busy with the morning paper.

"Gerald," she said, "I really do believe that it would help if you'd talk to Nellie."

"Talk to Nellie?" he said, looking up in surprise. "What about?"

"About what we were discussing last night," she said wearily, a sense of futility overwhelming her. "Remember?"

"Oh." He inspected the balls more carefully for a moment. "Son," he said irrelevantly, "just for a change, why don't we have dinner at the Country Club tonight? They have a good chef out there."

"Swell," said Roger. "Might be fun. Hilda and I haven't been anywhere for the last six months. How about it, honey?" She thought, Oh, sweet and simple Roger. I love you!—and was pleased at the flush of annoyance she detected on her father-in-law's face. "Oh, but—" he began, and then subsided.

"Meet us out there," he said shortly to Hilda. "Roger and I'll be taking on nine holes this afternoon."

But the evening was not an unqualified success. How could it be, Hilda wondered, when such a motive had prompted it? (Now you be a good girl, Hilda, or I'll send you to bed without your supper; you do what I say, Hilda, or I'll show you who's boss)—and she thought how fortunate she was to have Roger for a husband, a man too inherently decent and open himself to know what was seething below the surface.

Dressing for dinner that night, in the black cocktail gown that she hadn't worn since her pregnancy, clasping about her throat the small string of pearls that Mrs. Trenton had given her when she had learned of the imminence of the baby, putting a touch of rouge to her cheeks and carmine to her lips, she smiled into the mirror and then suddenly leaned forward, as if she hadn't ever seen herself before. She said to herself: Hilda, there's something different about you!—and noticed the slight rounding of her face that had displaced the angles of early youth, the serenity of the eyes, the full lips, a kind of new beauty that could come only with maturity and, she thought, with maternity. She went into the next room for a quick look at her son. Miss Hyslop glanced up from the book she was reading and said, "Well, Mrs. Trenton! Who would have thought it!"

"Thanks," Hilda said, laughing. "I'm flattered! But I guess it takes time for a new mother to get to looking human again." She leaned over the bassinette at the completely oblivious baby. "Doesn't he ever do anything but sleep?" she demanded. "Or is he just bored?"

"He's full and he's dry, and God knows that's all a baby demands at that age. Wait till he's a little older and you'll wish to heaven he went to sleep oftener. Little devils," she added fondly. "Minute they have sense enough to know anything, they're trying to know everything. That's why they put things in their mouths and get into mischief and start running away—just a quest for knowledge. And what good does it do 'em?" She sighed. "Sometimes I think the only happy people are the morons. Have a good time," she added briskly. "I hope you get a decent dinner."

Roger whistled when he saw Hilda. "Darling," he said, "you're a knockout! Where you been hiding that figure?"

"Ask Junior!" she said and they both laughed. Gerald wandered up with Lila Donovan beside him, and the two women greeted each other pleasantly but with reservations. Lila's hair was sleek, her dress clinging, her skin white, her lips bright red. "Well, isn't this nice!" she said. "I haven't seen you for quite a while, Hilda."

"I had a baby—remember?" Hilda said lightly. "But it's nice to get out again. . . . And nice to run into you like this."

Lila laughed. "Oh, you didn't run into me," she said. "Gerald called me up and asked me to join your threesome," and for a sudden startled moment Hilda wondered if there were the slightest possibility that Gerald could be seriously interested in Lila. But as the evening proceeded, she began to get a glimmering of why Lila had been asked. It was more of the same, Hilda reflected wryly—a little more of the punishment he had decreed for her for coming to dinner when he had intended her to stay at home. He was courteous to Hilda, but pointedly made it appear that Lila was the guest of honor.

It was the following day that Miss Hyslop told Hilda she was leaving.

"Oh, do you have to?" asked Hilda, and added ruefully, "I'll be scared to death all on my own with the baby. Do they break easily?"

"Babies are practically indestructible," the nurse assured her, and proved it by tossing young Gerry onto her shoulder for a burp.

"I know," said Hilda, "but even so, I wish you'd stay a little longer—I've hardly got my bearings here yet."

"Got my notice today." Miss Hyslop whacked a fine bubble out of the baby and put him back in his bassinette. "Mr. Trenton told me you wouldn't need me any longer from now on."

"Mr. Trenton!" Hilda exclaimed, astonished. "You mean my husband?"

"Nope. His pa."

Hilda sat down suddenly. "He—he *fired* you?" she asked, unable to believe that Gerald would take such a step without consulting her first.

"In a nice way," said Miss Hyslop. "Told me he had a lot of expenses and that other young mothers managed to

take care of their own babies and you'd have to learn some time. Thanked me for staying on after his wife died, and so on."

"Well," Hilda said slowly, "it's true enough, of course, that I have to learn to care for the baby myself, but—but I don't understand—" although she was beginning to, and what she understood she didn't like.

The nurse said, "Well, honey, it's none of my business, of course, but since I've already been fired I can't be fired again. . . . If you were to take my advice you'd get hold of your husband and baby and get the hell out of this place."

"I never wanted to come. . . . But why do you say that?" Hilda asked suddenly.

"Anyone who holds the purse-strings can make everyone dance to his tune. Better to have fifty a month of your own than fifty thousand that belongs to someone else. Old boy's a bit on the close side, if you ask me."

"That's only because he's never held the purse-strings before." She stopped suddenly, remembering something that had completely escaped her mind up until now. "Miss Hyslop," she said slowly, "do you know anything about a will that Mrs. Trenton made before she died? One that she wrote herself?"

"Yeah," said Miss Hyslop. "I witnessed it. Didn't see what was in it."

"What happened to it?"

"She told me to put it in that little enameled box beside her bed. Haven't seen it since. She called up her lawyer and told him to destroy the will he was holding; then she wrote this other one out."

Suddenly Hilda rose, went into the room where her mother-in-law had died. She opened the small box on the bedside table and looked in, but all it held were two aspirin tablets and some three-cent stamps. She glanced into the bureau drawers, but they were empty now, and into the closet, but it, too, was empty. Gerald had said he didn't believe in keeping mementos of a dead person around, and he had given all of Teresa's things away. She thought: I wonder. But he needn't have destroyed that will; I would never have done anything about it. . . . But perhaps he didn't take it; perhaps it just got lost in the confusion.

"Find it?" Miss Hyslop asked as Hilda went back to the nursery.

"No, but it doesn't matter, anyway. Did you read what was in it?"

"Nope, just signed it. Old lady seemed to have a sudden brainstorm. Her husband had just been in the room and was kind of putting the screws on about some money—I didn't pay much attention: nurses have to let personal talk like that go in one ear and out the other—and after he left, the old lady said she wanted to make a new will, that she didn't trust any man on God's earth—"

Hilda laughed shortly. "And her husband doesn't trust any woman, either."

"They must've had a charming married life."

"I don't think it was so bad," Hilda said, thoughtfully. "They understood each other. But I wouldn't care for it myself. I wouldn't want to feel that my husband couldn't trust me—or that I couldn't trust him—"

"Too many like that," Miss Hyslop assured her. "That's why I'm single."

Hilda laughed and said, "I'll miss you, Miss Hyslop. I need a friend at court. Nothing but men around here, except Bonnie and Nellie—and Bonnie's dour and Nellie's impossible—"

Miss Hyslop's sharp eyes softened and she laid a hand on Hilda's shoulder. "Stick to your guns, girl. And trust Bonnie. She may be dour but she sure has your interests at heart. Well, I must be off to do my packing and get the hell on to my next job. I'll give you a ring once in awhile to see how the young marster's making out."

That night after dinner, Hilda said to her father-in-law, "Gerald, you assured me that I was to be supervising housekeeper here. After this, I wish you would consult me before you discharge any of the help."

"Well, well," said Gerald, putting down his coffee cup and sitting up straight, "you're quite the little boss around here, aren't you?"

"Perhaps," she said coldly, "if you would outline my duties there would be less friction. I naturally have nothing to do with discharging any of the help since you are paying their salaries, although this duty usually falls to the housekeeper, but it is embarrassing for me not to know it when someone has been given notice." She glanced at Roger and he smiled at her but said nothing. "Don't you feel that I'm right, dear?" she asked, and he answered, "Let's not make an issue of it, darling. After all, it's Dad's home and his money that's supporting us—"

She stood up. "I feel that some other arrangements should be made," she said coldly. "I do not care to have it rubbed into me that we are here on sufferance and that we must do as we're told since we have no money. . . . Incidentally, Gerald,"—and she turned to her father-in-law who was smiling tolerantly,—"did you find a paper in the little enameled box beside Teresa's bed?"

He jumped suddenly, then picked up his coffee cup. "Certainly not. What do you mean? What paper?"

"I think you know," she answered, her voice expressionless, while Roger looked on in bewilderment. "That was unnecessary, Gerald," she said evenly. "I had absolutely no intention of using it for any purpose whatever. Please excuse me."

But didn't she? she wondered as she plodded wearily upstairs. Wouldn't she have used it as a weapon to hold over his head any time he got out of line? And what did she have now? Nothing. How could Roger be so blind? How could she have been so blind? Six weeks they'd been here now, and nothing was being done about the studio for Roger. He spent his time playing golf with his father and doing little else. Apprehension filled her, and deep fear; for she was beginning to feel the shadow of the future falling darkly over them all.

CHAPTER 6

Hilda said to Roger one night, when they were getting ready for bed, "Don't you think, dear, that if I had some idea of just what the financial set-up is here, I might be able to manage the household better?"

