FEBRUARY • 35 CENTS

Redbook

The Magazine for YOUNG ADULTS

"OVERTURE TO YOUTH"

A COMPLETE NOVEL BY ELICK MOLL

S. J. PERELMAN

begins his fabulously funny search for a modern Fountain of Youth—in

"SPRINGTIME FOR SIDNEY"

●

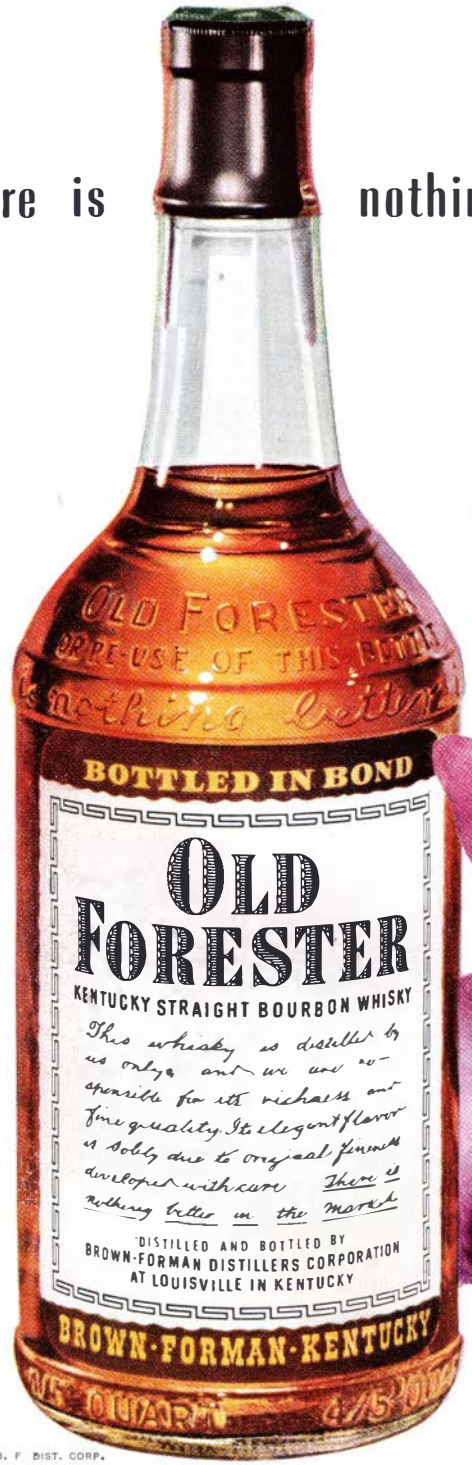
KILLERS AT LARGE!

The shocking story of our failure to isolate deadly tuberculosis carriers

BETTY HUTTON

SEE PAGE 28

There is nothing better in a highball...



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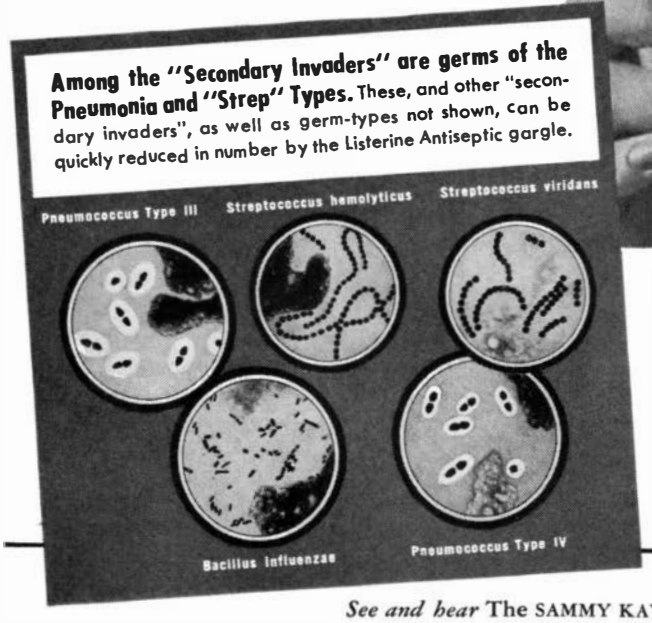
LAMBERT PHARMACAL COMPANY, *St. Louis, Mo.*



At the first symptom of a cold . . .

Gargle

LISTERINE ANTISEPTIC—*Quick!*

See and hear The SAMMY KAYE SHOW • *"So you want to lead a Band"* • CBS TELEVISION NETWORK

Picture of the Month

For the New Year there's a new light in the entertainment skies. It's the radiance that comes from M-G-M's lustrous and lusty production of "Lone Star".

This story of the battle for Texas and the battle of the sexes is sparked to immediate excitement by the meeting of two of the most pyrotechnic personalities on America's screen today The romantic stars are Clark Gable, rugged, reckless, assertively male and Ava Gardner, all woman, satiny in her beauty and electric to the touch.

They encounter each other amid the upheaval and strife of frontier Texas in its most turbulent era. And what a blazing, Roman candle romance is theirs!

It begins with a stolen kiss in a moon-drenched patio, while inside the rambling, low-arched hacienda a bold plot is working that could tear Texas and their dawning love asunder.

Broderick Crawford, fascinatingly ruthless land Baron, has already converted Ava to fiery belief in his cause. He sees the Lone Star state stretching to the Pacific and envisions Ava as queen of his inland empire.

But Gable has aligned himself against this power-mad leader. The two foes pit rifles, Colts, bowie knives and bare, slashing fists against each other while Ava is torn between her unspoken pledges to Crawford and her blood's leaping response to Gable's caresses.

In its story, in its cast, in its production, in every respect—M-G-M's "Lone Star" is a stellar production.

★ ★ ★

CLARK GABLE, AVA GARDNER and BRODERICK CRAWFORD in "Lone Star", with Lionel Barrymore and Beulah Bondi. An M-G-M Picture with screen play by Borden Chase, directed by Vincent Sherman and produced by Z. Wayne Griffin.

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Redbook

THE MAGAZINE FOR YOUNG ADULTS

COVER PHOTO BY JOHN ENGSTEAD

The short stories and novel herein are fiction and are 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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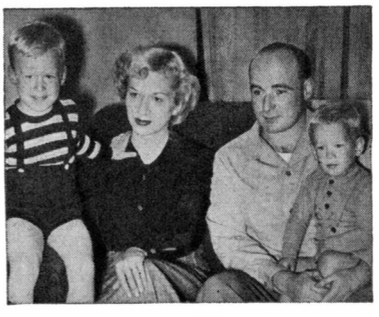
George Weinstein reports a shocker

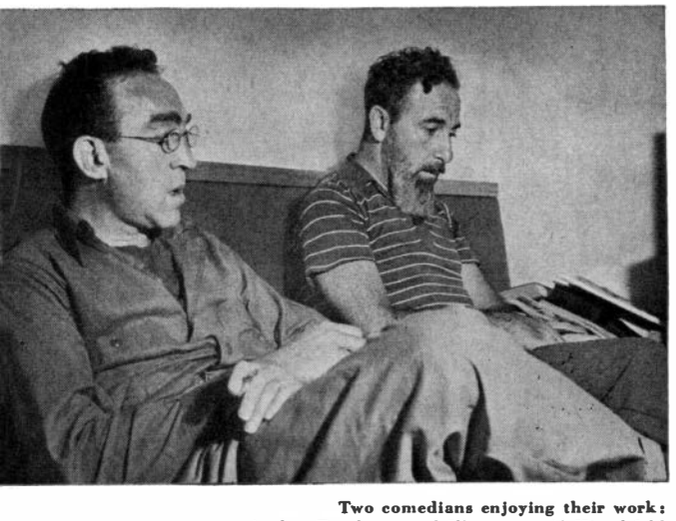
Betty has her troubles, too



Above—the reason why Author Forrest likes to stay home and write

George Scullin delivers an affirmation

Mrs. Szold with the Golden Goof



Two comedians enjoying their work: Author Perelman and Illustrator Al Hirschfeld

Between the Lines-

As an object for sympathy, Betty Hutton—what with her fame and her salary of 5 G's per week—seems pretty far-fetched. But this uninhibited movie star, who graces our cover this month, is a consistent sure-shot loser in one important department—love. Lloyd Shearer, the Hollywood writer, tells why this is so on page 28 in his surprising article, "The Girl Who Married Her Career."

Capable of spreading deadly disease at every contact, patients with active cases of tuberculosis are freely mingling in our midst, handling our food in restaurant kitchens, even caring for our children in our homes. This grim situation is reported in "Killers at Large!" by George Weinstein on page 24. You will be shocked to learn how these potential killers enter and leave hospitals—practically at their own discretion.

No one can know how many young women bring sexual fear into their marriages. But medical men agree that far too many do and that the unhappiness they cause themselves and their husbands is needless. You'll meet that problem—and one answer to it—in Williams Forrest's "Inhibition," a short story on page 22 that deals frankly with a delicate situation. Mr. Forrest, now 32, launched his writing career nine years ago while in the army.

Mary Richardson, eight, has endured tragedy such as no little girl should ever know. Yet the story of her overwhelming loss has its heartening aspect, too, because "She Found the Heart of a Town." What happened to Mary is told on page 44 by George Scullin, a former REDBOOK editor who now is free-lancing. It is a deeply-moving testament to the best in America today.

We've seen our share of dog stories, even published a few, but we never met a pooch that captured our hearts as has Rusty, the Golden Goof. He is the winsome hero of Helen Davis Szold's short story, "Member of the Family," on page 42. The author frankly admits that this particular piece of fiction is a nearly factual tribute to a great gentleman. You won't soon forget him!

"Springtime for Sidney," a very funny new REDBOOK series beginning on page 32, is the report of S. J. Perelman's search for the fabled Fountain of Youth. His first trek, reported this month, is to Florida, in the footsteps of Ponce de Leon. In later issues he will visit such spots as Hollywood, Las Vegas, Sun Valley, etc. Come along—for the laughs!

Next Month —Why do medical men keep secret the abuses done to the public in the name of a great profession? A famous writer tells the shocking inside story—"The Doctors' Conspiracy of Silence" by Philip Wylie.

He Loosed a Storm of Passion in this Saturday Night Town

...when he tried to play God with people's private lives!

HE WAS a "miracle doctor" to the brawling miners and fishermen of Cape Breton Island. But did his amazing surgeon's skill give Dr. Dan Ainslie the right to play God? To perform an operation on his own beautiful wife, knowing that because of it she could never become a mother? To save a little boy's life, then scheme to take him away from his family and make him his own son?

The boy Alan had hardly known a father; Molly MacNeil's husband had been gone for years. Now, when she had found a new lover in gentle, understanding Louis Camire, Dr. Dan saw his chance to loosen the bonds between the boy and his mother.

But suddenly, Mollie's hulking husband came home—to find he was losing both his wife and his son. Then a storm of passion, fear and jealousy exploded in a night of terror that rocked the island. Then Dr. Dan, Mollie, and her French sweetheart all found their secret desires bared before the world! Once in a blue moon comes a powerful story like this —and *Each Man's Son* is just *one* of *three* exciting new novels you may have in this wonderful membership offer!

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REDBOOK'S PICTURE OF THE MONTH—SELECTED

"ROOM FOR ONE MORE"

Anna Rose (Betsy Drake) is always willing to add one more unwanted child or pet to the household, but *"Poppy"* (Cary Grant, *below*) thinks she's overdoing things when it means that he has to move to the upper bunk in his sons' room to accommodate a newcomer.

BY FLORENCE SOMERS

Anna Rose is a girl who can't say no to any waif, animal or bird. The consequence is that the *Rose* household gets a bit cluttered at times. Beside *Anna* (Betsy Drake), there's *"Poppy,"* her husband (Cary Grant), their three children and a very shaggy, wistful stray dog. That's just the starting lineup —a cat and her innumerable kittens soon join the throng, followed in short order by two foster children. And that's when things start humming.

Jane (Iris Mann) has become a difficult child to handle because she's had no real home or family. No longer wanted by her divorced parents, she's understandably embittered and resentful. *Anna* brings her home for two weeks only, and at the end of that time the *Rose* family are still not wildly enthusiastic about *Jane,* but they decide to give her a chance at living with a family.

Jimmy-John (Clifford Tatum, Jr.) is the next addition to the family, and he's more of a problem. He's a cripple who is considered retarded and mean. It takes a little longer to straighten him out, but he, too, succumbs to the love of the family and becomes their first Eagle Scout.

"Room for One More" is a wonderful picture for young people because it's so close to their own lives. It's full of the fun and heartaches of growing up, of the experiences of young marrieds in establishing a home, and of the warmth of a fine family relationship. All the men will appreciate the witty observations of *"Poppy"* when he feels he's being neglected by a wife too busy with children and pets. But it's the youngest *Rose* (George Winslow) who really steals the picture. With a voice like a frog and a tendency to pronounce his "s's" in a slightly juicy fashion, *Master Rose* comes out with some sage remarks which are delightful.

"Room for One More" is a comedy everyone will enjoy. *(Warners)*

• • •

For more about movies, turn the page ⟶

FOUR OTHER

"MIRACLE IN MILAN"

NOT TOO LONG AGO an unpretentious, poignant film, "The Bicycle Thief," won praise everywhere for Italian producer Vittorio De Sica. This latest picture of his is another delight which is very touching and very humorous.

Toto (Francesco Golisano) is an orphan found in a cabbage patch. When he is old enough to leave the orphanage, he takes refuge in a hoboes' village on the dump because he can find no job. He soon becomes the leader of this group who have almost no worldly goods but a great joy and appreciation of living. Such things as a spot of warm sunlight on a winter's day, a beautiful sunset or a chicken won in a raffle mean a great deal to them. When a capitalist threatens to take their land. *Toto* and his love (Brunella Bobo) lead them in revolt. By a miracle, they succeed.

The satire and understatement with which De Sica produced the film make it most entertaining. *(Burstyn)*

"DEATH OF A SALESMAN"

THIS FILM WILL UNDOUBTEDLY be as much a subject of discussion in the movie version as it was on the stage when it won a Pulitzer Prize. It is the story of a man who had the wrong dreams—a salesman who believed success depended on being impressive and well liked, and who would never face the truth about himself or about a son whom he idealized. Rather than admit he was a failure, the salesman built up a dream world around himself in which he and the son were great successes. When he had to face the tragedy of his failure, he took what seemed to him to be the heroic way out.

It is the depth of characterization of this play which made it a prize-winner on the stage, and the fine acting of Fredric March, Mildred Dunnock, Kevin McCarthy, Cameron Mitchell and Claire Carleton make it a memorable film. It was produced by Stanley Kramer, who made the outstanding film "Champion." *(Columbia)*

THE BEST BETS IN

Boots Malone — Warm, human tale of a man, a boy, and a race horse. William Holden and Johnny Stewart.

Decision Before Dawn — Semidocumentary picture, filmed in Germany, about the work of our spies. Richard Basehart, Gary Merrill. *Jan.

Distant Drums — Florida Everglades is the setting for a historical drama concerning the white men's war with the Seminole Indians. Gary Cooper.

I Want You — Dana Andrews, Dorothy McGuire, Farley Granger and Peggy Dow in a story that is almost a sequel to "The Best Years of Our Lives." *Jan.

I'll See You in My Dreams — Danny Thomas makes his film debut as Gus Kahn, lyricist of song hits. Doris Day.

Japanese War Bride — Timely picture of the returning veteran, introducing Japanese actress Yamaguchi.

FINE FILMS

"SAILOR BEWARE"

LET'S HOPE THINGS never get so critical that they have to draft Martin and Lewis. Not only would there be a great loss of comedy in the entertainment world, but we hate to think what Messrs. M. and L. would do to the armed forces. The title of their latest picture should tip you off to the fact that it is the Navy they snafu this time. There's no need to bother about the plot, since Martin and Lewis take things pretty much in their own hands, which is fine with us. There's a wonderful sequence where Lewis gets caught on the deck of a diving submarine. And one of the funniest scenes in the picture is a boxing match that's as fine comedy as anything seen in the old Chaplin and Lloyd films.

Wherever the Navy is, or whenever Martin and Lewis make a picture, there are sure to be pretty girls on hand. Corinne Calvet and Marion Marshall get some well-deserved whistles from actors and audiences. *(Paramount)*

"THE CLOUDED YELLOW"

OFFHAND, NO ONE would connect butterflies with a thriller, and not even *David Somers* (Trevor Howard), an ex-secret service agent, dreamed that his new job of cataloguing such butterflies as the Clouded Yellow would involve him in a mystery. Shortly after he begins his job with an English country gentleman, he realizes that there's trouble brewing in the house. When *Sophie* (Jean Simmons), his employer's niece, is accused of murder, *Somers* forgets all about butterflies and sets out to prove her innocence.

His plans to help her escape from the country lead Scotland Yard and almost everyone else on a merry chase through the picturesque Lake District. Following this, there's as thrilling a chase across rooftops as has been on the screen for a long time.

This is a film which offers you complete escape from your troubles. You'll be on the edge of your seats waiting for its finish. *(Columbia)*

YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

The Model and the Marriage Broker — Thelma Ritter gets her first lead as the broker; Jeanne Crain is the model.

My Favorite Spy — No need to say why Hedy Lamarr is Bob Hope's favorite spy in a comedy with a wonderful finish. *Jan.

Navajo — Striking photography distinguishes this story of a little Navajo boy who doesn't want to go away to school. Photographed in Arizona.

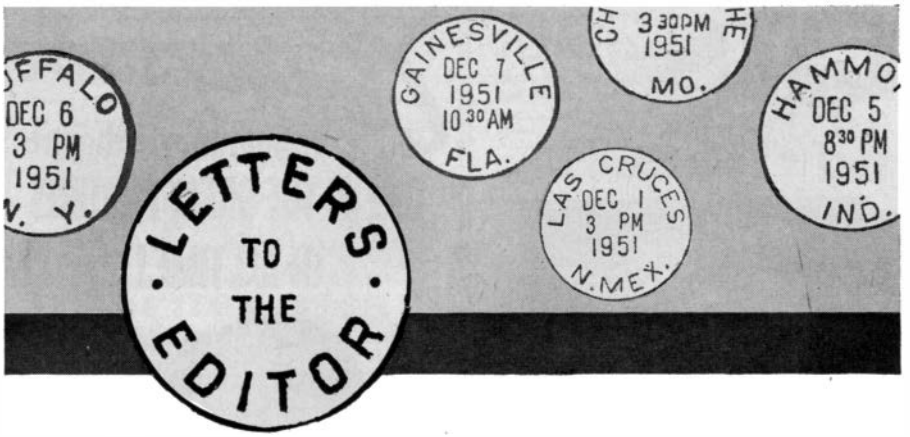
On Dangerous Ground — Robert Ryan is the cop who finds the killers of his fellow officers. Ida Lupino.

Pool of London — A thriller written about crime on the London waterfront.

Quo Vadis — Biggest spectacle in movie history is impressive and thrilling. Robert Taylor, Deborah Kerr. *Jan.

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs — A reissue of Walt Disney's delightful version of the fairy tale. Don't miss it.

**Previously reviewed in Redbook*



CONSTRUCTIVE CONTROVERSY

After reading your "Letters to the Editor" column, it seems obvious to me that the editor is more interested in inserting gibes at the readers who disagree with articles than anything else. Why not publish a few letters showing both sides and let it go at that?

C. Retter
St. Joe, Fla.

■ *We agree that this is the best procedure and follow it wherever possible. See below.* *ED.*

CANCER OR NEUROSIS?

I am writing in reference to the article on page 33 of the November issue, entitled "Are You Risking Cancer Because of False Modesty?" I am more than a little tired of these articles in your and other magazines telling the public what boobs they are not to get adequate medical attention. The writers of these articles seem to deal with physicians the like of whom I do not meet. I see honest doctors, but not those who wish to hear what one fears. I do not think it is false modesty, or lack of funds that prevents people from having check-ups. I would be willing to bet that if you could poll even 100 people who have consulted a physician for a continued under-par feeling, you would find that over half of them would tell you that their doctor would act as though he had a neurotic fool on his hands if they asked for a check-up. About the best that most of us can do is to wait until we have a bump or a cut to show....

Helen Sweeney
East Orange, N. J.

. . . He looked at me and almost shouted, "What makes you think you have cancer?" He was so disgusted that I hesitated a moment before replying, "My sister died of cancer less than a week ago. . . ." I could tell of other times when I was made to feel that I was foolish to ask such a question . . . they seemed to feel that I was trying to find something wrong or wanted personal attention. . . . I imagine that others have had much the same experience and do not want to risk being laughed at or insulted in some way.

Mrs. N. O. Richmond
Phoenix, Ariz.

. . . Certainly there is a percentage of neurotic people, but that should not preclude sympathetic examination for *everyone* rather than assuming first that the patient is neurotic and making him feel like two cents.

Margaret Briggs
Lexington, Mass.

■ *Another reader was moved to sarcastic comment on her poor physician "who has a neurotic patient." We received many letters in this vein.* *ED.*

ON THE OTHER SIDE

. . . I've heard nothing but the most favorable comments on this excellent piece of work. I'm sure that Redbook is proud to have presented such an important phase of the cancer problem to its readers. . . .

Guy F. Robbins, M.D.
New York, N. Y.

ADMIRES "ALLISON"

Have just finished reading a thought-provoking little tale in November Redbook called "Allison."

. . . Had *Allison* become the daughter of *Anne*, she would have become the daughter of what is known as the middle class

. . . neither rich nor poor (materially speaking) but usually a pretty miserable lot because, as the author so ably pointed out, they have nothing to be sad about and yet are not glad. The goal for which they are reaching remains just out of reach, and the children thereby suffer from "parent frustration." . . . Someone is to be pitied in this story, but most certainly not spunky little *Allison*.

Mrs. Joseph E. Flowers
Memphis, Tenn.

SORRY, OUR ERROR

Enclosed find clipping from the letters column of your October issue entitled "The Great Fraud." I am wondering if Mrs. Dickinson (if she is Mrs. Dickinson) is trying to put over a "Minor Fraud." . . . There is no Marion County, or Marion County High School, or a town or village by the name of Buena Vista, in the state of California.

Mrs. Gladys H. Smith
Monterey, Calif.

■ *We can assure you that there is a Mrs. Dickinson, and she did like our July editorial. However, she lives in Buena Vista, Ga. We regret this error and thank our sharp-eyed correspondent.* *ED.*

FUNDAMENTAL FAITH

I read with interest and admiration the editorial "The Eleventh Hour" in the November Redbook. I find it inspiring that a great magazine such as yours has presented so brilliantly the fundamental faith of America. I am sure that Redbook will gain many friends who have not previously been steady readers. Certainly this is true in my own case.

John Slawson
The American Jewish Committee, N.Y.C.

IN DEFENSE OF THE TRAINER

. . . Mr. Frank, in his article "Stop Maiming Athletes" (November), has created the impression that all trainers are as he described them. This is hardly true and grossly unfair to the many men serving colleges and high schools in that capacity who have fine backgrounds for their chosen profession. As a director of the National Athletic Trainers Association, I can truthfully say I am proud of every one of our 300 or so members. Most of them have a bachelor's degree in physical education, quite a few have a master's degree and even more have taken courses in physiotherapy and been graduated from schools approved by the American Medical Association.

Joe Glander
University of Oklahoma

■ *We have received several other letters from trainers throughout the country setting forth the same information, and, although much is to be said for this point of view, it does not alter the over-all truth of the situation portrayed in Mr. Frank's article.* *ED.*

WE'RE STILL ON THE PAN

I can't remember when I've read an article that made me more indignant than "Granny's on the Pan," by Jane Whitbread and Vivian Cadden (November). I don't know what kind of cooks your mother and mother-in-law were, or your grandmother, but I am quite sure that they would have been no better cooks on an electric stove, though I can see where all the modern quick mixes would improve *their* cooking. My mother and mother-in-law both cook on old wood-coal-burning stoves; they do not use modern mixes or exact recipes, but I defy you to find better cooks anywhere.

Mrs. Earl Brill
Sharpsburg, Ohio

■ *Many readers seem to be driven to high fury by "Granny's on the Pan," an unusual reaction to a humorous article.* *ED.*

Address: LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, Redbook Magazine, 230 Park Avenue, New York 17, New York

RECORDS

BY GEORGE FRAZIER

Patrice Munsel

All over the country young people are humming "Manhattan," a tune that first appeared before most of them were on earth. It was composed by those masters of music and lyrics, Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart, for "The Garrick Gaieties" of 1925, and it rhymed "Yonkers" with "conquers." (George Gershwin used the same rhyme in his "Who Cares.") Two treatments of "Manhattan" that deserve close and respectful attention are those by **Mickey Rooney** and **Lee Wiley.** The Rooney one can be found in the Decca album called "Words and Music," while Miss Wiley's is part of "Night in Manhattan," a Columbia LP of a year or so ago.

Another Rodgers and Hart number that is being revived is "The Most Beautiful Girl in the World," which was introduced in "Jumbo" in 1935. The classic interpretation of this is unquestionably **Ted Straeter's,** but, failing to get hold of it, you will find an excellent one by **Vaughn Monroe** on the new RCA Victor LP known as "Rodgers and Hart Song Book." Never having been addicted to the muscular vocalism of Mr. Monroe, who is understandably known as "The Man with Hair on His Tonsils," we were agreeably surprised by the restrained and sensitive reading he gives "The Most Beautiful Girl." Indeed, this whole record, which also features Patrice Munsel, must be regarded as quite a success, not only for the tasteful singing, but also for the inclusion of such somewhat forgotten delights as "My Funny Valentine" and "Falling in Love with Love."

Although this department does not essay book-reviewing, it cannot refrain from mentioning that one of the most exciting things in popular music is a new volume from Simon and Schuster. Called "The Rodgers and Hart Song Book," it contains the words and music of 47 tunes by a team of songwriters that turned out a string of 27 hit musicals. Larry Hart, "an electrified gnome of a man," died at the age of 47 in 1942. Rodgers then joined forces with Oscar Hammerstein, II, to create the loveliness of "Oklahoma!" "Carousel" and "South Pacific." But Hart, though deceased, has not disappeared from Broadway. His and Rodgers' "Pal Joey," which is generally viewed as one of the four or five best musicals of all time, was revived on Broadway last month. And rightly so, too.

NEWS ABOUT MEDICINE

BY EDWARD T. WILKES, M. D.

Electricity Saves Babies Who Fail to Breathe at Birth

Difficulty in breathing is one of the hazards of babies at birth. Electric stimulation now promises a method of reviving them. By stimulating the phrenic or breathing nerve in the neck with high doses of electric current, two obstetricians were able to save 25 out of 29 newborn babies struggling for breath. A study of these babies several months later showed no signs of harm. One baby, who had been blue and gasping for breath for nearly four hours, was treated by electric stimulation for 45 minutes before he breathed normally.

Childbearing Best in Early Years

A condition of the womb called endometriosis, which attacks women who postpone childbearing until their early thirties, may cause pressure on the abdominal organs and lead to sterility. Early pregnancy acts as a preventative, and the condition can sometimes be corrected by surgery. It is rarely found in women who have their children not more than five years apart.

Abscessed Teeth No Longer Need Be Pulled

Many infected teeth, which would have been lost under old-fashioned methods of treatment, can be saved by the use of antibiotics. A study reported from the Children's Memorial Hospital of Chicago reveals that sulfa drugs give slightly better results than heat treatment, penicillin gives much better results, and aureomycin the best, since it is the only drug which enabled all cases to heal without drainage.

Malaria Warning

The U. S. Communicable Disease Center has cautioned doctors to be alert for malaria in veterans returning from Korea. A significant number of cases has turned up. Unexplained fever, chills, weakness or anemia should be investigated. Malaria has been on the way out in the U. S. with only 2,200 cases reported last year as against 63,000 in 1945.

Field tests of a new antimalarial drug, primaquinine, have been made in Korea. Prisoners at the Joliet penitentiary who volunteered for tests with this drug showed a high percentage of faster cures with no recurrences.

Cats Sometimes Carry Disease

Cats as pets are generally harmless. However, several cases of cat-scratch fever, a disease of the lymph nodes accompanied by fever and weakness and lasting several weeks or months, have now been reported in New England and Washington, D. C., and remind us that cats can transmit illnesses to humans. Among these communicable maladies are virus pneumonia, and occasionally rabies, ringworm, creeping eruption, tapeworm and even diphtheria.

THESE WOMEN!

BY PAUL STEINER

ASKED BY A JUDGE where she got her black eye, a woman in Seattle, Washington, replied, "Sir, I was struck by a gentleman."

*

When a Fairmount, West Virginia, police desk sergeant asked a woman, who came in to report an accident, whether she got the other car's license number, she said, "You're doggone right I did," and tossed a battered license plate on the sergeant's desk.

*

In Toronto, Ontario, a woman called a service operator of the telephone company and said in a perfectly serious tone, "My telephone cord is too long, Miss. Would you please pull it back at your end?"

*

After a Lakewood, Ohio, husband telephoned his vacationing wife to say that she had taken the mailbox key with her, she obligingly mailed it back to him.

*

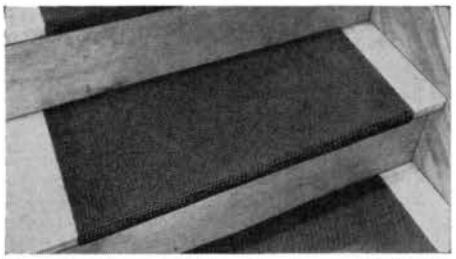
After police raided her home and found two 10-gallon stills, 40 gallons of mash, 250 pounds of sugar, 2½ gallons of moonshine, a Pittsburgh woman explained in court: "Somebody must have left all that there."

*

In Manchester, Connecticut, a woman drove up to the drive-in window of a bank, handed the teller her fountain pen, asked him to fill it, took back the filled pen, said "Thank you," and nonchalantly drove off.

*

An El Monte, California, librarian reports that an unidentified woman called her, asked to whom she was speaking, then explained that she had found a phone number in her husband's pocket and was just checking.



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CARPETREADS 95c

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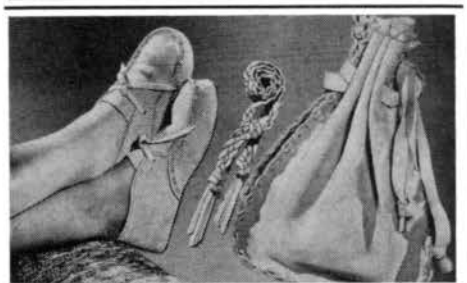

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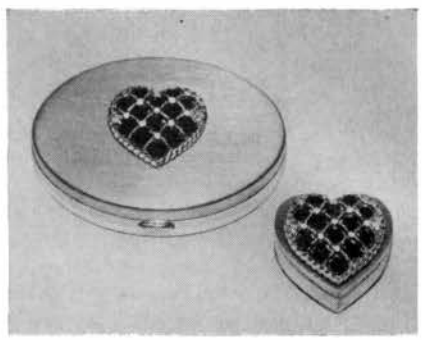
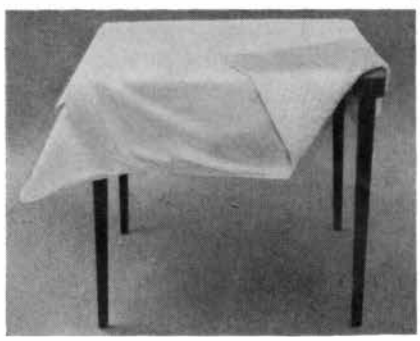


Heart to please on Valentine's Day. Bejeweled compact and pillbox to capture the feminine fancy. Compact is jeweler's bronze with raised heart motif of deep red imitation rubies. Pillbox is lined in white enamel. Compact, $4.80; pillbox, $4.20; set, $9—all prices include tax and postage. Susan Noble, 56 Baker Ave., Dover, N. J.



Flexible table pad of heavy waterproof vinyl effectively protects table top at a minimum of expense. Heatproof, with insulated tufting on underside. Fits any shape table and folds for storage. For tables up to 53" x 90", $4.98 ppd., 53" x 70", $3.98 ppd. Milton Novelty Co., Dept. 15-N, 277 Broadway, New York 7, N. Y.

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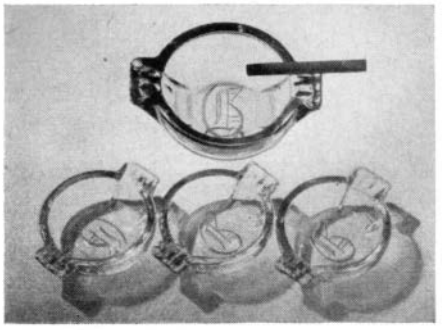
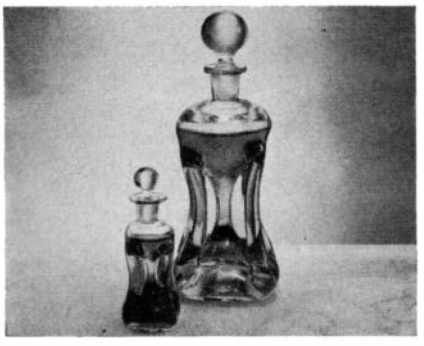
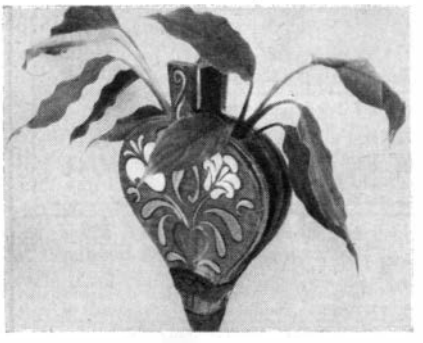


Initialed ashtrays are a good buy for year-round giving or entertaining. Sizable crystal ashtrays have sensible cigarette rests and are hand-engraved with an Old English script initial. Engraving is done on bottom side, so the letter never clogs with ashes. Set of 4 trays is $2.95 ppd. From Kreglow Gift Shop, Moundsville 9, West Virginia.

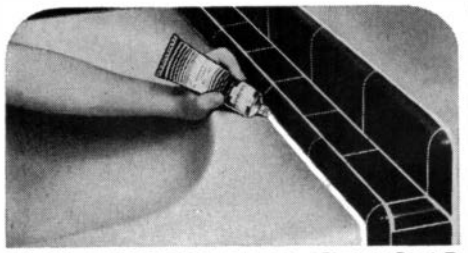
Copy of an import from Italy, this large shoulder-strap bag is really practical for a housewife or businesswoman. Genuine leather in navy, suntan (natural), black, red, brown or bamboo with a two-letter monogram. A good value at $5.95 ppd. including tax. Vernon Specialties Co., Dept. R, 16 Mt. Vernon Ave., Mt. Vernon, N. Y.



Danish decanters—beautiful hand-blown bottles that make a clucking sound when you pour from them. Wines or liquors go through four sides and center. Small size, 3 oz., useful for oil, vinegar or cologne, is $2.60. Large one, 24 oz., $5. Add 40¢ postage. Jon's Scandinavian Shop, 179 W. 4th St., New York 14, N. Y.



A really unusual planter to hang on the wall in your hallway, den or living room. Hand-painted ceramic, it looks just like an honest-to-goodness pair of bellows. Can hold plants in earth or water. Wonderful, too, for Chinese evergreens or long stemmed flowers. $5.50 ppd. Marsha Kay, 947 Lincoln Road, Miami Beach 39, Fla.



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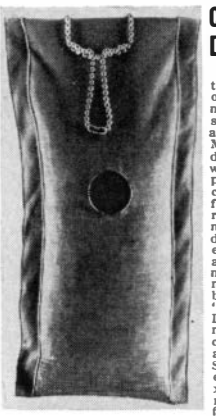

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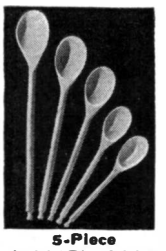

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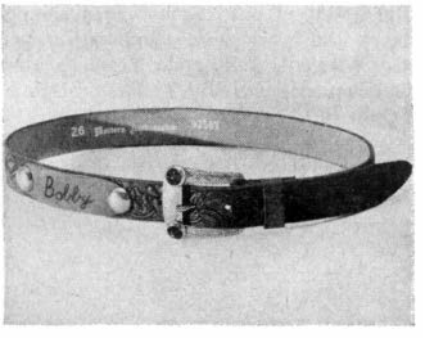

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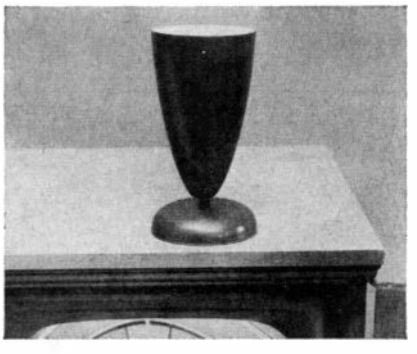

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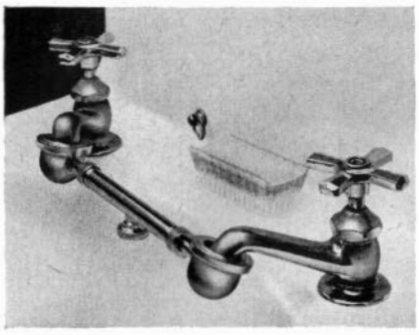
TOPS IN THE SHOPS



A good mixer—hot plus cold water equals warm. If the faucets in the kitchen or bathroom are separate, you'll appreciate the convenience of this fixture. No danger of scalding your hands. Fits faucets from 7" to 11" apart and saves on costly plumbing fixtures. $1.95 ppd. Spencer Gifts, Dept. R-2, Atlantic City, N. J.

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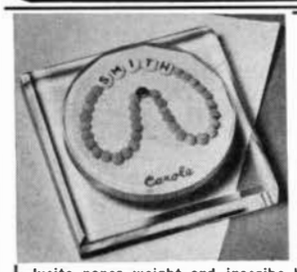

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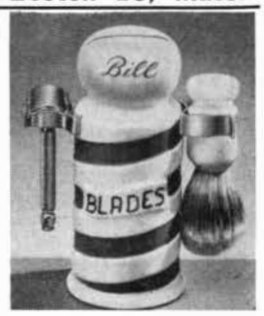

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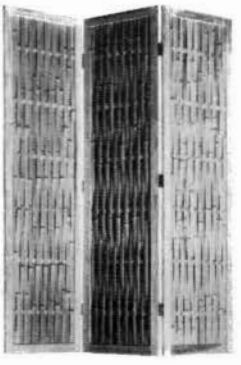
TOPS IN THE SHOPS

Valentine gift for a man—a gadget for his beloved car. Kar Diary fastens to the sun visor and helps keep track of gas and oil consumption and other operating expenses — vital for income-tax purposes. Entries are made on a roll tape good for a year. $1.25 ppd. Refills, 2 for 35¢. Mahoning, Dept. R-1, Youngstown 3, Ohio.



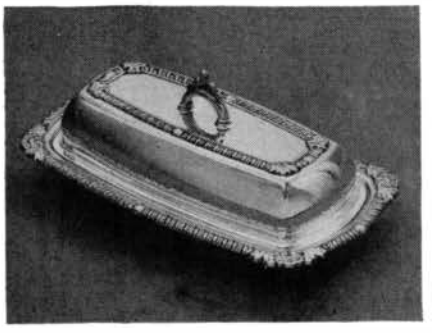
Imported bamboo screens. Use to separate dining area from living room, screen kitchen goings-on, or partition the bedroom for baby. Split bamboo in wood frames to paint or use in natural color. $15 for 3 panels, 4½′ x 5½′ tall. 4 panels for $20 ppd. Special Products Co., Dept. 1S, 950 Columbus, San Francisco, Calif.

TOPS IN THE SHOPS

For men only—a boots and saddle pin-up lamp masculine enough to please young cowboy fans. Fine for Junior's room or Dad's den. Metal base has a burnished Western silver finish. Shade is hand-painted with boots and sombrero and Pinto's head. Lamp is 12" high from tip to stirrup. $4.95 ppd. From Ward Phillips Co., Dept. R, Dundee, Ill.

A good traveler—an emergency shaving kit smaller than a pack of cigarettes. A handy gift for businessman, salesman or serviceman. Tan cowhide case holds a full-size Gillette razor, nylon shaving brush, soap-stick and razor blade. Brush and soap come in gold-finished swivel cases. $5 ppd. L. Falitz, 158-25 91st St., Howard Beach, N. Y.

TOPS IN THE SHOPS



Set a pretty table with this silver-plated butter dish taking first prize. The covered rectangular dish has a crystal liner for practicality and holds a quarter-pound bar of butter. A nice wedding or engagement gift for a favored couple. $6.50 ppd. including tax. Nelmor Jewelers, 897-901 Bergen Avenue, Jersey City 6, New Jersey.

Kitchen match holders of unusual charm to grace an Early American kitchen. Both are tinware, hand-painted by Maxey, and sprayed with a protective coating. Tall one is red and can be hung or set on the stove. $2.50 ppd. Flat holder in black would be equally nice by the fireplace. $1.75 ppd. Jane Griffith, Oreland, Pa.

Dripping tub toys need not clutter up the bathroom. After the bath is over, put the wet toys neatly in the Tubtoy Tender. Made of fine, absorbent terry cloth, it hangs from the towel rack. Comes in canary or white. $2.98 ppd. Smaller size with 2 pockets only, $1.98 ppd. Bron-Shoe Co., 269-R E. Broad St., Columbus, O.

Home on the range is the very best place for this trio of shaker jars for Ac'cent, salt and pepper. Ac'cent, a pure monosodium glutamate, brings out natural flavors without adding its own, making it a cooking staple. 4-oz. Ac'cent shaker comes filled. $1.95 ppd. for the set. Lewis & Conger, 45th & Ave. of Americas, New York 18, N.Y.

"Serve-a-Hospital" volunteers at Louisville, Kentucky, wrapped and sent 1,100 gifts to patients in one Veterans Administration hospital.

They've Never Forgotten

The young man's face had the dark look of weather and war. But it brightened perceptibly as he opened the bulging little cloth bag and turned it upside down on the hospital-bed sheet. Out spilled toothbrush, razor, comb, a small book, stationery, pencils, nail file, candy, gum, soap, handkerchiefs. Trifles? Not to a soldier who had been carried off a Korean battlefield with a shattered leg only a short time before. He had lost almost every personal possession, and immediate replacement had seemed impossible.

The young infantryman was lucky. He had been adopted — adopted by a group of American women who without fuss and fanfare make it their business to find out what people in service need, and then get it for them. The little bag was one of thousands provided by local committees of Jewish women who "adopt" a camp, hospital or chaplain, usually many miles distant, and maintain a continuing contact by mail.

Because of this contact and because camps and hospitals are chosen for their out-of-the-way locations and lack of recreational facilities, there is no duplication of a service furnished by the USO or other organization. The committees send only what is specifically asked: a game, radio, phonograph records, typewriter, alarm clock or a new cover for a billiard table. And it is given without knowledge of the recipient's religion. Overseas gifts are distributed through Jewish chaplains, but they go to men of all faiths.

The "Serve-a" program (Serve-a-Camp, Serve-a-Hospital, Serve-a-Chaplain) has been working steadily since 1942. In that time, organized Jewish women have sent more than ten million gifts to servicemen and hospitalized veterans. There are "Serve-a" committees in forty-four states. And several hundred thousand Jewish women, all of them unpaid volunteers, are now sending gifts to Korea.

Although the material advantages of this program are considerable, the morale value is even greater, says Mrs. Alfred R. Bachrach, chairman of the Women's Organizations Division of the National Jewish Welfare Board.

A member of the First Marine Division wrote from Korea:

"I will always remember that someone besides my parents thought of me."

Last April, REDBOOK reminded America that "We're in This Together," and urged "voluntary mobilization of civilian effort to encourage young Americans in uniform." These Jewish women mobilized ten years ago, and never disbanded. Their patriotism is an inspiring example to all. Their act of personal effort is well worth emulation.

"You seem so inhumanly clean and cool!" he said. "If only I didn't love you so much."

INHIBITION

Once Connie had been honest with her husband, but never had she faced her own dark doubt. Then, suddenly, restraint gave way to blazing jealousy

BY WILLIAMS FORREST

ILLUSTRATED BY EDWIN GEORGI

It was Saturday, and Connie's husband, Jed, was out in the yard. The sound of the lawn mower seemed to irritate Connie's mother, who was making one of her frequent afternoon visits. But Connie knew it wasn't the lawn mower. It was the occasional sound of laughter from outside that Mrs. Maitland didn't like. The laughter of Jed, and of Nancy, the neighbor's nineteen-year-old daughter. It had a tone to it that Connie understood—its innocence was only superficial.

Evidence of her mother's irritation added impact to the scene Connie had witnessed from an upstairs window shortly before Mrs. Maitland's arrival. Overtly, an ingenuous scene: a young man of about thirty, in slacks and polo shirt, lean and bronzed in autumn sunlight, stopping to lean on the mower, as a girl shouted and started toward him. He'd been cutting the rear edge of the lawn, and he was in half-profile to Connie, who had paused in the window. His black hair was tousled in the wind, and he was smiling, but there was a disturbing intensity beneath his smile.

The girl approached, and he seemed concentrated in a way that made Connie feel she was excluded from his life. Nancy's long legs were in levis, her waist drawn with a cord, her shirt showing a broad-shouldered, tapered body. She walked with a mature grace, but it was modified by the soft indolence only young girls seem to possess.

When she was standing next to Jed, her face, with its high cheekbones and untrained animation, had a possessive coquetry to it; and Jed seemed to pause on a discolored thought as he looked into that face. He *(Continued on page 82)*

KILLERS AT LARGE

Every year thousands of TB patients defy hospitals—walk out before they're cured. What is your state doing to curb these deadly disease carriers?

BY GEORGE WEINSTEIN

PHOTO BY TED CRONER

Ed and Mary B were married two years, very happily. Ed had just been promoted to assistant sales manager, and with the handsome boost in salary he and Mary could now buy a home of their own. The apartment hadn't been big enough since little Billy was born six months before.

But one day everything came crashing down. Ed brought home some terrifying news—he had tuberculosis. A chest X ray, taken of every employee of the firm in one of those mass campaigns, had given the first indication. Laboratory tests confirmed it.

Ed was a victim of a disease which preys on young people—people just getting established in life. For tuberculosis is a greater destroyer of our fifteen-to-thirty-four-year-olds than any other disease. Furthermore, of the total number of TB patients in this country, 175,000 of them are children.

The company doctor told Ed he had a moderate case but would have to go to a TB hospital, not only to clear it up but to protect his wife and baby. Mary took the news bravely. It would be for only a few months. She and Billy would manage somehow—with Ed's disability benefits and some secretarial work she could do at home.

Eight months later, Ed was still at the hospital. He was making steady progress, but no one could tell him when he'd be able to go home. A good patient up to now, Ed began to fidget, find fault, and become generally disagreeable. Each day he grew more and more insistent that he was well enough to be discharged, and he wanted to know why he wasn't. Next he began to threaten to "take a walk," and after one especially stormy session, made his way to the director's office and demanded his immediate discharge.

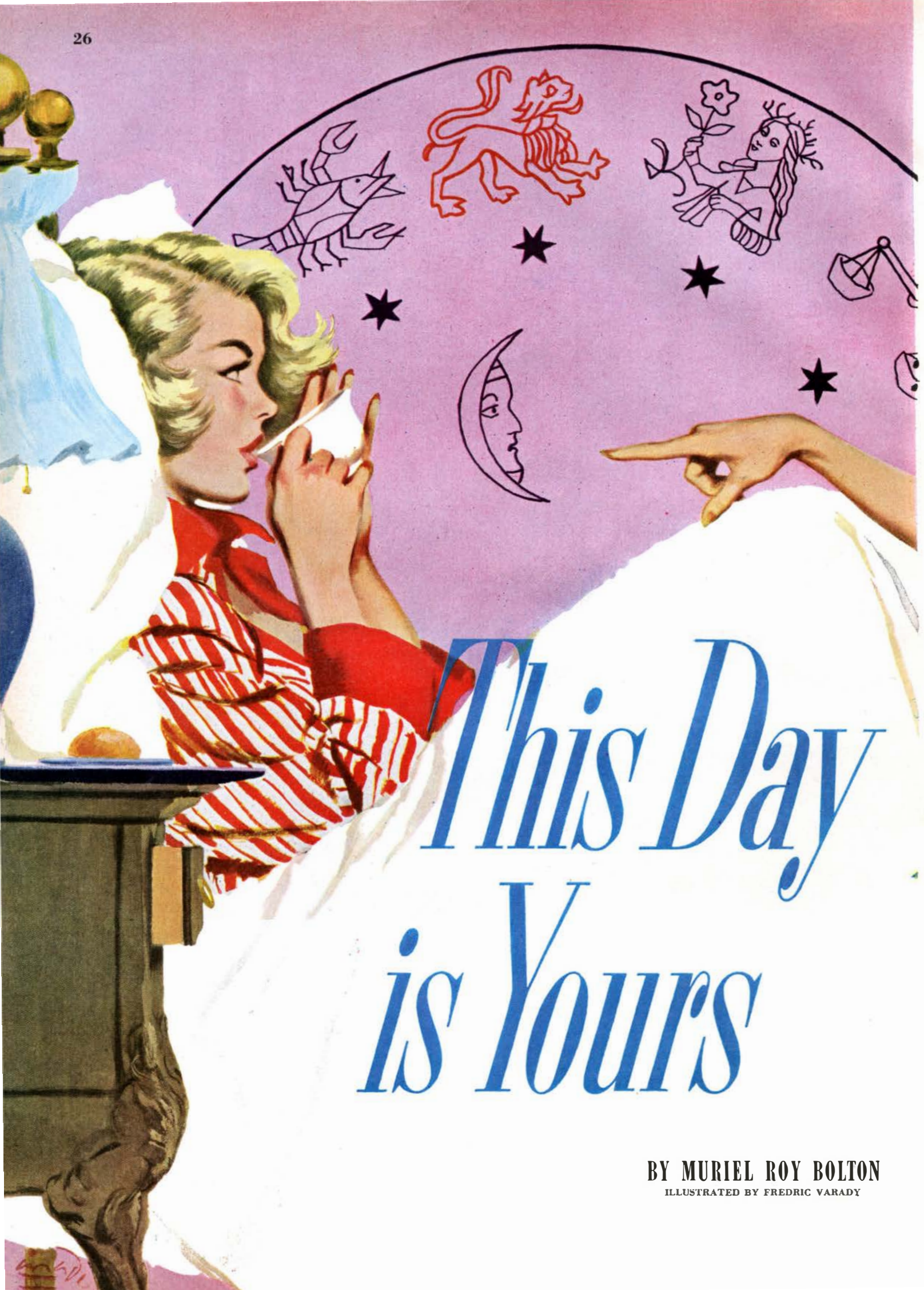
"Ed," said the director, "you've been a lousy patient and I ought to be glad to get rid of you. But I'm not, because you're taking your life in your hands—and your wife's and baby's, too."

But Ed was in no listening mood. "I'm going crazy here, Doc. I've got to get out—today."

The director shrugged his shoulders, handed Ed a release form, and told him he could sign out AOR: "at own risk."

When Ed arrived home that afternoon, Mary was horrified. She pleaded with him to go back, but got nowhere. He was determined to start working again. He wouldn't dare return to his old job, of course. But with the growing manpower shortage, he was sure he could find something somewhere.

He did—as a counterman in a highway diner several miles from town. His experience as a hash slinger in the Army was satisfactory *(Continued on page 72)*



This Day is Yours

BY MURIEL ROY BOLTON

ILLUSTRATED BY FREDRIC VARADY

"Listen!" Jeanne said. "This is the one day when the stars are precisely right for you. Nothing can go wrong."

"Walk boldly forward," commanded the stars. "Silly superstition," jeered Lois— and almost missed the most exciting day of her life!

I hate you," Lois muttered, "and I hate you, too." A submerged figure in the other twin bed stirred, and a dark tousled head poked out inquiringly. "Why? What'd I do? Snore?"

"Not you," Lois told her roommate, turning off the stridently-ringing alarm clock. "I hate this clock and I despise this day."

Jeanne looked shocked. "It's Friday! Your payday!"

"I know," Lois admitted gloomily. "I know it's my payday. But I'm going to get fired."

Jeanne's eyes were wide awake now with surprise. "How do you know?"

"For the last four or five times Mr. Munson has paid me, he's looked at me exactly the same way I look at Mrs. Hether every Friday when I pay the rent and try to get up courage enough to tell her I'm leaving this hole in the wall."

"I did it yesterday," Jeanne said with a deep breath of relief. "I don't like the apartment I'm moving into, and I don't like the girls I'm sharing it with, but anything's better than staying *(Continued on page 93)*

Betty Hutton has found out that when your name's up in lights, no man wants second billing where love is concerned

The Girl Who Married Her Career

BY LLOYD SHEARER

Several months ago Hollywood had a field day at Betty Hutton's expense.

In her honest, uninhibited way, the motion-picture star ecstatically announced her engagement to Norman Krasna, the thin, balding half of the film-production company of Wald & Krasna and the author of "Dear Ruth" and "John Loves Mary."

"Isn't it wonderful," Betty exclaimed, "that such a brilliant man should fall in love with me!"

Five days later Betty returned a diamond ring to the playwright. Whereupon one columnist quipped: "This is the longest run an engagement of this type has ever enjoyed."

To Betty Hutton, at 30, this broken engagement marked the latest in a long series of consistently unhappy love affairs, serving to reemphasize her oft-repeated contention: "I'm just unlucky with men. Whenever I think I've met the right guy, something happens to ruin it."

Ever since she was a cute, brown-eyed, freckled runt of eight, supporting her mother and sister by singing in Detroit saloons for whatever coins the customers would throw, Betty June Thornburg has been searching for happiness. She has yet to find it. For Betty is a girl who resolutely refuses to let anything, even love, interfere with her career. She is, therefore, an unhappy person. As one Hollywood observer puts it, "Betty deserves a good life, but she can't cash in on it because of the things she does to herself, and indirectly because of the things that happened to her before she controlled her own affairs."

When Betty was 17 and screaming with the Vincent Lopez band in New York—it was Lopez, an amateur nu- *(Continued on page 61)*

Betty Hutton plays the part of *Holly*, a trapeze artist, in "The Greatest Show on Earth."

SECRET AGENT

Mrs. Mary Markward and daughter

IN APRON STRINGS . . .

The incredible story of a young housewife who masqueraded for seven years as an official of the Communist Party. She gathered evidence for the FBI against America's greatest enemy—international communism

BY BOOTON HERNDON
PHOTO BY BRADLEY SMITH

The chambers of the Committee on Un-American Activities on Capitol Hill were packed with people that hot summer's day. There were a score or so of Congressmen and their special assistants, a horde of reporters and photographers, and, finally, just plain people, filling every available bit of space in the large room. Their entire attention was focused on one small person, the trim young woman in the witness chair.

She wore a light tan suit and a white straw sailor pushed back off her forehead. She was a pretty girl, her blue eyes quick to smile under her brown hair. You've seen her, or her counterpart, a thousand times. You've seen her at the supermarket, giving her child a ride in the cart as she buys the family groceries. You've seen her at PTA meetings, at Sunday school and church, at the American Legion Auxiliary—everywhere a typical, happy, young American housewife would be.

The people in the committee room looked at each other and shook their heads in amazement as she told her story. They heard it from her own lips, and still it seemed unbelievable.

For this pert young wife and mother was an undercover agent for the FBI! For seven years she had masqueraded as an official of the Communist Party in Washington, D. C., gathering, for her Government, evidence against the greatest menace of our time—international communism, directed by the Kremlin!

Cool and poised, Mary Stalcup Markward finished her testimony. Everyone in the room—distinguished legislators, hardened investigators, cynical newspapermen—stood and applauded. It was then, and only then, that she let go. As the applause rang out, covering her like a warm and comforting blanket, she blushed and ducked her head like a schoolchild, and the warm tears smarted her eyelids. And thus she left the stand, a heroine.

And so was ended one of the most incredible masquerades of our time. Who in the world would ever dream that little Mary Stalcup of Chesterbrook, Virginia, was an agent of the FBI? Certainly not the people, her best friends, her relatives, who turned their backs on her during those long bitter years when her affiliation with communism was known.

The only people who knew the whole truth, outside of Government agents, were her mother, Mrs. Benjamin Stalcup, and her husband, George A. Markward. Her little daughter, Christine, didn't know.

The best friend of her childhood didn't know. Many a time Mary would see her former chum drive down the country lane in front of her little brick rambler, without even looking in her direction.

The congregation of her church, the *(Continued on page 79)*

Springtime

BY S. J. PERELMAN

Once upon a recent time, the editors of REDBOOK *were sitting around, gazing from their windows at the winter sky, when a man with a lantern jaw stalked through the office. "Whither?" asked the editors. "I seek the Fountain of Youth," the man replied. "Here?" the editors inquired, flattered. "Ha!" said the man, readily identified as S. (as in Sidney) J. Perelman. "I go first to Florida. Then to Hollywood. Then to . . ." And thus was born an astonishing adventure, the first episode of which begins on these pages.* THE EDITORS

ILLUSTRATED BY AL HIRSCHFELD

for Sidney

No. 1: BIRTH OF A CONQUISTADOR

It all began, as have so many other breakneck enterprises, with a woman's taunt.

I had been lunching that day with an old schoolfellow, a tall, flamboyant divorcée with titian hair and an hourglass figure whom I had met at an obedience school where our dogs had struck up a flirtation. Knowing my wife's curious hostility toward tall. flamboyant divorcées with hourglass figures, I had taken Velveeta (for that was her rather intriguing name, by the by) to a small, dark chophouse well out of the turbulent shopping district. To my surprise (since I might have expected a shallow coquette), I found her a deeply thoughtful person who had read widely in Elbert Hubbard and Robert W. Service, a student of numerology, palmistry and other occult arts, and possessed of an amazing range of scientific knowledge. She could, for example, distinguish real diamonds from paste at a glance, and had the true biologist's ability to differentiate between small mammals like sables, chinchillas and platina minks.

"It's a strange thing, Sidney," she mused over our fifth Martini, smoothing my palm with her cool fingertips and studying its lines. "Most people born under Aquarius are tightwads, but *you*—you're generous to the point of folly. I mean, like if you were to befriend someone, why, you would try to lavish your last dollar on imported perfumes and little crepe-de-Chine knick-knacks to make them happy. Am I warm?" she asked. with an appealing upward smile that revealed what I could have sworn was more than two rows of teeth.

I assured her that nobody had ever divined my character so cannily and waved away the maître d'hôtel with instructions not to interrupt us unless the liquor license was revoked.

Approximately three hours later, I came to in Cartier's. a jewelry store plumb in the middle of the most turbulent of all shopping districts. Due to some steam on my glasses, I was momentarily unable to see with my usual acuteness, but a salesman was pressing me to make a choice between a cabochon emerald choker and a star sapphire the size of a Brazil nut.

"I—er—there's been some mistake," I stammered. "I was supposed to meet my wife in the kitchenwares in the basement—"

"Just a second, brother," Velveeta snapped, blocking my exit. "The last john that welshed on me wound up with his feet in a barrel of

"The die was cast: the obvious prelude to my search must be a visit to the Fountain of Youth...."

cement. Did you ever hear of Tony Cobra of the Purple Gang?"

I saw how fatuous was palaver, and thrusting the lady aside, made for the street. She scurried a few paces behind me down the Avenue, filing brief sidelights on my morals and antecedents in a whisky tenor that drowned out the roaring traffic's boom. We passed several people whom I dimly recognized—our family dentist, a gossipy second cousin, my wife's *corsetière*—but I failed to acknowledge their salutations. As I dodged down Rockefeller Plaza toward the rink, Velveeta overtook me, redoubling her objurgations. Finally, with all the dignity at my command, I informed her I was late for a skating appointment.

At that, she emitted a howl of derisive laughter. "Why, you pathetic old dodo!" she cackled. "You couldn't stand up on a pair of skates if they were set in concrete!"

The references to cement were beginning to abrade my nerves. I scanned her witheringly from tip to toe and produced my watchfob.

"My good woman," I said coldly, "if you will have the goodness to examine the reverse of that medallion, you will discover that I was substitute goalie of the Pawtucket Wolverines in 1919. Allow me to bid you a very good afternoon."

Before she could recover from her chagrin, I had descended to the arena, donned a set of tubular blades, and was skimming away over the ice. In all modesty, Mercury himself seemed to have lent wings to my heels. Round and round I spun, gliding effortlessly through figure-eights and arabesques, now balancing on one leg, now swooping backward in lightning reversals, until the tyros about me cowered open-mouthed against the barriers. The spectators above craned down in silent awe, shielding their eyes and shuddering convulsively as I defied every law of gravity. And then the unpredictable, the fluke in a million, happened.

Out on the ice, square in my path and blissfully unaware of my dizzying momentum, strayed a golden-haired tot. She could not have been a day more than nineteen, though her proportions were already as opulent as a ripe gooseberry.

In a second's flash, so razor-keen are my reflexes, I foresaw the peril, took the only course open to one of my code, and swerved aside. As I ricocheted into the outdoor cafe and struck a buffet wagon laden with glassware and pastry, a resounding roar of homage to my chivalry welled from the onlookers. On its crest, I was wafted into oblivion.

* * *

The doctor attending me after the imbroglio at Radio City had become seriously concerned at my condition: I was on the edge of the abyss.

