

BY
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PART ONE
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LIKELY I WILL NEVER MARRY

Maria E. Burns and Leving Weeks, both eighteen years old, walked to the end of the pier and watched the gulls circling over the tide-flats hunting for anything edible.

"I can't stay long, Leving," the girl said.

"Your mother must really hate me. Here you are leaving Milford tomorrow. Why should she not want us to be able to say goodbye?"

"She says that we said our goodbyes last night and that should be sufficient. But she doesn't hate you, Leving. She's just upset about your religion."

"Maria, she doesn't even know what my religion is."

"But she's sure she knows what it isn't, Leving. She knows it isn't like ours."

"I'm not even sure myself what it is, Maria. I haven't decided what my religious beliefs are yet."

"That's just what mother is worried about. She wouldn't want me to marry anyone who didn't have absolute faith in the Lord."

"I guess she'd be really horrified if she known my middle name was Emerson."

"If she had known that I'd have been sent to Ohio long before now. I wouldn't be out here saying goodbye to you, that's certain. I'd have never been allowed to talk to you."

"My father admired Emerson. He knew him in Boston."

"But, Leving," Maria said, "He doesn't even believe in Holy Communion or the Trinity."

"Oh Maria, what difference does it make? If people are kind to each other and lead an honorable life what does it matter what they privately believe about everything? Things in this world happen the way they're bound to happen no matter what people believe."

"Leving, you do believe in the Lord who created it all, don't you?"

"Well, I have to be honest, Maria. I'm not going to say I believe things that I don't believe and can't possibly believe. I do not believe that "His eye is on the sparrow."

"But if God is all powerful, Leving - ."

"Maria, I didn't say I knew it wasn't so. I just said that I, for one, can't believe such things. I believe we have to make our own fate, insofar as possible, that is."

"Still, you said, 'Things will happen the way they are supposed to happen'."

He smiled. "Well, I know I said that. It's just a feeling I have. I don't know that. When I'm older, when I'm very old, maybe, I'll have more of the answers, Maria."

"Mother says the Bible has the answers, Leving. We must accept its teachings."

He frowned, "It doesn't satisfy me."

"Leving, I must get back to the house."

"But you do love me, Maria, in spite of my unruly thoughts?"

Maria smiled. "You know I do, Leving. I guess you're not the first man who ever had such thoughts."

"No, I'm not the first. Kiss me goodbye, Maria."

"Mother is probably watching from the house, Leving."

"What can she do? The worst has already happened. She's sending you away from me."

“Yes. Well just a quick kiss, Leving. Mother won’t want me to make a public spectacle of myself. Those will be her words. But we did our kissing last night, Leving.”

He took hold of her shoulders. “I would never have enough of kissing you, Maria. Please, dear, don’t cry. It isn’t the end.”

She brushed her arm across her eyes and stood on tiptoe to kiss him. “I’m going now. Don’t walk back with me.”

He watched her as she hurried back across the pier. She turned and glanced back briefly when she entered Seaside Lane. She sped past the Blanchards’ white picket fence and hollyhocks, past the home of Leving’s aunt and uncle, Captain and Mrs. John Weeks, where delphiniums and foxgloves, and more hollyhocks, and sweet-Nathan grew behind another picket fence. Just before she turned in at her own home with its boxwood hedge, Maria turned and waved and then was gone.

Susan Tibbals Burns was in the kitchen making blueberry slump. She turned when Maria entered the room.

“I saw you making a public spectacle of yourself, Maria.”

“Leving and I knew you would say that, Mama. Don’t you know I would want to kiss him goodbye? I love him, and maybe I’ll never see him again.”

“You’re very young to think you’re in love.”

“No younger than you were, Mama.”

“Mrs. Blanchard was probably watching out her parlor window.”

“She probably was. She always is,” said Maria.

“She’ll think that because we’re sending you to your aunt in Ohio, that you are in the family way.”

Maria’s eyes lit up. “Then let me stay here, Mama, and time will prove to her that it isn’t so!”

“No. Your aunt has already agreed to have you come. Besides, no one believes the things Mrs. Blanchard spreads around anyway.”

“But they might believe her, Mama. You wouldn’t want them to think anything like that.”

“Maria, forget I said that. I know it isn’t so, and people would believe me over Mrs. Blanchard anytime. No more talk about such ideas. Now set the table, for we must leave in plenty of time for the train. And, by the way, take my recipe for blueberry slump, so you can make it for your Aunt Sarah and Uncle Thomas.”

“Do they have blueberries there?”

“If not they can use blackberries just as well.”

“Not everyone likes blueberry slump, Mama.”

“Maria, you’re just thinking up objections to everything I say. You want to have a copybook of family recipes for yourself for when you get married.”

“Likely I won’t get married now, Mama.”

“Nonsense, Maria, you’ll change your mind about that.”

“If I can’t marry Leving, I’d rather be a schoolteacher.”

“Nonsense.”

“It’s what I used to plan on anyway. If I’m going to be living in Oberlin I might as well go to college there.”

“Now, Maria, the best thing for you to do is help your Aunt Sarah all you can. It’s one of the main reasons you’re going. It’s really taken her a long time to get her strength back since the last baby came.”

“Papa said something about my being able to go to the college.”

“Your Papa shouldn’t have started you thinking about that. What you should do is learn all you can about housekeeping from Sarah. I’ve been too easy on you that way. I’ve let you spend too much time on books and such.”

Maria sighed. “I’m going up to my room now, Mama.”

“All right, but don’t plan on taking anything more with you. Your Papa shouldn’t have anything more that’s heavy to lift. No more of your books, Maria.”

Maria’s room was on the third floor of the house. It has a window that looked out on the side garden, and another that faced the street, with a view of the inlet, and over to the right, the Sound. There were just six houses on Seaside Lane. Burns’ was the third from the end. The beach was stony, not sandy, but nonetheless a fascinating place. Maria had been born in the house on Seaside Lane. She had not always had the present bedroom. This one on the top floor she had inherited from her sister, Susan Isabella (Belle), two years ago when Belle had married and gone to live in New York City. Before Belle had the room the oldest daughter, Helen Martha (Nelle), had it. Nelle had married and now lived in San Antonio, Texas. Maria’s three young brothers shared a downstairs bedroom.

Maria stood in front of her dresser and looked in the mirror. Mama said it was a sin to spend time looking at yourself in the mirror any longer than was necessary to see that your face was clean and your hair combed neat and tidy. Maria’s eyes looked red because she had been crying so much the last few days. She wondered whether people could tell her heart was breaking just to look at her. Mama said, nonsense, it wasn’t breaking. Mama said later on she’d realize it took more than that to break a heart.

Maria was pretty in a gentle, quiet way, but she knew she and Belle were not as pretty as their sister, Nelle. Maria considered Nelle beautiful, for she had wavy dark brown hair and large beautiful brown eyes like Papa’s, and color in her cheeks, too, while Belle and Maria were small and blond with blue eyes. Maria’s hair was darker now than it used to be, though. She had told Mama she wished it would get as dark as Nelle’s, and Mama said it wouldn’t, and she shouldn’t be vain and think about her looks so much.

Mama was calling her now. After lunch she and Mama and Papa were going to Norwalk in the buggy. In Norwalk they would get the train to New York. Belle and her husband would meet them there and two days later she and Ma would take the train west to Cleveland.

“Hurry, Maria!” Mama called.

Maria took a last look around her room, at her furniture, and the books she couldn’t take with her. She looked out her window on the garden side for a last look at the white lilac bushes that came up almost as high as her window on the third floor. They were not in bloom now, of course, but she would never forget the way they were in April, especially on a warm rainy day. Maria loved lilac blooms best when they were wet with rain. There were purple lilacs in the side garden too. Maria wondered whether there were lilacs in Cleveland and Oberlin. Lilacs would always make her think of Leving, because one evening last April they had picked a sprig of them and walked down to the end of the pier on the inlet, and sat down with their feet dangling over the water. They had talked a while about Leving’s studies, and they kept sniffing the good fragrance of the lilacs, and then they had talked about President Lincoln and the war. And Leving had said he guessed he’d probably be going to the war pretty soon, though his mother didn’t think his health would stand it. Leving had been very sick when he was a little boy. He said he was a lot stronger now, and he’d probably be going soon. That evening he had told Maria he loved her. It had been unusually warm that evening. They had stayed on the pier a long time, ‘til

The three Burns sisters, daughters of
Nathan Gillette Burns and Susan Tibballs Burns



Maria E. Burns "Mide"
(Sophia)



Susan Isobelle Burns "Belle"
(Isobel)



Helen Martha Burns
"Helle" (Ellen)

Maria married Henry J. Martin
Susan Isobelle married Wm. H. Caster
Helle married Alfred E. Caster

Helle Burns Caster not to be
Confused with Ellen Martin Fison
who was also called Aunt Helle

Mama called Maria in. After she got to bed a spring thunder shower came and the lilacs smelled so overpoweringly sweet. Yes, they would always make her think of Leving.
“Maria, your Pa is waiting!” Mama was real cross now.

Maria was silent on the way to Norwalk. She never particularly liked going there, though she had cousins who lived there. Usually when anyone in the family went to Norwalk it was to take the train to New York, where Mama liked to buy yard goods for herself and her daughters. Now that Belle lived there they had even gone once just to visit her. The reason Maria didn't like Norwalk was because of the train wreck there when she was eight years old. They had been visiting her aunt and uncle, and the cousins, at the time. Maria had been old enough to remember the horror of the wreck. Naturally, she and the other children had not been allowed to rush to the scene of the tragedy, but her uncle had, and her father, and so had the neighbors, including their children. Maria's uncle's house had been near enough for them to hear the sound of the wreck, which had been caused by an open drawbridge. To Maria the frightening part was hearing the grown-ups talk about it that night after she and the children were supposed to be asleep. She had never heard her father's voice with a quality of near hysteria. When Maria's mother and aunt had begun to walk to the scene of the disaster, Nathan Burns had raised his voice to what Maria remembered as being “almost a screech.” “You mustn't even think about going over there. You'd have nightmares for years. It's the bloodiest thing I've ever seen. So many are dead, Susan, and dozens more are hurt.” And Maria's mother had cried out, “Oh dear, oh dear! Why do things like this happen?”

The next day Maria had talked with her mother about it. “Mama, why do things like that have to happen? Why does God plan things to be that way?”

Susan Burns, who had calmed down by then, said, “God had His good reasons for what he does, Maria.”

“But why kill so many people, Mama, all at once?”

“Maybe they were sinners, Maria.”

“Even the babies, Mama? Even children?”

“We don't question God's reasons, Maria.”

In later years Maria thought about the wreck whenever she got on the train to go to New York City. She would wonder whether she would arrive safely, or whether a bridge might give way and the engine and cars plunge from the track and overturn in a roar of fire and agonized screams.

Maria wondered how bad a sinner one must be for God to decide not to let him live out his life to be old and die in bed quietly. Mama said that all of us were sinners; some were much worse than others. It was puzzling to Maria that if God had killed forty people in a wreck and hurt a whole lot more because they were sinners, why did he let some really bad sinners live on and on to be old. And some of those were greedy, and lived in ease and personal comfort, and they did not go to church, nor give to the poor and needy. But Mama had an answer ready when Maria questioned why God let wicked, wealthy, old sinners live on and on. Mama said, “Maria, you just don't know anything about what God is planning for people like that. And besides, maybe even if they die at home in bed, they may not be contented, with their souls at peace. Maybe they are lonely, and guilty, and afraid to meet their God.”

Maria had discussed all these ideas with Leving Weeks, and he had rejected the whole thing, both Maria's questions and her mother's answers.



*Maria E. Burns and her brother Howard
as children living in Milford, Conn.*

"SOPHIA WHITEFIELD"
AND A BROTHER
IN "HIGH ROCK"

“Look, Maria, you love God, don’t you? And you’ve been taught that you should love Him, and that He loves you, and that He loves all his children.”

“Yes,” she told him.

“Well, now, Maria, do you for one minute believe that a God who loves His children, sits up there on his mighty throne in Heaven, and plots train wrecks?”

“Well - ,” Maria had said.

“And that He lets some sinners be greedy, so they can get richer and richer, and get mean and selfish and finally old and sick so they can die with a guilty conscience, shaking with fear of the fires of Hell. Why wouldn’t a God who is a loving Father plan it so these sinners didn’t just get wicked and wicked? Why wouldn’t it be better if He just straightened all the sinners out when they were young, instead of making so much work for Himself plotting train wrecks and other bloody tragedies to punish them?”

Maria was almost laughing when Leving got through sputtering all that out. But he went on.

“You don’t suppose that everyone riding on that train was wicked enough to be killed, do you? Or all smashed up?”

“Well, some of them weren’t killed or hurt, Leving. There were survivors who came through it all right.”

“They didn’t come through it completely all right, I’m sure. For everyone in that wreck, it was a terrible experience, and they’ll always remember the horror of it. You can’t tell me God sat up late planning all that.”

“Leving, I don’t think you understand about God -,” Maria said.

“No, I certainly don’t,” Leving said. “But what I do understand is about man. It was man’s lack of good management that caused that accident, and it never should have happened, and they’ve taken steps since to see that sort of thing doesn’t happen again.

Maria had never told Mama what Leving had to say about God, but Mama disapproved of Leving for several reasons, one of them being that Leving’s father and brothers were known to enjoy playing cards, and worse than that, they were just as likely to work on Sundays as any other days, and some of the Weeks family were Unitarians and Mama was very alarmed about that; she’d heard that they didn’t believe in the Trinity or Holy Communion either.

“Most of the Weeks men become sailing men, Maria. It’s a mean life for a woman, you know, having your man gone most of the time.”

“Mother, Leving doesn’t want to be a sailor.”

“Well then, what does he want to be?”

“I don’t know. A lawyer maybe, or a professor. He’s going to go to Harvard, he says, if he can. He might like to get to be a senator, someday. He isn’t sure yet. He wants to think about everything for awhile. And then there’s the War.”

“A young man should have a purpose, Maria.”

“Oh, Mama, you don’t understand at all, do you.”

“I know a lot of those people at Harvard are Unitarians.”

When the Burns’ arrived in New York they were met by Belle and her husband.

“Edmund came home from the office to come with me to meet you,” Belle said. “We’re having riots in the city. It’s terrible.”

“Riots!” Maria’s father said. “What about?”

“About the conscription,” Edmund said. “The city’s poor men are angrier than ever, and the immigrants are rising up. Many of them did military service already in the countries where they came from. It’s the Irish, mainly, and they’re killing the Negroes.”

“But why?” Maria asked. “Why on earth would the Irish kill the Negroes?”

“Because work is scarce,” Edmund said, “And there aren’t enough jobs for white men. They’re afraid when the Negroes are freed they’ll come north and take over more work from the white men.”

“But what started it up?” Susan Burns asked. “We’ve been fighting to free the poor black people since the beginning of the war. Why didn’t they think of that before?”

“It’s because poor men don’t have the money to get out of fighting, like the rich do. They could pay the \$300 and get off the draft, but they don’t have the money to do that. That’s the cheapest way to get out of fighting, of course, or they can hire a substitute. That costs more, of course.”

“We knew about the Conscription Law, Susan,” Nathan Burns said.

“Yes,” Susan Burns said, “But I didn’t think anybody in the North felt strong enough about Negroes to kill them.”

“They even burned an orphanage for Negro children,” Belle said.

“Oh!” Susan Burns said, “Oh, how terrible! The poor innocent little ones.”

“Now I know Leving will go to the War,” Maria said. “His mother won’t be able to keep him from volunteering.”

“I doubt she will let him go, Maria,” her mother said. “He isn’t strong enough.”

“He will go. Wait and see. I know Leving. I know the things he thinks about. He’ll be gone and it will be for nothing that you sent me away.”

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Maria had been asleep for nearly two hours without changing her position. Now she woke and stretched ever so slightly. Mama had always told her that a young lady should never yawn and stretch in such a way as to attract attention. But her back ached, and her neck was stiff from the cramped way she had been sleeping. She wished she were in her bed back home in Milford instead of in the train going West. Tears began sliding down her cheeks.

“Maria,” her mother said, “I wish you would stop crying over Leving Weeks.”

“I wasn’t.”

“Well, then why are you crying?”

“I guess I’m homesick already. And my back aches too.”

“I guess you’ve inherited my bad back.”

“No, it’s from sitting so long in these dreadful seats. I wish they had sleeping cars like Uncle Nathan in Chicago wrote about.”

“They only have one or two such cars. I doubt if they’ll build many more of those.”

“Why not, Mama?”

“I should think people would be afraid to go to sleep on a train. I know I would be.”

“Why?”

“Well, anything might happen, you know.”

“Do you mean a train wreck?”

“Yes, that. And what if you went to sleep and someone stole all your money or your baggage?”

“Or your clothing while you had it off, Mama?”

“Oh, mercy, Maria! People wouldn’t take their clothing off! It would be like taking your clothing off in church or on the street.”

“Mama,” Maria said, “It’s strange that you’d worry about something bad happening like a wreck or having your money stolen. You always say God watches over us.”

“Why, of course he does, Maria.”

“Then I’d think you’d trust Him to watch you while you slept on the train.”

“Well, I do trust Him, certainly, Maria. But I can’t sleep sitting up anyway, and I’m sure I’ll never get to ride on one of the sleeping cars, so there’s no use talking about my faith in the Lord. And furthermore, young lady, it is not your place to question my faith anyway. You’ve got such ideas from Leving, haven’t you.”

Maria was looking out the window now, and she knew her mother would want no more discussion about the Lord, but suddenly she spoke up excitedly.

“We’re coming to water now, Mama. Oh look!”

A wide expanse of open blue had come into view.

“Why, it must be the lake,” Susan said. “It’s Lake Erie.”

“Mama, it’s as wide as the Sound. You can’t see the other side. It looks like the Sound.”

“Yes, it does. It really does.”

“And the tide is in. Oh, no. I guess they don’t have a tide, do they, in a lake? Of course not, how silly of me.”

“Don’t they? No, I guess not.”

“But I’m glad it looks like the Sound, though. I’ll feel better.”

“Maria, Oberlin isn’t on the Lake. Cleveland is, but Oberlin is some distance away.”

“Well, but I’m still glad the lake is there, Mama. I was thinking it might be like the prairies. I didn’t want to live in a place like that, where there wasn’t any water or trees.”

“Well, you won’t be here all your life, anyway, Maria.”

“No,” Maria said. “I won’t be here all my life.”

The next day Maria wrote letters to her father and Leving Weeks.

July 10, 1863

Dear Papa:

I am writing for Mama because she is very tired from our trip on the cars and she has one of those dreadful headaches that she gets. I know that she is also very upset because of the state of affairs here at Aunt Sarah’s. They’re really bad, and I will try to tell you must what happened. We expected that Uncle Thomas would be at the station in Cleveland to meet us yesterday morning when we arrived. In fact, we thought he and Aunt Sarah would both be there. We looked up and down the platform and saw only strange faces. Mama was so puzzled and upset. I tried to calm her because her headache was already starting. She never slept a wink on the cars, you see. Well, we waited a while, sitting on a bench outside, and it was getting to be a very hot day. Mama stayed out while I went into the station to see whether any one was looking for us, or had left a message. When I got back to Mama she was talking to a young man that Aunt Sarah had sent to meet us. You see, yesterday morning early, when Uncle Thomas went out to hitch up the horses for the drive to Cleveland, he had a sudden seizure. He fell to the ground and he was in great pain. Aunt Sarah came out of the house ready for the trip, and found him lying there. She ran and got the neighbors, and they got him into the house, and the doctor came of course, but Aunt Sarah had to send Mr. Martin to meet us at the train. All the way back to Oberlin we wondered about Uncle Thomas. Hr. Martin had to leave for Cleveland to get us before the doctor arrived, so he couldn’t tell us much. We were afraid that Uncle might be dead, when we arrived in Oberlin.

Well Papa, Uncle Thomas didn’t die, but he is very sick, and the doctor says it is his heart, and he can’t tell us how bad Uncle Thomas’ condition is, but he thinks he has probably a chance to survive, but he will be an invalid. He must lead a very quiet life or he may bring on another bad spell, which would kill him. Papa, they have not told Aunt Sarah yet that it was his heart, because she was nearly hysterical. The doctor gave her something to quiet her, and she thinks it was heat stroke. Mama and I and a neighbor lady fed the children and got them into bed, and took turns all night watching over Uncle Thomas. None of us got much rest, and Mama is exhausted, but tonight someone is coming in to help, so that we can get some sleep.

Well, Papa, none of this is going the way anyone planned, but we won’t know just what day Mama will be returning to New York until Aunt Sarah gets able to take charge of everything again. I do hope you and the boys are well.

Your loving daughter,

Maria

P.S. Mr. Martin, who met us at the train, is a school teacher. Mama and I think he looks like President Lincoln a little bit, only he is not that tall and lanky. Papa, if you should see Leving, tell him I shall write to him tomorrow.

Oberlin, July 15, 1863

Dear Leving:

I meant to write several days ago, but I have been so busy and tired that I just couldn’t. Mama has written to Papa by now, and I know that you have probably learned most of our news from him, but I will bring you up to date on things, and you can pass it on to Papa. Papa really likes

you, Leving, but Mama is funny about people who don't see religion the same as she does. And Papa, to tell the truth, is one of those people. I think that sometimes he wishes that Mama did not talk about the Lord quite so much as she does. Mama was brought up by very strict parents, and her beliefs are very strong. But Papa does really like you, Leving, and I don't think he is really disapproving of your beliefs. If he asked you to come over and have dinner with him and the boys it wasn't just because he thought you were lonesome for me. It was probably because he knew he'd enjoy talking to you and he is lonesome too. In your next letter, tell me what you talked about. Let me guess. The war, of course, and President Lincoln, and what you plan to do. Papa gets so upset when he reads in the paper about the Copperheads and the deserters. But Leving, you were very sick last winter, and you are just eighteen. No one would feel that you didn't love our country if you wait until you get stronger and also older. The Conscription law says men between 20 and 45.

By the way, the young man who met Mama and me at the train, a Mr. Henry John Martin Jr, was in the army for a while, but he was sent home because he has something wrong with a tendon in his heel. He was not able to march with the rest of the men. He limps a little but is otherwise in good health. I told him how you wanted to join up, and he said he knew how you felt, and said he feels very useless, not being able to fight. But, Leving, please be sure you are doing the right thing. I know I must not tell you what to do, but even if you had not been so sick last winter, I would be upset. Still, I admire your desire to take your share of the struggle. But since coming here I learned that a cousin of mine was at Gettysburg, and a letter received here this morning says he has lost his right arm in the battle. The letter was from his mother, and they learned because a friend wrote the letter for him.

So Aunt Sarah has something more to trouble her. She does seem to be getting calmed down, though, since Uncle Thomas seems to be recovering nicely. Mama and Aunt Sarah have daily arguments about what he should eat. Aunt Sarah thinks he should have broth and gruel, and Mama wants him to have something more hearty, because he has got quite spare and puny this week. I have been looking after the children, and cleaning and ironing for Aunt Sarah, but now that Aunt Sarah and Mama feel better, I have had a little time to my own self and I am glad for this, for I have no idea how to answer your questions, "What is Oberlin like?" But in my next letter I hope to be able to describe it to you, for tomorrow I'll have time to go to the village.

Most affectionately,
Your friend, Maria

July 25, 1863

Dear Leving:

Your letter really has made me very upset. Mama and I were both surprised that Dr. Wheeler said he saw no reason why you should not join up with the Army. Mama said it must be partly because he has always hated the Secessionists so much and wishes he were with the fighting men himself. But Leving, I remember how you coughed and coughed for weeks last spring. I know how you feel about the War, but I do hope that you are not being rash. Are you really feeling strong enough now? Of course, news of your joining up would affect me even if I thought you were in vigorous good health. Still, I know the Army needs men, the draft riots in New York City make us realize that more than ever.

Mr. Henry Martin keeps up closely with all the news of the War, and he has been telling us about the battles of Gettysburg in Pennsylvania. He says it was a truly great victory there, though the loss of life was shocking. But he says there is great outrage on the part of many folks because

General Meade let Lee get away. We will have a service in August at the Congregational church here, the one Aunt and Uncle attend, to celebrate the successes in the War lately. Still, Mr. Martin says that it is most unfortunate that the Rebels were not pursued after Gettysburg. He says that men stand around the street corners downtown and argue and argue about it. Mr. Martin also says that he is upset to find that there are quite a goodly number of men here who do not think President Lincoln should be nominated again next year. He said that one man made him so angry he wanted to knock him down right there in Main Street. The man had said that Mr. Lincoln was "uncertain and bumbling, not a true leader." I told Mr. Martin that I would be very glad to assist him in knocking that man down, and he laughed at me, so I said, "Well, at least I would enjoy stamping on him." But Mr. Martin says that most folks here in Oberlin admire Mr. Lincoln greatly.

Leving, I did say in my last letter that I would describe this town in my next, but I have been rambling on and on, haven't I. And now, everyone here is waking up from an afternoon nap. The doctor says they should all take naps, even Mama. So I must get busy and help with the children. Aunt Sarah had her babies rather late in life, so although she is older than Mama, her children are much younger than Mama's. The littlest one, Timmy, the only boy, is just five. He is the hardest to care for as they have all spoiled him, even his sisters. I want children, but I hope that mine will all be treated equally and none of them spoiled.

I must put this letter by, right now, and tomorrow I shall tell about the town. I am going to iron now, and when it is cooler we figure to walk up town.

Next day – Mama and I went on a tour of the town with Mr. Martin. We went in his buggy. Mama and I had been planning to walk, but as she leaves tomorrow for home, we didn't want her to tire herself too greatly. She is feeling better now, and is anxious to get back to Milford, although I think she likes it here. We both miss the Sound, though, and the gulls. It smells different here too. Oberlin is surrounded by very flat farm land. There are very extensive wheat fields, all being harvested now, and corn fields too, and many orchards. The farms are considerably larger here. Mr. Martin thinks it is because the land is so flat, and there aren't as many people here as in the East. His father owns a section of land three miles east of Oberlin, where there is a little village called North Royalton. His father raises Morgan horses, and other farm stock. Henry Martin says his father talks of turning the farm over to him, and going back to England again. Henry says his father came to this country thirty-two years ago, in 1831. And to think my family, that is, Mama's family, came nearly two hundred years before that, in the very early days of the colony. Mr. Martin says his mother and father crossed the ocean on separate ships. Hers was ahead of his but it was a slower ship and they both ran into unfavorable winds. The ship that Henry's mother was on was running low on fresh water and provisions and the other ship stayed close to help. They sailed together the rest of the way. Henry's parents didn't meet until after they got to America, and then they found each other. They learned then that they had been crossing the ocean side by side. Henry said, "And they were side by side later on." I think that is a very romantic story, don't you?

Now, to tell you about Oberlin. It's south of Cleveland and it's a rather pretty town, though all the country side around is so flat. The only part that isn't flat is where the Shale River passes through in the part near North Royalton. The river goes north to Cleveland and along the bank it seemed quite a bit like Milford and made me homesick. It took half a day to come from the train at Cleveland here to Aunt's house.

I really like Aunt Sarah. She laughs more than Mama, and scarcely anything happens here that doesn't have something in it to amuse her. I think that is really a good way for a person to be.

The only time I see her looking sad is when she is worrying about Uncle, but Doctor seems to feel now that Uncle will be all right if he takes good care of himself. He is worrying about getting back to his store, but feels that the young man who is in charge is a very honest person, and Henry Martin is helping them in the store too. It is a general store, and Henry says it is good experience, and who knows, he might want to go into that business some day. During the school year Henry teaches in North Royalton, where there is a two-room school house out on the same road where his father's farm is.

I am always getting off the subject of Oberlin. The main thing about it is the college, which Henry Martin says was here before the town was. The village just grew up around the college, and both have grown fast. Henry's father came here in 1833, and the college wasn't anything but two buildings, now there are eleven. They have planted elm trees all around, and what with the green grass and Martin, it reminds me of Connecticut. I am anxious to see the place when the students are here after the holidays end. Oh, how I long to attend college. They admit women here now. Henry Martin says Oberlin did that long ago. I said something to Mama about college but she only repeated what she told me in Milford, that I would be in Oberlin to help Aunt Sarah. Mama used to say that I could learn housekeeping while I was here, but since we have arrived, I secretly think Mama now realizes that it is more likely that Aunt Sarah could learn from me. I've been doing cleaning and polishing here that hasn't been done for a long time. But Aunt Sarah is a very good, kind person. I like her.

Will, I must bring this letter to an end, for tomorrow we must be up early to drive Mama in to Cleveland to put her on the train. She had told me that I must stay here with Uncle Thomas and the little ones and help Aunt Sarah, but Aunt Sarah said I had been working hard, and the drive would be good for me. So I will say goodbye, for this time, as Henry Martin is going to take us in to Cleveland to the train. And he says that we must leave at five in the morning.

This has been a long letter. I'll write again soon.

Most affectionately,

Your friend, Maria

####

The Sunday afternoon following her mother's return East, Henry Martin took Maria to North Royalton to see his father's farm.

Maria consulted with Aunt Sally first.

"Do you think I should go, Aunt?"

"Why not? You deserve a change, you work hard."

"Well, I wondered if I should, because of Leving."

"But you're not engaged to Leving?"

"No. Mama and Papa were opposed for various reasons. But Leving means a lot to me."

"Yes, your Mama told me."

"I suppose so."

"But run along with Henry, Maria. There's no reason at all why you shouldn't ride out to the Valley."

The house was brick and substantial looking. It had many fireplaces, with handsome white mantles. Henry showed Maria around with pride.

"They made almost everything on the place except the window glass, and the nails."

"The bricks too?" Maria asked.

"Yes, indeed. We had perfect clay for brick."

Maria looked around.

"Isn't the house very large for just you and your parents?"

"Yes, it certainly is. Pa thought that he and Mama would have more children. Well, they did have them, but few of them lived to grow up. Three little brothers and a girl died."

"It must be terrible to have babies and lose them."

"Yes," Henry said. "Pa thinks it killed Mama. She died when I was twelve. He's been talking of going back to England ever since. But I have a sister, Mary, here. She's married."

"Still, I suppose one can understand that he would want to go back, having your mother and the children die, and all."

"Yes, but Pa married again. My stepmother is a very different kind of person. She is business-like and thrifty. My Pa came to America to make his fortune. He didn't meet my mother until he'd been here for more than a year. They learned about their ships sailing together, and they presently decided to marry and come West."

"Was he in business in the East?"

"No, he had saved up money from his earnings and he wanted to invest in land somewhere in America. He spent that first year looking around. When he married my Mama they lived in Cleveland for a while, and at that time Pa nearly bought land there, near the river, but he thought it was too low and swampy so he decided against it. That land is a part of downtown Cleveland now. I wish he had bought it."

"But he came here to North Royalton instead?"

"Yes."

"You like it here, don't you?"

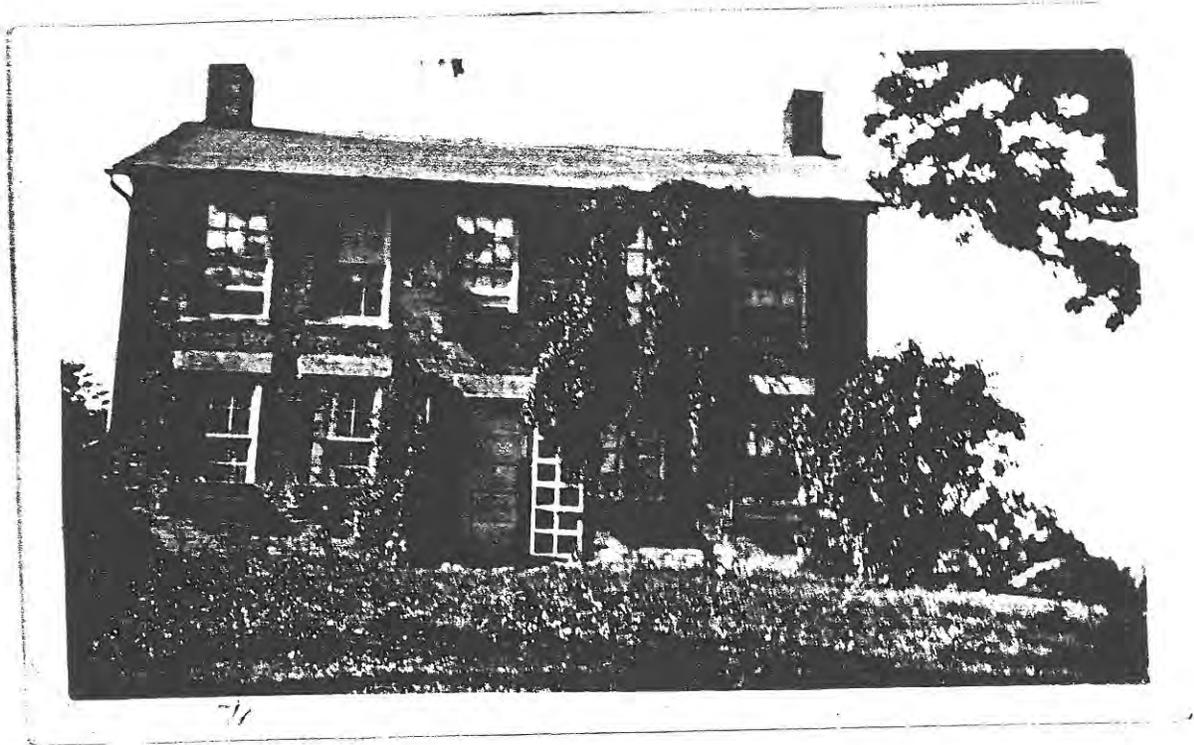
"Oh, yes. Very much. I just wish he could have afforded the city land too as an investment." He looked across the fields. "Yes, I like it here. I was born here. One reason I tried to get into the army is I thought maybe I should have to defend this land."



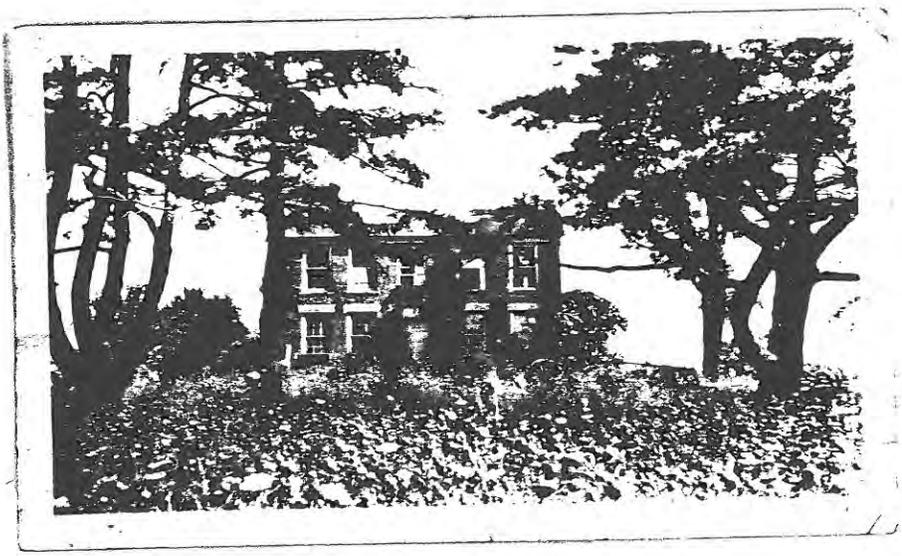
↑ Thought to be
Sabrina Pritchard
who died in Aug. 1853
She was the mother
of Henry John Martin III
the author's maternal
grandfather. at right
is Mary Martin H. J. III's
sister.

Are they mother and
daughter, or the same
person? Sabrina looks a
little too old, to have died
at age 45 (at the most)





"THE OLD BRICK"



THE OLD BRICK WITH
ITS SCOTCH PINES

Heritage Homes of N. Royalton

The home that Stan built in 1941 on foundation of "old brick"

THE Henry J. Martin homestead is located at 10470 Edgerton Road between Adkins and Bennett Roads. It dates back to 1831 although the present home was built about 1941 on the foundation of the original 1842 brick homestead. While not a true Heritage Home (over 100 years old) it is the site of early Royalton history.

Henry John Martin was one of the pioneers of North Royalton having come to this country from England in 1831. His ship crossing the Atlantic met another carrying passengers from England, who were in distress because of a shortage of fresh water. Through this chance encounter at sea, Henry met his future wife Sabrina Pritchard, a passenger on the distressed vessel.

The Martins and the Pritchards, in search of good farming land, stopped in Cleveland but thought the soil was too sandy. They then moved out to Royalton Township. Here the Martins located on both sides of Edgerton Road as did the Pritchards near to York Road. The little cemetery on the knoll just west of Bennett Road was known for many years as the Pritchard Cemetery. Sabrina Martin was buried there.

Henry Martin harvested a crop of wheat for the first payment on his homestead but had to convert it to cash. He took a wagon load of wheat to Cleveland and had to camp with it for a week until a factor purchased it for cash. Wheat was in demand at that time but most people wanted to trade other products for it.



The factor was an agent who purchased foods for the large number of immigrants who temporarily located in town.

Henry purchased his farm in 1831 and built a log cabin on the site. Henry J. Martin Jr. was born in this cabin in 1841. In 1842 Henry Sr. built a large two story brick home on the site. This home had an outside chimney at each end with a fireplace heating each room on each floor. One fireplace downstairs was the typical huge size used for cooking, with an oven attached for baking.

Lumber for the home was obtained on the site. Black walnut was used for all interior woodwork. Brick was made from clay dug in the flood plain of Rocky River close by. Neighbors assisted in the building of the home, led by Henry's father-in-law, Mr. Pritchard, a carpenter by trade. All materials used in the house were obtained by trading, except the hardware. The total bill for hardware was \$45.00 which was paid in cash.

In clearing the lands some of it was done by "slashing", a term meaning to cut down everything in sight and let it rot. While this might today seem wasteful it sped up the clearing, provided

humus for the soil and cover for small animals. The neighbors used to hunt squirrel and pigeons in the Meacher slashing next door.

Henry J. Martin Sr. lived to the ripe old age of 88 years. In his life time he acquired a number of parcels of land throughout Royalton Township, and also large holdings in Oberlin, at the site of Oberlin College.

Henry J. Martin, Jr. met his future wife at a singing school in Royalton. She was a member of the Burns family of Milford, Conn. Henry, Jr. and his wife had eleven children. Bill Martin who was a star football player at Oberlin in 1909-1911 when Oberlin beat Ohio State for the Ohio championship, went to school for several years in the one room school house on Akins and York Roads and finished his high school in Cleveland. He was a school teacher for 37 years and now lives with his wife in Cleveland. Prior to becoming a school teacher Bill studied for the ministry and was associated with the Baptist Church on the Village Green. There he taught the Adult Sunday School Class. He tells of a baptistry in the church which was never used because of the

problem of bringing water to it. Instead baptisms were conducted in Rocky River. Bill recalled that his best friend at church was Lester Edgerton's father, Stanley, whom he remembers as a very kindly, understanding man.

Bill Martin recalls the store and postoffice on the village green, which was run by a Civil War veteran who had lost one hand in the service and used a hook. He tells of the lack of a physician in the area. However, a midwife, Mother Stewart, took care of most of the births and illnesses with a combination of skill, herbs, understanding, and faith.

Mary Martin married John Craddock in 1865, and they lived in the Craddock homestead featured earlier in the Heritage Home series.

Martha, the daughter of Mary and John Craddock, was the mother of Lester Edgerton's wife.

In addition to farming, the Martins operated a sugar bush for many years.

William and Elizabeth Tamar live in the home today. Although the old homestead is gone, the new home, located on the foundation, has the old cellar stairway still in use. The homestead site is identified by the two aged Scotch pines at the front entrance. The two trees were planted in memory of an aunt and uncle of H. J. Martin, Jr. Lois and Wayne Lykins were married under those trees, with Mrs. William Martin, Jr. playing the piano in the living room for the ceremony. Mayor Lester Edgerton officiated at this wedding.

By RUSS HUNT

THE HISTORY OF THE "OLD BRICK"
AND "THE FAMILY"

“You don’t really think they’d ever get this far north do you?”

“No, not really, but Morgan has been in Ohio and Indiana lately, you know. He and his Raiders are ruthless.”

“Aunt Sarah won’t let Uncle Thomas read the War news since he’s been sick. I don’t know the very latest that’s happened.”

“Well, the news, just lately, is not of great battles like the ones at Gettysburg and Vicksburg, but of the draft troubles in New York. There are troops there now and things have quieted down some. There is fighting going on in Tennessee, but the men downtown are still arguing over why Meade didn’t chase after Lee at Gettysburg.”

“I wish the War would end.” Maria said. “I’m afraid that Leving will join up.”

“Is Leving the one they hope you’ll forget?” Henry asked.

“Yes,” Maria said, and a small frown appeared. “I wish Mama hadn’t told you about that. I’m old enough that I wish everyone wouldn’t talk about me and what I do.”

“It wasn’t your mother told me, Miss Burns,” Henry said. “It was your Uncle Thomas. He told me yesterday that it would be nice if I entertained you a little because he thought you might be bored or sad while you were here. He said that they had wanted to get you away from someone they didn’t approve of.”

“And so that’s why you seemed to be taking an interest in me?” Maria said, the little frown still there.

“No, that isn’t why I take an interest in you. You must admit that I took an interest in you from the day you arrived. And before your Uncle told me yesterday about your friend in Connecticut. I had already asked you if you would care to drive to North Royalton.”

“Miss Burns, your Mama told me you were engaged to that young man.”

“No. Oh, no. My parents wouldn’t ever have given permission. They didn’t hold with Leving’s beliefs.”

“But otherwise, if they had allowed it, would you and he have married?”

“I’m not certain, but I suppose we would have. There were several problems. I was somewhat upset myself by what he believed.”

“It isn’t my business at all, but you make me very curious as to what those beliefs are,” Henry said.

“They were about God. Leving never said he didn’t believe in God, but he raised so many disturbing questions about Him, that he kept me all confused. Leving didn’t believe, for instance, that God watches over each and every one of us. He said that the evidence is everywhere that we are mortals completely in charge of this world, to make it good or bad.”

“There are others who feel as he does.”

“Leving didn’t believe that God punishes the wicked, either,” Maria said, and with a little shiver she realized that while Henry spoke of Leving in the present, she herself had been referring to him in the past tense. Was that just because she felt she’d not be seeing him again, ever?

Henry was speaking again. “It does often seem that the wicked get off free, but then, what do we know of what’s in store for those sinners, or anyone else.”

“Maria sighed. “Leving and I went over all of that.”

“There are many things we can’t know, I guess.” Henry said.

“Do you believe in God, Mr. Martin?”

“Yes, I really do. I have to,” He said. “Look here.” He reached out and showed her a tall Queen Anne’s lace plant growing near where they stood. “Look at this wild carrot blossom. It’s a miraculous bloom. It is made of all these tiny blossoms and they’re all put into groups like snowflakes, and then the whole thing is put together prettier than any piece of lacework a lady could devise.”

“Queen Anne’s lace we call it,” Maria said. “We have it at home.”

“And if you pick another and another they’ll be put together in the same way, and all with the one small purple flower in the center. And they’ll all curl up into a cup shape when they’re dry. And then take seeds, they stay all dry in a bag all winter just like something dead, and then when they have water, a plant grows. Other people can argue the case in fancier ways, but for me, it all proves there has to be a God: It couldn’t just happen, could it, Miss Burns?”

“No, it doesn’t seem that way, does it. But when I used to talk to Leving, I always got so confused about God.”

“Well, that was what worried your parents.”

“My Mama, mostly,” Maria said.

“She wouldn’t want you to be confused about God.”

“No, but you see, Leving is such a truly good person that to me, it never seemed terrible that he raised so many questions about God. Can’t a person wonder about the Almighty and still not be a sinner?”

“The preacher wouldn’t say so,” Henry said.

“I know,” Maria said. “They say we must have Faith.”

“That’s right.”

“It isn’t easy,” she said.

“No, not always,” he agreed. “Come down to the barns and we’ll see if we can find Pa. He’d like to meet you, and he’s always proud to show someone his horses. They’re Morgans, and they’re beauties. Everyone around here admires Pa’s horses. He’s really had success with them, and with the whole farm. I really don’t know why he’d want to go back to England. This is a splendid place.”

“Is he really going to go?”

“Yes, As soon as he can persuade me that I should take charge here.”

“Don’t you want to?” Maria asked.

He looked at her a moment thoughtfully. “Well, I’m beginning to think I do. I like teaching school, but perhaps this is better work for a man. I’ve been thinking that lately. I could get ahead, with the farm. I’m not just a boy, anymore. I guess I can live without Pa.”

Three weeks later Maria wrote a letter to her father.

Dear Papa:

I have written mama twice and she has not answered my letters. I know that she is always busy, but I wondered if she was sick. And I have not heard a word from Leving since a few days before Mama left here for home. He wrote me twice when I was first here, and now I am worried about him, and whether he is sick. It is not like either Mama or Leving to be like that. I even thought Leving might have suddenly decided to join up. Please write me, Papa, and let me know. The latest news here, is that Uncle Thomas gets up for a while every day now, and sits in a chair. The doctor says that next week he may walk a little each day. The rest of us here are all well, and college opens again in a few days. The town will be lively then, folks say. But Papa, please do write to me as soon as ever you can.

Your loving daughter, Maria

####

Maria liked her uncle's house. It reminded her of the house in Milford. It was built in the fashion of many Connecticut homes, for it was in the section known as the Connecticut Western Reserve, and the folks who'd come here had built to suit what they were accustomed to. The Barnes house was on Conservatory Street and it bordered college property, looking out across a broad green square of land which Maria thought of as "The Common," but which folks here called "The Green."

Maria liked the little room Aunt Sarah had assigned to her. It was under the eaves at the front of the house, with a pair of low windows near the floor on each side of the dresser. Her bed was exactly like the one in her room at home in Milford. It might have been made by the same man, Maria thought. She could lie on her bed after lunch, during the hour when Aunt Sarah made the whole household rest, and watch the college students strolling across The Green. How wonderful it must be to attend college! There really were quite a number of young ladies studying here. Henry said most of them were planning to be school teachers. He had studied here at the Academy himself, and then afterwards at the college. "But I would like to have studied more," he said. "But I got too restless. I wanted to begin things. I was tired of being a student." Maria had not seen Henry for some time, now, because he had returned to North Royalton when his school opened up for the new term. "I'll be coming into Oberlin soon, though, as soon as I get things off to a good start at school."

Now, she could hear Aunt Sarah coming up the stairs, panting and sighing a little, as she came close, and vexed to be up from her rest. She came into the room, patting her brow with a handkerchief.

"It's still very warm, isn't it? It's been a very hot September. I'll be so glad when cool weather comes. I don't take an afternoon nap except in summer time. This time of year, the early sunrise wakes me before I've had enough rest. I didn't used to be that way, though. It's only the last year or so that I sleep so poorly."

"Mama says that 'the change' did that to her," Maria said.

"Change of life? Well, maybe that's it then. I'm forty-six. I guess that's what it could be. But worrying spoils my rest, too. Right now, of course, it's Thomas. Do you know what he's doing right now? He's not taking a nap like I hoped he would. He's reading War news. All about the battle at Chickamauga, and he's all upset about that."

"Where is Chickamauga?" Maria asked.

"I'm not sure, but Tennessee, I think. No, Georgia, I guess they said. Professor Selby just returned from New York and he brought the New York newspapers and the Cleveland newspapers, and Harper's Weekly with him. He's given them all to Thomas to read, and I thought when Doctor stopped by he'd tell Thomas not to read the War news, but Doctor said it's all right now, that he's stronger. Oh dear, I still think it's better for him not to." She reached into her apron pocket. "Well, here's why I came up. Professor Selby brought us our mail from the post office. There's two letters for you this time."

"Oh, good," Maria cried. "From Leving, and from Mama, I suppose. No, ones from Papa and the other from Mama. I do hope they've told me about Leving. I know something's the matter with him. He must be ill again, or he'd write to me."

Maria felt it would be rude not to read her parents' letters to her aunt. It would have been different if Leving had written. A letter from a beau was personal.

“This one is from Papa. If it seems strange they wrote me separately, I guess it’s because I wrote him separately. I was puzzled because Mama and Leving hadn’t written to me.”

“He says:

Dear Daughter:

Mama is well and she says she is going to get a letter written to you today. However, she has been saying that for at least two weeks, so I figure I should write you in case she still doesn’t get at it. You see, Maria, Mama hated to write you because she has news that she hated to tell you. Young Leving Weeks has run off to the War. He didn’t say much to anyone before he left, but of course you will remember Dr. Wheeler had told him he thought he was strong enough to fight now. Your Mama has talked with his mother, so when she writes you she will tell you more about it. I understand Leving left a note for his parents.

No, daughter, don’t go worrying too much. Leving often said he felt like a shirker, being home while his good friends were fighting for the Union. Even older men like myself can understand that feeling. I’m sure that you can see what emotions he had about it. Probably the War will not last much longer. The loss at Chickamauga is discouraging, but nevertheless the Union is prevailing; it is inevitable that the Rebels will lose this conflict.

I do hope that things are progressing well with the household there, and that your uncle is recovering his health. Do be of as much service to these good folks as you can, daughter. We miss you at home, my dear.

Affectionately, Your father.

Maria was on the point of tears from the point in the letter where she learned of Leving’s going away to the War, but she kept on to the end.

“Oh, Aunt Sarah, he shouldn’t have gone! He isn’t strong enough. I thought he didn’t write because he was sick.”

“Read your Mama’s letter dear,” Sarah said. “Maybe she’ll tell you more about it.”

“Oh, but why didn’t he even tell me he was going?”

“Do read Susan’s letter, Maria.”

“No matter what Mama says, Leving is still gone.” But she opened the letter and began to read.

Dear daughter:

I know that your father is writing to you and he will be telling you of Leving’s decision to go to the War. You must not judge me ill that I did not let you know of this sooner. I knew that you would be upset, and that you might be inclined to think things that were not so. I was trying to think of the best way to write about this to you. Until you are my age, you will not know what it is like to want to make a child understand the beliefs that you arrived at by living longer than he has. It is futile to try, so I think I won’t, but Maria, you must believe that I spent hours in prayer before I decided that it would be wisest for you to be in Ohio for a spell.

Now, Maria, I’m almost certain that you will be deciding that Leving ran off to war because you were gone. It would be vanity to assume that, in any case, and also, you must remember that you went to Ohio in the middle of July, and he did not go until the middle of September. I’m sure that it was simply that he finally felt that he could not stay home any longer. He wanted to do his share in the fighting. He stopped listening to his mother, and listened instead to Dr. Wheeler, who told him that he was in sufficient good health to go. As you know, Mrs. Weeks always had the firm idea that Leving was consumptive, but Doctor assured her that he is not.

Your Papa and I have been discussing how long you should stay in Oberlin. You have been there nearly three months now. How is Sarah getting along? I thought you might want to plan on being at home by the Christmas seasons, but there are a few questions concerning this. First, your Papa

thinks you must stay longer, if your aunt needs you, and the other is that we don't want you to travel alone on the cars. Papa doesn't want me to make the trip alone again, and he feels that he isn't free to come with me before next summer. But now, Belle and Edmund are talking of going west to live. They want to make a trip first to see Cleveland and Chicago. Edmund met men from those places when he was in the Army, and now he feels his future lies in the west. So many people still feel that way, in spite of the fact that just a few found gold. Edmund, of course, simply feels that a lawyer can always do well in a growing city. If they make a trip in the spring, they could bring you back with them.

Papa says that if your Aunt Sarah feels that you are a help to her, he thinks it would be right for you to stay there this winter, and he intends to contribute board money for your food. He also says that if you would like to study piano or singing or some such thing at the Academy, he will pay for your lessons. I don't know just where he got all these ideas, but I guess he doesn't want you to spend your time worrying about Leving Weeks.

No, Maria, I will have to end this letter, as I have some grapes to make into jelly, but I will continue to figure on a way for you to get back here by Christmas time. Give my best regards to all there, and ask Sarah to write me when she has time.

Most Affectionately,

Mama

P.S. I am going to write to Texas this evening and urge your brother to come home for a spell. He could come by way of Cleveland and escort you home. It wouldn't seem like Christmas with only Papa and me here, and the little boys.

Maria laid the letter aside and put her hand over her eyes.

"I'll never see Leving again," she said.

Her aunt said, "Maria dear, you mustn't say that. You don't know that at all."

"I knew it when our train left New York City. I had the certain feeling that we would never see each other again. I knew he would go to the War."

"No. But I can't see why he didn't write to me of it. It wasn't like him."

"He must have been excited about going. Too excited to write letters."

"No," Maria said. He isn't like that. He's a calm person, a quiet person. He thinks a lot. He just decided it was time to go, and went."

"He'll likely be all right."

"But winter is coming, and he isn't strong. In the winter he gets coughs and colds, and quinsy. What if he's captured and goes to Andersonville?"

"Maria, you mustn't let your mind run on so."

"And now, Mama talks as though she wants me home. Now that Leving is gone she wants me home."

"Don't be bitter and your Mama, Maria. She did what she thought was best. When you're as old as your Mama and I, you worry a great deal about your children. Remember that, when you are your Mama's age. Your Mama couldn't rest at night if you married a man who didn't believe in God."

"Leving never said he didn't believe in God."

"But he said things that made her believe that."

"I can't bear to think of Milford with Leving gone."

"I'd be very happy to have you stay on with us, but remember, Maria, even if you had stayed home, he would probably have gone to the War. Most girls are waiting these days for someone to

come home to them. You mustn't forget that, Maria. And they are all learning to be patient. Why don't you just stay here this winter and take piano lessons at the Academy. You'll make some new friends. Henry Martin will be happy to be with you around a little, and next summer your Mama and Papa will take you home to Milford."

But it would be eleven years before Maria would go again to Milford.

###

KEEP YOUR PHILOSOPHIC MIND, ADA

Brooklyn 1874

There had been fine children in the Norris house on Fleet Street, but now there were three. Esther Anne Walton Norris had considered herself greatly blessed by God; she had lost no children in infancy. Many of her friends had lost at least one babe to “summer complaint” or membranous croup or something else.

Her first baby was a boy, Albert Norris (Bertie). He was big and strong from the start. Then came Ada Norris, Rosella Norris, and Annie, and finally, another boy, James. But there would be no more children now that she had gone through “the change.”

Esther Norris had always felt badly about her girls because they were not equally pretty. All of them had blue eyes, and they all had golden wavy hair when they were small. But Ada, the oldest, was never a pretty girl. She had a receding chin, and a solemn long face. Rosella was more favored than Ada. Her face, also, was too long for ideal beauty, but her chin was well formed and it had an attractive dimple. It was generally agreed, in the family, that Rosella was quite a pretty girl. She and Ada were both taller than most girls. They looked very handsome in their riding dress, when they took their lessons in the park. Esther Norris had engaged a photographer to take pictures of the girls on their horses. Seated side-saddle, and sitting very straight, they looked proud and aristocratic. Esther Norris had to admit that there were times when even Ada looked rather attractive.

Annie was the beauty. She did not have a long face. It was a perfect classic oval like some of the Madonna’s in the Italian religious paintings. Nor was she tall like her sisters, but a perfect height for a little girl. At nine Annie had been no bigger than Ada and Rosella were at seven.

But Baby Jim was the truly bonny one of them all. His hair was not wavy like the others; it curled all over his head in a flaxen cap of ringlets. His eyes seemed to be the bluest and they were ringed with long lashes.

The personalities of the five children differed more than their appearances. Albert and Ada were both neat and business-like, with skill for arithmetic, and careful penmanship, though they differed in other matters. Ada loved to read and to write letters. She spent hours reading poetry – Longfellow, Whittier, and most especially Wordsworth. She kept a copy-book filled with excerpts from her favorites with many marked “anonymous” which her parents suspected were her own compositions.

Rosella’s tastes were different. She had an intense dislike of doing sums, and of practicing penmanship. But she was not without skills in housewifely arts. She enjoyed embroidery and tatting, and spent little time reading, although she frequently asked Ada to read aloud to her while she did her needle-work. Ada and Rosella were good companions though Rosella was frivolous and more interested in young men and frilly clothes. Ada wore dark skirts and white shirtwaists, while Rosella preferred dresses with fancy braid and trimmings. She was particularly enchanted with pretty bonnets.

When the girls were small they shared the same bed, and to Rosella’s dismay, Ada sometimes wet the bed. Their mother dosed her with various medicines to cure the habit. She tied a knot in the back of Ada’s nightgown to help wake her in the night so that she might use the commode, but it did no good. When the appointed time came, Ada stopped wetting the bed.



1879

"MARCELLA"

Annie was the musical one in the family; she had begun to play the parlor organ when she was six, and at eleven she could play all the favorite numbers in the Episcopal hymn book. Baby Jim was everyone's spoiled pet, but in spite of this he was an appealing child. He showed more loving affection for his mother than any of the others ever had, the girls apparently being more drawn to their father. Ada had acquired her love of the poets from Francis Dennis Norris, Annie had been given her first piano lessons at his side and Rosella always loved to cook for her father, because he always praised her efforts so lavishly.

In the early autumn of 1873 Ada fell ill. She had no appetite, and complained of weakness, and presently of headaches. Within a day or two Annie was taken with the same symptoms. Both girls became very ill; from day to day their fever racked them, and they tossed in delirious dreams. They were fed nothing but broth and barley water, they were wasted by diarrhea. But in the fourth week Ada's fever began to subside. She took more nourishment, and slowly her strength began to come back. With Annie it was different. From day to day she worsened. Typhoid was a terrifying sickness. Esther's father told her not to listen to what other women said about it.

"Don't let their stories frighten you," he said. Just nurse the girls carefully. There is far less importance in what I can do for them. You must feed the liquids in small quantities but often. Sponge them with cold water in the afternoons and in the evenings. Get someone to help you. You need your rest. No, of course, you should boil your drinking water and, of course, the milk the rest of the family drinks. And don't give any milk to the sick girls.

"Will Baby Jim get sick, Doctor?"

"Probably not, but boil his milk anyway."

"Rosella never drinks milk."

"That might be why she hasn't come down with the disease. You must change your source of milk immediately."

"I already have, Doctor."

In spite of the doctor's caution, Esther listened to her neighbors' alarming talk.

"Typhoid makes holes in the innards," one woman told her.

"Have they passed blood?" another asked.

"It's not good when the tongue turns brown."

When she was able to sleep at night, Esther had fitful dreams and nightmares. When she was awake she tortured herself with guilt feelings. She knew that Annie was going to die. She knew that the Lord was punishing her for her anxiety over Annie. He knew that she would grieve more for Annie than for Ada. It was not that she did not love Ada dearly. No more dutiful or unselfish girl could a mother ask for. And she felt somehow that Ada loved her more than the others did. She dared not admit to herself that it was Ada's plain homeliness as opposed to the winsome beauty of Annie that made the difference. In honesty, she had to admit that Annie did not have as quick a mind as Ada. Perhaps that was part of it. Annie was the prototype of feminine loveliness that needs protecting. Now, that beauty was being destroyed before Esther's anguished eyes. Day after day the little face grew thinner, her eyes more sunken.

Annie died at the end of the same week which saw Ada turn the corner toward recovery. All that last day Annie had been very weak, but restless and delirious. In the evening she went into convulsions and died.

"Perforation," the doctor pronounced.

"I didn't do enough for her," Esther sobbed.



"IDA WINTON" 1879



THE PACKER COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE

BROOKLYN N.Y.

Where Aunt Oda (nee) graduated
Brooklyn N.Y.

“You did all you could, Mrs. Norris, and so did I.”

Because she was a disciplined, religious woman, Esther did not collapse. And she did everything she could to show love to Ada. The poor girl was painfully thin and weak. All her blond wavy hair had been falling out. It was replaced in due time with straight hair, which was much darker. With the loss of her golden hair, Ada’s only remaining claim to good looks was her blue-grey eyes. Her long nose in her long face with the receding chin seemed to be more noticeable than ever without the softening effect of curls. She and Rosella had always made their hair into a row of “sausage” curls at the back, with their bangs in a “frizz” made by braiding them tight when wet. But now that it was totally straight, Ada merely pulled her hair straight back, and after it grew long enough she wore it in a knot or just put it in a snood.

“Poor Ada,” Esther Norris said to her husband. “What has happened to her hair is such a pity. She didn’t need that, and she doesn’t deserve it, either. I don’t know how she’ll ever find a husband.

“Some men don’t marry pretty girls, Esther.”

“Perhaps, but the pretty ones are taken from home first.”

“Ada is very intelligent, Esther.”

“I don’t feel convinced that men like that either.”

“Well, if she wants to have an education, I’m willing to send her to Packer Institute.”

“Really, Francis? But you didn’t send Bertie to college.”

“Because he didn’t want it. He wanted to go straight into business.”

“Do you really think Ada should go, Francis?”

“I do. She’d make a splendid teacher of English.”

“Very well. I’ll tell her. It will make her so happy. But what of Rosella?”

“She may attend too, if she wishes, but she won’t, I know.”

Ada had been in attendance a short time at Packer Collegiate Institute, when tragedy struck again at home. On a bright September afternoon, Baby Jim, who was now five, played on the front door step. His cat frisked around on the stone balustrade, and presently he climbed up on the rail himself. A neighbor across the street saw him take three steps and fall. It was ten feet from the rail to the sandstone floor of the basement areaway. Baby Jim, who had no longer wished to be called “Baby,” fell on his head.

This time Esther Norris did not bear up as well. She was quite hysterical, and the doctor kept her in bed with sedatives.

It was suggested that Ada stay home from her classes to help at home, but Francis would hear none of it.

“She’ll stay home for the funeral, of course, but that’s all. Rosella, you can see to the cooking and cleaning. There’s no need for Ada to miss her studies. You won’t have too much to do, never fear.”

“No,” Rosella sobbed. “Without Baby Jim I won’t have much to do at all.”

“When you have time you will gather up his clothes and we’ll give them to charity. Ada will help you.”

“Oh, Papa! I can’t do that,” Rosella cried.

“I’ll do it,” Ada said.

Francis Norris looked in at the door of Ada’s room late that evening.

“Still studying, daughter?”



JOHN W. MORRIS

FRANK LEONARD

298 FULTON ST BROOKLYN

"BABY JIM" 1869-1874
(WINTON)

“No, I’m through with that. I was reading Wordsworth for some comfort.”

“Did you find any, dear?”

“Yes, but perhaps what I found isn’t what Wordsworth intended. Just some lines from the “Ode on Intimations of Immortality.””

“One of my favorites,” her father said.

“It says:

We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind
In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be:
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering:
In the faith that looks through death
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

Francis Norris smiled. “You are very young to be acquiring the philosophic mind.”

“But father, a person just has to be.”

“Yes. Sooner or later.”

“Some people do anyway,” she said.

“But some never do.”

“Father, there is something else in the poem that brings a little comfort.”

“Tell it to me. I need comfort, too.”

Ada threw her arms around his neck.

“Of course you do, Papa, and you are so brave.”

“What else did you find in the poem?”

“Well, I’ve just been gleaning out the thoughts that help me now. It isn’t all of what Wordsworth was trying to tell us. But he said:

Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing boy.

“So I thought at least we can tell ourselves that Baby Jim never had to leave all that early glory Wordsworth spoke of. The prison-house never closed on him. I will always think of him that way. Papa, I remember how wonderful everything seemed when I was very small. Wasn’t that the way for you, Papa?”

“Yes.”

“Is it that way for everyone?”

“Not for those born into poverty and oppression.”

“Like the slaves?”

“Yes, and the slum children here in the city.”

“But even for them there must be some things, like going out on the first warm day in the early spring, or down to the harbor when there is a fresh cool breeze making whitecaps in the bay, or waking up to a new fall of clean snow that hides all the city grime. Or of finding a twenty-five cent piece. When you are small, so many things are miraculous. I even like to look in show windows at things I haven’t the money to buy.”

He patted her shoulder.

FRANCIS DENNIS NORRIS b. 1824 BERF ALSTON
DEVONSHIRE, ENG. died BROOKLYN, N.Y. 1889
He was a builder



"THOMAS WINTON"
Ida and Marcella's
Papa



(NORRIS)
ESTHER ANNE WALTON b. 1830 BROOKLYN
died in CLEVELAND 1897

"ESTHER WINTON"
Ida + Marcella's
Mama

“Ada, the Lord is wise to let people like you survive. Because you are made of the stuff for survival.”

“Papa, what you said about poverty – it’s another point of comfort about Baby Jim, and Annie too; they never had to want for anything important. Their lives were short, but ever so happy, I’m sure.”

“Keep your philosophic mind, Ada; you’ll be happy too.”

####

Brooklyn 1878

Ada's dress for her Commencement exercises was so pretty that Rosella begged for one like it. She would only be sitting in the audience, but Ada's friend, Georgiana Rahming, was graduating from Packer Institute that same evening, and Georgiana had a younger brother whom Rosella greatly admired. Since Georgiana's family would be at the ceremonies, Rosella was counting on John Christopher Rahming to be there too.

Rosella attended the public high school, but John Rahming had already finished, and Rosella never saw him anymore except in church. He had been attending a business school this past year. Rosella knew that John, like herself, was almost eighteen. Georgiana and Ada were twenty-one. On Sunday at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, but the Rahming and Norris families were regularly present. Sometimes when Rosella was in church she looked toward John and found him looking at her. She would calmly let her gaze pass on by, to the choir, to the nave, to the rector, so that John would think her eyes had fallen on him by chance. But it happened more and more frequently, and finally one Sunday, when her eyes met his, he smiled at her, and she smiled back. It was the tiniest of smiles, but with passing Sundays, it became a regular thing. Ada had to nudge Rosella in the ribs to make her pay attention to the service.

"Tell me everything you know about the Rahming family," Rosella begged on the day of Ada's Commencement.

"Because of John?" Ada teased.

"Yes, of course," Rosella said. "I want to know all about him."

"Well, they're British subjects, you know," Ada said.

"All of them?"

"No, all but Mrs. Rahming."

"Oh, really? Why all but Mrs. Rahming?"

"Because she was born down in Charleston."

"But Georgiana was born in England?"

"No, she was born in Nassau in the Bahamas. Her parents are from Leeds, but Mr. Rahming had a fleet of sponge boats in Nassau. During the war our government seized them, and they were interned here in New York."

"What does that mean – interned?"

"Detained, held, confined, impounded."

"Oh, Ada! One word will do. Why do you love dictionary words so?"

"Because they are useful."

"Yes, well, tell me more. Why were his boats impugned?"

"Rosella, now you're being sassy. I didn't say 'impugned' and you know it. Although, I imagine that word would enter into the lawsuit."

"Lawsuit! What happened?"

"They seized the ships because they said he was running the blockade. That means carrying contraband of war to the South."

"What's 'contraband of war'?"

"Anything the South could use to help it win the War."

"Like cannon and gunpowder."

"Yes, or maybe a lot of other useful things. The Union wanted to choke the South off, so as to shorten the war."

JOHN CHRISTOPHER RAHMING II
b. LONG ISLAND, BAHAMAS 1834
d. BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 1898
British subject



← "GARRETT NORTH II"

"Matthew's paternal
grandfather"

*He owned a fleet of sponge boats. Was
accused of "running the blockade" during
Civil War. Proved his innocence in a
suit against U.S.*

MRS. JOHN C. RAHMING II
(GEORGINA JONES)
b. CHARLESTON S. CAROLINA 1838
d. BROOKLYN, N.Y. 1909



"JOANNA WHITE NORTH"

→
"Matthew's paternal
grandmother"

“Was he?”

“Was he”? You mean guilty of blockade running? He says ‘no’, and he’s suing our government.”

“Oh,” Rosella sighed, “isn’t that romantic.”

“That’s what Georgiana thinks. She says it would be more fun if he was guilty. But it’s hurt them financially – terribly.”

“Not so badly that they couldn’t send Georgiana to school to Packer.”

“No, but they used to have a great deal of wealth, I guess.”

“Oh, I can’t wait till tonight,” Rosella breathed.

“You are a flirt, Rosie.”

“But Ada, I really like him.”

“But, Rosie, you don’t know him.”

“I will, though. Just you wait.”

Ada and Rosella looked their very best that night. Their dresses were white and they had ribbons in their hair. Ada’s hair was put up, of course, as befitted a young lady about to receive her diploma from a collegiate institute. She wore her pansy class pin and her class ring with the initials ‘PCI’ engraved on it. Her hair ribbons were lavender to match the pansy pin.

“Your hair looks just lovely, dear,” her mother said.

“Oh, but it’s so drab, Mama. If it were either blonde or black, I’d like it better than this plain brown.”

“But you’re happy today, aren’t you, dear? It’s your big day, you know.”

Rosella had her hair down her back in shining golden crimps. Her ribbons were blue to match her eyes, and she wore a blue sash.

“You look very pretty, Rosella,” her mother said.

“I don’t think she really needed to have a dress just like Ada’s,” Francis Norris said.

“It doesn’t do any harm, Francis.” Esther Norris said. “It doesn’t hurt Ada.”

“No, it doesn’t hurt Ada, but it hurts my pocketbook and it may hurt Rosie’s character.”

“Why, Francis?”

“Because she can’t always have everything everyone else has.”

“But Ada has all the glory today, Francis. Rosie is only a spectator.”

“Rosie’s day is coming.”

Rosella was very disappointed at the ceremonies to find that the Rahming family was nowhere in sight when she and her parents arrived. She had hoped to sit where she could see John.

“Couldn’t we wait outside for a while? The air is so close this evening.”

“No,” her mother said. “We’ll go in. I want to get a good seat where I can hear everything.”

Inside they took seats way up front, and Rosella’s only consolation was that when the Rahmings arrived they would sit behind her and John would be able to see her new straw bonnet and her hair. Ada had done Rosella’s plaits this time and her crimps had turned out particularly well.

They had used egg for their shampoo and their hair was shiny. Rosella’s hair had been growing since she was a baby. It was long enough to sit on. Thanks be, that she hadn’t had a disaster happen like Ada’s typhoid. A girl was lucky to have golden hair. Boys liked it best. She just wished she wasn’t so tall, even if Papa had said that goddesses were tall.

While the auditorium was filling up, Rosella turned half around in her seat several times to see the people behind her. Esther Norris had to speak to her about it.

“That’s not good manners, Rosie.”

“”but I’m not staring at anyone, Mama.”

“Never mind, just sit around straight. And stop worrying. I’ll invite the Rahmings over for lemonade and cookies afterward.”

“Oh, Mama!”

The Norrises and the Rahmings all walked down Fleet Street in the June evening. They walked in pairs – first Esther Norris and Mrs. Rahming, who said her name was Georgiana Jones. She was named for her mother and for the Queen, she said. She preferred Georgiana, and chose it for her only daughter.

In back of the two ladies walked Ada and Georgiana, each wearing a bunch of pansies and carrying her diploma.

Behind the girls walked the two fathers smoking cigars and discussing importing business. Half a block behind came John and Rosella.

Rosella said, “It’s very warm this evening.”

“We might have a thunderstorm,” John said. “Still, I’m very used to warm weather where I come from.”

“Where do you come from?” she asked.

“Oh, I was born in Nassau. I’ve been back there with father twice since the War ended. That’s where my family’s from. The last time, I lived there three years with my Grandmother.”

“Nassau?”

“Yes. Georgiana was born there before the War started. But you see our father was born on Long Island.”

“Long Island! Why, Ada told me that they were British subjects.”

He grinned at her. “So they are. I’m speaking of Long Island in the Bahamas – not Long Island New York. I laugh when people think that.”

She glanced at him sideways under her frizzed bangs.

“Oh, you do, do you? You always laugh at people?”

“And you? Do you always twist words around?”

“Well, I think you were teasing me a little.”

“Sure I was. Teasing’s fair, isn’t it? Girls like to tease.”

“Oh, they do, do they? Have you known dozens and dozens of girls?”

“In Nassau I knew dozens and dozens of girls.”

“Oh, you did, did you.”

He grinned at her again. “All of them Negroes.”

“All of them Negroes?”

“Yes. They worked for my grandmother. She’s old now, but she had slaves years ago. Our slaves were freed before yours. They get paid now.”

“You had slaves!”

“My family had. My grandmother – that’s my father’s mother – had a lot of them, but she freed them at the very beginning.”

“... of the War?”

“No, no. Slaves were freed in British possessions long before they were here. Grandma freed hers even before the law said she had to.”

“Were they just her slaves? Weren’t they your grandfather’s slaves too? You keep saying she freed them.”

“She did. He was sick for years and he died young. She managed the plantation.”

“Cotton plantation?”

“No. The colonists tried cotton in the beginning. It grew fine, Father says, only then, bugs got at it. So on my grandmother’s place now they grow a lot of different things. She says it’s smarter to do that. She grows pineapples mostly, right now, and guavas, and yams and sugar cane and pumpkins, and some tobacco.”

“What about all those Negro girls?”

“They’re everywhere. There’s more of them in the Bahamas than Caucasians.”

“Do you like that?”

“It’s the way it is in Nassau. I never think about it.”

“Tell me about the boats,” she said.

“What boats?”

“Your father’s boats.”

“How did you know about his boats?”

“Georgiana told Ada. It sounds so fascinating. I’d like to hear all about it.”

“I can’t tell you all about it ‘til after the case is settled. Papa doesn’t want us to talk about it until it’s all over. Georgiana shouldn’t have mentioned it to Ada.”

“Oh, Ada wouldn’t gossip it around.”

“She told you though.”

“Oh, well, I’m her sister. That’s different.”

He smiled at her. “You don’t look much like Ada.”

“Her hair used to be more like mine. It got straight after she had typhoid. And it got darker too.”

“Your hair is very pretty.”

“Thank you.”

“In fact, you don’t look much like a Negro girl.”

“Well!”

“Not like a Negro girl at all.”

“Well, why on earth should I?!”

“I’m just kind of used to looking at them.”

“And you like to tease, don’t you.”

“But never people that can’t defend themselves.”

“Oh, you think I can.”

“I think all pretty girls can, probably, especially tall and queenly ones.”

“The queen of England isn’t tall.”

“True, but she’s certainly queenly. We aren’t talking about Queen Victoria, we’re talking about Queen Rosella with the golden tresses.”

“My, aren’t you fancy! I think you must read a lot.”

“That’s right.”

“My sister Ada does, too. She likes fancy words.”

They had reached the front entrance to her house. He spoke quickly.

“Before we go in – will you walk to church with me Sunday?”

“Yes, providing you’ll tell me more about the Islands.”

Inside, the others were already drinking lemonade. Ada was passing cookies.

“Well!” Esther Norris said. “Here are the tag-alongs. We didn’t wait for you, you see.”

Rosella’s blue eyes shone. “It was such a beautiful evening – we just couldn’t hurry. The moon is lovely.”

John Christopher Rahming father of Norris Rahming



JOHN CHRISTOPHER RAHMING III

J.C. RAHMING III

b. NASSAU, BAHAMAS
1862

ABOUT 1879

d. CLEVELAND, O.
1920

"GARRETT NORTH" III

“Everyone in the room laughed, and then Francis Norris spoke up.

“We mustn’t let the two moon-gazing slow-pokes steal everyone’s attention. This is Ada’s and Georgiana’s special occasion, and Ada hasn’t received her graduation present yet from her Papa.”

“Why Papa! I thought my dress was my present.”

“If your dress is your graduation present, then what is Rosella’s dress which is just like it? No, I have something else for you, Ada.” He pulled a white envelope from his coat pocket, and presented it to Ada.

“It’s money,” said Rosella.

“Now, just hold on there, Rosie,” her father said. “No, it isn’t money. Not exactly. Read the note please, Ada.”

“Dear Ada – This is a promise to buy for you as soon as it becomes available, one of the new typewriting machines that are coming soon. It will have a special key on it to print small or capital letters. You have earned it with your diligence and devotion to study.

Most affectionately,

Papa and Mama”

“Oh, Papa!” Ada cried. “You are the most wonderful, generous Papa in the world!” She ran and hugged him.

“I don’t believe you could prove that,” he said.

“Well, it must be true,” Mr. Rahming said. “Typewriting machines are very expensive.”

“As soon as Ada has it and learns to use it, she and her machine will have a paid position in my office.”

“Oh, splendid, Papa!” “Oh, what a happy evening this is!”

“That’s a very grand present, Ada,” Rosella said. “You write so beautifully though. Why do you need it?”

“If you want to go through Packer, you can earn one too,” her Papa said.

“Oh, gracious! I don’t know what I’d do with a typewriting machine. But I’d certainly like a sewing machine of my own.”

“When you’re married, Rosie,” her mother said. “Francis, how about proposing a toast to Georgiana and Ada?”

Within the year Ada had her typewriter and went to work for her father.

The financial and legal problems of the Rahmings dragged on in federal courts. The matter of the interned sponge boats was finally settled in favor of John Christopher Rahming Sr, but disappointingly in terms of cash. His boats, which had rotted during the War, were undervalued in the adjustment. He was a very bitter man in his last years.

Young John Rahming Jr was struggling to save enough money to marry Rosella. Time was passing. Rosella was always flirtatious and sometimes impatient, but she waited.

####

John did not miss Rosella as much during the daytime, but at night in the rooming house, when he sat down to write her his daily letter, he ached to take her in his arms.

How cruel it was for a young husband to be separated from his bride in their first year of marriage. And after being engaged for such a long, long time, hoping to be able to offer her at least financial security, and a home of their own, they found themselves scarcely nearer that goal than before. At the end of the first week, he was more than a little discouraged, but writing courageous words to Rosie always helped steel his resolve, and gave him new heart to set out again the next day.

He dressed for sleep, and then sat down to his letter writing.

75 Fuller St

Cleveland, Mar.30.'86

My darling wife,

I am presently at the above address where you may direct my letters. Rosie, I thought you were going to write me every day? I am hungry for a good letter from you. You are a better letter writer than you say you are. Sometimes a spelling or usage error, but in every other way, fine. I am fearfully tired tonight, so this will be short. I am afraid they building up of my coffee trade will not be an easy thing, but I am determined to succeed.

Rosie, my room here is adequate, but bare and I have only your picture to comfort me. I'm still unpacking, and must write to Papa and also to your Papa to thank them for the extra cash they gave me the evening I left. We are so in their debt.

Rosie, I am very tired, but send all love to you and the little ones still unborn.

Your aff. husband, John.

Then next night he wrote:

My darling wife,

Except that I still have not received my letter from you, I feel more encouraged today. Business prospects brighter. And the weather brighter too.

Rosie, I am sure you will like Cleveland. Today there are signs of spring here and there. The grass in the Public Park downtown is quite green, and I saw two robins. The street I live on is pretty and quiet, but I have seen the street where I hope we may live someday, Cartwright Street. I can't explain just why I like it so. It is wide and lined with young sycamore trees, but more than that, it just has an atmosphere I admire – one of quiet security. The really impressive street here is Grand Avenue. People here tell me I must see it; it is where Cleveland's really wealthy people have their mansions. After the weather turns really warm I shall take a walk there some Sunday afternoon. Weather changes rapidly here at times. The wind comes off the lake, which is a very dreary looking sea. You can't see the other side. It is as though you were at Coney Island, and could sail straight across to Europe on it.

Darling Rosie, I do so hope I can get things so well in order here, that I can be back in Brooklyn with you when our dear baby arrives. But there is a great problem. I can only be away from Cleveland one week, and a man in my office tells me that more often than not babies do not come when they are expected. What does your doctor advise? It would be too bad if I came on, say the first of May and you still hadn't had the child at the end of a week.

We must discuss this more. Give my love to all.

Your loving husband, John.

That night John was overtired and sleep did not come. His mind went on and on, his money problems first of all, together with his embarrassment that as yet he could not provide the roof over his wife's head. He would have liked to know that his son (or daughter?) would be born in a home that he had rented for Rosie. Of course, knowing Rosie, she would have gone home to her mother, for the birth, in any case. Such thoughts brought him back to the strange events of his wedding day last June. He had not thought of this for some time, but now it all came back again. The wedding had been at St. Paul's, and then everyone had gone back to Thomas Winton's Fleet Street home for the reception, with toasts and wedding cake and all the rest. Then, at last, after Rosella's tearful farewells to her Mama and Papa and Ada and the brother Bertie and all John's family, they were finally off in the carriage to the railway station.

Then it all went wrong. He had tickets for the seashore at Atlantic City, but it seemed that all the while Rosella had been counting on going to Saratoga. She had been sure, she said, that he was planning to surprise her with a honeymoon at Saratoga. She had no wish at all to spend a week at the seashore. If she wanted the seashore she could go to Coney Island anytime, or Bergen Beach. She didn't care for bathing, in any case.

Rosella had begun to cry, then all of a sudden she had fainted dead away. He had stopped the carriage and got water to revive her, but when she came around again she seemed hysterical and, being uncertain what to do with her, he had taken her back to her parents' house.

The whole thing was explained to John by Rosella's mother as being the result of exhaustion and nerves. Rosella would be all right as soon as she was rested. Meanwhile she was put to bed in her own room. Her father took John aside, and beseeched him to be patient. Brides, he said, were delicate creatures. In time things would be as they should be.

In time they were. Before a week was out, John got into Rosella's bed, and their married life began. She was loving and basically willing, but very shy, so John decided again to be patient. They made love, but Rosella would not remove her nightgown. He had been disappointed to find that the garment had a high button-up neck, the same as her shirtwaists and dresses. After a week or so he sought one night to loosen the buttons at the throat of her gown. To his dismay, Rosella fainted as she had on their wedding day. As before, he hastened to get water to revive her. She seemed slow in recovering, and as on their wedding day, he felt her mother was needed. But when he went to the door to go and fetch Mrs. Norris, he heard Rosella call him in a small voice. He hastened back to her side.

"I'm better now," she said faintly.

"But what happened? What makes you faint like that?"

"I guess it's my nerves."

"I still don't understand," he said.

He thought of discussing it with her mother, but was reluctant for fear that Mrs. Norris would want to know all the particulars, and he was shy about intimate matters. One day he decided that Ada might shed some light on the fainting attacks. He resolved to speak to her when the opportunity came, but before it came, another such spell occurred.

They had been married one month, when John came home one day in a mood for discussion with Rosella.

"Could we talk about our plans, Rosie?"

She looked a bit alarmed, but said, "Of course."

"Let's go to our room."



"MARCELLA'S" WEDDING DRESS



KIM CHANDLER WEARING
ROSELLA'S WEDDING DRESS

ROSELLA'S DRESS NOW
THE PROPERTY OF
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TUCSON, ARIZONA

When they were upstairs, he said, “Rosie, I think it’s time we got a little place of our own.”

“Why should we, John? Mama and Papa are quite willing to have us live with them.”

“I know, but since we did not have our honeymoon trip, I thought it would be pleasant for us to be by ourselves somewhere.”

“It’s cheaper here,” she said.

“Yes, but young married people ought to have their own home. We can get rooms somewhere near here, and later when I am earning more, we can get a flat somewhere. I really feel strongly about it.”

Rosella looked at him, and her eyelids fluttered briefly. He thought for a short moment that she might be going to have one of her fainting attacks. But she did not; instead she said, “John, there may be a very good reason why I should stay here for at least a year.”

He looked at her. “You meant that – already - ?”

“I’m not certain yet, John.”

“A little one?”

“Yes, but as I said, I’m not certain. I’ve consulted with Mama, and she thinks it’s probably – well, yes, she thinks I’m – well –“

“In the family way?”

“Yes – “

“Rosie, dear – well, that’s very, very exciting – “ He put his arms around her. “I love you darling – I guess I’m kind of surprised. I’m – well, I’m really bowled over right now. I didn’t realize this could happen so immediately – in fact, I am just a very naïve boy in things like this. I really thought people usually waiting and hoped for a baby for a little while at least.”

She looked hurt. “And you hadn’t yet begun to do any hoping?”

“No, it isn’t that. Well, yes – to be honest, I must say that that is true. I wasn’t yet hoping. I wanted to have more money – some in the bank – you see. But, now it’s true I’m happy about it – truly, I am.”

“Well, I hope so,” she said.

“But, Rosie –“ he hesitated. “Now, more than ever, I wish we could have rooms by ourselves.”

“John!” she cried. “Don’t you see? I will have to be with Mama this year. I don’t know a thing about having a baby. With Mama I’ll feel confident.

“I want you to be confident with me, Rosie. I’m after all, your husband. We can get rooms by ourselves, and then when the time approaches we can come back here for two or three weeks, even longer if you want. I feel very strongly about this. It’s important to my success. We must make our own little home together.”

But she did not listen to him finish. She fainted.

He did not run for water. He rose and walked to the window, and stood looking out, his brow furrowed, turning occasionally to look at her.

In the middle of August he decided to speak to Ada. It was more difficult than ever for him to consider consulting his mother-in-law. Although it was certain now that Rosie was pregnant, it was not yet openly discussed in the family, and John had no notion of how Mrs. Norris felt about it. He wondered if she shared his own feeling that it was regrettably soon. He felt somewhat embarrassed in her presence. Apparently it had happened immediately.

He told Rosella he was planning her birthday present and must consult with Ada in order to plan a surprise. It seemed the only way to talk to Ada privately.

When he and Ada were alone in the front parlor, he came straight to the point.

“I’m supposed to be consulting you about Rosie’s birthday, but I’ll do that another time. I’ve something more serious to ask you about.”

Ada tipped her head slightly to one side, and raised her eyebrows. “About Rosie, isn’t it? I mean her health?”

“Yes, I’m worried about her.”

“About the fainting spells? Has it happened again?”

“How did you know?”

“It’s gone on for years. None of us has ever known what makes her do it.”

“But Ada, how long has she been having them?”

“What does the doctor say? They did take her to a doctor about it?”

“There’s nothing wrong, he says, except nerves.”

“But what can we do about it?”

“John, have you noticed anything about the times when she has fainted? I mean, something that was the same each time?”

He thought about it. The first time in the carriage on their wedding day, the next time in bed, and the last time the day Rosie told him she was expecting, and he had talked to her of their living in rooms by themselves.

“No,” he told Ada. “Nothing was the same. The situations were all different.”

“But were you arguing?”

“I wouldn’t call it that. And one time we weren’t even having a discussion about anything. Everything was very pleasant.”

“That’s strange. I mean, every time I’ve ever seen her faint, something was distressing her very much.”

“Well, Ada, that would apply to two of the times certainly, but not the other.”

“I imagine that if you think back carefully to all those occasions, there will be something about it that Rosella didn’t like, or else feared. The first time it ever happened when I was a witness was in Central Park. Papa took us all there to skate on the lake. Bert and Rosella and I. It was after the year when Annie died when we had typhoid. I was sickly all that first winter I recall. Well, anyway – Bert could skate and so could I, but Rosella hadn’t ever tried it. The skates that I had outgrown fit her perfectly. We wanted so much for her to learn. We had planned to skate in pairs. Papa and I, and Bert and Rosie. She has always adored Bert; no one doubted he could teach her. When we got to the lake, Rosie changed her mind and decided she did not want to learn after all. Bert kept coaxing her, and she kept protesting that she couldn’t and wouldn’t. He got her over to a bench and he got her skates fastened on. He told her Papa would skate on one side of her and he on the other, and they would support her – they wouldn’t let her fall. Well – they got her up on her feet, on her skates, that is – at the edge of the pond, and all of a sudden she fainted. She just drooped down between them, and her eyes sort of rolled up in her head. We were all terrified. Papa rubbed her face with snow. She came around to consciousness then, and we took her home. Mama had the doctor see her, but he said she was all right and that some young ladies faint at times of excitement. Rosie told us she fainted from fright. She said she was fearful the ice would break and she would drown in icy water.”

“In circumstances like that I can understand a young girl fainting,” John said, “but these times I’ve seen it, were nothing like that. Nothing like fearing drowning in icy water, I assure you.”

“Well, since that first time it hasn’t seemed to take much of an upset to cause it. Sometimes, just some kind of minor family dispute, where matters were going against Rosie. It’s hard to explain, John. She just gets upset very easily. We don’t rush for water or brandy anymore. She always

comes out of these spells in a few minutes. In fact, she hadn't been doing it much of late. It seems to have started up again lately."

"Since I married her," John said.

Ada looked thoughtful. "Yes, that's true, John. There's one thing about Rosella you may not know. It's the way she's grown up. She hasn't had much practice with adversity in her life so far. Her path has run very smoothly, all in all. Of course, Rosie grieved as much as well all did when typhoid took Annie, and when little Jimmy died. But, otherwise things have been much as Rosie wanted them to be. Papa provides so well, he keeps us well-dressed, and our house is very nice. But the thing is that Rosie's had no personal disappointment, like I did when my hair changed after I had typhoid, and – and – other things – I've got teeth that don't look nice and so on. John, I don't mean to be boasting about my disadvantages. It's just that such things tend to chasten a person, and it hasn't been that way with Rosie. She's been sheltered by circumstances and you'll just have to be patient with her. I think she'll get over the fainting spells. She hasn't had time to grow up yet. She'll learn to stand up to things better after a few years. Life toughens our spirits, it seems."

"Or crushes them," John said.

"John, I just don't think Rosie's spirit is that frail. You could ask her doctor yourself."

"No, if he's been consulted and says it isn't a physical problem, I'll just do as you say and be patient. But I won't run for water anymore. I'll just let her come out of it by herself."

"That will work, you'll see. And your spirit will toughen, too."

"Thank you, Ada."

"And I'll be thinking about her birthday, meanwhile."

In later years John realized how gently Ada had explained Rosella to him. She could have said "Rosie is a very spoiled girl, and it was very dull of you not to see it in the years you've known her." No, instead Ada had done her best to preserve the romance between him and Rosella as long as possible. Ada seemed to be confident that Rosie would stop her fainting spells in time if only John would be patient and wait for her to grow up. Meanwhile, he pinned his faith on the thought that once Rosie was a mother she would stop being a child.

The wholesale coffee trade continued slow, and John continued lonesome in his rented room in Cleveland. As April wore on, Rosie's letters sounded plaintive.

My darling John:

I miss you so. I could not stand it if it were not for Baby. How I wish everything were all right again. It will be such a relief. I am more uncomfortable every day, and lying down or sitting up I feel dreadful. It is also getting harder and harder to write. I shall soon ask Ada to take it over for a while.

Georgie succeeded in getting your Grandmother over her to see us. She is quite frail, but remarkable for her age. Georgie had a time getting her ready to come, but managed it. I think the old soul is not really happy here in Brooklyn, but longs to go back to the Islands. She said she didn't particularly want to go back to Nassau, but would rather go to her "old place." Would that be the plantation on Long Island?

Well, this is more than I felt like writing, but knew you'd be interested in what is happening her. I had some pains this morning but they went away.

Ada says she will send the telegram and write you as soon as there is big news.

We all send love and especially

Your loving wife
Rosella

P.S. Georgiana also says she'll let you know when little John arrives. Says she knows it's to be a boy.

It was a boy. And since it had been agreed would stay on duty in Cleveland, he did not get to see his son until he was two weeks old, for his company could not immediately spare him. He got a very welcome letter promptly from Ada, telling him of Rosella's good health, of the baby's pretty face, and flawless little hands and feet, and his "little cap of golden fuzz." She said that Georgie and his own parents and aged grandmother had been to see the little fellow. The doctor said everything was as it should be and at the end of a week Rosella would be permitted to write to him herself. The baby, said Ada, was still unnamed. This surprised John, because for months Ada and Georgiana had been speaking of "little John," and Rosella had not mentioned any other name. She must be waiting for him to decide.

But when he went back to Brooklyn he found Rosella had already decided. She wanted the baby to be called Norris Couch (later Walton) Rahming. [The author's fictional name was 'Matthew Hobbs North' which explains the following explanation.]

"Do you like it? Rosella asked him.

She looked so pretty in her wrapper with blue ribbons, and the baby was so appealing as he slept beside her, that John could only say, "Yes, my darling, whatever you want."

But later, when he went down to the kitchen to fetch Rosie a cup of tea, he asked Ada where Rosella got the name for the baby.

"Well, of course, Norris was our Grandfather Norris' given name, and Rosie always loved him. He was very fond of her, he used to bring her sweets and trinkets."

"And the 'Couch'? That's a family name too, is it?"

"No," Ada said. "Actually not. It's for 'Auntie' Minnie Couch. She's not a real aunt."

"Who is she?"

"A friend of Mama's who lives near here. She's distantly related. She has also been very fond of Rosie."

John smiled a bit ruefully. "Ada, I have also always been very fond of Rosie. As long as I've known her. That's eight years."

"I know John. And I did think the baby would be named for you. Probably the next boy will be."

"Well, I think 'Norris' is a fine name. But why the 'Couch'? 'John Norris' would have been more euphonious name."

Ada smiled. "You know. I didn't want to interfere, John, but I too thought 'John Norris Rahming' would have been a lovely name. It would have pleased Papa, too."

"Then why on earth 'Couch'?"

"Well – " Ada hesitated. "Auntie Couch has no children of her own. Rosella thought she should be little Norris' god-mother."

She hesitated again, then said "Auntie Couch is a very wealthy woman."

The christening was at St. Paul's the day before John returned to Cleveland. It rained hard all afternoon, with no letup and at intervals the heavens seemed to fairly open up and hurl water at the city.

Ada stood at the door of the church waiting for the carriage which would bring 'Auntie' Couch for the ceremony.

“Mercy!” she said to John. “This is the way it must have rained for Noah and his ark. I wonder if ‘Auntie’ will be able to come.”

‘Auntie’ Couch did not come. She sent her carriage with her driver bearing a message asking Ada to be her proxy. She couldn’t venture out in such weather, she said. She was enclosing for young Norris Couch a silver dollar, that when he was grown he might never want for one. She said she must remind everyone, that when the baby was taken “out West” to Cleveland, he would no longer be in her jurisdiction, and she could no longer be responsible for his “ill turns”.

“Oh, pshaw!” Ada laughed. “Isn’t that ridiculous!”

“Yes,” said John. “I trust she is joking.”

“Oh, yes, she is, but she is a strange person. It’s a good thing Rosie didn’t see this. We daren’t give it to her before the ceremony now. That one silver dollar!” Ada laughed again.

“Rosie might faint.” John winked at Ada.

“Well, she might change the name. And there’s no upsetting the rector now. Rosie will just have to wait and hope ‘Auntie’ remembers Norris Couch in her will.”

Auntie Couch never left Norris a penny. When he was grown he changed his middle name to ‘Walton’.

####

GET DOWN ON YOUR KNEES, MARIA

It was a local minister's wife who renamed the town 'North Royalton', well before Henry Martin's time. It had been called 'Wilcox' for its original settlers. The Wilcoxes hadn't stayed. They had gone on farther into Iowa corn – hog country, leaving only a married daughter behind. Then, after she moved to Cleveland when her husband quit farming, people began to talk about changing the name.

The minister's wife was a poetic soul. She suggested the name because the hills around the town were covered with dogwood. In the autumn they blazed with color, a breathtaking scarlet. Some of the townspeople felt the name 'Fire Valley' was a bit flamboyant but the minister and his wife were very well thought of, and objections were few. And folks said it was different and might help make it famous. [The author's fictional name, 'Fire Valley' for 'North Royalton' is explained in this paragraph.]

When Henry and Maria Martin settled there in 1865, it was only a crossroads by a river, with a mill, a blacksmith shop, a general store, a church and cemetery, and a one-room school. Henry's father, Henry Sr, was wealthy. He was an Englishman, and never anything else. He gave his son enough money to stock the farm.

Henry Jr had a bad leg, which had prevented him from staying in the War, but he was strong and vigorous.

By the time the War was over he was well started in farming and Maria had had her first baby, a girl named Mary Ellen (Maidy). [author fiction: '... named Sarah, for the aunt of whom [Maria] had grown very fond.]

Henry was very much in love with Maria. Her diminutive proportions and physical flawlessness had captivated him from the start. She was an ash blonde. The summer sun did not freckle her – it gilded her. It burnished her hair and made her eyes seem bluer. Her hands were small and perfect. He could not bear to have her blister them on the handle of her churn. He insisted that she let him help.

"It's girls' work," she told him.

"But it's farm-girls' work," he said. "You're not used to it. We'll have a hired girl do it."

In the big brick farm on Edgerton Road, on a spring day, Maria Martin was in labor with her fourth child. Henry had gone for the doctor, and the children had been taken to the next farm until after the birth. Maria's sister Belle (Susan Isabella Burns) sat by the bed. She had come from her home in Cleveland to help take charge, and Henry was out of the house most of the time. Sophia did not have much faith in Belle in these matters. She wished their mother could have been with her again, but it was too much to expect her to come from Connecticut every time a grandchild arrived in the world. The trip on the train was tiring and Susan Tibbals Burns was older now. She had come to Cleveland when Belle's son was born shortly after Belle and her husband came West. She had come again when Maria's first was born. That was a daughter, Mary Ellen (Maidy), born so exactly nine months after Maria and Henry were married that Susan questioned her daughter, "You didn't sleep with him before you were wedded, did you?" "No indeed!" Maria had assured her.



Maria Elizabeth Burns (age 17)
Milford, Connecticut 1863
("Sophia Whitefield" in "The Old Brick")
"High Rock, Connecticut"



Maria Burns Martin
age 19, Royalton, O
"Sophia" 1865



Henry John Martin and
Maria E. Burns Martin
1875

"John Henry Heages & Sophia"
after the death of their two
eldest children

Two years after Maily's birth, Jane Amelia (Jenny) was born in 1868, then in 1870 the first boy, Henry Howard (Howd), much to the delight of his father and grandfather. 'Old Henry' was back from England where he had gone shortly after Henry Jr and Maria were married.

Now, two years later, Maria was about to deliver again. She groaned a little.

"Is it bad?" Belle asked.

"Not yet," Maria said, "but I'm somewhat weary of bearing babies."

"You're too small for childbirth. So am I. I told Edmund I couldn't have more."

"You deny him!?"

"He doesn't mind. He has his son now."

"Henry would mind very much. I could never deny him for long. He's a man of great strength and strong feelings."

"Do you love him?"

Maria looked amazed, "Why of course I love him!"

"I always thought you loved Leving Weeks."

Maria spoke patiently. "Belle – of course I loved Leving, the way a young girl loves. But, anyway, why speak of him. It's all over a long time ago. He's been dead for eight years."

"It seemed as though you made up your mind all at once to marry Henry."

Maria waited till a labor pain came and went before she spoke.

"I liked Henry from the start," she said slowly, "but I kept thinking of Leving. Then Leving ran away to the War without telling me, and I couldn't understand it. His mother did a strange thing. She was very bitter that he went. She mailed me all my letters to Leving from Oberlin when I was at Aunt Sarah's house. She told me in a letter that I should read them over. It was a very angry letter. I never answered it. What good would it have done? She blamed my letters for his going."

"What was in the letters, for heaven's sake?"

"Just news and girlish chatter. I did mention Henry Martin quite frequently, but I said nothing to make Leving think I loved Henry."

"Or were attracted to him?" Belle asked.

"He might have decided to think so, but I showed the letters to Aunt Sarah, and later to Mama, and they found nothing in them to make Leving think Henry meant anything to me in a romantic way at that time."

"Well then, his mother was wrong, and just bitter." Belle said.

"Perhaps," Maria said, "but knowing Leving, I must admit the letters may have upset him. I quoted Henry Martin again and again. He must have got the impression I was spending hours in his company. And I really wasn't. But you know, Belle, when you are miles and miles away from someone, how helpless you feel about things. There's nothing you can do about anything." She stopped. "Oh! Oh-o-o."

"Another pain? They're getting stronger, aren't they?"

"Yes, and closer together. I has one while I was talking, but I didn't let on."

"I wish Henry and the doctor would get here," Belle said, nervously.

"Let's keep talking, it keeps my mind off the pains. Henry will be here soon. He's only just had enough time to make the trip. You were asking how I made up my mind to marry Henry?"

"Yes."

"Wait a minute. Here's another pain."

"They are closer together," Belle said.

“Yes, well, about Henry – you remember I stayed on with Aunt Sarah that first winter after I came – after Leving went to the War. I was really angry with Mama. And then, Uncle Thomas died, and Aunt Sarah asked me to stay still longer. Then the War ended and Henry and I and Aunt Sarah went to Cleveland to see the Lincoln funeral train. It was all so strange and sad and unreal. All of us cried. It was strange to see men crying that way, along with women and children. Henry was so crushed by it. He fairly worshipped the President.”

“Most folks did,” Belle said.

“Oh Belle! There were many who despised him.”

“In the South.”

Maria stopped for another pain, then she said, “There were many in the North too. Well, anyway, it was on that drive home from Cleveland that Henry and I drew so very close together in our grief over Lincoln. That night I told him I’d marry him.” She bit her lips now in the grip of another strong pain.

“Belle,” she said, “you just may have to catch this child when it comes. It’s going to be soon.”

“Oh Maria! I can’t!”

“But you may have to.” Maria was perspiring. “I’ve got everything ready. They are all in the top drawer over there. All nice and clean. Singed linen for the cord, scissors, and everything else. The baby’s clothes are in the cradle. Everything for the bath is on the wash stand, lard, pure soap and so on. Lizzie is ready to help with the bath. She’s all right once the birth is safely over.”

“So will I be all right, once the birth is safely over,” Belle said.

Maria began to make strange sounds and Belle wrung her hands. “Oh, why doesn’t he get here?” She paced back and forth from bed to window.

“There’s a carriage coming, way up the road.”

“This child won’t wait,” Maria panted, “look and see if you can see the head.”

Belle looked. “I think so. Everything is bloody. Oh, Maria! Your bed is all wet!”

“Belle! It’s all padded. Now pull yourself together. Get the small blanket from the cradle – the one with the blue edge – oh!” Maria strained and nearly brought the child. She relaxed only long enough to say, “See that it cries.”

“I didn’t know they could come so fast!” Belle exclaimed.

One more pain, and Maria brought the child forth.

“Lift it Belle – by the ankles!”

Belle reached out her hands hesitantly and at that moment the baby cried strongly.

Maria lay her head down with relief.

“It’s a boy,” Belle said making her second useful contribution to the proceedings (the first being her distracting company).

“Now I have two of each!” Maria was still breathing hard but looking better now. “You must take care of the cord now.”

“Oh Maria! I don’t think I can!” Belle ran to the window. “The carriage is nearer now! There’s two men. Let’s wait for the doctor!”

“Belle! Bring me the things from the top drawer!” Maria struggled to a half-sitting position, the baby lying between her legs crying and kicking. “He’s a beauty! Bring me the scissors and the singed linen twine, and the squares of soft linen. And bring two towels.”

Belle brought the things.

“Now tie it about two finger’s breadth from the baby, and again an inch further one.”

“It’s Henry and the doctor Maria! They’re turning in!”

“Belle, you’re no help at all!” Sitting up awkwardly, Maria bent toward the baby between her legs. She tied the cord in two places then took the scissors and cut between. She placed the blue edged shawl over the baby. Henry and the doctor entered the room. Maria lay back down on her pillows. Belle just collapsed in the chair by the window and sobbed.

“I’m just no good at all at such times. I’m hysterical by nature,” she protested.

That evening when the doctor had gone, and Maria was resting, the baby was washed and warm in its cradle, Belle said,

“It reminded me of a snake, the cord did. I’ve always been terrified of snakes.”

The new baby was named Nathan Albert (Nate).

Maria’s two girls (Maidy and Jenny) had been robust at birth and a drain on Maria who nursed them long. The first boy, Howd, was born small, and he always would be. Maria, on the advice of neighbor women, nursed him even longer, hoping to make him a stronger lad, and also in the hope of delaying a fourth pregnancy. Nevertheless, the second son, Nate, had arrived.

The summer of 1874 was hot in North Royalton. After the threshers had come and gone again, Maria was exhausted. A great nostalgia for Connecticut began to consume her. She was weary of the responsibility of the big brick farmhouse that stood, without relief of shrubbery, in the midst of the hot, dry stubble fields. Night and day she dreamed of the smooth, green Common in Milford (Green Point?), and the boxwood hedges of her parents’ home, and of the white lilacs. In the spring, Maria looked so dejected that Henry questioned her.

“What’s the matter Maria?”

“I guess I’m homesick Henry.”

“Homesick?! After all these years! We’ve been married nine years.”

“I know, but I’m tired Henry, and I’d like to see my mother again before she dies.”

“Why,” Henry said gently, “she ain’t going to die, be she?” Henry often liked to talk like his hired man.

“It seems like she might, Henry, before I get to see her. Maybe I just feel that way because I’m tuckered out.”

“I didn’t realize you felt so bad Maria! We’ll see you go East for a visit.”

“But the children...?!”

“The girl can take care of Maidy and Jenny. Just take the little boys with you.”

“I’ll bring home some slips of white lilacs for the yard, Henry!”

Maria left by train the following week. As she rode eastward on the clicking rails, she scarcely dared admit that her thoughts turned to the memory of Leving Weeks, whom she should have forgotten.

Her trip to Milford was a disappointment. For one thing, it rained and rained, and the town looked dismal. For another, as so often happens on sentimental journeys, the scene of past happiness has lost its aura. The spots which nostalgia had gilded were shrunken and shabby. The Common looked weedy and neglected. Maria learned that Leving had died in Libby Prison. She felt old and changed and detached from both her past and present at the same time. She missed Henry and the little girls, and, yes, even the farm. Even so, she told her mother she wanted to stay in Milford at least two months.

“How will Henry get on without you, daughter? Susan Burns asked, “Should you stay so long?”

“Mama,” Maria said, “I’m so tired. I want a little while before I’m in the family way again.”

“But Maria, as a wife it is your duty...”

“Mama! I need a little while, just a little while. Belle feels the same way. Having babies is hard.”
The very next day the telegram came from Henry.

“Maria,” the message read, “you must come home as soon as you possibly can. The girls are both ill with brain fever.”

“You must get down on your knees, Maria,” Mrs. Burns said, “and ask God and Henry to forgive you.”

####

Ellen Maria (Nelle) Martin occupied a unique position among her brothers and sisters. She came at a time when her parents were passing through deep grief and emotional adjustment.

Maria and Henry were crushed after the death of Maily and Jenny. Neighbors came around to comfort them and to recount the stories of their own deceased children, but it did little good. It was true that infant mortality was high. Many diseases took children while parents and doctors could do nothing but sit sponging fevered little brows with cool cloths.

But Maria refused to take this into account. Eight year old Mary and six year old Jane had been in good health when their mother left Cleveland on the train going East. Their skin tanned and their brown hair bleached by the summer sun, they had stood on the platform dressed in blue Sunday finery, holding their father's hand, and waving Maria out of sight. Her last thought had been that Maily still had her pretty baby teeth but one was loose, and her mother would not be there when it came out.

After the funerals, it was absolutely necessary to Maria that she bear all the blame. She had gone on her knees to God and Henry as her mother had directed her. She went about her days in numb silence.

For his part, Henry could not let her take the entire burden alone. He needed a share of it to ease his own grief.

"I should have seen that you were still just a bit of a girl," he said. "I should have known the babies were hard on you. I was selfish not to let you rest longer each time. After all, you aren't like a peasant girl."

But, thin as she was from lost appetite, and weeping, she protested. "I have a duty, Henry. A wife has a duty. It was meant to be that way. It's in the Bible. Mother showed me. I know my duty now."

Her attitude gave no comfort to Henry. "Maria, it should be love, not duty."

"I love you, Henry, but duty is a part of love."

"I don't think that way of it, Maria, but sometimes I'll admit that lust is a part of love. Right now, though, there is nothing of lust in me, only love. We need to heal our hearts. In a year we will feel happier again."

After a while Henry's grieving eased somewhat, but Maria's did not, and presently he realized that Maria could not even begin to heal her heartache until she was again carrying a child.

Maria hoped for a daughter, but the baby that came at the end of July, 1875 was another son.

They named him Frank Stanley (Stan) Martin, after an uncle of Henry's. Maria now had three sons. The baby was strong and healthy although his mother had been in anything but good health at the time of his conception. She nursed him through his first year and on into the next winter. In the spring of 1876 she lost a baby by miscarriage. She was greatly disappointed.

"Perhaps the Lord will never send us another daughter," she said to Henry.

"You're still a young woman, Maria," Henry said, but he really didn't know, as he had never felt sure about the Lord's plans.

That fall Maria suffered an attack of inflammatory rheumatism. She had fever and swollen joints for weeks, and even in the spring was not feeling right, but all the aches and pains went away in the warm summer sunshine.

Dear Jennie birthday born 1868
died Apr. 27th 1874

Rainy Wea. SAT. FEB. 21, 1925 Ther.

This is dear little Jennie's birthday
Cousin Jane was with us the winter
she was born, and I named her
after her. Jane Amelia Martin Pa
had a little sister by that name
she only lived to be a year & a half.
Her Jennie was dark eyed, and
dark complexion, sometimes it did
give her, she asked her Aunt
Belle one day, if she was very
very dark. Aunt Belle replied
no, you darling little bright eyes
he was indeed a lovable child
but God took her to himself
in early childhood - and no
doubt she was saved many cares
and sorrows, for she was quite sensitive.
Belle came in awhile, but it
was raining, so I couldn't ask
her to go to the Post office, to
mail anything for me. She had
had a letter from Sula - Loungs
wife, she said Bobbie was doing
well in school, and that the adopted
sister was proving a very good helper,
had a bath, but for some reason
did not sleep well.



MARY ELLEN MARTIN
called "Madie"
(Saley)



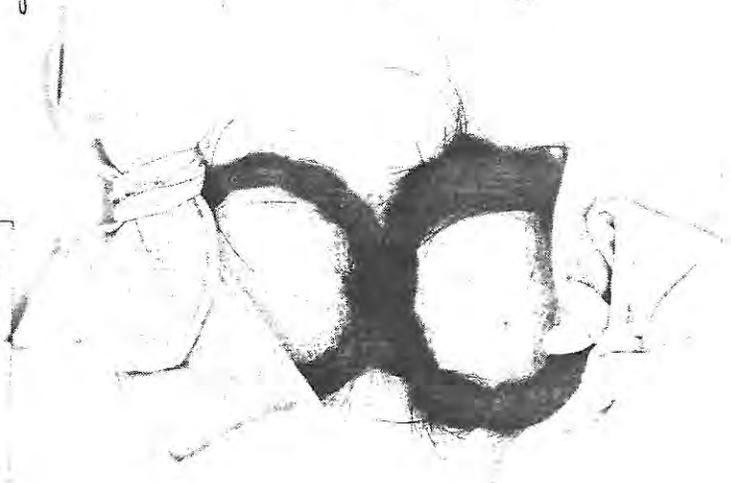
JANE AMELIA MARTIN
called "Jennie"
(Annie)

from Maria Burns Martin's diary

Green Point, April 13th 1874

My Dear little Jenny

I was glad to hear you
were pleased with my letter. Pa said you
did not want me to come back, so I sup-
pose I may stay all summer, my cousin Lizzie
came to see me last night week, with Aunt
Florilla, and cousin John Tibbals, wife, in
the evening, cousin Marion, played on the
Piano, and sang, one piece was about a



Madie and Jennie's hair
Grandma Martin saved these
little braided locks in her
"box of treasures". She saved them
till the last and mentioned them
in her 1929 diary

letter to Jenny from
Maria Martin's her mother

Jenny died two
weeks later

“You’re anemic,” said the doctor. “You must take wine before each meal every day, and you must eat more mutton and beef.”

Henry was worried about Maria and treated her like a fragile doll for a while. He hired extra help for the house. The farm was doing very well. Henry’s father, now called “Old Henry”, was so pleased that he had made his son a present of more acreage and Henry and Maria now had a full section at the corner of Wilcox and Schoolhouse Roads.

Henry had developed the place gradually into a stock-farm, with Morgan horses the main line of business. Old Henry as a hobby, kept a half-dozen riding horses stabled at the farm with the off-hand idea of producing a fast race horse some day. With all these interests, plus the fact that Old Henry was now beginning to introduce him to the real estate business, Henry found it easier to let Maria build her health again.

In the late summer of 1876, she was feeling fine, and like her old self. In the spring the next year a girl was born, healthy, and very pretty. They named her Ellen Maria (Nelle) Martin, and the whole family adored her. The three brothers vied for opportunities to rock her cradle when she cried.

After two stillbirths, Emma Pritchard (Emmie) Martin arrived in 1883, Marian Martha (Merly) Martin in 1885, and Grace Isobel Martin in 1887. Maria was forty-two years old. She was discouraged again because the old pains in her legs had returned.

After she weaned Grace, Maria was shortly pregnant again, this time with William Treat (Bill) Martin. Bill would turn out to be the steadiest and most accomplished of all Maria’s boys, but his birth was the most difficult for her, for he weighed over eleven pounds. She had to get on her knees to bring him forth, even with the help of the doctor, the hired woman, and twelve year old Nelle who insisted on helping. Henry was in Cleveland at the time closing the sale on a house. Two years after Bill’s birth it was thought that Maria was in change-of-life, but nature tricked them, and one more baby arrived in 1892. It was another boy. They named him John Arthur (Art) Martin. By this time Nelle was fifteen, and helping with the care of the younger children. She did not believe her mother was strong enough for any more childbearing. She had not grown up on a stock-farm for nothing. An hour after Art’s birth she faced her father in indignation.

“Pa! For Heaven’s Sake! Isn’t it time that you left Ma alone?”

Henry did not scold Nelle for speaking her mind. He was silent, and then he turned and went out to the barns. But only Nelle could have got off with speaking to him in that fashion. She had been his darling since her birth.

Nelle loved the farm, but she was responsible for her mother’s decision to get her away from its influence as much as possible. Nelle was as competent around the horses as the boys were. At age ten, she had begun to pick up rough language from the hired hands. Her New England bred mother was appalled.

She went to Henry. “Have you heard the rough talk that Nelle has learned on this farm?”

Henry said he had. He said he had whipped Nelle for it.

Maria laughed. “I saw that ‘whipping’. She bested you as she always has. She stayed so close to you that you couldn’t hurt her. Then you both fell to laughing. Henry, whipping won’t work with Nelle, and Henry, soon all the girls will be talking like immigrant farm help.”

“It’s you that hires the immigrants, Maria.”

“Oh, Henry! I don’t look down on these good people, but the farm is rough. Rough things go on. I wish we could move into Oberlin. I do wish the children had the opportunity the town children have. They could attend the Academy. Oh, Henry, it would be so much better for them.”



"THOMAS HEDGES"

“I agree,” he said. But it was three years before he put the farm in the charge of a manager and moved the family to Oberlin. He always brought them all back to the farm in summer. Nelle would have given him no peace at all if he had not.

Before Nelle married and left home, the older boys were already married and gone. When the younger ones were at their studies, Nelle liked to tease them. She had cleaned up her vocabulary somewhat but she was still a tomboy. She had a rough, mocking laugh. It infuriated those at whom it was directed, especially Grace, who aspired to great heights of the intellect. [noetic pharaoh-hood] Grace put on airs which infuriated Nelle in turn. There was a strong measure of jealousy in Nelle’s teasing, but she would never have admitted it. Nelle had good looks and the boys chased her, but she didn’t have much schooling, and maintained she didn’t want it. It was, she said, a ridiculous waste of Pa’s money to send the other to the Academy.

It was during one of the summers at the farm that Nelle met Earle. He had brought a stallion to one of her father’s mares, and there had been a commotion in the barnyard. It was a windy day and the clouds were scudding. There was excitement in the air. The minute Nelle saw Earle she was fascinated. He held the nervous horse with a firm rein. The mare was making a racket in the barn. Nelle was impressed. This man had a way with horses, just as her father had, and he was very strong. Moreover, she had never seen a handsomer man.

Nelle and Emmie were both in the yard watching from a safe distance, but Nelle moved nearer to the men who were discussing the stallion’s bloodlines.

Henry Martin said, “Nelle – you and Emmie go in the house now. I’m going to turn the mare out.”

Nelle turned to Emmie. “You go into the house. Pa says.”

“You have to go too.”

“I can stay. I mean to raise horses myself.”

“You go in with Emmie,” Henry Martin said. “This isn’t young ladies’ business.”

“Oh, Pa! It’s only nature, like all the other animals on the farm. I’ve been around the farm all my life.”

Henry shrugged and went into the barn. Nelle called again to Emma. “You go in. You’re younger Emmie.”

Earle, still holding the snorting horse, looked at Nelle and said, “D’y always get your way?”

“I’m the oldest girl in the family.”

“Oh? How old?”

“Seventeen.”

“And you don’t mind your Pa?”

“Pa don’t really care if I stay. He knows I’m as interested in horses as he is. We’re building our stock up these days. I know the bloodlines of all our animals. I’ve loved the horses since I was tiny.”

“You’re still tiny,” he said, grinning at her.

“I know. I’m five foot one, but I’m strong. I can drive all of Pa’s teams, and I can ride too.”

“That so? Well, if you love the horses you best get inside like your pa told you. This horse here, Prince William, is a mean one with the mares. He’s a terrible one to bite. You might get pretty scared. It’s shocking the way they act so fierce sometimes.”

She looked at him. “I don’t ever get scared and I don’t get shocked either. If I’m upsetting you, I’ll go in the house and pretend I’m a city girl.”



83

EMMA

MARIA

GRACE

He watched her as she flounced into the house. She had talked bold, but she looked pretty and feminine as they came. A girl like that was full of spirit, but he guessed she could be shocked just the same. He'd like to find out.

####

Grace was on her hands and knees under the Queen Anne tree. Beneath the hammock that hung there, the dust was smooth. It was early morning and none of her brothers and sisters were up. Pa was down at the cow barn, of course, and Ma was in the kitchen. Ma had called her early as she had promised.

“I want to be out early, while the dew is still on the cobwebs,” Grace had told Maria, “while the birds are still getting their breakfasts.”

“Why so early, Gracie?”

“Promise you won’t tell?”

“I promise.”

“I’m going to look for the fairies!”

“Oh! Do you know where to look?”

“I know by their tracks.”

“Their tracks?”

“Haven’t you seen their tracks, Mama?”

“Why no Gracie, I don’t think I have.”

“Next time I’ll come get you and show them to you.”

“You’ve seen some?”

“Oh, yes, lots of places! Merly and I have many times, but she says, let’s not show anybody else or it will spoil it. But you can see them, Mama.”

Maria watched Grace from the pantry window. The little girl knelt for a long time studying the ground beneath the hammock. Then she carefully climbed into the hammock and sat quietly. A half-hour later when Maria looked, Grace was still motionless in the hammock, studying the grass all around her.

Maria went out, and walked toward Grace who saw her and put a finger to her lips, and motioned to her mother not to come any closer. Maria went back into the kitchen.

About ten minutes later Grace appeared in the kitchen door.

“I guess I missed them, Mama, but their tracks are there.”

Maria looked up. “Their track are?”

“Yes, ever so clear. Come and see them now while no one is around.”

At the Queen Anne tree, Grace said, “You’ll have to kneel down, Mama. I hope it won’t hurt your knees too much.”

“It’s all right Gracie,” Maria said, kneeling slowly. “Now where are the tracks... Why for goodness sake!”

Grace pointed in the dust where the earth was worn bare from the toes that prodded the hammock into motion.

“You see, they were driving their little wagon,” she said.

“Well I never...!” Maria exclaimed, completely mystified. Across the dust ran a pair of lines that distinctly resembled the trail of tiny wheels, and more amazing than that, between the lines at the properly proportional intervals were tiny curving prints that looked exactly like the hoof prints of tiny horses.”

“There!” breathed Grace. “What do you think of that, Mama? You can see they’ve been here.”

“I can see that somebody has,” Maria agreed. “Did you say that you and Merly have seen these tracks before?”

“Oh yes, a number of times. She’s better than I am at finding them, but a couple of times I’ve found them all by myself.”

“Hm...,” Maria glanced up at the bedrooms windows. She was just in time to see two curly heads duck out of sight.

“Hm... We’ll have to learn more from Merly about this.”

“Merly has really seen the fairies herself, lots of times.”

“Has she now!” said Maria, sounding quite like her hired-girl. “Has she now.”

Maria started toward the house. “Play here ‘til breakfast, Gracie. I want to think a little more about those tracks.”

“Mama, why don’t grown-ups ever believe in the fairies?”

“Because they’ve never seen them.”

“That doesn’t prove there aren’t any, Mama.”

“No.”

“You believe, don’t you, Mama?”

“Yes, for children Gracie, like Santa Claus. Not for grown-ups. For grown-ups there are other things. Now you play here ‘til I call you to breakfast.”

She went up to the bedroom where she had glimpsed the grinning faces of Merly and Nelle at the window. The girls were still looking out at the Queen Anne tree.

“Pretty slow this morning, aren’t you girls?”

They turned around in surprise.

“Good morning Ma,” Nelle said. Merly was silent.

“We were just looking out at Grace,” Nelle said. “She’s outdoors awful early.”

“And I think you girls know why,” Maria said sternly.

Merly looked at the floor.

“Don’t you?” their mother prompted.

“Yes,” Merly said, her head still low.

“And you do too, Nelle?”

Nelle held her head up high. “Well, it really was funny watching her crawl around looking for fairies.”

“Nelle! You’re too old to enjoy being mean to a young child.”

“She’s got to grow up some time,” Nelle said.

“Was this your idea then?”

“No,” Nelle said. “It was Merly’s”

Merly turned on her. “But you laughed! You said I was really clever to think it up!”

“Nelle,” Maria said. “Go down and tell Mary you are going to do the churning.”

“I think it is silly to make such a fuss over a little joke,” Nelle pouted.

“It isn’t a joke to tamper with a child’s illusions,” her mother pointed out.

“She’d find out soon there aren’t any fairies,” Nelle argued.

“She doesn’t have to learn in such a disappointing way.”

“Ma! You’re just protecting her from real things. Life is full of real things, not fairies!”

“She’ll find that out all too soon. Let her believe for a little while longer.”

“Me, I’ve no time for such ideas,” Nelle declared. “I only like the real things. I always have, even when I was Grace’s age.”

“We’re not all alike,” Maria said. Then she turned to Merly. “You may go and sit in the hammock this morning ‘til I tell you you may leave it.”

“Ma! It’s breakfast time!”

“Never mind. Just watch for the fairies, Merly.”

“Ma! Do you know why I did it? It’s because I hate having Grace in the same grade with me. It makes her such a little old smarty!”

“She can’t help that. You were sick and missed a lot of school, remember? Remember, too, that Grace has to wear you outgrown clothes, She resents that.”

“Well, why doesn’t Pa buy her new ones? He can afford it.”

“It wouldn’t be thrifty. ‘Waste not, want not.’ That’s one of the reasons Pa is well-off.”

“What’s the good of being well-off...”

“That’ll be all now Merly! You go out to the hammock now and look at your artwork. If I were you I wouldn’t worry about Gracie’s talents. You seem to be quite an artist yourself.”

Merly went out to the Queen Anne tree. Grace looked up as her sister approached.

“You tricked me,” she said.

“Do you want to know how I did it?” Merly asked.

“I don’t know. I guess so.”

“I made the wheel-tracks with this little forked stick. See? I dragged it along like this. And the hoof prints I made with a little piece of grass. You break it right where the joint is, and it makes these tiny curves. Isn’t it clever? Nelle thought it was.”

“Ma hasn’t told me for sure that there aren’t any fairies,” Grace said.

“You can believe in them if you want to,” Merly said.

“Ma is never mean,” said Grace. “She doesn’t try to spoil everything that is nice.”

After breakfast, Maria took Grace down to the barnyard, and they found some baby chicks. Then they went to see a new colt.

“Aren’t little baby creatures as much fun as fairies? I think so. And look how wonderful snowflakes are.”

“Yes, I guess so,” Grace said. “But aren’t there any magic things like the post of gold at the end of the rainbows?”

“Not things just like that, Gracie.”

“But isn’t there any kind of magic?”

“Maybe there is. At least when you are small the world is filled with wonderful things. Run and get my book of poems, Gracie, and we’ll sit in the hammock for a while and read poetry. Would you like that?”

“Oh, yes!”

“Grace came flying back with the book.”

“Read the one by Wordsworth that I like so much, Gracie.”

Grace began to read, proudly pronouncing the difficult words.

“There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Appareled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it has been of yore: -
Turn wheresoe’er I may,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.”

Grace looked up. “This one always makes you sad, Mama.”

“Because it’s beautiful, that’s why, and it makes me think of Milford, when I was young.”

“I’d like to go see Milford, Mama.”

“Perhaps you can some day, but the last time I saw it, it was different. But perhaps that was only because I had grown up.”

“Shall I read more, Mama?”

“Yes. Skip to that part I like so well.”

Grace began again:

“Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life’s star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy! – “

“I like that part,” Maria said. “We must come from something better than this world.”

“From Heaven, Mama?”

“I think so. But we seem to lose it as we grow up. Don’t hurry to grow up fast. You’ve plenty of time. Keep trailing your clouds of glory as long as you can.”

####

The trouble that ended Nelle Martin's marriage was never talked about by the family. In truth, the family never knew the whole story. Except Nelle's father, that is, and she swore him to secrecy. It was all very strange and Nelle was very proud. She would rather have died than have North Royalton know what kind of man she had married. Nobody but a lawyer and a judge or two in Cleveland every learned why Nelle left Earle.

She had married him at eighteen. She was as pretty as her mother had been, but more vivid, and not at all meek like Maria.