"What do you mean, the financial set-up?" said Roger, taking off his shoes.

"Well, darling, I hate to pry: it isn't that, but was there a will or something of that sort? Is there really enough money to maintain this place and the servants and all, or is Gerald living on principal? Did you inherit anything?"

Roger said shortly, "Mother died intestate—at least, there was a will, but her lawyer said she phoned him to

destroy it—but if I demanded my share of her estate it would mean Dad would be almost destitute. So I told Dad that as long as we were living here we'd toss it in the pool and let him have it, and gosh, the poor guy sure was grateful."

"I should think he would be," she responded bitterly, thinking about the other will that his mother had written herself; she opened her mouth to tell Roger about it, but sudden wisdom stopped her. She finally said, "Roger, in an important step like this, handing everything over to your father, don't you think it might have been advisable to discuss it with me first?"

Roger laughed, a short, bitter laugh. "That's exactly what Dad said. He was worried about your reaction to the set-up. He said women always wanted security; they wanted the family money in their own hands; he said you'd raise hell. He said, 'Talk it over with Hilda first, boy; otherwise she'll be fit to be tied!' so naturally I told him it wasn't any of your business, it was just between the two of us."

"**Naturally,**" said Hilda. She was brushing her hair, and she continued the even strokes. "But did it ever occur to you that when something goes wrong with the family finances, it's the wife who has to make ends meet, who has to economize and do without?"

Roger said, his voice very quiet, "Then you think that I should have demanded my full share of what Mother left, and have let Dad try to get along on the rest of it?"

"No," said Hilda. "Only that you should have talked it over with me first. Of course I don't think we should have taken anything for ourselves—after all, Gerald surely has a right to anything your mother had—but—" She put down the brush and turned around to face him. "Roger," she said, her voice shaking a little, "something's happening to us. We should be partners, a family unit—you know I've always been very fond of your father—it isn't any of this silly in-law trouble. But a husband and wife should stand together against the world, against everything, even against their children if they have to. That's what marriage is, a partnership, and any time a third party enters into it, the foundations begin to weaken.

"Don't you see, darling?" she said pleadingly. "It isn't that I don't love your father and want to care for him, or that I resent his having all that he's entitled to; the only thing that hurts me is that you discuss every matter of vital importance that concerns us, with him, and then tell me about it afterward. I want to be your partner, Roger; not just your housekeeper."

Roger came over to her and bent down and kissed her where the dressing-gown fell open, and his eyes were warm and seeking, his hands hot on her body. She could feel her heart begin to pound, as it always did when desire mounted in both of them, all of her emotions demanding fulfillment, her heart and spirit and the whole wealth of her love going out to him.

It was only her mind that was ashamed, her mind that told her that an issue was being evaded, that her individuality as a person had been absorbed by her passion as a lover, that physical love was being substituted for moral integrity, that no longer was she the other half of Roger, making him a whole, but that now she was merely a woman whose purpose was to supply a man with his physical needs and whose mental life had nothing to do with his own. . . .

But most of the time there was little friction. Except that life remained static. Hilda found herself frantically busy, just taking care of the baby and overseeing the workings of the household, which was no small task in itself; she soon was too busy, in fact, to do any of the soul-searching she had been absorbed in up to now—or perhaps, she felt in one of her more logical moments, it was because she dared not indulge in further analysis of her situation in this house. She did most of the baby's washing herself, although Bonnie had offered to take charge of it. But Hilda felt that Bonnie was overworked as it was, for Nellie would have nothing to do with the household outside "her" kitchen, and Bonnie therefore had most of the cleaning to do. Hilda took over the upstairs work, aside from the bathrooms, ordered the meals, did the marketing and found herself completely exhausted by night.

Sometimes Hilda wondered how she ever managed to get into her twenty-four-hour day as much work as she did. She thought sardonically of Gerald's complacence about the fine home he was giving the three of them, the freedom from work that a big house with servants would provide her, the lack of financial worry. . . . True, they had no living expenses to pay, but there were other ways to spend money—stamps, stationery, clothes, additional needs for the baby, the doctor's bill, cleaning for Roger's clothes and hers; and no money coming in! Their small savings account was becoming rapidly depleted, and Hilda wondered what would happen when it was gone.

She realized for the first time the true importance of money: not the things that it can buy, but the independence of spirit it can give one. She was now in the same position that Gerald had been in while Teresa was alive—dependent upon someone else's bounty—and she wondered at his lack of imagination that could deliberately let him forget his own experience so soon that he could force it upon another person. Another person? Not Roger, who seemed to have enough money for his own needs; just herself, who did the work, and received nothing for it but food and shelter. It was not carelessness nor lack of imagination on Gerald's part, she decided; it was deliberate, because in this way he would have more control over her since it was his hand that held the purse-strings.

At times she thought it was all her own imagination, but at other times she knew it was true and she was frightened, for now she and Roger *could* still be free, now when they had the youth and the courage and the ability to make their own way; but later they would be so entangled in Gerald's life, that they never could break away. . . . But it's not necessary, she told herself over and over again, for us to stay here—Roger is young and talented and experienced; he can make a living for us, he can give us independence and pride and security. *Only why doesn't he?*

She said once, over their after-dinner coffee, "Gerald, I hate to mention this, but I'm afraid we're going to have to have more help around here. Nellie won't touch a thing outside the kitchen and Bonnie has too much to do already—I just can't keep the house clean—"

"Why, it always looks nice." Gerald said in surprise.

"Yes," she said carefully, "it looks nice because I spend a large part of my time cleaning it. There are twelve rooms here and one maid to do the work—"

"But you just said you do a lot of it yourself!"

"I'm afraid it's too much for me," she said quietly. "The baby takes a lot of my time, and to tell you the truth I'm not accustomed to quite so much physical labor. It takes a lot of work to keep a house well cared for."

"The trouble with women today," Gerald announced, "is they haven't enough to do. My grandmother used to say, Keep a woman busy and she'll stay out of trouble."

"Perhaps we could shut off part of the house."

"Nonsense," said Gerald. "What could we shut off? My wing? Your and Roger's wing? The servants' quarters? The library? The guest-room? Nonsense. Just do the best you can, my dear, and don't worry. Things'll work out for the best."

Hilda thought once, How unfortunate it is that unhappy periods in our lives should so overshadow the happy ones. For there *were* happy moments in her new life. Some of these moments of well-being came when, on a sunny morning, she would put Gerry in his bassinette (and later, in his play pen) out on the porch and sit beside him, mending clothes or knitting a small sweater. Roger might wander out, take a look at the fast-growing child,

say, "H'm, stork must've brought him. Too good-looking for us to beget," and Hilda would reply demurely, "Pretty is as pretty does. He threw up all over his nice clean rompers this morning."

Gerald adored the child, which Hilda thought was strange: for most men, as Roger had pointed out, couldn't make head or tail ("and no pun intended," he added darkly) of a new baby and had to wait until it became more human in order to take an interest in it. But Gerald would sit and look at the small boy, sometimes just saying nothing, just feasting his eyes on him, and soon the child grew to know him and would put out his arms to his grandfather. Then Gerald would pick him up and toss him high in the air until he was screaming with excitement.

"I think it would be better just to let him play by himself," she said gently once. "Babies soon learn to demand attention and it isn't always good for them."

"Oh, come now, Hilda," he said indulgently. "You're not going to be possessive where *Gerry's* concerned, too, are you?"

"I'm not possessive where anybody's concerned," she retorted sharply. "I simply know what's good for the baby."

"The way you know what's good for Roger?" he asked, his voice as cold as hers. "After all, they both have their own lives to live."

"Exactly," she pointed out. "Roger should be able to know how, by now, but Gerry doesn't. He's a good baby," deliberately trying to get away from the implications that her father-in-law was inserting into the conversation, "but he won't be for long, if he gets spoiled."

"Nonsense," said Gerald, "you can't spoil a baby that young."

"They learn fast," she commented, biting off a thread.

"Certainly too much affection never hurt anyone."

"Its application sometimes does. Too many people who spoil children," she added, trying to keep the conversation general, "don't realize that indulgence of a child is simply self-indulgence."

Gerald rose from his chair, said, "The fog's rolling in again, damn it. Now Roger and I can't have our golf game this afternoon. . . . What makes you think you know so much about child-raising, Hilda? After all, I'm a great deal older than you are, I've had more experience and I've already raised one child. You have a lot to learn."

"A book of instructions comes with every baby," she tried to say lightly. "Women just *know*, that's all." She picked the small child up, nodded to Gerald and went in the house, her heart heavy with foreboding, her mind trying to deny the implications of future trouble in her father-in-law's relationship with his grandson. She thought wearily: Oh, no, I can't stand *that*, too. I can't fight too many things at once.

Hilda thought she could stand almost anything except the change in Roger. She saw him so little these days, less, actually, than she had seen of him when they had their own home. Now when he wasn't swimming or driving somewhere with his father, he was playing golf with him at the country club. At first they played only in the afternoons; then after a while they'd start out in the morning and have lunch at the club. Then one day Roger phoned at six-thirty and said, "Honey, Dad wants us to stay here for dinner—do you mind? There's going to be a bridge game afterward."

Hilda said, her heart sinking, "Oh, darling, I see so little of you," and then, hastily, "Of course not, dear," and wondered what she could do with the roast that was almost ready to be served, and the lonely evening that would leave her to her own devices.. "See you later."