"I'd like to see him get away for a while," he told my wife, doubtless taking the words out of her mouth. "He's too good a sport to complain, of course, but the man's been carrying a heavy load."

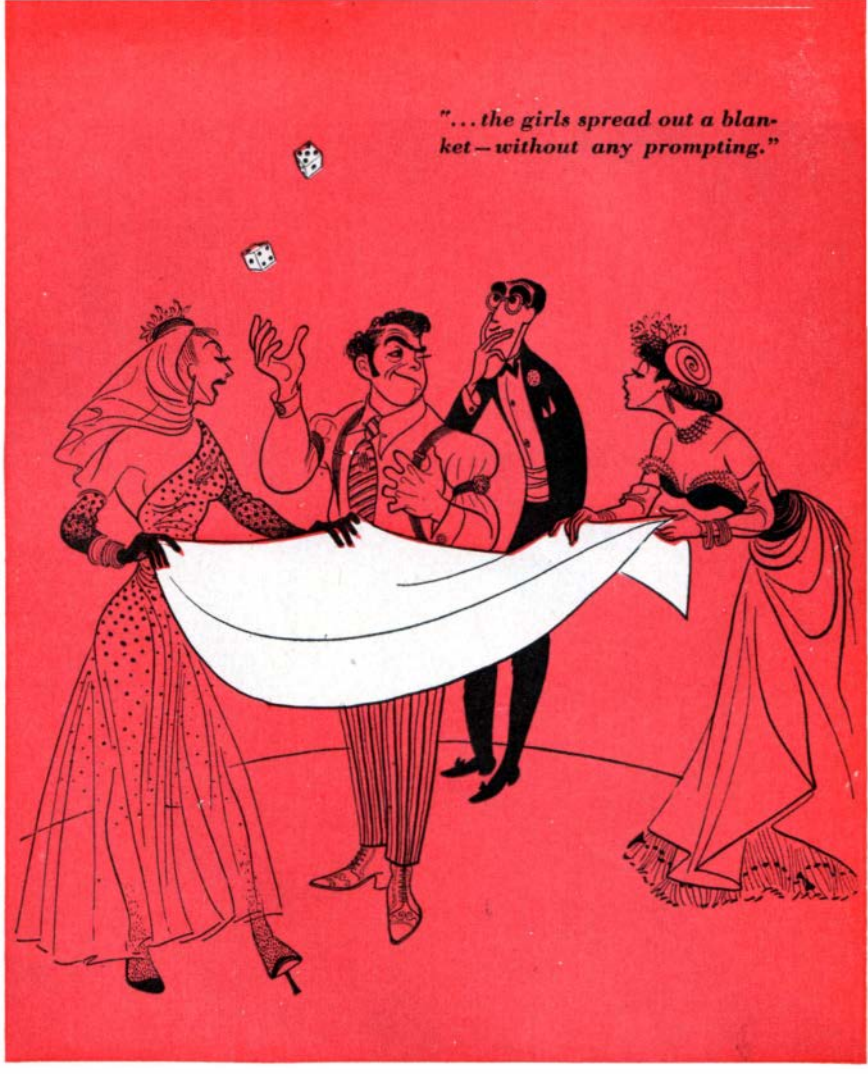
"You mean those compacts I keep finding in his pockets?" she asked. "Funny how he always comes back from conferences with lipsticks and bobbie—"

"Now, now, dear," I broke in. "I don't think Dr. Peritonides is interested in our domestic trivia. What do you recommend, Doctor?"

"Complete change," he said unhesitatingly. "New environment, new faces. Go to California, Mexico, anywhere—get out of your rut, so to speak. Mix with young people; find out what makes them young, and follow suit."

"Kind of a search for the true Fountain of Youth, eh?" I reflected. "By Jove, I believe that's exactly what I need. Frankly, I *have* felt a bit jumpy of late." (Just between ourselves, I had noticed a rather villainous customer resembling Tony Cobra of

"...took no notice of the pair until one chanced to drop a handkerchief."



"...the girls spread out a blanket—without any prompting."

the Purple Gang skulking around our brownstone and eyeing the windows, and I thought a spot of travel might be relaxing.) And so it was decided.

To safeguard the children's welfare. I procured my spouse a sinecure tidying up the Fisk Terminal Building at night, and subsidized the poor creature with a new mop and wringer to launch her auspiciously. Stony-eyed with grief, biting their knuckles to stifle their emotion. my brood waved adieu as I boarded a Florida-bound plane.

The die was cast. The obvious prelude to my search for the philosopher's stone must be a visit to the hypothetical Fountain of Youth itself, and my heart hammered at the early prospect of actually sipping its life-giving ichor.

Now, mile after mile of Florida scrub flowed past the bus windows. interspersed with marshy inlets and billboards proclaiming the world's largest alligator farm, the world's largest hamburger, and the world's largest saturation of odious billboards. Fifteen-odd tourists had embarked with me at Jacksonville that morning for St. Augustine, site of Ponce de Leon's quest four and a half centuries before. All around me they slumbered fitfully in their seats, yawning and fanning themselves with comic books. Chin cupped in my hand, I stared out at the landscape and pondered the relentless, almost inevitable steps that had led a flabby, middle-aged burgess into his present situation.

"Five-minute stop, folks!" The bus driver's voice booming over the amplifier dissipated my reverie. We straggled out into a seedy crossroads depot flanked by a coffeepot. where. flailing at unquestionably the world's largest cockroaches, I was presented with the world's smallest hamburger. My disquietude was somewhat allayed. however, by the counterman's confident prediction of a slap-up case of ptomaine by nightfall. Our destination prior to St. Augustine, it now developed, was Marineland, the renowned oceanarium a few miles down the coast, and within the hour, we had reached it.

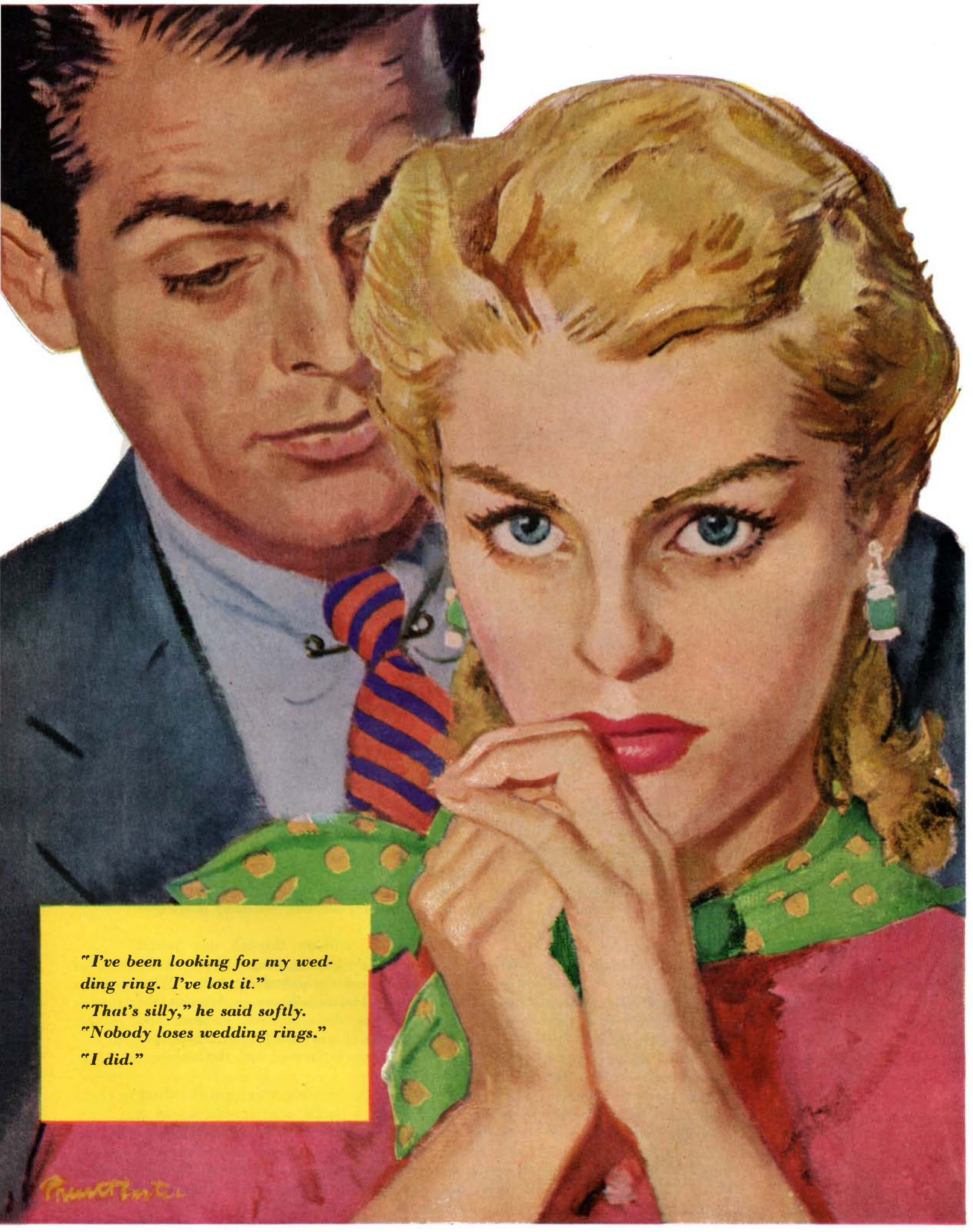
While it was a delightful and instructive experience to eavesdrop on the sharks, porpoises, sea turtles, octopi and sting rays in their life-like habitat, one slight contretemps marred my visit. I had mounted a short ladder to a porthole, the better to observe the undersea activity, when a six-year-old boy scrambled up beside me. The little fellow prattled so incessantly that I laid a gentle finger on his lips to enjoin silence. Suddenly, to my stupefaction, he hurtled from our perch, cracking his immature noggin on the promenade below.

Forthwith, there was a hullabaloo, a caterwauling and a bobbery fit to wake the dead. From the behavior of his parents, you would have thought he was the Dauphin on his deathbed. whereas any objective person could see that the fillip had quickened the child's circulation and stimulated his tissue tone. To show his gratitude, the little sneak willfully and with malice aforethought placed me in jeopardy. "He pushed me!" he screamed, empurpling like Tony Cobra. "He threw a bag over my head and tried to kidnap me!"

Fortunately, I am not one to show the white feather in a crisis; I quietly took the parents aside, made them a small peace offering ample enough to send the boy through Groton and reshingle their house, and dismissed them. If the vagabonds cherished any thought of blackmailing *me*, they had sadly misjudged their man. . . .

That afternoon, midway through our junket around St. Augustine's historic sites. I threw in the sponge and seceded from the sightseeing party. What with the oldest wooden schoolhouse in America, the oldest outdoor kitchen, the oldest wax museum, and the oldest burial crypt, I was trembling with palsy and buttonholing strangers to quaver out reminiscences about Pickett's Charge.

Fearful lest I dwindle into a little heap of sodium potash if I tarried, I hailed a surrey driven by a worthy in a plug hat and directed him to convey me to the Fountain of Youth. He whipped up his nag and we set off briskly through a maze of alleys. Half an hour later, after passing the same store front three times, we fetched up in a dismal back yard littered with scrap metal. With a *(Continued on page 97)*



"I've been looking for my wedding ring. I've lost it."

"That's silly," he said softly. "Nobody loses wedding rings."

"I did."

An unknown woman's perfection haunted Riley's marriage. Vainly she tried to escape the past—unaware that its secret would forever still her own fear

His Mother's Ring

BY EDITH JAKOBSSON

ILLUSTRATED BY PRUETT CARTER

It would not have been so final, she thought, if it had not happened the day before they moved. You could lose a thing, ordinarily, and tell yourself for years that you would find it tomorrow or next week. But the day before you moved was a bad time to lose your wedding ring.

She looked, at first in irritation and then in panic, and finally with a kind of witless fatigue that ignored all reason, in places where the ring could not possibly be. She opened barrels that she had finished packing yesterday, although she had had the ring that morning. She opened the traps in the plumbing, and went through the garbage and rubbish by hand. She searched through the gray November noontime—a frightened, harried young woman with blonde hair dusty from ashes and grime. The child, upstairs in what still was his room, called, "Lunch soon, Mother?" and she called back, "Soon."

She fixed him an omelette, the kind he liked, with leftover cut-up meat and browned onions in it, briefly grateful that she still found a kitchen knife in the clutter. "Excuse me," she begged, "if I don't sit with you. I've lost something that I have to find."

He nodded. "Later. I'll help you look," he said. He ate quietly, and then put his not-quite-emptied plate and milk glass into the sink, standing on tiptoes to do it. He walked in his mother's footsteps, asking from time to time. "Is this it, Mother? Is this it?" But it never was.

The time came for preparing a sort of supper in the stripped-down kitchen. She knew the time by the failing light outside, not by any clock: their clocks had been packed. Jerry went back to his room, to make a preposterous sober effort to finish packing his toys. Still she looked for her ring. She was looking when Ben came home, his face tired and cheerful and ready.

It was the readiness that hurt her. It reproached her, like the loss of the ring. He had not really wanted to go away from Kingstock. He always had lived here, and he would have been happy here forever, if Riley could have brought herself to be happy.

"But, darling," he said, as he took her in his arms and kissed her, "darling, what's happened? Am I wrong, or are we less packed than we were this morning?"

She said, "You aren't wrong." Her voice sounded flat, rather lonely. She was a sturdy girl, with a deceptive look of height about her, and of competence. Inside, she felt small and inept. She was like her house, she thought—a desolate thing to come home to. "I haven't been packing since eleven this morning. I've been looking for my wedding ring. I've lost it."

He had not taken his coat off. He stood there, in the cold living room—how soiled the walls were, how unkept, with the draperies all down, and the lampshades off their bulbs!—looking without comprehension into Riley's face.

"That's silly," he said softly. "Nobody loses wedding rings."

"I did." *(Continued on page 89)*

TRIPP

The chances of having triplets are only one in 7,506. And the joys and tribulations are fantastic, too

How many times have you heard prospective parents say—or have you said it yourself?—"Well, if it's going to be more than one, there's no point in stopping with three!" It's supposed to be a joke, but it isn't to Murray and Jewel Herman, one of the 336 couples who did have triplets in 1949.

They were an average pair, leading an average existence on an average salary UNTIL —until they found out that they were going to be one out of thousands. They were told to expect triplets—at least.

According to "Gynecology and Obstetrics," by Carl Henry Davis, an analysis of 50,000,000 births indicates that triplets occur about once in every 7,506; quadruplets once in every 757,000. Insurance-company statistics offer more rounded figures, with the chances given as 1.6 in 10,000 on triplets and 1.6 in 1,000,000 for quadruplets.

The Hermans soon learned that in this last simple statistical correlation lies the nub of a great injustice. For while everybody thinks triplets are mighty interesting, you have to have at least four babies at once to be rated phenomenal.

With quadruplets a family is pretty sure to hit the jackpot, blazing enough headlines to cull the maximum in free goods and services—a ten-room house perhaps, free milk, diapers, baby oil, layettes to the fourth power and in unlimited quantities, especially-made carriages, strollers, cribs, offers of money to endorse various products.

But all because of a slight difference in mathematical probability, the most to be hoped for with triplets is help in finding a new apartment, if you're lucky, and maybe free milk and diaper service for a year.

The point is, say the young Hermans and others like them, you're in for just about as much worry and complication with three babies as with four; family life will be just as disrupted, the bank account just as fractured—in fact, more so, since you'll have to get along with very little outside help.

Let us consider, for example, the experi-

LETS

BY GLEDHILL CAMERON
PHOTOS BY HENRY HABERMAN

To see how one family meets the problems that triple with triplets, turn the page →

●*Laundry, formulas and the common cold multiplied by three are routine for Murray and Jewel Herman, and they love it*

This is only two days' supply of milk for the Hermans. Furnished free the first year, a month's supply now costs $45.

The triplets need special storage space for their staggering supply of vitamins, baby oil, powder and canned baby food.

Murray refused to push this Gargantuan custom-made baby buggy. It was too conspicuous for him. Jewel enjoyed it.

ences of the Hermans, a tall, dark, attractive pair, vigorous, healthy and—fortunately for them—possessed of a high spirit of enterprise.

In 1948, Murray, then 34, and his wife, then 27, were living in a pleasant three-room apartment in Forest Hills, Queens, New York, for which they paid $78.50 a month. They had one four-year-old daughter, Leslie, and the apartment did well enough for them.

But with another baby on the way, they, like most young couples in a similar situation, began to think of rearranging their living accommodations.

"We ordered one of those leather folding doors for the dining room, and we were going to make it into a kind of studio-bedroom for us and turn our bedroom over to the two children." Jewel Herman smiles wanly now at the folly of it all.

Jewel gained weight rather rapidly, and remembers that she began to say jokingly to her husband and doctor, "Maybe it's going to be twins!"

It's a fact that the prospective mother and the doctor may suspect fairly early in pregnancy that more than one baby is on the way. Previous multiple births in the family increase the possibility, since the tendency exhibited by some women to bear more than one child at a time is definitely inherited, especially in the female line. The record is probably held by a notably fecund lady in Vienna who, according to medical history, produced twins three times, triplets six times and quadruplets twice—a total of 32 children in 11 births.

But Jewel Herman, with a single child already, knew of no instance of multiple birth in her family, nor were there any such on Murray's side.

About the sixth month of pregnancy, X rays will usually confirm a suspicion of multiple birth, and, as he ordered such X rays for her, Jewel's doctor said lightly, "Now we'll see what all this talk is about twins!" Twins are really not so uncommon, occurring about once in every 85 births.

Jewel Herman's X rays clearly showed three babies. The question seemed to be, were there any more? Sometimes the total number cannot be determined; there may be a fourth—or even a fifth—behind the others!

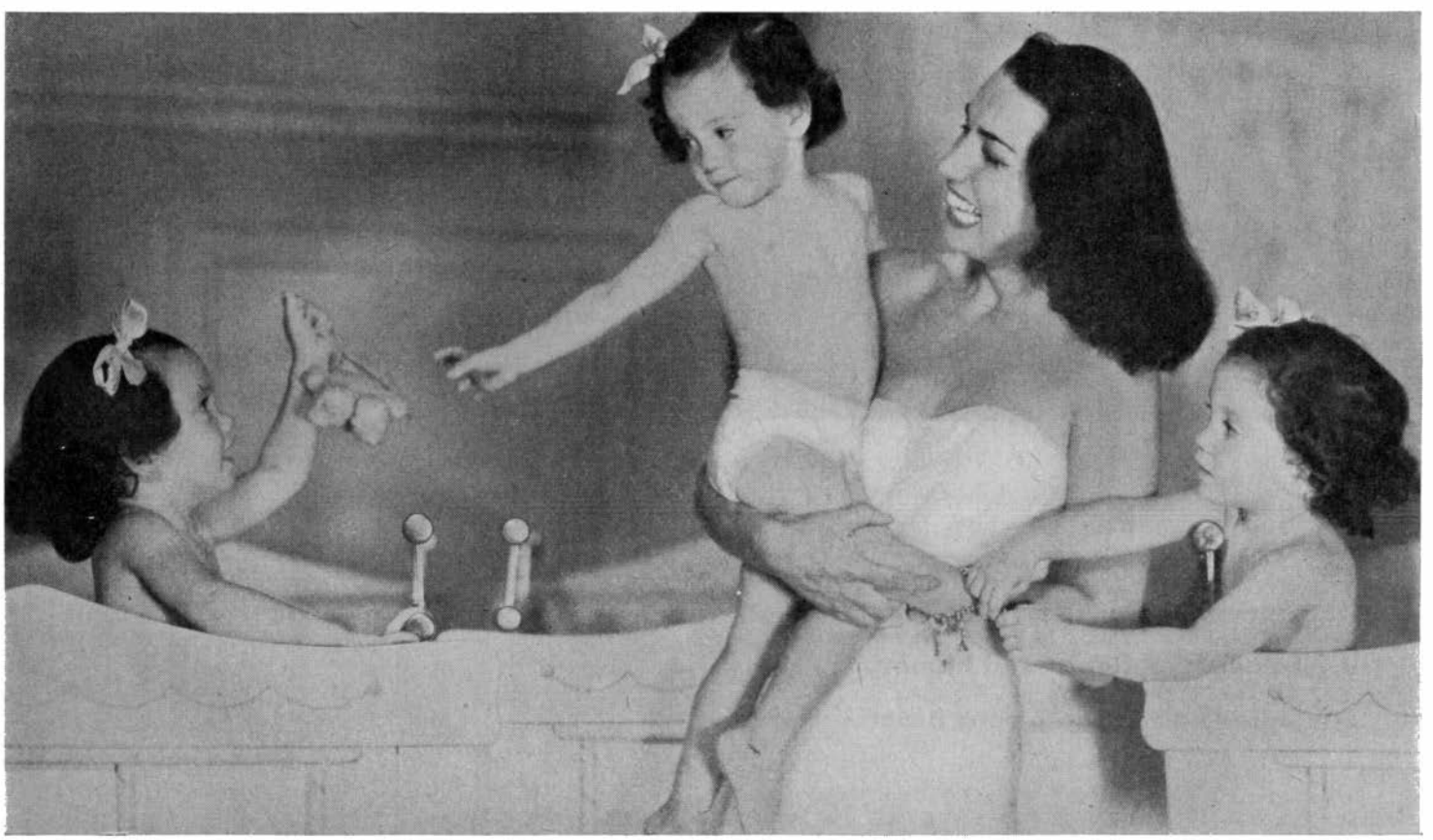
Although three or four sets of quads are reported each year, in relatively few cases do all babies survive. There are, at the moment, only eight living sets of quadruplets in the United States, and, of course, one has only to think of the furor surrounding the Dionne quintuplets since their birth in 1934 to realize how fantastically improbable quintuplets are. Survival of all five children is even more rare, and there are only two sets of living quintuplets known today—the Dionnes and the cloistered quints of Argentina, born to a wealthy textile man, Franco Diligenti, and his wife in Buenos Aires in July, 1943. Medical history also records one set of sextuplets, who were born and lived briefly in 1888. *(Continued on page 68)*

Jewel reaps the reward of ironing all those ruffles when Jaimye, Randye and Vickye team up to model the playsuits.

Big sister Leslye (her name was changed from Leslie to make all four names end in "ye") conducts and joins the quartet.

Wholesale bathing is arduous fun. Fortunately they don't all cry at once. The rest splash around and enjoy eating soap.

Jewel finds that nothing is ever dull with her triplets and Murray agrees that this is the most exciting way to have children.



Meet the incomparable Rusty, a four-legged gentleman of dignity and humor, who will bound straight into your heart

Member of

the Family

BY HELEN DAVIS SZOLD

ILLUSTRATED BY KEN RILEY

Gwen Martin stared at the golden retriever pup standing on his wobbly paws in the middle of the landlady's purple carpet. He looked so forlorn and bewildered that her heart went out to him, but another part of her cried silently, *How am I ever going to find time to take care of a dog? With two children and no help to be found anywhere and this big house to take care of, I'm half dead as it is.*

But Steve and the kids were so obviously thrilled with the newest member of the family that she tried to hide her dismay; besides, it was Billy's ninth birthday, and this was the present he had begged for. . . .

"There!" Steve whispered to her with satisfaction. "Just the kind you ordered, funny-face. He's got a pedigree a mile long; he'll be a big, beautiful animal, and all goldens have wonderful dispositions—" He stole a peek at her face. "Aw, Gwen, don't look like that! You'll love him. He won't be much extra bother. All you'll have to do for him is give him a short walk at noon; the kids and I will do everything else. I promise you."

Still Gwen could find nothing to say. But the spring sunshine suddenly seemed to have dimmed.

"Bill! Susie! Let the dog be for a minute and come here. There's something I want to tell you, and it's important. Rusty cannot go out of the yard alone. He must have someone with him every minute he's outside until he's old enough to go back to the kennels for his training. He might run off or get hit by a car."

"Sure, Dad," Billy said importantly. "I'll walk him every day after school."

"Me, too," Susie, aged five, cried. "Me, too!" She flung herself down on the floor beside the pup, who flopped his tail twice and promptly went to sleep.

Rusty had accepted the Martins.

If Gwen had been the kind of woman to say "I told you so," she could have said it in less than a month; instead, she had long, bitter conversations with herself. They went something like this: "Steve, my *(Continued on page 86)*

Mary divides her time between Alice and Irene, her half-sisters and only family ties. Both families, closely-knit, visit often. Alice holds her baby as Irene's mother-in-law watches Mary feed him.

She Found the Heart of a Town

BY GEORGE SCULLIN
PHOTOS BY ROBERT ISEAR

Mary is only eight—so young to endure the loss of parents and two brothers—all at once. Yet in her great tragedy she came on something truly wonderful . . .

You may never have been in Tarrytown, but you know it well. It is a part of your heritage, and you have but to stand at midnight in the Sleepy Hollow Cemetery of the Old Dutch Church to claim it all.

Then out of the mists of the present will rise the ghosts of the past, and once more the frantic Ichabod Crane will race by, a scant pumpkin's throw ahead of the Headless Horseman. You will hear in the sound of distant traffic the marching feet of Washington's men as he leads them to West Point over the King's Highway. And on a clear night when the moon is low, you can look across the Tappan Zee to the dark outlines of the Catskills where Rip Van Winkle slept the good sleep.

During the day Tarrytown becomes a modern village, but an unhurried one. The ancient elms and maples that Washington Irving knew still grace the streets, and even the newest of real-estate developments strive to preserve the air of permanence that was so much a part of the Colonial past. You will find the past around you, too, in the historical markers, the monuments, and the many restorations of pre-Revolutionary dwellings. But better than that, you will find, as did little Mary Richardson, a preservation of the good old American spirit of neighborliness.

Mary is only eight years old, but every one of the 18,000 people in Tarrytown and its neighboring North Tarrytown knows her. In a way, she is their daughter now, and has been ever since an accident cost her her father, mother and two brothers. That happened on September 4, 1951, near Gary, Indiana. The Richardsons, en route from Tarrytown to Madison, Wisconsin, never would get there.

For a couple of days there was some doubt that Mary herself would live, but Tarrytown was already in action. She would live if the prayers, money and heartfelt goodwill of her townfolk could do anything about it. Even as the doctors in Chicago were examining the X-ray plates of her fractured skull, the Mary Richardson Fund was becoming a Tarrytown institution. From the John D. Rockefeller, Jr., estate at the top of the bluff to the anonymous clerk's home down by the railroad tracks, the big concern was for Mary.

Just who was this Mary Richardson who swung a whole city to her support? Well, she was to Tarrytown one of the most precious things in the world: She was a little girl.

When Richard Richardson moved his family

Normally happy most of the time, Mary occasionally seems a little bewildered by the many things people have done to help her.

Mary and her nephew. Her two brothers were killed in the accident that claimed her parents' lives and nearly her own.

to Tarrytown, he had been for eighteen years an investigator for a New York credit clearinghouse, occasionally plumbing some rather sordid depths of humanity. He bought a comfortable house down on a comfortable street called Park Avenue, but for a time he could not relax. Too many years of professional suspicion stood as a barrier in his mind between him and his neighbors. The Tarrytown feeling that nobody is better than people was too new to him, and too strange.

Now, America's past is a very real and vivid thing. Sometimes it produces a feeling of worshipful awe, as at Mount Vernon or in the Alamo or the California missions. Sometimes it produces a feeling of patriotic pride, as at Bunker Hill, or Gettysburg, or the Little Big Horn. Or it produces a wonderful feeling of kinship, as it does in the Hudson River valley. And it was that kinship which Dick felt every morning as he looked from his back yard across the Tappan Zee to Storm King Mountain. Just down the street was the site of the Van Tassel farmhouse, where the buxom Katrina entertained the dashing Beau Brummel and the awkward Ichabod Crane. Another couple of blocks would take him to the old Florence Inn, where the stage coaches of the Albany Post Road had stopped to refresh the passengers. In this atmosphere Dick quickly rediscovered his faith in his fellow man.

He began with the neighborhood kids. He had two daughters, Irene and Alice, by a previous marriage, but he and his wife, also named Irene, were not long in acquiring three children of *(Continued on page 64)*

PSYCHOLOGIST'S CASEBOOK NO. 20

BY DR. JOHN R. MARTIN

Can You Diagnose this Case?

1. Alice and Jean, secretaries who shared an apartment, were attractive girls. Jean had many boy friends, and relived her experiences with them by telling Alice about her dates. Alice had fewer dates and never discussed any boy friends with Jean.

2. Jean introduced Alice to Ed, and he asked her for a date. Alice had a grand time that evening, and told Jean about it later. She felt uneasy admitting her attraction to Ed, because she said, fellows were never talked about in her parents' home.

3. As Alice and Ed continued seeing each other, her attitude toward him became very possessive. No matter what he wanted to do, she would suggest they go where they could not be alone. Ed, anxious to please her, always willingly did as she wished.

4. One night on the way home. Ed stopped the car, put his arms around her, and told her he loved her. As he drew her close and caressed her, she pulled back and said he was "common." Their love, she said, was above the level on which he put it.

What makes an attractive girl afraid of love? Was Ed a "wolf," or was the trouble a lack in Alice?

WHAT IS YOUR DIAGNOSIS?

1. **Alice** had good reason to distrust Ed's intentions toward her because of Jean's accounts of her experiences with her dates. ☐

2. **Alice** merely led Ed on because she wanted to prove to Jean that she too could attract men. She didn't really care. ☐

3. **Even** though she dearly loved Ed, Alice drew back from him and did not trust herself to express her affection for him. ☐

Turn to page 88 for Dr. Martin's analysis

There Comes a Time....

First love, with lightning swiftness, ended Mark's boyhood. No longer could he walk in his father's shadow; he was a *man*

The father was a portly, big-shouldered man with a bluff, hearty manner, and yet with something indefinably uncertain about him. It was almost, the son thought, as though a small, frightened man sat back out of sight and guided the splendid exterior, marching it about and making it laugh on cue. The son was eighteen. The bones of cheek and jaw were heavy and good. He was quiet, polite, and with a look of awareness.

They had lived in Mexico for three years. Their name was Porter. The boy's grandfather had made, and lost, a great deal of money. At the time he died, a small fortune was left. The father had tried to take over the management of the money and, in a frighteningly short time, had lost almost half of it. He placed the balance in the hands of a conservative investment house. The income, after taxes, was six thousand dollars a year. They lived very comfortably indeed in Mexico City. The apartment in Chapultepec was bright and airy and new. The son attended the English school. There was a small, sturdy sedan of French make. Rosita, the fat, elderly cook, kept the apartment spotless.

Now they walked side by side in the thin sharp February sunshine, on Juárez, on a Sunday afternoon. Their long legs scissored in exactly the same way, and the arms swung in cadence. Often the son felt that there was something ludicrous about this similarity of almost every action.

"I met her while you were in Acapulco," the son said. The father gave no sign that he heard, but the son knew he was listening intently. "It was at a party. *(Continued on page 98)*

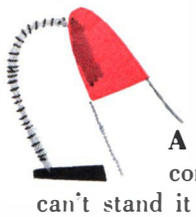
BY JOHN D. MAC DONALD
ILLUSTRATED BY JOE BOWLER

Young Folks at Home

BY CHARLOTTE MONTGOMERY
ILLUSTRATED BY MARGARET NIELSEN

Lighten Your Life

New lights do more than illuminate—they brighten your outlook, add accent and cheer to your home, save money on decorations



A friend whose husband is in Korea confessed to me. "When I get so lonesome I can't stand it another minute. I go around the house and put on every light. As soon as the place is all warm and glowing, I feel better."

It's true—light is almost as important to us as food and shelter. Dark days, gloomy rooms, unlit houses can make us restless and unhappy, while the warmth and friendliness of light add to our cheerfulness, comfort and well-being—actually make us feel more optimistic about life.

While our concept of what is good lighting has gone up and up since the days of oil lamps and candles, the experts tell me that most people still don't light their homes as well as they should. They say we are reluctant to put a large enough share of our home dollar on light: "In a home where the plumbing fixtures for one bathroom may run up to $2,000, as little as $35 is often allowed for lighting fixtures for the whole house." This does seem small when we think of the necessity for light and all the brightness it sheds.

Still more recently, we are learning to "decorate" with light. We know that light can make rooms seem larger (partly by the simple fact of filling up the corners), can change and lift colors, can be gracious, dramatic, or pay compliments to those who sit in its glow.

Make Light Work of It—Lots of thought has been given to kitchen lighting, and the same conclusions apply to any place where close work is done—the carpenter's bench, the sewing room, the laundry. People who specialize in bringing light to our lives feel that a kitchen needs both a general light and special lights directed at work areas. An overhead light alone—once so usual in kitchens—means that you are always in your own shadow: not a very bright thing, if you think about it!

It's through the back door, into the kitchen, that fluorescent light made its way into our homes. The early fluorescents were harsh and unflattering, but people found they gave a shadowless light that was fine to work by. Incidentally, though fluorescents are usually more expensive to install, their operation is quite a bit cheaper than the usual incandescent lights. Because of these advantages, you'll find fluorescents

used in some way in one home out of five today—this includes old homes as well as new.

As for lights that come built in kitchen appliances—my answer would be "it depends." I find real advantages in the light inside the refrigerator. It helps to see those leftovers that always get pushed to the rear. On the other hand, I have seldom seen a light on top of a stove that was more than a gadget. One reason for this is that the back panel of a stove isn't usually high enough to give a good place for a working light.

Be a Lamplighter—Because table lamps complete and trim a room, they are what we are most apt to think of when we speak of an attractively-lighted house.

There are a handful of rules for selecting table lamps that should help make your choice easier. Naturally, they must be in keeping with the room in formality and general feeling. Next, a lamp should be in proportion to the table it is to be put on, and in pleasant relationship to the size of the other furniture. Be sure every lamp is high *(Continued on page 104)*

THE WESTERNER

He came up from behind me, his wide-brimmed hat pushed back on his head so I'd be sure to see the way his eyes were hard and unfriendly. His hands were hanging limply, almost apelike at his sides, and I could see that his gun belt was at exactly the right angle for a quick draw.

I knew him well enough to realize that he wanted me to see these things. He could have come up on me with his gun leveled. But that was not his way. He just wanted me to know—he was ready.

I saw this in the mirror, but I went on shaving, simply nodding to him.

"'Morning, Shorty," I said.

"Nothing good about it," he answered.

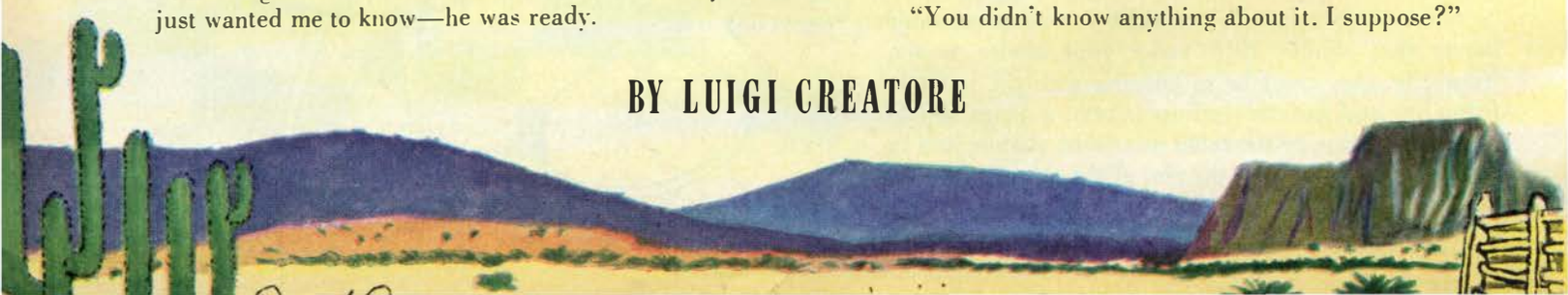
I was silent for a moment. "How are things on the range?"

"Another raid last night," he informed me quietly. "Twenty head of Herefords this time."

"That so?"

"You didn't know anything about it, I suppose?"

BY LUIGI CREATORE



"No. Of course not." I said evenly. "Anything else on your mind?"

"Yep," he said, changing his tone abruptly. "Cook said breakfast is ready. We better mosey on down to the chuck wagon."

I rinsed my face with cold water. He said nothing else, waiting for me to ask the next question.

"Any clues?"

"Not a thing," he said. "Leastwise nothing you could put your hands on. But I know who did it."

"Who's that?"

"Miguel," he said. "He's that Mexican fella—"

"I know who Miguel is," I said. I didn't know him well, but I had seen him a few times. He and his family had taken the old Bertram place some months ago. They'd gone to work with hammer and nails, paint brushes and buckets, and turned one of the sorriest spectacles in the county into the cleanest, prettiest home you'd ever want to see.

"What makes you think it's Miguel?" I asked as we sat down to breakfast.

"He's a Mexican," Shorty said. "You can't trust 'em."

"Is that all you've got against him?"

"That's enough for me."

I wanted to reach across the table and shake him till his boots rattled.

"Look, Shorty—"

"Pardner," he interrupted, "I'm formin' a posse to get that critter. And when we rope him there's gonna be a hangin'—"

Cook came in then with a platter of pancakes.

"All right, cowpokes," she said. "How many times have I told you I don't want talk of shootin' or hangin' at the table?"

"But this is serious," Shorty said.

"It is," I agreed.

"I don't care if the whole ranch was rustled out from under your noses," Cook said. "You're not to talk about it at my table. And that's final."

"Yes, ma'am," Shorty said.

Cook was only a young girl. Pretty for these parts. Pretty for any parts, the way I looked at it. But she knew how to turn Shorty from a toughened gun-slinger into a gentle calf.

The only damage done within the next fifteen minutes was to Cook's pancakes, for which Shorty and I both had a special hankerin'. After breakfast I finished dressing and got ready for the day's work.

This thing with Shorty was bothering me quite a bit. Not the hanging part. Shorty was always forming a posse to run down some varmint. Guess he was a natural-born leader that way.

But I didn't like his reason for going after Miguel.

Shorty was leaning on the gate-post when I came out, one hand on the butt of his gun.

"What you doing here, Shorty?" I asked.

"Miguel comes by here every morning," he said. "Figured I could take him myself."

"Shorty," I said, "you're not sure it was Miguel that rustled the cattle."

"Yep, I'm sure."

"But why?" I insisted. "You said yourself there were no clues."

"I got it in mind the Mexican did it," Shorty said. Then he stiffened. "Don't move," he cautioned me. "That's him coming down the road now."

I followed his gaze and saw the lone figure of Miguel coming toward us. It was up to me to stop Shorty from making a mistake he would carry with him the rest of his life.

"Shorty," I said, "you're wrong."

"It's him that's wrong."

"No," I said. "Miguel didn't do it. He didn't rustle the cattle."

Shorty turned and eyed me suspiciously.

"What makes you so sure?"

"Best reason in the world," I said.

"I'm listening."

"Rustled 'em myself," I said flatly. I saw his gun-hand tighten around his revolver. "I'm not carrying my guns," I added quickly.

"Lucky thing you're not," he said. Then a puzzled look came on his face. "But . . . but *you* can't be a cattle-thief."

"Why not?"

"You're the foreman," he shouted unbelievingly. "You were my pal!"

More than anything, it hurt me to see Shorty let down like this. But it was the only way.

We heard Miguel's greeting as he passed the gate. Shorty turned and waved to him.

"Guess you were wrong about Miguel," I said.

"Couldn't have been more off the track," Shorty admitted.

"Guess you have to judge people all by themselves, and not by where they come from," I went on.

Shorty glared at me. "Guess a rattlesnake is a rattlesnake in any country," he said.

"Guess so," I said. I was in bad with Shorty. It's not a pleasant feeling to have an eight-year-old look at you the way Shorty was looking at me. Nobody wants his own child to think badly of him.

We stood silently for a moment, neither of us knowing what to do next. Then Cook came out and took over.

"You cowpokes better break it up," she said. She kissed me hurriedly. "You'll be late to work," she warned. "And I have to take young Hopalong to school."

I watched them walking down the street together. Then the gunfighter let go of his mother's hand and ran ahead—to catch up with Miguel. It was all right, then.

And I knew what *I* had to do. I hoped the store still had that toy replica of a Mexican rancho; it wouldn't be hard to stock it with twenty head of Herefords and have the whole thing put together before Shorty's bedtime. . . . THE END

A SHORT SHORT STORY COMPLETE IN THESE TWO PAGES

THIS IS THE

The entire Conkle family keeps busy and happy by selling neighbors' handicrafts in their own Carolina living-room shop

After four active years of Navy duty in the Pacific, Hank Conkle, a former schoolteacher, chose to move his wife and his daughter, whom he had never seen until she was two, to the little crossroads community of Cashiers, North Carolina, just south of Asheville and situated on top of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

There, in near-perfect climate, Hank felt he'd have the chance to get better acquainted with little Nancy, and to work closely with Dottie on something they both could do and enjoy together.

With the aid of a GI loan, Hank planned a house to be laid out on typical mountain-cabin lines. Then he got some mountaineers to help him. "That way," explains Hank, "I got to know and like my neighbors real well. They

BY MAX de NOVELLIS

Photos by Scott-d'Arasien and Charles J. Wick, II

Hank and Dottie, making regular calls on mountain craftsmen who make most of shop's items, watch Mrs. Buchanan weave straw table mats.

Cornshuck dolls, originally for mountain children, attract tourists for their quaintness.

Delicious preserves in the confection department are made by Dottie's mother, Mrs. Smith. Some 10,000 bottles are put up yearly.

Sweater girl smiles approval of her choice. *Below,* Hank explains use of unusual table centerpiece. The Conkles have nothing in the store they wouldn't have in their own home.

Dottie inspects copper and aluminum tray and dishes being made by Mrs. L. A. Ammon. Mrs Conkle often makes use of her artistic flair to give advice on color and design on most of handmade articles.

Large Hadley Pottery plate is among the distinctive gifts sold.

include some of the most interesting people on the face of the earth."

Though the Conkles had no previous business experience, they were intrigued with the idea of opening a gift shop in their pine-paneled living room with its great stone fireplace. While Hank built. Dottie scoured the countryside and persuaded native craftsmen to let them turn their handiwork into profits. Either they would succeed. or else sell the house, and Hank would go back to teaching.

By year's end they forgot about everything but adding to their stock. Now in their sixth year, the Carolina Mountain Shop not only keeps them busy, but 16 neighboring families as well. Nancy, now seven, and three-year-old Johnny help with toy buying —Johnny runs a real proving ground. Dottie's mother, Mrs. Smith, who now lives next door, has added her fine preserves. Mr. Smith's hobby, collecting rare mountain stones, amounts to more than a mere pastime.

Buying only things they'd like for their own home, the Conkles seek to increase business by that rule. And to a partial list which includes baskets, jewelry, pottery, linens and towels, they have even added mink collars made from mink raised on the only farm of its kind in the South.

"We're independent," says Hank, "and we can live and work together with our children. What more would anyone want?" . . . THE END

Jim McCall *(above)*, a typical mountaineer handicrafter, makes a sale of his basketware to Anna Deyermond, salesgirl. Dottie looks on. *Below*, exterior of the Carolina Mountain Shop; neighbors helped Hank build it.

He Was Kissed By the PTA

Like many a husband, Henry Toy, Jr., was talked into attending a school meeting. The experience changed his whole life

Betty Toy put down her fork, absent-mindedly told Jeffrey to stop eating with his fingers, and said, "There's a Parent-Teachers meeting tonight, dear."

Henry Toy, Jr., a vigorous young man with a crew haircut, put on his influencing-people smile. "Good!" he said. "Always glad to see you keeping up with those things. Have a nice time."

"I will. I'm in the quarter-finals of my bowling league tonight. *You're* going to the meeting. And for goodness sake, keep your mouth shut."

You've heard of people who were kissed by Fortune—well, Henry Toy was kissed by that PTA meeting. It started a chain of events that completely changed his life when, three years later, it lifted him out of his comfortable job and placed him at the head of a nation-wide organization which President James B. Conant of Harvard called "potentially the most important move for the advancement of public education in the last fifty years."

Today at thirty-five, Henry is executive director of the National Citizens Commission for the Public Schools. It was the things that Henry did and learned as a result of that PTA meeting that fitted him to do an outstanding job in his present post: and the chances are pretty good that because of what he's doing your kid is going to get a better education.

Before the meeting Henry was a typical young businessman with a good job as a metals-buyer with the DuPont Company of Wilmington, Delaware, and a nice-but-not-gaudy home in the suburbs. Like most first-home owners he spent his nights painting, papering and generally fixing up the house in Oak Grove, a suburb of Wilmington, and his week-ends fooling with his two boys or shoot-

BY ANDRÉ FONTAINE

PHOTO BY LEO CHOPLIN

ing a little golf with a couple of guys from the office or the breeze with a couple of neighbors. He avoided PTA meetings just as ingeniously as you or I do.

But one evening in September, 1946, he was mousetrapped. He went to the meeting determined to (1) keep his mouth shut and (2) find a seat behind a post. But all the seats behind posts were already filled by other fathers, so Henry had to sit out in plain sight of the speakers' stand.

Soon after the meeting was called to order, the school principal made a plea for higher teachers' salaries, and the group's president asked for some comment by parents. No response. He looked around the room, picked out Henry Toy and said, "How about you, sir?" His throat frozen and his hands trembling, Henry stood up and said he also thought salaries ought to be raised. Thus, within a remarkably short time, he was head of a committee-to-do-something-about-it.

Henry believes in action; he called the first committee meeting for the very next night, and immediately began to realize how little he knew about the job he'd been given. The committee knew that Oak Grove salaries were so low—from $1.200 to $2.600 a year—that fully-qualified teachers went elsewhere, and the school had to take half-trained substitutes. But no one knew exactly how the school was financed, what laws it operated under, or much of anything else. Henry determined to find out.

In the next few days he learned that though the school's money was raised by local taxes, it was all sent to the state, which then doled it out to the various localities. As a result, local citizens had little or no say in how it should be spent.

By now Henry was getting interested, and he went to see the head of the state PTA. And of course he came away head of a new state-wide committee. As he dug into this new job, two things became clear: low salaries were only one symptom of the disease that afflicted Delaware schools, and the PTA was not strong enough to do anything about a cure.

But Henry wasn't ready to quit. The thing to do, he figured, was to set up an organization of all the state's service groups—the Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, B'nai B'rith, American Legion, even volunteer firemen—which would find out what the schools needed, and get it. It was while trying to get publicity for the organization meeting of this new group that Henry was spurred on by a run-in with a newspaper publisher.

It is characteristic of him that when he wanted to get a story in the paper, he didn't telephone a reporter; he called in person on the publisher. Rather timidly he explained what he wanted.

The publisher wasn't interested. "You'd better give up your big ideas about doing anything for the schools, young man," he said. "You'll never get anywhere. Amateur do-gooders never do."

Henry's voice deepened. "Maybe we *won't* get anywhere, at that. I've always figured a town was no better than its best newspaper."

The publisher blew up, and Henry walked out, determined to cook up an untasty dish of crow for the newspaperman's dinner.

It's easy to talk about getting all a state's service clubs together, but how do you know what and where they are? Toy's ingenious solution was to buy copies of every newspaper in the state. Night after night he and the other committee members—and Betty—searched through the papers, picking out names of service groups and their officers. They wrote (and Betty typed) letters to each, describing their plan for a school council and inviting delegates to attend an organization meeting in Wilmington. They got out publicity releases for all the state's papers—and Henry went on the radio.

He'd never been in a studio before. But he went to the program director of station WDEL, told about his plan, and was given an evening spot a few nights later. He went home, wrote a speech, and, in the best tradition, tried to practice it in front of a mirror. But he found he couldn't read the speech and watch himself in the mirror at the same time. So he forgot about appearances and read the speech to Betty, who coached him over the rough spots.

When he got in front of the microphone, though, the old familiar vacuum gripped his stomach so hard he couldn't breathe evenly, and he stammered and stumbled through the talk until he was sure there wasn't a radio set still on in the state of Delaware. But he must have been wrong, because he began to get phone calls from people who wanted to help. Several were from other young DuPont executives or research scientists, and Henry began to put together the eager, brainy team that was to do so much for Delaware kids.

When the organization meeting was held, on November 8, just six weeks after Henry had gone to his first PTA meeting, delegates from 150 groups in the state were present. Two hours after Henry called them to order they broke up, having formed the Council for Delaware Education and elected a slate of officers—H. Toy, Jr., pres.

The biennial session of the Legislature opened on January 1, and by February the Council had whipped together a bill to increase teachers' salaries and other bills to correct other obvious shortcomings. At that point Henry learned how little he knew about politics.

"I guess I was stupid," he said. "I thought bills were introduced in the Legislature, eventually debated on the floor, and either passed or rejected. Huh! Our bills never even came out of committee."

Henry and the other Council members thought they could put pressure on the Legislature by a letter-writing campaign. The various service organizations got members all over the state to write their representatives, and the capital was nearly snowed under with letters. Henry learned what a waste it had been one night when he called on his own senator to plead for the Council bills.

The senator listened politely, then said, "Come here—I want to show you something." He led Henry into the next room and pointed to a huge pile of mail. "All those letters are from people who want me to vote for your bills. How can I fail to follow the wishes of my constituents?"

The next day he voted with the administration—and *against* the Council.

Nevertheless Council pressure forced one slight concession. The administration had put up its own bill increasing teachers' salaries from an average of about $1.800 to about $2.000. The Council wanted one of at least $2.400 to bring Delaware salaries up on a par with those in neighboring New Jersey and Pennsylvania, because higher salaries were luring all the good teachers into those states. The administration bill couldn't—and didn't—stop the migration. In a final effort to get the higher figure into the bill, Henry tried to see Governor Walter Bacon.

He wrote for an appointment and was told it wasn't proper for the governor to discuss matters that were pending before the Legislature, but that when the bill came to him for signature he'd be glad to hear arguments pro and con. So the day the bill was passed, Henry phoned Bacon, who told him to come on down to Dover.

Henry picked up John Roman, a real-estate man from New Castle who was head of the Council's legislative committee, and they rushed down, preparing their arguments all the way. When they were ushered in, the governor immediately pulled the rug from under them by announcing that while he wanted to keep his promise to hear arguments, he'd already decided to sign the bill as is. After that there wasn't much use talking, but they made their case anyway.

When they left, the governor signed the bill and the Legislature adjourned, with the Council—and Henry Toy—beaten on all counts. A veteran politician tried to console him: "Don't take it too hard, son. You just can't get much of anywhere—I've spent twenty years trying to get enough money to fix the pipes in the schools. Take my advice and don't get too far out on a limb."

When Henry gets advice from a more experienced hand, he usually takes it. But he'd set out to do a job and had fallen on his face. The excuse that one man can't defeat a deeply-entrenched political machine was not convincing enough. If he had to beat the administration to accomplish what he'd set out to do, then he'd beat it.

He knew he couldn't do it alone—that only the power of an aroused public opinion was potent enough for the job. Because he has a respect for people, he figured that the thing to do was to get the facts and plaster them all over the state so often and so loud that nobody could miss them.

Now, anybody with any sense knows that you can't visit every school in a state. But Toy followed his usual tactic—a direct, frontal attack—and the result was spectacularly successful because it collected the facts and distributed them all in one operation. He persuaded the state division of the American Association of University Women to recruit 100 members who would visit each school and report what they saw.

What they found was appalling. Many schools were overcrowded, and in some

cases schools built only two years before were already bulging. Although the state Constitution called for "separate but equal facilities" for Negro children, the only Negro high school in the state was in Wilmington. Only a third of Wilmington schools and a sixth of the rest had passable lunchrooms.

But worst of all was the sanitary equipment. Only two out of every twenty-five schools had modern plumbing and washing facilities. One Wilmington school's washroom had "no heat, no hot water, no ventilation." One researcher reported "modern health technique impossible; boys and girls use the same outside toilet." Another found "toilet out of order for three years; odor permeates school."

A woman in a well-to-do suburb told her neighbor, "Why, do you know that only six miles away, the school is lighted by kerosene lamps and the children have soapboxes for chairs." And across office desks and store counters their husbands told friends, "My wife says that just ten miles from our town there's a school that doesn't have enough textbooks for all the kids—and our own school has a supply that will last ten years."

With 100 women and their husbands, relatives and friends spreading the word, a ground swell of indignation quickly rose and rolled across the state.

The Council for Delaware Education fed the wave with other facts and figures via pamphlets, radio talks, newspaper stories and speeches by members at club meetings up and down the state. A Joint Legislative Committee was formed of all organizations interested in schools. In a year of monthly meetings, it hammered out a single, complete program to streamline and modernize Delaware schools.

The program included bills for nineteen million dollars in new school buildings (only forty million dollars had been spent in the state's entire history) including two new Negro high schools, a uniform salary schedule for teachers and other school employes, a new way of distributing state funds that cut out political favoritism, and a plan to cut down the state's 126 school districts to about twenty.

The Council's decisive battle came, however, not in the next legislative session, but in the next election—of November, 1948. The school situation had become the big issue, thanks to Council efforts. The Council itself took no partisan stand in the election because it believed that good schools are everybody's business. But individual members got out and worked. In some sections they backed Democrats and in some places Republicans. Dick Schreiber, for instance, became a Republican district captain in North Wilmington; Henry, usually an independent, joined the GOP so he could support a "good" candidate in the primaries. John Roman worked high in the councils of the Democratic party.

And a few days before election, Henry cooked up a scheme to get both candidates for governor on the record. He wrote identical letters to them saying, in effect, Here's what we're for—are you with us or against us?

Democratic candidate Elbert Carvel went down the line for the Council pro-

TRAVEL GUIDE

Bargain Trips to Europe

For the vacationer with modest means, France offers tourists the tops in travel fare abroad

For young people who have only a two-week vacation and who wish to go abroad, the good news is that beginning in May, transatlantic air services will institute a bargain round-trip rate—$417 in the off-season months, November through March, and $486 at all other times. The rate from New York to London was $711.

With twelve full days to spend in a country like France, you can experience life at its very best. Nothing short of seeing Paris itself can describe the kaleidoscopic panorama of its every boulevard, its architectural magnificence, museum treasure houses, glorious cathedrals and gardens, its fashion-wise shops in the Rue de la Paix, the Bohemian night life of Montmartre and Montparnasse, and the out-of-this-world cuisine of restaurants in the Bois.

You will wish to spend a day or so visiting elegant Versailles and Fontainebleau. Then on to the chateaux-dotted Loire valley, "Garden of France," especially inviting in summer.

Since Paris is the virtual hub of France, a day's journey can encompass such widely diverse pleasures as an untouched Breton fishing village, magnificent Renaissance castles, cowboys in Provence or bullfights in Bayonne.

Tours throughout most of France are relatively inexpensive, and most include rooms with meals. For instance, for only $32 a person, all-inclusive, you can take a 2½-day trip to the French Alps, world-famous ski playgrounds, and the sun-drenched beaches of the Côte d'Azur on the Riviera, with its prevailing carnival atmosphere, its festivals and the glamour of Cannes, Nice and Monte Carlo.

Ancient Roman ruins are scattered throughout Provence. Add a visit to Carcassonne, most perfect of medieval fortress towns, before you venture on to the Pyrenees, famous for local traditions, baths and spas. Lourdes is the great spiritual mecca and Biarritz the ultimate in beach resorts.

In Brittany, Mont-Saint-Michel and the strange monoliths of Carnac are eminently worth-while. The religious "Pardons" (May-October) reveal native Brittany at its most colorful. You may want to visit the invasion beaches in Normandy; at least, visit Rouen, the museum city, where Joan of Arc was put to death.

In France, cooking is a prized art. Even roadside inns specialize in delicious local foods and exquisite wines. Hotels compare favorably in cost with those anywhere. You can live in Paris on $5-15 a day, including food. The "*logis*" throughout France are inexpensive hostelries ($3-5 a day), with food and lodging quite adequate, as any bicycle tour will quickly prove.

Rail travel is modern; busses link even the remotest spots. And nearly everywhere you go, English is spoken.

Consult your local travel agency for complete information.

gram; Republican candidate Hyland George came up with a wishy-washy statement that he was certainly for anything that would benefit education. Henry gave both to the newspapers.

When all the returns were in on election night, the breadth of the Council's—and Henry Toy's—victory was crystal clear; Delaware had gone for Dewey for the Presidency and the Republicans had swept most local elections. But the new state administration was Democratic—for perhaps the third time in 100 years. In almost every case, men who had voted against school bills in the previous legislature were out.

After that, the 1949 legislative session was almost an anticlimax. The Council program went through in a breeze, and assemblymen practically fought to get their names on the bills as sponsors.

Nevertheless Henry spent so much time in Dover, mothering the bills along, that he took a week of his vacation so as not to short-weight DuPont on working time.

The session ended in May. On May 26, at the Council's annual meeting, Henry resigned as president. "I was afraid that if I stayed on," he said, "the Council would become known as the Toy group. That would be bad, because its strength had been that it was the combined effort of many men, many organizations with different objectives, many different political factions."

For his endless hours of work, for his missed vacations, for the money he had spent on gasoline and stationery and shoe-leather, he received no pay, nor did he want any. "Henry doesn't really care much about money," Betty said recently. "What matters to him is doing the job, accomplishing things."

Neither did Henry have any idea that his Council work would further his own ambitions one bit. But a hundred miles away in New York, plans were in the making which were going to change his whole life.

One day toward the end of July, 1949, Henry's secretary in Wilmington received a call from Roy Larsen, president of Time, Inc. Henry, she said, was in New York—at the moment in the office of a supplier in the Empire State Building.

Larsen called Henry and asked if he could have dinner that evening with Jim Brownlee. Henry knew that Larsen was chairman and Brownlee vice-chairman of the National Citizens Commission for the Public Schools, and he figured they wanted to talk more about the Delaware Council's work. The last thing he expected was what happened: Brownlee offered him the job of executive director of the Commission.

Henry gulped and said thanks and asked for time to think it over. On the way home in the train that night he knew he was up against the biggest decision of his life. Methodically he tried to weigh the pros and cons. He was very happy at DuPont; he owned a nice house in Oak Grove and had a fine group of congenial friends. Jeffrey was happy in school, and young Hank had plenty of good kids to play with. Betty, too, was well settled and happy with her club work, her bowling and frequent rounds of golf on DuPont's 45-hole course. Henry had a big investment in DuPont's noncontributory pension plan, which assured him a comfortable retirement some day, and every year he shared in a handsome bonus scheme. (What he didn't know was that his boss told Larsen that in ten years Henry would be making four times his present salary.)

But Brownlee's offer was not to be kissed off. Salarywise he'd do a little better, although he figured higher living expenses in New York would probably eat up the difference. He knew that although his future would be less assured, it might well be even brighter. For he'd be working closely with men like Larsen and Brownlee, with Frank Stanton, president of the Columbia Broadcasting System, Neil McElroy, president of Procter and Gamble, and a score of other Commission members who were in the top ranks of American life.

When he got home, he told Betty about the offer and asked her advice. Her answer was exactly what it should have been—and no help at all:

"If you're happy from nine to five, I can be happy from five to nine."

The next three days were torture for Henry. Normally he makes decisions quickly, but this was a big one, and though he did his work in the office with his usual unruffled efficiency, inwardly he was sweating and fighting to solve his problem. Finally, on a Sunday afternoon, he made his choice.

Three weeks later he went to work in his new office at 2 West Forty-fifth Street, New York. The whole job of selling the Oak Grove house, of finding a new one and of moving the family, fell on Betty. She accomplished it with an efficiency and lack of fuss that she must have absorbed from Henry. She sold the house in a week. She made two trips to New York to look for a house to rent, and the fact that there weren't any houses to rent disturbed her not a bit.

Henry said he didn't want to be any farther than forty-five minutes by train from the office. So Betty went to Grand Central Station and got a flock of timetables. With these she figured the outside limits of her hunting area. Then, with the help of a car and chauffeur loaned by Jim Brownlee, she toured Westchester County. On her second trip she had six houses for Henry to look at—and she shrewdly saved the one she really wanted, in Mamaroneck, until last.

"She's always one step ahead of me," Henry said. "Any one of the other houses would have been satisfactory. And the last was the most expensive. But after I saw it I knew none of the others would do."

Betty packed up all their furniture, hired the movers, closed the deal on the Oak Grove house and drove the family to New York. When Henry came home a little early on October 14th, they were already half settled.

Henry, meanwhile, had dived into the new work with his usual energy and decisiveness. The National Citizens Commission is dedicated to the job of improving American schools in the most democratic way possible—not by pouring money and outside experts into a community, but by urging local people to get off the dime and get to work.

It does this in two ways: by conducting a full-scale publicity campaign, and by acting as a clearing-house of information for groups that have accomplished or are trying to accomplish something. If you, for example, want to improve your own schools, the Commission can tell you what your problems are likely to be and how other groups have met and solved the same situation. It gets, and answers, about 700 letters a week in dispensing this kind of help.

In all his speeches today Henry is an unusually effective persuader. The stomach-vacuum that used to make him stammer is gone; he doesn't even use a prepared text, but talks off the cuff and with a simplicity that is disarming. Though he got all A's, except for four B's, at the University of Pennsylvania (he worked his way through at night), he wears no Phi Beta Kappa key and makes no pretense of being anything except another citizen like you and me. People respond to him with immediate warmth, and Commission mail is loaded with letters that start "Dear Henry . . ."