The morning of Nelle's wedding her mother had said to her a little wistfully, "You're marrying even younger than I did. Your father would have given you more schooling if you'd wanted it." "I'm doing what I want, Ma," Nelle said. "I'm not a scholar like Grace and Emmie. I want a lot of kids and a lot of horses."

"I want you to be happy, Nelle."

"I'll be happy, Ma," Nelle said confidently.

After Nelle had gone, Emmie said to her mother, "You're worried about Nelle, aren't you Ma."

"I wouldn't say that, Em."

"You are. I can tell. You don't like him do you. Neither do I. I knew the first day I didn't like him."

"Shush Emmie! He is your sister's husband now. We must all like Earle."

"I never will, Ma," Emmie said. "There's something about him that I don't like."

Earle had thought that Nelle might cry on the wedding night but he was wrong. He knew he was her first, but she had not behaved in the way he expected a girl of her station would. He knew the Martin children were what he called 'coddled'.

"You weren't shocked last night, were you," he stated.

"Why should I be shocked at something that's normal?" Nelle asked him.

"Because you are a young lady of good family, that's why."

"I don't see what 'good family' has to do with things like that. We're all born the same way."

"Yes, but you oughtn't be the way you are. You should be more like your mother is - tamer."

"She'd have been better off if she wasn't so tame."

"How do you mean?"

"Too many babies."

"Don't you want babies?"

"Of course I do. Not thirteen though. Four of Ma's didn't live to grow up."

"Well, I guess we'll have babies, won't we."

"Of course. I'm probably in the family way already."

And she was.

Another time he thought to see her cry was when he slapped her for going horse-back riding against his orders. However, she did not cry; she merely refused to talk to him for two days. He came home from Cleveland one evening when Nelle was five months pregnant. He had been in the city all day. Old Harvey, the hired man, was at the pump washing up. Earle wouldn't keep any young male help around. "...not with a spunky wife like Nelle," he thought. He wasn't sure yet whether he trusted her or not. One of these days she's have to be taken down a peg or two. After the baby came. He should have done it sooner. Of course her spirit was part of the fun of a wife like Nelle. He wouldn't have wanted a wife like his own mother must have been. She never

gave his father much pleasure – too much of a mouse. His father’s second wife was livelier. She was his sister Pearla’s mother. Pearla was a red-hot little thing herself. Earle had found that out, even if Pearla was his half-sister. Pearla has always had a crush on him. Even now he was married Pearla wanted to come and visit him and Nelle.

He walked toward the pump where Old Harvey was drying his face and neck on his shirt.

Harvey looked up and said, “Mrs. Earle hurt herself.”

Earle was startled. “How!?”

“I don’t know.”

“Is she hurt bad? What do you know?”

“I came in at noon and there wasn’t no food ready. She was in her room and hasn’t come out.”

“Was she riding?”

“Not as I know.”

“Damn it! I told you to watch that for me.”

“I was working on the back fence in the pasture. I didn’t see nobody go by.”

“How do you know she was hurt?”

“There was blood on the kitchen floor and a bloody towel in the sink.”

“Blood!” Earle ran into the house.

He tried the bedroom door. It was locked. He called her. She did not answer.

“Nelle! Are you all right?”

A muffled sound came from the bedroom.

“What’s the matter with you? Were you riding?”

“No.”

“I don’t believe you! Did you fall?”

“No, I did not!” Her answer was muffled and angry.

“Nelle! Are you losing the baby? Let me in this minute!”

“No.”

“What in hell happened to you? Where did all that blood come from?”

“I fell and cut myself.”

“Where?”

“On the basement stairs.”

“You fell down the basement stairs?”

“No, I fell up. I was carrying a pan of milk to skim.”

“Well, open the door now and let me take a look at it. It isn’t bleeding anymore is it?”

She didn’t answer.

He raised his voice. “Nelle! Answer me!”

“I’m not coming out. I ruined my face. I broke my tooth.”

“Oh Nelle! No! What tooth?”

“An upper one in the front. It hurts terribly.”

“Nelle, are you crying?”

“No.”

“Come out and I’ll take you to Doc Johnson right now. Put something over your mouth if you’re afraid to have me see you. I think you’re crying.” He knew that would bring her out.

The doctor sent Nelle to the dentist, who said he could fix her up with a porcelain crown, but he recommended a dentist in Cleveland that was particularly good at such cases.

“You go ahead and make it, doc,” said Earle.

“Why don’t I go to Cleveland and get it made?” Nelle asked.

“No. We’ll get it done right here in Oberlin.”

“Pa would pay if it costs more.” It was the worst thing she could have said to him. He was furious.

“I just want to look like I used to,” Nelle said.

“You changed that when you got pregnant.”

In a day or two he told her, “I’ve written for Pearla to come and be with us when the baby comes.”

“You didn’t need to do that. Ma’ll come.”

“Your Ma has enough to do at home, what with the little boys, and Pearla has time on her hands. She can come easy.”

“How come Pearla isn’t married?”

“Because she never found a man as good looking as me.”

“Did she say that? Your own sister!”

“Sure. Anyway Pearla’s only twenty-three.”

“She better start noticing other men than her own brother.”

“Pearla is only my half-sister.”

“How many times was your Pa married?”

“Four times,” Earle said, grinning.

Nelle looked at him a while, but she said nothing.

“Why did you ask?”

“Just interested in my future child’s family,” she said.

“You think your family is something great, don’t you.”

“Who said that?”

“You do think it though.”

“Of course I’m proud of them.”

“All of the Martins are proud, it seems. I passed Emmie on the street the other day and she didn’t barely nod to me.”

“Emmie is shy.”

“Just dame snooty, that’s all.”

“Emma wouldn’t snub my husband.”

“Don’t be so sure of that. And the younger ones are just as bad. They thing because they go to the Oberlin Academy that they are somebody good.”

“Well, what’s wrong if Father can afford to send them to the Academy?”

“When you’re in a high and mighty mood I notice you call him ‘Father’, not ‘Pa’.”

“Oh, for Heaven’s sake Earle!”

“You’re sorry you married a horse-trader, aren’t you? Well, don’t you forget that your Pa’s a horse-trader too.”

“What I’m sorry about now is that I busted me tooth, so just you forget all that nonsense.”

“Why are you so stuck up you never cry about anything?”

“I’ll cry at Pa’s funeral, or Ma’s, and you won’t see me cry until then.”

####

Grace would always remember the night that Nelle came home. It was a clear picture in her memory, although she had not known exactly what it was all about. She and her sisters had been hustled off to bed in a hurry that night, and the little brothers were already asleep. But, nevertheless, Grace remembered the pounding on the front door. The sisters were of the impression that Nelle's horse had shied at something and had spilled her in the road.

But Grace and her sisters, Emma and Merly, had overheard enough of the talk in the house that night between Nelle and her parents, to know that Nell had run away from her husband, Earle. Her parents had poured whiskey down her throat and warmed her up, and put her to bed, and Pa had told her not to worry, that she wouldn't ever have to go back to that man.

Grace and Merly shared a room and they whispered half the night, but they understood little of Nelle's trouble. They did know that it was April and Nelle was to have her baby in July.

Nelle spent the next four or five days in silence in her father's house. No one could say a thing to comfort her. Not her gentle mother, or the father who had always been so good to her. The younger girls upset her because they looked at her with wide, wondering eyes.

Nelle had been a beauty, and she knew she was not beautiful now. Her figure was swollen with the six-months pregnancy. Her face had the discoloration that sometimes accompanies the condition, and this was made worse by the two black eyes she had suffered. She lashed out at Merle or Gracie if she caught them eyeing her.

"What are you looking at? Run along and do your arithmetic!"

In the days when Earle was courting Nelle, they had sat in the parlor on the horse-hair sofa. Now that she was at home again with nothing to do, Nelle had taken to going into the parlor to sit and brood. The horse-hair sofa with its disciplined contours may have been more comfortable for her in the awkward condition, or perhaps she let her mind turn back to the time when she had thought Earle a wonderful person. At any rate, she sat in the parlor and that was where Grace had to practice her piano lesson. When Grace came in to do her exercises, Nelle frowned and said, "Run along out of here."

Grace went to her mother and complained.

Maria said quietly, "Explain to Nelle that you have to practice, dear."

Grace went back to the parlor and climbed self-righteously onto the piano stool, after twirling it screechingly to the correct height.

"You again?" said Nelle.

"Ma says," replied Grace.

Nelle eyed Grace darkly. Her little sister represented everything that Nelle did not have at this time. The main thing was that Grace had no worries – everything lay ahead of her; school, boyfriends, dances, ice-skating, just everything that was wonderful and young. Grace was only eight years old, but she was beginning to be a very pretty little girl. Her dark hair was curly and fell clear to her waist.

Grace was rattling through a series of monotonous finger exercises and drills.

Nelle presently snapped, "Don't you know any pieces?"

"Certainly," replied Grace, "but I always do a half-hour of exercises first."

"My God!"

Grace whirled around on the piano stool, whittling the finger of shame at Nelle, "What you said!"

"What about it?"

“Mother doesn’t allow us to blaspheme.”

“You’re a little prig, aren’t you.”

“I hope I’m a lady.”

“If I were you I’d be out riding horse-back on the farm right this minute!”

“Well, I’m glad I’m not you right now,” Grace turned back to the piano and began playing arpeggios with elaborate flourishes and much swaying on the high piano stool.

Nelle huddled angrily in the corner of the sofa. She had not felt her baby move since the night she was brought home. She wondered if it was still alive, but she had told nothing of her thoughts to anyone. Today she had been feeling badly since she woke up. All at once she let out a hoarse groan.

“Stop that pounding, you heartless thing!” she cried.

Grace spun around. “Why Nelle! What’s the matter?”

“Go get Ma stupid,” Nelle moaned, “hurry!”

When the doctor came to take care of Nelle he had a bad time taking a baby that had been dead several days. Nelle was ill of a fever for a long time after, and they barely succeeded in pulling her through.

In later years she carried a resentment towards Grace, “You sat and played the piano while I was in agony.”

THIS IS HOME NOW, ROSIE

John Rahming was not able to afford to buy or rent a house on Cartwright Street for many years, but he kept it as his goal.

He brought Rosella to Cleveland when his son was nearly six months old. All through the long, lonely summer months he had savored the letters with their reports on young Norris' progress. "Baby is 3 months old, he rolled over today from his back to his stomach. I no longer dare lay him down on a bed and turn away for a moment. I do so much need a carriage for him. I think Father would give me the money for one, but don't know if you would rather I not ask him. I know you did say you wanted to provide everything Baby needs yourself. But he does need it for his airing. Ada says that she thinks perhaps I can borrow one from someone, but I wouldn't be able to take it to Cleveland with me. Of course, you are right that if I wait until I get to Cleveland, I wouldn't have the worry of shipping it. Meanwhile, though, Baby must get along without."

It had worried John not to have enough resources yet, to bestow everything needed on Rosella and the little fellow, but he was striving to find a nice little home to bring them to.

In October he found a little place on a side street north of Cartwright Avenue. It was a suite of four rooms in a larger house that had been converted for light housekeeping. John was very nervous about bringing Rosella and the baby there. It was clean and bright, but very plain and rather sparsely furnished. He had plans to buy one comfortable chair for Rosella soon, to sit in while she was nursing the baby. But he thought about what a contrast the little suite of rooms would be after living all her life in the brownstone front in Brooklyn. She had grown up with carpets and plush drapes, with walnut and mahogany chests, desks, and tables with marble tops. At home, the rooms had hand-painted lamps, crystal candelabra and glass-fronted whatnot cabinets with seashells and curios from Europe. He feared that Rosella would be terribly, terribly homesick. He had been that way himself for weeks after he came to Cleveland last March. But of course, now they would have each other, and that would make a difference. He was pleased that Ada was coming with Rosella, it would be so much easier on the train with the baby. It would mean, of course, that they wouldn't be alone together until after Ada went back to Brooklyn, but the peace of mind gained by having Ada to watch over his little family on the train filled John with gratitude. Ada was such a good person.

Ada had not particularly wanted to make the trip at this time. Her father was not at all well and Ada was worried about him. He tired easily. One day at his office recently he had been taken with some type of fainting spell. He'd rested at home a day or two, and then seemed to be himself again for a time. Ada had been working for him for six years – ever since she had graduated from Packer. She now know how to run the Norris building company nearly as well as her father did, and he could not have done without her.

But now Rosella came, telling Ada that she couldn't possibly go to Ohio without her. Ada suggested that perhaps Georgiana Rahming might make the trip with Rosella, but she vetoed that at once.

"She knows nothing of Baby's needs," she said. "Besides, Georgie is too much in love just now. She wouldn't leave her doctor friend at this time for anything. He is just about to propose to her." Ada sighed. It no doubt was true. And now that Georgie would be married before very long, Ada felt even more than ever her role of maiden aunt.

Ada took her mind from that forlorn subject and put it back to the immediate problem. Perhaps Marcy, who helped their mother with housework on weekdays, would accompany Rosella and the little fellow?

“No,” Rosella said. “Mama already asked Marcy. She wouldn’t consider it. She’s afraid to ride in the cars. Besides, Ada, she’d have to return alone. Marcy is too naïve and simple to go about the country like that. She isn’t worldly enough.”

“Do you really think that I’m worldly?” Ada asked.

“Yes, I do.” Rosella said. “You are. Oh, I know you’re a single woman and all that, but you’re capable. No one would dare try any foolishness with you.”

Ada smiled dryly. “I daresay not.”

At length, Ada agreed to go to Cleveland for a few days to help Rosella “get settled.” Her mother was torn between worry over her husband and worry over Rosella. Ada tried to put her mind at ease.

“If Father gets to feeling too tired,” Ada said, “insist that he come home early each day and rest, Mama. Things can wait ‘til I’m back. All the company’s bills are paid up to date.”

“Oh, I do hope you will hurry back, Ada. But I just don’t know how Rosella is going to manage all by herself. She doesn’t realize how much she has depended on the rest of us all for help with little Norris. She’s going to miss Marcy, most of all, when she has to do all Baby’s washing by herself. She’s scarcely ever touched a soiled diaper herself.”

It was true. When Rosella woke in the morning her mother had already changed the baby, and dressed him in fresh dry clothes, and brought him to her bed to be nursed afterward. Rosella put the baby back in his crib, and went downstairs where Marcy had her breakfast ready and had already started the baby’s laundry. On Thursdays and Sundays, when Marcy was not there, the laundry was set aside for her until the next day.

Two operations in the baby’s care, Rosella reserved for herself; his bath and his airing. In spite of not having a carriage for him, Rosella would often borrow one from the lady next door. Norris’ bath at ten in the morning, was the high point of the day for Rosella. It was a cooing, gurgling time for both of them, but after he had been dried and powdered, Marcy usually dressed him, and carried him up to Rosella to be nursed. When he was bedded down again, Rosella dressed for the day and went downstairs where her mother and Marcy had lunch ready. She usually went out with the baby at three and returned at four, to find her mother and Marcy busy with the evening meal. When Ada and Mr. Norris came home from the office they were ready to admire and hold the baby until Rosella fed him. And so the days went. But in Cleveland it was going to be very different.

Ada spent three weeks in Cleveland, rather than the three or four days she had planned on.

Rosella was in tears when she and John put Ada on the train headed East.

“Oh Ada! Please come back and live with us for awhile!”

“Father needs me, Rosella. You know that.”

“Yes, but what would father do if you were to get married?”

“He’d have another secretary, in that case. But I’m not going to be getting married. You know that, and I am father’s secretary, and I’ll have to continue to be as long as he stays in business, though I don’t know how long that will be.”

“Oh dear! Oh dear!” Rosella cried. “Don’t say that! I can’t bear to think of anything happening to Papa!”

“But Rosella, it’s the natural order of things. We have to grow up now, and Mama and Papa, who have been so busy for so long, and so good to us, must have their chance to rest and live an easy life.”

“Oh dear!” Rosella cried. “I guess I don’t really want to be grown up and taking charge of things. I’d like Papa in charge forever!”

“Well, it can’t be and you know it. You’ve got John now, for that. And Rosie, you’ll only be doing what other girls do when they have a home and baby.”

“I know it,” Rosella sniffled, “and John is very good to me.”

Ada spoke to John now. “It’s our fault John, we’ve been smoothing her path far too long without realizing it.”

“No, it’s my fault for marrying her before I could put her in her own home. Naturally, while she was still at home with her family, she still felt like a young girl. We’ll be all right. All Rosie needs is a little time to get used to the change. She’ll be fine.”

He spoke the words bravely, but he was far from sure that they were true. They would be alone in their little flat now and he would have her all to himself, to the extent that the care of the baby permitted.

That night they would go to bed together for the first time since long before he left Brooklyn to come to Cleveland. He had looked forward to it all through the lonely spring and summer and early autumn. He had been back, of course, to Brooklyn in May, right after the baby came. Nothing had been normal then, naturally. The whole family was in a fine state of excitement. Rosella had been queen of the house, a nervous, tearful woman, happy one minute, hysterical the next. He could not sleep with her for off and on all night she nursed the baby, and the nurse, or her mother came and went according to the baby’s screams. But he had told himself, when we are by ourselves in Cleveland, we will be all right.

But now, the time had come, they were back in their little suite of rooms, and Rosella was sobbing.

“Oh, I wish Ada had stayed longer. Whatever will I do?”

“Don’t you want to have your own home, Rosie?”

“Yes, but...”

“Don’t you want to live alone with me? Don’t you still love me?”

“Yes, of course, but I’m so far from all of the rest of them, from Mama and Papa, and Ada. I’m so frightened John!”

“Let me make you a cup of warm milk dear. And then we’ll go to bed and snuggle the way we used to in Brooklyn.”

She stopped sobbing and looked at him, then she dropped to the settee, and leaned back. Her eyes rolled up and she fainted away. Apparently.

He walked to the window and looked out at the night. Then he turned to her.

“Rosella, I’m not going to get water, and I haven’t any brandy. I hadn’t thought it was going to be this way. I thought you would be more grown up by now. I’m going to be, because tomorrow is a working day for me. Come whenever you are read.”

####

In those first years in Cleveland, John Rahming was to attribute the success of his marriage to the amiable lady who owned the house where they first started housekeeping. In later years, he frequently reflected that it would have been better if Rosella had never met Mrs. Hanney. She lived downstairs, and since Rosie always referred to her as “Mrs. Hanney downstairs” John called her “Mrs. Downstairs.”

She taught Rosella many housekeeping skills, and inspired her to be a good cook.

She found her crying in the basement the day after her arrival, crying over the dirty diapers.

“Why, you poor girl, you’re just homesick, aren’t you?”

“There’s just so many of these horrible diapers to do! At home I never had to do them. I’m just a horrid spoilt girl!”

“Now, Now. You’ll learn. I’ll tell you a secret about doing diapers. Never, never let them accumulate. Keep up with them. Always rinse them out right away, as soon as you’ve changed them. Then rinse them and boil them all every day, and hang them out if the weather’s at all good. Even in the winter when it makes your fingers get cold. You know what I do? I heat my clothes pins in the oven, and get them nice and hot!”

“Really!” Rosie said admiringly. “How clever of you!”

“We’ll do it today, and you’ll see. It’s nippy outside. There’ll be a frost tonight for sure. By the way, can you fix stuffed peppers?”

“Mama and Ada used to fix them,” Rosie said.

“I’ve a whole big basket of them from the country. I’ve a sister out near Oberlin. They’ve already had a frost out there. It’s further from the Lake, you see. Can you use some peppers and tomatoes? I use celery, and onion and bread crumbs and tomato and cheese and seasoning.”

“And meat and rice?”

“Oh, no – no meat. I’m a vegetarian. I used eggs and cheese and nuts instead.”

“Why not meat?”

“Two reasons. I love animals, and meat isn’t good for you.”

“Oh!”

“Would you like to have me show you how to make the peppers? Come down this afternoon while Baby’s sleeping. You’ll have a nice surprise for your husband’s supper.”

That night Rosie was filled with enthusiasm when she told John about her day.

“Aren’t the peppers good?” she asked.

“Delicious!”

“Mrs. Hanney downstairs showed me how.”

“Splendid!”

“She’s wonderful! She talks all the time. I forgot to be homesick. She asks you questions and doesn’t wait for you to answer. She has a most interesting religion. She doesn’t believe in anything bad. She thinks that all bad things aren’t real, like death and pain and greed.”

“She’s a Christian Scientist?”

“Oh, you know about it?”

“Yes, I know about it.”

“It sounds so interesting!”

“Well, but we’ll still be good Episcopalians, won’t we?”

“Oh, John! You’re teasing me! But doesn’t it sound like a wonderful way of thinking? That all the horrid things in the world aren’t real?”

“Well, if it got you past the dirty diapers today, it’s truly wonderful.”

“Oh, John!”

A year and a half later Rosella returned to Brooklyn for the birth of her second child. John tried to persuade her to remain in Cleveland, and to have Ada come on for the confinement. But Rosella wanted to be with her Mama and Papa too, and to be in her old room in the Fleet Street house.

“I’d like to see all my old friends at home.”

“This is home now, Rosie.”

“But Brooklyn will always be my real home till the day I die. I plan to be buried in Greenwood Cemetery.”

“All right. That’s all very well, but now we’re dealing with birth, not death. Forget about Greenwood for at least a few years!”

“But I’ll be much better off if I’ve got Mama and Marcy and Ada when the new baby comes.”

“Three handmaidens?!”

“What do you mean?”

“I mean, do you really need three handmaidens?”

“John, I think you’re trying to say something that isn’t kind.”

“I just wish you were a little more self-sufficient.”

“I think I’ve done very well since I came to Cleveland. You said so yourself, several times.”

“You have! You’ve learned housekeeping and cooking very nicely and I’ve been so proud of you. But why can’t you stay here with me and have the baby? Pioneer women went into the wilderness with their husbands and had their babies.”

“And a lot of them died too!” triumphantly.

“Yes, but Cleveland is a far cry from the wilderness. Ada would come and I’d hire a nurse for a week or so. I can afford that now.”

“Please John! I’ve got my heart set on going to Brooklyn. For one thing, I want to see Papa again. Ada and Mama don’t think he’ll live much longer.”

John couldn’t [honorably] argue with that, so [even though he sensed it was a tangential issue wanting a much shorter visit, once again, like so many before and after him] he gave up. Rosella left for Brooklyn in April, 1888, two months before the new baby’s expected arrival. Mrs. Downstairs, who had a great desire to see New York and Boston, went with her to help care for Norris, who at nearly year years was a very obstreperous child. [I think, to give him his due, Jane’s Dad may be getting some biased press here.]

In early June Rosella gave birth to a girl, whom she named Ethel. She was a blond baby as Rosella herself had been, not dark like Norris. The birth was an easy one according to the doctor, but Rosella thought otherwise.

“I had forgotten what a horrid business having a baby is. Well, now I have a boy and a girl. I really don’t have to go through it again, do I?”

Mrs. Downstairs had returned to Cleveland long since, and now Ethel was a month old and her father was anxious to see her. But events were again working against his domestic life. Rosella could not travel alone on the Pullman cars with the two small children, she said. She wrote to him outlining the problems.

“In the first place, Ada can’t come with us, for Father is selling the business and Ada is spending a lot of time in the office explaining things to the new owner. Father only goes over there once or



NORRIS WALTON RAHMING
(COUCH) 18 MONTHS

" MATTHEW NORTH "

twice a week now, to talk with them. He really shouldn't do that much; his heart gives him so much pain in the chest, especially at night when he tries to rest. He says he feels as though a horse were sitting on him. Mama worries so much about him that it is making her sick. You were wondering if Georgie might be able to come with me. John, she is much too busy getting ready for the wedding. She is having the fittings now for her gown and couldn't possibly get away. John, the wedding is just one month from today. I do so much want to go to it, and it would be safer for me to travel with Ethel after the worst of the summer heat is over. So many babies die of summer complaint, it terrifies me.

John, ask your boss again whether you can't get time to come East for your own sister's wedding. Georgie is counting on your coming. Just think, if she had waited two more years to get married, our little Norris could have been the ring bearer. Well, anyway, if you come for the wedding, we can all go back to Cleveland together, a happy family of four."

But it was not soon to be. John could not get away for Georgiana's wedding. And in September, when Ada had been considering making the trip back to Cleveland with Rosella, things went awry again. Mr. Norris took a really bad turn and was forced to take to his bed. This postponed everything indefinitely.

John was convinced that if Norris were not such an unruly child Rosie could have made the trip without Ada's help, but Norris was at the stage when, as Rosie said, "he gets into everything and he won't mind me at all."

Rosella and the children were still in Brooklyn when Christmas came. John went East to join them and to see his daughter for the first time. When it came time for them to start for Cleveland, Rosella came down with quincy sore throat and couldn't make the trip. John returned to Cleveland alone and embittered. It was obvious that Rosella preferred to be in Brooklyn without him. He felt that if she really wanted to be with him she would have managed to come home sometime in the last eight months.

In January, Francis Norris grew much worse and the doctor said it was "a matter of a few weeks." Rosella stayed on. "I would not leave Papa's side now," she wrote. "He has been wonderful to all of us, John. You would not want me to walk out now. I know that it does not seem fair to you to have me stay away so long, but John, we are young and we have a long, happy life ahead of us. Papa has so little time..."

Again, he could not argue with her reasoning. It was true that Francis Norris had been wonderful to them both, and he would be very sorry to see him go. His father-in-law was too young to die, and his had apparently been a very happy marriage. But now John was put in the miserable position of wishing that the end would come, for he knew that Rosie would not come back to Cleveland until it was all over.

In the middle of February John got a special delivery letter from Ada.

Dear John,

Our dear Papa died last evening at eight o'clock. We thought of sending you a telegram, but they are so upsetting and leave so many questions unanswered that I told Rosella I would write you a letter. We are all in deep grief, of course, but Mama is bearing up better than I expected, better than Rosie certainly. Actually, I don't believe that Mama realizes it yet.

Now, John, it is one thing to grieve for loved ones who are gone, but the living are more important, and please do not think that all of us here have forgotten about you. You have probably just about decided that Rosella will be here in Brooklyn forever. I wouldn't blame you if you did. Last night I had a talk with Bertie [brother Albert Norris] and with Mama, and we



MRS JOHN C. RAHMING III
(ROSSELLA WALTON NORRIS)
born in Brooklyn, N. Y. 1861
died MT. VERNON, O. 1936

about 1887

"MARCELLA WINTON NORTH"
"MARCY"

decided what we will do. We decided that after the last difficult weeks with Papa so ill, we have all been under great strain. It would do us all good to be somewhere else for a while. The house will seem terribly empty without Papa. So Bertie and Judith want Mama to come to them for a while. And so, John, finally, Rosella and the babies will be coming back to you. I will now be free to come with her as soon as things are taken care of here.

Papa will be buried day after tomorrow in Greenwood: services will be at St. Paul's of course. I wish you could be here with us. Papa was very fond of you, and believe me, it was not his wish that kept Rosella here so long. He often said to her, "Daughter, you must go back to your poor husband. Don't stay on my account." And Rosie would say, "As soon as you get better, Papa." Well, I guess he is better now, John. He has certainly gone to his reward. Papa was always kind, and always honorable. He had nothing to be ashamed of in his life that I know of. It is best that God finally took him, for he had much pain, lately. His heart was failing, digitalis had kept him going for some time, but finally nothing helped.

Rosella seems utterly prostrated today, but she promises to write you soon herself. We will let you know what day we shall leave, and what train to meet.

John, forgive my mentioning something that no doubt is not my concern, except to the extent that I am involved in it. You are probably thinking that every time Rosella has a baby, she would leave you alone in Cleveland, and come home to us in Brooklyn to stay for weeks or months on end. But, do not fear, it would never happen that way again. Our home here will be changed without Papa. It will not be for Rosella the way it was when she was a girl. When she is expecting a baby again, she will no doubt be happy enough to have Mama come to her in Cleveland for the confinement. I would always be happy to help out of course. John, I'm telling you all this to prepare you for Rosella's return with the children. She has been here ten months almost, and will need to adjust again to managing her own home. I will stay for a short time to help, but only as long as you feel my presence adds anything to the wellbeing of your little family.

Mama and I are both aware that we tend to spoil Rosella when she is here, but it is hard not to, somehow. Marcy, of course, is the worst that way, and she also spoils little Norris. She has always waited on Rosie. But with four women here in the house, the burdens are light on all of us, except Marcy, who is a very whirlwind for getting work done.

John, Rosella will be all right again in her own home, though grief over Papa will depress her for a time, I know. One thing I can tell you, she has said to us, day after day, as long as she has been here, "Oh, I am so lonely without John." So we know you are always in her thoughts. You will be amazed at how Ethel has changed since Christmas. She is beginning to creep. Well, you will see soon, for yourself.

Yours affectionately,

Ada W. Norris

I'M GOD'S PERFECT CHILD

The trolley cars did not run on Cartwright Avenue. When John Rahming came home from work in the evening he took the Grand Avenue trolley out as far as 75th Street and walked through to Cartwright Avenue. Going across 75th was a five-block walk. It was pleasant and beautiful enough in mild weather, but in the heat of summer or in stormy winter weather he found it hard at the end of a long day.

John Rahming was in his forties now. It had taken him nearly eighteen years to realize his objective of living on Cartwright Avenue. Back in 1886 when Rosella was still in Brooklyn waiting for Norris to be born, John wrote her every evening from his lonely room. He had talked often about Cartwright Avenue and Grand Avenue, where the mansions of the Cleveland millionaires stood in the center of spacious green lawns with curving drives leading to porte cochères.

Rosella had come back to Cleveland for the second time in 1889 when she returned after Ethel's birth and the death of her father. She had come with two babies, and with Ada to help her "for a while." Ada had stayed a month, and then over Rosella's protests she'd gone back to Brooklyn to dispose of her father's personal things before her mother came back to Fleet Street from her son Bertie's home.

As soon as Ada left for Brooklyn, Rosella turned for moral support to her old friend, Mrs. Hanney. She was no longer "Mrs. Downstairs," for John had rented a larger place on Sloane Avenue during Rosella's sojourn in the East, but it was close by, and the first thing Rosella did on returning to Cleveland was to load both babies into the carriage and set off to visit her friend. With Ada gone, Rosella sought Mrs. Hanney's company more and more.

One evening at dinner she announced to John, "I've decided to become a Christian Scientist."

"Why would you want to do that?"

"Because I believe in it absolutely."

"But how can you reject the church you grew up with?"

"I've been reading what Mrs. Eddy has written. She tells us what the Bible really means. That only God is real. That man is the perfect child of God. When you know the Truth you can heal the sick."

"Won't you go to Trinity with me anymore?"

"John, I was hoping you'd take up Christian Science with me!"

"I don't know. I'm an Episcopalian. I should feel all out of place in another church. I'd miss the good Liturgy I'm used to, and the hymns. You know how I love the hymns."

"But this will change our life!. We can triumph over our problems. We can demonstrate that sickness and sin are not real, they are contrary to God."

"We haven't been sick or sinful, Rosie."

"I wish you'd take me seriously, John."

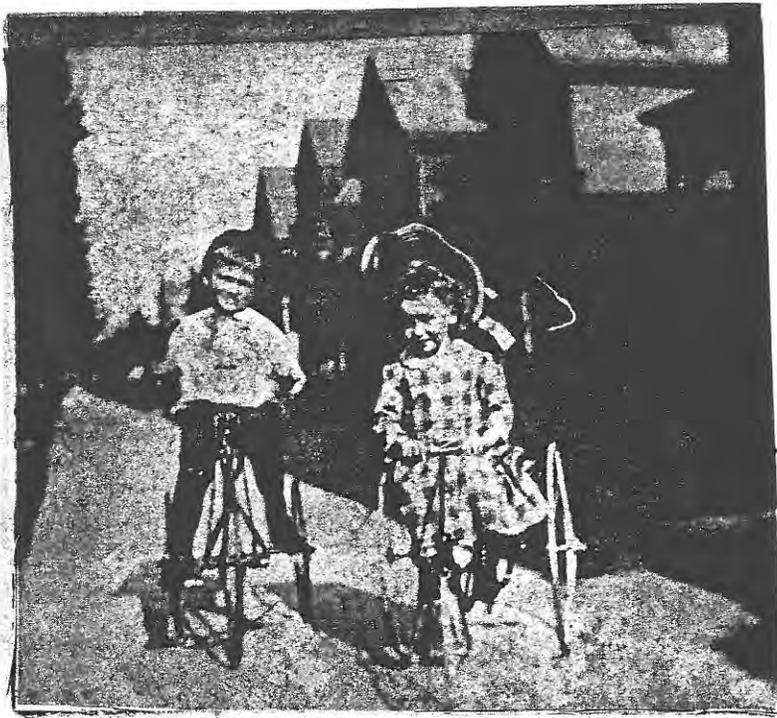
He looked thoughtful. "You really think it helps you?"

"Oh yes, indeed I do!"

"More than prayer?"

"But now I understand prayer, John. I understand more about everything. We will have more harmony in our life. Everything I do for all of us will reflect harmony."

John thought about it after talking with her. Perhaps it was what she needed. Perhaps it would help her in raising the children. She seemed to be quite helpless when it came to being firm with



Norris
and Ethel
Rahming
about 1894

"Mattie"
and "Edie"



Norris
and Ethel
about
1889

"Mattie"
and
"Edie"

Norris. Of course, the boy, at that time was not yet three years old, but even at that age there were many things that he must not be allowed to do such as torment his baby sister. There was a great difference in the way Rosella said “No, No, Norry.” and a good firm “No!” that would make an impression on him. And perhaps a gentle spank?

John was forced to admit that both times when Rosella had been confronted suddenly with the task of caring for her family all by herself without the help of her sister, mother or servant, Mrs. Hanney had come to the rescue and talked her out of her tears and despair. Perhaps the woman’s religion or philosophy, whatever it was, had real value, at least for Rosie. Or maybe it was just Mrs. Hanney’s sunny disposition and her determined approach to life. Maybe the religion accounted for her disposition.

He went to Rosella in a day or two.

“I’ve been thinking about it. If you want to take up Mrs. Hanney’s religion, I have no objections.”

“Oh John! I’m so pleased! And will you join me?”

“Well, I’ll investigate it. Is there some literature I can read on the subject? There’s a book isn’t there?”

“Oh, yes, and I’ll borrow it for you or we could buy it.”

“Borrow it first. Well, if you want one of your own, buy it.”

“Oh, John. I’m so pleased!”

“That’s good. I want you to be happy, Rosie. I want us both to be happy, the way we were for a while.”

She knew what he meant. A tiny shadow of a frown came over her brow. He was for a moment reminded of her old fainting spells. But after a moment of hesitation she gave him a serene smile and said, “John, God teaches us that in marriage it is the pure and spiritual that matters most.”

During the first years after Francis Norris’ death, Ada and her mother stayed on in the Fleet Street house. Ada no longer had her work at her father’s office, though she’d been offered work there by the new owners. But she found life exceedingly tedious at home. She loved her mother dearly, but there was no challenge in their daily living. It was all too quiet and the same every day. The only way they changed their routine was by cooking with as much variety as possible. But one day, Esther Anne Walton Norris said, “You know Ada, I don’t know why it is, but food doesn’t tempt me anymore. Even the things that were always our favorites don’t seem to have the savor they used to have.”

“It’s because there’s only two of us to eat it. Papa always complimented us on how good everything was. And Rosie! My, how she used to eat your Boston brown bread, and corn fritters, or your creamed eggs and asparagus. You and I always liked to cook because they loved to eat it – Papa and Bertie and Rosie made it seem worth the effort.”

“Yes,” Esther Norris said. “And Annie and Baby Jim too.”

“Oh, yes,” Ada said softly. “But that’s a long time ago.”

“They’re all gone now.”

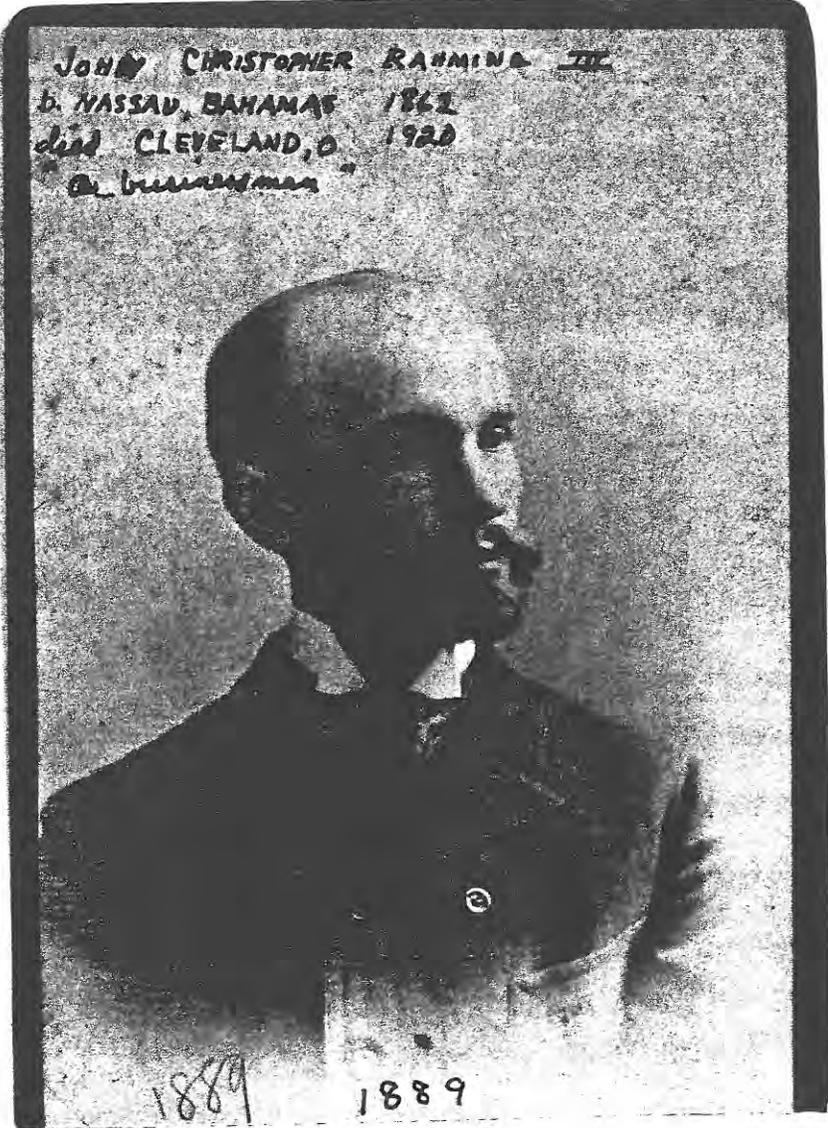
“Not Rosie nor Bertie, Mama,” Ada said. “Nor I.”

“No, of course, that’s true. But Brooklyn doesn’t seem the same anymore, Ada.”

“Mama, I think that you should live near Rosella. Leave Brooklyn and move to Cleveland.

Rosella and her family would make you happy. You hardly ever see Bertie and his Judith. You’ll

JOHN CHRISTOPHER RAHMING III
b. NASSAU, BAHAMAS 1862
died CLEVELAND, O. 1920
"a businessman"



"GARRETT NORTH" III)

never be as close to Judy as you are to Rosella. You need your grandchildren now, Mama. It's a natural thing."

"If I went to live in Cleveland, you'd come too, wouldn't you, Ada?"

"Mama, I can't imagine me anywhere but Brooklyn. I guess I'd just stay here. I like to go to Bergen Beach and Bath Beach in the summer, and Prospect Park."

"But you wouldn't want to live here all alone, Ada."

"We'll see. We don't have to decide in a hurry. But you might begin to think about it, Mama."

In Cleveland, Rosella had begun to think about it too. By 1893 she had converted completely to the faith of Mary Baker Eddy. But she was not content to be a believer. She had set her hopes on being a Christian Science healer. She was making plans to go to Boston where the Mother Church was. There she would study to be a practitioner. She talked to Mrs. Hanney, whom she now called "Aunt Millie," for as such she was known to Norris and Ethel.

"I'm ever so eager to begin studying" she told her old neighbor. "Just think, if I'd been in Science four years ago, Papa need never have died so young. We'd have made him well and vigorous again. He was sixty-five – that's too young to die. John's grandmother is eighty-five and his mother writes us that the old soul is in better health than they are. I suppose it's because she has a more absolute belief in God and knows that God is Life. Do you suppose that is how it is? She isn't in Science, of course."

Aunt Millie hesitated. "I don't know all about those things yet. I've only read part of the book. Maybe when you go to Boston and study, you can explain to me the parts of Science that I don't understand, like about death."

"Death is nothingness," Rosella said. She was pleased that since reading Mrs. Eddy's textbook, she was the one who was teaching Science to her friend. "What we think we see as death is not the end, but merely a change. Mortal existence is like a dream, we dream our body is material. Well, Aunt Millie, I want to know more about these things myself. I've read the book twice now, but it's sometimes hard for me to find the time to study, what with the children and all."

"After they've grown older, you can go to Boston." Aunt Millie said.

"Oh, I don't mean to wait that long. Norris is six and Ethel is four, they'll be just babies for several years. But last night it was revealed to me what I must do."

"What's that?"

"Why, I've written this morning to Mama and Ada. I want them to come and live with us. Then I'll be able to go ahead and study. Mama can take care of Norris and Ethel and Ada can do typing for people. John always has typing to be done, and I'm very poor at it."

But things had not gone precisely as Rosella had planned. Ada wrote from Brooklyn that she felt it was a fine idea for Mama to move to Cleveland, since she was not happy in Brooklyn since Papa's death. Perhaps Rosella and the children could cheer her up a bit. She, herself, however, would remain in Brooklyn for the time being, at least. In the first place, she did not feel it fair to John to have so many in-laws to put up with in his home. In the second place, she explained, the only friends she had beside family, were in Brooklyn – all her classmates from Packer Institute, including of course, Georgiana. Ada sometimes cared for Georgie's new baby when she and her husband went to the theater or some such outing. But, Ada wrote, perhaps the most important reason for staying in Brooklyn was that her own living situation would be taken care of – she had been offered a position as secretary-companion right here in Brooklyn. It was the perfect opportunity, she said, for "a spinster like myself." And her new employers would be none other

than Uncle and Auntie Couch, she who was Norris' godmother and who had given him a silver dollar at his christening.

Rosella quickly wrote back that she could not understand how Ada would place Auntie and Uncle Couch's interests ahead of hers and Mama's. She was hurt.

Ada wrote back that at Uncle Couch's she would be paid a salary in addition to room and board. This, she said, would give her more independence whilst living in a sheltered home safe from the buffeting of going out into the working world. She appreciated the fact that Rosella's home was sheltered too, but there her position would be different. She would feel as though she were being supported by her brother-in-law, and she was not prepared to live under those arrangements. She would, however, escort Mama to Cleveland on the train when the time came. But first, the Fleet Street house would have to be sold, and the furniture disposed of. On second thought, it would be better to bring Mama to Cleveland first, in order to spare her the pain of witnessing the breaking up of the home where she had lived so many happy years with Papa. Ada said she could manage that business (with Bertie's help) after bringing Mama to Cleveland.

And so it had been that in late April of '93 Ada had brought her mother to John and Rosella's home on Sloane Avenue. They were there in time for the celebration of Norris' seventh birthday in early May. Ada made what the family had always called her "famous sponge cake," and she frosted it with a glossy white boiled icing, and put Norris' name on it with tiny candles. Before the cake was cut Ethel put her finger in the icing and Norris pulled her hair very quickly and very hard. Ethel sobbed for fifteen minutes and didn't eat her cake.

"You ought not hurt your little sister, Norris," his grandmother said. "You are a big boy now, and should always be nice to Ethel."

"She poked my cake," Said Norris.

"She's only five years old," his grandmother reminded him.

"I remember when Papa spanked Bertie for pulling my hair," Ada recalled.

"Norris should be spanked now," his father said.

"Not on his birthday!" Rosella argued. "He didn't mean to pull Ethel's hair."

"That's ridiculous!" John said. Certainly he meant to pull it. And he doesn't have a right to be a bad boy on his birthday."

"We must all express perfect Harmony," Rosella said nervously. "Love is reflected in Love."

"I'm God's perfect child," Norris recited. "There is no bad."

Ada stayed until June for little Ethel's birthday and then returned to Brooklyn and Fleet Street. The day Ada came home to Fleet Street, she noted immediately the signs of neglect her six weeks' absence had caused. The courtyard was cluttered with bits of paper and last winter's leaves blown in on spring winds. Mama's hydrangea bushes needed water badly, her climbing rose had not been pruned. She and Papa had always come out into the court on the first warm Sunday afternoon in the spring, and trimmed the dead wood from the rose. No it looked neglected, and rank. Mama had forgotten in this spring, or else she'd lost interest in it after Papa died. Papa had loved that rose. It was always in full bloom by July Fourth. It was covered with buds again this year despite its lack of care.

The house smelled stale from being closed, but still, it smelled like home. A lump came in Ada's throat. It was so strange coming home this time alone, knowing that so soon it would no longer be her home. Tonight she would sleep here all by herself, something she had never done before in her life. She was not frightened, but she was overwhelmed with a sense of time and change. Although she was thirty-six years old, she had felt this afternoon when she entered the house

alone, as though she had just caught a fleeting glimpse of her childhood as it vanished forever down a long corridor.

She went to her room, and unpacked her shirtwaists from her straw telescope bag, and lay down on her bed to rest. She could not relax. She got up and wandered from room to room, surveying the possessions the family had accumulated over the years. The house had always been more than adequate for them even when they were seven. Annie's room still contained her furniture, though Mama had given away her clothes to the poor. A dust-cover protected the bed, and beneath it, a lump on the pillow was made by Annie's doll which Mama had never been able to dispose of. Ada decided immediately to give it to Ethel.

Baby Jim's room had been converted into a guest room, and contained no reminder of the little boy who had tumbled from the railing to the hard stone area below.

Rosella's room still contained most of her girlhood treasures. On her dresser stood a bisque angel, and a shepherdess with her lamb. On the wall was her framed cross-stitch sampler worked by their grandmother, Rosella Ursula Houzelot (whose father came from France) when she was ten years old.

Ada had wondered that Rosella had not taken these and other keepsakes after she left home. It appeared that she was not yet adjusted to the idea that her home henceforth would be with John wherever he went. Indeed, after marrying him, she had spent many months in that same room of her youth.

Once Ada had asked Rosella about her china bric-a-brac and whether she'd like to take them to her new home. Rosella had said, "No, I like to think of them here in my room at home." Ada had almost said, "But there'll come a day when Mama and Papa will be gone, and the house will be sold to other people." She hadn't said it. Rosella never wanted to face life as it really was.

Perhaps Rosella counted on Ada to maintain the old home after their parents were gone. She had always refused to listen to any discussion of the sale of the brownstone building where she'd grown up. Ada had given due consideration to the idea of staying on by herself, in the Fleet Street house, and she had rejected it. With its four floors and basement, it was far too big unless she were to take in roomers or boarders, and, for many good reasons, she did not. To make a career of housework was all very fine for a woman with a husband and children, but not for a spinster. There was no pride in it. Papa had known what he was about when he gave her her typewriter for her graduation present. Papa had known she would never marry, but he had given her a pride in her secretarial skills and in her love of literature and history. No, she would not run a boarding house. She would prefer to always remember the place as it had been.

She wandered downstairs to the kitchen and made herself a cup of tea, and found some crackers, and preserves and took them to the dining room. She sat in her Papa's old place at the head of the table, and pondered the duties before her. Ever since Papa had died, Ada had been the real head of the family. It should have been Albert, who was a man, but since his marriage, Bertie seemed to have been swallowed up by his wife's family. He was an architect and his father-in-law, like his father, was a builder. Bertie was always too busy to visit his own family, except on Christmas and his mother's birthday, when he and Judith came to call with gifts.

As she sipped her tea, which she found very comforting, Ada looked about the dining room.

There were two china cupboards filled with her mother's precious china, Spode and Wedgwood, and Haviland, and little figures of English and French porcelain. On the sideboard, were Mama's dearest treasures of all, her crystal candelabra. Mama had left it up to Ada to decide what things to save. In recent years, Mama had left more and more to Ada, and when she



ROSELLA URSULA HOUZELOT

"MARCELLA MONTAND (TAYLOR)"

The family's French connection

left her home for the last time, she had looked around and simply said, "Use your judgment, dear. You'll just have to sell most of it."

At Uncle and Auntie Couch's house, Ada would have a fine large room. She would bring a few small items there when she moved in, but there would not be room for furniture. It was too bad. Everything here was so fine, and what Rosella and John had in Cleveland was cheap and second-hand. Ada had asked Mama if she would like to have some of her furniture shipped to Rosella's home. "I know Rosie and John would be pleased to have it there. They're still struggling to make ends meet." But Mama had become nervous about money now that Papa was gone. She felt a widow must be extremely thrifty. "I would cost too much to send it to Cleveland," she said. But Ada had resources of her own. Papa had arranged a trust fund for Mama, and after Mama's death Bertie, Ada and Rosella would inherit equally. But Papa had known that Ada would never marry, and he wanted to give her a degree of independence. He had left the house to her. He had known she would always look after Mama if Mama needed her.

Ada wondered whether John would ever be really prosperous, the way her own Papa had been. Papa had been really happy in his home life. Happiness helped make a man successful. Ada was certain that John was not happy. He and Rosella had been married eight years, and John's face revealed something to a person as discerning as Ada. Ada respected her brother-in-law, for he was a kind and gentle person who shared her own love of poetry, history, and the old Episcopalian hymns of their childhood. On this last trip to Cleveland, Ada felt that the youthful enthusiasm had all gone out of him, to be replaced by a strange quiet that touched on bitterness. Ada knew that his lack of real success in business might have been the principle reason for that, but she felt that that was not all of it. It was Rosella. She had been a great disappointment to John, Ada suspected, but she felt that she could not understand it all, for she knew so little of men and marriage. Some things about Rosella, of course, had long been obvious to Ada and others – that she was frivolous, and a bit flighty at times, that she frequently acted like a little girl instead of the matron that she was. Perhaps John had lost patience with that at last, although Ada had long been under the impression that men were attracted to such women. Mama had said once that men were afraid of self-reliant women. But certainly, Ada thought, when a woman was homely like herself, she had to be self-reliant.

She must stop thinking all these thoughts, and deal with the problems at hand. Mama had said, "Sell the house and then sell the furniture." But suddenly Ada decided to send the nicest things to Rosella. Mama would enjoy living with familiar things, and it would save money for John. As soon as she had made up her mind about that, Ada felt relaxed and able to plan. Unless Rosella should wish it otherwise, she would send the two parlor settees, and Papa's comfortable chair, and the marble-topped parlor table. She would send her own bedroom furniture for Ethel, and Mama and Papa's bedroom furniture for Mama. For John and Rosella she would send the dining room set. The next time she made a visit to Cleveland she would take a trunk full of carefully packed china, Mama's crystal candelabra, and Annie's doll. Having thus made her plans, she went to sleep.

At Thanksgiving time she wrote to Rosella:

"The house is finally sold and I am so relieved. Uncle and Auntie Couch have been wonderful, coming over here to be with me when I had it for sale, so that prospective buyers would not think me a gullible, innocent female. Uncle Couch helped me get a fair price for it.

Rosella, you have no idea how wonderful Auntie and Uncle have been to me. Auntie calls me "Daughter" all the time and says she loves having me with them. She says she always wanted a

daughter but the Lord saw it otherwise. She keeps me busy, of course, and so does Uncle, but there is a laundress who also cleans and does the floors and windows. My duties involve typewriting for Uncle Couch, marketing for our meals (which I enjoy), helping Auntie cook and bake, and a little daily dusting.

They always see to it that I take my free time off, though it amuses me that Uncle Couch frequently offers to spend it with me. He says, 'Would you like to walk to Bergen Beach with me this afternoon?' I can never make myself tell him that I'd planned on shopping or visiting Georgiana. Fortunately for me I have, as you know, always enjoyed the beaches and the harbor. Also, the walks are good for my health. Uncle insists that if he did not take his daily walk, he would rot away.

I have been very fortunate in selling furniture to the family who bought our house. They have five children and can use much of it. I hate to think of their three little boys battering it, but I must put it out of my thoughts. The other things that are coming to you, must be shipped at once, as the new family will move in by Christmas. So you may look forward to eating your Christmas dinner from our dear old dining room table. I am glad that John is pleased to have the things sent. He is a good judge of fine quality things.

Rosella, I do hope you will get over all grudges against Auntie Couch, about that old silver dollar business. She is really not tight-fisted at all. When she saw how wistful I was about being away from Mama at Christmas time, she said, 'Uncle and I want to give you a little Christmas bonus. We will pay your fare on the cars to go and visit your Mama for the holidays.' Wasn't that generous of them? And they really had no reason to do it. I am certain that they would have enjoyed having me with them, for they are a lonely old couple, having no close relatives at all. We have been reading Vanity Fair aloud together every evening, and I know they will miss it while I am gone, for they have enjoyed it so much.

I shall arrive about three or four days before Christmas. I have not yet got my ticket, but will tomorrow, likely. I shall be able to help you with the baking and so on, for the festivities. I am certainly looking forward to it, for I have missed all of you. Give my love to Mama and all.

Affectionately,

Ada

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Ada arrived at Cleveland's Union Station on a snowy morning. Rosella met her at the train with both the children.

"Oh, it's good to see you! My, what rosy cheeks!" Ada cried.

"It's cold today," Rosella said.

"Norris! How you've grown since your birthday! And you, too, Ethel! My goodness!"

Ethel pulled on her mother's sleeve. "Mama, don't forget about the toys," she said.

"I don't know," Rosella hesitated.

"Shucks." Norris put in.

"Now Norrie, be nice. Maybe Aunt Ada is too tired."

"Goodness, no. I was in the Pullman sleeper all night. Too tired for what?"

"Oh, they've been hoping to go to Strohmeier's store to see the Christmas toys.

"Well, I'd like to do that," Ada said. "But first I want to arrange about my trunks."

"John has sent a man with a wagon who'll deliver them."

"Fine. I'll arrange for that then. Rosella, how is Mama?"

Rosella hesitated for a fleeting second. "She's fine."

"Is she happy?"

"Oh yes. Of course, especially so, sine you're here for Christmas. Oh, and she was so pleased to get her furniture. We managed to keep it a complete secret, and I got her out of the house over to Aunt Mille Hanney's while John and Mr. Hanney moved it into her room. Then she spent the next day getting her things all sorted around."

"And she got sick." Norris stated.

"Oh, you said that word!" Ethel cried, and clapped her hand over her mouth.

"Norry!" Rosella scolded. "You know we never say 'sick'."

"But how is Mama?" Ada asked again. "What was the matter?"

"Nothing," Rosella said. "She got herself over-tired and kept to her bed a few days, that's all."

"And she's all right now?"

"She's fine."

But when they got home to Sloane Avenue, Ada was dismayed when she saw her mother. It was all she could do to check herself from a quick question. Esther Norris' face looked changed to Ada, strangely lop-sided. At her first opportunity she spoke to Rosella.

"Rosella, what on earth is wrong with Mama? What happened to her face? You told me she was fine!"

"Ada, Mama is fine. And every day I have been reading the Truth to her, and every day she gets better."

"But what is it? Better from what?"

"Nothing but mortal mind, a mistaken belief."

"Don't use those terms, Rosella. I know you're interested in Christian Science, and if you choose if for yourself, that's all right, but you shouldn't push it on the rest of us."

"Don't you want Mama to be healed?"

"Certainly, but I don't even know what's the matter with her!"

"I don't give voice to error, Ada."

"Well, alright, if you won't tell me anything in just plain language, I'll have to ask John about it."

“Well, John might tell you that he thinks Mama may have had a little stroke.”

“A stroke!”

“Yes, but she’s been better every day since I’ve been sitting with her often, reading Science to her, and Mama’s very interested in it, and wants…”

Ada interrupted. “Did the doctor think it had been a stroke? Now tell me straight, Rosella!”

“We didn’t have a doctor, Ada. I don’t have them at all anymore.”

“Even for the children, when they’re sick?”

“No, I don’t give in to the mortal mind.”

“Well, you can do what you want for yourself and your children, if John agrees, but you have no right to decide for Mama!”

“But she’s better, Ada, better!”

Ada was silent, thinking, then she said, “Mama always had doctors for all of us, including herself.”

“Yes,” Rosella said, “and Papa died. So did Annie and Jimmy.”

“Oh, now, Rosella! You aren’t trying to say that your Christian Scientists don’t die?!”

“But, Ada, you see, death is not real.”

“Oh well! What I do see is that it is fruitless for you and me to discuss this sort of thing. But, Rosella, you are going to have to understand something right now. Just because you have endorsed this particular system of thinking, you must no assume that all the rest of your family are going along with you. I hope you’ll examine your conscience thoroughly before you make decisions about Mama’s health, especially now, if she has had a stroke, and can’t think for herself as she used to.”

“Don’t voice all that mortal mind, Ada.”

Ada sighed helplessly, and resolved to speak to John at her earliest opportunity, and that did not come for two days. Sunday was the day before Christmas, and Rosella had planned that the whole family would go with her to where her Christian Science group met for church, but she ran into opposition.

“If I go to church today,” John said, “It will be to Trinity.”

“Oh, John!” Rosie pleaded. I set my heart on your going with me!”

“Well, I’m sorry you did, because on the day before Christmas I’m going to where I can hear the music I grew up with and love.”

“I’m so disappointed.”

“Well, I’m sorry, but I’ve gone with you most of the time all year, but I refuse to go at Christmas time. I want to go to a real church, where they decorate with greens and holly. Your church could at least hang greens for Christmas.”

“I explained that to you last year.”

“Well, explain or not, I have certain feelings about Christmas, and I especially like to be in a church or better yet, a cathedral, on Christmas. Christmas is a time for traditional things.”

“But it’s what’s spiritual that matters.” Rosella said. “Much of Christmas is very material.”

“Fine,” John said, “and I like it that way. There’s nothing like a good material plum pudding, blazing with plenty of material brandy.”

“Brandy is fit only for the loathsome worm’ is what Mrs. Eddy would say,” Rosella quoted.

“I know she would, damn her!” growled John.

“Why John! You don’t usually say terrible things like that! You will shock Ada!”

Ada laughed. “Oh Rosie, Uncle Couch says ‘damn’ all the time. I’m not shocked.”

“Well, anyway,” John said. “I’m going to Trinity whether anyone goes with me or not. Rosella’s ‘church’ is really just a house, Ada. Don’t you want to go with me, where we can sing ‘Angels from the Realms of Glory?’”

“We’re going to have a real church soon,” Rosella said.

It was ultimately settled that Ada and John would walk the four blocks to Trinity on Cartwright, while Norris would go along with his mother to the house where the Christian Science Society met. They would take the streetcar, something Norris always enjoyed intensely. Little Ethel would stay home with her Grandma to help make Christmas fudge.

So, at last, Ada would have a chance to ask about her mother.

They walked down Sloane Avenue to 75th Street, and then 2 blocks to Cartwright Avenue, and another block to 74th. On the way they admired the houses on either side bright with Christmas wreaths on the front doors, but very soon Ada spoke of her worries.

“John, I’ve been wanting to ask your opinion of Mama’s health.”

“Because Rosie won’t tell you in plain English,” he stated rather than asked.

“Yes, John. I don’t understand Christian Science, and I intend to investigate what it’s all about. Perhaps Rosella has found a true healing faith. But she knows I haven’t studied it, and she is not being fair to me when she refuses to discuss things in the terms I am familiar with.”

“I know, it is pure frustration!” John’s face flushed with emotion. “Ada, the best I can do is to tell you how events went. Two weeks ago was the Sunday we moved the furniture into Mother Norris’ room. Rosie and I made the bed and put everything into place. We put the dresser drawers she’d been using into her room on her bed, and she spent the afternoon and evening moving the contents into her old dresser from Brooklyn. She was happy and humming every time I went by her door. Ethel was helping her. (Your mother is ever so fond of Ethel.) They were humming away in there and I was in my room at my desk taking care of some bookkeeping when I heard Ethel cry, “Grandma! Grandma!” and then she started calling me. I found your mother on the floor in what I took to be a faint. Rosella wasn’t at home. She was at Aunt Millie Hanney’s. They study Science together. I ran for some water, as I used to for Rosella when she fainted. I put a damp, cool washcloth on her forehead but it didn’t seem to help. She wasn’t pale, she was flushed. I didn’t want to leave her. Norris said he’d go for his mother, but it was night and I didn’t really want him to go that far alone. I sent him next door to see if one of them could go get Rosella. Fortunately, just then she came home. I had thought she would want me to go for a doctor, while she waited with your mother. Well, when she saw her, she was very upset at first, and I was sure she’d send me right off for a doctor. But instead she sent me for Mr. Phillips.

“Who is that?”

“Aunt Millie’s practitioner.”

“That’s the ‘healer’?”

“Yes.”

Ada shook her head. “It’s beyond my abilities to understand Rosella in this business. She’s always been so close to Mama, and worried about how she would exist after Mama had to leave us.”

“Well, let me tell you the rest of it, Ada.”

“Yes – please do! I’ve been wanting to know.”

“Well, I ran right off to Mr. Phillips’ house. It was after ten by the time I got there and he said he did not like to go out that late at night, but he would begin treatment.”

“Absent treatment?!”

“Yes. When I got home Mother Norris was still unconscious, but she seemed to be breathing more smoothly. (We had put her onto her bed, by the way, before I left.). She did seem to look a little better in a way – more like someone asleep, but I was very concerned about her. I said to Rosie that I still thought I should go for the doctor, but she asked me not to. She wanted Mr. Phillips to be given time to try, and she said she would help. So, she sat up nearly all night beside your mother, and in the morning, when I left to go to work, Mother Norris was awake. I asked her how she felt and she looked at me and smiled. She spoke very slowly and her face looked strange to me, but I couldn’t see just what it was at that time. Since then I can see that one side of her face is relaxed or seems to droop. Wouldn’t you say so?”

“Yes,” Ada said, “and it upsets me.”

“Let me tell you more. I have talked to friends at work and they say it must have been a stroke, for that’s what they’ve seen before, the facial muscles affected. But they did say, that even if we’d called the doctor, it probably wouldn’t have made any difference. When you’ve had a stroke there’s nothing much to be done. I gather that sometimes leeches may be used, or ice or cool cloths to the head, and mustard plasters to the back and so on.”

“But, in fact, none of these things were done?”

“No, but she did get better. Every day she got better. She is still getting better. She is slower in many ways. When someone asks her a question, she seems to be thinking a moment before she answers, and then her speech is slow. But otherwise she seems to be her old self. Except for her face. I don’t know what to think or say about Rosella’s religion. Perhaps it is the real truth. She feels that in your Mama’s case it has been proven. Perhaps it has.”

“Perhaps it has,” Ada said thoughtfully. “I’ll have to read about it, but I’m afraid I’ll worry about Mama when I go home to Brooklyn. The first thing I don’t understand is, if this ‘Science’ that Rosie has so much faith in is like the divine healing power that Jesus had, why isn’t Mama completely healed? I mean, right away, the way Jesus did it?”

“Do you know how Rosella would answer that? She would say that someone didn’t hold the right thoughts.”

“Someone like you and me.”

“I expect so. Perhaps your Mama will continue to improve, though, of course, I know I needn’t remind you that she is getting on in years.”

“Yes, she is. And I feel that I am too. Everything keeps changing so fast lately.”

“Yes, it does, and whatever happened to our dreams?”

“John, I guess I never had very many dreams, at least not since I was a very little girl.”

They enjoyed the Christmas service, then walked home through a light snowfall.

“I feel happier now, than when we came, don’t you?” Ada asked.

“Yes, church always makes me feel uplifted. It does as much for me to come to Trinity as Rosie’s faith does for her.”

“I wish Mama might have come today. She always loved the Christmas hymns.”

“Yes, and it’s too bad we don’t have a piano. We always used to play and sing hymns at home.”

“You’ll have to have a piano someday, for the children. It’s not too soon for them.”

“But it’s too soon for my pocketbook.”

When they got home, they found that Rosella and Norris had not yet returned. Mother Norris and Ethel were in the kitchen seated at the table.

Ethel sprang up and ran to Ada.

“Oh, Aunt Ada! We’re so glad you’re back. Grandma can’t remember how to make the fudge!”
“I don’t know what’s the matter with me. I can’t seem to think anymore,” Esther Norris was upset.

“It’s all right Mama. I’ll help you. Let’s start with three cups of sugar.”

“I just don’t know what’s the matter with my brain.”

Ada went home to Brooklyn before New Year’s Day.

“I feel that I must not take advantage of Uncle Couch and Auntie’s generosity in giving me the time and train tickets,” she explained.

At the train, she spoke to Rosella quietly but very firmly.

“Rosie, I want you to remember this year, that if anything serious happens in regard to Mama’s well-being – I am her daughter too. I want to be notified if she isn’t well, and Bertie deserves the same consideration. If something happens to Mama, I don’t want to be notified after it’s too late for me to come and see her. If she should be taken ill, or have a stroke, or anything like that I want to you telegraph me. Promise?”

“Well, yes,” Rosella answered, “but you know that it is not in Mama’s interest for me to voice things like that.”

“I’ll know more about that after I’ve studied Christian Science. Meanwhile, if you wire me that Mr. Phillips is treating Mama for an attack of mortal mind, or error, or whatever, I shall understand that it is a message to come. Is that all right? And, John, I know you will be sure nothing is kept from me.”

“I’ll be sure, Ada.” he promised.

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All during that year, 1894, Ada Norris wondered about her letters from Rosella, saying, "Mama is fine." But no word from John said anything else was the case.

As Christmas approached, Ada made her plans to go to Cleveland, for Auntie and Uncle Couch would again give her train fare for the trip. But when the time came for her to leave, Auntie and Uncle were both down with bad colds and high fevers.

"I can't consider leaving them," Ada wrote to Rosella. "They are too sick to care for themselves and their Christmas will be miserable enough even if I don't leave them." Perhaps I'll be able to call on Bertie and Judith on Christmas afternoon. I certainly will miss you all very much. I am sending money for you to buy a piano for a Christmas present for all of you. I know John plays some, and you will no doubt want the children to study. I shall keep the gifts I was going to bring, and send them later for birthdays, or perhaps I'll bring them. Auntie Couch says that since I am staying with them now, I should take a vacation later, so perhaps I'll come for Mama's birthday. I do hope you can find a good used piano for the enclosed amount. While it is not what a new piano might cost, Uncle Couch says it is ample for a good used one. If you should happen to get a particularly good bargain, please put any remaining amount of cash toward the cost of lessons for Norris and Ethel.

A bit of news about Aunt and Uncle Couch. Since he's been feeling so miserable this week, Uncle has decided he will retire from business. That is, he will no longer go into Manhattan to the office, although he can still keep up with his interests in his investments. (He has been such a help to me in investing the money from the sale of the house.) I asked Uncle if he would no longer need my services after he retires and he said, 'Dear girl, we'll need you more than ever.' I guess he is beginning to feel his years. About a month ago a very lovely autumn day, instead of walking to Bergen Park as we so often do, Uncle said, 'Let's take some chrysanthemums to your Papa's grave.' So we went to Greenwood, and it was so beautiful there. The grass was such a lovely green, the way it gets in the Fall after the summer has passed. Grass loves the cool nights. There is something different about the light in the afternoon, the shadows lie longer, and the air is so refreshing. (Though Uncle says autumn air makes him a little giddy, almost inebriated.) We both agreed that there is every bit as much magic in the fall of the year as in the Springtime. I am glad my birthday is in October.

Uncle showed me the plot in Greenwood he had recently bought for himself and Auntie. I felt sad that this somber frame of mind has come on him, but of course, he is always planning carefully and wisely, and he is sixty-nine years old.

We went to our own Norris family lot, and Papa's grave was neat and well-tended. We put flowers on it, and on Annie's and Baby Jims', and I even put a few on our grandparents' graves, too. It is strange to realize that Grandma Rosella Ursula Houzelot lived longer than our own Papa. We were so grief-stricken after Papa died that when Grandma went I don't think we quite realized she had still been here all the time. Of course, it is because she lived in New Hope with Aunt Katie, and we almost never saw her after your wedding. Rosella, do you still have the sampler that she worked when a little girl? I hope so, for it is a lovely heirloom, and you are her namesake (or is it the other way around?). Aunt Kate has given us all the old letters that came from France to Grandma Rosella's father Jean Pierre Louis Houzelot. Just imagine, they are dated 'in the sixth year of the Republic.' How glad I am that I studied a little French! Auntie Couch did too, and she and I have been trying to translate them. It is slow, but fascinating work. How rich is our heritage!"

Rosella was very put out by Ada's Christmas letter. Ada was not coming! This news was a shock to Rosella in many ways. To begin with, Mama had been looking forward to it so eagerly. And the children had been counting the days. Norris was nine years old now, and he had a calendar in the kitchen where he was keeping the days marked off till his Auntie Ada's arrival.

And Rosella had counted on Ada's help with the Christmas baking. Mama seemed to be no good at all when it came to cooking, she got all confused. Of course, for this Christmas they had last year's fruitcakes to use. They were safely wrapped in their rum-soaked cloths and powdered sugar in tight tins in the cool basement. One of them was from the last Christmas when Papa was well, and he had helped crack the walnuts and almonds that went into it. So far, from Christmas to Christmas, they had not yet brought themselves to the decision to eat it. Mama said she'd tasted a delicious fruitcake once, that was twenty-four years old.

They should have been making next year's cakes by now, but Rosella hadn't been able to get at it. She'd been waiting for Ada to come. Ada always said it was important to get the fruitcakes made before Christmas, when there was lots of holiday spirit in the air. The it was fun to do the baking; afterward it would be a chore.

But Ada wouldn't be here, and Rosella must do it alone. Of course Mama and the rest would help crack and chop the nuts, and cut up the citron, and so on.

The matter of the fruitcakes was only one disappointing part of Ada's not coming, however.

Rosella had wanted to have a long confidential talk with Ada. She had hoped to persuade Ada to leave Brooklyn and come to Cleveland permanently. Rosella had thought of several good arguments to bolster her case in winning Ada away from Aunt and Uncle Couch. Now she was all upset; Christmas was spoilt.

She met John at the door that evening, with the bad news.

"I'm so glad you're home. I'm so upset."

"What now?"

"Ada's not coming."

He looked as upset as she. "What's the trouble?"

"Oh," said Rosella disgustedly, "they're sick."

"The Couch's?"

"Yes. Wouldn't you have know it?"

"Well, I don't know as I would have. I don't recall them being sick before."

"Well, they never came to Norris' christening because of the rain."

"You shouldn't hold such a grudge against them. It was that silver dollar that always irked you."

"Well, they could have given him something truly lovely and valuable, with all that money."

"Oh, Rosella! Don't you know they saw through your idea in naming Norris for them?"

"I don't care! They shouldn't be so close. After all, they had no children of their own."

"Well, they've been very nice to Ada."

"Yes, well, read the letter."

After he'd hung up his snowy coat and hat, he sat down in the kitchen. When he was through with the letter, he sighed. "We certainly will miss her, won't we. How generous she is to want to buy us a piano."

"She can afford to be generous. After all, Papa left her the house and she's got all that money invested."

"He knew she had the wisdom to do the wise thing with either the house or the money from it."

"But she's got that, and when Mama dies and her trust fund comes to an end, Ada will get her third of that."

“That was just your Papa’s way of being doubly sure you’d always all have something. He knew Ada well enough to know she’d handle her money well. And he also know that she cares enough about the rest of you to always give a helping hand when it might be needed. That’s why she sent the money for the piano. She knows I can provide the necessities for us, but she also knows I can’t afford any extras. She’s a very fine person. She’s like her father.”

“Don’t you think Mama is a fine person?”

“Oh, of course, but you and your Mama and I don’t have the strength that your father had, and Ada has. You should never fail to appreciate Ada. She’s a rare one. Don’t begrudge her the money she has. When your Papa left it to Ada, it was as good as another trust fund.”

“Why do you say that?”

“I know it. Time will prove it to you. She’ll always care what happens to you, and your children. Don’t you know that? Think about it!”

Rosella suddenly burst into tears. “I know it, and I love her dearly. I want her to come and live with us!”

John couldn’t help but laugh. “That would be nice for us, of course, but Ada is happy in Brooklyn.”

“I need her here.”

“Yes, you want her here to help take care of your Mama, and the children, so you can go to Boston and study Christian Science.”

“Why John! How can you say that?!”

“Rosella, you’re so easy to see through. When your Mama came, you thought she’s take care of Norris and Ethel and you could go to Boston. But Mama had a little stroke, and since then she’s not as capable as she used to be. You won’t ‘voice’ it, as you put it, but you recognize it. You’d have been to Boston, and back home again, long since, if you could have safely left the children in your mother’s care while you were gone. That’s the only reason you haven’t gone before now.”

“John, I haven’t gone partly because I’d miss you, and the children, and Mama. I thought I’d wait awhile.”

“You could more correctly put me on the end of the list of people you’d miss. You don’t even want to sleep with me when I come home from an out of town business trip.”

“John, I’ve got to get dinner on. We can’t go on talking.”

“That’s something you never want to talk about. At least, you don’t usually faint anymore, thank heaven.”

Rosella wrote several letters to Ada during the spring of 1896, urging her to make her home in Cleveland.

“If you won’t live with us, you could live nearby. John says good secretaries are needed.”

Ada wrote back that she would have to begin considering the idea, but she could not imagine leaving Brooklyn permanently. “I am really past the age for embarking on new adventures,” she wrote. “Next year I shall be forty.”

Rosella wrote again with further arguments. “If you stay on in Brooklyn, you’ll find yourself so involved with Aunt and Uncle Couch’s affairs that you could not break away, no matter what happened.”

Ada did not respond to this last, but said that she’d come to Cleveland for two weeks at the time of Ethel’s birthday in June.

Rosella wrote back that Ada should come in May for Norris' birthday since it was his tenth. But Ada said in her return letter that she thought she'd choose June, for May in Cleveland would be quite rainy, and furthermore, Norris did not need fanfare and visiting aunties as much as Ethel did.

Rosella asked Ada, when she came, what she had meant by that remark about Ethel needing fanfare and aunties more than Norris did.

"Well, I meant that Ethel lives in the shadow of Norris most of the time."

"That's a silly thing to say!"

"No, it isn't, but I don't think you realize how partial to Norris you are. The rest of us all see it, Rosie."

"Well, perhaps a mother's always that way with her firstborn baby," Rosella ventured.

"Perhaps, I'm not experienced in a mother's feelings, but if you are right about that, then you are not hiding it as well as other mothers do. Certainly Mama never seemed partial with us."

"I'm a good mother to Ethel!"

"Yes, in a sense you are. Perhaps a better mother to Ethel than you are to Norris."

"But you just said...!"

"I said you were partial to Norris. That isn't the way to be a good mother. It isn't the way to prepare him to grow up and take his place in the world as a man. He will expect others to coddle him as you do. When he learns that they won't he'll have sad difficulties."

"But Norris is a very intelligent boy, Ada. He'll know how to face the world when he is grown up."

"If you permit him to grow up, Rosie. Look here! I know he's intelligent. He has an intelligent family heritage. On both sides. But, Rosie, you'll be wasting his intelligence and his handsome looks, if you don't give him a good character to match."

"Ada! You haven't raised children!"

"I'm well aware of that, to my sorrow. But I can view this business more clearly, perhaps, because of that. And others see it this way, too."

"Who?"

"I'll only mention names if you'll promise not to go fussing to them about it. I only want you to know what you may not see for yourself."

"Well who Ada?!"

"Almost everyone. When you were last in Brooklyn Mama and Papa and Marcy saw it, and Bertie, and John's folks, his parents and Georgiana and her husband, and Aunt and Uncle Couch."

"Oh, Auntie Couch never liked Norry!"

"That isn't so. But if you turn him into a spoilt boy, you'll make him disliked. That's the way it is with spoilt children. People had to see them coming. It would be a pity for you to handicap such a fine child that way."

"Ada, how can you talk as though you know all these things? You can't know them!"

"You ponder them and you'll realize they're true. Now, I'm tired of talking about it. And I'm making a promise to myself never to mention it again. Never. But always remember that once, when he was still young. I did."

When Ada returned to Brooklyn, Rosella was so irked with her, that she wondered why she had ever tried to persuade her to come and live with them. Ada would be fussing now, if she knew

Norris was going to start piano lessons, and Ethel was not. Later on would be soon enough for Ethel, but likely Ada would be thinking it was partiality.

For her part, Ada went home feeling easier in her mind about Rosella's household. John had seemed to be in a better frame of mind. Perhaps he'd become more philosophical about life's disappointments. Perhaps he understood Rosella better and was resigned to accept her with her shortcomings. At least he seemed to be doing better in his coffee business. He now had not only the Cleveland territory to cover, but frequently went out of town to Detroit, Toledo, Buffalo and Chicago. He was dressing better, and so were Rosella and the children. He had been able to put money with Ada's Christmas check and had bought a nice new piano for the family.

Ada was also pleased with her mother's general health. Esther Norris, of course, was not the woman she'd been before her stroke a year and a half earlier, but she'd apparently made a good recovery. Her appetite was good, and her color. She was useful around the house in light tasks like dusting and silver polishing. She kept her own room tidy, and she had an amazing memory for things in the long ago past. True, her day to day memory for little things was poor, and she seemed confused about cooking anything requiring a recipe, and she'd stopped writing letters to friends and relatives. She'd start them and after a few lines forget about them. But, all in all, Ada was pleased about her. She was gentle and she seemed happy.

So Ada carried a good report of them all back to Auntie and Uncle Couch.

"Does Rosella still pamper Norris?" Auntie asked.

"I'm afraid so," Ada admitted. "She dotes on him. I spoke of it to her."

"Well, even if you did," said Auntie Couch, "she won't change. People don't change. do you know of anyone who did?"

"Not offhand," said Ada, "but my circle of friends is small, and my experience is limited."

"You have so much humility, Ada. It's a rare quality."

"But it's true though. Except for going to Packer, my whole life has been so sheltered. I've just known family and a few close friends."

"You forget all you've learned in the books you've read. You've been all around the world in books."

"I'd like to really go around the world, but I'd never dare go alone."

"I wish Uncle and I were young enough to go with you."

"I wish so too. Well, I shall still dream about it. Dreams are sometimes more satisfactory than the real thing."

"Ada, you are always the philosopher, aren't you."

"I don't see that there is any alternative in this world."

BACK TO BROOKLYN WENT ADA

But Ada was really quite happy. She had stopped thinking of marriage many years ago. She did not think of a spinster's life as the worst lot in the world. She took a definite pleasure in leading an ordered life. In the mornings she did a few household duties, then typed letters for Uncle Couch, and sometimes for Auntie. She enjoyed the afternoons. In fine weather she and Auntie and Uncle Couch went to Bergen Beach or Brighton Beach, sometimes even to Bath Beach. Auntie didn't always want to go when they were planning to walk, but she was usually willing to go on the cars. Sometimes in the evening they went to Prospect Park to see the fountain illuminated at night. On rainy days they read books.

When October came it brought Ada's thirty-ninth birthday, and the thought of starting her fortieth years was not a cheering one. But she loved autumn so! How wonderful was Brooklyn in the fall! She and Uncle went to Prospect Park or Bergen Beach every afternoon until the really cold weather came.

Just before Thanksgiving a letter came from John Norris.

Dear Ada,

I've hesitated to write to you, and I don't know whether Rosella has or not. She has told me she would but I thought you'd be answering immediately if she had. Rosie has said nothing of hearing from you lately. It's about your mother. She has had another episode like the one two years ago, and Rosella is having Mr. Phillips treat her again. I tell you this without comment, but I thought you should know. It happened a week ago and was almost the same as the other incident, except that I do not think her recovery is as good as it was that time.

I hope you will be coming for Christmas again, for this reason at least, if not for the purpose of adding to our Christmas happiness, which you always do.

Affectionately,

John

Ada had been hesitating about Christmas. She had not decided whether she should wait until the next summer to visit Cleveland, where it was so dark and dreary in the short days of December. But now, with the news of her mother's bad turn, she decided to go to Cleveland at once. She discussed it with Auntie Couch.

"If I go now, I'll come back here for Christmas if Mama is doing well."

"Now, don't worry about us. You do whatever is necessary. Your mother is very dear to us, Ada."

"I think that Marcy might be able to come and help you if you need her. Marcy is wonderful."

"I'll remember that, my dear. Leave me her address."

Ada spent the next day packing, while Uncle Couch got her tickets for the Pullman. She would have to do her Christmas shopping in Cleveland. That would be better, in any case, for she'd know what they needed. Before last June, when Ada had spoken her mind about Norris, Rosella had written long, chatty letters about the children, Mama, and her own activities, though she seldom mentioned John except to say whether he was home, or out of town on a trip. But since June, although Ada had written at least every two weeks, Rosella had only written one terse note in August saying, "Mama is well" and a birthday care in October with nothing but signatures.

Ada knew that Rosella was feeling hurt, sulking and punishing her. She had ever responded to criticism thus, but always got over it in time, when her plans demanded a thaw in her icy silence. In that day's mail came an intimation that the thaw had begun. There was a letter from Rosella.

"We trust you are coming for Christmas this year, especially since I have had to have Mr. Phillips treat Mama again for a similar claim. I think it would please her to see you. It would cheer her. John is out of town till tomorrow. Let us know your plans.

In haste, Rosella"

In the afternoon, a messenger brought a special delivery from John.

"Dear Ada,

I came home from Detroit a few hours ago to find your mother had just had another attack, and she is in serious condition. Rosella was hysterical, and the children were both crying. A neighbor got Aunt Mille Hanney, who has taken Norris and Ethel home with her for a few days. I sent for a doctor, with Rosella's approval. The doctor says he won't know for a few days whether your mother will survive. He says, from what we have told him, she has been suffering from 'softening of the brain' probably since that time nearly two years ago. He says if she survives she may live several more years, but could have another bad stroke of apoplexy at any time. She is conscious, but doesn't talk to us, and seems paralyzed on her right side. The doctor says he can get us a daytime nurse, but your mother will need care around the clock, as she is completely helpless and has no control of her functions. Rosella is so appalled by all this that she has taken to her bed, and the doctor has had to see her, too. He says she and her mother both have goiters. This is something I did not know, for I have never seen Mother Norris without her throat covered.

Well, Ada, Rosella now says that she is giving up Christian Science. I must say that I have often hoped she would, but now I am not so sure it is a good idea. I think there is much good in it, especially for a person like Rosella. It made her approach life more courageously and happily. If the way she is now is any indication, I hope she'll go back to it, for she has gone all to pieces, and I can scarcely talk to her about our problems.

Until you get here, I shall have to wait, and they you and I must decide what can be done.

Affectionately,

John.

In the evening a telegram came that gave Ada some comfort.

"Mother out of immediate danger. Come as soon as convenient. John"

Ada was very grateful to John for the telegram. He had wanted to spare her a too-hasty departure and the fear, while traveling, that she would never see her Mama again, that she would arrive too late.

Aunt and Uncle Couch saw her off at Grand Central, and were so kind to her that she wept, something that Ada rarely did. Auntie comforted her.

"Please don't give any thought to our problems at this time, Ada. We'll hire Marcy or someone, and you stay as long as your mother needs you. You may want to stay in Cleveland permanently, or perhaps bring your Mama back to Brooklyn. Do what you think best, without worrying about us. We'll be here for a few more years, I'm quite sure, and Brooklyn will wait for you too."

"Oh, thank you so much for everything! Please tell Bertie I'll write him in detail as soon as possible?"

"I'll ride over there this evening," Uncle Couch promised.

Ada's arrival the next morning in Cleveland was depressing. It was one of that city's worst days. A cold, raw wind blew in off Lake Erie, which was as grey and forbidding as the sky. The water was rough and covered with whitecaps. The Lake did not have the gay, busy look that the harbor in New York had with its continual bustle of tugs, ferries, and barges plying back and forth from one point to another. Ada remembered that John had once called the Lake 'a very dreary looking sea'.

The station was located only a few blocks from the Lake, and Ada shivered in the cold wind, as she stood on the platform looking for John. She surely hoped he had gotten her wire! Then, with relief, she saw him hurrying toward her.

"I'm so glad you've come!" he said. "Ada, you always seem to end the confusion at our house." She laughed. "Oh, no, but that's a nice thing to say. How is Mama?"

"Holding her own. Looking a little brighter. She's quite aware of things, but can't say much. She knows you are coming, and is very pleased."

"But she's still paralyzed?"

"Yes. The doctor isn't very optimistic about that."

"Oh, dear!"

He says occasionally they get back use of their limbs, or partial use."

"You have a nurse?"

"Two of them, for the time being, because Rosie was just no good at all, and I couldn't handle it of course."

"How is Rosella?"

"Well, she emerged from her room yesterday afternoon because she wanted the children brought back. I wouldn't go after them unless she got up to take care of them herself. I told her she must rise to the occasion, and I told her that she might as well get Mrs. Eddy's book and read Christian Science. She looked at me so surprised and said, 'That won't do any good, when we're having a doctor.' I said, 'It won't do any harm, I'm sure, and it will do you some good. Maybe it'll help the doctor, too.'"

"What is the doctor doing for Mama?"

"Not much. Trying to get her to move her fingers and toes. Telling the nurses what to feed her – liquids mostly."

Rosella's greeting at the door was the same as John's had been at the train. "Oh, Ada! I'm so glad you've come!" Then she cried, "What on earth are we going to do about Mama?"

Ethel ran and threw her arms about Ada. "Oh Aunt Ada, I'm glad you came too! So is Norrie."

"Will you remember to call me 'Norr' Ethel." Norris said.

"My goodness!" said Ada. "You are a big boy now. I agree with you. I'll call you 'Norr'".

"Ada!" Rosella asked again, "whatever are we going to do about Mama?"

"Well, right now," Ada said, "I'm going to take off my hat and coat and my spats."

"Poor Ada," John said, "Let her at least get inside the door, won't you all."

"And after I get my things off, do you know what I'm going to do about Mama?"

"No," Rosella said. "What? I'm at my wits' end!"

"Why, I'm going up and give her a big kiss."

"Oh, Ada, what I meant was what are we..."

"Make us a nice pot of tea Rosie, then we'll talk."

"But you'll stay, won't you Ada?" Rosella begged.

"If I'm needed."

"But that isn't to mean that Ada takes care of her all alone." John warned.

“Don’t go back to Brooklyn anymore, Ada,” Rosella pleaded. “We’ll move into a bigger house, and you can have a nice room. Just tell us you’ll stay.”

“We’ll see Rosella. If Mama and you feel you need me. Auntie Couch said perhaps I should bring Mama back to Brooklyn.”

“No!” Rosella sounded distraught. “You can’t move Mama! It would kill her!”

“Even if she were well, I wouldn’t uproot her again. I won’t take her back to Brooklyn until I take her back to be with Papa in Greenwood.”

The problem of housing arose, but no one wanted to move at holiday time. Springtime would be better. Until then, they would double up as best they could.

Rosella said that Ada could move into her room as John shared Norris’ room.

“Where does Ethel sleep?” Ada asked.

“She’s slept with me for a long time,” Rosella said. “She and Norris are too big to share a room. It’s the only way we could divide up in this little house.”

“Why don’t you fix up the sun room for one of the children?”

“But that’s way downstairs,” Rosella said.

“Norris is big enough to sleep down there.”

“But I wouldn’t hear him if he called me in the night.”

“Mama wouldn’t have minded if you had put a cot for Ethel in there with her. She’d have liked it, no doubt.”

“I can’t put her in there now with Mama sick like she is. We’ll put a cot for you in with us.”

“Rosie! I won’t be the one to put John out of his bedroom.”

“He doesn’t mind, Ada. He’s been sharing the room with Norris for ages. They have twin beds. He’s used to it.”

“Well! I guess all this isn’t my business.” Ada shook her head. “Please have the cot put in Mama’s room for me. I can take care of her at night if she needs me. I’m not going to be part of your most unusual arrangement.”

Aunt and Uncle Couch heard from Ada after Thanksgiving.

“Mama is quite helpless but she is cheerful and grateful for loving care. I have ordered her a wheelchair, which she’ll have in time for Christmas. Mama can’t talk well, but I am getting quite proficient at anticipating her needs and guessing what she wants to say. She has let me know that she wasn’t to send you her love and Christmas wishes.

I’m grateful that you were able to get Marcy to help you. I know she will like working for you, Dear ones. I don’t know when I shall be able to get back to my dear Brooklyn, but someday I shall, for I do not particularly like this city. Whenever I have left New York the sun was shining and when I arrive here it is always dull and gray.

Have a happy holiday. Rosella and John send their good wishes to both of you.

Affectionately,

Ada.”

Ada longed for her typewriter, so that she might maintain her skill and speed. She planned to write to Uncle Couch to ask him to ship it to her, but then realized there was no urgency at all, for her days were filled with housekeeping and nursing duties. Her mother’s care demanded much changing of linens, and much washing, bathing, powdering and backrubs, and the preparing of trays and the carrying of bedpans.

Rosella seemed to be continually busy with the children, or with sewing. As soon and Norr and Ethel came home from school, Rosella liked to question them about their day in school while they ate bread and butter sprinkled with sugar and cinnamon and sipped 'caloric' tea. Norris usually escaped outdoors until dinner time, but Ethel stayed on in the kitchen talking to her mother and Ada while the dinner was being prepared. It was Ethel's task to set the table, and to dry dishes later, for a girl must learn those things early.

As time passed, Ada got the dinners without Rosella's help, for usually Rosella was off looking for Norris, or had 'stopped over' to Aunt Millie Hanney's 'for a few minutes.'

One day Rosella came home to report that Millie had broken her ankle. She had tripped on the basement stairs when she was three steps from the bottom, and had saved herself from falling headlong, but a quick maneuver, but she had landed with her left foot on a wet spot and turned the ankle hard.

"She could hear it snap," Rosella said. "It's paining her badly and it's all swollen up."

"Goodness, what a pity." Ada said. "When did it happen?"

"First thing this morning."

"Will she have to have it in a cast long?"

"Oh, she doesn't have a cast on it,"

"No?! On a broken ankle?"

"No, she's just staying off it, and Mr. Phillips is helping her."

"'Helping her'?"

"You know what I mean, Christian Science treatment."

"And that will set the bone properly?" Ada shook her head in skepticism.

Rosella said no more about Aunt Millie's ankle, and Ada forgot about it because her mother had several bad choking spells that evening, and felt poorly for two or three days. Choking was something one could expect, the doctor said, in a person paralyzed that way.

But in a day or so, Ada remembered Aunt Millie's ankle and asked Rosella about it.

"Is her pain better now?"

"Oh, goodness, yes. She's getting around again."

"Well, it couldn't have been broken," Ada opined.

"Oh, yes it was." Rosella said. "She heard it break."

"I don't believe it. She couldn't walk on it, and she couldn't know it was broken if she didn't have a doctor. It was probably a sprain."

"Nonsense, it was broken. Science healed it!"

"Oh piffle! Bones don't heal in three days - especially not at her age. She's fifty or sixty isn't she?"

"I don't know about her age. In Science we don't talk about age."

"Piffle."

['piffle' - origin uncertain according to dictionary. I wonder if it was derived from Hebrew - 'pilpul'? This means religious debate but with a connotation of no resolution - wasted time]

Following that episode, Rosella re-embraced Christian Science and decided to become a vegetarian too. Aunt Millie Hanney's recovery from her 'broken' ankle had demonstrated to her, Rosella said, that both beliefs were excellent. Aunt Millie was the proof.

John protested.

"You've no right," he said to Rosella, "to ban meat from this house when we all like it so well."

“You’ll like what I fix,” she said. “I’ve got Aunt Millie’s cookbook. She’s got wonderful recipes. You’ll all be much better off.”

“It’s not fair to Ada,” he insisted. “She came here to help us and you impose your thinking on her. The Christian Science doesn’t do us much harm, I’ll admit. In fact, I like some things about it. But I want you to still fix us a good roast beef on Sunday.”

For a time, Rosella still served a roast on Sunday, then she began fixing roast chicken. Presently, the chicken appeared in some chopped up form, such as creamed on biscuits or some such. Eventually, Rosella evolved a number of truly delicious dishes using eggs or cheese and nuts. Her recipes were in demand from guests who tasted her meals, and John ate heartily of them, but he still maintained that Sunday without a roast wasn’t Sunday.

As springtime drew on, Esther Norris’ health failed, but John felt it was time to move to a better house. Rosella at first opposed the idea, pleading her mother’s health. John silenced her by saying that in Christian Science, her mother was fine, wasn’t that right?

“But we don’t really need a larger home, John. We’re all right here, and Norr and Ethel wouldn’t want to leave their little friends in this neighborhood.”

“Oh, we wouldn’t have to move far. There’s a house for rent on Cartwright Avenue. I know why you don’t want to move.”

“It’s because of Mama of course.”

“No, it’s so we can keep these same funny sleeping arrangements – you with Ethel, me with Norris and...”

“You don’t sleep with Norris, John. You just sleep in the same room. Don’t make it sound like something improper or vile...”

“Well, Rosella, you do sleep with Ethel’, and there are people who might think that was improper or vile.”

“You know Ethel sleeps with me because she has nightmares.”

John grimaced. “Isn’t it more likely she sleeps with you because you have nightmares about having to sleep with me? Don’t think I don’t know what this strange arrangement is really all about!”

Rosella gave a sort of moan, “Oh-oh-oh, why can’t we have a harmonious home, where Spiritual Love is all Supreme.”

“In many homes, Physical Love adds to the Harmony, but you never want to talk about things like that.”

“No, I don’t. It’s true. It makes me so nervous. I can’t be different from the way I am.”

He looked her a moment, then turned away, sighing. “No, I suppose you can’t.”

But Rosella began to think about living on Cartwright Street, and the idea began to appeal to her more and more. John had wanted to live there since he came to Cleveland in ’86. There were other respectable streets, but John liked Cartwright because it was wide with fine trees and lawns, and substantial looking houses. He said it had a ‘certain atmosphere’. It occurred to Rosella that if John, at last, could live on Cartwright Street, he would be more contented and stop fussing about some things. When they were first married, she had gathered from his letters that he felt that living on that particular street would mean that he had reached the height of his ambition. Of course, he had always planned to own a house. But, they had no money saved. They had been married for thirteen years and were still living in a rented house. But Rosella reflected, other people she knew lived in rented house houses too. Aunt Millie Hanney’s house was rented, and the neighbors on each side rented. It wasn’t a thing to be ashamed of, certainly, but owning

one's home was truly reason for pride. Maybe after Mama died and they inherited their share of Papa's estate they'd be able to buy property somewhere. Papa had always stressed the importance of working hard so that one could own property.

Unknown to John, Rosella and Aunt Millie Hanney began taking afternoon walks along Cartwright Street, looking at houses, and unbeknown to Rosella, John was house-hunting on the way home from work. They each found two houses for sale and one for rent. Rosella did not go in and inquire about them. She decided not to go farther until she'd had a talk with Ada.

Rosella found Ada in the kitchen starting to prepare dinner. She did not know how to start saying what she had to say.

"Ada," she began, "after Mama – I mean, after Mama, well, when Mama isn't with us anymore, what do you plan to do?"

Ada hesitated not at all. "Go back to Brooklyn."

"Oh, Ada! For heaven's sake, why?"

"Because it's the place for me, that's why. I was born there, grew up there, went to college there, and I've lived and worked and have friends there."

"You don't have much family there except for Bertie. And how often do you ever see Bertie?"

"Oh goodness, Rosie! There's family all around New York, and what about the Norrises out in Bucks County?"

"I mean close family, Ada."

"Well, actually, I feel as close to Aunt and Uncle Couch as anybody. And what about Georgiana – don't forget about Georgie."

"Well, she's got her own life now, Ada. You aren't little college chums anymore. And Uncle Couch and Auntie won't be here forever. And after all, I'm your sister. When Mama's gone, won't you think I'm your closest relative?"

"Of course I will, along with Bertie, he's our brother after all."

"But he isn't close to us anymore."

"Rosella, what is this leading to?"

"I want you to say you'll stay in Cleveland and make your home with us."

"Rosella, I don't really like Cleveland very well."

"Why not?"

"The climate mainly, I suppose. No, that isn't really it. I guess it's just that when I'm away from New York City I feel a little bit as though I were in exile. Everything important seems to happen there." Then she laughed at herself. "Well, I guess that isn't quite true."

"Ada, we just love you, and we think it would be nice if you made your home with us permanently. We'd all put our assets together and buy a nice house. We'd all be better off when we're older. If one of us got sick, we'd have the other to take care of us."

"Rosella, you don't get sick," Ada reminded her.

"Well, I expect to get old, though."

"Well, let's talk about that after Mama goes. Meanwhile we can be thinking about it."

"But don't you think we ought to move into a bigger house? We're so crowded."

"That's up to you and John. I don't mind being in with Mama."

"There's a house for sale on Cartwright Street that would be just right for all of us."

"But Rosie, why are you looking at a house now. None of us knows yet when a house could be bought. Why don't you wait until you get your legacy. It doesn't seem right to be anticipating

this way. All you need is one more bedroom. If it costs a little more, Mama and I can contribute more.”

“But the house I picked out is so nice. If we could only buy it now, it would be so lovely. You have money, Ada. If you were willing to put it into a house, the it would be good for all of us. You’d always have a home with us. For the rest of your life you’d have a home.”

Ada looked at her sister thoughtfully for a moment.

“I hadn’t really planned the rest of my life to be like that. I intend to go back to the Couch’s if they want me after Mama dies. If they don’t, I shall get rooms somewhere, and do secretarial work. I’m a good typist.”

“But you’d be lonesome.”

“I don’t get lonesome. If one is busy there’s not time to be lonesome. And I have friends.”

“You’re not likely to marry. You’re forty, almost.”

“Certainly I won’t marry. And that brings us to why I have money. Papa wanted me to have independence. He left me the house to keep or to sell. My money is all invested and I wouldn’t sell my bonds. Uncle Couch helped me to invest very carefully, so that I’d have an income. Of course, I need extra money, too, and I can earn a little. If I sold my bonds, and gave you the money for a house, where would I be?”

“Why, Ada! You’d be with us!”

“Peeling potatoes? That really isn’t quite as far as my aspirations reach.”

“Oh, Ada, why can’t you be satisfied with just plain, simple things? Why do you have to have fancy aspirations?”

“Because I don’t have what you have, a husband and children. And my aspirations can hardly be called ‘fancy’.”

“And you won’t lend us some money?”

“I won’t sell my bonds, no. Would you expect me to live with you, and have to ask you for spending money?”

“But you’d be doing typing, like you said.”

“I’d be peeling potatoes, Rosella, and you know it.”

####

Rosella scarcely spoke to Ada for a week, and Ada wondered meanwhile, whether John knew Rosie had asked to borrow money from her.

Then one evening at dinner John announced, "I've found a home for us, on Cartwright Street." Rosella looked startled. She glanced at Ada, and away again.

"Which one?"

"It's 11240 Cartwright Street."

"Oh, I know which one that is," Rosella cried. "It's for rent and it's the smallest house on the street."

"That's right, and that's why I can afford it."

"I was hoping we could buy."

"With what?"

"I had thought Ada might be interested in lending us some money."

John snorted. "Interested! That's the word all right. Because 'interest' is just what Ada wouldn't get if she lent us her money."

"We'd pay her back."

"Would we? Like I paid Father back, and your father back? No. She should keep her money in her bonds, and never lend us any because I'm not a good risk."

"John! You mustn't talk that way!"

"Well, it's true. I haven't the Midas Touch."

Ada spoke up. "John, if I had more, I'd be very glad to lend, but you see, it's my income."

"Ada, you needn't apologize. You're quite right. I understand completely. We can live in a rented house. If we have this long, we can longer."

"That house is so small." Rosella muttered.

The house in question was two stories high, on a street where all the others had third floors. It had an entry hall, a living room, dining room and kitchen with pantry, and a small bedroom downstairs. Upstairs it had two normal size bedrooms, a bathroom, and one tiny bedroom. It had what appeared to be a small summer kitchen built on at the back, and a large back yard. Like most other houses on Cartwright Street, it had both gas and electric lights.

The Rahmings moved into the house in May. John announced at the start that he would occupy the smallest bedroom. "I don't care how you arrange everyone else."

"Won't you share a bedroom with Norrie anymore?" Rosella asked.

"No, I certainly will not. I've had enough of that nonsense. He's an eleven year old boy. He needs a room of his own. And so do I."

"But what if he took sick in the night? There'd be no one to hear him!"

"Never fear. I'll wager the rest of his life people will always hear him when he's sick. You're making a baby of him."

Ada and her mother took the downstairs bedroom so that Esther Norris could be brought in her wheelchair to the dining room, or taken out onto the porch for a breath of air. Rosella and Ethel again shared a room upstairs, with Norris and John having rooms alone.

It was a hot summer. Esther Norris began to fail suddenly in a week of high temperatures. Ada called the doctor over Rosella's protests that Mr. Phillips could handle it. Privately, Ada explained to the doctor that Rosella didn't believe in illness or doctor care.

“But just tell me what I can do to make Mama feel more comfortable. What can we do for her?”

“Just good nursing care Miss Norris. Keep her dry and clean. Sponge her with cool water and witch-hazel. Give her fruit juices and egg-nogs, custard if she feels like solid food. Don’t worry about your sister’s beliefs. Let her have the Christian Science practitioner. It’s quite all right, because I can’t do anything for her. You must prepare yourself for her going. It won’t be long.” For two weeks Ada did all she could for her mother, washing her, and giving her liquids a scant teaspoon at a time, and cooling her forehead with a damp cloth. Sometimes she sat quietly by her, gently stirring the air with a palm fan.

Then a day came when Mother Norris sank into a coma. Rosella came into the room for a while but did not stay. “I can’t bear to see her that way.”

John brought Norris and Ethel in to kiss their grandmother’s cheek, then led them out again.

Ada sat up with her mother through the night, then just after sunrise Esther Norris died. Ada called Rosella and told her. The doctor came and left again.

“We must wash her and dress her Rosie. You’ll help me won’t you?”

“Oh, Ada, I can’t!”

“But it’s Mama! Won’t you help me do this last thing for her?”

“I can’t Ada! Oh, I can’t!”

“Very well.”

“But I’ll get Millie Hanney. Millie can do anything. She is very brave.”

“But it’s a matter of love Rosie.”

“I can’t explain Ada. But you know I love Mama.”

Ada went back into her mother’s room. She sat down beside the bed in a chair where she had sat all night. Washing and dressing her mother’s body was not going to be easy for her. Rosella would not do it. “But,” thought Ada, “it’s the last thing I can ever do for her. Maybe that form lying on the bed is no longer Mama because her soul is gone. I don’t know what I believe about such things. But three hours ago it was Mama. It certainly is no one else and not dust or ashes. Not now.”

Ada rose and went to the closet. Mama had a lovely rose colored dress – one that Papa had especially liked. She chose that.

Rosella came to the door with the next door neighbor.

“Mrs. Keeler has offered to help you with Mama, Ada.”

“That’s if you would like me to, my dear,” Mrs. Keeler said.

“You’re very kind,” Ada said. Together the two ladies went about washing the body and then Ada sent for the undertaker.

Later that day Mrs. Keeler came over again and asked to speak to Ada.

“I hear you are going to take your Mama back to New York?”

“Back to Brooklyn – yes. On the evening train tomorrow.”

“Your sister says, because of the children, she’s not going with you. You’ll be going all alone?”

“Yes.”

“It will be a sad trip for you, Miss Norris. I hate to see you go alone when you are grieving. Rosella says you are always strong and brave, but still it seems a shame for you to have to go alone. Would you like company? I have a sister in New York who’s always begging me to pay her a visit. I could travel with you if you’d like that.”

“Why, that’s ever so kind of you Mrs. Keeler! I’d like it, of course but it’s too much for you to do. I couldn’t ask if of you.”

“No, don’t worry about it. I’ll enjoy a visit with my sister very much.”

“John is seeing about my ticket in the morning. He could take care of yours, if you really want to go.”

“And the other matter about your Mama?”

“The undertaker is arranging for that part of it. He telegraphed to our undertaker in Brooklyn. The one we’ve always had. A hearse will meet us at the station, at Grand Central, and we’ll go straight to Greenwood. There’s where our family lot is. Greenwood is very beautiful. Mama will be buried in the same grave with Papa. They arranged it that way many years ago. It was a very happy marriage. I wish I could believe that they are together in heaven.”

“It’s comforting to think that, isn’t it. Miss Norris, you look very tired. You must rest. Take a little glass of brandy or whiskey, so that you can sleep better.”

“I don’t think I have any. Rosella doesn’t approve of it.”

“Oh.”

“But Papa always had some brandy or wine on hand. I don’t disapprove.”

“I’ll bring you some. You must rest, Miss Norris.”

“If we are going to New York together, why don’t you call me Ada.”

When they reached Grand Central Station in New York City, it was three in the afternoon. Mrs. Keeler went off to Staten Island with her sister.

Ada saw Bertie first, when she stepped from the train. When she looked around her she saw Auntie and Uncle Couch too, and Aunt Katie from New Hope, Pennsylvania, and Georgie.

“Bless you all for meeting me here!” Ada burst into tears for the first time since her mother’s death.

“Everyone has been so kind to me and I’ve been trying not to cry.”

“Cry, by all means,” said Auntie Couch. “It always helps.”

“I was going to wait until everything was taken care of.” Ada said.

“Ada, you are being almost too brave, dear. Take time to cry. It’s better that way. You’ll be sick if you don’t. Why didn’t Rosella come?”

“Because of the children.”

“Oh pshaw! She could have found a way to arrange it somehow.”

Outside, it was a beautiful day. As the carriages made their way through the streets to Brooklyn, Ada reflected how comforting it was to have brought Mama home to the place where she had lived all her life. Papa had come from near Bere Alton in England when he was young, but Mama had been born right here in Brooklyn, and had never lived anywhere else till she went to Cleveland to live with Rosella.

They were quiet in the carriage as it rolled along. Bertie was having a hard time to keep from crying, using his handkerchief frequently to dab his eyes. Ada knew what must be going on in his mind. He had paid little attention to Mama after he married Judith, and he was realizing, now, that he could never do another thing for her. Ada felt the same way, even though she had done everything possible for Mama this past year. She kept thinking of things she might have done on the last day of her mother’s life. I must not let myself think along these lines, she told herself. It does no one any good.

Aunt and Uncle Couch were with Ada and Bert in the carriage. Auntie kept patting Ada’s hand.

“Bertie, don’t you think it would be a good idea for Ada to come home with Uncle and me for a day or two? She’s just so exhausted.”

“Whatever Ada would like,” Bert said. “But Judith would be glad to have her with us. We know she’s tired.”

"I'm alright," Ada said. "I just need one good night's rest."

"You need several good night's rest," Uncle Couch said. "And at Bertie's there is the little boy, and the baby. It would be quieter at our place dear."

"That's true," Ada said. "You wouldn't mind Bertie?"

"No, of course not. Auntie Couch is right. The children are noisy."

"As soon as she's rested she can go to your place Bertie."

"That'll be fine." Bertie said.

"Did you have services in Cleveland, did you say?"

"Yes," Ada said. "Yesterday afternoon. But not at church. At Rosella and John's home. The rector from Trinity Church read the service. So few people in Cleveland know Mama, that we felt the church would seem to be too big and empty. Rosella and I didn't want to have her taken there. It was friendlier that way."

"Were the children present?" Auntie asked.

"Yes, for the service. They'd been staying with neighbors, but John said he felt they were old enough to learn about death. Rosella didn't agree, but John said they could be at the service if they wished. And they did wish. They loved Mama."

"I see no reason why children shouldn't go to funerals when they are old enough to understand and keep quiet," Bertie said.

"I agree," Ada said. "Rosella is trying too hard to shield Norris and Ethel from reality."

After the graveside service at Greenwood, they waited until the men had shaped the mound, and then the flowers were placed, many that had been brought on the train from Cleveland, along with those from the family and friends in Brooklyn.

"Oh, what a beautiful day!" Ada said. "I'm so glad for Mama that it's a beautiful day. I'd have hated for it to be in the rain."

"It rained yesterday," Auntie said. "That's why it's so fresh and fine today. It's been very hot."

Bertie turned to Ada. "I'll be leaving now, I guess. I hate to leave her, but it helps me to think that she is resting here with Papa."

"I feel that way too," Ada said.

"You know, Ada, what is so terrible to me, now, I feel orphaned. I'm forty-two years old, but as long as Mama and Papa were alive I felt young and secure. I always felt that they were there for help and advice. Now they are gone, and it makes me feel old and at yet at the same time, frightened and like a lost child."

Ada put her hand on his arm.

"Bertie, I know, but there are still the aunts and uncles."

"It's not the same, Ada."

"No, it's not the same. But Mama and Papa are still with us."

"Do you really believe that?"

"Well, yes. I believe it because I have to believe it. I'd be too alone if I didn't. You have Judith and the babies and Rosella has her family. I don't usually mind being a spinster but just at this time I feel it more."

"Please do come and stay with us for a while, Ada."

"Thank you Bertie. I probably shall. I've come back to Brooklyn to stay."

It was comforting to ride back to Aunt and Uncle Couch's house. "Your room is all ready for you, Ada." Auntie said. "Why don't you nap before dinner? Shall I have Marcy bring you some tea?"

"That would be lovely, and how happy I'll be to see Marcy again."

"This is your home, Ada. Uncle and I want you to know that. We hope you'll stay with us now, dear."

"But auntie, I wouldn't want to take Marcy's place away from her."

"You wouldn't be doing that. We'll leave the housekeeping to Marcy. We'd just like you to be a companion. Uncle has a few letters occasionally to type, but very few, for he is stopping his business activities entirely. He's put in an active life. He's earned his time of rest and leisure. he'll enjoy it very much if you take walks with him to the beach, and to the park in the afternoons, and read to us in the evenings the way you used to. Our eyes aren't what they used to be."

"Oh, Auntie, you make me feel as though I had come home. I love Brooklyn so, and you and Uncle are so good to me."

"You have come home, Ada. Now get a good nap. Don't do anything for a few days. You've been pushing yourself too hard for much too long a time."

"Tomorrow I must arrange to have Mama's name put on the headstone."

"Ada, dear, wait at least until the next day. The flowers will still be there tomorrow. Please, do put everything aside for awhile. You'll otherwise be sick. I'll send Marcy up with tea now, and maybe warm milk would be good. Perhaps a little brandy, too?"

"All right, Auntie, thank you."

In her room, Ada washed up, and lay down on the bed, but when Marcy came in she jumped up to greet her.

Marcy set the tea tray down, and she and Ada both burst into tears. Marcy put her arms around Ada.

"Oh, Miss Ada, I feel so sad about your Mama."

"You always loved her, didn't you Marcy."

"I really did, Miss Ada, She was a wonderful lady, a truly wonderful lady. She was always good to me."

"She's with my Papa now, Marcy."

"Yes, God bless them both. I hope you'll stay in Brooklyn now, Miss Ada."

"Yes, I shall, Marcy, I certainly shall. You have no idea with what a feeling of relief I came back to Brooklyn. In spite of the sad errand that brings me, my heart lifted when I came into the sunshine at Grand Central. When I left Cleveland it was grey and overcast, but when I reached New York, the sky was bright blue. It's always that way – isn't that strange?"

"Well, anyway, you're here now. Shall I unpack your things while you have tea?"

"Thank you Marcy. There's only the telescope. I didn't bring my truck, because there wasn't time to pack it. And also, I didn't want to tell Rosella that I will be moving back to Brooklyn. We had enough to upset us yesterday, without getting into an argument about that. You see, Rosella wants me to say with them permanently."

"Oh, Miss Ada! Don't let her talk you into it."

"Don't worry, I won't, Marcy."

"But Mrs. Rosella is so determined. She could always talk all of us into things we didn't want to do. Even your Mama and Papa."

The following day Ada and uncle Couch went to greenwood to see about the headstone, and then to Bergen Beach. They sat and watched the sparkling water of the bay, with the boats plying back and forth.

"I loved it here." Ada said. "Oh, I do so love it here!"

"So do I," the old man said. "I could come every day and not tire of it."

"I've decided something Uncle. I don't think I'll go to Greenwood very often. It would only make me sad. Mama and Papa aren't really there."

"No, they are in our hearts." Uncle Couch said. "Or in heaven, I suppose."

"Certainly in our hearts. Heaven is hard for me to understand."

July passed, and most of August.

"When are you coming back? Rosella wrote to Ada. "Soon you'll have been gone six weeks. The children miss you very much. Ethel gets tears in her eyes when she talks about you and Mama. She says, 'Aunt Ada isn't dead now too, is she? Then why didn't she come home?'"

Auntie Couch said, "Rosella will just have to explain to Ethel that your home is in Brooklyn."

"Rosella seldom faces things," Ada said.

"I know," Auntie Couch said, "she always wanted to work things out according to her own plans."

"I do love them all dearly, Auntie, but as I see it, their life is there and mine is here. I must go back for my trunk and my things, and when I'm there I'll make it clear to Rosella that I can't live there. I'll go for Christmas. I can get along without my things until then. I was planning to buy a new winter coat this fall, anyway."

"Why not go for Thanksgiving and come back here in time for Christmas. Uncle and I would so love to have you here then."

"That's just what I'll do," Ada said, "but I don't dare let Rosella go until then thinking that I'm coming back to settle permanently in Cleveland. I'll have to write and tell her my plans, otherwise there'll be a great big fuss when I tell her I'm spending Christmas in Brooklyn."

"She'll probably have one of her swooning spells."

Ada smiled. "I didn't know you knew about those."

"Oh, yes. Your Mama told me about that years ago. She was worried but she wasn't sure whether the spells were real or not. I told her healthy girls didn't swoon. I said that swooning was no longer in fashion. And Georgie spoke of it to me once. She never thought it was anything but dramatics. John had confided in her, it seems."

"Well, it did seem that Rosella did it to get her way," Ada said. "However, I've not seen one of those spells for a long time."

"I'll venture to say she'll swoon again when the day comes that her boy Norris leaves home to marry some woman."

"Perhaps." Ada laughed.

"Mark my words," Auntie said. "She'll take that hard."

####

In late November Ada left New York as usual in clear weather. She had expected grey skies in Cleveland, but not a blizzard. John met her at Union Station. The snow was blinding.

“It’s a terrible welcome, Ada,” he said. “And it’s early for a storm like this. I just hope we’ll have no trouble getting home. We’re in for a very heavy snow; there’ll be trouble with the trolley cars. Last winter, remember they had wires down one time and the cars couldn’t run.”

“Indeed I do remember,” said Ada.

“I was going to put you on the trolley, and come home later, but everyone’s going home early today, so I’ll come with you. I don’t want you to run the risk of being stranded halfway home. How much baggage have you?”

“Nothing but this telescope. My winter clothes are at your house.”

“Good, Then you’ll be set for the winter, and winter it is too.”

“John, I really can’t stay for the winter. Didn’t Rosella tell you what I wrote her?”

“Yes, she did, but I hoped you weren’t completely set on your plans. It means a great deal to us to have you here. To me especially. I’m out of town frequently these days and I worry about Rosella and the children. When you’re here, I don’t worry that way.”

“Goodness John! I don’t make that much difference.”

“Indeed you do. It’s because you’re wise and reasonable. You always seem to see through problems to the light on the other side of them.

“You flatter me. I’ve no such special gift, John”

“Yes you have, and I think I know why.”

“Why?”

“No, I won’t tell you. But I’ll tell you one thing. It’s partly because you’ve got your feet on the real earth. That’s where you’re different from your little sister. Rosella seems to be off in space somewhere. She’s following an alien star. And Norry and Ethy and I are expected to follow her as she goes flitting about on her gauzy wings.”

Ada couldn’t help but laugh. “Do you mean Christian Science?”

“Not exactly that. I rather like Christian Science in many ways. But one could be a Christian Scientist without being the way Rosella is about it. It’s the way she is about anything, really. She doesn’t just lightly dabble in things. She’s got to get totally immersed. That might be all right, but what always happens is that she takes the children and me along with her, whether we’ve the inclination or not to go.”

Ada laughed again. “You’ve got a gift for figures of speech, John. All I can picture is you and Rosella and the children all fitted out in bathing costumes and leaping into the water.”

“With the children and me holding our noses, and shutting our eyes tight.” he said.

“You’ve tried it with your eyes open, haven’t you?” Ada asked gently – still smiling at the picture of Rosella pulling them all into murky water.

“I really have, Ada. I’ve looked into Christian Science with a very open mind. I haven’t opposed it. I’ve been very receptive to it, and it is, for the most part, good for Rosella. But her interpretation of it is very bad for our marriage, believe me. We had certain problems from the beginning, but they are far greater now.”

“I’m sorry, John.” Ada was somewhat embarrassed and afraid he would say more.

But he changed the subject. “We’re having turkey on Thursday. I’m afraid we overruled Rosie on that. In fact, it wasn’t too difficult. She has a taste for turkey herself. We made an agreement about holidays from now on. We’ll go along with her vegetarian diet all through the year, but on

Easter and Thanksgiving and Christmas and New Years, we'll eat meat. Norr suggests we celebrate New Years on the Fourth of July, so that our four meat meals will be distributed more evenly through the year."

"It's a wonder Rosella agreed," Ada said. "It seems that if it is wrong to eat meat, it would be even worse to eat it on Christmas and Easter. But perhaps it isn't based on any Christian principle."

"Compassion is Christian, and it certainly is kind to an animal not to eat him. But that is only part of Rosella's reasoning. She says it is more healthful not to eat meat."

"How does that fit in with Christian Science thinking? Eating meat is then bad for one?"

"I'm not sure that's a Christian Science idea," he said.

"But she'd have to reconcile the two wouldn't she?"

"She's found a way, I'm sure."

They got off the street car at 75th Street. The snow was still coming down hard, and beginning to drift.

"I hate to have you walk in this snow," John said. "Your feet will be terribly cold by the time we reach the house. Mine always are."

"I'll be all right."

John was carrying her telescope in one hand and holding his hat with the other. Ada felt she should perhaps carry the telescope herself for she was actually taller than John, and probably stronger. John was handsome, but he had always seemed less than robust.

"The wind will take your hat off if you don't take care. Mine is pinned on. Why don't I carry my telescope?"

"No, I'm all right."

They reached the house with their fingers and toes aching and with red noses.

Rosella got a broom and brushed the snow off them.

"Isn't this terrible! The children are so excited. They were sent home early from school. Norris thinks it's wonderful but Ethel is afraid you'll take the train right back to New York."

"Oh, no, Ethy, I won't do that. We get snow in New York too."

"I've decorated your room, Aunt Ada," Ethel said, "with autumn leaves."

"She's been saving them all fall," Rosella said, and she's pressed them with a hot flatiron just to decorate your room. We've still saved Mama's room for you Ada. I hoped it wouldn't bother you to sleep there in her bed?"

"Why, certainly not. I take it as a privilege to have Mama's bed. And remember, I slept on a cot in that room before. I'll feel at home."

"Now that I've brushed the snow off you I see you have a new winter coat. It's very handsome. Beaver collar and cuffs! Oh, Ada, you have money to spend on new clothes. You're lucky!"

Ada was a bit disconcerted. Then she said, "Yes, I have a bit to spend, but I haven't a lovely family, remember, Rosie. You have John and Norry and Ethy."

"Well, I...well! Let's come in out of the weather shall we." Rosella said.

At dinnertime, Ada felt that she must make her future plans very explicit to the family. They had been speaking as though she had come back to Cleveland to stay permanently. It appeared that Rosella had said nothing to the family to the contrary. Ada realized that it would be best to straighten things out at once, but she felt that for little Ethy's sake, at least she must be careful how she said it.

"I shall have to spend Christmas with Aunt and Uncle Couch."

“Oh, Aunt Ada! Not with us?” Ethel cried.

“They are so very lonely, Ethy, and they are getting old, and I don’t believe they’d even have a Christmas tree if I weren’t going to be there to trim it for them.”

Ethel looked somewhat sympathetic, but then she said, “I don’t even know who they are, Aunt Ada.”

“Well, they’re a dear old couple, you see, Ethy. Aunt Couch is even distantly related to your mother and me. Of course, Auntie Couch really isn’t your aunt. Your brother is named for her, you know.”

“I didn’t know,” Ethel said. “Oh, I guess I did.”

“Well, anyway, they are both always very nice to me. When I am in Brooklyn they make me welcome in their home, now that the home your Mama and I grew up in belongs to someone else.”

“But you’re always welcome here, Aunt Ada,” Ethy said.

“Thank you, Ethy.”

“Mama and Papa say so too.”

“That’s very nice to know and I won’t ever forget it either.”

“Please say you’ll live with us, Aunt Ada!” Ethel begged.

“Well, now I just thought of the answer to all this,” Ada said. “How would it be if I spent the wintertime in Brooklyn with Auntie and Uncle Couch when it’s harder for them to get about if there’s cold weather and snow. Then I could come back to Cleveland in the summertime.”

“You’d have to promise to be back in time for my birthday,” Norris announced. “That’s the first of May. I shall be twelve then.”

“And mine is the 10th of June,” Edie put in. “You’d surely be here then?”

“Well,” John said, “If we can’t have you all the time, we shall have to consider ourselves lucky to have you part of the time.”

“But you do understand the way I feel about Auntie and Uncle Couch, I hope.”

“Certainly,” said John.

“Well, I don’t.” Rosella said. “I really don’t and I never did.”

“Not since Auntie gave Norr that solitary silver dollar at his christening,” Ada said, almost winking.

“Oh, pshaw! That isn’t so. It’s just that I never considered that she was such a close friend. But it was rather stingy to give that one dollar when I’d asked her to be his godmother.”

“You should never have asked her to be godmother if you didn’t feel she was dear to you,” Ada said.

Norris spoke up. “It was because Auntie Couch has money.”

Ada looked astonished and Rosella got all upset.

“Norris Rahming! The very idea!”

“I heard you and Papa talking about it one time.”

“Well, you just didn’t understand what you heard, Norry. Now I don’t want to hear more talk about Auntie Couch.”

“Well, I’d like just to have a word here, now, if I may,” Ada said. “About Auntie and Uncle Couch. They have a little money to leave, it’s true, and unless they change their will, it’s not going all in a lump to anyone. They plan to leave a little bit to a number of people, and some to charity.”

“What charity?” Rosella asked.

“I’ve forgotten, but I think it’s for missionary work in China and Africa.”

“I wish I could persuade her to leave some money to the Christian Scientists.”

John laughed and quoted from his favorite hymn, “From Greenland’s Icy Mountains”: “Can we to men benighted the lamp of life deny?”

“Don’t make fun of me, John,” his wife scolded, “and don’t make fun of that hymn either.”

“Why, it’s my favorite!” John said, grinning.

“Only because it amuses you.”

“No indeed! I love the tune and I love the sentiment about the spicy breezes that ‘blow soft o’er Ceylon’s isle, where every prospect pleases, and only man is vile.’ Don’t forget I come from some spicy islands myself.”

“I don’t forget. You’re quite a heathen.”

John snorted, “Salvation, O Salvation.”

“You can scarcely call John a heathen, Rosie,” Ada said. “He goes to church more regularly than I do, I declare.”

“When he’s not out of town,” Rosella said.

“Well, in any case, Auntie and Uncle Couch are certainly not going to stop being Episcopalians at this time in their lives. And I shan’t try to persuade them to leave money to Mrs. Eddy’s church. You’ll have to present the case yourself, Rosella.”

“I wouldn’t say anything to her about anything.”

“I thought persons of your faith always expressed love.” John needled.

Rosella blushed slightly. “That’s got nothing to do with it.”

MOTHER CHURCH WILL WAIT FOR YOU

Ada dreaded telling the Couch's that she had weakened somewhat in her resolve to live in Brooklyn permanently. She was somewhat put out with herself for promising to spend the summer in Cleveland. Marcy had been right when she said that Rosella usually got her way. Ada returned to the East in early December, but it was not till after Christmas that she spoke of it. Uncle Couch had hired a carriage for a drive in Prospect Park on New Year's Day, which was crisp and sparkly. Uncle always chose to sit with the driver on these occasions, and so Auntie and Ada were free to chatter away by themselves. Except that Ada did not seem very chatty this afternoon.

"It's beautiful weather," Auntie said, "though I do see clouds coming in the west."

"Yes, perhaps we'll get more snow."

"And speaking of clouds," Auntie went on, "you seem to be rather cloudy yourself lately. I felt that somehow you weren't happy over Christmas, my dear."

"Oh, I was happy, Auntie. I didn't mean to seem moody. I guess it's my age. I'm forty-two, you know."

Auntie laughed. "Of course, when one is seventy-three as I am, forty seems young. You haven't begun 'change of life' though, have you?"

"I don't think so, Auntie. Everything's the same as it's been for years."

"No headaches or hot flashes?"

"No."

"Well, it may be another ten years. Don't worry about it. I didn't mean to put ideas in your head. It's just that you've seemed so quiet lately, as if something were on your mind."

"It is, Auntie. I've been wanting to talk about it, but I thought I'd wait till after the holidays were over. I've felt badly, because you and Uncle have been so loving to me. You've made me feel that I still have a home in Brooklyn, even with Mama and Papa gone, and Bertie and Rosella have gone their ways."