Roger came in late that night, his breath strong with whisky, and the next morning was still asleep when Hilda got up to tend the baby. She thought, in desperation: This is not the right kind of life for a young and able-bodied man; he should be at a job; he should have something to interest him, more than this playing around with swimming and golf and bridge; he should have a sense of responsibility. It's as if he were in some kind of a drugged sleep. . . .

But still the days went by, and the weeks and the months, while Hilda worked harder and harder, now that the baby was creeping and then stumbling around with his first steps, getting into everything and demanding a constant watchful eye; and still Roger was not doing anything but keeping his father company—he was no longer even making any attempt to get to work at his drawing-board; it was as if all incentive were being drained out of him, and Hilda could see a strained look of fear come into his eyes as if he, too, knew that something was happening but did not know what it was or what to do about it; and as Roger's face grew thinner and his eyes grew lost, Gerald seemed to take on more of a healthy glow than before: his eyes sparkled, his whole body exuded well-being and happiness, as if, at last, he had begun to live.

Hilda was frightened. She whispered once to herself: He is taking Roger; he is consuming him. He is nourishing his own spirit on Roger's and soon there will be nothing left of Roger except the core that Gerald has sucked dry. . . . And then she thought, bewildered: I must be losing my mind. I've been alone too much, I've been brooding; but what's happened to Roger?

And at night, when the two of them were alone, she'd try. They'd lie in bed together, close together, and Hilda would talk in low tones, trying to make him remember the days when life had been wonderful because both of them had had an incentive, an objective, when both of them had worked hard and been independent of spirit, when they'd laughed and argued and made love and talked about that wonderful future of theirs. But Roger said little now. When she asked him once, trying to make her voice gentle, when he was going to get to work again, he'd said shortly, "Oh, don't *nag*, Hilda!" And had turned over and gone to sleep.

Nag: That's what Gerald was always saying about women. Any woman. They nag. They turn and twist a man's actions until he doesn't know whether he's coming or going. They manipulate a man's life. They drain him of money and independence and peace of mind, and what do they give him in return? Nothing. In our grandparents' day, he was fond of saying, a woman stayed in the kitchen where she belonged and let a man manage his own life. Women were intended to be cooks and breeders—why couldn't they realize it and stick to their own line of work? And now Roger had absorbed the poison, drop by drop, so that no longer did he and Hilda even speak the same language.

But even realizing this, she could not give up. She could not believe that no longer had she any influence with him at all, that he had completely lost his own pride and independence, that Gerald himself could be so blind as not to see what was happening.

She said to him once, "Gerald, what about that wing you were going to fix up as a studio for Roger?" and he had answered indulgently, "Let the boy rest for a while. He's had a tough time of it, keeping his nose to the grindstone this past year or two. But then," he added, laughing, "that's what a man expects when he marries, isn't it?" and Hilda, seething, had replied, "I doubt if Roger feels that way about the baby and me."

Her father-in-law patted her on the shoulder and her flesh shrank away from his touch. "There, there," he said, as one might to a fractious child, "you mustn't take my innocent little remarks so seriously. Roger's said more than once, 'There's one thing you have to admit about Hilda—she's not petty.' "

Hilda, quietly enraged, retorted, "*One* thing? One thing to counteract all of my shortcomings, I suppose."

Gerald, looking bewildered, said, "I don't understand women very well. I didn't mean to hurt you, my dear."

Hilda thought: I am helpless. I am alone. I am lost. Unhappy and confused, she would go to the baby and hold him in her arms for comfort and then, horrified, put him down quickly, thinking: But that's what Gerald is doing—using Roger to make himself happy. I must never do it with Gerry. I must not love him too much.

Hilda found that whenever she and Gerald had an argument, invariably Roger would call up from the Country Club to say they were staying there for dinner. Once when she had objected he said nothing for a moment, and then, "I see. We'll be home." But the evening had been a total loss as far as any real companionship was concerned, for Roger was over-polite to Hilda and Gerald took the part of the gentle and distressed peacemaker.

"There, there," he said as they were having their coffee in silence, "wives are difficult to understand, boy; they seem unreasonable at times, but it's just that they have a different make-up from us."

"Thank God," said Hilda, sipping her coffee. "Let's put it this way: supposing Roger and I were living with my mother instead of you, Gerald. Do you think Roger would be unreasonable to object if she and I stayed out to dinner three or four nights a week?"

"But your mother's dead," said Gerald in bewilderment, while Hilda looked at him with scorn for his deliberate evasion. "And besides, women are different. It's their job to adapt themselves to their husbands' needs; it's their job to look after the home and children, and not to be running around all hours of the night—"

"Well," said Hilda dryly, "then I must be the perfect wife, because I certainly don't do much running around."

"You're lucky," Roger put in with tight lips, "that all the running around *I* do is with Dad and not with other women."

Hilda slammed down her coffee cup. "Why am I lucky?" she demanded. "Are you implying that I should be *grateful* because you're not having an affair with someone else? And how do I know you're not?"

Roger said, "Oh, for heaven's sake!" and flung out of the room. Hilda picked up her cup again, her hand trembling, and tried to drink some of the cold dregs. Cold dregs, she thought. I'm drinking the cold dregs of my marriage, because there's nothing left of it, nothing but a fantastic triangle that I can't fight. I only wish it *were* another woman—then I'd know what to do, but this utterly ridiculous, fantastic attachment. . . .

She glanced up and met her father-in-law's kindly eyes. "Hilda," he said, "you're young. And you haven't seen much of the world—not enough to know that all you're doing is to antagonize Roger. You're clutching at him; you're trying to run his life for him; the only way to keep a husband is to let him be free, to give him all you have to give but to ask nothing in return except his loyalty—"

"Perhaps," she put in bitterly, "you also have some prescription for keeping a wife?"

He shrugged. "I wouldn't know about that," and to Hilda it was the same as if he had said, "It's not important to know how to keep a wife."

She looked at him directly. "Gerald, do you think Roger is happy?"

"When he's with me, yes."

"Do you think that's natural? For a married man to be happy only when he's with his father?"

Again he shrugged. "Well—isn't that up to you? If he isn't happy with you, don't you think perhaps that's your fault and not his? It's up to a wife to see that her husband *is* happy."

"Don't you think he was," Hilda went on doggedly, "when we lived in Burlingame by ourselves?"

"Do you?" he countered. "Certainly he wasn't pleased with his job, and he had a hard time supporting you on the salary he made."

"He didn't anything of the sort. And *any* kind of job is better than none at all. Oh, Gerald, don't you *see* that? For a man as young as Roger to hang around home, to swim and play golf and bridge, to have no money of his own, to let another man support his family— Don't you see the terrible things it's doing to his self-esteem? A year ago Roger would have been appalled at such an existence for himself, and now he's getting so used to it that it doesn't seem anything but normal to him . . . That's the worst part of all, to lead a useless, inadequate existence and to find nothing wrong with it. But he's so unhappy inside. . . ." She sipped again at the cold coffee in an effort to fight back the tears.

Gerald said, his voice unyielding, "You're acting just like all other wives. You want to run his life. You nag at him. You hound him to make money. You want to decide what's best for him, instead of letting him decide for himself—"

"When has Roger ever decided?" she cried wildly. "You're the one who's done all the deciding. It was you who encouraged him to give up his job and his home and to come here, it's you who managed to convince him that he doesn't need to work, that you'll take care of him, that I'm the one who's ruining his life. . . ." And now the tears came in a fierce rush, tears that burned her eyes and her throat, that tightened her tension instead of releasing it.

Gerald rose from the table in distaste. "If there's anything I can't stand," he said, "it's an hysterical woman!" And he left the room.

Hilda thought, for the first time: Oh, if he would only die!

CHAPTER 7

From that moment on she stopped trying to make herself believe that she was fond of Gerald. From that moment on she hated and feared him. For the first time she was able to see clearly what he had done and was doing to her husband; she was able to comprehend the tentacles of a self-centered monster that were wrapping themselves around her husband's life and her own and her child's.

She had tried, with all the diplomacy at her command, to discuss him with Roger, in an effort to show him that what friction existed between her and Gerald was due not to typical "in-law" trouble but to a source so much more profound and dangerous that their whole futures were at stake. But her appeals to Roger did not penetrate, for invariably when she and Gerald clashed it was she who lost her temper and raised her voice and burst into tears; it was always Gerald whose voice was soothing, whose eyes were distressed, whose whole attitude was one of bewilderment toward the one person in the world who had turned against him.

Roger said harshly once, "Hasn't it ever occurred to you, Hilda, that perhaps you are wrong and the rest of us

are right? Do you realize that you are the only person who has ever known Dad who hasn't thought he was a pretty swell guy?"

"Except your mother," she reminded him bitterly.

"Yes. Except my mother," and he looked at her oddly, his eyes speculative, almost as if he were comparing his mother and his wife and finding them to be the same.

So she could not discuss Gerald with his son—to Roger it meant only that she was attacking a defenseless man, one she did not understand, one she was incapable of understanding. But the time finally came when she felt she must have someone to talk to, someone with whom she could ally herself, someone on whom she could lean for just a little while. Bonnie was there, of course—Bonnie who was quiet and not given to talk, but whose eyes were often pitying and whose mouth was often pinched. Hilda asked her once why she stayed. She said, "Bonnie, you could get a dozen places better than this one, with more pay and less work. Why do you stay?" and Bonnie answered, the stiffness relaxing a little, "Mrs. Trenton said for me to look after you, Miss Hilda, just before she died. She told me you might need help. She said, 'Don't let them come here to live because that is what Mr. Trenton is going to want.' But what could I do, ma'am? I saw it coming, but it wasn't my place."