Of course Henry Toy isn't the whole National Citizens Commission—most of its members spent a major part of their spare time fostering their baby—but you can get an idea of how effective they are by one fact: When the Commission was formed in May, 1949, there were about 150 citizens' organizations in the entire country working to improve their schools; last June, after not quite a year of Toy, there were more than 400.

So if your kid gets a better education in the next few years, you can thank Henry Toy's devotion and skill in spurring, directing and organizing the efforts of people all over the country. And Henry will be satisfied, because, you see, that's really the reason he left DuPont. After three years of working to improve schools in Delaware, he found he couldn't get along without the inner feeling of satisfaction that comes with public service. So now he is working for better schools in every state. . . . THE END

The Girl Who Married Her Career

(Continued from page 28)

merologist, who changed her name to Betty Hutton "because she needed a good five-eight vibration"—she fell in love the way coal shuttles into a cellar basement. The object of her slavish devotion was a struggling young attorney. After spending her savings and most of her salary renting and furnishing an office for him, teen-aged Betty discovered that her lawyer-fiancé wasn't all she thought he was. Tearfully but quickly she ended the liaison.

"When it comes to picking men," says her mother, "Betty can't get to first base. She's yet to come up with the right one."

Luckily for her, once-divorced Betty Hutton is blessed with both a resilient personality and a professional career which has progressed in inverse ratio to her romances—the less successful her search for love, the more successful her career.

In 1939, after she had amazed and amused audiences at Billy Rose's Casa Mañana by performing incredible gymnastics between vocal choruses—she would mug atrociously, tear up sheet music, alternately kiss and kick the microphone—Betty quit Vincent Lopez and got a job in a Broadway revue, "Two for the Show."

One afternoon the young singer called upon a lawyer—not the one she had loved and lost. While she was waiting in attorney A. L. Berman's office, impresario Buddy De Sylva telephoned from Hollywood. "I'm going to put 'Panama Hattie' on Broadway," De Sylva announced, "and I need a loud-mouth like Betty Hutton. Any floating around?"

Berman grinned. "Why don't you put Hutton in herself?" he asked. "She's right here in my office."

Betty lurched across the desk for the phone. In a matter of minutes she was set for the role. A few weeks later she was Buddy De Sylva's protégée. And in a matter of months, when De Sylva became Paramount Studios' executive producer, Betty Hutton was on her way to Hollywood, success and more heartache.

When Betty first arrived in Hollywood ten years ago with her mother, Mabel, she was terrified. To assuage her fright, she spent money she hadn't yet earned. She leased a penthouse, bought a mink coat on time with a $10 down payment, purchased a Buick convertible, and shouted that no one at Paramount was going to shove her around.

She demanded a dressing room as large as Bing Crosby's.

She yelled her food orders across the commissary.

She insisted that the publicity photographers tear up her first set of stills because "You've loused up my personality." In general, she carried on like a tornado; and had anyone suggested that here was a lonely girl, sobbing her eyes out at night, he would have been laughed off the lot.

One afternoon, Betty was running around the corner of a Paramount building when she crashed into Cecil B. DeMille, sending the Great Man down on his rear. "Hiya, bum!" Betty chirped. Astounded, DeMille got to his feet. He squinted his eyes, peered at the blonde bundle of dynamite. "Some day, young woman," he threatened good-naturedly, "I'm going to put you in a picture of mine." (Last year, DeMille finally made good that threat. He cast Betty as the aerialist in his circus story, "The Greatest Show on Earth." The film will be released in March or April.)

The same afternoon she knocked DeMille over, young Betty paid her first visit to the studio's music department. When lyricist Johnny Mercer politely asked, "What sort of routine do you do, Miss Hutton?" Betty leaped on Mercer's back and began slapping his sides. "Get it?" she shouted. Mercer, when he was able to, nodded.

In her first film, "The Fleet's In," the musical jack-in-the-box bounced about so feverishly that the cameramen couldn't keep her in range. Betty complained to Buddy De Sylva. "They're purposely leaving me outta shots," she wailed. De Sylva called in the cameramen. They had a valid excuse. "She won't stop for a minute," one of them explained. "This dame's really wacky. No fooling, Buddy—you oughta tell her to slow down a little, to mellow."

De Sylva came up with a now-famous couplet. "To be mellow, all that girl needs is the right fellow."

Betty tried to find the right fellow in Hollywood (and she's still trying). For her, it was like mining for diamonds on the sands of Coney Island. She started dating Sid Luft, currently Judy Garland's frequent escort. But Betty and Sid didn't hit it off, so Betty fell for a radio producer named Charles Martin. One evening when she was on a bond drive in New York, she announced it over the public-address system at Madison Square Garden.

"Ladies and gentlemen," she shouted, "you've made me so happy I'm going to let you in on a secret. I'm very happy to announce that I'm going to marry Mr. Charles Martin."

Betty says now, "It was all a publicity gimmick, and it worked." But this cynical observation may only be a way of avoiding a painful truth. As one of her girl friends insists, "It was on the level. Only he didn't care as much as she did, and it never came off."

The really shattering love affair in Betty's life occurred after she had become a full-fledged movie star via five film musicals and a Preston Sturges comedy, "The Miracle of Morgan's Creek." Tall, dark and handsome enough to become an actor, the man in question (who must remain anonymous) was the embodiment of all she had ever sought. Each time she looked at him, she saw him with her heart. When friends predicted eventual

Three-year-old Candice seems bent on emulating her famous mother's athletic ability, with a little help from amazed sister Lindsay and Betty.

disillusionment for her. Betty refused to listen. "I know he's married," she confessed, "but in a few weeks he's gonna get a divorce. It's all set."

"No one could tell her anything," says her mother. "Each time she falls in love she acts as if it were the first time."

The weeks mounted into months; the months stretched into years. In 1945, Betty finally realized that "He'd been stringing me along. It killed me. On the level. It really broke me up. I couldn't sleep. I cried for weeks. I'm a pretty smart dame when it comes to my career. But men! I just don't know. Every time I get up to bat, I strike out."

In September, 1945, after entertaining troops in Europe, Betty Hutton was married to a wealthy, 28-year-old Chicago camera manufacturer, Ted Briskin. A few months previously, Ted had met her at the Singapore, a Chicago restaurant, had later courted and argued with her in New York, and had finally proposed by an overseas cable which read: PLEASE SEND SIZE OF THIRD FINGER LEFT HAND.

They were married in Chicago. Betty quickly wired Ray Moyer, a Paramount set decorator: REDO A BEDROOM IN MY HOUSE FOR A MAN. They moved into Betty's home in Brentwood, and separated after six months when Briskin suggested that Betty give up her career. Betty refused, explaining to Ted that she couldn't abandon her career for any man. Briskin said he understood, and set up a camera-manufacturing company in Santa Monica. A reconciliation was effected, and the marriage was blessed with two girls: Lindsay Diane, now 4½, and Candice, 3.

Last April, Betty filed for divorce, charging mental cruelty. Those who know say that Briskin was too much of a man to take a back seat to his wife's career.

"I wouldn't give up my career for Ted," Betty explains honestly, "and I won't give it up for any guy. They don't know what I've gone through to get where I am. I've been working since I was three years old. The punishment I've taken, singing on street corners, the abuse, the poverty, the lousy breaks, all those years. Give that up now when I've finally made the grade? No guy can ask me to do that.

"Nobody loves love more than me. Nobody'd rather be happily married. But I just can't give up my career. Not now or ever. When I've finished a picture and it's good and I see my name up there in lights, I get a kinda glow. I can't explain it. It makes me feel warm all over, as if my soul is smiling. It's my whole life. I can't help it. No, sir. I'd sooner give up an arm."

The explanation of Betty's vehement refusal to abandon her career undoubtedly can be found in her background.

At 1:30 on the morning of February 26, 1921, Dr. James Elliott drove away from Number 12 Stone Avenue, the site of a soot-stained, gray frame house that stood between a cereal factory and the Grand Trunk railroad yards in the city of Battle Creek, Michigan.

The doctor was tired but feeling pretty good. It had taken five hours, but he'd just delivered a strapping baby girl to Mabel and Percy Thornburg, a young couple from Nebraska. Mr. Thornburg, a brakeman for the railroad ($75 every two weeks), had told him that the girl would be christened Betty June, and that she'd be brought up in a healthy, wholesome fashion by decent God-fearing folks.

Only half of what Thornburg told the obstetrician proved true. Three years later, just after his wife had lost a boy in a miscarriage, Percy Thornburg ran off to California, deserting his wife and his two daughters, Marion, 5, and Betty, 3.

When Mabel Thornburg got on her feet, she visited the local district attorney to charge her husband with abandonment and desertion. The attorney tried to have Percy Thornburg extradited from California to Michigan, but the deserter jumped the border into Mexico. Betty Hutton never saw or heard from her father again. When he committed suicide and died in 1936 at the Sawtelle Veterans' Hospital in West Los Angeles, he had never once tried to communicate with his wife or offspring. A story that he left each of his daughters $100 is untrue.

Betty Hutton, of course, has no memories of her father. Her earliest recollections are of mother Mabel working at a breakfast-food plant in Battle Creek as a box maker and food checker. Mrs. Thornburg's weekly salary at the time was $12. The rent for her house was $22 a month, and there were payments to be made for the family furnishings. When Betty's mother quit her job at the cereal factory, she took her daughters to Lansing, where she got a job punch-pressing sheet metal in the Oldsmobile factory at 16 cents an hour.

Honesty is one of Hutton's foremost virtues, and she bluntly admits, "That's how I spent my youth. We were dead poor. Never knew where the next meal was coming from.

"When I was 7 or 8, we moved to East Detroit on St. Jean Avenue down by the Briggs plant. Mom went to work at Chrysler's, 22 cents an hour—a tack spitter, spitting tacks. She trimmed upholstery. Later on, I began singing in saloons and on street corners. My sister Marion was the demure type—she never sang on street corners—but there were lots of times when Mom was sick and someone had to support the family. I've never forgotten those days."

When she was 14 and in the tenth grade at Marshal Foch Intermediate, she quit high school for good. Years later, when Buddy De Sylva asked her what she'd like for Christmas, she said, "An education." De Sylva sent her a set of 100 classics, which she began reading assiduously.

After several years of amateur-night contests, one unrewarding trip to New York, and singing sessions with pickup bands, Betty at 16 got her first "professional" job with a local outfit at the Lansing Hotel.

On her first night, Vincent Lopez happened to be in town looking for a new girl singer. He heard Betty and signed her to a job at $65 a week. "The day after," she says, "I ate steak for the first time in my life at breakfast, lunch and supper."

Less than a month later, when the Lopez aggregation was playing Philadelphia, the first cornetist called Betty aside. "This is your last night, kid," he confided. "The old man is gonna tie the can to you. Says you ain't got enough zip."

Betty was furious. Thinking of the poverty she would have to return to, she strode into a bar, ordered three shots of brandy, and gulped them down. When she reported on stage that night, there was no holding her. Pandemonium broke loose. Instead of singing, Betty shouted, stomped and shrieked. She jumped on the piano, off the piano, turned somersaults, swooped down on Lopez, lifted him off his feet. "I was so mad," she recalls, "I tore up the joint." She ended her act by launching a flying tackle at the microphone.

The crowd loved it, and the boisterous, slam-bang, lyric-bawling Hutton style was born. Lopez was amazed. "Why haven't you done this before?" he asked. Betty grinned and said nothing. "You were very good," Lopez continued. "But what you need, young lady, is a new name." Presently, he consulted the stars and the numbers, and came up with "Betty Hutton" and a contract.

Betty has come a long way since that time. Naturally she has been conditioned by her background to sympathize with less-fortunate people. She's very generous. But, oddly enough, Betty is not overwhelmingly popular with the lower echelon of Paramount studio employees.

One studio executive explains it this way: "Betty is so obsessed with her career that she likes to deal only with people of talent—people from whom she can learn something. Let her get hold of a top director or cameraman, and she'll drive him nuts. She'll hold on for dear life, sponging up every bit of knowledge the guy has to offer. Outside of her mother and her two kids, the girl's life is her career. She's determined to become the greatest entertainer in the world, and she won't let anything stand in her way.

"A year before he died, Buddy De Sylva, who really launched her out here, sent Betty a script. She didn't like it, and she turned him down cold. After that they didn't speak. She'll do anything to get what she considers a good part, and in this town little people don't control good parts."

A case in point is how Betty maneuvered C. B. DeMille into giving her the female lead in "The Greatest Show on Earth."

Last year she heard that DeMille was casting his circus story and went around to see him. "Yes," said C. B., "there are two great woman roles in this picture—the elephant girl and the aerialist. I think you're just right for the elephant girl."

Betty was overjoyed. She'd always wanted to star in a DeMille opus. She kissed the great man and started for her dressing room, bubbling with happiness. A DeMille secretary stopped her. "Did you get the aerialist part?" the girl asked.

"Why?" Betty countered. "Is that the top role?"

The girl nodded.

Betty was crestfallen, but not for long. By the time she reached her dressing room, she'd given birth to an idea. She called up a flower shop and ordered a tremendous floral piece made in the form of a circus. "I want you to make the trapeze girl completely out of orchids." Betty ordered. "Then send the whole works over to Mr. DeMille."

When DeMille received the circus made of flowers, he noticed the decorative concentration on the aerialist. He took the hint and phoned Betty, telling her he had changed his mind. She would play the trapeze girl. The floral piece had cost Hutton an even thousand dollars.

Insofar as her career is concerned, Betty Hutton is currently approaching the pinnacle. Having finished "Annie Get Your Gun," "The Greatest Show on Earth" and "Somebody Loves Me," she's convinced that she's entering an era in which the studio will star her only in top-drawer Technicolor productions. She's right. Three still-untitled ones have already been announced for her.

Since her career, however, is reaching a new high, it follows that the Hutton love life is approaching a new low.

"For a while," Betty admits, "I thought I had the husband problem licked. For a week I thought it would be Norman Krasna. He was one guy in the business who could afford to pick up the checks. Only he wanted me to soft-pedal the career, maybe do one picture a year. I couldn't do that. I guess no real guy is gonna be happy with second billing in a marriage."

What then is the solution to Betty Hutton's problems? A basically religious girl who reads the Bible before going to bed at night, she says, "If God wants me to have a good marriage, it'll work out somehow. If He doesn't, I can still concentrate on my work and my two daughters. Right now, I'm seeing to it that my kids get all the things I didn't." These include a nurse, an eleven-room Brentwood mansion currently being redecorated in French Provincial, scads of toys, and dress-changes five times a day. Betty's favorite color, for herself and her girls, is pink.

Unlike her older sister Marion, who gave up a successful career as a vocalist with Glenn Miller's band, the actress is convinced that her future is destined to revolve around her work instead of a man.

"People keep telling me," she asserts, "that a career is a very nice thing, only you can't run your hand through its hair—stuff like that. They ask me how long I'm gonna keep knocking myself out. I got news for them. I'm gonna be a second Sophie Tucker. When I get too old for the camera, I'll hit the night-club circuit. Spice up the lyrics a little, and Betty Hutton is good for another thirty years."

Her mother, who lives in a Hollywood apartment not too far away from her daughter's up-and-down moods, says, "Betty isn't fooling anybody. The reason she likes to work so hard is that when she's out there singing and carrying on, entertaining people, she feels as good as anybody else in the whole world. When you've been dirt-poor as a kid, it takes a long time to get over it. Sometimes you never do." ... THE END

BY IRMA SIMONTON BLACK

Keeping the Sick Child Happy

Suggesting that dolly is sick, too, can lead to all sorts of imaginative play to amuse your wee invalid.

A sick child is more demanding. Stay with him within reason, but don't feel cruel if you go away.

Every mother feels a sense of glad relief when the doctor examines her ailing youngster and says, "He'll be all right in a day or two." But her spirits may take a sudden dip when he goes on, "But keep him in bed — and quiet."

The question is — how?

The sick child, like the well child, needs activity, but of a different kind, and requiring different types of materials. These include small blocks, wooden beads and laces for stringing them, a pound or so of plasticene (clay with an oil base), small cars and trains, crayons and pastel chalks, wooden puzzles and picture books.

A hospital tray that fits over the bed and stays firm even when the patient wiggles, provides a good play space for small toys. A card table next to the bed makes a good source of supply.

A doll or a couple of stuffed animals will help a child to pass his time in bed more agreeably. If you suggest that the doll is also under the weather, that may start your young invalid off on all kinds of imaginative play.

All kinds of household materials may be pressed into the service of a sick child. Smoothly-cut cans of assorted sizes may be stacked or fitted together, playing cards may be sorted in various ways. Old magazines and Christmas cards, plus a pair of blunt-tipped scissors, provide entertainment.

A small phonograph and some unbreakable records will provide hours of pleasure for any sick child. The radio will help, too. You needn't be afraid that your pre-school child will become an avid fan to the exclusion of other interests. Once he is up and around, he'll turn to more active pursuits.

Try a change of scene occasionally. A youngster who has been confined to his own room for several days gets a lift out of being transferred to his parents' big bed for an afternoon. Or he may enjoy having a bed made up on the living-room couch, where he can see out of the window.

Physical illness usually brings on mild psychological complications. This is reasonable if we remember that to a child the discomforts of even minor illness may be upsetting.

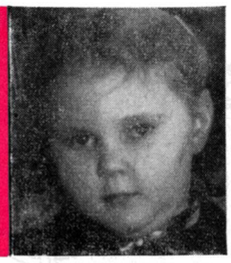
Even a very young child reacts to the anxiety you feel about him. You can't help worrying when your child is sick — but you can help him by soft-pedaling your fears in his presence.

Most children become more demanding during illness. You can help your child here by doing such chores as mending clothing or preparing vegetables in his room. But feel free to leave him when necessary.

The child who keeps busy during spells in bed will certainly be happier, and will probably make a smoother recovery.

And it will be easier for you, too.

She Found the Heart of a Town



(Continued from page 46)

their own. Jimmy came first, then Mary, and finally baby Daniel. As each child grew old enough to acquire his or her own circle of friends, Dick found his own circle of friends broadening, taking in first the kids and then the parents. Quite naturally he slid into the role of confidant, game organizer and baseball coach of the neighborhood Sluggers.

The story should be that in this happy environment Dick found his niche in life and prospered accordingly. We do have every reason to believe that he did find his niche, and we can also believe that in finding his niche, he knew he was prosperous. This does not mean he was rich in worldly goods. In fact, the time came when Dick could not make ends meet. His wartime job with Todd Shipyards Corporation folded, and then so did his job with Railway Express. His wife quietly resumed her career as registered nurse, working nights to save as many as possible of her daytime hours for the children. The kids of the neighborhood quickly learned that there were certain hours in which Mrs. Richardson was asleep, and they did their shouting elsewhere. Kids are like that, in Tarrytown as elsewhere, given a chance.

Dick got jobs all right—small ones here and there like serving on the Board of Elections or as a census taker—but these were merely economic stopgaps, having little to do with his real career or his impact upon Tarrytown. His real career was kids, and in Tarrytown this affects everybody.

So Dick was coach of the Sluggers, and his son Jimmy was catcher. Across the street lives Sydney Pollock, whose son Syd, Jr., was pitcher. It so happens that Syd, Sr., is owner of the Indianapolis Clowns, the formidable all-colored baseball team that has done so much to wipe out the color line in major-league ball. It was not long before Syd, Sr., was drawn into Dick's club as consulting coach, nor was Syd long in bringing in his next-door neighbor. Larry Hynes, a teacher of American history at North Tarrytown High, to help with the outfield.

Dick was not a big man, but he was solid, and suddenly he discovered sources of exuberant energy. Maybe they had been stifled all his life. Anyway, he expanded to meet the expansive atmosphere of good old-fashioned American living. Having organized one juvenile ball club, he had to organize another one to provide some equally good old American competition. This done, there was nothing for it but to organize a whole league. This called for help, so he organized the parents into a Dad's Club, now a powerful sponsor of youthful athletics in the Tarrytowns. This last season saw eight ball teams, including the Red Birds, an all-colored club, fighting it out for the juvenile championship.

Dick learned a lot working with the kids. He discovered in them a competitive spirit that even their parents were beginning to forget. For instance, for the last thirty-five years Tarrytown has been so solidly Republican that scarcely a Democrat has dared raise a head. It didn't matter to Dick that the Republicans had given Tarrytown as clean an administration as was to be found in the country. To his way of thinking, after moving in on his newfound heritage, good government was worth fighting for and it took two parties to start a fight. He dusted off the quiescent Democratic Party, breathed new life into it, and with a gesture more quixotic than sensible, tossed a full ticket into the last election. He was soundly beaten, but a grateful Tarrytown had learned more about local politics during his campaign than it had in the last half-century. If for no other reason than that, the Democrats will continue to remain a potent force in town life.

The trouble was that while Dick was fighting the good fight for Tarrytown, he was not doing so well in his own battle against the expenses of a growing family. He got a job as guard on the Croton Aqueduct, an important link in the New York water supply, but even with the income his wife was bringing in as a nurse, it didn't provide enough to keep up the big house and feed five children.

No one would ever know this, talking to Dick. Nor would he suspect it in talking to his kids. During their mother's absences, young Irene and Alice managed the household as a matter of course. Little Mary gravely took charge of baby Daniel as though that were the job for which she had been put on earth. The funny thing about Mary was that she was always having honors thrust upon her and wondering why. She began winning beauty pageants at the age of four, and there was never a time after she started school that she wasn't at the top of the honor roll or playing the lead in a class play. She just thought all that was fun, and went on seriously discussing the merits of various baby foods with Mrs. Hynes, and the significance of the pilgrimage to Rome with Mrs. Thomas Vincent, Sr., who lives across the street.

Maybe the shortage of money made the Richardsons a more closely knit family than most, but Dick would never have agreed to a theory like that. He was a great believer in the big-opportunity-around-the-corner, and given time, he might have proved his convictions. Anyway, he made a wonderful father, and when Irene became engaged to Bob Walton, and Alice to Everett Newman, both boys automatically assumed that dishwashing and baby-sitting were part of the chores of courtship. They, too, became members of the family, and remained so even when they set up separate households after their respective marriages.

"If anything happens to Dick and me," Mrs. Richardson told Irene and Alice, possibly as a result of some strange forewarning, "I want you to take care of the children. I know you can do it best." The Richardsons were like that. Even if Alice and Irene were not her own children, she wanted her own children left with Irene and Alice.

Though Dick and his wife did not know it, events began closing in on them swiftly after the first of August. The big house finally became too much for them to carry, and because it was a comfortable house in a good neighborhood, it was snapped up immediately when put up for sale. For the first time in a number of years they had money—something like $7,500 after the mortgage and all the bills were paid. At his wife's urging, Dick began looking around for a small business in which he could invest, either as owner or participating partner.

They turned in the old car on a new one, but the time for their enjoyment of it was growing short. Almost with its delivery came the word from Madison, Wisconsin, that Mrs. Richardson's mother was desperately ill. To Dick this meant only one thing: When a member of the family needed help, you helped. Right now.

Dick and Irene loaded Jimmy and Mary and baby Daniel in the car and started for Madison. At the time of their departure Dick was 47 years old, Irene was 46, Jimmy was 11, Mary was 7, and baby Daniel a scant 1. Their first real stop was at the home of Mrs. Richardson's sister and her husband, the James Nevinses, of Gary, Indiana. There they waited over until the flood of Labor Day traffic subsided. Dick didn't like to drive in heavy traffic.

Thus it was that they didn't resume their journey until Tuesday morning, the fourth of September. At exactly 10:15 A.M. they had arrived at the intersection of U.S. Highway 42A and U.S. Highway 30, just south of Gary. And at that moment the normal sounds of traffic were interrupted by a frightful crash.

First upon the scene were two men who had been having coffee at Arch Inn, on the corner. What they saw has been seen too often at too many American crossroads. In the ditch was a huge trailer truck, the kind used for conveying autos. And in the center of the road, some hundred feet from the intersection, was the Richardson car, almost flattened by the violence of the impact. At first glance it seemed that all in the car must be dead.

But Mary whimpered. "Mamma," she said. The call went in for ambulances.

For Dick and his wife, and sons Jimmy and Daniel, the ambulances could furnish no earthly aid. Mrs. Richardson and the boys had died instantly, Dick a few minutes later. Of the family group, only Mary showed a few feeble signs of life, and she was rushed in time to the St. James Hospital in Chicago Heights. The driver of the truck escaped with minor physical injuries.

Then, in the face of stark tragedy, wonderful things began to happen. As the newspapers and radio stations carried the story of the accident from coast to coast, the telegrams for Mary began to pour into the hospital, extending sympathy and urging courage. More than 200 offers of adoption for the seven-year-

old girl were included in the flood of messages. And abruptly Mary was no longer alone in her brave fight.

In Tarrytown the neighbors gathered instinctively to discuss the tragedy and formulate plans to help. No single accident in the history of the town had ever affected the hearts of so many people. Down on Park Avenue, where the Richardson children had been as members of the family in every house on the street, the sense of loss was particularly acute. One by one the women began drifting into the home of Mrs. Thomas Vincent, Sr., for years the central figure to whom everyone turned in time of trouble.

Slender, alert Mrs. Vincent, showing her years only in her graying hair, summed up the feelings of all of them when she said, "We all know that Mary's half-sisters, Irene and Alice, will take care of her, but Mary is *our* girl, too. I think all of us want to help in every way we can. So what I suggest is that when our men get home from work tonight, we get them all together at my house and start a Mary Richardson Fund. If I know Tarrytown, it won't let our little girl down. Right now I think we should see what we can do to relieve some of the strain on Irene and Alice."

Irene and Alice had been all but overwhelmed by the tragedy. As with most young married people, they were having a struggle to make ends meet. Irene's husband, Bob, was working for a construction company in the near-by town of Irvington, and Alice's husband, Everett, was driving a delivery truck for a Tarrytown grocery firm. Alice had one child of her own—Michael, born last July—and to meet this additional expense she had taken a job as soon as she was able, clerking in a drugstore from 5 P.M. to 9, five days a week. The girls are like that—asking no favors. Certainly they would have resented any offers of charity, but they couldn't resist the sincere offers to help that came straight from the heart.

The meeting at Mrs. Vincent's that night represented a complete cross-section of Tarrytown. Syd Pollock, the baseball-team owner, and Larry Hynes, the high-school teacher, were there with their wives. So were Frank Reel, national executive director of the American Federation of Radio Artists; Joseph Bonney, head teller of the Washington Irving Office of the County Trust Company; Miss Winifred Brown of the American Legion Auxiliary; Vice-Commander R. Judson of the American Legion, and a score of others from as many trades, professions and associations.

The *Daily News* of Tarrytown was behind the Mary Richardson Fund from the start, and with the first announcement that such a fund existed, the contributions began pouring in. The American Legion distributed coin-contribution boxes, labeled simply "Mary Richardson Fund," to all public gathering places. Joseph Bonney, named treasurer of the fund, rented Box 5, Tarrytown Post Office, in which to receive the mailed contributions, and was at once swamped as the town opened its heart.

In the meantime, medical science had won its battle to save Mary's life, but only a lot of loving care could help her recover from the loss of her parents and brothers. This began arriving at once in vast quantities. Dolls and toys by the score, from individuals, groups and department stores. A new fall outfit from Dr. Charles S. Baer did almost as much in saving Mary's morale as had his skill in saving her life. With this loving attention, Mary was eased over that critical period in which she learned that the father and mother for whom she cried would never again answer her calls.

"She was very brave," said her aunt, Mrs. Nevins, who broke the news. "She only cried a little bit, but you could just see she was holding back to spare my feelings."

On Tuesday, September 11th, a solemn, hushed Tarrytown paid final tribute to the four victims of the tragedy. As the long funeral procession wound through the town from the Church of the Transfiguration to the Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, all traffic came to a halt, and all businesses closed along the route. Four members of a family were gone. Not members of a great family or a famous family. Just members of a Tarrytown family. But in Tarrytown the loss was beyond measurement.

The responsibility now was to the living, and Tarrytown was aware of its responsibility. From the Duchesse de Talleyrand came a contribution, and one from seven-year-old Tommy Bruce. The grown-up Indianapolis Clowns ball team contributed, and so did the juvenile Red Birds. Then came contributions from the Dad's Club, the Postal Employees, the Washington Engine Ladies Auxiliary, the Riverside Hose Ladies Auxiliary, the Tarrytown Women's Democratic Club, the Professional Women's Club, and just about every other group in the Tarrytowns.

By the time Mary was declared able to return with Bob and Irene Walton, her fund was approaching the $2,000 mark and still growing. It was well that it had grown so spontaneously. A preliminary survey of the Richardson estate after the settlement of all debts revealed that there would be little left for Mary.

The desire to help Mary spread. A fund was started for her in Hammond, Indiana. Contributions to her fund came in from New York, Chicago and the West Coast. Don Ameche had her as a guest on his television show, where her winsome smile charmed all who saw her. The television producers, usually so professionally reserved, were overwhelmed by her natural graciousness, and they showered her with more offers of guest appearances. Only the concern for her health prevented her becoming a starlet overnight.

Through it all Mary remained her calm little self. When doctors advised against an immediate return to school, she contented herself with sending for her class books, "just to keep up, you know. It wouldn't do to get too far behind, would it?" Her sisters both had to caution her about overworking. Instead of their taking care of her, she was trying to take care of them.

The plans are now that Mary will continue to live with Alice and Everett Newman, her future assured by the fund that will be administered by a committee of her neighbors. Yet there is much more to it than that.

On October 13th Mary celebrated her eighth birthday. Present at her party were a score of her friends and classmates, and of them all, Mary was the happiest. It was not just the happiness of a child at a party. It was the unbewildered happiness of a child who had lost everything, and in so doing had found something else.

Maybe Mary couldn't know that she had found the heart of Tarrytown and the heart of America, but she did know she had found something, and whatever it was, it was wonderful. . . . THE END

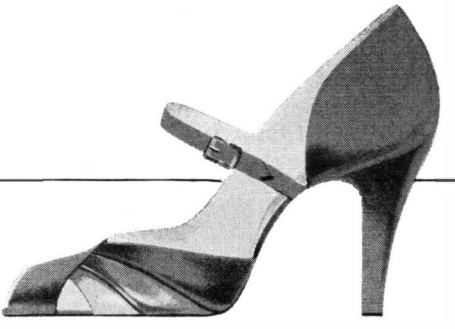
An avid stamp collector, Mary gets some studied attention from her brother-in-law Bob Walton. Bob is by profession a hospital technician.

Redbook Fashion Editor's  Spring Selection of

suit by Handmacher

"This spring, you'll find many new colors, new styles and features in fashion footwear. When the makers of Trim Tred shoes asked me to prevue their new line . . . which includes almost a hundred, smart styles . . . I chose these eight as my favorites. They are cued to the places you will go, the fashions you will wear and you'll get compliments every time you wear them!"

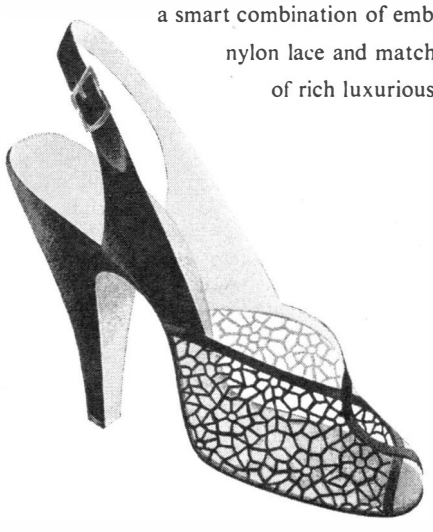
Ruth Drake
Fashion Editor, Redbook



Rhonda • High inside, exposed outside—its smart, wrapped vamp is accented by combining suede with polished leathers.

Danila • The classic pump in rich gleaming leathers with a jaunty piped-bow at the throat. Beautifully comfortable.

Whirl • Dress-up sling featuring a smart combination of embroidered nylon lace and matching tone of rich luxurious leather.



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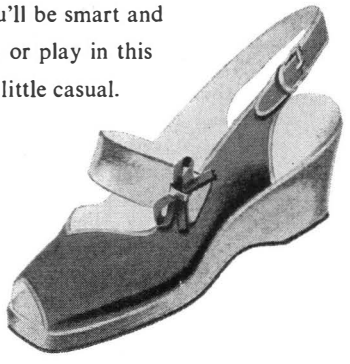
Fritzi • You'll be smart and gay at work or play in this cuddlesome little casual.



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Adalyn trimly embraces your ankles and wraps your peeking toes in smart, carefree comfort.

Oberta with its clever collar at the throat is a suit shoe that's smart, comfortable.

shoes shown are available in generous range of leather colors and finishes

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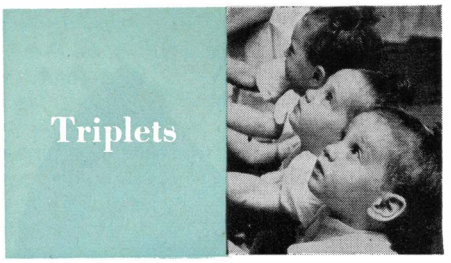


(Continued from page 40)

Jewel Herman didn't have all these facts at hand when she went to the hospital for her X rays, but she did understand that there was a possibility that she might have more than three babies.

"I can remember sitting there in a sheet and waiting and waiting (every time one of the babies kicked it spoiled the X ray), and thinking and thinking," she recalls. "I figured it meant roughly the difference of $100,000 whether it was three or four—since I'd heard what happened to a family with quadruplets. They had a house given to them, fully furnished, all clothing for the babies, free services, money for endorsing crib mattresses and so on, and that's the figure I came to—$100,000. I didn't pick it out of the air. And I said to myself, 'If it's going to be three, it might as well be four.' And even if it were triplets, I kept thinking to myself that it's one of those things you never expect to happen to you—to someone else, maybe, but never to you. You know?"

The very prospect of a multiple birth begins to complicate life for the whole family long before the thrice—or more—blessed event occurs. Murray grins as he tells the story about the day little Leslie was late for Sunday school. She didn't get into trouble, because the teacher thought she had a pretty good excuse.

"Pretty soon my mother is going to have several babies," the four-year-old confided, "and I had to tie her shoelaces this morning."

Murray heard about the probability of triplets before his wife, and he remembers he was sitting in the doctor's office and believes he was quite calm.

"I said, 'Well, what's the next step?' I guess I was stunned."

He found out that his job would be to see that his wife took extra good care of herself—no stairs, no driving, and, most of all, she must be kept calm and cheerful. Furthermore, he would have to bring his wife to see the doctor twice each week. One danger with a multiple birth is that the babies will be premature, and, of course, the closer to full term they are, the better, for they will be bigger, stronger and with all the "finishing touches" which normally occur during the later period of gestation—more fat beneath the skin and a better-developed breathing and sweating mechanism. They will, in short, be better equipped to survive. Only 80 per cent of twins are born at full term, however, and very few triplets or quadruplets are nine-month babies.

Toward the end of her pregnancy, Jewel was so miserable that she groans at the memory.

"It was like being in the ninth month for the last four months," is the way she explains it. "I only gained 20 pounds altogether with the triplets. I actually lost weight myself. I couldn't stand. I couldn't eat. I couldn't sleep."

It was a little less than a month before the due date that Jewel finally broke down in tears and hysteria in the doctor's office, and it was decided she should go at once to the hospital.

On May 18, 1949, at 5:55 P.M., in Polyclinic Hospital, Manhattan, Jewel was wheeled to the delivery room. With her own doctor and seven specialists and house physicians in attendance, the first baby was delivered at 6:07, weight 5 pounds, 2 ounces. Baby number 2 was born at 6:10, weighing 4 pounds, 8 ounces, and the third came along at 6:12, weighing 4 pounds, 4 ounces.

In the waiting room, Murray Herman, his face beaded with perspiration, first heard the news when his mother-in-law, who'd left the room for a few minutes, came back at 6:25 and said she'd heard one nurse whisper to another, "It's three girls."

"THREE GIRLS! What did I tell you!" Murray shouted.

He was thoroughly delighted at the news. After he was allowed to see his wife, he called his secretary and ordered cigars and refreshments for a party at his office, and three bouquets for Jewel. Naturally she still treasures the cards that came with them.

One said: *To Mother—and what's our names?* The second was signed *Leslie* and read: *Thank you for my new sisters.* The biggest bouquet was from Murray, and the card said: *Just what I asked for—four daughters!*

Less than 16 hours after the triplets were born, Jewel was up and posing with them and her husband for newspaper photographs.

When the newspapers wanted to know the names of the babies, the Hermans chose three from a list of about 15 they'd prepared.

"We seemed to have more boys' names we liked, so we took Jaimye and Randye, adding the feminine 'ye' ending," Jewel explains. "Vickye was for my doctor's wife. At the same time we changed the spelling of Leslie's name to Leslye so all the girls would be alike."

Even the problem of choosing names for triplets can be understood by any parents who have struggled over the lists when christening a single offspring. Of course, tradition says there must be something to tie together the names of babies born together—first initial, sound, usage. "Tom, Dick and Harry," "Faith, Hope and Charity" often have been used. One wonders, though, about the triplets born in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1945 when all was at its most cordial among the "Big Three." These triplets were named "Franklin Delano," "Winnie Churchill"

(a girl), and the third—yes, indeed—"Joseph Stalin."

But naming triplets is probably the simplest problem the parents have to solve, the Hermans agree, as they remember that, once the first few exciting days had passed, the practical worries of their situation, which everyone had assured them would resolve themselves, began to loom large.

At first, like all babies under five and a half pounds (which are considered premature, medically speaking), the Herman triplets were kept in incubators. But once ready to go home, the question was, where would they go? Frankly staggered at the idea of wife, nurse and four daughters in his three-room apartment, Murray made a desperate effort and found an unlikely-seeming but available house.

It was a huge old place and ugly to some, but a lovely thing to the frantic Hermans. It licked the first problem—space. It offered nine rooms and a large back yard. It also offered a leaking roof, bad plumbing, cracking plaster and peeling paint, and Murray had to pay for all repairs and decorating himself.

"We did business with scores of firms to fix this place up," Murray ruefully remembers. "I went thousands of dollars into debt. I'm not ashamed to say it. But at least we had a place where we could live in a decent and reasonable way."

Once the major problem of housing was taken care of, there were still all the others—all those, in fact, which come with any newborn infant. But the Hermans wondered how complicated the business of feeding, dressing, diapering, bathing and loving three babies at once would be.

Just what do you do when three infants bawl together, thought Jewel and Murray, and where would you get a diaper can big enough for three babies, and would it fit into the bathroom? Would the rest of the family starve while the old refrigerator was stocked stem to stern with bottles of formula, and could "demand feeding" work with multiple babies, or would all "demand" at precisely the same instant?

Jewel Herman can be quite blasé about such questions now that the triplets have healthily and happily survived the infant stage.

"You just work things out," she says. "Of course, it's hectic at first, but you learn a lot of short cuts fast. After a few weeks with triplets I began to think, 'How could I have ever thought one baby was a lot of work! What did I do with myself? What a snap that would be now!'

"Take feeding, for instance. Everybody asks that—how do you feed three babies at once? Well, they held their own bottles from the time they were six months old; the bottles were propped up, and they always burped themselves. It may not be the accepted method, but we just turned them over on their stomachs and pretty soon they burped. Then we turned them all back again, like flapjacks," she smiles.

"We learned always to be one jump ahead of the triplets. They were on demand feeding, but the trick was to anticipate the demand and never to let them

get too hungry. In fact, we tried never to let them get too tired or too wet or too anything.

"I must say," adds Jewel with a pardonable touch of pride, "they were always wonderful babies, and that's a great help. But outside of that, I would say we always tried to anticipate a problem, and we just didn't let the impossible situation arise."

But situations there were, though none impossible, and problems there were, and Jewel and Murray aren't denying it.

Take the apparently simple matter of refrigerator space, for example. The Hermans bought a new one, the type with shelves in the door. Jewel thought it would be ideal, since the door shelf could hold the triplets' 18 bottles of formula a day, while leaving room in the refrigerator itself for other essentials. She wept when she found that every time the door of this shining new expenditure was closed, bottles fell down and were continually crashing to the floor when the refrigerator was opened.

But parents of triplets become philosophical in short order. She shrugs.

"We just had to buy another box—a smaller one, which we kept in the nursery just for the triplets. We used the other one for the rest of the family."

Also in the nursery, Murray built a special closet with shelves to hold the 250 jars of baby food a month the triplets were soon consuming, and there was a special medicine cabinet for their staggering collection of vitamins, baby oil and baby powder.

"Honestly, I think that's one of our biggest expenses," Murray sighs. "Baby powder! Tons of it. And our drug bill for last year was $350."

There also had to be room for the 1,500 diapers a month the triplets used. "We were given free diaper service for a year," says Murray. "Now we use about 1,200 a month and get the service at half price, and it averages $15 a month. We were also given free milk for a year, but now we pay about $45 a month for the nine quarts the milkman leaves every other day."

The Hermans had two other important items of expense with the triplets—a special stove for the nursery, and a double washing machine, holding 18 pounds, for all the extra laundry.

"Between the two refrigerators, the stove and all the washing and ironing we do, our average electric bill is about $25 a month," says Jewel. "It used to be about $3 a month in our apartment. Our other big running expense is fuel. It costs $75 a month to heat this house. There are 60 windows, including the sun porch, and I don't think they ever heard of insulation when it was built."

The question of expense aside, Jewel and Murray at once bumped into a situation which has long baffled parents of triplets when they tried to buy some necessary equipment for their babies. There are baby carriages and strollers for twins and people seem willing to go to extraordinary lengths to build special vehicles for quadruplets, but it's an unhappy fact that the publicity value of constructing something especially for triplets isn't quite worth the effort. As a matter of fact, about six years ago a group of mothers of triplets, thoroughly irked by this fact, formed the Mothers of Triplets Association in an effort to do something about it. There are about 125 members now, and they meet in convention once a year. Between meetings they swap equipment, clothes and generally helpful information.

Murray and Jewel did find, after some searching, one small company willing to make a special triplet baby carriage for them.

"And I must say it was beautiful," sighs Jewel. "It was navy blue outside with a pink lining."

"And it cost $200," adds Murray with a grin.

And that was only the beginning. There were, of course, no such things as triple-width baby-carriage sheets, mattresses or covers. Jewel solved part of the problem quite neatly, using regular bed sheets and twin-size bed blankets. But a special mattress had to be made for $20, and the coverlet cost $40.

Furthermore, this behemoth baby buggy wouldn't fit through any of the doors and couldn't be brought inside, and so Murray had to build a special "garage" for it in the back yard—another $100.

Once this dazzling wonder was delivered, the question arose: who was going to push it? Murray, a completely devoted father in all respects, confesses with a slow grin that here he balked. The one thing he refused to do for his three babies was to push that carriage down the street.

"It had specially weighted wheels, so it was very easy for my wife to handle," he explains. "But it was just too darn conspicuous for me. For one thing, it only cleared the sidewalk on each side by about a quarter of an inch. It caused too much commotion on the street."

Jewel, on the other hand, admits she even enjoyed a little all the hubbub when she took the triplets strolling in their new carriage.

"People often stopped their cars to see the babies, and when I did the marketing and left the carriage outside, sometimes a hundred or more people gathered. One market offered me a discount to do my shopping there because we drew so many other customers."

Now that the little girls are older and livelier, they've been taken out in a stroller, actually made for twins, with a kind of tandem seat tacked on behind.

"But I can go only to stores with doors wide enough so I can go in with it," Jewel explains. "The babies are too active to leave outside now. Or sometimes I call to the clerk and ask him to come outside so I can tell him what I want."

The feat of dressing the babies to go out is, in itself, something of an exercise in perpetual motion. Just how do you get number 2 bundled up before number 1 suffocates, or get number 3 ready before numbers 1 and 2 expire?

"That's easy." Jewel smiles at this question, because it all seems so simple to her now.

"You just dress them in layers," she explains. "All the socks, then all the shoes; all the dresses, then all the sweaters; all the hats, then all the coats. Besides that, you keep the windows open!"

A woman of strong and positive convictions, Jewel is proud of the fact that she hasn't skimped on the dressing and attention to her triplet daughters any more than she did for her first child, Leslye. She does have a nursemaid to help her now, however. "And that's a problem in itself—finding some one to work for you when you have triplets! I talked to nearly fifty people after running an ad for a helper, and most of them hung right up when they heard the word 'triplets.'"

Jewel, with the maid to do the heavy work, manages the cleaning, marketing, cooking, washing and ironing—no mean task with a nine-room house and a family of six. But hanging in the triplets' closet are dresses as sweet and frilly as any two-year-old could hope to own. Of course, when it's the practical thing, they wear overalls and snow suits. But the three little girls are "dressed up" part of every day, especially if they have visitors. And here's an aspect of having triplets which can complicate life. Murray goodnaturedly interjects: "Unexpected visitors! The first year we used to have as many as fifty or sixty people drop in on a Sunday. Just friends and relatives and *their* friends and relatives brought along to see the triplets."

Jewel admits it's something of a chore to keep her four daughters dressed well, and she shakes her head at herself. "But that's the way I have to have it." She swears that the first thing she said when she heard she had three more girls was: "But goodness, I can't do all that ironing!"

Pleased as they are with their four dark and lively daughters, Murray and Jewel admit there are a few problems they haven't been able to solve yet, and that new ones do seem to crop up every day.

There are colds, for instance.

"On the whole, knock wood, the triplets are remarkably healthy," they say. "We had a pediatrician on retainer, $150, for the first year, and she only had to come to the house twice. But the common cold is really a problem with us. It's always a round robin. No matter what we do, a cold usually lasts about three weeks around here, while one baby reinfects the other."

A rather new situation, just becoming acute, is one that might occur to anyone who has ever cared for one lively two-year-old, much less three at once, just reaching the explorative-destructive stage.

"Until now, we've been able to keep them pretty much in their own nursery," Murray and Jewel explain. "But now they want to explore, to get out to the rest of the house, and we have to allow them more freedom. The only trouble is, once out of their room and they're off in three different directions at once, each one after something different."

Murray has partially solved the problem, at least for pleasant days. He proudly takes a visitor to the back door to inspect a corral he built in the back yard. It's a 500-foot-square enclosure of

wire mesh and wood, a fine big playground of grass where the triplets can safely romp and play.

Besides the physical or practical problems which harass the parents of triplets, there is the whole question of the kind of psychological and emotional climate in which they are going to be brought up, and, equally important if there are other children in the family, how they are going to fit into the new family picture.

Murray and Jewel Herman made up their minds early that Leslye would never feel any less important than her triple sisters, nor would she be given any less time, attention and affection than before.

It was realistic to recognize, of course, that three babies would make large demands upon the time and energy of their parents. So provision is made to fill all of Leslye's time, too. She goes along, naturally, on all auto trips, shopping excursions and walks when not in school, and on Saturdays there are art and music lessons for her. An intelligent little girl with long dark hair, Leslye has found that as the sister of triplets she's pretty "important" in the neighborhood, too. For instance, her entire school class made birthday cards and wrote letters of greeting to her baby sisters on their first birthday.

Of course, all the books and all the experts say that the babies themselves must have a sense of security, a constant amount of love, affection and attention. The question is, how thin can an overworked mother spread herself as she plunges like a porpoise from crib to crib, from washer to sink to stove?

The answer to all this, say the Hermans, is that love and affection need never be rationed, even if it has to be given in relays.

"Ever since they were babies, if we've hugged or fondled one of the triplets, we've given the same loving to the others. The result is that they know they'll get all the attention they want. In the morning when we pick up one baby to kiss—whichever one is awake first or first to reach us—then the others hold out their arms and wait to be taken up in their turn. The important thing is, we think, that they all do expect affection and that they're secure in knowing they'll get it, that it's there."

Save the jackpot question to the last, and it seems to startle a little the two normally glib young Hermans. They take a moment or two for serious contemplation before answering.

"Supposing you *could*, would you choose to have three babies come at once?"

Strangely enough, joined as they are in complete happiness as the parents of Vickye, Randye, Jaimye and Leslye, the father and mother of the triplets differ here.

Murray is all for a big family, spends all his nonworking time helping to take care of his daughters, playing with them, building things for them, and he'll tell you in unabashed enthusiasm about all their cutest moments, like the 4 A.M. they heard noises in the nursery and found Randye, the "leader," teaching her two sisters "Ring Around the Rosy," which Murray had taught *her* just that day. *But*, three more daughters, yes, says Murray. Three at once? No!

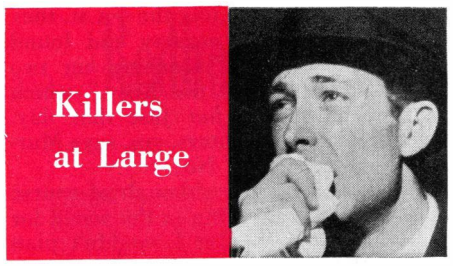
"I would say no, although of course I wouldn't take anything in the world for one of our babies. But I wouldn't plan to have three arrive at once, if it was a choice. Putting aside the expense, and you can't see an end to it—not for years and years—there is all the worry and danger involved. No, I don't think I'd go through it all again."

Jewel hesitates a minute, but her answer comes just as honestly:

"Well, in spite of all the work and all the sacrifices, I'd say yes, I'd have triplets. For one thing, I don't think we might have had any other children, and I love a big family and now I have them all at once.

"When I had Leslye, I used to sit in the park for hours, and I'd think 'Oh, is this the way I'm going to spend my life?' Since you do have routine and chores when you're a mother, I'm glad to have triplets; nothing with them is ever dull. I'm glad to be special. It thrills me to think of the future with them, seeing them go to school and to parties, taking them to the movies. Just walking down the street with my four daughters will be thrilling to me."

Both Hermans agree: "When you're having children, this seems to be the most exciting way to do it." . . . THE END



(Continued from page 24)

to the boss. Ed could see nothing wrong in taking such a job. He felt fine, and besides, the pay was good.

Incredible? How could Ed get out of that hospital uncured? The shocking fact is that it's happening every day in the week in practically every tuberculosis hospital in the United States. Patients with active cases, capable of spreading the disease in wholesale quantities, may discharge themselves as Ed did—or by simply taking French leave.

Last year 3,500 such patients, in the New York metropolitan area alone, loosed themselves upon an unsuspecting public. In Ohio, one-third of the discharges from state TB hospitals were in defiance of doctors' orders. Forty-six per cent of the patients leaving a St. Louis hospital did so on their own. And in one recent eleven-month period, there were 6.000 walkouts from Veterans Administration hospitals.

Holland Hudson. rehabilitation director of the National Tuberculosis Association, sums up this dismal situation as follows: "Departures from tuberculosis hospitals against medical advice range from five to sixty per cent of admissions. I regret to state that in most institutions such departures are at the higher end of the scale."

Thus, while public-health officials stage spectacular chest-X-ray campaigns in search of new cases, they allow the principal breeders of these new cases to slip through their fingers—with terrifying results.

There's the case of Dorothy, a twenty-four-year-old domestic worker living in an Eastern city, who, after a diagnosis of beginning tuberculosis, agreed to go to a state sanatorium. She stayed one day, decided she didn't like it, and left. Her local board of health was notified, but by the time an inspector called at her home a few weeks later, she had moved—without a forwarding address. About a year later, Dorothy, coughing steadily and showing a weight loss of twenty-five pounds, was admitted to the same hospital—from another town.

Questioned as to her whereabouts in that year, she admitted doing domestic work for two families, one with an only child and the other with three children. Health authorities checked the two households with trepidation—which proved to be well-founded. The only child was already down with tuberculosis, and, in the second home, tests showed that two of the three children were infected.

In another state, a girl employed as a dipper in a chocolate factory collapsed one morning with what doctors called a "massive" hemorrhage. She turned out to be an advanced case of tuberculosis and had checked in and out of several sanatoria in the last few years. No one will ever know exactly how many people she contaminated.

But TB experts do know that she and those like her are largely responsible for the 500,000 cases we still have in this country, and for 50,000 deaths every year.

Who, you indignantly ask, is to blame for this fantastic system of releasing these potential killers at their own pleasure? And why isn't every one of them rounded up and put under lock and key?

No one seems to know. Most health departments have the power to isolate active cases of tuberculosis. But few hospitals have the facilities for forcibly detaining them. It takes iron bars and twenty-four-hour guards, and hospital heads say they're not running prisons.

But even if the average TB hospital could hold an unwilling patient, it is not eager to do so. Why bother, when five or ten more co-operative cases may be waiting for his bed? Desperate shortages of nurses, doctors and beds have created long waiting lists everywhere.

The Pennsylvania State Department of Health, for example, says that 600 patients are being denied admission to its Mont Alto Sanatorium because there are no doctors or nurses to take care of them. Throughout the state there is also a need for 5.000 additional beds.

The U. S. Public Health Service reports similar shortages in nearly every state. California, for one, can use 3.900 more beds; Florida, 1,290; Illinois. 2,100; Alabama, 2,900; Maryland. 1,200; Arizona, 1,000; New York, 5,000. Only five states—Connecticut, Minnesota, Washington, North Dakota, Wisconsin—are in a position to take care of all their TB patients.

All told, there are more than 125,000 known tuberculars unhospitalized in the United States. In many areas they wait six months to a year for a vacant bed. In others, authorities don't even attempt to schedule them. In one state, patients are pushed out at the end of six or nine months, cured or not, to make room for new cases. These unhospitalized patients are expected to take treatment at home, and even if they follow advice scrupulously, constitute a serious threat to public health.

Nearly every sizable city has its headaches with these unhospitalized cases. Many fail to follow regulations intended to safeguard their own families. Others refuse hospitalization when their names come to the top of the list. And especially troublesome are the sanatorium walkouts who have returned home.

Large numbers of these recalcitrants eventually kick over the traces and disappear, to join an estimated 250,000 unregistered or unknown cases now on the loose. Freed of supervision, they seem to turn up in jobs where they can do the most damage—as laundry workers, domestics, barbers, beauticians, cigar makers and—purveyors of food.

A few years ago, when Philadelphia decided to chest-X-ray its food handlers, it discovered, to its horror, 771 TB cases. How many were refugees from sanatoria could not be determined because of their obscure background.

In the group, working as a dishwasher in a large restaurant, was a twenty-three-year-old woman who had been coughing up sputum for years. For the last month she had been racked by a severe pain in the chest, but no one had ever taken the trouble to ask her what was wrong.

Another young restaurant employee, also in the last stages of the disease. died two months after the X rays had ferreted her out. It's a safe guess that a good portion of Philadelphia's 13.000 known cases of TB can trace their troubles to this infection pool of 771.

When Detroit made a similar check-up, it discovered two hundred active and twelve hundred inactive cases among its waiters, cooks, grocery clerks, bartenders, dairy employees, butchers and other food handlers. The inactive cases are particularly dangerous, because no one knows when they may suddenly revive.

In Seattle, the health department reports that it generally finds twice as many TB cases among food handlers as in the general population. But at least half our cities, including New York, haven't the slightest idea who might be dishing out the disease across their food counters. because—believe it or not—they don't bother to X-ray their food handlers.

The weakest link in TB control. however, continues to be the hospital. Students of the situation are convinced that despite all the shortages, better handling of patients could materially cut down the number of walkouts. Dr. Stuart Willis, superintendent and medical director of the North Carolina State Sanatorium, says, "The Sanatorium has lost too often the opportunity to capture the patient's interest or to create in his mind the conviction that he is in a good hospital about which he could become enthusiastic."

In one institution, patients are told, "If you don't like it here, get out. We've got a waiting list of three hundred." In another, irksome rules are continually being quoted, like "Female patients must not talk to male patients," or "Patients are not permitted to wear make-up," or "Patients must use the bathrooms only at the prescribed hour."

Or they are told, "You're a charity patient. What are you kicking about?" Because treatment is usually a long-drawn-out affair, seldom lasting less than a year, few patients—about one in twenty-five—can pay full costs. In one Eastern state the various county hospitals charge anywhere from $25 to $87 a week and in some instances will sell a patient out of home, car or even furniture to collect!

In most hospitals, patients who say they cannot pay are made to sign a pauper's oath. Or they are subjected to a "means test," an FBI-like investigation of their finances.

A few states are beginning to see that hardfisted policies like these, which force many uncured patients to leave hospitals or to refuse hospitalization altogether, eventually cost them far more in relief, care for newly-infected patients and added misery for large numbers of their citizens. The National Tuberculosis Association estimates that the economic loss for each new case is upward of $10,000, plus an additional $10,000 for every relapse.

Long-drawn-out treatment usually means long stretches of idleness, too. When patients get fed up with a steady diet of checkers, crossword puzzles, radio and other time killers, they begin to look for trouble—and the exits.

A good occupational-therapy program—missing in most places—can head off much of this. Not only that. It can get a patient started on the new career he may have to enter when he recovers. His old job is very often no longer suitable.

Glen Lake Sanatorium in Hennepin County, Minnesota, has one of the best such programs in the country. As soon as a patient is admitted, a study is made of his school record, employment history, special interests and hobbies. When he is well enough, he takes a series of aptitude tests. Then a vocational counselor comes in and talks over plans for the future.

A training course is mapped out and started—bedside. When he is able, the patient attends classes in the hospital. Next, the state rehabilitation department and the Hennepin County Tuberculosis Association step in, help him complete training and find a job.

Glen Lake and other hospitals with similar programs—like Sunny Acres in Cleveland, and the Middlesex County Hospital in Waltham, Massachusetts—have among the lowest walkout rates in the country.

In the New York City area, where such programs are almost nonexistent, the New York Tuberculosis and Health Association is doing a good job of taking up the slack.

One of its typical cases is that of a Navy veteran whom we shall call Charles. Charles was only thirty, but he had a record of five hospital walkouts that extended clear across the country from Arizona to New York. When the Association's rehabilitation department made contact with him, he looked like a hopeless prospect. He had never been able to hold on to a job, even before his illness. An intelligence test, showing that he had a better-than-average IQ, surprised and impressed him, and shortly after that came the first change in his attitude.

Charles was persuaded to stay hospitalized long enough to arrest the course of his disease and, with the help of a hard-working psychiatrist, chalked up his first fully-approved discharge. During this last stay, vocational tests revealed an excellent mechanical aptitude, and Charles expressed an interest in television. Today he is a television-service expert, one of the best in the metropolitan area, and no longer a public menace.

Family troubles, which seem to multiply for TB patients, are responsible for large numbers of signouts, too.

A young married man hears that his wife is running around with an old boy friend. He begins to lose sleep, his condition gets worse, but he's got to do something and demands his immediate release.

A mother learns that her fifteen-year-old daughter has been truant from school and is staying out late nights. Someone must take her in hand. A wife's parents, who never liked the patient in the first place, persuade their daughter that she has no more future with him and should get a divorce. He's going to get out and fight it.

And the most frequent problem is, "How can I stay here while my family starves?" Just what the former breadwinner, in his impaired condition, can do about it he hasn't figured out.

A good social-service department can ease many of these problems and help hold on to patients.

Then, too, every hospital has its full complement of malcontents, screwballs and other difficult characters—those who don't like their rooms or roommates, the bed-rest cases who feel that nothing is being done for them and they can do as well at home, those who are getting not enough eggs or too many eggs, those who have gained a few pounds and think they're completely recovered, "climate chasers" who feel that certain localities can magically effect a cure, those who refuse to believe they ever had TB, those who are going to cure themselves by chiropractic or faith-healing, chronic alcoholics who sneak out for all-night binges, tramps who drift from institution to institution, staying long enough to fatten up or keep out of the cold.

And finally, most dangerous of all are the far-advanced cases who want to go home to die. They are highly infectious and often linger on long enough to spread the disease to most of their immediate contacts.

One of the most tragic and unbelievable cases on record is that of Alice, a sixteen-year-old girl who was dying in a Midwestern hospital. Her mother asked that she be released in order to spend her last days at home. This was the *fourth* daughter she was taking home to die. In the three previous cases permission was refused because there were several children at home, including, of course, Alice. But in each instance the witless mother had her way, and another child was infected. This time, however, doctors were able to convince her that the whole family might eventually be wiped out. Alice died in the hospital, but, had her mother so decided, the girl would have gone home to pass on her legacy of death.