"And now, John and Rosella are trying to persuade you to live with them? Don't be reluctant to tell me, Ada. While you were away, Georgiana and I talked about it. You see, John writes to her, and tells her things. He says he thinks it's better for the children when you are there."

"I know. He told me. It might be true."

"What on earth is the matter with Rosella?"

"I don't know Auntie. She loves her children dearly, I'm certain of that. She's not much for discipline though. Norris needs it, and Ethel doesn't. I mean, Ethel is one of those quiet little girls who is always good, and Norris takes advantage of it."

"His father should whip him when he's bad," Auntie said.

Ada laughed. "I can't imagine such a thing occurring ever."

"Why not? Boys can use a few whippings. Nothing brutal. It's just that it's something they really need at times when they act terrible. All boys act terrible sometimes. What's the matter with John, that he doesn't take care of that?"

"He's away frequently. But anyway, if he ever tried whipping Norris, Rosella would make his life miserable."

"Oh, pshaw! She's got no sense, then."

"Well, I've never seen Norris whipped, but Rosella never faces unpleasantness very well. She seems to just go to pieces. She manages to take everyone's attention from the real problem and divert it to herself."

“Those fainting spells? I remember those.”

“Not anymore. I haven’t seen her faint in years. No, she just carries on and makes such a commotion. I will say that since she took up Christian Science, she’s a little calmer. But there’s a new problem connected with that. Whenever Norris needs discipline, Rosella says that he is the ‘perfect child of God’ and can’t be a naughty boy.”

Auntie Couch began to laugh. “Oh, dear me! I wish Uncle Couch could hear that. You know, if it weren’t pitiful, it would be funny.”

“It is pitiful, because Norris is a very bright little boy, and it’s sad to see him growing up without proper training. I’m glad that Papa didn’t live to see what Rosella is doing to him.”

“I’ll tell you something, Ada. It’s what Rosella is doing to John that worries his sister.”

“What did Georgiana say?”

“She told me John’s marriage is a tragedy. She and her parents all think so. They decided that, in the very beginning, when Rosella stayed in Brooklyn so long when the children were babies instead of going to Cleveland to be with John. He’s a bitter man, Ada.”

“Rosella does seem to shower all her love on Norris. Yes, Auntie, there are many problems there. I’m only an old maid, but I can see it’s not a happy household like Mama and Papa’s was. And my going to live with them, won’t make John and Rosella a happy couple.”

“According to Georgiana, however, you have a good influence on Rosella. Georgiana says that John definitely feels that when you are there, Rosella is less indulgent with the children, and that she makes more of an effort to show that she is a mature person.”

“I don’t know why that would be.”

“It’s because you are her older sister and you are so much like your mother.”

“Am I, Auntie? I’ve been always told I was like Papa.”

“Well, you’re very much like both of them, Ada, and I think Rosella respects you, as she respected them. Uncle and I will certainly understand if you go and live with them, although we’ve loved having you with us.”

“I really want to stay in Brooklyn, Auntie, but I did tell Rosella and the children I’d come and spend the summer with them. Ethel was so persuasive, I couldn’t say no to her. My heart goes out to that child. She’s so gentle.”

“Why don’t you plan on spending half the year with Rosella, and half with us? They you’ll do us all good, Ada. But though you prefer Brooklyn to Cleveland, you must think first of yourself and your future interests. You must look beyond the years when you’ll be with us, for Uncle and I won’t be around much longer, Ada. If it seems best for you to find secretarial employment and establish a place of your own somewhere, you should put your own desires first, ahead of Rosella, and of Uncle and me.”

“No, I don’t want to live alone unless I have to Auntie. I’m a home kind of person. Even though I did learn how to typewrite, I haven’t the courage to go into the working world. If I had to, I suppose I could, but I’d rather not. I would always try to find employment as a companion or secretary, or both.”

“Ada, you have spoken so often of yourself as an ‘old maid’; I want you to know that Uncle and I think you’d have been a great success as a wife and mother.”

“I never planned on marriage. I knew I was homely, and too tall to attract a man.”

“Oh now Ada! Bless you! Have you ever taken a look at married women? Do you think they were all beautiful? No. They were not. Many of them were homely, and were when they were bespoken by their young men. And there are women taller than their menfolk. And you aren’t

homely, Ada. Perhaps you are the type that is called 'plain,' but that is mainly because you consider yourself so. You might have married if you hadn't got it in your head to be a spinster." "Well, it's too late now," Ada said briskly. "I'll just try to live a useful life, and be satisfied with that."

"Of course," Auntie said, "marriage is by no means paradise, in any case."

####

Ada returned to Cleveland in time for Norris' twelfth birthday on the first of May. All was very festive that morning. Norr received a new and larger bicycle among his gifts and spent most of the day trying it out up and down Cartwright Street in front of his house. In the afternoon, he and another boy got into a tremendous argument over the comparative value of their respective bicycles. Ethel watched, fascinated, as the dispute escalated into a fist fight, then went flying home to tell her mother.

"Norrie has a bloody nose. He got knocked down but he got up again."

"Oh my good Heaven!" Rosella cried. "Oh my heavens! Oh, my poor Norrie!"

"He's still fighting," Ethel said.

But Rosella had stopped making the cake for Norris' birthday and had dashed out the door, gasping "Where is he?"

"Right in front of Keeler's house," Ethel said.

"Maybe I should go too," Ada said.

"Oh yes, Aunt Ada," Ethel said. "Mama will need you. She'll be terribly upset. Norrie got in a fight once before, and Mama stayed in her bed for two days afterward."

"What about Norr – how was he?"

"He got all right pretty soon, I think. He ate his supper anyway. But Mama kept him home from school for a while after that."

"Well, I hope he'll be all right," Ada said.

"Oh, he will be, Auntie. boys like to fight. I've seen lots of fights on the playground at school. But the boys always get well afterward."

"I guess we should try to finish this cake, don't you think so? Is this the recipe right here? Why it says 'Ethel's cake'! Is it your favorite?"

"Yes, and that's because I invented it. It was a recipe Mama had but I put more butter in, and three eggs instead of two, and I beat the egg whites by themselves."

"Splendid! Can you finish it by yourself if I go help your Mama with Norrie?"

"Of course."

"Be careful of the hot oven. But then you know all about that."

"Of course. Aunt Ada?"

"Yes?"

"I hope you stay with us always and always."

"I shall stay all summer, Ethel, and we'll have a fine time on your birthday."

"And I hope Norrie doesn't get in a fight that day."

"Well, I do hope he doesn't! Now I'll go see what I can do for Norris and your Mama."

Rosella was in Norris' room reading Christian Science to him. He lay on his bed with a damp towel on his nose.

"How is everything?," Ada asked.

"Everything is spoiled," Rosella cried. "Norris' party is ruined and I had everything planned to be so nice. I hate it when plans are spoiled."

"But of course you do, Rosie. We all hate for plans to be spoiled. But we have to face up to it."



Miss Elton *E R*

166 EUCLID AVE.
CLEVELAND, O.

NORRIS WALTON RAHMING
AGE 12
"MATTHEW NORTH"

“You talk to me as though I were a little child.”

“But not without good reason, Rosie. Now get up, and come downstairs and help us with the cake. Ethy’s doing it all alone.”

“She knows how.”

“I dare say. But you must give more thought to her.”

More plans were spoiled before May ended. On the 29th a telegram came from Brooklyn. It was from Aunt Katie, and it reported the death of Uncle Couch. Could Ada possibly come? Aunt Couch needed her urgently.

Ada set about packing immediately. Rosella was very upset.

“I see no reason why you have to go back there, Ada. You just got here a couple of weeks ago.”

“It’s been a month, almost.”

“But you came for the whole summer!”

“True, but Auntie Couch needs me.”

“She has Aunt Katie.”

“Rosella! My Stars! Aunt Katie is older than Auntie Couch – they both need help.”

“Bertie and Judith can help with the arrangements. They can manage without you.”

“Bertie will help, of course, but Judith won’t be able to do much for Auntie Couch. Judith will find that the children keep her too busy. She really wasn’t any help when Mama died. She came to the funeral and that’s all.”

“Rosella! I’m very put out with you. I’d want to go to Brooklyn to Uncle Couch’s funeral, in any case. And I’m surprised that you don’t want to too!”

“Well, I couldn’t leave the children, and anyway, Aunt and Uncle Couch never took any special interest in me.”

“It might occur to you to be grateful to them for all their affection for Mama and Papa, and for all their kindness to me. Now, I don’t want to talk about it anymore. I’m going and that’s that. I feel badly about Ethel’s birthday, but I shall explain to her and she will understand. She is a very dear little girl. And I hope you’ll prepare as elaborate a birthday party for her as you did for Norrie.”

“When will you come back?”

“I can’t say at this time.”

“But I had planned to go to Boston to study at the Mother Church this summer!”

“Mother Church will wait for you Rosie.”

“It’s not like you to be sarcastic, Ada.”

“You try the patience of a saint.”

####

So back to Brooklyn went Ada, arriving at Grand Central Station on the Morning of June first. She looked about her for Bertie, who usually met her at the train. Then to her surprise she spied Judith and a man she didn't recognize, although he looked somewhat familiar.

"Hello, Ada," Judith said. "So glad you're here. Bertie couldn't come. He's sick. He's got heart trouble."

"Oh, dear, no!" Ada said.

"Do you know who this gentleman is?" Judith asked.

"I keep thinking I should," Ada said hesitantly.

The man put out his hand. "We met years ago. I'm Charles Billings."

"Oh, of course, we did meet once. You're related to Uncle Couch."

"First cousin once removed. My mother was his cousin."

"Don't you still live in the West? Or am I thinking of someone else?"

"No, you're right. I live in San Francisco."

"He just happened to be visiting in New York," Judith said.

"Well, in fact, you might say it didn't just happen. I'd decided to make the trip East because I knew Uncle Couch was up in years, and I wanted to see him again before he went."

"Oh, dear," Ada said. "I hope you got here in time."

"Yes, I did, I'm thankful to say. I had several nice talks with Uncle. Only the day before he died, he was up and out. We walked to Bergen Beach. We had gone several times. Then that last day he seemed quite tired on the way back. That evening he collapsed."

"He died that night," Judith said.

"Poor dear Uncle. Oh, Judith, tell me about Bertie. What's that you say about his heart?"

"Well, nothing like Uncle's heart attack. Bertie's been feeling poorly all winter, but he hasn't said anything until lately. The doctor tells him he has a tired heart. He must get lots of rest. That's why he didn't come to meet you. Mr. Billings offered to come, but wasn't sure he'd recognize you or you him. So I came too. Aunt Couch is so upset, and the doctor has given her something to calm her down."

"When is the funeral?" Ada asked.

"At two o'clock. I know you're tired," Judith said.

"It's all right. But I'm worried about Bertie."

"Well, so am I. Ada, he is only forty-two."

"I know."

"And here I am with two children. I don't know what I'll do, if he leaves me a widow."

Charles Billings spoke up. "Don't look on that side of it, Mrs. Norris. My Mama lived a long life with a bad heart. She was very careful not to do foolish things."

Three days later Ada wrote to Rosella.

"I shall stay here for the time being. Auntie is lost without Uncle Couch. In fact, Marcy and I and Mr. Billings think she may have had a slight stroke. She is very different, not herself at all. We have not been able to discuss plans for the future at all, but frankly, I'm afraid she doesn't have much future left. Aunt Katie is urging her to come and live in New Hope with her, but Auntie doesn't wish to leave Brooklyn. I shall write again when I am more certain. Tell dear little Ethel "Happy Birthday" for me. I enclose a check for five dollars for her to buy a little something, material for a dress, perhaps."

“Last evening Mr. Billings and I walked to Bergen Beach. It made me sad, for I often went there in recent years with Uncle Couch, and when we were little we went with Papa. Do you remember? I guess one of the reasons I love Brooklyn so much is because I love the harbor and the beaches. Salt water smells different. I wish John would see his way to live here, and we all could be near each other.

I love you all and miss the children, but I truly belong in Brooklyn and not in Cleveland. I am getting to the time of life when I can't be forever traveling back and forth across the country. It's too exhausting and unsettling.”

The substance of Rosella's answer to Ada's letter was, “Who is Mr. Billings?”

In a mood of mischief, Ada decided not to answer the question at present. Instead, she wrote to her niece.

Dear Ethie,

I do hope your birthday was pleasant, and that it was one of those rare June days the poet speaks about. I am so sorry that I wasn't able to be there, but when things here become more settled, I'll let you know when I can visit Cleveland again.

Lovingly,

Aunt Ada

Ada consulted with Marcy about Auntie Couch's health. Marcy was pessimistic. In her opinion, Auntie wouldn't be with them for much longer. She seemed to fail from day to day, getting up in the morning, dizzy and weak when she stood up, and when she went to bed at night her feet and ankles were swollen. The doctor said her circulation was poor. He had prescribed digitalis.

Ada went to consult with Bertie.

“I'm uncertain how to plan for the future, Bertie,” she said. “Auntie wants me there. I shall certainly stay with Auntie as long as she lives, but after that I don't know just what is best for me. I love Brooklyn, but the people who are dear to me are departing from the scene. I grow sadder each time.”

“You've been around old people too much, Ada. You are probably much better off with Rosella and her children.”

“I don't care for Cleveland, Bertie.”

“You'd get used to it. If I were you, I'd go with Rosie. It will be livelier with the children. And perhaps, I should tell you something, perhaps I shouldn't. Still, you should know. Auntie Couch plans to leave you her house. Maybe you knew that, or guessed.”

“No, I didn't know or guess, but I think that I'm not surprised. They have always treated me like a daughter.”

“And they have no daughter or son,” Bertie reminded.

“But still, I had thought they might have left it to St. James' Church. A small bequest to me would have been generous enough.”

“Auntie and Uncle were deeply grateful the way you were always willing to put their interests ahead of your own convenience. Always rushing back and forth to them when they needed you. All the way from Cleveland.”

“Actually, Bertie, it wasn't that way at all 'til this time. I was grateful to be here in Brooklyn with them. Most of the rushing was done when Rosie wanted me to help her in Cleveland.”

“Well, it's only fair to tell you that Auntie means to leave you the house, even if you decide that you must go and help Rosella run her household.”

“I shall stay with Auntie as long as she needs me.”

“Very well, but let me give you some advice. After Auntie dies, sell the house, and go and live with Rosella or near her.”

“Why Bertie? I’m at home here, not there.”

“Because you should live near family. There aren’t too many left any more, here in Brooklyn.”

“There’s you Bertie.”

“But with my heart the way it is, you couldn’t be sure how long I’d be here. Judith will go and live with her Mama on Long Island if anything happens to me.”

“Don’t talk about it Bertie. I have friends here too, you know.”

“Friends aren’t the same.”

“Some are.”

“No, you should go with Rosie, they when you’re old, there’ll be lots of young family to worry about taking care of you.”

“Bertie! What an idea! I don’t want anyone to worry because of me.”

“But you’ve always worried over others. You took care of Papa and then Mama, and helped Auntie and Uncle Couch, and you always rescue Rosella.”

“Well, it’s just the way my life has turned out. It wasn’t my lot to have a family of my own.”

“You’d have been a very good home maker, Ada for some fortunate man.”

“Men have never noticed me, Bertie. When I worked in Papa’s office, I think the men that came in and out just thought I was another desk or cabinet.”

Bertie smiled. “Well, that’s because you’ve probably always been so practical and useful. Men are forever looking for helpless women.”

“I should think a helpless woman would be a terrible trial to a man.”

“They are,” said Bertie. Then he changed the subject.

“Have you seen this book?” He held up a large flat red and blue book with silver lettering.

“What is it?”

“The story of our navy. It’s got a lot about the blowing up of the Maine and the salvage efforts. And many pictures of Cuba and Hawaii and so on. Would you like to borrow it? I know you always loved the harbor and the ships.”

“Oh, yes. It’s one reason I hate to leave Brooklyn. That and that Mama and Papa are buried here in Greenwood.”

“You’ll remember them just as well in Cleveland.”

“I know. I suppose that it doesn’t matter where you are. I suppose you’re right that I should go to Cleveland after Auntie passes on. But I’ll come back here someday after Rosella’s family is raised. In six more years Norris will be eighteen, and Ethel will be sixteen. Rosella won’t need help by then.”

“Maybe she’ll have more children.”

“No,” said Ada. “Oh, no.”

“How do you know?”

“Well... I... Well, I don’t think so...” Ada was a bit embarrassed. “Well, Bertie, John has slept in a little room by himself for years. I think it’s been ever since Ethel was born. Rosella doesn’t want any more children. I know that. She wants to go to Boston to learn to be a Christian Science practitioner.”

“Oh, what nonsense!” Bertie opined.

“Well, she’s very sincere about it, Bertie, and some things about it have been very good for her. She never faints anymore. Remember about that?”

Bertie smiled. “I do, indeed.”

“You know about Christian Science?”

“Oh, yes. I have some friends who believe in it.”

“Well, I think it’s probably good for Rosella.”

“But... the rest of them?”

“I’m sure it’s not good for John,” Ada said.

“Not if that’s why she doesn’t sleep with him.”

“Well, but more than that, Bertie. It’s that Rosie puts ‘Science’ ahead of everything else. Except her son Norris, of course. She’s absolutely set on becoming a practitioner.”

“That’s a faith healer.”

“Yes. She wants me to come live with her and care for the house and family while she goes away to study.”

“I think that’s outrageously selfish of her,” Bertie said. “You might think she’d consider that you might have plans of your own about your life.”

“Oh, Bertie, it’s late in the day for me to have any big plans for my life. I might as well be helpful to other people.”

“If they’re deserving, yes. Like Auntie Couch, but Rosie ought to run her own household. I’m surprised she’d be willing to go jaunting off to Boston, and leave her sister at home alone with her husband.”

“Not alone, Bertie. There’s always the children. And besides, John’s away much of the time.”

“But what of appearances – to the neighbors?”

“Oh come now Bertie! Do I look like a home-wrecker to you?” Ada was thoroughly enjoying this conversation.

“No, but you’re not nearly as unattractive as you’ve always thought.”

[Damn! I’m going back in time and courting that gal! She would be my maternal great-aunt’s aunt-in-law – no problem!]

“Goodness! I’m not only plain, I’m middle aged.”

“Nevertheless, you’re attractive to Charles Billings.”

“Oh? said Ada, and she smiled and blushed ever slightly.

“Yes, He indicated that if he were not so old, and had not been a bachelor for so long, he’d be interested in a future with you.” [Sheesh! What a wimp!]

“He really talked about me?”

“He thinks you’re a fine woman, Ada.”

“I can’t say I’m not pleased, Bertie. I’ve known so few men. They usually frighten me a little, because I don’t understand them at all. There’s only been Papa and Uncle Couch and you. I mean, the only ones I’ve talked to much.”

“Yes, I guess that’s true. Well, Ada, don’t go back to Cleveland just to accommodate Rosella.”

“Bertie, if I go back at all it will be for Ethie’s sake.”

“Oh?”

“Yes, somehow I feel uneasy about Ethie.”

“About Ethie? Why?”

“Because Rosella’s feelings toward Ethel are not the same as they are about Norris. Her concern is always for him, not for Ethel. Ethel, I think, will only live to be useful to Rosie. That’s a terrible thing to say, isn’t it?”

“I can easily believe it, Ada. Rosie has always permitted you to be useful to her. And Mama. And Marcy. Anyone.”

“Yes. Well, I can’t explain just the way I feel about Ethie. Perhaps it’s because I have no children of my own, and because Norris gets more than enough love and care. I don’t know. But I just hope so earnestly that Ethie will have a happy life.”

“Happier than yours, you mean?”

“Well, yes, though I don’t think I’ve been so unhappy. But marriage, I suppose is what women usually want, isn’t it?”

“So it would seem.”

“Well, I don’t know as I should worry about Ethie. She’s quite pretty, really. I wasn’t pretty.”

“You’ve always been handsome, Ada.”

Ada smiled stoically. “I’d rather have been pretty, I think.”

“I gather you think you can save Ethie from something?”

“Oh, no, Bertie. Just to make her childhood a bit more joyful. As I said, I can’t explain it. It’s as though Ethie were going to grow up without anyone knowing her, what she’s like, what she dreams about. She’ll just be lost in the shuffle of going things for Norris. I almost have a feeling of impending disaster. I guess I’m a foolish old auntie.”

“But Ada, you mustn’t always think of others. You must think of yourself sometimes. And now you’re all torn up between Auntie Couch and Rosella. Ada, you should put yourself first. I was talking to Charles billings about how good you are to everyone. I told him you have no life of your own, that you are a good stenographer, and worked in Papa’s office. Do you know what he said to me?”

“That I should ‘get a life’?”

“He said, ‘She should come out West and get a secretary position.’ He said the West is fresh and new and wonderful. He said the future of America is there, and that he wishes he were twenty years younger; he’d take a bride out there and seek a fortune.”

“Oh, yes. If he were twenty years younger. And if I were twenty years younger, or fifteen years younger, I just might go West and be a secretary.”

“I think he was hinting that he might have asked you to be that bride.”

Ada blushed big time. “Bertie! You don’t know that!”

“No, but I think so. I really think so. He had praised you so highly. He said he would have liked to have had a family, but that he’s too old to think of it now. But if he were younger he would think of it.”

“I don’t know why you’re telling me all this, Bertie.”

“Because I thought it would be nice for you to know it. It’s something nice for you to think about now isn’t it?”

“Something nice for a spinster to think about? Yes, Bertie, it is nice. But, ‘of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these, it might have been’.”

“Dear Ada, you always have a quotation at hand don’t you. What a reader you are! It’s wonderful to love books the way you do. I dare say you could have written books yourself.”

Ada pretended to frown. “Now, Bertie, please don’t supply me with any more ‘might-have-beens’.”

“But you still could write books,” he protested. “That’s if you don’t spend your life peeling potatoes for Rosella.”

“Perhaps that’s my destiny – denuding spuds.”

“No Ada. Even if you never marry or join the business world again, as a typist or such, you’ll have lived a worthy life already. You’ve been an inspiration to us all. Please, Ada, don’t spend the rest of your days in Rosella’s kitchen! It would be such a waste.”



Piper & Becker WILSHIRE BUILDING, ©
CLEVELAND, OHIO.

ADA WALTON NORRIS

about 1900

"IDA"



Miss Ethel

166 EUCLID AVE.
CLEVELAND, O.

ETHEL RAHMING

"EDITH"

11 years old

BY
JANE R. CHANDLER
PART TWO
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PA WONT BACK DOWN

In the years between Nelle Martin's marriage to Earle in 1894 (which her father had annulled) and her marriage in 1905 to Roger Fison, many changes took place in the family. "Old Henry" Martin, who had come to North Royalton in the 1830's, died in a hospital in Cleveland. He had been born in England in 1806, and was holding on to see the new century. He succeeded with three weeks to spare.

Maria's role as a grandmother began in this period, and not without heartache aplenty for her. She had been raised in strict New England protestant tradition, and her mother had instilled in her a profound distrust of 'Papists'. Maria's life-long term for them would always be "Roman Catholics". She was appalled with the numbers of them who had come to her home state of Connecticut.

The Martin's third-oldest child, Stan, had married soon after Nelle and Earle. Stan had married a Catholic girl, Julia Mraz, who had promised she was giving up her faith to take up his. They were married in the Oberlin Congregational Church. In the next few years three daughters blessed this union, and in a short time Julia began attending her own Sacred Heart church again. She begged Stan to agree to their being married again there by her priest. Stan refused and years of strife began. Maria could only say to herself, "Oh, Stan, I was afraid of this!"

The oldest two sons of Henry and Maria were a study in contrasts. Henry Howard Martin (Howd) was very short. He had either inherited his mother's tiny stature, or was born too soon after Maily and Jenny and a miscarriage. In any case he was only five feet four inches tall. He had a good-natured face with an elfin smile.

Nathan Albert (Nate) was one foot taller than Howd. He was, when young, the most handsome of the Martin boys. He liked clothes, and was known in Royalton and Oberlin as 'Martin's dude'. Time after time, without trying, Nate took girls away from Howd. They met Howd first and liked him because he was good-natured, fun to be with, and had spending money, his own horse and buggy. Then presently, they met Nate, who was tall, dashing and handsome, and had spending money and his own horse and buggy. It was all up for Howd then. Maria's sister, Belle, called Nate 'Bonny Prince Nathan'.

Finally, Howd found a girl that Nate did not take away from him. Charlotte (Lottie) Dean didn't prefer Nate, and he had no interest in her. Lottie was a strange girl. At times, she was loving and sweet, and then unexpectedly, sullen and secretive. She was known among her acquaintances as a girl who told fibs. Her lies seemed meaningless and without purpose, but they were numerous and indiscriminate. They would have done more damage if anyone had believed Lottie, but no one did. Maria and Henry wondered why Howd had married a girl who lied so much. The answer was that she was very pretty, and that she hadn't fallen for Nate. She was also a good cook.

Lottie and Howd had one child, a very pretty little girl named Averill.

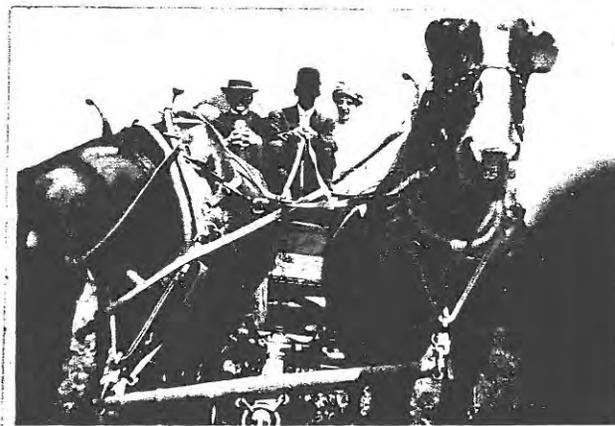
It had been Maria's policy not to interfere with her children's choices for their life partner. She had never forgotten the matter of Leving Weeks, but she had forgiven her mother for all that had happened. She felt that her marriage to Henry Martin was successful. It was her intent to let her children make their own choices without offering unwanted advice. But Nelle had married badly, and Stan's marriage to Julia was in serious trouble. Belle had said to her more than once, "Why did you let Nelle marry that awful man?" and she'd also said, "You should have persuaded Stan that marrying a Catholic girl would only bring trouble." And there was Howd's marriage to poor,



"STAN" MARTIN

1905

"TOMMY HEDGES"



"HOWD" "STAN" "BEA"
AT THE FARM

"JOHNNY" "TOMMY" "FANDY"

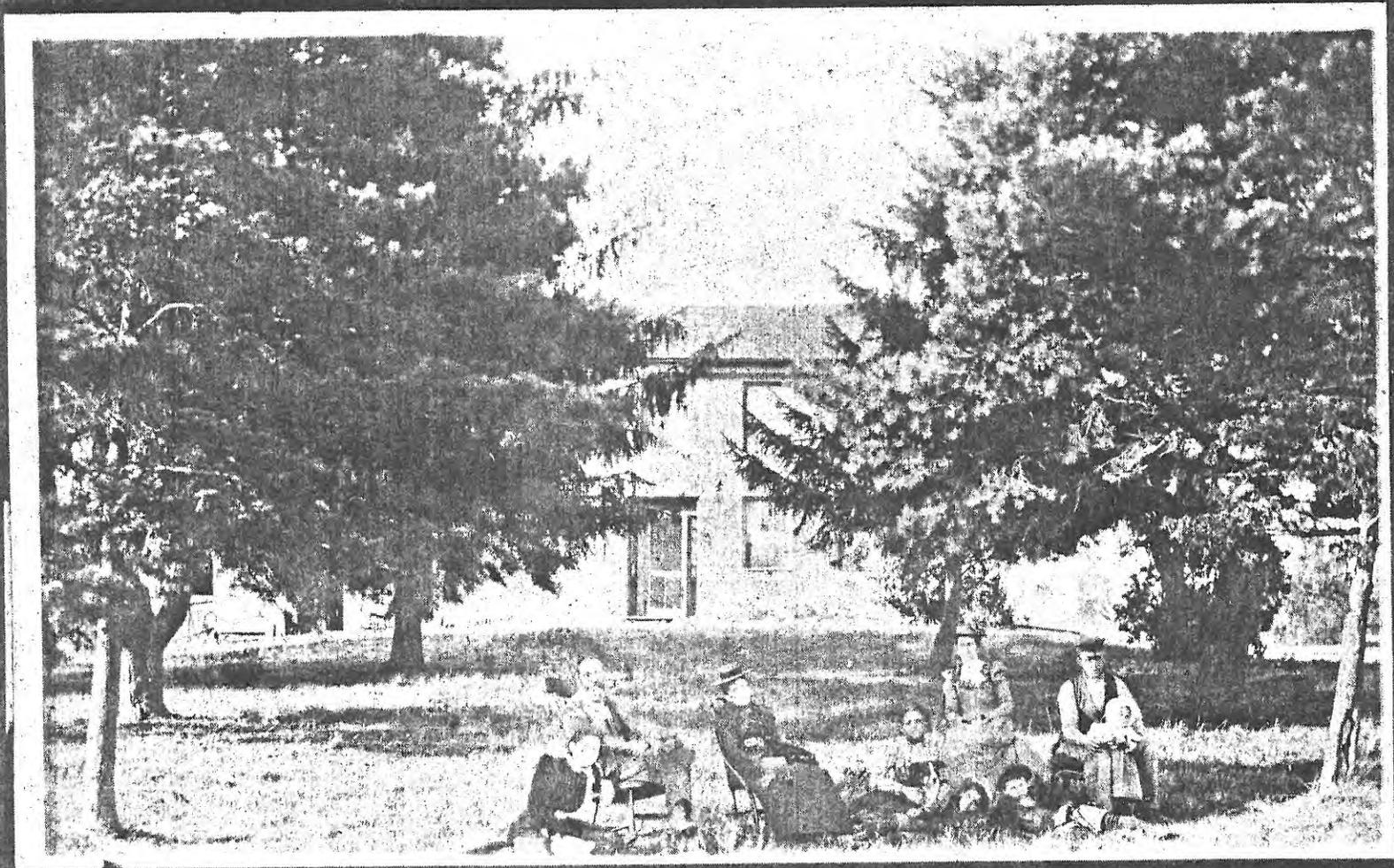
HORSE

HORSE

CIRCA 1912

eccentric Lottie. Belle said, "I don't believe in your practice of not interfering. Children need guidance." Maria had held that when they reached marrying age they were not children. But she broke her rule when it came to Nate and Edith Broadwell. Perhaps she had been shirking responsibility, perhaps she should play a more active role in the older children's affairs. Nate had taken Edith Broadwell for an outing at the lake west of Cleveland where there was a resort called Emerald Beach. It was a long drive; they left about noon on an August Saturday. They had gone in Nate's new buggy his pa had given him for his birthday. Nate had not really been sparking Edith; she had one or two other beaux she was seen with. But she liked being seen with 'Martin's dude' in his new rig, with the pretty Morgan horse. Nate and Edith did not get home from Emerald Beach until about four-thirty Sunday morning. "You've brought shame on Edith and on all of us," Maria was furious. "When you keep a young woman out all night, it costs her her good name. Her mother is a friend of ours, and she and I agree. You'll have to marry her." "But ma! We weren't seen getting in late!" Nate protested. "Yes, you were seen." "Who saw us?" "Lottie saw you." "Lottie! Who cares what Lottie says!" "Nate! Hush. What Lottie says isn't what matters. You and Edith, and her parents, and yours, and no doubt other folks, know you got in at dawn on Sunday. All the folks who go to early mass at Sacred Heart probably saw you too." "Aw, shucks, Ma." "You'll have to marry her, Nate," Maria insisted. "And just hope she isn't in the family way already." "You're dead wrong about that part, Ma." "Well, I hope so," she said. "Anyway, you do the manly thing and protect her reputation." They were married in early September.

So, in the space of two years, the four oldest Martin offspring had married, though, of course, Nelle was already home again by the time Nate married. Howd and Nate had married in the summer of 1895, but while Howd and Lottie's daughter, Averill, arrived the following year, it was not until 1900, that Edith bore Nate a child. It was a girl and named Grace for Edith's mother. Maria had begun to think that Edith must be barren, as the years had come and gone without babies. She was delighted when Grace was on the way. One day she spoke of it to him. "I'm so glad you're at last to be a father, Nate," She said. "I'd begun to think you'd not be blessed." Jim smiled a wry smile, but said nothing. "How is Edith? Is she well? I'd hate for her to lose it. I lost several babies myself. Don't let her work too hard." "Edith is fine. She's not lost any babies. This is her first pregnancy. So you see, Ma, I hadn't got her in trouble that time." Maria looked rueful. "I realize that, Nate, but her mother and I were concerned for her good name."



"THE OLD BRICK" CIRCA 1900

H.J.M.

MARIA M

EMMIE

LOTTIE

HOWD

NELLE

ART BILL

AVRILL

2107



"JAMES ALBERT HEDGES"

Again Nate smiled his wry smile. "That's as may be," he said, "but what you two mothers didn't realize is that I was not the man Edith loved."

Maria looked aghast. "But why did she step out with you, Nate?"

"Pa's money, I suppose."



"Four generations"

MARIA BURNS MARTIN

GRACE ELMINA MARTIN

"NATE" MARTIN

SUSAN TIBBALS BURNS

"SOPHIA"

"JEANNETTE"

"JIM HEDGES"

"GRANDMA WHITEFIELD"

####

Grace had been eight years old when Nelle had lost Earle's baby in 1895. Grace was never able to get Nelle to concede that an eight year old child could have no concept of the events that were taking place at that time – particularly since that child had been told not to ask questions about things she would understand when she was grown up. But Nelle was never convinced. Hers was a mind that did not easily relinquish a fixed idea. She was at home a good many years after her father got her marriage annulled. During those years the family had become completely town-centered. It was much harder for Nelle to find a place in the new scheme of things.

The children still at home were busy with studies at the Academy. Even the housework was different. In town, there was no milk to skim, no churning to do, no eggs to gather, no chickens to feed, nor hogs to swill. Pa did keep four carriage horses, and one saddle horse which was Nelle's greatest pleasure. She spent time keeping all the horses groomed beautifully, and she learned to sew with great skill and made dresses for all her sisters. But she was not happy. She talked with her mother about it.

"Ma, I can't go on this way forever. I wish we still lived on the farm."

"You'll marry again someday, Nelle."

"There isn't anyone I care about, Ma."

"But there will be, Nelle. You had a bad time. Your spirit suffered a blow, but it will heal."

"Maybe, Ma, but I don't know what to do with myself in the meantime."

"Why don't you get more schooling?"

"Not at my age, Ma. The others would laugh at me."

"Not if I explained things to them."

"That Grace is a snot-nose stuck-up sometimes."

"Nelle! If you can talk so rough you ought to be strong enough to take being laughed at by little children."

"But Ma, Emmy is already past where I was when I quit going to school."

"Do you want to be somebody or not, Nelle?"

In the fall, Nelle started at the Academy. The adjustment was easier than she had anticipated. She found a friend her own age who missed much of her schooling because of illness. This girl, Metta, and Nelle became fast friends. The girl was shy and retiring and Nelle had a need to be a leader. It was an ideal combination. But one morning two years later, Merly came flying into Nelle's room, her eyes full of excitement.

"Guess what Ma says! We're moving to Cleveland!"

"Who is?"

"All of us, the whole family," Merly said breathlessly.

"Not me, I hate Cleveland. I wouldn't live there for love or money."

"We're all going, I said."

"Why?"

"Because Grace is going to go to the Cleveland Institute of Art, and maybe I am too."

"Oh, for pity sakes, what nonsense!"

"The art teacher at the Academy told Ma that Grace has too much talent to be wasted. She should be trained at the Institute and he said I was talented too."

“I should think you’d have more pride than to always want the same things Grace wants. What’s the matter with you?”

“I think it would be exciting to go to school in Cleveland!” Merly asserted.

“I don’t,” said Nelle. “I love it here, and now that I have Metta for a friend, I wouldn’t leave the Academy for anything.”

“But we’re going! You can’t stay behind when the family moves out of the house. Everyone is pleased but you, Nelle.”

“I’m going to talk Pa out of it.”

“I don’t think you can,” Merly said. And she was right.

So with the coming of 1904 Henry Martin owned three houses, one in Cleveland, one in Oberlin, and ‘the old brick’ on the farm in North Royalton. But now, instead of leaving Oberlin and going to the farm for the summer, the Martin children chose to spend the vacation in Oberlin, where they had many friends. Art was 12, Bill was 15, Grace 17, Merly 19, and Emmy 21. Nelle, still at home, was 27. She had several interested beaux, but cared little for any of them. She spent most of her time running the house for Maria.

When September came, the family would all move into Cleveland to the new house on Cartwright Avenue. Art and Bill would go to Eastern High School, Grace and Merly would go to the Cleveland Institute of Art.

Nelle had no intention of leaving Oberlin. She wanted to stay and keep the house there occupied during the winter season, while the family was in the city. She felt that as a woman 27 years old, who had been married, there was no reason she should not be able to live there alone, or better still, with Emmy. But Maria wavered. And then the picture changed.

Nelle’s friend, Metta, introduced her to the first man in years that had interested her. He was Metta’s cousin, and he was visiting relatives around the country. In the one week Roger Fison spent in Oberlin, he and Nelle fell in love.

It is sometimes said, that people who select a second or third or subsequent spouse will invariably pick the same type of person as before. Not so when Lucy decided Roger Fison was the man for her. He was utterly different from Earle. Where Earle had been of average height with dark hair and eyes, and very handsome but rather sharp features, Roger was a bigger man, with sandy Scottish coloring, his hair reddish blond, with blue eyes with golden lashes. He had a large, friendly face, nice-looking but not dazzlingly so. Where Earle was rough and unpolished, Roger was gentle and mannerly, with strong convictions about the chivalrous treatment of womenfolk. His father was a minister, born in England, and originally Episcopalian, but currently preaching in a Baptist church in Hanley. Roger had two sisters and a brother still living at home, whereas he had been gone from home for years. He also differed from Earle in that he was a passionate lover of books. Earle had never read anything, while Nelle was married to him and Nelle was almost as bad. She was a lover of the outdoors, and very active. She couldn’t sit still and read for hours like Emmy, Merly and Grace.

There was one trait that Roger Fison shared to some degree with Earle, and that was a spirit of adventure. Nelle was always intrigued by anything exciting and bold. Metta had told her that Roger had run away from home when he was 14 years old. He had been a telegrapher and a train dispatcher in a town in Colorado, and various other jobs.

“What made you run away from home when you were such a young boy?” Nelle asked him at her first opportunity.

“There were two reasons, I guess. I truly don’t know which was more important. My father is a very strict, old-fashioned disciplinarian. When I and my brothers were in trouble, Father locked us up and all we got was bread and water.”

“My! That is old fashioned. I never knew any parent that did that. Around here the custom is to give bad boys a good thrashing.”

“Father gave us canings frequently too.”

“You said there were two reasons. What’s the other?”

“Mark Twain. Have you read him?”

“No, but Grace and Bill have, and so had Ma, come to think of it.”

“He’s wonderful. You’ll love his books.”

“But what did he have to do with your leaving home?”

“I wanted to go on the river.”

“You mean the Mississippi?”

“Yes, indeed.”

“And did you?”

“I certainly did. I worked on and near the river for close to a year, doing whatever work I could get. Then I met a man who liked me, and brought me East, and I got a job as a telegraph messenger boy in Buffalo, and then in Rochester. I learned Morse code from a friend I made there. And that’s the way it happened – how I got to be a telegrapher.”

“How wonderful! If I’d been a boy, I could have been doing things like that since I was fourteen.”

“There are lady telegraphers, did you know that?”

“Honestly?”

“Yes. I’ve talked to several, as a matter of fact.”

“Is being a telegrapher what you’d always dreamed of when you were small at home?”

“Yes, it was. That, or being on riverboats, but it isn’t where my dreams stop though. That’s where Mark Twain influences me. I’d like to write stories myself. So that’s one reason I ran away from home. I was after adventures I could write about.”

“And you found them?”

“Plenty. And there’ll be more. I’m stationed in Colorado now, and there’s real stories happening all the time in the West, and when you run out of them, you can make them up, once you’re familiar with a place.”

“What’s it like, Colorado?”

“It’s the most beautiful place I’ve ever been. Blue mountains, some with snow on the tops year-round, and there’s clear streams, and mining towns and railroads. And it can be fierce in the winter. The trains get stopped by the blizzards. There’s wrecks, and all kinds of excitement.”

“And I’ve spent my whole life in this quiet place. Maybe I ought to learn to be a telegrapher like those ladies you told me about.”

“But I doubt they’d put you in an office in the Rockies.”

“Why not?”

“Too rugged, too lonely. Our offices are often boxcars. I can think of something better for you to be than a telegrapher.”

“What’s that?”

“A telegrapher’s wife.”

“Oh, don’t tease me. I really meant it.”

“Miss Martin, I really meant it, too.”

The next afternoon was a sweltering hot one in Oberlin. The four Martin sisters all washed their hair, and brushed it dry in the sunshine. Grace Isobel and Emma Prichard put on their dresses again, for they were going to the Conservatory for a piano lesson, but Ellen Maria and Marian Martha sat around in their petticoats and camisoles. They felt cooler that way. All four of them were lounging in the darkened front parlor sipping cold lemonade when Grace said, "Someone's coming up on the porch. It's Metta and Roger and Roger's sister Lucy. Nelle and Merly each gave muffled shrieks. Merly dashed out of the room and Nelle dived under the round table at the end of the room, where she was completely hidden by the long tablecloth. Emmy and Grace ushered the girls and Roger into the room, asked them to be seated, and offered them lemonade which they accepted. Then Metta noticed that Emmy and Grace were both stifling laughter.

"Whatever is so funny, you two?" she asked.

Emmy pointed to the parlor table. "It's Nelle. She's under there."

"Whatever for?" Metta asked.

"You caught her and Merly without their dresses on. Nelle didn't have time to go farther than that. Merly escaped."

Roger blushed fiery red, but Metta said, "It's all right, Nelle. We'll put Roge outdoors until you get safely upstairs."

"No, I'll go home and come back later," Roger muttered.

"You don't need to do that," Grace said. "It won't take Nelle long to put on her dress and do her hair."

"My hair isn't dry yet," Nelle said from below the table.

Roge fled to the door. "I don't want to inconvenience her," he insisted. "I'll come this evening to call."

After he had left, Nelle emerged.

"He's such a gentleman, Metta. He's got better manners than any of the chaps I know. You're lucky to have a cousin like that."

"He's smitten with you, too, Nelle." Metta said.

"He's certainly a long way from that dreadful Earle," Emma said. "I never like him."

"Emmy, I don't want you to ever talk about Earle again."

"Well, for heaven's sake, Nelle," Grace said. "Emmy's twenty-one years old. You can't tell her who she may talk about."

"Well, out of consideration for me, I hope she won't." Nelle seldom backed down so quickly, but she wanted to ask a favor of them all.

"Emmy," she said, "go get Merly. I want to ask you all something."

When Merly was in the room, Nelle said, "I'll have to talk to Ma, too, but I'll do that separately. It's something I want to ask you. About Rog, he's getting very serious, and I like him better than any of the beaux I've ever had. But here's the thing. I want to tell him about Earle myself. Any one of you might think she had to mention it to Roger, but it's important to me to tell him in my own way at the right time and place."

"How could we tell him about Earle," Merly said, "when we don't know about it. You've never told us anything."

"I never told anyone but Pa, and maybe I never will, but you girls all know I was married once."



ROGER B. FISON
"BARTELL HOWARD"
CIRCA 1905

“You mean you aren’t planning on telling Roge that?!” Metta exclaimed. “Surely you’ll tell him that!”

“Certainly, but when I feel it’s the right time. I’ve got to think about how to tell him that I could have married anyone so low.”

“I wish you would tell us about it, Nelle,” Merly said. “You’ve made us awfully curious.”

“No, I wouldn’t dream of telling you girls or Ma. You’re all too nice. And Roger is nice too. When the annulment was over, it was all over. And remember, girls, I wasn’t divorced. An annulment is the same as saying it all never was at all.”

####

So now Nelle was engaged, and Maria slept more peacefully. She'd worried for eleven years about Nelle's happiness, but now she was at last in love with a fine man from a good religious family. The next thing was to get Emmy straightened out.

Nelle had come to her mother to make the same request she had made of her sisters and Metta. She wanted to be the one to tell Roge about Earle.

"I think you're right Nelle," Maria said, "but you would better tell him right away. You should have done it as soon as he proposed to you. He has the right to know, and he'll not think well of you if he learns it from someone else, like Edith or Lottie.

"Why should he learn it from Edith or Lottie, Ma? He probably won't meet them."

"But we should announce your engagement to the rest of the family, Nelle, and they'll meet Roge."

"Ma, I'll be much happier if Roge doesn't even lay eyes on Lottie till after we're married. She's such a peculiar person, he'd probably change his mind and decide not to marry me after all."

Maria couldn't help laughing. "Oh, Ellen. What a goose you are sometimes! Now tell me – when do you and Roge plan to marry?"

"Probably next spring, Ma. He has to go back to Colorado right away, and then he wants to get transferred to a different town, where I'll not be so lonesome.

"I was thinking it would have been nice if you and Emmy could be married at the same time."

"Oh, Ma! Emmy doesn't even want to be married!"

"Nelle, Emmy has to come down out of the clouds and live in the real world. She's twenty-one now. She's a woman. It's time for her to stop being a stage-struck school-girl. She'll soon get over the notion of being an actress. The stage is all right for Sarah Bernhart and Maude Adams, but most of us live in the real world."

"But, Ma, Emmy has been so happy dreaming about acting. She's had a wonderful time in the plays they've done at school. She'd like to teach dramatics."

"She could teach more useful things than that," Sophia said. "She could teach office work."

"Ma, you're pretty old-fashioned."

"Nelle, theatrical people lead peculiar lives. I'm not saying they are always immoral, but they travel from one place to another, they keep late hours, and they often drink too. Young ladies in the theater are always approached by men who expect them to be free with their favors. Now, would you really want your little sister in a world like that? A world where men wouldn't treat her with respect?"

"No, of course not, Ma," Nelle said.

"Well, then, I wish you'd persuade her to marry William. He's a fine, good man, and she's been putting him off long enough."

"Ma, surely you know what she doesn't like about marrying Calvin!"

"Oh, Nelle, now that's silly. She has no objections to having him be around her, and spend money taking her to the theater in Cleveland. Just because his father is in the funeral business doesn't mean William will be."

"Emmy's afraid that sooner or later, when his father gets older, William will just naturally decide to become an undertaker, too. And she says by then, she'd be married to him, and couldn't do anything about it."



ELLEN MARIA MARTIN
"LUCY HEDGES"

CIRCA
1905

“Nelle, I do believe that Emmy’s trouble is that she just wants to stay a young girl forever, and read books and daydream about the theater. It’s time she thought about being a grown-up woman. She isn’t serious about teaching, either. She’d like things to go on indefinitely the way they are now. But we won’t always be here. Your pa is sixty-four, and I’m fifty-nine. We’re getting on.”

“Don’t talk that way, Ma! You’re not old.”

“Nelle, Pa and I just want to live long enough to see all you children happily married, with children of your own. Then we’ll feel our duty’s done.”

“Stan and Nate aren’t very happy, Ma.”

“Stan isn’t, but Nate and Edith will be all right. As the years go by, they’ll reconcile themselves to each other. I didn’t advise you or Stan at all when you married, and it all went wrong. I probably should have spoken to Howd about Lottie, too. I’m not going to withhold in giving Emmy a mother’s wisdom. I’m very pleased to give you my approval and your Pa’s too, to Roger. He’s a fine man, and so is William Wooldridge, and your sister must make up her mind about him. He’s already talked to Pa and me. We’d be very happy to have William in the family.

In the night, it all came clear to Nelle. Ma was right, Emmy should marry William. Ma had always said things work out for the best. God has His plan. It was His plan that Emmy marry because not only would it put an end to her silly schoolgirl romancing about the stage, but it would work out well for everyone else. First of all, ma would feel easy about Emmy’s future. But, beyond that, other problems would be solved. After they were married, Emmy and William could live right here in the Oberlin house, and take care of it during the school year when the family was all in Cleveland at the new house on Cartwright Avenue. When summer came there would be plenty of room still for everyone, when the family came back to spend the summer in Oberlin. Everyone had agreed that if Pa sold this house, they’d fairly hate to spend summers in the city. Art and Bill had even announced they’d run away before they’d let that happen to them. Ma and Pa themselves hated the idea.

The best part of it, Nelle told herself, was that, with Emmy and William married and living in the house, she, Nelle, could stay on in Oberlin until Roge sent for her to come out West and marry him. Ma had refused to consider letting her and Emmy stay her this winter unchaperoned. And when she’d told Ma that at twenty-seven it was perfectly proper for her to live alone, the same as all spinsters can, Ma had laughed and said, “You’re a long way from being a spinster, and at twenty-seven you’re still a very pretty, headstrong, young girl.” But with a married sister and brother-in-law in the house, Ma would be agreeable.

Nelle talked to Emmy the very next morning. She had always been able to influence both Merly and Emmy, but now she ran into some difficulty with Emma.

“I’m just not sure about William,” Emmy said.

“Then you’ve no business keeping him dangling these last three years. It isn’t honorable or fair.” This upset Emmy. “Well, I like him very much. It’s just this undertaking business that I hate so much.”

“Emmy! William’s pa is in the tombstone business.”

“Oh, he’s touched bodies, too, never you fear, Nelle. I can’t stand the thought of a man who touches corpses coming home and touching mine.”

Nelle laughed. “Your corpse?”

“My body,” Emmy said, a little annoyed.

“But Emmy! William says he has no intention of becoming an undertaker.”

“I don’t trust him.” Addie shook her head, scowling. She was a pretty girl when she smiled, but not so when she scowled.

“That’s the trouble with you Emmy, you don’t trust people, you’ve got to learn to trust them.”

“Like you trusted Earle.”

“Oh, don’t be a goose! Earle can in no way be compared with William Wooldridge.”

“But you thought he was marvelous before you married him.”

“So I did. And I was only seventeen years old. What’s more, I’d only known him a couple of months. You’re twenty-one, and you’ve had lots of time to judge William. In any case, there’s no way that William could do what Earle did to me.”

“Why not?”

“Because the circumstances were very unusual, very peculiar.”

“What happened? You never told anyone.”

“No, and I never will, so let’s change the subject. I want to tell you my plan for the winter.”

Suddenly, Nelle got another inspiration. William lived in Hanley, twenty miles away. His father’s monument business was there. If William and Emmy lived in Oberlin, William would work there, of course. That would wean him away from the business of cemeteries, once and for all. Maybe Pa would take him into the real estate business. Better than that was Nelle’s next idea. She and Roge would be living in the West. Emmy and William should plan on living there too, eventually.

Emma for a day or two resisted the pressures put on her by Nelle. They would have so much fun running the house together, Nelle said. They would be able to do things just the way they wanted to.”

“What about money?” Emmy asked.

“Pa would give me enough for my share, and you and William will benefit by having no rent to pay.”

“Then in spring you’ll go to wherever Roger is.”

“Maybe then you and William can come West too.”

“Nelle,” Emmy said, “I was planning on going to Cleveland with the family next month. I thought I might go to the Art Institute with Merly and Grace.”

Nelle sighed with disgust.

“Emmy! For heaven’s sake. Are you going to be as bad as Merly, copying Grace all the time? Haven’t you any imagination? Wouldn’t you like to live in the West?”

“But it was Roger who finally broke Emmy’s resistance down. He’d been requested by Nelle to tell Emmy how beautiful Colorado was and how exciting, but he got started talking about Denver.

“You ought to see Elitch’s Gardens,” he said. “I’ve been to the theater there. It’s a grand place.” Emma sat up and took notice. “You mean you have a real theater out there? I mean a good theater?”

“The casts often come from New York. But there is more than that. There are opera houses too. Oh, yes, and at Elitch’s they had ‘Trilby’ and ‘Cyrano’ a few years ago.”

“Really! I just didn’t believe things were that citified. I just thought the Rocky Mountains were, well, wild.”

“They are, but Denver is a fine city.” Roger said.

“Oh, don’t you see, Emmy,” Nelle coaxed, “what fun it would be?”



Emma Pritchard Martin (Woolbridge) ^{taken} about 1900



"Addie"



circa 1905

"Jed"

Isaac Isabel Martin

Marian Martha Martin

Emma P. Martin

"Calvin"

"Martha"

"Irene"

"Addie"



Emmie and Art
"Addie" and "Charles"

####

Grace and Marian were enchanted with the new house on Cartwright Street. All its appointments were new and modern. Since Nelle and Emma would not be living there, they would each have a room alone, and so would Bill and Art. There would be a large room for Henry and Maria, and another one for Maria's mother, who was in failing health.

Susan Tibbals Burns was in her eighties now, a frail, tiny person dressed in black skirts and shawls. She always wore a little white lace ruffled cap. She had been living with Susan Isabella Burns (Belle), her oldest daughter, until recently, but now that she was old, her mind turned back to past places and happenings. She thought a great deal about Connecticut now, and of how much Maria had loved Westport, and how she had sent her away from the place of her birth, and away from the ocean, to this flat inland country. She wondered often what Maria's life would have been like if she had married Leving Weeks. Leving might not have gone off to the war if Maria had stayed in Westport. Certainly, Leving's mother had been convinced of that.

Susan Burns had asked Maria and Henry if she might live with them in her last years.

"Why, certainly, Ma. You needn't ask. Henry has always said you were welcome. His father was with us for many years, after all. But you're sure Belle won't be offended?"

"No. It will give her a rest. I'm old and forgetful and probably a nuisance."

"You are nothing of the kind, Ma, and we love you."

Nelle wrote to Roger in September.

Dearest Rog,

I am still missing you terribly, and it does seem strange, since I really only knew you such a short time before you went away, back to your mountains. Mother would never have approved of our early engagement if she hadn't liked Metta and her family so well. Of course, I'm old enough not to have to have anyone's permission to marry, but I am glad that Mother and Father are pleased. I think Mother felt that it was high time I decided to settle down and get married. Someday I will tell you why I waited so long to find the right man, but not in a letter, Roge.

When I see you.

Speaking of letters, I have already written you more letters than I have written in my whole life (not counting "thank-you" notes to Aunt Belle and Aunt Helen (Helen Martha Burns), for instance, for Christmas presents). And do you know why I have never written many letters? Because I have never been anywhere, really. Oh, I've been to the Lake for a weeks or so, and to Cleveland and to Hanley, of course. But never anywhere long enough to even write a letter home. So I am thrilled to have met a man who likes to go to far-off places. Rog, you really don't need to wait until you get an assignment in a larger town. Not for my sake. I wouldn't mind living in a tiny mountain town, particularly if I could have a horse. I like horses so well that I wouldn't feel lonely if I had a horse or two, to talk to. I wouldn't even care if I couldn't see any other houses from our place. So keep that in mind in regard to our plans.

Well, Rog, most of the family are in Cleveland now, going into ecstasies over the new house Pa built on Cartwright Avenue. It has gas and electric lights, and the girls are delighted with the new plumbing fixtures, and new-style kitchen sink. And they feel very grown up this fall, because they are keeping house for Pa and the little boys, while Ma is here in Oberlin getting the house ready for Emmy's wedding. It is going to be three weeks from tomorrow at the First Church here. Emmy has invitations, and she and Ma are fussing with those.



Wife (from family portrait)
"Lucy"

Ellen Maria Martin age 13
"Lucy Hedges"



"LUCY"
about 1905



Helle Fison ?
"Lucy" Roger Fison ?
"Barrett Howard" ?

I think Ma is just terribly happy that Addie is getting married, because I know that she longs for some grandchildren that are her daughters' children. You see, the only ones she has belong to her daughters-in-law, and that's a little different. It especially is in this case because Julia and Edith are the way they are. Julia seemed to turn away from us all when she went back to her old religion. She's sure Ma hates all Catholics. Well, Rog, my mother doesn't hate anyone, if Julia only realized it, but they aren't close. And with Edith, well, no one is close to her. She's just one of those stand-offish people. Then, of course, there's Lottie. Well, she is an odd person, but she's loving in her way, and for all she's got faults, Ma is really fond of her, but we don't see very much of Howd and Lottie. Pa and Howd seem to very often be at odds over things, and that's a long story which I'll probably tell you some day.

So, anyway, Ma is really all pleased that Emmy and William are finally taking the step, and she's happy about us, too, even if we don't plan to be married in Oberlin.

I will write you every day like I said, but when the wedding is over I'll have a lot more news for you. Just now, the plan is that Emmy and William will take a one-week trip to Niagara Falls, and then they will come back here to Oberlin. William is going to work for Father and see how he does at selling real estate. After they get back, I'll be in Cleveland a week or two so they can have a little more time alone here.

“Oh, Rog, how I envy Emmy and William getting married now. I know that you are probably right in your belief that Spring will be the best time for us, after you get your new territory, but oh, what a long winter this will seem for me. I wish I had met you years ago. We would have a family by now wouldn't we? I so look forward to the day when one of my mother's girls gives her a grandchild. I feel this way so strongly and I hope that I will still be the one to be first, even though Emmy is going to have a head start on me. It has something to do with the deaths of my two older sisters when they were small. Ma never got over that. I think that it's one reason she kept on having more babies, even when she wasn't really strong enough. Each time a new one came it comforted her for the loss of Maily and Jenny. Of course, when we are married, we will be a long way from Ma, but she will probably get on a train, and come to see our first child when it arrives. I don't mean to sound bold.

My, this letter has been long, hasn't it? But that is the best substitute I have for talking to you, Roge dear.

Please take good care of yourself for me, won't you?

Ever, and with kisses,

Your loving Nelle.

####

Moving to Cleveland had been a fascinating experience for Maria. She was fifty-eight years old now, and would have no more children. The oldest ones were married and gone, and Art, the youngest, was thirteen years old. Her friends and family in Oberlin and Royalton had asked, "Why after all these years would you want to leave this town?" And she had told them, "That's precisely it! We've been here all these years; besides, we aren't leaving. We're keeping our houses. We'll be back summers. Henry says we'll come back to stay when he retires from business. It will be easier for him now, he spends so much time in Cleveland. And for the children and me, it's like a great new adventure.

She loved her convenient new home. Cartwright Avenue had been settled long enough for the sycamores which lined it to have grown large and shady. Their son Stan had spent two months at the new place, painting and papering, and getting a lawn started. By September when school started everything was finished, and the family moved. It had presented a problem in connection with Emmy's wedding, because so many things had been taken to Cleveland. They'd left much of their furniture in the Oberlin place, but certain things like table linens were at the new place. Emmy wanted to be married in Oberlin, and in any case, Nelle would have insisted on it. But, of course it was best because the wedding guests were all Oberlin County people. The wedding would be in the First Church, and the reception would be at Nate and Edith's house. Maria was grateful to Edith for making the offer, though she couldn't get over a faint, subconscious feeling that Emmy was not getting the most auspicious send-off for a lifetime of marital bliss.

But Maria was not preoccupied with Nate and Edith in the days before Emmy's wedding. Something had happened that would sorrow her heart for the rest of her days.

A few weeks before the wedding, Maria and Henry went out to the old farm on Schoolhouse Road in North Royalton. Howd and Lottie were managing the place, but the older Henry Martin came to visit often. His love for the farm was still strong. Sometimes he spent a week or so there, before returning to Cleveland. Maria loved the place too, but life in the town was easier for her, as the running water and central heating she would not have wanted to give up. She'd had these conveniences in Oberlin too, but the farm still had only the hand pump in the kitchen, the privy out beside the barn, and was heated with fireplaces and pot-bellied stoves. Henry seemed to glory in doing things the old-time way.

It was a warm Saturday and Nelle and Roger had come to North Royalton too – the farm always called the older Martin offspring back. The three older boys and Nelle and Emma felt about it as Old Henry did, while Merly and Grace, and Bill and Art had more friends in Oberlin and Cleveland, and considered the Old Brick merely a spot to spend a few weeks in summer vacation. Young Howd and Lottie were running the place as a general farm. They had a string of dairy cows, pigs and chickens, and had two teams of workhorses for the field crops.

Lottie was in charge of the chickens and a kitchen garden, and the housekeeping, which she slighted at all times. There were two hired hands, one a younger man who spent most of his time in the fields with a team, and his uncle who was lame. The older man, "Uncle Ben" concerned himself with the dairy affairs, keeping the cow barn white-washed, the manure shoveled out, and feed distributed for the cows. He also slopped the hogs, and cleaned the chicken coops for Lottie. At milking time his nephew and young Howd showed up to help, and with getting it ready in cans to be picked up to go to Oberlin. They kept some cream, and Uncle Ben helped Lottie with the churning. Uncle Ben never went near the horses if possible. A horse had kicked him when he



"TED" W. EMMA GRACE MARIAN
"CALVIN" "ADDIE" "IRENE" MARTHA

CIRCA 1905

9428
1/2

was a boy, and broken his leg, and made it shorter than the other. He had always marveled at how fearless Nelle was around the horses. She liked to ride but she could even handle a work team.

“They’re treacherous beasts,” Uncle Ben said, and Nelle disagreed.

“Only if you don’t like them and let them know it,” Nelle insisted.

Old Henry still kept two or three riding horses at the farm, with the notion of raising race horses when he retired. He had not give the farm to Young Howd and Lottie – he merely let them run the place. The financial situation between them was a bit hazy, since the farm had been stocked when Howd took over. It was Old Henry’s opinion that Young Howd and Lottie were in his debt, while they, especially Lottie, felt it was the other way round. It irked Lottie that Old Henry came so often to “look around”. He was not opposed to progress, but he did not want Young Howd making changes without consulting him. The smallest detail did not escape his eye, although it was a dozen years or more since he had left the farm and moved to Oberlin.

On this particular Saturday, Old Henry went first, as usual, to see the horses. He kept a very close watch on their hooves, and the condition of their shoes, and got after Young Howd if he thought anything was neglected. It made Young Howard very sullen, but the old man could not be entirely blamed, for Lottie and Young Howd were only there on a trial occupancy. Both Henry Senior and Maria were nearly convinced that a hired caretaker couple would not lose them any more money than Howard and Charlotte were doing. The two reasons for the management problems at the farm were that Young Howd spent more and more time elsewhere engaged in carpentry around the neighborhood. He had a natural knack for it, and had since quite young acted as apprentice to the best carpenter in North Royalton. Now that he knew the trade well, he was getting more and more work of his own, and spent much time away from the farm. In the meanwhile Lottie did as she pleased about the place, which was largely nothing in the way of housekeeping, though she loved feeding chickens, weaning calves, and fussing with baby chicks and ducks.

In the beginning, when Young Howd and Lottie had planned to get married, Maria talked to them about their plans.

“I know you are certainly old enough to marry, Howd,” she said, “though I can’t believe that you are twenty-five years old. Stan seemed so young when he married last year. He was only nineteen, but he knew just how he expected to make a living. What do you think, Howd? Are you figuring that you can make enough carpentering? Pa and I don’t see how you can, for a while.”

“I’ll have to get me some more jobs,” Young Howd said. “I’ve got two for this summer.”

Maria got to the point. “Pa and I helped Stan and Julia with a cash loan for them to start their little lunchroom. For you, he has a different idea. He needs someone on the farm. He’s not happy with just Joe and Uncle Ben as caretakers. He’d rather have one of his boys there. Stan and Nate aren’t interested. Stan is doing well with his business, and Nate wants to try something like that, maybe in Cleveland.”

“I’d love to live on the farm,” Lottie said. “I love it there.”

Howd hesitated. “I don’t know just how it would work out. Would Pa pay me, or what?”

“Pa would let you run it as though it were yours, and the profits at the end of a year would be yours, too. But the farm would still be his, and he wants it kept in good repair. If you and Lottie give it up and leave it, he wants it to be as you found it, with all the stock, a dozen cows and so on, and around a hundred chickens and so on. Pigs, I suppose. No, Pa has a couple of conditions to the whole arrangement.”



Henry Howard Martin circa 1930
N.J. + M.E. Martin's
Christ (who lives)
2 older girls died
in childhood

"JOHN HENRY HEDGES III"
"YOUNG JOHNNIE"

“I thought he would,” Young Howd said.

“They are very reasonable,” his mother said.

“I’ll bet.”

“He wants the horses to be a separate business. He’s still interested in them for himself. He says Joe and Uncle Ben can stay on and do the same chores they do now, and they can take care of the horses. That is, Joe can. There’ll be a team or two for you to use for work. But the other horses will be strictly part of Pa’s business arrangements, breeding, buying and selling, and all.”

Young Howd looked at her for a moment, then he said, “You said there would be a couple of conditions Pa would make.”

“Yes, The other one is simply that you keep records. Pa wants the farm run well, and he wants to know what pays and what doesn’t. He would expect you to keep track of what you pay Joe and Uncle Ben, and Lottie should keep track of her grocery bills. You’ll have butter, milk and eggs, and the kitchen garden, and of course, the apples and such. But whatever you sell, keep a record of it. Pa just wants to know, at all times, that the farm does well. He’d rather come back her to live than see it get run down. Well, what do you say, Howd?”

“I don’t know yet. I’ll be thinking about it, Ma. I really like building. I’m getting to be a good carpenter.”

“I’m sure you are, Howd, but in case there isn’t that much work for you to do, there’ll be the farm always, to fall back on.” She didn’t want to tell him that she worried about him because he was so small, and she didn’t think he was very strong. He had been born so soon after the baby before him, and there had even been a miscarriage in between him and that baby. Maily and Jenny were both apparently strong, healthy girls, even though they’d succumbed to the brain fever. But after Jenny’s birth the next pregnancy came soon, even though Maria was still nursing the baby. She miscarried and her doctor said, “Wait a while before the next.” But quite soon, Howard was on the way.

When his father offered Young Howd the chance to run the farm, he had hesitated. He was much more interested in carpentry, but he and Lottie couldn’t live high on it. Then Lottie had come to tell him a secret.

“What secret?” he asked her.

“It’s about Nelle.”

“What about her?”

“She might get the farm instead of you.”

“Who says that?”

“She says. Nelle.”

“Why should she get the farm? Why would Pa give it to her?”

“Because of what happened to her. She’s a divorcee. No one will want to marry her now, but with the farm...”

“Oh nonsense! She’ll get married soon. Boys always ran after Nelle. She doesn’t need the farm to get another husband.”

“But she wants it, Howd! Her Pa’ll give it to her, and we could have had it.”

“He isn’t just her Pa. So is he my Pa. Besides, I can talk her out of any notion she wants it.”

“Don’t you dare say anything to her.”

“Why not?”

“Because – well, because she told me I shouldn’t tell you. She’d be mad at me, Howd.”

Soon after that, Howd decided to tell his father that he and Lottie would take over the farm. Six months later he talked with Nelle when she came to the farm to ride.

“You look tuckered out, Howd. Is this place too much for you, do you think?”

“Well, I don’t think there’s anything easy about farming. I can see why Pa quit it.”

“I wish he’d quit earlier,” Nelle said. “It was very hard on Mother, even with hired girls. It wore her down. I saw it happening to her. It made me know I’d never want to be a farmer’s wife.”

“Then why did you want the farm, Nelle?”

“Why? Because Earle wanted to raise horses like Pa, and I thought it was a wonderful idea.”

“I don’t mean Earle’s farm. I mean Pa’s farm.”

“Pa’s farm! I don’t want it. What would I do with it?”

“Lottie told me you wanted it. Said you told her so.”

“When did she say that?”

“Last year. I guess she misunderstood something you said?”

“She’s notional, Howd. We never had any conversation like that.”

Howd had learned that Lottie was more than notional. She was a chronic liar, and seemed to go out of her way to make up an untruth.

But in spite of all Lottie’s faults, Maria liked her better than Edith or Julia. Lottie couldn’t help being the way she was, Maria decided. She had no training, and she didn’t know any better. Lottie liked Maria quite well, too. Maria was always kind, and never snippy the way some people were, and she never told her how to keep house. Maria would come out to the farm with Old Henry, and just act friendly and natural, and ask to see the baby chicks, or baby pigs. But Lottie did not care for Old Henry or the Martin girls. The boys were all right, but the older ones, that is Bill and Art, only came to the farm occasionally. But Grace, Emma, Merly and Nelle were very fond of the farm and visited often. The trouble was that they never paid any attention to Lottie when they came. They moved about the farm as though it were still their home as it had been when they were small. Nelle always went straight to the horse barn and saddled up a horse to ride. In the early years after she left Earle, Nelle rode alone around the farm every Saturday afternoon, and now, ten years later, she continued the practice whenever possible.

So when they all came to the farm a few weeks before Emmy’s wedding, Nelle went to the barn for a horse. Old Henry went touring around the place with Uncle Ben and Howd, while Emma, Merly and Grace went straight to the Queen Anne tree to spend the afternoon in lazy idle talk about their beaux and their studies. They seemed to have no time for Lottie or her daughter Averill, though Averill was to be a flower girl in Emmy’s wedding.

“I don’t think the girls like me, Ma,” Lottie said to Maria. “They never pay any attention to me when they’re here.”

“Oh, Lottie, it’s not that they don’t like you! It’s just the way young girls are before they are married. They’re so excited about life, and the wonderful things that may happen to them. When one is that age, the future is always a wonderful thing to dream about. Emmy is thinking about her wedding, and Nelle of going out West, and Emmy has some lovely gifts and new clothes. And Grace is happy because she has won a scholarship for next year, and has a new beau. They’re all living in the clouds these days. I remember how beautiful life was when I was seventeen.” Maria remembered that Lottie was much older than Howd’s sisters. It wouldn’t be kind to remind Lottie that she was almost middle-aged, that she was in her forties. Indeed, it was hard for Maria to realize that Howard was thirty-five.

But Lottie had been brooding about such things, and she said, “When I was seventeen, life wasn’t so very beautiful. We didn’t have enough money, ever.”

“But you never went hungry, Lottie?”

“No.”

“Nor did I. Well, in truth, I can thank God I’ve always had everything I needed. As long as I can remember, I’ve had plenty. In that way, the Lord has never tested me. But... Pa and I have had to use the money wisely and if all you children will do the same, you’ll prosper accordingly.”

“It’s hard to get ahead,” Lottie said.

“You’ve only the one child, though, and the farm should support you all well, with Howd’s other land, and the carpentry.”

Lottie was about to respond to that when they heard loud voices and shouting from the direction of the barn. The voices were angry and excited. They both hurried to see what the commotion was, and found Nelle and Old Henry Martin leading the horses out to the surrey to hitch them up.

“Going so soon! What’s the matter?” Maria called.

“Get your hat and shawl,” Old Henry said to her, his face flushed and angry.

“Pa! What’s the matter?” Maria cried.

“We’re goin’ home. Get the girls.”

“Pa! Now, what’s the matter? We’ve only been her a little while. Lottie and I’ve got to work on Averill’s dress for the wedding.”

“Forget about that! Get your hat and come on.”

Maria turned to Nelle for an answer.

“Howard knocked Pa down.”

“Howard knocked Pa down?” Maria repeated.

“Where’s Howd?” Lottie asked anxiously.

“Down back the barn somewhere,” Nelle said.

“Pa, are you all right?” Maria asked, for Old Henry was very flushed and his hair was mussed.

“Are you hurt?”

“Well then, take time to get calmed down. And let Nelle finish hitching. You’ve got that harness wrong because you’re upset.”

“Upset? I’ll show him who’s upset! I’ll upset him right off this place. He can’t stay on my farm. You hear that, Lottie? You can be getting ready to pack. And don’t sell anymore chickens, do you hear? Or anything else either.”

Maria stepped forward and took firm hold of Old Henry’s arm.

“Henry, no! Just stop talking! I want you to get quieted. You can talk about it when you’ve calmed down. Nelle, were you there when this happened? Do you know what it’s all about?”

“Yes, Ma.”

“All right, then, I’ll let you tell me. I don’t want Pa to tell me. You can drive me back to Oberlin in your buggy. Pa and the girls in the surrey. Get the girls now, Nelle.”

Maria turned to the porch where Lottie still stood, watching them without comment.

“Lottie, we’ll get this dress done for Averill somehow, but not today.”

“Don’t know as we’ll be needing it.” Lottie said. “Likely we won’t be at the wedding.”

Young Howd had come up, seeing his father leaving with the three younger sisters. “No, that’s right, we won’t be at the wedding.”

“Now, Howd, you didn’t fight with Emma,” his mother said.

“That’s not the point.”

“I don’t want you spoiling her wedding day. You’d make Averill feel bad too. She’s got her heart set on being a flower girl. And I should take it as a personal injury to me if you and Lottie didn’t come.” She turned to Nelle.

“Whenever you’ve got the buggy hitched up, I’m ready to go back to Oberlin. I don’t know if we’ll go back to Cleveland tonight or not. Grace wants to get back. Norris Rahming was going to call on her this evening.”

“Let him wait,” Nelle said. “You can all stay at the hotel tonight. Pa’s too upset to go back to Cleveland this evening. You’ll have to calm him down, Ma.”

Maria turned again to Lottie and Howd. “If Pa said you can’t live on the farm anymore, he means it. I can’t talk him out of that, I know, but you’ll have enough time to work something out. I’ll see to that.”

“Don’t worry about us, Ma,” Young Howd said sullenly. “I’ve got my fifty acres. I don’t figure Pa can take that land back. It’s in my name.”

“He wouldn’t take it back, Howard.”

“Oh, I don’t know about that. You didn’t hear what he said, Ma. He called Lottie and me things you wouldn’t want to hear. He said that we...”

“Never mind, Howd. I don’t want to hear your side or Pa’s. Nelle’ll tell me what she saw. I feel sick about this day’s business. Nelle, can we leave now?”

They drove in silence for a short while with Nelle clucking softly to the mare occasionally. It was as though each woman postponed the inevitable discussion. Maria knew it would worry her and keep her awake at night whatever it was that had caused enough anger in Young Howd to make him knock his father down.

Nelle knew that Maria would end up being more sorry for Howd than ever – for Pa would be unforgiving.

Maria put her face in her hands for a moment, then straightened up and looked at Nelle.

“Well, I guess you may as well tell me now.”

“I imagine you could guess who’s really at fault, Ma.”

“I suppose you mean Lottie.”

“Yes.”

“Yes.”

“Poor Lottie,” Maria said.

“Ma, don’t be sorry for her. She’s so dishonest, and she hates Pa, I do believe.”

“Well, she was poor, and he’s well-off. It’s natural. Well, what happened? Lottie wasn’t even there.”

“It’s just that one thing led to another. You know about the records Pa wanted kept about profits from the farm? Well, Lottie’s been lying about the eggs. She told Pa lately that the hens aren’t laying well. And they’ve gathered the eggs together several times, Pa and Lottie. So Lottie was trying to make Pa believe that all the eggs were laid in the hen house. She thought he didn’t know all the other places the hens put their eggs, like in the mangers and in the hay loft and so on. So today he went around and gathered a lot more eggs. Lottie’s been putting down about 25-30 eggs and day, when actually they’ve been laying 50-60. And then she sold some chickens and some little pigs and lied about that.”

“Poor Lottie!”

“Ma! Why do you keep on saying that? She’s such a liar.”

“She lied without having any reason. Not that a reason is an excuse for a lie, but she had no reason, you see. And she still had to lie. Whether she gathered 30 or 50 eggs wouldn’t have made any difference to Pa. He didn’t collect any money for them. But he liked to know that 75 chickens were doing well. He told me about the egg business. He’d been so puzzled the hens weren’t laying better. It made him angry when he found out that she wasn’t telling the truth. He

wanted the profits to show on the records. I think it makes Lottie mad to have to keep records. Howd resents it too. It would be better if Pa didn't ask them to show records to him, but I know why he does it."

"Why?"

"Because he's getting on in years, but can't admit the children are grown up. He won't let go the reins. The farm would be all right even if Pa didn't see the records."

"But it's businesslike, Ma."

"Pa has enough other business now, Nelle, without the farm. He could sell it to Howd if he wanted, but he won't give it up."

"Howard would rather be a carpenter," Nelle said.

"Yes, and that's what he'll have to be now. Nelle, what started the argument? Surely it wasn't about those eggs."

"No, though Pa was sore about that, and Howd was irked about the mare."

"The mare?"

"Yes, my mare. I offered to sell her to Pa when I leave and Howd ask why I didn't ask him first. I said that I just didn't think he wanted to buy any horses – there were plenty here for him to use. Pa said Howd didn't need to put money into more horses. That annoyed Howd. He said he didn't need people to think for him. Well, then I brought up the subject of Nate. I wish I hadn't, it was a mistake. I said, 'Maybe Nate would like to buy the buggy and the mare.' Then Howd said the thing that caused the trouble. He said, 'Nate don't need any buggy, but he might like an extra mare because he hardly has a wife.'"

Maria bit her lower lip, "Oh, dear me!"

"Pa was furious right away. He said to Howd, 'What kind of dirty talk is that?' and Howd said, 'Julia is cheating on Nate.'"

"Oh, dear me! Oh, dear!"

Nelle went on. "Pa asked, 'Who says so?' and Howd said 'Lottie found it out.' Pa said, 'Your Lottie is a liar.' Howd said, 'You'd better take that back, Pa.' Well, Pa said, 'I'll repeat it. Lottie is a liar and you know it.' Howd said to Pa, 'You go to hell!' Then Pa hit Howd across the face with the back of his hand, and Howd hit him back, only harder and Pa went down, but I think he went down because his foot rolled on a little stick. I don't think he was hurt at all. He was just thrown off balance."

"Howd is such a little fellow," Maria said almost musingly.

"But he's strong, Ma."

"Yes, I guess so. He'll be all right, but Pa will make them leave the farm. Pa won't back down."

"I know."

"The terrible part of this is that Lottie might be right," Maria confided.

"About Julia?"

"Yes. Oh, Nelle, I shouldn't say that! But I've wondered about her. I shouldn't have made Nate marry her. It was wrong. I found that out too late. Nelle, what made Lottie say that about Julia. She might be jealous of Julia because Nate liked her once."

"Lottie said she was in Oberlin with eggs to sell, and she had extra ones and thought Julia might be able to use some at the hotel. She went to the house, and of course Julia wasn't expecting her. She rang the doorbell and it was quite a while before Julia answered it. Lottie heard the back door close and a bit later saw a man walk across the side yard. She knows who it was, she says."

"Who was it?"

“Howd won’t tell us, but he just said that Lottie was positive about it and that Julia said there was a man fixing the stovepipe. Lottie sais that man wasn’t fixing any stovepipe, she’s sure. She says as he crossed the yard he seemed to be combing his hair.”

“Nelle, none of that is proof of anything!”

“I know, Ma, but it makes you wonder...”

“We mustn’t wonder. We must put it out of our minds and just see that Emma has a nice wedding.”

####

Lottie and Howd hadn't come to the wedding, though Averill had been the flower girl. Nelle had gone out to the farm the day before to get her. Maria had insisted on Old Henry letting Lottie and Howd continue to live at the farm while they were building a cottage on a piece of land of Nelle's nearby. It was part of fifty acres Old Henry had given her for a wedding present, and Nelle had made Howd and Lottie a present of three acres of it the fronted on Wilcox Road.

"I'll take it out in carpentry work, sometime after Rod and I have our own home."

When Nelle got back to Oberlin with Averill, she found an opportunity to speak to her mother privately.

"Ma, you've been feeling bad because they won't be at the wedding, but believe me, it's just as well."

"Why Nellie?"

"Because of the way Lottie looks."

"Child, appearances aren't everything."

"Oh, Ma, you just don't know. You know how awful her hair usually looks. The way she lets it hang down hr back in a single braid, or loose and messy? A school girl can do it, but a woman whose hair is starting to turn grey can't."

"She'd have it pinned up for the wedding, Nellie."

"Wait a minute, Ma. I haven't finished telling. Well, when I went out there, I didn't see her when I went in the house. Then Howd came out of the kitchen. He had to cook his own dinner, I guess. He told me Lottie was out feeding the chickens or something. He said, 'Don't be surprised when you see her.' I said, 'Why?' He said, 'I asked her to fix her hair. She fixed it, all right.' Well ma, I went out to the chicken yard, and there Lottie was, throwing scratch feed around and standing there in all that chicken manure, in her bare feet."

"But what about her hair?"

"Ma, she's just jacked it off with scissors. Real short. It's as short as her ears in some places, and it's all uneven. She may have put a bowl over her head and chopped around the edges."

"Oh, dear me! Poor Lottie! Poor Howard!"

"Ma, don't always say 'Poor Lottie.' She's just crazy, that's all."

"Then, more than ever, I say 'Poor Lottie!'"

"I suppose..."

"Lottie was always so nice about letting me hold Averill, even when she was a brand new baby. I never have felt free to hold and cuddle Ethel or Julia's babies."

"You'll get to cuddle mine, Ma."

"I know, dear."

"I hope I have a baby before Emma does."

"Whenever you have one, Nellie, will be just fine. I love all my grandchildren."

"Ma, just think! I would have had one nine years old by now."

Maria was surprised. Nelle had never spoken of her lost baby.

"Don't think of it, dear. Some things in the past are to be forgotten. But you did tell Roger all about Earle, didn't you?"

"Well, now, ma," Nelle said, looking uncomfortable. "I didn't tell him all about it. Not the details."

"Just so you told him, Nellie. I know you were putting it off."

Nelle was still putting it off. She felt that sometime in the future, the proper time would come.

Emma and William went to Niagara Falls for a one week honeymoon. The rest of the Martin family went back to the new house in Cleveland. Nelle insisted she didn't want to join them in the city – she hated it.

“But it's just till you and Roge get married, Nellie,” Maria said.

“No, I'll stay here and get the place all cleaned for Emma and William when they come back.”

“I think it would be good if you'd let them live here alone, Ellen.”

“Ma, you don't understand. Emmy's half afraid of being married. She practically begged me to stay with them after they were married.”

“All right, Ellen – but remember your presence in the house won't have any effect on their personal life.”

“Ma, it isn't that. Well, not really. But Emmy is so timid. She wants me for, sort of support. She hates growing up and leaving you. She is substituting me for you. She'd have you live with them if she could, but she knows she can't.”

“It's funny,” Maria said. “Most young folks can't get away from their parents soon enough.”

“I know, but Emmy isn't like that, Ma. She needs something or someone in between her and the real world.”

“She'll have to change.”

“I don't think she will, Ma. She's always put something in between.”

Something spoiled Nelle's plans for staying in Oberlin till Roger sent for her, or came to get her. Metta had a beau, and since she and her young man were both in college and were courting almost every night, Nelle saw little of her. By Thanksgiving time she had made up her mind to join the family in Cleveland. But when she got there, she felt left out when Grace talked about Art School and her new beau, or when Merly talked about china painting and her new beau, a Baptist missionary's son. Sometimes she went into her Granmother Burns' room and read to the old lady, who was nearly blind with cataracts. She would brush old Susan's hair and help get her ready for bed, and rub her back with liniment.

“You're a good girl, Nelle,” her grandma would say. “You're a good nurse. Would you like to be a nurse?”

“I'm getting married in the Spring, Grandma.”

“That's nice dear. Where are the other girls tonight?”

“Merly's at church with Waldo Lemmon, Grandma.”

“Which church?”

“Cartwright Avenue Baptist Church.”

“Baptist? That's fine. Did Grace go with them?”

“No, Grace went to an organ recital with Norris Rahming.”

“Who's that?”

“A boy who lives down the street. He goes to Art School too.”

“And is he a Baptist too?”

Nelle laughed. “No, Grandma. He's a Christian Scientist.”

“A what? What did you say?” Old Susan was very deaf.

“A Christian Scientist. It's a new religion.”

“Why, there's nothing wrong with the old religion!”

“That's right, Granma. I agree with you.”

“I'm tired now, Nellie.”

“I’ll get you into bed then.”

“I’m 85 years old.”

“I know, Grandma.”

“Nellie, is your Mama happy?”

“Why, of course she is!”

“I think about it in the middle of the night.”

Nelle would wander downstairs to talk to her parents and her little brothers, then she’d pace around the living room, waiting for Grace and Merly to come home.

“Why don’t you read, Nelle?”

“You know I don’t enjoy reading very much, Ma.”

“You seem so restless.”

“I am restless. Heaven knows, I’m restless!”

“Nellie. I’ll give you some money. Go downtown tomorrow and buy material to make a trousseau.”

“Why, Ma, I’ll do that! Why didn’t you suggest that before?”

“I don’t know, but it will be good for us all when your young man comes to fetch you.”

“Amen,” said Nelle’s father, and they all laughed.

“What are Roger’s plans?” Henry Martin asked.

“Well, he’s got his new job, Pa. I’m going out on the train the end of April. We’ll be married in Denver.”

“Could still snow in the Rockies in April,” her father said.

“But the Rockies are west of Denver, Pa. I can get to Denver all right. Roge will have a week off from his job.”

“You can’t go west all alone on the train, Nelle.”

“Pa! I’m twenty-seven years old.”

“You’re still putting your knees under my dining-room table, though.”

“Pa! That’s what this is all about?! I’m taking my knees out from under your table. Just think! You won’t even have to pay a cent for a wedding reception.”

“You can have a wedding. You know that,” he said gruffly.

“I had a wedding! This time, just for luck, I’ll forgo all that.”

The problem of Nelle’s traveling alone did not arise, for within a week she received a long letter from Roge.

My dearest Nellie girl,

I think at last our affairs are beginning to ‘arrange themselves’ as the French say. Tell me if you think these plans will fit your wishes.

Item 1. To be married in Denver the last week in April.

Item 2. “ “ “ “ “ by my father, the Rev. Fison.

Item 3. “ “ attended by my mother, the ‘Mrs.’ Reverend Fison if none of your sisters or friends can come.

Item 4. If at all possible, your parents to make the trip with you.

Item 5. Any other Martin family members cordially invited, indeed urged, to attend.

Item 6. For you to be accompanied on the train west by any or all of the aforementioned (my parents if no one else).

- Item 7. To spend a honeymoon week in Denver and Colorado Springs, visiting Elitch's Gardens, Overland Park racetrack (though I am no gambler, but you love horses), the Garden of the Gods, and Pike's Peak, to mention a few diversions.
- Item 8. To journey at the end of the week to our Rocky Mountain paradise by a sparkling trout stream which tumbles down a pine and aspen glade. The stream and the grassy glade are snow and ice bound at the moment, but in summer they are green and lovely. (They are lovely now in a wintry way). All around this spot are towering majestic peaks of the Rockies. The little cabin I have in mind is something less than paradise, but if you like the rugged life as much as you say you do, you will love it. It is just a cabin – one large room, one bedroom, and a kitchen – all heated by wood stoves, of course, and a little house at the end of a path out back (hidden by little pine trees). And – there is a shed suitable for a horse, perhaps two, but I think not. There is loft space in the top of the cabin, but this is only reached by a ladder from outside the place.
- Item 9. Now – I have been 'batching' it for some time and I have accumulated a motley but modest collection of housekeeping items: a few pans, a broom, scissors, thread and needles, and sundry other things very precious to me, such as my typewriter and certain books. But you, my dear, will have many other items on your list, and perhaps we'll even receive a gift or two. Wives of two men I know are already inquiring into our needs. I do hope we will end up with some muffin tins. I have none, and I don't know how to make muffins anyway, though I can make creditable pancakes, I must say. I can eat a dozen muffins at a sitting, I warn you.

I will have many more details to discuss with you in our letters before you come, but for now, I'll just close with this one more fact. I have not yet rented the little cabin, and will not unless you approve. It is two miles from my station, and in decent weather, I will walk it. There are other cabins and houses along the way, and past the one I have begun to think of as 'ours', so, frequently, I can ride with someone driving along that road. It is sparsely settled country, and I know many of the people here already. In the winter time, there would be stormy days, real blizzards, when I might have to stay at the telegraph office overnight, or even two or three days. It would be lonely, and could be a little frightening. I would want to get a dog for us (I have one in mind), and I would want you to be able to handle a gun. No doubt you would never use it for anything but practice, but it is just good sense for a woman to know how. On this rather unsettling note I will close, as I must do some chores around here. Are you sure you want to be a 'pioneer' wife? I passionately hope so.

Ever, your loving Roge.

Nelle was enchanted with life in Colorado. Having lived all her life in the flat country south of the Great Lakes, she never had seen mountains before. As she came west on the train she was pleased with the rolling country she passed through, but then Kansas was flat again and so was eastern Colorado. But as they approached Denver she caught her first glimpse of the blue, blue Rockies beyond.

Her first letters home told of the beauty.

“The snows are beginning to melt now and the white tops on the mountains are shrinking because the sun is so warm and bright now. It is very different here. The sun in the daytime is hot on your back when you are out, but the nights are still bitter cold, and at this altitude, I understand, they are never really warm. Also, Roge tells me that the spring flowers won't appear until summer, many coming in July and early August. Of course we are very high here, and that makes a big difference. Oh, and the air is very clear and dry, and that makes the nights crystal clear. Mother, you should see the stars here! There are millions and millions of them.

It is so strange to live in a country like this with these towering mountains all around me. I was so used to looking out and seeing only flat fields or flat streets. This is very different from Oberlin or Royalton, let alone Cleveland. We live only two miles from the station where Rog's telegraph office is, and we have one horse now, and a buggy. Roge always walks when he goes to the station if the weather is good. When it has snowed heavily he has had to stay at the station. This happened twice in April when we first got here. At present he is the night operator, and since I am alone nights, Roge has got me a wonderful dog. Her name is Brownie, and she is no purebred; in fact we don't know just what she really is. She seems to have a lot of collie blood and that's mixed in with some hunting breed like setter or pointer, or something like that. She's fairly good sized and has a very business-like bark when she hears something that sounds suspicious.

Our cabin is very cozy now, since Roge and I worked on sealing up the cracks. I'm glad I brought my three trunks with all the extra quilts and blankets. My wedding present from Rog's folks was a sewing machine, and it is my most cherished possession, except of course for the things you gave me, Ma. It took a while to get everything from Denver, but it finally all came and now I am busy making curtains, and I'll start some shirts for Roge soon.

Like her mother, Nelle was a good letter writer. She had ample opportunity to write, for she had no close neighbors to take up her time, and since Roge was usually asleep when he was home, it was a good cure for loneliness. She wrote most often to Maria, but also frequently to all her sisters, and to her favorite brother, Stan. She had written to Howd and Lottie, and also to Nate and Edith, but they hadn't answered. Her “baby” brothers, Bill and Art, had written short notes in response to her letters to them.

Nelle filled her letters with accounts of the beauty of Colorado, and its wonderful clear air, and in a short time Stan wrote that he would like to bring his family out to Denver “to change our luck.” He'd been running a restaurant in Cleveland, and it was quite successful, but his marriage was in trouble, and he was unhappy and bored with his life.

Emma wrote that she and William were talking of coming to Denver, for William felt that there would be better business opportunities for him in the West. He did not feel that selling real estate in Oberlin was going to make him a fortune. He still had the option of going into the monument business in Hanley with his father, but Emma would hear none of it.

“Don’t come in the winter,” Nelle had warned them. “The snows often stop the trains. We have some mighty fierce blizzards. You’d best come before October.”

As soon as Emmy was established in a rented house in Denver, Nelle went up to the city to visit her. Roge was somewhat opposed to her going, but Nelle, as she had done most of her life, got her way.

“I’ll only stay three or four days,” she promised.

“If we get an early snow, it might be longer,” Roge warned. “We can get heavy snow in September.”

“No, it won’t,” Nelle said. “It won’t snow.”

“What makes you so sure?”

“I feel lucky,” Nelle said. “Besides, look at that clear blue sky. Where would the snow come from?”

“Everything can change in twenty-four hours. Storms come rolling in from the northwest, from Wyoming and Montana. You haven’t yet seen a real Rocky Mountain blizzard. You will.”

“All right. But I don’t think it will be in this next week. I don’t smell snow. Father and I could smell snow.”

“Oh, Nelle! That’s ridiculous. People can smell rain. They can’t smell snow.”

“Pa and I can.”

“What a stubborn girl you are.”

At Emmy’s house in Denver, Nelle enjoyed herself. Emmy was full of news of the family, and it made Nelle homesick for her mother.

“Goodness, how I wish I could see Ma!” she said. “But it helps so much to have you and Stan here in Colorado.”

“Yes, except that Stan isn’t here.”

“Isn’t here? What do you mean?”

“He’s gone from Denver, anyway. We don’t know where he is.”

“But,” Nelle said, “he said in his letter he’d bought a little house, and he was looking forward to seeing me when I came to Denver. Where did they go, and why? Stan said he like Denver so much.”

“They didn’t go. Just Stan. Julia is still here with the girls. She chased him out of the house with the bread knife.”

“My stars! She did that once before in Royalton.”

“I know. this time she told him to never, ever come back, and he told her, never fear, he wouldn’t.”

“Oh, dear! Ma will be so upset.”

“I know. She’ll worry about the little girls.”

“Julia must be crazy as a loon,” Nelle said.

“Yes,” Emmy agreed, “but she’d never hurt the girls. She dotes on them.”

“What was the quarrel about?” Nelle asked.

“Religion.”

“Stan never should have married her.”

“She wants him to marry her in the Catholic church, and Stan won’t.”

“She told him she’d never ask him to do that.”

“Well, she says different things now. Stan will divorce her. There were witnesses when she went for him with the knife. The neighbors think she is terrible.”

“Well, I’m not sad if he divorces her, but I’m sad not to have seen him,” Nelle said. “Stan and I have been chums since we were tiny.”

“I know,” Emmy said. “Stan is a dear. He is the nicest one of all of us. He’s the only one who never says mean things – except Ma, of course.”

“Well, now that I think more about it, I’m glad he’s going to divorce Julia. He didn’t deserve a holy terror like her.”

“I just feel bad about the little girls,” Emmy said. “Stan loves them, but I think Julia tries to turn them against him. I’ve seen it in many ways.”

“Children usually go with the mother no matter what the story is,” Nelle said.

“But what about the bread-knife business? Horrors!”

“Just wait and see. Julia will get the children. Anyway, Stan would have a hard time taking care of them until he married again, and children usually don’t like step-mothers. Better if he finds a nice girl and has more children by her.”

“Yes...” Emmy said vaguely.

“And that reminds me, Emmy, of the main thing I wanted to talk to you about. You’ve been married a year and I’ve been married six months. I’m not in the family way yet, are you?”

Emmy looked at Nelle, and a blush came over her face. She looked down. “No.”

“My good grief, Emmy! You’re a married woman. Why are you blushing? And why do you suppose neither of us is pregnant by now?”

“I don’t know.”

“Well, Ma was in the family way at least thirteen times.”

“Thirteen times!”

“Certainly. Nine of us living children, and Maily and Jenny, and two miscarriages that I know of.”

“Thirteen times! Why, Pa must have been terrible!”

“Well, that isn’t the point I’m making, Emmy. If Ma got pregnant so easy, why don’t we?”

“I don’t know,” blushing again.

“There isn’t any good reason for it that I can see, unless it’s our husbands’ fault.”

“I don’t know about that either.”

“Well, it worries me. Not only because I want children, but for Ma’s sake. She loves babies so much, and she’s hardly had a chance to be a Grandma.”

“Why, Nelle! She’s got a lot of grandchildren.”

“Well, Edith keeps her children to herself and so did Julia. So there’s only Lottie and Howd’s Averill. I will say Lottie was always nice to Ma. but it’s up to you and me to have some babies.”

“Now that we live in Colorado what good does that do Ma?”

“Oh, she’s coming out to visit us. She said so in her last letter to me. And I plan to go home sometime to visit.”

“Well, that wouldn’t do Ma much good. Anyway, Nelle, Merly and Grace will have families, and Bill and Art.”

“Not Grace! She’s going to have a career. And I doubt if Merly can have children.”

“Why not?”

“Because she didn’t become a young lady until she was sixteen.”

“What do you mean, Nelle?”

“Oh, Emmy, for heaven’s sake! I mean she didn’t start having her periods. Ma took her to the doctor because of her nosebleeds, and he found there was a problem.”

“She’s all right now, though,” Emmy said. “She’ll probably have babies.”

“I’m not so sure. Emmy, my goodness, don’t you want to have a family?”

“I guess so. I’m just afraid, I guess.”

“To have babies?”

“Yes.”

“Emmy... Do you sleep with William? I noticed his clothes were in the spare room closet.” Emmy blushed and then frowned. “Nelle, you shouldn’t ask me a question like that. That’s a personal thing.”

“Well, it may be, but my stars, Addie, we’re sisters!”

“I really wanted to talk to you about something else, Nelle. Willy is going to take us to Elitch’s Gardens tonight. Isn’t that nice? Have you been there?”

“Yes. Roge took me last spring when we were still honeymooning. You still love the theater, don’t you?”

“More than ever. Elitch’s has fine shows.”

So they went to Elitch’s that evening, and they went the next day to see William’s new place of business, a “monument” works, and Emmy and Nelle spent a day shopping. then it was time for Nelle to return home to Roge, so that he would not have to worry about an early snowfall.

William took Nelle to the train on his way to work. She had a suitcase and several bundles.

“Thanks for helping me, Will. I couldn’t have managed alone. Tell Emmy I’ll write to her soon and tell her she’s a wonderful cook.”

“She is, isn’t she.”

“Yes,” Nelle said. then her face turned sober. “But are you happy, William?”

“Some things aren’t right between Emmy and me, if you know what I mean.”

“I guessed as much. I wish Ma would come and talk to her. Maybe she’ll do that. I’ll write to her.”

“Do you think you should?”

“Ma has a lot of influence with Emmy, William.”

“Your mother is a fine woman, Nelle.”

“She’s one in a million.”

On the way back, Nelle marveled at the beauty of the mountains. The aspens at the lower altitudes were still in their golden fall dress, but as the train climbed higher into the mountain passes one could see the cold nights had already brought the leaves down, and Nelle saw that the white snow-clad areas on the peaks had grown larger.

Denver had been fun, but Nelle was glad to be going back to Roge. She had missed him more than she’d expected to, and she missed the dog, Brownie, too, and even the horse. She was glad Roge was working nights, so that he could leave Brownie shut up in the house asleep while he was gone. If he’d been gone in the daytime he’d probably have to let her stay outside, and then coyotes might gang up on her. Apparently they were quite clever at luring a dog away from its home and making a family meal off it. Brownie wasn’t any bigger than a coyote herself. The horse would be all right. Roge would ride her to work probably.

Nelle’d been thinking a lot about Roge lately and about her marriage. It was strange that after six months she wasn’t expecting a baby yet. It wasn’t as though she was like Emmy, who evidently wasn’t sleeping with William. Nelle and Roge had normal relations, normally often. Then what was the matter? Sleeping with Roge actually hadn’t been as exciting as it had been with Earle. Earle had been very – well – fierce when he made love. Passionate was probably the word. But then, Earle hadn’t been really a nice man, and Roge was. Roge was a gentleman, gently reared.

After all, his father was a minister. Earle's father was a horse trader – what could you expect? Earle had done terrible things. She hadn't even told anybody but Pa, just why she left Earle, but he'd been acting bad right from the start. Once he had given Grace a ride home from school in his buggy. She'd gone straight into the house to tell Ma that Earle had pinched her on the leg. Not just once, but several times. Nelle'd told her mother that Grace must be fibbing, but later on she realized that Grace was no doubt telling the truth.

Roge gave Nelle a great bear hug when she stepped off the train.

"I missed you terribly."

"I missed you, too."

"Even in the big city?"

"Goodness, yes! I love Denver, but it's still a city. You know I'm a country girl at heart. I missed Brownie and I missed the mare."

"But you didn't miss me?" He teased.

"Yes, I did, you old silly! But speaking of Brownie, how is she? I thought you'd bring her with you."

"Well, no – I – well, I thought she'd get too excited when she saw you. Might run under the train or something. And then there's been another problem. She's – well – I don't know, there's been this coyote hanging around all the time."

"You didn't leave her outside tied up?!"

"No, no. She's inside."

"No, they way he acted, I thought he might be – well – romantically inclined."

"You mean Brownie's in heat?"

Roge blushed. "Oh, Nelle!"

"What's the matter with you? What's the matter with saying 'in heat'? You're even blushing!"

"oh, it's just my fair skin," he said, blushing even more. "It's just such an indelicate expression."

"Oh, piffle! Listen, do you think a coyote would really mate with a bitch dog?"

"Nelle!"

"I just said 'bitch' to tease you, you minister's son, you. But it is the correct word."

"I know. But I wish you wouldn't work so hard to be earthy."

"Well, do they mate?"

"So I hear."

"Well, I wouldn't want her to, though. Weren't there any dogs around?"

"I didn't see any."

"There will be. They'll get scent of her on the wind. Oh, there you go blushing again, Rog!"

When they drove in at their little place, they saw the coyote running off into the underbrush, and they heard Brownie barking inside the cabin.

Roge took Nelle in his arms after she had fussed over Brownie a bit.

"I was very lonely without you. Do you know what I did? I took your nightgown that you left hanging on the hook, and I slept with it by my pillow every night when you were gone."

"I'm glad you missed me," Nelle said, and kissed him passionately. She would have liked to toss him in bed right then, but she knew that Roge would rather wait until after they'd formally gone to bed. He had once confessed to her that daylight inhibited him in such things. He said he knew he was foolish and shy and old fashioned.

"You have no idea what it was like at home when I was a boy. My brothers and I had to mind our p's and q's all the time. The whole town was always watching how Reverend Fison's

children acted. I think if you and I made love in the bedroom in the daylight, I'd have the feeling that there were neighbors outside the windows looking in at us."

"Rog, that's awful!"

"I know, but that's the way I feel."

During their dinner, which was sourdough pancakes made by Rog, Nelle read aloud a letter which had come from Maria while Nelle was in Denver.

Dear Dottie, (Maria called all the girls that. It was a contraction of 'daughter')

Well, we are all settled now in our city house, and beginning to enjoy life in Cleveland. Of course, all of us miss Oberlin in a hundred ways or more, but life is certainly easier for me here. At first, I was really lost when it came to doing my marketing. I didn't like going to strange grocery stores where I didn't know anyone, but I'm getting acquainted now, and I find there is more selection here and better prices, too.

The children are all enjoying their schools. Bill and Art only have three blocks to walk to get to Cartwright Avenue School, but Merly must take the street care to get to Eastern High School. We persuaded her to go and finish. She has only two years and then she could graduate, as Emmy did. We'd be proud of her. But she is not content. She says she feels silly to still be in public school while Grace, who's younger, is going to Art School. Merly insists that next year she wants to go to Art School, too. I really don't know that she has the gift, but I don't want to hurt her feelings by raising the question. Actually she and Grace have become the best of chums now. They have been sharing a room since Stan came back from Denver, and is staying with us. He and Julia are 'all through' he says. He's getting a divorce. I am heartsick about it. I only wish that they could have found God together. But Stan told Julia very definitely in the very beginning that he would never become a Roman Catholic, and she assured him then that it didn't matter to her. I don't know what he plans next. Pa wants him to go out to Royalton and manage the farm. He may do that, but I doubt he'll stay there. He isn't very much of a farm boy anymore, and that surprises me. As a boy he loved it so much. He is a very different person since he came back from Denver. He went out there with such high hopes that his marriage problems might improve with a fresh start, but now I think he is very bitter, and he is also in financial straits. Pa, of course, is planning to help him out.

Well, Dottie, write me another letter as nice as your last, and tell me all the news. I keep looking for a letter from you or Emmy with word about the expected visit from the stork. I trust you're not postponing it purposely. After all, you girls should not wait until after you are thirty to have your first babe. It would be very foolish.

Your father and the girls send their love, and so does Grandma but I think her mind is failing.

Much love from you mother

P.S. I hope you go to church

After she put the letter down Nelle sat musing.

"I wish Merly could come out and visit us," she said.

"Goodness! Wait till we live in a larger place. We've no room here for company."

"We'd find some way to put her up."

"Well, maybe next summer when she's through her school year she could come."

"It's silly for her to think she should finish high school. She's much too old. She's almost twenty. She missed two years. One when she was little and one when she was about thirteen. She

was very sick. After that she and Grace were in the same class. It always embarrassed her, which was natural, of course.”

“Still, it would be nice for Merly to graduate, especially if she’s going to be a missionary,” Roge said.

“Oh, she’ll never be a missionary. Merly gets crazy notions. She’s probably forgotten that already. The last I heard she’s under Grace’s influence. She’s begun to think she should be an artist too.” Nelle spoke with scorn.

“You know, sometimes you sound as if you don’t like Grace.”

“Oh, I like her all right, but she’s too bookish for my taste. She’s always putting on airs and trying to be an intellectual.”

“Nelle?”

“What?”

“Im bookish.”

“You’re different! You like to read Mark Twain, and adventure stories. Grace thinks she’s smart because she’s studied piano and singing and French. She reads philosophy.”

“I’ve studied German. I studied it from an old professor who was a friend of Father’s.”

“Are we arguing? I thought you were glad I was home.”

“I thought we were just talking.”

It was dark outside now, and clear and cold. the moon was up. Nelle washed up the dishes, and Roge went outside to put the horse in the shed. They always left her outside tethered to graze a little, but Nelle liked her put inside at night because of bears and mountain lions. Roge said he’d never heard of horses being bothered by bears or mountain lions, but Nelle said she didn’t want to take chances.

When Roge came in again he said, “The coyote was back again.”

“Chase him off,” Nelle said.

“I did. He went up the hill fast.”

“Better put a rope on Brownie, and take her out that way. She might take off and join him.”

“Oh, she wouldn’t leave us.”

“Oh, yes, she would. If he’s the best available. She’s just pining to get loose. She’d stay away a few days, and come back carrying pups.”

They went to bed early that night. During the next week Nelle had ample opportunity to recall their conversation, and to regret the turn it had taken.

They made love in the protective dark that Roger always liked. He kissed her, and patted her and stroked her, but many things that Earle had done, Roger would never dream of doing. When they finally came together in the ultimate act, Roger seemed to be always fearful that he might hurt Nelle. He never forgot that while she was barely five feet tall, he stood nearly six feet, and weighed almost twice her one hundred pounds. Nelle had told him more than once that she’d prefer if he forgot about his weight. She was strong, she said; he wouldn’t crush her.

“You’ll spoil it all if you keep worrying.”

Secretly, Nelle wished that Roge would be as rough and abandoned as Earle had been a love making. Later, in remembering, Nelle always reminded herself that Rog’s restraint was proof that he was a gentleman, sensitive and kind, and that whatever faults and shortcomings he might prove to have in future years, he would never ever do anything as evil as what Earle had once done to her.

But Nelle usually lay awake for an hour or two after, with him sound asleep beside her. She was puzzled about the whole business which men apparently found so exciting and subsequently

relaxing. She was more and more convinced that while a woman might be very eager to go to bed with a man, get kissed and caressed and possessed – when all was said and done, she'd be lying there wondering what all the excitement had been about. Men thought sex was such a wonderful thing to do. Well, once in a while Nelle thought so too, but mostly not. There'd been a few times with Earle when he'd been drinking and took her to bed roughly and passionately, that some rather astonishing things had happened. She'd had sensations that just never happened ordinarily - never, with Roger. Still, she loved him and was always willing to make love when he wanted to, and sometimes when he didn't.

Nelle kept thinking that if she knew she were in the family way, the whole business of making love would seem wonderful. She'd be able to lie there and be completely happy, even when Roge went right to sleep afterward. She knew that Ma believed that having babies was God's plan for women. That was where they found their happiness when they slept with a man. If they knew a baby was growing inside they wouldn't be concerned at all about other matters, like whether they did or didn't get as much pleasure in bed as their husbands did. God's plan, His high purpose, was that new lives should be created, new souls for God's kingdom. Pleasure, Ma said, was only incidental. It was necessary for men, Ma thought, because if it were left to them, as a matter without great pleasure, they might not ever bother to see that babies were started. They were interested in too many other things in the world. They'd be off politicking, and making wars, or trading horses and buying new tools and machinery.

Actually, Ma had told Nelle and her sisters a great deal more about the business of having babies and such than other mothers had told Nelle's girlfriends. She'd told Nelle enough before she had her first period, and what to expect, so that she wouldn't be frightened as Metta had been. And she'd also told Nelle when she was very small and saw kittens and calves and foals dropped at the Royaltan farm, that little human babies were born in the same way. Ma had taken the opportunity, bravely, when Nelle saw the bull mounting the cows, that he was busy seeing to it that all the cows were "freshened", and this was easy for Nelle to understand, for she knew that when a cow freshened she had a new calf and could be milked again. So all that seemed very practical. When the roosters jumped on the hens, and sparrows and houseflies and most everything else behaved the same way, Nelle was very wise about it all, and she even beat Ma to it in telling Emmy and Merly about it. And it wasn't very long before Nelle went to Ma and asked...

"When you have a baby, Ma – does Pa - ?"

"Yes, Dottie," Ma said. "That's right."

"I thought so!"

"Well, you'll learn more about it as you get older," Ma assured. "There's plenty of time."

Ma had told Nelle many more things in a year or so, especially since Nelle had helped take care of Ma when Bill and Art were born. Nelle knew about tying the cord when a baby came, and how to oil a newborn well to get him ready for his first bath.

But about the rest of it, the beginning of a baby, Ma had not been explicit. Nelle had gone to her marriage to Earle with nothing but her farmyard knowledge. However, she had come out of that marriage knowing a great deal more, more than she would ever dare talk about to Roger. Nelle had decided in her first week of marriage that Roge had had a very limited experience with women. On the face of it, this seemed to be pleasant knowledge to have, but she soon decided it might be a disadvantage. For now, after six months of marriage, she was beginning to admit to herself that her experiences in bed with Roge however affectionate were, compared to those with Earle, nevertheless dull. Take tonight [please]; Roge had been very cuddly and neck-nuzzly,

stroking her hair (always ecstatically). He showered her with chaste kisses on her lips, vast numbers of them, and Nelle was frustrated and not excited by them in the absence of any other, more inventive foreplay. Earle's kisses had been long and hard. They had wandered alarmingly/wonderfully - exploring her like mountaineers or spelunkers or... [well, you get the idea]. And this evening, since she had been gone from his bed for a week and he had longed for her, Roge flashed bright and faded to sleep in a hurry, and here she lay thinking about Earle. Nelle truly believed that Roge was a very fine person, and his pleasant disposition and sense of humor delighted her. He was good company, and Nelle loved to listen to his stories about his adventures around the country after he ran away from home when he was 14. Roge had met many fascinating and rough-edged people in his travels, and it seemed strange that he should be so extremely reserved about some things. Nelle decided that probably Roge's mother was responsible as much as his minister father. One had only to look at Roge's picture of his mother to know that butter wouldn't melt in her mouth, and Nelle thought privately that it was a very marvel that Mrs. Fison had any children at all, let alone 5 of them. But the, Nelle had noticed that the ministers in Oberlin and Royalton all had large families.

Nelle lay quietly, thinking about Emmy. It would have been nice if she could have talked about all these matters with her, but that was out of the question. Emmy was an odd girl. She was affectionate, witty and essentially loving... She hadn't wanted to get married in the beginning, but now that she was married she seemed to be fairly happy. She liked housekeeping and cooking and sewing, and in her own home she could have everything her own way. But as to that business which was what marriage was all about - that business; apparently Emmy did not like at all, and wouldn't even discuss it. Merly would have been different, Nelle felt, and probably even Grace, though, of course, she was still too young. Come to think of it, though, Grace was eighteen now, and at eighteen, she, Nelle, was home again after her first marriage. Grace and Merly were interested in boys, even when small. Emmy never was, or if she was, she never showed it. But Emmy was always interested in the stage. She was crazy about Maude Adams. Nelle could swear that Emmy liked to pretend she was Maude Adams. Romance was all very fine in a play, but in real life, it seemed to Nelle, it must frighten Emmy.

Nelle wished that Merly could visit her, so that she could confide in her, or Ma. Maybe Ma could come. No, Merly would be better. You could tell things to a sister that you couldn't talk about to your mother, even if the sister wasn't married.

Brownie woke up and began to whine at the door. She always slept in the bedroom with them, but now she wanted to go into the big room. Nelle got up and opened the door. Roge rolled over and spoke sleepily.

"What's the matter?"

"Just Brownie. She's restless. She wants to go out."

Nelle went to the window and looked out.

"That coyote is back. I think it's the coyote. He's lying out there by the path. Maybe it's a dog. I think I'll go out and see."

"No, don't go out," Roge said.

"Why not?"

"Well, because I don't want you to. You can't tell how that coyote might act if he's after Brownie. He might bite you."

"Oh piffle! He won't bite me."

"How do you know?" Roge sounded sleepy

"Because I know animals. Most wild animals will run from people."

“Not grizzlies.”

“Well, if that’s a grizzly out there, it sure is a funny looking one – small too.”

“Come on to bed and forget it. Put Brownie in the kitchen, or the shed. Let’s get some sleep.” He turned over toward the wall.

Nelle was annoyed. He must not be really worried about her being hurt by the coyote, or he’d stay awake to see what she was going to do. She went into the big room. By the front door, Brownie was whining with her nose to the crack at the bottom of the door. Nelle tried to call her into the kitchen, but Brownie wouldn’t leave the front door, so Nelle dragged her along by the collar and put her into the shed off the kitchen. Brownie had a bed there with a warm blanket in it, though she usually chose to sleep in the bedroom. Nelle shut her in and told her to be quiet. Brownie continued to whine in the shed, so Nelle also shut the kitchen door.

She looked out the front window. She could see the coyote lying in the same place, beside the path that led down to the outhouse in the woods. It was smoother in the path, but apparently the animal shunned lying on the ground where humans walked. If it was a coyote, Nelle decided, it was larger than most she had caught glimpses of since coming to Colorado. She had several times seen them running across the road or an open field, and often, when they howled on moonlit nights they seemed very close to the cabin, but always when she stepped outside to listen or see them, they were nowhere in sight, and if she made the slightest sound, they quieted down immediately.

Nelle decided to go out. The animal would no doubt run off. She closed the door noisily, wondering if Roge would hear it, and what he would do if he did. Would he come out to save her from the beast?

When the door slammed, the coyote did not run off, but stood up and walked toward her, his tail waving gently. He stopped to take a good stretch, first the front legs, then the hind, and then he lay down again, this time in the path. She walked toward him. His tail wagged again. This made him look wrong. A coyote’s tail was not like that. A coyote held his tail out in back at a low angle. It’s not a coyote, Nelle decided, it’s just a dog.

“Here boy,” she called. He stood up wagging his tail high. Then she recognized him as a dog she had seen at a cabin about a half mile away on the road to the railway station where Roge worked. The coyote who had been hanging around earlier seemed to have left the scene.

“Come here boy,” and the dog came to her. She bent over him and rubbed his head behind the ears.

“You’d like to come in and pay a call on my Brownie girl, would you? Well she’d like that too.”

The door to the cabin opened. Roger stood there in his night clothes. he had taken time to light a lantern.

“What under the sun are you doing out there?” He sounded cross.

Nelle said over her shoulder, “Under the moon, you mean?”

“Nelle, you are so sassy sometimes.” Then he saw the dog. “Nelle! Get away quick from that coyote! He must have hydrophobia! He’s not acting natural!”

“Oh, don’t be ridiculous Roge – it’s a dog!”

Afterwards, it seemed to Nelle that their whole conversation that night had been ridiculous.

Certainly, the start of it was ridiculous.

“Well, come on in the house. I need sleep. I have to get up in the morning. I’ll be working days from now on. You can sleep in the morning – I can’t!”

“You know I get up when you do.”

“Well, come in to bed now, then.”

“I thought I might invite this dog into spend the night with Brownie.”

“Better to let her out with him.”

“Oh no! They’d disappear for several days, probably. I know how they do.”

“Well, invite him in tomorrow then, not tonight.”

“Oh? Night is for people? Dogs have to mate in the daytime?”

“Nelle! You’re being very silly, not to mention unladylike. I just want my rest.”

“Well, go get your precious rest! I don’t have to go to bed because you do. I may want to introduce these two dogs.”

“I won’t be able to sleep if you let that beast into the cabin, and I don’t like the idea of you hanging around watching them carry on.”

“Oh Rog! Don’t be so prudish! Didn’t you ever hear of animal husbandry?”

“Well, but, men usually superintend these matters of breeding. Women don’t interest themselves in such.”

“Where did you get that idea?”

“From my mother, I suppose.”

“I suppose so too. Well, I was farm-raised.”

“Well, why do you want to breed Brownie? She’ll be all right in a few days.”

“She and I are lonely here in the mountains. It’s beautiful, but it’s lonely. Puppies would be fun. She’d love to have a litter. Might as well one of us get in the family way. Maybe Brownie can, since it seems I can’t.”

“It’s only been six months since we got married.”

“Soon be seven.”

“I had thought that you might go see a doctor while you were in Denver.”

“Why me? Why are you sure it’s me?”

“Because it usually is the woman.”

“Not necessarily, not necessarily at all!”

“Well, in the Bible, there are references to ‘barren’ women. I don’t know as the Bible speaks of ‘barren’ men.”

“Are you using the Bible as your authority? Don’t you know anything else about it? Something more modern? Why, on the farm, we sometimes had bulls and stallions who were no good.”

“So you think I’m ‘no good’?”

“And you assume I’m no good?”

“Oh, Nelle! Come in and let’s not quarrel. You just got home and here we are arguing.”

“Well, you made me mad.”

“Well, come in and go to bed, and if you want to, let that dog in, too. Put them in the shed.”

“No, I guess I’d better not. I guess he’s probably too big. I should breed her to a smaller dog. The pups might be too large, especially for a first litter.”

“Well, you’re the authority on all that I guess.”

They went into the house.

Nelle said, “I’m hungry. I’m going to have a piece of bread and butter. Want one? I won’t be able to sleep if I don’t eat a bite.”

“I’d like one if we can have a cup of tea with it.”

Nelle smiled. In times of stress Roge always wanted a cup of tea. She lit the large oil lamp and the oil stove, because the wood stove fire was nearly dead. Roge blew out the lantern and hung it on its ceiling hook.

“Nights are getting darn cold.” Nelle broke the silence.

“Wait till January,” Roge said. “Winter in Colorado is like nothing you’ve seen yet in your life. Blizzard’s here are wild.”

“They’re pretty wild back home.” Nelle brought the bread and butter and a jar of apple-butter she’d made in September. When the tea was made she sat down with Roge at the table. They each ate thick slices of the bread, which she’d brought with her from Denver, knowing Roge would have used up the supply she’d left with him.

“Is this Emmy’s bread?”

“Yes.”

“Well, I have to say, it’s almost as delicious as yours.”

Nelle was frowning ever so slightly.

“What’s the matter? Yours is still better.”

“I was thinking about something else. I know Emmy’s a wonderful cook. No, I was thinking about something else.”

“What’s that?”

“Something I should have told you.”

“What’s that? You spent all your money in Denver?”

“No. It’s something that goes back farther than that.”

“Well, out with it,” he said indulgently. The tea and apple-butter and bread had made him feel warm and comfortable.

“Rog, it’s something I should have told you long ago. It’s something I always knew you should know. And if I hadn’t known that myself, I’d have known it because Ma told me so.”

“Nelle, what on earth!? Have you done something dreadful?”

“Except for not telling you, it wasn’t dreadful.”

“Then, why didn’t you tell me?”

“I kept wanting to , but I put it off, and the longer I put it off the harder it was to tell you.”

“That’s always the way, Nelle.”

“Now you’re sounding like a preacher, and I think that’s probably why I didn’t get around to telling you. You’re good fun, and you’re witty, and I love you, but you have this proper side to your nature. Prunes and Prisms, Stan calls it.”

“Does Stan talk about me behind my back?”

“Oh, no, I didn’t mean that. About anyone that’s priggish he says that.”

“Well, I’m sorry I’m priggish. Are you going to tell me this secret now, or are you talking yourself out of it.”

“I’m going to tell you now. I have to.”

“Alright. Tell.”

“Rog – Rog, I was married before.”

He looked as though he hadn’t understood her.

“Married? You mean – before me?”

“Yes.”

“When?”

“A long time ago.”

“When – exactly?”

“Ten years ago – almost.”

“Is he dead? You’re a widow?”

“No.”

“God damn it! What are you saying?”

“I’m saying I was married when I was seventeen years old.”

“And where is he now?”

“Still in the same place, I suppose. He lived between Royalton and Oberlin.”

“I don’t care where he lives! Why is it you say you aren’t a widow? Are you still married to him? To both of us!”

“Rog! No! Pa had the marriage annulled. He went to a judge in Cleveland.”

“You better tell me more, now that you waited so long.” His face was grim.

“It’s a long story, and I hate talking about it.”

“Apparently.”

“Well, it wasn’t easy for me. These last ten years I’ve never talked to anyone about it. Ma and Pa and my brothers and sisters knew I didn’t every want to talk about it.”

“Why? Was he a criminal or something?”

“In my opinion he was.”

“Why did you marry him?”

“I was young and got carried away, I guess.”

“Did you have to marry him?”

“No, I did not, thank you. I was a virgin when I married him.”

“Nice for him. I wasn’t so lucky was I.”

“Oh, Rog,” Nelle sighed. “Why should that have to matter? I loved you. I haven’t loved him in years. In fact, I only did for a little while in the very beginning.”

“What went wrong? What was his name, and what did he do? You ask shy things should matter. Her you have all this secret past, and I thought you were an innocent girl.”

“You told me once you thought it was strange such a pretty girl was still single at twenty-six.”

“And that was the time when you had a chance to tell me the truth, and you didn’t.”

“I should have, I know.”

“Yes, you should have, damn it!”

Nelle was silent.

“I asked you before what his name was, and his business.”

“Earle. It doesn’t matter. He raised horses.”

“I suppose that’s why you fell for him.”

“Probably.”

“A horse trader! What moved you to confess tonight.”

“When you say ‘confess,’ you sound as though my having been married was a crime.”

“Your crime was that you deceived me.”

“Can’t you forgive it?”

“No. And I’ll ask you again why you told me tonight.”

“Because of what you said bout the doctor about why I haven’t got in the family way. I thought I ought to tell you that I’m not barren. I’ve been pregnant.”

“Well, that’s comforting information. Does the father have your child?”

“No, and I’m not going to tell you anything more as long as you’re too angry. I thought you’d be understanding.”

“You thought wrong. You hoped for too much.” He went and got his coat.

“Where are you going?”

“Out of here.”

“What do I do now?”

“Write your father. He gets you out of your bad marriages.”

“Rog, I predict tomorrow you’ll regret the way you’re taking this.”

He picked up a chair and threw it against the far wall. It fell with two legs broken off.

Nell laughed on an hysterical note.

Roge went out and slammed the door.

THINGS BEING AS THEY ARE

Ada Walton Norris had the back bedroom. It was the smallest, but she preferred it, for it reminded her of her old room in the Fleet Street house in Brooklyn. The windows and the doors were placed the same, so that she was able to arrange the room in the exact same way. It was her mother's furniture that had been shipped from Brooklyn after the Fleet Street house was sold. The windows looked out on the back yard, where there were two ailanthus trees, and these, too, made her think of the old home. In June, when they bloomed, they had a sickening sweet odor, but that added to the nostalgia. They had permeated the early summer air in Brooklyn through all the years she had lived there – nearly half a century.

Ada had been in Cleveland for seven years now. Auntie Couch had lived two years after Uncle Couch died. After Auntie's death, Ada packed her things and left Brooklyn permanently, to make her home with Rosella. As soon as Ada was settled in the Cartwright Avenue house, Rosella took herself off to Boston to learn to be a Christian Science practitioner. That had been in 1900. Norris was 14 then, and Ethel 12. Ada had felt that the children were old enough to protect her from possible gossip by the neighbors because she was living under John Rahming's roof while his wife was absent.

There were 4 bedrooms in the Cartwright Street house. Rosella had shifted the family around. The downstairs bedroom where Ada had slept on a cot the year her mother was bedridden, was now Rosella and Ethel's room. Norris, who was now 21 years old, had the largest bedroom upstairs, and he needed it, for he was experimenting with photography and his room was filled with the necessary paraphernalia. That left two more bedrooms, one very small, and another fair-sized one on the front. Ada had refused to take the larger of the two rooms, when she came from Brooklyn.

So, John moved out of the little back room and Ada moved in.

"I shall be quite happy here," she assured them all. To her mother's furniture she added her own old desk. And she had her typewriter, and her beloved books. She knew now that she would never return to live in Brooklyn. The fact made a continual sadness in her heart. But she had no strong excuse for living alone in the East. Georgiana was married and entirely taken up with her daughter and her doctor husband. Bertie's wife was not an especially friendly person. She had no interest in Ada and seldom extended her an invitation to visit. Aunt and Uncle Couch were gone and were buried in Greenwood, not far from Ada's Mama and Papa, and the little sister and brother who had died young.

But in Cleveland Ada had a warm welcome. Whatever their various reasons, every member of Rosella's family had wanted her to come and live with them. Sometimes Ada thought about it when she was resting in her room. She was too busy to think about it the rest of the time. John frankly said that Ada made everything run on a more even keel. When he was out of town he felt his family was safe when Ada was with them. Rosella had always leaned on Ada in many ways, but now she wanted her as a housekeeper while she herself pursued her interest in Christian Science. Norry, it seemed to Ada, loved her for her cooking, for her Boston brown bread, crullers and Parkerhouse rolls. But Ethel was the one, Ada felt, who really loved her. Ethel had been Ada's strongest reason for coming to Cleveland to stay. Ethel needed her. Ethel was growing up in a fashion that worried Ada. There were parallels to Ada's own childhood but also very great differences. Ethel spent a great deal of time at home with her mother, doing various household duties to help out. She cleaned not only her own room and Norris', but her father's as well. She had done much of the cooking too, until Ada arrived to stay. She spent very little time away from



Piper & Becker WILSHIRE BUILDING, ©
CLEVELAND, OHIO.