"But even so," Hilda faltered, tears close to the surface, "you don't owe us anything, or Mrs. Trenton, either."

"I owed her a lot," said Bonnie. "She was good to me, in her own way. When I was young I'd been—well, pushed around a good deal, but after I came here years ago she made me feel that this was my home. She made me feel—I guess you'd call it secure. She never asked anything of me before that was beyond"—the dour lips smiled a little—"beyond the line of duty. So I'm staying," she added. "Besides, I kind of like the boy," and off she went about her work. One ally, Hilda thought, in the whole world. . . .

No, there *was* one other ally, she remembered. Jock. But Jock had gone off to New York for a conference with his publishers, and while he dropped her gay little notes occasionally, there was no way that she could write to him of what troubled her without seeming to be indulging in self-pity, a vice which she repudiated for herself. But she had to talk to someone; she had to get the perspective of another point of view.

Suddenly she thought of Dot Nesbitt, still living in Burlingame. They had exchanged affectionate little notes occasionally, both of them saying, "Do come and spend a week-end with me," but neither of them doing anything about it. But now she thought, excitement rising in her: Dot! I can talk to Dot. She's had trouble with Frank's mother. She's older than I am. Perhaps if I could see someone else, someone from outside, I could get away from this feeling of aloneness.

That night, Hilda said with eagerness, "Gerald. I'd like to ask the Nesbitts here for next week-end—you met them, didn't you, when you visited us in Burlingame?"

"The Nesbitts?" he inquired. "Oh, yes, the sloppy young woman next door."

Hilda laughed. "She's not really sloppy; she just goes around that way in the morning."

"Why do you want them to come here?" he asked, and glanced at Roger, who was smoking and looking moodily into space. "Would you like them, son?"

Hilda's lightheartedness died. *Would you like them, son?* It did not matter whether Hilda would like them to come; it was Roger who must be pleased. He shrugged. "It's okay with me," as if it didn't make much difference.

"It—it gets kind of lonely here sometimes," Hilda said, trying to quiet the trembling of her lips. "I'd like another woman to talk to."

Gerald looked at her speculatively, his eyes on hers, as if trying to penetrate into the depths of her mind. He said pleasantly, his voice soft, "Why, of course, my dear. You're always welcome to have any of your friends here, you know. I'll try to see to it that they have a good time."

Hilda thought: Why am I frightened? What can he do? After all, Dot's *my* friend, not his. I have to talk to her, I have to tell her . . . Oh, Dot, Dot, please come!

From the moment of the Nesbitts' acceptance, Gerald took over. He planned the week-end. He hired a Filipino houseboy and ordered flowers, he gave Nellie two days off and engaged a chef from Monterey; until Hilda, in despair, said, "All this isn't necessary, Gerald. They're simple people. They don't expect a lot of elaborate preparations," but Gerald chuckled and said, "All women like to show off a little. We'll give 'em a week-end they'll remember for the rest of their lives!"

When Hilda came downstairs on Friday afternoon, freshly bathed and dressed, she said, "Where's Mr. Roger, Bonnie? It's time for the train and I want him to go down to the station with me."

"Oh, they went already, Miss Hilda. Both of 'em—they took the car and said they were meeting the Nesbitts and would be back right after the Del Monte Express pulled in."

Hilda was white with anger. She thought: Whose guests are they, anyway? Gerald's or mine? But she took off her hat, lit the fire in the living-room, called the Filipino houseboy and said, "Please have some Martinis ready in half an hour, Sixto," and went into the library to see if the baby was still clean. He was lying on his back in the play pen, spread-eagled, his hair in damp ringlets, his round cheeks flushed, his eyes closed. Hilda smiled and leaned over to kiss him.

. . . The front door flew open and Gerald and Roger and the Nesbitts came in, laughing and noisy, rubbing their hands against the cold, the two guests halting for a moment to look about the house.

Dot cried, "It's lovely. Oh, you lucky girl!" and flew to Hilda, throwing her arms around her and giving her a resounding kiss. "Oh, the baby, the darling, the precious, isn't he a lamb?" Gerry opened his eyes, took a look at her and burst into wild screams. "I always get the same reaction from babies," she said ruefully. "Scare the daylights out of them. Here's Susie." Hilda stooped down and kissed the three-year-old girl whose round sweet face peeped out from an old-fashioned poke-bonnet. "Hello, everyhody," Hilda said, laughing, and put out her hand to Frank. "It's wonderful to see you again."

"Sixto!" Gerald bellowed. "Drinks! Fast!" and the immaculately coated Filipino came in with a tray holding cocktail glasses and shaker. Gerald rubbed his hands. "Well, this is something like!"

Hilda said, "I'll show them their rooms first, Gerald."

"Fine," he said. "I put them into the suite next to mine, that used to be Roger's."

"Oh, but—" she began, and caught herself before anger could overwhelm her. Why hadn't he told her; why had he let her go ahead making preparations for the room next to hers and Roger's, that she had filled with flowers and a small cot for Susie, a room she had spent hours on in preparation for the Nesbitts' visit? From that moment she knew that Gerald knew why she had asked Dot here, that she had wanted her for a confidante; and from that moment on he was making it manifest that Hilda should have no such opportunity.

The week-end party was Gerald's from the very beginning. He was the grand host, the welcoming, considerate friend, the jolly, unselfish father, who was devoting his life to making his son and daughter-in-law happy and comfortable. "Gee whiz," Dot breathed in awe just before they went in to dinner, "you really have it soft here, Hilda! Great big house, no work to do, Filipino houseboy, cook and maid and everything. Wow!"

Hilda said, her lips tight, "Yes, charming, isn't it?"

The dinner was delicious; the wine poured frequently, Gerald's laugh booming out above the noisy chatter, one fascinating anecdote after another coming from him. Hilda's smile was stiff and she had no appetite to appreciate the well-cooked meal. She tried to say once, "What have you been doing lately, Dot?" but before she could get any kind of an answer, Gerald was off again—his gayety so contagious that even Hilda would have enjoyed it if she hadn't known from what it stemmed. . . .

Gerald had everything mapped out for their week-end visitors. A ride around the seventeen-mile-drive, a fish dinner at Pop Ernst's, tickets for the new show at the Carmel Little Theater, dinner the next day at the Country Club—he had even gone so far as to engage a baby-sitter for the children, and Hilda thought bitterly that if he had dared, he would have had her filling that capacity.

There was no quiet talk between Dot and Hilda, who realized that even if there had been an opportunity, she never could have penetrated the sweet curtain of charm and devotion that Gerald had drawn over Dot's eyes. "Isn't he a peach?" she said once to Hilda, in one of their brief moments together. All Dot could see was that Hilda was the luckiest girl in the world to have such a wonderful home and such a darling, charming father-in-law. "Mm," she said as they were leaving, "if I didn't have Frank on my hands I'd certainly make a try for you, Gerald!" and he laughed and put his arm around her and whispered loudly, "Maybe we can do something about Frank, at that!"

All charming, all lovely, a beautiful week-end at a country estate.

That's how it seems, thought Hilda; and for a moment dropped the torch that Teresa had thrown her, for it was growing too heavy for her to bear—I'm too tired, she thought; I can't fight any longer.

And so from now on Hilda had no social life, and her evenings were bleak and barren. . . .

Bonnie said, one day, "Miss Hilda, honey, why don't you run out to the Country Club and have dinner with your menfolks?" and Hilda, startled, answered, "Why—I never thought of it. They—they don't want me," and Bonnie, her dour face gentling a little, said, "Well, they'd ought to, leaving you home alone here night after night. 'Tisn't as though Mr. Roger was running around with another woman or something, but staying out for dinner and half the time not even letting you know, is almost as bad. Mrs. Trenton never would have stood for anything like that, I can tell you."

Hilda laughed shortly. "You're right there, Bonnie."

More and more often she found herself talking to the older woman, at first out of sheer desperation and later because she found that Bonnie, dour as she was, was her own stanchest ally in the house.

So Hilda got herself up the best she could with a last year's dress, for she would not ask her father-in-law for clothes, and got in her and Roger's old car and drove herself out to the Country Club.

She went first to the powder-room to repair the damage the wind had done her hair, and found Lila sitting before the dressing-table gazing with absorption at her own face, but whether with gratification or apprehension Hilda could not tell.

Lila glanced up as she caught Hilda's reflection in the mirror. "Well!" she exclaimed. "How'd *you* happen to show up?"

"Is it so strange for a wife to have dinner with her husband?" Hilda retorted.

"Under the circumstances, yes. Unless," her voice dripping with sweetness, "you're staging a big reconciliation scene, complete with audience?"

"There can't be a reconciliation," Hilda pointed out coldly, "without a separation."

"That's not the way Gerald tells it."

"I suppose," Hilda said scornfully, "you feel you'd make Roger a better wife?"

"Well, I wouldn't nag him to death, at any rate."

"You would if you lived with Gerald."

"I wouldn't live with Gerald."

"That's the first sensible thing you've said so far," Hilda said with sarcasm. "Now will you please mind your own business and stay out of my personal affairs?"

Lila shrugged. "Have it your own way. But if you don't watch out, Roger'll be back in circulation before long."

Hilda laughed, and this time it wasn't the giggle that had been so much a part of her back in the days, long ago, when she had been a happy woman: it was short and brittle and deadly.