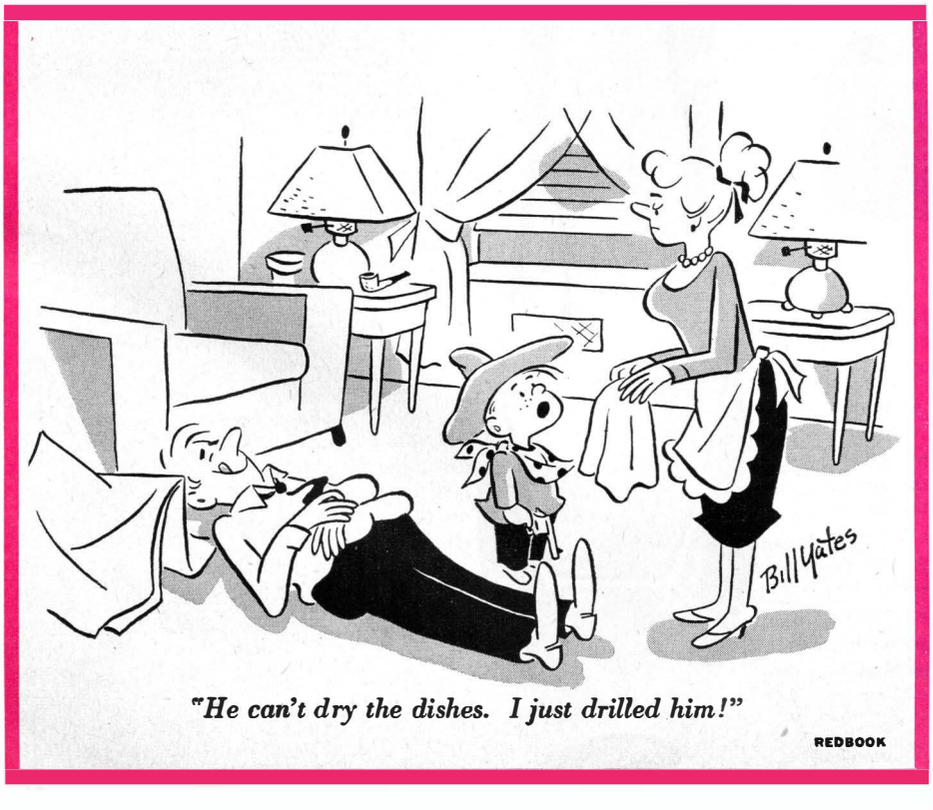
It's time these decisions which so vitally affect the public health were taken out of the hands of irresponsibles. It's time health officials began to get tough with these killers at large.

A few states have already begun to clamp down. California has just set up a detention hospital at Terminal Island, in Los Angeles Harbor, as a sort of Alcatraz for unruly tuberculars. While only about twelve patients are confined there at present, Dr. Chesley Bush, tuberculosis consultant of the California Department of Health, says, "Its existence has acted as a deterrent to recalcitrancy in many local areas."

Wisconsin sends its tuberculous bad actors to the Milwaukee County House of Correction, where half of the hospital unit is reserved for them. They are confined to cell-type rooms, but receive full hospital treatment. If they show a cooperative attitude, they are transferred to the county sanatorium but remain on the books as prisoners. North Carolina is another state which doesn't fool around with these menaces.

Forty-three states have the legal authority to do the same thing. Yet a recent check by the United States Public Health Service shows that only eight states are making forcible detentions. Probably not one of the others would permit a kid with the measles or chicken pox to sit on his front doorstep. Still, they allow thousands of active cases of TB to roam at will, spreading deadly infection wherever they go.

Until these potential killers are removed from circulation, you, I, our wives and children—any one of us—may suddenly find ourselves victims of this dread disease. ... THE END



"He can't dry the dishes. I just drilled him!"

REDBOOK

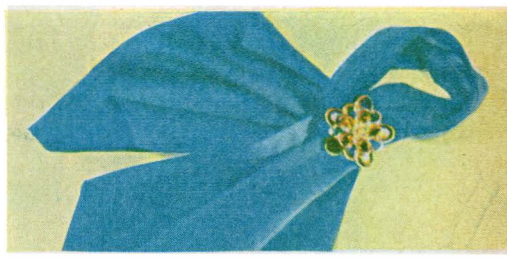
BY RUTH DRAKE

Fashion starts with shoes..

Shoes in new colors, materials and silhouettes give a magic touch to your spring wardrobe. Add pretty accessories—a handbag, a scarf, a flower—and a new fragrance

2. A jewel of a shoe. **(a)** Sapphire blue cobra pump with white kid frosting on the throat and vamp. Comes with high or midway heel and in many colors: red, green and turftan with white accents. Also in black and navy. About $17. By Laird Schober. **(b)** Matching cobra handbag with white frosting by Rivets, about $16.* **(c)** A lovely fragrance, "Something Blue" by Gourielli. ½ oz. bottle, about $8.50 plus tax. White lace and linen handkerchief—a perennial choice for dressy wear. **(d)** White cotton gloves with "artichoke" cuffs, designed by Jean Desses for Ireland Brothers. About $5. Pink rose by Flower Modes.

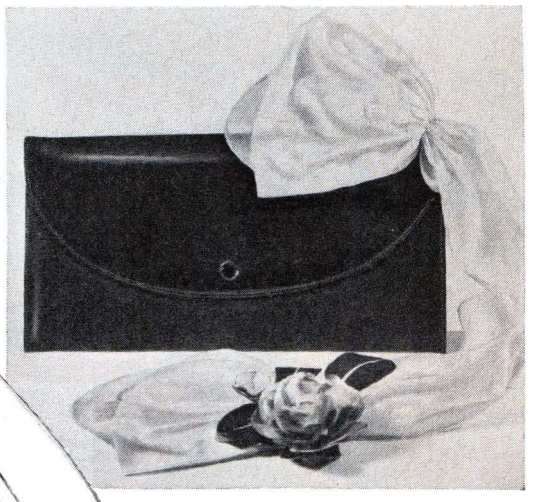
**Plus Federal Tax*



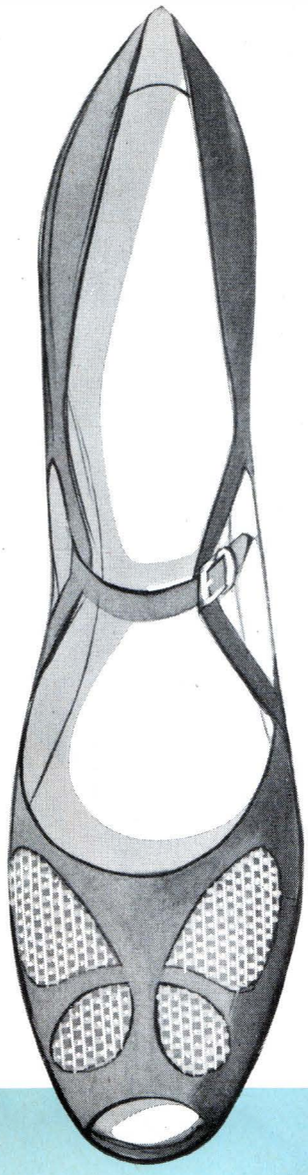
1. Pretty and pert. **(a)** Tweedies' brand-new flattering shoe to give your foot that petite look. Note the comfortable square-toe last. The pump is available in combinations of calf and suède as shown and also in red calf on navy suède and in tan calf on white suède. About $15. **(b)** Matching umbrella with suède and kid sheath by Loreson. About $17. **(c)** Glentex scarf, about $3. **(d)** Coro topaz pin, about $8.* **(e)** Pouch handbag by Coronet to match Tweedie shoe, about $13.*

3. Walk-on-air. **(a)** Feminine bi-tone casual with symmetrical stripping and featuring special Foamex inner sole to insure softness. In many color combinations of kid, also kid combined with suède, linen with white kid accents. By Rhythm Step, about $13. **(b)** Bracelet by Bill Agnew, about $5. **(c)** Pure silk scarf, new oblong shape, by Echo, about $5. **(d)** Cotton broadcloth blouse by Ship 'n Shore, about $3. Also other color combinations. **(e)** Calderon hand-turned bi-tone kid belt. About $9.

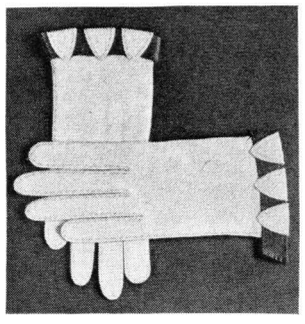
4. Alluring silhouette. **(a)** For afternoon and evening wear, a pretty sandal in violet and lilac kid combination. Also available in multi-colored kids and in all black patent and all black suède. By Queen Quality. About $13. **(b)** A lilac open-crown veil hat with a halo of flowers. "Little Lady" by Laddie Northridge. About $15. Also comes in pink, ice blue, white. **(c)** "Mais Oui" perfume — a delightful French bouquet by Bourjois. 1 oz. bottle, about $7.50 plus tax. **(d)** Elgin American compact, silver plated with rhinestone and blue stone center. About $10, plus tax.



6. Sleek and saucy. **(a)** Very new black patent pump with spindle heel and V throat. This dressy shoe also comes in blue suède, black suède and white linen. By Naturalizer, about $11. **(b)** Large black patent envelope bag lined in red faille. Also comes in white linen. By Coronet, about $11 plus tax. **(c)** Sleek white taffeta ascot — a flattering fill-in for your suit neckline. By Glentex, about $3. Red camellia for a pretty accent. By Flower Modes. **(d)** "Starch" (new color name) white pearls with smoke rhinestone clasp and matching earrings. By Michael Paul for Marvella. Pearls about $10. Matching earrings, about $5. Both plus tax.



5. Airy and feminine. **(a)** Calfskin shoe with dainty nylon mesh inserts and instep strap. By Velvet Step. In russet glow — a smart new shade — with natural-colored mesh. In black calf and black mesh, also in admiral blue and blue mesh. About $12. **(b)** Beige cotton gloves accented with brown. Also in all basic colors. A Jean Desses design for Ireland Brothers. About $5. **(c)** A twenty-four-inch hand-rolled golden tissue silk square to be worn with the new fake-gold scarf ring. Both by Emily Weatherby. Scarf, about $2. Scarf ring, about $4, plus tax.



7. Step nimbly. **(a)** High tapered calfskin wedgie — cushioned with foam rubber insole. The base of this shoe is stem green with powder brown and cream inserts on open toe vamp. Also in powder brown with gray and cream inserts, and black suède with patent inserts. By Town and Country. About $10. **(b)** "Pillbox" hat in wheat-colored straw with red grosgrain stripe. Also in wheat combined with black, navy with gold. A Sally V design, about $13. **(c)** Handbag by Town and Country in colored calf to match casual shoes, about $8, plus tax. **(d)** Cotton gloves match pillbox. Cuffed in straw and grosgrain stripe. Dawnelle, about $4.

Continued on next page ⟶

FASHION STARTS WITH SHOES *(CONT.)*

8. Walking beauty. **(a)** Open toe, sling back, smooth leather walking shoe. Wide stripping insert on vamp. Extended stitched sole and cuban heel. In russet glow, green or black. By Grace Walker, about $10. **(b)** Gold bracelets, about $4 each, plus tax. Fake-gold dachshunds, about $4 each, plus tax. Both by Castlemark. **(c)** Cotton knit turtleneck slip-on in many color combinations. By Helen Harper. About $3.

For the name of the store in your locality where you can buy the shoes and accessories in "Fashion Starts with Shoes" (pages 74 to 78)

FILL IN THE COUPON AND MAIL IT TO:

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Please let me know where I can buy the fashions I have checked that are featured in the February 1952 REDBOOK.

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MY NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TOWN _____

ZONE _____ STATE _____

Secret Agent in Apron Strings

(Continued from page 31)

Methodist Church in Chesterbrook, didn't know. For many long years Mary had to forgo the solace of religion, for good Communists don't go to church. Anyway, the church people knew her as a Communist, and Mary was not welcome in the House of God. Frequently, on church-supper nights, George or Mrs. Stalcup would go to church, pay for the suppers, then carry them home to be eaten in lonely, friendless silence.

Even if the cold looks, the lack of neighborly visits, hadn't been enough to indicate to Mary she wasn't wanted in her own community, there was the telephone—the party-line telephone. Mary, one miserable winter day, wished the thing had never been invented.

Her brother, Staff Sergeant Benjamin S. Stalcup, had been killed in action in Europe, and his body had been brought home to be interred, with other American heroes, in Arlington National Cemetery. It was a day or two after the ceremonies that Mary picked up the phone to make a call, just as the harsh voice of a woman on the line shrilled out into the room:

"What a hell of a thing to do!" said that terrible voice. "To bring that boy's body back home when his own sister is a traitor to the country he died for!"

And there was nothing anyone could say. For her country's sake, Mary had to remain, in the eyes of her friends and relatives, a traitor.

And so it was no wonder that Mary and her husband spent those years within a shell of their own. Though George had an excellent war record and longed to join the American Legion, he didn't even bother to apply. He knew the Legion's attitude toward Communists.

And it wasn't only the Legion. Mary, that Communist, wasn't wanted anywhere. *From the time they were married, in 1943 when Mary was just 21, until the late fall of 1951, a little over eight years, George and Mary Markward did not go to one single dance, party or social function together.*

There was another sacrifice, too. In 1949 Mary became ill, with a terrifying, helpless form of paralysis known as multiple sclerosis. At one time, for a period of weeks, she could not move a muscle. She couldn't even speak. Little is known about this dread disease, and it can not be definitely said that it was brought on by the damp and drafty meeting halls and basements, constant strain and exhaustion, or poor diet resulting from sandwiches grabbed on the run. It *can* be said, however, that these conditions surely didn't do her health any good.

Mary herself is the kind of person who would like to minimize those sacrifices. After years of dealing with people she hated, she has learned to bottle up her emotions. "I did nothing any loyal American wouldn't do," she says.

Mary means it. But how many people you know, even the most patriotic, would let themselves in for the life that Mary Stalcup led? She spent as much time at Communist headquarters as she could, during the day. She had meetings as often as seven nights a week, and, to keep her position in the party, she always had to be the first to arrive, the last to leave. She not only had to keep up with the changing policies that emanated from Moscow, but she had to swallow her disgust and her shyness, stand up on her own two feet, and repeat them. After the hours of party business were over, she then had to make her reports to the FBI, sometimes in person in out-of-the-way places, sometimes in voluminous handwritten notes, sometimes even in the form of official party records which had been given her to burn. The FBI would also furnish her with lists of Government employees and applicants, thousands of names, which she would scan to see if she recognized any as Communists. Over the years Mary identified hundreds of Communists. She also cleared many people, who could not have been Communists without her knowing it, from suspicion. She kept the FBI abreast of what the party would do next, and why. Her work was seldom dramatic, but it was of great cumulative value over the years.

And there must have been some danger, even though Mary scoffs at the idea. "Nobody would hurt me," she says. "And even if anything *did* happen to me, everybody would know who did it. They couldn't get away with it, and they know it."

Henry Thomas, a Washington labor leader who was trained and educated by the party but who broke with communism recently, is less sure about the safety of people like Mary, and himself.

"I've been to Marxist schools in New York," Thomas says, "and I've seen party goons who'd think no more of killing a human being than you would of swatting a fly. It's true that right now public opinion is against the Communists and they couldn't get away with murder, but just you let inflation run away with this country, or another depression come along, The great mass of people will forget then what they're saying about communism today—it's easy to forget when you're hungry.

"The Reds would get braver then—and that's when you'd find Mary Stalcup, and me, and other enemies of communism, with bullets in our heads."

When you hear talk like that about Mary Stalcup, who looks, honestly, as though running for office with the local PTA would be the very height of intrigue, you wonder how in the world she ever got mixed up with the Communists.

Look at the people she associated with. There was Phil Frankfeld, alias "Joe West," alias "Carl Franklin," who studied revolution tactics in Moscow, who served time in a Pennsylvania workhouse for inciting to riot, and who is even now under indictment on charges of advocating the violent overthrow of the Government.

Frankfeld was organizer for the party in the Maryland-District of Columbia District. He replaced Al Lannon, and was in turn replaced by George Meyer, both of whom are also under indictment. So is Roy Wood, chairman of the Washington branch of the party. Mary worked closely with all of these men.

There was James Branca, one-time executive secretary of the Washington committee, and Elizabeth Searle, the college-educated board member who worked from ten A.M. to midnight, seven days a week, for a pittance. There was Henry Thomas, the Communist-schooled young Negro who, with a handful of men, took over a local union with 300 members and delivered it to the Communist Party. All of these, and hundreds more, Mary rubbed shoulders with, day after day, night after night.

Why did the FBI pick her, of all people? We'll probably never know, but it was certainly one honey of a choice.

Mary was born and grew up in Chesterbrook, a village right across the Potomac from Washington. Her parents both worked for the Government, but they also kept a couple of cows and a small garden on their ten acres. Sunday evenings, Mrs. Stalcup would put gallons of hot cocoa or cold chocolate milk on the big old table along with cold cuts and garden greens, and tell Mary, her brother Benny and their mob of friends to help themselves. Mary went to high school in Washington and lost contact with many of her friends. After high school she went to a beauty college. By the time she was 21, in 1943, she was doing well as a beautician in a Washington shop and living in a small apartment in Washington.

That was when, out of a clear sky, an FBI agent called, made a date, and put to her the proposition that she join the Communist Party.

Mary, naturally, after she caught her breath, said she'd have to think it over. What she thought over the most, of course, was Master Sergeant Markward, with the Fourth Armored Division, then stationed in Texas. Mary finally decided she wasn't going to sit under the apple tree with anyone else but George. That would leave a lot of lonely nights. And so Mary became a volunteer agent of the FBI.

Then came the job of getting into the Communist Party. How in the world would you do it? Mary hadn't the faintest idea. She thought she'd better read something about communism, though, for a starter, so she went to the Washington office of the party to subscribe to the *Daily Worker*, the Communist newspaper.

"While I was there," she testified to the House committee, "James Branca and Martin Chancey were in the office, and they received me quite warmly. . . . They gave me an invitation to a party which was to be a celebration of a successful recruiting drive which had just ended, and a going-away party for Martin Chancey."

Chancey was retiring as executive secretary of the Washington branch at the time, and Branca was taking his place, she testified. So, with such an invitation, to the party Mary tripped. Again, from her testimony . . . "Casey Gurewitz and

Bruce Minton were sitting in the back of the room. They asked if I was a member of the party. I said I was not, so they said, 'Well, we will do something about that.'"

The clincher came when a customer from the beauty shop came up. "Mary," she said, according to the testimony, using Mary's first name as is customary in beauty shops, "what are you doing here?" Mary identified this customer as a woman named Mrs. Charlotte Young Oram, who, incidentally, had been brought before the committee but refused to testify concerning anything relating to communism in the District of Columbia.

The comrades, hearing Mary called by her first name by a person they knew, assumed that she was okay. She was asked to join. Once she was in, she was assigned to one of the Communist clubs, which in turn assigned her to selling the Sunday Communist paper from door to door. This was an onerous task that even the most ardent Communists frequently ducked, and the top leadership was quite impressed when Mary sold out, Sunday after Sunday. The fact that most of the papers went in the incinerator at Mary's apartment, and most of the money came out of Mary's purse, was something Mary never got around to mentioning to them!

So Mary got to be some stuff in the party. She became chairman of her local branch and a delegate to the city-wide committee. Then, partly because the wartime manpower shortage was affecting the Communist Party as well as everything else, she was named treasurer and membership director of the Washington committee.

Thus, less than a year after she was first approached by the FBI, the Communist Party itself placed Mary Stalcup in the one job in which she had access to the names of its Washington members.

Though she remained Mary Stalcup on party records, Mary had actually become Mrs. George A. Markward during this period. She and George hadn't intended to get married until after the war, but just before the Fourth Armored went overseas, George got a five-day furlough in order to get married. He went overseas not knowing that his wife was a Communist or an FBI agent.

But the secret could not be kept at home. Gradually the word got out, in Washington, in Chesterbrook, that Mary Stalcup was a Communist. It was not a sudden thing. It was more like ice growing on a pond, slowly, beginning at the edges, advancing until the entire surface is covered. So was Mary Stalcup frozen out of her girlhood circles. And she had no place else to go.

By the time George came home, in October, 1945, Mary was up to her ears in the Communist Party. On the very day he received his discharge, she was at a Communist convention. She told him the whole story, of course. He and her mother were the only ones who knew. There was no one else in the whole world with whom she could relax.

Mary quit work when George came home. He had been a filling-station manager, but, impressed by the building boom, decided to become a bricklayer. It was a pretty good decision; he now makes $28 a day.

Christine, a cute, chubby-faced, alert little girl, was born five years ago. Not long after, Mary and George moved out of their Washington apartment. George had been saving a good deal of his Army pay, and they had a nest egg. They built their home, a neat little one-story brick home with a picture window, in the shadow of the farmhouse where Mary grew up. Her mother still lived there—fortunately, for Mary and George needed a baby-sitter. Few grandmothers would envy Mrs. Stalcup—sitting with her grandchild while her son-in-law drove her daughter to a Communist meeting.

"Sometimes I'd drive her to the toughest sections of Washington—places I wouldn't go myself," George said bitterly, "and see her walk off, alone, to whatever hideout they were using. I never knew whether she was coming back."

George is a short, thickset man, more interested in mechanics than in political concepts. Mary tried to get him in the party with her, but it just didn't work. Al Lannon once called him "Mr. Stalcup." George dozed off at a couple of meetings. Mary tried to squeeze him into the laborers' club at a meeting held at Henry Thomas' house, but Henry's wife, Gladys, who never trusted Mary, told him to get out and stay out.

"Thing that really got me, though," George said, "was when we were in some Communist's house during a period when they were picketing the White House for some stupid reason or other, and a four-year-old kid was running around talking about how he was going on the picket line with his daddy the next day. Can you imagine that? An American kid running around talking about picketing the White House? It made me sick to my stomach."

"The reason George felt so strongly about that," Mary said, "was because it was just about that time that Christine suddenly walked up to us one night after supper and, out of a clear blue sky, recited, word for word, the oath of allegiance. She had heard it on a television program. Now, we know that Christine isn't old enough to appreciate fully what our flag stands for, but nevertheless, when she stood there, so solemn, the oath of allegiance on her lips, love for our flag in her heart, why, we were proud of her, and glad that we live under that flag."

"Yeah," growled George, "and then to see that little blankety-blank runnin' around yellin' about a picket line."

So George didn't go to the meetings. A typical Markward night went like this: Mary's mother would come down from her house after supper, and George would drive Mary the three miles to the bus stop. He'd get back home just in time for the fights, or a baseball game, on television. When the fights were really getting good, he had to leave to meet Mary at the bus stop. And then sometimes she'd be tied up, and he'd wait in the car for one hour, two, sometimes three hours, for her to come. Then they'd go sleepily home. Sometimes Mrs. Stalcup would get up and go to her house, and sometimes she'd just spend the rest of the night where she was, on the couch.

"It's George who should get the honors," Mary said. "Even the few nights I stayed home were lonely for him, because no one ever came to see us, and no one ever invited us out."

Mary was rarely actually snubbed, for Chesterbrook has grown rapidly and few of the people she'd encounter while shopping knew who she was. Even so, she gave no one an opening to be friendly. Her nearest neighbor tried to be amicable when Mary moved in the new house, but quickly gave up.

"She was polite, but reserved," the neighbor said. "I took the hint. We'd borrow a cup of sugar back and forth, but we'd never stop to chat. Now Mary tells me I should never have tried to be friendly with a Communist in the first place."

When Mary first joined the party, it was the Communist Political Association, pledged to work with capitalism to win the war. As soon as victory appeared certain in Europe, however, the line changed, and once more the Communists were avowed disciples of world revolution. As such, they made arrangements to go underground. Lists of names were no longer kept. Everything was secret. Each official—including Mary—was given $25 to be used for an emergency, in case of arrest. Mary still has hers, incidentally.

A meeting held in Baltimore might indicate how far they went to avoid suspicion. Each person attending the meeting was given a certain minute at which to arrive.

"I drove over with a group from Washington," Mary said; "we had sealed orders, which were to be opened in Baltimore, and which told us where to go and at what minute to enter. We got there a little early and had to sit outside for a few minutes. Just about everybody else got there early, too, and had to walk around the block. Talk about your security measures—just about every leading Communist in Washington and Baltimore was walking around the block, looking silly."

Although Mary was present at all such meetings and dutifully reported what transpired therein, it was years before active suspicion was directed against her. Her most uncomfortable moment came over something with which she had little to do.

"A reporter for the Washington *Star* named Thomas G. Buchanan just walked in the office one day and said he wanted to be a Communist," Mary says. "We were suspicious, but we took his application. William C. Taylor was chairman of the Washington group then, and he held up the application for some time, not knowing what to do.

"Well, it was finally accepted, and then Buchanan was fired from the paper for being a Communist. It became a big issue in Washington left-wing circles, and naturally everybody wanted to know who had tipped the *Star* off. They named a committee—Jim Branca and Henry Thomas were on it—to investigate the whole thing, and one of the people they investigated was me."

It was at a youth meeting in a private home in Washington. Mary was there, and so were Branca and Thomas. They asked her to go in the kitchen with them, and there, with the bright white walls and the bright overhead light giving

the general atmosphere of a third-degree, they sat her down on the kitchen stool. They stood over her and asked her questions, but she answered them all satisfactorily, and they finally gave up.

"I didn't have anything to do with it, anyway," Mary said. "The only people I told about Tom Buchanan were the FBI."

In her high position in the party, Mary was called upon to make several decisions which certainly appear ironic today. There was the case of Donald Rothenberg, chairman of the American Veterans Committee post on the George Washington campus.

As Mary testified before the committee: "He agreed to join the Communist Party providing his membership would not be known to other than the very top leadership of the party. . . . I was to decide if the party would accept him under those conditions."

Mary took it up with Chairman Taylor, and decided to accept Rothenberg, on his terms. Nobody knew—nobody except the FBI.

Occasionally Mary would get wind of other Communists in Washington—those belonging to supersecret cells of Government workers who reported directly to New York headquarters. One of these cells, known as W-37, was right in the Naval Gun Factory, but Mary could find little about it except that it did exist and had about a dozen members.

She had direct knowledge of other cells, however. On one occasion she received, by courier from the New York office, notice that a member was transferring to Washington, and that whoever contacted her should give the password "Evelyn's cousin."

Mary, identifying this person before the committee as one Ruth Rifkin, went on to testify: "I called and made an appointment to meet her. She was quite cautious about the way this meeting should take place." They met at Union Station during rush hour, hiding in the confusion of the crowd.

The woman had a job with UNRRA, Mary testified, and because of this connection with the Government she was not taken openly into the party in Washington, but into the underground, which Mary could never penetrate. Mary also testified that she performed the paper work in transferring a woman named Joyzell Shore from the local city organization into the underground and back again.

"I remember discussing with her the hardships she had endured," Mary told the committee. "She told me that when she transferred into the underground organization she had to sever all connections, social and otherwise, with the friends she had made in the party organization; and when she transferred from the underground organization she had to sever all friendships she had in that organization."

Incidentally, Mary says she felt no sympathy whatever for Joyzell Shore, or for anybody else in the Communist Party. She says she didn't like, personally, one single person who was a Communist; she felt contempt for them all.

"Sure, I heard all their stories," she says. "I heard how they were discriminated against because of this or that, how they couldn't get ahead under our form of government. Well, whenever I heard that I thought of my husband. His father died when he was just a boy, and at an age when most kids are going to school, George had to support his family. He didn't have any advantages. But he got out and worked, and when the war came he fought, and now he has something—he has a good job, a nice house and a family. A lot of Communists I know could have done the same thing if they'd stopped whining and gone to work and attempted to solve matters of discrimination and labor difficulties under the American democratic way of life instead."

Mary has no sympathy for the people she might have hurt by revealing their membership in the party. She recently read in the Washington papers about how two men she named as important Communists before the committee, Samuel Michaelson and William Shonick, were dismissed as teachers in the public schools. Mary's attitude simply is that if they were loyal Americans they wouldn't have lost their jobs. They, in turn, refused to comment.

Mary was active in the party until October, 1949, when she simply could not continue. Her mysterious attacks of partial paralysis finally culminated in one spell of complete, utter helplessness, and the diagnosis of multiple sclerosis followed. For weeks her mother and George nursed her as though she were a baby. Late in 1951 she had not completely regained her strength, and so little is known about the disease that no one could tell her whether or when she would have another attack.

In February of 1951 the *Daily Worker* carried a vicious story announcing her expulsion from the Communist Party as a stool pigeon, and Mary knew that her usefulness was at an end. She didn't know then how the Communists caught on to her, or if they were only guessing, but Henry Thomas ruefully confesses that he—and his wife, Gladys—were probably responsible.

"When I testified before the Department of Justice, I saw page after page of names on the desk," he said. "Man, I saw red. There was only one person could have furnished those names, and that was Mary Stalcup."

Even then, what betrayed Mary Stalcup was a small thing indeed. Years before, Gladys Thomas had bought a fur coat, and the purchase had caused gossip in the party. But Mary Stalcup had bought a fur coat, and nobody paid much attention. From then on Gladys was bitter against Mary, and when Mary had her baby in a hospital which did not receive Negroes, Gladys declared open warfare.

"She never let up," Henry said. "When she got through, the entire Negro membership was suspicious of Mary. So when I saw proof that we'd been right all those years, I guess I sounded off, and it got back to the party. That's what killed Mary."

Then even the story of her expulsion proved of some value. To Raphael I. Nixon, formerly an FBI agent, then director of research for the Un-American Activities committee, it meant the opening of a door to a vault of secrets. The

committee had been probing into communism in the District of Columbia and Maryland, and, while it had overturned some stones, it still had not found the key. That, thought Nixon, might well be Mary. She was subpoenaed. appeared, and gave valuable testimony on the identities of scores of the top-flight Communists in the capital area.

"She is a loyal American and a terrific person." said Nixon. "Do you know what? I tried to make some arrangement by which we could reimburse her, if not for her time, at least for her expenses in coming to Washington from her home in Virginia. Know what she told me? She said that if she accepted any money, no matter how little, someone might attempt to discredit her testimony as being bought and paid for. She said she would testify as a loyal American, from patriotic motives only."

The papers covered the hearing, of course, and then they covered her. Reporters and photographers arrived at a most unpropitious time. The Markwards had been away at the beach, and Mary's nose was fiery red and peeling. Christine had had a birthday party—some of the kids in the neighborhood were permitted to play with her—and the place was a mess of cake, candy and cookies.

Everything was a riot of confusion, but Mary didn't care. This was vindication. This was the end of one era and the beginning of another. All Chesterbrook, all Washington and all America heard about Mary Stalcup.

The Virginia Department of the American Legion invited her to their state convention, in Roanoke, Virginia, and presented her with its Americanism award. Mary received the award, looked out upon the faces of Legionnaires—and George—and started her speech.

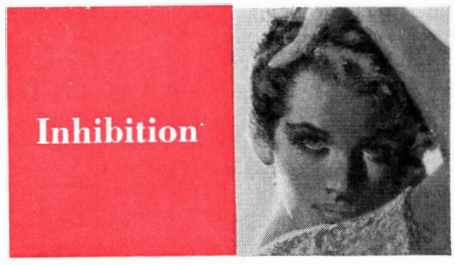
"To stand here before you men—" she said, and then there was just too much happiness in her to continue. She bawled all over the place.

When they got back home, the adjutant of the local post visited George, and at last, finally, he became a member of the American Legion. A local social club invited them to a dance, the first they ever attended as man and wife. A few evenings later came two most important telephone calls. They had been accepted in the social club, and Legionnaire Markward's wife was accepted into the auxiliary.

"Just so much has happened that we haven't completely realized it all yet," Mary said. "It's been too hectic to make any plans for our new life. I know we're going to start going out more—George deserves it. We're going to go to Sunday school and church. Although Christine has never been left alone for one instant, and she's never been sick, I want to spend some time with her, for a change. And, of course, I'm not completely well yet.

"If I am called upon in the trials of the secondary Communists, like Phil Frankfeld and Al Lannon, I'll do anything my country asks me to do, of course, just as I have done all along. Really, I think any loyal American would have done the same thing."

Mary took a deep breath. "I just don't see what all the fuss is about." she said. . . . THE END



(Continued from page 23)

could not meet her eyes for long, without some change in posture or attitude, and said, "The work must be accomplished," and started the mower. And Connie, who by this time was sensitive to his reactions to lovely girls, knew there was a bitter embarrassment underlying his appreciation of the girl.

Jed often looked at girls this way of late, and was ashamed of it. His sense of humor, his love for Connie, no longer made his appreciation of them clear and open. He used to wink at Connie. say. "Hmmm, there's a beauty." the dark. virile planes of his face quickly accepting a candid laughter. And he would pull her closer, indicating all desire was limited now, and was her right alone. But that was before they married. before he discovered the reserve she did not want to have but couldn't help. Now his sense of humor was gone. and his closeness to Connie lapsed at intervals—as the intensity of his emotions made demands on him that he could not satisfy by turning to her.

It's my fault that he acts like this, she thought; but she had told herself this so often over their two years of marriage that it had become meaningless. Strange, she thought, the way the compelling manhood that had attracted her so strongly was now the thing that was turned against her because she could not appease it. When she met him. she had felt a welcoming surge within her. as if all her life she'd been waiting for what he could bring to her. But when she possessed it, she became cold and fearful.

She blamed herself repeatedly, as she was now, knowing he was antagonized by his own desires. and she felt sure he had sternly kept himself from infidelities of the body—although infidelities of the mind were not so easily controlled. She had seen his inconstancy many times, as she was watching it now: and she could not blame him. but only herself. He was hurt. she knew; and he had been patient and gentle for a long time—but that could not go on, could it?

Already, deeper signs were manifest: in words and manner: Once. he said darkly, "You seem so inhumanly clean and cool!" And speculated as he looked at her; and said, quietly, "If only I didn't love you so much." And then he smiled, with an irony in which something regretful and tender took firm shape: "The only trouble is, no one is prettier than you," he said.

She had been heartened by that shape of love that couldn't be concealed —and once again, she felt she could overcome her restraint and reach him: meet the imperative need she'd recognized when she fell in love with him. She felt as if she could do it if only she could give herself one extra command: it was as if she held a weight in her hand, and her muscles could press the weight overhead if only her brain would release the will to do so. Instead, she held the weight helplessly. and determination to move it was as poised as a perfectly balanced scale between doing and not doing.

Now, sitting opposite her mother in the living room, she knew her mother would not mention her disapproval of Nancy's infatuation, and her careful skirting of the subject gave it an unpleasant importance.

It seemed necessary to Connie to bring the matter cleanly into the open. "The other day I told Jed we need a fence around our yard, and I more than half meant it. Nancy is getting exasperating!"

She had a faint, flickering hope that her mother would say something that would permit a confidence. More than ever. she wanted to be able to confide in her mother—be comforted, advised.

But she was disappointed, as she had known she would be: Mrs. Maitland was placid, only one thin crease above her nose showing that the high laughter from outside made her nervous. "If only she wasn't so loud," she said, "she'd be more bearable."

Connie listened: yes, the laughter. even the blurred sound of voices above the clicking blades of the mower. was loud. Loud and clear. It seemed to her that the sounds belonged to the bright nature of the day—they were also bright. As if, now, Jed was in his proper element, that she could not make for him. And she felt a resentment that this was so, but hastily pushed it aside.

Nothing could be gained by turning against him; the fault was hers, she insisted.

Abruptly, Jed let out a whoop, and a fusillade of giggles and deep laughter followed it, commingling—and Connie's imagination suddenly showed her the arched body of the young girl, black hair splashing with her excited movements around a face that was pale but wholesome. The mingling of their laughter. one so feminine, unreserved. the other rooted in maleness. gave her a quick sense of jealousy—a jealousy she had experienced too often—and she felt a weariness slip into her.

Her brows drew, in resemblance to her mother's irritation. She had to fight back a wish that she was as controlled and therefore as serene as her mother. She would be serene, perhaps, if she cared nothing about what was happening to Jed—but she would be empty.

She had to break the silence; she jumped to her feet. "Coffee, Mother?" she asked.

"I think I'd like a cup," said her mother.

Connie put the coffee things on the table before the couch. She sat quietly once more, but was conscious of a rebellion against her mother's self-control and her own wish to emulate it.

She remembered the time in the past when the rebellion first showed itself. She had been punished for some misdemeanor now forgotten—and a sudden rage had come to her. The rage had risen with a struggling force—as if she'd had

it capped within her for a long time. Of course, she had been punished on other occasions, although not often—but this time a barrier was broken. Even as she turned dutifully to go to her room, she knew it was going to happen. She also knew the rage had not come because of justified punishment . . . but because she hated the feeling of her legs going dutifully—not even reluctantly—up the stairs to her room. And she hated the calm look in her mother's eyes, and the way she took it completely for granted that no bitter, unjust word would stir a violence between them.

Connie would have preferred a spanking, and then crying it out in her mother's arms.

On the stairs, passion broke into her face.

She whirled, hair and skirt flying. The air of motion on her legs made her want to jump from the stair, and land in the hall whirling, until her dress stood out straight from her body like a wild dancer's, and she would feel the air whipping around her long, thin, bare legs.

"Connie," came the single restraining word.

"Don't talk to me!"

Her mother's face below her was pale and quiet.

Connie's skirt had fallen into place, and the last motion had left it—and she felt bereft of something glorious that had carried her flying like a bird for a moment.

The quiet of her mother's face infuriated her. Her own breathing was loud and harsh, and she had to hold her breath to hear her mother's steady breathing. She had the strange notion that she would be alone forever if she didn't smash through the barrier of her mother's calmness—and reach her. If she didn't cry out, and hear her mother cry out in return, and both of them would cry loudly and with soft wet tears in each other's arms.

The words cascaded from her lips without even being told to. "Know what I'm going to do when I get older—do you?" And she repeated unrepeatable things she had heard in school. Her voice trailed off into silence.

She was frightened, because she was sure her mother had been struck dead as if by a hammer.

But the voice rose to her coolly, without shock or anger. And penitence became a huge lump of gratitude within Connie: she ran down the stairs to her mother's arms—and now was grateful that they were dispassionate. Her mother seemed so untouched, Connie wondered if she had really acted the way she had at all.

"I didn't know you knew such things," said her mother. Did she tremble—and was her hand damp and shivering? Slowly, her mother withdrew her hand. And composed whatever anxiety had sped across her face.

"I should have talked to you about sex long before this," she said, firmly. They sat in the light living room, and composure settled around them again, peaceful and timeless.

"Your father was a very decent man," her mother began, with the air of a gentle storyteller. "He was the most civilized man I ever knew."

And then she painted an unforgettable picture. It was the most satisfying hour Connie had ever spent. She could never quite remember what had been said, but, somehow, in a masterly fashion, an impression was laid deep upon her. She'd been told a poetic story—and it made her feel her parents had loved each other happily in a fairy-tale-like chamber, where time always stopped at the touch of the first faint kiss.

The chamber where she found herself after marriage was nothing like that. She hadn't expected it to be, but she was dumfounded when it wasn't. Inexplicably, the freedom and joy she had found in his kiss when they were going together, turned to fear—and the dark, virile planes of his face, that had built promise, made her feel cold and alone. And she did not want to feel that way.

Jed had said, "Don't you feel well?"

"Of course I do," she answered, with asperity. More than anything else, she didn't want him to think she was a sissy.

"Are you afraid of me?"

"Don't be silly."

He looked foolish and unhappy. His face colored. "Didn't you know . . . I mean . . . did you realize . . ."

She couldn't help laughing: "Did I know the facts of life before tonight? Darling, please!"

His apparent disadvantage made her feel a little better—not much.

"Then—then what is it?" And panic followed fast: "You feel it's a mistake? You're sorry you married me? You don't love me?"

She sat up, fast. "Never, never believe that. Never!" She took his hand to her cheek. Her voice was muffled. "Forgive me. I know them—but I guess I'm a little unprepared to live them." Her face wore a small smile, so that he wouldn't see her fierce disappointment with herself. Dutifully, she was following in the footsteps of past restraint—and she could not let him see her anger, because he might think she was angry with him.

"You're brave to admit it," he said; "brave and honest."

She refused to be complimented for her ineptitude. "I'm unfair even when I tell you the truth," she said. "Unfair, because I know you're understanding. It's easy to be honest, when it means . . . when it will make it easier for me not to . . ."

He smiled: "Shush." She thought there was something funny about his smile. He bent his head—and she saw only the edges of his bitter disappointment before he buried his face and its secret against her hair. "I have hurt him!" she thought, with shock. And it seemed stupid to let it be that way: wouldn't it be simple to pretend? The idea gripped her: it became an emotion. Because in a way it would be a sacrifice—and she'd be giving more to her love than a girl who could give without conflict. The idea made her feel closer to him, and suddenly warm with anticipation—but in spite of her inward glow, she could not bring him to her.

Now she thought, How fine my resolutions were! And realized how much

they'd preoccupied her—and the slow weariness returned.

Her mother said, "I'd call Jed in if I were you."

Connie's eyes opened wide: "Why?" she demanded, sharply.

Mrs. Maitland regarded her hands. "I'll have to be leaving very soon," she said; "I'd like to see him before I go."

"Why don't you say what you mean, Mother? That you object to Jed's being with Nancy Bellman?"

Their eyes met. Mrs. Maitland said. "It's not unusual for young girls to flirt with older men. And quite natural for the man to be flattered."

There was a tempting innocence in her mother's words that made Connie want to submit to them, believe them and close her eyes. The warm air came in, and she heard their voices, and she felt tired. It would be nice to close her eyes, she thought, a little irritably, but retorted:

"I for one don't think it's so innocent. Nancy is nineteen, and her parents might think her infatuation is cute, but I don't agree. And Jed is probably more serious than he would even admit to himself."

Mrs. Maitland bridled. "After all, she's a decent girl, very young, and a neighbor's daughter!"

Was there a hint of passion in her words and manner? Connie saw the composure flow across her mother's face, absorb it. For the first time, she wondered what chaotic suspicions, subverted desires were held under control there. She told herself she was glad she could not hold her thoughts so rigidly under control, distorting the truth—but this time recognition of her honesty did not fully sustain her. It had been futile, hadn't it? she thought—and her tiredness made her eyes ache.

Her new insight into her mother was revealing, but Mrs. Maitland had a shrewdness of her own. She said, "You seem determined to torment yourself. Martyrdom isn't very pretty."

Martyrdom? Connie stared at her, and met the cool, even gaze, and wished harshly that her mother would go. The voices lifted from outside, and she winced. The girl was more than exasperating!

Her fingers and feet were restless, and she sat there for the next twenty minutes before her mother left, mastering a vague, growing irritation.

She kissed her mother at the door, watched her drive off; she stood irresolutely, then walked to the back window.

"Jed?" He looked up and around; Nancy Bellman glanced up, too, across the clipped lawn, and Connie thought her serenity was insolent.

"I'll have cocktails ready soon, Jed," she said.

He waved a casually infuriating hand. "Make it a half-hour or so," he called: "Got to clean up." Then he turned away, and waved at Nancy's father, who'd come out of the back door of his house.

Connie walked back to the living room, biting her lip. She felt strange. She wanted to kick something. She chided herself, adding up her items of guilt. She'd made things this way. But today, she was tired of rationalization. Her emotions were pushing her mind aside, as if they had tolerated its workings too long.

"Damn!" she said aloud, and walked across the living room with a lithe animal stride, as if stalking her own discontentment.

At length, Jed entered the room. In slacks and soft shirt, he looked particularly strong and good-looking, she thought. But he also looked once removed from her—and this time she didn't feel lonely; she felt intimidated.

"I'd better take the ice out of the Martinis," he said. "Claude Bellman and family are going to join us." He took the long cocktail spoon and began fishing the ice from the glass shaker.

Her brows drew: for a nameless reason she disliked his care in removing even the small chips of ice.

"Why didn't you ask me about it?"

He glanced up at her with surprise. She had long been amenable to all his

whims, thinking circumstances required it of her. She met his eyes with something unwavering and unfathomable in her own.

"I didn't think you'd mind," he replied, uncomfortably. "Claude came out and talked a while, and of course Nancy would have a date for Saturday night . . . so I thought all of us could get together early—"

It was too much explanation for a simple thing, and he was boylike in telling it, but she didn't want to think about the intense man behind the boyish façade . . . and that man's motivations, childish themselves, because Nancy was not for him and he knew it. She said, "I'm afraid I do mind. I think I've heard enough about Nancy Bellman for one day."

A spark of anger in his dark face. He looked inexpressibly interesting, dark and somewhat moody now, but she tore her thoughts away from a consideration of him that had become suddenly academic. She did not want to find him ingratiating. She wanted to be unreasonable.

"I think it's only fair for you to talk to me first about things like that," she said to him. "I don't feel up to par, and I don't want to have to act nice!"

His brows went up. He stood awkwardly before the coffee table, the cocktail spoon in his hand. He twirled it as he stood there. And then she saw the defiant light in his face—and it made her feel better. She was bothering him, and it was satisfactory.

"It can't be helped now," he said; "they'll be over any minute." He contemplated her. And his next words were sardonic, and hurt her. "I'm sure you can get hold of yourself, and act very calm and collected. This is unlike you," he told her; "you're an expert at being calm, undisturbed. I'm amazed that you're aroused," he went on, as if he couldn't stop. "Wonders will never cease."

He talked as if he hated the taste of his own words, but there was a nervous compulsion, an antagonism behind them: and it was master. And the words were blows, but she was glad they were spoken. Her own anger was building, and she reneged all her intellectual rationalization of the past. She hadn't been doing him a favor, or herself. As her mother had said, she had been a martyr.

For the first time, she saw how far apart they had gone. His resentment was visible, and in this moment there was no tenderness in it. He was driven—and she had gone along beside him, thinking of the reasons why he was the way he was, tolerating because she understood. But he had dropped thinking somewhere along the route, and she no longer cared for it, either.

Hadn't she been dutiful in this case, too? She had hurt him, but hadn't he hurt her, too? The obvious way he had looked at Nancy—it was insulting and unforgivable.

They glared at each other there in the living room—and she found she liked to glare.

"You're making a fool of yourself with Nancy," she said.

His shoulders came back. "Is that so?"

Ineffective answer, she told herself happily.

"Completely," she said.

He colored. He said slowly, "I don't give a damn. Do you understand? I don't give a damn."

She smiled at him triumphantly.

"Don Juan," she said gently.

She thought, with a shock of eagerness, that he was going to dash across the room at her: and a violent sense of rightness went through her. Just let him try it!

The chimes of the back door. The Bellmans, who lived in the house in back of theirs. He relaxed, shrugged his shoulders, as if to cast off a burden. And she thought: it was getting too much for him!

He went to let the Bellmans in, taking the shaker with him, to put new ice in it. She met Claude and Lissa Bellman in the living room archway, and was almost glad to see them, after all. She was riding above her usual emotional level: stimulated. And Lissa Bellman, tall and too thin, said, "You look wonderful, Connie! Doesn't she look sweet tonight, Claude?"

Claude Bellman, shorter than his wife, complacent, nodded, said, "Connie, you're blooming!"

Jed appeared behind them, twirling the spoon in the shaker. The Bellmans sat down, and Claude looked at the shaker appreciatively. "Nancy's got a dinner date," he said, "and she's getting ready. Should be over in a few minutes. She'll leave a note for Bob—that she's over here." He accepted the thin glass with a grin. "Jed, you use the perfect proportions. Amazing how hard it is in the city to get a good Martini."

Jed appeared morose, but said, "A lot of them bottle them beforehand, and let the ice melt. Is yours all right, Lissa?"

He did not look at Connie, and did not address any of his remarks to her. He was flushed and introspective. Connie thought, He's furious! She watched him with a maddening, almost invisible smile on her face. She knew it was maddening, and knew he saw it occasionally from the corner of his eye.

When the drink was finished, Jed rose. His movements were abrupt. "I'll make a batch," he said.

Before he left the room, the chimes sounded again. "I'll get it," he said, and went through the dining room and into the kitchen, and Connie heard the back door open, and heard the added chime of Nancy's voice; more breathless, she thought, than was reasonable for a nineteen-year-old girl. She thought she'd been hearing that light, husky laughter for eternities.

The moments plodded; again she heard the mingling of their voices, and their laughter. The moments seemed swift for the Bellmans; they sat unperturbed. Unperturbed, even when Connie heard the silence. It was that kind of silence. She heard it and felt superior and avenged: Jed, making a fool of himself. And she could picture his defiance as he kissed the girl. The great baby.

She smiled at the Bellmans, and tried to listen to what they were saying. And wanted to say: Don't be idiots. She isn't cute—Jed isn't cute. And don't you wonder about that unmistakable quiet?

And then, as she'd known she would, she said, "Jed won't be able to find the vermouth—" and left the room, walking through to the kitchen.

As soon as she came close to the doorway, she heard their recaptured breathing, and was in time to see their rearranged expressions, and the way they stood apart in a pose that was like a tableau. Jed was half turned toward the ice tray on the sink, Nancy bending toward him as if watching.

"I thought perhaps you wouldn't be able to find the vermouth," she said. Disdain had moved deeper into her, helped her, and she could act removed, untouched.

Jed said, "I have it, thanks." His voice was throaty, as if the muscles of his neck were constricted. He looked challenging, but he also looked as if he'd discovered a clown's cap on his head, too late.

Jed led the way into the living room, carrying the shaker. Nancy walked before Connie, fidgeting, and began to chatter nervously.

In the living room, Nancy continued to chatter nervously, her face flushed and pretty and embarrassed. She had lost the poise of the afternoon, and kept glancing at Connie as if expecting to get spanked. Jed regarded her with a brooding astonishment—and Connie knew he must be seeing the child that still lingered in the woman.

Cradle snatcher, Connie told him silently, and consciously looked amused. Jed's eyes flickered dangerously when he caught her gaze.

Finally, the front doorbell rang, and Nancy exclaimed with relief, "It must be Bob," and went to the door and opened it. Her father said, "Bring Bob in to be introduced, Nancy."

Jed rose, and met his competition eye to eye. His competition had bright cheeks, a crew cut and an awkwardly confident manner.

"Happy to meet you, sir," he said to Jed, and Jed accepted the hand that was offered man-to-man and aggressively, as if Bob wasn't sure it would be accepted.

Jed's expression was wry, but Connie's remained blank and cool, with the demeaning amusement shining through. She served him that amusement all evening, with supper and later during a card game they had with the Bellmans.

At eleven o'clock. Connie got ready for bed. She got ready with calculated precision, paying no attention to Jed.

Jed, unable to contain himself longer, demanded, "You don't think I'm serious about that kid?"

She shrugged. He started to take a cigarette from the box on the bed table, and then snapped the box shut and rose belligerently.

"Why're you trying to put me on the defensive?" he asked. "Is that your new gimmick?" And strode across the room to her. She turned from her mirrors, arching her brows questioningly.

"Why don't you say something?" he asked.

She rose and stood before him. "What is there to say? If you want to make a fool of yourself . . ." She stood regally, and was proud of the steadiness in her voice. And her coolness infuriated him—and his mouth was hard.

"Stand there like an iceberg!" he shouted. He took her shoulders in his hands and shook her—but the calm objective look did not leave her face. "You know what was going on," he said; "you must think something about it!" And she knew he wanted to be punished, but not this way—not as if it didn't matter; not as if whatever he did was to be treated with aloof condescension. But she would not give him the satisfaction of a fight; she would not give him the relief!

She knew how effective her treatment of him was: its parallel returned to mind—and she saw again the young girl. herself, going dutifully up the stairs to her room, a cold, impersonal punishment—and remembered how she'd whirled on the stairs, in physical expression of the need for release, to break through to the heart—the will to express love, sorrow and anger whirling her in a short, broken dance of power and rebellion. Remembering how lonely it was outside the shell of her mother's icy discipline—

He wanted what she had wanted then—but she would not give it to him. He wanted anger and tears; to know that it mattered! But she would attach no importance to it—and therefore none to him!

None at all! she thought—and a bitterness she had not known she possessed became overwhelming, attached to deep shaking jealousy: he had needed her, and she had failed him—but that had given him no right to discard her. And that was what he had done, wasn't it? Jealousy grew in her, and a rage that would admit no reasoning. He was a fool! He had made a fool of himself. And she would let him suffer for it!

She would not let one sign of her anger enter her face. She would not! He would never know what was happening to her now—she could control it, and she would. He hadn't just made a fool

"It better work like magic! Our electricity is turned off."

REDBOOK

of himself, but of her . . . humiliating her in hundreds of little ways: with a deep look at someone else, with an intolerable rejection of her—and she had stood it stupidly—and she would not stand it any more!

She held herself under stern control: feeling the conflict in her body, the light, fantastically insistent trembling under the flesh—and remembered the way he'd acted with Nancy today—and the thought of that insufferable kiss, with all its innate futility, was like a hot wind from her mind; and she felt the red coming into her face. But she would not give in and make it easy for him—she would not.

Never! she told herself, furiously: never, never, never—the single repeated word seeming to build and build, toward a climax she could not foresee— And then, involuntarily, but with the savage joy of rebellion, ultimate and unstoppable this time—her hand lashed out and left its sting on his cheek. And she slapped him with her other hand, and then was striking at him with a passion that blinded her.

And as she struck blindly, the relieving tears began to flow. They came as if she had never cried before and had too many tears for one person to manage. And as she struck, she was breaking down a barrier that she had endured too long—and her ferocity did not diminish as she put her arms around his neck, but was increased, and she kissed him hard, with contempt.

"Is that how you like to be kissed?" she cried. "Is it?" And kissed him over and over, as if she was still striking him with her fists.

And then she stopped, and was breathing deeply, still gripping his arms with her hands. There was a look like surprise on her face, and her face had a look of wildness; her hair was disarranged. He was stunned. They looked bruised, as their eyes met and held. And then she went close to him again, in a slow motion that seemed studied; and his arms came around her in the same way; as if the motions were prescribed and classic and must be accomplished in a certain exact way.

"Jed!" Sharply, as if she'd just called him back to her, from a place too far away. "Jed . . ." softly, as if he'd answered and returned.

And then she was amazed at the sweet power of freedom; and then he was very close, and she forgot she had never known it before.

The Sunday-morning bells were ringing, and persisted in Connie's ears until she woke. Her sense of emotional freedom woke with her; it was still there and alive. She stretched round bare arms, and found she had a spectator.

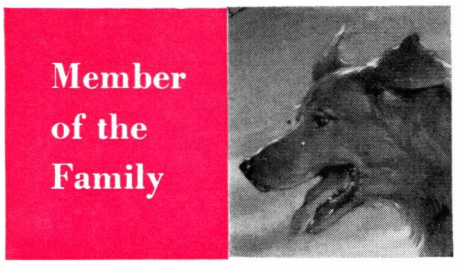
Leaning on an elbow, black hair tousled, he was watching her.

"I looked at you a long time while you were asleep," he said, reverently.

He was grave and intent. He looked at her as if she were the most mysteriously satisfying person on earth. And she regarded him in the same way.

Suddenly, he grinned. "Good morning, Tigress," he said.

She smiled. "Hello, Tiger," she said softly. . . . THE END



(Continued from page 43)

love, did you forget that you had to work for a living? Or did you really think you could be in two places at once—here to take care of the dog and downtown trying to earn a living? Billy, flesh of my flesh, heart of my heart, you have become the invisible man; you are a nine-year-old expert in one field—never being around when you are supposed to walk the dog. Didn't you swear in seventeen languages that you'd help with the care of *your* dog? I can make you do it, of course, but I'm sick and tired of these arguments; it's easier to do it myself, which is bad for you and worse for me."

Finally, she complained to Steve about Billy's lack of interest, and he just couldn't understand it. Why, to own a dog was the most wonderful thing that could happen to a boy! Billy, never one to be tactful, blurted out that the dog had become a darn nuisance and gave him a pain in the neck. And Steve, in a high rage, changed Rusty's tag from *I belong to Billy Martin* to *I belong to Stephen Martin*, which bothered Billy not at all, since he still had the fun of playing with the dog when he felt like it and none of the responsibility. This further enraged Steve, but did not surprise Gwen. She did not know any child who would stick to the boring routine of caring for a dog after the first thrill of ownership had worn off.

Susie loved the dog passionately, but she was not really strong enough to take him out alone, so that left only Gwen, already loaded down with more chores than there were hours in the day, to take over all day, every day.

When Steve's mother, a gallant old warrior who certainly never felt that women should pamper themselves, paid them a visit, she took in the impossible situation at a glance. She was a wise old lady and had always abided by the rule that in order to be a good mother-in-law you should keep your mouth shut and your purse open—but this time she spoke her piece.

"Stephen must have been out of his mind to burden you with anything like this, my dear. Men! I'd get rid of him if I were you—the dog, not Stephen."

At which point Rusty laid his head in her lap and looked at her with such love glowing in his beautiful brown eyes that she stroked him and murmured, "If you can. . . ."

"That's it," Gwen said ruefully. "He's a horrible nuisance, but, well—he has a sense of humor, Mother. I swear he does. And how can you get rid of a dog who has a sense of humor? Why, he even smiles." And this was the truth. Each morning he woke Gwen up with an honest-to-goodness smile, raising his lip and revealing his entire row of upper teeth. It was unbelievable.

He could not bear to be left out of any display of family affection, either. If Gwen kissed one of the children or sat on Steve's lap, Rusty poked himself between them, eyes alight, tail wagging and pink tongue licking. He didn't wait for an invitation, and indeed he needed none, because he knew he was always welcome; however, Steve and Gwen practically had to give up dancing together because Rusty couldn't learn to dance! He did nevertheless have a rakish side to his personality, shooting his long nose up feminine skirts—and, of course, always the wrong feminine skirts.

Gwen nicknamed him "The Golden Goof" and delighted in teasing Steve by stoutly maintaining that although he was indeed beautiful, he was not quite bright. Then citing chapter and verse—like the day he lost her going around the lake and she had to chase him in the car. Wrong-Way Corrigan . . . the great retriever. Or the way he would stand outside the door patiently waiting to be let in without having sense enough to scratch or bark. Or his really insane retrieving which went on every time somebody entered the house . . . still, it was his way of showing infinite love and delight, so how could she bop him for it?

But there were times when she could have bopped him cheerfully—they all centered around the landlady's hideous purple carpet. There was nothing to be done about it because they were in a rented house, but Gwen had disliked it from the first moment she laid eyes on it. After Rusty came, she found herself endowing it with a malign personality of its own and hating it so violently she began to fear for her sanity. Rusty's golden curls were a joy to behold, but every single hair he shed stood out like a neon sign on that carpet. One flick of his feathery tail, and hours of work were undone. Gwen and the vacuum cleaner fought a losing battle month after month.

Those dog hairs and muddy paw marks all over her freshly scrubbed kitchen floor brought her to the verge of tears time and again.

She began to spend a great deal of time feeling sorry for herself. Perhaps if Steve had remembered to take her in his arms each night and tell her how wonderful she was to be taking such good care of his dog, she wouldn't have felt so martyred. But he didn't. And there was really no reason why he should. After all, as far as he was concerned, what were a few dog hairs? Or even a lot of dog hairs? She knew she was doing something she had always detested in women—griping, complaining, nagging—but she couldn't seem to stop it.

One of the reasons was that the short noontime walk which was supposed to have been her only chore had stretched into a three-mile hike each day. Steve, with the best intentions in the world, could manage only a short walk morning and evening; Rusty was a big dog and needed a lot of exercise if he was to stay in good shape, and Gwen was the only one around to see that he got it.

Every time she walked him around the little lake she would die a thousand deaths. What would happen today? Would he blithely sit himself down in the

middle of a picnic party, scattering potato salad to right and left and caressing both the willing and the unwilling with his wet pink tongue? Would he roll in dead fish? Would he run off with a strange man's shoe or rush in front of a speeding car? Or would he, just to be different, gallop into the lake and then shake himself on some furious sun-bathers?

She never knew, but those walks every day, rain or shine, summer or winter, would live in her memory forever. Gone her peaceful and much-needed nap after luncheon. Bitterly as she resented this rigid schedule, there was a stubborn conviction inside of her that if you had a pet, you cared for him properly—or you didn't have one.

And Rusty returned her devotion to his welfare with a love that knew no bounds. Many times when she was especially weary or the weather was really bad, she would decide not to walk him and settle herself on the couch. If he had been boisterous or too insistent, whopped her with his big paws, or barked hysterically, she could have remained firm; but Rusty, even when deprived of the high spot of his day, was always a gentleman.

He would lay his fine silky head next to hers on the pillow, half-close his melting brown eyes, sigh gustily, and wait. She could never resist him. Furious with herself for being such a fool and especially furious with Steve for having saddled her with anything like this—but never angry at Rusty, who, after all, couldn't help any of it—she would rise from the couch and off they would go, Rusty delirious with joy, Gwen filled with resentment but knowing there were aspects of the walk she would enjoy.

The lovely wooded shores of the lake and the beauty and grace of the magnificent golden animal bounding ahead of her were pleasures not to be denied. Midway, they would stop at a little stand for ice-cream cones. Rusty would put his big paws up on the counter, and the man would say, "Why, hello, Rusty. I bet you want your ice-cream cone, don't you?" Then he would dish up an extra big scoop. Rusty soon learned, in spite of being not quite bright, to prolong his enjoyment by licking instead of gulping. Gwen knew it was a ridiculous sight. She felt really silly the day a small boy said, "Why don'tcha teach him to hold the cone, too?"

As for those daily walks in the subzero Minnesota winters, no words could describe them. All Gwen knew was that she looked exactly like a man from Mars in her down-filled jacket, Army-surplus fleece-lined pants, stadium boots, hood and mittens—except that the man from Mars undoubtedly would have had more sex appeal.

In February, Susie was six. That event marked the day when both of her children started lunching at school, and Gwen was flooded with a glorious feeling of new freedom. At last, after years of keeping her pretty nose to the grindstone, of always being home to feed and welcome her darlings, Mamma was going to have almost the whole day to herself. Why, she could play golf again when the greens were fit, or stay downtown for luncheon, or—

But could she? With a sinking feeling, she remembered her third baby, Rusty, and their noontime walks. *Now* what was she to do? To have heaven so close and not be able to enter—it was more than she could bear.