ADA WALTON NORRIS
about 1900
"IDA"

home in the company of friends, except when at school. When Ada was a girl, there had been more domestic help. There had been Marcy to help every day, and there'd been a laundress, besides. Rosella and John could not afford a full-time maid, though on Fridays a young Hungarian woman came to wash and iron.

Another great difference in Ada's childhood compared with Ethel's was that Ada's Mama and Papa had been an unusually happy couple. Rosella and John were not. It was not that they quarreled. It was just that John was gone a great deal, and when he was home he was an extremely quiet man whose mind seemed to be miles away. He had not always been that way. Ada could remember him as a light-hearted man with a keen wit. And he'd been quite a handsome fellow with a ready smile, and what people referred to as "snapping black eyes." Those black eyes had been a disarming contrast to his blondish hair and moustache.

But John was 46 now; his hair had darkened with the years, and now it was graying, and he was growing bald. He still had the snapping black eyes, but they did not wrinkle up in laughter very often now, and his smiles were less frequent.

Ada herself was 50. Her body was betraying her in many ways. She considered herself through the change of life, but many of its discomforts lingered on. Mama had told Ada the change was 'ten years coming and ten years going' but Auntie Couch had declared that five and five was the way she'd always heard it, and for herself, Auntie had said it wasn't nearly that bad. "I just stopped, that's all. You should have an easy time too," she told Ada. Ada wished she'd been as lucky as Auntie predicted. She got fierce, relentless headaches and she had those dreadful hot spells, especially at night, when she flung off the bedclothes, then after a time she'd wake up cold, and cover up again. She could not get to sleep for hours and house some nights. Then there was the problem of her hands and feet swelling. She noticed this because she could no longer wear her ring from Packer Collegiate Institute. Her fingers were so swollen at times that the ring cut into her flesh, and would not come off her hand. She was glad that at least she could wear her class pin, which was in the form of a purple pansy with a pearl in its center, and she put the gold ring with its "PCI" monogram, away in her little jewel box with her gold earrings and her cameo brooch and her mother's chatelaine watch.

Ada planned to give her trinkets to Ethel, who in Ada's opinion, needed to be favored. Norris got most of what he wanted, for Rosella could not bear to see him unhappy. He had decided to become a photographer, and that had meant expensive equipment. He liked nice clothes, and he was always well groomed, getting his hair cut often, and his shoes shined. Even though he was very spoiled, Ada was very fond of Norr. He was a handsome boy with a great abundance of natural charm, and a sense of humor much like his father's. He was talented in many ways. He liked to read, and had an excellent memory. As he grew up, he accumulated a great store of miscellaneous knowledge, ranging from the world of arts and letters to technology and the sciences. He often came in the living room when Ada was sitting mending, and taking a favorite perch on the piano bench, he would swivel slowly from side to side while regaling Ada with some bit of information that fascinated him.

One day he told Ada about the Wright Brothers, Orville and Wilbur, and why it was that airplanes could fly. She marveled as he spoke about the way the air could support the machine if its wings were properly designed.

"I never thought about the air as anything much," Ada said. "I guess I almost thought it was nothing at all, because one can't see it."

"But if you were in a small box breathing it till you used it all up, you'd know it was something."

"Yes, of course," Ada said.

“And when the wind blows hard and knocks things over, you know it’s something.”

“Yes.”

“Well, air is very much something. If it were nothing, the aeroplane wouldn’t be able to get up at all.”

“It’s an age of wonders,” Ada said. It was a phrase she used often, so often that Norr and Ethie both repeated it frequently in Ada’s Brooklyn accent, “an age of wondahs.”

Ada was much impressed with Norris’ photographic work. He had explained the darkroom process to her, and told her something about lenses, cameras, and the chemistry involved, and Ada had become convinced that perhaps Norris was almost as talented as his mother thought he was. If only Rosella would deny him occasionally for the good of his character. If only she would once in a while say “Norris, I can’t give you the money for that because I haven’t bought Ethel anything new to wear in ages.” But no. Rosella never thought about Ethel as long as Norris was claiming her attention. And yet Ethel was Rosella’s constant companion. They slept in the same bed and whenever Rosella went shopping, Ethel was with her. When she went to church on Sunday, or to Wednesday night testimonial meeting, Ethel was with her. Ethel had two or three girl chums, but often enough she had to forego some activity with them because Rosella wanted her company.

Ethel had stayed in high school, and graduated, but Norris, with only one more year to go, had quite and for three years now, had been puttering around with his photography and other interests. He had recently decided that he wanted to become an artist. In the Rahming household, the problem was always money. John Rahming never seemed to get ahead. He was still renting the Cartwright Street house, and had given up all hope that he would ever be able to save enough to buy a house. Rosella made a small amount of money as a Christian Science practitioner, and Ethel, who had learned to type, earned a little money that way, just as Ada had often done. Ethel saw other parallels, too, between her life and Ethel’s. Like Ada, Ethel was too tall. At nineteen she had never gone anywhere in the company of a young man. But Ada felt that her own Mama had never been to blame for that situation in her own case. Ada had been afraid of boys. She’d felt awkward and homely. When her hair came in dark and straight after the typhoid fever, it had been the last straw. She had avoided men. She’d spent much time with Mama, but not because Mama demanded it. She’d felt secure with her, and with Papa, too. When she had worked for Papa in the company office, she’d seen a great many men, but it had been a business relationship and it hadn’t bothered her.

Ethel, though tall, was quite pretty. She had hair as blond as her mother’s, but Ethel was shy, whereas Rosella had been a flirt. Ever since Ethel was a very small girl, Rosella had planned all her leisure time after school. Most mothers seemed anxious to push their daughters into social life in preparation for meeting a prospective husband. But Rosella seemed not to have that in mind for Ethel. Whenever someone mentioned Ethel’s future life and her marriage, Rosella was in the habit of saying, “My Ethie is too spiritual.” It made Ada angry. She said once or twice to Rosella, “Why don’t you permit Ethie to plan her own future? She may not want to be a spinster. It’s not the lot I would choose for such a fine girl.”

But Rosella never paid much attention to what other people in the family had to say, particularly about her children.

August started out very hot and dry in Cleveland. The grass in the parks was parched and brown. Cartwright Avenue was very well kept, and the home owners there watered their lawns and kept them green, even through the heat wave. The afternoon temperatures reached at least one

hundred degrees for eight days. Ada's diary entries started out each day, "Still no relief!" How she longed for her beloved Bergen Beach in Brooklyn! She and Mama and Papa had so often walked there on hot summer evenings. Later, Uncle Couch had been her companion for a while for walks, and a few times she had walked there with Charles Billings.

Sometimes Ada walked with Ethie down Cartwright Avenue to where it ended at Whitfield Park. In the spring it was fresh and green and the ducks on the small lagoon had broods of ducklings, and the place was quite delightful. Small boys sailed toy sailboats and mothers pushed perambulators. Now in the heat wave, whole families came out and slept all night in the part on the dry grass, not going home until the early dawn, after their bedrooms had cooled off a bit. Ada hadn't walked to the park much of late because her shoes pinched her swollen feet. She was glad September was near. And she knew, too, after seven summers in Cleveland that when the heat wave broke, the nights would turn chilly. The evenings for sitting out on the front porch were numbered now. In spite of this week's heat, they would soon sleep under blankets again.

####

Yesterday had been disappointing to Ada. In the morning one of the neighbor's children had come over to extend an invitation to her on behalf of his parents. It was William Martin, a handsome boy about seventeen years old. His mother would like to know, he said, whether Miss Norris would like to drive to the Lake with them for a picnic supper.

Ada had said, "I should enjoy it very much. Thank your mother for me. What time should I be ready to leave?"

"Mama says about four o'clock," William said.

Ada had approached Rosella about it.

"Mrs. Martin has invited me to the Lake with them."

"When?"

"They're leaving at four."

"But what about supper here?"

"You and Ethie can get it without me tonight."

"But Ethel won't be here tonight!" Rosella protested.

"Rosie! You know how to cook! You're a good cook."

"You know I haven't the time, Ada. I'm doing work for fifteen patients."

"Well, you can do that while you're getting dinner. Since 'working' for your patients is entirely a matter of holding the right thought in your mind. I can't see why you can't cook at the same time. And especially since John's in Buffalo, and Ethie's at her friend's, there'll be only you and Norr to cook for."

"I counted on you to get supper."

"You always count on me to get it, Rosie, and it isn't really fair, though I often enjoy cooking. But I'm certainly anything but a financial burden to you and John, and you shouldn't begrudge me an afternoon's diversion with some very fine friends."

Rosella was suddenly contrite. "Ada, I don't begrudge it. go and have a nice time. It's just that I wasn't expecting to get dinner tonight and it upset me to be surprised that way."

"Pshaw! You've got hours to think about it. Or you can just scramble some eggs for you and Norry. Or make him some corn fritters. He'd love that. I'm going to the kitchen now to back some cookies to take to the picnic as my contribution. And since I won't be eating anything else here this evening, I guess everything will come out even."

"Ada," Rosella said. "I'm not forgetting how much you've helped us financially."

"The main thing I wish you wouldn't forget is that I do for you most of the things that Marcy used to do for all of us, so I wish you wouldn't fuss when I wish to have a few hours away from here."

Rosella looked at the floor. "I'm sorry Ada. I hope you'll forgive me."

Rosella did not often apologize. Ada thought that she knew the reason why Rosie was doing it now. In a day or two, at the latest, she would be coming into Ada's room to ask to borrow more money.

The Martin family had stopped by with their surrey promptly at four. Not many people on Cartwright Avenue still kept horses, and Ada looked forward to the drive to the Lake. It would seem like the old days in Brooklyn when they went many places around New York in carriages. Papa and Uncle Couch had often hired hansom cabs and hacks even after the subways and trolley were commonplace.

Mr. Martin was in the front seat with young Arthur Martin, the youngest of his children. Art was about fifteen or sixteen years old, and a very handsome lad with dark eyes and hair. He reminded Ada somewhat of John Rahming when he had first taken a fancy to Rosella. How changed John was now. How different from the boy he'd been in Brooklyn a quarter of a century ago.

Mrs. Martin was sitting in back. She made a place for Ada beside her.

"Hop out, Arthur, and help Miss Norris up."

"I'm all right," Ada said, as Art helped her into the surrey.

"I've such rheumatism," Maria said, "I assume everyone my age does, and of course, I'm wrong about that."

"I've a little twinge here and there but it doesn't run in our family."

"That's fortunate," Maria said. "I'm afraid it does in mine. My poor Mama can't walk at all anymore."

"How old is your Mama?"

"She's eighty-four, poor dear. It's a marvel she's still with us. She's very frail. And I think she's never got over being homesick for the East."

"My Mama felt that way too. And I'm trying hard myself, to learn to like Cleveland."

And, in fact, Ada had found Cleveland more acceptable since becoming acquainted with Mrs. Martin. They'd discovered with considerable pleasure that while Sophia had been born and raised in Connecticut, she'd also lived in New York, had relatives there, and knew Manhattan as well as Ada herself did. Maria had skated on the lake in Central Park, had loved the harbor and the beaches, and agreed with Ada that there were more sunny days in New York.

"Winters are very grey and long here," Maria said. "It can be very depressing, I admit. But, it is a much longer time since I lived there in the East, and I now think of Oberlin or Royalton as home. New York and Connecticut seem to me, now, like just a golden childhood dream. It must be much harder for you, I imagine you still get truly homesick."

"Yes," Ada said, "I do, But I'm beginning to get used to it, and I'm making a few friends, and one our two things have made life pleasanter lately."

"I came out to Royalton at the end of the War," Maria said, "in 1865. I married Henry, and very soon after, we started our family. I went back once to Milford. It was a very sad thing for us. We lost our two older girls at that time. For a long time, thinking about Milford was painful for me. But later, of course, I stopped feeling that way. I shall always feel a strong tie with the East."

"You speak like an Easterner," Ada said. "Your accent."

"So they tell me. I never think about it."

"It makes me feel at home to hear you," Ada said.

"I wish today we had our big spring-wagon. It carries more people. It's in Oberlin. Henry didn't think we'd need it often here in the city, and I doubt we'll keep the horses here another year, though Henry will hate to part with them. William wants us to get an auto, and Henry won't hear of it. But, of course, we can get nearly everywhere with the streetcars, and the trip to Oberlin is much faster that way. It's a good thing Nelle isn't here to join the argument. She'd put up a strong fight to keep the horses, I'm sure."

"Nelle is one of your daughters?"

"Yes, the eldest. She lives in Colorado now, and so does Emma. She's in Denver. I surely miss them. I'm glad Merly and Grace are still here with me. They all grow up so fast."

"How many children have you, Mrs. Martin?"

“Nine, There’s three older boys, all married. Howard’s the eldest child. He’s in Royalton. Nate’s in Oberlin, and Stan is in Cleveland. Then came the four girls, and then William, and our Art here. William will go to college this fall.”

“To the University here?” Ada asked.

“No. He’s going back to Oberlin to the college there. Some of his friends are going there too. Ones he knew before we moved to the city. He graduated from Eastern High School in June.”

“Our Ethie graduated last year from Eastern. She’s doing a little typing now. But I worry about her. She stays home too much, Mrs. Martin. I don’t want to see her become a spinster like me. It’s not the happiest lot for a woman. But I’m not making hints to match her with your young boys. Ethie’s older than they are, anyway. I just wish she’d got out more. Shat stays too close to her mother, my sister Rosella.”

“I’ve noticed they’re always together.” Maria said.

“Ada sighed. “Yes, like chums. It’s not that in itself that’s wrong. But Ethie has so few friends. She’ll never meet them if she’s always with Rosella.”

“I have a daughter I worry about too,” Maria said. “My Merly is still at home, and seems to have no plans. She’s talked for a while about being a missionary. Her Pa would let her go to college if she wanted to. But she doesn’t seem to want to. Now, Grace is different. She’s always wanted to be an artist. She talked Pa into sending her to Art School, and before we could catch our breaths he’d decided to move us all into Cleveland. And now here we are. Nelle was so put out. It’s a good thing she’s got married and moved away. But frankly, I’ve really enjoyed it – living in the city, I mean. I had years and years of life on the farm, fine years, and years more in Oberlin, but living in Cleveland is a pleasant change. I enjoy the stores, and and, oh, I do enjoy the Lake. It does remind me of the ocean.”

“Indeed it does. Will you remain in Cleveland permanently now?”

“Oh, no. No, we’ll go back to Oberlin when Grace finishes at the Art School. Henry had thought he might want to stay here in Cleveland. He’s bought rental property here, and he’s been very busy looking after it, but he’s homesick, I do believe. He’d rather be closer to the farm. He’s got a manager there now, but, he can’t keep a close enough watch on things and it makes him restless. He tosses around in bed at night. And while he tosses around about that, I’m tossing around with worrying about the children.”

“I guess all mothers do that, Mrs. Martin.”

“I suppose. Just now it’s the ones in the West I worry about. Nelle and Emma. I’d so much love to take the train trip out there and visit them. I sound like a foolish mother, I know, but I’d love to see the West in any event, and I might be able to put my mind to rest about the girls. They’ve been married over two years and neither of them has children yet, or any sign of them. Nelle wanted babies so much. Emmy didn’t. I’d like to talk with both of them. It’s hard for me to imagine marriage without children.”

Ada smiled. “Yes, I see what you mean, but for me, of course, it’s hard to imagine marriage at all.”

“I hope I haven’t seemed rude, Miss Norris, talking as though marriage and babies were the most important things in the world.”

“Not rude at all, Mrs. Martin. I’m certain that marriage and babies are the most important things in the world.”

“Well, I could talk about something else besides my family. I haven’t been polite at all.”

“Oh, no! I enjoy hearing about young people. Not having children of my own, I’m more interested than ever in those of other people. Tell me about the West. Do your daughters in Colorado like it there?”

“Oh, yes. They love it, though they say they’re homesick for the rest of the family. I do so want to persuade their Pa to let us take a trip out there.”

“I’d like to see the West myself. But I have not family there, so haven’t any good reason to go. I wouldn’t go alone, anyway. But I have a good friend in San Francisco.

“Oh, my! I hope she came through the quake all right.”

Ada smiled. “Well, actually it’s a gentleman friend. Yes, he came through it safely, but it was terrible. He wrote several long letters about it and sent pictures and clippings.

“What a thing to experience,” Maria said. “Oh, my! How I would love to see those far-off places. Since coming out here in ’63 I’ve really never been anywhere except my one unhappy trip back East in ’74. After that, for a long time I was afraid to go away from home. I guess I was superstitious or something. I felt that God intended me to stay home and look after my children. I don’t feel that way anymore. My Mama had led me to believe that the Lord took my children because I had neglected my duty as a wife and mother. Poor Mama, she really believed it. She couldn’t help it. She was brought up to believe that the Lord was wrathful, and sent punishments to His children. But that may be true, of course.”

“I don’t believe the Lord is vengeful. The Old Testament says so, but Jesus didn’t teach such things,” Ada said.

“No, that’s true,” Maria said. “I consider myself a devout woman, Miss Norris but it isn’t always easy to understand the apparent contradictions in the Bible.”

“No, it isn’t,” Ada said, and Maria felt that there was a faint twinkle in her neighbor’s eye. “I’m an Episcopalian myself,” Ada went on, “and I’m afraid we often sit there and listen to the hymns and liturgy and don’t even think or wonder at any of it. But then again, sometimes I question some things the Bible says. But on the whole, it’s a most remarkable book.”

“I was a Baptist when I was young,” Maria said, “but in Oberlin, I joined the Congregational Church. It seemed appropriate to me as there were many Congregationalists in Connecticut, where I was from. But Mama was very upset. She thought I should have stayed a Baptist. She was always much stricter in her faith than I. Poor dear, she’s so old and frail and confused now. All that firm resoluteness seems to have softened.”

“My sister is very religious,” Ada said. “She’s changed her faith from Episcopal to Christian Science. Do you know about it?”

“Well, a little, but I don’t really understand it.”

“My sister’s a practitioner. That’s a faith healer, you know.”

“Is it true they don’t have doctors?”

“Yes, that’s right. They heal as Jesus did.”

“I declare! Have you seen real evidence of healing, Miss Norris?”

“Well, it often seems so, but then how can I be certain? How can I know that the people weren’t going to get better anyway? Rosella says that sin, death, and disease aren’t real.”

“Well, they certainly seem to be real, Miss Norris.”

“Yes, they surely do, but that’s just what Rosella keeps on emphasizing. That all these problems Man has are just ‘erroneous thinking.’ She says God is real and Man is in his image, and therefore only good.”

“That God made only good things?” Maria asked.

“Yes, that’s what Mrs. Eddy teaches.”

“But there are contradictions there, Miss Norris.”

“Yes, I know.”

“Because God made everything, didn’t he?”

“The Bible says so.”

“Satan is responsible for evil, isn’t he?”

“Well, Mrs. Eddy doesn’t hold with thought about Satan.”

“She believes in Jesus, doesn’t she?”

“Well, Miss Norris, Jesus believed in the Devil. He called him a liar and a murderer from the beginning. It’s in John, I think.”

“I imagine you know the Bible better than I, but I do recall that passage.”

“And Satan was an angel, a fallen angel, wasn’t he?”

“Yes.”

“Then if God made everything he must have made the angels, and therefore he made Satan, didn’t he?”

“It would seem so,” Ada said.

“I’d like to discuss with your sister the concept that sin, death, and disease aren’t real. It’s a very interesting thought, but very difficult for me to accept.”

“You must discuss it with Rosella, but you would find it very rough going, because Rosella has a quotation out of Mrs. Eddy’s book for every question you raise, and she will not respond to anything except in Mrs. Eddy’s words. She refuses to use any of her own. She has a complete knowledge of ‘Science and Health,’ the textbook. And you have a complete knowledge of the Bible, I surmise.”

“Oh, goodness, no, not complete, but Henry and I do read a chapter or two every day. We’ve done it all our married life.”

“That’s remarkable,” Ada said. “I expect I’ve spent too much time on Longfellow.”

“I love poetry too,” Maria said. “You and I have some more good talks. It’s such a pleasure to be with you.”

“I’ve been enjoying this very much myself, Mrs. Martin.”

They had arrived at the Lake by then and Henry tied the horses. Arthur took the blankets and picnic baskets to the beach. But they had no sooner got settled than Henry pointed out that the sky to the south was growing very black, and they would probably have to start home early.

“I’m going to have a swim,” Arthur announced.

“You’d best not, Art,” Maria said. “Well have to eat our supper and hurry home to beat the rain.”

“No, I’m hot,” Arthur said. “I wouldn’t have come if it wasn’t to swim. Besides, I can see William down the beach, and I think Merly and Grace are there too.”

“They are?” Maria said. “I didn’t know they were coming to the Lake. They were invited to a birthday party for Sally Long, one of the Art School girls.”

“That’s the party Ethel was going to, too,” Ada said.

“Well, Arthur,” his mother said, “You hurry on down there and warn them all of the storm that’s coming up. I don’t want any of you children near the water if it’s starting to thunder and lightning.”

“Goodness no!” Ada said. “We know someone that was killed by lightning just that way.”

“Yes, I did too,” Maria said, “right down on a farm pond near Hanley. Just last summer. Water attracts lightning. now, run on, Arthur, and don’t swim.”

“Aw, Ma! Just a quick dip?”

“Well, then you come out of that water, the first stroke of lightning you see.”

“Alright.”

“but you tell the others first, mind.”

“Alright.”

“Arthur sped off down the beach, and Ada and Sophia spread the picnic supper out on a clean table cloth. Henry Martin brought cushions from the surrey and they sat down.

“We may as well go ahead and eat,” Maria said. “If Arthur misses his supper on account of the storm, He’ll just have to eat something when we get home. Oh, pshaw, I hate to be hurried!”

“My goodness sakes!” Ada said. “If that’s Sally Long’s party, then Ethie’s there too.

Rosella would have a conniption. She does hold that girl down so.”

“Well, she wouldn’t fib to her mother. Rosella would have just assumed Sally’s party was at Sally’s home. as long as they all get home dry, it will be all right. I shan’t tell on Ethie. She needs to have more good times. I’m very glad she’s with the other young folks. I do hope the storm blows over.”

“Oh, so do I!” Maria said. “I looked forward all day to this picnic. All my life I’ve loved picnics. At Roylton we used to picnic at least once a week in the summertime, when the children were growing up. We had a lovely spot in the meadow under a big beech tree.”

“For me it was very different, you know,” Ada said, “growing up in the city. Picnics were very rare. But sometimes we used to take a lunch to Bergen Beach, or Coney Island or Prospect Park. Once I went to visit a classmate at Huntington on Long Island and we went to a clam bake on the shore. I never forgot it. I suppose I have missed a great deal by living always in the city. Still, I was always happy in Brooklyn, and how I miss it!”

The storm clouds were much closer now, and the southern half of the sky was black.

“Pa,” said Maria, “Go get Art out of the water.”

As she spoke, the first rumble of thunder reached them.

“Art’s out of the water,” Henry Martin said. “He’s skipping stones. Here come the girls.”

Six pretty girls were coming up the beach towards them.

“It’s Grace and Merly,” Maria said. “And your Ethel and Sally Long. I don’t know the other two.”

“Oh, my, how pretty they all are!” Ada said, and she thought with pleasure that she’ never seen Ethie look so happy, her cheeks so pink, or her blue eyes so bright and laughing.

Grace drew two girls forward and presented them to her parents and Ada.

“Miss Norris, Mama and Papa, this is Anna Wyers and this is Edna Oddy. Oh, Miss Norris, do you know Sally Long?”

“Yes indeed, I’ve had that pleasure,” Ada said. “Sally’s been to the house once or twice with Ethie.”

“Mama,” Grace said, “it’s going to rain.”

“Yes,” Maria said, “it is, and you must all hurry right home. I wish we had room in the surrey. I wish we had the spring-wagon. We’re going to start home right away.”

“Mama, we’re all going to Sally’s.” Grace said. “We’ll stay there and come home after the rain.”

“On the street car?”

“No, Don Trunk has his Peerless.”

“But Grace dear, you can’t all get in that motor car. How many boys are there?”

“Well, there’s Allen Grey and Norris Rahming and William is there and some boy named Harold, and Art’s been hanging around. I hope he’ll be going home again with you.”

“He certainly is.”

“He’s a terrible tease,” Merly put in.



Grace Martin in her
art school days



A. J. Hariland (her fiancé)
↓ art ↓



Mesby ↑ Lucy Fison ↑

Grace

↑

↑

“Well, anyway,” Grace said, “Don will take all us girls to Sally’s, and then come back and get the boys.”

There was a louder rumble of thunder, and Ethel Rahming spoke up.

“I don’t think I’d better go along. My mother gets so upset in thunderstorms.”

“Oh, come on, Ethie,” Sally said. “She thinks you’re at my house.”

“But she’ll hear we were at the beach and she’ll worry about what might have happened to me or Norr.”

“Like what?” Edna Oddy asked.”

“Ethie blushed. “Oh, struck by lightning, or drowned or something.”

“For heaven’s sake,” Marian Martha Martin said. “By then you’ll be safe and sound.”

“I know, but you don’t know my mother,” Ethel said. “Aunt Ada does.”

“Yes,” said Ada.

“Well, but Ethie,” Grace said,” in Christian Science your mother wouldn’t have to worry about lightning, or drowning, or anything. She’ll know that you are safe.”

“Yes,” Merly said, “Now, that’s right, Ethie.”

Ethel looked distressed.

Then Ada said, “I know! Why don’t all you young people come to Ethie’s house? Then my sister won’t worry. We’ve got a big batch of cookies I baked this afternoon.”

“And Sally has her birthday cake,” Grace said.

“Our house is the nearest one, too,” Ada said.

“Yes, and the storm is very near. Pa, get that Arthur up here right away!”

Ada often thought about that evening in later years. It had been the beginning of many relationships for many people. Some of those relationships had lasted and some hadn’t. One of the best ones, was Ada’s own strong friendship for Maria Martin. One of the fiercest and most troubled ones was Norris Rahming’s romance with Grace Martin. The most successful one was probably Don Trunk’s love for Eddna Oddy. The saddest one was Allan Grey’s short-lived attachment to Ethel Rahming, and his hopeless one later to Sally Long. But the strangest one of all was the relationship begun that night between John Rahming and Grace’s Art School friend, Anna Wyers.

But the importance of the evening, of course, had not been immediately apparent to Ada till years later, though she had thought about it at length the following morning. She’d been so disappointed that the electrical storm had cut short their picnic supper at the Lake. It had deprived her of the pleasure of a longer chat with Mrs. Martin while they relaxed peacefully at the picnic table, watching the sunset over the water while the young folks romped along the beach. They might have talked of the old days in the East, or reminisced about Lincoln and the War, and the cousins who’d fought for the Union, or they might have spoken of poetry, or philosophy, or religion, or of the young folks in their families.

But of course the evening had turned out eventfully in the end. Ada had to smile when she remembered the look on Rosella’s face when all the young people came in. Ada had only had time to give her a few minutes warning, after she came in herself.

“I thought it was a poor day for a picnic,” Rosella said. “Hot like it was, you might have known it would rain.”

“Well, it’s been this hot for two weeks and hasn’t rained. It hasn’t rained tonight yet, either.”

“I had to eat all by myself.”

“Well, I’ve done that many times,” Ada said.

“You thought I could eat with Norry, but he went to the party.”

“I know,” Ada said. “They were at the beach.”

“At the beach? Norry?”

“Yes, and all the others, and they’re coming here.”

“Here!”

“Yes, all of Sally Long’s birthday party. I asked them because they were going to Sally’s because of the storm. Ethel was afraid she couldn’t go because you’d be worried about her, so I suggested they all come here.”

“But Ada! I have to talk to patients this evening!”

“Well, talk to them! Let Ethie have a good time with some young people for a change. For goodness’ sake! If you want to get away from the noise, take your patients up to my room; it’s presentable and neat.”

“Oh, Ada, I don’t see how you could take it on yourself to invite – “

Ada cut her off – “You don’t?!”

Rosella did not go on with her protest, and Ada know why. Ada expected that in a day or two Rosella would come to her to ‘borrow’ money. All recent signs in the Rahming household pointed in that direction.

But now the sound of a motor car was heard in the streets, and laughter and talking.

“Rosella – you should see your face! It’s not Attila and the Huns attacking. They’re not going to sack the house.”

Rosella fled upstairs. “I’ll be in your room in Mrs. Melcher comes. Make some lemonade for the young people.”

They didn’t sack the house, but they did make a lot of noise. Anna Wyers could play the piano, and so they sang all evening. William Martin had a fine baritone, and so did Allen Grey. Don Trunk and Norris Rahming hummed along. Anna Wyers’s voice was excellent, and Grace and Merly sang well. Ethie was too shy to sing, but she stood around the piano with the others, beaming happily. Edna Oddy helped Ada with the refreshments.

They sang the old favourites: “Annie Laurie,” “Then You’ll Remember Me,” “My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean” (with its parodies), “Come Where My Love Lies Dreaming,” and “Sweet Genevieve.”

And at that point, unexpectedly, John Rahming came home from out of town.

“Well, Great Day! I heard you halfway down the block, and knew that someone was having a beautiful party. It sounded like my piano, but I didn’t really think it was here. And what do you think? It was!”

Ethel introduced everyone to her father, and Sally Long asked him to join them in the singing.

“Sing ‘The Road to Mandalay’ Mr. Rahming. Oh, please do!”

“Will Miss Boeker play it?” he asked.

“I’ll try,” she said.

Everyone joined in on the chorus, and then they sang a bit of Gilbert and Sullivan. Anna Wyers sang “The Lorelei” and “Aus Meinen Grossen Schmerzen.”

“Oh, that was beautiful,” John Rahming said. “Please, won’t you sing it again?”

“Yes!” everyone said, “Please do, Anna.”

She sang it again, this time in English. “Out of My Soul’s Great Sadness.”

“What a lovely song that is,” said John Rahming.

“O, yes,” said Anna. “and written by such an unhappy man.”

“Such an unhappy man,” repeated John almost musingly, “Yes.” Anna riffled through the sheets of music on the rack. “Oh, here’s ‘Robert of Sicily’! I used to play that for a student at conservatory. Who sings it?”

“I do,” said John Rahming, “That is, I attempt to.”

Ada came into the room then, from the kitchen, and went to speak to Norris.

“Norr, would you run over to Mrs. Martin’s and see if she has some lemons? Ours are all gone.”

“I’ll go, but only if Miss Grace Martin goes with me,” Norris said.

Grace, who had been sitting beside him, looked at Norris.

“Why? Are you so timid?”

“Yes. I’m very shy. Didn’t you know that?”

“No, I didn’t. No one should be shy with my mother. She is the world’s most gentle person.”

“I believe that, I truly do, but in my case I should love to have you come with me to help carry lemons.”

When they were outside, he said, “In point of fact, there is no girl in this city with whom I would rather carry lemons.”

“And outside the city?”

“I don’t know any girls outside this city. I’ve never been outside the city.”

“Really?”

“Well, I was born in New York City, but I’ve been here ever since I was tiny. but other than that, I’ve not been far from Cleveland. but I plan to change all that.”

“In order to meet more girls?”

“No. In order to see the world. London, Paris, Spain and Italy.”

“Oh yes. Me too. And I really mean to do it.”

“Well, so do I. I’m going to see the Pyrenees. I’m going to climb all over them and take pictures. I say! We should see the world together!”

Grace laughed. “You said you were shy.”

“Well, I am about some things.”

“So am I. When I was little, all the others called me ‘Cowardly Custard.’”

“Eat a barrel of mustard,” Norris said.

“Yes, because I was so timid. I was afraid of strangers, or of big dogs, and cows, and horses. One time, when I was about a year old, Mother says, I toddled down to the lane, where the cows came back from the pasture. And I was just sitting there, in the lane, when the cows came along. And Mother says, she got there just in time to see Molly, our lead cow, put her head down and lift me out of the way of the other cows.”

“How could a cow do that? I don’t believe that!”

“With her horns. She just hooked her horns under my arms, and set me on the side, out of the way of the cattle. Seems hard to believe doesn’t it.”

“Well, yes, it does. I never thought cows were smart. Now, I know horses are smart.”

“Father used to raise horses, and he doesn’t think they are any smarter than cows. Horses can be trained to do certain things, certain tricks. But then, oxen can learn to work and pull a wagon, or even a plow. At Father’s farm in Royaltown, we used to have twelve cows, and at four-thirty they used to come up the lave from the pasture, and the hired man would open the gate to the barnyard, and they’d file into the dairy barn. And, do you know, each cow would go into her own stanchion.”

“Her what?”

“Stanchion. It’s a thing with bars that the cow puts her head through, and then it’s closed and fastened.”

“How dreadful! It sounds inhumane!”

“No, the way it’s made, they can stand up and eat, or lie down and chew their cud. You couldn’t milk a lot of cows if they were all milling around, don’t you see?”

“I’m not a farm boy, I never thought about it.”

“Well, I’m not a farm girl either. I grew up in Oberlin, but we spent all our summers at the farm. It was always fun when I was small, but of course later, I preferred to be in town in the summer.”

“You mean Cleveland?”

“No, Oberlin. I always studied piano and French at the Academy, summers.”

“I studied French at Eastern High School myself,” Norris said. “That’s why I want to go to France and paint.”

“And paint? I didn’t know you painted. I thought you did photography only.”

“No, no. I paint a little.”

“Oh, I’d love to see your work. Will you show some to me sometime?”

“I’ve thrown it all away.”

“What a shame! Why?”

“Because I’m my own severest critic. If I’m not satisfied with a painting, I throw it away. Miss Martin, do you know something? Do you know what I’ve decided to do?”

“I certainly don’t.”

“I’m going to the Art School this fall.”

“Why, that’s splendid! How is it Ethie didn’t tell me?”

“Ethie doesn’t know. My mother is the only one I’ve spoken to about it.”

“Ethie wants to go herself,” Grace said. “So does my sister Merly.”

“Ethie has never shown any interest in art. I don’t know where she gets such a notion.”

“Merly never cared about art either. She and Ethie got the idea from Anna Wyers, and from Sally Long. Sally has no particular talent, she’s just in Art School for the fun of it. But I’m serious about it. I have to be anyway. I promised my father I’d win scholarships. That was the only way I could convince him I belonged in Art School. He thought it was very frivolous.”

“You did win the scholarship, didn’t you?”

“Both years! Father only had to pay for my first years.”

“I wish you weren’t in your third year. I’d like to be in the same class with you. I’m going to try to talk them into letting me take advanced classes.”

“But then you’d miss the basics.”

“I know the basics,” he said confidently.

Grace looked doubtful. “Perhaps, but I thought I did too, and there was a lot to learn.”

“I have a complete understanding of perspective and a good knowledge of composition.”

“Well, perspective is precise, and you might say, mechanical. You can learn that easily. And a sense of good composition is almost an innate thing (though there are rules). But color use and good figure drawing – well, they take hours of practice.”

“Oh, I think it’s all a matter of talent,” Norris said. “Either you have it or you don’t have it.”

“I don’t know,” Grace said. “I once thought that, too. But now I know differently, on account of Don Trunk.”

“Well, don’t ever say anything, but when he came to the Art School his work was awful. I mean, it was just miserable, Norris! And now he’s winning some of the concours.”

“You called me Norris, so may I call you Grace?”

“Certainly - especially if you’re to be a classmate. Well, anyway, Don Trunk is going to be an artist through sheer power of determination and hard, hard work!”

“I still believe in talent.”

“Oh, of course,” she said. “Talent is wonderful. With talent it’s all easy and fun. But Norris – I don’t think they’ll let you skip the first year.”

“I’m afraid not, damn them!”

She looked a bit shocked.

“You’ll have to get used to me. That’s the way I talk.”

“And I’ll have to get used to you, will I?”

“Don’t laugh. I’m the most important part of your future.”

While Ada waited for them to bring back the lemons, she went upstairs to take a piece of birthday cake to Rosella.

Rosella was in Ada’s room, lying on the bed, looking at the ceiling.

“Why didn’t you close the door if you wanted to be away from the noise?”

Rosella didn’t answer, but flicked her eyes toward Ada, and then looked away.

“I brought you a piece of cake. There’s no more lemonade at the moment. Would you like some tea?”

“Mrs. Melcher didn’t come,” Rosella said. “She probably heard all the commotion and went home.”

“All the commotion! Why don’t you just come downstairs and enjoy the young folks’ fun?”

“Because I’m trying to stay up here and do some work for Mrs. Melcher, even if she didn’t come. She was bothered by a claim of indigestion.”

“Well, couldn’t you do your absent treatment a little later? Why don’t you come on down?”

“No, I told her I’d work for her.” Rosella closed her eyes.

“Shall I close the door?”

“No, leave it open. I was listening to the singing because one of those boys has a voice just like John’s. When he sang ‘Robert of Sicily’ he sang it exactly like John does.”

Ada laughed. “That’s because it was John.”

Rosella’s eyes flew open. “John! He’s coming home Saturday.”

“He’s here. Been here about an hour.”

“And didn’t he ask where I was?”

“Yes, and I said you were up in my room ‘doing Science’.”

“Ada, why do you always say ‘doing Science’? Why don’t you say ‘treating a patient’? I must say it’s most unfriendly of John to come home and not even let me know he’s here.”

Ada sighed. “Rosella, can you honestly say that over the years you’ve given him friendly welcomes when he comes home?”

“Why, of course I have!”

“In the way that a man expects to be welcomed?”

“Ada, you don’t really understand those matters.”

“I’m not completely blind and ignorant.”

As always, when subjects of sex and marriage came up, Rosella changed the subject.

“What’s Ethie doing down there?”

“Why, she’s with the others. She wanted to help me in the kitchen, but Sally Long wouldn’t let her. Sally and I have been having a great time talking about a lot of things.”

“I’d have thought Ethie might have come upstairs. I expected her to come up.”

“Why?”

“Well, hasn’t she wondered where I was?”

“I doubt it, because for a change she’s having fun with young people. Rosie, your Ethie needs more gaiety in her life. She spends too much time with you.”

“And I’m not gay enough?”

“You used to be, Rosie, when you were a girl.”

“I see nothing wrong with a mother and daughter spending time together. You and Mama always did.”

“I was different, Rosella. I was homely. Ethie is quite a pretty girl. She has a better chance to get married.”

“Ada, you might as well know that being married isn’t necessarily the best thing for a woman. There are things about being married that aren’t nice at all. It isn’t all going for drives in the park or having your husband bring presents home to you from the stores. Oh no, it isn’t all that at all. It’s having him feel that he has every right to make use of you. It’s having him want you to give your own self up to his material appetites. That’s part of what marriage is, Ada. You just couldn’t possibly understand those matters, never having been a married woman.”

“Alright, Rosella, here’s something you might as well know, never having been an old maid. It isn’t a very pleasant life to never have a man want you for his material appetites, or anything else. It’s lonely that way, and it hurts your pride, and it makes you different. One goes to church or to the store, or to sewing club, or anywhere else where the grown women go, and all the ladies are married, and one is different. I haven’t enjoyed it, Rosella. And remember this, Rosella. It’s a man’s appetites for a woman that give her her children. I would have liked to have had children, Rosella. It’s an empty life without them. I’d have been glad to have a man in my life.”

“You have your Mr. Billings.”

“Oh, Rosie! My friendship with him is different.”

“He must be very fond of you. He writes to you often enough.”

“He’s lonely too. Unfortunately, we met too late in our lives for anything but friendship. Besides, we were talking about Ethie, not about me.”

“Yes, you were talking about you.”

“Well, anyway, I’m going back downstairs now.”

“Is Norris down there, Ada?”

“I was wondering when you’d ask. I thought you’d be hoping he’d come up to see where you were. Well, he’s been here all evening.”

“I thought he was going to see Doris Lee Spencer this evening.”

“No, he’s been with these other young people all evening. Just now he’s gone over with Grace Martin to borrow some lemons from her mother.”

“He’s getting very interested in Grace, isn’t he?” Grace mused. “They have money, I think. Ada, who else is downstairs?”

“Well, Ethie and Sally Long of course and Merly Martin. Most of the others are from the Art School, friends of Grace Martin and Sally Long. I was introduced to them, but don’t remember all their names.”

“Who’s playing the piano? Not Grace Martin? Norry said she plays piano.”

“No, no. It’s not Grace. She’s gone for lemons. It’s a girl named Anna.”

“She’s quite good, isn’t she?”

“She’s very good. And she goes to Art School too. She studied piano in Oberlin at the Conservatory, Sally says. Grace studied piano there, too.”

“Ada, when you go down, ask John to come up to see me, please.”

“Rosie, why don’t you let him stay down while they’re all singing? He’s having such a good time.”

“Ada, it’s ridiculous for him to be with all those young people. John’s forty-six years old. It doesn’t make sense for him to be mixing with people half his age or less, now does it?”

“To me it does. Things being as they are.”

“What do you mean by that?”

“I mean, that you are so interested in Norry, and Christian Science, and perhaps Ethel, that you don’t save anything for John.”

“That’s not so at all.”

“Not as you see it, I suppose.”

####

Ada usually arose early and wrote letters before the rest of the family wakened. As soon as she heard them stirring, she went to the kitchen and prepared the coffee and cereal. The Rahmings seldom had eggs for breakfast. Since they did not eat meat, eggs were for preparing dishes for lunch or dinner, along with cheese and vegetables.

John Rahming was in real estate now, but since he had been a wholesale coffee salesman for years, he was very particular about coffee. He always bought the family's coffee himself, bringing home special blends from his old supplier.

This morning, Ada did not awaken early. The rain had finally come in the night, and now it was delightfully cool. She had had to get up and find a blanket to put over her, and after lying awake in the heat thinking, she'd gone sound asleep.

Her days were usually monotonous, writing letters, preparing breakfast, washing up. Mending or typing, preparing dinner, washing up. Some days Rosella helped with any of these duties (usually cooking), but as a rule she was busy visiting sick patients in their homes, or receiving them in the parlor. Fridays were different because on that day Mary Magyar came to do the washing. Ethie was always willing to help Ada, but so often she was with her mother on some errand or a trip to the downtown stores.

Yesterday had been more interesting to Ada than any in a long time. She'd enjoyed the young people's singing and lively chatter, and she'd enjoyed the brief picnic at the Lake, cut short by the threatening storm. But what had made her really happy was seeing the pleasure Ethie had had at the party. And in addition to that, it had been a joy to see her brother-in-law joining in and singing, as Ada had not heard him sing in ages. And all because of Ethie's friends. There had not been such a lighthearted time for Ada since the old Brooklyn days when Mama and Papa were still alive and Bertie still at home.

When Ada woke she lay awake a long time thinking about it all. It had all been purely accidental that Sally Long's party should have been moved to the Rahming's house. Ordinarily there were no parties at Rahming's because of Rosella's patients. Rosella always received them in the living room, which she and Ada always referred to as the 'sitting room' as their parents had done. The Brooklyn house on Fleet Street had also had a front parlor, and a back parlor. Papa had used the back parlor as a study or office, but the children were always allowed to go in there, and so were the family dogs, who always slept on the couch. It was a big and hospitable house, and no one felt constrained to be quiet or to talk in whispers, as they did here. Ethie didn't bring friends home because she never knew when her mother would have a patient in the sitting room, and everyone in the family must be careful not to disturb them.

Most of Rosella's patients were middle-aged or older, with more or less chronic troubles. The majority of these were women suffering from change of life and related miseries. Ada, in the kitchen or dining room, could often hear these ladies reeling off their complaints in anything but subdued voices, but Rosella's answers were muted and soothing. There were a few men who came who had rheumatism or asthma or stomach catarrh, but they were also older. Rosella had only a few young patients, and very few with grave and acutely serious ills. Those few very sick ones she visited in their homes.

If Ethie had had a bedroom of her own she might have taken her school friends there when they came to visit, particularly if the room had been upstairs. But Ethie shared the downstairs bedroom with her mother, and from the parlor Rosella and her patients would have been able to

hear the laughing and talking if Ethie had girl friends in the bedroom, or in the kitchen, or the dining room.

Ada had thought it strange at first that Sally Long had been the one to come to help her in the kitchen. It was Sally's birthday, and Ada might have expected one of the other girls to help. But it was clear at once that Sally had taken an opportunity to talk to Ada about Ethie. They had talked at length, but the sum and substance of it was that Sally could see that Ethie had social problems because of her mother's practice in Christian Science.

"I love Ethie," Sally had said, "and she's so shy and so retiring. She never gives a thought to herself. She's always worrying about others, especially her mother."

"I know," Ada told Sally, "It worries me too, and has for a long time, but I've been at a loss to know how to help."

"Miss Norris, I've an idea. You know, Grace Martin and Anna Wyers and Enda Oddy and I all go to the Art School?"

"Yes, I know."

"Did you know that this fall Merly Martin is going to go to Art School too? That will leave only Ethie, out of our group, who won't be going."

Ada was puzzled.

"I do wish Ethie could go, Miss Norris."

"But Sally, Ethie doesn't have any artistic talent that I've seen."

"Grace Martin says Merly has no particular talent either so far as she's seen. But how do we know? Maybe they have talent! Maybe Art School will develop it. But Ethie needs it for other reasons. She's so sweet and so loving, and she needs friends. She needs to meet people."

"She needs to meet young men," Ada said.

"Yes, certainly, but girls too Miss Norris. I know I probably shouldn't presume to say it, but Ethie is with her mother almost all the time and she has so few friends."

"I know, Sally, but why did you come to me about this?"

"Miss Norris, it's because I think of all Ethie's family there's no one who loves her any more than you do. And also, I feel that you must have great influence in the family."

Ada resisted a strong temptation to ask Sally why she thought that, and then Sally answered Ada's thoughts.

"I know that from talking to Ethie. And Norris too. They've both said wonderful things about you, Miss Norris. Norris said you were the one in the family with the strongest character." Sally was speaking in a low voice, apparently aware that Ethie's mother was somewhere in the house.

"Norris says his mother leans on you in many ways. Forgive me for saying all this."

Ada smiled. "Rosella may lean on me in many ways, Sally, but she disagrees with me in many ways too when it comes to the children."

Sally dismissed that with a wave of her hand. "She's their mother. I just think she doesn't want Ethie and Norris to get out into the wicked world. She won't be able to stop Norris, but I know she can stop Ethie unless other people help. I do hope you understand what I'm saying Miss Norris."

"I do understand, Sally, and I promise you that I'll think about it carefully. The only thing is I just can't picture Ethie as an artist, with a studio and all. Norris yes, but Ethie, no."

Sally laughed. "Goodness, no. Neither can I picture Ethie that way. But Merly Martin is going to study decorative design. There's lots of possibilities there. She could do textiles, or wall paper, or china painting or Christmas cards, or any kind of greeting cards. I know Ethie could learn to paint flowers, things like roses or lilies, you know. Don't you think she could?"

“I hadn’t thought about it, Sally, but I will. I truly will.”

Ada had thought about it for a long time before sleeping. She was convinced that Ethie would never be an artist, or even a teacher of art for school children. Ethie was too shy for that. But to go to Art School with all the others would be wonderful for her. To have them all go back to school in a few weeks without her, would drive Ethie further into dependence on her mother’s companionship. And that isn’t right, Ada thought, it isn’t normal.

Rosella would object. Without knowing what the various objections would be, Ada could anticipate that Rosella would have many. The more Ada thought about it, the more enthused she became at the thought of getting Ethie into Art School. It would give her confidence, make her feel more important, and somehow Ada knew that in spite of Rosella’s Christian Science practice, it would bring more young people into the house. And that, thought Ada, will be good for all of us. It will make John glad to come home from his trips. There’ll be more singing and not such an over-abundance of praying.

One thing Ada pondered about for some time. Did Sally Long know that the Rahming’s had financial problems? Had she come to Ada to discuss Ethie’s entering Art School because she knew that she, Ada, would supply the tuition money? It was possible, but not probable. Ethie would probably not tell Sally anything about such matters. Ethie had more pride than that. So did Norris. Norris had too much in fact. He was inclined to brag.

Ada wished she could discuss the whole thing with Maria Martin, who seemed so sensible. But she did not care to discuss either the money aspect of it, or Ethie’s social problems with Maria because Norris was about to set his cap for Grace, and he would be terribly upset if his Auntie were to discuss family with Grace’s mother. The Martin family had money – Henry Martin was apparently a very good business man. Poor gentle, refined John was not. He should have been a teacher, Ada thought, or some such thing, perhaps a journalist. If only he were happier he could do better, Ada was sure. Papa had always said that the carpenters who liked their work were the best ones. They worked fast and they worked well. Papa had said he could tell by the way a man handled a piece of wood whether he liked being a carpenter. He said even a man who wasn’t happy at home, would be all right if he enjoyed his work well enough. But, on the other hand, if a man hated his work, he wouldn’t be happy even if he had an angel for a wife. Well, Ada didn’t know how often that all might be true, but she knew her brother-in-law wasn’t happy at work or at home, if one could judge by his sad eyes.

Oh, but if there could be more times like last night! How fine it would be for everyone in the family. And good for Rosella too. She needed something to bring her into the real world. Her religion might be the true and right one, but there was something wrong about the way Rosella applied it. It was smothering the family, especially Ethie. Oh, it wasn’t smothering Norris. He didn’t let anything hold him down. He went where he wanted to. This year he wanted to go to Art School. And he would go. However Rosella found the money, Norris would go to Art School. He would have to register before the end of this week for the fall semester. And he would have to have his money at that time.

Ada was not at all surprised then, that afternoon when Rosella came to her room to have ‘a little talk.’

“I know what you want to talk about, Rosie.”

“Ada, I didn’t want to have to ask you again. And I know I haven’t been very good about paying you back in the past. But I am building up my practice. It’s just that my people don’t seem to be

able to spare much, and you know I can't send them a bill. But I hope some of them will pay me a little more, soon."

"Sometimes I wonder that they pay you at all."

"Now why do you say such a thing as that?"

"You tell them that Divine Love always will meet every human need."

"That's not exactly how that goes," Rosella corrected.

"They seem to count on Divine Love meeting your needs too."

"You're not being very funny, Ada."

"You shouldn't have to borrow from me, Rosie. Can't you work it out in 'Science'?"

"Ada! You don't usually attack my religion!"

"No, I don't, and that's the truth, but it's full of contradictions. You won't have a doctor to cure our physical ills, but you come to me to cure your financial ills. It's inconsistent."

"It's easy for you to talk to me this way to me – you got Aunt Couch's money, I didn't."

"I only got a part of it Rosie, and the way things are going, I think you'll end up with most of it after all."

"You've never told me how much Auntie left you, Ada."

"I follow Papa's advice."

"What do you mean? Papa didn't even know that Auntie would leave you anything."

"Papa said that there were some things a wise person should keep to herself, and one of them was her financial condition."

"Well! You're very fortunate to even have a financial condition. I haven't any finances."

"Papa and Aunt Couch loved me and they knew I would never marry."

"Well, being married hasn't made me rich," Rosella said bitterly.

"Rosie, I am far from rich. It was unfortunate that you and I were reared in such a sheltered home. Our early life was so comfortable it makes it hard for use to learn to pinch pennies now. But there's one thing I'd like to say to you, now that we're discussing money. I think if you would spend less time and thought on your patients and more on your husband he might be able to earn more."

"Why, Ada! You know I'm trying to help the family by my work as a Christian Science practitioner."

"It isn't working," Ada said bluntly.

"And what do you mean I don't give thought to John?"

"Just that your mind is either on Norris or your patients."

"That's not so!"

"That's all you talk about Rosie. Let's stop now, I'm getting a headache."

"I never wanted all this talk Ada. It give me a headache too."

"Some things needed saying. I rarely speak my mind. I just live here and do housework most of the time."

"And you pay your board too, Ada. I know, I know, and I'm grateful to your for everything. And I hate to ask for money again but Norry needs his tuition money Wednesday."

"All right, and I'm going to 'lend' it to you you, or rather, to him. But there's a condition..."

"I do appreciate it, Ada... Oh? A condition?"

"I want to lend Ethie the tuition so she can go to Art School as well."

"Ethie!?" "She's not going to Art School!"

"She would like to go, Rosie."

"Why do you think that? I've never heard her say that. Ethie has no talent for art."

“Perhaps not, or perhaps she has. Anyway, it would be good for her. All the rest of her friends are going. Ethie needs something like that. I’ll pay for both of them, but not just Norris.”

“Why not?”

“Because things around this house need some evening up, that’s why.”

“You don’t like Norry, Ada.”

“You know better than to say that. But I’ll tell you one thing. I don’t love Norry more than Ethie.”

“But if Ethie goes to Art School who’ll go shopping with me and things like that?”

“You will do them yourself, or, if worst comes to worst, you will do them with me. Rosella – when Ethel gets married and leaves home this would happen naturally.”

A look came on Rosella’s face that Ada had not seen for years, and for a moment Ada thought that she was going into one of her old fainting spells. But the look passed, and Rosella sighed and rose.

“I’m going to my room and work right now. There’s a great deal of ‘mortal mind’ trying to take over among us.”

####

When it turned cool in the night, Maria got up and went into her mother's room. A damp breeze was blowing in from the west, and across the old lady's bed. Maria closed the window, and put a light blanket over her mother.

Susan Tibbals Burns stirred and turned over, and smiled at Maria.

"You're a good girl, Maria."

"I don't want you to get chilled, Mama."

"The heat broke, didn't it."

"Yes. It must have rained hard somewhere, but we didn't get very much here, I guess. How do you feel, Mama?"

"It's not too bad, daughter. I slept a little bit."

"I wish I could make you more comfortable, Mama. Do you have any pain tonight in your chest?"

"A little dear. I'm alright. Get your sleep dear."

"I could use the pan, dear."

Sophia slipped the bedpan under her mother. It hurt her back. She and her mother were both only five feet tall, but old Susan Burns was now so thin and frail that Sophia could lift her in spite of her own rheumatic aches.

"I'll go down and fix you a little warm milk, with a teaspoon of brandy, Mama."

"I don't really approve of the brandy, daughter."

"I know, Mama, but Doctor says it's a medicine sometimes. I'm going to fix a little for myself. I've been awake all night."

In the kitchen, Maria poured the milk. She shivered. This is the beginning of cooler weather, she thought. I'm glad Henry ordered coal for the winter.

As she passed through the front hall, she saw a letter lying on the hall table. It was addressed to her and in Nelle's handwriting. It had come the day before, and in all yesterday's excitement everyone had forgotten to tell her it was there. It was postmarked from Denver. Oh dear, Maria thought. I hope that doesn't mean Nelle's with Emmy because of another quarrel with Roger. Nelle'd gone up to Denver last year prepared to take the train home to Cleveland, but Roger had followed after and taken her back. It had all been Nelle's fault for not telling Roger about Earle, but apparently Roger was a hot-tempered man. He was, according to Nelle, one of those people who go for days, weeks and months, being gentle, sweet and even-tempered, but when something went against his strict sense of righteousness, he went into a rage. "You can tell he's a minister's son," Nelle had said in the letter to her mother when she wrote telling her of the quarrel. And Maria had written back, "Be glad that Roger is a minister's son with a sense of righteousness. That's all to the good, daughter. And if he is usually even-tempered, you are fortunate indeed. Not all women are so blessed."

But that was all last year, and Nelle and Roger had been getting along, apparently, ever since, except for Nelle's continued worry over not conceiving a child.

Maria took the letter and the hot milk upstairs. She helped her mother sip her milk, and sipped her own while she read her letter. From time to time Susan Burns sighed or made a tiny moan, and Maria pattered her. But she read to the end of Nelle's letter with a smile growing on her face. "Mama! I have such a good letter from Nelle! Guess what news it has. Emmy is in the family way. Oh, I'm so pleased. I was beginning to think – but, oh, dear, I can't help but wish it was

Nelle first. She wants a baby so much. Really, more than Emmy does, but of course, Emmy's been married longer.

Susan Burns looked at Maria while she was speaking, but she seemed not to fully understand what her daughter was saying.

"Emmy?"

"Yes, she's going to have a baby."

"Emmy?"

"Our Emma, Mama, You remember."

Susan smiled sweetly."

"Nelle's sent a letter than Emma's expecting."

"Nelle? Expecting?"

"No, Mama, it's Emmie's expecting."

"That's lovely."

But Maria knew that in the morning her mother would have forgotten what little she had grasped of the idea. She could talk to her Mama still, and show her love, but they could no longer have a real conversation, an exchange of ideas. Her memory is gone, Maria thought, except for the long ago. Only the other day her Mama had said, "Maria, I should have let you marry Leving. You really loved him."

Maria had said, "I've had a good life, Mama. I've never wanted for a thing."

"But you loved Leving, daughter, and he died in Libby Prison."

"Mama, that's all a very long time ago, over forty years."

"I'm sorry about it, daughter."

"Mama, you know I love Henry."

"But he's no more religious than Leving was."

"Mama, Henry reads a chapter of the Bible every day. Anyway, don't think about the past, Mama."

But the past was all old Susan wanted to think about."

Maria said to her now, "Try to get some sleep Mama. The air is fresh and lovely."

She bent and kissed her.

####

Frank Stanley Martin (Stan) took his mother and father to the train. They would go to Chicago, and change, and go to Denver on the sleeper. It was raining – a gloomy morning in Cleveland.

“I’m sorry the weather’s so bad, Ma,” Stan said.

“I don’t expect much else in Cleveland. It’s rained all spring. We used to have such pretty spring weather in the East.”

“You haven’t talked that way in years,” her husband said.

“I’m sorry, Henry. I’m just upset and gloomy.”

“She’s right, Pa,” said Stan. “Ohio’s got miserable weather.” Howd (Howard Henry Martin) never got any oats planted at all.”

Old Henry said nothing at the mention of his eldest son.

“Ma,” Stan went on. “The weather will be great where you’re going. You’ll love Colorado. Now be sure to give Emmy my love, Ma.”

“I only pray I’ll be able to,” Maria said, her eyes filling with tears. “And you be sure to pray too, Stan. Pray she’ll get well. Pray she’ll live.”

Stan kissed his mother. “I’ll pray, Ma. Of course I will.”

After the train was under way, Maria opened her handbag and got out her three messages from Nelle. The first was dated early in April and spoke of Emma’s pregnancy. “Several times Emmy has thought her pains were starting, but nothing happens. We have everything ready for the baby. We’ve sure been doing a lot of sewing, Ma. I don’t really think Emmy wanted to have a baby, Ma. I guess I talked her into the idea finally, but I thought it was high time Emmy tried to have a baby. Roger and I have been disappointed for so long. Something is surely wrong with one of us. But with Emmy’s case it’s different. She confessed to me that she is the reason they haven’t had children before now. I asked her if there was something unusual or mean about William (I was remembering Earle, you see), but Emmy said no, William is good to her. When I was talking to Roge about it, he said Emmy deserved a whipping for being the way she is. Of course, Roge always talks tougher than he really is.

Well, Ma, it won’t be long now, anyway. I think Emmy is really eager for the baby to be here, now. She wishes you were here, though. She said yesterday, “When I think of people having babies, I think of Ma. I would get a lot better if Ma were here.” Well, why don’t you write her a specially encouraging letter, Ma. It’s two weeks till the baby is due, and I think that Emmy is getting a little frightened.”

Maria opened the second letter from Nelle, written four days later.

“Ma, I have sad news for you and Pa. Emmy has lost her baby. She started her pains the same night after I wrote you last. The birth was not unusually hard for a first baby. Emmy was very brave and the doctor used just a little chloroform. He let me assist him, because she was asking for you all the time, and he thought a sister would be the next best to comfort her. The baby was a girl, and rather small – the doctor said, more like an eight-month baby. The trouble was that from the beginning it did not breathe right. We did all kinds of things, and kept her warm with bottles of hot water around the sides of the little basket, but she only lived through the night and until ten o’clock yesterday morning. I would have written to you sooner, but I had been up all night and William insisted I get some sleep. The doctor gave Emmy something so she’d rest, and then he made me take one, too. William sat with her all afternoon, and in the evening I did. I told her what I thought you would have said to comfort her, but she is very listless and says she

doesn't think she ever was supposed to have any babies anyway. William fees very badly, but he and I agree that she may change her mind after she gets over this. The trouble is, Ma, that Emmy has never liked any part of the business of having a baby. I mean, getting them started. William has mentioned this to Rog, and Roge told me that he wouldn't blame William if he went to other women. I wish you would write to Emmy about this when she's over this loss of the baby. William has just come from Emmy's room and says she feels a little feverish this evening, but she has taken something for sleep, and I guess she'll get some rest. She is thirsty and can't seem to realize that she can't drink as much as she wants just now, for of course, there is no baby to nurse, and the doctor wants to dry up her milk. We have bound her tight and she isn't comfortable.

Well, Ma, I'll write again tomorrow and let you know how Emmy is. She says she will write you herself soon, but she isn't that strong yet. By the way, Ma, write William a little letter to cheer him up. He is very much in the dumps. He says he doesn't know how on earth he can ever make Emmy happy.

Maria put away Nelle's letter, and took out the telegram that had come a week later, on the same day that Nelle's third letter had arrived saying that Emma was ill of a fever following the birth. The doctor wanted to put her in the hospital.

The wire read: "Emma very ill. Can you come? Roge will meet any train you take. Nelle."

Maria folded the messages and put them back in her handbag. John reached over and patted her hand.

"Don't upset yourself more, Maria. You shouldn't keep reading those letters. You must know them by heart."

Maria said nothing.

"This is our first train trip together," Henry reminded her.

"Yes, I know. And the last time I rode a train I was hurrying home to dying children. And here I am again."

"You don't know Emma is dying, Maria."

"I think it is still part of my punishment. I believe we pay for our sins right here on earth."

"You aren't sinful, Maria. You never were. I told you that when Maily and Jenny died. And you aren't any more sinful now than you were then. Less, if possible."

"My sin is to try to take the decisions out of the hands of the Lord," Maria insisted. "I never should have advised Emma to get married. She was doing so well at her work."

"Nonsense Maria! Why on earth not? Any mother advises a daughter to get married."

"Once she wanted to become a teacher or an actress. She'd be alive now if I'd not told her to get married."

"Alive now! Why Maria, she probably is alive now! She's in the hospital. They'll make her well. Now, cheer up. Look out the window at these farms. What wonderful soil they have here. Look at those oats. This is Indiana now. I probably shouldn't have stayed in Royalton. I'd likely be a wealthy man if I'd bought land out here. My stars! Look at the color of this soil."

"You are a wealthy man, Henry."

"Well, I'd have been really wealthy if I had done some things differently."

"Why would you need more money? We're perfectly comfortable."

"I could leave more to the children."

"I don't think they'd be any happier with more money, Henry."

“They’re just as happy as anyone else. They ought to be happy, I’ve done enough for them. Which of them isn’t happy?”

“Stan isn’t and Nate isn’t...” Maria began.

“It’s not my fault they picked the wrong women.”

“And Nelle’s unhappy because she wants children. And I don’t think life is going to be easy for Grace if she marries Norris Rahming.”

“Well, life isn’t supposed to be easy. The Bible doesn’t promise us an easy life, does it?”

“No – that is true of course.”

Two weeks later Maria wrote a long letter to Grace.

“Dear Dotty:

What beautiful country this is! I declare I don’t think your father wants to leave Colorado and go back home again. He is saying that he should have come west to make his fortune.

I am so happy to write you the news that Emmy looks better with every passing day. She has a little color in her cheeks again, and I thank the good Lord for sparing her. Poor William lost weight too, but is looking more rested now. It is hard for them to accept the fact that they can’t ever have any babies of their own, but I think they should plan on adopting a little one after a while. Nelle says that she and Roge plan to do so if none come in the next three or four years. Pas is going to send you a check in a day or two. We have been under considerable expense here, as we had to send Merly her train fare to come too. She coaxed so hard that Pa couldn’t say no to her.

You should see this country! Last weekend we took the train to Colorado Springs, and of course we saw the Garden of the Gods, and Pike’s Peak. When I lived in the East I knew I loved mountains, but of course these western mountains surpass anything in New England.

Grace, dear, I think of you in the hot city this summer and wish you could see this beautiful state of Colorado. Your father has enjoyed it so much, but this evening we found Emma so much improved that for the first time he spoke to me of going home. He loves all you children deeply (and God grant that he forgives Howd). The doctor says that Emmy may go home in a few more days. We’ll stay a day or two more after that, then your father wants to start home. All of a sudden he’s possessed to see what shape the farm is in. I suspect that, angry as he is at Howd, he’s worried about the old place since he ordered Howd and Lottie off. He’s starting to worry about the wheat and the hay, and the horses and all of it. He has even been trying his best to start me worrying about Bill and Art and what they are up to, but I’m not going to worry, because Nate and Edith are strict with their own, and will keep them all out of trouble.

Well, I’m torn between wanting to get home to see all the rest of the family (Pa says half of us are here in Colorado now) and staying here to look after Emmy for a few weeks. But Nelle will be with her, so she’ll be well cared for, and Merly says she’d like to stay a while and help. But your Pa says no, she’s to come home with us, not alone on the train.

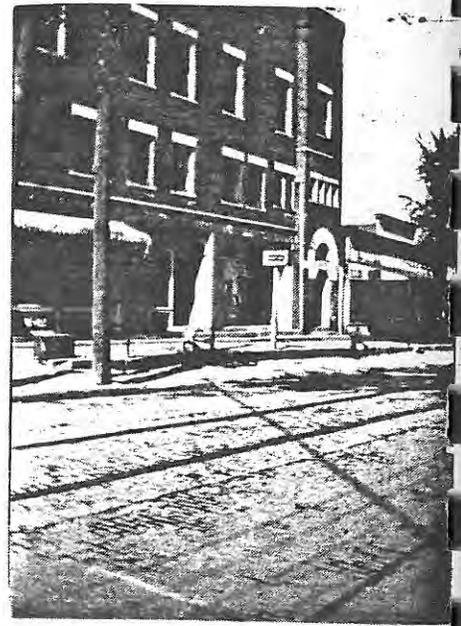
Grace dear, do thank Miss Norris again for helping you look after your Grandma, and be sure and tell Mrs. Rourke to be sure and dry Mama very carefully after bathing her. It’s very important to take care of old folks’ skin. See that there aren’t any wrinkles in the bottom sheet on Mama’s bed, and keep her powdered with cornstarch. I don’t want her to get bed sores. Be sure she sits up in her chair awhile mornings and afternoons.

Congratulations, dear, on winning the Madeleine Paul Scholarship for next year. Your Pa and I are very proud of you.

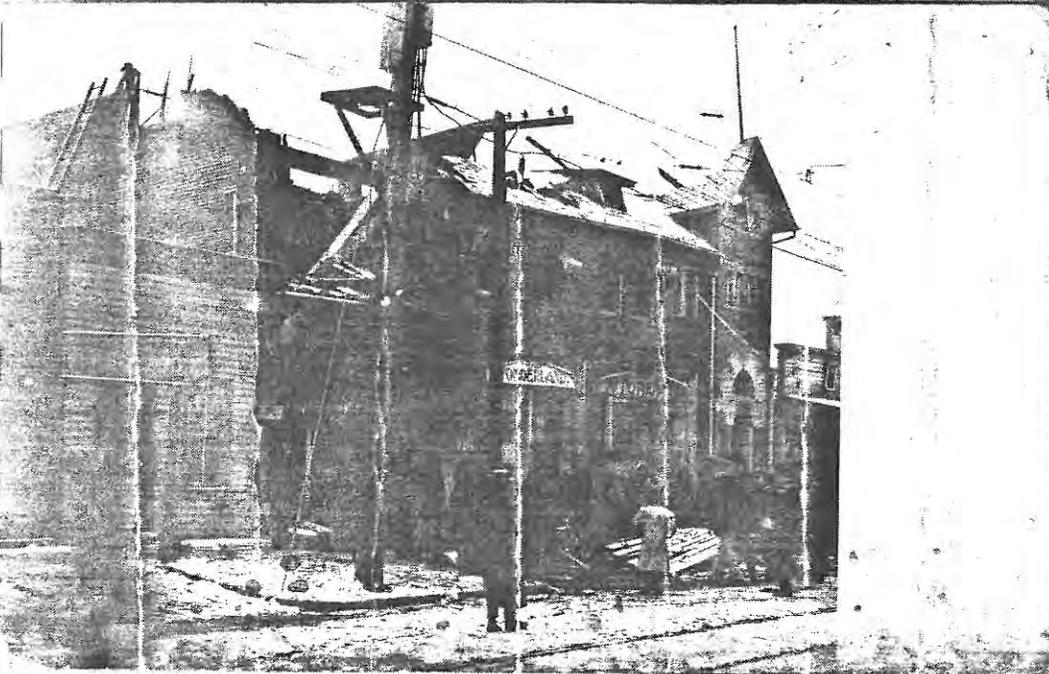
N. J. Martin in Colorado 1907

Cripple Creek
Colo Aug. 12-07
From the woolly west
The effects of my
vacation

I told your father I would
not have such a picture
but it was so good, aside
from the cigar and night
that I thought I would send it



Martin Block restored



← The Martin Block in
Oberlin, Ohio after a
fire which must have
been around 1908 or so
It was rebuilt higher,

N. J. Martin in
Ted Woolbridge's car
N. J. never learned to
drive. He wanted to
stop the car by
saying "WHOA!"



We'll be home soon, dear. Don't do anything so that the neighbors will talk. I hope you haven't forgotten that your Pa and I don't want you to have Norris at the house till we get back. You can go over to his house, and there'll be no gossip.

Much love,
Your Mother"

PLEASE DON'T WORRY ABOUT US

Norris had known he had competition in winning the favors of Grace Martin. When she scarcely noticed him in the beginning, he told himself she was only a country girl, and he decided to pay no more attention to her. But he could not forget her. He found it quite impossible to refrain from watching her. He soon found he had not been correct in trying to write Grace off as a country girl. When he learned that her family had recently moved into Cleveland from out of town, had had assumed it was from the country. But Grace had set him straight, informing him that she was from Oberlin, a college town.

“Your sister said you were from Royalton.”

“Father does have Royalton property and Merly was born there. She’s fond of that place. We used to spend our summers there when I was small.”

“Is it a farm?”

“Father used to breed riding horses.”

“Is that what he does?” Norris asked, hoping Grace wasn’t finding him too curious. She obviously had more money than a farm girl would have. Her clothes were excellent.

“Oh, no – Father is in real estate.”

Norris’ interest mounted. She was not a farm girl. She was a young lady of means. She was pretty, but more than that, she was one of the best students in the Art School. Every month or so she distinguished herself in the ‘concours’ competitions that were part of the school program. Grace had a string of concours honors to her credit, and after her first year she had been in school entirely on full tuition scholarships. She was, with her various assets, extremely popular, and were it not for two factors, Norris might have been discouraged in a campaign for her favors. But it happened that Grace was a good ice skater. All winter long, it was her favorite diversion in her leisure hours. In this field Norris could make a favorable impression. He had lived all during high school near the indoor skating rink, The Arctic Palace, which operated from September till May. In Oberlin Grace had skated at every opportunity on the Academy Rink, but as it was outdoors, she had had to depend on the cold winter weather. So, although Grace excelled at everything she attempted, she was not a better skater than Norris, and she had discovered that it was a pleasure to have him for a partner on the ice. At the Arctic Palace there was always music, and Norris and Grace had got acquainted while waltzing around and around. Norris’ second asset, in his own estimation, was that he was an interesting person. He tried and tried to think of what might be his greatest attraction in Grace’s eyes, and finally came to a decision. He would have to have qualities which set him apart from all his competition. In the field of art, Norris secretly felt that Grace had greater talent than he, but he hated to admit this to himself. He could not. He could not, for this was the girl he wanted to marry. If Grace had not been so attractive to him, Norris would have been annoyed with her successes. She could play the piano, had studied French longer than he had, and would in all probability win the graduation prize for a year of art study in New York City. So he decided that to attract her he would have to have qualities that the other students lacked, and this need not be artistic ability. For it was true enough that almost all the students in the Art Institute were from Cleveland and the surrounding towns, while Norris was from New York City, and it was on New York City that Grace had set her sights. Norris counted on fascinating her with stories of his grandfather Rahming, who had come to New York by way of the West Indies, and who had owned a fleet of sponge boats that the Yankees had interned during the Civil War. And there had been a wealthy grandmother who had inherited a sugar plantation in the Bahamas. All the anecdotes that Norris told had some root



1901
Grace Isabel Martin

"Irene"



Grace Martin
1906



Grace Martin + Olive Willey
her chum

"Irene" 1906 "Laura"



Grace Martin
"Irene" 1905



Olive Willey Grace Martin
"Laura" "Irene"

1907

in fact, but his lively imagination and his need for an aura of romance caused him to elaborate gaily and without restraint.

####

It annoyed Norris that he had to start as a freshman student at the Cleveland Art Institute. He had hoped he could persuade them that his work in photography might somehow qualify him to at least be placed in the second year. The qualification for entry was that a student be at least fifteen years old, and able to refer to some well known Cleveland citizen. Norris was able to give as reference the Episcopal minister at St. James where his father and Aunt Ada frequently attended church.

He argued at length with the Art Institute's registrar.

"I'm planning to specialize in Illustration and Pictorial Art," he declared. "Do you really think I need all those first year courses like charcoal drawing from plaster casts?"

"Why shouldn't you need them?"

"Well..." Norris hesitated. He had no answer to that. "It's just that Illustration is a Special Course."

"Yes, for post-graduate students mainly. And Pictorial Design is a four-year course, like most of our other courses. You're very lucky we haven't put in our new requirement we're considering – a high school diploma. You couldn't get in at all in that case."

"It's just that I'm twenty years old and it'll take so long."

"I'm sorry, but if you aren't really serious about your art training, why don't you take some of our afternoon or evening courses?"

"No. I am serious."

"Then you must start at the beginning."

Norris went home in a rage. There was absolutely nothing he could do about it. When Grace Martin graduated, he would still have two years more to go. He would have to persuade her to stay on and take post-graduate courses. How he would ever manage to wait four years to marry Grace he didn't know.

He came to the dinner table in a sullen mood and had little to say to anyone.

Ethel, on the other hand, was bubbling over. She and Merly Martin, and Anna Hill were all enrolled in part-time special courses at the Art Institute. They were studying various arts and crafts pursuits. Anna was studying work with textile design and batik and weaving. Ethie and Merly were going to study ceramics."

"Why in hell do you want to waste time painting china for?" Norris challenged.

Ethel looked surprised and hurt. She didn't know what to say, and looked first at Aunt Ada and then at her mother.

"It's just a waste of Aunt Ada's money. Why in hell would anyone study china painting?"

"Norris!" Rosella scolded. "You said that word twice!"

Ethel's eyes filled with tears.

Aunt Ada spoke then, and rather sharply.

"Norris! I'll be the judge of whether or not my money is wasted. Ethie worked hard in high school, and she worked hard to learn to type. Now, it pleases me to lend her the money to study something more enjoyable. She's young and can enjoy the Art School just as much as all the rest of you. A person has a long, long time to be old and sedate, like me. Don't dare begrudge Ethel what she's doing."

Having heard Aunt Ada state her case so completely, Ethel's tears flowed harder and she excused herself and went into her room and closed the door.

“Contrary to what you may think, Norr, there are other people in the family besides you,” Ada said.

“I don’t know why you’re so provoked, Auntie,” Norris said in his most placating tone.

“Well, I know why I am.”

“Let us all express perfect Divine Love,” Rosella said nervously.

Norris worked hard at the Institute. He was determined to distinguish himself, for Grace was winning the monthly concours competitions regularly. They were not in competition against each other, but Norris wanted to be noticed favorably. He could never catch up until they were both through art school. Then he would marry her and she would settle down, and he would take care of her. He would be delighted to have a wife who was accomplished in art and music and languages. It would be a tremendous advantage to their children. When they achieved financial security, they would travel in France and Spain. Norris began to study his French again in the evenings, and also to practice the piano. He did well at the Institute in lettering, geometry, and perspective. He excelled in mechanical drawing, but he was only fair in figure drawing, where Grace won most of her concours awards.

During that year, Grace had been engaged to an Oberlin boy who was in college in the East. By the time spring came to Cleveland, she had written to him and broken off the engagement. She was no longer in love with him, she told him. But she would not tell Norris Rahming that she would marry him. “It’s much too soon for that,” she said. “I want to study several more years.” Norris bided his time, but impatiently.

####

Ada had been observing for years to what lengths Norris would go in order to have what he'd set his heart on. Since babyhood he'd found that sulks, temper tantrums, and prevarication had always made his mother and sister give in to his will. And, Ada thought ruefully, his auntie, and even his father, often gave in to him.

It was all because there was a good side to Norris' nature, the sunny, affable disposition that he showed much of the time. He had a droll sense of humor, he often saw the funny side of a situation long before anyone else in the family did, and with an infectious chuckle and twinkling of his eyes he had them all laughing. He had amusing alliterative titles for some of the neighbors, but he had never been unkind in his teasing, or cruel in the handling of animals, as so many children were. As Norris grew older he had revealed a great depth of sympathetic feeling. Ada recalled how one day a neighbor had fallen on the icy sidewalk. Norris had happened to be watching from the sitting room window at the time. He'd been out the door in no time, and helped the man get up and on his feet again, brushed off the snow, and then he'd gone all the way home with him because he seemed to have hurt his ankle. That was the good side of Norris' nature.

But there was the other side. There were two Norrises, Ada had often said. The rest of the family agreed, even Rosella. The Norris of charm, gallant manners, and infectious laughter and the Norris of sulks, vile tempers, and extravagant untruths. By now, there was little doubt, Grace would have seen both sides of Norris' personality. Heaven help her, Ada thought. She's probably seen his dark side many times by now.

There had been a good-bye party for Grace at her home several days before she left for New York to begin her scholarship year. Merly and Ethie planned the party, and decorated all the downstairs rooms with late summer flowers. The occasion marked two events – Grace's departure for the East, and the announcement of the engagement of Edna Oddy to Earl Hurst. Maria and Merly had invited all the Rahmings and Ada Norris in addition to the young folks, but John had been out of town, as he so often was. Norris had been very much in the center of things, at his very best, his charm shining brightly. He danced attendance on Grace, but he was gracious to all the ladies, including the older ones.

Betty Long and Grace played the piano for the singing, and even Emma came from the kitchen where she'd been helping with the refreshments, and played her three best numbers. It was that evening that Ada realized that Anna Hill wasn't present, and that she hadn't seen her for several months. Ada had so hoped that, when Ethie got in among the lively students at the Art School, there'd be gayer times around the Rahming household, with Ethie bringing her friends home, and going to social events with them, and it had really worked that way for most of that first winter when Ethie started her classes at the Art School. Ethie brought Betty Long home with her, or Merly Martin, and occasionally Betty and Merly came with Anna Hill and Edna Oddy. Anna always played the piano when she was there, and Ada enjoyed it so, and always wished John were home so that he could sing to Anna's accompaniment. Norris or Grace sometimes tried to accompany for John to sing, but their playing wasn't up to Anna's level.

At Christmas time, that first year, there had been frequent festivities. The young crowd gathered daily during the school holidays, and John Rahming was home more during that period. They all did a great deal of singing of Christmas hymns and carols. One night there was a big party at the Martin's house and Anna played waltzes. Young Bill Martin rolled up the rugs and everyone danced. Ada helped Maria and Emma in the kitchen, and Rosella sat beside Merly Martin and

explained Christian Science to her. Grace undertook to teach Norris' father how to do the waltz. John caught onto the step quickly and then insisted on Rosella dancing with him. She'd protested but finally permitted him to take her several turns around the room. Norris said he'd teach Grace's Mama how to waltz, but Maria said her knees weren't up to dancing any more. John danced with Betty Long, Edna Oddy and Grace. Then he begged Grace to play so that he could try a waltz with Anna Hill. Ethie danced with her father next, and with William Martin, and several times with Arthur Grey.

Ada had gone home happy that night, happy for Ethie, and a week later there'd been a party at the Rahming's. John had bought a gramophone and records so there was more dancing, and Anna was able to join in the waltzes more often. Ethie seemed to be getting attention from Arthur Grey. Ada was very pleased because Arthur had always made a fuss over Betty Long, but Betty hadn't cared whether he liked her or not. The main thing, Ada felt, was for Ethie to be happy, and get confidence in herself, and to have a beau like the other girls.

But as 1907 went on, things changed. The young people's crowd began to break into couples. Edna Oddy and Earl Hurst seemed to be as good as engaged, though Edna still wasn't wearing a ring. Norris was in hot pursuit of Grace, and preferred to take her places by himself, instead of going to parties.

Arthur Grey seemed to have lost interest in Ethie and was again fluttering around Betty Long. With these developments, Ethie Rahming and Merly Martin were left out of the pairings, and they became close chums, spending their spare time either at Merly's house or at Ethie's. Anna Hill hadn't come to the Rahming's since Christmas time.

When summer came, Maria and Henry had gone off to Denver when Nelle summoned them because of Emma's grave illness. Merly had followed them for part of the summer. Grace had spent her summer studying French and piano. Norris had fussed and fumed because she still refused to be engaged. She told him she'd finish her studies at the Art School and do a year in New York, and one in Paris, and then they'd talk of engagement. Norris, with three years more to go in Cleveland Art School while Grace had only one, did not think he could stand it. He became a terrible nuisance to be with, except when Grace was with him.

When the new school year started, Ada hoped things would improve for Ethie. But it was to be a very different year from the last one. Merly and Ethie kept on as close chums but there were no beaux in the picture, and Ada feared they'd both be old maids like herself.

Life seemed duller that year. John traveled more, and was gone from Cleveland days at a time. He didn't seem quite as unhappy as he had been. Ada decided he must be enjoying his work more. Rosella was increasingly busy with her Christian Science practice. The year wore on, monotonously for Ada.

But in May came Norr's impulsive trip to New York, his return and engagement to Grace. Then June and Grace's graduation.

The party for Grace's goodbye came in early September. Since Anna wasn't at the party with all the other students, Ada asked Grace about her. Grace had said, "She'll be here, Aunt Ada." John said he'd not be able to be present, for he'd be out of town. Ada and Rosella had walked over alone to the Martin house.

As Grace had said, Anna did appear at the party, but she stayed only a few minutes, left a little gift for Grace, and departed.

"That girl has changed," Ada commented to Rosella as they walked home afterward. "She was such fun at the piano."

"Whom are you talking about?"



NORRIS RAHMING
1907

"MATTHEW NORTH"

“Anna Hill. Don’t you think she’s changed?”

“I don’t know,” Rosella said. “I never noticed her much.”

“You never notice anyone but Norris,” Ada said crossly. “It’s just that she was such fun, it was nice for Ethie, nice for us all.”

“Why, that’s silly Ada, but I was thinking about how he’s going to miss Grace. Norris, I mean.” Ada smiled.

But Norry hadn’t missed Grace for long. In a sudden fit of inspiration, he’d persuaded Ade, and his own parents and Grace’s, that he should go to New York to see that Grace got “properly settled.” He would introduce her to his Aunt Georgiana (whom he scarcely knew himself), and to his Uncle Bertie and Aunt Judith. What’s more, he told Maria Martin, he would be sure Grace found a room in a good respectable, safe part of the city, not too far from her new Art School.

“You know how cities are, Mother Martin.” Maria had let him persuade her. She felt she did know how cities were, but reminded him that she also knew how young people in love were.

“I place a very high trust in you, Norris.”

After two weeks Norris was still in New York. He should have been starting his third-year classes at Cleveland Art Institute. He had already missed the first week. Ethie fussed about it daily. She had an office job with a building company. She ran an adding machine. But she and Merly still went evenings to ceramics class at the Art School. It was their principal social life, although the class was all women. Ada began to give up hope that Ethie would ever marry. The spark of self-confidence that had flared up in Ethie while Arthur Grey was making overtures to her died out when he drifted back to Betty Long again. It was not that Arthur Grey was such a splendid catch. Just that Ethie should have a beau. She was quite a pretty girl, but much more so when she was happy.

Thoughts of Ethie’s problems were put aside when a letter came from Norris in New York. He was not coming back to Cleveland. He planned to stay in New York. He could get work from Uncle Bert, and more from others. He wanted to study with the well-known artist, Robert Henri. This he could do if he could earn enough money. It would mean a great deal to his career. He’d go much further in the art world than if he’d stayed in the Cleveland school. He would be hard-pressed for money at first. Please, could Mama send him whatever money she could spare? Maybe Aunt Ada would help a bit. He’d soon be on his feet financially and would pay them all back handsomely.

Grace, Norris said, was settled in a nice room in Morningside Heights. He had taken her to meet Aunt Georgiana and her family, and they had all thought Grace was a splendid girl. One of these days he’d see that she met Uncle Bert. There hadn’t been time yet. And Uncle Bert was busy. And goodness knows, Grace was busy too. She was excited about her school, but mostly excited about New York itself. They’d been to the Battery and Central Park and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Sunday they were going to the Zoological Gardens. He promised that he and Grace would go to Brooklyn and go to Fleet Street to find the house where he’d been born. Norris closed the letter with love to all, and please would they send what cash they could spare? He was staying with Aunt Georgiana but didn’t want to impose. He would rent the cheapest room he could find, and he’d soon have money coming in. He’d write again soon, and Grace would write also. Love to Papa, Ethie and Aunt Ada.

When Rosella finished reading Norris’ letter aloud to Ada and Ethie she looked first at one and then the other, then she rolled her eyes back in her head and fainted.

Ethie jumped up and cried out.

“Oh, Aunt Ada! What should we do? Get some water!” She started to fan her mother with a newspaper.

Ada stayed in her chair. She didn’t get up.

“She’ll be all right, Ethie. Don’t be upset. We all learned years ago that Rosella recovers sooner if she’s left quiet.”

“But I’ve never seen her this way, Auntie!”

“I have. Many times.”

“You’re sure she’ll be all right?”

“I’m sure. Anyway, shouldn’t you just know the Truth about her? Isn’t she God’s own child?”

“Yes, of course, Auntie. I’ll get my copy of Mrs. Eddy’s book and read it to Mama.”

“That’s a good idea, Ethie. I’ll go down and start dinner. Your Mama’ll be all right in a little while. I’m sure there must be something in the book for situations of this sort. She’s just awfully upset.”

In the days that followed, Rosella did a great deal of reading in Christian Science writings, and it gave her some comfort, Ada decided. Rosella would be concentrating on ‘holding the right thought.’ Ada wondered what thought Rosella had concluded to be the ‘right’ one. Was she concentrating on Norris’ success in this plan to work and live in New York City? Or was she, rather, working on the idea that Norris would soon see the wisdom of returning to Cleveland to finish his education, and to make his career and his home near his family who loved him.

Ada herself was torn in her emotions about Norr’s plan. She felt that he should have finished at Cleveland Art School, but she knew he would have been miserable with Grace in New York. He would have felt that she’d be lost to him forever; quite likely he’d have been right. Grace had no trouble attracting beaux. Norr had had to compete with others. In New York, Norr could see that Grace remained his girl.

But Ada worried for the future. What would happen if Grace won the next scholarship she planned on, the one that would take her to Paris to study? Could Norris follow her there? Not on my money, she thought. Norris had definite talent in Ada’s opinion. He’d been getting good marks at Art School, but he lacked discipline – self-discipline. And Ada felt that somehow, Norr lacked the confidence in his own work that Grace Martin had in hers. Grace had talent and confidence too. Ada could sympathize with Norr’s desire to live in New York. She herself still ached with homesickness for Brooklyn, for Prospect Part, for the beaches, the Harbor, the rivers and the bridges. No wonder Grace and Norr had been so excited, seeing it for the first time.

Oh, if only Norr could succeed in New York! If he’d work hard and get over his spells of sulkiness and tempers. If he’s realize he couldn’t always have his way. Ada was sure he was a good enough artist, and if that didn’t pay, couldn’t he be a photographer? Why not? But he must work.

It would be the best possible thing for him to be away from Rosella. That was it! That would make him grow up and be a man. That was the ‘right thought’ to hold.

Meanwhile, Ada began to worry about Grace, as well. How would she ever be able to work at her art studies with Norris in New York? Here in Cleveland, her mother had been able to see that Grace and Norris did not stay out too late of an evening, or see each other too many times a week. In New York, who would be able to keep Norris from demanding too much of Grace’s time? Ada wondered if Maria knew yet of Norris’ plans to stay in New York.

####

Before Nelle and Roger Fison decided to leave Colorado, Nelle had gone to consult a doctor in Denver about her failure to conceive a child.

“It’s been three years, doctor. I’m very discouraged.”

“Do you have regular periods, Mrs. Fison? Regular menstrual periods?”

“Yes.”

“Have they always been regular?”

“Yes – very.”

“About every twenty-eight days?”

“Exactly twenty-eight days.”

“When did they start?”

“You mean, how old was I?”

“When you had your first one, yes.”

“Twelve.”

“Was your mother always normal in this respect?”

“Mother raised nine of us and there were two more who died, and two miscarriages. She was very normal, I’d think.”

“My! Do you happen to know when she reached the menopause? The change of life?”

“Not exactly, but my youngest brother was born when Ma was forty-seven.”

“Well, she does sound normal. More than normal. Does anyone else in the family have this trouble that you have?”

“Two of my sisters aren’t married, and other who is, had one stillborn baby and she had an infection. She was very sick.”

“She’s all right now?”

“She’s got a mental problem, but that’s another story.”

“She lost her baby. Well, Mrs. Fison, offhand, you sound normal. Some women have a very small opening to the womb. This makes it more difficult to conceive, but not impossible. Why don’t you and your husband wait a little longer. Don’t give up trying. I know of many ladies who’ve had babies after waiting several years for the first one.”

Nelle was about to tell him that she had conceived once years ago, but the doctor went on speaking. “You would do best, perhaps, if you and your husband had marriage relations more frequently than you have been. But be sure you each get sufficient rest, and maintain your health, both of you. You are thirty-one years old. That’s not too old. Give it one more year, and then have your husband come and see me.

But Nelle and Roger discussed it at length in the next few weeks. They were convinced that they were healthy. Roge was one of five children, Nelle one of many. And they saw no reason why they should not be parents. But Roge could not get the idea out of his head that climate and altitude might be a factor.

“But Rog, people all over Colorado are having babies. Emmy conceived a baby in Colorado.”

“So she did – and it died.”

“Oh Rog! For heaven’s sake!”

“Well all right. Colorado probably didn’t cause that. But still the air is thinner where it is high. I might affect you.”

“Or you.”

“Well, or me. But I always think a woman’s got more to do with having a baby.”

“But no more to do with starting a baby.”

“Maybe the birth rate is lower in Colorado.”

“I think you just want to move on. You’re restless.”

“Well, that’s true,” he agreed. “Let’s go to New York.”\

“New York! You mean New York State?”

“No. I mean New York City!”

“The city!? I hate cities! Why do you want to go there?”

“Because it’s where a man should go if he wants to be a writer.”

“But can’t a ‘man’ write anywhere? If it was me, I could write better here in the mountains. I love Colorado. I thought you did too.”

“I do too, but I have to go to New York to sell what I write. And Nelle – in New York there are excellent doctors. We can find one who can help us to have a baby.”

“Do you think we might?”

“I really do.”

Shortly after their decision, Nelle Fison wrote to her mother.

Dearest Ma,

Roge and I survived the long, cold winter, and I truly didn’t mind it as much as many people do. I walked outdoors a great deal considering how very cold it was most of the time. But Roge doesn’t intend to spend another year in Colorado. He thinks the cold isn’t good for me. We have both wondered why I don’t get in the family way, but I’m sure it isn’t the cold. I told Roge the Eskimos have babies, but he says that I am not an Eskimo. So we are not going to stay here. He has a new job promised him.

Ma, dear, you asked if I am happier now and of course I am. Roge is good and he loves me. I never told you, but I made the mistake of not telling him about Earle. You remember I didn’t want anyone to talk about it? I was so ashamed of all that happened. Well it was a great shock to Roger to learn that I had been married before. It even ruined our Thanksgiving, Ma, but I guess things are all right now. It was really Rog’s pride, Ma, but he said it was just that I fooled him. Well, that is three years ago, now, and he says that he understands why I did it. I hope he does. Perhaps it is just that I wouldn’t sleep with him after he made all the fuss and temper-tantrum. I said if he thought he was too good to sleep with me he didn’t have to. Ma, I know how your mother trained you about things like that but I don’t agree with all of it. Besides, Roge has a very hot temper and I don’t have the notion that men should always be yielded to.

Ma, dear, don’t tell this to anyone. Remember, I am really very happy, I think. Life is strange, though. I just wish that I would get pregnant. Maybe I will when we move to New York. Yes, that is where we are going. And by the way, when we are there, I can keep an eye on Grace for you. Then you won’t have to worry so much, Ma dear. At least she is away from Norris Rahming. I don’t approve of him. He is too egotistical and spoiled.

I’ll write again soon, Ma.

Love from Nelle

####

Irene wrote to her mother faithfully and kept her informed. She wrote in October:

“I’m eating well and getting a fair amount of sleep. I’ll get more after I get adjusted to everything. Everything is so exciting! I must try to calm down.

Mother, Norris is still here and he doesn’t want to go back. We’ve been arguing about it. He should finish at Cleveland, I know, but he has some new ideas. Ask his mother to tell you about it.

I certainly was surprised to hear Nelle and Roge were coming to New York to live. I bet that relieves your mind about me, doesn’t it. Ha! She’ll be being a chaperone to me and Norr, I’ll wager. Mother, please remind Nelle that I’m not her baby sister anymore. I’m twenty-one years old.

I’m just fooling. It will be nice to have Nelle and Roge here. Nice to have family near. Oh, but I have met Norr’s Aunt Georgiana and she is a dear thing. I’m ever so fond of her. She has already invited us for Thanksgiving. Of course, Norr should be back in Cleveland then. But he doesn’t plan to be, Mother.

No, please don’t worry about us dear. Things will be all right. They’ll work out. Send me Nelle’s address when she gets located. And give her mine – well, of course, I have only a room, and I’m usually not there.

Give my love to the family, Mother. Is Emmy still the same? I keep hoping. Please have Norris’ mother do some Christian Science for her, and for your rheumatism, Ma. I’ll write tomorrow or next day.

Much love, Grace

In early November, Maria got a hasty letter from Nelle.

Dear Ma,

I do hope you are feeling better now. It’s good Merly’s at home to care for you and Emmy. You will be fine again by Thanksgiving, but if not, keep her with you. If I were single I would come right home now and nurse you. Does Merly still correspond with her minister? Are they serious? Ma, the main thing I am writing about now, is Grace. I wouldn’t worry you with it if it were not important. Ma, did you know that Norris Rahming is still in New York and is seeing Grace? Has she told you that? She hadn’t when I stopped by last week but she said she would next time she wrote you. We called at her rooming house and someone there said, ‘They’re out.’ Roge and I thought that sounded funny and we waited for them to come back, but it was quite late and we only had a short talk with them.

Norris told us he has found work in New York and he said that he and Grace are engaged. He did all the talking and Grace was as quiet as a mouse, and not at all like herself. It seems that Norris has an uncle in the city and he is working for him. He also has an aunt that Grace has met and likes. But, for all the talk, something about it doesn’t sound right. Norris is supposed to be living with his uncle but Grace was vague about the address and I wonder if he doesn’t have a room right there where Grace lives. Roger disapproves of Norris as much as ever. He says that Norris is the fast talking type and that is bad.

Ma, dear, don’t worry too much about all this, but I know you’ll want to write to Grace and find out what is going on. Maybe you’ll even want to come to New York and take her home. She has always been a little girl with big ideas.

I must close now and get this in the post.

Love from Nelle

P.S. Ma, why do you suppose that I don't get in the family way? Roge is so puzzled and it worries me. Do you think it's because of what happened that other time?

Maria wrote immediately to Grace and had an answer within a week.

Dear Ma,

Oh! You should not have let Nelle's letter upset you so. Remember, she is always fussing about me and my plans. The truth is just a tiny bit of jealousy, Ma, dear, because of my Art talent, you know. Merly is a bit that way at times herself. She is talented too, and has so many other things to think about, she shouldn't have the time to be jealous of others. I can't bear the thought of something being wrong with Emmy's mind. Did you call Mrs. Rahming, Ma? I hope you will. Now, about Norris, Ma; things have happened so fast that I had no time to write anyone. Who should appear but Nelle and Roge. Now, mother, I was so surprised and excited I hadn't got to tell you our plans. Don't be hurt, please.

Norr, you see, Norr had the idea to surprise me by coming unannounced to New York. He is very bright, but also high-strung and determined; he loves me and wants to get married. He said that it worried him sick to think of me alone in New York. He came because he thought something would happen to me or I might fall in love with someone else.

Norr has an uncle here who will help him. He is an architect; does theatres and restaurants and so on. Norr is going to work for him at first. He is very bright, Norr, I mean, and is sure to succeed as he has many wonderful ideas for inventions and such. He and his uncle have something they are almost ready to patent.

No, mother, the really big news! Pa does not have to come to New York to talk to me because—I am married!!

Don't be hurt, Ma, dear. It was not my idea to be married away from home originally, but I must finish my courses here as I must not throw away the benefits of my wonderful scholarship. But we will be home as soon as possible to see you and have Norris meet all the family. I hope we can afford it by Christmas. Perhaps if Pa is not too mad at me he would be willing to pay my fees for the coming year. Norris will earn enough to support us but at first not enough to cover my tuition too. I am determined to finish and I have not given up the dream of studying in Paris either. Norris says that when he gets going we will be able to afford that for both of us.

Dear Mother, I love you, and didn't want to startle you with my news. Forgive us both; we are so much in love.

We send our love to you and Father and all the rest.

As ever, your wondering daughter,

Grace

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When Norris arrived in New York in late September he had gone straight to his Aunt Georgiana's brownstone house in Brooklyn. Georgiana had married a doctor, Theodore Sauer who had his offices on the lowest level of the building. Their daughter, Constance Sauer, was eighteen years old and was away at college in her first year.

Norris appeared at his aunt's house without advance notice. Georgiana had seen him last in the previous spring, when he had come to New York in search of work. That time she had not known him until he introduced himself, as she had not seen him since he was small. He had stayed three weeks and then returned to Cleveland to propose to Grace Martin.

Now he was back again to report that he was in New York to stay. He was full of enthusiastic talk of his plans. He had work to do immediately for his Uncle Bert, he said. But would his Auntie put him up for a day or two until he found himself a room?

Certainly he could stay, Georgiana told him. Stay as long as he needed in order to find a nice room. Georgiana had an impulse to invite him to make his home with her until he got himself established in New York. But she reminded herself that he was Rosella's boy, and she knew he had been badly spoiled. She had not witnessed his childhood and adolescence, but Ada Norris's candid letters, indeed, even Rosella's dotting letters, told the story. If Georgiana were to invite him into her home on an open-ended basis, she might have reason to regret it, and it might be difficult to end the arrangement. For Norris had much natural charm. More than that, it appeared to be a sincere warmth and sense of humor. It did not have that artificial flavor that so often marks the manner of some very charming individuals. Georgiana did not detect the guile that can underlie the pleasantness and infectious smiles of some people. And there was nothing unctuous about Norris. Certainly his delightful charm must come from his father, and it was real in that case. Georgiana feared that life and circumstances were taking that quality out of her brother John, though. Norris had the same twinkle in his eye that John had.

But Ada had commented more than once in her letters that there were 'two Norris Rahmings,' one a very fine person who cared about others in the world, and the other, selfish and even heartless in his teasing of his timid sister. And Ada had remarked, 'When he sets his mind on something he'll do or say anything to get it.' But Ada was proud of her nephew, she said. 'He's very talented, I think. He's very bright, even brilliant. But he does not always work hard in school, and some of his marks have been poor. He studies diligently in the subjects that interest him, and neglects the ones that don't. All his life, whenever his father attempted to teach or discipline Norris, Rosella has defended him, and thus has done the poor lad a great disservice.'

And so Georgiana had certain reservations about her nephew. She would treat him with affection, but she would wait and see how he turned out. Her husband, Dr. Theodore Sauer, was a kind person but he had very definite opinions of how young people should behave. His home housed his professional offices, and patients were coming and going during much of the day. Ted's health was a concern to Georgiana, as he was fifteen years older than she and he was often fatigued at the end of a day. He needed all the rest he could get, and he was frequently disturbed in the night. Georgiana felt it was wisest to protect him from the possibility of extra worries in connection with Norris.

But Norris did not stay long at Georgiana's. After three days he told his aunt, "I'm looking at rooms over near Uncle Bert's. That will make it handy for me since I'll be doing work for him. I'll stay with him for a day or so unless I find a room today."

“It’s wise to locate near your work, Norris, but keep in touch with us. We’ll be very interested in what’s happening and how your work is coming along. We knew that you were engaged and that your young lady was awarded a scholarship here in New York. I know you are anxious to get your own career going. Do you plan to study too? I’m sure you do.”

“Oh, I certainly do! I’m going to study with Robert Henri. My work for my Uncle can be arranged so that I can continue my classes.”

In the course of the next six weeks Norris brought Grace to the Sauer household three times, first for Sunday afternoon tea to meet Georgiana and the doctor, then one night for dinner, and again for Sunday tea. Grace met with their approval immediately, and Georgiana congratulated Norris privately.

“She’s a lovely girl, Norrr, and intelligent too. You’ll have to work hard to keep up with her.”

“That’s right, Auntie, but I wouldn’t be interested in anyone who wasn’t attractive and bright.”

“Is she going home for Thanksgiving?”

“No, not till Christmas.”

“And you?”

“Oh, Aunt Georgiana, I can’t go home yet. I’m just getting started.”

“Well, then, would you like to join us for Thanksgiving dinner and bring Grace too? That’s providing she’d like to come, but maybe you and she have other plans. To your uncle’s perhaps?”

“We’d love to come, Auntie,” Norris said. “Aunt Judith has invited her family that day. I’d feel much more comfortable with you. Aunt Judith is too formal for me. Aunt Ada tries to correspond with her, but doesn’t have much luck.

When Grace and Norris arrived on Thanksgiving Day, they found the house much livelier than usual. Constance Sauer was home from college with two classmates from Chicago who were not going home for the holiday. The three girls were all two or three years younger than Grace and Norris. They filled the living room with their chatter and laughter, and Norris immediately turned on his charm for the girls from Illinois. He insisted that they sit one at each end of a couch and then he sat down between them, declaring that ‘we Westerners must stick together,’ which statement seemed to delight them (excessively, in Grace’s opinion). But they all had a good time discussing their classes and instructors. Presently Grace left the others and went to find Georgiana to offer her assistance with dinner.

Georgiana was in the kitchen helping her maid Margaret with the cooking. Margaret was a general purpose servant who cleaned house and got dinner every day. Another woman came twice a week to do the laundry, which was a huge task, since she had all the doctor’s office laundry to boil and iron.

Today Margaret had worked all morning in the holiday dinner, but she would leave to go home to have dinner with her family. Georgiana would serve the meal herself. Dr. Sauer would carve the turkey.

When Grace opened the kitchen door she felt a wave of homesickness sweep her. The holiday cooking aromas were overpowering.

“Mrs. Sauer, what can I do to help you? Thanksgiving dinner’s such an undertaking.”

“Why, thank you, dear. We’re almost ready. It’s sweet of you to offer. And don’t you think it’s time you called me Aunt Georgiana? Some day you’ll be a member of this family. Why, what’s the matter, dear?”

Grace’s eyes were swimming in tears, but she smiled.

“It’s just Thanksgiving. It’s making me homesick. At home, right now, they’re all in the kitchen fixing the dinner, Mother and my sisters. Even my youngest brother William probably made bread. It’s his special contribution to all our family gatherings. I can just picture them all and I suddenly missed them.”

“That’s natural, dear.”

“But I’m ever so grateful you invited me. I’d love to help you.”

“Why don’t you take this pitcher and fill the water glasses? Margaret and I will carry the vegetables in and then she’s going home to her family, and do another dinner for them.”

“My turkey’s in the oven, too,” beamed Margaret.

When everything else was on, Dr. Sauer carried in the bird and sharpened his carving knife. Next he went down in to the basement and came back with two bottles of imported wine.

“Why isn’t Constance helping? he asked. “She should be here instead of our guest.”

“But she’s entertaining her guests,” Grace said. “I’m pleased to help, Dr. Sauer.”

The table was beautiful with its white damask cloth, cut glass and silver. An arrangement of oak leaves and yellow chrysanthemums graced the sideboard.

Georgiana seated Dr. Sauer’s widowed elder sister beside him on his right. During the entire day Grace never heard the doctor call her anything but ‘Fraulein.’ This was not explained, and Grace concluded it was like a pet name such as ‘Missy.’ Grace sat on Dr. Sauer’s left, with Norris next, and then Constance. The two Chicago girls sat opposite, beside Fraulein.

Constance and Norris made conversation, but at first the three visiting girls were shy and quiet.

Grace said, “That flower arrangement is lovely. I love those shades of brown and yellow. I didn’t know there were any pretty leaves left.”

“Those are oak leaves,” Dr. Sauer said. “They stay on the tree all winter.” He turned to his sister and shouted in her ear. “Will you say the blessing, Fraulein?”

Constance whispered, “She’ll say it in German.”

She was right. The old lady said a short German prayer and the doctor began to carve the bird.

He spoke to his sister in English and she replied in German.

Constance whispered again, “This goes on all the time. She used to speak English.”

The doctor carved beautifully, cutting off smooth even slices of white meat and strips of dark.

Grace said, “I’ve never seen anyone do a more expert job of carving.”

“He must have learned that in anatomy class in medical school,” Norris said.

The doctor laughed, and said, “Probably so.”

Grace was grateful that Norris had not said, ‘he learned that from cutting up cadavers.’ Norris was continually saying things that shocked people. But he was on his good behavior today, and looking very handsome. The two Chicago girls laughed at everything he said, but still contributed nothing to the conversation, other than ‘Yes, please,’ or ‘No, thank you.’

Grace said, “This dressing is so delicious, Aunt Georgiana. It’s something like Mother’s but different. It’s better. Do you use sage?”

“No, not any more. This is Rosella’s recipe. Ada sent it to me. They use thyme instead of sage.

Rosella is a very good cook, Ada tells me. No, Norris, if you’re used to such good cooking you must be fair to Grace and give her time. And don’t expect her to cook exactly as your mother does. Rosella will give her the recipes for some of your favorite dishes. But I never did learn to cook the German food Theodore’s mother used to fix. Too fattening anyway.”

Fraulein said something in German to the doctor, who said to her, who said to her, “No sister, it is fattening.”

“I swear Fraulein reads lips,” Constance said softly. “Or else she’s not really so deaf.”

“I notice you use the word ‘recipe,’ Aunt Georgiana,” Norris said. “Ada and Mama always say ‘receipt.’ I wonder why.”

“Probably because their Mama did. they aren’t wrong to say ‘receipt.’ It’s the old-fashioned word.”

My goodness, Grace thought. No one is making any conversation but Norris and me. If only Constance would say something once in a while instead of muttering about her aunt. And the other two girls did nothing but titter. They didn’t seem bright enough to be in college. Perhaps they were just nervous. Maybe they were in awe of the doctor. Some people feel the same way about doctors as they do about preachers.

Finally it was time for mince pie. Dr. Sauer asked Constance to clear off the plates and serving dishes. Grace helped her, and the pie was brought in and a silver service and cups.

When everyone was seated again, Norris turned to Dr. Sauer. “Uncle Theodore, have we enough wine left for a toast?”

“I’m sure we have, son. Enough for a toast is just what we have.”

Norris divided what was left in the second bottle and came back to his chair. He raised his wine glass high then, and said, “I propose a toast to my bride. Grace and I were married yesterday.”

Afterwards, when she remembered that day, Grace could not have said for certain whether anyone ever drank that toast. She remembered exclamations and questions. Constance saying, ‘Aren’t you two the rascals!’ Aunt Georgiana saying, ‘Norris, you’re just joking!’ and Norris saying “Grace’s mad at me because she wanted it kept a secret for a while.’ Uncle Theodore saying, “I trust you’re going to be able to afford married bliss, son.’ and one of the Chicago girls actually saying, ‘Will you continue to study now you’re married?’ And Grace herself saying, ‘Yes. Yes, I will, and I’ll go to Paris too!’”

####

In early December, Nelle wrote Maria:

Dear Ma,

We have learned of Grace's marriage, and I was surprised that you and Pa gave your consent. I can't give you any details about it, because we weren't even invited to the ceremony. It is supposed to have taken place in Brooklyn somewhere, and according to Norris "a few of their friends" were present. I can't see why they got married so abruptly if he didn't get her in trouble. She doesn't look pregnant, but time will tell. Ma, Roger doesn't think very highly of Norris, as I have told you before. He thinks Norris puts on intellectual airs. For that matter, Grace does too. And Ma, it sure will be a mean fate if Grace has a baby before I do. I don't care whether she is married or not. If she does, I wonder what they will all live on. Roge wonders if a man like Norris can even earn a living. He thinks Norris is too spoiled to stand on his own two feet. He lets Grace wait on him hand and foot, by the way.

Well, there isn't any other news at present, but goodness knows that is enough for one time. I hope Emmy is going to be better. I think it is all right to try Christian Science (Grace and Norris call it 'C.S.') on Emmy, as nothing else is doing her any good. You and Mrs. Rahming will be very thick now anyway. If it is doing your rheumatism good, keep it up, Ma. I will close now.

Your loving daughter,

Nelle

What with all the family's excitement about Grace's unexpected marriage at Thanksgiving time, it was to be a few months before Nelle got to see one of those excellent New York doctors. To begin with, Nelle and Roge kept their promise that they would return to Cleveland for Christmas. But first they had to find a furnished flat, and see to getting the trunks and sewing machine and so on that had been shipped from Colorado. Then Nelle had insisted on doing her holiday shopping in New York. She had tried to persuade Grace to return with them to Cleveland for the holiday.

"I can't," Grace said. "We can't afford it."

"Pa and Ma expect you, don't they?"

"Everything is changed now, Nelle."

"I think you were very hasty, Grace."

"I'm twenty-one, for heaven's sake. You were seventeen."

"That marriage doesn't count. It's as though it never happened."

"Well, but it did happen, though."

"Well, I hope your hasty marriage turns out better than mine."

"I hope so too. It will!"

"Well, I hope so," Nelle repeated.

"I don't think you can say that Norris is in any way like Earle, Nelle, so I should have a better chance for success."

"I don't see you you could possibly know what he was like, you were just a little thing."

"I was old enough to be frightened when he gave me a ride home in his buggy, and had his hand all over my leg. He was the kind of man that would do that to a seven year old."

"Grace, you should remember that I never want to talk about this."

"Well, you were making a comparison with my marriage and yours. With your first one, that is."

“No, I’ll admit they aren’t alike. Earle and Norris. Earle was someone I shouldn’t have been allowed to marry. Ma and Pa shouldn’t have let me.”

“No!” Grace exclaimed. “Parents shouldn’t try to stop a marriage, even when you’re quite young.”

“Why do you think that?”

“Because Mother never got over loving Leving.”

“She loves Pa,” Nelle said. “You know she loves Pa.”

“Of course she does. But I know she never got over Leving. I can tell by the way she speaks of him. He must have been a person more like Mother. He loved books and philosophy, like she did. I think Mother sometimes wonders if she’d have had an easier life if she’d married Leving.”

“Pa adores Ma!” Nelle said hotly.

“Oh, I know he does, but he’s hard on her. You said so yourself.”

“When did I ever say that?”

“Emmy and Merly told me long ago that you thought Mother had too many babies. According to Merly, you told her once that you scolded Father right to his face about that. After Art was born.”

“Well, I did,” Nelle admitted. “But I’ve since decided it was as much Ma’s fault as Pa’s. Or rather, it was Grandma’s fault.”

“Grandma’s!”

“Yes, after Maily and Jenny died, Grandma Burns convinced Ma that it was a punishment the Lord sent her because she went East to visit that summer.”

“I don’t understand.”

“Ma told me one time that she went East that summer to visit her folks so that she could be away from Pa for a while and not get in the family way again so soon.”

“Oh, no,” Grace said, “and I know something else she went East for. To learn whatever became of Leving.”

“Oh, nonsense! Don’t be so romantic, Grace.”

“Why not? It is romantic.”

“Well, you’re making that up.”

“Oh, no I’m not! Ma told me herself.”

“You forgot and called her ‘Ma’ instead of ‘Mother’,” Nelle teased.

“It’s from listening to you,” Grace said. “Anyway, when Ma went East she learned that Leving had died in Libby Prison.”

“Well, if she went East with Leving on her mind, besides getting away from Pa for a while, no wonder she felt guilty when the little girls died.”

“But then, it’s all the fault of religion,” Grace said. “I love little Grandma dearly, but she’s always been far too religious. She couldn’t help it, I suppose. She was trained that way. But she should never have said anything to make poor dear little Mother feel guilty when Maily and Jenny died. Mother didn’t need guilt added to her terrible grief.”

“Well, I certainly agree with you there,” Nelle affirmed.

“And I’ll never believe it was the Lord’s punishment on her. Mother’s too good a person.”

“I agree again.”

“Religion’s dangerous. I prefer philosophy. Mother quotes a lot of Bible verses, but she’s philosophical too. Now, Father can quote Bible, but I don’t recall him quoting anything else. He doesn’t read anything else.”

“Pa’s always been too busy.”

“No busier than Mother. But when she sits down to rest, she reads. Pa just sits when he rests.”

“Some people don’t care much for reading,” Nelle said. “I don’t.”

“I know.”

Nelle decided to change the subject. “Grace, are you in the family way?”

“As of a week ago, I wasn’t.”

“I wondered.”

“I’m sure the entire family is wondering. Well, let them wonder away. They’ll see in the fullness of time, won’t they?”

“You mean in the fullness of you.”

“No. I don’t mean that. Norris and I are taking measures so that I don’t get ‘enceinte’.”

“Oh-see-ont? What kind of a word is that?”

“That’s French for ‘pregnant’. I don’t want babies for quite a while. I plan to go to Paris still, you know.”

“I think I’ll just postpone my Paris plans for quite a while,” Nelle said with rare sarcasm. “I plan to have babies.”

“Well, that’s fine. I wish you luck with it, Nelle.”

“And I wish you luck, but I’d be willing to wager that you’ll never get to Paris with Norris Rahming.”

I WISH SHE WOULD HAVE A BABY

At Christmas time Nelle found time to visit all the family back in Oberlin and Royalton, but she spent most of the time in Cleveland in order to be with her mother and father, and of course, Emmy, Merly, and the young brothers. Nelle would have preferred it if all the family had been in Oberlin. Her old feeling against Cleveland remained, but she understood why her parents had stayed there. Arthur wanted to continue his school at Eastern High, Merly was still engrossed in her ceramics and her friendship with Ethel Rahming and Betty Long. Henry Martin now owned more rental properties in Cleveland than he did in Oberlin and Royalton.

But all of these reasons were not as important to Nelle as her mother's stated reason for staying in the city. Grandma Burns was failing more and more, and Maria did not want to move her again. Her voice was soft and weak, but her smile was sweet, and she bestowed it on everyone who entered her room. She still recognized all the members of the family when they came to see her, but her awareness of the world outside her room had slipped from her. She had lost track of the days of the week and the months of the year. Her memory of day to day events was gone, but she spoke clearly of events of her youth in Connecticut. It made Nelle sad to see her grandmother so weak, but she realized that she would retain now a memory of a gentle, sweet old lady, and not the former image she'd had of a firmly religious woman, who had certainly directed the course of her daughter's life, first by sending her away from her first love, and second by convincing her that the Lord had visited His wrath upon her by taking two of her children. Nelle spoke to her mother about it.

"How sweet Granma has become."

"But she has always been sweet, Nelle."

"Yes, but she seems somehow utterly gentle and happy with everyone."

"Yes, she seems completely at peace, doesn't she. But she has pain sometimes. I feel so badly about that. I want her to have no pain at all. I hope the Lord will make things easy for her when she goes."

"She seems so frail – do you think she'll – I mean, how much longer will Grandma..."

"Be with us?"

"Yes," Nelle said. "I hate to talk about things like that."

"I know. Well, it's hard to say, dear. Sometimes I think she could just slip away any time. But Aunt Ada says it's amazing how very frail old people seem to be stronger than we think."

"Who's Aunt Ada?"

"Miss Norris. Norris' aunt. She lives with his parents. She's a spinster. I'm very fond of her. She's a very fine person."

"Ma, is Mrs. Rahming doing Christian Science for Emmy?"

"Yes."

"Is it doing her any good, do you think?"

"I sometimes think it is. Yes. She seems to be a bit better, wouldn't you say so?"

"Well, I did think so," Nelle said. "Could Mrs. Rahming help Grandma with the pain she has?"

"She's trying to help her too. But Nelle, I can't believe that anything like that can change what's happening with your Grandma. She's old and her time is nearly here. I believe it's God's plan for folks to go when they're very old. I'm afraid I'm not very good at understanding what Christian Science has to say about things like that."

"What does Mrs. Rahming say about it?"

"She says death isn't real."

“Hm,” said Nelle. “I’ll have to learn more about it. I wonder if it could help me with my problem.”

“What problem, Dotty?”

“I want a baby, Ma. I want one so badly.”

“Nelle, I think you should see a doctor.”

“Oh, I did, Ma. Two of them in Colorado. One who lived near us, and another in Denver.”

“And what did they say?”

“To keep on trying. They thought probably there’s nothing wrong with Roge or me. Ma, do you think Christian Science might help?”

Maria looked a little surprised. “Why, I don’t know.” She frowned. “It’s peculiar, but somehow, that sort of problem doesn’t seem to me to be a Christian Science kind of thing. I mean – well, I’ve read some of Mrs. Eddy’s book and – Oh, Nelle, I don’t know how to explain it. It’s just that it’s all so spiritual. I can’t imagine Mrs. Eddy even thinking about what husbands and wives do in bed. Of course, she was married I guess, and I think she had children. I’m not sure. One, anyway. Do you know Mrs. Rahming doesn’t sleep with her husband?”

“Ma! How do you know?”

Maria looked a bit flustered. “Oh, I’ve been over there, and I know that Mrs. Rahming and Ethel share a bedroom. Mr. Rahming has a room of his own. And I have this feeling – I may be wrong – that it has to do with Christian Science.”

“But why?”

“I just think that Mrs. Rahming is too spiritual.”

“Oh.”

“Nelle, when you get back to New York, go see a real good doctor.”

“I’m going to, Ma.”

“And tell him all about what happened to you before.”

“You mean the one I lost? I told the other doctors about that, Ma. They didn’t say anything much.”

“What did you tell them, Dotty?”

“That I had an eight-month stillborn baby, twelve years ago.”

“But did you tell them how sick you were?”

“No, I forgot that, I guess.”

“Be sure to tell them about it next time, Dotty. You were a very sick girl that time. I thought it was childbed fever until you took a turn for the better. Women usually die of that, you know. You had a fever with chills. I was frightened. But then you got better quickly. I thought it was because you were young and strong.”

“I thought it was a problem about the afterbirth. I didn’t know you thought it was childbed fever. I don’t remember you telling me that, Ma.”

“I didn’t. It’s such a dread thing. And I suppose it wasn’t that. But be sure and tell the doctor.”

“Ma, do you think that did something to me?”

“I don’t know, dear. But don’t worry about it yet. Your Aunt Belle (Susan Isabella Burns) didn’t have a baby until they’d waited almost seven years.”

“Really, Ma!”

“Yes. Her doctor had told her she was barren.”

“Well, maybe there’s hope for me then, Ma.”

“Yes of course, Nelle, And anyway, God’s will be done.”

Nelle paid a visit to Royalton. She stopped in at her brother Howd's cottage to see him and Lottie and their one child Averill. Lottie had only produced one chick, but that one was a little beauty. Howd was making a reasonable living at carpentering. He had two young men working for him, and while he drove Nelle around Royalton in his buggy, he pointed with pride to a number of houses he'd built. Then they drove around by the old brick homestead on Schoolhouse Road. Nell had been particularly anxious to visit the farm. Howd hadn't been enthused about driving over that way.

"You'll be sorry you went to see the place," he said. "It doesn't look the way it used to."

"Well, I'd like to go over there just the same, for old times' sake."

"You'll hate it," her brother predicted.

When they got there, Nelle saw what Howd meant. The people renting the farm weren't keeping it up as it should be. Nelle saw signs everywhere. It was not so much an indication of slovenliness. The windows were clean, and the barnyard reasonably neat, but it was rather a case of the place being too much for the man to care for. The orchard trees needed pruning, the raspberry bushes were lost in the weeds. In the side yard the lilac bushes that had been Maria's especial pride were all overgrown with suckers.

"Do you want to go in the house?" Howd asked Nelle. He was grinning, knowing her answer.

"I'll introduce you to the lady."

"No, I don't. I don't want to see it with someone else's furnishings."

"Shall we go back to my place?"

On the way home to Howd's, Nelle was quiet. She glanced occasionally at her oldest brother as he held the reins. Howd must be getting close to forty, Nelle calculated. Thirty-nine. He was very bald, and without the added height of hair on his head, he looked smaller than ever. Nelle had always been very fond of Howd. He'd been old enough to remember the death of Maily and Jenny, and after Nelle was born, he doted on his baby sister. Nate had never paid much attention to Nelle. He'd always been very busy chasing girls. He'd started when he was about thirteen. And he'd taken away so many of the girls Howd had an eye on. Stan and Nelle were always good chums. They'd liked the same things, and they had been next to each other in the matter of age, among the Martin nine.

"What happened to your hair, Howd?" Nelle teased.

"The wind blew it away."

"Ha! The years blew it away."

"Lottie really thinks the wind did it. She says if I weren't a carpenter always up high on a ladder, I'd keep my hair."

"Wear a cap."

"Oh, that's nonsense anyway. I inherited my baldness."

"Not from Pa."

"No, from Grandpa Burns. Have you seen pictures of Ma's brothers?"

"Daguerrotypes, yes."

"They're bald. And wait till you see your dude brother Nate. And Stan. Or have you seen them yet?"

"No."

"They're more bald than I am. So I feel sorry for Bill and Art. They better enjoy their hair while they're young, real young."

"Maybe they'll be like Pa. He's got lots of hair."

"Maybe. We're getting old too fast, Nelle. Where'd time go?"

“I don’t know. Don’t talk that way. It makes me feel bad. I have no children.”

“We’ve only the one.”

“Well, she’s a beautiful child. Prettier than ever now. Oh, Howd, I wish you lived in the Old Brick!”

“You sound like Lottie. She liked it there a lot.”

“Didn’t you?”

“I don’t know. I liked the place, of course. All of us kids do, don’t we? But I like my work, you see, and Nelle, you know a man couldn’t run the farm the way it ought to be run without giving it all his time. Pa always had hired men in the fields and barn. But Pa had capital to put into it, and that way he makes it pay. Pa had a head start with the money he inherited from Grandfather Martin. If I was on the farm I’d have to be in the fields plowing myself. And down in the dairy barn milking. I’d have no time to do any carpentering, and I wouldn’t like that. No, I wouldn’t want to be breaking my back farming. I couldn’t hire any help. But Lottie would love to live there. However, this is all foolish talk. I wouldn’t live there, and Pa wouldn’t let us live there anyway.”

“It’s too bad you hit pay that day, Howd.”

“Well – you know why I did.”

“Yes – but you know why Pa was mad at Lottie.”

“Don’t you think a man should defend his own wife – even if she has failings?”

“Well, Howd – not to the extent of knocking your own father down.”

“Anyway, it happened, and Pa won’t ever forget it.”

“No, I guess not.”

####

Nelle went to Oberlin next and called on a few old friends, and then stopped in to see Nate and Edith. They were now proprietors of a hotel and restaurant in the center of town, and to Nelle, the place seemed to be teeming with Nate's in-laws. The cash register in the restaurant was presided over by Edith's sister, an extremely sour-faced woman with a mouth that turned decidedly down at the corners. She informed Nelle that Nate was in Cleveland buying meat for the restaurant. He should be back soon. Edith was in the kitchen.

Nelle found Edith giving orders to a college boy who was washing dishes. Edith's two hundred and fifty pound sister was making pies. Nelle noted that both Edith and her sister had mouths that turned down at the corners. It must have been a family expression that came with the years, Nelle decided. Edith's mouth hadn't looked that way when Nate married her. Nelle had an unhappy thought that the down curving mouth came from years of disapproving of Nate.

"Are any of the children around?" Nelle asked. "I haven't seen them in ages."

"Still in school," Edith's sister said without a trace of friendliness.

"They'll go home from there," Edith said.

"I see you're expecting again, Edith."

"Yes."

"I wish I was. You're lucky."

"I don't feel so lucky – I'm really needed here."