"Have you forgotten Gerald?" she asked, and turned away, her shoulders lifted with assurance, but her heart heavy with fear, for Hilda knew now that Gerald would willingly, joyfully, toss Lila to Roger for the purpose of breaking up his son's marriage; but that, once this purpose had been achieved, he would then snatch Roger from Lila before there could be any danger of his allying himself with another woman. For Roger must belong to his father and to no one else. . . .

She found Gerald and Roger at the bar, and, her heart hammering with apprehension, went gayly up to them and said, "I think I'll have one, too!"

Roger said, "Hilda!" and to her overwhelming relief she could see that his face lighted up, that he was really glad to see her. Gerald said cordially, for the benefit of the others at the bar, "Well, how are you, my girl? What'll you have?"

"A Daiquiri, please." She glanced around. "Well, well, it's quite a while since I've been here. Hasn't changed much." She took a sip of her cocktail and thought: I hope this puts some stiffening in my spine.

Gerald was looking straight ahead, and glancing at him out of the corner of her eyes, she could see the curb that he was putting on his own rage. "What brought you down here?" he asked at last.

"Why not?" she countered, and pushed her empty glass across to the bartender for a refill. "After all, if I can't see my husband at home, I might as well see him at his regular hang-out."

"He might stay at home oftener if you made it pleasant for him."

Hilda turned to Roger. "In what way have I made home unpleasant for you?" she demanded.

"Darling, you haven't," he murmured, his unhappy eyes on his father's face. "It's just that Dad thinks it's good for men to get away from home once in a while."

"The time for men to be away from home," Hilda put in pointedly, "is during the daytime, not at night."

She picked up her second cocktail and sipped at it, moving nearer to Roger as she did so. She thought: I'll show you who's going to be on the outside of this triangle, and it won't be me!

"That's exactly what I mean," said Gerald coldly. "Men need their freedom, but their wives are always trying to tie them down and run their lives—"

"They don't need their freedom any more than women do!" Hilda cried, her voice rising. "And even so, then why don't they remain bachelors? You can't have a marriage without responsibilities." The two drinks were beginning to take hold, and now she glanced around with more assurance. "Where's Lila? I saw her in the powder-room, so I suppose she's part of our gay little party. Ah, here she comes." She pushed her glass across the bar, glanced brightly at Lila and said, "Why, darling, how lovely you look tonight," and to herself, Strange how meanness is so much more contagious than decency is.

"Really?" said Lila languidly. "How sweet of you to say so."

"Isn't it?" Hilda agreed heartily. "But then, one must have compensations, mustn't one?"

"For what?" asked Lila, her eyes dangerous.

"For being oneself," Hilda replied enigmatically; and Lila, with poisonous sweetness, turned to Gerald. "I have a frightful headache," she said, "so I think I'll wander along home and take a rain-check for the dinner tonight. My stomach," she added pointedly, "is a little queasy. Next time you ask me for dinner please let me know who your other guests are going to be."

Roger came to life for a moment. He looked at her levelly and said, "Hilda is not another guest, Lila. She is my wife and she is always welcome here."

"It took you a long time to come to that conclusion," Lila tossed over her shoulder, and departed.

Gerald, his face dark with anger, said shortly, "Let's go in to dinner."

"Not till I have another drink," and Hilda picked up her glass.

Roger said, "Hilda, don't. What's the matter with you, anyway?"

"You'd really like to know?" she asked him.

Before she could go on, Gerald had her by the arm and was leading her out toward the dining-room. "Sit down," he said shortly, "and shut up." He picked up the menu and ordered for all three of them without consulting the other two. "Who's taking care of Gerry tonight?" he asked when the waiter had gone.

Hilda, enraged because she had been thwarted at the moment when she had finally gathered enough courage to say what she meant, answered sullenly, "Bonnie."

"Is that supposed to be one of her duties? You're always talking about how overworked she is."

"She offered to," Hilda said, and added, "if it's any of your business."

She caught the glance between Gerald and Roger, the glance that said, "See? What did I tell you?" and the rage grew bitter and strong in her.

"Oh, she offered to, did she?" said Gerald mildly, and now Hilda was really frightened, for she could feel something ominous brewing. "I suppose this was her idea, your coming out here tonight?"

"Well, what if it was?" Hilda said, her voice rising again. "Why shouldn't I come? Why should my husband leave me at home night after night, to come here with his father—"

"Be thankful it isn't another woman," Gerald put in shortly, as if that were all that a wife ever had to worry about.

"God knows I wish it were!" and now Hilda's voice was rising above the hum of the conversation around them. "I'd know how to deal with another woman, and believe me, Lila's no menace where Roger's concerned! But you—you— You're poisoning him, you're taking him away from me; you won't let him be a husband, you want him to be nothing but a son forever—"

"Keep still!" Gerald's voice was sharp and filled with distaste. "For God's sake, don't make a scene here! You women, always hysterical; you can't even take a drink without going off half-cocked—"

Her eyes, to her intense dismay, filled with tears and she turned them on her husband. "Oh, Roger," she whispered, "can't you say anything, can't you do anything, do you have to be an echo all the rest of your days?"

He said, his voice trying to be gentle but not filled with love the way it once had been, "Hilda, let's go home; you're not yourself. . . ."

She whispered, sick with longing, "Oh, Roger, if we could only go home alone," and rose, leaning against him, wishing that they two were alone in all the world.

Gerald said, his voice still filled with disgust, "Well, I hope this never happens again! Remember what I told you, boy. . . ."

The next day, sick at heart, filled with an awareness of complete impotence, Hilda stayed in bed. She thought: I cannot face him; he knows that I will always be vanquished, that he will be the winner and that some day, somehow, he will have Roger to himself. And then: I wonder if it's worth fighting about; I wonder if the objective is worth the struggle—and, comparing Roger with the way he once had been, she almost decided to give up.

And so this morning she was lying in bed, afraid to face another day, giving in for once to her fear.

Bonnie brought her breakfast, and Hilda saw that her eyes were red with weeping. She sat up and said gently, "What's the matter, Bonnie?"

"I've been given my notice," the older woman said. "Mr. Trenton gave me two weeks' pay, first thing this morning, and told me next time I got a job maybe I'd have sense enough to mind my own business. 'Women!' he said. 'Always butting in and spoiling men's lives!' But, Miss Hilda," she almost whispered, "they don't think of how often they spoil women's lives."

"You've been given your notice! But why? Oh, Bonnie, no, I won't have it; I can't get along without you!" She swung out of bed and into her dressing-gown. "I won't have it, I tell you! Just because you wanted to help me!"

"Don't you worry, Miss Hilda," Bonnie said unhappily. "I can get a job as easy, as easy—I would have a long time ago, too, if it hadn't been for you and the little tyke. He's so sweet," she faltered, "and when you've taken care of a baby since the first day he was born, almost, it's hard to leave him. But you need me, too—more than he does, Miss Hilda."

"I do, indeed," said Hilda grimly. She tied the belt of her dressing-gown around her, opened the door, and went down the stairs to the breakfast-room, where Gerald was heartily engaged with a plate of ham and eggs, and Roger was sipping coffee and staring moodily into space.

"Gerald!" said Hilda peremptorily, and he glanced up at her, his fork poised.

"Go back and get into something decent," he said with distaste. "You know how I hate to see women coming to the breakfast table before they're properly dressed—"

"I'm not coming to the breakfast table!" Hilda interrupted him. "I came down here to see you about Bonnie. She says you fired her, and I won't have it, do you understand? *I won't have it!*"

"Well, well!" He put down his knife and fork and glanced at her in mock astonishment. "So you won't have it. And how are you going to stop it, may I ask? Who pays Bonnie's wages, you or I?"

"The only reason you're doing it," said Hilda, too sick with rage to guard her words, "is because you stole that will of Teresa's even though I'd have been fool enough to let you have the money despite the will—"

Roger came to life for a moment. "What are you talking about, Hilda?" he demanded. "What has gotten into you lately? You act like a wild woman!"

"I'll tell you what's gotten into me. The only person in this house who gives a damn about me or ever does anything for me is Bonnie; and now your father, for no good reason except that he doesn't want me to have an ally, has fired her!"

"But what's this about a will of Mother's?"

"Ask your father! He knows! He knows what happened to it, and ever since then he's kept us like beggars—me, at least—because he wants you for himself—I'm only an unpaid maid without a cent to my name and now how on earth I'm going to manage without Bonnie I don't know—I can't do any more work; I can't stand any of it, ever; oh, Roger, Roger, take me away from here!" And she burst into tears and cried wildly, and knelt beside Roger with her head in his lap, too heartbroken for shame at her importuning position, wanting nothing on earth except her own family, and never to have to lay eyes on Gerald again.

"Poor girl," said Gerald, rising, "she had too much to drink last night. Let's get her upstairs, boy, and perhaps call the doctor. Looks like a bad case of hysterics to me. But then, you know women."

And Hilda, sobbing and sobbing and sobbing, found herself back in her own bed again, with Roger on one side of her and Gerald on the other, looking at each other with understanding, and at her with pity.

CHAPTER 8

The cry came again, faintly, faintly . . . and the woman still stood poised, quivering, aware that she held a man's life in her hands, those strong sturdy hands that would have liked to strangle the life out of him, and instead were prompted by eons of civilization to go to his rescue.