In desperation, she asked some of her friends what they did about their dogs during the day. They just laughed at her; they turned them loose, naturally. How much longer was she going to keep up this insane schedule? Who ever heard of being such a slave to a dog? So that night she casually asked Steve if Rusty wasn't old enough now to run loose like other dogs.

"Run loose?" he said, aghast. You would have thought she had suggested committing a hatchet murder.

"Yes. Run loose. Or haven't you ever heard of a dog doing that? Do you think anybody else is crazy enough to rush home in the middle of the day to walk a dog?" Her voice was tight with frustration.

"Well . . ." he frowned, "if you don't care what happens to him you can let him run loose. But he's a valuable dog. And goldens are at a premium in this section of the country, because they're wonderful hunting dogs. They get stolen all the time, especially during the hunting season. . . . Phil Stark's golden was stolen last week; the poor guy was sick about it. And Tom Kennedy lost one a couple of months ago. Cripes, you know Rusty! He's so darn friendly he'd go with anyone who held a car door open."

Yes, she knew Rusty. The Golden Goof who thought the world was filled with nothing but sweetness and light, who loved and trusted all two-legged creatures. And the thought of him jumping into a strange car and being cuffed around by any jerk low enough to steal a dog was too much for her. Rusty could not run loose. She groaned.

"Listen," Steve said. "Rusty's old enough to start his hunting training now. They'll teach him obedience at the same time, and it'll give you a real break. He'll be gone for three months, and when he gets back you'll find him much easier to handle. Why, if he shows real promise, the boss himself will take over his training. Rusty might be a champion! Wouldn't that be something?"

Gwen didn't think so, particularly, but for once she kept her thoughts to herself. She knew it would be expensive, and it had always seemed to her that champion dogs led a miserable existence, being yanked all over the country; but Steve had his heart set on a champion who would lead the field and eventually bring them some handsome stud fees. That last was pure sophistry, and they both knew it.

So Rusty went off to be a champion. The Martins were permitted to visit him only on Sundays, and of course he was always deliriously glad to see them. Steve grew more and more excited as it looked as if Rusty might make the grade. Then one day, during his water training, a live duck bit him on the nose. Rusty was goofy, but not *that* goofy; he promptly and quite sensibly decided to have nothing more to do with ducks.

Steve was crushed. Gwen was secretly delighted. Now he could come

home and be what he was meant to be—a family pet. He had been home only a short time when Gwen had one of those impossible days. He was shedding worse than ever and tracking in mud from outside; their walk had been cold and damp and nasty. She returned from it to find the house filled with boys, each trying to outyell the other. Rusty wouldn't stop retrieving things out of wastebaskets. Susie came home in time to get Rusty so excited that in their furious racings back and forth he accidentally nipped her. She was heartbroken, tearfully certain the dog didn't love her any more. Gwen was almost ready to call in a psychiatrist before she could convince her daughter that the bite was accidental—that the dog was only playing and still adored her madly.

At this point, Steve phoned to say he couldn't get home for dinner and would one of them please feed and walk the dog. That was the last straw. *He* could always get out of his chores with the dog merely by picking up a phone and asking somebody else to do it; but when could *she* ever get out of hers? When was there ever anybody at home that she could call and tell to take over for her?

Never, she told herself bitterly—never, never, *never*. . . .

She brooded about this unfair situation most of the evening. When Steve finally returned and quite innocently asked if Rusty had had a drink of water lately, she could have killed him.

"I haven't the vaguest idea," she said coldly.

Without a word he went into the kitchen and filled the dog's pan with water, which of course he didn't drink because he'd already had plenty. Then he returned and said, "I want to talk to you."

"Do you?"

"Yes. Put down that damn paper and listen to me. I'm going to get rid of the dog."

"This is so sudden." Of course she didn't believe him.

"No, Gwen, I mean it. Rusty is coming between *us*, and no dog is worth that."

"You're just being silly—"

"Don't you understand? I love you. I'm not going to let anything come between us ever, if I can help it. If it's Rusty's fault, then he has to go. You're turning all your resentment on me. God knows, I'm sorry. I had no idea it would be like this."

"Like what?"

"You should have heard the tone of your voice when you answered me before! I only asked you if the dog had had a drink. You didn't have to take the top of my head off. You sounded so nasty it—well, it scared me."

It is possible to feel both justified and guilty at the same time, and Gwen's feelings were so confused she couldn't say a word.

"Yes," he said slowly, not looking at her, "Rusty will have to go. I'll sell him. It was a mistake ever to have bought him. I can see that now."

Something rose inside of Gwen and exploded. Now, *now* he had decided it was all a mistake!

"Wonderful," she said shakily. "Just go ahead and sell him. How simple. Bring a dog into your home, give him love for two years, and then because *you* made a mistake, just snatch it all away from him." She could see Rusty in some strange place, waiting with his marvelous patience and trust week after week, month after month, for the sound of a familiar footstep. a voice, a member of his beloved family come to take him home, and she started to cry.

"It's too late now," she sobbed. "It's too late. We can't do that to him."

"He'd forget in time—they all do."

"Not Rusty. He wouldn't forget—ever." *And*, a small voice inside of her whispered, *neither would you forget that I had forced you to give up your dog. . . . A part of you would always hate me for it.*

"All right," Steve said grimly. "then we don't sell the dog. But remember—I offered to, and I meant it. If we keep him now it's because *you* decided that we should. And that means no more griping." He kissed her. "And no more fussing between you and me about the dog. Agreed?"

"Agreed," she said, really ashamed. "I've been a rotten sport about the whole thing. And I'm sorry, darling. No more complaining. For better or worse, Rusty is one of us now."

The next Sunday afternoon, while Steve was taking a nap, Gwen decided to surprise him by combing and currying Rusty to within an inch of his life and tying an enormous blue bow on his collar.

Rusty was lying under a tree in the yard and did not wag his tail as she approached—something unheard-of. Gwen noticed immediately that his eyes were squeezed tightly shut and running. He couldn't seem to open them, and he was also drooling copiously—something Rusty never did even when he was begging for tidbits.

Disturbed, she called to Steve, and by the time they got Rusty in the house, they were both worried. Gwen prepared his dinner. He was obviously hungry, but could not seem to pick up the food, and it was so pitiful to watch him try that Steve finally sat down and put the chunks of dog food in his mouth. Even then the food would fall out. and the drooling became worse and worse. He apparently couldn't swallow. Finally Steve gave up, and Rusty sprawled out in a corner of the kitchen, completely motionless, his shining coat turning dull and lifeless before their eyes.

Steve, really alarmed now, took his temperature. They were completely bewildered. How had Rusty become so sick in such a short time? And they couldn't even take him to the animal hospital! The place was closed until seven in the evening.

Heavyhearted, Gwen went ahead with preparations for dinner; their friends, the Gaylords, were coming, and she had several last-minute things to do. Out of the corner of her eye she saw Steve staring at the thermometer. His hand was shaking. He opened one of Rusty's eyes. It was already glazed.

Steve looked up at her, dazed. "He's going to die. No dog can live long with a temperature like this. My God, *what happened?*"

"I don't know. I don't know. . . ." Tears were running down her cheeks. "If only we could get him to the hospital! You'll—you'll have to get dressed now,

PSYCHOLOGIST'S CASEBOOK

Continued from page 47

DR. MARTIN'S ANALYSIS:

It is perfectly normal for us cautiously to avoid obvious physical danger, such as fire or an onrushing car. These precautions we learn while we are growing up, and they are necessary to our survival.

There are other threats to our survival which are neither external nor tangible. Among these threats is lack of self-confidence, that undermining fear that we may not be able to behave in a manner which is acceptable to ourselves and our friends.

Alice's behavior reveals just such a lack of self-confidence. She did not discuss her dates with Jean. Fellows were never talked about in her home, and she felt safer — more confident — by avoiding discussing her dates. After that first wonderful evening with Ed, when she did tell Jean, her wavering confidence in herself made her feel uneasy. She systematically avoided going anywhere with him where they might be alone. Her lack of self-confidence led her to avoid situations which would permit her to express her true feelings for him. Finally, when the moment came to accept his words of love and to express her own love for him, she pulled back under the defense that he was "common." Actually she distrusted herself in the expression of her feelings for him, and diagnosis No. 3 is correct.

With Ed's patient love, and professional psychological assistance, Alice can understand and overcome her habit of withdrawing from every situation which might lead to the admission of her attraction to the opposite sex. As she does this, a full share of mutual happiness will come to Alice and Ed.

PERSONALITY POINTERS

If you answer YES to any of the following, you may be disguising your lack of self-confidence.
1. Do you think you will look "silly" if you join the fun at the party?
2. Do you think others will take advantage of you if you are informally friendly?
3. Do you think the display of tenderness and affection is a sign of weakness?

honey. The Gaylords will be here soon."

How she wanted to call them and tell them not to come! If it had been anybody else, anybody else at all, she wouldn't have hesitated a second, but this was one of those things. The date had already been broken three times by Gwen. She just couldn't tell them not to come again.

She explained all this to Steve as he knelt by the dog, and he finally went upstairs, saying dully, "It doesn't matter; there isn't anything we can do for him now. Let them come."

As soon as he left, Gwen began to stroke Rusty and talk to him. She knew he heard her, although he couldn't open his eyes or flop his tail or give any sign of response. He must have been suffering horribly from some kind of poison they never identified. But there wasn't a whimper out of him. A purebred.

When Gwen went upstairs, she found Steve fully dressed, sitting on the bathtub, the tears running down his face.

"Steve . . ."

"I know, I know . . . it's only a dog, but I can't help it. The poor guy. The poor sick sonuvabitch. . . . If only there was something I could *do*. . . . I can't stand feeling so helpless."

The doorbell rang, and they hurried down to greet their guests. Steve explained what had happened, and of course the Gaylords were polite and sympathetic; but they were not really doggy people, and could not be expected to understand.

Being a good hostess that night was one of the hardest things Gwen had ever had to do. Each time she would go into the kitchen and see that golden body so still, so very still in the corner, she felt as if she were moving in a nightmare.

At the earliest possible moment, Steve excused himself and explained that he had to get Rusty to the hospital. Gwen, longing to go with him, followed him to the back door and watched as he gently laid the semiconscious dog in the front seat of the car. She whispered a small prayer of thanks that the children were spending the week-end with their grandparents.

She continued to exchange polite chitchat with her guests. Steve did not return, and finally, seeing how distraught she was, the Gaylords took pity on her and departed. She paced the floor until she finally saw him coming from the garage, the dog still in his arms.

"I brought him home. . . . They can't do anything more for him."

"Oh, Steve, what does that mean? What did they say?"

He shook his head. "Poison of some kind, obviously, but they can't figure out what it is or where he might have found it. They did everything they could and gave him an intravenous feeding but—but—"

"But what?"

"They don't think he'll last the night out."

"He will," she said stubbornly. "Go upstairs and lie down, darling—you're all in. I'll stay with him for a while."

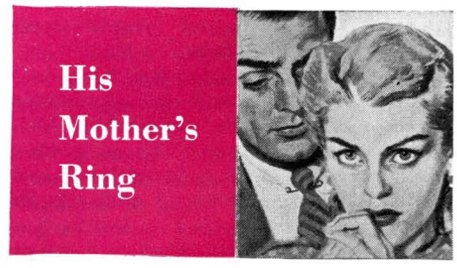
Rusty was barely breathing now. She knelt beside him, her heart breaking. What mattered now the dog hairs, the muddy paws? This was her friend, and he was dying. Hardly aware of what she was doing, she leaned down and whispered in his ear, "You mustn't die, Rusty. . . . Please don't die. . . . You can spread dog hairs from one end of the house to the other. . . . You can track up my kitchen a dozen times a day. . . . Just don't leave us. . . ." and then so deep was her distress that she turned, as she had many times before, to a source of power greater than her own.

"God, don't let Rusty die. Maybe it isn't right to pray for the life of a dog. I don't know. I only know any human being could be proud to own his qualities, which truly come from You—courage, loyalty, boundless and unselfish love. Let him live. Let him live, so that I can make up to him for all the angry, hurtful things I once felt. . . ."

Suddenly, her wrist was damp. Rusty had opened his eyes. The glazed look was gone, and with the tip of his painfully swollen tongue he was gently licking her hand. With shaking fingers, Gwen smoothed his coat, then raced upstairs to tell Steve the good news.

In his arms, with her tears of relief dampening his shirt, she knew that her prayer had been answered. Rusty would live. He would live to bound ahead of her again as beautiful as ever, carrying his magnificent feathery tail as befitted a purebred and a gentleman.

And she knew, too, that each morning when he greeted her with that amazing grin, she would grin back at him, loving the sight of him, knowing that when he finally did leave them, as some day he inevitably must, the world would be a colder, darker place. . . . THE END



(Continued from page 37)

Now you can see me for what I am, she thought. Now, with the draperies gone. I can lose a wedding ring, as I lost you your home, as I bore you a child who never eats enough to please you. As I quarreled with your sister, and with my own. As I have quarreled for years, with myself. Nobody loses wedding rings. But I did.

"You're cold," he said gently. "You're trembling. You've let the heat die down, honey. How's the boy?"

"All right," she said.

"I'll take you both to the diner for supper. Okay?"

"You're very nice, Ben," she said.

He took off his coat, tossed it carelessly across a barrel. "All right. Try to think. At eleven this morning, you were doing what? Packing what? Which room?"

"Jerry's room," she said. "I was packing toys." The words sounded boring, as a lie does, although they were as close to truth as she could remember; although she had said them over and over to herself, all through the bad day. "I took my ring off, Ben. It was idle and stupid to do, of course . . . I took it off just to see what the groove looked like, on my finger, after all these years. No more reason than that. The ring didn't want to come. I went to the bathroom for soap, to make it slippery. The soap wasn't there any more. I found the soap, someplace, and when I found it, I got the ring off. Where was that? The sink in the cellar? The kitchen? I have looked, over and over, in those places. All day, I have been finding cakes of soap. But no ring with them."

He grinned. She had quarreled with all kinds of people, all kinds of laws, but there was no quarreling with Ben Thomson, and perhaps that was why she had married him. He never had lied to her, he never had bored her, he never had made tedious demands. When he made a statement, you could believe it, because it meant he believed it himself.

"You sit right down on that box," he ordered. "You've been going around in circles. You're half dead. I'll have your ring back in five minutes."

She heard him, upstairs, his vigorous footsteps loud on the uncarpeted floors. He was right, of course—she was half dead.

It had been a hard day, with little accomplished . . . a hard life, in a way. She had spent most of her twenty-five years looking for a place that would feel like home, and this frame house outside Kingstock hadn't been the answer. Any more than a flat in Helsinki had been . . . or a cabin on the *Gripsholm*. Home was elsewhere, undiscovered, but some day she would find it. She would know it when she saw it, as she had known Ben Thomson when she saw him, at once. The earth and the sky would order a halt; the heart would cling. She would quarrel with no one any more, not even with Riley Thomson. She would become a better thing to come home to. . . . She would be a competent mother; she would make Jerry fat and strong.

When she came to the place.

And perhaps they would go to the place tomorrow.

It was more than five minutes before Ben came downstairs. He carried the boy on his shoulder. Their dark, angular faces, so much darker than Riley's, were almost ridiculously alike. There was only one difference—Jerry's brown eyes were still turned on his mother with kindness and admiration.

Ben's voice had become puzzled, almost unfriendly. "The kid didn't have a meat lunch," he said. "I asked him how he liked the chop for lunch. He said he didn't have any."

There was no quarreling with Ben, she had to remind herself. But they seemed, occasionally, out of sheer earnestness, to clash over the child who embodied both of them.

"True." Riley admitted. "It seemed the wrong time to bother. We meant to pack. And I wanted to find the ring."

"It was my mother's ring," Ben said. "Maybe that was why you lost it.

Wouldn't it have been enough just to leave town?"

When he said a thing, it was true. Only he wasn't making a statement now. He was asking a question. It was for Riley to furnish the truth.

Well, was it so? *Hadn't* the ring irked her, from the time Ben's sister had begun making a point of it? "Our mother's ring," Eula liked to say.

Ben's mother, it seemed, had been twenty feet tall, like Paul Bunyan. She had borne eight children, managed a farm, run for Congress on an independent ticket. She had made all her own clothes, all her children's clothes, and stumped for Calvin Coolidge, and could doubtless have breakfasted occasionally off her immaculate floors. She had given her children three banquets a day, every day, including hot meat and potatoes for lunch. And the children, Riley had heard, had liked it, even asking for seconds.

The world had gone along all right, as long as Alice Thomson—Saint Alice, Riley called her privately—had lived. She had died, in '29, leaving Ben, a mere child, to be reared by his oldest sister. And look what had happened! A crash, a world depression, communism, and war. Ben's mother would never have allowed a mess like that.

Such was the woman whose wedding ring Riley had lost.

"If you really hated it," he continued, "why didn't you say so? I wouldn't have made you wear it. I'd have bought you one of your own."

Was that, really, why she had lost the ring? They said that when you secretly hated someone, you tended to forget his name. It was a trick your mind played on you, in spite of yourself. (Psychology IV, that had been. The course she'd taken the year before she met Ben.)

"I don't know, Ben," she answered as honestly as she could. "Maybe that was the subconscious motive. But I wouldn't have wanted to hurt you. It's not just that I love you; I *like* you."

"Subconscious, my foot," he dismissed it. "What about the kid's lamb chop? Are you subconsciously trying to hurt him? Where the hell do you live, anyway, Riley? Have you ever really visited this earth?"

"Perhaps not," she said sadly. "But he doesn't like lamb chops."

It must be something wrong with herself, she thought, something that tied in with her labored, inadequate housekeeping. She never could feel in her heart that Jerry was undernourished. The tie between them was simple. When she saw that he needed an extra sweater, she felt cold till she put it on him. Her own hunger ended when he was satisfied and fed. On hot summer afternoons, she had found, it made her feel clean and cool to bathe not herself, but her son. And when she tried to force his dead grandmother's hearty, wholesome menus on him—he tried to be good; he tried to obey her apologetic insistence—Riley felt inwardly sickened. Yet if Ben wanted it that way, Ben had a right to ask it.

She went for her old coat, that still hung in the undusted closet after newer clothes had been put in trunks. It was the same coat, she realized suddenly, that she had worn in college, years before. It was tan and belted, a durable and noncommittal covert that could travel forever and not show wear or change of style. She wondered how many closets it had still to visit.

Their last night in Kingstock. She had spent a last night in so many places that she could not feel moved.

Her name, before college, had been Raili Anttonen, and she had been born in South Africa, where her father had been a missionary to unsaved tribesmen. She had known, as soon as she could speak, that she was not living at home. Home was across the sea, her mother had told her. Home was Helsinki.

It hadn't looked like home, when they returned to it. It had been merely a cold, clean, foreign city in a foreign land, where fair-haired people spoke Finnish. She had begun school there; she had hated Russians. And home still seemed a place across the sea. What sea?

She had been sent to America, when war broke out, to be raised, out of harm's way, by a childhood friend of her mother's who had emigrated years earlier. She had not been missed, she suspected. In her absence, her vigorous mother and older sister had rolled bandages, driven trucks, saved the Republic.

She had thought, when she first saw America, that home must be somewhere within it. Ben Thomson, of Kingstock, New York, whom she'd met at college, had promised, "I'll find it for you." And she had believed him. Her mother, in Helsinki, had been relieved at the news, had sent exquisite linens as a wedding gift. It was a great burden lifted, wrote Raili's mother, to have Raili married and settled at last, and some day they would visit.

Riley, they'd renamed her at school. The name had stuck. Riley Thomson, of South Africa, Helsinki and a few points west.

She'd have fitted here, she thought, if she'd been a better housekeeper. Eula, nearly old enough to be Ben's mother, had been delighted at first. Somehow, she'd expected Riley to be twenty feet tall, also, or the metric equivalent thereof. To turn out a smörgasbord supper at the drop of a kerchief, perhaps, to whittle modern furniture in her spare time, to grow flax in the back yard and spin linen.

It had been a disappointment to Eula to find that Riley was just a whiz at the stuff they taught in schools. Any old American, European or African school. She had gone native, was merely American.

On the surface, it hadn't been a bad life. Ben, working for his brother-in-law as an office manager, had made an adequate income. They had their own house, their own car, and friends—too many kinsmen and friends. He might never have accepted the New York offer if he hadn't seen Riley remain bewildered and unanswered throughout. *I'll find it for you,* he had promised. And Ben never lied.

And so, after five years, they were leaving the midstate city where Riley had not been happy or successful. She was traveling still. Now she was traveling with a man and a boy.

What did she want? What was she looking for? There were signs, in big cities, outside shops that catered to foreigners. *Se habla español. Ici on parle . . .*

Did it say, anywhere, *Enter, pilgrim?* Or *Truth spoken within?* Or was that only over the celestial gates of her father's dream?

She went to get her son's leggings from the upstairs closet where she hoped she had left them handy. It would be good to get away from the mess of the house for an hour.

The front door opened. A brisk, short-haired brunette girl in her middle twenties, cheeks clean and pink from the late autumn outdoors, greeted them from between the two enormous brown paper bags that she held in either arm.

"Hi, folks!" she said. "Hi, Riley! Hi, Jerry boy! I didn't think you'd have time to cook, Riley, so I brought you some club sandwiches and coffee from the Greek's. I still just can't believe you're going away."

She was Joan Gray. She had been Ben's secretary, until close of business that evening. In the cozy everybody-knows-everybody atmosphere of Kingstock, she was also a family friend. It was like her to think of the sandwiches—especially, Riley realized, when it would have been somehow a relief to get out of the house, and to go to the Greek's themselves. Joan always thought of everything; probably, she would have been a far more suitable heir to the lost ring of Saint Alice.

"Everything," Riley protested, "looks so terrible. I feel ashamed."

"Swell of you," Ben acknowledged gravely to the girl with the paper bags. "It comes in handy. We haven't much time. Believe it or not, we still have half the packing to do."

Riley silenced the familiar feeling of alarm in herself. It was silly, but it was so. She always felt thick and stupid, in front of her own husband, when Joan was around. All his life, Ben had known Joan Gray. Why had he married someone like Riley instead? What was Riley giving him?

After a while, it was time to put Jerry to bed. She left the murmur of voices downstairs and sat by him for a moment, in the dark that he never had feared, although she had expected him to.

"Sorry to be leaving?" she asked. "Will you miss this place?"

"No," he sighed sleepily.

"We'll have fine times in New York. We'll find things to do that you'll like."

"I like you," said Jerry comfortably.

She wondered why. She never had felt at home anywhere. But she seemed to have made a home for this contented child. It was strange. She wondered when he would discover how inadequate she was, and whether it would be a shock.

It was eight in the evening when they reached New York. They were lucky, Riley had been told, to have found an apartment in the crowded city . . . and when she saw the streets, she believed it. She almost had forgotten, during the years in Kingstock, how full a city could

be. Cars were double-parked, midtown, in the residential section. Everything moved slowly, trying to avoid everything else. There were so many lights it reminded you of Christmas.

"The kid must be starved," Ben grumbled, half to himself, half to Riley. "Keep your eye peeled for a parking space."

Jerry woke, in back. "Not hungry," he informed them in a glad voice.

He seldom was, when he and Ben were together. Or maybe she only noticed it then.

The apartment was on the top floor, rear, of a middle-aged building on the block east of Riverside Drive. It smelled of old paint grown damp—its walls were a little more soiled than the walls they had left behind them. Although it was empty, still, you could see where the last tenants' furniture had been, by the scars on the walls. You almost could tell what the people had had for breakfast that morning, by looking in the sink.

Ben said, "We'll clean it up. You'll see. It'll look fine by the time we're through."

She touched the grimy windows. Her eyes were grave. This was the first place, she thought, that they would have all to themselves, with no one's help and no one's advice to guide them.

"Maybe this is it," she said.

"I hope so. Though it sure doesn't look like the end of anyone's trail." Ben started pacing off the living room's length, one foot ahead of the other. "I doubt our carpet will fit. You know something, Riley?"

"What?"

"I'm happy wherever you're happy. If you like this dump, I'm going to like it, too. And I'm going to like not working for a brother-in-law."

The words gave her a strange glow. "You're a good husband," she told him, smiling. "You never will know how good."

There was nothing to do till the van came with their gear. They rinsed their hands in the unwashed bathroom sink, and went to a restaurant for dinner. Ben insisted on ordering too much for Jerry, and the child shook his head after a few mouthfuls.

"He's too tired," Riley explained. She knew it without search, as she always seemed to know how he felt.

"He's too young," Ben said firmly, "to judge for himself. That's what parents are for. Go ahead, kid. Eat."

Expressionlessly, the boy obeyed.

"Hurry," Ben said.

Jerry hurried, proudly.

Suddenly he stopped, and looked helplessly at Riley. He waved one arm in the air, as though he were drowning.

She snatched him from his chair and dashed for the restaurant washroom. She knew what was going to happen. He was going to be sick.

She brought him back, moments later, a paler child but a happier one, who was quite content to sit still while his parents drank their coffee, as long as he was not required to eat or drink.

"When I was his age," Ben said, "I could eat nails."

She looked at the empty spot on her finger, at the white groove where his mother's ring had been.

"You can't possibly remember yourself at his age," she pointed out. "Or what you ate."

"That's true," he admitted, after a while. "Eula said I did. It's not important."

It was, however.

Was there a gap in his life, as there was in hers—a root-point, where no memory reached, that in other humans was filled with securities and answers? He had been raised by an older sister, toward whom he felt only a conventional, frail attachment—and she had been sent out early by parents whose spiritual home was in another world. Was that what they had seen in one another—were they both looking, together, for some modest earthy place such as others already had, that would be peculiarly theirs?

She tried next day, not to dally too much over the unpacking. That had always been her bad fault as a housekeeper. Dreaminess. Inefficiency.

She realized, by three in the afternoon, that she was almost finished. She didn't understand it. Why had she been so ineffective in Kingstock?

It was because she had had no help, perhaps. This was almost the first day in her housewifely career that she had spent altogether by herself, except for the company of her child. The results were startling. She was a born putterer. Evidently, if you were allowed to putter on steadily and alone, you could straighten an apartment almost as easily as you could get an A in senior psychology.

In the end, she had to rush to market, and her dinner was only a little better than makeshift. At six, when Ben came home, she was tired. But she had made it. She had finished a day with all its loose ends tied up.

"How did it go?" she asked him.

He smiled. "I like it," he said. "I like this town. Maybe not to live in," he made a sweeping gesture that indicated Riley's efforts with the apartment—"but it's going to be all right, for my job."

"I'm glad," she said humbly. "I'd have hated myself—"

"You're always hating yourself," he interrupted her. "Cut it out, will you?"

"Sure."

"Kid been okay? You didn't get him out, I guess."

She shook her head. "Only to market and back. He's been good, though."

"He's too good," Ben said. "Is a kid supposed to be that good? Now that we're in New York, maybe we ought to look into this Medical Center uptown."

"Yes. I'll get to it," she said.

There was a good, new feeling among the three of them, here in the apartment. They were private. The place was obviously less than heart's desire. But somehow you could think straighter in it.

There are no problem children, she had been told in Human Relations, a course open to juniors, seniors and accredited sophomores. There are only problem parents. When her thinking became perfectly straight at last, Jerry wouldn't need the Medical Center to make him fatter.

In the meantime, she would take him there. if Ben wished it.

The cleanliness of the hospital's out-

"Stop eating—I lost my caterpillar!"

patient department reminded her, somehow, of Helsinki. Outside the waiting-room window, New York sprawled in its own good-tempered disorder. But here, there was a chaste, infallible, antiseptic quality that would have pleased Riley's hard-to-please mother.

They examined Jerry with a thoroughness that dazzled her, and him, too. Once, when they drew blood from his finger, he uttered a toneless "Ouch," but he made no other comment.

At last, she was closeted alone with a white-jacketed lady doctor who looked upon her in a detached and kindly way. "Well?" asked the doctor. "What did you expect would be wrong with him?"

"Me," Riley answered.

"What?"

Suddenly Riley realized that the doctor's kindly face had become even kindlier, more understanding. She was looking straight at the bare third finger of Riley's left hand.

"I lost it," Riley said, her face flushing. "When we moved. He has a perfectly good, fine father. The trouble is, I don't get him out enough. He's too little and quiet. Sometimes I forget his vitamins."

"Horrible," said the doctor. "If you keep it up, he may not live past a hundred and seven."

Riley absorbed this verdict slowly, and shook her head. "Shouldn't he be more active? Rosier?"

The doctor laughed. She was a small woman, brunette and rather pretty, and a few years earlier, she had probably looked even more like Joan Gray, of Kingstock, New York. "Only one thing for that," she said. "Frankly, what's your husband's income?"

Riley told her.

The doctor whistled. Then she said. "You get that kid out of the city. It'll spark him up in time, and obviously you can afford it. Rent a house out in the suburbs. If you've never lived in a house, you'll love it. And quit worrying about what kind of mother you are. Probably you've never done a wrong thing for the child in your life."

On the way home in the bus, watching him, she could almost believe it. He looked, as always, contented. She had passed motherhood with flying colors, as she once had passed Psychology IV. Within her, a hunger gnawed to pass muster with herself.

That night, she said to Ben, "He's in perfect shape. They said."

"If that's perfect," he retorted, "I don't like it."

"I told them that. They made a suggestion."

"What was it?"

She laughed, half-derisively. "A house in the suburbs, with a back yard he can play in."

"Well," said Ben, frowning. "I guess we can swing it."

She looked at him speechlessly for a moment. Then she cried. "But he *had* a house and a yard. For four years! It didn't help. Don't you understand, Ben? Most people won't admit it if they don't know an answer. They'll make one up, or make over a second-hand one. She didn't really *mean* he needed a house in the suburbs. She just said it."

"How can you think that?" he demanded. "She's a doctor, isn't she? A specialist. That's the biggest place in the country. Why should you think she was gaffing you?"

It is a woman's prerogative to change her mind; after which she starts working on her husband's.

Why should she think it, indeed? What was her touchstone for belief? "Because," she said honestly, "it bored me."

Ben looked at her, hard. "Come again?" he suggested.

"If an answer bores you," she insisted, "it is probably wrong."

He swore, in awe. Then he said. "Darling. My queer, wonderful, dreamy darling. I wish I could manage an office that simply."

"Are you angry?" she asked, in hurt.

"Of course not. But let's not be poetic about this. Raising a kid is a serious thing, honey. We'll get him his house and yard."

"Not back to Kingstock." She mustn't cry. She looked awful when she cried. She looked boring.

"Not back to Kingstock," he agreed, thoughtfully. "I like my New York job. And believe me, sweet, if it weren't for your divine discontent, I'd still be in that rut upstate, never knowing I was half dead. But I could commute."

"Yes," she said, troubled. For once in her life, she felt unprepared for the next move. She had been learning something here, and she needed to finish her course.

"Even if we couldn't afford a new house," he went on eagerly, "we could have the old place in Ossining. I've always wanted to look at it, anyway."

"What old place in Ossining?" This was something she should have known, she thought in alarm—one of the many, many things that people had told her since her marriage, one of the boring, frightening things that had left her unequal and poor by its very existence.

"Why, my mother's house!" He looked quite happy, facing her across the table in their functional New York flat—so happy that she knew she had met an inevitability. "Don't you remember? My folks had a farm near Ossining, years ago, before I was born, when it still was farm country. It was later they went farther north. Forty years ago, maybe more . . . but the family still owns the place. Eula would let us have it, maybe for nothing. Gosh, I'd like to see it! Let's drive out there Sunday?"

Why did he pretend it was the child's health that concerned him? Why didn't he admit that he still was looking for his elusive, saintly mother?

They went, that Sunday, to look at the house and acreage. Riley expected it to resemble her sister-in-law's house in Kingstock.

But the pastures were overgrown, had returned to woods.

In their center stood the house. It was made of stone, and looked huger than it actually was. Most of the windows were broken. But one unbroken pane reflected the sunlight blindly, hungrily, as it had done for forty years. Forty springtimes. Forty autumns. The house had waited, empty, for returning life, alone and hungry on its hill.

Ben whispered, as though he were in church. "Isn't that it, though? Isn't that one glorious place?"

She had fought it for five years. And now she had lost.

Tragically, she saw no glory except in his good and transfixed face. She still

felt like a gypsy in her heart. But Ben was home.

"It will take a lot," she said faintly. "It's sort of in ruins."

"We can fix it for half the price of some atrocity in one of these new developments. How do you like it, Jerry?"

"Fine," said Jerry amiably.

"They'll help us," Riley said. "We're on the way to Kingstock here. They'll drive down and help us move in."

He looked at her quickly, then laughed. "Oh, just at first, I guess. They'll be curious to see how we fix up Mother's old place. Naturally."

They would be curious to see how Riley floundered in it, too. Lock, stock and barrel, as the saying went. Hog-tied and helpless—signed, sealed and delivered, into the ghostly and critical keeping of the indomitable past. You could escape the living, apparently, more easily than the dead.

It couldn't happen. She couldn't believe it. Something would prevent her coming here, to walk for the rest of her life in her old enemy's footsteps.

Much later, on a raw, wet day in March, she stood again on the hill. Things had moved very quickly—and so had the Thomsons. It was the bottom hour of her life. She had said good-by to all her fatherlands without a qualm. But she had wept at last, as quietly as she could, when they left the ugly small private apartment near Riverside Drive.

Jerry said, "Can I dig some, Mother?" and she answered tonelessly, "Yes."

She could go back into the house in a while, she thought, and pretend to struggle with it . . . but there was no rush. She could not but fail. Within an hour or two, all the relatives would arrive, to arrange the rest of Riley's life. She could not cope with that house. In the gray sky above, did Saint Alice watch her benignly?

She had challenged the whole world, and she was unequal to charting her own little destiny. She had turned her back on all the advice and all the wisdom that had ever been offered her, and now she was trying desperately to recall any least little phrase that might give her a fragile spiritual footing.

"Trouble with you is," Joan Gray had told her, "you're too darned easy on Ben. You ought to buy more clothes, hire a maid. You foreign girls spoil things for us natives."

"When Ben was Jerry's age," Eula had sighed, "he ate like a horse."

"The trouble with you is," said Raili Anttonen's mother, in Finnish, "you never wake up!"

Probably this place had bloomed, in Ben's mother's time. Probably, by this thicket of lilac, bare and unpromising now in March, Ben's mother had paused to sow a kitchen garden between running up a banquet in the baronial kitchen and doing a week's wash in the vast stone basement tubs. Probably this place would never bloom again.

If only, she thought, there had been someone really on her side—not only a man who loved her, but a guardian friend, such as the others had insisted they were! Someone who would have been to Riley what Riley's mother had been to Riley's older sister. She never had known how far her rights went, where her duties ended. She had tried to do everything, *be* everything. If only her friend were coming, to defend her from Eula and Joan. And from the terrible ghost of this place.

Just as a woman, just as a wife, she needed someone to have shop-talk with. Everyone needed that. Whom did she respect enough for that? And who respected Riley?

"Something, Mother," Jerry said. She did not hear him at first. Then he clutched the skirt of her housedress with his muddy hand. "Something," he insisted.

She took the thing from him, frowning. It was like a pebble, at first—any other mud-covered pebble that a child would find in the dirt and treasure for unfathomable reasons of his own.

But when she rubbed the dirt off, she saw that it was gold.

It was a ring—a heavy, old-fashioned wedding ring. The engraved script on the inner surface still was visible. It said, *To Alice, from James. April 4, 1899.*

After a while, it was warm in her hand. Trembling, she tried it on.

It covered the naked white groove, perfectly. It was snug. It had belonged to a slim-fingered woman, with most of her work ahead of her. Never to a woman twenty feet tall.

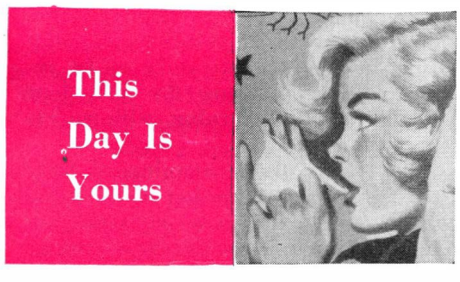
And Riley imagined her, just as she must have been, forty years before, here by the lilac bush, dreamy, snatching a moment alone, from chores that felt like too much for her and that could never be solved. No other kind of woman would have done such a foolish thing. She had come here, feeling thin and unequal, prodded unendurably by conscience, and she had slipped off the ring, to try to recall who she had been before all the tasks piled up. Before anyone had expected her to be more than five feet tall. She had taken her ring off as Descartes had discarded all certainties. "I am Alice," she must have said to herself. "I mean terribly well. This is my house." And possibly, "That is my child."

And of course, she had lost the ring. Someone must have loved her a great deal. Someone had bought her a new ring, which she had worn all her life, and which she had left to Riley to be lost in turn, when its meaning was lost. When its meaning became a bore.

She laughed aloud. She snatched her light little son by his waist, and swung him in the air till he screamed with joy. "See that house?" she told him. "That is my house. You are my boy. Race you to the door."

Indoors, she began to clean and to scrub. She seemed to know exactly what to do. The ring grew cleaner and cleaner as her hands went in and out of her scrubbing-bucket. Soon, without realizing it, she was giving orders to the breathless child, who obeyed, as he always did, brown eyes fixed on her with wonder and devotion, storing up stuff for the legend he would tell his sons. She began to sing, not softly, but at the top of her alto voice, and the little boy sang, too.

. . . THE END



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here. I don't know how you've managed to stand it for six months."

"You're lucky," Lois accused her. "Your mother didn't go to school with Mrs. Hether."

Lois had considered herself very lucky, before she'd come to Washington, to have a room already waiting for her, but Mrs. Hether had achieved a unique feat in this crowded capital city: She was an unsuccessful landlady, one who couldn't keep her ten tiny, unheated rooms steadily filled.

"Well, anyway," Jeanne said consolingly, "at least you've got a date with Eric Willison tonight. Haven't you?"

"Yes," Lois answered slowly, "or no, as the case may be. Last Sunday night he said, 'Probably see you next Friday as usual.' "

"As usual like the three Friday nights you waited till midnight?"

"Maybe like them," Lois admitted, smiling automatically, even though Eric's casual treatment hurt painfully. "I suppose I'm lucky, at that, to have even the hope of a date in this town. There are at least a hundred girls to every one man."

"If there's even one man in it," Jeanne said morosely, "I haven't seen him."

"There's the President," Lois pointed out. "But he's married."

"Who isn't?" Jeanne sighed, "except me. Hey!" she exclaimed, looking at the clock. "You're going to be late."

"Am I?" Lois murmured, but she didn't move. She dreaded the inimical day that waited to offer her a variety of disagreeable experiences. Facing Mrs. Hether's hurt amazement, finding another place, probably just as bad, the humiliation of being fired, the ignominious wait for Eric, and—topping these things like a poisoned cherry decorating an indigestible sundae—she absolutely *couldn't* put off making an appointment with the dentist!

She lay in bed, watching the inexorable clock hands move well past the time when she should be dressed and out. Guiltily she stayed there, avoiding the uncomfortable issues of the day, and also her roommate's curious eyes.

The knocking on the door startled them both.

"Lois, dear," Mrs. Hether's voice said plaintively, "I didn't hear you getting up." (Her room, with its paper-thin walls, was next to Lois and Jeanne's.) "I wondered if you were ill, so I brought you this."

She came into the room, carrying a small breakfast tray with a jug of hot

coffee and a sweet roll. A morning paper was tucked under her plump arm.

"How very nice of you," Lois said uncomfortably. "I have a headache and I thought I'd skip work today."

She'd call the office later and get fired by phone. Maybe she'd even pack up and go home to that green little Illinois town where she was one of the four "pretty Prentiss girls." It would be a limp ending to her solo flight into independence and maturity, but her family would be happy to have her home. Only she would know it was a retreat.

"You'll feel better after you have your coffee," Mrs. Hether told her. "And that nice roll . . . oh, dear, I forgot the cream."

"I don't use—" Lois started to say, but Mrs. Hether was already scurrying out.

"She'll bring it to you next Tuesday," Jeanne said, looking enviously at the steaming coffee. "But now you'll never be able to tell her you're leaving."

"I know it!" Lois miserably wished Mrs. Hether wouldn't be so solicitous. She cut the sweet roll in half, put the tray on the table between the beds where Jeanne could reach it, and tossed her half of the paper. They took turns sipping from the big cup and, leaning comfortably back on their pillows (Jeanne didn't have to get up till nine), they read the morning paper.

Jeanne turned immediately to an inner page, read with absorbed interest, and then asked, "What sign were you born under?"

"Sign?" Lois repeated vaguely.

"Of the zodiac. You know . . . astrology. What star were you born under?"

"I don't know. I'm not particularly superstitious."

Jeanne was affronted. "Astrology is a science, not a superstition. When's your birthday?"

"August first."

"Then you're Leo. Leo, the Lion." Her eyes returned to the newspaper and searched the column. "Aries . . . Taurus . . . Gemini . . . Leo . . . here you are. Every day it tells you what things you should try to . . ." Her voice broke off sharply, and she looked across at Lois in excitement.

"What's the matter?" Lois asked.

"*Listen!*" Jeanne said imperiously and read in a fervent voice: "THIS IS YOUR DAY! In all the year, this is the one day when the stars are precisely right for you. Nothing can go wrong. Difficulties will melt away at your approach. An unexpected message will solve a minor problem. Upward paths will lead to unusual opportunities! Walk boldly forward! This is *your* day!"

"My day, is it?" Lois said scornfully. "Just shows how silly the whole superstition is."

Jeanne's annoyed answer was interrupted by the return of Mrs. Hether. She brought no cream, but there was an open telegram in her trembling, excited hands.

"Oh, dear," she said pantingly. "I hardly know how to tell you, Lois, dear! Your mother entrusted you to me, and I do dread disappointing her, but my brother Edward in Baltimore . . . I'm afraid my responsibility to him must come first! And of course my experience here will be very valuable in managing his big house . . . and his children, too, because I've looked upon my paying guests here, especially you, not as roomers, but in a sense, as my children! And that's why I do hate telling you I must desert you, but"—she waved the telegram defensively—"when Edward says come at once, that really means practically right away!"

After Mrs. Hether had finally fluttered away, Jeanne muttered in an awed voice, "The exact words! 'An unexpected message will solve a minor problem!' "

Lois smiled. Mrs. Hether had certainly been a minor problem, and the telegram was an unexpected message, but . . . "Coincidence," she said.

"Coincidence, my foot!" Jeanne answered hotly. "Astrology is just as exact a science as mathematics. It rules our lives, whether we have sense enough to know it or not! I've proved it to myself time and time again. And I certainly know one thing!" she said impressively. "If this were *my* day, my *one* day in the year when nothing could go wrong, I wouldn't stay in bed!"

Lois' eyes went involuntarily to the clock. It said eight. If she dressed like lightning and took a cab, she wouldn't be more than half an hour late. She wasn't influenced, of course, she told herself, by a silly superstition. It was just that she felt so much better now that she didn't have to worry about Mrs. Hether any more. She pushed back the covers and got out of bed quickly.

Lois wasn't a Government Girl, yet, although her application was in. She worked in a branch office of a big insurance company, and when she walked into the lobby of the tall building, she found it crowded with people impatiently waiting for the old elevators to be repaired. *Everyone* above the fifth floor would be late this morning, with no excuses required!

The words of the astrological forecast came suddenly into her mind: "Difficulties will melt away at your approach!" Another coincidence, of course. Wasn't it?

Although she worked on the nineteenth floor, she walked up to the fourth, high heels tapping briskly with purpose. At the door of a dentist's office, she hesitated. After all, the tooth wasn't aching *now*. And after all, it was probably so bad that it would have to be pulled anyway, so another delay wouldn't matter. She turned away from the door.

But then . . . on the other hand, if there *should* be anything in this astrology business, and if this were *really* a day when nothing could go wrong . . . She pushed open the office door and walked bravely in.

The doctor's nurse was there at the desk, consulting her appointment pad for the benefit of a tall young man with red hair . . . hair he seemed to dislike so much he had it crew cut almost to the skull. He looked up quickly at Lois' entrance and seemed relieved that she was there.

"Why don't you help this young lady first?" he suggested politely to the nurse.

"Thank you. . . ." Lois smiled at him as she stepped past him toward the desk. He worked in the building, she knew, because she'd often ridden up in the elevator with him, and now and then they'd exchanged a few original remarks about the weather.

"Do you think the doctor could possibly see me today?" Lois asked the nurse. "I know he's very busy, but . . ." and she smiled her very best smile.

The nurse hesitated. "His first patient hasn't come in yet . . . probably still downstairs . . . so if you have the time right now, perhaps we could just take a little look."

Lois' heart pounded with alarm, but she said brightly, "Fine."

She followed the nurse into the dentist's office and was in the chair exactly three and a half minutes.

"How old are you?" the doctor asked.

". . . enty-un," she answered with her mouth open.

"It's just your wisdom tooth, trying to come through."

He rubbed something cold on the gum, used a tiny knife which she didn't feel at all, and said it would be okay now.

When she came blithely out into the reception room, the young man was still there.

"But, Mr. Stevens," the nurse was saying gently, "I could just as well make it a week sooner."

"Oh, no! No, thanks," he said hastily. "I'll be out of town next weekend. Like I was last week. Sorry I had to cancel, but things come up. . . ."

"Of course. Then I'll put you down for three weeks from today at five."

"Fine, fine," he said dismally, and retreated quickly, opening the door for Lois. Out in the hall, he took a long, dejected breath. "And to think somebody gave me a medal once to prove I wasn't a coward."

"Everybody's scared of dentists," she consoled him, and she started toward the elevator doors. "They're running now, I see."

"But they'll be so crowded, they won't stop at these lower floors. We could walk up."

"But it's fifteen floors!" she exclaimed in dismay.

Then she remembered the words of the forecast. "Take upward path to unexpected opportunities!" If fifteen flights of stairs weren't an upward path, what was?

"All right, then, let's walk up," she said gaily, and felt a surge of excited curiosity as they started up. He smiled at her admiringly, and she was glad she had worn her new blue gabardine suit and the gold blouse that almost matched her hair. Her seams were undoubtedly straight, too, if this was the day when nothing could go wrong for her, and it did seem to be, didn't it?

They climbed, resting on the landings, and talked, liking each other's sense of humor, each other's looks.

"You work in that big insurance office, don't you?" he asked.

"I did," she said calmly, "but I'm making a change. Very dull . . . not really a secretarial job at all."

"Well, listen," he said quickly. "My office is always looking for good secretaries."

"How do you know I'm good?" she asked lightly.

"I can tell," he said evasively. "The way you walked into that dentist's office, for one thing . . . oozing with confidence. People don't have self-confidence unless they're good at their jobs." She laughed aloud, but he went on eagerly, "Come and take a look at our office."

"Thank you. I will, after I see where I stand. What would be the best time for me to see your personnel manager?"

"Any time, any time," he said, smiling. "I'm the personnel manager."

At the door to her office, he started to leave her, but impulsively turned back.

"Got a date tonight?" he asked.

Lois hesitated. "I don't know yet."

"Could you switch it?"

She thought about Eric, wondering if she could reach him by phone. If he were coming, she'd rather wait for him, but if he weren't . . . Then she saw that Mr. Stevens' face was almost as red as his hair. He spoke quickly and awkwardly.

"Listen—the date's got nothing to do with the job. There's no connection. If you don't want to go out with me, or can't, that's okay. Our office still needs good secretaries and I don't take any of 'em out."

She answered quickly, "That isn't what I was thinking at all. I'd like to go out with you tonight, very much. And yes . . . I can switch it."

Her office, almost emptied of people, seemed big and silent. Mr. Munson looked at her curiously as she came breathlessly in.

"Did you walk up, too?" he asked.

She nodded, and suddenly she wanted to get the disagreeable moment over. Only now, somehow, there seemed nothing so very terrible about it.

"Oh, Mr. Munson," she said, "I wanted to talk to you about my leaving here."

She was faintly amused at his look of relief. "Getting married, Miss Prentiss?" he asked.

She laughed. "No."

He was watching her thoughtfully. "Better job somewhere else?"

"Maybe." She smiled into his tired eyes, feeling comfortable and easy with him for the first time in weeks. "But mainly, I thought I'd rather quit than be fired."

He looked swiftly away from her in embarrassment for a moment, but didn't deny it.

"You seemed to have lost interest in the job," he explained defensively. "When you first came, you were full of suggestions and ideas."

She interrupted in surprise. "Which you always showed me were quite valueless."

He looked surprised at that. "No, no. They were very sensible short cuts, only the home office requires certain routines that can't be changed. I get pretty bored with them myself sometimes, but there they are."

Lois hadn't thought anything could bore Mr. Munson. He was such a quiet, faded little man, but now she could see the wryly intelligent smile at the corners of his mouth.

"Suddenly your interest was gone. Whenever I worked with you, you made mistakes . . . and the last few weeks you seemed to avoid making your reports to me."

"I thought if you didn't see me, you might forget to fire me."

"But now you want to leave. Well, I don't blame you. It's not a very interesting job." He hesitated. watching her, then suddenly nodded as if he'd come to a decision. "If you haven't settled on another job already, I know of one I think you'd really like. My sister lives just across the river in a beautiful old house . . . historic landmark . . . even *Martha* Washington slept there. Tourists have pestered her for years, wanting to buy a brick out of the fireplace or cut a small souvenir out of the draperies, so now she's decided to turn it into an antique shop."

"I don't know anything about antiques," Lois confessed.

"You wouldn't have to. Evelyn knows all that. She needs someone to do letters and accounts . . . someone who's attractive and pleasant with people. The pay is the same as here, but a little apartment goes along with it."

"I'll take it," Lois exclaimed quickly. "I want it!"

He laughed. "Cute little place . . . used to be a guest suite built up over the stable. A living room, big window looks out toward the river, bedroom and bath, and a small bit of kitchen."

Lois was moaning in ecstasy and suspense. She grabbed his arm. "Don't tell me any more. I can't stand it if I don't get it. Let me call your sister . . . Let me go see her. . . . Oh, let's do something quickly!"

So Mr. Munson called his sister quickly and came out of his office to tell Lois that it was all settled. His sister would expect her to come out over the week-end for a chance to get acquainted.

"My wife and I are driving over," he told Lois, "leaving about one tomorrow. Would you like to go with us?"

"Love to," Lois replied gratefully. "And I can't thank you enough, Mr. Munson. I'll work like a dog—I really will!"

He was shyly pleased with her gratitude. "So now," he said dryly, "you may consider that I have lowered the boom and you're fired."

"Oh, no," she said firmly. "I quit."

He laughed and walked on, while she sank down at her desk, too excited to think about working. This was the most amazing day! A new job, a new apartment, a new man in her life! Oh, yes . . . she must call Eric.

She dialed his office in the Pentagon, was passed from operator to receptionist, from secretary to another secretary, being made to feel more and more guilty at bothering a busy man. She had never called him at work before.

She heard his deep voice, brisk with vitality, and all her excitement and triumph in the day drained out of her because what she feared about herself was true. She was falling in love with Eric Willison, although she knew by his careless treatment that he wasn't in love with her.

"Lois?" He seemed surprised. "Something wrong?"

"No, no," she said quickly, "Sorry to call you when I know you're busy."

She hated herself for her apologetic tone. He called her when he felt like it . . . which didn't seem to be too often . . . but he never cared whether she was busy or not. "But about tonight . . . I wasn't sure whether you had planned on coming."

He interrupted, quickly, defensively. "Lois, you know I'll get there if I possibly can. It might be late, but—"

"The point is, Eric, that I don't want you to come all that way and not find me there. As I said, we didn't have a definite date, so I made other plans."

"Well, you can change it, can't you," he said easily, "because I'm pretty sure I'll be there by nine."

She was boiling with fury, but she said lightly, "I really can't change it, Eric."

"Don't be silly," he said impatiently. "You can go to the movies with Jeanne any night."

"This isn't with Jeanne. I'm sorry, Eric," she fibbed, "but the boss is coming my way now, and I have to hang up. 'By." She hung up hastily.

In a few moments her phone rang, and it was Eric.

"I couldn't hear you very well," he explained, "and I think we were cut off."

"No," she said calmly, "I had to hang up."

"But we hadn't settled it about tonight," he complained. "I certainly intended to come over."

"I couldn't know that, Eric, so I made another date. I'm sorry if you'd made plans."

"Who with?" he asked curiously.

"What?" she asked innocently. "I don't hear you too well, either."

"I said *who* are you going out with?"

"I don't think you know him, Eric."

"Does he work in your office?"

"No, Eric. But he is a very nice young man, if that's what's worrying you. And I'm sorry, but I really do have to get to work."

"Okay," he said sulkily. "Then maybe I'll see you tomorrow night."

"I'm afraid not. I'm going out of town over the week-end." Technically speaking, over the bridge was certainly out of town.

"Out of town!" He repeated the phrase in as incredulous a tone as if she'd said she was having her face painted green and flying to the moon.

"Well, yes," she said, nettled. "See you next week . . . . *maybe*." And she hung up.

After a moment, she began to smile a little. The conversation had done her good, although she knew Eric's annoyance was only due to masculine pride. His ego balked at being the one rejected. At the moment she felt triumphantly free of him, with a strong hope that the feeling would endure. The evening with Mr. Red Stevens would help her, she knew. Perhaps she could even become interested enough in him to forget Eric completely.

It certainly looked that way for a good three-quarters of the evening. They had a wonderful time . . . dinner and dancing . . . a better time than she often had with Eric, because she was tense with Eric, sometimes too anxious to please him, sometimes antagonistic to anything he planned. But it was easy and comfortable with Red. Until in the taxi coming home, when his arm slid around her shoulder and he kissed her lightly, she felt a surge of longing for Eric so strong that she wondered numbly what she was doing out with this strange young man . . . this nice, amusing, but absolutely meaningless young man, whose touch was so unimportant to her.

She thanked him overeffusively, at the front door, for a wonderful evening, and let him kiss her once again, guilty that he should find pleasure in what was to her such an empty gesture, and she watched him drive off in the taxi, knowing that she wouldn't be going out with him again. It was no use going out with anybody until she could forget the infuriating Eric.

A man's figure stalked across the street and came up the front steps, two at a time. It was Eric, not only infuriating, but infuriated.

"That was certainly a nice display of vulgarity," he said, his voice hot with anger.

"What was?" she asked, startled at his presence. "What are you doing here?"

"I have been parked across the street," he said cuttingly, "for just exactly four and a half hours. Do you realize what time it is?"

"It's about three, I guess. Why?"

"It is exactly twenty-five minutes after three! Practically morning, and you finally come home with some lout you barely know. I suppose he kissed you in the taxi, too?"

She flared up in resentment against his accusing manner. "Why, yes, he did. Why not?"

"Are you in love with him?" Eric demanded.

She looked up in surprise at the tenseness of his face. In the dim light from the street lamp, it was heavily shadowed, but his dark eyes under the heavy straight brows were glittering with anger and jealousy, and his mouth was pressed into a thin line of impatient suspense. He wore no hat, his head with its thick dark hair was bent to watch her intently, and his strong shoulders were very still with waiting. There was no arrogance in him now. No carelessness in the way his attention was focused sharply on her.

"What if I were?" she asked slowly.

He caught his breath in a gasp of anger. "What if you were? A fine question to ask after I've been working like a fool . . . twenty-eight hours a day . . . so I can make enough to find us a place to live in this madhouse of a town . . . so we can get married before we're too old to notice it! And then you ask, real cute and careless, what if you're in love with somebody else!" He reached out and shook her. "Are you?"

"No," she said.

"Why did you let him kiss you then?"

"Because I thought it might help me forget about you. Please stop—you're shaking my wisdom teeth loose!"

"But why should you forget about me, you small idiot?"

"Because, you large idiot, you forgot to let me in on your plans. How was I to know?"

"You know I love you," he said impatiently. "I've told you dozens of times."

She stared at him in honest bewilderment. "You've said the words," she conceded. "Said them in just the same careless way I've heard you say them to a waitress . . . When she brings your order quickly. 'You're wonderful!' " she mimicked his light tone savagely. " 'And I love you quite madly.' "

He looked dazed. "But I don't mean it the same way."

"Don't you?" she asked. "How could I know?"

He groaned and pulled her close against him. "I love you," he said in a half-angry voice, and it didn't sound at all as it did when he said it casually. "If you don't know it by now, you're the stupidest woman I ever met!" And he kissed her—vehemently.

After a moment she smiled groggily up at him. "I know it now," she said. "I know it now."

An hour later, in a daze of sleepy delight, she stumbled into her dark room and shook the slumbering bundle of bedclothes that was Jeanne.

"Jeanne . . . wake up . . . the most wonderful things to tell you!"

"Wha'?" Jeanne finally blinked swollen eyes half-open. "Oh . . . you."

"Yes, it's me," Lois said triumphantly, "and I want you to have my new black, the one you like—for a present—because if it hadn't been for you I'd have stayed in bed, and never even known it was my day!"

Jeanne was awake enough now to make some sense of it. "Oh, yes . . ." she said. "Leo . . ."

"I really do believe it now, because every word came true!"

"Lois." Jeanne was trying to interrupt. "I believe it, too, and it really is a science, only . . ." She hesitated. "Only I found out after you left that was *yesterday's* paper!"

"Yesterday's!" Lois exclaimed.

Jeanne looked at the clock. "I mean Thursday's."

"Then, according to the stars, it wasn't my day at all?"

Jeanne answered uncomfortably, "It's hard to understand, and I'm sorry that I—"

But Lois began to smile, and she embraced Jeanne fervently.

"I like it better this way. Today *was* mine. But not because of stars or planets." She felt a sense of heady power at having learned a valuable secret.

"Any day is yours," Lois said. "All you have to do is get up, reach out, and *make* it yours!" . . . THE END

CREDITS IN THIS ISSUE

PHOTOGRAPHS:

Pages 14-20, Tops in the Shops—Thomas Yee; Page 21, Editorial: They've Never Forgotten—Sam Hinerfeld; Page 59, Bargain Trip to Europe—Robert Barclay-Free Lance Photographers Guild; Page 68, We Are Proud to Announce—Binder & Duffy.

Springtime for Sidney

(Continued from page 35)

flourish, he helped me dismount and indicated a rusty pipe topped by a spigot under an ailanthus tree.

"You sure this is the right place?" I queried doubtfully.

"Look, boss," he said, "you ain't no ordinary tourist—right? You got to have the real McCoy or nothin'—right?"

I modestly admitted I had seen too much of the world to be hoodwinked.

"It sticks out all over you," he said. "Now, you just taste this yere spring, and if it ain't the same one Ponce drank out of, the attendant refunds your money."

"Where *is* the attendant?" I asked, unpinning a bill from my shirt.

"He's laid up with yellow jack," he replied. "I'm takin' custody of the dough till he gets back."

The water had a sweet, flavorsome tang, and I drank several dipperfuls. By the time the evening plane put me down in Miami, its rejuvenative properties had demonstrated themselves beyond cavil: My wrists and ankles were swollen to chubby little barrels, and I was chewing on my toes as lustily as an infant. The hotel clerk who registered me flinched when I burst into a plaintive wail, but he needn't have. I was merely teething. A short nap and a basin of bourbon, however, soon knit up the ravell'd sleave of care, and I was ready again for the search.

Coruscating like a string of jewels along the moonlit sweep of Miami Beach, Collins Avenue's ninety-seven blocks of skyscraper hotels outshone the solar spectrum. As far as the eye could see, a serried row of floodlit edifices, resembling gigantic bureaus with their drawers pulled out, trumpeted to the newcomer that he was in the nobbiest winter playground ever devised by the mind of man. Check by jowl they stood, with chrome canopies ablaze and plate-glass doors twenty-five feet high, their names a subtle tribute to their guests: the Saxony, the Cheviot, the Worsted, the Mohair, the Seersucker, the Buckram. Some, doubtless catering to the peerage, bore names of unbearable elegance—the Sherry-Nylon, the Lord Corduroy, the Chambray-Plaza, the Eustachian, the Broadloom. But the labels were arbitrary, for their lobbies all had the same décor, the same tufted-leather walls and mirrored pillars, the aggressively modernique sofas upholstered in bile green, the schizophrenic drapes.

The surroundings, apparently, had exerted a powerful influence on the plumage of the customers, which was as resplendent as that of the Lesser Superb Bird of Paradise. Clad in Dubonnet-colored slacks and playtime jackets of woven jute piped in suede, the males milled about the foyers forcing cigars on each other and bemoaning the state of business. The wives, stoutly refusing to hide their lights under a bushel, sported cabaña blouses whose necklines plunged to the navel, sarongs that automatically made every bystander a Peeping Tom.

It was my second evening in this Shangri-lollapaloosa that I was seated on the porch of my own hostelry, the Gabardine, feeling rather bushed. I had just finished mailing quantities of citrus fruits, dates, cocoanut patties and pecan rolls to anyone I could think of who abhorred them, and I was looking forward to a quiet session in the kip with Motley's "Rise of the Dutch Republic."

"Have a cigar, young man," a voice on my left ordered me abruptly. Turning, I beheld a mahogany-faced ruin in a phosphorescent pullover and a tropical helmet fashioned of red cardboard.

I explained that I rarely indulged.

The oldster nodded sagely. "Hyperacidity," he said. "Only one thing for it—sauerkraut juice and cold baths. I had the exact same thing; all the biggest professors in the Mayo, the Massachusetts General, they all gave me up. But I'm a fighter. I said to them, 'I'll be walking around when you're pushing up daisies.' And look at me today. How old a man would you say I was?"