Nate got home on the same interurban car that was to take Nelle back to Cleveland. They were able to chat about five minutes. Nate was as bald as Howd had stated, and it bothered Nelle to see that he did not stand up as straight as he had when he was younger. Nate was the tallest of the five Martin boys, although Bill had almost caught up to him. Nelle remembered that folks had always called Nate Martin 'Martins Dude' in the old days when he was courting girls. But now he was thirty-six years old and looked like any other married man, and growing old besides. Nelle had an impulse to ask Nate if he was happy, but she decided not to. She did not want to start him thinking about whether or not he was happy. Maybe someone could go along from day to day not being happy, but still not thinking about it. If someone asked them about it, they might change from being just plain not happy, to decidedly unhappy. Nelle had once asked her mother if she was happy, and Maria had said, "Of course, Dotty, I'm living the life the Lord has planned me to live. I rejoice in the Lord."

"But, Ma," Nelle had said, "that isn't the kind of answer I wanted from you. You always rejoice in the Lord. I know that, but I meant, is the kind of life you've had the one you would have chosen?"

Maria had hesitated, and then said, "Yes, I think it is. I don't think I would have wanted anything more than to have raised a family of children, unless it would have been to help in missionary work."

"You do that anyway, Ma."

"Yes, but with money, Dotty, not with my hands. Dotty, don't spend time thinking about my being happy. That kind of happiness is for children, it's doesn't come again in the same way. And there is the happiness of people when they are first in love. That is something that has to change with time. What comes later is different. Just cling steadfastly to your faith in the Lord."

But Nelle was convinced that Maria was not happy, no matter what she said. Maria's idea of happiness must be resignation. It was not Nelle's. Nelle did not want to quietly accept the Lord's

plan if it was too different from her own. She was convinced that Maria was sad because the older boys' marriages weren't good. Of course, Ma won't admit that, Nelle thought. And it wasn't as though Ma's house was empty now. True, the three older boys were gone, and she, Nelle was gone, and now Grace too. But Merly, Bill and Art were still unmarried and Ma's 'babies,' so to speak. But Ma was so worried about poor Emma, and also about Grandma, who was failing.

Nelle was sure that if Ma could seem more of her grandchildren she'd be happier. Ma just loved little babies so much. But Ma almost never saw Nate and his children, and Stan's youngsters were out in Denver where Julia had decided to stay. Ma might never see Stan's girls again. And Lottie and Howd kept their distance, so Ma seldom saw Averill.

Nelle wished that Merly would get married. Ma shouldn't have talked so much religion to Merly. Now, Merly was talking about being a missionary and saying she wasn't the marrying type. It annoyed Nelle because she thought Merly was the marrying type. It was Grace who was not. She had always wanted a career. How ironic it was that Grace, the youngest girl, was probably pregnant right now, while, Nelle, Emmy and Merly were getting nowhere with giving Ma grandchildren. Nelle saw no reason for thinking that God planned such unfairness as this. Stan was courting again, and Nelle went to visit them too, but had not formed an opinion of his new lady friend. Her name was Mary Alberta Gifford (Bertha) and in Nelle's judgment, she was plain and seemed to be about forty years old. But when Nelle commented on her to Maria, she found that her mother liked Bertha.

"She's loving, Nelle, and she's a hard worker."

"How can you tell she's loving, Ma? She has just as sour an expression on her face as Edith has."

"Ah, but there's a bit difference, Nelle. Bertha may look stern and unfriendly but she really loves Stan. I know that. In fact, I think she adores him."

"And you don't think Edith loves Nate, Ma?"

"Well, Dotty, of course no one knows all about other people's marriages. It's best not to judge. And speaking of that, don't judge in the case of Grace and Norris. I know it's easy to guess that Grace's expecting, but just don't jump to conclusions. And if she is, just be happy for her, Nelle."

"But Ma! She didn't want to get married! She wanted to go to Paris."

"Well, we'll see. They knew what they wanted. They'll make their own lives, Nelle."

"Oh, Ma. He got her in trouble. I'll bet real money on it, Ma. He's just the type."

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After Christmas, Nelle and Roge returned to New York, and Nell lost no time in finding a new doctor. She told him a more complete physical history than she had told the Colorado doctors. After listening to the information she gave him, the doctor put his hands together and pursed his lips as though to whistle.

“Well, Mrs. Fison, it may be as your mother suggests, that you suffered some effects at the time of your fever and infection. Still, everything seems to be normal. Female inner workings are in some ways very delicate. Then again they are remarkably sturdy, as is indicated by your mother’s many pregnancies. If I were you I wouldn’t give up trying, little lady. It sometimes takes a number of years to get a baby started.’

“And there’s nothing to be done?”

“Just keep your health up. Eat well. Get plenty of rest. That all goes for your husband too, of course. Have patience. Keep trying.”

In April Nelle wrote to Maria.

Dear Ma,

Well, apparently Grace is not in the family way. At any rate, if she was, she isn’t now, but as you said, she would show it by know. I know you would not be pleased to hear that she has stopped going to her Art school. She has been getting some art work to do for a magazine. I have been over to their flat several times, and Norris has always been there. He was supposed to be working for his uncle, I had thought, but I see no sign of it. Grace insists that Norris has been doing art work too, but I have never caught him at it. I asked Grace if she was still planning to go to Paris, and she says she and Norris are both going as soon as they get enough money saved. Well, if she does that, Ma, I don’t suppose she is planning to have children. They both plan to study art in Europe, but how can they study and early a living too? Ma, I do believe that it’s Grace who will earn any money that takes them to Paris.

But there are other things to talk about. I want to ask you about Merly. do you think Pa would pay her fare to come down here for a visit? I’m really afraid the way things are going, she’s never going to get married. I thought when she came out to see us in Denver at the time Emmy was so sick, that it would be nice for her. You remember that Roge introduced her to a couple of nice bachelor friends of ours? Well, the reason it didn’t work is that she is so shy, and so determined to be an old maid. She told me she had nothing in common with the opposite sex. I told her she wasn’t supposed to have anything in common, she was supposed to be completely different. I said that is what life is all about. And then she fell in with that group of Evangelists, and got the notion to be a missionary. I do hope she is over that notion, Ma. You are religious yourself, Ma, but not like that. I do hope you’ll let her come down to New York for a visit. Roge and I have friends, and so do Grace and Norris. They have a gay crowd and we have some nice times at their place.

I must mail this, Ma, but do persuade Merly to come, and get Pa to give her the money. If he won’t, Roge and I will pay her fare.

Will love to all,

Nelle.

“Dearest Mother,” Grace wrote to Maria.

You and Pa have been wonderful to keep on sending money now that I'm married. It is just like you two dear parents.

No, mother, I'm not in the family way. Did you get that idea from Nelle? Of course it would be like her. She thinks of nothing else. I wish she'd have a baby so she would stop worrying about me.

Norris and I are both working on some commercial art-work right now. It is a job I got through one of my teachers at the school. It is an automobile advertisement. Norris draws the cars and I do the figures. Norr is not good at figures, and they are one of my special skills. Money has been a problem for us until we get started here. Norris has had some kind of difficulty with his Uncle Bert (Albert F. Norris). I'm not sure just what the trouble was, but Norr is not going to work for him anymore. So you see our money is rather scarce, and I am helping out by taking these jobs to do. Fortunately, there seems to be plenty of opportunity for artists, including women artists. I must close, Mother, as there are things I must work on tonight. Thank Father again for the money. I wish we could have come home for Christmas, but it was out of the question.

Much love to all,

Grace and Norr

Norris and Grace lived in a shabby flat, but it had a big room with good north light. They each had drawing boards there. Grace frequently worked late at night if the work was to be in black and white. She was making at least three times as much money as Norris, but though she had stopped her courses at the New York School of Art, she had not stopped talking about going to Paris. Norris still had a consuming fear that she might simply leave him and go. He knew that if she had a child this could not happen, but until he himself got established, that wasn't feasible. He told himself that Grace got work because she managed to meet people with influence in the advertising agencies. Often the work that Norris got was something extra that Grace brought home.

He found being married to her a delight, but he was in a continual state of irritation at his inability to provide for her. He took out his frustration by teasing her and she did not take teasing well. He had learned that she had a very deep family pride. He could hurt her the most when he hit on the shortcomings of the Martin tribe, whether real or imagined. He liked to lie in bed and talk to her and tease when she was working late on the drawing board. He could make her bristle. "You're prickly as a hedgehog," he would say. "Aren't you, Martie?"

One night he coaxed her, "Come on to bed, Martie."

She was silent.

"You're mad, aren't you."

"Let's not get talking now, Norr."

"I want you go come to bed."

"Not yet."

"Are you mad because you're hungry?"

"I am hungry, naturally."

"Martie, I don't like living on unsalted dried lima beans any more than you do."

"Please, I don't want to get into a battle tonight. I still have too much to do."

"The check will probably get here tomorrow."

"A check from my father is no real answer to the problems."

"You'll look back on these days as though they were a dream, some day."

"Dream! They're getting to be a nightmare."



ALBERT F. NORRIS
"UNCLE BERT WINTON"

“Don’t be nasty, Martie. I was all in the mood to make love to you.”

“That worries me too.”

“Making love must never be a worry, Martie.”

“But we can’t have a baby, Matt, and I don’t like what we do to not have one.”

“My dear, it’s one of the oldest methods known.”

“Maybe so,” she said unhappily.

“Besides, it’s been a year now. We’ve proved to your mother that I didn’t get you in trouble.”

“There’s more than one kind of trouble, Norr.”

“You are nasty. But I’ll overlook it. We could have a baby now.”

“And starve to death?”

“That’s insulting.”

“What would we have lived on all this time if I had been in the family way?”

“Please say ‘enceinte,’ it’s more chic.”

She ignored that. “speaking of being insulting, you are forever insulting my family.”

“Well, admit it, Martie, you are the only one who isn’t a clod.”

“What a horrid, cruel thing to say to me! And a terrible lie, what’s more!”

“You know that I’m a horrid person.”

“I know you say things just to shock me.”

“That’s true. But they are clods, I do insist.”

“They are not!”

“Intellectual clods.”

“A loveable, motherly, hymn-humming one.”

“My mother is everything a mother ought to be.”

“Anyway, I think you’re a changeling - switched in infancy by the fairies. I don’t think you belong to them at all.”

“Silly! Anyway, I look like Mother.”

“I’m teasing you Martie. Aren’t you glad, though, that you are the flower of the family?”

“Aunt Belle used to call me that,” Grace said dreamily. “She was my favorite aunt.”

“Naturally.”

“I didn’t mean that. She was really nice, Mother’s youngest sister, and the prettiest one. She was the flower of her family.”

“I really shouldn’t tell you complimentary things. You won’t be fit to live with.”

“Norr! Really!”

He decided to return to the subject of her family again. It was entertaining to get her sputtering with outrage.

“Your sister Nelle is really a clod.”

“Will you part with the miserable word!”

“And your father too.”

“He certainly is not!”

“He never reads, does he? Nothing worthwhile.”

“Of course he does. And he makes money.”

“Martie, I thought we agreed you weren’t going to say that kind of thing to me.”

“But Norr! You drive me to defend my relatives.”

“You’ll agree your older brothers aren’t smart.”

“They are smart. They could have done well in college if they had only gone to one. But when they were younger, it wasn’t what Royalton boys were doing.”

“So as a result they are clods. Isn’t it true?”

“No! And you can’t call us girls that either. I know how you feel about Nelle, but she isn’t dumb at all, you know that. And also, you know what happened to Emmy. She was very bright in school.”

“Well, she is a total loss now.”

“Maybe she’ll get better, now that your mother is treating her in Christian Science.”

“Maybe.”

“I can’t figure out why you work so hard to make me feel badly.”

“Just trying to put a dent in all that family pride.”

“You’ll never be able to do that. I’ll always be proud of all of them.”

“Even slow-poke, absent-minded Merly?”

“Certainly. She is very smart. Being dreamy is just her little failing. And don’t dare say William is a clod. He’s brilliant.”

Norris snorted. “Bright, perhaps. And what about your so-spoiled baby brother Art?”

Grace smiled and said nothing.”

“What are you grinning at. He is spoiled.”

“But look who’s talking.”

“I’m not spoiled.”

Grace only continued to smile.

“I’m not. That’s ridiculous.”

“This is a ridiculous conversation.”

“I was only trying to build you up by telling you that you had the best brain in the family.”

Grace got a reminiscent look. “That did used to make Nelle angry. It irked her that I did well in school. Merly was peevish about that, too. She was in the same grade with me even though I’m more than two years younger.”

“You know,” Norris said, “she is very jealous of you.”

“Now, why?”

“Because you have me.”

Grace laughed. “Norris, thy name is vanity.”

“I’m not joking. You think she loves Waldo, but he is only a substitute for me.”

Grace’s jaw dropped. “Are you serious?”

“But you know you are my choice of the whole lot. There is something about you that puts you above the rest of your tribe.”

“Maybe it’s my ‘clouds of glory.’ Mother used to say that I was ‘trailing’ them.”

“That’s Wordsworth,” Norris said, “but it doesn’t apply.”

“How did you know it was Wordsworth?”

“You are insulting now.”

“You learned if from your Aunt Ada, didn’t you.”

“You’d be surprised to learn that I read as much as you do.”

“You do?”

“Now it’s your name that is vanity.”

“Oh, Norr, there’s nobody in the world with a bigger ego than you.”

“Why Martie, a minute ago you were just doting on the idea that you were the flower of your family.”

“I was not.”

“Yes, you were.”

“Norr, why do we argue all the time? Will we always be like this?”

“Probably.”

“How terrible.”

“How interesting.”

ANYWAY I AM GOING TO PARIS

One evening in May, Grace spoke to Norris.

“Do you remember the letter Mother sent us when I asked her permission to marry you, Norr?”

Norris frowned slightly. “I remember she said ‘yes.’”

“That wasn’t all she said, Norr. She said she granted the permission on the condition that I promise to come home for a visit in June, after school was out.”

“I don’t remember that at all.”

“Norr, don’t say that. Of course you remember.”

“I do not.”

“Well, I still have the letter. I’ll get it.”

“Never mind getting it. You can’t go anyway.”

“I can’t go! What do you mean, I can’t go?”

“Two reasons. We can’t afford it, and I forbid you to go.”

“You forbid me!”

“Of course.”

“Norr, I never promised to obey you. You can’t do any forbidding. Besides, Ma will send me the money for the ticket.”

“We’d better use it to pay some of our bills if she sends it.”

“Norr! Have you no moral sense?”

“Morals are a bore.”

“Well, even if morals bore you, Norr, you’ll have to go out and get yourself some work to do, to pay those bills.”

“You know I can’t go out and get the work. I’ll do anything you bring home for me, but it’s just not compatible with my personality to go soliciting work.”

“Nonsense. For any artist it’s more fun to make the picture than to go out asking for the commission to do it. I don’t like going out after work anymore than you do.”

“But you don’t stammer,” Norris said.

“Well, you don’t stammer either, unless you let yourself get all upset, Norr.”

“Martie, it’s my nature to get upset, and you can’t change me.”

“No, I can’t change you. But, Norr, you’ll have to change yourself for the years ahead. I can’t bring home all the work that you’ll be doing.”

“I see no reason why we can’t do it that way.”

“Because it’s ridiculous. Besides, we’re going to Paris. Maybe you won’t stammer in French.

Anyway, I’m going to Paris.”

“We’re going to Paris together or not at all.”

“Norr, unless you talk nicely to me, don’t talk to me at all.”

“Well, but Martie, it’s very impractical for you to go home now, when we’re just getting started here.”

“I wouldn’t stay long. I just want to talk to Mother.”

“Why don’t you call her ‘Ma’ like Nelle does?”

“I’ve never called her ‘Ma,’ and don’t change the subject. I want to talk to Mother face to face because my conscience hurts me.”

“Because of me, I suppose.”

“Because we’re using the money Father sends, under false pretences.”

“They gave you permission to marry me.”

“How can you even dare mention that to me! And besides, they thought I would be attending Art School here.”

"Martie, I know that you can convince your mother that it will be a good idea for them to help us until we get established. And you can do it all in a letter. You don't have to make the trip. Just write them a 'hot shot'.

“A hot shot?!”

“Yes. Because if you go back to Cleveland, I'm going too.”

But they did not always quarrel. Often they had hilarious good times. They went many times to the Bronx Zoological Park, and down to the Battery to the Aquarium. They had favorites in both places; they liked the octopi and sword fish and the huge turtles in the center tank, and Grace loved to imagine what the place was like when Jenny Lind sang there. At the Bronx Zoo they laughed at the armadillos; Norris called them 'big bedbugs' (They had moved out of their first apartment because of bedbugs). They loved to be in the lion house at feeding time when the big cats were roaring and pacing their cages. Norris liked felines of all kinds, and maintained that the lions when they were quiet and sleepy, were as gentle as pussycats. But they could not stay long in the lion house because the overpowering smell was more than one could tolerate combined as it was with disinfectant odors. In the primate house they were fascinated by the mandrills, with their gaudy red and purple faces and rear ends.

They spent house in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, studying the masters and frequently disagreeing in their critiques. But their differences about art were not disagreeable – not in those early months.

When June came, Grace was still talking about going home to Cleveland, and Norris was still opposing it. But then came a letter from Merly. She was coming to New York. Nelle had invited her, and Pa had given her the money. And what was more, Merly said, Betty Long was coming too.

Grace was in a flurry of excitement. She would postpone her trip home. Perhaps they could go home for Christmas. They must work very hard and save all possible money. If they saved enough they could visit Cleveland and then go on to Paris. A year there would give them much added prestige. Then, when they came back to New York, they would get all the work they could possibly handle.

Norris, Grace, Roge and Nelle all went to Grand Central Station to meet Merly and Betty. Nelle wanted everyone to come back to their place, but Grace countered with an invitation of her own.

“Wait, Nelle. There's a very special reason why you should come to our place.”

“Oh, Grace, you can't get away with that. You're forgetting that I invited Merly to New York.”

“I'm not forgetting, and you and Roge shall take her home with you. We've got room for Betty. But we've got a special surprise in our flat.”

“What surprise?” asked Nelle.

“I'll give you a hint: it's human.”

Nelle's curiosity got the better of her. “All right, we'll come for a while if Merly isn't too tired.”

“I'm not,” Merly said. “We slept beautifully on the Pullman car, didn't we Betty.”

“Yes, and I bet I know what the surprise is,” Betty said.

“If you do, don't tell,” Grace implored.

Betty was right. She had guessed that the surprise would be Ted and Edna Hurst, who had been married in April. Edna was teaching art in a public school, and Ted was working for an advertising agency. New York was the place to be for artists.

The occasion was very gay, and they all had a good time, but Nell kept insisting that Merly must be tired, and she finally succeeded in dragging her way from the party over everyone's protests. Grace was a bit annoyed and told Nelle, "You shouldn't take Merly away just so you can lionize her."

"Grace always likes to use big words," Nelle said.

Roger said, "Merly could like down in the bedroom, couldn't she?"

"I'm really not tired."

"You're probably more tired that you think you are," Nelle told her. "Remember Ma always said that to us. Anyway, I've got things to do at home, still."

So they left, and soon Ted and Edna left too.

Next day, Norr, Grace and Betty had a rather frugal meal which Grace apologized for. "We were short of cash today, Betty. We have a check coming though. It should be here tomorrow."

"Oh, let me buy some groceries!" Betty argued.

"Absolutely not," Norris said. "Unless our check doesn't come. We can always eat lima beans. Do you like lima beans? Dried ones?"

"Love them," Betty said with a straight face.

"They're ghastly without salt," Grace made a face.

"We only were without salt a couple of days," Norris said.

Grace chanted the subject.

"You'll be sleeping on the couch tonight, Norr."

"Oh, no," said Betty. "I'll take the couch. I couldn't put Norr out of his bed."

"Now, I suggest Grace sleep on the couch, and Betty and I take the bedroom."

"Norr! You're very naughty-talking since you're married." Betty said.

"He likes to say things to shock everyone," Grace said.

"And I will sleep on the couch," Betty insisted.

"No, you won't. You and I have lots to talk about, Grace said.

"I'm glad you made this arrangement," Betty said, after they were in bed. "There were some things I wanted to talk to you about. In private, I mean. For one thing, I wanted to tell you about Ethel."

"Ethie?"

"Yes – she wanted so much to come on this trip."

"And she couldn't?"

"Her mother wouldn't let her come with us."

"They are short of money lately," Grace said. "Father Rahming's business has been terribly slow lately."

"Aunt Ada would have paid Ethie's railway fare and given her money to spend while she was here."

"But Ethie's working! She has her own money."

"She gives that to her mother. It's what they live on, she told me."

"But isn't Father Rahming making any money, Betty?"

"Oh, yes. Some, of course. He pays the rent and the gas bill, and of course, other things. But Ethie buys the food. Aunt Ada contributes too, I understand. Mother Rahming gets a little from her patients."

“Oh, yes, I know she does,” Grace said. “But pshaw! Ethie could have come. That’s too bad.”
“You know what I think, Grace? Mrs. Rahming doesn’t want Ethel to meet men and get married.”

“Oh, I’m sure you’re right. She discourages it. She really does. But why did she say Ethie shouldn’t come with you and Merly?”

“Because of the money. And because Father Rahming is out of town so much of the time. She said she ‘needed’ Ethie.”

“That’s silly. She has Aunt Ada.”

“That’s what Aunt Ada said herself. She was put out.”

“I’ll bet she was. She’s good to Ethie. Good to all of them, in fact.”

“You’re right. She is. Something else I wanted to tell you, too. Well, you know Ethie works downtown part-time, in the office of one of their neighbors.”

“Yes, for Mr. Miller. Aunt Ada used to type for him sometimes.”

“That’s right. Well, Anna Hall works downtown too, at the Cleveland Music School. She’s teaching there.”

“I wondered what Anna was doing these days...”

“Yes. Well, one day Ethie worked a half hour longer than usual, and she caught a late streetcar. And on the car was Father Rahming, and sitting with him was Anna Hall. She got off at her stop, and then Ethie and her father got off at theirs and went on home.” Betty paused.

“Yes,” said Grace, “then what?”

“Well, when they got home, Ethie mentioned meeting her father and Anna on the streetcar and Mrs. Rahming got all upset.”

“She did!”

“Yes. She said it didn’t look nice, an older man riding with a young girl like that. Neighbors might talk.”

“Oh, nonsense! Anyone can meet someone else like that on the streetcar and sit and talk with them.”

“Of course, but Ethie told me last week, that she met them riding the streetcar together a second time, only she didn’t mention it to her mother because she’d fussed so the first time.”

“Yes, if she’d heard about it happening a second time she’d have pulled a fainting fit.”

“You mean, really?”

“It’s something she does when she’s upset. She faints. Norris told me about it himself. He says it’s nothing to worry about.”

“There’s one more thing. One night when I was coming to your parents’ house for dinner (Merly invited me), I met them on the streetcar.”

“Father Rahming and Anna?”

“Yes.”

“The same time of day?”

“Yes, about quarter of six. Do you think it means anything, Grace?”

“Do you know what I think it means, Betty?”

“What?”

“It means that Anna Hill and Father Rahming...” Grace hesitated in order to tease. “It means that Anna and my own father-in-law...”

Betty waited for Grace.

“It means...” Grace finally pounced. “that when Father Rahming is in town he leaves his office about the same time that Anna leaves the Music School, and that they frequently catch the same streetcar.”

Betty laughed. “I suppose that’s all it is after all.”

“Oh, Betty!” Grace said. “It would be easy for me to believe that Father Rahming might love some other woman. Mother Rahming is a very strange person. And she doesn’t sleep with him you know. Everyone knows she and Ethie share the downstairs room. And Father Rahming is away a great deal of the time. It wouldn’t surprise me if he were in love with some woman in another town. Of course, I don’t know that at all. But it wouldn’t be our little chunky Anna. Anna’s a blue-eyed blonde. So is Mother Rahming. If my father-in-law has a ‘femme fatale’ somewhere, I’ll bet she’s a ravishing brunette.”

Betty laughed some more.

“Seriously though,” Grace continued. “Father Rahming took quite a fancy to Anna. There’s no doubt about that. But that’s because of her music. Those times at the Rahming’s house when she played the piano and he sang, I’ve never seen him have a better time. When they ride on the streetcar, no doubt they talk about music.”

“Likely,” Betty said. “Grace?”

“Yes?”

“How about you? Are you happy? I was so sure you were going to go on with your career.”

“I am going on with it. I’m actually already in it.”

“But are you going to Paris now that you’re married?”

“Certainly I’m going. But I’ll have to do it differently now. I was going to try for the scholarship, and get there that way. Of course, Norr and I have been getting art work to do, but we’re just starting, Betty.”

“We knew you and Norr were engaged, Grace, but I was so surprised when your mother told us you’d written asking if you might get married right away. You had your heart set on going to Paris.”

“I know I did. I still have.”

“Well, why on earth didn’t you wait another year to get married.”

“Betty, you don’t know Norris. Besides, it would have been two years. My year in New York, and then my year in Paris. Norris wouldn’t hear of it.”

“Ethie tells me Norr always gets what he wants.”

“He is spoiled, Betty. But then, so is my brother John Arthur (Art). In fact, all of us Martin children are spoiled, too. Father’s been wonderful to us. I’ve always had what I wanted too, Betty.”

“You wanted Paris, Grace.”

“Betty, you know what – I think you’re kind of put out with me for getting married.”

“I am - In a way. Oh, not really, Grace – if you love him.”

“I love him. But someday I’ll tell you why I didn’t wait. And it’s not what you probably thought at the time.”

“What’s that?”

“That I was enceinte.”

“I never thought that, though Merly wondered about it.”

“She probably got the idea from Nelle. Nelle was sure I was pregnant. She asked me twice if I had had a miscarriage!”



J.C. RAHMING III about 1908

"GARRETT NORTH" (III)

“Well, Grace, some people may have wondered about it, because you were so dedicated to your art work.”

“I don’t blame people for what they may have thought. I proved them wrong about being pregnant. We’ve been married seven months.”

“Grace, you said you’d tell me why you didn’t wait.”

“I will, some day.”

“No – tell me now. Who knows when we’ll get together again to really talk.”

“Will you promise never to tell a single soul?”

“Yes.”

“I’ll tell you how it all came about. You recall that a year ago Norr quite school in the spring before the end of the year?”

“Yes, and came to New York to look for work.”

“He had made up his mind already to marry me as soon as possible. He talked to Uncle Bertie, that’s his mother’s brother. then he came home and told me he would be working for Uncle Bert. When I came to New York in September, Norris followed right along. He got a room in the same rooming house. I scolded him for that, but he was very determined. Then do you know what happened? He was invited to his Aunt Georgiana’s home in Brooklyn for Thanksgiving. He asked her if he could bring his fiancée. Of course she said yes. There were quite a lot of people there. Many I didn’t know. Aunt Georgiana’s husband is a doctor. Some of them were relatives, and Contance’s friends. Well, when we were all at the table and the meal was nearly over, and it was time for pumpkin pie, Norris stood up. Better, do you know what he did?”

“How could I?”

“He announced to that big group of people, ‘Grace and I were married yesterday.’”

“You were married already, then?”

“We weren’t married at all, then. He just said that.”

“For goodness’ sake, why?”

“So that I’d have to marry him.”

“Well, what did you do, Grace?”

“Nothing. I was too dumbfounded. Aunt Georgiana came over and kissed me, and welcomed me into the Rahming family. The doctor gave us advice, and they all fussed over us.”

“For goodness’ sake,” Betty said again. “What you should have done when Norris said that, it to tell everyone he was just joking.”

“I thought about that afterwards, but I didn’t have the courage at the time. I was too shy and overwhelmed.”

“Then when were you really married?”

“Well, I had to write Mother and Father to ask their permission. And she sent a telegram and a letter right away.”

“And then you were married later?”

“Yes.” Grace hesitated. “After I had Mother’s blessing.”

“He really compromised you didn’t he.”

“He said people in the rooming house were starting to talk.”

“Were you angry with Norris?”

“Yes, I was, but I can never stay angry with him. He’s fun to be with. He has a lot of charm.”

“Yes, he has, and you love him.”



BETTY LONG

"SALLY LONGMONT"
ABOUT 1912

415 1/2

“Yes.” Grace said. “I do love him. But he’s been spoiled by Mother Rahming. He’ll have to change, Betty. Well, he will change. Life will change him. No one will spoil him the way she did.”

“Unless you do, Grace.”

“I won’t. I certainly will not.”

“We’ll see.”

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Maria sat on the front porch with Ada Norris. It was unusually not for early summer. They sat sipping lemonade, and Maria took out a handkerchief and wiped her face and throat.

"I'm sixty-three years old and I still get hot flashes."

"I get them too," Ada said.

"Buy you're younger. I ought to be over it, wouldn't you think?"

"I don't know. Mama had them for years and years."

"Being a woman isn't always easy," Maria said.

"You look tired, Mother Martin. You're not your cheerful self."

"These last two years have been so difficult. Did you ever have a period in your life when things seemed particularly hard? I mean, not just a day or two of grief or misfortune, but a period of weeks or even months and months, when there are burdens that seem at times too much."

"Yes, I've had such times. Fortunately, not often. When I was young, my little brother Jim fell from the porch and was killed. And before that, my little sister and I had typhoid fever. We were both terribly ill and almost all my hair fell out, and I pitied myself. But then I began to get better. My little sister didn't. She died. It seemed as though our whole family would never be happy again. That was so long ago. But we didn't have more tragedies. My parents had a very happy marriage and Papa was a most bountiful provider. I somehow didn't expect to get married. I never counted on it, that is, after I was a small girl. I wasn't pretty. Rosella was, and I got used to the idea. No, there weren't any more tragedies, really. The year that Papa got sick and died was a very sad time for me. He and I were close. And then poor Mama had a stroke and failed for two years before she went. That was hard. I still miss her after ten years. But they were old. One had to expect that they'd leave us. And other people I've loved are gone, but since the time my little brother and sister died, we've had no unusual misfortune."

"I can't really complain of my life either," Maria said. "We never wanted for the good things, and mostly we've had good health. But we lost our two eldest children in the early years of our marriage, though."

"Yes, Grace spoke of that, I recall."

"Parents never get over the loss of children."

"No, I believe that. You know, Mother Martin, one thing I appreciate about you. When you speak about children, you never tell me that I wouldn't understand because I don't have children of my own."

"It wouldn't occur to me to say that because I know you are a very understanding person."

"Thank you, Mother Martin. That's kind of you to say that. I do want you to know that I can sympathize with you just now. You have good reason to feel that these last two years have been hard. Do you notice any improvement in Emma?"

"I try to see same every day, but there isn't any at all, really, Her mind has been affected. It's hard to understand. She's not like other people I've seen with mental troubles. She still reads books, plays the piano, sews, cooks, and helps with the housework. But she says strange things that have nothing to do with what the rest of us are talking about."

"Isn't that unusual! I wonder why she does that."

"Yes, and she seems to dislike William. Poor William! I feel so sad about him. He says he still loves her, but I'm afraid she can never be a wife to him. She doesn't want to be. they have an apartment, but she's here more than there."

"What does she want?"

“Just to live with her father and me. She used to do secretarial work, but she certainly couldn’t as she is now.”

“Would she be interested in going to some of the ceramic classes with Ethel and Merly? Ethie is going to go there mornings this fall and study the new Gregg shorthand writing.”

“Oh, I wish Emmy would, Miss Norris! But we can’t even get her to ride the streetcar to go anywhere. She only wants to stay home. Last winter when we took her back to Oberlin, we thought being in our old town where she grew up, she’d be happy. Well, it didn’t help much, because most of her old friends are married and gone. Howd and Lottie invited her out to their place in Royalton. It’s right next to the old farm where we lived for so many years. We call it ‘the old brick.’ It’s our homestead. Henry and I love it and so do all the children, but particularly the older ones, who were born there. Our little girls, Maily and Jenny, the ones who died, were born there. And Howd, Nate, Stan and Nelle, and Emma were born there. We moved out of the old brick then, and Merly was born in another house in Royalton. My father-in-law decided to go into the business of rental property. Henry and I were supposed to live in houses and fix them up, and then rent them. Merly was born in the first one. After that I told Henry I wasn’t going to live like that, always moving from place to place. I told him I wanted to go back to the old brick and stay, or else move into a new house with conveniences in Oberlin, one with more rooms in it. Henry told me to take my choice. I chose Oberlin because of the better schools and the Academy and the college. So we bought our house there, we still have it. Grace and William and Art were born there. It’s a lovely comfortable house. I should never complain about my life, Miss Norris. I pray the Lord forgives me.”

“Oh, He will, Mother Martin. If he doesn’t forgive you, He isn’t going to forgive any of us.”

“Oh, pshaw!” Maria laughed. “I’m always fretting about something.”

“No,” Ada said. “Only over your children, the way any mother does. Tell me, how was Emmy when she was at her brother’s place on the farm?”

“With Howd and Lottie? Well, that wasn’t the old brick. Henry won’t let Howd and Lottie live there. Howd has this little place he built a few years ago. He’s a carpenter and he’s good, but I think they’re having quite a struggle. Howd’s such a little fellow, he’s not much over five feet three inches tall. But the trouble is Lottie. She’s a very unusual person. I can’t talk about it. She caused a terrible quarrel between Howd and his father. They don’t speak to each other. I’m heartsick over it. I thought time would heal it, but they’re both stubborn. And to think that Howd is his firstborn son and named for him! Oh, dear. I forget what got me started on that.”

“About Emmy.”

“Oh, yes. I’m as bad as the old woman in the shoe, aren’t I. Well, no, Emmy couldn’t stand it at Howd’s place. She was somesick for her Pa and for me, mostly. But Lottie upset her. We’ve always thought Lottie was an odd girl. Nelle says Lottie’s a mental case. So how could we leave poor Emmy with Lottie, when Emmy’s having mental troubles of her own. She came home telling me that Lottie is a witch!”

“Oh, my!”

“Well, but you see, Emmy says strange things lately, so I can’t be affected by all her statements.”

“But why did she say Lottie was a witch?”

“Lottie had a pet bulldog who died. He was a kind of homely, sniffly, old bulldog, but he loved Lottie and she loved him. He got old and died one winter. Do you know, that girl wouldn’t bury that dog. She put him in a big box and kept it out on the back porch all winter. Good thing it was a cold winter. When spring came and it warmed up, Howd insisted on burying it because of the smell. Lottie carried on about it, but she let him do it because he promised to put a gravestone

over the dog. Well, Emmy says Lottie puts flowers on the grave and she always puts a lamp in the window on that side of the house. The lamp stays lit all night. Lottie won't let anyone put it out. She wants the light of the house to shine on the dog's grave so he'll know she still loves him."

Ada pursed her lips a moment. "That's eccentric, Mother Martin, but it wouldn't make Lottie a witch. But then, I don't believe in witches anyway."

"Neither do I. And Emmy never did either. But, oh, Miss Norris, she's such a sick girl."

"What does the doctor say about it?"

"The doctor in Denver said she'd be depressed for a while till she got her strength back. You see, they had to operate and remove her womb and everything. So she knows she can never have any babies, ever. But the doctor says women adjust in time. He recommended adoption."

"What does Emmy think of that idea?"

"I've only spoken of it a few times to her, and I'll tell you why. She can't adopt a baby until she stays at her home again, and she won't even talk about the difficulties with William. Some days she won't see him if he comes here. I feel very badly about William."

"She blames him?"

"She doesn't say that. She just calls him 'that little Turk'."

"That little Turk! Why?"

"I have no idea," Maria said. "It's just the sort of strange thing Emmy says these days."

"Oh, Mother Martin, you have all my sympathy. I do wish there was something I could do to help. The only comfort I can give you is to tell you that I believe you are doing the best possible thing for her."

"How do you mean?"

"Just having her with you and her father, where she knows she's safe and loved."

"But she was safe and loved with William. I'm sure of that," Maria said.

"She must not have been ready for marriage. Something about it she wasn't ready for, don't you suppose?"

"That's what Nelle thinks, but they were all brought up the same way. At least I thought they were."

"It's hard to say what would cause it. Mama and I always thought Rosella wasn't ready for marriage. But of course, her case isn't at all the same. She had her babies normally, and no operation. It's just that in some ways what you said made me think of the way Rosella was when she was first married. She didn't seem to want to stay with John. She was always coming back to spend long, long visits with Mama and Papa. It seemed to me that she preferred to prolong her girlhood as long as she could. It wasn't till Papa died, and Mama and I sold our house and moved out of it, that Rosella started to grow up. Mama then went and lived with Rosella."

"I think in some ways that Emmy did want to prolong her 'girlhood' as you put it, but once she was married she seemed to have fun keeping house, baking and sewing and so on."

"Mother Martin, I guess I'm not qualified to even discuss marriage, and in any case I ordinarily don't like to gossip at all. When you and I discuss family troubles, it doesn't ever seem to be gossip – it's seeking help and advice, and giving it. What I was going to say is that some women seem to love to keep house and sew and cook, but they don't really like having to live with a man. At least, not sharing a bedroom with a man."

"Yes, you are right. I'm afraid that Emma is one of those women. Nothing I ever said to her, or that Nelle ever said, could make her feel differently about it. But still, Miss Norris, why would her mind be so affected now?"

“I don’t know,” Ada said. “Shock perhaps? The loss of the baby? Or the operation?”

“Yes. The operation. The doctor said it’s as though she experienced change of life all of a sudden. Just think, only twenty-five years old and through change of life! It’s so sad.”

“Yes, it is. And might it not be ‘the change’ is why her mind has been affected? Even normal, slow change of life sometimes does that. I guess it’s a temporary derangement usually.”

“Usually. Oh, if that’s it, I do pray she gets over it. Miss Norris, I got a letter from Grace suggesting I have your sister do some Christian Science for Emma.”

“She’d be glad to, I know,” said Ada.

“Do you believe in it, Miss Norris?”

“I try to, because it’s very important to believe it, Rosella says. She says if someone doesn’t believe, it’s harder for her to help.”

“It’s very difficult for me to believe,” Maria said. “I just don’t understand. But if I thought it would help Emmy, I’d try it.”

“I would think Emmy’s case might be just the kind where one might be successful. If her leg were broken, I’d have a much harder time believing Rosella could put it together just by holding the right thoughts. But often things occur at our house that make me think faith does heal.”

“Well, as I understand it, Mrs. Eddy’s faith is the same kind of faith. I guess she feels we could all heal if we achieve the same high degree of faith that Jesus had.”

Maria was puzzled. “Henry and I each read a chapter of the Bible every single day, and we know that if we have faith in the Lord, He will protect us in His wisdom. But I’m not sure that I could believe that anyone can heal as Jesus healed. Such as raise the dead, and make the blind see.”

“Rosella explains that death and disease are not real. They are only concepts of mortal mind.”

“It’s different from what I’ve been taught to believe all my life. However, I never doubted that death and disease were real. I believe that the Lord has His reasons for sending such afflictions. Sometimes we can’t know His reasons. When my little girls died, I couldn’t reconcile myself to God’s purposes, but my Mama made me realize that He had good ones.”

“When children die, I’ll never be able to understand God’s reasons,” Ada said. “My mind just can’t accept it.”

“Mama trained me to have a strong faith in the Lord.”

“Well, I was trained that way too,” Ada said. “But at times my faith has great difficulties.

Forgive me, Mother Martin, for changing the subject, but how is your Mama?”

Maria’s face brightened. “I think she’s a little better lately. At least she doesn’t seem to have as many aches and pains as she did. She’s sleeping better, and she smiles at us so much. She is so sweet to us all. Sometimes I think she has less pain, because her mind is not as sharp as it was. She’s less aware of everything, but while that is sad, it’s still a blessing. I wonder if that is what is known as making one’s peace with the Lord – being gentle and resigned.”

“I daresay it is,” Ada said. Inwardly, Ada decided that while she firmly believed in God, she was nevertheless not as secure and comfortable in her religious convictions as Maria Martin was.

Mama and Papa were regular church-goers, were good friends of the bishop in Brooklyn, and sometimes quoted scripture to their children, when there were disciplinary problems. But Mama and Papa had not read the Bible daily as Mr. and Mrs. Martin did. Still, they were very good people, kind, generous and honest. But they hadn’t thought about their religion as often as Maria Martin did. Perhaps that was just the difference between being born Episcopalian and being born Baptist. But on the other hand, there was Rosella. She’d been born Episcopalian, but she was now deeper into religion than she’d ever been. While Ada still couldn’t fully understand

Christian Science, she was convinced that in some ways it had been a wonderful thing for Rosella.

“Mother Martin,” Ada asked now, “do you hear often from Grace?”

“About twice a week – sometimes more often.”

“My goodness, what a good young correspondent she is!”

“All the girls are, but Grace is the best.”

“I like to write letters,” Ada said, “but Rosella finds it such a difficult chore. She’s upset, though, because Norris doesn’t write to her.”

“Not at all?”

“I think he’s written to her twice since he went back to New York last October. Once when he first got there, and once at Christmas time.”

“Why, he should be spanked!” Maria said, “and so should Grace for letting him neglect it.”

“Oh, Grace has written a good many letters. She’s been fine about it, and Rosella appreciates it, but she is ever so upset because Norris doesn’t write.”

“It’s new for her to have a child gone from home, isn’t it. When my older ones, Howd, Nate and Stan got married, I missed them, but they all lived nearby and I saw them frequently, so it made it very much easier for me to become accustomed to having them gone. But it was hard when Emmy and Nelle went to Colorado to live. Girls are closer to their mothers than sons are. I missed them terribly, but I got used to it in time, of course. Now Emmy is back with me, but under the circumstances, I’d prefer to have her happy and normal and living with her husband, even if it was on the other side of the world. I miss Grace too, but I always know she would leave home and go far off somewhere. She’s talked of New York and Paris for years.”

“Did you expect her to marry so soon?”

“No,” Maria said. “No, I really didn’t. I thought she was very ambitious to have a career as an artist. I was very surprised when she wrote, asking our permission to marry Norris. I thought that she might ask if they might become engaged (though I didn’t even expect that). She was so full of talk of Paris.”

“That’s what he was afraid of,” murmured Ada.

“Norris?”

“Yes,” Ada said. “He knew how talented and hard-working Grace is. He predicted that she would win the Madeleine Haylor Paul scholarship. He told us so at the beginning of the year, when he saw how well she did in the Concours. And, Mother Martin, I know his heart just sank. I remember the day well. He went into his room and closed his door and didn’t come out for hours. He didn’t come out for dinner, and his mother was upset. She went to his door and talked and coaxed, but he kept his door shut and said he was feeling bilious. So Rosella went to her room and did some Christian Science work for him, but he never did come out till after Rosella and everybody went to bed, when I heard him go down to the kitchen and get something to eat about midnight. The next day he was still quiet and glum. He came into the kitchen when I was getting lunch and said, ‘Aunt Ada, I’ll never see her again.’, and I said, ‘Who?’. ‘Grace,’ he said. ‘She won the New York scholarship prize.’ I said, ‘Well, you’ll see her again, Norry, just the same.’ But I couldn’t cheer him up that day.”

“Two days later he came to my room and said, ‘Auntie, I need to go to New York, to Brooklyn, right away and I hope you’ll lend me the money.’ Of course, I couldn’t understand his request. I knew he was in love with Grace, and that she would be going to New York in the fall. But that was May, and Art School wasn’t going to be over till the middle of June. I asked him why he couldn’t go at the end of the school year. He said, ‘No, I must go immediately. I want to get

established in New York. I'm going to see if Uncle Bertie will help me.' My brother Bertie is an architect. I couldn't see just how Bertie could help Norr, but Norr said he could do photography, and paint murals, and help in other ways, even with his plans and drawings for houses. It sounded somewhat hazy to me, and very impulsive, but Norr was determined. He brought a lot of his photographs and some of his landscapes into my room to show me. They really were very nice. He has quite a lot of talent, Mother Martin, don't you think?"

"Yes, I do. I really do."

"And his mechanical drawing is excellent. I thought he might really be a help to Bertie in some way, but I wanted him to wait until after the end of Art School. I wanted him to finish his year. I don't know how he talked me into it, but I lent him the money. Well! He stayed in New York about three weeks as you know, and he had arranged something with my brother, but I didn't ever know precisely what Norris was to do in Bertie's company."

"Nor did I," Maria Martin said. "But before we all knew it, they were engaged and everyone was happy about it all."

"Except for two things," Ada said. "I had hoped that Norry would finish Art School. But he was too in love. He couldn't bear to see her go off in September while he stayed behind."

"Yes," Maria said, "and I well remember how I felt at that age, Miss Norris."

"I think, by now, you should call me Ada, or Aunt Ada, as the children do."

"Yes, you're right, and I will do that, Ada. Well, in any case I'm sure the children will get along all right. But they certainly did surprise us all."

"Rosella, most of all," said Ada. "And she certainly hasn't adjusted to it yet."

"She will, but it will take a while. For myself, I was disappointed that we didn't have a lovely wedding here in Cleveland, or more likely, in Oberlin. Merly wanted to be a bridesmaid, and Nelle would have come home for it, too. We've never had a really fancy wedding, and Grace has so many friends. It would have been such fun. Merly hasn't forgiven Grace for not getting married at home. Merly said she and Emmy would be bridesmaids, and Nelle would be matron of honor. But you know, Aunt Ada, it's probably just as well we didn't have a wedding with Emmy in her present state of mind. She couldn't have been a bridesmaid. One never knows what she will say, or worse, when she will say it! She might have spoken up, out loud in the middle of the marriage ceremony. She's got a very poor attitude about marriage lately. But usually when she says something, it has nothing whatsoever to do with the situation at hand."

"It's very strange," Ada mused.

"Well, it's been a strange year altogether, or else I'm getting too old for so many happenings. By the way, how is Ethel getting on, with her brother gone?"

"Ethie's all right. She enjoys her evening classes in china painting, and her friendship with your Merly. And you know, she's working now for Cleveland Builders Supply Company, but I can't say she's enjoying that very much. But, as far as missing Norris goes – we all notice the difference with him gone. But it's really better for Ethie. Her mother always catered to Norr far too much. And she waited on him, or asked Ethie to wait on him. So that's changed, with Norr gone. And it's all to the good. For everyone's sake. It may be better after all, for Norr to be in New York with your Grace, than to have stayed here in Cleveland going to Art School under his mother's wing. I'll be very frank with you, Mother Martin, my sister has spoiled Norris shamefully."

"Well, Aunt Ada, other people have observed that," Maria said, "and Grace was well aware of it, so she'll have to learn to get along with him as he is. She has faith in him."

“So do I, Mother Martin. He’s talented and affectionate, and has a winning personality. What he lacks is discipline and the character that comes of taking one’s share of adversity.”

“He’ll get his share,” Maria said. “We all do. Life forces us to face adversity.”

“Most of us, I guess,” Ada said, “though I think I know one or two people whose lives seem to have been very smooth paths.”

“Such folks are rare. well, Grace and Norris did what they wanted to do, and they’ve both been indulged, I guess. They will have to grow up now.”



ETHEL RAHMING

circa 1910

"EDIE"

4295

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It snowed every day in November of 1910. Maria's rheumatism was so bad in her knees that winter, that she could not walk outside for fear of slipping on the icy sidewalks. She depended on Henry and Art to do the shopping. Merly did much of the cooking with sporadic help from Emmy, who made bread and cakes, or sewed, and cleaned house on the days when she felt like it, or stayed in bed on the days when she had headaches. The headaches, hot flashes and sleeplessness that plagued women twice Emmy's age, tormented her severely, made worse by their sudden onset. Often when Maria woke during the night she found Emmy awake and reading.

Merly finished her ceramics course at the Art School, though she still went there several days a week to paint china. Her father saw no sense in it, but Maria humored her in it because she felt that unmarried Merly needed something outside the home. Her father felt Merly should marry, but Maria explained the problem to him.

"She wants to marry a minister, and the right one hasn't come along."

"Nonsense, what's the matter with marrying a businessman?"

"Well, Henry, no businessmen have come along either – not yet."

"She should have learnt to be a school teacher."

"Have patience, Henry. She's a help to me in taking care of Mama and Emmy. Don't begrudge me that."

"I'm sorry. I don't begrudge it."

Ethel Rahming was working full time in an office in downtown Cleveland now, and Betty Long had gone to Florence, Italy. Merly felt that the old fun times at the Art School were ending. In July the news of Grace's pregnancy had an odd effect on Merly. She had years ago grown used to the fact of her sister Nelle's married state. First Earle, and now Roger Fison. But no children. And Emmy had been married but no children there, nor ever would there be. As for Grace, she had gone away to New York to study, and Norris had followed her. They'd been married there, with no one present to represent the family. Merly somehow never felt as though Grace, her little sister, was a married woman.

When Grace and Norris stayed on in New York for a second year, Merly began to think of them as a couple. But only when Grace wrote to say that she was expecting, did Merly suddenly feel that life was perhaps passing her by. She looked at herself in her bedroom mirror, and disliked what she saw.

I am the least favored of all the Martin girls, Merly told herself. Nelle had always been pretty. She had been a child with flaxen hair and blue eyes like her mother's. Men had always found her attractive. When she was tiny they had swung her up on their shoulders and carried her about the farm 'to see the horsies,' 'to see the baby chicks,' or whatever. Nelle had been what her father call a 'fetching' child. When she grew older the flaxen hair had darkened, and she'd become a tomboy, but she'd never stopped attracting men. the last time Merly had been in Royalton, some of Nelle's old flames had asked after her.

Emmy had been attractive too. She was the only one of the girls who had not inherited curly hair from her mother. But Emmy's hair, while straight, was fine and shiny. It was such a dark brown as to be nearly black, and Emmy had her Pa's dark brown eyes. They were pretty eyes, too. And Emmy had a long, patrician nose. It was straight and not too large. Her only flaw was too strong a chin.



MARIAN MARTHA MARTIN
"MARTHA HEDGES"
CIRCA 1910 ?

Grace was pretty, too, nearly as pretty as Nelle but in a different way. her hair was wavy, and as black, if not blacker, than Emmy's. She had hazel grey eyes, and small features, a Cupid's bow mouth, and tiny ears, and a turned-up nose. Merly had often teased Grace about her small nose, saying, 'It's little and no-account, and it flies up just like that, while mine is big and beautiful, like a pear.' But Merly felt that Grace was better off with her small nose.

Merly hated her hair. Like Nelle's it had been blond when she was a tot, and it too was now brown. But it was too curly, tight curly. She would rather it had been straight like Emmy's if it couldn't be softly wavy like Nelle's and Grace's. It was unmanageable. She couldn't properly braid it, or make a nice pompadour of it. She could merely pile it up on top of her head and poke it full of hairpins. The problem was it was too thick. There was just too much of it. And her nose was the worst nose in the family, Merly felt. Pa's nose looked alright on the boys, but it didn't fit a woman's face. Not that it was long, no. And it wasn't hooked, not a beak or anything like that. But it was too broad in the bridge, too wide in general. In spite of what she'd told Grace, Merly did not at all like her nose.

She decided she would probably never marry. She was twenty-five years old, an old maid. The best thing to do would be to become a missionary and then she could at least serve God. Perhaps, too, she could travel a bit. Oh, how she would love to travel around the world to all those strange foreign lands where people looked different and spoke in strange tongues.

Grace came to Cleveland in September. Maria had assumed that Grace had planned to come home to her own mother when the baby came, but it had been planned otherwise. Rosella expected Norris to be with her, and Norris expected Grace to be with him. So they went to the Rahmings to wait out the time.

Merly knew that her mother felt badly that Grace wasn't coming home to have the baby. Ma hadn't had her own mother with her at such times. Grandma had lived in Connecticut until after the last of Ma's baby's had been born. But more than once Ma had said that a woman took a lot of comfort from having her own mother on hand to help take care of the newborn baby. 'You feel that your own mother is the one person in all the world that you can trust to handle your babe,' Ma said.

Merly had heard that once when Ma was having one of her babies, Aunt Belle was on hand to help. Belle was Ma's youngest sister. Ma had gone into labor very quickly and her strong pains came on so soon there was no time for the doctor to come. Before Ma knew it the baby was being born. But Aunt Belle had gotten all panicky. Somehow Ma had managed to get the cord tied. Aunt Belle had felt pretty sheepish about it.

Merly talked to her mother about Grace's confinement.

"I'm sure you could be with Grace when the time comes, Ma."

"I would go if they asked me, but it might make too much confusion. After all, that house has plenty of women; there's Mother Rahming, Aunt Ada, and Ethie."

"Well, Aunt Ada will be a real help, I know. She's always useful. Of course, she's an old maid."

"Say 'unmarried,' Dotty – not 'old maid'. It's kinder. Anyway, that won't make any difference. Aunt Ada is always sensible. Grace is ever so fond of her. But if I went over it would be one too many grandmothers. Doctor's don't like too many people in the way at those times, nor any time."

"Ma, I'm not sure they're going to have a doctor."

"Not have a doctor!"

"Well, they're Christian Scientists after all."

"But I thought of course they'd – Oh dear!"

“Ma, wait. I’m not sure. I’ll ask Ethie about it tonight at ceramics class. Don’t worry about it yet.”

“If I thought they were not having a doctor I would go over to be with Grace. I wouldn’t take up more room than the doctor would.”

“And you’d probably do just as good a job. Better. But wait till I ask Ethie, Ma.”

That night when Merly returned from class she reported to Maria, who was putting her mother to bed for the night.

“Well, I found out all about Grace’s confinement plans,” She said.

“Wait a minute till I finish here, Dotty,” Maria said softly. “I don’t want to discuss it and upset Mother.”

“What’s that?” Grandma Burns asked.

‘Just talking about Grace, dear,’ Maria said. “She’s going to have a baby soon.”

“Grace? A baby?”

“Yes, Mama.”

“Grace isn’t the baby is she? Where’s William?”

“They’ve grown up now, Mama. I’ll put your light out now dear.”

“You’re a good daughter, Maria.”

They went into Merly’s room.

“How are your knees tonight, Ma?”

“So-so, Dotty. The weather’s changing again, I can tell. Now tell me, what did Ethie say?”

“She said they are going to have a doctor for Grace.”

“Oh, thank goodness. I’m so glad to hear that. I’ll rest easier now.”

“Well, I guess Aunt Ada should get the credit. Originally they weren’t going to have a doctor. Mother Rahming has a great horror of doctors. She says they are an expression of the mortal mind and she had Norris convinced that Grace would have a beautiful normal birth if everyone held the right thought about it. But then Aunt Ada apparently spoke up. She said that, in the first place, having a baby was not an illness, it’s a normal health process. And she said a doctor is a skilled worker who knows how to help the baby arrive, how to tie the cord, and take care of the mother. She said to Mother Rahming, ‘When you had the front parlor wall-papered you called a paper-hanger, didn’t you. You didn’t try to paper the wall by means of Christian Science.’ Well, I gather that argument rather irked Mother Rahming, but Norris said it was a very logical thought. He said he wants his child and his wife cared for by an expert, so they are going to have a doctor after all and Grace is very grateful to Aunt Ada.”

“I should say so! Poor girl. She’s just a baby herself. After all, the choice should be hers.”

“Yes, Ma, but Mother Rahming runs that household.”

“When Norris isn’t there. Well, I’m relieved that Norr chose to let Grace have the doctor.”

“Yes,” Merly said. “But I do believe in Christian Science Ma.”

“That’s your privilege, child.”

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It continued to snow every day as November wore on. Winter seemed to have set in early that year. One day the temperature rose and a warming rain began to melt the snow. Then the temperature dropped again and the rain froze on the trees and power and telephone lines. The slush in the streets froze into icy ruts. Maria could not venture out to go down the street to Rahming's to see how Grace was faring, and Grace in the awkward last days of her pregnancy, could not go to see her mother. Norris and Rosella would have forbidden it even if Grace had dared to try it. That night another heavy snow fell.

Merly awoke in the middle of the night. She had had a bad dream. Grace's baby was born dead. There had been three doctors, and three ladies, all Christian Science practitioners, but nothing they could do would save the baby. The child was long and thin and blue and very dead. Its eyes were open. The dream was very real. After Merly woke up she kept seeing the dead baby's face, and its open staring eyes. She could not get back to sleep but lay there thinking. She was quite certain the dream was a prophecy. It had become evident that the Martin girls could not have babies the way Ma had. There probably was no use for Merly ever to get married, for no doubt she could not have children. She had already had difficulties with her female workings. She was seventeen years old when Ma finally took her to the doctor in Oberlin, because she had not yet started having monthly periods like her sisters. It had been an embarrassing and frightening business, but afterward she was glad she'd gone to the doctor. It had been a simple matter for the doctor to take care of, and hadn't been very painful, and then she'd been just like the other girls having visits from 'Aunt Scarlet' every month. The doctor had scolded Ma a little for not seeing him about the whole thing sooner. Ma had said she'd felt that it would be wisest to let nature take its course. The doctor had replied that she'd given nature ample time, and sometimes, 'nature needed a little help.'

Merly had gone on pondering it all. There was something wrong with all of them. Nelle'd lost a baby years ago. The circumstances of that had always been a deep family secret, but the fact remained that Nelle had been pregnant, she'd left her husband (who was a scoundrel) and come home, one spring night, to stay. Merly could remember it still, though Ma and Pa had kept a lot of the facts from the rest of them. Nelle'd lost the baby a day or two later, and had been very sick for days afterward. And now she didn't seem able to get a baby started.

And then, of course, Emmy. She'd lost a baby, got blood poisoning, had surgery, and her mind was affected. It was plain there was something wrong.

As soon as Merly heard Ma stirring, she rose and dressed, and went down to the kitchen.

"Why Dotty! What gets you up so early?" Maria was making corn meal mush and cocoa. Pa's favorite breakfast. He'd had cereal for years – preferring mush or oatmeal cooked all night. Pa's theory was that the big meal with meat should be a midday, with modest, simple food taken at breakfast and supper. Even in his farmer days Pa had never eaten heavily like the hired hands always did. 'I eat to live,' he said, 'I don't live to eat.'

"I got up because I had a bad dream. I couldn't sleep after that."

"Well, here. Have a nice bowl of mush and get waked up. Did you look out doors? There's at least eight inches of snow."

"Maybe it will snow all winter, Ma."

"Yes, it might, Dotty. We've had such winters."

"You haven't heard any word yet from Rahming's have you?"

"About Grace? No."

“I have a presentiment that it will be today, Ma.”

“Well, it’s the fifteenth. It’s due today. But first babies are often late, you know.”

“Yes, Ma.” Merly hesitated. “Don’t be surprised if things don’t go right with Grace’s baby.”

“Why!?”

“Ma, I don’t think we’re good at having babies. Us girls, I mean. Look at Emma and Nelle. They’ve no luck at all and I dreamed Grace had bad luck too.”

“What do you mean?”

“Oh, I don’t want to talk about it, Ma.”

“You mean you dreamed something bad? That she lost her baby?”

“Yes.”

“Well, Dotty, put that right out of your mind. We all dream dreadful things at times. It doesn’t mean a thing. You don’t know the whole story about Nelle. It’s not strange she lost that baby, and she and Emma both got blood poisoning after giving birth. But that doesn’t mean Grace will have it happen to her. Now best forget those thoughts. You said you were interested in Christian Science – now would be a good time to practice it, Dotty.”

The day went by. Merly kept expecting to get word from Rahming’s that Grace was in labor. But no word came. Against her mother’s advice Merly went to ceramics class, despite the bad weather. Merly hoped to see Ethel Rahming, but there were few students present. She came home again disappointed. She had thought of going on down the street to Rahming’s to visit Grace, but a bitter wind was blowing and her toes were aching from cold. She went into the house. Maria was still up.

Merly stamped the snow from her overshoes and unbuttoned her gaiters.

“Is it snowing still?” Ma asked.

“A little,” Merly said. “Have you heard any news about Grace?”

“No, dear.”

“It’s funny. I was so sure it would be today. And Ethie wasn’t in class.”

“She had the good sense to stay home. Now, you’d best get to bed and get warm. You’ll take cold.”

It was bright and sunny next morning. Maria rose feeling more cheerful. She hated to admit it but Merly’s account of her bad dream had disturbed her, and her own thinking had turned gloomy. What if the doctor could not get to Rahming’s because of the bad weather? Would Grace be safe in the hands of the Christian Science practitioner?

But now it was morning and sunny, and Maria’s arthritis was always better when fair weather came. She wondered what it would have been like if she had lived in Connecticut all her life. It had always been sunnier in Milford. Cleveland had long, dark winters, no doubt about it. But here was a sunny day, best to enjoy it.

Just as Maria finished preparing the breakfast, the doorbell rang. It was Ethie Rahming.

“Mother Martin, I hope I’m not too early in the day.”

“Goodness, no, Ethie. I’ve been up for two hours. But the rest of the family aren’t downstairs yet. Tell me quickly, do you have news for me?”

“Yes!” Ethie’s eyes shone. “I have. There’s a baby girl at our house!”

“Oh, splendid!” Maria cried. “But when was she born?”

“Last evening about nine o’clock, and Grace is fine and so is the baby. But the telephone hasn’t been working.”

“Oh, I’m relieved that you came. Last evening you say!”

“Yes. Mother Martin, I wanted to come over and tell you but by the time the doctor left it was after ten, and Mother thought it was too late and the weather too severe.”

“But Grace is all right?”

“Yes, she’s fine. But she’s very tired. It lasted long. All day.”

“When did the pains start?”

“In the morning. Early morning.”

“Early yesterday morning? Why didn’t Norris come and tell me?”

Ethie looked distressed. “Mother thought it better not to worry you. She thought you’d venture out in the storm and possibly slip. Aunt Ada thought they ought to let you know. She reminded Mother that she came back to New York to be with her mother when I was born. Well, there was quite a debate about it, Mother Martin. It was just because of the bad weather, they decided to wait till it was all over. They knew then you’d rest easy and not worry if you couldn’t come over.”

“Well, I shall come over to see the baby, weather or no weather. Henry and Art can help me over the icy spots.”

“I think the sun will melt the icy spots.”

“Yes, but it’s beginning to cloud up again. Well, I’m coming, never fear. Tell me, what did they name the babe?”

“Delight. They said she should have her own name, not to be named for anybody in particular.”

“Well, that’s all right too. Merly and I will be over to see her after breakfast. Will you stay awhile, Ethie?”

“No, I’ll be getting back. There’s diapers accumulating already, and Aunt Ada isn’t feeling well. She’d have been over here yesterday, if she’d been well. Mother’s been doing some Science work for her, but Aunt Ada isn’t a very good Christian Scientist, I’m afraid. Well, I’ll hurry on home now. Tell Merly the news!”

“I shall, Ethie. She’ll be so excited.”

Maria hastened up the stairs as fast as her bad legs would take her. She went first to Merly’s room.

“Wake up, wake up Dotty. There’s good news today!”

Merly sat up with big sleepy eyes and wildly tousled hair. “What’s that?”

“News. Good news. The baby’s here. A little girl!”

“Is it all right, Ma? Who told you?”

“Ethie. She was just here. The never called me. All day yesterday, and they never called me. Think of it! I’m really put out about it, but… I’ll just try and forget it. Baby’s name is Delight.”

“Is Grace all right, Ma?”

“Ethie says she is. Now hurry and get up so we can go calling on them. No snow is going to hold me back today!”

Henry and Merly each took Maria by an arm as they made their way to Rahming’s. The sky was dark again, and a light snow starting to fall.

“Do your knees hurt bad, Maria?” Henry asked.

“My stars! I’m not thinking about my knees today. I just can’t wait to see my little girl and her baby.”

Rosella opened the door for the three Martin in-laws. Her manner was cordial but nervous, and Maria sensed an embarrassment over yesterday's events.

"Oh, come in, come in. I'm so glad the weather cleared."

"I'd have come yesterday, Mother Rahming. Henry would have gotten me here one way or another."

"Oh, but it was bitter cold. And anyway, the bad part is all over now, and you were spared the worrying."

"It was bad?"

"Well, it took a long time. But then it's better to treat things with Christian Science alone, and not try to have material medica too. There's a conflict of thinking, you see."

Maria did not see, but she was too eager to get upstairs to Grace to discuss it.

Grace was in bed in the room that had been Norr's. Her black hair was in braids, a way she never wore it, and her eyes were darkly circled from fatigue. She looked to Maria like a little refugee child who was suffering from malnutrition. Her face lighted up when her mother came in.

Maria went to the bed and kissed her.

"Dotty! Dear child! How proud we are of you!"

Grace burst into tears. "Mother! Oh, I thought you'd never come. I wanted you so yesterday."

"Dotty dear, I just learned this morning."

"Why, mother? I thought they'd call you!"

"They didn't want me to worry, they said."

"Oh..."

"And it was cold and stormy out. Well, anyway, here you are, child. Now let me see the precious little one."

The baby was asleep in a basket on two chairs beside the bed. Maria bent over her.

"She's a little fairy princess, Mother. Now don't worry about her bruises. The doctor says they'll be gone in a day or so. That' from the forceps."

"Forceps?"

"Yes, the doctor finally decided to use them. There was quite a row about it."

"Oh, Dotty, was it quite bad?"

"Yes, it was bad. It was very bad, I guess. And I didn't get chloroform, and I didn't let out one yip. Nelle says you never did."

"Well, I guess I used to moan some, Dotty. But they say I never screamed like some women do. Oh, child, she is a little princess."

"Pick her up, Mother. I'll be feeding her soon."

"Oh, I hate to disturb a sleeping baby, Dotty."

"Go ahead. I want you to see her with her eyes open."

Maria glanced at the doorway. Rosella, Norris and Merly were all standing there.

Grace spoke up again. "I want mother to hold Delight while she's still new. It's the first time Mother's had a change to hold one of her grandchildren while it was tiny. all the boys' wives had their babies at their mother's homes. Merly, you can hold her too."

"Oh, I'd be terrified to hold her," Merly said. "I might drop her."

"Ethie did."

"Dropped her!?"

"No! Silly! Held her."

After Maria and Merly each held little Delight, Maria went to see Ada in her room.

"I hear you're feeling poorly," Maria said.

“I’ve a cold, so I daren’t go near the baby. I’d have come over to your place yesterday, Mother Martin, if I’d been up to it. I felt you should know Grace was in labor. But in this house there are many schools of thought. The arguments make life a little too exciting for me some days. Between Norris and his mother and the doctor, we had quite a day yesterday. And Grace was occupied with her pains, of course. I decided I’d better stay out of it.”

“Well, the baby’s here now and Grace seems to be all right.”

“Yes,” said Ada, “it’s a time when one may very appropriately say ‘all’s well that ends well.’”

The doctor insisted that Grace stay in bed the rest of the month to convalesce from her difficult labor. Rosella didn’t appreciate his ‘interference’, but he called on Grace regularly during that time in spite of daily snows and cold weather. When Grace was on her feet again Rosella dismissed the doctor saying flatly, “We are a Christian Science household.”

“Heaven help the little lady.”

As soon as she was up and around, Grace began making daily visits to her parents’ home. She would bundle the baby up in shawls, and carry her down the street so Maria could enjoy her. But in April when the weather moderated and Grace and the baby seemed to be thriving, Norris took them back to New York.

Both grandmothers were concerned. Rosella wept because Norris was leaving her again, but she could only think of two reasons why he should not go. “I’ll miss you terribly. Your father is never home, and there are too many women in this house.” Her other reason was that New York was too big. “It would be easier to make a name for yourself in Cleveland.”

“And if I make a name for myself in New York City, it will be worth much more,” Norris said.

Maria, on the other hand, while she hated to see Grace and the baby leave, privately felt it was for the best. Little Delight was being cared for according to Mother Rahming’s ideas on baby care, and Maria silently disapproved. It seemed that Mother Rahming took Mary Baker Eddy as her arbiter, and Mrs. Eddy did not believe in bathing a baby daily. She felt it was ridiculous.

But Maria didn’t agree. “Babies get smelly,” she stated. “They really need a daily bath. they spit up milk and it runs down their necks, and turns sour. Poor little things, they’re so helpless. Their mothers have to keep them sweet and clean. My stars, even cats and dogs keep their babies clean. What’s the matter with Mrs. Eddy, anyway?”

Grace laughed. “She just doesn’t thing baby-bathing should be overdone, Mother.”

“Well, anyway, I’m glad you’re going to be with Nelle for a while, Dotty. You’re nursing a little baby now, and you need meat. When you are with Nelle she’ll cook meat and see to it that you eat it. You can’t feed that child if you don’t get proper nourishment. A vegetarian diet won’t do it.”

“Mother, I’ve really been getting good food. Mother Rahming and Aunt Ada are both good cooks. So’s Ethel.”

“Aunt Ada has told me that she misses meat. She says she grew up accustomed to roast beef, and turkey, and chicken and leg of lamb.”

“Well, but she cooks with lots of eggs and milk and cheese. It’s very satisfying.”

“That may be but – you need red meat, Grace, for your blood.” Maria only called her daughters by their given names when she was being firm. Otherwise she called them all ‘Dotty’.

“They eat fish, Mother.”

“Oh, pshaw. Just Lake Erie fish. Not real rich ocean fish like we got back home on the coast. Oh, my, how I have missed clams and crabs. Deviled crabs, all such good things as that.”

“Aunt Ada fixes codfish balls. Although I’m not very fond of those.”

“That’s not fresh fish. Anyway, I was talking about red meat. You need it after having a baby.”

“I’ll be all right, Mother.”

“You look pale to me, Dotty, but I’ll try not to worry. You’re a married woman now.”

The Old Brick

By Jane R. Chandler

1981

Part Three

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU MEN?

For the first two years of Desire (Dee) Rahming's life, she had for all practical purposes two sets of parents. As soon as Grace and Norris returned to New York, it was necessary for them, immediately, to find art work again, and Grace lost no time in heading straight for her old sources of work. Norris had borrowed a small sum of money from his mother and some from Aunt Ada, but they would not be able to rent a flat of their own until they had money coming in. Norris had brought his photographic equipment with him, but there was no room for him to work with it as long as they were staying with Nelle and Roger Fison.

Nelle was enchanted with the baby, and Roger found conversations with Grace and Norris quite fascinating, but the flat was terribly crowded, and everyone was anxious to see the Rahming's located in their own place. Roge and Nelle considered Norris spoiled and lazy, but admitted that he could be very charming and witty when he wished to be.

Grace got work immediately doing magazine covers again, but Norris stayed at home toying with various plans for the future. He might do portrait photography, he might paint landscapes, he might experiment with a new process of printing photographs. He went off with his camera to take photos of the waterfront and the ships. He went to the Palisades to take pictures of rocks and trees, and the Hudson River.

Grace worked hard on her drawings, and Nelle took care of Dee. Nelle had recently gone to two more doctors. They had told her the same as the others. She seemed to be sterile, but there was no apparent cause. She might yet conceive; women sometimes did, after years of waiting.

By the time spring came, Grace and Norris were in their own flat, close to Nelle and Roge's place. Grace was earning a little money regularly, and Norris had sold a picture. Aunt Ada had helped out by sending money when Norris' birthday came on the first of May. Dee's Grandma and Grandpa Martin had given twenty-five dollars to be put into savings for the baby, and Nelle and Roger had given a ten-dollar gold piece. Charlotte (Lottie) Dean, Howd Martin's wife, had crocheted a pair of booties and a bonnet for little Dee. Emma Pritchard Martin (Emmie) had knitted a carriage robe. Frank Stanley (Stan) Martin still had no wife, since divorcing Julia (nee Mraz), but he had gone back to Colorado to be near his three daughters. Nathan Albert Martin

and Ethel (nee Broadwell) had ignored the birth of Grace's baby. Nor had they sent a wedding present. Ethel apparently had no interest in the Martin family.

But Nelle and Roger had fallen in love with little Dee. Nelle sewed dresses and coats for her. She came and took her for her daily carriage strolls, and home to her own flat, so that Grace could get her drawings done in peace. Usually Norris was at home when Nelle came to get Dee, and she would find that while Grace was hard at work on her magazine covers and illustrations. Norris more often was not. He loved to spend his days talking, and Nelle could not see how Grace could possibly get her work done.

"At least," Nelle told Roge, "when I take little Dee off her hands, Grace doesn't have two babies to distract her."

Occasionally, however, Nelle did find Norris at work. He had converted a large clothes closet into a photographic darkroom, and was making many duplicate enlarged prints of the same scene. Then, when the prints were dry and pressed, with sharp knives he cut portions of the pictures out, to form his stencils. From one print he would cut the entire ground area, from another a house, and perhaps a moon and a few pinpoint stars. Then the hard part began. He cut the trees, shrubs, and such things as telegraph poles, from various other prints. When the delicate stencils were finished, he made his pictures by means of thinned-down paint, sprayed through a nasal atomizer, a device which had a small glass jar for the liquid, a long metal tube with mist nozzle, and a rubber hand bulb to squeeze. The paint came out in a fine spray which could be adjusted by turning the nozzle.

Norris chose colored papers for the backgrounds of his scenes. His most effective pictures were on dark colors, deep blues and grays. With light colors he achieved the effects of winter nights with snow on the ground, or city scenes, with lighted buildings against the night sky.

Norris sold a few of these paintings by putting them on consignment in picture galleries. The sold quite readily, but there was a drawback. It took him a long time to make them, and they were rather small, limited to the size of his photographic enlargements. Small pictures by unknown artists do not bring large prices.

Nelle and Roger admired Norris's stencil pictures, bought two smaller ones, and helped Norris make a couple more. The encouraged him to turn out more.

Roge asked, "Don't you think he's got a good thing here, Grace?"

"Perhaps," Grace said, enigmatically, and somewhat uncomfortably.

"But why not, Grace?" asked Nelle. "I think they are very good pictures."

"And they are unusual, too," Roge said. "I've never seen a picture done that way before."

"It's been done before," Grace said. "Norris read about it."

“Well, I’ve never seen any,” Nelle said. “Not anywhere. I think Norris could sell a lot of them.”

“Yes,” Grace said. “And he could make a lot of them too - all from one set of stencils.”

Now Norris spoke up. “What’s wrong with that? A lithographer or an etcher makes a lot of pictures from one original plate. They make a limited printing and then destroy the original. I’ll probably destroy my stencils.”

“Oh, that would be foolish,” Roge said. “They aren’t etchings. You don’t have to follow anybody’s rules, do you?”

“No,” said Norris.

“Grace,” Nelle said, “I get the impression you don’t like Norris’ stencil pictures. I wish you’d explain why. I didn’t go to Art School, but I like them.”

“They’re quite pretty,” Grace said, “but they’re not a pure art form, for one thing. And Norris knows my other objection to them.”

“What’s that, Norris?” Nelle asked.

“It’s sort of private dispute between us,” Norris said.

“Oh pshaw,” Nelle said. “If you two are going to earn a living selling Art to the public, it’s stupid to have private disputes about it. You’ll need money to buy food for your baby.”

Grace bridled. “It’s not that. It’s that an artist shouldn’t compromise his talent by using tricks to get results.”

“What do you mean, ‘tricks’?” Nelle asked Grace.

“I mean that it would be better if Norris wouldn’t use photographs to make his stencils. I’d rather he cut them from original drawings as he used to do.”

“I probably will cut them from drawings in the future,” Norris said. “Just now, I’m refining the technique, you see.”

“I couldn’t do it, with or without photos,” Roge said. “Neither could most people. It seems like an art form to me.”

“Me too,” Nelle said. “Grace, you’re too fussy and highfalutin about Art.”

“Grace is a purist,” Norris explained with a small smile.

Later, Nelle said privately to Grace. “If I were you, I wouldn’t discourage Norris in his efforts. He’s got something started that seems good. Keep him at it. You have to eat you know.”

One morning in June, Nelle arrived at Grace and Norris's flat, with a letter in her hand.

"Did you get a letter from Ma?" Nelle asked Grace.

"No. Our mail never comes this early."

"Well, Ma wrote one to you, too. It's about Grandma Burns. She died, Grace."

"Oh no! Poor, dear sweet Grandma!" Grace began to cry. "Read me the letter."

"All right," Nelle said. "Ma says: - "

"Dear Dotty: Cleveland, June 18, 1911

The life of your dear little grandma went out about four-thirty this morning. I had spent the night with her, lying beside her on her bed. She has failed greatly this past week. It has been very hot for September, and I think the weather oppressed her. Yesterday God told me the end might be near for dear mother, and so I spent the night beside her in case she felt need of me. I prayed that it would be easy for her, but of course I did not pray aloud, lest I frighten her.

You grandma did not voice any complaint but frequently made a tiny moan. And she would reach out her hand at times to pat my hand. I think she did it to reassure me, rather than herself. Oh, daughter, I will miss her sorely. All my life I think I lived in fear of the day my mother would leave us, but I would not wish her back to suffer another minute. She had pain and great weakness I know, but she would never speak of it, so I don't know where she hurt.

Now that grandma is gone, your father wants us to move back to Oberlin. He has been chafing to do so for two years, but had promised me we would stay here while grandma lived, for I was loath to move her. But now she is no longer with us, there seems no reason for staying here. Art does not feel he needs any more schooling, and wishes to marry, but William will go one more year at Oberlin, and may go on to enter the Seminary there. He hasn't yet decided whether a minister's life is for him or not. I would be very proud if he did, however, as my own dear brother William was a preacher, and his life was ended by consumption when he was but forty-five years old, leaving a wife and five children.

"The news of your poor dear sister Emmie is unchanged. She still is not right. Mother Rahming has been trying to treat her in Christian Science, but I guess Emmie and I don't have sufficient Faith. Somehow that thinking escapes me. I know that our Lord Jesus healed, but I am not sure of the powers of others to do as He did. It is my belief that Emmie would be helped if we adopted a little babe for her to care for; I shall investigate that after we move back to Oberlin. Your Pa will sell or rent this house. The College Street house in Oberlin is still rented, so we shall move into rooms in Nate's hotel for a while. Emmie is quite interested in being in Oberlin again. I do so hope it will help her.

William Irving Wooldridge is back in Denver, but writes of moving somewhere else. Poor boy, he is lonesome. Emmie often refuses to see him. I am provoked with her, but know she is still sick in her mind. I must trust in the Lord to heal her.

There is good news of Merle (Marian Martin). She has a fine young lawyer for a beau (Waldo Lemmon), and they are becoming quite serious. I expect them to come to me soon to say they are engaged. I shall be relieved, for Merle is twenty-seven, and more than old enough to start her family. The problem is, I don't see how we could give Merle a nice wedding if Pa and I live at Nate's hotel for a while. I doubt if we will ever move back into the College Street house; it will be much too large for our needs.

Write soon, Nelle. I know you can't come for Grandma's funeral, but will be with us in spirit. Grace couldn't come with that dear baby girl still so small. I must close now, Dotty, and write to Grace and many others.

Much love from

Your Mother."

"Oh my," Grace said. "It makes me so sad to think that Grandma is gone out of this world. She was so sweet, so very sweet, Nelle."

"Yes, she was, in recent years, but I remember her before, Grace, and she used to be very stern."

"Oh, I never think of Grandma as stern, Nelle. She was always kind to people."

"By the time you came along she was getting mellow, Grace. Now, mind you, I'm not saying she wasn't kind. But she was so strict in her religion. If you had troubles, she reasoned that it was the Lord punishing you for something you did."

"I'll never think of God that way," said Grace.

"Grandma was born a long time ago, remember. In the 1820's I think. She was almost like a Puritan, Grace."

"I suppose. Well, anyway, she did mellow."

"Yes, she finally did," Nelle said. "As you say – sweet, very sweet."

Grace and Nelle were getting along very well these days – better than they ever had. The ten-year gap between them seemed for the time being, to have narrowed. Nelle felt sorry for Grace because she had to work so hard at her drawings, but she had a strong suspicion that Grace didn't mind knowing she was the big breadwinner. Norris continued to turn out his stencil pictures, but

it took him so long to produce one that it wasn't very practical. Occasionally, Norris got a small job of portrait photography to do, but for every dollar Norris earned, Grace earned three.

Nelle put down her letter.

"We couldn't possibly have got back home for the funeral," she said.

"No," said Grace, "but Nelle, in spite of feeling sad about Grandma, I am thrilled about Merly, aren't you?"

"Thrilled doesn't begin to express it. I'm so happy for her. I know she was sure she'd be an old maid. She thinks she's not pretty."

"I know. She hates her nose and her hair."

"Yes, and she's twenty-six years old. But I was twenty-seven when I married Roge."

"Ah, yes, but you weren't an old maid. You'd been married before. Divorcees attract men more than spinsters."

"Everyone didn't know about that, kid - Roge didn't."

"Roge didn't! You didn't tell him?"

"Not right away," Nelle quickly changed the subject. "Grace! I have a great idea. Let's have the wedding for Merly here!"



"Grace laughed. "Nelle! She isn't even engaged for sure."

"Oh, I just know that this is it. I just know it."

"But why would she want to be married here and not at home, Nelle?"

"Why not? We can give her a lovely party. And they can see New York for their honeymoon."

"I'll bet Merly would like that. Oh, wouldn't it be fun! Oh, but Nelle, what about poor mother? That wouldn't be fair to her. She always wanted to give all us girls nice weddings, and she's never been able to. Emmie's reception was at Stan and Julia's, and you got married in Denver, and I in New York."

“Well, Ma and Pa will come, of course, Grace. Then they can go and visit in Milford before they go back to Oberlin.”

“Mother would love that, but there are some questions involved before we can plan on it at all. First, Merly has to get definitely engaged to her beau and want to be married in New York, and second, Norr and I have to get some money saved so we can help pay for the reception.”

“Oh, don’t worry about that, kid. Roge and I will pay. Oh, for that matter, Ma and Pa will want to pay. They’ll insist in fact.”

“But right now I wouldn’t even have money to buy Merly a wedding gift, Nelle. Norris says he needs money for a new camera.”

“Let him earn and save his own money for a new camera. He’s always getting money from you for something he wants.”

“I know, Nelle, but he says he can make more money if he has a better camera.”

“Do you think that’s really true, Grace?”



“Well, it’s true that the camera he has is limited in what it can do. He wants a Graflex. He wants it so bad it’s all he can think about.”

“Isn’t it Norris that’s limited, Grace, not the camera?”

“No! No, he isn’t, Nelle. He’s plenty smart and he has quite a lot of talent. He’s just not used to getting himself down to hard work. Mother Rahming catered to him always, and I can’t change him of a sudden.”

“It’s been almost three years, Grace. Do you think you ever will change him?”

“Oh yes. It takes time. You can’t undo a boy’s upbringing just overnight. He’s got to grow up a little. Life teaches us lessons, hard lessons, and we have to grow up to survive.”

“My, but you’re a philosopher, kid. Personally, I don’t think people ever change much. Roge hasn’t changed since I married him, and that’s seven years now.”

“I didn’t know you wanted Roge to change, Nelle. I thought he was just about flawless.”

Nelle gave the characteristic unfeminine guffaw she was famous for. “HA, Ha. hA, ha. No, he isn’t flawless. No one is. And it’s only when you get married that you truly realize it, kid.”

Grace wished Nelle wouldn’t say ‘kid’. It seemed rather common.

Nelle went on. “I’ll tell you what Roge is, he’s prudish. It comes from being a minister’s son I daresay. And he has a quick violent temper. It’s unexpected. All of a sudden something outrages

him, and he slams a door, or throws something. It's almost funny. It is funny. Mostly Roge is amiable."

"Norris has a bad temper, too. He gets furious and shouts at me and stamps his foot and pounds his fist."

"Oh, his temper's different from Roge's. Now, tell me the truth, kid. Norris has tantrums when he doesn't get things his own way, isn't that true?"

"Well, yes, but that's because he's spoiled. He always did that at home, and it worked, you see, with his mother. Well, it won't work with me, Nelle."

"It won't, eh?"

"No."

"Well, Roge isn't spoiled. His temper isn't that kind. It's connected with his prudery. Anyway, he's a good man. I love him."

"I love Norris, too," Grace said softly. Even if he is naughty. He's fun to live with most of the time."

Grace and Nelle both immediately wrote to Maria to comfort her in her grief for her mother's death. But they each wrote long bubbling letters to Merly, asking her about her new beau and sounding her out about a wedding in New York City. And she must describe the new man in her life for them, "down to the most minute detail."

Merly wrote back that he was not a "new" man in her life, since there had been no others, and also he was not "new" because she had known him before at the revival meetings in Oberlin in past summers. He was her old friend Waldo Lemmon who had wanted to be a missionary when he was young, but had studied law instead. They were not engaged yet, but planned to be, at Christmas time. Waldo wanted to have more money saved for a ring etc., and so they could rent a nice furnished flat. He would practice law in Cleveland. She said she couldn't describe him down to the last detail; she'd never even seen him in a bathing suit (ha ha), but he had wavy brown hair and grey eyes. He wore glasses and not only looked studious, but was. He was witty and could sing.

As for getting married in New York, that sounded very exciting. She had confided the idea to Betty Long, and Betty had seized upon it at once. She was dying to visit there again. Well, time would tell. It would be a matter of how much money they had for a wedding trip, and so on. Meanwhile, Father and Mother were getting the home ready to rent. Stan was there again, doing painting and paper hanging for Father, to repay some of the money he owed him. Stan was so handy at everything. He had given up the idea of going back to Denver to stay, even though he

missed his daughters. He had a new lady friend, a woman named Bertha (Mary Alberta). He was serious about her, and he got furious when Art asked him, "How's your fancy lady?"

Oh, and by the way, Merly's letter went on to say, Art was practically engaged too, only Father and Mother felt he didn't have enough income to get married. He had tried his hand at being a salesman of various things, but didn't earn much. He wanted Father to give him the money to buy his girl and engagement ring. Father hadn't given in yet, but probably would. He always did give in to Art. Art had a plan for Father to build a moving picture house in Oberlin. Father was giving the matter some thought, but he would prefer to have Art get married and go out to Royalton and run the farm. Art was dead set against that and so was his girl, Jeanne, who could play piano pretty well, and volunteered to play in the moving picture house if they got it. Maybe that wasn't such a bad idea; what did Nelle and Grace think?

When Christmas came, Merly got her engagement ring and the plans were tentatively made for the wedding. It was to be the end of March, and in New York, probably in the famous "Little Church Around the Corner" That would mean an April honeymoon. Merly loved springtime best of any season. She and Maria would go to New York two or three weeks early and stay with Nelle, and the three of them would sew Merly's trousseau. Nelle sewed like a professional. Betty Long and maybe Ethie Rahming would come later and stay with Grace and Norr, and last of all Father Martin and Waldo Lemmon would come a day or two before the wedding. They could stay at a hotel or with Edna and Earl Olive Hurst (Ted).

After the wedding, Maria and Henry Martin would go to Milford in Connecticut to visit Maria's relatives, and then home to Oberlin. The newlyweds would go home to Cleveland by way of Niagara Falls, after sight-seeing in New York. Betty and Ethie would stay a few more days with Grace and Norr.

Everyone was thrilled with the prospect of the festivities, but when March came it was necessary to change the plan. Maria's rheumatism was so bad in her ankles that she could not make the trip. During the move from Cleveland to Oberlin, she had spent long days on her feet packing up the family belongings. There were things of Nelle's and Grace's to be shipped to them, things to be stored for Merly, and for Bill, still unmarried. Art, a newlywed now, must be summoned to get his boyhood possessions such as a violin, baseball bats, out-of-season clothes, and other odds and ends he had left at home. He and his wife, Jeanne, were presently living with her folks. Art was still trying to persuade his father to build a moving picture house in Oberlin, but Old Henry was hesitant. Meanwhile, Art had a job as a projectionist at a Cleveland theater.

After the house on Cartwright Street was rented, Henry and Maria settled for the remainder of the winter at Nate's new hotel in the center of Oberlin. It had been built on a parcel of land which was part of a property known locally at the Martin Block." Much of the block Old Henry still owned. It contained an office building and several stores which fronted on the town's

secondary through street, and on Main Street with more stores, and the new hotel which had been built on the site of a livery stable and smithy. Old Henry had been persuaded by Nate to have the hotel built. The college was growing and there were always parents in town visiting students or looking the college over to see if it would suit for their offspring.

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The Martin hotel was right on the corner of Main Street and College Street. It looked out on the southeast corner of the campus. The building was three stories high, with a lobby, rest-rooms, a dining room and kitchen on the first floor. The two remaining floors had eighteen rooms each, with two baths for ladies, and two for gentlemen on each floor. It was the second hotel in town, and the most modern.

Henry gave Nate to understand that he wanted the second floor corner room and the one next to it, for himself and Maria. They'd use one for a sitting room and one for a bedroom. The two rooms were handy to one of the ladies' bathrooms.

Nate was a bit upset that his father wanted those particular rooms. Ethel, or more often her spinster sister, Eva, assigned the rooms to hotel guests, and the corner rooms brought higher rates, especially the one on the second floor. Eva usually rented those to their more affluent guests.

"Eva saves those rooms, Pa," Nate said.

"Saves them for what?"

"For special people that come to town, college speakers sometimes. People like that."

Henry was angry. "You listen here, Nate. My money built this here hotel, and you ain't paid a cent back yet. And I'll have you to understand that your own mother is a 'special person.' She's got such bad rheumatism in her feet and knees right now, that she couldn't walk up to the third floor. I've got to have her on the second floor."

"Well, but you and Ma don't need the corner room necessarily, Pa. You could take one nearer the stairway. That'd be handy for –"

"Look here!" Henry raised his voice and his dark eyes snapped. "I want the corner room. Understand? Your Ma can sit by the window and see what's going on at the corners. And so can I. I built a good deal of this town, and now I'm getting older. I got a right to set and watch things when I've got a mind to. And your Ma don't get around well at all. I'm not even sure she'll always come down to the dining room for her meals. Likely, I'll have a tray brought up to her at least for her breakfast. Mornings are the worst for her feet. I'd figured to pay cash for our meals downstairs and let you take our room charges off what you owe me on the mortgage, but, by damn, I think you ought to furnish your Ma and me with all of it, meals and all. I could have that money invested where it would be bringing me in some return. This loan to you is no damn investment for me."

"Pa," Nate said, his face red. "Don't talk so loud, Pa. I'm sorry. I didn't know Ma's knees were so bad, Pa."

“It’s her feet now.”

“All right. Her feet. But I didn’t know, Pa. You and Ma can have the rooms you want. It’s all right with me.”

“It’s small enough payment on the mortgage,” Henry grumbled.

“I know. And you can have your meals free, too.”

“It’s not free, Nate! It’s payment on what you owe me, damn it!”

“All right, Pa. That’s what I meant.”

“Well, anyway. I said I’ll pay out of my pocket for meals. Your sour-face sister-in-law would never keep proper track of all them piddly little bills for meals.”

“Pa, what about Emmie? Does Emmie need a room too?”

“Emmie’ll be staying with Stan and Bertha for a while.”

“I didn’t know Stan’d married her yet.”

“You got your invitation. Your Ma was upset because you and Ethel wasn’t at the wedding.” Henry’s grammar invariably deteriorated when he was annoyed, as it also had when he was on the farm talking to his hired help. “Your Ma asked Bertha if they sent you an invitation and Bertha said they surely had.”

“Well, I never heard anything about it, Pa.”

“Your wife probably never bothered to tell you about it.”

“I guess not. How come they had a wedding?”

“Why not?”

“Well, after all, Pa. Stan’s been married and got three kids.”

“Bertha’s not been married before, though.”

“That’s what counts, eh?”

“So I understand. I don’t know much about these things, Nate. Anyway, it was just a small wedding in a little church, and a party at Bertha’s brother’s house after.”

“Is she pretty?”

“Who, Bertha? No.”

Nate laughed. "That's so funny the way you said that. 'No.' Just like that, 'No'."

"Well, she's not much for looks. Just hope he'll be happy with her. Anything would be better after that Julia."

"Yeah, you're right. So Emmie's going to be with them?"

"For a while if she gets along all right. She's still not the way she ought to be in her mind. In some ways normal, other ways not."

"How do you mean?"

"She says funny things. Stays in bed all day if she feels like it. Bakes bread in the middle of the night sometimes."

"She could have a room here if she wants, Pa."

"No, we wouldn't want to take three rooms here."

"Aw, we never have 'em all filled, Pa."

"No, it's not only that. Ethel and her sister might get upset by Emmie. She might do something odd, then they'd be mad at her or mad at us. Frankly, Nate, you got to admit your wife don't especially like our family."

Nate looked uncomfortable. "Pa, it's not just us. Ethel's family don't like anyone much but themselves."

"Well, we aren't going to stay here real long. Just till winter's over and your Ma's feet get better, and she's rested up from moving. In the spring we'll find a house, or build one."

"Not going back to the old one on College Street?"

"It's too big, Nate."

"Well, stay here as long as you want, Pa. Never mind Ethel or Eva or what they say."

"It's how they look, Nate."

"Yeah, I know. They forgot how to smile."

####

In early April, 1912, Nelle wrote to Maria:

Dear Ma,

I promised you I would write you a full account of Merly's wedding, so here it is. Pa was right to insist that you not make the trip. Believe me, Ma dear, we all appreciated how very much you wanted to be there, but as Pa says, we can't take chances with your health. You are too precious to all of us.

If Merly had been married back home, you could have been there, but you'd have had all responsibility, which would have been hard on you too. It's just as well she got married in New York, though Merly irks me a little the way she always seems to be following wherever Grace leads. One thing I will say, I think she's landed herself a much better husband than Grace's spoiled brat of a Norris. Ma, Grace is supporting that man! Almost every time Roge and I drop in on them, Grace is working, and Norris is doing nothing. Roge wouldn't let me work like Grace. And, we don't seem to be able to have children. If that is the Lord's will, I don't understand his ways.

Here I am, forgetting to tell you about Merly's wedding. As you know, they were married in The Little Church Around the Corner. Merly looked very pretty, but she was quite teary because you and Pa and Emma couldn't be there.

After the ceremony we all went back to Grace and Norris' flat for a wedding dinner. Grace cooked a very good meal, and Norris had got some champagne somewhere, and it was all very festive. Norris can be very charming when it suits him to be. He was that way all evening. Another couple, Ted and Edna Hurst (artist friends of Grace and Norris), were there. They are nice, and are Norr and Grace's best friends. They went to Cleveland Art School too.

The evening had a funny ending. It seemed that Ted Hurst smokes cigarettes, and someone remarked that even women are taking to smoking these days. Just for a joke Ted offered cigarettes from his package to all us girls. Well, what do you think happened then? Merly reached out (just for a joke, too) and took one and put it to her lips, and said, "How do I look?" Waldo was very angry, and he said to Merly, "If you light that, don't expect me to sleep with you tonight." At that point, Roger, with his quick temper, stood up and grabbed the edge of Grace's dinner table and overturned it, and all of the china and glassware went smashing onto the floor. We all sat there stunned for a few seconds, and Roge and Waldo looked very sheepish because Merly burst into tears, and said, "What's the matter with you men? Don't you know a joke?" And Grace told them they were outrageously prudish, and I told them they were very childish, and Norris said it must be the champagne was powerful.

After a while everyone got calmed down, and Ted Hurst and Norris loaded all the broken dishes and glasses into two suitcases and took them down to the alley to dispose of them. They kept pretending it was the parts of a corpse they had to bury. They were so funny we all laughed and laughed, and finally Roger and Waldo joined in, and then of course the newlyweds left for their little trip, so all was well that ended well.

Now I must close this, Ma dear. Do let me know about Emmie and if you still plan to get a baby for her. Perhaps that is the answer for me.

Speaking of babies, I have been helping Grace with little Dee. Norris does some of her errands for her (deliveries and so on). Isn't it awful that he can't support her without her having to work? She says she likes her work, but Norris simply must get busy. I hope everything will be all right. I must close now.

Much Love from

Nelle



GRACE MARTIN RAHMING
"ISABEL HEDGES NORTH"

ABOUT 1912

DON'T GIVE UP ON HIM YET

By the time Merly had been married a year, Nelle and Roge had left New York City and moved to Vermont. Roge had tired of life in the city, and gone back to telegraphy and writing short stories.

For Grace, Nelle's going made a problem. She had to devote her time to caring for Dee entirely by herself, with occasional help from Norris. They found themselves in more and more financial trouble. Grace had one dependable publisher who used her drawings regularly, but it didn't bring in enough to support them, and Norris only rarely sold his pictures, although they were always admired.

"I don't know if there's a living to be made in fine art," he said.

"Of course there is, Grace declared. "Other people do."

Suddenly he was seized with the desire to go back to Cleveland.

"Let's go home."

"This is our home."

"I mean got back to Cleveland. I'm homesick."

"Homesick? You're a grown man!"

"You don't have to be a child to be homesick."

"But it's childish, not to be able to conquer homesickness."

"I haven't seen my mother in two years. Wouldn't you like to see your folks too?"

"Certainly, but we can't afford it, Norr."

"I'll borrow the money from Mother and Aunt Ada."

"Don't you feel ashamed to speak of borrowing money from them again?"

"If my mother were to send me money it would be a gift to herself as well as to me."

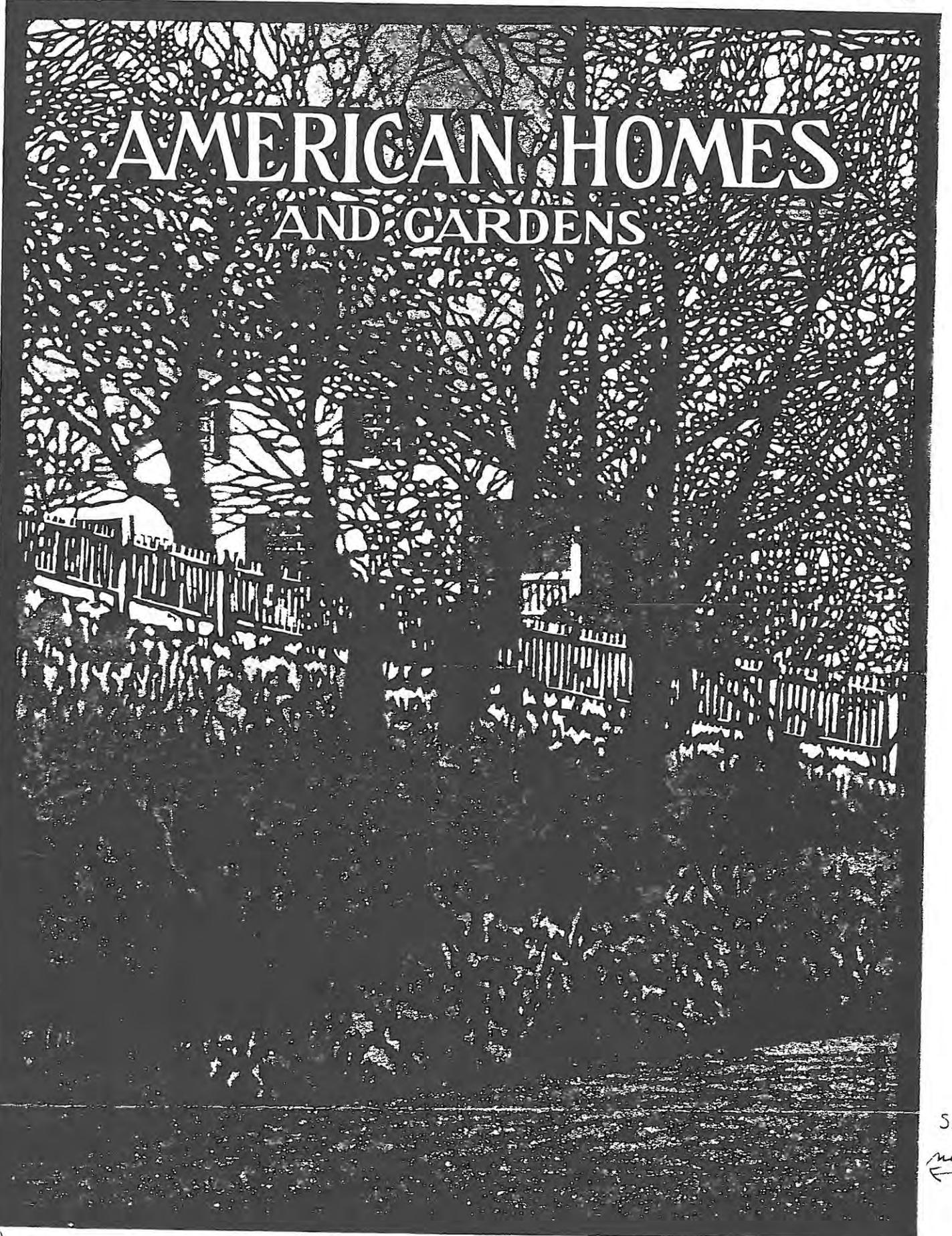
"Oh, Norr! Such an ego you have."

"Mother's longing to see me. She'll gladly send me the money for fare. Or else Aunt Ada will."

"And she's longing to see you too, I suppose."

Roses Everyone May Grow—A Treasure House of Colonial Days

AMERICAN HOMES AND GARDENS



See
name
←

APRIL, 1914
XI. No. 4

MUNN & CO., Inc., Publishers
NEW YORK, N. Y.
One of "Matt's" covers

PRICE, 25 CENTS
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4691

“Aunt Ada’s always been good to me.

“Of course. She’s good to everyone. You shouldn’t take advantage. And you would go home and leave me here, wouldn’t you.”

“You can follow up, after I get a job in Cleveland. I’ll get a job right away.”

“Well, if you can get a job so fast, why haven’t you got one here in New York?”

“I know more people in Cleveland.”

“You’re leaving because we owe a lot of bills, that’s what. And you know I have another cover to do, and maybe two. I couldn’t just leave and go back home with you.”

“Forget the covers. Let’s just go. The more I think about it, the better it sounds. In fact, I don’t want to spend one more day in this town than I have to. I’ll telegraph Mother for the money today. And we’ll wire your folks for money for you.”

“Norr, I will not do that! I’ll stay and do my covers. And I won’t run out on the bills. The landlord is going to stop again this Saturday. If my check for the last cover isn’t here by then, I don’t know what I’ll tell him.”

“Tell him I’ve gone to Cleveland for a job. I’ll pay him later.”

When Saturday came, Norris was gone. Grace had refused to come to Grand Central with him to see him off. She had turned her face away when he tried to kiss her goodbye. “I’ll write to you tomorrow,” he’d said. She did not answer him. She watched him from the window as he went down the street with his suitcase. Twice he turned and waved to her, but she did not wave back.

Saturday afternoon, Mr. Buddig, the landlord, came to collect. Grace hesitated before opening the door, and then just stood there looking at him. She would make him speak first.

“I’m here, Mrs. Rahming.” He was a rather elderly man and not unkind looking.

“I see your are, Mr. Buddig. Well, I have to tell you I’m still waiting for my check. I thought surely it would come today.”

“You said that last week, Mrs. Rahming.”

“I know, but it’s money that’s owed to me. And I’ve got more work to do right now. I’ve got more money that will be coming in.”

“What on earth does your husband do, lady?”

“We’re both artists, Mr. Buddig, but my husband just hasn’t had much work lately. I’ll be real honest with you. He’s gone home to Cleveland to get a job there. And then I’m going there too. But not before I finish my work here and get paid, and settle my bills.”

“So the mister just took off and left you with the bills, did he?”

“He decided the wisest thing was to go home and find steady work.”

“I’ll give you another week, Mrs. Rahming, to pay me last month’s rent. If you don’t have it then, you’ll have to move out.”

“I’ll be moving out in any case. I can always get the money I need from my parents, but I’d rather not borrow from them. I prefer to wait for the money that’s owing to me.”

“Who’s going to help you now, lady, not that the mister took off?”

“I have friends that will help me. Relatives, too.”

“Well, your mister shouldn’t have gone off and left it all for you. And you with the little child, too. One week more. All right, Mrs. Rahming?”

“All right.” Grace closed the door.

She tiptoed to the bedroom. Dee was still napping, wearing the cotton mittens that Grace always tied to her hands to prevent thumb-sucking. Grace closed the door. She went to the window and looked out at the street. It had been sunshiny yesterday, but today was rainy and depressing. With Dee asleep and Norris gone, the flat was quiet and suddenly frightening. When nighttime came it would be unbearable. Norris was a spoiled mother’s boy about many things, but he was brave about things like rats and prowlers. Tonight she would push a chest of drawers in front of the door to the hallway. How could Norris have left her to stay here alone! He knew that Nelle and Roge were gone. They were the only ones that she could have turned to if some kind of trouble came up - the only ones that she would turn to. Nelle was her sister. Nelle would always come if she needed her. If she got sick, for instance, or if Dee did. Nelle, if she were here, would come and take care of Dee while she, Grace, got her art work finished, and Nelle’d watch Dee while Grace took the work into the publisher when it was finished. Norris knew there’d be problems like that when he was gone, and he hadn’t cared! He’d just gone anyway. He knew she couldn’t ask Ted and Edna Hurst to help her. They both were busy, Edna with her art classes in schools, and Ted with his illustrating work to do. Norris knew she had no one to help her out. And he’d gone home because he missed his mother! Grace began to cry hot tears of rage. She cried for more than ten minutes, till her face was red and swollen, and her tears turned from anger to despair. She had thought, with his high ideals, and all the fine books he’d read, that Norris would turn into a wonderful person. But now she knew he would never, never grow up. When adversity came, he turned and ran.

Just then a knock came at her door. Grace turned and wiped her eyes. Maybe she should ignore it. But no, maybe it was a special delivery letter from Norris. No, too soon for that, she supposed. For a moment she was afraid to open the door, her feeling of aloneness growing.

The Knock came again. "Who is it?" She didn't open the door.

"It's us. Ted and Edna."

Grace opened the door.

"Why, Grace," Edna cried, "you've been crying. You poor dear!"

"We talked to your landlord downstairs. He said Norris had gone somewhere. What's it all about?"

"He's gone to Cleveland."

"For a visit?" asked Edna.

"No, he says he'll get work there, and then he'll send for us."

"Why did your landlord say Norris had 'skipped out'?" Ted asked.

"Because we're behind in our rent, and Mr. Buddig thinks Norris shouldn't have left me with everything to worry about alone."

"He certainly shouldn't have! Mr. Buddig is right and it makes me mad!" Edna had her arm around Grace's shoulders. "What work is he going to get in Cleveland that he can't get here in New York?"

"Well, he says that he knows more—" Grace began, but Ted interrupted her. "Do you have other bills, Grace, besides the rent?"

"Yes, of course we do. Things haven't been going very well lately. Norr's not being doing much. He's lost interest in his stencil pictures, because it's such slow work, and he can't seem to get started on anything else. Some days he thinks he wants to be a commercial photographer, other days he wants to be a landscape painter. He seems to be all mixed up in his mind, and he keeps on talking to me about it, and it distracts me from my own work, and makes me nervous."

"What about your work, Grace," Edna asked, "how's it going?"

"I've got two covers to do for the magazine. I've started one, but I got so upset when Norr left I haven't been back to it since. The trouble is, I can't get much work done with Dee at her present age. She'll be two in November, and she's forever climbing up on chairs and getting into my paints and brushes. I wish Nelle hadn't moved to Vermont. She came and took Dee for three hours every day. It was a godsend."

“Grace, how much money do you need?” Ted asked.

“I don’t know, Ted. I can always write and get it from my mother. I didn’t want to do that, though. I’ve got a check coming any day.”

“To cover what you owe now?”

“No.”

“How much do you owe now?”

“About sixty dollars.”

“Grace, I’m doing to lend you a hundred dollars so you can pay your rent and whatever.”

“Oh, no, you aren’t, Ted?” Grace protested.

“Yes, I am. You’ll work better when you aren’t upset about money. Then when Norris gets work back home, you can join him. We’ll help you pack. We’ll miss you Grace, but Norris’ got to start taking hold. Maybe he will do better back in Cleveland. Some people are happier in their home town, and some can’t work when they’re unhappy.”

“He was born in Brooklyn,” Grace said.

“That doesn’t count. He’s a Clevelander. It’s all he remembers. I think he may have been a little afraid of New York, Grace.”

“It was his idea to follow me here,” Grace said.

“He loves you,” Edna said.

“I’m not so sure,” Grace’s eyes filled with tears.

“Oh yes, he does,” Ted said. “But he’s selfish. And when you consider his mother and the way she dotes on him, it’s a wonder he does as well as he does. He’d never have run off and left you to face the landlord if she hadn’t coddled him so much. It was a scoundrel’s trick, really. But he’s never had to face up to unpleasant things before.”

“He’s going to have to,” Grace said darkly. “I don’t know whether to go home to him in Cleveland, or to go home to my parents in Oberlin. They took Nelle back home when she made a bad marriage. Maybe they’d take me in too. In fact, I know they would. I’m ready to give up on Norris Rahming.”

“Don’t give up on him yet,” Ted said. “Give him a chance to succeed in Cleveland. He might be a bigger fish in a little puddle. There are so many artists in New York, and lots of them are hungry.”

“But there are more publishers in New York,” Grace argued.

“Maybe Norris isn’t cut out to do illustrations, Grace. That’s your field apparently. It may not be Norr’s.”

“The thing is,” said Edna, “what are you going to do about Dee? I’d like to help but I don’t see how I can, Grace. Doesn’t Norris have an Aunt Georgiana living in New York? Could she help, while you do your covers?”

“Oh, my, she lives way over in Brooklyn. That’s too long a ride. Besides, she’s not so young anymore. I’ll manage to get my drawings done.”

“And you will accept my check as a loan?”

“As a loan, yes. As a short term loan. And I’m writing a certain young man a long letter tonight.”

####

Cartwright Street had changed little in the years that Henry Rahming had been walking home from the Grand Avenue streetcar. He no longer had to walk the five blocks across 75th Street, because a cross-town trolley line had been installed on 73rd Street. A transfer cost only a penny, and it was a welcome ride to Henry when he was tired. It meant a longer walk on Cartwright Avenue, but the sycamore trees were fully grown now and it was a pleasant shady walk in the summer time. In winter when he walked home in the dark, he liked seeing the warm light from the living room lamps shining out on the snow. The people who lived on Cartwright Street, while not the wealthiest in all Cleveland, nonetheless represented for Henry a level of success he had once felt was within his reach. He hadn't aspired to anything higher, because he'd been quite certain that this degree of comfort and security amounted to a man's 'fair share' of the world's riches. He worried about fortunes like the Rockefeller's. He did not really feel that they were morally wrong, but he felt that a man with money like that probably wouldn't sleep well at night. It would make him nervous. Could he drive in his expensive automobiles past the shabby homes of the poor? Rockefeller could, apparently, perhaps because of gifts to charity, but Henry didn't think he could be that rich without being worried about it. But to live in one of the better houses on Cartwright Street, to have, say, six good-quality suits to wear, and to have (if he were a bit younger) an automobile – that was not an unreasonable aspiration.

John's house was smaller than others on Cartwright Street, and he still paid rent after all these years. And now, with Norris grown up and gone these last five years, he'd had to mow the lawn. He would have been grateful if he had been able to hire a few things like that done. They did have a wash lady who came Fridays. One thing Rosella could never say was that she'd had to scrub and iron clothes. There'd always been a wash lady. For that matter, there had almost always been his sister-in-law Ada, and later on, Ethel. Rosella never had much money to fling around on frivolous things, but she'd never had to ruin her hands in hot soapy water.

It was winter now, and a long time before the lawn would need mowing. Many mornings now he had to shovel snow off the walks before he went to work. It always gave him pains in his chest when he shoveled snow. It seemed to be because he breathed in the sharp cold air so fast. Winters seemed so much longer here in Cleveland than they had in New York City. The presence of the Lake made more snow too, they said. Norris had always done the snow shoveling since he'd been about twelve years old. It was strange about Norris; he'd been a difficult boy to raise, what with tempers and sulks, and his mother babying him so, but he really wasn't a lazy boy. He'd been very mechanical, good with tools, and always making repairs around the house. He was the kind of person that was either being exemplary or plain terrible.

Henry was walking home this winter evening, thinking about Matthew's marriage, and wondering how it was doing after more than four years. Norris was going to be twenty-seven this May. Henry had the gloomy feeling that his son wasn't going to be any better at making money than he himself had been. He knew that Rosella and Ada had both lent Norris money several

times since he'd been married. It would be a pity if that marriage didn't work out well. Grace was a nice young woman, Henry thought, and her family was all good people too, her mother especially. Henry had never met a person who seemed more sympathetic and kind than Mother Martin. She was a truly religious woman, not one who merely professed to be.

The Martins were gone from Cartwright Street now. They'd gone back to Oberlin. That was hard on Ada for she'd found Maria Martin such a good friend. And, of course, Ethel missed Merly Martin, but then, Merly was married now, and that made a difference. Ethel did see Merly once in a while, because she and her husband lived in Cleveland. Merly was expecting a baby, they said. Poor Ethel! Almost all her friends were married now. Not Betty Long, of course, but Better did have beaux that took her places, and she seemed to have enough money to go to New York once in a while to visit Grace and Norris, and their friends, the Hurst's.

Henry knew the names of many of the neighbors because Ada was acquainted with them, or Norris and Ethie had played with their children when they were young. Like the Roby's. He was passing their house right now. Their children were all grown up and married now. They'd had three boys and a girl. They'd sent them all to good colleges. Then the children had married and left. But the oldest son, Luther Roby, Jr., who was a few years older than Norris, was living at home again, because his young wife had died in childbirth. Luther Roby, Jr. had brought the baby home to his mother for her to look after while he tried to get over his grief. The senior Roby's, who were better off than most folks on Cartwright Street, had hired a nurse to take care of little Luther, III, who was about a year and a half old now. Sometimes on Sunday, Henry used to see him out in his perambulator with the nurse. Henry thought that the Roby's would probably move away from Cartwright Street one of these days, perhaps into Cleveland Heights and exclusive area building up on the Southeast side of Cleveland. Roby's owned an automobile, but the old man rarely drove it. He usually let his son drive for him. They went downtown every day to the Roby Company, a metal foundry located in the flat land by the river. The Roby's had sent each of their sons to Yale University. Their daughter had gone to Smith College.

Two houses past the Roby's house, Henry crossed Price Boulevard, a divided, curving thoroughway that rambled across Cleveland's named avenues and numbered streets at an angle, ending up finally at Lakefront Park, and passing through the other park areas on the way. On the corner of Price Boulevard and Cartwright Street stood the Semon home, and through Ada, Henry also knew about the Semon family. Mrs. Semon was a well-to-do widow, who'd had four children, all sons. The Semon boys could have all gone to college too, but only two of them chose to. One became an engineer, the other a drunkard. Of the other two, one married a girl whose father owned a clothing store, and he went to work there. The other one, the eldest, stayed at home with his mother. Carle was different from his brothers. He was quiet, shy and artistic. He had attended Cleveland Art Institute at the same time as Norris and Grace and their friends, though he was ten or twelve years older than they. Like Norris, Carle Semon was interested in photography. They had made one or two camera trips together. Ada Norris sometimes walked home from the Episcopal Church with Mrs. Semon, and she learned that Carle had been "quite

interested” in Grace when she was in Art School. Mrs. Semon had commented that Carle was really not the marrying type. Ada told her family that Mrs. Semon was counting on Carle’s remaining a bachelor and living with her. He was “quite contented” his mother said. Henry had said, “How does she know he’s contented? How does she know he’s not the marrying type? Nobody knows what goes on in the mind of another person. They think they do, but they don’t.”

Further down the street lived another family, whose acquaintance Ada had made in her walks to the grocery store. “They’re foreign,” Ada had said, “but very nice; they don’t speak with an accent. The woman is German, and her husband is Hungarian, I think. She seems to be a very talented person; she’s done so many things herself. She showed me the garden in her back yard once. It’s beautiful, with tall shade trees, and violets and lilies of the valley, and she’s made a little pond for goldfish. She’s the busiest person I’ve ever seen. She paints pictures and china, and knits and crochets. Of course, she hasn’t any children, so I suppose that’s one reason why she does so many things. She has her father living with her, and he isn’t very well; her husband isn’t either, for that matter. He was wounded during the war when he was in the Philippines.”

It was always through Ada that Henry learned these bits of information about the neighbors. Rosella’s circle was limited to her Christian Science friends and patients. Ethie’s life was taken up entirely by her job, and going to church with her mother on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings.

Until lately Henry had listened with interest to Ada’s accounts of the various neighbors and their children and doings. But more and more, Henry seemed to be in an absentminded trance when he was at home. He was always at home on Sundays, but no longer attended church. He had agreed long ago to Rosella’s request that he read Mary Baker Eddy’s textbook on Christian Science. He tried it, but he found it “rather heavy going.” He said that it was at least a sure way to get to sleep at night if one suffered from insomnia. Ada had laughed and said she was inclined to agree with him; the book was not easy to read. Rosella expressed dismay at both of them. She said that she found “Science and Health” a book she could read “anywhere at any time and derive great comfort from it.”

But she had stopped objecting when Ada or Henry went to St. Paul’s. They said they went “for old times’ sake” and Rosella decided that it would not conflict with her practice of Christian Science. She had tried in vain to get them to go to her own church, but they refused, saying that while they did not disagree with it, they did not feel at home there. They were too old to change. Rosella felt she could have triumphed over either one of them alone, but they reinforced each other’s stubbornness, she was sure.

Rosella at this time could not possibly have dreamed how far from his original devotion to religion and righteousness her husband had drifted. The main thought that filled his mind now, awake and asleep, was how he might find more time and means to be with the woman he loved more than any other person, the woman who was not his wife. Nights like this when he had

walked in the winter darkness for several blocks, his toes were beginning to ache with cold. Sometimes on such nights he thought of his boyhood in Nassau in the Bahamas, where there were palm trees, and warm sand beaches. Strange to think that he had originated in such a place, and now he must wipe the snow from his cold feet.

He entered his house and closed the door, hung up his hat, coat, and muffler, and stood on the warm-air floor register rubbing his cold hands together. The rising heat went up his trouser legs and he stopped shivering.

Rosella usually came into the entryway when she heard him arrive if she was not busy in the sitting room talking in muted tones to one of her patients. On the evenings when she was free to greet him, Rosella gave him a quick kiss which usually was a light touch of her cheek to his.

“Good evening, dear”, she would say, pronouncing ‘dear’ in her lingering Eastern accent, ‘dee-uh.’ Neither she nor Ada had lost any of their native way of speech, each of them adding an ‘r’ sound to the end of their names.

“Ada says that dinnuh will be ready at quarter after six.” This announcement was also routine, and whether he had been home the night before or not, Rosella’s greeting seldom varied. She was not interested in his out-of-town trips, accepting his statements on certain days that he would be in Buffalo, or Detroit, or perhaps Pittsburgh.

Tonight Rosella’s greeting was different.

“John! I got a telegram from Norrie! He’s coming home. He’ll be here on the morning train.”

“Why?”

“Why?”

“Why is he coming home? Is he coming alone? What’s the reason?”

“He’s going to find work in Cleveland. Isn’t that wonderful?”

“I’m not sure it is.”

“Why, John, how can you say that? I’ve missed him so.”

“I know. Well, I hope it doesn’t mean trouble.”

“Now, John, you shouldn’t express thoughts like that, of course it doesn’t mean trouble.”

“Well, why isn’t Grace coming with him?”

“You’re just like Ada! That’s the first thing she said. He’s coming first so that he’ll have work by the time Grace comes.”

“And when is that?”

“I don’t know. He’ll tell us when he gets here.”

“Well, let’s hope for the best,” he said. “I’ll be in my room till dinner time. I’m going to wash up now.”

GRATITUDE IS AN UNPLEASANT EMOTION

Henry and Maria Martin had been living in the Martin Inn for nearly a year. Henry was thoroughly sick of the arrangement, and Maria was reading the Chapter of Job in her Bible more and more often. For Henry the main annoyance was that he had never in his life been so cooped-up and confined. They had two of the hotel's better rooms, rooms that looked down on the principal intersection of Oberlin. Though he could watch the comings and goings of the town's permanent residents, and the seasonal college students, Henry was nevertheless restless and irritable. Maria's favorite chair was placed so that she could see west down College street, and out across the expanse of the campus. White now with fresh snow, but in summer, one of the most beautifully kept plots of grass in the country. Maria preferred to watch the continual flow of student traffic, girls and young men in bright colors, sometimes walking, more often on bicycles. Henry liked to stand at the other window, one that faced the south. He could look either east or west on College Street or far down South Main Street. The town's principal bank was directly across from him, and across Main Street, the best drugstore. Though he would soon be seventy-two, Henry still knew most of the permanent white residents of Oberlin. There was a colored section south of the town, and of course he knew only a few of those folks, and there were the college students, and ever-changing population. But Henry knew so many of the older families in town that he could stand at the window and give Maria a running commentary on the passersby. But many days it bored him to stand and look out the window. If it was a pleasant day he'd rather walk down South Main Street to the office of C. W. Robertson, a lawyer who had handled all of his legal affairs for years. Henry figured to have Robertson draw up a will one of these days, when he and Maria figured out just how their property should be divided among the children. He planned to discuss with Robertson at some length, but when Henry dropped in at the lawyer's office, they invariably ended up talking politics or real estate.

When the weather was bad, Henry stayed in and watched those whose errands forced them to be out and around town. From the intersection of College and Main, South Main Street sloped away at such a degree that when the sidewalks were slippery with snow and ice, people had difficulty traveling up or down them, particularly in the area nearest the corners. The most important stores in town were in that section. Past the bank was a dry goods store with two stories of merchandise, and next past it, a hardware store, with a dentist office over it. On the other side was the drugstore. Next, a college bookstore and stationers, and on beyond that a bakery, with a grocery store next. These stores were busy all day long.

In the winter when Maria heard Henry chuckling at the window, she knew people were having trouble with the ice. The storekeepers threw coal cinders out on the walks, but there were falls nevertheless. Henry knew better than to laugh out loud when someone went down, lest Maria scold him, but he reported all accidents nonetheless.

"Whoops, there goes George Adkinson! I knew it! I could tell he was going to go down. He didn't think it was so slick. I knew it was. I seen the way they been creeping along. He's up

again, now. Guess he's alright. Walking kind of careful, holding on to the side of the bank there. Rubbing his elbow, though. Gave it quite a whack."

"Henry, I think it's terrible the way you stand there watching people fall down," Maria lectured.

"What else have I got to watch? The wallpaper in here? Most the folks don't fall down, anyway."

"Well, you hope they will, don't you. Just for excitement."

Henry grinned. "Not really. Though it would reward me for all the time I've spent looking out her, if I'd see Eva take a spill just once."

"Henry! That's a terrible thing to say!"

"No, it isn't. She's got it coming to her, for all the sour looks she gives everybody."

"Would you like her to fall and break bones?"

"Break bones! She's too fat for that. She'd roll all the way down South Main just like a rubber ball."

Maria sighed. This last year, living in Nate's hotel, she'd learned that Henry was still young enough to need more activity. Just owning property and collecting rents was not enough for Henry. Although it was a quarter of a century since they had moved away from the "old brick" house on Schoolhouse road to the big place on College Street in Oberlin, Henry had never got over his homesickness for the farm. At least, when they had their house on College Street, and the one on Cartwright Avenue in Cleveland, Henry could always put in a vegetable garden, and he'd kept the lawn mowed when the boys neglected to see to it promptly. Now, in the hotel, he had nothing. For that matter, even half-crippled as she was, Maria was bored by hotel life herself. She could spend only so much time writing letters, diaries, and reading. Like Henry, she was growing tired of the wallpaper. Of late, she only went downstairs for the evening meal, having her breakfast and noonday dinner brought upstairs on a tray. The trip downstairs was painful enough in the evening, but it would have been impossible in the morning, when her joints were so stiff and sore she could barely manage to get herself propelled to the door of the ladies' bathroom next door to their room. Henry always helped her to the door and then she had to be on her own, with just her cane to lean on.

It might have been a treat eating downstairs in the dining room in the evening as a change of scenery, were not that the area presided over by Nate's wife, Ethel, and his sister-in-law, Eva. Neither one of them ever acknowledged Maria's arrival downstairs by so much as a quick nod, let alone a cordial "Good evening, Mother Martin." She came in on Henry's arm and used her cane if Nate weren't there to take her other arm. Nate tried to make a point of being on hand to help her, but Maria felt that Ethel resented his using this time that way, because she always appeared from the kitchen to tell him of something he should be attending to. Although, when

things were unusually busy, Ethel occasionally helped the waitresses, she never waited on Henry and Maria's table.

It made Maria feel bad that there was such hostility on Ethel's part, and Eva's too. Perhaps it was true that Ethel had really been in love with someone else at the time she married Stan. If Ethel resented her life with Stan, her sister apparently shared the resentment almost equally. Maria, now, only wished to live elsewhere as soon as possible. She and Henry had only one more month to stay in the Martin Hotel. They would be moving into a small house on North Main Street, and Emmie would be living with them after a year of staying with Stan and Bertha. And Maria's doctor had promised her that he had located a baby they could take into their home. Adoption could be arranged later. In the meantime, she and Henry could be the boy's foster parents. Emmie, who was quite reliable at house work, should derive much comfort from having charge of the baby's physical care. And if it all made Emmie well, it would be hoped that she and William could live together again, for even though Emmie wouldn't discuss William, he corresponded faithfully with Maria, and always inquired to know how Emmie was progressing.

But now Maria had fresh concerns for her children. Art, who had a young wife and baby, was now separated from them. A divorce was underway in the Cleveland courts. Merly, who had been ecstatically expecting her first child, had lost it by miscarriage three days after Christmas, and she was heart-broken. But the most distressing news had been from Grace in New York. She and Norris had come to the conclusion that they couldn't make a living in New York City. Norris felt his chances would be better in Cleveland and he'd returned there to find work. Grace said she was planning to follow as soon as she finished some work there. Meanwhile, Nelle had gone down from Vermont to get Dee, and she'd taken her back up to Burlington for a few weeks, so that Grace could have a chance to get ready to move back to Cleveland.