A **heavy armed truce** hung over the house like a dank miasma. Bonnie was gone, and with her the last hope of sympathy and understanding for Hilda. Now the work doubled, multiplied, and no longer could she go anywhere, for there was no one to leave Gerry with except, occasionally, Roger, when Hilda found it necessary to drive into Monterey for shopping. Resentment and bitterness mounted in her and sometimes a desperate, futile resolve to find her husband again, somehow, some way; but Gerald had done his work too well.

She said once, "Roger, why don't we find a place of our own again? Don't you think we'd all be happier?"

"You're always harping on that," he retorted. "Always getting a place of our own! What good would that do?"

"You'd be independent again," she said quietly. "You could find work somewhere—"

"Independent!" Roger broke in, his voice bitter. "That measly job I had, drawing up stinking little houses that some contractor could have done just as well—"

"It was better," she said coldly, "than not doing anything at all."

He turned furiously and left her; and she could see now more clearly than ever the change that had come over him, and bitterness filled her at the thought of what she had given up for his sake, when he wasn't any happier than he had been before. For all those lofty dreams of his had died along with his pride and his love for her, so that nothing remained but his dependence on his father. His father, she thought bitterly, who hated her even more than she did him, for his was an active hatred and hers was passive with helplessness.

She thought, confused, bewildered by the events of the last two years: But Gerald *liked* me at first! Then she realized it had not been genuine liking at all, but his acceptance of her because she was something that Roger wanted. Later he had merely tolerated her, but now he hated her because she understood him.

Gerald had not hired another maid to replace Bonnie, and Hilda knew that it was not so much to save money as to tie her down more to the demands of the house, so that she would be too busy and too exhausted to do any maneuvering where Roger was concerned, so that, finally, Roger would belong to him entirely and Hilda would be nothing but an unnoticed servant.

Dust gathered in the household. Nellie stayed in her kitchen and refused to lift a finger outside it; and the more Hilda remonstrated with her, at first tactfully and then insolently, the more obstinate the hulking creature grew. "I been hired to cook and that's all," she said sullenly. "If you ain't got enough help it ain't my fault, and what's more I'm not supposed to do the waiting on table, neither," and Hilda said politely, "I wouldn't mind so much if you knew how to cook," hoping that the woman would leave, for then Gerald would indeed be forced to find someone else, someone perhaps who wouldn't mind giving a little help with the rest of the work.

And then, frightened, she thought: But perhaps he would say he couldn't find another cook, and then I'd have to do that work, too! So for a while afterward she would be polite to Nellie, trying to envisage the picture of no servants at all—twelve rooms, a family of four, a child to care for, the cooking and cleaning and shopping and planning. . . .

She thought: Gerald must be insane. And then, more slowly, *Gerald—must—be—insane!* She tried to put the thought from her, tried to tell herself that she was the one who was insane, remembering all that she knew of Gerald's life and how a person who is meek of necessity often turns into a tyrant when the balance of power is thrust into his hands. She thought, startled, *Teresa knew!* She knew what would happen to Gerald as soon as he was independent. She thought, too: Gerald is keeping Nellie only to spy on me; that can be his only excuse for tolerating her. He wants a hold over me, but what can she tell him, what hold could he have? A memory came to her suddenly, and she hurried to her room and looked in her desk drawer. . . .

They were gone, those innocuous little notes that Jock was still sending her from New York and which she had not shown to Roger because of their references to his father: "Hello, darling; how's the baby? Meaning you, not your masterpiece. Your letters are lovely, though they say nothing; but I can't believe that for once my intuition is wrong. Don't tell me things are working out beautifully and you are just one happy little family! Come on, toots, give! Love and things, Jock."

Innocent little note, with others like them, to be read by Nellie's avid eyes and then by Gerald's. And Gerald saying kindly, unhappily, sympathetically, "Son, I hate to tell you this, but I think you ought to know—" because only by destroying what was left of his son's marriage could he have all that was left of his son. She knew that never would Roger demand a divorce because of Jock's letters, but that most of his trust in her would be gone and that he would then turn blindly, hurt now beyond hope, to his father. And so, even if they lived together, yet their marriage would be ruined, and Gerald would have achieved his purpose, a purpose that seemed to him had failed in his first effort, that of throwing Lila as a bait to his son, but a purpose that now could be achieved by using another man to destroy what still remained between Roger and Hilda.

So the house, the family, hope and decency were falling into fragments about her, and Hilda, too numb now for anything but fear, stayed in her own suite of rooms with Gerry; rooms that she kept immaculately clean and filled with flowers and sunlight, rooms that finally came to mean her own small world as completely separated from the rest of the dingy, untidy house as if it were actually miles away. She set the table for meals, she ate with the two men, she cleared the table afterward; but the rest of the house she would not touch.

Gerald said once, polite to her as he always was in the presence of Roger, "Hilda, don't you think you might do something about the downstairs rooms? They're pretty dusty and untidy—look as if they hadn't been cleaned for a week."

"Make it a month," Hilda said coolly. "That's as long as Bonnie's been gone."

"But surely, my dear, you can't have much to do, with Nellie in the kitchen. Couldn't you just run the vacuum over it, or—or something?" he added helplessly.

"No," said Hilda shortly, "I couldn't. If you want a maid of all work, hire one," and again the glances were exchanged between Gerald and Roger and she could see Roger's lips tighten and his eyes grow dark and bitter, and sometimes she felt that she hated him, too, for he was a product of Gerald whom she hated, and Gerald was molding his son in his own image.

Now a wall grew slowly about her heart, a wall of protection from pain. No longer did she try to approach Roger, to make him understand his problems. No longer did she try to guide his mind back to the early days of their marriage and to make him see that no matter how little of material things they had, they had been happy because their union was as it should be, one of unity and tenderness and unselfishness toward each other, without any outside influences. No longer did she try to make him understand that a husband's and wife's first loyalty should always, inevitably, be for each other. No longer, she told herself, the tears dry inside her, tears that had not been shed for long months and would never be shed again, did she care. Let Gerald have Roger. Let Roger have his father; and if that was enough of a substitute for his own wife and son, let it be that way. She did not, she told herself within the cold grim wall about her heart, care, she *would* not care; never again would she be vulnerable to another human being's ability to hurt her.

And so she watched the small Gerry closely, guided his manners, his eating, his early knowledge of the English language, his first staggering steps, and would not let her heart go out to him for fear not only of the harm she might do him, but the harm his sweetness and lovableness would do to the carefully guarded wall. He was almost her only companion, and she made the most of him during the time that Roger and Gerald were away, for now that the child was walking and talking. Gerald took an increasing interest in him and often played with him and told him stories, never disciplining him, and comforting him fondly when Hilda found it necessary to punish him.

She thought, with anguish: My husband, perhaps; my son, never! And then to her came the thought that some day, somehow, she would leave this house and this environment and take her son and go elsewhere, a long way off, where the reaching tentacles could never find him. She would leave Roger, even though it would wrench her to leave the body she still loved, for the body was all that was left of what she once had loved in him—the spirit that had meant so much more to her had become another spirit, one which she could pity but no longer love. And yet she knew that the only chance for any of them was for her to reach Roger in some way: for the first time she realized that he too, must have a wall about his heart.

But she was so tired. She was tired of battling, of pitting her will against Gerald's, she was tired of remembering and tired of giving up hope. She was tired enough to die. But die she must not. For only through her could Gerry be protected.

Hilda spent a good deal of her time on the beach, lying on the sand or swimming, in an effort to find some sort of repose and peace of mind. She would often take Gerry with her and would watch him, smiling, as he dug in the sand or wet his feet tentatively in the small waves that the rising tide would lap up on the beach. She had always loved to swim, and the closeness to the beach was the only thing about the now shabby old house on the cliff that compensated her for her present way of life.

Occasionally Roger and his father joined her for a morning of swimming, with Gerald perhaps lying on the sand beside her and Roger taking his small son out into the deeper water for a first attempt at swimming. Hilda, her heart heavy, would think: Why couldn't it always be like this—a happy and united family out for a day's pleasure? For there were many times when the friction between all of them was far beneath the surface, when the bitterness would leave Roger's eyes momentarily, when Gerald seemed almost like any other father and grandfather.

And then Hilda would plunge into the surf beside Roger and take the child from him, laughing, and all of them would wade out and throw themselves on the sand and feel the healing warmth of the sun on their bodies. She would try to forget the unhappiness that lived with her day and night, and try to remember only that she was lying on the beach in the sun, her husband on one side, her son on the other. . . .

Fog rolled in so often during the summer months that whenever there was a day with plenty of sunshine, all of them tried to take advantage of it by living in their bathing suits. It was on one such day that Hilda realized, more sharply than ever before, that now she had another struggle on her hands.

She and Gerald had been lying on the beach, Gerry between them, while Roger was swimming out beyond the breakers. Gerry, trying to amuse himself, was pouring sand on her back and she said lazily, "Don't do that, darling. Mother doesn't like it." He continued to pour sand on her and Hilda, more aware than she had ever been since she came to live in this household, of the importance of early discipline, said sharply, "Gerry! I told you not to do that." The streams of sand continued to fall on her, some of it now on her hair, and she turned and said sharply, "Gerry, if you do that again I'll spank you!" Gerry laughed and threw the next handful in her face. She leaped to her feet, pulled down his brief trunks and started to give him a few resounding slaps on his little bare bottom. But Gerald was on his feet almost before she had started. He snatched the screaming child from her grasp, set him on his feet, and turned to her, his face dark with fury. "Don't you ever," he said in a deadly voice, "strike that child again as long as you live in my house!"