"Er—eighty-five?" I hazarded.

"Forty-six," he said triumphantly. "Florida—that's the answer. Down here they know the secret of eternal youth. That's why I finally sold out my various interests and located here. Now I go to my stomach specialist every day, he takes my blood pressure, and I know right where I'm at."

"How about the doctors you saw at the Mayo?" I asked. "Dead long ago, I suppose?"

"Those leeches," he said contemptuously. "I wouldn't soil my brains thinking about them. Excuse me," he said, rising, "I have to talk to a party over there."

Naturally I was desolated to see him go, as there is nothing so refreshing when one is weary as the maunderings of a health faddist; but the eiderdown was calling, and I was determined not to oversleep a sartorial treat scheduled for the morning—a fashion show of masculine resort wear beside the pool of the Balbriggan.

The show exceeded my most sanguine expectations. Before a critical audience of retailers, style scouts and assorted loafers of both sexes, a quartet of male models paraded about, displaying finery undreamt of outside the hallucinations of Little Nemo. They wore peekaboo dinner coats made of hopsacking, slacks and singlets of burlap, hemp, rush, raffia, oakum and sisal, and headgear ranging from Confederate kepis to imitation coonskin caps of terry cloth. Men's underthings during the coming season, it appeared, would stress aqua, peach, greige and other pastel colors; and one magnificently-muscled Adonis, in platinum-tinted swim trunks, led around a Kerry blue pup in shorts that were an exact replica of his master's.

I was fairly modish myself—having dressed for the occasion in fire-engine red hobby jeans with a magnetized waistband that dispensed with belts, a taupe

sports shirt with liquor signs on the bosom, a railway fireman's denim cap outlined in neon, and white kid scuffies. While I made every attempt to efface myself, it was obvious from the outset that my togs had captured the spotlight. Barely had the preview terminated before I was encircled by retailers begging me for representation rights in their territories. The thought of commercializing my taste filled me with repugnance, however, and I hastily fled the scene.

Suddenly, recalling the nature of my mission, I longed for mangrove-covered keys and the boundless blue of the Gulf Stream; for a rolling deck beneath my feet and the music of the reel as some lordly sailfish fought to pit his strength against my cunning. When the sun sank over the yardarm, I was ninety miles south in Key West and bedded down at the Barracuda, the jauntiest motel that ever begrudged its guest a towel.

Mrs. Yancey, the widow lady who owned it, was a saccharine Southern gentlewoman with marcelled blue hair, false choppers and the profile of an iguana. Her folksy solicitude had a way of embedding itself in one's psyche and festering there like a spicule of steel wool. Simpering ghoulishly, she allotted me a pistachio-colored oubliette full of furniture upholstered in pink tufted plastic.

My immediate neighbors, the first night, were a honeymoon couple who staged an epic binge and beat each other into insensibility, and an owlish young recluse who, to judge from the grinding sounds that filtered through the wall, had perfected a perpetual-motion machine in his oral cavity. The next morning, however, the entire clientele of the motel cleared out at dawn with a roar of exhausts like the Indianapolis Speedway, the bottles were carted off, and a new contingent of Yahoos swept in, uttering wild rebel yells.

Among the arrivals were two not unattractive girls who drove up in a white Cadillac convertible—student teachers, Mrs. Yancey implied, from a near-by normal school. They were comely lassies, clearly in very moderate circumstances, since their linsey-woolsey halters were threadbare and just barely adequate to shield them from the elements. I took no notice of the pair until one chanced to drop her handkerchief on the patio a scant thirty yards from my door. Overhearing the crash, I strolled over and retrieved it. By a fantastic coincidence, it turned out in the course of introductions that Billie and Yvette belonged to the very same hospital plan I did!

"Look here," I suggested, after a bottle of charged water had sealed our friendship. "Why not let's go deep-sea fishing together? I'm—harumph—pretty well-heeled, and I'd welcome a bit of feminine company."

They clapped their hands in joyous assent. The arrangements were soon complete: They were to foot the cost of the boat and provide lunch and a case of beer, and I pledged myself to furnish sunburn lotion without stint.

That evening they appeared at my cubicle in a chopfallen mood, accompanied by a swart individual whom they introduced as Gomez, a charter-boat captain. His sleeve garters, flashy tie and diamond stickpin seemed rather urban for a simple fisherman, but I passed it over.

"He wants four hundred clams a day for the *Spindrift*," said Yvette, employing a term infrequently used by schoolteachers. "We thought it was too expensive, so he has another idea."

"That's right," said Gomez. "Tell you what I'll do, Mac. I'm a sport, and I can see you're one, too. I'll roll you for it. You win, you get the boat, all my tackle, the whole shebang. You lose, pay me four Cs." I made guarded inquiries that satisfied me the craft was worth close to nineteen thousand dollars, and decided the odds were favorable. Gomez plucked a pair of dice from his vest and the girls spread out a blanket—without any prompting. The contest was on.

About ten o'clock the following morning, I finished poring through a batch of photographs in the station house. Between the mounting humidity and lack of sleep, I was not at concert pitch, and a peculiar buzzing in the ears did nothing constructive for my condition. I listened to it attentively for a while, and finally identified it as *vox frustrata*, the characteristic call of a Florida sheriff dusting off a chump.

"Not a prayer, mister," he was saying tonelessly. "Those babes are in Havana by now—or Nassau. All we can do is keep an eye on the hockshops for your watch and chain."

"B-but they looked so sweet and—and so, so well brought up," I snuffled. "One of them even had a puppy with her—and then that big convertible—"

"They glommed the bus from a guy in Tarpon Springs," the sheriff said. "He's flying down tonight to claim it."

I sponged the moisture off my eaves, and picking up my satchels, started for the door. "If you want the bus station," he called after me, "it's right on the corner of Southard and Bahama."

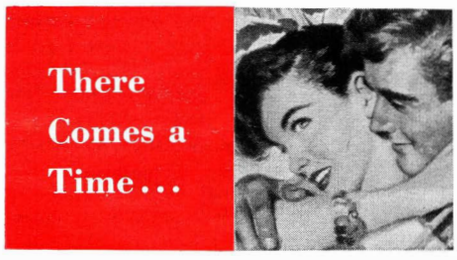
"Uh-uh," I mumbled. "I'll just get a hitch up the Overseas Highway."

"Do that," he said encouragingly, "and keep on going. It's open season on pigeons."

I came out into the broiling sunlight and trudged numbly toward the outskirts. By and large, my initial attempt to restore the bright luster of youth had been a flivver, but there was no reason to lose heart. All the way back to Faust, mortals bent on the same errand had taken a drubbing. Chin up, steady on, and *nil desperandum*, I counseled myself, stepping aside to avoid an open manhole. I promptly wrenched my ankle, fainted, and had to be carried into a drugstore.

But at that, I was luckier than Ponce de Leon. He didn't even have ammonia.

. . . To be continued



(Continued from page 48)

Benjamin's party, and we went to El Parador. Betty and her mother were there and Benjamin knew them, so we all sat at the same big table. She was across from me. That was the way it started."

"It wasn't like you, Mark, to keep it from me for so long."

"I know that," the son said humbly.

"I'm certain she must be a very pleasant girl, Mark."

"Oh, she is, Father! You're going to like her a great deal, and Mrs. Ryan, too."

"They are not like our . . . other friends, I gather," the father said carefully.

"More alive, somehow. They seem to have more fun."

"Mark, you're far too young to think of this young lady in any serious fashion. I hope you realize that."

"We're both eighteen, Father."

"That means, emotionally and biologically, that she is the older. We've always talked frankly, Mark. There is something to be said, of course, for young marriages. But you aren't a man yet. Doesn't that limit the extent to which you could love her?"

"I don't think anyone could love her more than I do, Father."

"We can't discuss this rationally if you're going to make statements like that. I loved your mother with all my heart, Mark. She died when you were too young to remember much about her. I know what she would have wanted for you: The best education, and then some travel. I had hoped we would travel together. By then you would know what you want to do with your life. An affair like this . . . it disrupts everything."

The son looked at his watch, lengthened his stride. "We're due there now."

The father shrugged. The Del Prado was in the next block. They walked up the wide steps and into the lobby. Mark used the house phone and turned, smiling, to his father. "She said we could come right up."

As the father waited for the suite door to open, he realized that he was tense, that the first impressions he received would be strong. A tall woman with tanned arms, iron-gray hair and vivid lips opened the door.

"There you are! Come in. Sunday is our day of sloth. Climb over the debris, men, and see if you can find a chair. We're fond of Mark, Mr. Porter. It's so nice to know you. Betty will be out in a minute."

Her voice was husky-hoarse, her personality as vivid as her lips and nails. They were California people, and the father saw why Mark was attracted to them. There was an expansiveness there that was lacking in the small circle of their friends who lived in Mexico City.

Betty appeared. The father saw, with a twinge of fear, that the girl was exceedingly lovely—slim, tall, with a face in which there was both delicacy and strength. Her black brows were beautifully arched, and the mouth was wide and firm. Her gray eyes were startling duplicates of Mark's, even to the quick

glance she gave him as they were introduced. Her hand, in his, was thin and brown and warm-dry.

The awareness of each other between Betty and Mark was tangible, visible. When he lit her cigarette, it was as though in some odd way they were dancing. Together their consciousness of self and each other caused a coltish awkwardness that was more indicative than any grace could have been.

Betty and Mark had soft drinks. Mrs. Ryan made generous bourbon highballs for the father and herself. She said, "You kids go for a walk or something and give us old parties a chance to get acquainted."

Mark glanced at his father. The father gave a slight nod. They laughed as they went out the door. The door cut off the laughter and left the room in silence that was, at the moment, oppressive.

She said, "A first-name basis will make this go faster. I'm Jenny. Mark said your friends call you Charles."

"I don't know how this all happened so fast, Jenny. My boy met your daughter not over ten days ago."

"Cards on the table, Charles?"

"Of course."

"We've got to be very, very bright, you and I. If we try to hamper them, it will just create a revolution."

Charles Porter caught the meaning behind the words and was filled with an enormous sense of relief. This woman was on his side. She, too, wished to split up the budding romance.

"I don't know as we have to be quite that delicate. Mark will do as I say."

"**How can** you be certain of that, Charles?"

"He always has."

She frowned. "I'd hesitate to give Betty a direct order in a thing like this."

"Willful?"

"I wouldn't use that word. She has spirit, certainly. Frankly, I've done as good a job on her as any one parent can do, Charles."

"How old was she when your husband died?"

"Eight."

"Mark was three when my wife died. Well, I can see that you feel as I do on this matter. They're far too young."

Jenny Ryan gave him an odd stare. "Too young? Of course they're not too young! What an absurd idea! I want Betty to be married young."

"But to someone older, of course."

"To someone her own age, Charles. That's the best way."

He finished his drink. He felt puzzled and a bit irritated. "I appreciate your wanting to break it up, Mrs. Ryan. But I'm a little baffled by what you just said. With those ideas of youthful marriages, I don't see why you wouldn't consider Mark to be ideal."

"Mark is a very sweet boy, Charles."

"Then why—"

"I should want Betty to marry a man her own age."

"I should like to have you explain that, please."

"You won't care for the explanation, Charles. I think your boy would be an unsuitable husband for Betty. Why don't you just accept that statement and we'll start our plotting from there?"

"It's a pretty critical statement to accept that flatly."

"What do you do with yourself, Charles—with all the time you have?"

"Why . . . I'm quite busy, really. Some translating. And the pastels I'm doing. And the committees at the club and all. What has that got to do with my son?"

"I'll take another tack. Why have you become *immigrantes* here in Mexico?"

"With the income we have, we can live better here than—"

"Oh, come off it, Charles. What do you take me for? A *turista* card can be renewed almost indefinitely." Her tone was quite rude. "You're all over that boy like a tent. If you hadn't applied as an *immigrante*, Mark would be drafted into the Army, wouldn't he? You've snatched him away from that, and you'll snatch him away from any girl he takes an interest in. You'll keep him right in your pocket as long as you live. The way he looked at you for permission to go out for a walk was pretty indicative."

"Now see here, Mrs. Ryan." Charles Porter said angrily. "Mark and I have gotten on very well with each other for a long time."

"Too well. You forget I've talked with the boy. I know what weapons you use. You tell him his mother would have wanted this and his mother would have wanted that. Mark is a sweet boy, and I suspect he is quite sound, basically. But there doesn't seem to be much spirit left in him. I imagine you think you've been a 'good pal' to your son. You don't seem to realize that such a relationship isn't exactly healthy."

"Are you quite certain, Mrs. Ryan," Charles asked evenly, "that this critique of my son isn't, in a way, an attempt to justify your own lack of control over your daughter?"

She stared at him. "Say, you can be pretty sneaky!"

"We aren't getting anywhere. What do you suggest we do?"

"It's simpler than I thought, Mr. Porter. Much simpler. I didn't realize just how heavy a hand you have. I think you better get up on your hind legs and tell that sweet boy of yours to stay to hell away from Betty. That will solve it."

"I'm quite certain it will, Mrs. Ryan."

She raised her glass in a mocking toast. "Here's to authority, my friend."

"I can drink to that."

The father and the son walked slowly back to where they had left the car. The son hummed softly to himself. "Isn't she wonderful, Father?"

"She's very pretty."

"Tomorrow I'm taking her to the *frontón*. Maybe you and Mrs. Ryan would like to come, too."

"I want to have a talk with you when we get home, Mark."

The son gave him a wary look. "Yes, Father."

The son drove with casual skill through the frantic traffic of Reforma, back to the Chapultepec section.

They went up the stairs to their apartment. The father hung his hat in

the closet and went on into the living room. The son was standing by the fireplace, hands in the side pockets of his tweed jacket.

"Is something wrong, Father?"

"Sit down, Mark. I don't exactly know how to say this. I'm very anxious for you not to misunderstand. The girl is very pretty. Her mother is . . . almost spectacular. But you must see that they're not . . . our sort."

"How do you mean that? What is *our* sort?"

"Don't speak so sharply to your father!"

Mark stood up. "What are you trying to say?"

"Dammit, listen to me! They're cheap people. Noisy, loud people. Anyone could see that. Do you want your friends laughing behind your back because you're snuffling after that girl?"

"Don't talk that way, Father!"

"I have to talk that way to shock you out of this trance you're in. Puppy love, they call it. Infatuation. Physical attraction. A thing like this isn't going to upset our plans. I won't permit it. You will not see that girl again."

"But you can't possibly *mean* that, Father. You can't! Why, she's the most . . . I've never met anyone like her."

"You will not see her again. Is that quite clear?"

"You can't stop me from seeing her!"

The father altered his tone. "Now, Mark. Listen to me. This defiance isn't like you. It's not *you* talking to me this way. If your mother were still alive, what would she think of the two of us? Bickering over that . . . that girl."

"What makes you such an authority on what she'd think? Maybe she'd think it was a good thing, my knowing Betty."

The father shook his head sadly. "Your mother was a sensitive, wise and perceptive woman. She would see through that precious pair just as readily as I did. Believe me, Mark. After a few months you'll come to me and you'll thank me for putting my foot down this way."

Mark stared at him. The father could see the shock, the disbelief in the boy's eyes. Mark turned toward the windows, stumbling against a chair in the process.

The father said softly, going over and putting a hand on the son's shoulder, "Come on now, Mark. This isn't the end of the world. We've had good times. We'll continue to have good times. I know you're a little disappointed right at this moment. In a month you won't be able to remember what she looked like."

Mark didn't speak.

"I know what's best for you, Mark," the father said insistently. "Answer me. Promise you won't see her again."

"I'll have to explain to her."

"No, you won't. You just won't show up. She'll be a little annoyed. Her mother will be the angry one. Her mother is just the type to try to grab off someone like you for her daughter."

"I'll have to explain to her," the boy said stubbornly.

The father thought for a minute. The son was agreeing on the basic point, so perhaps it would be best to make the minor concession.

"Perhaps it would be better manners at that, Mark."

The boy walked from the room without a word. Charles Porter heard the door of the boy's room shut gently. The liquor had given him a dull headache. He called Rosita and had her bring him the aspirin and a glass of water.

At breakfast, as Rosita brought in the coffee, Charles asked, "*Marco 'sta dormiendo?*"

"No, Señor," she said quietly. "He is not here."

"What do you mean? Where has he gone?"

"That I do not know, Señor. Much of his clothes are gone, also."

Charles leaped to his feet, the napkin wadded in his hand, his heart thudding with a wild fear. He ran to Mark's room. All his best clothes were gone. The note was pinned to the spread over the pillow. The bed had not been slept in. "I'm sorry, Father." That was all it said.

Rosita came up behind him and said, with an expressive shrug, "All small birds must one day leave the nest, Señor."

He doubled up his fist and came close to striking her. She guessed his intent and stepped back, unafraid, smiling. . . .

Jenny Ryan opened the door after his loud knocking. "Oh, come in. I've been expecting you."

"Where is my son, Mrs. Ryan?"

"Don't snarl at me, my good man," she said in a good-humored way. "He's not hiding under my bed."

"Where is he?"

"You better come in and sit down. You're pale as death."

"Please, Mrs. Ryan. Do you know where he is? I beg of you."

"He's in good hands, Charles. He's with Betty."

"But where are they? How soon will they be back?"

"That's a bit hard to say. You see, they've got my car. They planned to drive all night. They might be as far as Victoria by now. That means that they'll reach Brownsville late this afternoon."

Charles Porter sat down and covered his face with his hands. He took a deep shuddering breath. "Oh, my God," he said softly.

"The sun isn't exactly over the yardarm, my friend, but this will help." She thrust the glass into his hand.

He stared up accusingly at her. "Why are you acting so unconcerned?"

"It's just an act. I'm trying to figure out what my life is going to be like without Betty under foot. From where I sit, things look a bit empty."

"We can stop them, you know. I have a friend. He can wire customs at Matamoros."

She shook her head sadly. "That won't do a bit of good. Believe me, it won't."

"What will they do for money?"

"Betty has a little. Mark had some. I loaned them some more. He explained that returning to the States would foul up this *immigrante* deal of yours. I rather imagine that eventually they'll be living on Army pay."

"He can't do this to me!" Charles said heavily.

"Oh, but he has."

"You explained why you didn't want him to marry your daughter. Why didn't you stop them?"

"Please try to understand. He was a sweet boy all the other times we talked. When he came here last night he was very much a man. He grew up very quickly, Charles."

"Does running like a thief make a man of him?"

"He told us that he wanted to tell you to your face, but he was afraid of the habit patterns of so many years. He said that soon he would be strong enough to talk to you about it, and that he would talk to you."

"I can stop them, you know."

She smiled at him. "But you won't. You know why? Because in your heart you know that already he's grown too strong for that. There's absolutely nothing you can do about it. Stopping them will only delay them, and it will make them both resent you. Both of us, my dear Charles, are in the unhappy position of having to make the best of it."

"So many things were planned."

"I'm afraid Mark would have considered them pretty empty plans. I wish you could have seen them as they left. A kind of beauty that's too rare. They'll be married in Texas. Charles, don't brood about it. If you love your son, you must know in your heart that this is a good thing."

He did not want to meet her glance. A certain strange pride was stirring in him. He looked at her. She was a long-legged, handsome woman. Her eyes were kind and good. He forced a smile. "I'm going to be pretty difficult for a while."

"Expected."

A thought struck him. "Why didn't you go with them?"

"Because somebody had to stay here and keep you from making a darn fool of yourself, Charles. If I'd gone, too, you would have had everything out but the Mexican Air Force. And your son would have ended up hating you."

"I . . . I had better keep busy for a while. Maybe you could use a guide. Have you been down to Cuernavaca and Taxco?"

"Not yet."

"It will keep us from feeling too lonesome, Jenny."

He had lunch with her in the hotel. He was silent during much of the meal. She talked charmingly. At last he said, "Do you know where they'll be staying?"

"I have the name of the Brownsville hotel written down, Charles."

"I imagine there's a waiting period."

"Are you trying to say what I hope you're trying to say, Charles?"

"My little car will make it. Aren't there supposed to be, by law, two witnesses at every wedding?"

She reached across the table and placed her hand over his. Her fine eyes were misty. "If we try real hard, Charles, we may turn out to be pretty acceptable in-laws, after all. I detect something under that shirt of yours besides stuffing."

Then they laughed, and it was warm, fond laughter. They left the table hurriedly, because there was a great deal to do, and the first one of these things was the wire which would carry both their names. . . . THE END

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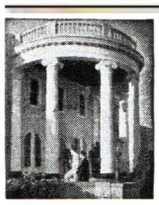

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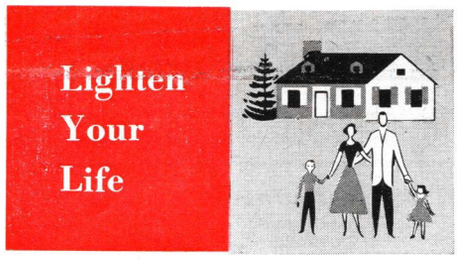


(Continued from page 51)

enough—nobody wants to push his neck into his shoulders in order to read; to avoid this, have the bottom of the lamp shade about on a line with the shoulder of a person sitting beside it. The shade should be large enough so that the bulb can't be seen from any normal angle. and, for the best light, shades should either be light-colored or (if dark) white-lined. Be sure the bulb is of sufficient wattage.

One way to be sure of adequate light is: Buy "approved" lamps. These have gone through rigid tests by laboratories quite independent of the manufacturer; they bear a tag saying that they have been passed for good lighting, construction and safety.

As for materials, there's no end to the things that lamps can be made of—old oil lamps or copies of them, wooden or tin boxes, vases, pewter jugs, statuary, candlesticks, pitchers and coffeepots, bottles, urns—literally anything that is decorative and of a suitable size. Brightly-painted wooden decoy ducks look masculine in a library, while a cider jug suits a playroom and a perfume bottle decorates the dressing table. For modern rooms, choose simple columns or attractive forms in handsome materials: polished wood, brass tubing, even a glass brick or a graceful piece of driftwood can be used.

Shades, too, run the gamut from the usual silk, rayon, paper, tin, parchment and glass, to nylon, plastic and Fiberglas.

Dollar Stretchers—Many of these lamps you can make yourself—how much you do depending on how handy and how ambitious you are. At an electrical-supply store, for example, you can buy "adapters" which electrify an old oil lamp with no more ado than screwing them in. You also can mount almost anything on a wooden base, either carrying the cord through a pierced hole or taking it up behind the piece in a metal tube, which is then fastened near the top. This leads into the bulb holder, and, with a suitable shade, the job is done.

Shades should always be carefully chosen as to proportion, color, style. The present trend is definitely toward tailored types, with trimming held to a minimum. At a store that makes shades you might buy an unfinished one (just the white paper "form") and trim it yourself with paint, paste-on prints, or bits of wallpaper from the room in which it will be used.

Special Lights—The smallest bulb you can buy to fit a regular fixture (either 7½ or 10 watts) burns with just the right light to keep a child from feeling he's alone in the dark. Older children may prefer a flashlight under their pillows. . . . If you use one end of your living room as a dining room, there are new ceiling fixtures that pull down to make a comfortable over-the-table light during meals; when you're through, they push back to any height you choose. . . . Floor lamps seem to be rather out of favor today; you don't see anything like the wide selection you'll find in table lamps. . . . For the right rooms, glittering, rainbow-making, tinkling chandeliers are as exciting as anything you could desire. They call for high ceilings, largish rooms and a certain formality.

Switch to light! It costs little in comparison to its necessary and useful purposes. More than that, it adds so much in beauty and depth to a room that, when well used, you can actually save on other decorations and create beautiful, welcoming rooms. THE END

BY ELICK MOLL

Overture to Youth

"I am in love with your husband. Tell me what to do." It was the unspoken plea of a girl on the brink of folly—a girl too young to resist an older man's charm, or to heed a younger man's warning

REDBOOK'S COMPLETE FEBRUARY 1952 NOVEL

ILLUSTRATED BY HERBERT SASLOW

Sometimes, during the bleak months of Laura's second winter at the Institute of Music, she tried to recall the person she had once been—the eager high-minded girl of twenty who had come East a year ago with the prized Dutra scholarship and the prospects of her career spread out before her with the explicit glamour of a travel folder.

In that far-off winter, last year, she had fallen in love with a dream city called New York. The juxtaposition of December slush in the gutters and April across the street in the florist's window delighted her; the overpowering warmth of her little flat that greeted her with a bear hug when she came in from outdoors was a fine and friendly thing; nothing had ever tasted quite so good as the gluey goodness of sweet rolls from a paper bag underscored with the faint woody flavor of hot coffee out of a cardboard container. And finally the long slow hours of practice at the piano while winter's bluish dark moved in against the window, bringing new urgency into the reedy notes of the doormen's whistles in the street below, the answering bassoon blurt of the taxi horns, a curious homely counterpoint that wove an earthbound enchantment around her, enslaving her heart to this place, yet leaving her free in a way she would never quite feel or understand again, as she would never know again how it was to be twenty and bell-toned in the singleness and purity of her desire.

The meager kitchenette ("kitchenless" would have described it more nearly) walk-up she had chosen on 58th Street reflected the near-devotional character of her thinking at the time. A more comfortable apartment and the services of a maid were easily within her means, but she preferred to fend for herself and avoid the easy and time-consuming ritual of social obligations. There were simply not enough hours in the day for what she had to do, and she guarded her time that winter the way some women care for their complexions.

Three days a week she was at the Institute, for coaching in piano, ensemble, theory and composition. (Dutra was on a world tour that year, guest-conducting.) Four hours a day she spent at the piano, rain, shine or indisposition. Evenings there were always concerts to attend, and sometimes mornings and afternoons, as well. Sometimes she felt drenched with music, drained of emotion, but it was never too much. It was never enough. That was the power of music, the godlike thing. It was obsession without madness, indulgence without vice, passion without satiety.

Men, or boys—she'd only lately begun to call them men—inhabited only the outer fringes of her life. Laura disliked words like "sublimation." She preferred to say, simply, "too busy." There had always been boys, from the age of ten onward, but she tended to bunch them together in her recollection, like a procession of schoolboys, always different boys and yet the same boys. At the Institute nothing changed; the young men remained a collective entity. The shy ones who might have attracted her didn't speak up; the assertive ones flexed their musical muscles and punched the doorbell in vain. She was permanently not at home to egotists. Or so she thought. She had not yet met the champion of all.

THIS novel, like all other novels printed in REDBOOK, *is purely fiction and intended as such. It does not refer to real characters or to actual events. If the name of any person, living or dead, is used, it is a coincidence.*

She did carry on a mock, verbal flirtation with Bertels, the brilliant tousled Hungarian who taught her theory class. He was fifty, and his dress usually gave the impression that he'd snatched at the first piece of clothing that had come to hand in the morning and flung it on, like a toga or a Mother Hubbard. But his mind was fleet, cool and tidy as a Czerny exercise, and he had endeared himself to Laura in class one day by reaching into a sagging coat pocket for some notes and pulling out instead a rolled-up napkin which proved to contain not the missing notes but a fried chicken leg. After a moment of blankness that was high comedy, he had said, with dignity and a complete lack of self-consciousness, "Well, don't laugh. You are Americans; you do not know about hunger. But you are also musicians, so you may yet learn."

It was Bertels who introduced her to Martin Gauss at a Horowitz concert. The name "Martin" struck a poignant echo in her mind. Once, at fifteen, she had thought herself seriously and quite irrevocably in love with a boy named Martin. He played the violin; their troth had been plighted over a Tartini sonata they performed together at a school recital. Martin had a thin, dreamer's face. Also, he made slight snuffling noises when he played, like the moaning of a small animal in love, that called up an infinite tenderness in Laura. But one evening when they were alone in her home, he put down his fiddle and embraced her, his beautiful hands grown suddenly clumsy and frantic in her dress, and the little dream was over.

The present Martin had nothing in common with his namesake except his name. He was a doctor. His blunt, competent hands would never be clumsy or frantic; his gray eyes held no vain dreams or tormenting doubts. What they said, at the same time, was no-nonsense and have-fun, an attractive balance. His field was urology, in which Bertels said he was a genius. Laura preferred not to think too technically about what he did; he had a genuine love for music and a down-to-earthness about it and about living in general which she found very restful.

She went to concerts with Martin several times and then found that they were spacing the music with an evening at the movies, or dinner and dancing, or swimming in a pool where he had a membership. She was grateful to him for reminding her that she liked to swim and dance; the convent walls of Career seemed to move closer in upon her year by year, and there were long periods when finger exercises were all the exercise she got. She was grateful to him also for the easy comradeliness of their relationship which necessitated no guards on her growing fondness for him. Apparently Martin had not heard that platonic companionship between a man and woman is impossible, not to say unhealthy. He seemed very fit, and content to let the dynamics of their situation develop as they would. She found herself looking forward to their meetings as to a familiar piece of music whose quality improved rather than diminished with repetition, and she thought, with a touch of humor, that she must have an affinity for people named Martin.

One Sunday in spring they drove up along the Hudson to Hyde Park. Laura had learned that F.D.R. was one of Martin's idols. She herself was as devoid of politics as a newborn babe. She had been unaffected by the depression and untouched by war. Yet she had felt, with many others within reach of a radio or a newsreel during Roosevelt's lifetime, the power of the father image he had evoked. At fourteen, sequestered in her living room in Kansas City, as far from the main current of events as if she had dwelt in Graustark, the tidal wave of shock and loss that had swept

MARTIN ***LAURA*** ***PHILIP***

the nation at his death had still reached her, recapitulating for her an earlier and more personal loss.

Now, in the quiet of Hyde Park, with the dogwood just coming into flower and the cluster of people drawn together out of all the divergences of their ways and means by the simple block of stone which marked the grave, and by the remembrance of grief at the loss of her own father, Laura was again tremendously stirred. She cried. Martin made a place for her against his shoulder, but without undue tenderness.

"Go ahead, baby," he said. "The good music always makes you want to cry, doesn't it?"

Over the picnic lunch they'd brought, their mood changed. Martin told her why he did not believe in socialized medicine, and she told him why she thought Bartok was music and the composition of another man was noise.

For a charmed hour, on the drive back, it seemed to Laura that poetry and sound and passion were dipping earthward in her at last, toward this man who thought and felt so cleanly and clearly, whose quality was somehow of the beautiful order of leaf and lawn that unrolled mile after mile along the Parkway.

It was evening when they got back to the city, and neither of them felt like dining. They stopped for beer and corned-beef sandwiches at a delicatessen, and abruptly, without disillusionment but nonetheless definitely, the magic was gone.

Laura sat and looked at Martin regretfully, the dogwood still glimmering in her mind, the petals sifting like snow in the dusk, the eternal sadness of beauty and need. . . . Oh, what can ail thee, knight at arms alone and palely loitering? . . . Nothing ailed Dr. Martin Gauss. He was a solid, useful citizen, with a good face and nice gray eyes and a hearty appetite.

Alone in her flat, she played for an hour. The music rose about her, protective, secure; she was walled in with lovely sound again, her cathedral and her home, the incense, the votive offering, the wafer and the wine and she the high priestess, the vestal. . . .

It was always the music she returned to—herself and the music, herself in the music. Everything else was incidental. Her debut, when it came, her career as a concert pianist, the appreciation and applause that would be hers—all that was part of it. But not the deep inner part. Ultimately there were only two people she would ever really play for—herself and the father who had died when she was six, a God-image in whom all goodness and gentleness and wisdom was contained, sitting always in the shadows behind her, nodding grave approval.

In the summer, she went back to spend a few dutiful, toneless months in Kansas City. She had always had a curiously wooden relationship with her mother. Mrs. Mason was a woman dedicated to small, brisk movements, like a squirrel; she was congenitally indisposed to the larger exertions, either physical or mental. Lacking a strong sexual drive and having a substantial income which her husband had left her, she lived in a financial and emotional climate in which the temperature was always an equable seventy, a pleasant warmish blur of engagements, commitments and small civic responsibilities satisfyingly bounded at one end by her church and on the other by the Club.

She had been somewhat mystified by her youngest daughter's passion for the piano. Piano lessons were one thing. But "drugging" oneself with music! It was something the child had from Charles, of course. There had always been something about her husband that eluded Martha Mason. She ascribed it, vaguely, to the fact that he came from a distant land—Australia—where "ways" were different. Actually these ways were no more or less than a starved passion for poetry and music, in which Martha herself had been interested only just long enough to marry Charles Mason.

Somehow, miraculously, poetry and music had flowered into a child he named Laura. The actuality may have been less—and more—miraculous than it seemed to him. Perhaps because her father was good and she loved him madly, Laura was able even at five to sense his need and to fill it by sitting wide-eyed, drinking up the lovely words he read her, learning the little tunes he taught her. If she had been able she would have turned herself into a reed, a lute, poured out all her young heart and mind to fill the vacancy in him.

By the time Charles knew he was a very sick man he also knew that his favorite daughter was touched with divine fire. With a prescience for that formless jealousy which mothers almost invariably bear their gifted daughters, he had forestalled any possible interference with Laura's career by providing a separate trust fund for her musical education.

It was always an added source of wonder to Mrs. Mason, perhaps tinged with annoyance, that Laura never used any of this money. From childhood on she had chosen to pay for her lessons by her own efforts, doing odd jobs for her teacher, working in a music store, and later on with radio work. There was almost a note of reproof for the less dedicated involved in such single-minded devotion.

Some sort of balance might have been maintained if the child had had stringy hair and acne. But she was beautiful, with a milk-white skin and Marie Laurencin eyes that shaded from gold to brown with the time of day and the degree of her absorption in what she was doing; her soft brown hair dissolved into misty tendrils at the least touch of damp. These, with the shadowed, mysteriously Slavic contours of her face, made an effect almost startlingly lovely, as if a permanently sunny morning should be encased in the dusky tones of autumn afternoon.

Laura herself maintained only a nodding acquaintance with her own beauty. Except for a short period of narcissism when she was on the threshold of adolescence, the only time she was really aware of her looks was when she stood before her bathroom mirror grimacing fiercely at herself over her toothbrush or through a chestnut cloud crackling as with summer lightning from her hairbrush. What she saw pleased her, as she was pleased with her foolproof digestion and generally robust health. Her appearance would be an asset on the concert platform; her digestion was an asset along the way.

The brief period of intoxication with herself occurred when she was twelve. Her uncle James had come to the States to make some purchases for his stock farm in Australia. On the way back he stopped in Kansas City to visit his demised brother's family. He was an "elderly man" of forty who reminded Laura of her father, by turns pleasantly and poignantly. Laura heard, or overheard, talk about stock raising, strains and breeding; she took occasion when her mother wasn't around to ask a direct question.

"Uncle James, what's breeding?"

"What you've got, little one," he said, stroking her hair. She was tall for her age, slim-hipped, with the promise of full breasts.

"No," she said, "that's the noun. I mean the verb."

"Oh." He smiled. "I don't think I'm the one to explain it to you. I think you'd best ask your mother."

Oh, yes, she thought scornfully. She'd asked *him* because she *knew* what her mother would say: "You'll learn when you're old enough." Or, "What on earth put *that* notion in your head?"

"Is it the same as sex, Uncle James?" she asked.

"Roughly."

"Why do people kiss?" she asked. "Is it part of breeding?"

"Well . . . yes. In a way. But it's nice, all by itself. Haven't you ever tried?" She shook her head. He crinkled his eyes. He was a fine-looking man, not as handsome as her father but more sunburned. "You'll get your chance to find out," he said. "Soon, too, I don't doubt."

She stood looking at him with some unformed invitation in her mind and doubtless mirrored in her big, candid eyes, and he drew her suddenly onto his lap and kissed her. It was strange but pleasant; his lips were fresh-tasting like clove, and he smelled of lavender water, as her father had used to. She kissed back, and for an instant he held her before amusement overcame his surprise.

Men who kiss little girls seriously lack, among other things, a sense of humor. Uncle James had that; he held her off and said, "You little minx. I ought to spank you."

"Why?" she said.

He laughed. "You're a ravishing creature. And dangerous, too. Come—play something for me on the piano."

Her mother had come in then, and Uncle James said to her, with rueful laughter in his eyes, "You'd better tether this filly, Martha. She's got the smell of wild onion in her nostrils."

For a few weeks after he was gone, the words "ravishing" and "dangerous" continued to frisk agreeably through Laura's thoughts like high-spirited colts, and "the smell of wild onion," etherealized into something resembling white lilac, had hung in cloudy distillation over Bach's Two-Part Inventions. The slight fever of self-love passed, but it left Laura, while still curious, forever immune to any infection of doubt concerning her future with boys. They would be there, when she wanted them.

The knowledge didn't turn her head. Quite the contrary. It was rather like the money her father had left in trust for her. She was glad it was there to draw on, if she needed it. But she preferred not to draw on it, perhaps because, like the music, this was something of her father's that remained to her, his thoughtfulness and protection made tangible; she wanted to keep it intact, forever.

And Mrs. Mason found herself finally and ironically allied with Beethoven and Brahms during that trying period when every boy with a cowlick and a cajoling smile was a potential threat. Whatever else she might think of the Great Masters, they greatly simplified her role as an abstracted dragon standing guard over her youngest daughter's treasure. It was the Dutra award, however, and its attendant publicity, that finally won her unqualified approval of Laura's chosen career. This could no longer be dismissed with a deprecating "music teacher." There were all sorts of enticing prospects—a debut at Carnegie Hall, a South American tour, the Christmas-tree gleam of glamour and fame.

"Of course, the scholarship provides for tuition and so on, but that's not the important thing," she said, more than once, to various members of the Club. "Thank goodness, Charles saw to it that none of us would want for anything within reason. But it *is* quite an honor, you know. There's only one a year, in the entire country."

For Laura, returning to New York, this second winter, she had only one important admonition. "You're not wearing those horrible mittens in the city, are you, dear? They look so *gauche*."

"They're not for style, Mother," Laura said. "They're to keep my hands warm."

"I know. But I'm sure that Paderewski doesn't wear mittens."

"Didn't, Mother," Laura said. "Paderewski's dead."

"Well, living or dead. I'm sure there's some other way you can keep your fingers warm. It's just not *sophisticated* at your age. Mittens!"

"Yes, Mother," Laura said.

If Mrs. Mason's stricture reflected real concern for Laura's *chic* instead of mere irritation at the ways of this changeling who had been thrust upon her, it was wasted. Laura could have worn mittens, button shoes and a guimpe at the Versailles and seemed thoroughly right doing it. She was one of those rare people who, without insistence, create the standards by which they are judged.

Chapter 2

Martin called her a few days after she got back to New York. The sound of his voice made a thump of physical pleasure in her stomach. She realized now how much of what had passed for social intercourse during the summer had been like an empty clatter of loose shutters in her mind. I'm definitely a man's woman, she thought, without any sense of humor in the discovery. It seemed an important revelation.

"Bertels told me you were back," Martin said. "We missed you. How about a swim and some oyster stew?"

"Sounds lovely, Martin," she said happily. Yes, lovely, lovely, this impossible city where you could get nowhere without standing in line, clawing your way through a mob, or dodging the rocketing taxis; this silly flat drawn to the specifications of a Navajo hogan, where only an advanced claustrophobia could regard itself as "comfortable." And lovely, too, seemed the long winter approaching—bleak stone and gray skies, and slush that worked its way inexorably into your shoes, and hot burned chestnuts from a little stove on wheels, and damp newspapers unfolding their bottomless cornucopias of wonders, horrors and things to do, and your own life at the very center of it all, bright and secret. . . .

And Martin.

I'm home, she thought, hugging the rich, warm sense of it to her.

"I'll pick you up in an hour," he said.

He was late, calling for her, and an unwonted look of worry made his face more square than she remembered it.

"I've got to go up to the hospital for a while," he said. "Patient of mine. I don't know how long I'll be. Want to come along and wait? Or shall we make it another time?" Then, characteristically, with a light, firm grip on her arm and a preoccupied smile, "You look fine, Laura. What kind of summer did you have?"

He seemed a little taller, too, than she'd remembered. She was conscious for the first time—pridefully so—of his role as a healer. "I'd like to come along," she said. "If I won't be in the way."

She was impressed with the reception he got from the underlings who spaced their progress to the fifth floor of the hospital—the receptionist, the orderly and the elevator man, the nurse in charge of the floor, who looked after Martin with a shake of the head that stated approval more explicitly than any words could do.

Martin left her in a little reception room furnished with cane chairs, covered with cretonne—a sort of compromise between comfort and anxiety. The head nurse brought her a magazine.

"Any girl who makes dates with a doctor is crazy," she said. "Isn't he wonderful?"

Laura smiled. She sat with the magazine unopened, listening to the hospital silence, smelling the hospital smell—hope, terror, pain, distilled into an essence. Hospitals always gave her a knotted feeling in the pit of the stomach. lumped together with prisons, homes for the aged. the blind, the insane. Invariably they were square, massive buildings with their grim foliage arranged, like the preternatural silence that invariably hung over them. as a screen for the misery that dwelt behind the thick walls. a shield for the people outside, doing the world's work, who'd had the wit and the good taste to stay healthy, sane, unblind, unaged.

Back home, she had played several times for the shutins at the Veterans Hospital. They had been shattering experiences. Each time she had gone away with a tightness of anguish inside her that was beyond the reach of tears. It was as if there were no place to begin to cry, or to stop, like reading all the books in all the libraries. For weeks she had been haunted by the faces of the maimed youths who had listened to her music, intent, or bored. or annoyed—haunted more by those who smiled and looked brave than those who were merely hopeless or still or bitter. She could never hear the phrase "World War Two" afterward without a stab of terror at the casualness of that numeral. As if Number Three and Four and Five were already drawn up, waiting, like faceless figures in a parade, stretching back, or forward, into infinity.

Martin came in after a while. "You must be starved," he said.

She shook her head. "How is it going?" She felt a strange embarrassment with him, all at once. Guilt, perhaps, at her own unassailable health.

"Can't tell yet," he said. "I'm afraid it'll be a while. Would you rather wait at home? I can get you a cab. . . ."

"No, I'd like to stay. Is there . . . anything I can do?"

He smiled at her, and for a moment she felt the great pity of the man, his feeling of responsibility mixed now with a desperate sense of limitation. And the tenderness that did not rebuff her silly offer. What *could* she do. against all he'd learned, of medicine and magic—all the research, the antibiotics, the techniques, the machinery of a great hospital? And all of it not enough against the single, simple fact of death.

"You can light me a cigarette," he said. She saw that his hand trembled slightly, taking the cigarette, and something stirred within her, profoundly. For a moment it had a shape, familiar and passionate, like a strain of music, or a well-loved poem; then quickly it became something else—a quality of light in a room long ago, the sound of her father's voice, the touch of his hand on her hair.

It was another hour before Martin was through. She knew from his expression that he was relieved. But she asked, to give it form, "Is he going to be all right?"

"I hope so," he said. "I hope she's going to be all right."

"She?"

He looked at her gravely. "Yes, she. A girl of fourteen. Uremic poisoning. Long history of—" He broke off. "Why bother you with all that? It's not pretty."

She felt rebuffed. "What makes you think it has to be *pretty* for me to be interested?"

"Well, pretty or not, nothing you learn around here is likely to help you with your scales."

He took her arm to lead her into the automatic elevator, and she shook him off. "You're rather insulting."

"That's just my bedside manner," he said wearily. "You do live in a secure little world of your own, Laura. Right now I don't feel that I'm appointed to blast you out of it."

"And pretty snobbish, to boot," she said coldly. "Not everyone can be a doctor. Is there nothing else in the world that's of any account? There's healing and pity in music, too. Haven't you ever heard it?"

The elevator door opened, and she walked out into the street ahead of him. He caught up with her. "Am I off your list for good?" She kept walking, quickly. "I'm sorry," he said. "I'm sore at poverty and indifference and death. I'm sore because I'm not a better doctor. I didn't mean to let it out on you."

She looked up at him, and her anger evaporated. "You were a good-enough doctor this time."

"I don't know yet."

"It must be awful for you," she said, "if you have to go through this sort of thing all the time."

"They're not all this sick, thank God. But you do get involved, despite yourself. You try not to, but you do. Especially with these helpless ones, who've been kicked around."

She took his arm. "Dr. Martin Gauss. Office hours nine to five. Father, all the rest of the time, to several thousand children of assorted ages."

"Is that how you'd like to see me? Father of all I survey?" There was something enigmatic in his regard, and she felt anger rising in her again. He felt it, too, and said, "Let's not fight tonight, Laura. Please. I'm beat."

He opened the door of his car for her. "You must be famished, poor kid. What would you like to eat?"

"Let's drive for a while," she said. "I mean, let me drive. You just sit. Rest." She slid across the seat and took the wheel, motioned him in beside her. He eyed her doubtfully. "Don't worry," she said. "I can drive. As well as you."

He got in, and she set the car in motion, smoothly. He leaned back. She gave him a look. "You're always surprised to find I'm not a completely helpless infant away from the piano."

"Not surprised," he said. "Pleased."

She headed for the 59th Street bridge. Before she crossed it he was asleep, as she knew he'd be. He didn't wake for half an hour. Then he sat up sharply. "Where are we?"

"Long Island, somewhere."

He stretched his legs hard against the dashboard, put his arms up over his head. "We could keep going to Montauk," he said. "Get there in time for a spot of whaling."

She smiled. "You think of the nicest things. Life with you would never be dull."

He turned to her. "No. It would never be that. Move over. I mean, stop the car. I'll take the wheel now."

It was as if he regretted somehow, just a little, the authority he had ceded for a half-hour. Laura thought she understood, smiled to herself.

Later, when he left her at the door of her apartment with a handclasp, she still had a fine, warm feeling of understanding—a wordless design, as if a door to some inner view of Martin, the doctor, the dedicated man, had been opened for her. Oddly it went with a picture of him as a child, a sleepy child. The juxtaposition made her realize that something had changed in their relationship—something that was moving toward a decision.

She found it at once pleasant and disturbing. The complexities of the fugue form could not quite shut it out, as before. Sometimes now, at the piano, she found herself wandering into a smiling remembrance of something Martin had said, a warm, prideful sense of his worth, a curious thump of pleasure in the recollection of him asleep in the car beside her. . . . She bought her first package of cigarettes that week and walked about her apartment a good deal, puffing industriously, making diagrams, with tiny clouds, of her emotional weather.

She saw Martin again on Sunday. There was no hint from him of any change between them, any pressure toward decision. He was still the same relaxed, considerate friend, endlessly imaginative, in a quiet way, about things to do. They went for a boat ride around Manhattan Island and in the late afternoon walked through the lower town from the Battery to City Hall. Nothing is quieter than downtown New York on Sunday. They fell silent, listening to the sound of their footsteps, echoing slightly in the empty streets, punctuating their thoughts. She put her hand in his, walking that way for a while; then she looked up at him, found his eyes on her, crinkled with an odd smile.

"What's that for?" she said, then realized that her hand was in his, like a little girl's, and pulled it away sharply. Again, as in their last meeting, anger flicked her a moment, obscurely, and was gone.

They sat long over dinner in Paneta's, an Italian restaurant on Park Place, where the food was good and abundant and there was a gratifying dearth of old Caruso records. With her third glass of wine Laura put her elbows on the table and stared at Martin as if he were a painting of himself. He endured her scrutiny, returning a look of his own with which she'd grown familiar—a level regard, part appreciation, part amusement, with something enigmatic, too, holding some secret about her he was aware of, or thought he was aware of, that was hidden from her.

"Martin," she said finally, "why have you never kissed me?"

He grinned. "You fooled me. That isn't the one I thought you were going to ask."

"What did you think I was going to ask?"

He held a light for the cigarette she had been tamping on the cloth. "Why do you smoke those things?"

"Because I like to."

"Good. You handle them as if you thought they might explode."

"Must you treat me like a child, Martin? Does it do something for your masculine ego?"

He put his hand over hers. "I didn't mean to sound superior. But you do kill me sometimes."

"Just why?"

He shrugged. "I don't know how to tell you, exactly."

"Suppose you answer my question. Why have you never kissed me? Don't you want to?"

"I have to give you a physician's answer. Yes and no."

"Tell me about the yes part. First."

"I'll tell you about the no part. The yes part's easy." He paused for a moment. "It's funny how, with all your naïveté, you manage always to set the pace. You're naïve in the most sophisticated way. It puts a man at a disadvantage."

"You don't think it may be because I speak directly, about things I want to say, and that men are always a little afraid of that? Afraid that they'll have to come out of hiding and let it be known they're a little less bold, less omniscient than they'd like to think they are—"

"All right, all right," Martin said. "I give up. Hold your fire. For one thing—you might not have suspected it—but I'm proud. I wouldn't want to kiss you and find out, in the middle of it, that there were two bars of the Tschaikovsky Concerto that were worrying you like the devil."

"Tschaikovsky," she said scornfully.

"All right, Beethoven," he said. "Whoever it is you really worry about."

"Martin." She fingered her wineglass. "Aren't you ever going to talk to me seriously? About our relationship?"

"Yes. Sometime, I hope. How about some more wine?" She shook her head. "More coffee? *Espresso?*"

"*Espresso*, my foot," she said, banging the glass down. "I want to know why you've never kissed me."

"Because kissing is for kids," he said, explicitly, "and one of us, at least, is a middle-aged young man—and getting older by the minute."

"There you go," she said stormily. "Always treat me as if I were an idiot girl. What's the matter with me, Martin? Is there something wrong with me?"

He was silent now, studying her for a moment with that odd expression she'd come to recognize. It was as if he were weighing some knowledge he had, and weighing the advisability of letting her in on the secret.

"Does that have a qualified answer, too?" she demanded. "A physician's answer? Yes and no?"

He smiled faintly. "Do you mean, do I think you need a tonic, or some hormones?"

"You know very well what I mean."

"Look—I'm just a plain doctor. I'm not a psychoanalyst."

"You think I need one?"

"I think you need some coffee," he said. "Too much palaver. Bad for the UN. Bad for you."

"Martin, I insist that you stop treating me like a mental defective. Are you my friend or aren't you?"

"No," he said, looking at her steadily. "Not the kind you mean, anyway. Get this straight, Laura. It's the nub of our 'relationship,' as you put it. I'm not your faithful confidant. Or your brother. Or your father. If you've ever had, or ever get, the darling notion I'll settle for that, knock it out of your pretty little head. I'm very good at waiting—when I know what I'm waiting for. Go powder your nose."

That night Laura had a dream. She was riding somewhere, swiftly, in the dark. There was the hum of a motor, or a beating of wings—she wasn't sure which. But Martin was beside her, in the dark, and she wanted to put her head on his shoulder and he wouldn't let her and she was hurt and a little angry.

Martin said, "If you want it in butcher's English, I'm playing for bigger stakes. If I kissed you now, you'd snuggle up, like a kitten; you'd say, or think, Dear Martin, how comfortable he is—how like my brother or my father."

Her thoughts made a slow dance around her. They seemed to be mocking her. She was aware of the dark suddenly, enclosing them, the city, her own thoughts, the sound of wings they were making, the dark that surrounded all light and knowing and feeling, as it must enclose finally everything one has known and loved.

"I proclaim," she heard Martin say, "that when I kiss you, lightning will strike. A rumble like thunder will run through the drums and the brasses; the scenery will shake and topple and the sleeping beauty will awake. But it is not time." He grinned at her fiercely. "This is still the first act."

"Then I'll kiss *you*," she said and reached out to him. At the first wonderful warm touch of his lips she awoke and lay for a moment, dizzily, realizing she'd drunk more wine at Paneta's than she should have. Her heart was beating thickly. She looked at the phone, and for just a moment one thought was explicit in the cloudy jumble of her thoughts. She saw herself dialing Martin's number. She heard him answer sleepily, "Laura, you still up? What is it? Anything wrong?"

And then what? Would she say, with the directness on which she prided herself, "Martin, I want you. Please come, now, and bring your lovely lightning with you"?

She went to the refrigerator and poured herself a tall, very cold glass of tomato juice. She set the glass down on the piano and discovered she didn't want to play. The turmoil in her was something apart from music, not to be resolved by it. That in itself was disturbing. She went back to bed wondering just how it would be resolved.

She stayed in after her harmony class next day to talk to Bertels. "I'm afraid I haven't been working very well lately," she began.

"It's the weather," he assured her. "It is for animals, this city. Small animals who can lose or grow fur overnight. Don't worry. What you have to know you will know. In time."

"No," she said. "It's not the weather. I think I'm in love."

Bertels had seen everything and heard everything (his characteristic expression suggested that most of it was hopelessly out of tune), but this simple, declarative statement surprised him. He took off his glasses, blew on them, polished them. "Good," he said. "Soon you will be out of love. Then we will get some fine work done. There is nothing like despair to tone up the reflexes."

"It's a friend of yours," she said. "In a way you're responsible."

"Dr. Gauss, you mean?" Bertels asked, surprised again. "Martin?"

She nodded.

"That is bad," Bertels said. "He is a serious man."

"Do you think he's in love with me?"

"How should I know that? Why do you ask me?"

"I thought you might have an idea. You're his friend. And you're a man. . . ."

"*Danke*. I was not sure you had observed."

Laura was too preoccupied to notice the quizzical tone. "I think I ought to know how he really feels before very much longer," she said. "It could be very embarrassing. Don't you think so?"

Bertels had begun to wear his "crazy Americans" look. Yes, it could be very embarrassing, he agreed.

"But how does a girl find out?" Laura asked. "I can't very well ask him, can I? Point-blank?"

Bertels invoked his personal deity, with an extravagant gesture heavenward. "My dear child, what do you wish me to say? Ask *me*, please, if you should study more counterpoint. The answer to that is yes."

But Laura was beyond sarcasm, no more capable of being deflected than a sunflower seeking the sun or a salmon homing for death. She lit a cigarette and puffed it, asthmatically. He watched her, as if he half expected an American flag to spring from it.

"Paul," she said earnestly, "you're old and wise. How do you think it is for an artist to be married? Especially to a doctor?"

Bertels exploded: "Especially to a doctor! Or to a plumber. Or a suitcase manufacturer. What kind of questions do you ask me? With those eyes, you should not ask questions at all. Except by mail. Write to the *Gazette*. They have a department. 'Dear Editor: I think I am in love. Should I marry? Or should I have a chocolate malted milk?' "

It was Uncle James all over again, with a Mittel-Europa accent. Laura supposed, with a sigh, that men, unpredictable creatures, would always be angry with her when all she wanted was a simple answer to a simple question.

Actually her talk with Bertels had been prompted less by a desire for any advice he could give her than by a desire merely to talk. She didn't need to be told that Martin was in love with her. Woman's instinct told her that. But he wouldn't make love to her. He had decided, in his autocratic, doctorish way, that she was not ready for marriage—not even, perhaps, for love.

He had some notion about her being too tied up with music; something of the sort. It was nonsense, of course—but how could she go about proving it to him? She wasn't a "case"; she was perfectly healthy and normal. She wanted a career, yes, but she wanted love, too—his love. With the stirring of emotions that had begun to wake in her had come the realization that a career without love would be a bleak and barren thing. On the other hand, love without her career was unthinkable.

It was all very baffling. And a little ironic. By all the conventions of their situation it was the man who should have been importunate, who should be saying, "We can't go on like this." But Martin seemed quite willing to go on, "waiting" for some development in her he wouldn't even tell her about. If he was waiting for her to say, "I'll give up my music to become a doctor's wife," the whole thing was impossible. She couldn't believe that was it. He was anything but the domineering, possessive male. It was rather some *lack* in her that he implied. He was always hinting at it, in ways that angered her. As if she were still a little girl on her father's knee, incapable of assuming a grown-up role in an adult relationship.

Well, regardless of whether Martin was willing to let it go on like this, she wasn't. It was too disturbing; it was beginning to react on her work. There must be some decision between them, very soon.

As it happened, the decision came from without. The lightning Martin had promised her, in her dream, that would ruffle the drums and topple the scenery, struck finally. But from a totally unexpected direction.

Chapter 3

On a Sunday afternoon in October, when summer weather returns to Manhattan spiced with the smell of wood smoke, or only the memory of wood smoke, and a briny incense from the sea brings rumor of voyages, of ivory, apes and peacocks and any bright magic the heart can name—on such an afternoon Laura stood in the living room of Mrs. Horace Bentley's *fin de siècle* brownstone on Fifth Avenue and saw Philip Dutra enter.

It was her first time at the Bentley house. She had wanted to ask Martin to bring her, but was uncertain of the etiquette of these occasions; she was no little awed, in truth, and unwilling to chance a rebuff. Mrs. James Horace Bentley was the director, or directress, of the Foundation from which the Institute derived its principal support. At intervals she swept through the school, dropping graciousness like gentle hail, a Society Leader in a tradition already as archaic as the Stanley Steamer, old-fashioned, artificial in unimportant ways and real in most of the important ones, a benevolent tyrant to her coterie, an implacable enemy, a willing sucker, and a great lady.

Her invitation to Laura was a signal distinction for a raw student. Mrs. Bentley was royalty in the world of Art whose capital is New York. When she said "Heel." Culture settled its hackles and followed, like a well-bred poodle. Laura felt she could not afford to ignore the summons.

The house on Fifth Avenue was something left over from another era, whispering loudly of du Maurier and Jenny Lind and whalebone. One day Mrs. Bentley would pass to her reward and the house would become a museum, just as it stood: rose-glow mahogany, Chippendale furniture, Siena marble, Tiffany glass, Chelsea ware, Kermanshah rugs, Beauvais tapestries and vellum bindings—a sort of Last Chance Salon of a vanished frontier, the last time Money made a music in the world instead of an incurable woe.

Laura found herself one of an oddly conglomerate company which included a famous mathematician, a famous German novelist, some famous musicians, a famous drama critic, a scattering of Hokinson ladies, several professional beauties and a number of other figures, unclassifiable except by the invisible hallmarks of wealth or talent or position.

Mrs. Bentley saw Laura and bore down on her, sweeping an invisible train behind her. "My dear! So glad you could come. You're—"

"Laura Mason," Laura supplied.

"Yes, of course. You're the—er—charming, charming. I hear splendid things about you at the Institute. You'll play for us later, won't you? Do make yourself at home." She was off, with a plump parabola of arm extended in greeting to another guest.

"Faith," she heard someone say beside her. "What we in America need today is more faith—plain old-fashioned faith."

"What we in America need today," a disgusted voice muttered in her ear, "is a good five-cent tank that mounts a two-hundred-millimeter gun." She looked around at a pleasant lined face and hands scarred with etcher's acid. "My name's Lyndon Carter," he said. The name stirred some vague association in her mind, but she couldn't place it. "I heard someone ask that tall lady if she would *do* some Brahms later. What do you suppose she *does* him on? Piano, harp, skillet?"

Laura smiled, doubtfully.

"You're not amused," he said. "Can I get you a drink? That sometimes helps."

"Thank you," she said. "I'd like some sherry, please."

"Sherry," he agreed. "A discreet drink. We can start there and feel our way." He went toward the bar.

Laura could never afterward quite recapture the moment she looked up and saw that Dutra had entered the room. If Beethoven had stepped out of the frame over her piano and stood before her, the event would have contained something of what she felt.

Philip Dutra had been, during most of Laura's childhood, an idealized, impossible, elegant silhouette on the covers of her most cherished record albums. At fourteen, she had seen him conduct for the first time, and for weeks afterward he had remained in her mind, outlined in a sanctified glow, like a figure in a stained-glass window. On succeeding occasions, when she saw him with an or-

chestra, he had seemed less saintly and more the mortal male, but of regal proportions still, outside the range of ordinary men. He had come to inhabit a recurring dream in which she played the piano with the orchestra; in these dreams she wore the same white dress, as at a confirmation, her hair was tied in a simple knot, with a ribbon; it was always the Brahms Second she played, her father's favorite. When she finished playing, oblivious to the applause, oblivious of all but the kingly man who had guided her so tenderly and firmly and surely through the pitfalls and the glories of the concerto, Dutra would put down his baton, walk over to her and say, "Your father would have been very proud." He would incline his head, ever so majestically, and touch his lips lightly, and burningly, to her forehead.