Grace's letter had not upset Maria so much as Nelle's.

Dear Ma,

I'm home again here in Burlington after a trip to New York to take Dee off Grace's hands for a while. Grace says she wrote you they're going back home. Hope she told you Norr had already gone. He skipped out and left her with all the responsibility of debts and moving and art work still to do. Used the excuse that he wanted to look for work in Cleveland. Ma, Grace and the baby are both thin. They haven't been getting enough to eat, I'm sure. I'm trying to fatten Dee up before Grace comes up to get her. Ma, it really makes me indignant when I think what advantages Roge and I could give a child compared to Norr and Grace. Roge has been given a promotion and pay raise and he's sold two stories to Boy's Magazine. Will send you copies when they come out. They are about narrow-gauge railroading in Colorado. Roge is so homesick for the Rockies. Ma, I'm homesick for you. Would so love to get home for a visit this next summer, but can't say for sure just what will happen. Roge is talking about being transferred out west again, perhaps Topeka, Kansas.

Ma, I must mail this now. I wish you still lived in Cleveland on Cartwright Street. Then you'd be in a position to tell me just what happens at Rahming's when Grace and Dee arrive. Grace was pretty provoked with Norris, though she tried to conceal it.

Do write – Much love

Nelle

P.S. Roge is so enchanted with little Dee. He takes her for long rides on a sled we borrowed. Oh, and he is keeping a diary of her baby ways and the precious things she says. The other night he said, "Nelle, we really ought to kidnap her, and take off for the Canadian wilderness." He is just wild about her. By the way, I am taking a tonic that a neighbor recommended for help in getting in the family way. Of course, I don't have much faith in it, but I guess it won't hurt any. It is made of wild herbs and such.

N.

Maria thought about Nelle's letter for several days before discussing it with Henry. When he asked what the news was she said offhandedly, "They're talking of moving to Topeka, Kansas."

"Why?"

"Roge likes the west, I guess."

"Thought it was mountains he liked. Kansas don't have any mountains. Why does he like to shift around all the time? I don't like it. I'd have been satisfied to've stayed on the farm all my life."

Maria saw a chance to turn the conversation in the path she wanted.

"I know, and you'd like to live there now, wouldn't you?"

"Yes, I would if I was young, and there wasn't so danged many motorcars on the road these days, scaring the horses."

"Art would teach you to drive a motorcar, Henry."

"No, thank you. I gave it a little try last fall down at the farm. I never told you at the time. When I wanted to stop I pulled back on that steering wheel and said 'whoa!' and the thing wouldn't stop. Luck we were in the wood-lot lane at the time, and no one else saw us. Art got it stopped alright. See, I forgot and took my foot off the brake, but Art pushed the throttle back and the motor stalled. He just sat there and laughed and laughed at me.

"And you got mad at him."

"Well, not for very long. It was funny, me saying 'whoa!' to that auto."

“And so you gave it up?”

“What I did was give it two more tries. I don’t give things up that easy, Maria.”

“Well, what happened?”

“Same as before. The thing got going too fast, and I just said ‘whoa!’ again. And Art stopped it again. Motorcars make me nervous, I guess. I’ve drove horses too many years.”

“I guess so,” Maria said. “Pa?”

“What?”

“You were out to the farm before Christmas. How was it?”

“Place is falling to pieces, that’s what.”

“But they painted the barn last summer,” Maria protested.

“Well, everything else needs paint, hen hous3es, corn-cribs, spring house. All the shutters and doors, and sash on the house, horse barn could use paint. Might go one more year.”

“They only painted the dairy barn?”

“That’s all. Two coats on the dairy barn.”

“Thought it was in your arrangement with them, they’d keep things painted?”

“It was. I’d like to throw them off the place.”

“Henry, you know what? I’d feel better if we had one of the family living there.”

“You ain’t going to suggest Howd and Lottie!” Henry’s eyes flashed sparks.

“No.”

“None of the other boys wants it. I wish Bill did. Is he going to go to college forever?”

“No, but he wants to teach. No, I wasn’t thinking of one of our sons. I was thinking of a son-in-law and a daughter.”

“Well, now – we’ve got a railroader-author-man, an artist, a lawyer, and a tombstone salesman (only he don’t count, William don’t). Which one of that bunch was you going to recommend to me for a farmer?”

“Henry, why, when you’re put out with me, does your grammar get so bad?” Maria asked.

“I don’t know.”

“Well, the one I was going to suggest was Norris.”

“Norris!”

“Yes. Because he’s smart, and Aunt Ada Norris says he’s mechanical and can repair anything.”

“Well, that place can sure use repairs, I’ll say that much. But Nelle always talks as though Norr was lazy. You know as well as I do, a lazy man can’t succeed in farming.”

“Nelle, I’m afraid, is jealous of Grace and Norr.”

“Why do you think that?”

“I’m not sure if you can recognize it as I do. They’ve studied art, and French and piano, and such, and they have a baby. Nelle envies the all those things. About Norr being lazy – Aunt Ada says he really isn’t. His mother coddled him, but when he’s interested in something Ada says he works very hard at it.”

“Humph.”

“Will you think about it Henry? Please?”

“Maybe.”

“Nelle says Grace and the baby are thin. Just think, on the farm they could have eggs, and good rich milk, and fresh vegetables, and fruit. Oh, my, what good applesauce I used to make!”

“But they were going to be artists. You think they’d want to just forget about that?”

“They could still paint some pictures once in a while, like in the wintertime. They’d need a hired man, of course.”

“Yes,” Henry agreed. “They’d need a hired man, and a hired girl, too. They’re too soft to do farm work. Can you picture Norris milking a string of cows? With his artist’s hands? Can you picture Grace churning butter?”

“Yes, any one of our girls could churn butter.”

“Once in awhile, sure, but – everyday?”

“Certainly; with the modern churn you’ve got out there now.”

“If those good-for-nothings haven’t broke it.”

“Well, the sooner you get them out of there the better then. You know, Henry, I don’t think they’d need more than just a hired man. They wouldn’t need to work the whole farm. They could

keep dairy cows and chickens, and just a team of horses, not a whole lot for breeding like you did. Well, maybe a carriage horse.”

“Oh, he’d want a motorcar, if I’m any judge. Yes, Norris’d have to have an auto.”

“Well, he couldn’t have one till he’d saved for it. There’s always the interurban streetcar when they wanted to go into Cleveland. And speaking of Cleveland, there’s a thought been running through my mind. I was awake all night thinking about all this.”

“I can see you was,” Henry said.

“Henry, you know for years Aunt Ada Norris has been living with the Rahming’s doing most of the cooking for them. She came when Norris and Ethel were babies. Well, they’ve grown now. I was wondering if she might like to live with Norr and Grace on the farm!”

“Maria! She’s a city lady; she’d hate it.”

“I’m not so sure. She’s a woman with a great deal of imagination. True, she’s lived all her life in cities, but she told me that in Brooklyn she loved the beaches, and she used to visit her Quaker relatives in New Hope, Pennsylvania. She said she always enjoyed the country.”

“For a visit, maybe. But how would she like the out-house all the time? She’s used to flush water-closets.”

“That’s the only thing I’ve had doubts about. But we could put in some improvements. Lots of farms have put in chemical toilets.”

“Sure they have, Maria. But they aren’t getting old like me. I’ve got no future on the farm. Neither have you, with your health. If the younger ones want a fancy farm they’d have to work hard and save and fix it up themselves.”

“But wouldn’t you give them a chance? Wouldn’t you help them out? Your Pa gave you your start, remember? All you had to do was take care of all the property he left to you. I always thought you wanted one of your children to want the farm.”

“I thought it would be one of the boys.”

“If the boys don’t want it, why couldn’t it be a daughter? Why not Grace?”

“How do you know she wants it?”

“I don’t, but if she does - ?”

“The most I would do is buy them some cows, and a team, and some chickens. Maybe a pig. A good sow.”

“Oh, yes!” Maria said. “A good sow.”

“I’d like to see that sugar bush worked again, I would.”

In the summer of 1913 Rosella had planned to go to Boston for a visit to the Mother Church. Several other Christian Scientist ladies were going and Rosella was looking forward to it. However, her whole year was disrupted.

It had started out happily enough with Norris' sudden return from New York City in January. For nearly a month Rosella had Norr virtually to herself to talk to and cook for, since the weather had been so miserable that he'd seldom ventured out on his search for work. He was not certain just what work he was looking for, but he felt that photography was the thing he should try to find. What he really wanted was to set up his own photographic studio, but would mean capital investment and his family was in no position to lend him money. Ethie had almost no savings, for she contributed at home, though she offered to lend him fifty dollars. That wouldn't be enough, Norris told her. There was always Aunt Ada, but Norr hesitated to ask her because the last time he borrowed, he'd promised to pay her back promptly and he'd never been able to return a cent. In order to set up a studio he'd probably have to ask Aunt Ada to sell some stock, and he wouldn't ask her to do that except in an extreme emergency.

Norr thought perhaps he could get a position in one of the established photographic studios, at least for darkroom work. He went downtown and asked at several studios, and they told him that they could have used him at Christmas time when they were extra busy, but now business would be slow until springtime when the Commencement and wedding business came in June.

After waiting three days before writing Grace, Norris sent her an imperative letter, saying that she need not stay in New York City any longer, but should plan on finishing her magazine covers in Cleveland, and should therefore arrange accordingly.

Grace did not like the tone of his letter. She fired back an indignant answer, saying she expected him to write her in a pleasanter manner. "After all, it is the first time we have been separated, and I was looking for something more like a love letter from you, rather than a set of 'travel orders.' I can't leave now. If I finish my covers here I think I can get them to pay me promptly, and then I can clear up more of our debts before I leave. Nelle has taken Dee to Burlington – they left this A.M. – so I shall have to go home that way in order to pick her up when I come to Cleveland. I can't expect Nelle to make the trip here twice. I am going to ship some things to you this week. You would better write nicer letters to me, old dear, since I am here getting you out of a lot of chores and drudgery, all because you were in such a rush to see your mama. I hope you appreciate the fact that you chose the easier course by scooting home and leaving me. Now write me a good letter.

Rosella was in no particular hurry for Grace to arrive, because then there would be fewer opportunities for her to chat with Norr. But Ethie, Ada and Henry were all eager to see Grace, and little Dee. Norris was lonely without them and the novelty of seeing his mother again, had worn off. But he was piqued with Grace for her pointed reminders that she was alone, working hard to pay their bills. He was well aware of it, and he did not like having her tell him about it.

He was supposed to feel grateful to her and he hated having to feel grateful to someone. It was a most uncomfortable feeling.

His father in one of his rare evenings at home suggested that Norr try to get a job in the automobile factory.

Rosella exploded.

“In the factory! Norrie?”

“I’m trained to be an artist, Dad.”

“You didn’t finish your training, though.”

“My experience in New York City makes up for that – more than makes up for it. It’s worth something here in Cleveland to have lived and worked in New York City.”

“But do you have enough to show for it? Enough samples of your work?”

“I did two automobile illustrations. I have copies of those, and I have my stencil pictures.”

“Yes, and they’re all good,” Henry said. “The stencil pictures are charming. Boy, I don’t question that you have talent. You have, son. But can you support your family? Artists so seldom make a decent living.”

“You don’t make much money, yourself.” Norris countered.

“And no one knows it better than I. And it’s been a constant worry to me. I’d have liked to have built a beautiful house for you all in Cleveland Heights.”

“I’ve always liked Cartwright Street,” Ethie said softly.

“I thought it was nice myself, when we came here,” Henry said. “But I’d hoped to be able to buy, and not rent for all these years. When I die I daresay we’ll still be renting the house. But Norr – what I’m saying is this – get into something where you can make enough money to live free of debts. That’s why I suggested the factory, Norr. You’re a bright person. You could advance to the top. You’ve a good technical mind. Industry is where the big money is, boy.”

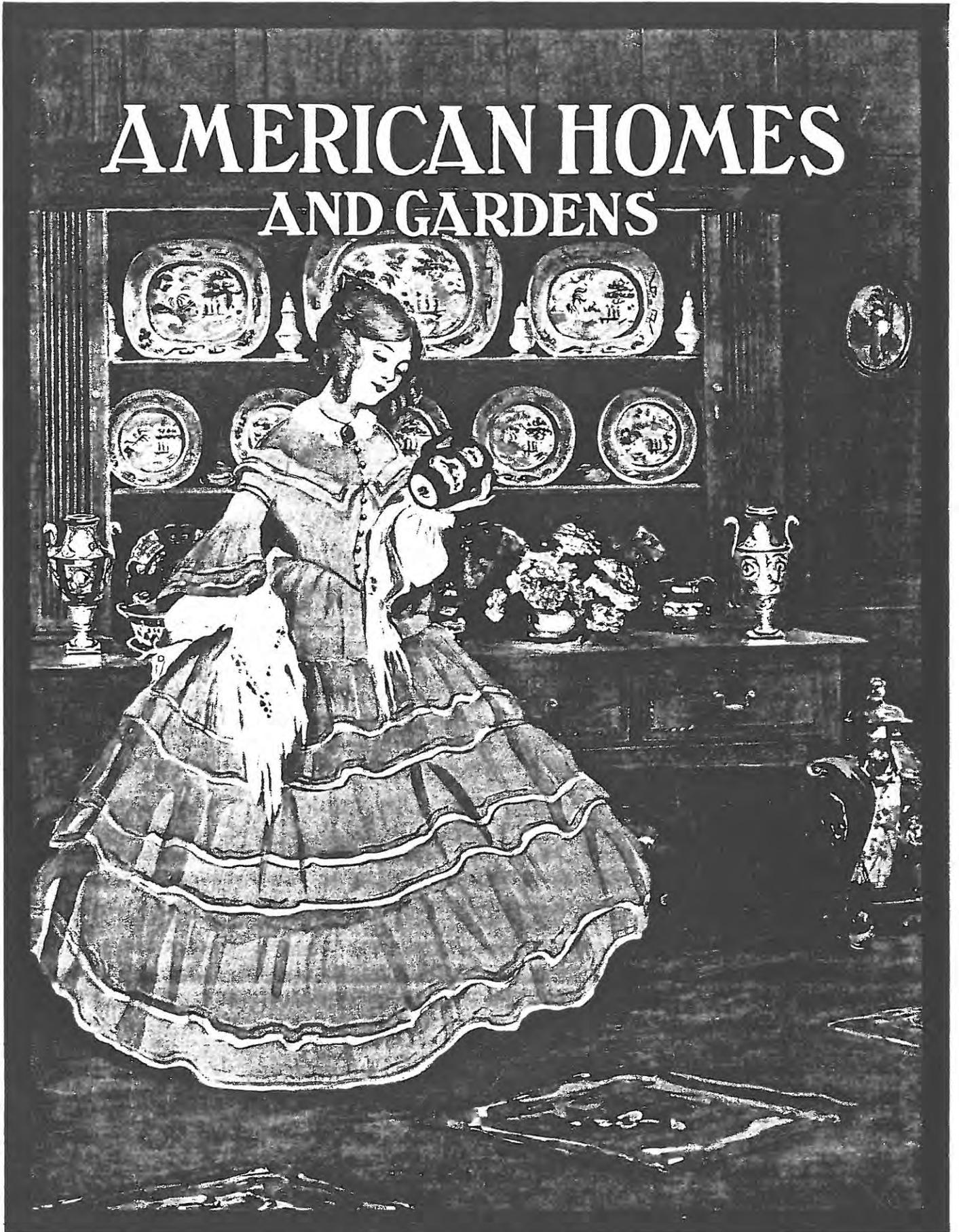
“But industry doesn’t appeal to me at all. I’m drawn to the world of the Arts. I like the people in it.”

I do too, but most of those people usually have to worry about the rent and groceries. Most artist starve or half starve.”

“Oh Dad! Come on! In New York City loads of artists are making a good living – they’re illustrating books, doing advertisements, drawing cartoons and so on.”

Early Silver—Tobies—Spring Planting Number—Attractive Houses

AMERICAN HOMES AND GARDENS



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“But son! You just left New York. Why’d you leave it then?”

“We tried New York too soon. We’ll go back someday.”

“Grace went there to study. And you sidetracked her. Why didn’t you wait till you both finished your studies?”

“Well, we were in love. What’s done is done, anyway. Never mind the hindsight.”

“Well, I wish you luck.”

But as the days passed and the time of Grace’s arrival approached, Norr began to speak about the possibility of applying for a job at the factory. Rosella was appalled at the thought and begged him not to consider it.

“They have terrible accidents at the auto factory. I’ve read about them in the newspaper.”

“I might just work there for a while until I get money saved up for a studio. If I had a studio separate from my home I could paint pictures and do photography too. Grace and I could both do more work away from home.”

“What about Dee?”

“Maybe Aunt Ada could take care of her for us till she’s old enough for school. We’d have to get a flat somewhere nearby.”

“You can stay with us, Norrie.”

“Mother, that would be impossibly crowded!”

“We could manage all right with you and Grace and the baby in your room, just as you were before the baby was born.”

“Dee’s older now. That wouldn’t do except temporarily. A man and his wife can’t have children in the bedroom. Now, I wonder how long I’d have to work at the factory to save up enough for a studio.”

“Norrie, didn’t you hear what I said about accidents?”

“I wonder what kind of pay they’d start me out at.”

“Norrie, before you were married you used to listen to me when I spoke to you.”

“No, Mother, you’ve always complained I don’t listen.”

“But you’re different since you got married.”

‘Naturally, I’m older. Everyone changes.’

“I don’t think I’ve changed, Norrie. Just the other day Ada said that I was just exactly the same way I was when we were young girls.”

Norris looked at her. “I daresay you are, Mama. I don’t imagine you were ever very worldly.”

“Well, I hope not. I try to be spiritual, Norrie.”

March came in like a lion that year. It was one of Cleveland’s windy blizzards. Grace’s train was due at the Union Station at nine in the morning.

Rosella worried about the storm. “Surely, she won’t count on your coming down to meet her this morning?”

“Of course she’ll count on my coming to meet her! She’s got the baby and her luggage. What do you think I want her to do? Be out in the storm alone with the baby and her suitcases? Walk to the streetcar?”

“Well, I just thought she could get a taxi, perhaps.”

“Mother, you’ve got this bad habit of saying silly things without stopping to think at all. Grace will be looking for me at the station. Now, goodbye. This isn’t the first time I ever went out in the snow.” He went out and slammed the storm door.

He was back in two hours with Grace and baby Dee. Dee was dressed in a coat of blue velvet with white rabbit fur, and bonnet to match. Grace wore a new green wool coat with black velvet trim. They both had rosy cheeks and were covered with melting snowflakes. Norris carried in the suitcases and set them down.

Ada and Rosella came forward to greet Grace.

“My!” Rosella exclaimed. “How wonderful you both look! And what lovely clothes you have. Your coats look brand new. My! You must have earned quite a bit of money.”

Nelle made our new coats,” Grace replied, “and she made Dee five little dresses, and petticoats too. Nelle is an expert seamstress. She’s making me a new dress, too, but she didn’t have time to finish it before I got there. She’s going to mail it to me when it’s done. Oh, and she gave me two dresses of her own. We’re the same size.”

“So I see we have to add Nelle to the list of people to whom we are indebted,” Norris complained.

“Why Norr, Nelle’s been on that list as long as we’ve had Dee. She’s spent hours taking care of Dee.”

“It seemed to me it was her pleasure. In my opinion, gratitude is an unpleasant emotion.”

“But Norr,” Aunt Ada asked, “don’t we all have to learn to be grateful to others in this life? And we must do it graciously.”

“ ‘Gracious gratitude’! It’s unnatural, except for sweet old ladies,” Norris managed to be simultaneously entertaining, endearing, and annoying.

“Norr,” Grace wasn’t amused. “You are so intrigued with the sound of your own voice.”

“It’s nearly lunch time, about half an hour,” Rosella said, nervously. “Are you all hungry? Ada is going to make corn fritters. They’re good on a cold day. I hope Dee will like them.”

“She might, Otherwise, a coddled egg, and a glass of milk,” Grace said.

“I’ll get it for her if she’ll come with me,” Ada said.

“Yes, she will. She likes people,” Grace said.

“Let’s go into the front room and sit down,” Rosella suggested. “We can visit a while and – “

“Later, Mother. Grace and I are going upstairs right now. We have a lot to talk about. We have plans to make.”

“Why don’t you wait till tomorrow, dear?”

“We’ll be down when lunch is ready, Mama.”

Rosella went into the kitchen, where Ada had Dee installed in Norr and Ethie’s old high chair.

“Here’s your Grandma, Dee,” Said Ada. “She’s your Papa’s Mama, you know.”

“Gamma?”

“Grandma, that’s right,” said Ada.

“Shall we have stuffed peppers tonight?” Rosella asked. “Norrie loves them.”

“Norrie loves everything, so does Grace,” Ada replied. “I was planning on the timballed eggs. Henry likes them and he’ll be home tonight. Little Dee could eat those too. I’m not sure about the stuffed peppers for her.”

“Do you think he’ll stay?” Rosella asked.

“John?”

“Norrie. Why would I mean John?”

“True,” Ada said resignedly. “Why would you? You always mean Norrie. No, I don’t think he’ll stay.”

“Why not?”

“Firstly, because the house is too small. Secondly, because he has brains enough to know they should be by themselves. Every married couple should.”

“I wonder what he meant by having ‘plans’?”

“I’d be more worried about them if they didn’t have plans. Surely you don’t expect them to stay here and live in one room?”

“Divine love always has met, and always will meet every human need.”

“Oh, Rosella! Divine love meets human needs by permitting people to use the brains God gave them to solve their own problems. He’ll show them the way, but His way may not always be your way.”

“You’re not a good Christian Scientist, Ada.”

“Sometimes you aren’t either, Rosella.”



DELIGHT RAHMING 22 MONTHS

" FAYE NORTH "



D.R. 3 YEARS

" FAYE NORTH "

Ada wrote to her cousin, Art Buckley, in California, two weeks later. Over the years, since Ada left Brooklyn, they had fallen into the habit of writing to each other twice a year, unless something unusual came up, like the San Francisco quake in 1906, or Norris' going to New York City and marrying Grace Martin in 1908, and the birth of little Dee in 1910. Ada customarily wrote at the end of winter, bringing the news of the Christmas holidays and a description of the season's weather. She wrote as soon as she could say, "I saw the first robin today." And in the fall she wrote a letter when the trees first turned color, telling him the events, if any, of the past summer. He answered about midway in the six months between. At Christmas they exchanged cards, and on their birthdays. She always referred to him as 'my friend Mr. Buckley,' but she addressed him in her letters as 'Dear Cousin Art.'

On March 12 she wrote to him: "This morning we saw our first robin, a bit earlier than average, but I have occasionally seen them in late February. It surely makes one's heart lift to see the return of the birds. We've been hearing song sparrows for some time now as they announce their plans for building nests. It's been a moderately cold winter, not an undue amount of snow, but our usual dreary, grey skies much of the time.

"Our Christmas holidays were quiet, with just the four of us here. Henry was home for Christmas, of course, although he is still out of town much of the time. I hope, now that he is not as young as he used to be, that he can arrange to travel less. I think it's hard on him. Rosella thinks that he would do well to smoke fewer cigarettes, or stop smoking altogether, but he seems to enjoy them so much. However, he does not seem to have as good health as a man of fifty-one should. We are supposed to be Christian Scientists here, and so I should not speak about bad health. However, I think that a person should decide whether to place his faith in Divine healing or in doctors, and I fear my brother-in-law does neither. He is very thin and tired looking. I remember him when he was young, as a lively person full of zest for life, and very witty.

"I have some very interesting news in a happier vein. Norris and his wife and little daughter have returned from New York recently, and they are soon to be embarking on a very new way of life, and I am to be included in their plans. We are going to be living in the country! It will be a new experience for all of us, although, for Grace, not quite as novel as for Norris and myself. He and I have spent all our lives as city dwellers. Grace was born and raised in a small college town south of here, where she was accustomed to most of the conveniences of the big city. But she spent her childhood summers on her father's old farm in North Royalton, so she knows more of this sort of life that we do.

"To try to make a long story short, we are going to be living on this very same farm. It still belongs to Grace's father, Mr. Henry Martin. He and his wife were our neighbors here on Cartwright Street when Norris met Grace. The Martins are very fine people. He is in real estate and rents houses and commercial buildings, and he is more or less retired now, but he still owns his original farm and wants it kept in fine condition. He's had people living there the last few years, but they haven't cared for the place the way a member of the family would. Well, what it



G.M.R. "DEE"
"IRENE NORTH" "FAYE NORTH"
Circa 1914

comes to is this – Norris and Grace are going to live there, and take charge of the place with the help of a hired man. Neither Grace nor Norris want to give up their work as artists, however, and this is where I can help them. I shall take care of their little girl, and prepare meals, just as I have done in the past for Rosella. Rosella, by the way, does not feel that our plan is very practical, but Norris is determined to try it, so she hasn't persisted in opposing it.

“The truth is that while Norr and Grace have artistic talent, they couldn't make enough money in New York, and now they feel that with the food the farm can provide, they can still pursue their art careers, and keep the farm in such a condition as will please Grace's father. He is very sentimental about it, and wants to see it kept in the family in his lifetime, at least.

“As for me, it will take some adjustment in getting used to the lack of running water and modern plumbing, and electric lights, and maybe I am too old to try, but I keep reminding myself that my grandmother (and yours also) lived in the countryside in Pennsylvania without all those conveniences. At the farm I will have a kerosene stove, and lamps, certainly better than a wood stove, and candles, don't you agree?

“We shall not go out to the farm until warm weather, but Norris and Mr. Martin are already buying some cows, and Grace is planning her vegetable garden, and telling me all about the wild strawberries, blackberries, and elderberries that grow in the fields all around the place. As you can imagine, I am beginning to look forward to this venture with considerable interest, and hope that I shall be able to make a generous contribution to its success. I shall have quite a bit of news to report in my next letter to you after we are all established in North Royalton. I trust that you are well, and would be interested in hearing your thoughts on my leaving the city to live on a farm. I'm wondering if I can do it at my age.

Affectionately yours, Cousin Ada

PEOPLE DONT ALWAYS UNDERSTAND

John's office in downtown Cleveland was in the Price Building on Grand Avenue. In the evenings when he was planning to go home to Cartwright Street, he caught the Grand Avenue streetcar directly in front of the Price Building. On the evenings when he did not go home, (usually Tuesdays and Thursdays), he walked down two blocks to the Public Square, where he could catch the Sloane Avenue streetcar. On those days he always stopped at a small tobacconist's and bought cigarettes. If he were to see someone who knew him, he could let the Sloane Avenue car go by without him, and go back to the tobacco store for another purchase, and if necessary he could catch a Grand Avenue car when it looped around the Square, and go on home to Cartwright Street. This he'd only done once in the three years since he'd been spending nights in Cleveland when his family supposed him to be in another city.

In 1908 when Grace and Matthew went to New York followed by Don and Louise Trunk, and Ethel Rahming and Merly Martin were still puttering around (or as Matt said, 'pottering around,' with ceramics, the old Art School crowd had. broken up Arthur Grey still occasionally pursued Sally Longmont, and once in a while he stopped by 'to chat a bit' with the Rahming's. But the fun was over; time had changed things. Anna Wyers was completely out of touch with them all. Sally Longmont and Ethie Rahming had each seen her on the Grand Avenue car sitting with Ethie's father. Ethie had seen them together twice and Sally once, but not after that, so they dismissed it from their minds.

In those days, Anna lived on 69th Street near Cartwright Street with her parents. She could take either the Sloane Avenue car home, or the Grand Avenue one, because the walk to her house on 69th Street was about equal in either case. She usually took the first one that came around the loop at the Public Square, though she preferred the Grand Avenue line because it was a better neighborhood, with well kept yards and houses. Sloane Avenue was a poorer street, with a rather depressing atmosphere, the paint on the once-white houses was darkened with industrial smoke.

At the time when Ethie first saw Anna and her father sitting together on the streetcar, neither of them thought much about it; they had been sitting together on the way home with some frequency for about a year, and it passed the time pleasantly for them both. When they ran into Ethie again, Anna had an instinctive mental reaction, It was not guilt, but it was a feeling that possibly Ethie might think it inappropriate. For a little while Anna avoided the Grand Avenue car and took the Sloane Avenue one instead. But after a month of riding home that way, she decided to go back again at least for one time to the Grand Avenue car. She had missed her talks with John Rahming. She hoped he would be on her car. He should be, for she was exactly on time.

She was fortunate. John got on at the Price Building stop. His eyes lit up when he saw her. The car was never crowded until further out the line. He sat beside her.

"Well! Good evening! How are you? I've missed you. You weren't ill, I hope?"

“No,” Anna said. “No, I’m all right. I’ve been very busy. I’m getting ready for my pupils’ recital. I’ve gone home later some of the time. My father hasn’t been at all well.”

“I’d wondered about that, too,” John said.

“He had a bad attack three weeks ago. The doctor says he must be very careful now. I shouldn’t talk about it. I know you are a Christian Scientist.”

“I try to be, I guess,” he said.

“I know it’s a very nice religion,” Anna said, “but I can’t grasp it.”

“That’s all right,” he said. “Many folks can’t.”

“My mother is so upset about my father. I wish I could give her some such comfort, but I don’t seem able to. Ethie tried to explain Christian Science to me, but I couldn’t understand the principle of it at all. She seemed to be trying to tell me that things aren’t real. That nothing is real. I can’t feel that way,” She stretched out her pretty, rather plump little hands and looked at them. “I can’t look at my hands and know that they are material, and tell myself that they are unreal, that only spiritual things are real and eternal. It’s a beautiful thought, but my mind doesn’t grasp it. Does yours?”

“Not completely,” he said. “Your hands do seem real.” He smiled.

“My fingers are really too short for piano playing,” she said. “But I can teach. I’m pleased with my pupils. I think the recital will go well.”

“I’d like to go to it,” he said.

“I’ll send one of my invitations to your family,” she said.

“That will be fine,” he said. “We’ll come.”

She looked down a moment. “Mr. Rahming, the reason you haven’t seen me lately is because I’ve been riding the Sloane Avenue streetcar home.”

“I wondered about that,” he said. “Because of Ethie?”

Anna nodded. “I suppose I was silly.”

“No. You weren’t silly. People don’t always understand.”

“That’s what I mean. But it’s been so nice to talk to you on the way home. I decided this evening I’d come this way. I’ve been upset lately, and talking to you cheers me up. You’re so philosophical.”

“Heaven knows,” he said. “In this world you have to be.”

In subsequent evenings they talked more about Anna's parents. They were Dutch immigrants and still unused to America. Anna felt if they had better health they would adjust better. As it was, all they could think about were the old times when they were young and in Rotterdam, and they'd been so happy.

"But," Anna said, "They were young, and they were healthy. And they loved each other. Well, I believe that they still love each other, but they're both so sick. Naturally, they think the old days in Holland were wonderful. When you're young you think that wonderful things can be yours. Well, they came here to find those things, and it didn't work out. On the other hand, my older brother (he was born in Holland) went out to the Dutch Colonies, out to Java, that is, and he's very successful. He has a fine home in Batavia. He has servants and he has urged my mother and father to come out and live with him there."

"Would they go?" John asked.

"Oh, no. My father never wanted to go to Java. He had friends in Holland who went there, but he doesn't like the sound of it. He grew up in Holland, where there was wintertime. The canals froze and he could skate. Mama did too. In Java, it is a tropical climate, and it has monsoons and it rains a lot. My brother writes letters and they always seem to start, 'We are having our rainy season just now.' Apparently they have two such seasons. Papa says 'Why would he want to live there?' And Mama worries because there are sometimes troubles with the native population, she's afraid Jan will be killed. She'd rather he'd come to America, but of course living in Java has made him a wealthy man. He does send some money to my parents. It helps a great deal since Papa has been so sick. That's another thing, Mama is afraid that the doctors in Batavia would not be good ones."

"You and I have something in common," John said.

"What's that?"

"You have family in the East Indies, and mine came from in the West Indies."

On another evening John told her about how his grandfather had owned a sponge fleet in the Bahamas, how the Civil War had ruined it, and how the family had settled finally in Brooklyn.

June came, and with it the piano recital of Anna's pupils. The Rahming family were invited, and Ethie and her father and Ada attended, Rosella did not go, because she had appointments with patients that evening. The recital was a success. Her pupils presented Anna with a large bouquet of roses, and Ada realized definitely that she was growing deaf. She could not hear the soft parts of the piano pieces.

In July, after walking home from a grocery store on a hot afternoon, Anna's father suffered a fatal heart attack. All the Rahming family attended Jan Wyers's funeral. Ada and Ethie cooked some food, and packed it into a picnic basket, and John delivered it to Anna and her mother.

He was shocked at Mrs. Booker's appearance. Apart from the ravages of shock and grief, she looked terrible. She was painfully thin, and her eyes were sunken, and ringed with lavender shadows. She thanked John kindly for his family's thoughtfulness.

"Probably Anna and I should go out to Batavia, now, and live with my son," she said, her eyes brimming with tears. "Jan never wanted to make the trip. It's such a long journey. He wanted to go back to Rotterdam, is all."

Anna patted her. "You don't have to decide now, Mama. You'll feel better after a while. You can be thinking about it this winter, then next summer during my vacation period, I'll take you to Batavia if you want to go. Brother would pay our way on the ship."

At the door, John spoke to Anna about her mother. He spoke in the dim entrance hail, in a soft voice.

"Is a doctor looking after your mama, Anna'?"

"Oh, yes. And he gave us both some laudanum to help us sleep tonight. Mr. Rahming, Mama will never go out to Batavia next summer. She has a cancer. Doctor doesn't think she'll live much past Christmas."

He put his arm across her shoulders, suppressing the desire to take her in his arms completely.

"You poor, dear, girl," he said. "You poor little girl."

They continued to ride home on the Grand Avenue streetcar of evenings, waiting always at least a half hour after the time when Ethie went home. They talked of many things, their childhoods, places they had been, music they liked, books they'd read, and so on. He tried to keep Anna's mind off her mother's condition. In October, Mrs. Booker entered the hospital because her pain required constant medication.

On the streetcar one evening they saw Sally Longmont sitting in the front of the car. They were not certain whether she saw them or not. But they decided that the next evening they would begin a practice of going home on the Sloane Avenue car.

"Sally is another person who would probably misunderstand our friendship," Anna said.

"No doubt," John agreed, although he was now beginning to understand it himself. He was in love with Anna, hopelessly in love. She was probably half his age. She should be seeing younger men, men free to marry her, but he had no courage to say anything to her that would change the way things were. Re looked forward all day to their ride home together as far as 69th Street, where she got off. He rode on to 73rd Street, where he could take the cross-town streetcar over to Cartwright Street where his walk home was exactly the same as when he rode the Grand Avenue car. Each time when Anna got off at 69th Street, he longed to get off with her and walk home with her. It would have made six additional blocks for him on Cartwright, but it would have been

worth it to him to be with her a little longer. He resisted the impulse to suggest it, however, because he felt their relationship was a delicate one. He was afraid of frightening her off. It was not the age difference that was the problem. He was a married man. It was one thing for them to visit while on the streetcar going home. It might seem very much another thing to Anna if he went out of his way to leave the streetcar to walk with her. He would best just go on trying to cheer her up about her dying mother, and go on in the same way. But he had come to the point when he thought about her all the time.

One day the evening paper told of an escape from the jail of two dangerous men. They were thought to be on the east side of Cleveland. It was November now, and dark by the time the car reached 69th Street. When Anna rose, John got up too.

"I'll get off with you tonight and walk you home. I don't like the thought of you walking down the dark street alone. You know what those two criminals were in jail for, don't you?"

"No."

"They were awaiting trial for attacking women."

"Oh."

"And if they are around the east side somewhere, I don't like the idea."

"Wouldn't they have left the city by now?" she asked.

"That wouldn't be too easy. Maybe after a week they'd get out. They're probably biding somewhere."

"I would appreciate it if you'd walk with me tonight, if you're not too tired?"

"I'm fine. I was in the office all day today. Real estate is slow this time of year. People don't want to move during the winter, especially over the holidays. It'll pick up in the spring, though."

At her door, she said, "I really do thank you for walking with me. It was kind of you,"

"It was my pleasure. I rode home alone for many years. Most of the neighbors go home earlier. It's always a lonely ride. I'm a lonely man. I guess it's just the way I am."

"I'm that way myself," Anna said. "I never made close chums among my girl friends. I'm a shy person."

"So am I. I never thought about it much, but I am shy. You're not going back to the hospital this evening, I hope?"

"No. I went at noon time. But Mama didn't seem to really know me. The drugs make her very confused. I don't know what I'll do when she's gone, but I don't want her to suffer any longer."

I've never experienced such a feeling of being torn apart. I want Mother to live, and yet I feel that it is not what God intends for her. I don't know how to pray to Him. Why does He let her suffer this way? I hope it doesn't last much longer."

"I hope not too, Anna." He wanted to call her "dear," but was afraid to. He thought of asking her to telephone and let Ethie know of her mother's illness. He was quite sure Ethie had not seen Anna since her father's funeral in the summer. Ethie had never really chummed with Anna, but more with Merly Martin and Sally Longmont. If Anna let Ethie know about her mother, Ethie would tell Rosella and perhaps they would do some Christian science "work" for Mrs. Wyers. Ethie and Rosella would "hold the right thought" for her. John pondered this a while. He was more confused about religion than ever as he grew older. He was not at all sure about prayer. A whole church-full of people knelt mumbling or concentrating on what they thought they felt God should do. Often their prayers must be in mighty conflict with each other. If God was the All-powerful One, he could not afford to listen to the prayers of men and women. He could only continue to execute His plan as He saw fit, His plan for Anna's mother could not be changed by any thoughts that Ethie and Rosella held in her behalf. And it was best that Anna did not keep in contact with Ethie anyway. It might have complicating consequences. But that was selfish. He was only fearing for his own friendship with Anna. He must at least consult her.

"Would you want Ethel and her mother to try Christian Science for your Mama?"

Anna dismissed this quickly; her thoughts, perhaps, had run parallel to his. "I have no faith in it. I'm sorry, and I have little faith in prayer. In case, 'God's will be done.'"

"Yes," he said. "In all the Lord's Prayer those lines mean the most, don't they? 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' I take it that people are saying 'Let Thy will be done;' or 'May Thy will be done.' In other words – a request. But I don't think of it that way. I think it's a statement - that God's will will be done."

"I see what you mean, but aren't we told to pray? The Lord's Prayer was given to us, wasn't it?"

"Yes, according to the Bible in the Book of Matthew, Chapter Six, as I recall, Jesus gave The Lord's Prayer in the Sermon on the Mount. But he also said, 'Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him.' What do you make of that?"

"I don't know," Anna said. "It would seem that we don't need to pray, if the Father knows our needs. Still, we are always taught to pray, encouraged to pray."

"But according to what Jesus taught, we should pray privately, not loudly in churches."

"Does it say that?"

"Well, read Matthew 6 and see what you think it says. We don't all understand the Bible the same way."

“I don’t read it very much, I’m afraid.”

“Neither do I. Especially of late. But when I was younger, I was quite a good churchgoer. I loved the Episcopal church service. I went as much for the hymns as anything else though, I must confess.”

“I don’t think that’s anything to apologize for. I guess the hymns, the ritual, the prayers, are just to remind us not to forget God. Perhaps prayers aren’t to remind God what to do for us, but to remind us of God, to remind us that He knows what is best for us.”

“Perhaps that’s it,” John said. “Promise me that you won’t exhaust your strength too much at the hospital if your Mama doesn’t know you.”

“All right. I may visit her in the late afternoon tomorrow. I’ll be late going home.”

“I’ll work late at the office, and then I’ll wait for you at the Square. I’m concerned about you, Anna, You look so tired.”

“I’ll be at the Square by a quarter of six.”

“I’ll wait.”

“Thank you, you are so thoughtful. You keep me going these days.”

She had not called him “Mr. Rahming” for months. It was too formal for a friendship that had been going on for two years, but John knew that Anna could not bring herself to call him John. However, it was easy for him to call her Anna. He had called her that, from the beginning, when Ethie had introduced him to her, just as he called all Ethel and Grace’s Art School friends by their first names.

He never spoke to Anna anymore about what was going on at home. He preferred to maintain, in her mind, the impression that he was just a man she knew. If he spoke of events at home, of Ethie, Ida, or Rosella, he would remind her sharply of the fact that he was married, a family man. He wanted them both to put that thought aside. She must think of him only as a gentleman who talked with her on the streetcar for a half-hour or so, five or six times a week.

By then, it was November, 1910, a cold, snowy month. Matthew and Grace were at his house, awaiting the birth of their baby. He had not mentioned that to Anna, and she hadn’t mentioned it to him. He did not want Anna thinking of him as a grandfather. He began to wonder whether she even knew that Grace and Matt were home from New York. Did she ever see Sally Long or Merly Martin? She never mentioned them; she never asked about Ethie, or anything at his house on Cartwright Street. He realized that Anna must feel the same way he did; she was refusing to think of him as a man with a family somewhere. As they rode the streetcar, he and Anna were playing a role; they were pretending they were other people in another time and place. But they weren’t! They were themselves, they were real, and he loved her. He was twice her age, but he

loved her. He did not know whether she loved him or not, but he knew that he now meant a lot to her. She did not want to change things. It had been a long, long time since she had said anything to remind him that he had a life with other people in a little house on Cartwright Street.

But at that time it was not difficult for Anna and John to speak of other things than his family. Her mother was dying, and now so heavily drugged with morphine that she never knew Anna when she came to see her, though she sometimes murmured her name, or the name "Jan." She could have meant either her husband, or her son in Batavia.

Anna's daily visits to the hospital were a visible strain on her. John begged her to spare herself, to let a day go by once or twice a week, but Anna felt she couldn't.

"She might die the day I didn't go, then I'd feel terrible. She may die any time now, the doctor said."

"I know, dear," he said, the 'dear' slipping out without his thinking about it, "but she might go in the middle of the night, when you're at home asleep."

"Most of the nights I don't sleep," she said.

He patted her hand. "I believe that," he said; "Do you have any whiskey or brandy in the house?"

"I think so. Yes."

"Take a little in warm milk before you go to bed."

"All right. But I don't like it very well."

"It will help you sleep, though. Have you written your brother just lately?"

"Oh, yes."

"He knows just how bad your mother's condition is?"

"Yes."

"Will he come?"

"No. He says he would probably only get here too late to see her alive. I think he doesn't want to see her the way she is. He said 'Let me remember Mama the way she was when I saw her last.' My Mama was still pretty when Jan went away. She had the most beautiful eyes."

"So have you, but they look so tired. Do you have money worries, Anna?"

"Oh, no. Not really. Jan is paying for all of Mama's hospital and doctor bills. He will pay for the funeral cost, too. I guess it makes him feel better, since he isn't coming. I shouldn't say that. He would pay it in any case. Jan is quite wealthy."

“Have you other relatives anywhere near? I don’t know why I didn’t ask you that when your father died.”

“I have distant relatives in Holland - ‘Distant’ in every sense of the word. My parents were each ‘only’ children. I have no aunts or uncles or close cousins. The relatives in Holland I never knew, and they never wrote to Mama and Papa after they came to America, though she wrote them.”

“Is Jan married?”

“Oh, yes. And he has two daughters.”

Then John asked her what he did not want to ask, but felt he must ask.

“Afterward — I mean after your Mama is gone, would you consider going to live with them?”

“With Jan and his family? I haven’t been invited.”

“If you were, would you go?”

She did not hesitate to answer that. “No. I wouldn’t care to live in Java. Jan is the only person there I know.”

He was much relieved when she said that.

The next day her mother was much worse. Anna spent much of the day at the hospital. When she left, he was waiting for her in the foyer. She was crying.

“It could be any time, but they said I should go home and get some rest. They said I couldn’t just sit there; it could be several days, or it might be only hours.”

“You’re exhausted, Anna, and it’s snowing very hard outside. I’m going to take you across the street to that little restaurant, and we’ll have a bite to eat. Then I’m taking you home in a horse-cab. You’re too tired to fight the snow, and the streetcar, and that long walk in 69th Street. It’s snowing hard, the motor cars are having a bad time.

“Do you think we can get a horse-cab?”

“We’ll certainly try.”

In the restaurant they were unusually quiet.

“I guess I’m too tired to talk,” Anna said.

“It’s all right,” he said. “You’re here to get some food into you, not to entertain me.”

“I didn’t think I could eat, but I can. I was really hungry.” Then she asked what she had never asked him before. “Will they wonder at home what’s keeping you so late?”

“No. I telephoned them and said I’d be late. They aren’t concerned. My work frequently has made me late. They’ll go ahead with their dinner. I used to travel a lot. They got used to going ahead with dinner long ago.”

“You were kind to take me to dinner.”

“I wanted to, Anna. This is a bad time for you. These are unusual circumstances. You are so alone.”

Again she spoke with a new candor, a candor born of her weariness. “I have come to depend on you.”

So now he must match her candor with his own.

“I’m glad, for we are both lonely people.”

In the cab, she leaned her head against his shoulder, and he patted her hand. It was something new between them, and for that reason, it was enough.

Her mother died the following day. Anna arranged for the services to be held at the same place where her father had been. There would be few people to come to the funeral, mostly the people whom Anna knew at the Music School. John went home with Anna again after the arrangements had been made, and her mother’s body had been removed from the hospital.

“I don’t expect many people at the services,” she said. “Mama’s English was so poor that she was too shy to make friends. Father knew more people because his English was better.”

They took the streetcar home. Anna did not want him to spend more money on a horse-cab. The snow had stopped early in the day and the sidewalks had been cleaned off.

“I don’t mind walking. It’s strange, but I’m less tired tonight,” Anna said. “Isn’t that strange?”

“No. It’s because the strain of waiting is over. Her suffering is over, and that has lifted a burden from you.”

“Another thing. I haven’t cried since she died.”

“You will, dear. And that will be good for you. You are all keyed up. It will take a while for you to relax.”

“I couldn’t have got through this last month without your support.”

“You’ll always have it if you want it, Anna. Do you want me to see that the folks at my house know?”

“It will be in the paper. Do they read the notices?”

“Usually Ada does, as a rule. But things are in a state of confusion there Grace and Matt are here from New York. Grace’s baby is expected any minute.”

“I knew she was expecting,” said Anna. “I met Merly a few months ago in Strohmyers’ store.”

“I guess I should have told you they were here.”

“No,” she said. “I understand why you don’t tell me things about your home life.”

“Do you?” he asked her.

“Yes, there are several reasons. One is that when you are with me you keep everything separate from all that. Another reason is that some things at your house are unusual.”

“How do you know that, Anna?”

“From observation, partly, and from things Ethie has said, and other things Merly Martin has said. It is partly the religion, isn’t it? Your wife is very serious about it, isn’t she?”

“Yes, it comes ahead of anything else, except Matthew. But Anna, I never want to complain about my life.”

“I know. I’ve noticed that. It’s unusual. So many of the people I know do. People at the Music School, men and women both, are always complaining about things at home. Men never seem to lose time making little critical remarks about their wives. They’re letting you know they aren’t happy at home. You’ve never talked that way to me.”

He was silent.

“And yet there are things I know. And they aren’t my business at all, of course. But I’ve been to your house in the past, and I know how some things are. I know that you have a room upstairs, and that Ethie and her mother have that downstairs room.”

“I didn’t realize everything was so conspicuous,” he said.

“It’s not that. But young girls talk. I guess it’s because they are so interested in marriage. One time Sally I guess it was, or Merly, asked Ethie why she was the one who slept with her mother. And Ethie said she really didn’t know, but that she had as long as she could remember.”

“Yes,” John said. “It’s true. I never slept with her mother after Ethie was on the way.”

“My father would never have lived with my mother in such an arrangement. This is something I shouldn’t be talking about, but it made me think of you as lonely.”

“I have been lonely, but not so much so since riding the streetcar with you.”

“You asked me a simple question, and I launched into a long talk,” Anna said.

“I forget what I asked you,” he said.

“Whether your family should come to the funeral or not.”

“Oh, yes. Well, if one of them sees it in the paper she’ll tell the rest of us. Grace and Matt wouldn’t come because her baby is due tomorrow. Ada is in bed with a cold. Ethie will want to come. And she’ll tell Merly and Sally. I don’t know about Rosella; it depends on her patients.”

“It’s best that they know about it. Why don’t you discover it in the paper, and tell them about it? Then you can come with Ethie, and I can ask you two to come to the cemetery with me. Perhaps I can get pallbearers from my friends at the Music School. And neighbors. It’ll be all right. I just hope that you can be there. I won’t lean on you. I’ll just feel supported if you’re present.”

“Of course, I’ll be there. I went the other time. I’ll either go with Rosella, or represent the family if she can’t come. There’ll be no problem at all. I can be a pallbearer too.”

And so the death of Anna’s mother forced John and Anna to face up to the nature of their relationship. Rather, they were beginning to face it.

The funeral took place without problems, but it was very cold. A horse-drawn hearse was used because of the snow. The new motor horses often could not be used in winter.

Grace sent Matthew, even though she thought her labor was starting. Ethel and John rode with Anna. Ethie kept saying comforting Christian Science sayings to Anna such as, “Life, Truth, and Love triumph over sin, disease, and death.” “You must know that there is no loss, dear, for Life is Eternal.”

After the graveside service, Matthew hurried home on the streetcar to be with Grace. Sally Longmont went home, but John said to Ethie, “Don’t you think we should see Anna home?”

“Oh, yes, we must do that,” Ethie agreed.

Merly Martin apologized for not going with them, but said she had to cook for the family. “Ma’s knees are so bad this weather.”

At Anna’s there was plenty of food sent in by her neighbors.

“I’d have brought you something this time, Anna,” Ethie said, “but for all the excitement at our house. Grace’s baby, you know.”

“There’s more than I can eat in a week,” Anna said.

“Promise us you’ll eat it,” John said. “You look thinner, Anna.”

“I’ll eat something, but won’t you and Ethie have a bite with me, Mr. Rahming?”

“We should get home, but I’d appreciate a cup of hot coffee,” John said. “It’s so cold out today.”

“I’ll make some right away,” Anna said. She went to the kitchen to fix it, and returned in a few minutes.

“Mr. Rahming, you’re in the real estate business. Do you think your company could find me another apartment?”

“I will look at our listings tomorrow. I’m sure there’s something, if you’ll tell me what you want.”

“Something smaller than this, cheaper if possible. One bedroom, and as near as possible to the streetcar line, I’m a little afraid, walking down this long street in the darkness.”

“I don’t blame you,” Ethie said. “I would be too,”

“But the main reason is, that I don’t think I can stand it to stay any longer in this place, with all its memories of Mama and Papa. I want to live in a new place, and start fresh with a whole new way of life.”

“I don’t blame you,” Ethie said again. “Papa will help you.”

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When John went with Anna looking for an apartment a few weeks later, they were in luck. They located a one-bedroom flat on Seventy-fifth Street close to the corner of Sloane Avenue. In bad weather Anna would no longer have to walk far to reach her door. The neighborhood was made up of middleclass foreign-born families. None of John's business associates, or family friends lived in the Sloane Avenue part of town. He did not expect to ever see anyone he knew in that neighborhood, but he stopped riding out from downtown with her. Anna decided that she would slowly change from teaching piano in the Music School Settlement and begin giving private lessons at her apartment. It would take a while to make the change, but it would be easier for her and might pay more, if she got enough pupils.

She moved into the new flat in February. John helped her get settled. The neighbors, who noticed her move in, assumed John was her husband. They understood he was a traveling man.

On the day when she moved in to the new apartment, finally and to stay, John helped her hang up a photograph of her mother and father, taken after their wedding in Holland. Anna suddenly sat down and began to cry.

"You're tired, dear. Let's fix a cup of tea, shall we?"

"I was crying about those two boxes I left at the old apartment."

"I can go back and get them. What's in them?"

"Mama's and Papa's clothes. I left them for the landlady to take to her church, for the poor. I can't use them. It's foolish to keep such things. I mustn't cry over thorn. I just began thinking about their things sitting over in that empty flat, and me gone away from there. Just as though I had walked away from everything in my life before, in the one moment when I shut that door on those boxes of Mama and Papa's clothes, I just shut the door and left them."

She sobbed harder, and he tried to comfort her. It was the first time he had seen her so.

"My dear, you haven't left them behind. Here you are with their furniture. You have your Mama's dishes and trinkets, your Papa's watch. You have their picture."

"I must send the watch to my brother."

"Keep it. You may want to give it to a son of your own some day."

"I'll never have a son. I'll never marry," she sobbed.

"Why, Anna, you're just a girl. You'll marry."

"You think I'm Ethie's age, I imagine. I'm not. I'll be thirty on my next birthday. Did you know that? How old are you?"

“I’m Forty-nine,” he said. “I am old enough to be your father.

She sobbed on softly, and he patted her shoulder, then she said, “The trouble is that I need you so much. The trouble is that I love you.”

“Oh my dear girl. Oh, Anna.” He put his arms around her, and held her.

“My father was twenty years older than my mother. Oh, what difference does age make? Yes, I know you are married, but she cannot really love you, or she would have slept with you.”

“She is confused by her religion,” he said.

“Or that may be an excuse,” she said.

“Yes, that is probably true, because the trouble started long before she discovered that religion.”

“That is proof then. Look, my mama did not always welcome sleeping with my papa. But Papa, though he loved us dearly, was not a man who... a man who... Well, Mama could not say no to him. He was a demanding... a very physical man. You think I am speaking very boldly for a woman? It’s just that my mama talked to me of these things because I was engaged once. Mama told me that Papa was a very strong and physical kind of man. After he got his bad heart, she said she knew that she had been lucky to have had such a man, for she remembered how it was when he was strong and well. Papa would never have stood for such a thing as Mama not sleeping with him.”

“We are not all alike, Anna. I would not have wanted to be in Rosella’s bed unless she wanted me there. It is pride, I suppose, but I could not help feeling that way.”

“Pride it may be,” Anna said, “but also, you are a gentle man, and a kind one. I do not disrespect you for being gentle. Are you surprised that we are talking about these things?”

“Somewhat. But then, perhaps it is more surprising that we didn’t speak of them a long time ago.”

“No, really, that is not strange. Because neither of us wanted to admit what was happening. By not speaking of it, we could let it go on in the same way.”

“That is true. I do love you, Anna. But you are young, and I knew in my heart, we could not go on forever.”

“We could not go on forever riding the streetcar, is what it comes to,” Anna said.

“You said you were engaged once. What happened?”

“He died. He died of tuberculosis, in the sanitarium at Hanley. He was twenty-four years old.”

“You have had too much death among people close to you.”

“Yes .”

“And you’ve never loved anyone since then?”

“No. Till I met you.”

“We should not have let this come to this point, Anna.”

“But we did,” she said.

“I should step out of your life, and leave you to find someone younger.”

“And that would be one more loss for me. Then I would be quite alone, wouldn’t I?”

He took her in his arms.

“Little girl, I have nothing to offer you. If I were a wealthy maxi, I could get a divorce. My children are grown up. I could support two women. But as it is, I’ve never been a business success.”

“I don’t love you because of youth or money, don’t you see? Love and friendship is what matters most to me.”

That spring they became lovers.

At home, when John’s business began to take him out of town more frequently than before, nobody wondered much. Over the years, in his various business ventures as a salesman, he had frequently traveled to nearby cities. He could be gone anywhere from two days to two weeks at a time. During the time when Matthew was going to Art School, and in his first years in New York, John had seldom traveled, but now he told the family that his company had out of town property listings, and he would travel more again. They did not question his statement. Ethie went daily to her position as a billing clerk. Ada continued to function as cook and seamstress, and Rosella was occupied with her ailing patients.

John was only at home on weekends during 1911 and 1912, but in late winter of 1913, when Matt came home alone from New York City to look for work in Cleveland, and especially when Grace and little Dee followed, John spent a bit more time at the Cartwright Street house.

Then came spring and the young folks departed for the farm, taking Ada with them. When John was at home on Saturday evenings and Sundays, the place was most unbearable. He sat at the table with Rosella and Ethie and conversation lagged. Ethie’s job was not the kind of work one talked about at home, and Ethie was a very quiet person in any case, contributing little to conversation, though enjoying that of others. Rosella had very little to say about her patients; the nature of her faith meant that she could not talk about their problems, even as much as a doctor

might discuss his cases. Rosella, unlike Ida, did not read the daily paper; it was too full of trouble and ‘mortal mind.’ So, when John tried to discuss politics and national events or civic goings-on in Cleveland, Rosella never had a solid opinion on any of it. “Ethie and I leave politics to othahs” she would say.

John missed Ida. Ada always read the newspaper thoroughly. She commented on anything from murder to church news, and was particularly fascinated in the development of the flying machines. When Ada was at the dinner table, things were never boring. In the election the previous fall she’d had opinions about the various candidates, and had said that her Papa would probably have voted for Teddy Roosevelt, but that she saw no reason why Mr. Wilson would not be a good president. Taft had been disappointing to her, and Eugene Debs Was frightening.

Not only did John miss Ida, but after having had Matthew and Grace and their little girl in the house for a time, things seemed especially dull and quiet, with only Ethie and Rosella. He saw no sense in his coming home weekends at all except for Ethie, who’s greeting kiss always seemed sincerely loving. Rosella’s was merely absent-minded and meaningless, the left-over habit of twenty-nine years of empty marriage. The more John thought about it in perspective, the more he saw that his marriage had lacked many of the qualities that other men’s marriages had. He had spent so many years being bitter about being denied his conjugal rights that he had given scant thoughts to the other shortcomings of his life with Rosella. He had long ago decided that she interpreted her chosen religion in a fanatic and distorted way. She used it as a shield not only between herself and the side of marriage which she feared and disliked, but also against all aspects of life which might be upsetting to herself and her family. This had always meant that all disputatious conversations all contention, all mention of physical discomfort, or of adversity in everyday social or business contacts, would be shushed and hushed immediately by Rosella. She would quiet them all with soft-voiced pronouncements from her religious textbook, or some of her own, such as “All is Infinite Harmony arid Infinite Love.” If Ethie wished to complain of some exasperating individual at work, or John to speak of a Cleveland politician whom he deemed to be a crook, Rosella would say “Love is reflected in Love.” For some reason, Ada was the only one in the family whom Rosella could not shush. If Ada felt like taking about something, she did so. For one thing, Ada was growing very deaf and couldn’t hear bland admonishments anyway. For another, Ada was the older sister who had known Rosella all her life, and Rosella had never shushed up Ida.

John was realizing now that his marriage had lacked the normal excitement of an occasional quarrel. Rosella from the beginning had retreated from all conflict of opinion. It appeared to frighten her. In the early years of their marriage she had gone into her little swoons if he was displeased with her.. Later, after taking up Christian Science, when members of the family began to talk with angry or upset voices, if her quoting that “all should be perfect. Harmony” did not quiet them, she would rush away to get her textbook and begin reading in it, in a scarcely audible mumble, like a nun saying her beads.

With Ada gone, there was nothing to talk about at table. Rosella was making Ethie into a carbon copy of herself — a woman who knew nothing to talk about but her religion. He loved Ethie, but he gave her up for lost, ruined by her mother. Rosella had done her best to ruin Mattie too, but he had married and got away. There was still a chance for him. He was selfish in the extreme, but not a bore. At least, he read and took an interest in the world. At least, when he was aroused he did not talk incessantly about God and Perfect Love.

John realized that over the years, coming home at night had been tolerable because Ada had always had a friendly greeting for him, and something intelligent to talk about. Poor woman, she should have married and had her own home. Though she was plain and rather homely, her face was aristocratic and alert looking.

Her manner was always warm and courteous, but never saccharin and innocuous like Rosella's. And now, after years of contributing the service of her hands, and the wisdom of her good mind to him and Rosella, she was gone to offer the same to Matthew and his family. How much would Ada herself benefit from it all?

When he sat at the table with his wife and daughter he contemplated their manner of dress. It was early June and very warm, but as always both of them wore long sleeved dresses with high lace



collars stiffened with whalebone. Rosella had always worn high lace collars. Ladies' neck lines had been low or high at various times, since he'd married Rosella, but she'd never worn a low-necked dress. After he learned that she had a goiter, he'd understood why she dressed as she did. A few years ago all the women had been wearing the whalebone-stiffened collars, but now low necklines were in style again. Why did Ethel have to dress just like her mother? There was one difference, Ethel's dresses were light-colored, Rosella's dark green or navy blue. The green dresses invariably were worn with cream-colored lace collars, the navy blue ones with white ones. The collars encircled the entire neck, coming up to just below the ears. They made John feel warm just to look at them. Ethel's dresses in summer time were mostly made of pongee, a silk fabric in a light tan color. Occasionally she wore white.

“Why don't you ever wear colors any more, Ethie? I used to like to see you in pink or blue, when you were a little girl. Why do you always wear these dresses?”

“I never thought about it, Papa. Pongee is just this color. It's the natural silk color.”

“Do you have to always wear pongee?”

“No, but Mama bought me fifteen yards of it, you see.”

John suspected that Rosella was deliberately keeping Ethie in drab dresses. She didn't want Ethie to get married. She wanted to keep her as her hand-maiden the rest of her life. In the winter Ethie changed into brown wool jersey dresses, but summer or winter for both of them, always the high whale-boned collars. Ethie was apparently beginning to develop a goiter, too. Rosella seemed unable to conquer this particular problem through her religious faith, but John had to admit that neither of them seemed to have illnesses, or if they did they never made it known.

On this Sunday evening John had attempted to talk about one thing and another with little success. Dinner finished with tapioca pudding, one of John's favorite desserts, topped off with a spoonful of red currant jelly. He decided to be pleasant.

"That was a good meal," he said. "Very tasty."

"Ethie made the pudding," Rosella said.

"Well, it was all good. You're a good cook, Rosella."

"I wish Ada were here to do it, though," Rosella said.

"Oh, Ada has spoiled you. She's helping where she's more needed now. It's easy for you to cook for only two."

"I don't know why you say she's spoiled me. She's had a good home, has had for years."

"Had a good home! Well, maybe. She's more than earned her so-called good home. She's lent money to every one of us. She even carried us financially over the rough spots a number of times."

"Well, that's because Auntie Hobbs left money to Ida," Rosella said.

"Doesn't matter where Ada got her money; she didn't have to spend it on us. Besides, you know why Auntie Hobbs remembered Ada in her will - because Ada gave her time to help Auntie Hobbs when Auntie needed her. She's always been doing things for other people, menial things, things that make her hands rough. You wouldn't have done what she's done."

"Why, John, I do housework! You know I do."

"Things like dusting. The things you don't like to do, Ada does. And the washing and ironing, Mary does. And Ada washes the inside of the windows and I wash the outside of them. And Ethie does things to help, too."

"John, it's not like you to talk this way," Rosella said.

"No, I know it isn't. But I should have talked this way years ago. Our whole life might have been better."

“I didn’t think there was anything wrong, except that we always seem to be short of money.”

He sat there just looking at her, saying nothing. Ethie sat quiet too, looking down at her hands, and twisting her silver napkin ring round and round with her thumb.

Rosella said, “You just got through saying it was a good dinner. And I thanked you for saying so. We should all try to always express perfect Harmony.”

“Oh, stop that” he said sharply. “I’m tired of having you dodge every unpleasant issue in life that has to be dealt with, by mouthing something like that at me. You never face up to anything; you just start that spouting forth of Mrs. Eddy’s words at all of us. I’m sick it, sick of it.”

“I thought you accepted Christian Science. I thought you believed it was good.”

“It probably is, but not the way you practice it. You’ve been using it for years against me.”

“Against you?” Rosella looked horrified. “I would never use Science against anyone.” She looked about to faint.

“Don’t bother to faint. I won’t be here to watch you. I’m going upstairs to pack my bag for out of town. I’d like a word with you in private, though, in my room.”

“Papa...” Ethie began, but stopped because she really did not know what to say.

Rosella had an expression on her face with which John was very familiar. It was her ‘bad trouble’ expression. When she had discovered her religion, on first coming to live in Cleveland, Rosella had given up for the most part her old fainting spells. They were incompatible with her new beliefs, and John had been grateful for that. She had slipped up once or twice, but had eventually developed a new reaction. Privately, John thought of it as Rosella’s ‘Holy Mary, Mother of God!’ expression. That is, it would have been such, if Rosella had been a Catholic. As it was, it was some form of supplication that served the same purpose. Although Rosella professed to believe that God was everywhere, when in trouble, it appeared that she thought he was on the ceiling, for on these occasions, she seemed to be looking for him there. She would turn her head upwards, roll her eyes toward her eyebrows, and sigh. Sometimes, she sighed words, and sometimes she sighed sighs. Since Matthew had been the cause of most of Rosella’s grief, the words she most often sighed were, “Oh, Mattie, Mattie!” When he was a two-year-old, he had climbed everywhere, pushing a chair around with him to reach the high places where fascinating objects had been placed beyond his reach. In addition to eating (and spilling) sugar almost daily, and upsetting various liquids including laundry bluing and olive oil on the carpet, he had been in more serious escapades at age two. He had upset a pot of hot tea onto himself and Aunt Ida’s foot, resulting in pain and blisters for both of them. He had fallen from the dining room buffet and split open his eyebrow on the corner of a chair, followed by profuse bleeding and piercing screams. When he was older he had fallen from his velocipede, later from his bicycle. He’d been hit in the head by the seat of a swing, and punched in the nose by his best

friend, all of which episodes were bloody, and blood put Rosella into near hysteria. Christian Science had never solved the problem of her reaction to blood, Mattie's blood.

But it was not the various accidents that had upset Rosella the most; it was the temper tantrums. They had started when Mattie was still wearing long-clothes. She'd immediately picked him up when he cried, and he'd learned very early that the harder he cried the sooner she would come and pick him up. When he was a little fellow in rompers, he'd developed the sweet-tooth that he would always have. He cried for sugar cookies, for macaroons, for fried cakes and jam. When he screamed for sweets and held his breath, Rosella had to give in to him, invariably saying, "Only one, Mattie, that's all." Ada would frown, and Rosella would say, "It's not good for children to cry so hard." Ada had finally said to her, "It's not good for children to get sugar diabetes." Rosella had been startled by that thought. "Does eating sweets cause it?" "So everyone says," said Ida.

In those days Rosella was not yet deeply interested in Christian Science. She still believed in the reality of disease. The thought of Mattie, dead of sugar diabetes, terrified her for a while, and she made what was, for her, a determined effort to deny him sweet things, or at least to cut down drastically on his consumption of them. He would scream and she would reason with him, and he would beat the floor with his heels. However, when "Mrs. Hanney downstairs" took Rosella under her wing and convinced her that Matthew, being God's perfect child, would not get diseases, the battle was over; Mattie had won it. He no longer screamed for sweets; he ate them when he wanted to.

But there were new problems as he got older. He asked for things Rosella was afraid of, things she felt he was too young to have, such as air-rifles and other dangerous toys. He no longer screamed, but now he sulked or he shouted. He slammed doors, and occasionally he broke things in his anger and frustration. He embarrassed Rosella in front of her neighbors, and John told Rosella, "You have ruined a perfectly bright and handsome boy with your maudlin indulgence. And now, for all your love for him, he makes you miserable. There is nothing he likes better than getting us all upset, and the whole house in an uproar. What we should all do is deprive him of his audience. Then it wouldn't be worth it to him to put on these scenes. We should all go to our rooms and shut our doors and let Matthew rave to an empty theater."

From the time her father first suggested that they leave the room when Matt had a tantrum, Ethie took his advice, for the episodes frightened her badly. Ada had long ago made it a practice to exit at the very start of such scenes. She took the position that Matt's discipline was none of her business, but she had strong opinions about it, so she took the wise course of going where she hoped not to hear Matthew's voice.

In the years when John first realized that Rosella could not muster the will power to discipline their son, or give any assistance to anyone else in or out of the family, in doing so, he had tried to reason with her that for the boy's own sake she should be firm and consistent. Many parents try

to be firm, make threats of punishments, and then fail to follow up their threats. With Rosella it seldom even came to a threat of punishment. She knew she could not enforce it, and she knew Matthew knew. So she wrung her hands over him. And later, she tried to “meet the problem” in her religion. She was failing and she knew it, but persevered saying, “Divine Love will prevail.”

When John saw Matt beginning to act up, he not only left the room, but if possible and practical, he packed his bag and left town. In the days when he was a wholesale dealer for a coffee company, it wasn't difficult to simply decide to go to Buffalo or Pittsburgh when things got unbearable at home. Sometimes in summer he would say to Ethie, “Let's you and me go down to Whitfield Park till the atmosphere clears around here.” And sometimes Ethie would go with him. Other times, Rosella would think of something that Ethie should do for her instead.

But Rosella herself never succeeded in walking out on Matthew. His shouting were directed at her, where they would bring results. He was always arguing for something he wanted to have or to do. If she walked away from him into the kitchen, or back yard, or her bedroom, he followed her and continued his argument.

Except for his return home in 1910 for Dee's birth, and in January of this year, 1913, Matthew's tantrums had been gone from Cartwright Street for almost five years. The house had been very quiet since then. Rosella had not had to roll her eyes toward the ceiling in a long time. Matthew hadn't put on a temper scene on this last visit, because he was too absorbed in planning his new life as a gentleman farmer. Rosella had grown so used to a quiet household of late that John's sudden outburst caught her totally by surprise. John was given to long silences when events depressed him. He was not a man to raise his voice. This was partly because of Ida's presence over the years. He'd always admired Ida's wisdom and dignity. She was not a woman around whom a man could shout, without losing much self-respect. It may have been because Ada wasn't there, that he had lost control this evening. If she had been present, they'd have been discussing other things. The talk would not have turned personal. In fact, John now recalled they'd discussed Ada herself. No, if she'd been there his sharp words would not have been spoken. But he wasn't sorry now. His mind was at last made up. It was long overdue. He got out his suitcase and began to pack.

Rosella stood in his doorway saying nothing. He looked at her. She looked upset, but she had composed her expression, and no longer wore what John thought of as her “end of the world” face.

“Sit down,” he told her, indicating the chair at his desk. He sensed that she was expecting him to talk about money problems. For, always, when he told her he wanted to talk to her privately, it concerned finances.

“Where is Ethie?” he asked curtly.

“Doing the dishes.”

She sounded tentative and a bit wary. He might very well talk to her about money. She'd been asking for more money for food lately. With Ada gone, she should have needed less. The difference was that Ada had done most of the food marketing. They'd always given Ada money for this purpose, but she'd spent much of her own money on groceries, particularly extras, treats and delicacies. Occasionally, when Rosella would comment that certain things were expensive (or "dear" as she always put it) would Ada explain that she had paid for the luxury items herself. Now, with Ada absent, Rosella realized that Ada must have contributed far more than the family had realized. It might all have been recorded in Ida's ledger, but Ada had taken that with her when she went to the farm. All her life since her days at Packer, Ada had kept careful records of expenditures, and had urged Rosella to do the same. "I hate figyuh," Rosella had protested. "But," Ada said, "You'll feel more secure if you know just where you stand moneywise." "I doubt it," Rosie had said, and laughed.

John finished putting clean shirts into the suitcase and closed it. He had a separate case especially for his starched white collars. It was circular and covered in red morocco leather with gold embossing around the borders. He put several fresh white collars into it now, while Rosella watched. Ada had given him the red collar-box two or three Christmases ago. He had only just begun to use it recently.

"Where are you going this time?" she asked. It was seldom she showed an interest, but he supposed she was thinking to divert him from a discussion of unsettling money worries.

"Detroit and Toledo."

"You never use the collar-case that I gave you anymore, do you?"

He turned around. "The one you gave me the first year we were married?"

"Is that when I gave it to you? I guess it was."

"Our first Christmas, yes."

"You don't use it anymore?"

He went to his high-boy chest of drawers and from a top drawer took out the brown leather collar case she'd given him so long ago.

"I still keep things in it," he said. "My old watch, and cufflinks and studs, and some keys. Look at it. It's almost thirty years old. It's old and the leather is dry and worn and falling apart. You never noticed it, did you? Ada noticed it and bought me a new one. Something else you never noticed is that our marriage is worn and falling apart too. Only thing different is that the collar-case was good when it was new, and it was good for many years after that. Our marriage never was good, was it?"

Her mouth opened in amazement. Her eyes opened even wider, but she couldn't say anything, and John went on.

“You never did want to sleep with me, except to get your children, because having children is the conventional thing to do. A man has legal rights, but you never gave a damn about that, did you?”

Rosella was slowly shaking her head from side to side, still speechless, and still wide-eyed.

“Well, I'll tell you, Rosella, there's no point in going on with a ridiculous marriage. One or the other of us must get a divorce.”

She looked at him for a second or two, then fell sideways from the chair and onto the carpet. He looked at her for a moment, then knelt down and looked closely at her face. He finally decided that this time she really had fainted. He went to the stairway and called to Ethie.

“Ethel Will you come? Bring smelling salts with you.”

Ethie came quickly. “Oh! What's happened? Oh, if only Aunt Ada were here!”

WHY SHOULDN'T PA HELP US ?

After Grace came to Burlington to pick up Dee before joining Matthew in Cleveland, Nelle was more acutely aware of her childless state than ever before. She had had Dee for nearly three weeks, and Roge had kept a diary of her baby ways and sayings. Dee at twenty-six months had been irresistible. Now when Nelle read the nineteen-day chronicle she cried, and Nelle had never been one to cry. Two or three times when she and Roge had tiptoed in at night to look at Dee asleep in a borrowed crib, Roge had said, "We really ought to just run off to Canada, or Australia, or some such place, and take her with us, oughtn't we?" He had even incorporated this threat into his copy of Days with Dee which he had written on blue paper in long-hand and presented to Grace, though not before typing a couple of copies in case he should want to try publishing it sometime.

Nelle was again talking about adopting a baby, but now Roge was planning for them to move again, this time back to Colorado, for he missed his mountains and railroads. Roge said it was better to wait till they got settled in Denver before investigating adoption.

In April a letter came to Nelle from her mother, full of news. They were moving out of The Martin Inn because they'd had enough of living there, Maria Martin said. She would not go into detail, but some things were quite unpleasant at the hotel. If she was going to be handicapped by her painful knees, she'd rather be in her own home. The notion that everything would be better for her when they lived at the hotel had proved to be wrong. They were moving into a house in a week, a house on North Main, and Emmie was going to be with them there. She'd grown tired of staying with Stan and Bertha. Bertha was a good soul, but she didn't understand Emmie's problem, and, of course, Emmie, the way she was at present, couldn't allow for Bertha's little peculiarities. Emmie was better off right now with folks she'd known all her life. And furthermore, Maria went on, she'd talked at some length with the doctor again about Emmie, and the doctor said it must definitely be called a result of melancholia caused by Emmie's loss of her baby and the ability to have children. The doctor knew of a family in real hardship. The father had been killed in an accident with a horse, and the mother was in very delicate health. She had a six month old baby boy, but she was not able to care for it. The doctor suggested that it might be helpful to Emmie to have a child to care for. The little baby would be placed in the county orphanage otherwise. The doctor did not expect the mother to live and, in any case, the mother was anxious to have the baby adopted to ease her mind about his well-being. She had two older boys whom a sister was willing to raise, if necessary. It was a sad story. Maria and Henry had told the doctor they would like to take the baby into their home, and Emmie would care for him. It was to be a temporary trial arrangement, but they were writing to William about it. The baby's mother was pleased with the plan. She wanted her baby in a good family.

Maria's letter went on to tell Nelle all about the plan for Grace and Matthew to take over the management of the farm, and that Aunt Ada Norris was going to be there too.

Maria closed the letter by saying that her knees seemed to feel quite a bit better just lately, and she would be able to be more active in doing some work around the house.

Nelle was terribly upset by her mother's letter. She surprised Roge by her reaction to the whole thing. She was most disturbed by the idea of Matt and Grace on the farm.

"Mother and Father must have taken leave of their senses," she sputtered.

"Now, why do you say that? It may be the very answer for them," Roge said.

"It'll ruin the place. Matt's no farmer" And Nelle gave her loud laugh, a broad "Ha, ha," that Roge hated. He had once told her that it was 'very unladylike,' and that had made her angry. And in anger Nelle was even more unladylike. He decided that Mother Martin had been right to get her children away from the farm and the "hands" who had rough language and mannerisms that Nelle had learned and seemed unwilling to relinquish.

"I don't see why Matt couldn't be a farmer. He's smart and you don't have to be a genius to farm."

"Is that a slur on my father?"

"Of course not; he's smart too."

"Well, Matt is smart, maybe, but he's lazy. One thing you can't be when you farm is lazy. Not if you want it to prosper."

"Matt works hard when he's interested, Nelle. Look at the painstaking work on those stencil pictures."

"Ha! I'd like to see him try to milk a cow."

"What's so hard about milking a cow," Roge asked.

"Did you ever milk one?"

"No, but I can't see anything complicated about the procedure."

"Ha! I would bet you a ten dollar gold piece you couldn't get one cupful of milk from a cow."

"Well, there's no way you can prove that, but if you can milk a cow, I could."

"We could prove it at the farm on our way West. I've got to stop at the farm and see what's going on."

“You can stop and visit your folks, but I won’t have time to, so I’ll have to go without your gold piece.”

“You wouldn’t get my gold piece because you wouldn’t get a cupful of milk from a cow.”

“Why wouldn’t I?”

“The minute you squeezed the teat you know what would happen?”

“I wish you wouldn’t use words like that”

“You mean teat? Oh, Roge, you’re so prissy. That’s the name of it. Cows have ‘tits’.”

“Then at least pronounce it the way it’s spelled, can’t you?”

“I pronounce it ‘tit’. Everyone else does, that is anyone around a farm.”

“But it sounds so common, Nelle.”

“Oh, hog wash!”

“Nelle, for goodness sakes!”

“Anyway you changed the subject. I was talking about milking.”

“You certainly were” he laughed.

She ignored that. “You know what happens when an amateur sits down to milk a cow that doesn’t know him?”

“She puts her foot in the pail, or hits you in the face with her old manuary tail.”

“Are you sure you never milked a cow?”

“No, but I’ve watched it done.”

“Oh. Alright. Well, when a beginner grabs a hold of the cow’s tits and squeezes and pulls, he expects to get milk. Isn’t that right?”

“And doesn’t he?”

“There’s a knack to it. If you just squeeze, all that happens is that the milk goes right back up into her udder. So you have to put your hands so that, with your thumb and first finger, you can circle the top of the tit tight, so the milk can’t go back up. Then you close the second finger, next the third, then the fourth. That makes the milk come out at the bottom in a nice stream. Of course, you do it with both hands, always closing the fingers from the top down.

“Both hands at the same time? No.”

“No, that’s right. First one then the other, in a nice regular rhythm, and of course, you have to learn to milk fast and be sure and put it into the pail. After Bossy gets used to you she’ll let her milk down.”

“How can she not let it down?”

“Well, she can hold it back if she’s upset. She has to relax and feel happy.”

“Thanks for the milking lesson. If I’m ever hungry when I’m out walking in the West I’ll just catch a wild cow and have lunch.”

“Seriously, Roge. I really am all upset that Matt and Grace are in charge of the old brick.”

“Nelle, calm down. Lottie and Howd had a chance; the other boys don’t want it; you and I can’t do it.”

“I wish we could,” she said.

“But we can’t. You married me and I’m not a farmer. It’s not my career. I intend to write and you know it.”

“You could write on the farm.”

“Oh, Nelle You know I need to have travel experience to write the kind of stories I want to write. I want to live in Seattle, and I want to live in Texas, and Montana. I want to write about railroads and the West. I need more material for ideas. After I’ve worked a few more years in different places then we’ll locate somewhere and stay. When we got married you said you would love traveling around the country, living in different places.”

“Well, I do, but I thought I’d have children to fill my time. This way, whenever we move into a new place I have to make friends all over again. It’s lonely, and I sometimes get homesick. Roge, they’re going to get a baby for Emmie.”

“Who?”

“Ma and Pa are. If it works out they’ll adopt. Oh, I hope it works out. I’m not sure about Emmie. But Ma has such high hopes. She thinks babies are the cure for anything.”

“I guess you do too, don’t you, sweets.”

“Yes.”

“Don’t worry, when we get to Denver, we’ll start looking into adoption.”

Nelle spent a month with her family before joining Roge in Colorado. As always on her return visits she went to see her mother first.

The baby “for Emmie” was there. Nelle was surprised when she saw him. In her mind, ahead of time, she had pictured an appealing child. After having had pretty Dee for a short time, Nelle was astonished to find that little Edward was thin and bony looking, not chubby and rounded as a baby should be, and his eyes were crossed.

“Ma,” Nelle said when she saw him, “Is he alright?”

“He will be,” Maria said. “He’s put on a little weight. His mama couldn’t breast feed him, and his bottle formula wasn’t agreeing with him. But we’ve found the right mixture now.”

“But his eyes, Ma! He’s cross-eyed!”

“Maybe when we get him built up they’ll be better. Doctor says it could be a muscle weakness. Babies’ eyes are always crossed a little bit at first. From time to time, that is.”

“But they always straighten up by this age, Ma.”

“Well, we’ll see, Dotty.”

“How is Emmie taking to him?”

“Well, it’s going to take time. So far she hasn’t shown an unusual amount of interest in him, but she is not unkind.”

“Does she hold him and give him his bottle, Ma?”

“Not yet, but she will.”

But Nelle wasn’t at all sure her mother was right about that. Maria herself gave Edward his bottle, although Emmie was willing to warm it for him.

The problem that Nelle observed was that Emmie arranged her day’s program according to some inner schedule of her own. On certain days it was her whim to stay in bed with no visible illness present. On other days she arose early and washed or ironed or baked bread. She cooked dinner if she was in the mood, otherwise Maria did it. Addle still talked to herself (or anyone present) about places and people that no one else knew about. Nelle said many of the people Emmie mentioned were friends she’d had in Denver before her surgery and illness. “She seems to me to have a habit of talking to herself quite a lot,” Maria said. “Lots of us do it, but not quite as much as Emmie does. I expect she’ll get over it one of these days.”

“But Ma, it’s been six years!”

“I know. We should have got a baby for her long ago. But we kept hoping she’d get completely alright. We couldn’t adopt Edward even now, if she doesn’t improve.”

“I wouldn’t think so,” Nelle said,

“The doctor doesn’t think she’s mentally ill,” Maria said. “He thinks she’s just depressed. Edward is only here temporarily. We are acting as foster parents.”

“You and Pa? By the way, how is Edward’s mother?”

“A little better. She has a weak heart, doctor says. But she’s pleased that Edward is here. You see, Nelle, she’s not only sick, but they’re so poor. I think as soon as Emmie gets used to him, she’ll love Edward.”

“I hope so,” Nelle said. “He certainly isn’t a pretty baby.”

“He has good features,” Maria said. “When his eyes straighten out he’ll be fine.”

Nelle went straight to the farm next. Her “baby” brother, Art, drove her out to the “old brick” in his new automobile, his pride and joy. He was married now, and had persuaded his father to buy a building in Oberlin for a moving picture show. Art would run the theater and pay rent to his father.

“The last time I heard news of that idea,” Nelle said, “Pa was against it.” Art grinned. “I talked him into it.”

“You get anything you want from Pa, don’t you?”

“Not quite,”

“You got that auto from him didn’t you? I mean he ‘lent’ you the money, didn’t he?”

“Well, I told him I could use it to take him out to the farm when he felt like going. And say listen, Nelle, my idea for the movie house is a good one. I’m counting on the college students.”

“They ought to be studying, not going to see moving pictures.”

“They can’t study all the time; they’ll come to my theater.”

“How are Janet and the baby?”

“Alright. Only Janet and I don’t get along very well.”

“Oh, now, Art, I hate to hear that. You’re a pretty spoiled little kid, you know. Be nice to her. I thought she was sweet. Ma would hate the thought of another divorce after Tommy’s broke her heart.”

“And yours?”

“That was different,” Nelle said.

“People always think their case is different,” he said.

“Well, it was. You were just a baby. You wouldn’t know anything about it.”

“No, but I’d like to. It’s such a family mystery. Such a shushed-up subject.” Art was grinning in his characteristic mischievous way. It was a grin that girls found irresistible.

“It was shushed-up because he was a terrible person who did terrible things. I never could stand to talk about it. Pa was the only one who knew. He didn’t even tell Ma; just told her there was a good reason. The judge in Cleveland agreed.”

“Oh, then if Pa knows, I’ll have to ask him to tell me. You said I can get anything I want from Pa, you know,” He was grinning again,

“You better not, kid. I’m pretty good with Pa myself. I would go and tell him he shouldn’t give you any more money unless he gives all the rest of us some. And Ma would back me up. She’s all for fairness.”

“I was just teasing you, Nelle. Besides, Pa has lent Nate money for the hotel.”

“I know he has,” Nelle said.

“And he sent checks to Grace when she was in New York. I remember that.”

“Oh, I’ll say he sent checks to her.”

“Well, Pa has the money, Nelle. Why shouldn’t he help us. Look what he’s done for Emmie taking her back into his home again. Some people would expect her husband to look after her.”

“She doesn’t want to live with William, Art.”

“Why?”

“Oh, it’s a long story. I guess she holds it against him what happened in Denver. She didn’t like some things about married life in the first place.”

“You mean the ‘bed’ part?”

“That’s the impression I got, Art,”

“Women are funny. Janet’s sort of that way, too. The main thing the matter with her is she’s very jealous. She thinks I always have my eyes on other women.”

“Do you?”

“Oh, I’m not so terrible. I like women, and women like me. Janet fusses at me if I say anything to another female. She got mad at me for teasing and joking with Maryanne.”

“Maryanne who?”

“Howd and Lottie’s Maryanne.”

“Why she’s just a kid, and your niece.”

“Have you seen her lately?”

“No, not for about five years, I guess.”

“She’s seventeen years old, and the prettiest thing you ever saw. But she is my niece.”

“Uh-huh, and you’re only - what? Twenty-two?”

“Yes.”

“Well, leave her alone. If she’s pretty as you say, that’s why Janet’s jealous. Why make her mad?”

“She’s talking about a divorce.”

“Oh, Art! Oh, no! You didn’t tell me everything, did you?”

“Well, I don’t want to talk about it anymore, Nelle. I’d rather talk about something nicer. How’d we get on that anyway?”

When they got to the farm Nelle was in for a series of surprises. As they drove into the yard, Art noticed her taking it all in.

“Place looks great, doesn’t it?” Art said.

“There’s something different. The pines are getting so tall. There’s been some painting done, too.”

“Yes, but it’s the yard. Matthew’s been working on the yard. Doesn’t it look nice?”

Grace, Ada and Dee came out to greet them. Nelle scooped up Dee for hugs and kisses.

Art said, “Where’s Matt?”

“In the garden,” Grace said. “He’s planting beans this afternoon. Go down and tell him who’s here.”

Dee was tugging at Nelle's hand.

"She wants you to see the baby chicks," Ada said. They toured the place, saw the chicks, saw the new calf, born the day before, and saw the kitchen garden that Matthew was planting according to information from Cornell University.

"Why do you need that?" Nelle wanted to know.

"For new and better ideas on farming," Grace said. "I'm feeding the chickens according to the Cornell plan too."

"Pa always did well enough on his own," Nelle said.

"Father's very interested," Grace said. "He's been reading my pamphlets."

"Oh, pshaw, Grace, Some things don't change. You put manure in the ground, and work it in, and plant your seeds when the weather is right, and if the weather stays right, you have a good crop."

"But there's more to it than that," Grace said. "Different soils and crops require different fertilizers. Crops take things out of the soil. Manure doesn't solve all the needs. Farming is a science."

"I might have known you'd go at it that way," Nelle said.

"Why not go at it that way?" Grace asked.

"Oh, nothing wrong with it; it's just so typical of you, Grace. You've always got such big ideas."

Ada Norris, with her characteristic distaste for verbal clashes, invited everyone in the house for tea and cake.

Dee jumped up and down. "Ethie cake! Ethie cake!"

"Eat a cake?" Nelle said picking Dee up for a hug.

"No. No. Ethie cake."

"She's saying 'Ethel's Cake.' It's Ethie's recipe. Chocolate-frosted yellow butter cake."

Nelle found the inside of the 'old brick' changed, too. Grace had painted all the dark woodwork in the front parlor ivory white. And she had painted the kitchen pale yellow.

"How d'you like it?" Grace asked.

"It seems so different from the way I remember it," Nelle said.



DELIGHT RAHMING (DEEDIE)
WITH PUFFY

1914

"FAYE"

553 $\frac{1}{2}$

“It needs light colors,” Grace said, “because the trees have got so tall now. The house is dark enough without all that old brown woodwork. I’m going to do the other rooms when I get time.”

“Does Pa approve?” Nelle asked.

“Mother convinced him that the rooms needed paint. The last couple that lived here banged the woodwork up badly.”

Art and Matthew joined them all for the refreshments, then it was time for Art and Nelle to go back to Oberlin, and time for Matt to go help Timothy milk the cows.

“I really wanted to see you milk a cow, Matt,” Nelle said. “I can’t believe it.”

“Well, I do, though,” Matt said. “But of course, Timothy milks six of them while I milk three. However by next week I expect to maybe get it to five for him and four for me. My fingers were sore at first, but they’re alright now.”

“Well, we’ve got to run along,” Nelle said. “Thank you, Miss Norris, for the refreshments.”

“Call me Aunt Ida, won’t you? We’re all family now.”

“Yes. By the way, how do you like farm life?”

“It’s a very pleasant change. I enjoy it even without the city plumbing conveniences. But I shall have to go back to Cleveland for a while at least. My sister has written me an urgent letter to come. She’s quite upset and nervous. Perhaps it’s her age. I really don’t know just what the trouble is, but she’s fifty-two. She says she can’t sleep nights. I guess I oughtn’t to talk that way. We’re supposed to be Christian Scientists.”

“Yes,” Nelle said. “But it’s hard to change your habit of speaking after thinking one way for years, isn’t it? I have to try hard myself. I’m taking up Christian Science, too.”

“Well, I hope my sister overcomes her problem soon. I want to come back in time to help Grace at canning time. There are going to be a lot of strawberries, Grace says. We’ll hope to make jam.”

“If you don’t get a late frost,” Nelle said.

“I’m a novice at such things,” Ada admitted.

Later, on the way home, Art turned to Nelle.

“You’re funny sometimes, Sis.”

“What do you mean?”

“You know there’s not going to be any frost now to hurt the strawberries. It’s June, Nelle.”

“We’ve been known to have frosts in late May, Art. You don’t remember about the farm, kid. I was born there and practically grew up there. You later kids were born in Oberlin.”

“And Pa always had strawberries and a garden in Oberlin, you know. Anyway, like I said, Nelle, it’s June. There isn’t going to be any frost now. The strawberries are almost ready to ripen.”

“Well, why did you say I was funny?”

“The way you are with Grace. You seemed to be always trying to damp their enthusiasm.”

“Oh, I did not!”

“Yep. You did. About the chicks, about the fertilizer and the milking, and the strawberries. All that. You didn’t once say the fresh paint looks nice. Grace has worked hard. She’s going to tell us what colors to use when we paint the theater. Grace’s good at things like that. I can’t figure out, though, why it always seems to annoy you, Sis.”

“It doesn’t.”

“Are you sort of jealous of her, or something?”

“No.” Nelle was suddenly angry. “Listen, Art, I’ve been very good to Grace. In New York I did favors for her and Matt all the time. I used to come and get Dee almost every day and take her to my place or for long rides in her carriage.”

“But, maybe you did that for yourself, too, huh, kid?”

“Nonsense. And I sewed Dee a whole wardrobe while I had her in Vermont for three weeks.”

“Well, Sis, I didn’t mean to scold. I know you’ve got a good heart, but you are funny about Grace, just the same. I wish you had kids of your own. It would be nice for you.”

“That’s got nothing to do with it.”

He looked at her, and she knew she’d slipped up. “Well, I just hope they take good care of Pa and Ma’s farm, I hope that they don’t ruin it.”

“They won’t.”

####

Cleveland, July 1913

“Dear Cousin Art:

“Well, as you can see by the heading of my letter, I am back in the city again and not living on the farm in Chagrin Falls as I had expected. It is a long story.

“I did go out there with the young folks, for two and a half months, and I thoroughly enjoyed myself. The primitive plumbing was the only adjustment I had to make, and it was considerable. Also it took me a while to learn to cook on the coal oil stove. But everything else was fine. The air out there is so clean. There is none of the black soot from the factories and trains that we have in Cleveland.

“In April, Matthew and the hired man, Timothy, put in the vegetable garden, part of it, that is. Grace busied herself getting settled and painting some of the woodwork in the house. She loves to work like that. She also planted some flowers around the house. Timothy worked putting in some oats in the fields. They have to go in early in the spring. Corn goes in later, after the weather is warmer. All these facts are new to me. Wheat goes in in the fall.

“Grace remembers some of the rules about farming from listening to her father, but she has sent to Cornell University for more information, so that she can do everything in the most modern scientific manner. She has started a hundred baby chicks in a brooder, which is a sort of metal shelter that keeps them warm with a heater. The chicks are precious little furry yellow balls, and the baby Dee is enchanted with them.

“The cows were another exciting part of our lives. Dee was my special charge while I was there, and she and I went down to the barn every day at five-thirty to see the cows milked. There are nine cows milking at the present time, one more to ‘freshen’ soon, as they say. They do not keep all the calves, some are sold, the little bull calves go for veal when they are quite young, and I find that a bit upsetting, for the little things have such appealing faces, and gentle eyes.

“Matthew did not intend to have to learn to milk the cows originally, but there are too many. It takes Timothy too long to milk them all himself, and Grace said Matthew should know how anyway, since he would have to do it if Timothy were to be sick some time, or had to be away for some reason. Matthew’s hands were very sore the first week he was learning to milk, and he was quite upset (as only he can be). He said it would ruin his hands for art work, but Grace says it can’t take away his talent; it will only strengthen his fingers. The milking is the only thing about this venture that has bothered Matthew. He does admit that having more cows will bring in more income, as they sell the milk to the city.

“They are very busy. Spring and harvest time are that way on the farm. They expect to find more time for art work after the crops are in. Except for the milking, Timothy can handle much of the

work. They will be cutting hay soon, and that is a busy time. Later, threshers come and that is important too.

“I had been cooking, and caring for Dee, and Grace had even started to do some magazine covers she planned to submit to an editor she knows, Matthew stretched a canvas for an oil painting. Things are going well. I planned to pick and make some strawberries into jam. Then everything was changed (for me, at least.)

“I got a letter in the beginning of June, from Rosella. She was very upset, and said she was in great need of me to come back to Cleveland. She hadn’t really wanted me to come to the farm, in the first place. She finally stopped objecting to the plan because Matthew said they really needed me, while the baby was so small. Dee is two and a half years old. Matt said having me there would make all the difference in their being able to get any art work done. And he was right. Someone had to mind Dee all day except during her nap.

“But I came back to Cleveland, and here I am. Rosella’s problem she has not fully explained to me, but I fear she has had a bad quarrel with John, and I don’t know what about, but they barely speak to each other, and as a result we are all upset, including, of course, Ethel. Ethel tells me, by the way, that she has no idea what the quarrel was about; it took place when she was not with them. I am puzzled about it all, because John has never been one to quarrel with Rosella.

“Well, that is my news for now, and I hope my next letter will be to tell you that all is well again here.

Affectionately,

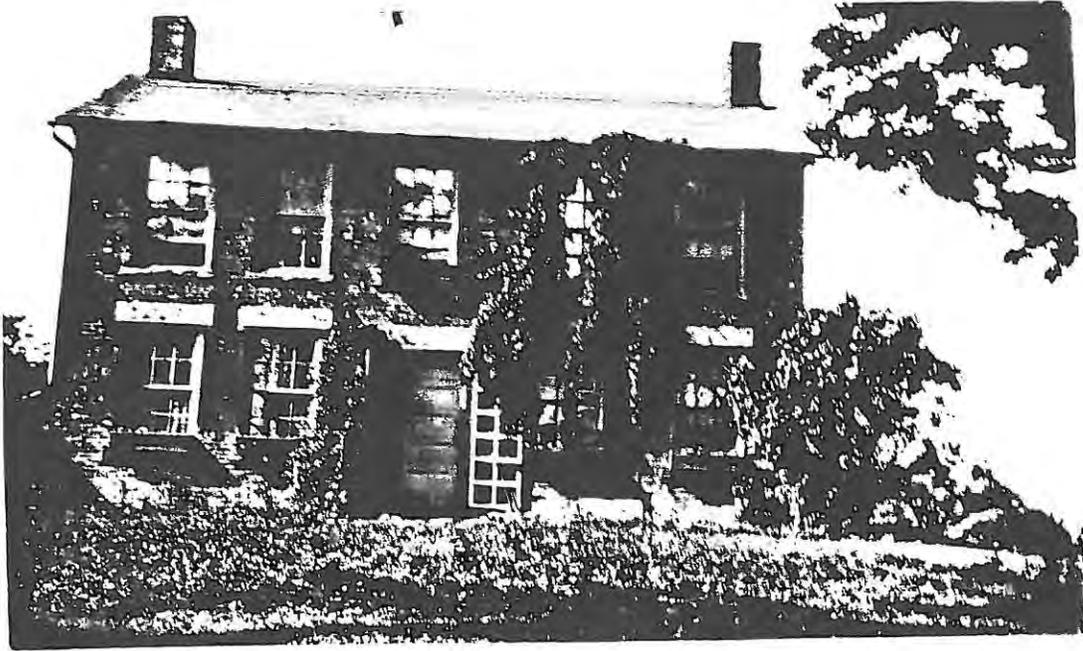
Your Cousin Ida

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At home on Cartwright Street again, Ada found herself strangely homesick for the farm. She had only been at the Old Brick ten weeks, but life there had been so fascinating, she longed to return. Her first week on the farm had been rather difficult, what with commodes at night, and the privy in the daytime. But Grace and Matt had seen to it that Ada never had any work in connection with the sanitary arrangements. At first, the quiet of the country nights kept her awake. The stillness was absolute for long periods, broken only occasionally by sounds that Ada presently came to identify; a horse's hooves on the floor of his stall as he shifted his weight, the clink of the chain on a cow's stanchion, sometimes an owl in a nearby tree. At about twenty minutes past eleven every night if Ada was still awake and her window on the west open, she could hear a locomotive whistle as it approached the grade crossings in Oberlin.

The quiet nights were pleasing to Ada after the second week, and the country air was delightful, especially after the warm weather brought the sweet clover into bloom. That was an aroma she had never known in all her years in Brooklyn and Cleveland, but several times, when she was young, they had visited the Quaker relatives in New Hope, Pennsylvania in the summer time when the fields of clover were being cut. Now that heady, sweet fragrance had brought her girlhood summers back to her in a strong wave of nostalgia. She could see her mother and father dressed in white, as they always were in midsummer; Rosella with flowers in her hair bleached by the sun, in spite of the sunbonnets she always wore in the country to protect her fair skin. And of course there were memories of her brother Bertie, and of Maily, and baby Nate.

Ada was fifty-six now, and in spite of her cheerful and philosophical nature, she knew that, for her, things would be only downhill from now on. She felt quite well, but her gradually increasing deafness was a worry to her. Some days it was better, other days worse. Sometimes she could hear the night sounds, sometimes not. But it had been her great pleasure to be useful to Matthew and Grace - one more chance to be something more than just a maiden aunt. Rosella, John and Ethel should not need her now; it was the young couple who really could use her help. On the farm, Ada had begun to have real hopes for Matthew. She'd always felt that Matt had many talents which he would use, if he could shake off the damage his mother's coddling had done to his character. Farm life was a discipline for both Matt and Grace, for it meant early rising, something they'd not had to do as free lance artists. Cows have to be milked every twelve hours, and Matthew had to get up at five with Timothy. Matt had suggested that they gradually adjust the cows' schedule to 8 am and 8 pm, but Timothy had no intention of interrupting his evenings for farm chores. Matt pointed out the advantages of sleeping in in the morning, but Timothy said, no, he was used to getting up with the chickens, and would rather have his evenings free to go visit his girl on a neighboring farm. So Matt had to do some things Timothy's way or the man would have quit. Presently they all got used to the hours (it had been no hardship for Ida, who woke early always) and retired at nine o'clock most evenings. Ida's hope for Matthew lay in the many challenges of the farm. It sometimes had seemed to Ada that Matthew had surplus energies



"THE OLD BRICK"



THE WEST SIDE

STAN H.J.M. "BEE"
"TOMMY" "JOHN" "FANCY"

that he could not find ways to express. He had always seemed to her to be a pent-up child, in need of using his energies in some forceful way - forceful, but useful. But instead, he had used his forces in tantrums or in teasing his little sister. John had likened Matthew to a steam boiler. When he blew up, everyone got out of his way; let him blow up by himself. Ada often thought that perhaps one reason Matthew indulged in his temper storms, was a reaction to Rosella's incessant reiteration that "Mattie is God's perfect child," and various quotations that bespoke of harmony and spirituality in mankind. Ada had a strong conviction that a streak of perversity ran through everyone's personality, no matter how saintly he or she might be. Matthew was not saintly, and his perverse streak was a yard wide. Ada thought that Rosella made it worse. It was apparent, from the time he was small, that Matt knew he could shock and upset her. Ada could recall only one occasion when Matt had said he was sorry after a temper display. He'd been pulling Ethie's hair (a frequent pastime of his) and Rosella had tried to intervene because Ethie was crying so hard. Matt had flailed his arms about and hit Rosella in the nose. It bled hard, and Matt was frightened badly. He was seven at the time and Ethie five. He'd hugged his mother and said, "Mama, I'm sorry I was a bad boy." But he'd grown up and never said anything repentant again about his hot temper.

Ada for the most part removed herself from the scene when he "acted up," but once she had said to him, "Matthew, I get the impression that you feel all the rest of us here must make an adjustment to you, when you fly into rages. Well, we seem to be doing so, but what will happen when you encounter the rest of the world? Will they adjust to you as we have done? I think not. You'd do well to plan on adjusting to the world."

Matt liked his Aunt Ida, and he respected not only her education, but her invested money. He had turned on the charm. "Auntie, I know I get obstreperous at times, but when I'm on my good behavior I'm very nice, don't you agree? It should more than make up for the wicked in me."

"You think over what I said, Matthew. The world will judge you; people will balance the good and the wicked in you. You'd best try to make the good side heavier than it is now."

On the farm, there'd been no temper tantrums, only the fussing about milking the cows. Matthew had loved planting the kitchen garden. Ada had watched him stretching string to make the rows straight, on his knees distributing the seeds for carrots, beets, lettuce, chard, and other things, Setting out plants for tomatoes and cabbages that he had started in a cold frame. She watched him prepare hills for cucumbers and squash, first putting a shovelful, of manure under each hill, and then mounding the soil up and putting the seeds in a small depression at the top. Ada watched him pulverizing the soil by rolling it between his palms to sprinkle it lightly over the seeds. He seemed as happy and content as she had ever seen him; he seemed to draw from his contact with the earth a soothing influence. Was it for him a sovereign balm? Sovereign balm. Where did that term come from? Probably from poems read long ago when she was a girl at Packer Institute. Now she would rack her brains to remember the author's name.

[She heard it in church - a hymn]

SALVATION! O THE JOYFUL SOUND!

Salvation! O the joyful sound!
What pleasure to our ears!
A sovereign balm for every wound,
A cordial for our fears.

Buried in sorrow and in sin,
And at hell's dark door we lay;
But we arise by grace divine
To see a heavenly day.

Glory, honor, praise, and power,
Be unto the Lamb forever:
Jesus Christ is our Redeemer:
Hallelujah, Praise the Lord.

Salvation! Let the echo fly
The spacious earth around;
While all the armies of the sky
Conspire to raise the sound!

Salvation! O Thou bleeding Lamb,
To Thee the praise belongs;
Salvation shall inspire our hearts,
And dwell upon our tongues.

Well, in any event, working the soil was good for Matthew; pruning the grape vines and the rose bushes was good for him too. He seemed to take the deepest pride in the appearance of the grounds around the buildings. Where grass did not grow, he swept the bare earth smooth of twigs and pebbles with a broom. The effect was almost miraculous, lending the place an air of great thrift and cleanliness. When Merly's husband Waldo first saw Matthew sweeping the bare dirt patches clean, he said, "I do believe you are partly Dutch housewife, Matt." And Matt had said good-naturedly, "And you are only partly wrong, Waldo, for I have some Dutch ancestors."

While at the farm, Ada had made a practice of having dinner prepared and ready to serve at six o'clock. At five-thirty she and Dee always went down to the dairy barn to watch Matt and Timothy finishing up the milking. Two cats were always present at this time of day and it was Dee's special delight to have Timothy squirt a stream of warm milk six or seven feet directly into a cat's mouth. Ada felt that she would never tire of the picture of Matthew seated on the low

milking stool, his forehead pressed against the warm flank of the patient Holstein. He had complained about the milking, but Ada suspected that Matt rather liked it. Perhaps the rhythm of it soothed him, perhaps the earthy presence of the big animals intrigued him, closed in as he was with them and the odor of their breaths and of the hay, and the fresh manure, and the animal urine running down the cement gutters to the yard outside. Perhaps it was the challenge that had been offered him and that he had met. Grace was less a farm girl than a town and city girl, but the farm had been her father's world, and Matt had fitted himself into it remarkably well. It seemed to be good for him, and Ada hoped he'd not tire of it. He would have to succeed at it, though, so that more hired hands could be employed to do the labor, for neither Matt nor Grace would give up their art work permanently.

It saddened Ada to come back to Cleveland, for she knew that without her help Grace would get no art work done at all. And it annoyed her even further that Rosella would not tell her why she had sent for her.

The house itself was depressing enough to return to, without having to look at Rosella's glum face day after day. For the first time, Ada felt that city life could be cramped and stifling. She had loved Brooklyn, and the big house, her beloved Beaches, the harbor, and the drives to Prospect Park, and of course, Packer Institute where she had made so many friends.

But in time she'd grown to like Cleveland, in spite of its less pleasant climate. She was familiar with its downtown stores, and there'd been occasional walks to Whitfield Park, and rare trips to the Lake, which was somewhat like the ocean because one could not see the other side. She had eventually come to like the Cartwright Street house, and during her first week at the farm, had been homesick for her room and her own furniture, which had been her Mama's, but now that she was back in town again, she was depressed and bored. And she was out of patience with herself for feeling thus. She had never been a morose individual.

Matthew had come with her from Chagrin Falls on the interurban streetcar in order to help her with her luggage. Much to Rosella's dismay he stayed about twenty minutes, long enough to drink a glass of cold lemonade. Then he left, saying that he must get back to Chagrin Falls for milking time.

"Oh, Mattie, please don't leave so soon. I was sure that you would stay for suppah," Rosella said. "I counted on it."

"So did I," Ethie said. "We miss you."

"Goodness sakes," Matt said. "I left home five years ago. You're used to having me grown up and gone."

"You were here two months," Ethie said. "We miss you all."

"I'll nevah get used to having you 'grown up and gone,'" Rosella said.

“Well, anyway, I have to get back to those bossy cows.”

“Oh,” Rosella said, “can’t the hired man milk them himself?”

“No, he’s going to see his girl tonight. I wouldn’t want to make him mad. Timothy is a good man, and they’re hard to find.”

“Oh, pshaw. If you only had telephones out there you could call Grace and tell her to let Timothy go, and you could milk the cows later on.”

Matthew smiled. “Mama, it isn’t like that with cows. Fifteen minutes or half an hour isn’t too serious. But it’s best to milk them every twelve hours right on the dot.”

“But I thought you were going to be a gentleman farmer, Mattie.”

“I am, Mama. Give me time.”

After Matthew left, Rosella had gone weeping to her room. Ada turned to her niece.

“Ethie, what is the matter with your mother? Why did she ask me to come home? She told me nothing in her letter to enlighten me.”

“She quarreled with Papa,” Ethie said in a low voice.

“Do you know what they quarreled over, Ethie?”

“No, not really, Auntie, but it was terribly upsetting that day. They began arguing at the table, and Papa got really angry. I’ve never seen him that way. He didn’t shout in the way that Matt does, but his tone was very sharp with Mama, and he said things that he must have been thinking about for a long time. He said things about Christian Science. That she had been using it against him for years.”

“Oh, my!” Ada said.

“That really upset Mama terribly.”

“I imagine that it did.”

‘Aunt Ida, Papa shouldn’t have said that. Mania would never use Science against anyone.’

“No, not in the sense you are probably thinking of, Ethie, but one thing is clear, and a number of people know about it; when Christian Science came into your Mama’s life, your Papa went out of her bedroom, and it was your Mama’s doing.”

“Aunt Ida, I really don’t know anything about marriages.”

“Being single, I suppose I’m not thought to know anything about that either, but some things are against the nature of people - especially against the nature of men. I discussed it with my own Mama once or twice. She was very upset about Rosella and John. Georgie was, too. She knew John felt that Rosella had shut him out. And she said to me, ““He will probably find another woman.

Ethie blushed, and Ada waited, expecting her to say something, but she did not, so Ada asked her a question.

“How have they been getting along since the argument?”

“Papa’s been away since then,” Ethie said. “That day (it was on Sunday, two weeks ago) Papa left the table and went up to his room. He told Mama he wanted to speak to her private. I did the dinner dishes, and she went upstairs to talk to him. I didn’t hear them talking, there weren’t any loud voices. But after a while Papa shouted down the stairs for me to come up with smelling salts; Mama had fainted.”

“Did she really faint, Ethie?”

“Papa and I thought so.”

“Your Papa did?”

“That’s what he said.”

“Well, maybe she did then. Maybe she really did. And after she came to?”

“I couldn’t find the smelling salts. We sponged her face with cool water, and after we got her awake, Papa left for out of town.”

“And you say he’s not been back since then?”

“That’s right, but he sent a check that he’d mailed right here in Cleveland. There was a note saying that he was going out of town again immediately, and he didn’t have time to come home before going away again.”

“What about his clean shirts and things?” Ada said.

“I don’t know,” Ethie said, “but he could have a laundry do them up.”

“Well, Ethie, everything you’ve told me still doesn’t tell me why I had to rush here from Chagrin Falls. If your Mama and Papa have had a falling out, it’s something they have to settle between them, Ethie. Frankly, I would rather not be here. I don’t want to be put in a position by your Mama of choosing sides in a domestic quarrel. I should return to the farm and stay clear of it all.”

“But Mama is so miserable, Auntie”

“Has she given up her ‘Science,’ Ethie?”

“Oh, no.”

“She’s still going to church?”

“Of course, Auntie.”

“Then she certainly should be able to meet the problem, especially this kind of a problem, I would think. I’ve never had faith that Science could properly set and heal a broken leg, but if Rosella is upset she’ll be alright soon.”

“I think you should talk to her, though, Aunt Ida; Mama leans on you so.”

“Yes, I know she does,” Ada said. “And she must not do it.”

It was not easy for Ada to convince Rosella that she did not need her. Rosella had hoped to persuade Ada to stay in the city without telling her that John had discussed divorce. The first day Ada waited for Rosella to talk to her, but Rosella kept quiet and went about the house with a doleful expression. Ada decided to give her the rest of the day, thinking that Rosella might talk with her privately, after Ethie had gone to bed. But Rosella didn’t come, so Ada decided to question her in the morning after Ethie went to work.

It was Monday morning, and after Ethie had left and the dishes were out of the way, Ada spoke.

“Rosie, did you call me back from the farm so that I could wash dishes for you?”

Rosella opened her blue eyes wide. “Ida, how can you say a thing like that?”

“Because you haven’t told me the reason.” Ada said.

“I can’t, Rosella said, and put her finger tips to her temples. “I just can’t.” She stared at the window and said no more.

“Very well,” Ada said, and went up stairs. She came down again with her hat and her handbag.

“I’m going over to the corner grocer s. I may call on one or two of the neighbors while I’m out.

“I forgot to tell you that Mrs. Major’s husband passed on.”

“Oh dear! Whatever happened? What was the matter? I knew he was wounded when he was in the Philippines, but he always went to work every day.”

“Well,” Rosella said, “it was very sudden.”

“But what was it?”

“Ida, you know I don’t like to talk ‘mortal mind.”

“For goodness’ sake, Rosie, you aggravate me so. What did other people say it was? You can tell me that.”

“They said it was apoplexy - a sort of stroke.”

“Poor lady! How long ago was it? I wonder if I should call on her.”

“Well she doesn’t seem to be grieving much. I saw her out in her front yard fussing with her flowers, and wearing a pink dress.”

“Oh, Rosie, that doesn’t prove she isn’t grieving. You can’t tell about such things by outward appearance. I don’t believe in widow’s weeds. Death is bad enough without dressing yourself in black crepe, for goodness’ sake.”

“Death is unreal,” Rosella said.

“Rosie, I can’t agree with you. Death is very real. There’s nothing more real, possibly. Mama meant everything to me; so did Papa. And I had no husband to help take their place when they were gone. I miss them as much today as I ever did. They are gone and I can’t ever talk to them again

“We have lovely memories,” Rosella said.

“Yes, but there is only a limited comfort in memories,”

“I hope you aren’t going to tell Mrs. Majors that,” Rosella said.

“No, I’m not. You know better than that. I suppose I shall tell her the usual platitudes. But if I were to be honest, I’d tell her that memories won’t help much. Memories only make one cry more. I can understand why some folks drink when they are grieving; they are trying to blot out the memories and make a numbness instead.”

“Does Mrs. Majors drink?” Rosella said.

“Now, I didn’t say that at all, nor mean it...”

“You’re a strange person, Ida. You do too much thinking about things. It makes me nervous.”

“I’m sorry about that,” Ada said. “But I wouldn’t know how to stop thinking. I’m going now. I think I will stop in and tell her I’d have sent flowers and a note if I’d known.”

“Don’t put me in a bad light, Ida. I forgot to let you know.”

“I shan’t.”

“I wish you wouldn’t go. I wish you’d stay with me.”

“Rosella, you can’t keep me housebound. You brought me home because you were upset, but you won’t discuss your problems with me. When you’re ready to, I’ll listen. Now, I’m going out.”

She felt she had to talk to other people. Just now Rosella and her house exasperated her. She’d go to the bakery and get some bread, and perhaps she could cheer up Mrs. Majors a bit on her way home.

Mrs. Majors was not at home. Her sister said she had gone to see the doctor, since she’d been feeling poorly. It would be some time before she would be back.

Ada left her visiting card and went on home in a depressed frame of mind. Other friends on Cartwright Street were away also, the Miller’s were at their home at the Headlands on the Lake. Suddenly, for the first time a strong wave of rebellion swept over Ida. She did not want to spend the summer in Cleveland. She had spent over fifteen years here, most of them on Cartwright Street. And before that her life had all been spent on Fleet Street in Brooklyn. Brooklyn was beloved, but it was changed and she would never go back till they sent her back to Greenwood to be next to Mama and Papa, and Maily, and Jenny. Perhaps she would live twenty more years. That would make her the age that Mama was when she died. She did not want to think of those possible twenty years spent on Cartwright Street cooped up winter and summer listening; to Rosella read Christian Science to Ethie, who was never going to get married.

Life would grow more and more tedious and dull as Rosella and Ethie grew older. If they had only chosen to go to a church with a social program it might have been pleasanter. And now for two and a half years John, who had once brightened the house of evenings, with conversation of people, books, and politics, was always away. And Ada had thoughts about that, too. Matthew was gone, Matthew the spoiled and self-centered, had taken his tantrums and oaths away from Cartwright Street, but He’d also taken his laugh, and his mischievous grin, his interest in science and literature, and his ability to keep things lively. There had been bad times with Matthew around the house, but there had not been dull times.

She walked faster, and when she reached the house her mind was made up. She was going back to the Old Brick. At least for the summer.

As she went up the walk she realized how narrow were the strips of land that divided the houses from each other, and how limited the variety of growing things about them. In Rosella’s back yard there was a thin cover of grass growing under the shade of the ailanthus trees, and a patch of lilies-of-the-valley. In the front yard the grass was slightly more vigorous, but the planting was uninteresting, the foundation hidden by the bridal-wreath bushes which were covered with white flowers in June, and filled with mosquitoes all summer. There was a red rambler rose climbing on a trellis beside the porch, and two large potted aspidistra plants, one on either side of the

steps. Inside, the sitting room was filled with hairy begonia plants. It had all been exactly the same as long as they had lived there.

Rosella had been at her desk, but she rose when Ada came in, and followed her into the kitchen.

“What did you buy?” she asked.

Ada took the things from her market basket one at a time. “Some poppy-seed bread.”

“Oh, good,” Rosella said.

“Cheddar cheese, and vanilla (we were out of it). I saw that you had enough butter and eggs.”

“Yes, he comes on Thursdays now, and Ethie and I don’t use up those things very fast, just the two of us,”

“That should make it a bit easier for John.”

“What do you mean?”

“Fewer mouths to feed, that’s all.”

“But Ida, you always contributed!”

“So I did.”

“And so with you gone, I’m not saving any money.”

“But Matthew and his ‘girls’ are gone, Ethie’s working. You earn a little. Things should be all right for you now.”

“What do you plan for supper?”

“Rosie, I didn’t plan it. You’ve been doing it while I was away. Or Ethie has.”

“Ethie has. But Ida, I thought we’d go back to our old way of doing.”

“No. We won’t — because I’m going to be returning to Chagrin Falls as soon as it can be arranged. It’s a busy time out there right now, and Grace needs me.”

“But I need you, Ida. You’re my sister.”

“No. I’m going back because you haven’t given me one good reason why I’m here,”

“Ida, come in the sitting room and I’ll tell you the reason.”

“All right.”

They went to the sitting room, and Rosella sat down in her chair beside the marble-top table where she kept all of Mrs. Eddy's writings. Ada was still standing, waiting.

"Sit down," Rosella said.

"I'm going upstairs in a minute."

"No, sit down, Ida." Rosella started to cry. "Ida, John told me we should get a divorce."

Ada looked at Rosella a moment. "When?"

"Two weeks ago. He hasn't been home since."

"But he sent you a check, Ethie tells me."

"Yes. And he mailed it right here in Cleveland, and he went away again without even coming home for his shirts."

"Rosella," Ada said, "hasn't he ever talked to you about divorce before?"

"No. Nevah."

"Well, Rosie, that is the only surprising thing you've told me. I would have supposed differently. What did you say to him? What are you going to do?"

Rosella wiped her eyes. "We didn't discuss it anymore, because he went away that day."

"Will you get a divorce?"

"Ada How can you think that? I must work it out in Christian Science. I've been trying. Mrs. Eddy says separation must never take place. She said that the nuptial vow should never be annulled."

"And she said a great deal more than that. I read her chapter on Marriage once. I read it out of curiosity. I knew you took your ideas from it. But I found it difficult to reconcile with the world as it is."

"Not as it is, Ida, as it seems to be."

"The way it seems to be is all we mortals have to deal with."

"But we are spiritual, Ida, not mortal."

"To me it seems otherwise, Ada said. "Now John has said he wants a divorce, and I'm not surprised. You chose to be spiritual, and perhaps he'd rather be mortal. You chose Mrs. Eddy's teachings, and you interpreted them to suit yourself, and you shut him out of your life."

“Oh, no, Ida! You can’t say I shut John out of my life. My heart has always been filled with love for John.”

“Your kind of love, Rosie - I’m sure he wanted more than that.”

“I never criticized him. All these years and I have never criticized him,”

“There’s precious little to criticize in John, except that he might have been more successful in business.”

“Ida, could John divorce me if I didn’t want him to?”

“Rosie, I’m no one to ask about such matters. I know little or nothing about divorce laws. It wouldn’t surprise me to learn that he could divorce you, but I don’t know whether he would or not. He would probably ask you to divorce him, I imagine.”

“Well, I wouldn’t do any such thing! I have no reason on earth to divorce John.”

Ada looked at Rosella thoughtfully. “I’m sure you feel that way. I can’t think of any reason either.” But a sudden thought passed through Ida’s mind. Why, after nearly thirty years of marriage, was John for the first time speaking to Rosella of divorce? He had put up with her complete absorption in her religion, her maudlin love for Matthew, and her possessive hold on Ethie, and with her fainting spells. But she’d been the way she was for years. She hadn’t changed suddenly. She was indeed the same Rosella she’d always been, a woman who never faced problems if she could deny their existence. Why was John wanting to leave Rosella now? Something had happened to end his long patient resignation to his inadequate marriage. Ada wondered if what she so often had thought might occur, had in fact finally happened. There might be another woman in John’s life. And, if so, perhaps, unknown to Rosella, she might have a reason to want to divorce John. And while Ada was thinking those thoughts, Rosella spoke.

“Even if I had some grounds to divorce him, I would never do it. Mrs. Eddy teaches us that there must be no separation, no divorce. In fact, in her book she reminds us that Jesus said that in the Resurrection there would be no marriage, no giving in marriage. Then all will be spiritual and perfect and eternal. “

“Rosella, when you begin to talk this way you lose me. We are not yet in the Resurrection, we are here and now, and we have to deal with it.”

“Don’t you believe in the Resurrection, Ida?”

“I don’t know,” Ada said.

“You believe in Jesus, don’t you?”

“Of course. I believe it would be fine if people lived as unselfishly as he.”

“What shall I do about John, Ida?”

“You should have asked that question of yourself years ago. I have no idea what you should do now. And if I had, I wouldn’t presume to interfere. I’m going to go back to Chagrin Falls.”

“You can’t leave me now, Ida, at a time like this.”

“This is just the time when I should go. You and John will have to settle this yourselves, and I don’t even want to be present when you do,”

“Ida, if you go, don’t go to stay,”

“I’ll come back to spend the winter with you if all is serene around here.”

####

Ada came home at Thanksgiving to spend the winter. Matthew, Grace and Dee came with her for the holiday and the weekend. Timothy took care of the livestock during their absence from the Old Brick. Rosella begged them all to stay longer, but to no avail. They had to get back, they said, in order to give Timothy the few days vacation they'd promised him.

John was at home for the holiday, and everything seemed to be "serene" as Ada had hoped it would be. There had been no further talk of divorce, apparently.

On the farm, despite Ida's absence from her function as cook and "Nanny" for Dee, Grace and Matthew were finding more time for art work. They took alternate days supervising Dee. Since it was winter and there was no field work, Timothy had more time. Several of the cows were dry before their "freshening" when their new calves came. There were fewer to milk and those still milking gave less, since they were off pasture and "with calf." Timothy could handle all the milking himself, which suited Matthew fine, as it meant he did not have to get up and go to the barn in the cold, dark winter mornings. Timothy got up and made the fires around the house, and went straight to the barn, where he fed the cows and horses, and did the milking. After straining and taking care of the milk, he came up to the house for the breakfast Grace would have ready for him. Matthew and Dee still slept. While Timothy ate, Grace prepared hot, "laying" mash for her chickens, and filled pails with warm water. She had learned from her agriculture pamphlets that the warm food would produce more eggs in zero weather. Timothy had told her that her hens were laying better than any others on the neighboring farms.

"They say it's beginner's luck," Timothy told her. "I told them it's your system. They say you coddle your hens."

"I do," Grace told him. "And it pays, doesn't it?"

"Sure seems to," Timothy agreed.

"There's no sense farming if it doesn't pay," she said.

"Reckon you're right," he said.

"The reason it works is simple. When their drinking water has ice on it, and the mash and grain are icy cold too, they don't want to drink and eat. They just mope around with their feathers fluffed up. When you take the warm food and water to them, what happens?"

"They gather round and drink a lot of water and eat a lot of mash," Timothy said.

"Exactly. They eat a lot and drink a lot. And so they lay eggs. It warms their bodies up too and keeps them contented."

"Guess you're right, Mrs. Rahming."

When Matthew and Dee got up, Grace ate breakfast with them. Timothy took care of the pigs and worked on small repair jobs around the place. In February Grace planned to have him prune the orchard fruit trees according to her instructions.

On Grace's day for art work she worked on magazine covers for her old New York publisher. Matthew was working on an oil painting from a photograph he'd made of cows in the wood-lot.

"Why don't you wait and paint it in the summer time when you can do it from life?" Grace asked him.

"Because I'll have no time to paint in the summer time. Besides, the light changes too fast, and the mosquitoes eat me alive."

"I hate to see you paint from a photograph," she said.

"Why?"

"Because it's not the right way to do it."

"Why?"

"It just isn't."

"Grace, when you look at a scene and paint an oil painting you think it's all right. You're making an oil painting image of a scene. Right?"

"Certainly."

"When I take a photograph of the scene, that's also an image, a photographic image. I see no reason why I should not make my oil painting comfortably at home from my own photograph, which I made very carefully as to composition and subject matter. I'm making an image from an image of a scene."

"Yes, and I don't like it."

"But why, if the result is a good picture?"

"It's just wrong, that's all. Wrong and lazy. It's an easy shortcut way."

"You feel that it should be done the hard way in order to be a good picture? I can't see why it makes any difference if the end is good. Who cares what method we use? It isn't a copy of a master's painting. You act as though I were making copies of something. I'm painting an original painting, using my original photograph for my subject. I'm not hurting anybody by my methods. Why do you go on at me about it?"