"He's my child," said Hilda, almost too shaken to speak at all, "and I shall do whatever I want with him. If Roger had had the right kind of discipline when he was young he might have turned out a whole lot better! And you can be sure his son is going to get it."

"You are never," Gerald repeated, his voice low with hatred, "to strike that child again. Do you understand? He is my grandson and I will not have him beaten by an hysterical woman. . . . There, there, Gerry," he said, picking up the tearful child and petting him, "you're all right now. We won't let the bad lady hurt you any more."

Hilda said, "You've taken my husband; must you take my son, too?"

And Gerald answered patiently, "Hilda, sometimes I think you're completely out of your mind, and if it didn't cost so much I'd have a psychiatrist examine you. You can find the most fantastic meanings to every simple ordinary occurrence; you get worked up over nothing at all. Why can't you settle down to a normal existence and act like other wives and mothers?"

"A *normal* existence?" said Hilda. "A normal existence? With you running our lives for all of us, interfering with my child's discipline, firing the help so I'll have so much work to do I can't run my own family, making promises that you never keep—"

"What promises?" asked Gerald blandly.

"What about that wing that you were going to do over for a studio for Roger? What's he done since we've been

here but nothing? He's turned into a damned playboy with your sanction and approval, just someone to keep you company and make you happy. You promised a studio for Roger, but even if he had one you'd never let him alone long enough to do any work. What you're doing is to make a loafer out of your own son!"

She saw a smile come over his face, gentle and kindly, and, knowing him well by now, glanced over her shoulder and saw Roger coming up the beach behind her.

"Did you hear that, son?" the kindly voice asked. "Hilda says I'm making a loafer out of you." He laughed gently. "I'm afraid that having life easy here in my home is beginning to make her discontented."

"It's done something to her," said Roger bitterly. "She certainly isn't the way she used to be."

"Are *you?*" Hilda asked pointedly. She scooped the child out of his grandfather's arms, and walked toward the house with him, and as she walked a new determination was born within her. No matter how difficult, no matter how impossible, she would not leave her child here to be marred the way his father had been marred.

For weeks now, Hilda and Roger had had no confidential talks, for she had given up, almost in despair, the effort to make him understand what was happening to him. Gerald had done his work too well: he had been alone with Roger for long periods of time and had been present most of the time when she and Roger were together.

But after that day on the beach, when Gerald had begun the first of his deadly work on his grandson, she felt that nothing must stop her now from making Roger understand what was happening, and that she must drive from him his apathy, his belief in his father, his lack of trust in her, before she could accomplish anything further.

That night in their bedroom she said, "Roger, we must leave this place at once."

"Are you harping on that again?" he said, running his hands through his hair.

She came over and sat beside him and put a hand on his arm. "I mean it," she said. "Roger, tell me something. Does your father really mean more to you than your own wife and child?"

"What's that got to do with it? Hilda, why can't you just settle down here and act like a normal human being instead of going into these vapors all the time about wanting to leave and my father ruining me and all that rot?"

She said, "Why should you believe him instead of me? We had our own life once, you and I. I'm the same person now that I was then—in a way," she qualified. "It's just that you've been given a different picture of me, a picture of a nagging, unreasonable sort of wife whose main purpose in life is to make you miserable—"

"That's not true," he said stonily. "Dad's never said one unkind word about you, and considering the way you talk to him—"

"Oh, Roger," she said in despair, "can't you *understand?* Don't you see that he can accomplish far more that way than if he criticized me so that you'd have to come to my defense? Don't you understand that it isn't me, so much, as a person, but as a woman and a wife that he despises, that he feels you've been trapped by marriage. . . ."

"Well?" said Roger, looking at her; and as she looked back into his eyes that were sick with unhappiness and yet not even aware of it, a frightened coldness ran through her.

"Roger," she whispered, "you don't mean that. You don't believe it. Can't you realize that all this has happened only since we've been here? That even if everything your father told you was true, you were far happier before you knew it? We were happy once; we were—don't you see, darling. We were happy when I was Hilda to you and not just a woman. . . . Roger, tell me what you want. Tell me, so that we can do something about it. You're not happy here, and neither am I, and yet there doesn't seem to be anything I can say that will convince you we should go."

"But where could we go?" he said, his voice still dull. "We haven't any money. And why should we? How could we live; what could we do? And what would happen to Dad? He couldn't stay here alone. You blame him for everything, but it never seems to occur to you that perhaps you're at fault. If you'd just buckle down to running the house the way it should be run, stop criticizing Dad and nagging at me, perhaps we'd get somewhere."

Roger was blind. He could not see; he would not see. Hilda thought: If I met Roger now, for the first time, I would never take the trouble to meet him again; and was appalled at the thought. But it was true. Roger was not the person she had known and loved and married; perhaps he never would be again. But she felt that she could not give up without this one last desperate struggle.

She again tried to cajole him with memories of their early days, in an effort to jolt him back into what he once had been. She did not know that few men are moved by sentimental memories of the past, that to them what has gone has gone forever and that, unlike women, the small and intimate details of a passionate attachment do not live in a man's memory forever but only as long as they last. And so she talked of their honeymoon in the Sierras and their early days in Burlingame, of the small house and garden and her early attempts at cooking, of his eagerness for his drafting board on evenings and week-ends, and the way they used to discuss his lofty dreams of beauty in the homes he wanted to build some day.

This last was a tactical error.

"I must have been crazy," he said harshly, "thinking I could blaze a trail in architecture when I couldn't even make good in that office I was in!"

"But that's why you couldn't make good," Hilda said quietly. "Because you couldn't conform to their hidebound ideas. But Roger, it's the dream that counts, don't you see? And you've lost that now. You've given up. It's not always the achieving of the dream that matters, but the effort to accomplish it. And you don't do anything; you don't even try any more. And that's why you're so bitter and unhappy, not that you've lost faith in me as much as you've lost faith in yourself. . . . Roger, for heaven's sake, pull out before it's too late!" She grasped hold of his arms and shook him a little, forgetting the danger to herself and her son, remembering now only the danger to her husband, who, for these brief few moments, was the man she had first fallen in love with, the man whose dreams meant as much to her as they had to him, the man whose dreams had shattered and thus, whose life was shattered. "Roger," she whispered, "believe in me, trust me, come away with me and let's start our own life, fresh. Let's have our own family. I'll do anything, Roger, I'll work, I'll get a job; I'll do anything so that we both can have freedom again—and dreams—"

"Lord, but I'm tired," said Roger, yawning. "Let's go to bed."

Hilda whispered, "You fool! You fool!" and struck him in the face.

That night she moved to another room, and if Roger had ignored the fact she might have felt that the quarrel was between the two of them, as an individual man and woman; but when Roger, without knocking; tried the knob of her door only to find it locked, Hilda realized, not for the first time, that she was no longer his wife, entitled to respect and consideration, but merely a woman who had been put into the world for man's pleasure, and was now daring to defy that man.

"Open this door," said Roger, "or I shall knock it down."

"Very well," said Hilda. "Knock it down!"

The house was old but well built: Roger must have remembered this before he brought himself to the point of

appearing ludicrous in an effort to batter down a door that had been built to stand through eternity.

She hated Roger all the rest of that sleepless night, and despised herself for allowing both him and herself to get into this impossible situation in the first place. She thought: Tomorrow I shall take Gerry and leave this house forever. Without money, without a job, without security.

But in the morning when she left her room, she found Roger waiting for her in the hall. There were deep lines about his mouth, and his eyes held the misery of helplessness, of a man whose strong loyalties were being stretched in opposite directions to the breaking-point. He said, "Hilda, I'm sorry," and she answered, her voice colder than her heart, "How sorry?" He put his arms around her and she stood within them, not moving, every part of her flesh and blood and spirit reaching out to him and yet pride and hurt holding her still.

"Come back," said Roger. "Come back to our room, Hilda."

"No," she answered. "Not in this house. Not where I'm just a woman and no longer myself. Not where you're an echo of your father and nothing else. Not until we have our own family again."

Roger said, his arms still about her, "Hilda, I stayed awake all last night. I tried to understand what you said to me. . . . I tried to feel what it would be like if you left here, without me. And I couldn't stand it. I don't know everything that's been going on, darling. I hear one thing from you and another from Dad and I don't know which to believe, and for a long time it just seemed like in-law trouble. . . . And then I got to thinking some more, and I knew it wasn't right, the way we were living. Dad always made me feel it was just temporary, this business of my not working, and then all of a sudden I realized it was nearly two years and that nothing was changing, and I began to see things the way you were seeing them—those nights at the Country Club and not having the help we needed. But, Hilda," and now she could see the pain and bewilderment in his eyes, and the sudden agony of a person who has been in a trancelike sleep and wakens to brilliant sunlight, "I don't know what to do about it. Dad made me promise him once that I'd never leave him as long as he lived; he said he couldn't bear the thought of spending his old age alone.

"Hilda," he went on, "I don't know what to do or how to do it. Dad was so much to me, all my life, and I'm even more to him, and if I break my promise to him now. . . ."

She thought, relief flooding through her: Roger *can* be saved, but not if we wait any longer. And she felt warmness beginning to move through her being again, and love for this man who had almost become a child again, and who still might if he stayed in this deadly environment; she knew now that she would always be the strong one and Roger the weak one; but even so, she knew that he was still worth saving and that, if he were not, life itself would no longer have any meaning for her. She stroked his hair and murmured, "I know, darling. All I want is for you to believe in me. And trust me."