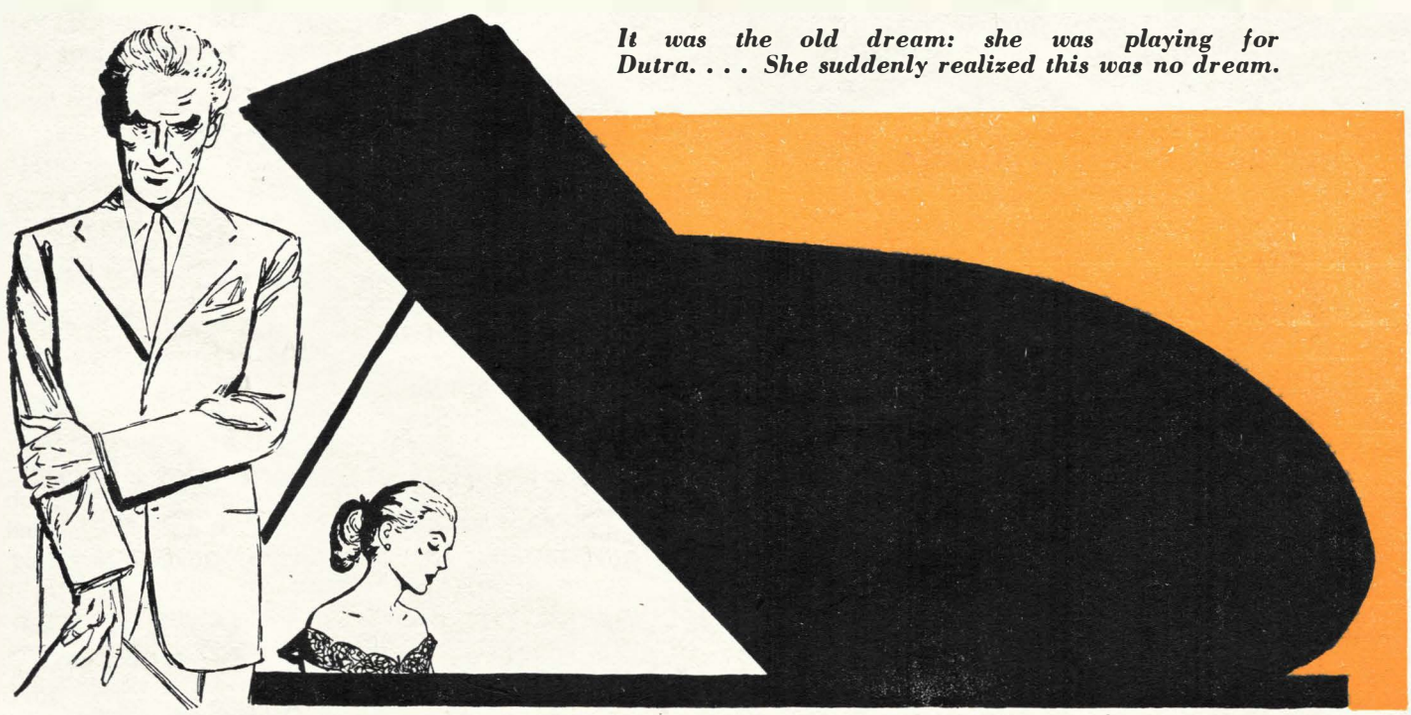
There had been something dreamlike for her in the fact that the radio award she won finally had borne his name: the Dutra Award. The night it was presented to her, he had materialized briefly into a Voice speaking over a microphone from Paris, a few priceless if conventional words of congratulations before dissolving again into the mists of legend. Ever since she had come to New York she had known that if she passed final muster at the Institute (an *if* about which she was never in any doubt), there would be a debut with an orchestra over which he would preside. But that had remained in the realm of fantasy. She could not actually conceive it as a reality.

He stood now for a moment while, in the beautiful room which had been built to erase the commonplace and honor the exceptional, a little hush fell, almost as if he had rapped on some invisible stand with his baton for attention—a little pulse of stillness that broke then into a murmuring sea of homage. Every woman in the room moved a step toward him, whether in space, or only in the quickened beating of her heart; a few of the bolder ones actually detached themselves from their escorts and converged upon him, as if magnetized. Dutra received them, smiling, with a divine and impartial graciousness. It had almost the quality of a ballet: Great Man with Lady Admirers—except that Dutra himself seemed quite unconscious of his role. He was the shore, and adulation lapped ceaselessly at his feet, like a tide. Long ago it had done something for his bearing; now it was merely the rhythm in which he lived and worked.

Incongruously, some prankster chose the moment to seat himself at one of the two pianos and, lightly sketching out a theme from one of Bach's fugues, proceeded to take it through an amazing series of jazz improvisations, boogie, bebop and barrelhouse. It was an audacious and amusing performance, and ordinarily Laura would have been amused. Now she was very nearly horrified. She looked up to see how the maestro was taking this desecration; he was standing near by with Mrs. Bentley; his head was thrown back in a listening attitude, and there was a delighted smile on his face. He turned to say something to Mrs. Bentley, and caught Laura's gaze of mingled adoration and horror; the smile on his face took on a personal tinge for her. With unhurried briefness his eyes traveled upward off her face and she had the feverish impression that he had left a little check mark alongside her head. It sent a sharp reasonless pang of happiness winging through her.

The pianist finished; out of the corner of her eye Laura saw Dutra applaud, with apparent sincerity. Carter came up now with a glass of sherry and a highball glass for himself. "Here we are," he said. "I tried to get back before, but I got myself stared at. You musicians take yourselves so seriously. You *are* a musician, aren't you?" As Laura nodded, he said. "I thought so. Well, there's no help for it now. Cheers." She stood holding her glass, frozen. "It's all right," he said. "You can drink with me. I'm not a musician myself, but I'm an honorary member of the club. I've got my credentials—I can whistle the Fate theme from Beethoven's Fifth."

He proceeded to demonstrate. Laura managed a smile. Dutra's voice, unmistakable through the blur of sound that filled the room, was registering somewhere inside her, like an organ tone. She turned suddenly and saw him standing beside her. Mrs. Bentley had come up with him. "Lynnie," she said to Carter. "You bad, wicked boy. Where have you been? You know Mr. Dutra. And Miss—er—"



It was the old dream: she was playing for Dutra. . . . She suddenly realized this was no dream.

"Mason," Laura breathed automatically, tremulously.

"I've met Mr. Dutra," said Carter, elaborately unimpressed. "And Miss Mason and I were about to become passionate friends."

"You're a fraud," said Mrs. Bentley. "A fraud," she repeated to Laura. "He is equally incapable of passion *or* friendship. He is the coldest, most heartless man on two continents, and I love him. Give him back to me, Miss Mason." She hooked her arm through Carter's. "Come and talk to me, Lynnie. I never see you any more."

"Don't worry," said Carter impudently. "You will now. I'm about ready for my next show."

"Dreadful, mercenary man." She clung to him, adoringly. It was slightly outrageous and rather charming. They went off; Carter kept looking back at Laura and gesturing, "Don't go; I'll be back." Laura was childishly glad of a reason for keeping her gaze averted from Dutra. She felt that if she looked at him directly it would blind her, like looking into the sun.

"Laura Mason," he said. "I have heard the name before, no?" His voice, a vibrant baritone, tipped with the faintest possible trace of an accent, commanded attention with the same mixture of imperiousness and charm which he wore on the platform. With an effort she looked up at him now.

"You are new to Mrs. Bentley's," he said. "You are a little shocked."

He was even taller than she'd realized, and at close range his magnetism was overpowering.

"It troubled you, the little jazz thing. You did not think it clever."

"I did," she heard herself say—or someone who sounded like herself. "But I don't think one should be clever about Bach."

He put his hands together in an odd foreign gesture. "My dear girl. That is very touching. But—you are a musician?"

"Yes. I—I am a pianist."

"Laura Mason," he said again, as if feeling the shape of it in his mind. He made a sudden vivid gesture of recognition. "Of course. You are the 1950 winner of the Dutra Award. I congratulated you from Paris." He looked at her with frank appreciation. "I congratulate you now in person. I did not know that you were beautiful. Only talented."

She blushed violently and took a sip of her sherry, felt it go down slowly, explode in a little glow in her stomach.

"Of course, of course," Dutra said. "I have heard fine things about you from Bertels, and the others. But look, my dear Laura Mason." His voice took on another tone, not perceptibly lower but intimate now, shutting out the rest of the room. "Your reaction to the little vaudeville—it is, in this day, in this time and place, a little *corny*, no?"

His use of the word almost made her jump.

"You are an artist," he went on, "and you must be a snob about many things. Fine. Only amateurs are humble. But about music, no. About music you must be *very* eclectic, very democratic. Everything goes. Music is not made only in the mind of a Bach, or a Beethoven. It is not only the distillation of great minds and great souls. It is a boy whistling on a bicycle; it is a colored man with a trumpet, a truckman with a jew's-harp; it is jazz and hand organs and harmonicas—wherever the joy of life, or the misery of life, or even the vulgarity of life, takes form in sound, *that* is music, and you must take it all in. You must not stand apart from *any* of it.

"Now," —he smiled at her and her knees got weak— "you must play for me."

"Now?" She was terrified.

"Now," he said.

It did not occur to her that she could refuse, demur. He had commanded her to play. She went to the piano, her fingers icy, the blood sludging thickly in her throat. The mark of the professional was on her; she could never play really badly, and she never played better than when the demands were great. But she seemed to be moving now in some compulsion not her own; the choice of what she was to play had been made for her. She found herself in the opening bars of the Brahms Second before she had willed to play them. It was the old dream, of course; she was playing for Dutra, in a white dress, with her hair tied back with a ribbon. . . . She woke suddenly and realized that this was no dream she was re-enacting. There was no orchestra; there were only the bare bones of her solo gleaming whitely in the silence—and she had made a fool of herself.

She broke off, heartsick, half turned from the piano and saw Dutra bearing down on her. Almost roughly, with a hand to her shoulder, he turned her back to the keyboard. "No. Go on, go on. I will play the accompaniment." And he sat down at the second piano and put a rich solid platform of sound under her solo. Again the dream took hold; she surrendered herself to it now, hearing the music as she had often heard it, wondering if it actually sounded as good as it seemed to her, if her fingers were performing the miracles of dexterity that were no miracles at all in dreams. . . .

She finished the first movement. Swimmingly she heard the applause. Dutra rose from the second piano, and in the fading October afternoon, when the topless towers of Ilium slide into place around Manhattan and no name is without its legend and magic is at home behind every window—Dutra walked over to her and touched his lips, lightly and burningly, to her forehead. "You are a beautiful child," he murmured, "and you are an artist. Or will be one, one day."

Were these the words, too, of the dream? Not exactly. But they would serve, with no diminution of magic, for the substance of a new dream.

He snapped his fingers, and a waiter stopped before them with a tray. He handed her a glass of champagne, took one himself. "To your future," he said, raising his glass. "It will be bright. . . . You are a very gifted girl. There is something of Novaes in your playing. . . . ."

She was dizzy with happiness.

"But there is something of your own, too. Youth and fire, very controlled. Perhaps too controlled, no?" He put his head back, squinted at her in his odd gesture of appraisal. "I want to talk to you. I am rehearsing for my appearance as guest conductor. Will you come and see me?"

Would she come and see him? Would she like to go to heaven when she died?

She walked home with her head in the clouds, as the saying goes. She was bursting with it by the time Martin telephoned.

"What's with you?" he said. "You sound as if you're about to take off."

"Oh, Martin, the most wonderful thing. I met Dutra this afternoon—"

"Philip Dutra? The big sharps-and-flats man?"

A chilly premonition came to her that perhaps Martin was not the right person to share this experience with.

"Yes," she said, "Philip Dutra. The conductor."

"No fooling. How'd you find him? A giant among men?"

"He's marvelous," she said carefully. "I think he's the most marvelous person I've ever met."

"You mean the second most marvelous person. The first is a doctor. Remember?"

She laughed. "Martin, I'm so excited. I want to talk. Will you take me dancing?"

"Sure." She heard him laugh, too. "You want to talk, so I'll take you dancing. Nothing could be more logical. My feet, which are large and untalented, are yours to command. And I am all ears."

"Martin," she exclaimed. "I love you."

There was a moment's silence. She wondered, a little frightened herself, if the impulsive utterance had frightened him.

Then he asked, "Do we go plain, or fancy?"

"Let's be fancy for once," she said, relieved. "I feel festive."

He arrived at eight-thirty, wearing a tuxedo which smelled faintly of cleaning fluid. She herself was dressed in brown taffeta, just the right warm brown for her golden eyes and the dusky places on her cheeks; she'd put on the string of opals her Uncle James had sent her, which she never wore because they seemed too ostentatious. Sophistication is only truly effective when it is unconscious, and the touch of it now made her young beauty starry to behold. Martin stood in the doorway, staring.

"There you go," she said. "That look. You'd think I'd never worn anything but overalls around you."

"Laura, the complete girl," he said. "A delight for the eye, ear, nose and throat."

He took her to an excellent restaurant and watched with tender amusement while she got a little high on champagne cocktails.

"Can you afford this?" she said suddenly. "I never think about money."

"You could be one of my patients," he told her. "You've got the one indispensable qualification." He stopped her with a lordly gesture of the hand. "Think nothing of it. The money rolls in. What about Dutra? Where'd you meet him? At your music factory?"

Again a slight chill descended on Laura. "You know, Martin, sometimes you talk about music as if you thought it was some kind of—of pastime, like solitaire, or jigsaw puzzles."

He laughed. "Laura, honey, I love music. I'm crazy about it. But do I have to light a stick of incense every time we talk about it? Come on. Tell me about the maestro. Great man, huh?"

"Very great." She stared at him resentfully. "What are you grinning about?"

"Something your friend Bertels said about him."

"*Your* friend Bertels," Laura said, explicitly.

"All right, let's not toss him around like a sack of potatoes. *My* friend Bertels."

"And what priceless pearl of wisdom did Bertels let fall?"

Martin grinned again, despite himself. "He said Dutra was the perfect balance of genius and charlatan. If he had two per cent more talent he'd be a failure."

"Very clever. Jealousy is the mark of small minds."

"Very well put. Consistency, too, if we're quoting."

"Thank you very much. I'll try to remember, next time."

"Oh, come on, Laura. You don't have to rush to Dutra's defense. He's doing fine. The audiences love him; the ladies tear him to pieces, adoringly, whenever he is the guest conductor."

"It's not hard to understand why."

"No. Not if you understand ladies. How about a dance?"

It was a rumba, so she was able to dance with him and hold him off at the same time, which suited her fine. His feet were indeed large and untalented, and her annoyance began to dissolve. She could only be angry with him when he was being wise and superior. She moved a little closer to him. But now he said, completely out of context, "Do you remember what your father was like, Laura?"

She stiffened, moving away from him again. "Why do you want to know? Just now?"

"I want to know everything about you. Now. All the time."

She gave him a look. "I dislike insincere people," she said.

"I'm not insincere," he said. "Just a little oblique. What was your father like? Was he a musician?"

"He loved music very much," she said tightly. She knew what he was driving at. He was deliberately trying to spoil things. It was becoming a habit—one of his less endearing ones.

"Do you often play for him?" he asked. "When you're alone."

"Yes, often." She was strangely, coldly furious. "Anything else?"

"No." The music stopped. "Had enough?"

"More than enough."

She walked back to the table, and he followed her. "Want some more champagne?" he said.

"No, thanks. I think I'd like to go. I'm tired."

So it had been a mistake to try to share this with Martin. Well, it was something to find out, though the finding out was a little sad. If she couldn't share experience with him, all experience, then there was no basis for any real relationship between them. No basis whatever. Companionship and good works were not enough.

Chapter 4

She went to Carnegie Hall next day. She walked by the place a dozen times before she found the courage to go in. She was certain Dutra must have forgotten his invitation, certain she would be turned away by the doorman. Amazingly, Dutra had remembered. He was to be the guest conductor that week and he had left word with the doorman about her. He saw her when she came into the empty auditorium, gestured her down front. She obeyed, realizing that already her life had become a radiant blur of Dutra in which she walked like this, obedient, trancelike, to his command.

She sat down and listened, more aware of him than of the music, his incredible care and patience with each phrase, the lightning flash of his anger, the animal grace that informed his slightest movement, that seemed to communicate itself through his fingers. It was the thing, she realized now, more than anything else, that turned the musicians into willing galley slaves and audiences into howling fan clubs.

He jumped down from the platform finally and came to her. "How was it?" he said, and without stopping, declaratively, "Bad."

"I don't know," she said. "I wasn't really listening to the music. I was watching you."

He laughed a little, sat down beside her. "Tell me," he said. "You are young, you are lovely—you have great talent. What do you wish to do, really: Marry a millionaire?"

That was easy. "I want to be a musician," she said. "I want *you* to tell me one day that I am a musician, that I play like one."

With a swift impulsive movement that was the first real intimation she had ever had of maleness, he bent and kissed her on the cheek. "What an enchanting child you are," he exclaimed. "What am I going to do with you? Take you home and set you on my mantelpiece, like an old-fashioned music box?"

She sat very still, some part of her reeling with new sensations and another part of her five years old again, listening to her father's voice.

"What will you play with the orchestra?" he asked finally. "At your debut. Have you decided?"

"I hadn't thought about it yet. It's at least a year off."

"Ha!" he exclaimed. "A year off. I heard the great Cortot say once that he had not dared to play the Emperor in public until he had practiced it five years."

She flushed. "I thought maybe Bartok."

He laughed. "Bartok, yes. That would be for you and the conductor and the concertmeister. But you must begin to think of audiences now. You wish to be a success, too?"

"Yes," she said. "I want very much to be a success."

"Good; I detest amateurs." He rose, with his dynamic, heart-stopping grace, held out a hand to her. "Come. We will eat something and you will tell me about yourself."

They ate in his apartment, a duplex or triplex, in Gracie Square. She knew about it afterward only that there was a large window in the living room from which she had glimpsed the East River, with an impression of evening light resting on dull lacquer, fleetingly, like gray birds skittering; a servant in a white coat, a Chinese or Filipino who drew the drape with a noiseless arabesque of movement that made an echo in her mind like the stroke of a gong; a narrow grand piano, half a block long, of some foreign make (she didn't have the courage somehow to go over and take a look), and food that appeared magically in the rhythmic pauses between talk.

She had several glasses of wine and heard herself suddenly making a large pronouncement about the role of the artist in society. ". . . more than anyone *he* must remain pure, because he is the keeper of the dream, for all the rest . . ." She broke off, flushing as she realized how high-flown the words sounded.

"*Lieber Gott,*" he exclaimed. "How young you are. How beautifully, tragically young."

"Tragically?" she echoed, trying to smile like a woman of the world.

"Yes. Because you say 'pure' and know what you mean. And there will be a time when you say it—if you will dare to at all—because you will be embarrassed to say it—when you will no longer know what it means." His voice had a hypnotic effect on her; it was an effort not to lose herself sensuously in the sound of it, keep her attention fixed on what he was actually saying. ". . . and what happens in between, whatever it is, however it has pleased and fulfilled you, will be a tragedy."

She flushed again, more deeply, because something in what he'd said had brought her a presentiment of sexual desire; its movement within her was not gentle. It slugged her, and she was frightened and confused.

"My sweet child," she heard him say. He put his hand to her cheek, gently as one would hold a fluttering bird. "You must not blush for being young. Glory in it. It will pass soon enough."

He looked at his watch and sighed. "Now I must go. Take heed, my child. I, too, wanted a big career—now I am a slave to it. You will not mind going home in a taxi?"

It was a question and it was a statement; it had the contour of consideration and the content of dismissal, however kindly. She was aware of all this, herself elated and disturbed, thrilling with premonitions which seemed afterward to have prefigured everything that would happen between them.

"When will you come again?" he said.

"When do you want me?"

He shook his head wonderingly. "*Incroyable,*" he said. He took her face in his hands, kissed her lightly on the month. "Now go, *liebe* Laura, before I forget that I am old enough to be your father."

It was blustery and damp when she got outside, the night air heavy with impending rain or snow. She walked, not going anywhere but too full of sensations to be contained indoors. She walked for an hour and was thoroughly chilled, but a need in her for space and darkness in which to be alone was not appeased. She took the subway down to the Battery and got on the ferry there. It had begun to rain, but she went out on deck, stood braced against the wind, something crouched and female in her responding with little snarls of pleasure to the sharp lashings of rain against her face. The bay was rough, straining up to meet its kindred element shredding from the dissolving sky; a lone gull flung by like a detached bit of froth through the gray dark.

Dutra. Philip Dutra. He had walked intact out of his legend into an apartment, with furniture, where laundry was done and food served, and he was every bit as magnificent, as godlike as she could have dreamed. No, it was not true what the wiseacres said, what even Dutra himself had said. Disillusionment was not inevitable. That was the rationalization of the old, the defeated, the tired, the disappointed. One could dream, standing up, and insist on the truth of the dream. She felt like shouting it into the dark.

She was still borne aloft on a symphony of wind and water when she fell asleep. Through the troubled urgency of her dream a name kept sounding now, like the faint warning music of a breeches buoy. When she made out what it was saying, she felt like crying. It was calling *Martin . . . Martin. . . .* At first she thought it was the present Martin with whom she had been so briefly in love; then it was the Martin of long ago, and then it was neither—it was a white dress fluttering in the dark, or it was a bird or a handkerchief, or her own youth.

There was a note from Dutra next morning. "I have left word with Karel to let you in. Come and play on my Bechstein this afternoon. It will spoil you, but you may as well know how good you really are. We can take you down later. I want you to dine with me this evening. I will be home at seven."

That was the beginning, the first statement of the theme, its simplicity, its power and its ambiguities. The rest filled in quickly—that he was twice her age, or more, old enough to be her father, as he himself had said, as people said (as Martin said particularly), as if that were a disparagement instead of a recommendation. Further, that he was a man with a wife and family, a tender, ruth-

less, perceptive, imperious, brilliant man who walked with kingly stride into the very middle of her life, surveyed and dismissed with an amused, impatient smile her little wardrobe of verities—the garments of honor, candor, integrity, the near-sacred sense of obligation toward her own talent that had served her unclouded youth so well.

In the reflection of his quizzical deprecation those verities shrank into oddities, prim and outmoded. There was a new and shining dress that awaited her: Womanhood. With him, in the spell of his voice, his charm, it seemed the raiment of a queen he was offering her. Away from him she very soon knew the offer for what it really was—a tiny corner of his life, without dignity, without pride, without even the security of knowing it would always be hers.

For a time he chose to preserve a fiction of casualness, as formal and consciously stylized as the measures of a minuet. "I detest dining out and I detest eating alone. . . . It is good of you to keep an old man company. . . . I do not bore you with this? . . . Tell me of your life away from the school; you must have many friends, young men. . . ."

She dined with him every night for a week. It was always a ritual. There was some magic he infused into whatever he did, demanding that life be, moment by moment, important, vivid, irreplaceable. And life obeyed, whether it was the truth of his words, or of his music, or only the correct wine, the mixing of a salad, the right bit of cheese musky on the tongue. . . . Yet the food itself was not important—only the dining. He was always at a feast, and always he seemed to partake sparingly.

There came an evening when the pauses in their talk were more expressive than their words, building toward an inevitable conclusion. Over coffee he seemed to make a decision. He reached for the phone and dialed, once. Dreamlike, she saw it for what it was, the commanding downsweep of his baton, no more impulsive than the calculated dynamics of the closing bars of a score—or the opening phrase.

"Karel," he said, "what must I do this evening?" He listened. "Yes, yes," he broke in impatiently. "I am not going. Say that I am not well, busy, anything. Yes, Karel. In the morning. Thank you."

"Now." He turned to her. "We will have time. Come." He held out a hand. "We will go to the movies. I adore them and I can never go."

"I think I ought to go home," she said.

A flash of annoyance crossed his face, but his tone remained unchanged. "But why? You have another engagement?" He mimicked archness. "With a young man?"

"No," she said. "But I think I ought to go."

He sighed, shrugged. "Well—if you must. I will call a taxi for you." He reached for the phone.

"I want to stay," she said miserably. "You know I do."

"*Tiens!*" He gestured, humor as explicit in the movement as a ballet dancer's. "What is it you wish, little one? Only command me. I am your servant."

"Don't make fun of me," she said. "I'm frightened."

Impatience edged into his voice now. "What are you frightened of, Laura? That we will see a bad picture?"

"All you men," she said stormily. "You're so superior."

"'All you men.'" He was amused. "How many men have you known, Laura?"

"Please don't treat me like a child, Philip. You know very well what's bothering me."

"I am afraid I do not."

"Well, then, you ought to. I'm thinking about your wife and family."

He clasped his hands suddenly and did a half-turn, one of those rare foreign gestures to which he resorted only when he was at the end of his endurance. "*Lieber Gott,*" he exclaimed. "In a long life it appears one must experience everything. My wife and family!" his voice rasped. "What is it about my wife and family that troubles you? My wife is in Europe, with my daughter. My son is in school in Boston. They are all well, thank you. They hope you are the same."

His scorn was towering, but at the same time an Olympian amusement flashed round it. She sat there, hating him, hating what he had done to her.

He spread his hands out wide now. In an altered tone he said, "What do you want of me, child? Do you want perhaps that I should be someone else, someone *without* a family, a football player perhaps, a playmate, someone you went to high school with in Kansas City—"

She started to weep.

"But this is impossible," he said. "I will not have you make a scene. It is insupportable." He strode to her, took hold of her and shook her a little, as one does a fractious child.

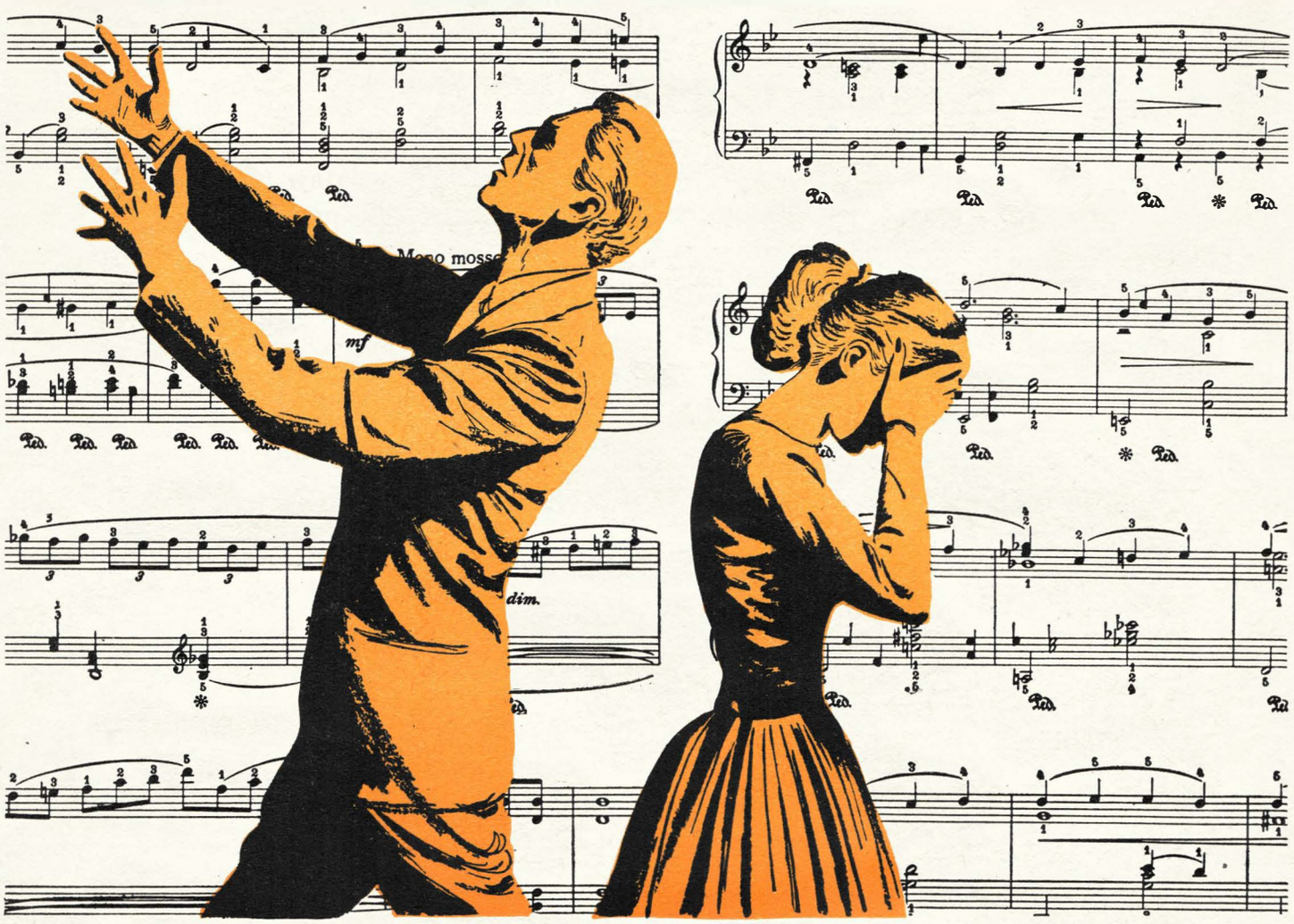
"Listen to me," he said. "I am a busy man. I have no time in my life for hysterical, possessive women. Or children. I will not be possessed. Not for a lifetime, not for a year, not for an hour. That is something you must understand." He let go of her. "Now I think it is better that you go. I have work to do. And *you* have work to do." He waited a moment, lighting a cigarette; then, with decision but in a gentler tone, he said, "I am leaving in two weeks. I go to be guest conductor in other cities, other orchestras. I will be back, in April. Perhaps by then you will be grown up and we can meet again."

Winter was about her in the city—her second winter in New York. She walked long hours in the tight-lipped friendless dark, seeking her lost image, her lost certainties. More than anything else it was the loneliness that had shouldered its way into her life that frightened her. She had never before known what it was to feel alone. Since her father had died, when she was six, solitude had always been the richest time for her, at the piano, or with a book or just her own thoughts. Nothing had prepared her for this sudden gasping need, this fire of submission that could not submit, this misery of self that clogged her mind and turned her fingers into wood on the piano and the music into a kind of incessant wailing.

Hopelessly she waited for his call. He wouldn't call—she knew he wouldn't. He had long ago made known his wishes. Now he was waiting for her to Grow Up.

Perhaps he was suffering too—a little—as a king suffers when he is denied. But he would make not the slightest concession to his wanting her, any more than he would make a bargain, come to terms with the wine he'd ordered, or the Brie, if they should suddenly develop a temperament.

The things she did that winter, out of doubt and despair. God! She could not believe in their actuality, afterward. The time she'd heard her phone ringing, from downstairs, and had run up, a thousand steps, a thousand years, only to hear the ringing stop as she flung open the door. She had sat by the phone, rigid, trembling, waiting



"This is insupportable," he said. . . . "I have no time in my life for hysterical, possessive women."

for it to ring again, sure that it was he, against all reason, all conviction, everything she knew about him; he was calling her from San Francisco to say hello, I am thinking of you, wish me good luck, I love you, I wish you were near me, I had to speak to you, hear your voice. . . .

The phone rang. It was Martin. She tried to keep the disappointment, the anguish, out of her voice.

"How are you, Martin?" If he had been there in the room she would have thrown herself into his arms, and wept wildly. . . . "I haven't talked to you in ages."

"I've called," he said simply. "You're a hard girl to get hold of these days." He waited, as if to give her a chance to say: I've been away. I've been busy. Something. She could say nothing.

"I've got tickets for the Budapest Quartet tonight," he said. "Want to come?"

"I . . . I can't, Martin. I . . ." She floundered helplessly.

He took her out, gently. "All right, Laura. Some other time." She thought suddenly of his wonderful hands, with the blunt fingers. Suitable for the helm of a storm-tossed ship, to hold together the life of a fourteen-year-old girl with uremic poisoning. . . . Help me, Martin. I'm poisoned too. I'm sick, I'm lost. . . .

"Yes, some other time," she said aloud. "Please call me again, Martin."

"Are you okay, Laura?"

"Yes. Yes, I'm fine. I'm a little tired. I—I've been working pretty hard."

"Good," he said. "Keep your eye on the music."

She heard the click of the receiver. Keep your eye on the music. He knows, she thought. He knows all about it. Rage seized her. Why didn't he *say* something, yell at her, tell her to go to the devil? No, not Martin. Just that maddening silence. Waiting. Waiting for her to Grow Up. Like the great Philip Dutra. Everybody was waiting for her to Grow Up. And nobody would put out a hand to help her. Well, she'd *Grow Up*—once and for all—

She hurled the phone to the floor, kicked over a chair, and ran out. There was a bar a little distance away where now and again, in the dear dim days beyond recall, a wolf in the sheep's clothing of a visiting Elk had beckoned. In those halcyon days they had been invitations with no more immediacy than a comic strip. Now a perverse, furious need to do violence to her own sense of proportion and dignity drove her inside. She sat at the bar and ordered vermouth cassis. That was something she had learned from Philip, and it served a double purpose, for identifying herself with him and striking herself down with his hand. After two drinks, what she was involved in seemed quite reasonable. She was going to get drunk; it was every man's prerogative, and every woman's, too, since women had the vote, or were supposed to have. She was going to forget her misery, her feeling of guilt about Martin, about the music. With melancholy satisfaction she watched herself, swimmingly, undergo a sort of sea change, turn into one of those shadowy greenish figures who sit

forever at café tables in the canvases of Toulouse Lautrec. leering, lost, abandoned in the sight of God.

"Sure you want another, sis?" the bartender said, finally. "You've had five."

"Sis." she said, pushing her glass toward him. "Six," she amended.

"Look." he urged, paternal spirit mounting irresistibly in him. "You ain't gonna prove anything, you know. You're just gonna fall on your face."

"It's my face." she said and banged her glass pettishly on the bar. It broke and cut her finger slightly.

"Now look what you made me do," she said. "I'll probably get blood poison and lose the finger—and then what?"

She half believed it and hoped it would happen and wished she had the courage or the lack of it to sit and cry her eyes out over her ruined career, her blasted hopes, her wasted young life.

A nice-looking young man down the bar moved over and gave her a clean handkerchief from his breast pocket to wrap around the cut. "Is this free," she said, "or are you a lecturer, too?"

"Just trying to be helpful, ma'am," he said. "There's no charge."

"May I have my cassis, please?" she said. "It's a free country. Some people don't seem to realize that."

"That's right, ma'am. Give the lady her drink, Mac," he said flatly to the bartender. "And another bourbon for me."

Paternal emotion curdled in the bartender's breast, as it is wont to do when frustration sets in. "Try to help people." he muttered. "Get a hole in your head."

The nice man's name, it turned out, was Walter Comansky. He was lonely. This was his first time in New York, and he was kind of feeling his way around. Big town. Kind of cold. But he guessed he'd catch on after a while. He had played halfback at a Midwestern college in '38. He had also been a corporal in the Marine Corps, and he now sold a line of builders' hardware for a big firm in Wisconsin. Unless the Russians threw a monkey wrench into everything, he was going to make the New York territory as a regular thing from now on, four times a year.

"I hope so, Mr. Comanche," she said. "Lifeblood is the soul of commerce."

She wasn't making any progress with the last drink. She couldn't get it down: her throat closed up. I'll never be a drunkard, she thought dimly. No form of suicide would ever be open to her. At some point in the storm when the mountain loomed or the dark chasm yawned seductively, a robot Laura within her, made of some nonshatterable compound of health and sanity, would take over the controls despite herself. She was not grateful. She was sick of being healthy. She was sick of being alive.

She stood up and wobbled. Mr. Comansky steadied her. His grip was firm without being rough, and his smile was C major, without overtones.

"Would you like to take me home?" she said.

He was excited and wary at the same time, not knowing quite what her game was. Nor could she have told him. Some obscure defiance was working in her, through the misery, boiling over into an insane recklessness. This is all sex at bottom, what I'm going through, something in her said, wanting to pull it down to a level where it didn't matter, where it was common and cheap and couldn't hurt her any more, drive her mad with confusion and guilt.

She had sobered somewhat by the time she got home, but she was still determined to go through with it. She stood over the piano for a few moments, playing chords, waiting for the trembling in her limbs to stop.

"Say." Mr. Comansky said admiringly. "You play like a professional. You must have played around a lot."

She turned from the piano. "All my life." she said. "That's my problem."

He shook his head. "I don't get it. Good-looking kid like you, plays piano like a professional, you don't have to hang around bars, picking up guys."

"Are you going to make love to me," she said. "or are you going to stand there and improve my morals?"

He made a grab for her then, as if he were going to run her back ninety yards for a touchdown. He smelled of shaving soap, alcohol and Sen-Sen; his lips were hard against hers. She felt made of wood, a thousand years, a million miles away.

He slackened his grip on her. "What's the matter—don't you like me?" he inquired, with a bearish wistfulness.

"I like you." she said.

"You sure don't act like it."

"You tell me how I'm supposed to act."

"Hey—what kind of a dame are you, anyway?" he asked, aggrieved.

"What kind of dame do you want?" she said. "I'm all things to all men."

He let go of her entirely then, aware for the first time of her pale, desperate face. "Say, look," he said, hurt. "If you didn't want—" Then, with a dim Neanderthal intuition: "I get it. You trying to pay somebody off on my time?"

She couldn't look at him, saying over and over in her mind, miserably, I'm sorry, Mr. Comansky. Forgive me. I'm sorry; I'm sorry. . . .

"You know, it just happens I'm not a mug." he said. "I don't go around slugging dames. But you're liable to get into trouble, with this kind of stuff."

She was suddenly infuriated. Trouble! "Go away," she said. "Go on, go away, will you please?"

"Say, what's the matter with you, anyway?" he said. "You nuts or something?"

"Yes." she cried. "Will you get out?" She swung away, and started to bang on the piano, violently. In a moment, a nameless critic in the apartment below began to hammer rhythmically on the radiator. Mr. Comansky stood with his mouth open; she turned from the piano and saw him, eyeing her dazedly, unbelieving, and suddenly it was all terribly funny—wildly, tragically funny—and she began to laugh hysterically, and Mr. Comansky turned and fled into the night.

In a fever of self-revulsion she threw herself into work and almost succeeded in losing herself. She had missed several days at the Institute: the next time she showed up for ensemble she learned that her partner, a gifted young violinist of nineteen, was leaving the Institute. He'd been inducted into the Army.

She lay on the bed in her apartment, crying, for the rest of the day. Finally she called Martin.

"Can I see you somewhere?" she said.

"What's the matter—you got a cold?" he asked.

"I have to see you, Martin," she said, dabbing futilely at her numb nose. "I have to ask you something."

"All right. I'll take you to dinner."

"No. I don't want to eat."

"Well, I do. I'll meet you in an hour." he said, naming a restaurant.

She waited for him in the restaurant, thinking wretchedly of the first time they'd been here together, in another age, the age of innocence, of clarity of purpose, when the world—and Laura Mason—were young.

He was late, and he didn't apologize. "What do you want to eat?" he said.

"Nothing. A glass of water."

"They don't serve water here. Only celery tonic. How about a nice corned-beef sandwich and a new pickle?"

She let herself be talked into that and munched on the sandwich, mournfully.

"What's up, Laura?" he asked. "What's on your mind?"

She told him. "I want to become a nurse, Martin."

He put down his sandwich, gulped, took a drink of his coffee. "A nurse?"

"Yes. I want to know how to go about it. I want to go to Korea. Or somewhere."

He didn't laugh. "It'd take you a couple of years, at least. You'll have to change your whole way of life—"

"I don't care," she said. "That's what I want."

"What's with the music?" he said. "You want to give that up?"

"I don't *want* to give it up. But I don't want to be the last one sitting and playing the piano, while the world blows up around me." She told him about the boy in school. "He's just nineteen, Martin. He's not a soldier; he's an artist. What's happening in the world, Martin?"

"Poor Laura," he said. "You're waking up."

"Don't be superior," she said. "I can't stand it—today of all days. . . . You know what I keep thinking about? That little girl in the hospital—remember? I suppose she died."

He smiled now. "No. I saw her the other day. She's very much alive. In fact, she wants to marry me. I seem to have an affinity for the younger set." He saw her react and said, "All right. I didn't mean anything. Would you like to see her? The girl?"

Laura thought for a moment. "No," she decided. "I'd feel too ashamed."

"Look," Martin said. "Don't make an orgy of it. You don't have to wear sackcloth and ashes, and you don't have to become a nurse. If there are things you want to do, I can fix it for you."

"What? Play Chopin for the invalids in the hospitals? They'd rather hear jazz. Roll bandages? It's all so futile. So . . . so *nothing*. I'm just useless, that's all."

He studied her reflectively. "What is it, Laura? Is it really humanity that's bothering you? Or is it Dutra?"

Her head went up as if he'd slapped her. She jumped up.

"Sit down," he said.

She glared at him for a moment, then ran out. He chased her half a block, caught up with her.

"You didn't finish your sandwich," he said.

She struggled vainly to free herself from his grasp.

"How about Sunday?" he said. "I'll take you for a ride in the country. You can tell me all about it."

"Let me go," she said. "I'll never try to tell you anything again. Never. Never."

"All right. If you change your mind about Sunday, let me know."

He released her, and she ran back to her apartment, threw herself on the bed, and resumed crying.

On Saturday she heard that Dutra was in town. She called Martin. "I'm sorry about the other day," she said. "Will you forgive me?"

"Don't be silly. Want to take that ride tomorrow?"

"I'd like to," she said, "but I've got to stop in at Mrs. Bentley's for a while. Will you take me there first?"

The consciousness that she was doing something shameful didn't prevent her from setting up an elaborate pretense of valid, even selfless, motives. After all, many of the best people felt it expedient to appear at Mrs. Bentley's for "business" reasons. She had a career to think of, sometime; Mrs. Bentley had gone out of her way to be charming to her, and as for Martin, he gave lots of time to clinics and people who couldn't pay for his services, and it was certainly fitting that he spend an afternoon occasionally cultivating rich people who might balance things up a little.

Five minutes after they arrived at Mrs. Bentley's, the hypnosis wore off. You liar, she thought—you incredible liar! You know very well why you're here. You hoped *he* would be here. You wanted him to see you with another man, a young man. And you used Martin to do this incredibly cheap thing. What's happened to you, anyway? You used to be a decent girl, an honest girl; how could you do this to someone you care for?

A cocoa-colored girl with a frilly apron went by with a tray of champagne glasses. Laura took one and then went suddenly limp. She glimpsed him, the odd way of putting his head back to appraise someone. . . . For a moment she thought she was going to faint. Then the man turned, and she saw it wasn't Philip. It was someone else. Fine thing, she thought shakily. Fine thing, if I start seeing him in every back, every pair of shoulders, every toss of a head; eight million people in New York, half of them men.

Then deliberately, courting the shame now, she set out to make herself drunk. After a while Martin found her, staring at a painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence, R.A.

"You look kind of green," he said. "Want to go?"

"Life must have been beautifully simple in the Eighteenth Century," she said. "Just standing around on terraces, in flowing robes, being painted."

"I'd hate to show you a laboratory analysis of that flowing robe."

"Don't be cynical; get me another drink, please." She held out her glass.

"You meant 'clinical,' didn't you?"

"I meant 'cynical,'" she said emphatically. "I'm not drunk, and I'll thank you not to insinuate that I am."

"Okay," he said. "How about some food?"

"Please don't be patronizing, Martin. I can't stand being patronized. I want another drink."

"You've had enough."

"Must you be *moral* at a time like this?"

"What do you mean, 'time like this?' You mean when people talk about dropping the atom bomb as if it was shooting off a bow and arrow? Is that what you mean, Laura?"

"All right," she said furiously. "I'll get it myself."

"Don't drink any more, Laura," he said patiently. "It doesn't become you. It doesn't do you any good. It doesn't solve anything. It just plays hob with your kidneys."

"There's my little urologist talking."

"Come on." He took the glass out of her hand and set it down. "I'll take you home."

She was suddenly docile, went along quietly. At home he took her shoes off, put her to bed and gave her a sedative.

"Martin," she said wistfully. "I knew a boy once named Martin. Did I ever tell you? He was sweet and sad. I loved him."

"You got any Vitamin B in the house?" he asked.

"No—there's some apples in the refrigerator. Weren't you ever a sweet, sad little boy in Kansas City, Martin?"

"I'm leaving a couple of these pills on the dresser. If you feel sick later on, take them, with a glass of water."

"He used to snuffle when he played the violin. Little snuffles, like a dear little rabbit. Do you ever snuffle, Martin?"

"Sometimes. But my nurse is usually around to hand me a piece of Kleenex. Good night. You'll feel better in the morning."

"Martin," she wailed, "forgive me. Please forgive me." She turned her head to the wall and started to cry. "I'm so miserable, Martin. What am I going to do?"

A little bleakly he said, "Grow up, I guess, like everybody else. It comes harder to some people."

Chapter 6

Suddenly, as in the popular song, it was spring. Only the other day she had been walking ankle-deep in slush, with a wind like a rusty razor blade roaming around the corners looking for trouble. Now, like a soft thunderbolt, it was spring. In a few weeks the forsythia would be out in Central Park and the parkways through Westchester would be cloudy with dogwood blossoms. And in the florist's window, on the corner, right now, there were speckled green orchids and the pink and white carnations that look more like crepe paper than crepe paper itself and little solitary pots of tulips and freesia. . . .

She looked down at her hands, tightly clasped. She was trembling. God, what's happened to me, she thought, that I should dread the spring?

He's *got* to call, she moaned aloud. He's got to, or I'll die.

He didn't call and she didn't die. She went to the Institute, did her harmony lessons, practiced double octaves till her arms ached, went to concerts, spoke to people, smiled, breathed, ate, yawned, even slept after a fashion. But that was becoming increasingly a problem.

She asked the druggist finally for some sleeping pills. He insisted on a prescription, and she gave him Martin's phone number. The druggist talked to him for a moment, then held out the phone. "He wants to talk to you."

"Hello, Martin," she said, in a small-girl voice. She hadn't seen him since the day she'd disgraced herself at Mrs. Bentley's.

"What's going on?" he said.

"I just want some sleeping pills, Martin. I didn't know there'd be such a fuss about it."

"They're not candy, you know."

"I know but it's—just for a little while. Can't you tell the druggist it's all right?"

"Nope. You'll have to come in and say 'ah'."

"Can't I say 'ah' over the phone?"

"Tell you what. You come in and *I'll* say 'ah'."

"Martin." She flashed the druggist an embarrassed glance. "The man's waiting."

"Me, too. I'm waiting."

"Please, Martin."

"Nope." He was adamant. "I don't dispense sleeping pills over the phone. If you want a prescription you'll have to come in and get it."

His office was on the first floor of a made-over brownstone on 68th Street. It looked worn and a little shabby, but pleasantly so, with use rather than neglect; there was an agreeable smell of old wood, antiseptic and Russian leather. A nurse looked her over with the touch of resentment reserved for doctors' special lady patients.

"You'll have to wait, Miss Mason. There are several patients ahead of you."

Laura sat in the big bare parlor, wondering if Martin lived here, too. There was an upright piano—a Steinway, she noted—and a violin case and several stands in a corner. Half a dozen patients waited with her; they all looked poor and ill. Something tightened in Laura's stomach. He's so good, she thought; he's such a good man. And I'm so bad: I've got so far away from the center of things, from my own truth and purpose. How did it happen? When?

Martin's office was in sharp contrast to the other rooms. The furniture was new, the medical equipment looked shiny and expensive. Behind his mahogany desk Martin himself looked gleamy somehow in the shining mail of his Hippocratic oath—a little remote, almost handsome.

"What's your problem?" he asked. "What do you need sleeping pills for?"

"I can't sleep."

"Why can't you sleep?"

"Please, Martin," she said. "I haven't got any pains. I haven't got any symptoms. All I want is a prescription for some sleeping pills."

He looked at her for a moment, hard, then pulled his prescription pad toward him, wrote on it, tore off a leaf, and handed it to her.

"Thanks." She looked at the prescription. "Why only six?"

"Because that's all you can have. Better make them last. I'm not going to be writing you prescriptions for sleeping pills."

"Why?"

"Because I don't think you should have them."

"Why?" she persisted obstinately.

"Because I think you're emotionally unstable, that's why. And I don't think you should have sleeping pills around."

"Don't be ridiculous," she exclaimed. "What do you take me for—an idiot?"

"No. Just a child."

She realized that in some equivocal fashion she had provoked this discussion herself. Was it true? Was all this *Sturm und Drang* only because she was a child, wanting somehow to be punished? Rubbish, she thought angrily.

"I didn't know you dispensed psychiatry, too," she said witheringly. "I thought you were a urologist, whatever that is."

"You know damn well what it is," he said tartly. "It involves a prime piece of plumbing in your system, and if you think you've got trouble sleeping now, just let *that* get out of whack. You'll think you were in Paradise with just Dutra to worry about."

"Why don't you give me a nice fatherly lecture now?"

"Because I'm not your father. And I'll let you in on a secret: *Neither is Dutra.*"

"Just what is *that* supposed to mean?" She felt outraged. "Have you been discussing me with Bertels?"

"Sure. They put out hourly bulletins on your condition down at the Institute; didn't you know?" He stood up. "You'll have to excuse me. I've got patients waiting. Sick patients."

It was the first time she'd seen him angry. I'm doing fine, she thought shakily, as she went out. I've done a good job of stamping out whatever feeling *he* ever had for me.

A week before the term ended, in June, she got a marked copy of Rachmaninoff's Second, with a note from Dutra.

> I have been thinking. For your solo with the orchestra. It's true this has been done many times, and musically it is not of the highest. But it is a young person's dream, full of tears and longing and magnificent despair. It will be good for the public, which likes only to hear what it has heard before, and for you, too, it will show what you can do, technically and emotionally. This has the Master's own notes. You would do well to study them, not to say pray over them. I go to Connecticut at the end of the week to join my family. If you wish to play some of this for me before I go, I am, as you know, your severest critic and most humble servant.
>
> PHILIP

She read it over a hundred times. What was one to do with such a man—laugh, cry, go crazy? She ended by going a little daft with happiness. The misery of the past months fell from her like a flung cloak. She fell on the Rachmaninoff as a hungry man on bread. She found it difficult, and her mind wandered. She was thinking not of the music but of playing it for him, feeling his presence over her, thrilling to it as she had the first time she had played for him, reaping his waiting approval with her heart, her mind, her willing hands, like a peasant girl bending to the sheaves.

He didn't approve. It was a disaster. For the first time in her life her assurance was gone; her fingers lay icy on the keys; she played wretchedly, like a stick. Heartsick, she renounced his approval for now, waited for his indulgence. He was not indulgent. He was caustic, and she burst into tears and ran out, and when he caught her she fought him, weeping and savage. Who did he think he was, really—God? How dared he call her amateur?

(The scorn he put into that word! Amateur. Criminal. Panderer. Adulteress.)

But now, having whipped her, he was tender. He held her, kissed her hands. "Laura," he chided. "What do you want now—a stick of peppermint candy? You played badly; I will not tell you you played well. Are you an artist, a creature of fire and talent, or are you a spoiled and fretful child? Laura, my precious, *who* are you fighting? *What* are you fighting? Do you know?"

"Yes," she burst out, all in a rush. "I'm fighting you. I'm fighting for my soul. Go ahead and laugh if you want. I don't want to be thrown a bone, like a dog. I'm fighting for my pride, for my life. Do you mind?"

"But you are such an *infant. Lieber Gott!* Surely you know how much I want you. You have not been out of my mind for a moment, all these months."

She discovered suddenly a rich, deep current of anger in her. It shook her with its violence. What was it she'd wanted from him, really? That he divorce his wife, leave his children, offer her marriage, change his way of life an iota? Only that he say I need you, that he be a little shaken, a little disturbed for her. . . .

"Why didn't you write me, call me, a note, a word—"

"Would that have helped *you*, really? You have a decision to make, Laura. I cannot help you with it. I must not. I will not."

No, he would make no allowances for her inexperience, her qualms, her moralities. She must make up her own mind. She must come and kneel and say, Thy will be done. No terms. Complete capitulation. Unconditional surrender. It was ruthless, tyrannical, brutal, immoral—whatever you wanted to call it. But there was integrity in it, too, his own brand. And it was that, finally—the knowledge that he would never behave other than as a king—that had buried the iron so deep in her soul.

"Laura, listen to me," he said. "You are young; your life is before you. I will not fill all of it, whatever you may think about that now. I am not yet old, but a great part of my life has been lived. And it is not dust blown away by the wind; it has form, it surrounds me. I must take it wherever I go. Call it fame, achievement, whatever you will. But the fact is I have given hostages to fortune, I am anchored in a hundred places over the earth. It is the price I have paid for being famous, sought after, for *needing* a great deal myself, to put into the music. One cannot give, give, give, without being filled. And each time one is filled—there is a commitment. Do you understand?"

Yes, she understood. She had understood for some time now that he was a Great Man. Her consciousness of his greatness was wound around her head like a crown of thorns. She would never again be free of him, able to start a relationship with one of those young men of whom he spoke so amusedly. They were pygmies beside him, immature, dull, inconsequential. But did understanding make it any easier for her? She could dash herself to pieces against his greatness without making a dent.

"I will not woo you, Laura," he said, "like a young man with flowers and promises. Because one day I will be too busy to remember the flowers, and you will be miserable and full of reproaches. And the promises will be broken, surely. There is no bungalow for two in my life. But there is, if you wish it, a very special place, your own, the knowledge that you will bring me something incalculably precious, your loveliness and freshness that wrings my heart. And when you hear the music you will know that *you* are there: your fire that has fed me, your youth that has renewed me. . . ."

I'm lost, she thought. I will never be myself again, my own, only his.

"I have something to give you, too, I think," he said (sublimely unaware of how Napoleonic a pronouncement it was). "But you must forget, once and for all, little one, Kansas City and the 'Little Colonel' books." (How did he know about those? He was so wonderful.) "You must stop being a fretful child and let yourself become a woman, an artist, to take from life what you wish, to give what you can, to make no bargains, no compromises with the Others, the maimed and the blind and the halt, what they would have you do or not do, only to be true to yourself, your own desires. I have known from the beginning that you and I have something to look forward to, and I have been willing to wait. But I am not young, Laura; don't make me wait too long."

He smiled at her, a shade reproachfully. She was really a most fractious child. "Go and practice the Rachmaninoff," he said. "Perhaps you will come and play it for me again, in Connecticut, in a few weeks. I will call you."

Go and practice the Rachmaninoff. Go and sin no more, my daughter. Go when morning shineth; go where glory waits thee. . . .

It was the first week in July when he called her. Decision had formed in her, finally; she had already written home to say that she was remaining in New York for the summer. But the habit of turmoil was still strong in her; the sickness of pride to which she had grown accustomed was in her stomach as she heard the operator say, "Rillsport calling Laura Mason."

"This is she." There was a queer dry ticking mixed in with the other sounds—little scrabbling sounds on the phone over the wire. Like grasshoppers in hot meadows. Her hands were cold—cold as ice. She heard his voice now: "Hello, Laura." Her throat closed up, and for a panicky moment she was afraid she wouldn't be able to answer, wouldn't be able to speak at all.

"Hello," he said again.

"Hello, Philip." It was a nice voice, a little husky. She wondered who had lent it to her.

"How are you, *kleine* Laura? I have been thinking about you, there in the hot city. It is so beautiful here."

"I haven't noticed the heat, Philip. I've been practicing."

"Good girl. How does it go?"

"Not too bad—for an amateur."

"Laura, darling," he chided, "but you must *not* be angry with me for telling you the truth. That is not very grown up of you, either. You know what I think of your playing—"

The word *either* remained in her mind. How skillful he was with his gambits. It was always her move.

"There will be some people this week-end," he said. "Marta Engstrand and some others. And Eames has prom-

ised. On Saturday. I think it will be good for him to hear you. Will you come?"

"I don't know," she said. "I'll think about it."

She was already his, joined to him in an act of surrender that had taken place in her mind weeks ago. But something in her that had suffered vainly because it had refused for so long to settle for a fragment of his life, for anything less than the sum of what he was (as she was prepared to give herself), was still hurt and angry with him.

She felt the little pause before he spoke, and a fierce joy flicked in her mind. Was it possible she had rocked him for an instant, brought His Majesty finally a moment of doubt?

"Laura, darling, what are you doing?" he said. "You do not need to revenge yourself on me, for what neither of us can help. Time will take care of that for you."

Well, she thought with a bleak and savage humor, it wasn't much, certainly; it wasn't a proposal of marriage; it wasn't a confession that he couldn't live without her. But there *was* the faintest suggestion of uncertainty—perhaps even pleading?—and it would have to do.

"Shall I expect you, then?"

"I'm not sure, Philip. If I can come I'll take the afternoon train on Friday."

It was a new Laura who was speaking these lines, no longer the old one. She would go by the same name. But did it go by the name of Love, too, this guerrilla warfare, between the lines? The poets, her darling historians of love, had told her nothing of this. Surrender, yes—all joy, forgiveness, sweet pain, fulfillment. Anguish, yes, but sweet anguish, sweet despair—never this dog-faced thing that sat snarling at its own reflection.

"I hope you can arrange it, *liebe* Laura," he said. "And bring your bathing things. The swimming is simply fantastic."

She hung up.

Well, it had come and gone, this moment of tremendous import. Being born, growing up, grown old, grown dead. Whatever their content of joy or pain, the great moments went by with the same inevitability and casualness as all the rest. That was the tragedy—and the mercy.

The car was a blur of bright blue plush and the bright soulless glint of chromium. Hammacher-Schlemmer, the wheels said, over and over. Then they changed to rackety-rax, rackety-rax, and then *molto leggerio, molto leggerio, molto leggerio.*

The lady opposite had put her book down and was knitting absorbedly now, her movements cued to the telegraph wires outside, ceaselessly threading the sky with an abrupt, even stitch. The hands were mechanical, piston-driven, the face a disembodied moon over a gray wool landscape, as expressionless as a carved marshmallow.

A feeling of strangeness closed in around Laura. I am going to spend the week-end in Connecticut, she thought, at the home of a world-famous conductor. I am going to Philip's house in Connecticut. I am going to my lover in Connecticut, to give myself to him.

It was without reality; the phrases clumped through her mind like an English lesson for foreigners.

The train stopped at a little wooden station. Several boys in uniform were on the platform. They might have been going off to military school, except for their unyouthful gravity and the forced cheerfulness of the older people with them. Laura was aware, again with the feeling of strangeness, somnambulism, that in the past months the rumors and portents of war had been all about her like hoarse shouts heard in fever, or bad dreams. They had grazed the surface of her mind, busy with its own private war. It struck her now that if she were a "normal" girl of twenty-one she might herself be on a train platform saying good-by to some youth she loved, or thought she loved, who was going off to the Army, perhaps to war. And what about Martin? She had never even thought of him in that connection. But doctors would be called up, too.

It had been painful with Martin, finally—more painful than she could have believed. He had called on

Wednesday. "So," he said, "you're running out on me this week-end."

She knew then that it was useless to pretend to herself that she could keep these two strands of her life, Martin and Philip, separate and untangled. Philip could departmentalize himself, apparently—wife, family, work, mistress. Perhaps that ability was one of the lesser facets of being a genius. Or simply of being a man. For herself, it was abundantly clear that no part of her life could remain untouched by the momentous decision she had made. Martin would have to know. But how? She flinched at the thought.

"You're in the papers," he said. "With a whole clutch of celebrities listed for the week-end at Dutra's place."

"I don't really belong," she said, hoping it sounded casual. "I'm just going up to perform."

"Okay, you go and perform," he said. "I'll stay here and swelter. How about dinner tonight?"

She hesitated, feeling, ridiculously, that if they met he would know, immediately.

"I'm afraid I can't, tonight, Martin." Sooner or later he would have to know. But not tonight. She wasn't up to it. It was all too new.

"Tomorrow night?" he said.

"I'm sorry, Martin. I can't tomorrow, either." This was her season of discovery, apparently. This fine rich vein of cowardice was something new for her to explore.

"Okay, lunch," he persisted. "I want to talk to you."

She gave up. If he asked any direct questions she would have to tell him the truth. But maybe that was best, after all. It would be crueler by far if he found out in a roundabout way, from some gossip column, from Bertels. . . .

"All right, Martin. Where?"

He named a very fine place and suggested: "One o'clock."

"Isn't that kind of sumptuous, for a weekday?" she asked.

"Well, who knows?" he said. "It may turn out to be an occasion. See you at one."

By the time she arrived at the restaurant next day, the panicky conviction had settled on her that Martin had chosen this setting for a proposal. She was confirmed in the notion when she saw him at a table, with an empty cocktail glass before him. He never drank at lunch. It was really too ironic, too beastly.

They exchanged greetings, curiously, for her, like the sound of coughing that filled up the rests at a recital. She found herself immediately involved in an unnecessary and stammering explanation of the week-end. "Philip—Dutra, I mean—thought it would be a good opportunity for me to do the Rachmaninoff—Albert Eames, the impresario, is going to be there—"

His level gaze was fixed upon her, and with a kind of lunatic perception, as one notes the color of a scarf during a riot, or untied shoelaces at a fire, she realized that he was probably the only person she knew who didn't wear some outward sign of inner tension—doodling or tapping, her mother's fiddling with a bracelet, Bertel's pinching his nose, Philip's slight jiggling of his foot. It didn't make things any easier for her. It only increased her own tension.

"He sent it to me a few weeks ago," she rattled on. "Dutra—the Rachmaninoff, I mean—he wants me to do it at the debut concert, I think—"

"How about a drink?" Martin said. He ordered sherry for her and another Martini for himself. "Albert Eames, eh?" he said. "That's big-time." And then, very simply and directly, "Is that why you're going, Laura? To play for Eames?"

She fought desperately, vainly against the slow flush rising in her cheeks.

"You're really going because Dutra whistled, aren't you?" he said.

The bright tinny façade of her chatter fell away from her. So it was to be much easier than she'd thought. And much harder than she'd feared. "Martin," she begged, "you're not going to lecture me?" She gave him an anxious, pleading smile.

"No," he said. "No lectures." He raised his glass. "To Dutra," he said. "The great Dutra. What is it about the guy, Laura? No fooling? Is it that he's fifty? And married?"

"Martin, please."

"You mean, none of my business."

"That's not what I mean. There's just no use talking about it. I can't make any excuses—"

"You don't have to. Not to me, anyway. I'm just a physician, friend of the family. I've got a question to ask. Okay? Where's it going, Laura? I mean, after this week-end? And the next one? And the one after that?"