“Because you are hurting someone, Matt. You’re hurting yourself. For one thing, it’s better art training to sit out in the field and paint from life. You need the practice.”

“Rubbish! Don’t be so smug because you graduated from art school, and I didn’t. I’m quite agreeable to sitting out in the field when time and temperature and light conditions permit. Otherwise I’ll do my pictures my way, and you do yours your way.”

“Oh, Matt, you make me feel so sad! You used to be so idealistic about Art.”

“Shit! Don’t be so dramatic about Art. I’m looking for a way to turn it into a livelihood, that’s all.”

“What a disgraceful way to talk!”

“It’s a great way to talk. Anyway, you got me on the farm shoveling it. I might as well mention it.”

“By the way, you ought to help Timothy milk, at least twice a week, so you won’t have trouble with your hands again. There’s three cows freshening next month, remember.”

“As if I could forget.”

“I thought you were pleased to be living here. At least, we have more to eat now. You’re never grateful.”

“You know feelings about the business of being grateful. It’s pure hell, that’s what it is. Farming’s all right in good weather. I don’t care for it in winter.”

“There’s less work in the winter.”

“That’s the trouble. I’m better off when I’m working hard. Then I’m not restless and irritable. What did Merly say in her letter?”

“That she’s trying to get pregnant again.”

“A delightful occupation!”

“Don’t joke about it. She’s had two miscarriages.”

“I know.”

“She’s just desperately anxious to have a baby.”

“Maybe I could help.”

“Oh, you’re such a smarty, Matt! She doesn’t have any trouble becoming enceinte. It’s just that she’s so afraid she’ll lose another one.”

“Why don’t we have another one now? Time we started making our boy, don’t you think?”

“No, Matt, I don’t think. I want to have money in a savings account first. And that’s not all I want before we have another baby, either.”

“What else do you want?”

“I want you to have gone at least a year without any bad temper scenes.”

“I can’t be perfect.”

“There’s no danger of that.”

“Look, Hedgy. I’ve been very good since we came here.”

“Especially when Aunt Ada was here. She’s good for you.”

“Yes, I think she is. She’s a grand old girl.”

“When you’re with your mother, though, Aunt Ada doesn’t seem to have that calming effect on you. And when you and I were living in New York you were very bad indeed.”

“Hedgy, do you know what? I could get you pregnant any time I want, and you wouldn’t have anything to say about it. I’m in charge of those matters.”

“You better behave yourself, Matthew Rahming.”

MY FRIEND DESERVES SOMETHING BETTER

On the June evening when John first mentioned divorce to Rosella, he had left the house and walked down Cartwright Street to Seventy-Third Street, where he took the cross-town trolley north to Sloane Avenue. If he had seen anyone he knew, anywhere near the corner, he might have waited for the southbound car which would have taken him to Grand Avenue, where he could get the trolley to go downtown, where the train depot was. That would have been a few minutes shorter in time than going down by way of Sloane Avenue, and the way he would logically go when leaving for an out of town trip. There had been a few occasions when he'd felt it wise not to get on the north bound cross-town car, because he happened to see someone he knew. Not that he definitely knew they would notice or think it an odd way to go to the train. But they might.

That night he arrived at Anna's while it was still light, for it was June and the days were long. If the neighbors thought it was odd that he appeared to be arriving home on a Sunday evening, they gave no sign of it.

He wanted to knock at the door but it seemed the unnatural thing to do. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, she expected him, and he always used a latch key. Tonight she had not been certain he would come. He had told her that he planned to talk to Rosella about divorce, and he had no idea what her reaction would be. An instinct had told him, however, that he would not want to be at home after talking with her. He knew too much about Rosella's reaction to all trouble.

"Perhaps she'll order me to leave," he had told Anna.

He heard her playing the piano, and so he let himself in the door.

She turned on the piano bench and stopped playing. Her smile was tentative.

He went to her and bent to kiss her, then stood straight again and held her close against him.

She looked up, waiting for him to speak.

"Yes, I know you're wondering. I did speak to her. I suggested we get a divorce."

"What did she say?"

He walked across and sat down in the most comfortable chair, the one that had been her father's, the one she now said was his. He stretched out his legs, and rubbed the back of his neck.

"Nothing," he said. "She fainted."

"Really? Oh, dear."

“She really did, I think. Ethie was with her and she was recovering when I left. I just couldn’t stay for whatever came next. I just hope she didn’t forget what I said to her. Maybe fainting wiped it out of her mind. I don’t think so, though.”

“Sleep doesn’t wipe things out of your mind. They all come back when you get waked up.”

“I know. I think she would have remembered the word when she came to — that fearful word ‘divorce.’ I didn’t want to be there to talk about it with her. I’m going to stay away from there for a time while she’s turning that word over in her mind. She’s a strange person. I couldn’t discuss it with her like one might with someone else. She would retreat into her religion.”

“John? Didn’t you ever mention that word to her before?”

“No.”

“Not ever in all those years?”

“Not ever in all those years, if my memory is correct.”

“That’s amazing.”

“Yes, in a way it is. But not so strange when you know Rosella well.”

She is not a person one talks to about problems. Rosella will only talk about what she calls ‘pleasant’ things. When problems come up she gets this frightened look on her face. It started as soon as we were married. I don’t want to even think about it because it makes me angry.”

“Then don’t think about it, dear. Would you like something? Coffee or something?”

“A little glass of wine, maybe, so I can get calmed down. Will you have one too?”

“Yes, I’d like a little wine.”

“She brought the two glasses of sherry, and sat down on the rug at his feet. It was a little ritual of theirs, that he would remove her hairpins and let her blonde hair fall down around her shoulders. It seemed odd to him that after all the years of dreaming of making love to women other than Rosella he had chosen another blue-eyed blonde. He had often had erotic dreams of dusky brunettes with eyes as black as his own.

After a while they went into the bedroom, and undressed in the half-light from the hall. Anna went into the bathroom, and presently came back wearing a robe. She removed it and slid into the bed beside him. The room was still lit from the hall light. He made love to her with a very tender passion born of his wondering gratitude that she had been willing to bring physical love to him at his age. Anna had been a little shy at first of undressing in front of him with light in the room, but she was a warm and passionate woman and soon learned to be aroused by his looking at her naked body. He was almost worshipping of her white round breasts. She had what he called

“a good ample Dutch figure,” with a gently rounded little belly, and the curly, golden triangle where her white thighs began.

Even on the few occasions before the begetting of Matthew and Ethie, John had not seen Rosella’s body, for she not only had refused to remove her nightgown or loosen it at the neck, but she had wanted the room completely dark.

They lay quietly awhile and then John began to talk.

“Do you know one of the many reasons why I must get a divorce - aside from the fact that I want to marry you?” (He had long ago stopped telling her that he was too old for her, because she absolutely would not permit such talk.)

“Why?” she asked.

“Because I can’t take you anywhere. Tonight, on the streetcar, I had the strongest urge to come and get you and take you to the Lake, so that we could walk along the shore where the little waves come rippling in, and watch the sunset over the water.”

“That would be lovely, wouldn’t it? So peaceful.”

“But we can’t do it because we might be seen by someone we know. I hate to have it this way. I’d like to take you out to dinner, to the theater, or to go to New York for a week or so and show you the sights, and the places I knew when I grew up there.”

“John!” she said. “Why couldn’t we?”

“What?”

“Go to New York! Or somewhere. We could travel separately. We might just go to Detroit or Chicago.”

He spoke thoughtfully. “If we were to do that I’d want to go to New York. I think you’d like that. There’s so much to see there.”

“There’s the opera!”

“Would you want to go in the winter time?”

“Oh, anytime!”

“Well, let’s begin to think about it. I could start to put aside a little money for it.”

“Oh, John, I could pay! I’ve been putting some of the money Jan sends me aside. He always thinks of me as his orphaned little sister. Jan has become really wealthy.”

“It’s a good thing Jan does send you money, for I haven’t been able to do things for you.”

“And that’s good. Then you’re not keeping me. You know how I feel about that.”

“Yes. Well, maybe we can take a trip. Meanwhile, I have two things in mind. One is to give Rosella time to ponder what I told her. And I’m going to stay away from there, so she’ll realize I was serious. I’m not going home for two or three weeks. May I stay here all that time?”

“You know better than to ask, John.”

“And the other thing I’m going to do is talk to O. Lord.”

“What’s the matter?”

John laughed. “I guess you read the Herald, do you?”

“Why?”

“A friend of mine writes a column on city affairs. His name is Jack Raper. He’s known as ‘O. Lord.’ He’s quite a humorist, but his column is serious. I’ve known him since I first came to Cleveland. He’s a lawyer, but not practicing much anymore. I’m going to ask him about divorce laws. I know very little about such things.”

“He’s a friend you can trust?”

“Oh yes. Absolutely. However, I shan’t tell him anything about you and me. And he knows Rosella well. He will understand.”

“I hope so, dear. Maybe everything will work out for us, but I don’t want her badly hurt.”

“She’ll be hurt by the idea of a divorce, but she hasn’t loved me for years if she ever did. She loves Matthew.”

“She must love Ethie, too,” Anna said.

“Oh, in her way she loves me and Ethie and Ida. But that’s a different way. It has to do with what Ada and Ethie and I do for her. With Matthew her love is all made up of what she can do for him. It’s too bad. I love my son; he’s in many ways a charming young man, but Rosella’s methods in his training kept me from being close to him. I used to have this feeling that she was enfolding him in great white-feathered wings. Whenever he was in trouble those white wings would flutter around him and hold me back from whatever I might have said to him. There were times when he’d been in a scrap with another child, or mean to Ethie, and I felt it would do him good if I could take him for a walk and talk to him. Rosella always managed to prevent me from doing anything like that. She’d take him off to her bedroom with her arm around him, saying that he’d been a naughty boy. She used the kind of voice one uses when scolding a kitten that’s stolen a ball of yarn. For punishment she would tell him to lie down on her bed, and then she would read to him from her religious textbook and tell him he was God’s perfect child.”

Anna did not make many comments when John told her his long-held resentments, she just listened to him.

He went on. "Oh, yes, I would have liked to have had a son I was close to. I wish I were a younger man, and a wealthy man."

"You are young enough and wealthy enough for me," she said. "I love you, and you love me, and that's enough."

"No," he said. "It would be if I could walk down the street with you. We'd walk on the beach, and in Whitfield Park, and on Grand Avenue. And certainly we would walk on Cartwright Street right on a summer Sunday afternoon, with all the neighbors on their porches."

"Oh, no, John," Anna said. "You would never do that!"

"I might," he said. "And some of the neighbors, the men at least, would secretly admire me for it. They know a thing or two."

"But you wouldn't do it. You wouldn't do it because of Ethie, because you love her, and it would hurt her."

"Yes, I guess you are right. But I would walk on every other street in the world with you."



Several days later, John had luncheon with his friend Jack Raper, lawyer-turned-journalist. He had at one time lunched often with this old friend who had come to Cleveland from New York, but in recent years he had seen less and less of his old friends. He had developed a habit of leaving his office late to avoid meeting people he knew when he took the Sloane Avenue streetcar in the evening instead of the Grand Avenue one his Cartwright Street neighbors took. The habit of avoiding acquaintances had become so strong with him that he had stopped going to his old accustomed luncheon places at the regular lunch time. He was now in the habit of going out at one-thirty or two o'clock to an obscure little eatery down near the Tenth Street pier. He told himself it was ridiculous to slip around furtively when he was nowhere near Anna's apartment. He decided that he must carry guilt around with him wherever he went, guilt without real reason. He decided he was a victim of what he thought of as his Nineteenth Century moral sense."

Today he had arranged to meet Jack Raper for lunch at the Arcade Restaurant near the Cleveland Herald building. He knew if he lunched at the Arcade, he'd probably see a number of acquaintances, and he hoped no one would want to join them. Jack Raper was well known

around Cleveland because of his daily column, and it was likely they'd be interrupted with people wanting to talk to Jack.

But he needn't have feared. Jack had brought a briefcase with him.

"You said you wanted a consultation, more or less, so I brought some papers along. I find people don't bother me as much when I spread papers around on the table."

"Good idea," John said. "I appreciate it, too."

"I asked Herbie to save us the little corner table in the back. It's been so long since we'd lunched together, I knew you must have something pressing on your mind. I suppose it's a legal matter?"

"Yes, it is, but it's also more than that. I'd like some advice from a friend as a friend."

"Well, let's order our lunch, and I'll see what I can do to help. It's nice to see you, John. It's been a long time. You look good, different. You were rather thin and tired the last time I saw you. What have you been up to?"

John smiled a bit shyly. "Well, I've gained some weight. I guess that's part of it."

"It looks good on you. A man shouldn't get too fleshy, but you look just right. You were always very thin. How'd you put on the weight?"

"I stopped smoking, and put on twenty-four pounds. I used to smoke continually every waking hour, just about. I cut out cigarettes completely."

"Well, that's great, John. Mary Louise would like me to stop, but I don't think I could. I enjoy my cigarettes. How'd you happen to stop?"

"Someone was worrying about my health, thought I was coughing too much. So when that person said, 'You really should just never smoke another one of those things,' I did just that. And not only did I put on the weight, but for a while I had yellow spots all over my skin. People said it was the nicotine coming out of my system."

"Is that a fact? What did Rosella say about that, what with her religion?"

"Now, there's a funny thing. Wouldn't you have thought she'd have noticed when I stopped smoking? She didn't. Nobody did until Ethie asked me about the yellow spots. She and Ada had both noticed, but Ada would never have made a comment on something like that. Rosella never noticed it at all."

"With her religion, she wouldn't mention it, would she?"

"Oh, yes," John said. "She really went on about it after Ethie spoke of it, and she was amazed to learn I'd stopped smoking long before that and she'd never noticed."

“How is Rosella these days?” Jack Raper asked, but the waiter came then and took their orders, so John didn’t answer the question immediately.

When the waiter had gone, John said, “In a way, I didn’t want to ask you to talk with me today, because I want to talk about our marriage. You may not want to get into that, Jack.”

“John, I’m a lawyer by training. It’s not unusual for people to talk to me about their marriages.”

“But as a friend, you don’t mind either?”

“Not in your case, John.”

“I gather you are not surprised I’m here today?”

“No, not really. Mary Louise and I have wondered about a few things, over the years. But you’ve shown unbelievable patience. I didn’t think you would ever rebel. I gather you’re rebelling?”

“I hadn’t thought of it that way. But the children are raised now, for better or for worse, and I think Rosella could live without me just as well as with me. Jack, since you say you and Mary Louise have wondered about my marriage, could I ask you to tell me what has been apparent to an onlooker?”

“First of all, Rosella’s obsession with the boy, I guess, John. It seems quite extreme.”

It is.”

“And then in the matter of her religion (and that’s a delicate subject), Mary Louise thinks Rosella has made some strange applications of it. We have a number of friends who go to Rosella’s church, but they don’t seem to carry it to the lengths your wife does.”

“Exactly,” John said, “she’s used it to make a spinster of Ethie.”

“Goodness, John, it’s too soon to say that, isn’t it? How old is Ethie?”

“Twenty-five, Jack. But Rosella will never let her go. She’s scared off any beaux Ethie ever had. They don’t even come to see her any more. Rosella has made Ethie into a handmaiden for herself.”

“What about the sister, Aunt Ida?”

“She’s been somewhat of a handmaiden too, but she’s got more spirit. She’s down on a farm right now, helping Matthew and his wife. Rosella never completely dominated Ida.”

“John, is it true that Rosella and your daughter share the same bedroom? Mary Louise got that impression when we were at your home.”

“Yes, it is true.”

“How long has that been going on?”

“Twenty-five years. Since Ethel’s birth in 1888.”

Jack Raper looked at him. “And you’re rebelling now?”

“Yes.”

“You should have long ago, man, if you were going to at all. How old are you?”

“Fifty-one.”

“And Rosella?”

“She’s a year older than I.”

“Too late for her to change.”

“She would never have changed, Jack. Let me tell you about our honeymoon.” And he recited the events that had happened so long ago, when Rosella had carried on and feigned a swoon because she had wanted to go to Saratoga Springs, and not to the seashore. And he told how they had returned in their carriage to Rosella’s home in Brooklyn, and how she had wished to sleep alone that night in her own room, and he, John, had been counseled to be patient, and he had spent the night in the spare room. And then about the next few years, how Rosella had slept alone during her pregnancies, and after Ethie was born there had been the excuse of her bad dreams, and how he had never slept with Rosella again.

The waiter brought their lunches then, and they ate for a minute or two in silence. Then Jack spoke.

“Probably that time in the very beginning, when she went into that fainting act, you should have slapped her then and there, and told her to be a woman, not a child.”

John patted his mouth with his napkin and smiled.

“Can you imagine me, a young bridegroom, slapping my bride on our honeymoon?”

Jack Raper laughed. “No, I guess not. But it doesn’t sound as though there ever was a honeymoon.”

“Oh, we went later to Mohonk Lake. Her mother had had a talk with her, and that made a little difference. But after Ethie, nothing. Rosella decided she was too spiritual, and she’s persuaded Ethie likewise.”

“But doesn’t Ethie have any natural instincts toward men?”

“Yes, but she’s lost her confidence.”

“Now, after all these years, you want out. Strange. Unless you’ve found someone else. I’m guessing you have. Is that right?”

“Yes.

“And Rosella won’t divorce you?”

“I don’t know. I spoke of divorce to her a few days ago, and then I left. I don’t believe she’ll be willing.”

“Neither do I, John. And I doubt if you would want to put her through a court action based on no cohabitation. An unpleasant business, I assure you. You wouldn’t like it. If you were wealthy it might be easier. Money persuades women. Can’t you go on as you have been, with your other woman?”

“It’s not fair to her. She’s a fine person and I’d like to marry her. She loves me in a real way.”

“I do sympathize, John, believe me, but I’m wondering if you have the kind of nature to bring divorce action against your wife. It takes a tough-minded man to go through with it. Usually it’s a case where the mother has been a woman of loose morals, or she drinks or neglects her children. You’d have a hard time getting witnesses to say Rosella wasn’t a good woman, wouldn’t you?”

“Yes, but there’s the other matter, Jack, about her not sleeping with me.”

“Have you witnesses who’d testify to that?”

“I don’t know, Jack.”

“One would be inclined to think that if you’d put up with Rosella all these years, you could stay married to her. A man is supposed to cool off after he reaches fifty.”

“Not if he’s just discovered for the first time a loving woman, Jack.”

“John, I know you won’t believe me, but if you should divorce Rosella, and marry again you may spoil it.”

“Spoil what?”

“This new romance. I’ve seen it happen a number of times.”

“Why should it, Jack?”

“Several reasons. I’ll be willing to bet you’ve been brooding so bitterly over your unrewarding marriage that you haven’t been thinking much about other people’s marriages.”

John flushed slightly. "Yes, I have been thinking about other men's marriages. I usually think they're a lot better than mine."

"Yes. But you haven't been thinking of them as having lots of problems too, have you? Almost everyone is disappointed in marriage. As a lawyer, I see a lot of it, John."

"You get a distorted picture, probably," John said.

"As a lawyer, yes. But as a journalist I talk to many people. I go to parties, work with men around the newspaper. They come to me because of my column. They think I'm a philosopher. Most of them are fussing about their marriages, John. Oh, hang it all, what I'm saying to you is that you've had a marriage, not a very good one. But you might end up with less than you have now."

"Why do you think that, Oliver?"

Oliver sighed. "I've seen it happen a few times too often. Men with families marrying again, giving up their children."

"My children are grown, Jack."

"They can still be hurt by it, and it will bother you."

"But I want to marry this woman because she's been good to me."

"I know how you feel, I just wonder how happy you would be in three or four years. Think about it, John. You aren't wealthy. You'd have two women worrying and fretting at you about money."

"My friend doesn't want me for money, Jack. God knows I haven't any. She knows it, too."

"Marriage has a way of changing things. If you've got something nice, perhaps you should keep things as they are."

"Jack, my friend deserves something better than a secret affair,"

"Surely you wouldn't start a second family now?"

"No, of course not."

"Well, bear in mind there are worse things than a secret affair."

"I haven't the temperament for it, Jack."

"No, I guess you're too sensitive. A man like you is damned if he does, and damned if he doesn't. Think about it a while, John; a divorce is a damaging business."

####

In the summer of 1915, at about the time of the Martin' Golden Wedding party, Anna Wyers wrote a letter to her brother in Batavia. The letter contained a great lie. She had never lied to Jan before. He had always been so good He had sent her gifts of money ever since their parents died, because she was "his baby sister." Several times in his letters he had asked her if she did not have any plans to marry someday soon. She had written back to him that she did not expect to marry, saying, "I am too shy, with my Dutch accent." Jan had answered that she should come out to Batavia and marry a wealthy Dutchman. But Anna said she could not leave her piano pupils, and that she had one or two close friends and was quite happy except that she still missed Mama and Papa.

But now everything had changed for her. She was pregnant. Her mind twisted in despairing circles. John's wife had refused to free him before. It was not likely she would change her mind now. At first Anna contemplated suicide. Then she knew she could not do it for two reasons. In the first place, she lacked the courage; in the second she couldn't do such a thing to John. He would suffer more from that than from facing the fact of her predicament. And then an idea began to form in her mind. First, she would tell John and if he had no answers, there was one more possibility.

She told him at her first opportunity. His reaction frightened her. He turned quite white and sat down quickly.

"Are you all right?" she asked him.

"Yes," he said. "I guess so, but girl, this wasn't supposed to happen. Are you really sure? When will it be?"

"March."

"Well, I shall have to tell Rosella everything now, and she will have to let me go."

"John, I'm wondering if I shouldn't do it all another way,"

"What do you mean?"

"Even if Rosella will give you a divorce, and you marry me, we are going to shock a great many people. I've been thinking about it. It's going to mean telling some lies to my brother."

"Why must you do that?"

"Because, for all I know, some day Jan may decide to come to America to see me. He keeps asking me to come to Batavia, because he is too busy to come here. But, you know, John, he might just decide to come, after all. And if he did and I had a child, I would have to have an explanation. I would have to have a husband, or to have had one once. Do you see?"

“Of course, but I intend to be that husband, dear.”

“I have so little hope that that will be possible.”

“She’ll simply have to let me go.”

“Please don’t tell her that it’s me, John. I’m not ready for anyone to know. I’m writing to Jan immediately. I shall tell him that I am being married, and that my husband and I will come to Batavia next year to visit him. After a while I will write him that we are expecting a baby.”

“How have you thought up such a story?”

“In the nights I’ve lain awake worrying over it. I think it will work. If Rosella does not give you your freedom, I shall presently write and tell Jan my husband is ill and presently I shall tell him that he has died.”

“Oh, Anna, what a tangled web that would be.”

“It can’t be helped. I have to plan ahead. It matters to me what my brother thinks of me, partly because I have needed his financial help. And. I will need it even more.”

“Anna, I am a wretched person. I should have stepped out of your life a long time ago. I am too poor a man to take care of one woman, let alone two.

“You can’t blame yourself, John. You know I wouldn’t let you step out of my life. You wanted to in the beginning, and I clung to you. Besides, I want the baby.”

“Your brother may suggest that you come to Java to have the child.”

“And I’ll tell him I want my child born here for American citizenship.”

John leaned forward in his chair and put his face in his hands.

“I have to think about this, Anna. We can’t put this burden on your brother.”

“Nevertheless, I shall write to him, and thus prepare an explanation for a child. Don’t you see I must do this??

“Yes. Alright. Write to him, but I must have time to think. I’ve a notion to go to Brooklyn, and talk to my sister Georgiana. She loves me and knows what Rosella is like. I can trust her, Anna, and she is a clear thinker.”

“Why don’t you write to her?”

“No, it wouldn’t serve the same purpose. If I can just talk to Georgie, I can think this thing through.”

####

During the week while John was in New York meeting his sister Georgiana, Anna wrote her first letter to her brother, Jan, of her forthcoming marriage. She got quite into the spirit of the thing, fictionalizing his name and characteristics. She could not have lied so freely if John had been in Cleveland. With him away she was able to entertain herself in her lonely hours, by spinning a convincing description of Henry Hill. He was older than she, good-natured, and in the wholesale business (this was conveniently vague). He had no family remaining. He liked music, so they had much in common. She added little details such as that he enjoyed smoking a pipe. She tried to think of some way e could pave the way for the later letter that would say her husband was ill, stricken with a disease, but she decided against it. He might advise against the marriage. She finished the letter and mailed it before she could change her mind. She had thought of one more thing. Supposing John, by some strange chance, should be able to persuade Rosella to divorce him, and he was able to marry her? The answer was that she would have to write to Jan again, saying that she had broken her engagement to “Mr. Hill.” But in that event, she would be married and have a husband and if later, by remote chance, Jan came to America, she’d not worry about explaining her child.

She began to wonder that if John told everything to Rosella, it might make her so angry and disgusted with him that she would insist on a divorce.

Anna wished she had someone to talk to. John was in New York, talking to his sister Georgiana. For five years now she had wished there were some woman she could confide in. A love affair was strange in so many ways. Your relationships with other people were so limited. You were in public alone, for the most part, and when you were with your lover you were always shut up indoors. She didn’t mind that, she loved being with John. He could talk about so many things, history, books, New York City, the British West Indies. He could just sit quietly and listen to her play the piano. But sometimes she wished there were some close woman friend she could confide in. The more she thought about it, the more she needed it. She thought of the women she knew. None at the Music School settlement, and none of the neighbor women. That left the girls she had known in Art School during her two years there.

The closest friends were married now. Louise Wesley had married Don Trunk and gone to New York. Louise had for a time been Anna’s best friend. Of the others, Merly and Grace Martin and Ethie Rahming, all had to be ruled out for the obvious reasons, that they were all connected by marriage or blood relation to John. Of her old friends, then, that left Sally Longmont. Any others were merely acquaintances. If circumstances had been different, Anna would have chosen Grace as her confidante, but, Grace was John’s daughter-in-law. Merciful heavens, how strange it all was! The child she was carrying would be, in fact, the aunt or uncle of Grace’s children. It gave her a very odd feeling to realize this. She felt more than ever the need to talk to a woman, someone who could understand how she had ever got herself into her strange predicament. To her knowledge, Anna had never known anyone involved in a secret love affair. But if it was truly

secret, one wouldn't know. Take Sally Longmont, for instance. What was going on in Sally's private life? Of the old crowd, only Sally and Ethie Rahming were unattached to some man. With Grace, Louise, and Merly all married, and her own situation what it was he fell to wondering about Sally, because it was fairly clear that Ethie would be a spinster. But Sally was different. She hadn't been painfully shy like Ethie. She'd had beaux as long as Anna had known her. Matthew Rahming had been interested in Sally before he met Grace Rahming. And Alan Grey had pursued her for years. But it was seven years since Sally had graduated from Art School, the same year as Grace, and Don and Louise Trunk. Anna wondered why a pretty, charming girl like Sally was single. Most girls of twenty-six as attractive as that were mothers of one or two children, and settled housewives. Of course, Sally lived alone with her mother, but it didn't seem to be a case of her mother needing her. Mrs. Longmont apparently had an income, for she'd sent Sally to Art School, and for a half year in Italy for further study. Sally must be single, Anna reasoned, for one of two reasons: she'd not yet been in love, or she had a hopeless love. Those were the two situations, Anna had known, and her mind turned more and more to having a talk with Sally.

####

Brooklyn seemed strange to John. He was surprised to see that his sister's hair was now grey. Georgiana's doctor husband had been very successful. Their one child, the daughter Corinne, was now a college graduate. And they had inherited money from the doctor's parents. After thirty-one years John still paid rent for his home. But Georgiana and her husband owned stock and three brownstone buildings, and the doctor's practice kept their savings growing.

On the first evening they talked at length of the old days in Brooklyn and of their parents. Dr. Reiner spoke of the changes in New York, of politics, and of his worries about the war in Europe and on the seas. He was of German parentage, and the activities of the U-boats upset him. John asked him if he thought the trouble would end soon, and the doctor said, no, it was like a pregnancy, it would get worse before it was over.

"Do you think that we will be involved?" John asked him. "Do you think we'll mix into it at all?"

"At all!" Dr. Reiner said. "I have no doubt that we are already mixed in."

John was startled. "I don't understand."

The doctor did not explain at length. "It is just a conviction of mine about wars. Most folks are horrified at the thoughts of war. I know many doctors who've been close to war. They've patched up the wounded, or pulled the sheets over their faces. They know almost no one wants war - almost no one."

"Who does want war, Richard?" Georgiana asked.

"Men of power and men of greed. I don't mean the leaders. I don't mean President Wilson or even the Kaiser. I don't even mean most of the generals."

"Who, then?" John asked.

"Men of power, men of business. These are older men who never come anywhere near the front. But they make things happen. They often control the press; they put forth information, or misinformation, in places where it takes effect. And before you know, the public, even the wives and mothers, are clamoring for a war that no one wants."

John went to bed thinking that he had been spending too much time on his own problems, and not enough time thinking about the world's troubles. But presently he came to the conclusion that it was mainly because at home Rosella never permitted problems to be discussed. Not personal problems, economic problems, nor political ones. Rosella's rule was that one must speak and think in terms of Perfect Harmony.

When he was with Anna they occasionally talked about what was in the newspapers, but she for the most part listened to him, or played the piano for him, and then they made love and went to sleep.

The next day he was able to speak with Georgiana alone. At first they talked about their children, and John told her of Matthew and Grace's experiment in farming.

"Good!" Georgiana said. "That's very good! That boy needs discipline. I don't mind telling you, Brother, but you and Rosella spoiled him shamefully. I want to tell you something strange. That first year they were in New York, they came to our house for Thanksgiving dinner. Matthew stood up when we were at the dinner table and announced that they'd been married that day.

"John, you should have seen that girl's face! I believe he was lying, and that he used that means to make her marry him. She looked surprised when he said that. She had planned to go to Paris to study on a scholarship. He forced her to change her plans. He always wants his way, you know. By telling everyone they were married, he got his way."

"Well, you don't think they were married then?"

"Oh, they may have been, of course. But I doubt it. They probably went down town in a day or two and had a civil ceremony. They got a flat soon after that. But I think he tricked her into it. And they had such a struggle to make a living. She worked so hard, John."

"I know, Georgie. She's a good girl. I'm afraid he's like me."

"He's not like you. You don't have a bad temper."

"Well, but I can't make a decent living." And then he told her the whole story of his long years with Rosella, and his brief ones with Anna, and of the present consequences.

Georgiana sat quiet a moment after he had stopped talking. Then she said, "Let me think about this a few minutes. I'll make us a pot of tea. The girl who helps me is out marketing."

She was gone for a few minutes, down to the kitchen. He spent the time looking about the room which was furnished expensively with soft oriental rugs underfoot. He examined the pictures on the walls. There were some oval framed portraits of his parents, apparently copied by an artist from daguerreotypes. He saw they had Grace's initials, very small, at the bottom. Georgiana had probably commissioned them done to help the young couple buy groceries. They were very well done portraits, evoking memories of his handsome father from Nassau and his mother, a Charleston, South Carolina beauty.

Georgiana came back into the room carrying a tray with tea and cups and a plate of little cakes.

"It's more fun when I do it myself, for you, anyway, Johnny." (She was the only one who had ever called him "Johnny.") I've been very coddled as the doctor's wife, Of course, like all

doctors, he gets called out at odd hours. But almost from the start, I've had help. I seldom put my hands in dishwater."

"Rosella seldom puts her hands in dishwater either, Georgie, but I can't take credit for that. Ada does most of that sort of thing."

"Ida's a wonderful person," Georgie said. "But of course you've provided her a home."

"Oh, if you only knew. She's lent us money time after time, and hasn't been paid back. We owe Ida; she doesn't owe us. She should have had her own home."

"She always felt she was too homely for marriage."

"She's beautiful within. A wonderful person," he said.

Georgiana poured their tea and sat down.

"John, of course you must realize it's been no surprise to me to learn what your marriage to Rosella was like. What with her spending so much time back here in Brooklyn when the babies were born, and you in Cleveland alone, I knew she wasn't behaving like a grown-up married woman. Then I learned once from Ida, when I asked about you and Rosella, that she and Ethel shared a bedroom. I could see the direction of the wind at that time. I knew that sooner or later, you'd find another woman."

"How could you know that, Georgie?"

"Great Heavens, Brother! Men often do, even when they have good wives who love them."

"Well, I waited twenty-six years to do it, Georgiana."

"Yes, and it's incredible. But you've been amazingly patient, too gentle, too naive. Perhaps that's why you put up with Rosella. Perhaps it's why you permitted her to raise Matthew so indulgently. Perhaps it's why you haven't been more of a money maker. You're too gentle and unresisting. You're not aggressive."

"In other words, a miserable failure, Georgiana."

"Not at all! Being a nice person is never being a failure."

"But by the world's standards, I'm..."

"I'm not pleased with the world's standards. Hush, now, about being a failure. We aren't all alike John. You are as you are, and you shouldn't lament about it."

"Some of the other salesmen can persuade a man to buy a house he can't afford. I hate to do that. It's been a handicap to be that way"

“John, I may or I may not die before you do. But I have remembered you in my will with a small legacy. I think you need it now rather than at some future date. I shan’t ask you what you’ll do with it. I told you I wasn’t surprised that you’d found another woman. But I am surprised that you got her with child.”

“I want to marry her, Georgiana.”

“I can’t imagine Rosella divorcing you, John.”

“I thought she might free me to give the child a name.”

“I think you can’t expect such generosity.”

“Perhaps on a temporary basis, for a little child’s sake?”

“I doubt it. She’ll use her religion to deny the whole problem. No, I doubt you can persuade her, but you can try, you can try. It will take me a few days to arrange it, but I’m going to give you the money I had planned to leave to you.”

“Georgie, I only wanted to borrow...”

“No, it’s not a loan, and it isn’t so much, and I don’t know just how it will help you. But I want you to have it. It is certain to help in some way.”

“Georgiana, truly I didn’t come here mainly to ask for money. It was just that I needed to talk to you. I had to tell someone.

“I understand, Brother. I do understand. And I love you. Now, I’ll have to mail the check to you. Where shall I send it? To your office?”

“Yes, please, Georgiana. That would be best. I’ll give you one of my business cards for the address.”

“John, though I’m not optimistic about it, I do wish Rosella would let you go. I just wish it had happened years ago.”

“Yes “

“Then you could just leave Cleveland and start fresh somewhere else. Even now, I imagine Rosella and Ethel could take care of themselves.”

“With Ida, they certainly can, but Ada enjoys being with Grace and Matthew. I doubt she’ll want to come back.”

“I just want you to know, Johnny, that if you should write to me and tell me that your address is no longer Cartwright Street, but something else, I’ll understand.”

“Thank you, Georgie.”

“I mean with or without a divorce, Johnny.”

“That is probably what will happen, Georgiana. I will just move out. For if she will not divorce me for my reasons, neither will she for her reasons.”

WHERE ARE YOU GOING GRANDPA?

By November of 1915, Grace was also pregnant. And, by New Years, so was Merly. It was Merly's third pregnancy and she was dismally expecting to lose the baby by miscarriage, but carefully following doctor's orders to be extremely careful not to overtax herself. She was to take morning and afternoon naps. Nelle had come from the West to help Merly with her housework while she waited for the baby. If she couldn't have babies of her own, Nelle was determined that Merly should have one. She couldn't bear it for Grace to be the only one of Ma's girls to produce a child. The boys' wives had turned out a fair number of grandchildren.

Nelle spoke of Grace to Merly. "I can't see why she wants another child, with a man like Matthew for a husband."

"Matthew is lots of fun at times, Nelle," Merly said.

"Are you sweet on him?" Nelle said sharply.

"Of course not, but I've always plainly seen why Grace loved him. He's witty and jolly."

"When he feels like it. And he's a terrible provider."

"He's doing quite well on the farm."

"Thanks to father!"

"Yes, but the farm didn't look very good when tenants had it. Matthew has improved the appearance of the whole place.

"By tearing down a lot of outbuildings! Pa won't like that."

"I don't think he tore down anything important or in good condition, Nelle."

"Well, the place looks kind of bare to me."

"That's why it looks neater. Pa's kind of over-thrifty, Nelle. If he ever built a little pen or coop for a duck, or a hen, or some rabbits, he'd hate to tear it down, in case he might want to use it some time. It gave the place a cluttered look. It's better now."

"Well, he shouldn't tear down a thing without Pa's permission. When does Grace expect her baby?"

"The first week in June. She's hoping for a boy. She thinks a boy will be good for Matthew."

"In what way?"

"A man always wants a boy so the name can go on. Grace thinks it will make Matthew feel more responsible, more mature."

“But you said he was doing great on the farm.”

“Well, he is, but I don’t think they’ll stay there forever. They’re both artists. Personally, I think Matthew has just as much talent as Grace. I think in a few years they’ll leave the farm. It’s been good for Matthew to be in charge. It’s bad for him to be around his mother.”

“I just wish Roge and I could run the farm,” Nelle said. “I would love that myself.”

“Would Roge love it?”

“Not really. Now, Sis, you go along and take a nap. Remember, you’re going to have this baby, and at the proper time.”

“I hope you’re right. Nelle, aren’t you and Roge going to adopt one? It’s been ten years.”

“I have given up the idea we’ll have any, Merl. But I look at Billy, and I’m afraid to adopt. He’s so unappealing.”

“It wouldn’t be like that. Ma let the doctor talk her into taking Edward. If you adopted you’d select a child. There must be many adorable orphans.”

“I don’t know, Mart. I’ll think about it.”

“You’re thirty-eight, Nelle. Don’t wait too long.”

####

Sally Longmont had every intention of keeping the secret Anna Wyers had confided in her. And she had succeeded for two months. Anna had told her many things in September. They had come as a great shock at first, but she recalled immediately that she had twice seen Anna and Mr. North on the Grand Avenue streetcar. She'd even told Grace about it in New York, and Grace had dismissed it. Now that it all made sense, she had a strong urge to tell Grace that she'd not been imagining things after all. She knew she must squash that urge to tell. She'd promised.

But then things began to happen. By Thanksgiving Grace was pregnant with her second child. She and Matthew were still living on the Chagrin Falls farm. Grace wrote her a letter, begging her to come for a visit "as a great favor to me."

It seemed that in the first months of pregnancy Grace had severe morning sickness, and could barely take care of her housework in the early part of the day. Aunt Ada had been wonderful, but now suddenly Mother Rahming had summoned her to Cleveland, for another one of her famous upsets. "God knows what it is this time."

Sally knew what it was. Mr. Rahming had by now asked again for a divorce, saying he had "an urgent reason." It seemed incredible to Sally that she knew all this and Grace didn't. She was about to burst with the import of it.

Grace's letter went on to say, "I wonder if you could give me a hand for a couple of weeks; just getting breakfast for Dee and Matthew and Timothy. I can't face breakfast - I retch and retch, and it wears me out, believe me. Later in the day I'm all right. We can even do some painting - you could do some beautiful winter scenes of the barns and fields. I might ask Merly to come, but she thinks she's pregnant again, and doesn't want to have another miscarriage (She's had two). She's having Nelle come and help her over the first few months. The doctor wants her to spend a lot of time in bed. So could you come - would you come, Sally old chum? And we can have some gay old gab times in the evenings, before the cheery fireplace. All the country eggs, cream, bacon, and strawberry jam you can eat! And much more. At least, we eat high on the hog here. The only bad part is getting up in the morning, but Timothy makes all the fires and gets the house warm early. Say you'll come."

Sally could come, and would, and did. She brought her painting things with her, and on the second day began making a miniature portrait on ivory of Dee, who would sit still and pose for up to ten minutes at a time, which Sally maintained was unusual patience for her age.

After it was all over and Sally could look back on it she decided it was as much Grace's fault as her own that she had not kept her mouth shut about Anna Wyers. The conversation had started with Merly and her difficulties with carrying babies to full term. It had led to Waldo, Merly's husband and his law practice, and whether or not he would be able to become a successful lawyer. Matthew wasn't around, so they could talk freely. They had discussed Ethie and her non-

existent chances for getting married, and how selfish it was of Mother Rahming to scare off Ethie's beaux. Grace spoke of how life at the farm was hard, but she thought it had been good for Matt. He had needed the discipline of it, and Grace just hoped he wouldn't lose interest in it. They'd been there nearly three years, and there were some signs that Matthew was getting bored with the venture.

"He was never made by his mother to do things he didn't feel inclined to do," Grace said. "I was worried about how he would take to early rising. He's really been quite good about it, all except in the middle of wintertime. He does love some aspects of farm life. He can't wait till February, when we start the maple run. Matt has such a sweet tooth. He had the time of his life last spring. We had a good run last year. We tapped almost two hundred trees. Father came over from Oberlin and helped out in the daytime. Timothy and Matt took turns keeping the fires going at night, and William came and helped us too. When the run gets really going, it keeps everyone busy, and it's quite exciting. Matt loved it because he always enjoys anything that requires a big heroic effort. It's little day to day chores that bore him. He loves putting the garden in, and the mowing, and threshing, and when the calves are born, and all that. But there are times when things are dull in the winter, and he talks about going back to the city. And, you know, Sally, both of us loved New York, but he didn't behave well there. He needs to be where he can be important, and there's been more chances for that on the farm than there were in New York."

"He hasn't had a chance to get going with his Art in New York. You got the head, start."

"Well, for heaven's sake, Sally! He changed all my plans! I finished Art School; he didn't. I had to get a head start. It was a question of eating."

"Yes, but you married him. Nobody made you."

"Oh, yes. He did."

"Well, all right. Anyway, now you're expecting a new baby. I suppose you're looking for a boy this time?"

"I think a boy would be very nice, and especially good for Matt. A son makes a man grow up, and feel his responsibilities."

"I guess that's what they say," Sally said.

"I'll see that my son isn't brought up the way Matt was. I'm going to be very sure they are both carefully disciplined, but loved equally."

"Grace, with two children to raise so very carefully, do you think you can get back to your art career?"

“Oh, yes! I’ve never completely been away from it. I’ve done several covers for my New York publisher since I’ve been here, and he wants more. After the new baby is weaned, I’ll really get down to serious work. I’ll go into Cleveland and really go after it.”

“But how can you, with children?”

“Aunt Ida. She loves to live with us. She told me so. I know she’ll occasionally get called to town by Mother Rahming, but she’ll, always come back.”

“I wouldn’t count on it, Grace.”

“Why?”

“Because Mother Rahming wants her to stay with her in Cleveland. Father Rahming asked her for a divorce.”

“Sally, you’re not telling me something Matt and I don’t know. Aunt Ada told me that early last summer, when she came back to us from a visit with Mother Rahming. But it all blew over, and Mother Rahming calmed down and Aunt Ada came back. Mother Rahming didn’t take him seriously, she knows he was just talking. Sally, I just love Father Rahming so dearly, but he’s just been a doormat for years for Mother Rahming.”

Sally pursed her lips thoughtfully for a moment. Then she said, ‘Grace, do you miscarry easily?’

“Why? I don’t know. I didn’t with Dee, obviously. I don’t expect to this time. I’m almost three months along.”

“Isn’t that the most likely time?” Sally asked. “How’d we get on this subject? I never had a miscarriage.”

“That’s what I wanted to know. But shocks can cause them, can’t they?”

“I guess so. Bad shocks. On the other hand, Merly seems to cough and have a miscarriage. I don’t expect to lose the baby. If I miscarried easily, living with Matt would have done the trick. He’s always a source of shocks.”

“You think if I told you something really startling it wouldn’t do any harm? Maybe I’d better not. I really shouldn’t anyway.”

“Sally Longmont! Whatever you have to say, spill it right out, and stop teasing me.”

“Grace. Honest, I’m not teasing you. This isn’t any joke, and it’s certain to upset you. That’s why I asked about your miscarrying.”

“Don’t worry about that. Merly’s the only one in the family that does that.”

“I thought your mother had, too.”

“Oh, that was from having the babies too close together.”

“And Addle, and Nelle”

“Those weren’t miscarriages. Those were stillborn babies followed by blood poisoning, or childbed fever, and such.”

“Still...”

“Oh, Sally - for heaven’s sake!”

“Well, I’ll have to prepare you for it, and not just blurt it out. It’s something I was told in confidence, and ordinarily I wouldn’t pass it further, but you’re a close friend, and it involves you, Grace. You are so sure Aunt Ada will come back to be a nurse for your children. Grace, I don’t think you can count on it at all.”

“You said that before, Sally, and I told you Aunt Ada promised me she’d stay with us.”

“Well, the situation is more serious than you know. Now, after you heard that Father Rahming had asked for a divorce, didn’t you and Matt wonder why he had?”

“Not really. We thought he was fed up. Even Matt knows his mother is not much of a wife. We’re sure he wouldn’t go after a divorce himself, and Mother Rahming wouldn’t dream of it. Mrs. Eddy doesn’t approve of it.”

“Mrs. Eddy was divorced,” Sally said.

“I know. But she still doesn’t think a good Christian Scientist would work out problems that way.”

“All right,” Sally said. “But didn’t you think Father Rahming might find another woman?”

“Oh, Matt thinks his father may sometimes have a gay time or two when he’s out of town.”

“You mean prostitutes?” Sally said, her voice low.

“Not necessarily. Traveling men sometimes have ‘friends’ in other cities. Lady friends.”

“Well, Grace, it isn’t that sort of thing.”

“You really know something, don’t you?”

“I certainly do, and you’re going to be most surprised. Father Rahming has a woman friend in Cleveland. They’ve had an intimate relationship for five years. They’ve known each other longer than that. So far, are you surprised?”

“When you first say it, I am. As I go on to think about it, I’m not. No, I’m not. He’s been traveling too much for a real estate salesman. Of course, he has a few other little projects. He wrote some little pamphlets, on business practice, How to Write Business Letters, and so on. He’s managed to sell a few of them in Cleveland, and other cities. He’s taken them to book stores and office supply places. But now that I see it with hindsight, I realize he’s been away much of the time.’

“He hasn’t been out of town at all, Grace. He’s been living with her most of the time.”

“Right in Cleveland?”

“Yes, for five years,” Sally said.

“Good heavens! It’s a wonder people didn’t find it out.”

“They’ve been very careful. She lives on Sloane Avenue.”

“Oh!”

“Grace, you remember when I came to New York that time? I told you I had seen Father Rahming and Anna Wyers on the Grand Avenue streetcar sitting together. And we discussed it and decided it didn’t mean anything.”

Grace’s eyes had widened so much that Sally had a strange impulse to laugh suddenly.

Grace said, “You don’t mean — !”

‘I do mean,” Sally said.

“Anna! Anna is the woman?”

“She’s the one”

“Oh, no! Oh, Sally, how did you learn that? You can’t be sure.”

“She told me, Grace! She told me all about it.”

“When?”

“In September.”

“And you didn’t tell me till now!”

“I shouldn’t be telling you now, either. I couldn’t help it. You think you’ve heard the worst of it, too, but you haven’t heard it yet. She told it all to me in confidence, but it’s been driving me crazy for over two months. I finally decided that you should know, what with Aunt Ada always

running back to Cleveland every time Mother Rahming gets upset. You count on her to be a nurse for Dee, and I'm sure there's even more trouble ahead."

"How could there be, Sally? As it is, I just can't believe it. Why, Anna must be thirty years younger than Father Rahming."

"No. She says nineteen. She was older than the rest of us at school."

"Even so, Sally, it's terrible!"

"Terrible? What will you think when I tell you that Anna is going to have a baby? His baby, Grace."

Grace's voice sank to a whisper. "Oh, no, Sally!"

"Yes. She says the baby is due in March."

"I don't know what to say," Grace said. "I don't know what to say."

Sally said, "I didn't know what to say, either."

"I always thought I loved Father Rahming. I always thought he was such a fine person," Grace said.

"Grace, I've thought about it quite a lot, and I can't change my feeling about him. He was always kind, and a gentleman. I can't think of him as a villain."

"But he's ruined a young girl's life, Sally."

"Anna doesn't feel that way. We'll have to wait and see how it all turns out."

"I shudder to think of it," Grace said. "Does Anna think Mother Rahming will give Father Rahming to her?"

"No. She asked him not to let his wife know who the woman was. She plans to go to Java after she has her baby. Her brother is there. She will make up a story about a husband who died. She doesn't expect Father Rahming will be able to marry her. But he wants to, just the same."

"Men!" Grace said. "How selfish they are! I shall never feel the same about Father Rahming again. Never!"

"Be charitable, Grace. It's so understandable. And keep what I told you to yourself. The people involved will have to work it out."

"I'll have to tell Matthew."

"What about his temper?"

“I don’t know. I’ll have to be very careful when I tell him.”

####

By the time Grace's second daughter arrived in June of 1916, Anna Wyers "Hill" was on her way to Batavia with her three-months old son, Donald. Certain facts were known among the members of the Rahming family but they were never discussed except in separate pairs speaking in low voices.

Rosella had been told by John that there was another woman in his life, and that woman would bear his child. He told her she "must" divorce him. She did not faint. She had already thought about the possibility. But she refused to free him. As a Christian Science practitioner, she felt it was out of the question. She must be a good example to her patients. The fact that her "leader" had been divorced made no difference.

"Mrs. Eddy says 'Husbands and wives should never separate if there is no Christian demand for it,'" Rosella said.

"Giving the child a name is a Christian demand," John argued.

"It does not affect my marriage. It is her mistake. She must find the solution"

"You are a cruel woman," he said.

"We will not discuss such unrealities as cruelty, infidelity, and infelicity. Divine wisdom will, in time, point the way."

Rosella summoned Ada back from the farm. Winter was coming anyway. She would be better off in the city.

"I need you at this time, Sister. John thinks he is in love with someone else."

"With whom?" Ada asked.

"He won't tell me."

Grace had confided to Matthew the whole story as told to her by Sally Longmont. She had told him to keep it in confidence. They were talking in bed at night, and Matthew got so excited and angry at his father that hot out of bed and began pacing around the room, shouting.

"Sh, Grace said. "You'll wake up Sally and Dee and Timothy."

When Matthew continued to rant, Grace hushed him up by saying, "You're not any better than your father. Look what a trick you played on me in New York when I was planning to have an art career. Now, stop shouting, or I swear I shall go to your mother and tell her about that."

He presently agreed to her argument that they should say nothing, but let his parents work out the problem themselves. Nevertheless, at Christmas time, perhaps because of his great delight in

shocking someone, he told Ethie the whole story. He succeeded beyond his expectations, for she burst into tears, and would have fled to her room if she had a room. Since she could not shut herself up in the room she shared with her mother, she sought refuge in her Aunt Ida's room, while Ada (as usual) was occupied in the kitchen. It was there that Ada found her.

“Ethie, child! whatever is the trouble, deah?”

Ethie wiped her eyes. She was cried out by now. “Auntie, I’ll tell you after Christmas. I’ve had upsetting news, but I don’t want to spoil the holidays for you.”

“Has someone died, Ethie?”

“No, Aunt Ida.”

“You’re sure you don’t want to tell me now? I won’t say anything to anyone.”

“Some of them know, anyway. No, Auntie, I promise to talk to you day after Christmas. I need your advice.”

“You’ve got me so curious I won’t enjoy the day anyway.”

“I’m sorry, Auntie. I guess I should tell you now.”

It had been a strange Christmas, almost as though they were all playing parts in a drama staged for the benefit of little Dee, who at five years of age must have a normal little girl’s Christmas, complete with her grandfather’s presence.

Rosella thought that only Ada knew. John thought only Rosella and Ada knew. Grace did not think that Ethie knew. Ethie knew that they all knew. But for Dee they all played their parts. But there was nervousness in the air. When Christmas evening came, John went to the entry-hall and put on his overshoes, hat and coat. Dee followed him.

“Where are you going, Grandpa?”

“Just out, for a little while.”

“In the Snow? Are you coming back soon?”

“In an hour or so.”

He went out and shut the door.

No one in the living room spoke of it, and Dee went back to her toys under the Christmas tree.

“Can we have the candles lit again, Daddy?” she asked, and Matthew replaced the short candles on the tree with longer ones and very carefully lit them.

“Next Christmas, will my baby brother be here to play with me under the tree?” asked Dee.

“Yes, but he’ll be too young to enjoy Christmas,” Grace said.

“What if he is a girl?” Aunt Ada asked.

“Then I’ll have a brother, John, later,” Dee said.

“I think we’ll probably name the baby Andrew,” Matthew said, and no one made a comment about it.

“Shall we have some cocoa and cookies?” Ada asked.

“Goody!” said Dee.

When her second daughter was born, Grace spent three weeks in Cleveland at the Cartwright Street house. Sally Longmont visited her there, and Grace learned more about Anna Wyers and her baby boy, who bore the name of Donald Hill . Anna had moved into a new apartment late in the fall. She’d given up all her piano students, moved to the west side of Cleveland, and established herself as a Mrs. Hill . She’d told her new neighbors that her husband traveled. They’d assumed that John Rahming, who came and went, was Mr. Hill . A midwife and practical nurse delivered the baby when it came in March. Through an influential friend of Jack Raper’s a birth certificate in the name of Donald Hill was obtained from downtown Cleveland, and later passports were also secured and now Anna was off to Java to visit her brother. She planned a six-month stay. When she returned she would start again to teach piano on the west side of town.

GIVING BIRTH IS NOT AN ILLNESS

Chagrin Falls, July 3, 1916

Dear Louise:

We promised to let you know when “our son” arrived. Why we and everyone else were so sure it would be a boy, I’m sure I do not know. If it had been a boy we would have named him Andrew. As it is, ‘he’ is Jane, a very healthy, very brunette little girl. She got a good start because her birth was very easy compared to the wretched time I had when Dee was born that very snowy November over five years ago. That time Mother Rahming was the “stage director,” one might say. Saw to it that I didn’t have any anesthetics (what a word to spell). She generally made a mess of that affair. This time was different. I am not such a timid girl. I forewarned the doctor - told him to keep my mother-in-law out of the room. (Aunt Ada assisted with this). And Matthew wasn’t present; he was down at the farm where our very best cow, Nellie, was “calving too” as he of course put it. I’m sure it helped the accouchement for Matt to be absent. It made it easier for Ada to control Mother Rahming. The doctor gave me some chloroform to sniff, and he did not need to use forceps, so the baby was not bruised up the way poor little Dee was.

Actually, I don’t think Matt would have let his mother interfere this time. He has been on the farm too long now, and he understands much more about giving birth. Matt is still a Christian Scientist (as much as he ever was), but I pointed out to him that giving birth is not an illness, and he agreed that the doctors know how to handle it. I stayed at Mother Rahming’s just two weeks and then we brought the baby back here to the “Old Brick”. So when she grows up, I suppose, Jane may be entitled to consider that she is one of the children “born” at the old homestead.

But, Louise, I doubt we’ll be here more than another year. Matt is beginning to feel that milking cows had a bad effect on his hands. He says is ruining them for Fine Art.” Perhaps he is just bored. We are wondering about the War, aren’t you?

Well, I must close this and nurse the baby. She has rosy cheeks and is Aunt Ida’s darling. Aunt Ada says she thinks Jane is going to have black eyes like Matt’s father, and she’ll be “scholarly like him.” It is a good thing Aunt Ada dotes on the baby, because I have to continue to do art work. Matt can’t do painting and farm too.

Do write and tell us all the news. Matt sends his best.

Affectionately,

Grace.

In January, Merly Martin Dillard finally produced a live full term baby. It was a girl and they named her Muriel Maria.

Nelle, who had stayed with Merly during the early months of the pregnancy, had gone back to Roge as soon as it appeared that Merly would not miscarry. She had returned to Cleveland for Merly's confinement.

"You broke the bad luck streak for the Martin girls, Merly," Nelle said.

"No, I didn't. Grace did."

"Well, yes, I suppose, but Emmie, and I and you had bad luck for a long time. With babies."

"Yes, but Nelle, I've thought about it. I think I'm the only one that wasn't perfectly all right to start with. My periods started so late, remember? And Ma took me to the doctor. But you, and Addle, got pregnant right away. I think it was just all coincidence that things went wrong when you and Emmie were pregnant.

"Not with me, it wasn't any kind of coincidence. It could all be explained by the simple fact that I married the wrong kind of man and got into a mess with him."

"And that caused you to lose the baby? How?"

"It's a long story, and I don't ever want to tell it. But the night I ran away from him is the night when the baby died. I never felt it move after that - it was dead. Several days later it was born. There was trouble with the afterbirth too. And the baby wasn't full term yet, and I was very sick for days. But if circumstances had been different, I'd have had that baby normally. However, it was just as well I didn't, considering the father."

"Why did you run away from him - from Earle?"

"That's the part I'll never tell. I don't even like hearing that name.

"Then, take Emmie's case," Merly said. "She got blood poisoning after the baby was born dead. That's happened to other people."

"I got blood poisoning too," Nelle said. "Only Ma said I had a stronger constitution. My system threw it off. You know what Roge wondered about Emmie?"

"No."

"He wondered if maybe William hadn't given Emmie a disease - you know what I mean, Merly? A social disease."

"Oh, no!"

"Well, you know, Emmie wouldn't sleep with him. Roge thought maybe William had gone to other women - loose women."

“But in the first place, if Emmie wouldn’t sleep with him, he couldn’t give her any disease, could he?”

“Well - I don’t know. He slept with her when he got her in the family way, at least.”

“But when he was still sleeping with her, he wouldn’t have gone to other women. Oh, shucks, Nelle! William wouldn’t have anyway. He’s nice, and he really loved Emmie, still does, poor dear.”

“Well, Merly, you’ll have to admit I’ve had bad luck with babies. Not even a miscarriage in all these years — ten years since I married Roge.”

“Nelle, I’ve really found the answer. Christian Science. Mother Rahming had been holding the right thought for me all through these months, and now, you see, I have the precious baby girl. Maybe she could help you.”

“But Merly, I’m thirty—nine years old!”

“Doesn’t matter. You still have your periods, don’t you?”

“Oh, yes. I just can’t quite grasp this theory that things that seem real to me, aren’t real.”

“You’ll grasp it if you keep reading it.”

“I haven’t even started. I’ve been trying to talk Roge into adopting a baby. He hesitates. He’s afraid it wouldn’t turn out well.”

“I want you to read my copy of Science and Health. Start today, Nelle.”

####

By Christmas 1918 Merly was pregnant again. Her baby girl Muriel was just a year and a half old. Her doctor warned Merly that she should take the same precautions to prevent miscarriage that she had taken before, in short, to limit her activities in the crucial first half of her pregnancy, at least. She was not to lift heavy things, scrub floors, or get overly tired. She wrote again to Nelle.

“Dear Sis:

How I hate to ask you to come stay with me again. Roge will be really put out with me. But Waldo and I are so hoping to get a little boy this time. Grace says now she has two children, she’s not going to try for any more. They wanted a little boy when Jane came, but she wants to get back to her art work in earnest now, and as long as she has Aunt Ida, she can. Wish I had an Aunt Ada to call on, but, Sis, you and I have such fun when we’re together, anyway. I figure I’m more than two months along. I’ve missed two periods now. If you can come for six or eight weeks that should get me over the dangerous time, I figure.

I have loads to tell you about the business of Father Rahming, and how the whole story finally got out. I really feel sorry for Mother Rahming! Oh, I know she has her faults and spoiled Matthew miserably, but she is a sincere Christian Scientist, and so am I. I feel sure that if it had not been for her efforts, and having here, I would not have my little Mim today. Do let me know you can come!

Lovingly,

Sis Merly

P.S. Waldo has been feeling not so well. I wish he was willing to try C.S. He says he can’t absorb such theories.’

Nelle had trouble persuading Roger that she should again spend a couple of months in Cleveland with Merly. He had been lonely the last time she’d stayed away so long, and was against the idea now. Nelle had finally given up the idea that they would have a child of their own, and they had agreed to adopt one. He was working for Associated Press now, and they were living in New York City. They had found a nice apartment in Queensborough, and were ready to go ahead and find a child. Nelle had her heart set on a girl. Now it would have to be postponed.

Nelle arrived in Cleveland in January. The skies were cold and grey, with a bitter wind blowing through the city. It always seemed to Nelle that she had left Colorado or New York City in sunshine and found Cleveland dark and gloomy.

Nelle was delighted with Merly’s little girl. Muriel had blue eyes, dimples, and was finally beginning to get a head of golden curls.

“She’s a darling, Merly, I hope I can find one as sweet as this one.”

“Mim looks like a daguerreotype of Ma at the same age. Poor Ma, her rheumatism is getting so bad. I want her to try to believe C.S.”

“She won’t, Merly. Forget it. You can’t make everyone believe the same thing you do.”

“You’ll see, Nelle.”

“Oh, but Merly, you’ve always been interested in some religion. You get all excited about it.”

“But Mim is the living proof!” Merly said.

“Well, maybe. But now, tell me what you were going to tell me about Father Rahming.”

“Yes, and I’d better hurry, too, before Waldo gets home from work. He’d get mad at me if he heard you and me going on about it. He thinks women are too free with gossip.”

“Well, they are, you’ll have to admit, Merly.”

“Yes, I know, but this is in the family. I don’t consider it gossip. But you see, Waldo is on Father Rahming’s side in the whole thing. Waldo has some pretty radical ideas about that. In divorce cases he’s often on the man’s side”

“All right. Well, will you tell me the story or not.”

“Yes. Well, you know part of it. Now, we know the rest of it. Now we know who she is, and that she had his baby.”

Nelle raised her eyebrows and pursed her lips.

“Oh, really?”

“Yes. The story was a long time coming out. The girl told Sally Longmont and Sally told Grace.”

“Do I know her?”

“Sally?”

“No, silly — the girl.”

“I don’t think you ever met her, she was in our art school crowd, but that was when you were still in Colorado. Then she vanished from sight. That’s when she became his mistress.”

“What’s her name?”

“Anna Wyers.”

“No, I never met her.”

“Well, anyway, she confided in Sally, and Sally felt that Grace ought to know. So she told her. Grace told Matthew, and I guess he told Ethie. Anyway, they all decided it wouldn’t help to tell Mother Rahming about Anna. Father Rahming had asked for a divorce; you knew that much.”

“Yes.”

“Well, something made Grace very upset recently, so upset that she spilled the whole story to Mother Rahming. Now I guess she’s sorry.”

“Merly, you do take a long time to tell something.”

“All right, but it’s that kind of a story. Grace was upset because she went down to the barn one afternoon just before Christmas, and caught Matthew kissing Averill.”

“Who’s Mary Ann for goodness’ sake?”

“Henry and Lottie’s Mary Ann.”

“Oh! My goodness! How old is she now?”

“She’s twenty-one, and Matthew is thirty-one.”

“And Grace’s thirty. Well, I can see why she’d be mad, but she’s got a lot to learn about men. Married to Matthew she has learned a lot. And tell me just what was Averill doing down in the barn with Matthew?” Nelle asked.

“Kissing him.”

“Merly, for the love of heaven! You’re so funny the way you tell a thing. You know what I mean. Was MaryAnn in the habit of coming over?”

“Apparently she was, but Grace didn’t think anything of it till then. I guess she gave both of them a piece or her mind. And then when she and Matt came into Cleveland for Christmas she was still angry. Somehow, she got to talking with Mother Rahming about Matthew, and about men and the way they have such a taste for younger women. Now she says she doesn’t know how it happened but before she knew it Mother Rahming had got it out of her that it was Anna.”

“I’m amazed she didn’t already know. Why didn’t she?”

“He didn’t think it would help matters any to have her know who the woman was, and I guess the rest of the family agreed on that much, for different reasons. Father Rahming said he kept it secret to protect both women. And I guess Ada and Ethie would have been protecting Mother Rahming. I don’t know what went on in Grace and Matthew’s minds. We all used to like Anna,

but we weren't close, really. Anyway, I guess Grace was so upset that day she didn't feel like protecting any of them."

"She never should have got mixed up with that family."

"Well, now she feels badly that she told Mother Rahming."

"Why?"

"Because she says that Father Rahming was always very nice to her, and now she's hurt him. She says he said to her, 'And now, you turn against me too?' She said he sounded so sad."

"Where is this woman Anna?"

"She just got back from Java, where her brother lives. She's here in Cleveland somewhere. She has a little baby boy. None of the rest of us has seen her, but I think Sally Longmont sees her frequently."

"What about Father Rahming?"

"What about him?"

"Does he live at home, or with her? Or what?"

"At home, supposedly, but he's almost never there, and Mother Rahming hasn't thrown him out."

"Why not?"

"Christian Science. She's just being ever so quiet and forgiving. She knows that Divine Love always meets every human need."

"But apparently it didn't meet Father Rahming's need."

"That's not Divine Love, Nelle."

"But it is the way God made people, though. Don't you believe in the human kind of love? The kind in bed?"

"Well, that's the way people are now. They'll someday be in a state of being where that won't be necessary."

"Why?"

"Because God is the Creator, not man. God's children, already created, will appear when man finds the truth of Being."

“That’s in the book?”

“That’s the sense of it,” Merly said

“It is? Well, I don’t grasp it yet. But I’ll try.”

####

1918

Nelle went back to New York after Merly reached the halfway point in her pregnancy. She promised Merly to return in August to help her care for Mim when the new baby came.

Nelle was depressed that summer. She seemed to have found most of her family unhappy. Her father was worried about the war in Europe, despite many people's conviction that the Yanks would win it soon. Maria was increasingly troubled with rheumatism, but worse than that, she grieved over her children. Howd's wife Lottie seemed to grow more peculiar with the years; Nate was not happy married to the sour-faced Ethel, in spite of five handsome children; Stan and Bertha got along tolerably well, though Bertha had a rather sharp tongue. They had no children. Nelle's childless state worried Maria for Nelle's sake Emmie's mental condition remained unimproved. She wasn't violent, but she obviously could never live independent from the protection of her family, where she felt loved and secure. She would never be able to function as a mother to Billy, although she was happy enough to make him cookies, and knit him an endless supply of warm wool mufflers. He had become, in effect, a ward of the Martin family, though no legal adoption had ever taken place. He was now eight years old, and William, who would have been his foster father, planned to take care of him as soon as he was a bit older. Edward had entered school under William's name, Woodbury, and William would have been entirely willing to adopt him, but Emmie's condition being what it was, the family feared that it could not be arranged. It appeared that the doctor and Eddie's real mother, and the keeper of the birth records had ail forgotten about Eddie. Nelle had several times considered that probably she and Roger should offer to take Billy. Emmie helped wash and iron his clothes, and she did most of the cooking, but Billy's guidance was Maria's responsibility, and Nelle knew it was a burden for her. Taking Edward as a child for Emmie, had been a big mistake.

And William, poor William, was neither married nor free, He showed Billy all the love he could, but since Emmie wouldn't even see him, there was no way William could make a home for the boy.

Nelle didn't really want to take Billy. The only way would be to legally adopt him, and Nelle wanted to adopt a little girl who looked like Ma when she was a little girl. She'd seen pictures of Ma when she was little, and pictures of Jenny and Maily too. She and Roge had begun to investigate a little bit, and had been to an orphanage in New Jersey, but there had been no child there at that time who seemed to be right for them. They were going to look further for a little girl, but now they would wait until after Merly's baby was born to pursue their search. Maybe, in future years, they could take Billy off Ma's hands for the summer vacations, for instance.

There was plenty else to worry about in the family. Merly was happy in her pregnancy, but in Nelle's opinion, Waldo seemed to be in rather poor health. He seemed thin and pale, and was

usually tired, although he was witty and light hearted by nature. Nelle felt he needed a tonic, but Merly said she was trying to treat it in Christian Science.

Then there was Grace. She certainly had got mixed into a dandy family, a spoiled-boy husband, and a father-in-law who had created a scandal. Matthew was working in a factory because of the war. He didn't like it, and his mother was commiserating with him every step of the way. Nelle had not forgiven Matthew for what he had done while still living at the Old Brick. He'd not only pulled down some of the outbuildings without consulting Pa, but had sold some of the stock and pocketed the proceeds, then moved out, and rented a house on the outskirts of Cleveland.

But Art was the one who was causing Maria the most grief at present. Two women had divorced him, he'd married a third, and now joined the army and was in France. His first wife had their little boy who, to the family's confusion, had also been named Billy, for his mother's father. So from that time on, the family must always be sure to specify "John' Billy Martin or Billy Woodbury."

Nelle felt badly because, although Maria had by now a fair number of grandchildren, there were so many she never saw. There were Stan' three daughters who lived in Denver with their mother Mabel. They'd as good as vanished, although Maria wrote to them faithfully. Nate and Ethel's five lived right in Oberlin, and occasionally Maria saw one or two of them, but Ethel did not encourage a truly close relationship. Since Howd and his father did not speak to each other, Maria seldom saw Averill, her oldest grandchild who lived in Chagrin Falls. And with "John' Billy Martin living in New York City with his mother, Maria no longer saw him.

So that left Grace's girls, Merly's little Mim, and of course, Billy Woodbury (who lived with Maria). These were the only ones who saw their loving grandma often. It made Nelle sad to think about it, because her mother remembered all the grandchildren on birthdays and Christmas, and other occasions. Well, things were going to be different soon. Nelle was going to change a lot of things in her own life, and in her mother's life too. Roge was making good money, and all these years without children, they'd been saving. They had plans. As soon as Merly had her new baby and was on her feet again, things would begin to happen. In the spring they would find their own baby girl, and then they would find their wonderful summer place in New England, perhaps even in High Rock, where her Ma was born. And Ma and Pa could come for long visits, and at various times Ma's grandchildren would be invited to spend the summer too. There'd be more children in the future, so if Ethel and Mabel wanted to keep their children away from Ma, so be it. Let them. William was engaged now. He'd have progeny, too.

But Nelle's plans were to be thrown badly off schedule. Merly's baby arrived on time, in August, full term and healthy. It was another girl. They named her Katherine, for a dear and admired friend of Merly's. Waldo was good natured in his disappointment in not getting a son.

"We'll try again," he said.

“Please wait,” Nelle said, “until after I’ve got my family started. Roge and I expect to have a little girl by the springtime.”

“Now, Nelle, for the love of Pete!” Waldo said. “Why don’t you pick out a boy if you’re going to adopt a child? There’s plenty of girl cousins already.”

“Because I want a little girl. My mother could tell you why. There’s that old saying that goes - ‘a son is a son...’”

“I know,” Waldo said, ‘...till he gets him a wife, but a daughter is a daughter all the days of her life,’ or something like that.”

“That’s it. That’s how it goes. And it’s usually true, too, I’ve noticed. In our family, for instance, Howd, and Nate, and Art don’t come to see ma very often (Art comes to see Pa when he wants money). Tommy and William are good, I’ll admit. Tommy always was real close to Ma. He always gives her big hugs, ever since he was a boy. But it’s us girls who Ma knows she can always count on to come when she needs us; even Grace with her ‘career’ comes to see Ma often.”

“Doesn’t Roge want to adopt a boy?”

We just want a baby to love, Wal. Roge was so crazy about Grace’s little Dee when she was with us in Vermont for three weeks, that he’s just always talked in terms of our getting a girl. After all, when the child is adopted there’s no sense in fussing about the ‘name’ being carried on, is there?”

“I suppose not,” Waldo agreed.

Toward the end of September Nelle returned to New York. Merly was up and about and able to care for Mim and the new baby, and to keep house, in her hectic fashion. Merly was the absent-minded one in the family, easily side tracked in the midst of a work project. She was absorbed in the news of the War, and spent much time reading the newspapers and discussing Wilson and his Fourteen Points with anyone who would listen to her. Waldo teased her a little about it, claiming that she scrubbed the kitchen floor, covered it with newspapers to keep it clean, and then lay down on it to read them. Emmie came from Oberlin to help with cooking, and Merly read Christian Science literature to her, and tried to interest her in discussing President Wilson’s plans for peace. She finally gave up, having come to the conclusion that Emmie either couldn’t or wouldn’t discuss anything outside the immediate household concerns, if the subject was introduced by another person. She could not be made to discuss anything if she had her mind elsewhere. However, at any odd moment, she might recall a person or incident from the past, speaking of it with interest and often amusement, no matter what other people were speaking of. Abstract ideas, or politics, were completely outside her thoughts, but she did enjoy reading novels, or small human interest items in the newspaper. She was a big help to Merly, in that

duties like dishwashing, ironing, and hanging diapers out to dry were chores she enjoyed doing, and Mim was fond of her auntie and toddled around after her.

By the end of September, however, Emmie decided she wanted to go home to Oberlin. She didn't feel well, she said, and she wanted to go home to Ma and Pa and Eddie. Merly called Art to take Emmie back to Oberlin in his car. She was quite put out with Emmie for leaving, but once Emmie got an idea in her head, there was no changing her mind. She was the most stubborn member of a stubborn family.

After Emmie left, Waldo came home one day feeling ill, and running a fever. He took to his bed, shivering. "It's the worst case of grippe I've ever had," he said.

"I'm going next door and phone Mother Rahming and have her start working for you in Science," Merly said.

"Well, it won't do any harm, I guess," Waldo said.

In a few days, Waldo felt better, but Mim fell ill. Merly hastened to call Mother Rahming again. She refused to voice her fear that the new baby might get whatever Waldo and Mim seemed to have.

But it was Merly who took to her bed next. She was, from the start, far sicker than Waldo had been. She had fever and chills, and no milk to nurse the new baby.

"Call Mother Rahming and ask her to work for me too," Merly asked Waldo. "She healed you, and Mim's much better."

Waldo was still weak and shaky, but he went to the neighbor's and called Rosella Rahming.

That night the baby fussed and cried for hours from hunger.

"I wonder if she should even be near you," Waldo said. "She needs a bottle of baby formula. Do you know how to fix formula?"

"Grace has a Dr. Holt's baby care book," Merly said, and closed her eyes. "I don't know what to do. I thought I'd be better today. I just don't have milk. What shall we do? I can't even think, Waldo."

"Neither can I," he said. "I still feel so terrible myself. I haven't any strength." He sat on the edge of her bed with his chin in his hand, thinking. "I know what I'm going to do. I'm going to send a telegram to Nelle to come."

"Oh, you can't do that to Roge! Nelle's only been back home for a few weeks. He'll be so upset."

“There’s nothing else to do. We can’t ask Grace to help. If they got it, they’d be in the same predicament we are, and their little Jane nearly died last year from whooping cough.”

“You’re not talking like a Christian Scientist, Wal.”

“That’s because I’m not one, really, Merly.”

“You’re only working against it.”

“I can’t help the way my mind works. I’m a lawyer. I’m logical and I’m practical. I’ll send a wire to Nelle, and I’ll ask my sister to come and stay till Nelle gets here. I’ve no objection to the Christian Science. But we can’t just sit here thinking good thoughts. We have to figure out what to do about these problems.”

“I can’t seem to think any thoughts today,” Merly said. “Oh, my head is hammering. All right. Send for Nelle. I do need her.”

In the next two weeks Merly came close to death. It was October, 1918. In that month nearly two hundred thousand Americans died. In the family next door to Waldo and Merly, three people died - the mother-in-law and two children. Down the street, the father in another family died.

Nelle nursed Merly back to health, forcing her to drink beef broth, tea, and eggnog, even when she didn’t want it. The baby, now called “Trink” (a name given to her by her sister Muriel), never did catch the ‘flu’, but she had been put on a bottle formula, and had some trouble adjusting to the sudden weaning. She was not rosy and plump as she’d been.

When Merly was up and around, they told her how many people had succumbed to the epidemic.

“It was Christian Science that saved us,” Merly said, and Nelle was inclined to agree.

“Heck,” Waldo said, “it was Nelle’s good nursing and all that eggnog and beef tea.”

“It must be Science,” Merly said. “Even before Nelle got here, you and Mim were getting better.”

“We were never as sick as you were,” Waldo pointed out. “Besides, the neighbors are good people. Why would God let three of them die just because they weren’t Christian Scientists? That doesn’t make sense, does it? God is good, and they are His children too, aren’t they?”

“Certainly.” Merly said.

“Then why should they die because they never heard of Mrs. Eddy?”

“Oh, Waldo, you’re always asking questions, questions. I suppose it’s because you’re a lawyer.”

By Thanksgiving Merly felt able to take care of the baby again, but Nelle took Mim home with her to New York to keep her through the winter.

“You aren’t strong enough to be chasing a toddler around the house,” she told Merly.

Just as Roge.ell had been enchanted with Dee Rahming at nearly two years, so was he with little Muriel at the same age. She was a little cherub, he said, but he did wish she would talk to him as Dee had.

“She will, Roge. Dee was an unusually early talker. But isn’t Mim precious? She’s exactly the way I’d like our baby to be.”

“Then you’d better get Merly and Waldo to make one for us.”

“I don’t think Merly should ever make any more babies for herself, let alone ones to give away free to other people.”

“Oh? Why? She’s all right now, isn’t she?”

“Yes, but with three miscarriages and, two baby girls, I think she should be satisfied to quit. But they want a boy. At least they did, before she got the “flu”. Probably, they’ll forget about that now.”

“Are Matthew and Grace going to try again for a boy too?”

“Ha! Are you serious?” Grace wouldn’t have any more children by Matthew. That Rahming family’s been a big trial to her. And with it all she still loves that egotistical mother’s boy.”

“But Aunt Ida’s a wonderful person, Nelle.”

“Yes, she is. The pick of that bunch.”

“And I like John Rahming, too, scandal or no scandal.”

“Well, Grace’s not married to Aunt Ada or Father Rahming. Anyway, I wanted to talk about our baby, not other people’s problems.”

“It almost seems we should forget about our baby, Nelle. All we do is take care of the rest of the family’s babies. And besides, we’re getting along. Forty is too late.”

“Don’t dare say that! If it’s the last thing I do, I’m going to find one little girl to raise. Maybe we’ve only got time to raise one, but we can invite the cousins to visit her.”

Here? In New York? That will be no good. The city’s no fun for children. We’ll have to find a bigger place. Apartment houses aren’t good for children. Still, I’d like to be fairly near my work. Of course, if I get to really doing more writing we could live anywhere we wanted, you know.”

Letter from Grandma (Maria Martin) ^{Sopran} to Merley ^{Mary} who had been ill with
the "1918 flu" after Frank was born

"Lincoln Birthday" Chagrin Falls Ohio
Feb. 12 - 1919

My Dear Merley, & all.

I am writing now
as peace & quiet reign in this household.
For the little ones are fast asleep.
First - I must tell you, about Miriam's
appetite, which is most excellent. I assume
you, and you would smile to hear
the forceful working of the spoon in James
and Miriam's hands - and with their eyes
bent on each other, at each mouthful
to see, which shall have finished, their
dish first. to call for the second helping,
and sometimes Mim will ask for the
fourth dish of rice & milk. Of course the
dishes are not very full, so the milk will
cool them sufficiently, that they may eat
without burning their mouths. Cream of wheat,
Oat-meal, Rice, or corn flakes, all dis appear
as being very palatable. At noon, they have
vegetables, in a soup, carrots & potatoes, and
it - rice or flour, this they enjoy.

Then about the sleeping arrangements.
Mim takes an afternoon nap regularly,
and without having to be rocked to sleep,
either when Grace removes her shoes, comes
her up, a gentle pat or two, she then comes
out, and shuts the door, sometimes there's
not a voice of protest, if she is good &
sleepy, sometimes she wails a wee bit, but
only for a moment, and she gives up, after
all is quiet - no look in to see, she is well covered.
Just the same at ^{night} she wants to be undressed
when Jane is, and is put in her bed, same
as in the afternoon, when the door is closed
she knows it is final, & there is such a
weak protest, you can hardly hear it, &
more often, none at all, and she sleeps
until morning. There has been only one
wakeful night, and then they eat a little
too hearty food, Aunt Ada, made some
Johnny cake, and they wanted some, and

we yielded and gave them some. but
never - Grace was up three times to
Jane - and many more to Mim who was just
uneasy - but Jane broke the stillness with her
loud cries. we learned our lesson. only light
food for their supper, and we have no more
trouble. Mim wants to do everything Jane does
if Jane makes a wab wab, she wants to, and
if Jane wants to see me, she wants to, so
if Jane wants to see me, she wants to, so
the "chain chair" is kept very busy. Mim has
got so she attempts to ride the Kiddie Kar,
and is not afraid, and is happy a day
long, trying to repeat all the little dittys
she hears Jane say. To day, Jane said to
me, "Grandma! I like you personally."
she repeats everything she hears. this noon
when she came to the table, she was waiting
for Grace to bring the food, she exclaims
"Well! what about it?" and when Aunt Ann
sat down beside her, she remarks, "and
what about you?"

and change her gear. He is the great Oh-My-God, go to the funder-
head.

They went out to play a little while after
lunch, and Jane came in with her mittens
all twisted about. she says "my mittens
is so excited," and in the expression
is "you make me so nervous!"
These children give ^{us} plenty amusement
and business. to be sure. I think I
had better remain here, while Mim
is here. Grace really needs one.
Oh, Muley, my machine is at the farm
but you might have it. if the roads
were so Wab's could go and get it. I
will not give it away, at present, till
I see if I want it. but will loan it.
Will is alone, and keeping house for him
self. I send him some bread every
few days, and some other eatables
which he cannot get at the farm.
Grace is going in tomorrow to celebrate
and your father expects me to come.
I will stay until morning, before I decide.

and bid you good night. The Lord bless you. I feel good.

“In the mountains?” Nelle said. “Colorado?”

“Best to be near New York where the publishers are. How, about New Hampshire or Vermont? You thought it was so pretty around Burlington when we lived there, I recall. So as soon as you take Mim back home, we’ll go looking for something in the mountains.”

“With pines and aspens, like Colorado?”

“No, with pines and white birch, like New England.”

####

Maria lay awake, unable to sleep, thinking of her children. The World War had ended and Art Martin had come home to find his third wife didn't love him anymore. To begin with, she wouldn't tell him why, and he made an effort to convince her that they could start over again. Maria's heart ached over Art's troubles. His first wife had gone East with his little boy. The second marriage was made in a hurry, and over after a few months, because of jealousy over Art's love for his son. And now this last marriage in trouble.

For the moment, Maria had stopped worrying about Howd, Nate, and Stan and their wives and children. Their marriages might not be the world's happiest, but at least they seemed fairly stable. Emmie's condition apparently would not change. The family would have to protect Emmie all the rest of her days. After her mother and father were gone, one of the sisters, probably Nelle, would take care of her.

And there was poor Grace, who'd had such dreams of studying art in Europe. Now struggling to make a troubled marriage work, and trying to earn money too. Well, whatever came of it, Grace had her two dear girls, and her own talents were great. She'd be all right. Maria had faith in Grace. She'd always had a great will to succeed. Maria might persuade her husband that helping Grace financially was the proper thing to do.

"She's a very brave girl," Maria told him.

But now, in the summer of 1919, it was Merly that Maria was worried about. Merly was expecting again, with her last baby not yet a year old. Maria was determined that Merly should not send for Nelle this time. Maria would go and help Merly herself, crippled as she was, before she'd let Nelle jeopardize her marriage by leaving Roge again for a protracted stay. Nelle had had years of hoping for a baby, and she should have a chance to find, one to adopt, without Merly always sending for her. Perhaps one of Waldo's sisters might come and help out.

In the end, Merly settled the question herself by announcing that she no longer worried about having a miscarriage. Now that she was a Christian Scientist, such things didn't happen to her. She had arranged for Sally Longmont to come and stay at the time when the new baby was to be born. Waldo waited on her during the crucial three-month period when miscarriages are supposed to be more likely to occur. "Don't lift things. We don't want to lose our son," he said.

"I have to lift things," Merly said. "I have to lift Trink. But don't worry. I'll be fine. So will the baby."

Maria wished that Henry would consent to having Emmie go and stay a while with Merly to help her with her housework. Merly still had trouble housekeeping, even when she wasn't expecting. She seemed still to be girlish and dreamy, too easily distracted by something she wanted to read. Since she'd had babies and miscarriages, the place was usually in an uproar with a general

disorder that upset Henry when he visited. The last time Art had taken her and 'Pa' (as Maria had taken to calling Henry in recent years. in to see Merly, the place had been a wild display of



Mim's toys and 'potty-chambers' and baby diapers and bottles. Maria had wanted to stay a while and chat with Merly and Waldo, but Pa had hurried them on. He wanted Art to take them over to visit Stan and Bertha.

It seemed to Maria that Henry had definite favorites among his children. Among the boys he preferred Stan's company best, though he gave money to Art, who carted him around in his automobile. He was still angry at Howd, and Nate and William he more or less ignored. Among the girls he seemed to lean more strongly to Nelle and Grace, although Maria had to admit he was good to them all. All except Howd, that is, and up until their fight he had been generous to him, too.

Maria wished that Merly had someone like Aunt Ada Norris, who was such a help to Grace. When she'd broached the subject of having Emmie go to Cleveland to stay with Merly on a more or less permanent basis, however, Henry had objected.

"You need her more than Merly does. She's a young woman and she doesn't have rheumatism, like you do. Emmie is needed here. Merly's got only her house and family to care for. At her age that's only normal."

"Yes, but Merly has special problems. She's not very strong, what with the flu and being in the family way so often."

"Well, she shouldn't be in the family way so often."

Maria looked at him and smiled a little.

"I remember years ago my sister Isobel used to tell me I shouldn't be that way so often."

Behind his grey General Grant-style beard Henry Martin blushed. "Well, Merly has no rheumatism. Anyway, what about Edward; what's to become of him?"

"I'll take care of him," Maria said. "He's nine years old almost, and William plans to take him when he's ten or twelve. Poor William, maybe the boy will make him happier. I don't think Emmie would mind if he went with William, do you?"

"It's hard to say what Emmie thinks," Henry said, "but in any case you better keep Emmie with you. You need each other."

Merly got through her crucial three-month stage of pregnancy safely. In August, William Martin was married to a Chicago girl whom he had known while attending Haden Mills College. Gertrude Addenbrook came from a well-to-do family and had good manners, intelligence and a lively personality, but she was a surprise to all the Martin clan. William had been out of college



Miriam Lemmon
MIRIAM LEMMON (MIM)
"MURRY"



KATHRINE LEMMON (TRINK)
"TREENY"



"TREENY" "MURRY"

for several years. He'd attended the Oberlin Theological Seminary for two years, then he'd decided he didn't want to become a minister after all, much to Maria's disappointment. She had thought he loved church, she told him. He went out to Colorado one summer, "to see if it's as splendid as everyone says." Then he'd come back and worked a year to save money for a year of graduate work at his old college in Oberlin. He'd decided to become a teacher, he said, but he didn't expect his father to pay for any more of his schooling. During his year at graduate school he met a beautiful Cleveland society girl. By summer of 1918 they became engaged. (William had not been in the War because he'd had a bad back injury while playing football in college). Suddenly, late that year, he and his socialite beauty had broken off their engagement, and by spring he'd told the family that he and Gertrude Addenbrook planned to be married that summer. His sisters were astonished and disappointed, frankly.

"Whatever happened to your plans to marry Dorothea?" Merly asked him.

"They were altered," William said.

"But why? She was so lovely."

"She looked lovely, didn't she?" he agreed. "But after thirty years or more when she didn't look as lovely, there wouldn't have been much left, I assure you. Oh, don't worry; you'll all like 'Trude. Wouldn't you think it better to have a nice sister-in-law than one who was only pretty?"

"What did you and Dorothea quarrel about?" persisted Merly.

"Did I say we quarreled? Well, as a matter of fact, we did - over politics, religion, all kinds of things. She's a Republican."

"Aren't you?" Merly asked.

"No, indeed. I'm a Democrat. I'm one of Wilson's greatest admirers."

"Does Father know?"

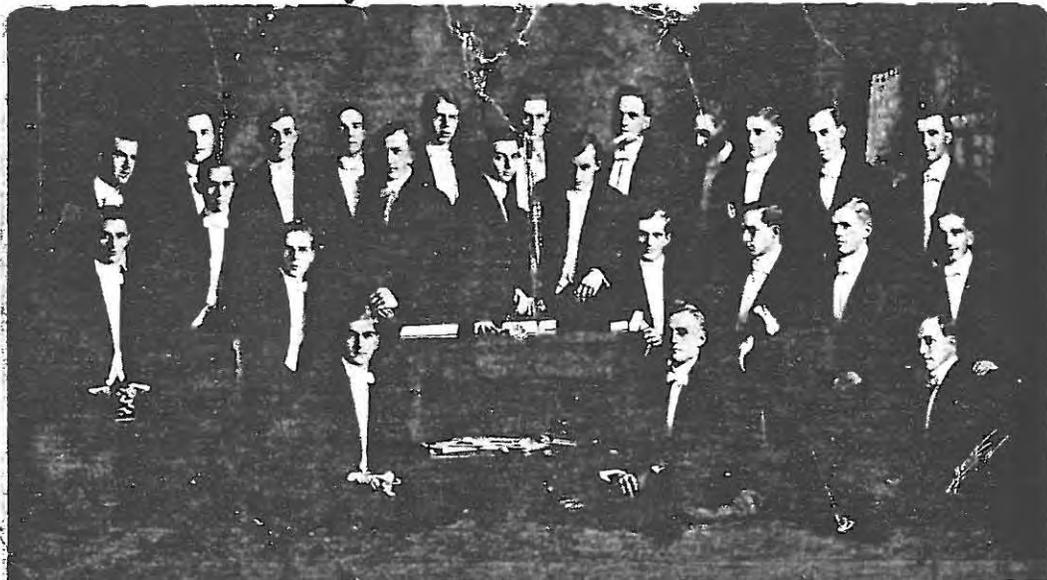
"I don't know. 'Trude knows, and she's a Republican too, but we'll never quarrel about it. We've agreed to accept each other's viewpoint, and to try to always respect it."

The wedding was not held in Chicago because so many of William's family could not make the trip. Maria's rheumatism was bad, Merly was pregnant, Nate and Stan felt that they could not get away from their businesses. And as always, there was the problem of Emmie, who didn't quite fit in anywhere among people who didn't understand her problem. And now there were so many children in the family.

Gertrude announced quite early to Maria, "William and I would love to be married in the College chapel. It will be so much more practical. My mother and father and two sisters will come, and my best friend."



WILLIAM TREAT MARTIN
"LAWRENCE"



OBERLIN COLLEGE GLEE CLUB

“But at about the rest of your friends?” Maria asked.

“Mother will have a reception in Chicago later for William and me.”

The entire Martin family was present at the wedding, with the exception of Nelle and Roger, who were on a business trip in New England, and Howd and Lottie, who sent William a wedding present, but did not attend the wedding, nor send regrets.

Gertrude’s parents arranged to have a wedding dinner served in the special dining room at Nate and Ethel’s Martin Inn. Grace silently prayed that it could be carried off without Nate donning a white apron and helping out in the kitchen. All went well, and things were very pleasant, but Grace was more aware than ever of her brothers’ lapses in grammar. She could almost forget about their “It don’t” and “I’ve went” when they were out at the Old Brick, but elsewhere, and especially in front of the gently-reared and well-educated, such as Gertrude Addenbrook, her big brothers and their wives seemed terribly countrified and lacking in polish. And there was no excuse for it. They were all brought up by the same parents. Their mother’d always corrected their bad grammar. She spoke good English, and their father did too when he wanted to. They’d all had a fair amount of schooling and could have had more if they’d wanted. From Nelle on down to Art, they spoke properly, but sometimes Art lapsed when in his father’s company. Grace got so put out with them for doing it. She was sure they did it on purpose. She was sure that they felt there was something sissified about good English. However, they were all on their good behavior at the wedding and at the dinner which followed. Grace noticed that even ‘Trude’s father said one or two “it don’t”.

The Old Brick

By Jane R. Chandler

1981

Part Four

EVERYONE ISNT LIKE YOU MARIA

Betty Long was thirty-three years old now and, like Ethel Rahming, still single, but Betty's life was very different from Ethie's. The money Betty earned was not needed at home. Her father had left her mother enough assets for a modest income. Betty had an older brother, a bachelor who was devoted to his mother. He was a very shy, strange person. He spoiled both his mother and Betty. He had paid for her trip to Italy and he encouraged her in her art work.

Betty was still fun and popular among her old crowd, but people were beginning to wonder whether she would ever marry. Arthur Grey took Betty to concerts, plays and motion pictures, but they were not engaged.

Among all the art school friends, Betty had liked best Grace, and Merly, and Louise Wesley. Grace and Louise were no longer living in Cleveland. Betty now saw more of Ethie Rahming and Merly Lemmon. She had rented a small studio down town in a building on Grande Avenue, where she painted ivory miniature portraits of children, on commission. She also painted each year a few landscapes and still-lives for the May Exhibit of Cleveland Artists. She saw Ethie Rahming about once a week for lunch, and stopped in to see Merly Martin Lemmon and her family occasionally. She also had become a good friend of Anna Ayers, who now went by the name of Anna Hill. The two women had become much closer than they had ever been in the days when Anna had been a part-time student in the Art School's ceramic class.

Anna's situation was a different one. She was known in her neighborhood as a widow. She wanted her son to grow up with the understanding that his father had died. But there was the problem of John. The boy must not know who the man who visited his mother was. The neighbors must not know, either. It was all right for a widow lady to have a gentleman caller. But that caller must not spend the night.

One of Anna's neighbors asked her teasingly, "Does the man who calls on you have serious intentions'?"

And Anna answered coyly, "He does, but I don't."

"It would be nice for your son to have a Daddy, don't you think?"

“Yes, and no.” Anna said. “Not one that much older than I. Besides, I’ll never fall in love again.”

Donald Hill was four years old and precocious. He had learned to talk early, and called his mother’s friend “Mr. Wronging.” Anna had decided not to attempt to correct his pronunciation of John’s name. So if she spoke of him to her neighbors, for any reason, she also called him Mr. Wronging.

Since Anna’s return from Batavia, her relationship with John had altered of necessity. She had established herself in West Cleveland as a piano teacher, and it was very important that people think of her as a model of propriety, for her pupils were mostly children. “Mr. Wronging” was known to Anna’s neighbors as “one of her piano pupils who has taken a fancy to her.” He visited her on Wednesday evenings when Rosella and Ethie were at their church testimonial meeting, and on Sundays he came in the afternoon “to take his piano lesson.”

Anna spoke of him to Betty Long.

“He seemed to age while I was away, Betty. He had stopped smoking, you know, and had gained twenty-nine pounds. When I got back he was smoking again and had lost all that weight again. He looks so tired and worried most of the time. I try to cheer him up and tell him I’m not unhappy, that he should be happy too. We have our little Donald, and he is well, and a very bright little boy too. But of course, he did not want things under these conditions. It bothers him more than it bothers me. I have decided to accept my life as it is, and make the best of what we have.”

“Financially, how is it, Anna?”

“It will be all right. I have my lessons, and my brother has been sending me money for years, and John has put something in the bank for the boy. It will be all right. But the evenings are lonely; John can’t be here very much. I am going back to the Art School and take some courses in design or something. I’d like to get something else besides my piano teaching, since I’m alone with the boy so much.

“Anna, do you ever think of meeting someone else and marrying, maybe?”

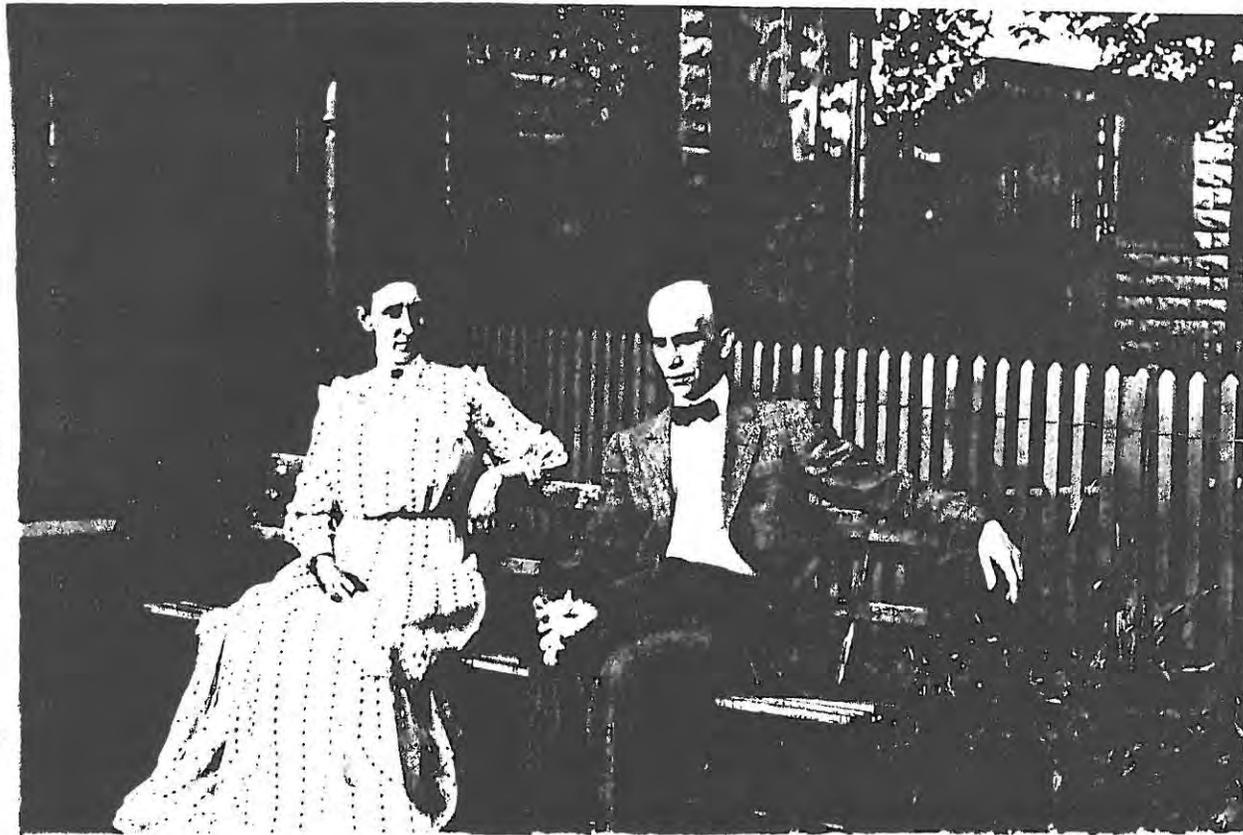
“No, Betty, I don’t. Do you?”

The question caught Betty off guard, but she managed a fairly quick answer. “Do I ever think of it? Not often. Not recently, in fact.”

“Why not?” Anna asked.

“Because I didn’t love anyone who asked me.”

“Not Arthur Grey?”



ROSELLA N. RAHMING
"MARCELLA NORTH"

JOHN C. RAHMING
"GARRETT NORTH"

ABOUT 1918

“No. Not Arthur Grey.”

“You know, Betty, I once thought you took a fancy to Norris Rahming.”

“Perhaps I did in those early years at Art School. I’ve forgotten.” Anna wondered if Betty had really forgotten.

Betty went on to say, “A lot of us took a fancy to him. He can be very charming when he wants to be.”

“He gets that from his father,” Anna said.

“I’ll tell you something else,” Betty said. “Merly Martin liked Norris too.”

“Yes,” Anna agreed. “I think that’s true. But she’s happy with her husband, isn’t she?”

“Oh yes. She is. He’s a nice fellow, lots of fun, and easier to get along with than Norris Rahming. And she’s all absorbed with having babies right now. She’s not like Grace, who hasn’t given up on having her art career.”

Betty rarely mentioned Anna to Grace, and never to Ethie. Even though Grace and Norris were as far away from Cleveland in their present home, as they had been when they lived at the Old Brick, it was easier now to visit them. The farm was in North Royalton Township out on Schoolhouse Road several miles, whereas their present rented house was near North Royalton Village, known to the old-timers as North Royalton Center, or simply, “The Center.” It was where the church, stores, and post office were located. It was a stop on the interurban streetcar line between Cleveland and Hanley, which was about twenty miles farther south.

Betty went out to North Royalton often on Sunday afternoons, and Grace’s children were always delighted. They called her “Auntie Betty” with Broad Bostonian “a” sounds, as in “ah” so that it sounded like “Ontie Betty.” They adored her. She was painting miniature portraits of them on ivory.

Frequently Ethie and Rosella Rahming came out too, on those Sunday afternoons, but never John Rahming. Grace felt badly about that. She knew that he felt that the family must despise him, but she did not despise him. She had got over the initial shock of learning of his love affair with Anna. As time had passed she had grown more and more sympathetic, for with every passing year, she learned more about Rosella’s peculiarities, and what her father-in-law had had to endure. Grace also knew that Aunt Ada Norris could not censure John Rahming either, for she spoke fondly of him always, and never critically, except once or twice to mention that he was “too gentle a person to be an aggressive business man.”

Grace was aware that Betty saw Anna frequently.



RENCE "IRENE" "MATT"
1916 (expecting)



"MARCY" "IDA" ? "GARRETT"
"ANDREA" "FAYE"
1918



"EDIE"
"FAYE" "IDA" "MARCY"
"ANDREA" ? ? "MATT"
1918



"ANDREA" "FAYE" "MURRY"
"TREENY"
1919



"IRENE" "FAYE" "JOHN" "IDA"
"ANDY" "SOPHIA"
1919



J.R. 1921
"ANDY"



1921
JANE DEE
"ANDREA" "FAYE"



J.R.
"ANDY"

THESE PHOTOS MADE IN CHAGRIN FALLS, O.
"FIRE VALLEY"



BETTY LONG

SALLY LONGMONT

CIRCA 1919

6571

“It’s too bad,” she once said, “that Anna can’t get together with all of us old Art School chums.”

“Yes, I agree,” Betty said, “but she feels that Ethie and you wouldn’t want to see her at all. You’ll have to admit it’s natural.”

“Yes,” Grace said. “It would be awkward. But perhaps you could tell her that I, at least, don’t look down on her.”

“I will,” Betty said. “Merly sent her the same message.”

“You see Merly often, don’t you?”

“Yes, fairly,” Betty said. “She lives so near me.”

“I haven’t seen her since Bill and Vinnie’s wedding. How is Merly? How goes the pregnancy?”

“Just fine, I guess,” Betty said, “but she’s having quite a time with her housekeeping. “Trink” is at that age where she’s into everything, and Mim is, after all, not yet three herself.”

“I’m glad I didn’t have my girls so close together. Well, this next child of Merly’s had better be a boy. Then maybe she’ll quit and get her strength back.”

Betty said she hoped so.

####

Emma continued to show no improvement. Her parents had made a home for her ever since bringing her home from Denver in 1909. No treatment had ever succeeded in curing her, although the family agreed that she had become more stable, less rebellious. In the beginning she had done such things as stay in bed all day refusing food, and at times, out of a clear sky she had lashed out with some strange and vicious remark such as, "They ought to take that little Turk and string him up," No one was certain whom she meant by "little Turk" until one time when William came on a visit. Maria had urged Emmie to come downstairs and see him. "He's very fond of you, Emmie." Emmie had turned down the covers of her bed and crawled in, with all her clothes on, shoes and everything. Covering up her head she had mumbled, "Tell that little Turk to go away."

At the time when Maria took Billy from the orphanage, it was on a temporary basis. The adoption laws were not firm in those days. The boy's mother had been agreeable that Billy should go home with Maria to see how things worked out. She knew that Billy Wooldridge was in business. (He had just rejoined his father in the tombstone trade). She also knew that Henry and Maria were well-to-do. They understood that Emma was unhappy because surgery had, left her sterile. It was understood that adoption might follow. For some reason, no legal action ever followed. Emmie was "doing for the baby, washing diapers, preparing formula, and taking him for carriage rides.

After a while her family had realized that Emmie would perform routine tasks for Billy, and be gentle with him, but she was making no progress toward recovering a normal personality. She did not want Billy or a home of her own. William came often to see Billy, and he bought him his clothes and toys, but on these occasions Emmie refused to appear, and Maria came to the conclusion that the visits had a bad effect on Emmie, even though she never laid eyes on William.

For Billy, although Emma was a person who ironed, made beds, and cooked, she was never really a mother. But he was taught to call her "Mother," and Maria was "Grandma. Grandma was loving and sweet; she cared about him. She asked him if his tummy ached, or if he would like to take a walk. His "mother" was always handing him cookies, but she did it in an absent minded routine way reminiscent of a trainer giving a sea lion a fish and a pat. Emmie didn't seem to think of Billy a much more than a pet that was kept around the house. When she spoke to him, it was vaguely, with her eyes focused on some point miles beyond him. In truth, she had this vague look in her eyes much of the time. So there was, for Billy, no feeling of a special bond between them. Where his mother should have been, there was a vacuum.

Others in the family could see how it was with Billy, and they felt badly. It would have been better had Maria never brought him home at all. Maria was troubled. She felt responsible, and blamed herself for urging the idea of adoption. She had had such high hopes. In Maria's view of

life, motherhood was the greatest reward for a woman (in spite of her early rebellion at perpetual pregnancy). She had been so certain that a baby would straighten Emmie out. Now she found herself in her seventies, with failing health and another child to raise. Maria had finally recognized that Emmie would never be normal. In the outside world, Emmie would be a lost and helpless child. She would not, or could not, go shopping in a store alone. She did a great deal of sewing and knitting and crocheting. She had to be almost dragged to the dentist, and refused flatly to go to the doctor.

Maria said one day to her husband, "Henry, we will have to make some arrangement for Emma."

"What kind of arrangement?"

"We won't always be here to look out for her, you know."

"Well..."

"She wouldn't be happy with anyone but family, I know. And she wouldn't be happy with any of her sisters-in-law, even if they'd have her."

"Trude or Bertha might," Henry said.

"I wouldn't ask them. Bill and Trude are just married. They'll be starting a family any day, and as fine a girl as Trude is, I wouldn't ask it of her."

"Well, what about Bertha?" he asked.

"Henry, Bertha is a good wife to Stan, but she's not patient, and her voice is high and sharp, especially when she has one of those headaches."

"But they don't have any children. They'd have room for Emmie maybe. And Stan is a good person."

"That's true. He's very affectionate, but Bertha would upset Emmie. Emmie needs a great deal of patience and love. Caring for Emmie isn't always easy."

"Perhaps she should be in an asylum."

"Henry! What a horrible word! I can't even bear to hear you say it! When one says 'asylum' one is saying 'insane,' and Emmie is not insane."

"What do you call it, then?"

"She's upset. She's not 'right.' I don't know what it is, but she's not insane. And don't ever say 'asylum.' If you must, say sanitarium, or something. She's not that kind of case, Henry. She needs to feel safe. It has to be flesh and blood kin. It has to be one of her sisters."

“Sophie, what if they don’t want to have her? They’ve got their own lives to lead.”

Maria looked distressed. “Well, it should be one of her sisters. They care about Emma. They wouldn’t want to see her in a sanitarium.”

“Are you sure? Everyone isn’t like you, Maria. Most folks are selfish.”

She looked incensed. “Of course, I’m sure, Henry. We’ll have to persuade one of the girls to promise to make a home for her after we’re gone.”

“If you think that would work.”

“You’ll have to leave some money to them, Henry.”

“I was calculating to leave them money,” he said.

“I mean extra money. Settle extra money on the one that promises to care for Emma.”

Henry shrugged. “Humph,” he said. “Extry money.”

He got a satisfaction out of saying things like “extry.” When he could tell an anecdote with poor grammar, it seemed to make the story richer. “That ole mare come at me fighten’ mad.” Maria found it best policy to ignore it.

“Yes,” she said. “Extra money. It would make it worth their while to take Emmie”

Henry said “Humph” again.

“Now, poor Grace hasn’t a good home for her just now. She wouldn’t be the best one anyway. I don’t believe she’d ever make the right kind of home for Emmie. Emmie needs a very simple home life, a very domestic one. Grace’s would be too... oh, too...” She groped for a word. “Well, too... lively, or something. Now, Nelle would be the best one for Emmie, if she weren’t so far away. Nelle has always loved Emmie so. But I wouldn’t trust Roger to be patient. Ever since I heard how he tipped over that table full of china-ware at Merly’s wedding party, I’ve seen him in a different light. I’ve always heard how ministers’ children sooner or later, kick over the traces. Merly is the logical one, Henry. They’ll probably need the money the most.’

“More than Grace or Art? They both owe me money.”

“Grace has to work and isn’t at home. And Art... well, it’s silly to even mention him, the kind of wives he picks out. I don’t ever know what he’s going to do next. So, it comes back always to Merly as the one Emmie should live with. Waldo is good and kind, and since he once trained as a minister, he’ll understand.”

“But Merly ain’t very strong, Sophie. Two miscarriages already, and two small children.”

“Henry, I’d like to talk to her about an agreement, with a financial consideration so she could always afford to care for Emmie.”

“Well, there’s time enough, time enough. And what do you plan for Billy?”

“Billy,” Maria said, her brow clouding again. “That is what I don’t know about yet. I’ve got to think about that seriously. We’ve got to solve the problem while we’re still able to solve any problems. Of course, Billy wants him as soon as he’s old enough.”

Billy was not an attractive little boy. Maria had brought the baby home to Emmie with no suspicion that his eyes would remain crossed. As Billy grew and lost the curves of babyhood, he became a plain child with bony arms and legs, and a pallid complexion, but it was the crossed eyes that threw people off.

Maria had a guilt-feeling about Billy. Grace pointed out that quite likely with his crossed eyes no one else would have adopted him, and in a curious way, her guilt spread to the rest of the family. He was invited by several of his aunts and uncles for summer vacation visits. Jim and Marie never paid any attention to him, nor to the rest of the family either, for that matter. Howd and Lottie were still in exile, as far as the old man was concerned, though Maria kept in touch. She had insisted that they be included in the Golden Wedding celebration, but her husband had avoided Howd all that afternoon. The rest of the family were clannish, however, and all of them visited Henry and Maria frequently, with Nelle and Roger coming from New York once a year. They all began to realize that Maria was no longer well enough to care for Billy. By 1919, when Billy was eight years old, Maria was walking with a cane, and a hired woman was helping care for Billy and helping with housework. Emmie’s help was a bit sporadic.

William was in a difficult position. He now worked and lived in New York City. It had not been his idea to adopt Billy, but he had had the same hopes for Emma that her mother had. He had loved, Emmie and had been quite crushed by the events of 1907, although when her mind became disturbed he was not as surprised as some, because in living with her he had found that she had a strange and rebellious personality.

She was different looking from the other Martin girls. She would have been beautiful were it not for her too-firm chin, a Burns characteristic. It thrust her lower lip forward in an expression that was both petulant and stubborn. But for that mouth, Emmie had a classic face. Her principal charm had been her wit, and even in Denver, when their physical relations were in sorry trouble, she had never stopped being able to see the humor of everything else. She had until the time of her hospitalization kept William laughing continually, with her own peculiar slant on life. He hated to think of a whimsical mind like Emmie’s being blighted by calamity. What William never learned was that even in her mental illness, Emmie never completely lost her droll outlook, and in later years, as she got further and further from the time of her trouble, she became wittier, though usually the things she said seemed to be lifted from outer space, and were not at all relevant to the conversation of others.

William felt responsible for Billy. He would have liked to be able to relieve Maria of his care, but he could not marry and give Billy a new mother. He was still married to Emma.

“You really should be free, William,” Maria told him.

William shrugged and said nothing about that. “As soon as Billy is big enough I’ll take him with me, Mother Martin,” he said. He really had a great deal of love for Billy, and the boy for him. William was jovial, and easy-going. He came always with presents for Billy from New York City, and Billy was proud to call him “my father.”

But presently Maria’s arthritis was so bad that they gave up the College Street house, and again took two rooms in the Oberlin Hotel that Jim and Marie operated. They owned it, but old Henry Martin held the mortgage on it, and it was a substantial sum they owed. Again, an arrangement was made to let Henry and Maria have the rooms, and meals, and something was taken off the debt each month.

Since Billy was now nine years old, William came and got him and took him to New York, where he had an apartment near one of the schools.

“Will he be all right?” Maria fretted.

“He’ll be fine,” William promised. “Nelle is going to take him to her place every weekend. Roge will take him home with him every Friday evening, and on Sunday I’ll come and have dinner with them and take Billy home. Don’t you worry - he’ll be a real New Yorker before we know.”

####

In the fall of 1919 Merly was keeping the secret of her pregnancy from Nelle. She had made the rest of the family promise not to mention it in their letters to Nelle. She had two good reasons, she said: Nelle would think she ought to come and help, and she, Merly, refused to ask Nelle a third time. Her second reason was that Nelle would worry, and worrying would run counter to the Christian Science thought that Merly was counting on to bring her safely through her confinement.

Meanwhile, Nelle was keeping a secret from Merly and all the rest of the family. It was a surprise. When she wrote them about it, they would all expect her to announce that she had adopted a baby. But that was to come later. This was the year for the summer place in the mountains.

They found it in New Hampshire in the foothills of the White Mountains, with a view of blue distances crossed by cloud shadows. The place was an old farmstead part way up a mountain, with about twenty acres of reasonably flat land cleared of trees, and another hundred acres of pine and white birch forest surrounding. It was being sold by the son of the man who had originally cleared the land, a man named Nehemiah Evans. His son, who explained that he was Nehemiah Avery Evans, was in poor health, and found living on the mountain “too hard for the legs.”

“Climbing that hill is all right when you’re young, but I don’t want to have to keep horses any more. If we live in town we won’t need horses. We’re getting on in years.”

Nelle was full of questions. “Did you really farm the place fully? I mean, how much farming did you do?”

“Depends on what you mean. You’re from the Middle West. That’s where they grow acres and acres of corn and wheat. Lots of field crops. My Pa didn’t grow much of anything to sell. He cleared the land and built the house when he was young. His pa helped him. They built all these stone walls around here with the rocks they took out of the fields. They built the barn and then the house. Help from the neighbors, of course, raising the beams and all. They’re all hand-hewn, too, and put together with pegs.

“Pa put in an apple orchard. If you buy the place you’ll like the apples. There’s early ones and late ones, good winter keepers. Ethel puts them down in barrels, with paper in between them. There’s blueberries, and strawberries too, in the east lot. And I know a place I could tell you about for red raspberries, down the hill at the end of the old lumber road. Oh, and behind the barn there’s blackberries. We’ve got grape vines, too, but to be honest, the frost nips them most years.”

“What stock did you keep” Nelle asked him.

“Just two horses, pigs, chickens, and a cow.”

“And you made a living?”

“No. Pa and I spent the winter carving ax handles. We let all the fields go to hay. We put in a pretty good vegetable garden. Put a lot of potatoes down for the winter. Ethel made a lot of jam and jelly. We always bought oats for the horses, and some grain for the chickens. But we got maple trees up there.” He waved his hand. “Made a pretty good bit of maple syrup.”

Nelle’s eyes shone. “Oh, Roge! Maple syrup!”

“You’d have to be up here in March,” Jed Evans said.

“Well, maybe someday,” Roge said. “At first it’s just to be a summer place.”

They spent three days looking the place over. Nelle walked through the woods till she found the maple grove. There was the old stone “arch” where they had made the fires to boil down the sap. And she had seen the big flat sap pans hanging in the barn. There were dozens of wooden sap buckets lying stacked together beside the arch, and Nelle walked around, inspecting the maple trees, and finding the old healed-over marks where the spiles had been driven in to tap the trees.

They bought the place for a thousand dollars. It included the classic Cape Cod style house, the barn with privy behind it, a woodshed, a carriage-shed, and at some distance from the house a one-room cabin. It was this cabin that clinched the purchase for Roger. Jed Evans said he had used it as a place for hunters to stay when they came up from New York City to try and shoot them a deer. They paid him a few dollars for the privilege of sleeping in the cabin for a few nights. Roge would claim it for his own private use when he was writing his books.

Nelle was thrilled with it all. It was a farm! They couldn’t farm it, but it was a farm. The Evans’ had no animals now but their two horses, so the barn had been little used in recent years, just the two stalls for the team. They hadn’t even cut hay this summer. Nelle had big plans for the place. It would take a lot of work to fix it up.

They talked about it all the way back to New York. The Whites would not be taking all of the furniture with them when they left. Nelle was delighted with the old beds and dressers and so on, that were being included in the purchase of the house because the Whites said they needed only a few things where they were going to live. Nelle was already planning how she would attack the little house, and clean it from top to bottom. Roge was deciding how much money he could spend in the immediate future on some necessary improvements in the place. Some things were basic. Plumbing was out of the question; the privy behind the barn must stay, but could be replaced with a classier model presently. There was an excellent supply of delicious spring water that flowed into a wooden hogshead, about twenty yards from the house. One of the projects would be to pipe that water into the kitchen to save Nelle many steps. In the cabin in the



Rockies, Nelle had hauled water into the house in buckets; she wouldn't want to do it again now that she was fifteen years older.

"I'll have to hire some work done on that place real soon," Roge said.

Nelle sat up straight in her seat. "Real soon? What do you mean, real soon?"

"Well, I guess I can't let the place go through the winter without taking care of some matters. Jed Evans says that I ought to get someone to board up the windows for the winter, so the place won't be broken into by hunters. He says we might leave the cabin unlocked so they could use it, but close the house up tight. It sometimes storms pretty hard, too. He's seen snow up to the attic windows some years."

"Well, I still want to know what you meant by 'real soon'," Nelle said.

"I meant that I think I'll go back up in early October. Jed Evans knows a man named Prentiss Peabody that does odd jobs of carpentry and such, He's also a wizard with automobiles. I'll take the train up, and he and I'll go up and work for a few days on the place."

"Not without me, though," Nelle said. "Oh, I can't wait till next summer!"

Nelle decided to wait before telling the family about the new place. She was bursting with the news, but it would be more fun if she could spring all the good news at once. Back in New York she decided to begin in earnest hunting for her baby girl. She decided to let Roger go up to the farm without her to get the place ready for winter; meantime she decided to give Grace a hint that they were hunting for a summer cottage. There was method in her madness. She planned to invite the family to come to New Hampshire for a vacation next summer, and then all the men could help Roger make repairs on the place. It would be fun for all, and a big help. And certainly Norris and Waldo had much to be grateful for, the way she, Nelle, had helped Grace and Merly.

"Don't tell a soul in the family," Nelle said in her letter to Grace. "We are going to invite everyone; it will be great fun. I thought you could begin to plan now, Of course, I don't mean to invite the whole family this first summer. The place won't be that big. I thought you and Norris, and Merly and Waldo, and Bill and Gertrude. Write and let me know what you think, but remember, keep it a secret. I'll let the others know myself."

When Grace answered Lacy she almost gave away Merly's secret about her pregnancy; fortunately Nelle misunderstood. Grace said, "A summer place sounds wonderful; Norris is enthused. Now he wants a car more than ever so that we could motor all the way. But I don't see how Merly and Waldo could come until the new baby is a little older. Oh, and Mim does have trouble with car sickness too. Perhaps, though, they could come on the train. Will it be by a lake?"

We wouldn't want to worry about the children drowning. We've been expecting to hear about your progress in adopting a baby. What's going on regarding that?"

When Nelle read Grace's letter with the reference to the 'new baby,' she simply assumed Grace meant Merly's second daughter Trink who was only a little over a year old. She decided that perhaps Merly might not want to make the trip during the first summer. Trink might still be in diapers by then, and if she, Nelle, had her own "new baby" by then, the laundry problem at the summer place would be very burdensome. She made a mental note to discuss with Roger the arrangements for laundry. When they got a crowd, things could be difficult. There was a steady flow of sweet, sort spring water at the mountain farm, but only the old hogshhead to retain it as it flowed in and out. Roge would have to find some system for greater water storage. There was no cistern, and Nelle was glad. She didn't like cistern water; it got dirty and couldn't be used for washing, let alone drinking. Sometimes they even got drowned rats and mice in them. Oh, there were so many things to think about.

Nelle suddenly realized that in her excitement, she had given no thought to Christmas presents for the family. This year she'd probably have to buy them. She must start immediately.

Nelle spent a full day in the downtown stores, but could not get in the Christmas mood. She decided to go hunting again for her daughter-to-be. She would go back again to the children's homes she had visited before. She had seen no baby like the one she had pictured in her mind. At one home, a religious orphanage, the woman in charge of arranging adoptions pointed out to her that many parents looking for a certain kind of child ended up in choosing quite a different type. She had told Nelle, "Too many couples are looking for children with blond curls and blue eyes. There are many other children who need homes and who are lovable, too."

Nelle had been a little embarrassed. "Well, I thought it would be nice if she looked as much as possible like my family, or my husband's. He's a blue-eyed blond. I was too, when a child, though my hair has darkened. My mother was a blue-eyed blond, too."

"Yes, well, many people do feel this way, but there are other things to think about, and you will want to tell your child she's adopted."

You think that's absolutely necessary?"

"I do, yes. Absolutely."

"In all cases?"

"Yes, because as the old saying goes, honesty is the best policy. The reasons are so simple, really. You tell me you come from a large family. There'll be many cousins. You couldn't count on your secret being kept. Children are strange; they tell fibs, but they also like to have truth told. They get very resentful when grown-ups tell the fibs. Then, of course, we always say you can assure the child who is adopted that he has been 'chosen'."

“I know. I read all that in an article,” Nelle had told the woman. Now, in September, 1919, she came back to that same orphanage. She and Roger had been to four places in all, but Merly’s problems had come along and interrupted things.

The woman remembered Nelle, and invited her into the office.

“Well, Mrs. Fison, I assumed you’d found your baby. Are you still looking, or are you looking for another?”

Nelle told her about the interruptions.

“And are you still looking for a blond baby?”

“Well, if possible, we are. I think so. My husband and I decided that a long time ago. We haven’t actually talked about that part lately. We were busy this fall finding our summer place. We thought it would be so wonderful for a city child.”

“Yes, indeed, it would, Mrs. Fison. I wonder if you’d like to come into the playroom with me for a few minutes.”

“I’m still anxious to get a small baby, Mrs. Bronson.”

“Yes, but the only babies in the nursery at the moment are two little boys.”

“I can come back later, when my husband is home again.”

“Alright, but do come in the playroom for a minute. One never knows, even when one is certain about it, just when a youngster a little older will turn out to be the one you want. How old are the little cousins?”

I beg your pardon?” Nelle said.

“You have nieces and nephews, you say - any tiny babies?”

“Not just at the moment, but my young brother just got married. There’ll no doubt be more.”

“Yes. Well, let’s go and see the children.

The play room was humming with the chatter and babble of preschool youngsters. The older ones attended the public school. A young woman who sat in a rocker crocheting superintended the children, who were playing, mostly with building blocks, or riding rocking horses, or stringing colored wooden beads.

At one end of the room a wooden bench ran across the entire width of the wall. At one end, in the very corner, sat a little boy and girl close together, their arms around each other. Shyly, they

watched with big, brown eyes, as the other children played with the toys. The little boy appeared to be around four or five years old, the little girl two or three.

Nelle noticed them immediately. "Aren't they cute!" she said. "Are they brother and sister?"

"Yes, indeed." Mrs. Branson said. "You can certainly tell that, can't you?"

"What's the matter with them? Are they afraid of the other children?"

"They're very shy. They've only been here about three weeks, but they should begin to play by now, ordinarily. Theirs is a very sad case. There were four children in the family. The other two were older; they were school age. The mother ran off with another man. The father is poor and in bad health. He couldn't keep the little ones. He brought them to us for adoption."

"They'll be adopted together, won't they?" Nelle asked.

"No," Mrs. Branson said. "The boy's adoption is already arranged for." Nelle was shocked.

"You mean you'd separate those dear little tykes!"

"It happens very frequently, Mrs. Fison. It's unavoidable. We often get several children from one family, and then they are adopted separately."

"Oh, but that's so sad."

"Yes. It is. Then again, many children are never adopted at all. They just grow up in the orphanage."

"What becomes of them?"

"Oh, they find employment of various sorts."

"Tell me - the people who are adopting the little boy - 'why don't they take the little sister?'"

"She only wanted the one child. Her husband wanted the boy especially, and he felt that they were both so young and close together in age, it would be too much work for his wife to take care of them both."

"So when the brother goes, she'll stay here?"

"Until someone adopts her, if they do. She's very appealing, don't you think?"

"Yes. She reminds me of some child I've known," Nelle said, "and I can't think who it is. Mrs. Branson, when my husband comes back we'll come and see you again. It's really upset me to see those two little dears."

When Nelle got home again that afternoon, she made herself a cup of tea, and wrote a letter to Roger. She hoped, she told him, that he would be home soon. She told him about her trip to the

orphanage, and about the little brother and sister. She had suddenly realized who it was the little girl reminded her of; it was Dee Rahming as she had been the winter they had taken care of her for three weeks in Burlington, Vermont, when Grace was busy moving from New York back to Cleveland. Dee was nine years old now, and still a favorite of Roge's.

"You would be really taken with this darling little cherub," Nelle wrote. "Since seeing her this afternoon, I have been getting over the notion that I must have a curly-headed blond baby, or even a 'baby.' This little tyke is two and a half. That is a nice age, don't you think. Mrs. Branson says that she is toilet trained and out of diapers. So you see, she would be easier to care for at the farm. Do hurry home so that we can go back to the orphanage together.

Christmas came and went, and the families were not too surprised when Nelle wrote that their Christmas gifts would be late. However, Nelle's box was always fine, for in addition to the gifts, she always tucked a box of fudge into it at the last minute.

This year Nelle was so keyed up that Christmas seemed a minor matter. All her thoughts were on April. She would have her little girl by then, and she was going to take her home to show her to the family. And she would show them all the pictures of the summer place and they would make plans for the next summer.