Thus, realizing that the struggle that was now facing her was to be the greatest of her life (and not even admitting to herself that her hope for the future was centered more in her son than in her husband), she went into it with new courage and determination, knowing that no matter what the means, the ends were worth it. Where her son was concerned, yes; but Roger? He *must* be worth it, she said to herself in desperation, he *has* to be worth it! And did not realize that she was struggling to convince herself.

Later that morning she left Gerry with Roger, put on her bathing suit for her daily dip in the ocean, and went to her father-in-law.

"I would like to talk to you," she said. "Alone. I'll be down on the beach."

He laughed tolerantly. "Are you giving me orders, my dear?"

Hilda looked at him levelly for a moment, and then answered. "Yes."

"And what if I don't choose to 'obey'?" His tone was that which one uses to an impertinent child.

"You had better," said Hilda. Her words were quiet, but there was so much menace beneath their very quietness that Gerald's tolerant smile disappeared. He said, "Are you presuming to tell me what I must do, my dear?"

But Hilda did not answer. She was on her way to the beach.

She was lying on her face in the sun, waiting, when Gerald came up to her, in bathing trunks and beach robe; and Hilda, lifting her eyes, thought irrelevantly, "What a splendid physique he has for a man past fifty!"

He sat down on the sand beside her, smiled indulgently and said, "Well, my dear, what's the trouble this morning? Nerves? We men," he added, chuckling, "should be used to women's nerves by now, but somehow we just don't seem to understand them."

"Did it ever occur to you," asked Hilda, "that I am not just another woman?"

He laughed with pure enjoyment, "Ah, the little egoist in you coming out—eh, my dear? Well, I've had quite a bit of experience with women and I've never known one who varied from another very much."

"This one does," said Hilda. She sat up and faced him, cross-legged in the sand, and to her there was something horribly out of focus in this apparently serene picture of a man and woman enjoying themselves on the beach. "Gerald," she said, "we're leaving, Roger and Gerry and I. We're going back to what we once had—a family of our own. Without you," she added venomously.

His expression did not change. "What are you going to use for money?" he asked.

She did not answer him directly. Instead, she said, "You took that will, didn't you?"

"Certainly. But only to protect Teresa."

"Protect Teresa!" she echoed incredulously. "What do you mean?"

"You don't use your head very intelligently, do you my dear? Like more women you rely on instinct and emotion rather than on thought. . . . It must be obvious even to you that if that will were ever found it would point to the fact that Teresa was mentally unbalanced at the time she wrote it. There would have been no trouble proving it in court, but there would have been a lot of—er—unfortunate publicity concerning it and I didn't want her name to be mixed up in a scandal after her death. She was a proud woman, Teresa."

"I see," said Hilda. "You did it only to protect her." And laughed. "Your powers of rationalization have finally overcome your intelligence. Well, keep your money, if it does you any good. *We're leaving!* We're leaving before it's too late. We're leaving so that we can have a life of our own again, a life that belongs to us and not to you. And there's nothing you can do about it."

"No?" he said softly.

She looked at him, her mouth bitter. "You're thinking of those letters of Jock's that you had Nellie steal from me." She leaned forward a little, staring at him, trying to reach the murky depths of his unsound mind. "Listen, Gerald, and I'll tell you why those letters are useless to you. It's because Roger and I have something that you never in this world could understand. Do you think I'd have put up with you this long, if we hadn't had it? Do you think I could have shrugged off Lila as a nuisance only, when you were throwing her at Roger as a sop to take my place? Do you think Roger could still ignore her and make me know, somehow, some way, that he still loves me? Do you think anything on God's earth could convince him that I was emotionally interested in

luck? No. Because we have something so much finer and deeper than anything you've ever experienced yourself that even if I tried to explain it, it would still be totally incomprehensible to you. You've almost ruined it; you perhaps *will* ruin it if we stay here longer. The plant has died, but the roots still have a little life left in them, and I'm not going to let you destroy what's left of them. Roger and Gerry and I are leaving—*now*!"

"You are?" The smile remained etched about his mouth, but his eyes were as murderous as the dark thoughts running rampant in her own mind. "Does Roger know it?"

"No, but he will. Roger is hypnotized; he's helpless. If we wait another day, it will be too late."

"So you're leaving?" he mused. "Selfish, like all women—depriving an old man of everything he has in the world."

Hilda said evenly, "Let's be honest about this thing, Gerald. You don't want us in order to have companionship in your declining years—you want Roger. You want his life and his youth, because yours were wasted. Well, you're not going to have them!"

Gerald said, "You are wrong, my dear. All I want is for Roger to be happy. You are like every woman I have ever known—pulling, manipulating, managing, arranging a man's life to your own liking so that he can be a possession of yours. . . . Roger is happy, now, for the first time since he's known you, because at last he's breaking away from your influence. . . ."

Hilda looked at him incredulously. "You think Roger's happy *now?*" she said. "What you mean is that if *you* were Roger you'd be happy. But you're not, don't you see? You're *not* Roger, you're *not* Roger!" Her voice rose hysterically, and she struggled for control of it. "Oh, Gerald," she almost whispered, "let him go!"

Gerald rose and looked down at her. His smile was gone, and his mouth, bitter and contemptuous, was a straight ugly line. "How much do you want," he said deliberately, "to clear out for good and leave Roger and Gerry with me?"

"For that," said Hilda, her voice at a dead level, "I shall kill you."

Gerald chuckled, and the sound was frightening. "That would please Roger, I'm sure. His father murdered by his wife. And such a fine motive, too: the father knowing that she has been playing around with another man and about to reveal all to the husband—the police would believe those letters even if Roger wouldn't. So,"—his voice was ugly and filled with threat as he leaned over her—"I wouldn't think of murder if I were you, my dear."

He laughed again and waded into the surf.

A ***last despairing cry*** *came from the sea.*

Sixty seconds had elapsed.

Suddenly the forces that had held the woman's body motionless, released it. She knew, in that moment, that murder was not the answer, that this was a struggle for a man's soul, a struggle that could not be solved by any physical violence on her part, nor the passive unresponsiveness required in standing by and letting another person drown. That would be murder just as violent as if she had strangled him with her own hands.

So she dived into the breakers and toward the small black dot that was the drowning man's head. Her powerful crawl, urgent now that it had been released, found Gerald before he disappeared, and in the instant that she reached him she thanked God that she had not shattered her own life by letting another's be destroyed.

The man reached for her and grasped her with the maniacal frenzy of the drowning; and Hilda, going under, was for a moment panicked. She pulled away from him, using the well-trained swimming strength in her shoulders, and came to the top. She drew back her arm and shot her fist toward his jaw.

Gerald ducked. . . . Gerald ducked!

Hilda thought: He wasn't drowning. He was waiting for me. I was to be the victim, not the murderer!

A second of thought only, while Gerald reached for her again, found her throat, pulled her under. Hilda, struggling and gasping for air, used her feet. She planted them against his chest, pushed with all the strength she had left. His hands came away from her throat, and she broke water and took air into her starved lungs. But the tentacle's grip had gone about one of her ankles and now she was being pulled under the water again, and another tentacle was about her other leg, pulling—soon they would be about her throat once more.

She fought frantically, panicked now as any drowning person, clutching at him one moment for support, the next moment pulling away in order to get beyond reach of the deadly tentacles. Her lungs were bursting, her mind blank with fear, and yet she fought on, struggling, pushing, escaping him for an instant of time, then being pulled back and under again. She thought: He is going to kill me. He is going to murder me. He is winning, after all. No one can defeat him. Not Teresa. Not Roger. Not I.

And at the thought of Roger and Gerry being left in the power of a man who would destroy their souls just as surely as he was now destroying her body, she found a momentary second wind, an upsurge of strength as powerful as that of a crazed person trying to escape his bonds.

Again and again she fought against the rising panic in her, the fear of the water in her lungs and the emptiness beneath her feet, and realized that her strength was now going swiftly and that only strategy was left. The tentacles were about her legs once more, pulling her down into the black water that was reaching for her, and, as though exhausted for the final time, she let herself go limp, holding her breath as her head went under. But as her body was drawn toward him she suddenly stiffened and planted her feet against his chest, pushing with the last remnants of her waning strength.

At last she was free of the deadly tentacles, but was unable now to swim except in slow motion, her exhaustion too great for further effort; and as she moved slowly away, her heart bursting in her chest, she saw that Gerald's arms were thrashing in the water, no longer as if they were trying to destroy another life, but more as if they were trying to save his own.

She swam slowly, painfully, back to shore. It was a long way off and she was very tired. She turned over on her back to rest, and as she floated, her eyes toward the horizon, she saw that the sea was smooth and nothing was in sight—not even a small dark object that might have been a man's head. . . . THE END

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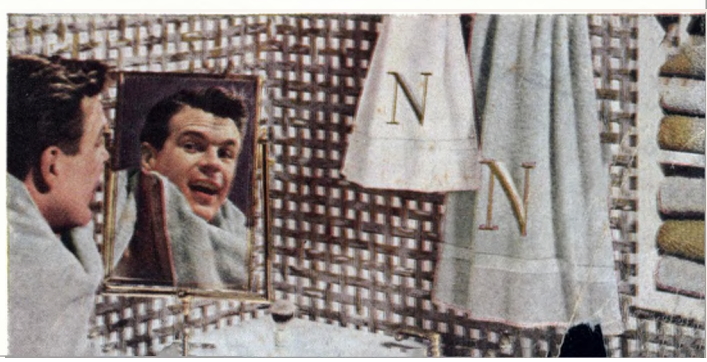

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