She wondered why it had been arranged that just now, for the first time, actually, she should feel love for him. "I don't know, Martin," she said, mournfully. "All I know is that wherever it's going—that's where I've got to go, apparently."

"Nobody's *got* to go anywhere, Laura. There's always a choice. For grownups, that is."

Anger reached out a momentary supporting hand and then melted away. "I fought it, Martin. You know I did. For months. I can't fight it any more."

He turned his glass like the stem of a watch, drawing the silence taut between them for a moment. "Have you thought about what it may do to you, later? Your life?"

"I can't know about later until it's happened." She tried to smile, a wan effort.

"Scraps from the master's table," he said, wonderingly, to the glass. "You, of all people, settling for that." He shook his head.

"That's not quite fair, Martin." She wanted to reassure him, but she also wanted to justify herself. "If you mean I can't have all of Philip—that's true." Self-abnegation rose suddenly, steeply, into a kind of lyric chant within her. "But I couldn't under any circumstances. Nobody could. He's too big; the demands on him are too great. He crams more work into a day than the average man does into a month. Do you know what it means, committing a score to memory? One? He has eighty of them. You know what it is to hold an orchestra together, a hundred men, different men, different temperaments, poised on the tip of a baton, pouring their music through you to an audience of three thousand people who are held together by the muscles in your neck, your shoulders, your back. One false note—that's all it needs, Martin. Can you imagine the tension, the wear, the strain? It would kill an ordinary man—one time, one bar."

She stopped, carried away by the power and emotion of the image she'd evoked. Maybe it was worth all the anguish she'd been through. Maybe this was something deeper than happiness, something most people never even got to know.

"He's a great man, Martin. Whatever it is I can give him, of mind, heart, body, I'm giving to a great man, to rest and refresh him so that he can bring great music to the world."

It was a flagrantly starry-eyed speech, and she went hot and a little ashamed, hearing the sound of it. But she

had to go through with it now, get the job done. "I'm sorry," she said. "I suppose I sound silly. But I can't help it. I can't make excuses for Philip, either. He's ruthless. I suppose. I suppose you could call him immoral. All I know is he's a great artist. He gives more to the world than other people; he needs more than other people; he's entitled to take more. And I love him."

There. It was said. She felt exhausted, drained suddenly, as if all of her had been compressed into that utterance and she would herself have to be replenished before she could go on. Too much emotion, too much fighting, too much relinquishing. . . . She hoped that afterward, beyond some crest of experience which still awaited her, there would be cool glades again and sunlit meadows where she could recover solitude and privacy, something of her own, remembered music.

Martin sat for a while, his gray eyes fixed gravely, unblinking on her face. She thought, with sudden wrenching tenderness, of the big porcelain cat that had sat looking over her shoulder at home when she stretched out in front of the fireplace to read.

"Tell me," he said finally. "What's so wonderful about being an artist?"

She was genuinely shocked. It was as if he'd asked what's so wonderful about God, or about being alive.

"My father was an artist," he said. "A painter. Maybe he was a good one. I don't know. But he had to get drunk regularly because his brain was on fire, or because it wasn't on fire, or because the tensions in him got too great or something. It took a lot of time, and he couldn't be bothered with things like paying bills, or finding out what his children were thinking about, hoping about, being miserable about.

"Maybe that's why I'm a doctor today, instead of an artist. A doctor's life has tensions, too, of course. But they're not earth-shaking, like color or line or melody or immortality or integrity or whatever. Just whether your diagnosis is right or wrong, whether what you do is going to make the patient better or worse, maybe whether he'll get well or die. Little things like that. But I won't have the right to wreck lives because of those tensions; my children won't be cheated of their childhood by the greed and narcissism of an 'artistic soul.'"

He's hurt, she kept saying to herself. This is his hurt and jealousy talking. I must remember that. I can't hurt him more by getting angry.

"You're all screwed up about art, Laura," he went on. "Music's not a career with you; it's a religion. It's worse than that; it's a fixation. I'll bet that all these months, one side of you has been secretly *hoarding* the suffering you've gone through, because you think it'll come out one day in your music—make it better, deeper."

"Well, even if that were so," she said, effortfully reasonable, "it's true, isn't it? Isn't that the way artists grow in their work—through suffering?"

"Maybe. But you've got it backward. Music's for living, not living for music. And anyway, it's not really music you're dedicated to. You just think so. You're dedicated to the memory of your father. That's where Dutra comes in. Mr. Music, himself. Sure he's quite a guy. I don't deny it. A genius. A god among men. But he's fifty years old; he's married; he's got a family. If he weren't a heartless megalomaniac, he'd have sent you packing long ago."

"Martin," she said, trembling with the effort to keep control now, "I can't have you talk this way about Philip and me. It isn't fair to any of us—not you, either. I know you're my friend, and advice is one thing, but—"

"It's too late for any advice I could have given you," he said. "Maybe if you'd been spanked a lot earlier and told the facts of life—"

Anger flamed uncontrollably in her. "Such as?" she said cuttingly. "That the aim and end of every woman's life is a safe, dull marriage, wrapped in clichés like cotton?"

"Peace and an ordered life aren't necessarily dull," he said quietly, "but you're too mixed up to see that now. Anyway, I'll be around, to write you a prescription for sleeping pills when you need it. I don't think you've begun to know what insomnia is."

He grinned at her, and she might have believed the grin if she hadn't caught sight of his knuckles, greenish white, where his hand was pressed against the table. She wondered if this was what Growing Up meant—the rueful heritage of maturity, that every step she made from now on toward fulfillment must have its irreducible quotient of heartbreak.

Chapter 7

The train jarred noiselessly into motion again. She caught a glimpse of a squirrel running along a stone wall; for an instant its pace was even with the train, so that it seemed stationary; then it flowed away in gray scallops of movement over the darker gray stone.

She leafed the pages of her magazine. A Breakfast Bowl of Balanced Nourishment. Just heat and serve. . . . Stainless and rustless. . . . No rubbing, no polishing. Just wipe off with a damp cloth. . . . Some day, perhaps, love would be produced in laboratories, too, under a bright scientific moon. Coal, air and synthetic emotion. Someone would win a Nobel Prize and an advertising agency would proclaim the incomparable virtues of the new product. Pain-free, sob-proof. Ninety-nine per cent of heartache removed. No hangover, no morning mouth. The modern way, without fuss, muss or bridal gown. Don't you like it? Doesn't it become you? Does it wear the nightmare face of sin and treachery, no matter how you adjust it? Money-back guarantee. Or just wipe off with a damp cloth.

At the station in Rillsport, the boy who took her bag said merely, "Miss Mason," as if he knew who she was, and led her to a huge station wagon. She got in; the car sprang under her like a crouched beast, throwing her back on the seat. She flashed the boy a protesting glance, and sudden realization came to her. This was Philip's son.

She stared at the youthful neck, the brown uneven hair curling a little at the ends. A slight access of panic swept over her. It was one thing to see a picture on a piano and say, these are Philip's children; it was another to find herself sitting in a car with his son. Had he been merely reserved, greeting her? Or had his expression been a little grim? There was a rash, silly impulse in her to reach out to him and say, "Please try to understand. We both love him and he needs love. Please be my friend."

It came to nothing, of course, except that for a moment the old dull, hopeless anger at Philip assailed her. Come, he had said. Come—I want to show you this part of my life, so you will know. My home, my wife, my children. Then you can file and forget it. . . .

She sat and looked at the boy, unhappily, wondering why he had not introduced himself. His carriage, the erect, uncompromising set of his head as he drove, seemed somehow hostile, accusing. Or was she just imagining things? It could just be that he was preoccupied, anxious

to get back to the television program he had been obliged to forgo until he brought her back from the station.

They entered a long driveway, and her first view of the house, from behind a screen of Italian cypress, drove all other thoughts from her mind. It stood on a cleared space of several acres; beyond this was an expanse of wood, stretching away toward a small lake which was just visible from the road. The house itself was Georgian, brilliantly white, sedately framed in yew and privet and blue spruce. There was about it in the golden quiet of the afternoon a sense of years that had added instead of subtracting, of easy, gracious, sunlit living, an almost lyrical sense of peace. A house to live in with one's beloved, to come back to from wandering, from care, from triumph, to be *home* in. It was Philip's house—and she could never be more than a guest in it. The deep, wrenching sadness of the thought was mixed with something else—a sense of inescapable destiny she had put on, long ago, with her confirmation dress.

There was a game in progress on the tennis court. She got a glimpse of Philip rushing the net with the massive grace that always tightened a quick cord about her heart. He saw her, too, at that moment, raised a hand in greeting, tossed his racket to a blonde princess in a red bandanna sitting beside the court, and came striding across the lawn toward her.

The boy had come around to her side of the car. She gave him a quick, beseeching smile as he helped her down. He didn't react; when he let go of her hand she felt as if she had been fingerprinted.

Then she heard Philip say, "Laura," and the constriction in her chest seemed only the quickened beating of her heart. "Laura." His slight foreign intonation gave it a lovely timbre, like the sound of a bell. "I am so happy to see you." His warm, strong hands closed around hers, and she felt their pressure deep within her, way inside where the line between joy and anguish is not clearly drawn.

The boy had set down her bag and was getting back in the car. "Eric," his father said. "Did you introduce yourself to Miss Mason?"

Laura saw the momentary hesitation, the flicker of defiance hopelessly outclassed by authority. She said quickly, "Eric and I are old friends," and caught a gleam of something that might have been appreciation in his eyes.

"Good." Philip put a hand on his son's shoulder, a gesture of lordly affection. "Eric is a sophomore at the University. And being a sophomore—well, it is a preoccupation. It leaves one little time for small talk, eh?"

There was something besides banter in his voice. Was it pride? It was something new for her—Philip in the role of proud father.

Eric did not unbend. "If you don't need me any more," he said, "I'll go along now."

"Yes, go along," Philip said, amused. "But leave the big car, please, if you are going along very far. We will need it later." The boy got behind the wheel of the station wagon and drove off with an emphatic scrunch of gravel.

"*Jugend,*" Philip said, looking after him, with affectionate deprecation.

"He's sweet-looking," Laura said.

"Yes. He has his mother's look. He will be very handsome—when he learns that it is sometimes possible to smile, despite the fact that life is a tragedy."

She echoed his smile, a little unhappily. He had reminded her suddenly of her equivocal role here, in this house. "I'm afraid he doesn't like me," she said.

"Nonsense." He took her hands again. "It is only that you are beautiful, and he is young and a little shy."

She was conscious now of eyes observing them, and withdrew her hands. On the tennis court the game had stopped, and the four people there were looking toward them. "Is that your wife? The blonde lady?"

He followed her gaze. "That is Marta Engstrand, of the Metropolitan. You have seen her, surely?"

"Yes. But she was wearing a tin bandanna then, and a set of portieres. It makes a difference."

He smiled, pleased. "You are gay."

"Who are the others?"

"The dark boy is Sirak Danelian. Beautiful talent. The other couple are neighbors; theater people—Lawrence Ridley and his wife. She is a writer, a playwright. Would you like to meet them now?"

"Later, I think. I feel a little grubby."

"There is time for a swim. Come. I will show you to your room." He picked up her bag. "Elsa—Mrs. Dutra—is resting. She will be down for dinner."

A fleeting, and momentarily comforting, thought crossed Laura's mind that perhaps his wife was an invalid. She dismissed it. It didn't go with him. But then, what went with him? She remembered something Martin had said. Mr. Music. It was true, in a way. Everything else about him—house, business, friends, managers, record companies, investments, a family—all seemed irrelevancies, serving not to reveal him to her but only to obscure the recognition of his essential quality that she carried about like a light within her.

She followed him into the house. Afternoon sun lay plump and buttery on the old rubbed wood of the banister; it plucked at her heart like a strain of music. There was sunlight on the gay chintz and in the honey glow of maple in her room. Philip closed the door and reached for her. He was never clumsy; at the moment she could have wished he were. She held him off and he eyed her for a moment, questioning; then he shrugged. Temperament bored him, as she had occasion to know.

"Would you like one of the servants to help you unpack?" She shook her head. "We are not having sit-down dinner tonight. It will be buffet, from six on. Will you swim?"

"Philip," she said, "do you love me?"

He grimaced. "Do we have our little visitor from Kansas City with us this week-end?"

"Do you?"

"But, my dear girl! What a question!"

"It would help if you said so. Sometime."

"But I have said it a hundred times. A thousand times. You have no ears. You do not listen. There is a

little phonograph in your head. and it plays only one American song. June, moon, yearn, burn. If you were a *woman* you would know without asking that I adore you. You enchant me. You have enslaved my heart. You set me on fire. You make the music begin. Is it not enough? Must I also say I love you. every hour on the hour. like a cuckoo clock?"

The familiar delicious weakness was tugging at her limbs. "Philip. talk to me. Everything will be all right if you talk to me."

"Everything will be all right. period." He gestured. "You see. I am American. too. Partly." He was amused again. "But come." he said. "We must not steal moments like naughty children. Get into your bathing things. We will go for a swim. It is the most beautiful time now."

The blonde princess of the tennis court was on the porch talking to him when Laura came down. She had on a beach coat made of a Guatemalan print and a stark white bathing suit: Brünnehilde by Mainbocher.

"Marta is joining us for a swim." Philip said. His tone was cordial. but Laura felt annoyance under it like a radar signal. He was wearing navy trunks and a terry-cloth robe loosely tied; his deeply tanned flesh gleamed darkly radiant against the white cloth. "You know each other."

"I think I have seen Miss Mason sometime." The accent was deliberately exaggerated. a matter of intonation and phrasing rather than the shape of individual words. They set off on the path down to the lake. It was through a patch of woods. musky from recent rain.

"Philip tells me you have much talent," Marta Engstrand said. "Is it true?"

"I never contradict Mr. Dutra." Laura said demurely. She caught his glance. amused and approving; it sent a little shiver through her.

Marta looked her over with cool appraisal. "You are very pretty for a pianist." she announced.

"Thank you." said Laura. "You are very frank for a soprano."

Philip let out a delighted yawp. Marta laughed, too —a silvery cascade of sound that shut itself off abruptly as if conscious of its expensive jangle. "That is a dangerous combination. Philip," she said. "That face and the talent—and witty. too."

"Dangerous for whom. Marta?" He laughed. "It is only hot here for pianists." He was keyed up, very high. Laura felt it like a tiny vibration within her. The mingled pungency of pine and mold was turning her a little giddy; the light flickered hypnotically; the boles of the trees springing thickly from the damp sod were a succession of thumping octaves in the pit of her stomach.

Philip caught her hand behind Marta's back and squeezed it, and she felt suddenly unbearably confined in the web of light and shadow and maddening earth smell. She broke away from Philip's grasp and ran down the path to the beach and onto the dock. She dropped her robe and dived in. rising through green darkness into the light. blinking gold dark from her eyes. The lake was larger than had appeared from the road, stretching out glassy and remote in the slant rays of the sun. The water had an unguent. satiny feel against her skin, and she swam with a long side-stroke. relishing the voluptuous feel of it, purposely avoiding the others, explicit in stating that there would be no contest on her part for the maestro's attention.

After a few minutes she pulled herself up on the dock and lay in the sun. tingling a little. feeling as if she had been soaked in good wine and hung up to dry. Through half-closed lids she could see the blue of the sky, the blue of skim milk. the green of the foliage, poster-green, the light that caught on the windows of the boathouse. making them glisten like those large flies that are called bluebottles.

Presently Marta Engstrand came up. gleaming. from the water and dug a package of cigarettes out of her beach coat. She lit one and flung herself down beside Laura, pushing a rope of blonde hair away from her eyes. that were very green and almond-shaped. She was not beautiful. but there was about her enough style and natural hauteur to make conventional beauty seem trite.

"Look how he swims." Marta said. looking off. "He is magnificent at everything. that one. It is enough to make a revolution."

There was in her tone a studied petulance which was not disagreeable but rather charming. like the outrageous hats some women wear to gain attention. If they are attractive enough they get away with it. and Marta Engstrand could assume and discard moods with impunity.

"This is your first time at court?" she asked.

"It's the first time I've been here."

The green eyes held sympathy of a sort behind their mocking glint. Laura decided—an impersonal feminine sympathy. or empathy. mixed with a purely feminine malice.

"You must come and see *me* sometime. I have a place for the summer in Wylwick. We will talk about Philip. I love to gossip."

"I'm afraid I'd have little to offer." Laura said. "I know very little about Mr. Dutra. except his work."

"So. Philip is all work and no play? He has changed."

Laura stood up. She felt suddenly surer of herself. older. wiser by some immeasurable sum. It was by now a familiar experience for her. in her relationship with Philip. this sudden advance into understanding by seven-league boots.

"I think the sun is going down." she said.

Marta Engstrand had not moved: she lay surveying Laura through veiled eyes. "Yes. That is the way of the sun." She sat up now with an abrupt lithe movement. clutching her knees. and looked off. Philip was a hundred yards out. swimming back toward the dock. churning up a little opalescent wake with his strong four-beat crawl.

The green eyes squinted. "It is almost a peculiarity." she said. "Everything else in the world goes up. until it comes down. But the sun goes down, until it comes up." Laura felt a weakening little prod of pity. It was utterly ridiculous. A famous mezzo. still young. rich, glamorous. Nothing had been explicit. even. Yet Laura felt it. all there, visible to the naked heart: They were last year's candidate and this year's incumbent.

In her room she peeled off her bathing suit and stood for a long time reflectively eyeing her naked body. She could still not bring close to her mind the image of herself in Philip's arms. beyond the shivery feeling that it would be some unbelievable extension of what she had felt when he touched her. what his voice—and once or twice his towering scorn—did to her. Only one thing fluttered dizzyingly in her mind. Lying with him. secret, in the dark. she could say "my darling." and everything would be different once it was said; all the shame. the bitter butt-ends of swallowed pride. would be expunged with the phrase and all the love that was in her would come out cleanly to enfold him. to give what she could give, to take what he offered.

She let the water run in the tub and got in. making the bath so hot that it drugged her. Afterward. a little shaky now with anticipation, she came out of the bathroom

to find the green chiffon dress she'd brought along lying on the bed, mysteriously pressed. Money, as Philip's whole way of life asserted, was the least important thing in the world. But it certainly made things happen. Very pleasant things, too.

She finished dressing. In the mauve light of the hallway, as she made her way to the head of the stairs, she caught a glimpse of herself in a mirror, saw herself for just a moment as Philip would see her, with the little unmanageable ringlets framing her wide eyes, golden now and underscored with a faint bruised blue against the glowing paleness of her skin.

Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth. . . . She went downstairs to wait, with as maidenly grace as possible, the pleasure of her liege and lord.

Chapter 8

Several new guests had arrived, but Laura picked Mrs. Dutra out at once from among them—a tall, graceful woman in a white organdy dress, standing near the fireplace in an attitude that might have been posed but wasn't.

Philip saw her, came over, and quite without self-consciousness, took her hand and led her over to make the introductions. "This is Miss Mason, *liebling*." And to Laura, "My wife."

"Miss Mason." The slight inclination of the head was so stylized that for a moment Laura had the feeling it was an attitude rather than a person she was meeting. Now that the moment she had dreaded was finally upon her, it was without emotion altogether. Of all the possibilities she had exhausted a hundred times—fear, guilt, shame—she felt exactly nothing. Only the word he'd used, *liebling*, remained in her mind. There was a difference, apparently, between it and *liebe*. *Liebling* was wife; another term of endearment could mean—what? Mistress?

"I am so glad you decided to come." Decided. Had that been deliberate? Her accent was more perceptible than Philip's, but the same kind. Viennese, Laura had always supposed. She wondered now if they might have been childhood sweethearts. Except that Philip would have been a grown man when his wife was still a child. She was not much over thirty-five now, and still beautiful—one of those pale South German beauties who Laura had always imagined inhabited the castles of the Esterhazys and the Wittelsbachs.

"I hoped you would come," she was saying. "Philip speaks of you so often." Laura still couldn't make up her mind about the intention. The words themselves were gracious and without effusion, a little masterpiece of balance.

She realized that she had waited an instant too long, listening for overtones. "It was good of you to have me," she said now, inanely.

"You are most welcome, my dear. . . . See that Miss Mason has some food, Philip."

"Yes, *liebling*."

Laura turned to him, almost hoping she would see some embarrassment or hesitation on his face. There was none. The straight perpendicular shaft of him blotted out the light for a moment, and when she turned back the woman's face seemed suddenly too exquisite, too finely drawn. Something nudged Laura's consciousness. It was that boy, that strange, silent, accusing boy; it was the same feeling of tightness in her chest again.

This is ridiculous, she thought angrily. First Engstrand, now this sheltered secure woman, surrounded by friends, a famous husband, her family, with this lovely house, *her* house—I must be crazy, she thought, to be standing here, feeling sorry for *her*.

"We must talk a little, later," Mrs. Dutra said, excluding Philip for the moment with a private, very charming smile. "Will you excuse me now?" She was gone, as if with an inaudible rustle of petticoats, toward some new arrivals.

"She's lovely, Philip," Laura said. It was a genuine judgment, not feminine. It only began to hurt afterward, like a very clean cut.

"Yes. Elsa is a lovely lady." The words contained her quality, whole, without blemish, with complete appreciation—and no warmth. "And she is European," he added, as if this explained all Laura would ever need to know about their relationship. "Shall I help you with the food? Or do you wish to adventure?"

"You see to your guests," she said, smiling a little. "I'll manage."

"Sit with the Ridleys," he said, over his shoulder. "They are amusing."

She selected a plate of food from the sideboard—curried chicken, wild rice, artichoke hearts and brandied fruit. The Ridleys made a place for her at their table. They were both apricot-colored from the sun, razor-sharp and indefinably wracked. Laura found herself caught in an odd bickery sort of repartee which she was as helpless to interrupt or participate in as if she were a spectator at a tennis game.

"My wife is a playwright, Miss Mason," Ridley said. "I'm a producer. What do *you* do?" Without waiting for an answer, he said, "You look like a wheatfield with the sun on it." He turned to his wife. "Don't you think she looks like a wheatfield with the sun on it, Mitch?"

"Yes," Mitch said in a sepulchral voice. "I feel like the Black Tom explosion. How about a drink?"

"Right," said Ridley. "Coals to Newcastle. We'll make a lovely pair in our old age, me with my bent back and you with your fluted liver."

"My husband," said Mrs. Ridley informatively, "is sometimes known as the Volstead of the theater. It's one of the kinder things that is said about him."

"Thank you, darling," said Ridley. "Will you have a drank, Miss Mason?"

"Thank you," Laura said, a little dazed. "I *would* like some wine."

"Check," said Ridley, and left.

"Wine," said Mrs. Ridley, gesturing extravagant despair. "This man Dutra is a good fellow and a fine orchestra leader, but what is this light-wines-and-beer routine? Curdles my frontier blood."

Laura found nothing to say. "Did I understand you played the flute?" said Mrs. Ridley.

"I'm a pianist," Laura said and then amended, "I hope to be a pianist some day. I'm studying now."

"The saints preserve us," Mrs. Ridley said, and stared at her.

Ridley came back with the drinks. "Here we are. The blessed juniper. The sacred grape. Alcohol is one of the Lord's last great mercies, Miss Mason, antedating the atom bomb. It's what He sprinkles on the sparrows when they fall."

"This is the intermediate phase," said Mrs. Ridley "—when he gets Biblical. The Face on the Barroom Floor comes later."

Laura gave up her rather desperate attempt to keep pace with this curiously lethal chitchat, and stopped listening, much less trying to reply. Additional guests were dropping in all the time, all more or less illustrious.

Philip was inexhaustible; he flowed through the room like a bloodstream, vitalizing everything, stopping here and there, or rather arresting his progress for a moment to discuss, to charm—a word, a flicker of his enchanting smile—the response always immediate, a head lifted quickly or turned, a hand going out in delight or homage.

Laura was included in the circuit; there was an occasional pressure of his hand, his eyes warm and secret, meeting hers across the room, but it wasn't enough to put down the queer unhappy sense of detachment growing in Laura. Like an anesthetic wearing off, the strangeness was coming back, the impossibility of it all, being in this house, *her* house, accepting her hospitality. . . .

She couldn't avoid the inevitable forever. "Are you enjoying yourself, Miss Mason?" Mrs. Dutra stood finally before her, smiling graciously—an abstract of impeccable graciousness.

"Very much," Laura said woodenly.

"Does it bother you a little? So many people? I find it sometimes a little—how shall I say—stupefying."

Don't be kind to me, Laura thought. Don't be thoughtful. I don't even want to like you. Don't you understand?

"I am a little . . . impressed," she said. "I don't think I've ever seen so many—" she searched for the words "—so many gifted people together at one time."

"Yes, it is a weakness of Philip's." She smiled, charmingly. "He must have gifted people about him, always. They stimulate him; they are his life. His own family, alas, is completely without talent." The smile deepened in her eyes, without becoming more of a smile. "I studied the piano all my life, and I have never become a pianist. Erica, my daughter—she is nine—for her it is really like chopping wood. She continues with her lessons only because she thinks it pleases us."

"What about the boy?" Laura asked. "Isn't he interested in music at all?"

"Not at all. He goes to a technical university in Boston: MIT. He wishes to be an engineer. He has finished a year—"

"I know, Philip—" she caught herself—"Mr. Dutra told me." She went hot and cold. "I think that's—very remarkable, at sixteen."

"Yes, Eric has a very good mind." She seemed unaware of the slip. "But it is all for science, technics. Is it not a pity, with such a father? Philip adores the children, but I know it is a cruel disappointment for him that they have no leaning toward art. I am afraid they are just like me. Poor Philip."

She looked off, with her tender, sad smile, at her husband, who was walking by on his way to the sideboard, arm in arm with the dark young man whose talent was "beautiful." Philip was talking animatedly; aware now of Laura's glance, he gave her a secret, fleeting smile. His words came to her with sudden, personal overtones.

"Look, my boy—do not talk to me about humility. You are an artist, and whatever else an artist may be, he is never a humble being. Yes, he may demur, make concessions, disclaim—but in his heart he carries his destiny arrogantly, like a coat of arms. He is his own government and his own law. . . ."

His voice went out of range, leaving the familiar organ tone vibrating in Laura's midriff. Dreamlike, for the moment, the young man walking with Philip was herself, gazing up at him adoringly, caught resistlessly in the current of the great man's leashed passion, the seemingly bottomless font of his energy.

More than anything else it was Philip's voice that had been her own undoing, woven through those truly enchanting evenings in his apartment by the river, through the thin tapestry of other voices at Mrs. Bentley's, cutting across the thunder of the orchestra, scornful or seductive or unimaginably tender. . . . It was his voice, the magic of his utterance, that had enslaved her beyond redemption.

She turned back to his wife, aware that she had let too much time go by and taunted suddenly by the daft impulse to jump that sometimes came to her in the balcony at Carnegie Hall. What if she jumped now, said, "Listen—I'm in love with your husband, you may as well know. But I'm not wicked; I'm not a home wrecker. I'm just hopelessly in love, like you are. *You* tell me what to do about it—kill myself or what. I've been through about everything else."

She said aloud, "This is such a lovely house, Mrs. Dutra," wondering why her voice didn't sound at all as strangled as it felt. "I don't know how you can bear to leave it, even for a few months." It was, again, precisely the wrong thing to have said—a tacit assumption of knowledge she could not have had if they were indeed what they seemed to be: hostess and guest, chatting agreeably beside a Georgian mantelpiece. "I heard Mr. Dutra mention, before, that you'd been in Europe for a while." She was all but stammering.

If Mrs. Dutra had noticed anything, she still gave no sign. "Is it not lovely?" she said warmly. "I missed it every minute while we were away. But there are many places that I love, in Paris and Italy and Vienna. I wanted to see them once more before the bombs begin to fall. . . . What do you think? Will there be war? I am so worried about Eric."

"I'm afraid I haven't thought about it enough," Laura said. "The whole thing seems incredible. Like a horror movie."

"Yes. And one cannot live always in fear and trembling. One must accept and hope—and learn to relinquish. But is it not sad what people do to their beautiful world. their beautiful life?"

She said it quietly, and to Laura it seemed that she had opened a book of herself that one might go on reading, wordlessly, as long as the echo of that quiet voice remained in one's mind.

"Philip has told me what fine work you are doing at the Institute." She had turned a page, deliberately. "He thinks you will be another Novaes." She bent forward and rested her hand ever so lightly on Laura's arm. "You are so lovely, too, my dear. You will have a beautiful career."

The thing was done; the little intimacy and whatever it portended were gone, like a white bird flying; it was impossible to say just what it had meant, what understanding, kinship, forgiveness perhaps, the fleeting gesture had contained.

Several men attached themselves to Laura in turn during the evening. One of them startled her when his sunburned face appeared suddenly over her shoulder. For a moment she thought it was Martin, and a sob of relief came up in her throat. He had come to rescue her from her own decision. The next moment, she thought she must be going crazy. It was Ridley saying, "My wife tells me you play the flute. Is that a career for a beautiful girl like you? Now if you were interested in a life of sin, I could make you famous. . . ."

They were not all comedians. There was talk of Korea and Russia, but it was either too hopeless or too flip, both equally disturbing. Marta Engstrand sang finally, and for a while Laura was almost taken out of herself, listening to the superb, thrilling mezzo. All the mannerisms fell from her, the singing was pure and restrained, the

The knock came finally, as she'd known it would. . . . She slipped out of bed. The doorknob was turning.

passion, the striving, the art—and even the artifice—were *away* from self, toward perfection—toward God.

There's always music, Laura thought with a surge of feeling. Could anything matter very much if the music remained to come back to?—forgetting her own thoughts of an hour before, forgetting how she had come back to the music all the last winter as to a Barmecide feast.

Even now Marta Engstrand was recalling her from the illusion that there was any escape from her destiny. The song was classical French, Couperin or one of those, and it intoned, in a thin chant, a fated tale of a king and one of his courtiers. The courtier has a new bride whom he displays in a transport of happiness. The king sees her; desire, kingly and implacable, takes hold of him. He commands the marquis to bring the girl to him. Heartbroken, the marquis finds no choice but to obey. The girl, heartbroken, finds another way. She chooses to die rather than obey the royal command.

Le roi a commandé. . . . The phrase recurred several times, like the tolling of a bell; each time it seemed clearer to Laura that the singer was directing it at her. She wondered if Philip and Mrs. Dutra were aware of what was going on. She herself was trembling with tension when the song ended.

She went out of the house to the garden. The sky was splashed with a dim radiance. Through the trees it showed faintly luminous, like a whitish glaze over blue-veined porcelain. The lake was wraithy under the milky sky.

Philip came out to her. "Why are you here alone, Laura?" he said. "Are you not well?"

"Should I be well, my lord? Is it a command?"

She couldn't see, but she could feel the tremor of annoyance that went through him. "You are tired, Laura. Why don't you go upstairs and lie down for a while?"

It infuriated her that he should treat this as if it were a headache that would disappear if she took an aspirin. "Why did she sing that song? Why did you let her?"

He spread his hands. "What is going on in that little head now?"

"It was for me, wasn't it? For my benefit."

He gestured, exasperated indulgence. "You mean she was inviting you to kill yourself?"

"It wouldn't surprise me. Why did you have her here this particular week-end?"

"Marta? She is a neighbor. Why should I not have her here?"

Something was winding up in Laura's mind like a spring, unbearably taut. "Why? Because some delicacy of feeling on your part prevented it. Because of some consideration for me, for instance, if not for your wife."

The indulgence in his tone and manner sharpened. "What nonsense are you imagining now, Laura?"

The spring snapped, releasing some final dam of restraint, manners, pride. "Imagining?" she cried. "Am I imagining that you break your wife's heart every time you take a lordly step? That you're wrecking your children's lives, stuffing them for a lifetime with shame and resentment?"

He took hold of her and shook her, his face gone a little gray. "I think that will be enough, Laura." She was

fighting back the tears now. He let go of her, left two stinging marks on her arms where he had gripped her. "You have been drinking too much, I think. Go upstairs and rest yourself. When you feel better, come down. I had thought that you would play for us, later—"

"I don't think I ever want to play again," she said in a strangled voice. "That's what you've done for *me*."

Chapter 9

She turned away from him, ran up the stairs. On the landing, the throaty tinkle of a piano reached her; she stopped, breathing hard, and listened. It was coming from somewhere down the hall. She recognized the tune. "*Für Elise*." A sad, thin little tune—she hadn't heard it in years; never since she was a child, in fact, and had played it herself.

She went down the hall toward the room. The door was half open, and she looked in. It was a small room, an old-fashioned upstairs drawing room; there was a child in it, seated at a small upright piano. Her back was toward the door, but Laura knew without seeing her face that this was the girl in the picture on Philip's piano: Philip's other child, Erica. Vividly now she could recall the plain face with large serious eyes and the sweet trembly mouth.

She was sitting very erect at the piano now, her braids hanging straight down her narrow back. It was a sadly ungifted and hurried execution she was performing on "*Für Elise*"—fifteen minutes between bathtime and bed, with the fingers lifted high and the foot tapping out the seconds until the blessed respite. The plaintive little tune marched back into the shadowed past, precise and colorless, and Laura found it altogether heartrending.

The performance terminated abruptly. The child turned. Laura smiled, placatingly. "Hello," she said.

"Hello."

"You're Erica, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"I'm Laura Mason."

"How do you do." The girl slipped off the bench.

"Oh, are you stopping? I was hoping you'd let me listen for a while. I play the piano, too."

"I know. I'm finished practicing now." She was tall for nine, but slight, like the boy.

"May I come in and visit for a minute?"

"I'm supposed to get ready for bed now. Nurse will be in in a minute, and she'll be cross if I'm not ready."

"Just for a minute. Please."

The child looked at her, as if considering. "Don't you like the party?"

"Yes, but—I got a little tired."

"It's supposed to be for you. That's what I heard mother say."

"Really?" The idea rather floored Laura. "Well, I'd rather be here with you, anyway. If you don't mind."

The child gave her an unhappy glance; then her trembly mouth set in a hard line. "I have to get ready for bed," she said. "Besides, I don't think I like you very much."

Laura was not amused. The directness staggered her. "But why?" she exclaimed. "You don't even know me."

The child said nothing.

"That's not a very nice thing to say, you know. You make people unhappy saying things like that. Especially when they like *you*."

"You don't know me, either," the girl said defiantly. "You're just saying you like me. I don't like people who are insincere."

"But I do—I've seen your picture. Your mother showed it to me," Laura added quickly. "I've been wanting to meet you ever since. I knew I was going to like you because you looked so kind—and pretty."

"I'm not pretty," the girl said, with definiteness. "I have character in my face, but I'm not pretty. I don't like pretty faces. They have no character. Like Marta Engstrand. I hate her."

She *knows*, Laura thought. She didn't even wonder how it could be. The child knew. About Marta Engstrand and about herself—and how many others? Oh, God, she thought, this is monstrous. This is a nightmare I've wandered into, it isn't real. . . . And yet it seemed to her, too, that all this had been inevitable, foreordained, that she should be standing here with the echo of a sad little tune in her mind, and a strange angry little girl before her, knowing everything, accusing her of everything.

She heard a step behind her and thought, If it is the child's mother now. I can't face her—I can't—I'll die. She swung around. For an instant she thought it *was* Mrs. Dutra standing in the doorway, with her sad, enigmatic smile; that she would always be there, the rest of Laura's life, wherever she would open a door, wherever a child's voice was raised in laughter that turned into a sob. . . .

She saw that, mercifully, it was not Mrs. Dutra, but the nurse. "Well," the nurse said brightly, "and how are we doing?"

"Rotten," said the child. "I hate that piece."

"Beethoven," the nurse chided. "Your father should hear you."

"I don't care. It's rotten and I hate it."

Laura didn't even try to smile. I've got to get out of here, she thought. She put her hand out abortively to the child and drew it back quickly. The girl had flinched. Laura turned and fled from the room.

She found a volume of poetry in her room and read until after midnight, then put the book aside and stretched flat in the bed, reaching for the wall with her toes. She stared at the light and tried, experimentally, to recall what she'd read. She couldn't remember a line; her brain was a blur of churning images.

The sound of laughter came to her, disembodied, mirthless. A starting car tore the silence to shreds and dragged the tangle off to worry it out of hearing. Later, she thought she heard the plaint of a child crying. But that might have been only the orchestration of her own troubled fantasy. She didn't know what was real any more, what she really thought or felt. She just knew that she was waiting for Philip's knock, but whether with hope or with dread she had long ago forgotten.

It came finally, as she'd known it would. And contained in it suddenly were the images of the two children and the too-finely-drawn face of their mother. It wasn't even surreptitious, that curt little summons. She could have forgiven him that. Anything but the certainty, the lack of doubt, the lack of *pity*. It was the knock of a king, who may choose, for reasons of state, to be discreet, but never ashamed, never unsure, troubled, chickenhearted. *Le roi a commandé.*

She slipped out of bed and went to the door, her heart pounding thickly. An odd memory came to her of Martin, the Martin of long ago, the night he had reached for her so clumsily and torn her dress; with sudden melting pity she remembered the fumbling desperation of his hands, the blind pitiless hunger naked in his eyes. If it could only have happened now, five years later. She could have denied him nothing. She would have held out her arms to him, as one does to a baby.

She looked down. The doorknob was turning. She put her weight against the door, reaching swiftly, and turned the key. Then she leaned against the door, faint with the feeling of loss. For an undetermined while she stood there with the echo of footsteps whispering away down the hall, like the echo of some forgotten dream of glory, some forgotten hope.

The moon had gone down, if there had been a moon, but there was still enough light for her to find the path that led down to the lake. She came out on the beach and listened for a moment. The silence was different here, wider, and bordered by new sounds, the feathery plashing of a minuscule tide, the slight jarring of a rowboat against the dock. A light winked on and off near the boathouse, but she hardly noticed. Some vague need for cleansing had led her here, for outer stillness and the violent movement of her body.

She dropped her robe and slippers on the dock and dived. The water was warm, after the first slight shock; she swam hard, losing herself in the rhythm of the crawl, dipping, rising, breathing. . . . After a while she stopped and listened again. The sawing of the insect chorus had receded to a faint whine; far off she could hear a whippoorwill twinging its reedier dactyls. She turned to look for the dock. It had disappeared. The single candlepoint of light seemed to be hanging out over the water now, obscuring rather than revealing the shore.

She struck out again, swimming until she grew weary, and rolled over on her back, breathing hard. For the first time she let herself think about what she was doing. Her arms felt weighted, leaden. She must rest before she could make it back. She looked for the pinpoint of light, but it was gone now, and she was without direction in the surrounding blackness. She fought with sudden panic. She must lie still, with a minimum of movement, until her strength returned.

But now a sound came to her: a light swishing, the kind of sound a huge fin might make cutting the water. It was the wildest fantasy—but all her landlocked fears reached crackle-tipped fingers into her brain. She backed away convulsively, fighting the now-suffocating darkness. She could see nothing, absolutely nothing. But she could hear the brain-shriveling sound distinctly now, closer. The blood came sludging into her ears in a rush of dread, like the roaring of surf.

She let out her breath in a gasping sob and swallowed a mouthful of water. The next instant the Thing was upon her; the pinpoint of light she'd seen before was suddenly a huge orange mouth bearing in upon her and blinding her. Terror more awful than death seized her, and the flashlight that shone on her face was for a moment only part of the screaming nightmare. Then a boy's scared voice spoke, a hand groped for hers, and sanity returned; she stopped fighting and held on.

Back at the dock, Eric helped her out of the boat and into her robe and slippers. Anxiety had broken through his reserve, and she saw that what she had mistaken for stiffness or resentment before was only shyness.

"Are you all right?" he said. "I'm awfully sorry. I didn't mean to run you down."

"It wasn't your fault." She smiled. "I must have been swimming in my sleep."

He echoed her smile, gratefully. He had a sweet vulnerable mouth, like the girl's. There was nothing of Philip here. They were both their mother's children.

"I saw you go in," he said. "I was fishing out a way from the dock."

"I think I saw you, too. You blinked your flashlight."

"Yes. I didn't want to holler and wake the house, but I thought I'd better come after you, just in case. You were pretty far out."

"I guess I was. And I started to get confused—" It came to her for the first time now how close to the edge she'd been. Had she wanted to die? It was hard to say. She had wanted an end to intolerable conflict and she had put herself in the way of death—waiting, like a woman, to be taken. "I think I'd have been in trouble," she said, "if you hadn't come after me."

She had a sudden strong sense now of something fated, mystically right, in the fact that it was Philip's son who had come out to bring her back from the brink.

"I know how it is." he said. "You kind of lose all sense of direction and distance in the dark. Until you get used to it."

"Are you used to it?" she said, with a rush of tenderness.

"I know this lake, blindfolded."

"In the dark, too?"

"I fish a lot at night. It's the best time, at night."

Yes, she thought, nighttime is the best time for fishermen, for lovers, for ghosts. How often he must have come down here, to sit in the dark and ponder the ways of royalty.

"You don't care much for these week-end parties," she said.

"They're all right." he said. "Aren't you cold?"

"No. Can we sit and talk for a little while?"

"Sure. If you want."

"Will you tell me something, frankly? You don't like musicians much, do you?"

In the dark she couldn't see the color change in his face, but she knew he had flushed. "It's not that I don't like them. I—I just don't have very much in common with them."

I know why, she thought. You've run away from music because music is your father and you fear and distrust him. *And I ran toward music and clutched it to me, because music was my father and I loved him, as one loves everything good and beautiful in the world.* But at opposite ends we're both off the track and headed for trouble—only I'm a little further along than you, and I could tell you a thing or two—

Except that you wouldn't accept it now, she realized. You wouldn't believe. Just as (she recognized in a flash of understanding) I wouldn't have believed Martin if he'd told me plain-out what he knew all along, that I was a little girl forever sitting on my father's knee, locked up inside the prison of that lovely image. That's why I was so often angry with him—because I didn't want to believe. That's why he was "waiting," knowing that there are some lessons that can't be taught, only learned. Some knowledge of yourself that must be gained the hard way, by bumping your nose, by making a fool of yourself, by wallowing in misery until the spectacle begins to sicken you as well as everyone else.

Yes, Martin had known. And now she knew. And now it was too late.

"Your mother tells me you've finished a year at MIT," she said.

"Yes." He gave a little laugh. "Funny, when you come to think of it. Me in engineering. Must seem pretty funny to Dad."

"You must have discussed it with him—"

He gave her an odd look. "Have you ever *discussed* anything with my father?" he said.

It was her turn to flush now, in the dark.

"My father's a very busy man," he said, without bitterness. It was sad to think that at sixteen he was already beyond bitterness. "But I know how he feels about MIT. Musicians and artists are the only people who cut any ice with him."

Tenderness for him was making a deep ache within her. "I'm sure he must be very proud of you," she said futilely.

"He's not," the boy said simply. "He's disappointed." He looked up at her and said unexpectedly, "But he's got a right to be, I guess. People don't understand about artists. It's not all glory. They're on the spot all the time; they've got to keep putting out; they can't ever let down—not for a minute. Well . . . I guess Dad's got a right to expect a lot more—of the world and his children and everybody else."

No, she thought with a surge of violence, it's not true. That's what I thought, but it's not true. An artist doesn't have more rights than anyone else; what he has is more responsibility. And if he ignores it and chooses to live like a greedy, gifted child, his life turns into something that Bluebeard might have invented.

But how could she say that to this boy, who had already paid for his father's "rights" with shyness and loneliness and introversion? He had gone far past the point where he could take refuge in simply hating, like his sister. Laura wished she could have told him that he need not include her at least in his valiant effort to understand and forgive; that his salvation, like hers, lay not in understanding but in turning his back on this father who was no father at all. She wished she could have said, "Go away. Now. You can't go on feeding love and understanding into a sausage machine unless you want to end up as hamburger yourself."

What she said was, "Would you like some cocoa? I'll make you some, if you show me where the kitchen is."

She was dressed and packed by the time it was light. The tragedy was gone, lost somewhere in the night, glittering there forever now like a black jewel with which to adorn her new-found maturity. (Or to wear on the concert platform, as Martin would say—a little scornfully.) This now, lugging her suitcase downstairs on tiptoe, in dawn light, was comedy.

It was still comedy when Philip came out of the living room and startled her so that she dropped the suitcase.

"You are leaving," he said. He did not seem surprised. He was fresh and immaculate as always, in powder-blue slacks now and a gleamy white shirt.

But for the first time she saw him as a man of fifty, his coppery tan underlain with a touch of pallor and dark pencilings under his eyes. He's tired, she thought, and in the near-impersonal emotion that enclosed her concern (this is his vacation; he ought to be resting; he needs the rest for the long winter's grind ahead) she realized how far from woman's love it was that she had ever felt for him.

"There is no train at this hour," he said. "Can you not wait and have breakfast? Sensibly?"

"I'd rather go now, Philip." Recrimination, anger, pride, hurt—they were all gone. She only wanted to get away, without explanations, without talk.

"What about Eames?"

"Please convey my regrets."

He smiled ironically. "You have at least the manner of a great artist. And what shall I say to Elsa?"

"You'll think of something, I'm sure. This can't be an entirely new situation for you." That had slipped out, unbidden. It would take a little time, apparently, for all the echoes of war to die out of her heart and mind.

He sighed, resignedly. "Very well. I will drive you to the station." She followed him outdoors, running a little to keep pace with his lordly stride, feeling a little blurry about the edges like the early morning around her. "*Ouverte la Nuit,*" he said to himself. Then to her, "You were swimming, I understand, at three in the morning." She felt no need to reply. At the garage door he turned to her, with a sudden gleam of humor. "Can you tell me, Laura, why it is my fate to be surrounded by children who will never forgive me for being what I am?"

"Eric has forgiven you, I think," she said. "Anyway, he tries."

"That is magnanimous of him." The glint of sardonic amusement deepened in his expression. "Erica, my daughter, is not so emancipated. She still has nightmares, it seems, about her father, the big bad wolf. She was up most of the night. Inconsolable." He gestured. "What a night! At four o'clock Eric's light was still on, and when I went in, because *I* could not sleep, I found him talking to his mother. He has decided to leave. He wishes to go back to the University and take the summer course instead of being with us for the summer."

There was something comical about it, the extravagance of it all together, and she had to fight off a smile. "I'm sorry, Philip," she said.

"There is nothing to be sorry for. Eric is a young man; he must lead his own life, find his own way. But Elsa is upset. She always blames herself for everything that happens with the children."

"Whom do *you* blame, Philip?" She hated herself a little for saying it. But it needed to be said, even if it turned her for the moment into a schoolteacher.

He shrugged expressively. "Whom do I blame? I blame Fate that did not make me Mr. X, a fiddler or a bassoon player in an orchestra." The humor faded out of his expression. "Why did you lock your door against me last night, Laura?"

She faced him directly, a little cold in the fingertips but very steady. "Because I didn't want you any more, Philip."

"So," he said. "You did not *want* me any more." He clasped his hands suddenly in that alien gesture of exasperation she had once feared so much. "*Gott*, the expressions you Americans have. It is a language for dotards and serving girls."

He took hold of her wrists suddenly, savagely. "And what makes you think I *wanted* you? Here, in this house, with my wife and children? Do you take me for a sex-starved schoolboy? You little idiot."

He let go of her abruptly, as if he were tossing aside a book or a score that had annoyed him. "I knocked," he said flatly, "to ask if you would come and talk to Erica. Elsa could do nothing to quiet her. The nurse came finally. It seems one of the things that was troubling the child was that she had been rude to you earlier in the evening. Fräulein thought if she could apologize to you, it would perhaps ease her mind and she could sleep. But you, it seems, were busy with your own peculiar fantasy."

Many things had seemed possible to Laura during the last crowded hours, including murder and suicide. But *this* possibility had not occurred to her, this death by humiliation, by falling through a hole in her own stomach. And there was nothing to do about it, as there is no straight bright road to truth, no diagram for villainy, no recipe for honor, no way to bottle moonlight, no way to clasp a sunset in your arms, no way to spell folly so that it brings a glow of pride to your bosom.

Dutra put his hand to his eyes now, the strong, beautiful fingers spaced as in a piece of sculpture against the fine

brow. No doubt he was aware of how effective it looked, how dramatically he was expressing the profound weariness that was his, that no one could really comprehend or share because it went with the greatness and the glory, the other side of the coin. The pose was there, but the actuality was there, too.

He dropped his hand now, decision added to the weariness. "Laura, *meine liebe*, you will not misunderstand what I say. I care for you very much. If only you were more grown up, more—what shall I say—understanding? Sophisticated? Less . . . American? Well, it would have been beautiful, sometime. . . . But it is as I feared all along. You could not really take the situation. So it is not possible." His tone softened. "It is not only for my comfort I fear, Laura, though it is true I cannot have scenes in my life; there are already too many with an orchestra. But I have *wanted* you very much, my dear Laura." He smiled wanly. "I am often lonely. And I live always with the knowledge that one day I will reach out for freshness and youth—and it will no longer be there for me."

It was incredible, the dignity and the mawkishness so perfectly balanced in his utterance, the great man and the small boy standing together. Was this the kingly man she had selected to play the role of father resurrected?

How blind need is. The groping hands of childhood that remain with us for so long, reaching out with a cry into the dark. This man's need was greater than her own. Poor Philip, his wife had said. How well she understood. Poor Philip, indeed. Sometimes great gifts go with great humility, and then there is a great man in the world, an Einstein, a Bach. For Philip Dutra talent and charm had been fashioned into a treadmill. He could never get off, never know the luxury of making a fool of himself, of failing to delight an audience—or a woman. He sat forever at a Barmecide feast, never filled, never to be filled.

And yet she must be forever grateful to him for the role he had played in her education, for the insight she'd gained through the misery he'd caused her. Or *had* he caused it? She could feel only sorry for him, in any case—

All at once, it was all too much for her, and she started to cry.

"*Ach*, tears now," he said, with a characteristic gesture, imperious, impatient.

Yes, tears. She had shed many on his account, but these were different. Once her tears had wished to own him. Now they said only, Alas, you are no longer lord in my heart; you are dethroned and I see you for what you are, a lonely man, aging, with the ghosts of your fatherhood about you, the laughing, music-loving children you might have had if you were indeed that Mr. X in an orchestra—

"Well," he said, tolerant now. "Weep, if you must. But save some of the sorrow for the music. I shall expect, next time you play for me, to hear a little more understanding, a little more passion." She looked up at him. "It is what we *must* live for." He looked lonely and proud and quite magnificent. "Otherwise we die."

Chapter 10

One is never more closely in tune with the infinite than when one seeks harmony in discord—and Laura now had the great good luck to come down with a nasty summer cold which permitted her to remain in her flat, sweltering, sniffling and wheezing, practicing the piano ten and twelve hours a day, in a little frenzy of devotion and rededication broken only by the occasional order she croaked over the phone to the grocer or the druggist.

Bertels came to see her. He brought some rock candy, a goose liver and the letters of Berlioz, which he thought might entertain her. He was concerned for her and curious in about equal measure, and if she had not been obliged to hoist each word over her barricaded sinuses she would have been disposed to satisfy his curiosity with a few direct statements. As it was she let him do most of the talking, about music in particular and the maestro in general.

"Have you seen Martin?" she asked finally, offhand, or as nearly offhand as one can be who is obliged to pronounce it: "Have you seed Mahden?"

"I was to his office the other day," Bertels said.

"Is he well?" Laura asked.

"That one?" Bertels snorted. "Sometimes I think he is the only healthy man left in the world."

She waited for something more, but nothing more was forthcoming. There was no reason why it should be, no reason at all why Martin should have asked about her, be interested in her any longer; she had gone out of her way to kill his interest, stamp on it. Still, she thought unreasonably, he might have asked. She might have died, committed suicide, anything.

"If you see him again, give him my regards," she said.

Apparently Bertels was late doing her bidding. Martin didn't call for several days. When she heard his voice on the phone she found herself, peculiarly, a little breathless—no doubt from surprise.

"Understand you've got a cold," he said. "Why didn't you call me?"

"Oh, it's nothing," she said. "I'm feeling better." She *was* feeling better—worlds better, all of a sudden. "As a matter of fact," she said eagerly, "I was just thinking I'd go out tonight. There's a concert at the Stadium."

"Any fever?"

"What? Oh. Oh, no," she said. "I'm sure I haven't any. The cold's almost all gone, really."

"You sound kind of nasal. But I think there's no harm in your going out. Better get to bed early, though."

If you were any kind of a friend, she thought, you'd come and see that I do. She blushed. "They're doing something by Hindemith," she said, hopefully.

"I know. '*Mathis der Maler.*' I've heard them do it a couple of times."

"Oh." What is this, she thought. It's too early in life for me to be having hot flashes.

"If you feel you need a tonic, let me know," he said. "I'll send you something."

"Thanks, Martin."

"Don't mention it."

"Good-by," she said tentatively.

"By." She heard the click of the receiver—not emphatic, not slow, just a click, very official. Take two at bedtime, click. Go to the devil, click. She stared at the phone with a gone sensation. He was really through with her.

Later, she decided not to go to the concert. She herself felt up to it, but her backside quailed at the memory of stadium seats. She went for a long walk instead. No one has yet estimated the possible combinations of streets one can put together in Manhattan for purposes of a walk. It probably runs to millions. By a curious coincidence Laura's walk this evening led her past Martin's office.

Approaching the stone stoop that led up to his place, her heart began to knock in her throat and her resolve faltered. She could ask him for some sleeping pills, of course. But subterfuge was beyond her at this point. And forthrightness seemed equally impossible.

She was standing there irresolutely, when the sound of a violin came to her, sweet and thin against the traffic's

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baritone, reaching for the quiet places in her mind. She was dreaming, of course. No one was playing a Tartini sonata now, in this street, at this hour—not that particular Tartini sonata, certainly. It was a sign, merely—an incontrovertible sign from whatever gods there be, or whatever ones she needed.

She ran up the steps and rang the bell. She had time to get nervous before the door opened. The stately little tune in her head had stopped. Then Martin stood before her, in his shirt sleeves, with his hair rumpled.

"Laura!"

"Hello, Martin," she said feebly. "Are you . . . busy?"

"I'm always busy," he said. "Idle hands are the devil's workshop. Come on in." As she hesitated he took her arm. "Come on. It's all right. I'm after hours. I live here."

She followed him into the living room. With the patients out of it, it still looked large, shabby and altogether agreeable.

"Thought you were going to a concert," he said.

"I—I changed my mind." She looked around a little frantically, and like the proverbial spar a violin stand with some music on it floated into her line of vision. Then she saw the violin and bow lying on top of the upright piano. "It *was* you," she cried. "Playing the Tartini."

"Yeah. I give concerts, too. For the mice."

"Why didn't you tell me you played the violin?"

"I figured I had two strikes on me already. . . . What made you change your mind? About the concert?"

Oh, Lord, she thought, feeling herself grow a little hot under his steady, rather steely regard. He wasn't going to help her at all. "What did Bertels tell you?" she said.

"He told me you had a cold."

"Did he tell you it's over between Philip and me?"

There was silence for a moment. He picked up a pipe, lit it, and made a production of extinguishing the match. "That's pretty fast tempo, even in the big league."

"Don't be cruel, Martin. It was all a great mistake. I know you tried to tell me but—well, I suppose it all comes under the heading of experience."

"Yeah," he said. "Experience. Drop it in the hopper, stir briskly, and who knows what'll come out. Magic. Or maybe even a facsimile of living. Anyway, whatever it is you artists find so all-fired important."

"There's no reason for you to be bitter, Martin."

"Isn't there?"

"No. I've been wanting to tell you something. It's a little embarrassing, though, especially with you in this mood."

"I'm in no mood," he said emphatically. "I don't have moods. For a doctor they're strictly a waste of time. There's nobody around to cry or applaud."

"All right, Martin. I'm sorry I bothered you." She started for the door, fighting back the tears.

"No bother," he said. "Drop in any time."

No, she thought, I'm not leaving and I'm not going to cry. She turned to face him. "What I wanted to tell you was—it's not just that it's over. It—it never even started."

A quick gleam lit his eyes and was quenched again. "That's interesting," he remarked, without any perceptible change of tone. "How come?"

"I don't know. I mean, I don't know how to explain it exactly. I guess I'm a pretty normal person, actually—"

"Says you!"

"Well, then, I'm a pretty selfish person. I didn't realize what it would really be like—his wife, and his two children—they were abstractions before and difficult enough for me to accept even that way, God knows. But seeing them in his house, as *people*—it was the little girl, I think, more than anyone else; she's nine, and she plays the piano badly and she has nightmares—and the boy; he's brilliant, really; he's finished a year at MIT, at sixteen—but he's lost, Martin; they're all lost. And I don't want to be lost with them. I guess that's what it comes to."

She drew a ragged breath. "Anyway, it's over," she said.

"You mean until you see him at the Institute, or Bentley House or some place without his wife and children. On the platform, being God—"

"No, Martin. It's finished. I'm sure Philip is actually a very remarkable person, but the funny thing is, now that it's over, as a *person* he's not at all the kind of man I would fall in love with."

"No? What kind is that? You got a picture all framed in your mind?"

"Yes," she said, a little desperately. "It's been there all along, Martin. It looks like you."

She blushed furiously, but remained looking directly at him.

"No fooling," he said, maintaining the detached, clinical tone. But she saw that he'd gone a little pale, and she smiled suddenly to herself, knowing now that it was going to be all right. "So what do I do now?" he said. "Follow you around with the picture until you run through another couple of orchestra conductors, a few hot-shot pianists, maybe a composer or two, and finally decide it's really me—the Great Stone Face?"

I'm learning all the time, she thought happily. No matter how unreasonable a man is, you can be infinitely patient with him, once you're sure it's you he's being unreasonable about.

"You said something once, Martin, about Philip not being my father—do you remember just what it was?"

"What I said," he said flatly, "or maybe I didn't say it but I meant it, was that you can't have your father back. Not with Dutra or anybody else. The more you try, the sicker you'll get. Your father's gone. All you can have now is a husband or a lover."

"I thought that was it," she said. "Something like that." She stood looking at him mutely now, with the same question in her big, candid eyes that ten years before had amazed her Uncle James.

"Cut it out," Martin said roughly. "What are you—two years old? How long are you going to go on holding out your trusting little hand for someone to take you across the street? How many times do you want to get run over?"

"Don't be cross with me, Martin. We have to find out if we really love each other, don't we—"

"Well, how do you expect to find out? They don't build Geiger counters for it."

She glanced at the violin rack. "We could play sonatas together," she suggested. "Until we were sure." He was going to explode at that until he saw the gleam of laughter in her eyes.

"I told you once before, Goldilocks, I don't snuffle. Quit trying to catch up with your past. All I've got to offer you is future. And not much of that—the way things are in the world."

"Martin," she said, "stop being so—so strict. Please put your arms around me."

He took her in his arms, and their lips met. She felt him trembling, and tightened her arms around him, listening gratefully to her heart say yes, yes, yes, yes.

"What about your career?" he said presently.

"Can't I have you *and* a career? *You've* got a career."

"Okay, I'm no hog. But look. You've got to be sure," he said with a resumption of sternness. "I mean it, Laura. I ran a kind of free dispensary for you for quite a while. I'm all through with that department."

"So am I," she said. "I'm going to take care of *you* now. You'll see."

"Yeah? *That'll* be something to have an orchestra seat for."

She knew that he was holding down the joy, deliberately. Sometime, later, tomorrow morning maybe, he would take another look. And if it was still there, he would let go. Maybe. It seemed, like all the rest of him, terribly sweet.

"When'd you eat last?" he asked.

"I can't remember. But I'm starved."

"Okay. Let me get cleaned up and we'll go out and eat."

"Can I come and watch you shave?"

He shook his head despairingly. "There's fifteen years got lost in you somewhere. It's going to be quite a job finding them again."

"Yes, Martin," she said. "Quite a job. But you're just the man for it."

"I hope so," he said. "I've got a practice to attend to, you know. That takes up a little time."

"You won't have to do it all. I'm going to help. I'll tell you something now. Don't laugh, please. I'm going to spend two afternoons a week at some hospital. I don't know what I can do—"

He grabbed her, held her against him, perhaps because he didn't want her to see that his eyes had gone a little moist.

"Come on." he said presently. He took her hand. "You can watch me shave."

She went with him down the hall. I'm going to get a new runner for this hall, she thought, no matter what he says. It was a lovely mundane thought, like eating cheese and black bread on a cloud. In her mind she heard, too, perhaps, the creaking of a great oak door. If she looked back the drawbridge would be up and the moat would be wreathed in evening mist, like tulle. The image froze in her mind like the page of a book. Not exactly a fairy book, but one to put away with the fairy books:

Once upon a time there was a little girl who didn't want to grow up, so she fell in love with a powerful king, old enough and magnificent enough to be her father. He wanted her to come and live in his castle, where all his other little girls lived, where the great and famous came to do him homage and fountains splashed day and night for his pleasure and a hundred-piece orchestra sang or thundered his every mood. But one day when she came to visit, she found another little girl there with a very unhappy countenance, and suddenly the place seemed filled with crying echoes and sinister-looking closets. So she went away and married a kidney doctor, instead, who played the violin in his spare time, rather squeakily, and lived on one of those crazy wonderful streets in New York, where a firehouse, a parfumerie, a delicatessen store and seven psychoanalysts all dwell happily together in the same block. Because, dear children, there is no substitute for love, and the best music, for you, is always the kind you make yourself; and anyway, castles are such drafty places.

... THE END

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