But things did not work out quite as Nelle planned that year. In late January a letter came from Grace.

"Dear Sis.

Things have suddenly changed for us. We have all experienced a big shock. Father Rahming passed on a week ago today. I would have wired you but everything has been in such a state of turmoil, that it just wasn't possible. Mother Rahming is calm about other people's troubles, but her Christian Science falters when things happen to her. This has had far-reaching effects — but I will begin at the beginning.

As you remember, Father Rahming sold real estate. Well, Friday afternoon he had been out showing a piece of property in Cleveland Heights to a prospective buyer. They looked the lot over, and then went back downtown to fill out some papers. After they got off the streetcar they walked up Sixth Street against a cold north wind with snow. Then they took the elevator up to the office. Father Rahming and his client entered and sat down at Father Rahming's desk. One of the other partners came in with a man and his wife, and they were introduced to Father Rahming. He stood up to shake hands, and as he held out his hand, he just collapsed and fell across his desk onto his face. They did things to try to revive him, but all to no avail, and someone called a doctor whose office is in that same building. The doctor pronounced him dead. He said it was either his heart or a stroke, but since he was only fifty-eight years old, there should be an autopsy. The family argued about that; Mother Rahming was horrified, though Norris favored it. He said his father was not a Christian Scientist, and he wanted to know what caused his father's

death. Mother Rahming asked Norris if he didn't believe in Christian Science, and Norr said yes, but death was different. They also argued about the funeral. Mother Rahming wanted a Christian Science funeral, whereas Norris Ethie, Aunt Ada and I all felt Father Rahming would have wanted an Episcopalian one. There was a kind of compromise; Mother Rahming agreed reluctantly to an autopsy, providing there would be a Christian Science funeral. And so it was done. We are all forbidden to mention the autopsy, and won't know what it proved until Norris talks to the doctor tomorrow. They decided to have cremation.

This is later - and now I have more to tell you. I was interrupted in my letter by more goings on. I've been given permission, or I might say, instructions, by Merly to write to you. She has been keeping a secret from you for months. She was pregnant, and didn't want you to know it, because she wanted to have this baby without asking you to come and stay with her during the period of risk of miscarriage. After she got through the early months, she said she wanted to surprise you. So many people scolded her for getting enceinte so soon after having Trink and such a terrible time with the flu. The baby would have been due about ten days from now, but she went into labor yesterday morning early. They were counting on having a little boy. The baby was born dead last evening. It was a little girl. Merly is very upset. Waldo says 'No more babies'.

One strange thing - Merly says that she does not recall feeling the baby move, after the day she learned Father Rahming had died. She said the news came as a real shock to her. She thinks it killed the baby. Doctor says unlikely.

Well, Sis, this is all bad news, and I don't know what to say about our coming to New England next summer. Mother Rahming has got us to promise to come and live with her for a while. I don't know what "a while" means. We are going to rent our house so it won't be empty. I don't relish living with Mother R, and I also don't like the idea of any stranger using my furniture. I am going to put my books, dishes and linens away. I don't want the tenants using those things. Bill says we can store them in one of the bedrooms at the Old Brick. (By the way, Trude is expecting, she thinks).

Aunt Ada offered to stay and take care of our house while Norris and the children and I went to stay with Mother R. and Ethie. But Aunt Ada and I have had this arrangement where she keeps house for us so that I can do my art work. So we couldn't do it that way. And anyway, Mother R. wants us all there. (She has never liked having to part with Aunt Ada's services, but couldn't say much in objection, because I earn more money than Norr does and she knows it.)

Sis, I would love to come to your summer place. I have been working steadily ever since coming back here in 1913. I only took time out when Jane was born and a little period after. Even when I was nursing Janie I did art work at home. Norris says he'd love to come to New Hampshire too. He wants to paint some mountain pictures. He has almost abandoned his stencil type of work and is going more into oil painting. Most of what money he brings in is from his photography. He has

had a little work doing portraits, but mostly that has been friends and relatives who always expect to pay you less, if at all. They don't consider that the supplies (plates and paper and chemicals) cost quite a lot. Norr has made a good dark room in the basement at the Cliff Street house. Here at Mother N.'s we won't have that, so we are going to rent a studio in downtown Cleveland. It will be in the building where Betty Long has her studio.

Betty is still single. Norr and I don't think she'll ever marry now. She's thirty-two or three. Norr says she's pretty but doesn't have enough "sensual appeal". Arthur Grey never gives up, though.

Betty is our only contact with Anna Hill. It was Betty who had to break the news to Anna when Father Rahming passed on. According to Betty, the shock nearly killed Anna. Betty is staying with her for a while. Betty told me she thought that Anna might do away with herself and the child, but she calmed down. The whole thing is a terribly sad story, for I guess they truly loved each other, and when I first heard of it I didn't realize that. I thought it was just flirtatious dallying. I should have known better, considering what a strange person Mother N. really is.

I hope and pray we can get back into our North Royalton house soon. It is far, far better for Norris.

Well, Sis, I'll close. Merly says as soon as she gets to feeling better she'll write to you and tell you all about it. She's had too much trouble and being a good Christian Scientist she doesn't speak of it, but I know she worries about Waldo a great deal. He just isn't very strong Nelle and he has such poor color.

Sis, don't think because of all this recital of trouble I'm not interested in your news. Let us know all about your little girl, etc. etc. Send us a snapshot as soon as you can.

Love to you and Roge and also to the soon-to-be Miss ? Fison. Ever, your sis, Grace

P.S. Waldo, who always says something appropriate, says "I can't fill my back yard full of girls trying to get one boy." I think Merly does agree with him now. This last event has dampened her spirits somewhat.

WE'LL JUST SAY HE'S AWAY

From the start, Jane was “Ada’s baby.” The circumstances were different from then Dee was born. Both girls had been born in the little house on Cartwright Street in Cleveland, but Dee had soon been taken to New York to be mothered sometimes by Grace, sometimes by Norris, and very often by Nelle and Roge. Jane had been brought to the Old Brick and Ada had immediately become her ‘Nanny’, Grace had nursed her at the necessary intervals, but Ada had changed her, bathed her, and after she’d been weaned to the bottle and solid food, Ada had fed her. After they moved away from the Old Brick, Jane saw less of her mother. Grace had become a “fashion illustrator”. She rode the interurban trolley car into Cleveland almost every day. She had a place to work in town. She made her sketches from live models. Norris still worked at home most of the time, in his photographic darkroom.

Next, they had moved to the Cliff Street house in North Royalton Village. Jane’s first distinct memories were of this place, though she had early memories of the place that came next after the Old Brick, the place the family called “Stop 31” from the number of the trolley car stop. Jane, however, always identified it with the Fire, the night Mr. Stanner’s garage burned to the ground. It was a neighboring building, a garage, once a stable, with three automobiles inside and gasoline stored in tanks underground. In after years, Jane realized that the family had been very frightened that night. The wind had been blowing from the burning garage toward the houses. Norris Rahming and Mr. Stanner and neighbors had formed a bucket brigade and wet the roofs of the houses. The garage was burning too briskly to save. They had got the automobiles out in the very beginning, but everyone was thinking about the gasoline stored underground. People were afraid when the terrible heat of the burning building got to it, it would explode.

For Jane, who was too little to understand, the whole experience had been wonderful. She’d been taken out of her crib in the middle of the night by Aunt Ada, who had wakened first; then with her mother and her sister Dee and her father, they had all gone rushing down the stairs and out of doors. Her father had sent them all far out into the field, away from the fire. Jane could remember being wrapped in a blanket, how bright and pretty the fire had been, and how her mother had kept worrying about her father up on the roof of the house. Afterward, when things were calmer, they’d gone back into the house, and Aunt Ada had cooked her some farina and while she sat at the kitchen table eating it she could see the timbers of the still burning garage glowing cherry red in the night. But how strange it had been to be eating her cream of wheat with brown sugar and milk, in the middle of the night!

The next place, on Cliff Street in North Royalton, was a new house, better than Grandma Rahming’s in the city, which was an old one with old fashioned conveniences in the bathroom. Jane always liked visiting there, for when they went to the city, there was always the golden yellow cake with chocolate frosting, the kind called ‘Ethie’ s cake.” And the milk at Grandma Rahming’s had a different taste, it was cold, creamy and delicious.

Jane was four years old when the family moved in to Cleveland to live with Grandma Rahming. She asked Aunt Ada why they were leaving their own house. Aunt Ada told her it was because Grandma Rahming needed them.

“We’ll come back later on,” Aunt Ada assured her. “Your Grandpa Martin counts your parents’ rent as payment toward owning this house. He’s been very good, hasn’t he?”

“Yes,” said Dee. “I like Grandpa Martin. I like Grandpa Rahming too. But he’s away an awful lot.”

“We haven’t seen him for a long, long time,” Jane said, her brown eyes wide and serious, “but he’s nice.”

Ada changed the subject. “Well, I hope the people who will be living here take good care of everything.”

When John Rahming died, a deep sadness had settled on Ada. One by one, the dearest people in her world had left. Mama and Papa, Aunt and Uncle Couch, Aunt Kate from New Hope, Pennsylvania, and last year her brother Bertie. But Ada had known for many years that Bertie had a “tired” heart. She had not expected Rosella’s John to die at fifty-eight. She had loved him for years. She admitted it to herself, but felt no guilt about it. It was not a sinful love, it never had been. It was simply that he was the kind of person everyone loves. He had a droll wit, and a reverence for literature, music, and the church he’d been used to all his life. He had tried for years to make his wife love him, and to support her comfortably. He had failed; she had retreated into a religion that he could not understand, and into her consuming love for Norris. So he had found love elsewhere, and Ada did not censure him. At least, she thought, he had something in his last years. Ada wondered often, about the child the other woman had borne him. It was a boy, about Jane’s age. What was that boy like?

Rosella had extracted from the family a promise not to tell Dee and Jane that their grandfather was gone.

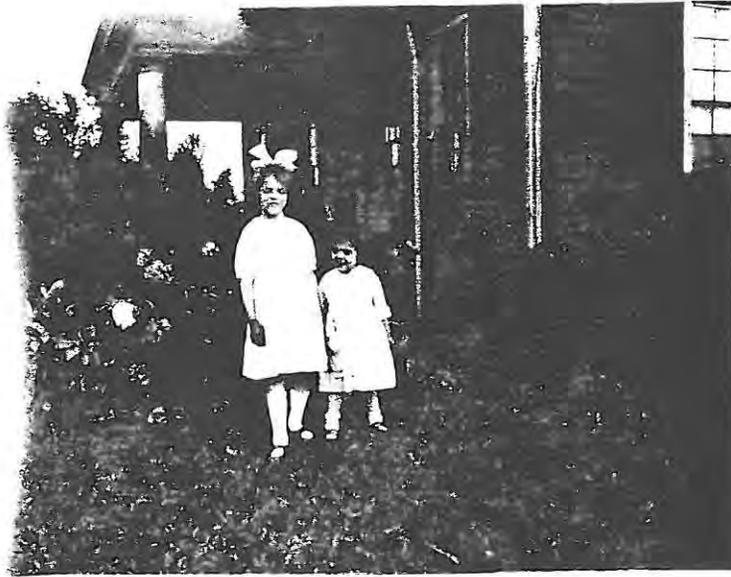
“Just let them think he is on a trip again,” she said.

“I don’t think that’s wise,” Ada said.

“They’ll ask questions,” Grace said.

“We’ll just say he’s away,” Rosella said. “Later on, we’ll tell them after they get used to having him gone.”

On Cartwright Street things were very crowded that winter. Aunt Ethie and Grandma Rahming slept in the downstairs bedroom, Ada in her back bedroom upstairs. Norris, Grace and their girls all crowded into the largest room, the one that had been Norris’s when he was a boy. The other one that was Father Rahming’s room was crowded with cardboard cartons and stacks of paper.



DEE AND JANE RAHMING
"FAYE" "ANDREA"



JANE DEE
"ANDREA" "FAYE"



GRACE JANE NORRIS R.
"IRENE" "ANDREA" "MATTHEW"

The door was kept closed. Dee and Jane asked where Grandpa Rahming was, and were told that he was away. Several times that winter the girls asked their grandma how soon their grandpa was coming home, but all she could say was that she didn't know.

Dee went to school in Cleveland. Jane spent her days playing with Puffy the grey Maltese cat, and the basket of toys she had brought from their other house. But mostly she followed Aunt Ada around, chattering and asking many questions.

"There's green this coming up in the leaves out back of the house."

"Yes, isn't that nice," Aunt Ada said. "Those are lilies of the valley. Spring is here now, Janie. When school is out we'll all be going back to Cliff Street."

"Grandma and Grandpa and Aunt Ethie too?"

Aunt Ada looked upset. "No, just those of us who lived there before."

"Will we ever go back to the Old Brick?"

"No. Your Uncle Bill and Aunt Trude live there now."

"I missed all the excitements. Why didn't we stay there?"

"Your Mama and Papa wanted to get back to being artists again. That's why they left the farm and moved to the house where we had the big scare with the fire. That's when your father worked for a while at the automobile factory."

"Why doesn't he work there anymore?" Jane wanted to know.

"Because the war ended. Now, don't ask me to tell you about the war, because you won't understand that till you're older, and maybe you won't then."

"Daddy wants an automobile," Jane said, "and Mommy says he ought to wait till later, when they have more money. But Daddy wants it now."

"It's an old story," Aunt Ada said, with something like a very small smile.

"What is an old story?" Jane asked.

"People always wanting things now."

One of the big events that Jane missed by not being born until 1916 was the Golden Wedding Anniversary of her Grandfather and Grandmother Martin. It took place the year before, in the month of June, when the roses were in bloom on the trellises around the house. The celebration was held at the Old Brick, though Henry and Maria had actually been married in the Baptist



1240 E. 111st Cleveland, where Rosella & Jack Rahming lived when I and Dee were young. J. C. R. died in 1920 during this period. Rosella & daughter Ethel lived here until 1931.

" THE CARTWRIGHT ST. HOUSE "

Church at North Royalton Center. The minister who had married them in 1865 had been gone from this world for nearly fifty years himself.

Jane had had to rely on Aunt Ada to tell her in later years how splendid a celebration it had been. The family had gathered at noon for an old-time farm dinner. Norris and Grace, being the current occupants of the farm, had hosted the affair. Grace had carefully hand-lettered the invitations, and planned the program.

The “family,” which meant all blood relations and their spouses, were invited to the noon dinner. At four o’clock in the afternoon, Bill Martin (who had trained a while for the ministry) conducted the mock wedding ceremony. Friends of the couple from far and wide were invited for this part of the festivities, and for refreshments to follow.

Ada told Jane all about it when they were looking at the Golden Wedding photo that Norris had taken that day.

“Sitting in the center, are your Grandma and Grandpa Martin, the guests of honor. Your Grandma could still walk at that time. Poor dear lady - a wonderful woman. That was a lovely, happy day.” She ran her finger across the top row of the picture. “These are all your uncles here in the back — your Uncle Howd, the short one, everyone was so glad he came, because he and your Grandpa hadn’t been getting along together for years. But for your Grandma’s sake they put it aside that day. Here’s your Uncle Nate, and Uncle Stan, then Bill and Art. Here are the sons-in-law - your Uncle Waldo and Uncle Roger. Your father would have been there too, only he took the picture. You have an Uncle William, who lives in New York. He wasn’t there that day.”

“I know Uncle Bill. Re visited once and shook hands with me and left a fifty-cent piece in my hand. He’s Billy’s father.”

“Yes, in a way, he is.”

“Billy said so.”

“All right, then he is. Now, in this row of ladies, all seated are — your Aunt Edith, Aunt Lottie, Aunt Bertha, and your Uncle Art’s wife, I can’t remember her name. Then your grandparents, and on the other side are all your mother’s sisters: Nelle, Emma, Merly, and your mother.”

“Where’s Aunt Vinnie?”

“Your Uncle Bill wasn’t married to her at that time.”

“And there are cousins in the front row,” stated Jane.

“That’s right, but of course there are only a few of them there. Your Uncle Stan has three girls, who live in the West with their mother, and your Uncle Bill’s little boy, Billy, wasn’t there either. But here’s Howd’s Averill, a grown up young lady; your Uncle Jim’s children, Grace Burns, Henry, Betty, and the baby Robert. And there on the end, is Dee and your cousin Billy Wooldridge. They’re almost the same age.”

“There are too many Billys,” Jane said.

“Lots of the cousins weren’t there: Your Uncle William’s boys Johnny and David; Aunt Merly’s girls Mim and Trink; and Uncle Bill’s boys, Billy and William.”

“And me. But we weren’t born yet.”

Aunt Ada laughed, and they inspected some of the other photos.

“It was a great day. Your Grandmother Martin was specially happy. Some relatives were here from the East, a sister Ellen from New York, a brother from Kansas City, another brother from Texas, her sister Belle from Cleveland with her four boys, Oh, and many other people.”

“There must have been a lot of refreshments Jane said.

“There certainly were. Your Aunt Nelle took charge of all that. She planned the noon dinner, and all of us helped; it was a kitchen full of aunties. Such a commotion, but lots of fun. And neighbors brought cakes and pies. Your father was in charge of making the ice cream, and that was an affair for all the uncles. We borrowed several extra freezers, and the uncles that weren’t turning the freezer handles were crushing ice in gunny sacks. Your Aunt Ethie and I cooked the custard for the ice cream, and Timothy brought up a big can of cream from the spring house. We made some French vanilla, and some fresh strawberry. It was delicious.”

“And I missed it,” Jane lamented.

“If you could have picked one of the exciting days we talked about, and waved a magic wand to put you there, which day would you have chosen?”

“Oh, Aunt Ada, I wouldn’t want to have missed any of it. I wish I could have been there when Mama raised the twelve little pigs on a bottle after their mother died.”

“Yes,” Aunt Ada said. “I often wish we still lived on the farm. It was a fine place for your father. His energies were well spent on the farm.”

“I wish we were still there.”

“Oh, you’ll have your own exciting times.”

“But Aunt Ada, everyone doesn’t have exciting times. Some people just watch like Aunt Emmie and Aunt Ethie.”

“Jane, some people feel safer looking on.”

Jane had been told all about the night when she was born in the house on Cartwright Street. Ada told Jane about that night long after.

“Your father couldn’t be at the Cartwright Street house the night that you were born. He had to stay at the Old Brick that night.”

“Why?” Jane asked. Jane kept Ada busy since they were constant companions after Dee started school.

“It’s a long story. It has to do with animal husbandry.”

“Do animals have husbands?” Jane asked. “Oh, yes, Jerry the bull was the husband of those cows, wasn’t he?”

“You might say he was, yes. But husband means also ‘to take care of’. When you are a good husbandman you can be a successful farmer. Your Grandfather Martin bought the animals when your parents came to live at the Old Brick. He’d bought ordinary cows, some Holsteins and some Jerseys. And Jerry, the Jersey bull who had a prize-winning Mama and Daddy. With Jerry they could have a much better herd. Now, Ada hastened to say, “you’ll understand more about all that later on. Your Papa had decided to buy a specially good cow, too. The better cows give more milk, you see, and that means more money. Nelle was a Holstein; she gave a lot of milk. The Jerseys give rich milk. Your folks were trying for a mixed herd that gave lots of rich milk. So Nelle was quite expensive and your mother and father were eagerly looking forward to her calf. She’d had one calf before they bought her. Her second one was due the same week you were.”

“And Mama says the same thunder storm brought us both.”

“So it seemed. Anyway, your Papa and Timothy had to be with Nelle, just as the doctor and nurse were with your Mama. Everything went beautifully. Both babies were fine and healthy, and so were both mamas. Everybody joked about it.”

“It didn’t happen the way it was supposed to,” Jane said. “Mama and Papa expected I would be a boy.”

“Oh, Janie, mamas and papas are always pleased to have a nice, healthy baby.”

“No, I was supposed to be Andrew. Dee told me so. That’s why I’m named Jane.”

“Well, that part’s true.”

“They named the calf Andrew.”

“That was Timothy’s doing. They don’t usually give the little bull calves any name, because they go for veal.”

“Did Andrew go for veal?”

“I’m afraid so.”

“That means he was killed when he was just a little young calf. That’s the part about farming I wouldn’t like.”

“I know. That’s the way your Grandma Rahming feels, and why she doesn’t serve meat at her table.”

“I agree with her,” Jane said, “but meat tastes good and if I’m not thinking about the animals, I can eat it.”

“Yes,” Aunt Ada said. “Some things in life are sad, and we keep on with them. But it happens with wild animals, too. Foxes eat rabbits; cats eat mice.

“But rabbits and mice don’t eat animals.”

“God made them differently.”

“Why?”

“They say He has good reasons for everything.”

“Who are ‘they’?”

“People who know about things.”

“I don’t believe those people really know. They just tell us that when they don’t have any good answers. Every time I ask someone a very important question they tell me something that isn’t the answer.”

“How do you know it isn’t the answer, Jane?”

“Because I know when I’m being told a real answer, and then I don’t go around wondering about it anymore.”

“Jane, some questions don’t have any good answers.”

“Then people should say so, and not make up silly answers instead.”

When Jane came back with her family and Aunt Ada to live in the Cliff Street house, it was summer of 1920. The weather was rainy and chilly; the house was cold and damp. It smelled different and it looked different. The people who had rented the place had been bad housekeepers. It was weeks before Grace and Norris put it back to rights again. And in the meantime Jane had felt uncomfortable in the place. In the daytime she had been afraid to go upstairs alone. She had the feeling those other people were still present somewhere upstairs.



ADA W. NORRIS

"IDA"

1920

4542

When Aunt Ada sent her up there to use the bathroom, Jane went up reluctantly and came back down as fast as possible, with the sensation that something was ready to leap on her from behind. The awful beings were under the beds, she felt. They would slip out as soon as she started down the stairs. Sometimes she slid down the banister, (a forbidden practice) to escape them faster.

Jane's fears of the upstairs were rooted in a bad dream that she had had during the winter at the Cartwright Street house. And the dream itself may have stemmed from some of the night-time quarrels that wakened her and Dee from sleep, quarrels between Norris and Grace, quarrels in which their parents' irate or plaintive voices rose and rose until the daughters were jarred awake in fear.

In her worst and long-remembered dream, Jane had seen her mother fall down stairs and her head broke off when she hit the bottom. It broke off bloodlessly, as a doll's head would, and it lay there apart with the eyes open like a doll's. The scene changed and Jane was opening the stork chest, where her father had hidden her doll after she played with the forbidden Polish neighbor children. Jane lifted the lid of the chest and looked in and there was her mother's head again.

Jane never forgot the picture of that dream, never in her life. When she was older she decided that it must have originated from some threat of her father's. She could not remember what threat it might have been, but she remembered that he had made them.

In any case, Jane developed a strange uncomfortable feeling in the house during the day, and she clung close to Aunt Ada every moment.

One day after lunch, during the story hour the two always had together, Aunt Ada announced suddenly, "I am nauseated, I shall have to go upstairs."

She rose from the velour sofa where they had been seated, and headed in haste for the stairway, with Jane following in wonderment.

"Stay there, I'll be back," said Aunt Ada.

"No, I'll come too," said Jane.

Aunt Ada had no time to argue. She kept climbing the stairs, and said once more, "Dear me, I'm so nauseated."

They dashed into the bathroom together, and Aunt Ada raised the seat. Then, before Jane's unbelieving eyes she removed her upper and lower plates and laid them on the wash stand.

Jane stared for a moment in stupefaction then fled the room. That night she entertained the family with her gibbering report to her parents. "It was horrible! It was horrible!" she kept repeating.



JANE RAHMING

5 YEARS

"ANDREA"

They laughed till there were tears in their eyes.

“But how could she do such a thing?” asked Jane.

“She was nauseated. She had to vomit.”

“Could that happen to me?” asked Jane.

No, your teeth are fastened in tighter than hers,” laughed her father. “They won’t come out.”

Jane was only slightly convinced. She began having dreams about all her teeth falling out at once and clattering to the floor.

IT WOULD RUIN MY WHOLE DAY

During the spring of 1920, Nelle altered her plans for the summer. None of the people she had planned on were able to come to New Hampshire that year. When Norris and Grace went back to their Cliff Street house in North Royalton, they found it a mess after it had been lived in by sub-renters. They were very upset and had to make many small repairs. Merly and Waldo had other problems. Waldo felt he shouldn't leave his legal practice now that he was getting it established, and in addition to that, he hadn't been feeling well. Merly was still subdued over the loss of her baby. Waldo had said there should be no more babies. Since the still-born baby had also been a girl, he seemed convinced they couldn't produce any boys.

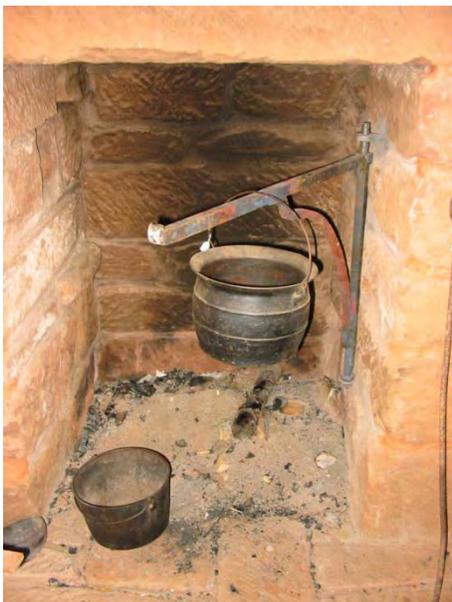
"There's no sense filling the back yard with girls to get one boy," had been his statement.

"We've only two girls," Merly said. "That's hardly a back yard full."

"Well, it's too hard on you - on me, too."

Bill and Trude were expecting a baby too. It was obvious that there'd be no help from brothers or brothers-in-Law that summer. Nelle had counted on getting the summer place in shape so that the following year she could bring her mother and father to the mountains for a vacation. They hadn't been anywhere other than their trip to Denver in 1907, and that had been clouded by Emmie's misfortune. Nelle wanted so much to take her mother to the White Mountains, for Maria had been so delighted with the Rockies, and never had ceased to speak of their magnificent blue heights. It would not be possible to take her parents to New Hampshire this year, not at all possible; the place was not in any condition for that.

It had been her plan to have Waldo, Norris and Bill help Roger pull down the old woodshed which shaded the north windows of the farmhouse, and also the carriage shed which blocked the view of the mountains to the south. The outside of the house was badly weathered, and whereas Mr. White had said it needed painting, Roger said nothing less than new shingles would preserve the present structure, which was basically sound, from the harsh winter storms which battered it.



There was inside work to be done too, and a most important project, the addition of a new kitchen in place of the ramshackle affair that joined the house on the east. Unbelievable as it might seem, Mrs. White had done much of her cooking in the fireplace, in kettles hung on the iron crane over the coals. In truth, Nelle and Roge had bought a slice of the eighteenth century. Mrs. White had only used the wood cook stove in the lean-to kitchen in the summer time when the house was too warm for a fire in the fireplace, or

when she planned to bake bread in the oven.

Nelle made a revised plan for the summer. They would have the little girl by March. At the same time, the folks who were adopting the little brother would take him from the orphanage. Roge and Nelle had been told who the other people were, and it was agreed that they would arrange for the children to see each other a few times till they got used to being separated.

The little girl's name was Agnes. They changed it to Babs. Her hair was straight, and the same shade of brown as Dee Rahming's. Nelle shampooed it and brushed it till it shone the first evening she had the youngster at home. The child was quiet and shy, her brown eyes filling with tears from time to time.

"What's the matter, sweet?" Nelle asked her. "How would you like a dish of ice cream? Daddy Roge will buy us some. Would you like some?"

Babs shook her head.

"Would you like a glass of milk?"

Again the shake of the head.

"What would you like, dear?"

"I want my Bobby."

"Bless your heart, you will see Bobby," Nelle said.

"When see Bobby?"

"We are going down town tomorrow and have lunch with Bobby and the nice lady who is taking care of him. And then you and Bobby can both have ice cream. Won't that be fun?"

Babs nodded her head, but she presently said again, "I want my Bobby."

They finally got her to bed and asleep with her rag doll clutched tight in her arms. As she slept. Nelle and Roge looked down at her in her crib.

"Doesn't this remind you of Burlington when we had Dee that time?" Roge said. "My! That was eight years ago."

"But we don't have to give Babs back," Nelle said.

They discovered a red, raw spot on the bottom of Babs's foot. They examined her shoe. There was a nail poking up inside it.

"Why, the poor, dear, brave little tyke!" Nelle cried. "And she never complained at all!"

They took her twice to see her brother, and then Bobby's new parents took him to California to live. They named him Arnold. His little sister never saw him again. After awhile she forgot about him. She was not quite three years old when taken from the Christian Orphan Home.

Nelle took Babs back home in late May to show her to the family in Oberlin, North Royalton and Cleveland. She had spent the spring sewing dresses, petticoats and nighties for her. She had bought her taffeta ribbon sashes, and black patent leather Mary Jane shoes. She had taken her to Best's and had her hair cut in the latest fashion for small girls.

She was met at the train by Waldo and Merly, and went home with them to spend a night or two. Mim and Trink were delighted with Babs, who was two months older than Trink.

Nelle was worried about Waldo's appearance.

"He doesn't look well, she said to Merly.

"Oh, he's feeling better. Mother Rahming is working for him. I think it's helping him."

"His color isn't good. Maybe he should go to a doctor, Sis."

"He does go to a doctor," Merly said. "That's part of the problem."

"Well, maybe," Nelle said.

"Yes," said Merly. "He should put his faith in Science alone, add not let his thoughts turn to mortal mind."

"Maybe," Nelle said again. "Maybe you're right."

She next went to Oberlin to show Babs to her parents.

Nelle was so upset when she saw Maria's condition that it took much of the joy out of her visit. Maria limped, and walked with two canes, and Nelle saw that her fingers were almost as twisted as Grandma Susan Burns's had been in her last years. With a sudden jolt Nelle recalled that her mother was seventy-five. What if Ma were only going to live for ten more years? Nelle's eyes filled with tears as she hugged Maria.

"Oh, Ma! Dear Ma. Oh, your legs are so bad, aren't they? Poor darling. Oh, you poor darling!"

"I'm all right - I'm all right. Let me see this little darling girl. Never mind old ladies. Today is a day for a young lady. So this is Babs. Bless your heart, dear."

Nelle had taught Babs to curtsy and smile when she was presented to the members of the family and to friends. Some folks found it charming, others thought it affected and ridiculous. Among the latter were Marie, Lottie and Bertha, The older "boys" wives who privately felt that living in New York City made people act funny.



↑
 MARIAN M. MARTIN + ↑
 LUCY FISON
 "MARTHA HEDGES" "MILLIE HOWARD"



↑
 "MARTHA"



"Merly" with Mim and Trink
 "MARTHA" and HER BABIES



"MERLY" GRACE "DEE" WALDO
 (MARIAN) MIM JANE TRINK
 "MARTHA" "IRENE" "FAYE" "RAYMOND"
 "MURRY" "ANDREA" "TREENY"

Nelle was sad to see that Emmie was as bad as ever, still living in the dream world of her own. In the company of other people she was forever talking about something else. If the folks were speaking of politics and the President of the United States, Emmie might very likely talk about Maude Adams and her role in "Peter Pan".

From Oberlin, Nelle went to visit Grace and Norris in North Royalton. They were just back in the Cliff Street house after their stay on Cartwright Street following Father Rahming's death. Nelle was eager for them to see Babs. Also, Babs's birthday could be celebrated there. Grace and Norris were always good at parties, and they had a neater house than Merly's. Of course, that was because of Aunt Ada's presence. Grace was lucky to have Ada to clean her house. Merly needed an "Aunt Ada".

Nelle's arrival with her new adopted daughter was somewhat upsetting to Ada. She was tired from cleaning the house after the sub-renters had cleared out. Everything had been a mess. A mattress had had to be burned up. The windows, woodwork, and floors had all had to be scrubbed, and, fueling Norris's rage, they had discovered that the Parkers had burned up an antique cherry-wood table for kindling.

Ada had done all the cleaning, because Grace and Norris had rushed to get a garden planted. Now the house was ready, but Ada had wanted to draw a breath before Jane's birthday party.

Ada loved birthdays. There were the summer birthdays; Norris's in May, and Ethie's and Jane's in June. In the fall were her own and Grace's in October, and Dee's and Rosella's in November.

It was traditional in the family to have sweet cider and home-made doughnuts for the October birthdays, and pumpkin pie for the November ones. For Norris's birthday there always had to be a dark chocolate devil's food cake. For Ethie's and for Jane's day, there would be the golden butter cake made from the recipe named "Ethie's cake." It would be topped with either chocolate or maple syrup icing. This year Jane would be four years old. She had chosen maple icing for her cake.



"Which day will my birthday be?" Jane asked Ada.

"Thursday. That's four more days. Then your special day will be due."

"Then I'll have my party?"

"That's right."

"With Mim and Trink?"

"Yes, indeed, and Grandma Rahming and Aunt Ethie, and maybe Uncle Bill and Aunt Gertrude."

"Will Trink and Mim throw up, do you 'spose?"

“I hope not.”

“They did last time,” Jane said.

“I recall. Mim got car sick on the way here. And then she got too excited.”

“If my daddy gets an auto, will I get car sick too?”

“You didn’t get car sick in your Uncle Art’ auto. Anyway, your folks got a piano instead of an auto.”

“Daddy still wants an auto. There was a quarrel.”

“I know.”

“Let’s talk about my birthday some more.”

On the day before the birthday, Dee said to Jane, “Your birthday is postponed.”

“What’s that?” Jane said, her dark eyes anxious. Her sister’s tone was ominous. “What’s ‘posponed’ mean?”

“It’ll be later. It won’t be tomorrow.”

“My birthday won’t be tomorrow!”

“Well, I mean the party. The party is postponed till Sunday afternoon. You know why - because Aunt Nelle is coming tomorrow and bringing Babs.”

“The new cousin?”

“That’s right.”

“But then she can be at my party. Why aren’t I going to have my party?”

“Because Sunday is a better day. And it happens to be Babs’s birthday. You and Babs are having your party together.”

“Why don’t we have it together on my birthday?” Jane asked.

“Because Sunday is a better day for everyone.”

“My birthday would be the best day for me,” Jane said.

“Older people always have reasons for things they want.”

In the end, the party on Sunday pleased everyone. Dee and Jane, and Mim and Trink liked Babs, and she liked them. What's more, Mim and Trink did not throw up till they got home again that night - full of birthday cake and ice cream.

At the party, Nelle announced her plans for the following summer. You all have a year to make arrangements, so there's no reason why you can't all come to New Hampshire next summer. Norr, you and Grace should be able to come for a month, since you are freelancers. Waldo, can't you arrange your law work so that you and Merly can have a month too?"

Waldo laughed. "Heavens, no. I have to take my cases when they come up. When I get to be older and better established I could arrange to be away a while, but not yet."

"Well, you can come for a week or two," Nelle insisted.

"Can't afford it, but maybe Merly and the girls could go for a while."

"Fine," Nelle said. "And William will bring them, because I'm going to have William for the whole summer. What about Bill and Vinnie?"

"The baby would be too young, I should think, Grace said. "I'm sure Vinnie wouldn't take it on a trip its first summer. And I don't know whether we could come for a whole month, Nelle."

"Oh, I think we could," Norr said. "I'd like to do some oil paintings of the White Mountains."

"Well, I must warn you. Roger will need some help with a few projects. The place needs some work to make it livable."

"Will there be beds enough for a crowd?" Merly asked.

"There are two bedrooms and a big attic. And Roge has bought some Army tents and cots that were on sale cheap. Things from the War. What I'm hoping, is that we can take Ma up there, too. She loved the Colorado Mountains so much, but Emmie's sickness spoiled all that."

"Do you think Ma would be up to a trip like that?" Merly asked. "And would things be comfortable for her, do you think?"

"We'll see that they're comfortable. She's to have the front bedroom, and we'll treat her like a queen. I'll even arrange to have a horse and buggy to take her up the hill. She wouldn't possibly be able to walk it."

"Can't cars go up your bill?" Norris asked.

"Not in its present condition. Roge thinks after some work is done on it we might get a car up. We tried to go up it but couldn't. The wheels just spun."

"Why" asked Norr. "Was it wet?"

“No, but it’s gullied and washed out, and there are lots of fallen leaves. You can’t get any traction, Roge says. He says he’s going to get the county to work on it. We are tax payers.”

“Oh,” Merly said. “It does sound like such fun. And Ma has never had a real vacation. She deserves it.”

“I just hope you can make her comfortable,” Grace said. “Wouldn’t the train be best for her?”

“You’re getting ahead of me, Grace,” said Nelle. “I want her to come to New York by train. Father too, of course. Then Roge and I and Babs will take them to New Hampshire with us in our car. We’ll go by way of Westport, and Ma can see Seaside Lane again.”

“Oh, Nelle! How marvelous,” Grace said. “If only Mother is up to it. I believe she would die happy if she could see Westport again.”

“Oh, Grace,” Nelle said. “Don’t you go talking about Ma dying.”

“And don’t you be scolding me. You know exactly what I mean. She’s never stopped being in love with Westport, and Father has never been there. He should see the place where Mother was born.”

“I don’t know,” Merly said. “I think Father was always a little jealous of Westport.”

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Roge and Nelle went to their summer place for three weeks in July, and Nelle cleaned the house from attic to basement, while Roge cleared out the barn. They wanted to save all the old furnishings and farm tools that the Whites had left behind. There was an old broken-down surrey in the carriage shed. Nelle knew that the children who would be coming up the hill next summer would love playing in the surrey. She and Roge had decided to call the place Forest Camp Primeval. They had gone through a long list of such titles as Whispering Pines, Hill Haven, Forest Primeval, and so on, but there were too many summer places with such names, especially on the lakeside cottages that surrounded Newfound Lake, Winnepesaukee, and other bodies of water around the state. They soon found that local people called their farm “Jed White’s Hill” so Roge placed a sign down at the main road, reading “Fison’s Hill.”

Roge had contracted with Frank Bump, the man Jed White had recommended, to work with him during the three-week working vacation. They repaired the barn roof temporarily, and cleaned all the old dusty hay out of the barn. They had had three rainy days so they were able to burn it in a continuing smoky bonfire.

“Next year we’ll get someone to mow so that we can put new hay in the barn,” Nelle said.

“What for?” Roge asked.

“What for!” Nelle exclaimed. “Why, for the kids to jump into. Oh, and for the sleeping space when we have a crowd here.”

“A crowd! You know, Nelle, this place could cost us a pretty penny if we’re going to have all that much company.”



“Everyone will have to contribute,” Nelle said. “Except Ma and Pa, of course. But I want lots of company. I want Babs to have happy summers in the country like I did when I was little. She won’t have brothers and sisters, but she’ll have lots of cousins. They’ll all have times to remember.” That much would be true.

They’d bought the place in late 1919. In the summer of 1921, others in the family gathered there. Jane Rahming was only five that summer, but she would retain certain memories of it all her life. It was to be referred to in later years as “the first summer.” And it would be distinguished from any later ones because it was the summer when things were very primitive. Improvements were still to come; one of them would be regretted by everyone. The sweet cold spring water came down from the hill to the farmyard and bubbled into a wooden hogshhead,



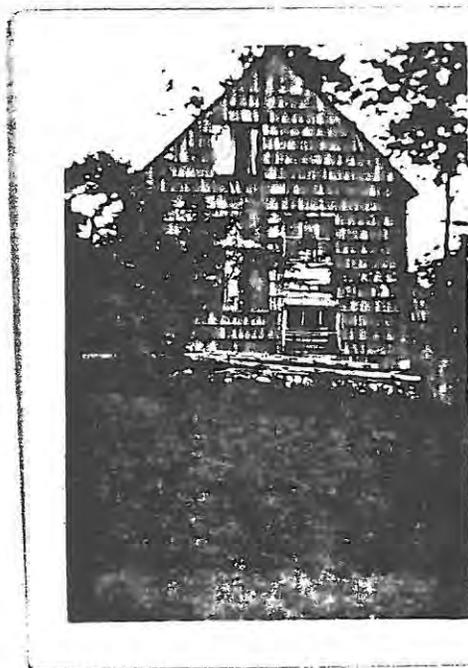
R. FISON THE EVANSES
"BART" "WHITES"



HOUSE + WOODSHED



BUGGY + CARRIAGE SHED



"THE STUDIO"



"LUCY"



THE BARN



"BARTELL"

2003

gurgling up from the bottom with a rhythmic sound that could be heard at ten-second intervals as an air bubble rose in the water. It went on continuously, but of course was most noticeable at night when things were quiet. Bedded down in the attic, the bedrooms, the tents, the barn, or the studio, anyone awake in the night could hear and be lulled by the soothing “buh - r—r-r - rrr up” of the spring. Later on, at the end of the second summer, Roger would have Frank Batton “modernize” the spring, building a concrete and stone container the size and shape of the hogshead, impounding the good cold water which entered at the bottom through a capped pipe with a small hole in it. This permitted the water to enter in a small jet with a continuous flow of fine air bubbles which made no noticeable sound.

Those with a poetic soul would always miss the dark, rotting hogshead with its green mossy sides, while city-bred folks would prefer to drink from the sanitary new arrangement, finding it less dark and mysterious, and also ‘cute, like a wishing well’. Frank Bump later would build a type of summer-house around the spring from white birch logs with the bark left on. And from flat boulders, carefully stacked in dry-wall fashion around the sides he would make stone benches for those weary from climbing the bill, to rest and quench their thirst.

But none of that work was done the first summer. Frank Bump and his oldest son and Roge chose work on the foundation of the house as the most important project. The cellar was stoutly walled in granite block, skillfully laid up, and the sills, heavy and square-hewn, were sound. But Roger said he would feel better if some cement work was done outside around the foundation. He also wanted some of the lower clapboards replaced because of slight signs of rotting. He and Nelle worried a bit about how this could be done, since clapboards go on from the bottom up, but Frank Bump said he could do it by prying and pulling some nails. And sure enough, it worked. Bert had plans to cover the entire house eventually with shingles and to paint it white, but he didn’t want any rotten wood underneath. Norris and Grace supposed that it would last longer that way, but they hated to see the silver-grey, weathered clapboards hidden; they were so picturesque.

It was an odd assortment of family that assembled that first summer.

Art wasn’t getting along well with his fourth wife and was happy enough to get away from her. She was talking about divorce. Nelle had suggested that Art get permission from his first wife to bring their son William to “The Hill” for the summer to be a companion for Billy Wooldridge, since all the rest of the cousins there would be little girls. Art was going to bring Merly and her little girls, and the big question was Emmie. Nelle wanted Emmie to come along because the vacation and change would be good for her. Maria wasn’t so sure; the mountains might remind her of Denver and her past problems. Nelle said, nonsense, Emmie had loved Denver and the mountains. Another problem was that Roge insisted that William should come because he was a good handyman, and would pitch in and help with the repairs to the place. But, what about combining Emmie and William in the same place? Could it be done? Nelle said it could be and would be, and she would see that Emmie accepted it. And, somehow Emmie did accept it. She

was going to New Hampshire with her brother Art, and sister Merly, and her nieces. Her mother and father were going on the train. Norris and Grace and their girls would be there, too. And, Nelle explained, William was going to bring the two Williams. Emmie asked Nelle if they'd be there in time for the blueberries.

Jane's first summer in New Hampshire was highlighted by certain events. The three cars had traveled together, with some of the group camping and others staying in tourist accommodations. Jane would remember the names of some of the places they had camped: Lake Ontario, the St. Bill River, Lake Champlain.

Norris and Grace had finally bought their first automobile. It was a touring car, with isinglass



side curtains to be snapped on when the weather was rainy or cold. In preparation for the trip Norris had built a type of folding bed that could be placed over the top of the front and back seats at night. to make a bed for him and Grace. Jane slept in the front seat, Dee in the rear one. Nobody rested very well, and in some locations where they camped, the mosquitoes were fierce. Grace rubbed Dee and Jane liberally with oil of citronella, and she and Norris used it too, but all night long one could hear the campers slapping the pesky

insects. One night Jane cried because she itched so badly.

William and Art had a tarpaulin that they stretched over the top of their cars to make a kind of tent. They had folding army cots for themselves, and the two Billys slept on the back seats of the care. Jane remembered that Billy Martin woke up in the morning, happy and laughing, as did his father Uncle Art. Billy Wooldridge usually woke up sleepy and whining and cross. Dee confided to Jane that she was in love with Billy Martin. Jane thought about it a while and decided that she was in love with Uncle Art. She didn't tell Dee that, however, because Dee might tell someone, and then there would be teasing. No one had to know she loved Uncle Art, anyway. Uncle William was nice, too. He was the one that always left fifty- cents in your hand when he shook it to say goodbye. One of the things that was nice about Uncle Art was that he played the violin. He also sang a song called "Casey Jones."

Jane did not remember how many days it took to get to Now Hampshire, but she did remember that every morning everyone was packed and ready to start on, but they had to wait for Aunt Merly, and Aunt Emmie, and the little girls Trink and Mim.

"I wonder what's keeping them so long," Grace said one day when they were especially late.

"Constipated," Norris said. "Emmie."

"Norr!" Grace said. "Why do you say things like that?"

“To entertain you,” he said. “You’re not late because you have me to stimulate you.”

Jane was never sure in later years whether she really remembered the first time they climbed “the Hill”. She certainly remembered climbing it many times in the next dozen years. Perhaps her father had carried her part of the way.

That first summer no autos went up at all. The private road came in from the main road (both were unpaved), ran for three quarters of a mile in the light shade of hardwood trees. It went downhill to a small stream called “White’s Brook”, over a little bridge, then gently uphill to a small turnout where the cars were parked. From that point on, the road was primitive and, in most places, very steep, only leveling out a bit in two or three stretches. It ran through the deep forest, and it was in poor condition. It took an adult in good health about twenty-five minutes to climb it. Tots had to be carried; older people took the better part of an hour, stopping now and again to sit on a boulder and pant. Everyone who appeared at the top of the road had comments on it. Over the years two or three people made remarks that bordered on anger. “If I’d any idea there’d be a climb like this, I’d have stayed in New York.” Nelle had answered them calmly, “To us it’s worth it. If you want to go back down, you’ll find it a little easier.

But almost everyone’s first question was, “Why on earth did you pick a place so hard to get to?”

“That is exactly what we wanted,” Roger said. “Exactly - just listen to the quiet.”

It was true. Nothing could be heard but bird-calls, the chatter of chipmunks and squirrels, and wind in the pines and the birches.

Norris, on the other hand, wasn’t flabbergasted by the hill; he was challenged by it. He wanted to try it with his auto. But there’d been a rain the night before, and the fallen leaves were slippery under the trees. The wheels spun round and round.

“A little work here and there and I’ll bet I can get my machine up before this visit is over.”

“I’ll help you,” William said. “Maybe we can drive Ma and Pa Martin up after all.”

“No.” Nelle said flatly. “They’re going up this bill in a horse and wagon. I’ve got it all arranged with Frank Bump. Pa and Ma’ll feel safer that way. A horse won’t frighten them like a machine does when it starts rolling back. Besides, there’s more important things to do than work on the road.”

The second day up the hill, Roge, Norris, William and Art spent wrecking the old carriage-shed. Frank Bump and his son worked for hire, cutting the old lumber up for the fireplace and kitchen stove. Roge had bought groceries the week before and hauled them up the hill in a wheel barrow.

Nelle assigned work chores to everyone. Merly, Grace and Emmie picked blueberries, made beds and did dishes. Nelle did all the cooking. Nelle also did all the planning for the entire group. In later years when Jane and Trink shared recollections of the by-gone summers at Fison’s Forest



BILLY MARTIN
"EDDIE HEDGES"

BILLY WOOLDRIDGE
"EDDIE WOODBURY"

"THE TWO EDDIES"

Circa 1920

Camp, they would say how Aunt Nelle had run “a tight ship”. She would have been good as the manager of a western ranch, or a horse-breeding farm, or some such. She was at her best in the out-of-doors, around barns and fields where she was happiest. She knew what to say to a horse to make him lift a hoof, or to calm him down if he was upset. She knew how to blaze a trail in the woods, and how not to get lost, by a system of looking back over the way you had come, to memorize the appearance of your path, so that you could return again without becoming confused.

In the house, she directed everyone’s chores and annoyed many people, but the meals were good and appetites were hearty, and in the evenings there was singing around the campfire or the fireplace, with Roger playing his banjo or guitar. Some guests would come only once to “The Hill” and would never come back because of Nelle’s bossy ways, but many would return year after year, a few as paying guests, others as “contributing” guests, and some simply as opportunists.

But that first summer Roge and Nelle said nothing to anyone about the cost of running the camp. They had hoped people would figure that out for themselves. In future they would expect people to either work or pay their board, in fact, both.

William would be the best over the years in contributing his labors. He was willing to help at anything. He hauled rocks to build an incinerator, in the middle of a back field, to burn trash safely. He helped with all types of carpentry. He worked on the road with Norris, who was determined, to get his car up the hill.

The sanitary arrangements were a sore point around the camp. Everyone knew a privy was necessary, but naturally, no one wanted to clean it. Nelle felt that the other men should help Roger. William was willing, but Norris and Art had a way of finding other things to do when “honey-dipping” time came around. Roger had first thought the job could be done once a week as long as wood-ashes and/or chlorinated lime were used, but after the camp got a crowd of people, Nelle decided differently.

“It has to be done daily,” she said. “I won’t have a camp that stinks.”

“Oh, Nelle,” Grace said. “can’t you say ‘smell’ not ‘stink’?”

“I said ‘stink’, I meant it. It’s the right word for it. And I won’t have flies around either. You men can take turns cleaning up. Do it in the morning when it’s cool.”

“It would ruin my whole day,” Art said, with the usual twinkle in his eye. “Whether the morning was cool or not.”

“Well, it’s not fair for Roger to have all his days ruined,” Nelle said.

“You’re quite right,” Norr agreed. “But I think we can work out a more agreeable plan, a more ingenious one.”

“Such as what?” Nelle said.

“Simply dig a hole,” Norr said, “and put the dirt to one side and place the privy over the hole. After a few days, dig a new hole and move the privy over it, and fill up the first hole with the dirt that came out of it. No one would have to ever shovel anything but plain clean dirt.”

“That’s a great idea,” said Art. “I’m for it.”

“Sounds like a good idea,” William agreed.

“No.” Roger said. “It wouldn’t work. The privy is too heavy to lift, even for several of us. It’s a good substantial building.”

“Then let’s build a lighter one,” Norris said. “A ‘single-place’ one with handles on it like a sedan-chair. It will be very easy to move, even for only two men. Grace and I will decorate it like, a real sedan-chair.”

Emmie muttered from the back of the room, “I don’t want any men carrying me around in a sedan-chair privy.” No one had known she was following their conversation. When such things happened Merly was always certain Emmie was getting better.

Everyone laughed at Emmie’s remark, but Nelle spoke up. “That’s a ridiculous idea. If you moved the privy every few days you’d have the whole back field dug up in no time.”

“We’d smooth the dirt all down nicely each time,” Norr said, “It would only improve the field.”

William spoke up thoughtfully. “You know, there might be a little problem at night finding the privy, if it’s going to be traveling around the field.”

“Oh, all you have to do is tie a rope, a clothesline, to the corner of the barn,” Norr said. “sand the other end to the privy. We’ll just follow the rope.”

“What we’ll do is leave our privy right where it is,” Nelle said. “It’s a good two place privy, and with all these people, specially so many children, we need it. Enough silly ideas.”

“It’s not silly, Norr said, “It’s a good idea, sanitary and more aesthetic. And it’s the only plan I’ll have anything to do with. Otherwise, I’ll do my share of shoveling somewhere else. Fixing the road, I guess.”

[Consider the privy, which in the eighteenth century was called the necessary house or, more simply, the necessary. This little structure—of brick or wood, painted or unpainted, of vernacular or high-style design—was also known as a bog, boghouse, boggard, or bog-shop; a temple, a convenience, or temple of convenience; a little house, house of office, or close stool; a privy or a

garde-robe, terms that descend from the Middle Ages. Or a jakes, a sixteenth-century term. Williamsburg's St. George Tucker once defined a jakes as a garden temple. In an earth closet, which Tucker used, dirt was thrown on top of the waste, in a probably vain attempt to keep it somewhat deodorized. A water closet implied a system of cisterns and pipes to flush away the offending material. Perhaps the highest-flown title for a privy was a cloaca, so called in honor of the Roman goddess of sewers and drains, Cloacina. A sewer known as the Cloaca Maxima ran beneath the streets of ancient Rome. And in 1716, in London, poet Henry Gay sang of Cloacina, the "Goddess of the tide / Whose sable streams beneath the city glide."]

Jane had no memory of the arrival of her grandma and grandpa at The Hill. Her Uncle Art had come to Boston and brought them back with him. They'd come up the hill in a horse-drawn wagon, and had arrived in the evening after the young cousins had been put to bed. Nelle was very strict about the children's bed-time. Mim and Trink Lemmon, Jane Rahming, and Babs Fison were all five years old or under. Nelle liked them bedded down by eight o'clock. Dee Rahming, Billy Wooldridge, and Billy Martin were at least five years older. Their bed time was nine o'clock.

Dee could remember that Grandma Martin had arrived at The Hill very tired, and had had to be put straight to bed in the one good bedroom in the house, the front bedroom with its old carved walnut furniture. Nelle had fluttered around her mother, doing everything to make her comfortable. She'd brought her hot milk and toast, and a hot-water bottle for her feet, for Maria had chills and her teeth were chattering. Her other daughters hovered around with other suggestions.

"It's this altitude," Emmie said. "I remember in Denver..."

"Emmie," Nelle said, "We're not nearly as high as Denver here."

"Then it's change of water," Emmie said.

"Emmie," Grace reminded, "Mother hasn't had any of the water yet."

"But on the train," Emmie insisted.

"You're not thinking Christian Science," Merly said.

"Mother's just exhausted," Grace said. "She'll be ail right in the morning as soon as she's rested up."

"Grace's right," Nelle said. "Ma's just over-tired."

But in the morning, Maria still wasn't feeling very well, though she did get up by lunch time. She wasn't hungry, though, and Nelle worried about her because all she would eat was tea and toast.

“I’ll be all right, Dotty,” Maria said. “I’m just tired from the trip. I’m getting on in years, remember.”

“I know, Ma, but you’re still young enough for a nice vacation. I want you to have a wonderful time while you’re here. And don’t forget you’re going home with Roge and Babs and me, and we’ll be going to stop in Westport. Then we’ll go on to New York and you can spend a few days with us before going home on the train.”

“Dotty, that sounds like a lot of traveling to me. I’m not sure I’m up to it.”

“But, Ma, you’ll love a visit to Westport.”

“No, Dotty. I hate to disappoint you, but I am afraid to see Westport again. It will be changed and I want to remember it as I left it when I was a girl.”

“But it’s still a lovely little town, Ma. I doubt if it’s so changed.”

“Dear, I think it’s just that I’m afraid to go back to Westport.”

“Why, Ma?”

“Because of Maily and Jenny.”

“Oh, Ma! But that’s —“

“I know. I’m silly. Well, we’ll see about it. We don’t have to decide today, do we?”

“No, Ma.”

Two days later they had to take Maria to the nearest hospital. She was there nearly two weeks, and on the hill another week. Her rheumatic knees and elbows had grown worse, and she had a debilitating fever. When she was well enough to travel, Art took her and his father and Emmie to Boston and put them on the train to return home. It took most all the fun out of everyone’s summer.

Two things that Jane remembered from the First Summer on the Hill, were that Grandma Martin had been there and had been sick, and that Billy Wooldridge had gone up the mountain to the maple sugar bush and overturned some of the old wooden sap-buckets. There’d been yellow-jackets’ nests inside, and the angry insects had come swarming out and sent Billy screaming back down to the house with his khaki knickers full of them.

Aunt Nelle had plastered wet mud on poor Billy’s many stings.

Dee, being older, remembered all those things and more. After Grandma and Grandpa Martin went home there was another visitor - Uncle Roger’s father, a wiry old man of whom the little children were somewhat afraid. He seemed not to understand children, nor they him. The



MIM JANE DEE TRINK BILLY WOOLDRIDGE
"MURRY" "ANDREA" "FAYE" "TREENY" "EDDIE WOODBURY"
FOREST CAMP

memory that Dee kept of Father Fison was that he decided one day to walk across the mountain to the village. Theoretically it was a shortcut, for it was ten miles by the road, only four by the old trail behind the house. Nelle and Roge tried to talk him out of making the trip, because the old trail, a long unused logging trail, was much overgrown and all but obliterated in many places. Nelle gave her father-in-law a handful of torn white muslin strips to tie on to trees as he went.

“I really don’t think you should go,” Nelle said. “Roger will drive you to the village. We’re going tomorrow to buy groceries.”

“That’s not the point. I just want to go by the trail. It will be enjoyable. I like walking.”

“You’re not as young as you used to be, Father Fison.”

“No, but I’m in excellent condition. I walk a lot. I always have.”

“That’s true,” Roge said. “He always has.”

“Well, be sure and start back with plenty of daylight time left.” Nelle said.

“I will. Don’t worry.”

But Father Fison was not back at suppertime, and not back by the time the small children were put to bed. Roger wanted to start up the mountain after his father, but Nelle pointed out that it was nearly dark, and he would only get lost himself. She said that it would be better to go down the mountain on their own road, and drive into the village by the regular route and inquire at the local inns to see if Father Fison had decided to spend the night at one of them. Also, Roge might very likely encounter his father along the main route. He would likely have chosen to come that safer way when he found the hour growing late. So Roge set off down the hill with a lantern. Norris and William went up to the top of the clearing and began calling “Hello ..o.. oh!” but after a while they came back to the house because they were getting hoarse.

Roge will probably find him walking home on the road,” Nelle said. “We’ll just have to wait.”

But time went by and Roge didn’t come home.

“What about bears?” Merly said. “Or wildcats?”

“Hush!” Nelle said sharply. “Don’t put such ideas in these kids’ heads. Dee, and you two Billys, go to bed. Right now.”

“We’re too excited,” said Fays.

“Well, go anyway,” Nelle said.

When it got to be eleven, Nelle realized Roge must not have found his father walking on the road, but must be inquiring at the inns in Plymouth. Even so, he should be back by now.

She lit a lantern and went outdoors.

“What are going to do?” Grace asked.

“I’m going to start calling and holding the lantern up high.”

“Where? By the trail?”

“No. Right here in the clearing. He might be anywhere, on any side of us, if he’s lost.”

“That’s right,” Norris said.

Nelle began to call “Yoo-hoo.” Echoes came back from all around her. She kept on calling, and always the echoes mocked her.

Then she said, “Wait! Did you hear another voice?”

“I’m not sure,” Grace said. “Maybe.”

“Call again,” Norr said.

Merly was inside reading Christian Science by the light of the kerosene lamp on the kitchen table (which was also the dining table). It was three feet wide and eight feet long. William had made it in the first days they’d been at camp. He’d covered it with white oilcloth and Nelle had warned everyone, “Woe be unto anyone who puts something hot on this table and spoils the oilcloth.”

Merly had said she would concentrate on “holding the right thought” for Father Fison.

Outside, Nelle continued to call “Yoo-hoo.” Occasionally the men gave forth with a prolonged “Hello —o-o.”

“It’s too bad one can’t holler ‘A-hoy!’ when one is on land,” Norris said.

“Are you trying to be funny, Norr?” Nelle asked.

“Not at all,” Norris said, “but ‘A-hoy’ is a better word for shouting. It carries well. That’s why they use it at sea.”

William began shouting “A-hoy!” and Art burst out laughing.

Nelle turned on him in anger. “Art, there is nothing funny about this.”

“Sorry,” Art said, but he chuckled again. “Roge will probably be fetching him back any time now.”

“No.” Nelle said. “If he’d found him they could have been back by now.” She began “yoo-hoo-ing” again.

Dee appeared then. "Aunt Emmie has gone to bed with her head under the pillow. She says all this 'yoo-hooing' is driving her crazy."

Art laughed again. "Emmie said that? Emmie said it's driving her crazy?" Nelle turned on her youngest brother. "Art, you watch it. I don't like the way you're talking."

"I guess I'm just nervous," Art said.

"Dee, you're supposed to be in bed," Nelle said.

"I can't sleep. I'm worried about Father Fison."

Nelle shrugged, and "yoo-hooed" again. This time everyone heard a far-off voice in the woods.

"Did you hear that?" Nelle asked.

"Yes!" they all said.

She called again. The answer was faint but definite; it was hard to tell just where it came from.

"Maybe it's Roge coming up the hill," Art said.

"No, it's not," Norr, William, and Grace said almost in one breath, "It's over there." They pointed to the west.

"Yoohoo!" called Nelle.

"Hello-o-o?" the faint call came.

"Yoo-hoo!" from Nelle.

"Where are you?" came the call.

"By the barn." Nelle called, and waved her light high.

"Where are you?" again from the woods.

"By the barn."

"Hello-o-o-o-o" came the voice.

At this point, Roge came up the hill, out of breath. "That's Father's voice," he said. "Let's keep calling." "Hello—o—o," he shouted.

But it was Nelle's voice that seemed to be heard best, and it sounded as though the voice in the woods was nearer now. Finally the old man saw the lantern as he neared the clearing. The men all went up to meet him. He was very tired, and they took his arms as he came toward the house.



(DOUBLE EXPOSURE)

"BART", "MATT", "?", "BART'S FATHER"

"ADDIE", "MARTHA", "LUCY", "IRENE"

"EDDIE", "FAYE"

"ANDREA", "MURRY"

"AT FOREST CAMP"

"TREENY"

“I’d enjoy a cup of tea,” Father Fison said wearily. “I got off my path, you see, after it got dark.”

They fluttered around him, and finally the whole camp settled down to sleep and only the bubbling of the spring could be heard, and an occasional call of an animal or an owl.

The most exciting adventure of the First Summer was over.

On the way back, Norris and Grace did not camp in the caravan with the uncles but stayed in tourists’ lodgings along the way. Grace said the rollup bed was “murderous” for her back.

They arrived home in North Royalton in mid-August and Jane flew into Aunt Ada’s arms.

“Oh, Ady, I missed you so!”

“I missed you too, Janie. My, I missed you all. It’s been quiet and lonely around here this summer. But the garden’s been lovely. There was a zinnia that was six and a half inches across. I wish I could have saved it to show you all, but I did measure it, and I tried to dry it, but it shrank and molded in the humid weather. Well, well! I’m glad you’re home again. And just think! It’ll soon be time for school again, only three weeks.”

Jane jumped up and down. “I’ll be going, too!”

“So you will,” Ada said. “Isn’t that splendid.”

“I’ve got to buy her some new dresses,” Grace said. “I won’t have time to sew any. I’ve got to get back to my work.”

“I need a pencil box,” Jane said. “I must have one for school.”

When the important first day of school arrived Jane, in a new brown and orange dress, set off in the morning with Dee. Grace could not be with Jane, for she’d had to go early to Cleveland with Norris. Their vacations were over - they had to get back to their work. These days Grace’s work was all fashion art for the newspapers, and Norris’s was all photography.

When they arrived at school Dee took Jane to the first grade room, and presented her to the teacher.

“This is my little sister. She’s ready to start first grade,” Dee said.

“Your Mama couldn’t come? There’s a card to fill out,” the teacher said.

“Mother had to go to the city. She works there,” Dee said.

“Isn’t your father living, dear?”

“Oh, yes,” Dee said. “He works in the city too.”

“I see. Alright. Yes, you can take the card home for your parents to fill out.”

Jane reached for it, but the teacher said, “May as well let big sister take it. Now, what’s your name, dear?”

“Jane Rahming, I live at 29 Cliff Street.”

“Fine. And you’re six years old, are you?”

“I’m five.” Jane said, and Dee said at the same time, “She’s five.”

“How soon will you be six?”

“In June,” Dee said.

“Oh. Then I’m sorry, dear. You can’t start this fall. You’d have to be six years old before Christmas vacation. You’ll have one more year to play at home, isn’t that nice?”

“No,” Jane said,

“You’d better take her home,” the teacher told Dee. “I wouldn’t want her to go all the way alone. I’ll give you a note for your teacher explaining why you’re late. Oh! Is there anyone to take care of her at home?”

“Yes,” Dee said. “Our Auntie.”

“Alright, then, run along.”

Outside, Jane said, “I can go home alone.”

“I know you can,” said Dee, “and I don’t want to be late the first day.”

At home, Jane flung herself into Aunt Ada’s arms.

“I’m too little!” she cried. “I can’t go till next year! I have to be six!”

“I’ll tell you a secret,” Aunt Ada said. “I’m glad to have you with me one more year.”

“But what do I do with my pencil box?” Jane wailed.

“It’ll keep. And now you can take the pencils and draw me a picture of your Aunt Nelle’s house in the mountains. Then this afternoon we’ll go to the store and I’ll buy you a big pad of paper and a box of Crayolas.”

“Aunt Ada? You know what? When we were in New Hampshire Mother and Daddy only had one fight.”

“Next time, maybe there won’t even be one. Let’s have lunch now, shall we?”

THE WHOLE FAMILY LIED TO ME

As soon as Christmas was out of the way, Nelle began making plans for the next summer on the Hill. The first one had been ruined for her, by her mother's illness. It had been supposed to be such a treat for her and for Pa. Nelle realized now that she'd been too late in planning such things for them. Ma was seventy-five and Pa was eighty. They were old and she hadn't ever let herself think of them that way. Also, Ma really, truly, hadn't wanted to see Westport again. She'd preferred to remember it from her childhood. Nelle couldn't believe that Ma thought that her long-ago return visit there had caused the illness and death of Maily and Jenny. Ma hadn't ever been superstitious. Black cats and number thirteen, Ma had laughed at. Maybe though, it wasn't superstition, but something to do with God's will. He didn't intend for her to go back there. Ma had thought that God punished her for wanting to be away from her matrimonial bed for a while. That idea was nonsense, and Grandma Burns' doing. She shouldn't have ever made Ma suffer from guilt that way. In fact, they'd probably all suffered from it in some way. There'd been too much talk about those little dead sisters all these years. Nelle realized that it was Pa who talked about them the most. He always had. Up in the mountains last summer, he'd gone on and on, about how Grace's Jane, and Merly's Mim, made him think of Maily and Jenny. Jane, with her dark eyes and dark straight hair was like Jenny, who had Pa's coloring. (Of course, Pa's hair was white now). Mim, with her blue eyes and golden curls, was like Maily. That was Ma's coloring, and Nelle's own. Their hair had darkened with time of course, and now, Ma's was white, and her own was iron grey. Nelle sighed. People had always said her hair was 'flaxen.' How pretty and poetic that sounded! Boys had gone wild over her hair. Nelle blushed, thinking of how Earle had acted in bed about her hair. Earle had done some strange things in bed. Good night nurse! She hadn't intended to start thinking about Earle.

Getting back to thinking about Mim and Jane and the other cousins, it was funny how you took to a child who looked like you when you were little. She and Roger had been crazy about Dee when she was a baby, and, they still loved her, goodness knows, but though she'd never admit it to anyone, Mim was her favorite of all those children. Yes, even counting Babs, their own. If she put them in order it might go something like this: Mim, Babs, Dee, Billy Martin, Trink, Jane, and Billy Wooldridge. Billy Wooldridge was cross-eyed, a tease, and a whiner. He made the other children quarrel among themselves. But one had to be good to him. Billy was Ma's mistake, good intentioned, but still a mistake. They all had to help with Billy Wooldridge.

Nelle guessed she didn't take to Trink and Jane because they didn't take to her. They seemed to be always watching her, as though she were Old Mother Witch. And furthermore, they frequently wet the bed. Grace said it was because they were high strung, and because she, Nelle, had scolded them so about it. One thing Nelle could brag about, Babs never wet her bed. Not since the day Nelle brought her home from the orphanage. At one time or another most of the others had, when they were small, even Mim. But not Babs - no-sir-ee. Nelle hoped next year they'd all be over it, since washing was such a problem at camp.

Nelle had learned a lot last summer. There had to be better plans made for the allotting of chores. If people were going to be vacationing on Fison's Hill they'd have to do more work. Next summer things would be easier in some ways. Frank Bump was going to make quite a few improvements. There'd be wooden floors in the two big tents. There'd be a basement workshop under the 'studio.' Water would be piped into the kitchen where it would come out a tap at the sink, and another pipe would carry it under the floor and out to the back yard, where two large creosoted barrels would impound some of it for doing the laundry. The excess would just flow away into the hillside.

For the second summer, a number of things would be different. Art Martin and his son Billy would not be coming. Billy's mother said she didn't want him to think that going to New Hampshire was going to be a regular thing every summer. Art had just married again and his new wife was already pregnant.

William was going to bring his Billy for the summer, and he himself would help Roge paint the house before going back to New York to his job. Billy, who was now twelve, could help his auntie.

Merly thought she'd better wait a year before coming again. It wasn't fair to Waldo to leave him again.

Maria and Henry Martin were afraid to try it again. Maria's illness had been too frightening; And Father Fison had had enough after his adventure on the mountain.

But Norris and Grace were coming with their girls, and later on in the summer Roger's sister and her family would visit. Their children were older than Babs, but it would all be fun. And Roge had invited some friends from New York for the end of August.

It would really be less hectic, with fewer guests at one time, and the work would be lighter. Dee and William could go for the milk and the mail each day after breakfast, and Nelle and Grace could do breakfast dishes. Later, Dee could wash lunch dishes, and Jane could wipe and put them away. Babs was only four, but she could begin to do little chores, too. Billy could bring in all the wood for the kitchen stove and fireplace.

But first, in early June, Nelle would make her usual trip back home to see Ma and Pa and the family.

That second summer was more fun for Jane because there were more "excitements," as she always liked to call them. There were side trips to the Flume, to the Old Man of the Mountains, to Indian Head, and to Lost River. Then, there was the biggest trip of all, and Jane got left home with Babs and Aunt Nelle. The others went to Mount Washington.

"You're too little," Dee explained.

“I’m six,” Jane said. “I’m old enough for school.”

“You’re too little to climb.”

“I climb better than you do. You won’t even climb an apple tree.” When the family came back from the trip Grace said, “You could have gone after all, Janie. We drove the car all the way to the Tip Top House. There wasn’t any climbing.”

Jane said, “Now I feel like crying again.”

Dee said, “Mother, you shouldn’t have told her.”

“I guess I shouldn’t have,” Grace said. “Anyway, you and Babs had all day to play.”

“That wasn’t an excitement,” Jane said, and everyone laughed.

But a few days later there was an excitement. Nelle had discovered a hornets’ nest in a hole in an old apple tree near the location of the two big white tents. She got some old rags and tied them onto the end of a long stick and soaked the rags in kerosene. She spent an hour or more smoking the hornets out of the tree. Then she carefully saw to it that her torch was burned out, and she soaked it with water to be sure.

That night long after everyone was asleep, a breeze came up, and started a draft blowing through the old hollow apple tree. It fanned a few smoldering sparks in the tree’s core into flame.

Dee and Jane woke up to find the whole side of their tent bright from the light of the burning tree.

“Janie! It’s a fire!” cried Dee.

“Well, run tell Daddy then,” said Jane. “Hurry!”

“We’d better get Babs out of here,” Dee said. “The tent might burn up.”

“All right. I’ll go tell Daddy then. You carry Babs into the house to Aunt Nelle. Hurry!”

“You hurry!”

Jane ran to the studio, and pounded on the door.

“The tree is burning! The tree is burning!”

They formed a bucket brigade from the spring, Grace filling the buckets, Nelle shuttling them to Norris, who stood on a kitchen chair and tossed the water onto the flaming tree. Billy carried water from the barrels back of the house. They got it well doused before the water in the hogshead was too low to fill the buckets. Roger and William had just returned to New York the day before.



BARBARA E. FISON 4 YEARS
OLD

"CAROL"

“It’s a good thing Daddy was here.” Dee said.

“Oh, yes,” said Nelle. “but Billy and I would have been able to handle it if we’d had to.”

“Would you stay here without a man, Nelle?” Grace asked.

“Certainly,” Nelle said. “I’ll be here plenty of times alone in the future, when Roge’s in New York, and there’s no guests here.”

“Won’t you be afraid?”

“No. I stayed alone in Colorado a lot when we lived there.”

“Yes, but you’re older now, Sis.”

“What of it? I have Billy, and also—I have a gun.”

“You have? Would you use it?”

“If I had to, I sure would.”

Dee and Jane went back to their cots in the tent. Babs was sound sleep in the house on Nelle’s bed.

“You know, Dee,” Jane said. “Aunt Nelle’s different from other ladies.”

“Yes she is. She’s led a different kind of life.”

“How?”

“Oh, out in the Wild West, and on the farm, and all that.”

“What’s in the Wild West?”

“Mountain lions, rattlesnakes, and grizzly bears.”

“there’s bears around here, Dee.”

“I know,” Dee said.

“But they’re black bears, not grizzly bears, Daddy said.”

“I know.”

“I shouldn’t have talked about bears. Now my back feels shivery.”

“Me too,” Dee said.

“Can I get in with you?”

“No, you might wet the bed.”

“I haven’t been wetting the bed for quite a lot of days.”

“Well, you will tonight. There’s been excitement.”

“I’ll try to think about school instead of bears.”

The most interesting project of the third summer had been one suggested by Norris and Grace. The house was essentially a Cape Cod design, all on one floor with a large one-room attic above. One entered in the center of the front; the steep attic stairway straight ahead. If one turned to the left one would be in the small front bedroom. A closet opening off this room led, like a tunnel, to an even smaller back bedroom. If one turned right, on entering the house, he passed into the living room which, while probably large enough for the previous owner and, his wife, was no kind of space to accommodate the crowds that Roge and Nelle would put in it on a chilly summer night. At the center of the rear wall was the brick fireplace and chimney, and on the right of these a door led to the room beyond—the room that Jed White and his wife had used as kitchen, dining, and multipurpose room. Nelle had decided at the start to move the wood-burning cook stove out into the lean-to and, as soon as the kitchen chimney was built, that was done and the stovepipe opening in the main chimney was sealed up. The room behind the living room could then be used as a dining room or whatever. But there was a very long table in the new lean-to kitchen, a table built by Norr and William so that ten people could sit down together. Everyone liked eating in the kitchen where the windows looked out on the faraway blue outline of Franconia Notch. There was even a shelf at one end where three children could sit down to have their meals.

In New Hampshire the weather turns nippy toward the end of August, and on the night before Norr and Grace left for home it was frankly cold and Nelle said there might be frost in the morning.

But it was fun. There was quite a crowd around the living room fireplace (the old fashioned kind with a crane). Jane, age six and Babs, age four, were in bed in the attic, but around the fireplace were Nelle and Roger, Norris and Grace, and eleven-year-old Dee. Also present were William Wooldridge and eleven-year-old William, who had been known as a whiner during the first summer, but who was growing up now, and quite a help to his Aunt Nelle. And Roge’s redheaded sister Millie was there with her husband and two children who were near Dee and William’s age.

Nelle had remarked that it was such fun that it was too bad that Waldo and Merly weren’t there with Mim and Trink. But Millie said the room wouldn’t hold any more people. That’s when Norris said, “Knock the partition out.”

“What partition?” asked Roger.

“The wall the fireplace is on,” said Norr.

“Oh, we couldn’t do that!” said Roge.

“Sure you can. That wall’s not holding up the attic.”

“He’s right,” said William. “The beam ceiling holds itself up. That’s the way these places were built.”

“But,” Roge said, “that would leave the fireplace standing alone in the center of one big room.”

“Precisely!” said Norr. “It would be charming.”

Roge didn’t commit himself to the idea, though Grace had said she agreed with Norris, and Roge had great faith in Grace’s opinion on such matters. But afterwards, when everyone else had gone home, Nelle and Roge stayed on into September. Babs wasn’t in school yet, so they could linger on. Roge had planned his work so that he had only a few calls to make in the Boston area. They stayed on until the middle of October. Nelle made crabapple jelly while Frank Bump and Roge tore out the living-room partition, with all the ancient lath and plaster and mouse-nests. Nelle exclaimed, “I knew I could smell mice I’m sure glad to see that mess go.”

“They’re probably in the rest of the house to,” Roge warned.

“Maybe not,” Nelle said. “Here, they were handy to the kitchen.” In any event, they were both delighted with the results after the partition was gone. They could walk all around the fireplace, and Nelle and Babs did a little dance to celebrate.

Before they boarded up the windows for the winter and left for New York, Frank Bump and Roge had put a new beaverboard ceiling in the newly enlarged living room.

The next year with all the other improvements, Roge and Nelle had a new hardwood floor put in the “big” room too. The bedrooms and attic would stay as they were.

Many guests came up from New York to spend one week or two. Some paid their “keep” and others did not. They went off rambling or sunbathing, or berry picking. It annoyed Roge and Nelle, but nevertheless they had enjoyed their guests. The evening campfires were such fun, with banjo playing, and singing.

Jane never forgot the clashes between her father and her Aunt Nelle. She had witnessed these frequently during summer vacations. Usually the feuds were of a minor nature. There was a continuing battle over the matter of sugar. Nelle had a firm conviction that sugar was bad for one. Money and health could be saved if one left sugar out of tea and coffee, and off breakfast cereals. Of course, she put it into her cookies and pies, and admitted that strawberries needed it.

Norris had always had a great sweet tooth; he had eaten granulated white sugar by the teaspoonful when a child, having been caught stealing it daily. He loved fudge, ice cream, and chocolate pudding which he frosted with a sparkling layer of sugar. Other people shuddered at the sight. "I like to bite on the grittiness of it," he said, enjoying the criticism.

Nelle never gave up the battle. She was horrified at the heaping teaspoonful that Norris put in his coffee.

"I have no feeling of moral turpitude about sugar," he told her.

"Or anything else," Nelle said, making a guess at the meaning of turpitude. What really made her livid was that Norris did not stir his coffee thoroughly, and his cup always contained a syrupy sludge that had to go down the kitchen drain.

"Good sugar, too," Nelle fumed. It was an outrage that he dared waste her food.

Nelle wrote incensed letters home to her mother. She always invited Grace, Norris and the girls to camp during the summer, and then vowed she never would again because Norr never offered to help Roge with the privy cleaning.

But Norris was always lots of fun. That summer he and Grace had brought their friend Arthur Grey with them. The girls enjoyed his company on the trip. He was good at telling stories and jokes and singing funny songs.

When they got to the point of climbing up the hill road for the first time, Arthur Grey was flabbergasted. Even though he'd been prepared for the length and steepness of it, he set them all to laughing by stopping every so often to wipe his brow and say "My word! I had no idea!"

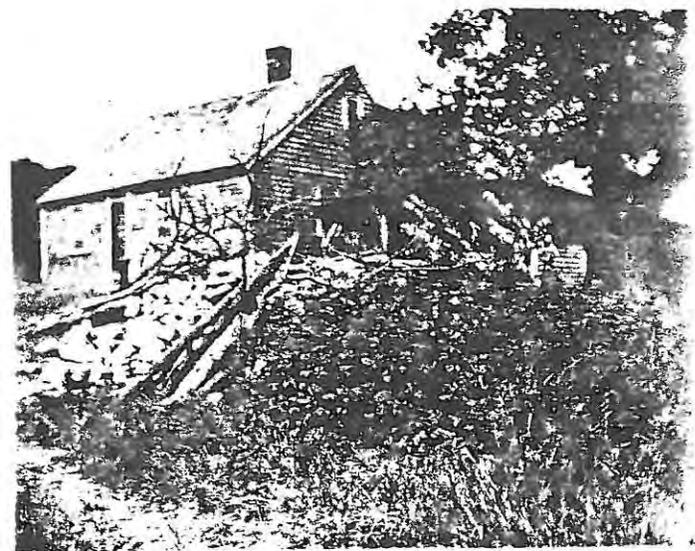
"This summer I'll get my car up this road," Norris said, "or I'm never coming back. But walking up isn't so bad, it's hauling the groceries up in the wheelbarrow that's really bad."

Arthur Grey and Norris, and Roger, and William and Billy Wooldridge all worked on the road for four days. They shoveled and raked till they had blisters on their hands. In the end they triumphed and Norris drove his Oakland up the hill.

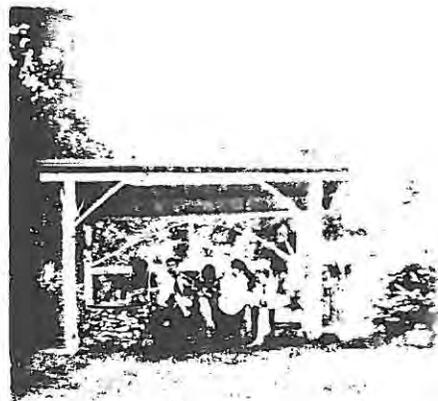
Jane was seven years old and Dee was twelve. They had each brought a doll along from home, but when they stopped at the Bump's to say "hello," and one of the Bump boys came out to the car, Dee dashed her beloved 'Nelly' doll to the floor and covered her up with a pillow. Boys were beginning to be very important to Dee.

Jane remembered the third summer on the hill as the year when Babs got sick. She was so feverish and listless that Nelle insisted on having Norris drive to Plymouth and bring back a doctor. Norris' car would climb the hill, Roger's wouldn't. Norris said Roger needed newer tires, and new spark plugs.

FOREST CAMP



after being shingled



The spring house



several years later



The "terrible hill" before -



*Lawrence jr. promoted a flagpole
circa 1931*



- and after repairs

The doctor diagnosed Babs's illness as 'scout fever,' something no one on the hill had ever heard of. It was a type of flu, the doctor said, and at Nelle's frightened look, he said it wasn't like the 1918 kind. He left three kinds of pills: small white ones, large white ones, and small pink ones.

"And don't let her sleep in the tent," he warned. "Keep her in bed a week. Send for me again if she isn't better by then. Lots of summer people get this trouble."

After the doctor had gone, Nelle said she didn't think sleeping in the tent had anything to do with it.

Babs was much better in three days, and it was nearly impossible to keep her in bed.

"It's all a bunch of baloney," Norris said. "all mortal mind. Why don't you just sit down with her and read some Christian Science to her? Then everything will be fine."

Nelle decided to read "Science" to Babs, but she also gave her the pills. Babs was soon herself again.

The next summer Jane was eight. She would be able to go on all the mountain climbing trips with the older ones. She went up Mt. Chocorua and Mt. Moosilauke with her father and Dee and Arthur Grey, who joined them again for their month on the Hill.

Since Roger and William could not be at Fison's Hill for as long as a month at a time because of their work, there were periods when Norris's car was the only transportation. It became apparent that Nelle would have to learn to drive if she was to spend the entire summer vacation on the Hill. Also there were signs in the wind that Norris might not be a member of the family much longer. The dissension between him and Grace continued to increase, though it was far less noticeable during the summer vacation periods.

But Grace had talked privately to Nelle.

"I can't go on with Norrr much longer, Sis," she said, one day when Norrr, Arthur Grey, and all the children had gone to Squam Lake to swim.

"I'm surprised you've gone on this long, kid," Nelle said. "I never thought this marriage would last."

"Well, but it's lasted nearly sixteen years," Grace said.

"And hasn't got any better, has it?"

"No, but Nelle, you know it's his mother's fault. She spoiled him, and she interfered with us."

"But kid, you saw all that before you married him."

“I know, and I wasn’t sure about him then, but he followed me to New York, and then, of course, I loved him. I guess I still do, but living with him is a nightmare. His temper tantrums are bad for the girls.”

“Of course they are,” Nelle said.

“And he loves to spend money. Every year he has to have a new car.”

“Sure, and that’s why he can drive his car up the hill,” Nelle said. “Roge and I are still driving our first Buick. Roge believes in thrift, and making things do. But we will have to get a car for me to have up here after I learn to operate it. Well, Sis, I’ll make you a promise; if you divorce Norr I’ll take your girls for you next summer. I like having cousins for Babs to play with. I wish Merly would come and bring Mim and Trink for two or three weeks. Babs will be all alone after you folks go home. Billy only teases her. He’s sometimes a problem, poor boy.”

“I know. But Nelle, Merly wouldn’t leave Waldo even for a short time. He’s not at all well. Of course she won’t talk about it. Has she ever told you what he has? I mean, what’s the matter with him?”

Nelle leaned forward with interest. “No, what is it?”

“Shucks, Lacy. I was asking you. Thought Merly might have confided in you. I have no idea.”

“Does Merly have any idea herself? She’s such a good Scientist.”

“Yes, but Waldo isn’t. He gave up Christian Science and went to see a doctor. But Merly thinks it’s best not to tell the family what the doctor said the trouble was. She doesn’t want us all thinking the wrong thoughts.”

“Well,” Nelle said. “I do believe in Science. But it’s so difficult to practice, isn’t it? Now, take Ma; she has great faith in God, but she just can’t believe that sin, disease and death aren’t real. She told me so.”

“I know, Nelle, but some things have been demonstrated.”

“That’s right,” Nelle said. “I’ve seen it my own self.”

“Well,” Grace said, “I wish Norr and I could make it work on our marriage.”

“I doubt if you can, Sis, any more than I could have made it work on first marriage. I could have read ‘C.S.’ night and day and it wouldn’t have changed the way he was.

“That’s always been such a secret, Nelle. You never told us about it.”

“I told Pa, and Pa said. ‘Never talk or think about it again.’ Anyway, I imagine there’re things about your marriage that you’ve kept secret, too. Isn’t that right?”



WALDO LEMMON
"RAYMOND"
circa 1923 ?



MARIAN M. LEMMON
MARTHA
circa 1923 ?

Another Cleveland Success

The interesting announcement was made this week by the Museum at Newark, New Jersey that the institution had purchased for its permanent collection a painting by Norris Rahming the well known Cleveland



MT. CHOCORUA—NEW HAMPSHIRE
By Norris Rahming

artist Mr. Rahming exhibited his canvas "Mount Chocorua, New Hampshire" by invitation in the exhibition by living American artists which was held at the Newark Museum from March 21st to April 21st.

This beautiful landscape has been exhibited in Cleveland and elsewhere and the Newark Museum is now its fortunate owner.



IN 1924 "MATTHEW", "FAYE"
AND "ANDREA" CLIMBED THIS
MOUNTAIN. IT IS BARE OF
TREES AT THE TOP

“Oh, yes,” Grace said.

On the way home from the mountains something happened that put a bad finish on the summer for Jane. She and Dee spent a great deal of time napping on the last day of the trip. They were tired, and the country was flat and boring.

Jane woke up, but lay on her pillow just watching the sky and trees passing by, and listening to her parents talking. How nice it was that they quarreled less on the summer trips. It seemed as though her Father was at his best when he had lots of things to do and think about. He was talking now.

I wonder what a winter in New Hampshire would be like. Beautiful, I expect.”

“Beautiful, but harsh, I guess,” Grace said. “I understand it goes down to 20 degrees below zero, or more. Still, it might be a lot more pleasant than a winter in the city.”

“I wonder if one could make out living on that mountain all winter. Roge wants to, you know. He wants to write.”

“It would be rigorous,” Grace said, “Hauling wood for all the fires .“

“I wonder what kind of winter we’ll have at home this year,” Norr said. “Last year wasn’t bad. It was mild.”

“Remember the winter Dee was born? How it snowed? And the winter your Father died. That was a bad one, too.”

Jane popped up from the back and put her head in between them.

“What did you say, Mother?”

“We were talking about the winters at home.”

“You said to Daddy, ‘the winter your father died!’”

“Yes, it was a very snowy winter.”

“But Daddy’s father is Grandpa Rahming.”

“That’s right, dear.”

“But you said he died!”

“Yes, in 1920 - that’s three years ago. Soon it will be four years. In January it’ll be four years.”

“No one ever told me!” Jane said. “Every time I ask Grandma Rahming where he is, she says he’s ‘far away’.”



ANOTHER NORRIS RAHMING PAINTING
OF MOUNT CHOCORVA , N.H.

1864

“Well,” Norris said, “he is, of course. That is in a way. We all still love him, though.”

“Every time I ask Grandma Rahming when he’s coming home, she says, ‘I don’t know, dear.’”

“Well, if you’d asked me I’d have told you,” Grace said.

“So would I,” said Norris.

“But you didn’t tell me. When he died, you should have told me. I ask Grandma Rahming because at her house is mostly where I think of Grandpa Rahming. Why didn’t you tell me?”

“You were little,” Norr said.

“That doesn’t make any difference,” Jane said. “That’s no reason, and you should have told me now I’m older.”

“We thought you’d guess.”

“Not with people still telling lies!” Jane said. “I don’t like it to have people tell me lies - ‘Specially something important. I guess little lies don’t make so much difference.”

“Little lies aren’t good, either,” Grace said. “Janie, I’m sorry.”

Jane put her head down into her travel pillow and sobbed. “Now I know I’ll never see him again. I wasn’t sure if he’d come back or not.”

Dee patted Jane on the shoulder. “They didn’t tell me either, for a long time.”

Jane jerked her shoulder. “You could have told me. You’re my sister. Sisters shouldn’t act the same as parents. Sisters ought to be your friend.”

Soon they were home again and greeting Aunt Ada. Jane’s eyes were still red.

“What’s the matter, Jane?”

“I just learned the truth about Grandpa Rahming. That he’s dead. They just told me. You never told me, either.”

“I was told not to,” Aunt Ada said. “I knew it was a mistake. They said you’d guess all by yourself.”

“The whole family lied to me,” Jane said darkly.

“That’s enough, Jane, “, Norris said. “Go to bed now.”

“She needs her supper,” Grace said.

“I don’t want any supper.” Jane stated.

It always seemed to Jane when she was small that the most exciting happenings in the family were those that occurred before she was born in 1916, or at any rate before her memory began. She thought of herself in later years as having been born at the Old Brick. Her mother had only gone to Cleveland in order to be near her chosen doctor. When Jane was two weeks old she'd been brought back to the Old Brick. Her memories of the farm sprang from the very few times when she visited there in later years.

She chose to think of herself as having been born there, along with her older aunts and uncles, and the famous little girls, "Maidy" and "Jenny" so tragically dead many, many years before. Grandfather Martin himself had been born on that spot, not in the Old Brick itself, but in a log building that had later been replaced by the more spacious brick homestead built by Great grandfather Martin before the Civil War.

Jane grew up with a wealth of lore about the farm, learned from others. Aunt Ada Norris told her many anecdotes of the days when Jane's mother and father managed the place. There was the time when Norris, Grace, and Dee had been riding in the farm wagon up the lane from the back lot, and something had possessed the team to run at top speed, completely out of control. Norris had pulled hard on the reins, but either their mouths were "hard", or they'd got the bits in their teeth; they'd dashed on, and Norris'd been afraid they'd overturn the wagon or tear the wheels off on a fence post. He'd shouted to Grace to toss Dee into the weeds beside the lane, and then he'd had her jump off into the weeds herself. Last of all, after one final effort to slow the running team, Norris himself abandoned the wagon in one grand leap.

"Nobody had any broken bones or very bad bruises," Aunt Ada had, reassured Jane.

"But what about the horses?" Jane wanted to know. "Where did they stop running?"

"In the barn yard - they'd knocked one back wheel off the wagon. But they were tired, and willing to calm down by the time they got to the barn."

"Why did they run away?"

"Well, horses are funny. I used to ride sometimes when I was a girl in Brooklyn. I rode side-saddle. Your Grandmother Rahming rode too. We rode in Prospect Park. Horses always come back to the stables much faster than when they go out. It was a little frightening once. Well now - the day the team ran away was a very windy day. It was toward the end of March, I remember, because we said that March was going out like a lion. Your father took the team and wagon down to the wood-lot and Timothy was with him on the way down the lane, and, of course your other and Dee too. Timothy stopped off at the field where they were going to plant oats. He wanted to walk around and see if it was dried out enough to plough yet, so they could plant the oats. Your father went on to the wood-lot to pick up some logs that were lying around down there. It seems to me that the high wind was making the horses nervous; they were tossing their heads and stepping around. I had some bed sheets on the clothesline, and they were making a

snapping noise in the wind. It's my thought that the horses didn't want to go out at all that afternoon. On the way back, Norris thought something blew in front of them; anyway, they just broke loose, and he couldn't hold them back.

"We all thought he was very brave, really, tossing your sister off first the way they did, then staying while your mother jumped before finally leaping off himself. He was after all a city boy who always rode on streetcars in his youth. Well, all was well that ended well, in any event."

"Tell me about the day Jerry got loose," Jane said.

"But there really isn't much to that story," Aunt Ada said.

"I like to hear it all the same," Jane said. "Tell it please."

"Well, your sister came running into the house all excited one morning. Your father and Timothy had finished milking, and they were having breakfast with your mother and me. Dee had finished and gone outdoors to play."

"Where was I?" Jane said.

"In your crib asleep; you were a little baby."

"That's the trouble. I missed all the best things."

"It's a good thing you missed that. That was scary. Well, Dee came in and she said 'Jerry's rin—rinning!'" So we all went out to see what she meant.

"What's 'rin—rinning' mean?"

"It's a high, funny noise bulls sometimes make, with their necks all thick and stretched out. Your Uncle Roger says that he's heard bull elk in Colorado make that noise in the winter time."

"Why do they make that 'rin-rin-rin' sound?"

"Because they are bulls, I guess. They want to let the cows know that they are the most important one. The bull thinks all the cows in the herd belong to him."

"Is that what Jerry was saying?"

"I expect he was."

"Was he very fierce and dangerous?"

"Not usually, but that day he was. Most days he stayed in his pasture just eating grass or chewing his cud like the cows always do."

"And then what happened?" Jane asked, her dark brown eyes wide.

“He stood about halfway back in the pasture, and he seemed to raise his head and smell the breeze. Then he went to ‘rin-rinning’ once more, and he pawed the ground a little bit, and then he came running, you might almost say ‘galloping’. And then - it was hard to believe - that massive beast just leapt - he fairly sailed over that pasture fence. He never touched it at all. And then he stood sort of quivering and surprised, right in the yard back of the house. Then he stretched out his neck again and made that high-pitched sound.”

“The ‘rin—rin’?”

“Yes. And your father and Timothy shouted to your mother and Dee and me to hurry into the house. We watched out the kitchen window. There was a pile of lumber lying right there in the yard, thin strips of wood for a new corn crib. Your father did a rather brave and clever thing. The bull was facing him, and the open gate of the barnyard was behind him, a few yards back. That barnyard was the one on the low side where it seemed to be almost always muddy. It had a higher fence all around it.”

“And a big manure pile?” Jane asked.

“That’s the one,” Aunt Ada said. “Your father thought maybe they ought to try and get the bull inside there, where the high fence would hold him. He wouldn’t be able to jump over that one. That fence was built to hold bulls. They sometimes let the bull in that yard with one of the ‘wives’ in his herd. The fence wasn’t only high, it was quite strong, and, it had a door that went right into a box stall, where the bull stayed in the wintertime.”

“What’s a box stall?” Jane asked.

“Like a big room for a bull or a horse, where he can move around and stand or lie down, but not get out and make trouble. That day, when he was standing there pawing, and roiling his eyes, right there in the farmyard, he might have done something terrible.”

“Like kill my father or Timothy?”

“Yes. Your father said if Jerry started toward him he planned on going up the Queen Anne tree, and Timothy was going to jump into the pig pen. But I’m not sure if that would have been a safe escape, myself. Well, anyway, your father picked up a piece of that thin lumber that was lying there and he shied it at the bull. “

“What does ‘shied’ mean?” Jane asked.

“In that sense it means to throw something kind of sideways. He threw the piece of wood right over the top of Jerry’s back, and Jerry was surprised when he saw it come toward him and sail over his back. He watched it go over him, and your father picked up another one and threw that over the bull’s back too. And Jerry watched that go over his head, too. The next time your father

threw one, he threw it a little bit lower and Jerry backed up a few steps. Well, your father kept on shying the boards at the bull and the bull kept stepping backwards, till he was almost to the big gate to the cattle pen, the yard where the manure pile was. All of a sudden Jerry saw where he was, and he turned and trotted into the pen, and right up to the door to his stall. He wanted to get away from all those flying boards. He had been having a fine time snorting and pawing and rolling his eyes, and 'rin-rinning.' But when the lumber came flying over his head he wasn't sure of himself anymore and he wanted to get into a safe place."

"Do you really think he would have hurt Daddy or Timothy, Aunt Ada?"

"I don't know, Of course, they sometimes do hurt people, or kill them. That day, Timothy just let Jerry walk into his own stall, and that was that. He quieted right down."

"Maybe he didn't know what to do that afternoon and couldn't think of how to entertain himself. Jane said. "So he decided it would be fun to frighten everyone."

"Perhaps." Aunt Ada said. "Some people are like that too.

Jane looked wise and said, "I know who you mean."

"Oh, do you? Well, perhaps you do, but I know more than just one person who's like that."

"Anyway," Jane said. "Aunt Ethie isn't one of them."

"No." Ada agreed. "That's right. Ethie is one of the gentle people."

"So are you."

"Thank you. I hope I am."

WHAT WILL MARTHA DO NOW?

Toward the last of August affairs in North Royalton became even more upsetting. Grace explained to Dee and Jane that their father was moving to Cleveland to live with his mother and Ethie.

“Are you getting a divorce?” Dee asked.

“We haven’t decided yet,” Grace said. “probably.”

“It’s for the best,” Dee said somberly. “There are too many fights. Yes, it’s for the best.” Dee was nearly fourteen.

Jane was eight. “I think it’s for the best too. But what about Aunt Ada - she isn’t moving away too, is she?”

“Not for the time being, at least.” their mother said.

It was a strange winter at the Cliff Street house. Grace traveled to Cleveland by the interurban trolley. She no longer went to the studio she and Norris had shared in the Fine Arts building, but she was busy, and had other arrangements with Betty Long. She also brought drawings home to work on in North Royalton. She was making plenty of money. Norris came out from the city every Sunday, ostensibly to see his children, but it always resulted in a shouting argument, Norris doing all the shouting, Grace sighing and saying, “Oh, Norrr, when are you going to grow up?” The scenes were so bad that when their father came, Dee and Jane usually left the house

and went to see their good friend Marian ‘Skipper’ Root, who though a bit younger than Dee, was in the same grade in school. Dee and Jane waited until their father’s car was gone and then went home.



Christmas was one bright spot in that strange winter. Norrr came out from Cleveland bringing Ethie and his mother, and a canary bird in a cage covered with a blanket and warmed with four hard boiled eggs. For a little while it was the way it ought to be for a family at such a time. But even so it was not the way it had been on other Christmas days that the girls could remember. There had never been a sign of Christmas in the living room, when Dee and Jane went to bed on a Christmas Eve. Their parents were always in Cleveland buying last-minute Christmas bargains, for the stores stayed open on Christmas Eve till midnight. The Rahming girls, according to Marian ‘Skipper’ Root, always got the nicest Christmas toys in North Royalton.

No one else had a real electric stove, for instance, or Schoenhutt dolls, or a mahogany four-poster doll bed.

But Christmas 1924 was different, only the canary saved it by singing charmingly in the sunny window where Norr hung his cage.

“Well,” Aunt Ada commented. “I hope we can all take example from that pretty little bird. Let’s all resolve to be cheerful in the circumstances in which we find ourselves.” She paused. “At least for today.”

But after Christmas the change in their lives became more noticeable. Norris did not come every weekend to see the girls any more. There had been a very bad Sunday afternoon. Dee was away, and Aunt Ada was spending the weekend with Rosella and Ethie in Cleveland. Norris and Grace had got into an argument over the divorce itself. Norris vowed to fight it, and told Grace he could take the girls away from her. Grace had laughed at him, saying there were far too many people who knew him well. Infuriated, Norr had dragged her into the bathroom and shut and locked the door. Jane, on the outside, could hear choking noises from within. Her father must be killing her mother! Sobbing, she pounded on the door. “Stop it! Stop it! Let Momny alone! I hate you, Daddy! Oh, stop it!”

Just then Dee came home. Jane screamed at her, “Dee, run next door, get them to come, Daddy is doing something terrible. I think ‘s killing Mommy.”

“I’ll get the police! Tell Daddy I’m going right out to get the police. I’ll go next door. You tell him.”

Dee dashed away.

Jane pounded on the door again. “Dee is going next door to get the police. Do you hear me? The police!

The door opened and Grace came out. She drew Jane to her. “I’m all right, dear. I’m all right. There, there, dear. Don’t worry.”

Norris hurried down stairs and called Dee back.

“Your mother’s all right. Now settle down.”

“Settle down!” Dee spluttered. “How can you tell me that? I hate the way you act.”

“I hate it too. And I hate Daddy,” sobbed Jane, still shaking.

Norris stopped coming to North Royalton on Sundays after that day. He had informed Grace that he had consulted with Waldo Lemmon and was going to contest the divorce. Grace was furious that Norr had chosen her own brother-in-law to consult for legal advice. She had planned on

retaining Waldo herself. But through one of her mother's cousins, who was a senior member of one of Cleveland's top law offices, Grace found a good attorney.

He was a young man but a very smart one, and was himself related in some way to Betty Long. He started out on a friendly basis with Grace, for he'd heard of Norr Rahming's famous terrible temper. He suggested that he would contact Norris's lawyer and try to convince them that Norr did not have a leg to stand on in contesting. Grace said she had many friends and relatives who would testify against Norr, even Norr's own aunt, and her own children, if necessary.

If the letterhead on the stationery of Gates, Halley, Burns, Jones, and Porter didn't impress Norr, it should have. Waldo pointed out that Grace's attorney was probably right. He had no case, as far as Waldo could see.

"I've plenty of people who could say that Grace has belittled my work," Norris said.

"Who?" Waldo asked.

"Well, in New York when I was doing my stencil pictures she discouraged me. She fussed at me about my technique."

"Who would corroborate that, Norr?"

"Well, Earl and Ted Hurst might."

"They might. But Norr, that isn't much anyway. What else have you got? After all, Grace's been working all these years. Everyone knows that. Father Martin has helped you both out. And Grace hasn't created the slightest bit of scandal."

"Arthur Grey has flirted with her a lot."

Waldo smiled. "Oh, come on, Norr. None of us think he really is attracted to women. According to what Betty Long told Merly, Alan is a sort of strange person, not homosexual, just sort of neuter. No one will believe any story about him and Grace. I suggest you just have to let this drift. If Grace files, we'll just have to do the best we can for you in the way of alimony. Meanwhile we'll wait and see what she asks for. I'm really very sorry about this divorce idea. I thought you and Grace really loved each other."

Norris looked out the window. "Loving each other doesn't always solve the problem of living together."

"Did you make up that phrase?" Waldo asked.

"Sure - a long time ago. Why?"

"Oh, it's apt, and catchy, that's all."

Jane was thin and sickly that winter, and in March, Grace decided to take her to a doctor. She dared not tell Norris. Jane had never been to a doctor since her birth, save for the superficial examinations at school.

“She has enlarged tonsils,” the doctor said. “What did your former doctor say about them?”

“We haven’t been going to doctors,” Grace said. My husband is a Christian Scientist.”

“Well, what are you?” the man said bluntly.

“I really don’t know,” Grace said. “I believe some of it, but I want Jane to be well. She has a lot of coughs and colds.”

“I recommend her tonsils come out right away.”

“My husband will have a fit.”

“Maybe he’ll die of his fit, then. Well, I’ve given you my professional opinion. You’ll have to thrash it out with your husband.”

“No, no. Never fear. I’ll take your advice. It’s just that I’m in the process of filing for divorce. Custody isn’t established.”

“One way or another. So better just have her tonsils out soon.”

The day before the tonsillectomy arrived, Jane didn’t go to school, but Grace went to work in Cleveland. Dee was in school, and Aunt Ada was busy, ironing.

When Grace left for work she said to Jane, “I’ll try to be home at three, I have to give you a spoonful of fig syrup laxative no later than three. And you will get a very light supper, no breakfast tomorrow. Tell Ada to give you a good lunch. Be a good girl. Don’t worry.”

At three o’clock, her Mother wasn’t home so Jane got the medicine and a spoon and went to the bathroom. She opened the bottle and sniffed. “Pew,” she said, and poured out a spoonful of the brown stuff and swallowed it. She washed it down with a big glass of water. She could still taste it. The doctor had thought it important. He had said to take it at three. Not later than three.

As soon as Grace came home she said, “Come on, let’s take your fig syrup. You should have had it before, but I was delayed.”

“I took it already,” Jane said.

“You took it?”

“Yes. I took it at three.”

“Did Aunt Ada see you take it?”

“No. She was napping. She still is.”

“Chicken! You didn’t really take it. Are you fibbing to your Mom?”

“No!” Jane sounded anguished. “I did take it.”

“I’m just interested in your health. I want you to take another spoonful, just to be sure.”

“That’s not fair. I took it for my health, myself because the doctor said three o’clock. Why do you think I’m lying? Just because Daddy lies to you doesn’t mean everyone does.”

“Oh, chicken! Now calm down. I just want you to take another spoonful to be on the safe side. Two won’t hurt you.”

“I think that’s wise,” said Dee, who had just come in in time to hear the argument.

That was the last straw with Jane. She stormed out of the house shouting, “I hate you both. You should believe people.”

Norris had not been as disturbed by the tonsillectomy as Grace had expected. He was willing to come out from Cleveland with his car to take Jane to the hospital, and the following day he came to take her home again to North Royalton.

“This doesn’t mean I approve,” he pointed out.

“Well, anyway, Norr, I’m grateful to you for furnishing us the transportation.”

“She’s still my daughter, after all.”

“Yes.”

“I didn’t want her to walk through the snow on the way to the slaughter.”

“Oh, Norris, what a word! I’ve done plenty of walking in the snow this winter, by the way.”

“Well, this separation is all your choice, you know.’

“Norr, I had no choice. We had to have some peace of mind.”

“Why don’t you get a car and learn to drive, or vice versa, by the way? Then you won’t have to walk through snow to the trolley.”

“No, I’m going to move to the city next fall,” she said.

“And leave all the pretty shrubs and flowers we planted? I thought you’d stay here.”



1925

JANE R.
"ANDREA"

GRACE R.
"IRENE"

DELIGHT R.
"FAYE"

745 1/2

“No, it’s too hard for me, running back and forth, too time consuming. In Cleveland I won’t be away from the girls so long each day. They need me more than ever now. And of course, I would have been happy enough to stay home with them always.”

“You wanted a career,” he reminded her.

“Only before - before I had the children. Not after that. I’d have been happy to just be a full time mother. I could have painted a few pictures in my spare time.”

“But with Aunt Ada to care for the girls during the day, it ail worked out nicely.”

“It could have, Norr. It could have.”

“It still could.”

“No, it’s no use. Seventeen years is a long enough time to try to make it work. If you’d worked harder, and not indulged in your tantrums and ravings and threats. I’m worn out with it all. Let’s not talk about it. Not get started, please. I don’t want to upset Janie. She doesn’t feel good; her throat hurts. And the doctor says she can have chocolate ice cream. Would you like to get her some?”

“Yes,” said Norr. “I’ll get her some.”

“They’re going to New Hampshire this summer,” Grace said.

“Who is?”

“Why, the girls, of course. Nelle is taking them.”

“That’s kind of her! She’ll ruin their summer.”

“Oh, they love it there, Norr.”

“Well, they won’t.”

“Why?”

“Without you and me they won’t love it at all.”

“But why?”

“Because I know Nelle. She’ll spoil the fun.”

In June, Jane and Dee went to New York alone by train, and then on to New Hampshire by auto, with Nelle, Roger and Babs, and Billy Wooldridge. Mim and Trink were invited, but Merly decided not to let them go. Trink, she said, was still rather young to be away from her mother all summer.



"FOREST CAMP"
1924

PHOTO BY N.W.R.

748¹/₂

It was a very different summer from the others. Nelle had taken driving lessons, and had the car for her own use at Fison's Hill. Roge had returned to New York on the train. Nelle was a very nervous driver. She had mustered the courage to drive to Plymouth for groceries, or to a small lake where the children liked to go in bathing. None of them could swim, however, so Nelle seldom took them. When she did go, she and Dee and Billy Wooldridge paddled around with inflated water wings, while Babs and Jane played in shallow water. It had been different when Grace and Norris were there, because Norr was a strong swimmer, and at least twice each week he'd seen that at least his family went to the lake, and if possible, all the rest. And he'd been trying to teach the others to swim.

Nelle preferred to remain on the Hill. Part of the time Roger and William were up from New York, and when they wore, the improvements on the place went forward. More roadwork, and the building of a garage at the bottom of the hill took all their time. Nelle kept the children busy. Dee and Billy went down the hill for the milk, and the mails every morning. When Roge and William weren't there, poor Billy had to clean the privy. Dee washed dishes while Jane and Babs dried. In addition, Nelle taught all three girls to iron, even though Jane was nine and Babs only seven. They learned to use old-fashioned flatirons, heated on the wood stove. On wash days, Nelle kept all three girls busy, at the scrub-boards out back of the house, scrubbing, turning the hand wringer, and hanging clothes on the line, or taking them down when dry. It was Billy's job to hand the buckets of water from the barrels to the wash-tubs.

Some days Nelle said, "Let's all go pick blueberries on Mount Morgan!" They would pick berries most of the day and pick them over the next morning. Then Nelle would make blueberry pancakes or blueberry muffins, or something delicious with the frightful name of 'blueberry slump.'

The girls much preferred berry-picking days to wash and ironing days. In the middle of the summer the telegram came brought by the mailman. Uncle Waldo Lemmon was dead.

####

Ada had been in a quandary for several weeks. She was torn between staying with Grace and the children, and returning to Cleveland. Rosella had been urging her to return ever since Norris and Grace had separated. Rosella said it was wrong for her to stay with Grace after Norris had moved out and come home to Cartwright Street.

“It makes Norrie look bad,” Rosella said, “If you stay with Grace. It looks like you side with her. I don’t like you to make Norrie look bad.”

“Norrie is bad, Rosella.”

“Ada! How can you say that! He’s your own nephew. He does have trouble controlling his tempah, but other than that he’s a fine man.”

“Rosella, there are two Norris: one is a fine man, the other is a liar and a bully. I have seen him both ways. And so have you.”

They had been talking on the telephone, and Rosella had hung up on Ada, but the next day she had called again to say that she was sorry.

“I know that Norrie has some difficulties, Ada, but I am sure I can help him in Christian Science.”

“You’ve been at it for twenty years, more or less, Rosella.”

“Well... Anyway, I called again to ask you to come back to us. You are a good influence on Norris. He respects you.”

Ada snorted. “I’ve not seen that that’s the case in recent years.”

“That’s because Grace upsets him. She hasn’t brought out the best in him.”

Ada snorted again. “One has to bring out the best in oneself. We can’t blame others for our defects.”

“Ada, we need you here.”

“I’m needed here more.”

“The fact is,” Rosella said. “I think you work too hard out there in North Royalton. Life would be easier for you here in the city.”

“I’m not looking for an easier life. I just want to be where I am useful.”

“But Ada, you’ve been useful all your life! First, for Mama, then Aunt and Uncle Couch, then you helped me, and you nursed Papa and Mama both in their last years. And you’ve been years with Grace, now. You’ve earned a rest. Please come home.”

“You mainly want me there because of Norris and Grace’s divorce, isn’t that the truth?”

“Only partly.”

“Well, you may as well know that I am going to testify for Grace in the divorce proceedings.”

“Ada! You wouldn’t do such a thing!”

“Yes, I would, and I will. I shall tell only the truth, what Norris knows is the truth. And you know it is, too.”

“But that’s so disloyal, Ada. So disloyal to the family.”

Ada became angry then. “Dee and Jane are ‘family’ too, Rosella. Don’t you care about them? It’s in their best interests that I shall testify. It’s ridiculous that Norr should talk of contesting the divorce. He’ll make a fool of himself. Grace has the right on her side. She’s worked much harder than Norr has, all these years, and all their friends know it. I advise you to counsel him to drop his action against Grace. He doesn’t stand a chance with the court.”

“What will you testify to, Ada?” Rosella asked.

“That Norris frightens the children,” Ada said.

“Are you going to plan on living with Grace the rest of your life?”

“No, only as long as the children need me, and Grace wants me. She’s going to move to Cleveland. I’ll probably help her move and get settled, and see how well the girls get on in their new schools. Then we’ll decide whether I stay or not. I’ll miss North Royalton. I love it here.

“Well, I hope you’ll decide to come back here. Do you think he’ll marry again, Ada?”

“Norr? How would I know?”

“Do you think Grace will?”

“I wouldn’t know that either. No sign of it.”

“I wish they’d go back together,” Rosella sighed.

“Not a chance,” said Ada. “Whatever held them together all these years is all used up, worn out, exhausted.”

Actually, at that time, although she did not mention it to Marcella, Ada was quite annoyed with Grace.

It had been an unusual summer at the Cliff Street house, though in some ways pleasanter. Since 1921 Ada had been alone for at least a month each summer while the family went to New Hampshire on their vacation. She had had little housework to do, and much time to write letters and diaries. She had pulled a few weeds in the garden, and watered it with the hose if the rains failed, as they usually did in August. But in the summer of 1925, things were different. Only Dee and Jane had gone East. Grace was living at home in North Royalton and making her daily trips to Cleveland to do her art work, and she'd gone to New York for a two-week visit with Earl and Ted Hurst. ("To get away for a while from the worry of the divorce," she had explained.) There was much coming and going, which Ada would not understand until later after it was all over, and Waldo Lemmon had died of Bright's disease.

To begin with, Grace's parents came for a long visit. They had been staying at their son James's hotel for about a year, since housekeeping, even with Emmie's help, had become too much for Maria Martin, racked as she was with her severe rheumatism. While Emmie could usually care for her mother's physical needs and do the cooking, no one ever knew when she would decide to spend a day in bed with a headache. Maria's knees were so bad now, that she could only walk with the help of two people. And her arms were so crippled that she could not dress without assistance also. Many a morning Henry had to help her, and though he worshipped his wife, and waited on her without complaint, he felt that nursing care should be done by females.

When Grace invited her parents to come stay with her in the Cliff Street house in North Royalton, Henry was enthused. He loved the thought of being close to the Old Brick. But Maria had demurred, saying "I don't see how you can manage, Dottie. Emmie's not always dependable in helping me."

But Grace had said that Ada would help in the mornings when Emmie slept in. Most of the time, Emmie would be a help to Ada. And the children would be gone all summer. "Well, we'll come for the summer," Maria Martin said. "At least we can share expenses with you while you're going through this difficult time."

Grace had consulted both her mother and Ada about the matter of the divorce, asking each of them whether she felt it was the right thing. Each of them had agreed sadly that there seemed to be no choice. Grace did not ask Rosella's opinion.

But the divorce had been put out of people's minds by Waldo's illness. In June, he felt poorly for days at a time - then he improved. Grace discussed it with Ada, who asked what the trouble was.

"Merly hesitates to give it reality by putting a name to it, but Betty Long says Waldo's brother told her it was Bright's disease. [nephritis – several possible causes – infection, autoimmune and genetic]



EDNA (TED) and EARL HURST
"LOUISE and DON TRUNK"

circa 1921

“That’s kidney trouble,” said Ada. “We had a cousin who had it.”

“Did he get over it?” Grace asked.

No, he didn’t. He died of it,” Ada said, “but of course, that was quite a long time ago. Probably they can cure it now.” Ada always looked on the cheerful side of things.

“Merly would like to heal it in Christian Science,” Grace said, “but Waldo is having a doctor. It makes it hard for Merly to help him.”

Ada did not comment on that conflict. It had been going on in the family for years and she was accustomed to it.

Ada enjoyed having Maria Martin with her this summer, for it was always pleasant to converse with her. Maria was seventy-nine and her mind was still alert and quick. She read the daily Cleveland Herald and a magazine called “The Christian Herald,” and she wrote many letters and kept diaries for her children. Maria was very much upset by the Scopes “monkey” trial in progress in Dayton, Tennessee. She had long been an admirer of William Jennings Bryan, even though he was a Democrat. He was a Fundamentalist and he defended the teachings of the Bible. Through the years, the sorrows of her life had driven Maria deeper and more firmly, into the teachings of her childhood. Her dear mother had truly believed that Maily and Jenny had been taken from Maria by God as a punishment, and though Maria had at times doubted this, now in her old age, she was convinced of it, and thought of herself as a sinner.

Ada was different. As she grew older she became less religious. Raised an Episcopalian, she had not been convinced by Christian Science, as explained to her by Rosella. Nor had Mrs. Billy’s writings convinced her. They invariably put her to sleep.

Maria had asked her what she thought of the teachings of Darwin and the theory of evolution.

“I really haven’t studied it,” Ada said. “I just know the main idea of it. About apes being our ancestors.”

“It’s so dangerous to get people believing things like that,” Maria said. “Man needs to be convinced of his divine origin. Else he won’t strive to uplift himself.”

I see what you mean,” Ada said. “You feel if he thinks he descends from apes, he won’t try to be more Godly.”

“I’m afraid so,” Maria said.

“But it’s easy to see how Darwin’s ideas could catch on. We used to go to the Bronx Zoological Park when we lived in Brooklyn. We used to think the apes were so much like people, and my Papa used to think people often act like apes.”

“That’s just the problem,” Maria said. “We must cling to the truth of God’s word. My Bible is my great comfort.”

Maria was deeply shocked when Bryan died only a few days after winning his case against the schoolteacher who dared teach that man and apes had evolved from a common ancestor. For though the prosecution had triumphed, somehow the defenders of the Bible had in fact lost ground, and the publicity of the trial had made more people interested in the Darwinian beliefs.

But then they began to think of other matters. Waldo and Merly drove out from Cleveland, bringing the little girls, Mim and Trink. Merly and the children were to stay a week or so. Grace spoke to Ada about it.

“I know we’ll be terribly crowded, but Merly wants to have a week to read ‘Science’ and try and cure Waldo. She thinks maybe she can be more helpful if she is where she doesn’t see him taking his pills.”

“My” Ada said. “He did look bad - so thin and pale.”

“Yes, and Mother noticed that too, poor dear. She’s already upset about me. Now she’ll lie awake nights worrying about Waldo and Merly. She gets so little rest as it is, with all her pain. And she never complains. She’s just a saint.”

“Yes,” agreed Ada. “She’s a fine, gentle person. And you know; she considers herself a sinner.”

“Nothing could be further from the truth,” said Grace. “Nothing.”

A few days later, while Grace was in Cleveland working, the telephone rang in the Cliff Street house. Ada answered it. It was Waldo’s brother Robert, calling to say that Waldo was taken very ill in the night. Ada called Merly to the phone, and Merly talked in hushed tones for a few minutes.

When she was through talking, Merly asked Ada to step out into the garden with her. Ada was so deaf that one had to speak loudly to make her hear.

“I came out here so Mother wouldn’t hear me talking to you. I’ll have to go back to the city. They’ve just taken Waldo to the hospital. Robert says his wife will look after Mim and Trink.”

“I’d be glad to care for them if you want to leave them with us.”

“No, I’d best not. Mother would wonder about it. We don’t want her to worry over Waldo. I’ll think up some excuse for going home early. Robert is coming out to get us.”

“Does Grace know?” Ada asked.

“I’m going to phone her at work,” Merly said.

A week later, at the end of July, Waldo Lemmon died. The news came in the early evening on the day when Maria had been feeling sad because funeral services were being held in Washington for William Jennings Bryan. He had won his case in one sense but lost it in another; Clarence Darrow had made the cause of the Fundamentalists look ridiculous.

“That poor, poor man,” Maria said of Bryan. He tried so hard to show the shining truth of God’s Word. He was exhausted from trying to contend with that man Darrow.”

Grace, who had stayed in Cleveland to help console Merly, had spoken to Ada on the phone.

“Tell Father the sad news, but ask him not to tell Mother tonight. Let her get her night’s sleep first. Ask him to tell her tomorrow morning, or let him wait and I’ll tell her. I’m going to stay with Merly tonight. Betty Long is here too, and so is Robertt Lemmon. He’s taking care of all the arrangements. Apparently Waldo felt that he was going to pass on. He had bought a cemetery lot in Oakmont. The funeral will be day after tomorrow, I suppose, or the day after. It’s not definite yet.”

“Tell me,” Ada asked. “How is Merly?”

“Doing fairly well, I would say. She’s reading Science and trying to find some comfort.”

“She hasn’t lost her faith? Now that Waldo has died so young? How old was he?”

“Thirty-eight. Younger than Merly.”

“Such a pity. Those poor, dear little girls losing their Daddy.”

“Yes, and Mother will take it hard. You asked if Merly has lost her faith in Science. No. She hasn’t. Personally, though, I think it’s better not to try both beliefs at the same time. They were mixing ‘materia medica’ with Christian Science and there was a conflict in their thinking. Merly herself thinks that’s why it all, failed.”

“I would venture to say that someday doctors will find the answer to Bright’s disease,” Ada said. “They’ve found the answer to so many things. What will poor Merly do now?”

“I don’t know,” Grace said, “but she has asked me to send a telegram to Nelle. I’m sure Nelle wouldn’t be able to get here for the funeral. Not with the children and all there is to do. If Roger were on the Hill she could come on and leave the youngsters up there with him. Although I doubt if he would want to try to cook and wash for four children.”

“From what Dee writes me, the children do all the washing,” Ada said.

“Well, yes - with supervision. But Nelle does all the cooking. No, I doubt if she’ll be able to leave till they close camp. That’s usually the last week in August. That’s another month almost.

Well, someone wants to use the line, Ada, so I'll go. Be sure to tell Father to wait till morning before he tells Mother about Waldo.

Suddenly Ada was alone in the Cliff Street house. Mother and Father Martin and Emmie went into Cleveland to stay with Merly for the rest of the summer, to keep her from her loneliness and to help with her expenses. And Grace took to spending many nights in the city with Betty Long.

Once again Ada had only herself to cook for, and plenty of time to write letters. Rosella began again telephoning her to come back to Cartwright Street.

"No," Ada said. "I have to keep the garden watered in this dry spell. I don't have Father Martin here to do it now. No, I'll continue here. You don't really need me at all. You have Ethel and Norris."

"Aren't you lonely?" Rosella asked.

"Oh, yes, but Grace is here most evenings, and the children will be home soon. Besides, there's a stray cat that's decided to make his home here. He keeps me company. I wasn't going to feed him, but he was so hungry and thin, I finally gave in. He's a beautiful white one. Jane will be delighted with him."

"Grace doesn't like cats," Rosella said.

"I know, but I think she'll let the children have this one. He's so pretty."

When she got home from the mountains, Jane immediately fell in love with the cat. She named him Whitey and carried him around in her arms much of the time.

"Aren't you glad to see your poor Mommy?" Grace asked. "You pay more attention to that cat than you do to me."

"Course I'm glad to see you," Jane said, "but you don't love people the same way you love animals. They depend on people to give them love. They can't tell you they need it."

A week or so later the cat got into a fight with another cat, and got his nose badly scratched. He sneezed quite a lot as the injury slowly healed. He was not as pretty with his injured nose. Jane carried him around more than ever and babied him. When the cat sneezed, Grace would be upset.

"Put that cat down, Jane. It's got something wrong with it."

"He's not 'that cat'! He's 'Whitey' and I love him. It's just that his nose is still hurt. He can't help it."

"He's sick." Grace said.

"4a. Don't say that. You're a Christian Scientist."

Shortly after that, the cat disappeared. Jane spent hours calling him. She would go outside by the back porch and stand, calling "Here Whitey, here Whitey." Grace couldn't stand it any longer. She called Jane in.

"Sit down, dear," she said. "Don't call the kitty any more, dear. I have to tell you something. The kitty was sick so I had him put to sleep."

"You what!" Jane said. "You mean you had him killed?"

"We don't think of it that way, dear. We think of it as putting him to sleep. I had a man chloroform him."

"Oh!" Jane cried. "You're awful. You may think of it as 'putting him to sleep' - I call it 'killing' - I even call it murder. He wasn't sick. His nose was healing up. I'll never forgive you."

Aunt Ada had difficulty forgiving Grace , too.

"It wasn't at all necessary," she protested.

"Well, we couldn't have taken the cat to Cleveland anyway," Grace said.

"Certainly, we could." Ada said. "He would have been a comfort to Jane. She's had an unhappy summer."

LIFE IS ALWAYS CHANGING

Nelle had arrived at Merly's with Babs, and soon found the solution to the question of what Merly would do.

"The thing," Nelle told her father, "the obvious thing is for you all to move into one house in Oberlin. Merly and Emmie will do the work, and Pa will pay the bills."

Henry Martin raised an eyebrow. "I'll pay the bills?"

"Yes," Nelle said, "and you'll be ahead money if you do. Otherwise you may have to hire a nurse or a housekeeper, or even both. And it will be a help to Merly too. I'll take Mim back to New York for the winter, by the way."

"If I could get some of our former houses back, I'd do it," Henry Martin said.

"You'll have to do it anyway, Pa," Nelle said. "Because it's the only smart thing to do."

In the end, they moved into an apartment in the building that had been built to house Art Martin's motion picture theater. Although they had expected to live in a house, this arrangement delighted everyone concerned except Maria, for Henry Martin and Trink spent hours in the theater, and even Merly and Emmie slipped downstairs frequently to watch an especially good film. Maria suspected that it was bad for them to see so many movies, but since she'd never seen one she was at a loss to prove her theory.

With October, came Grace's divorce proceedings. One grey day Jane came home from school at noon expecting to find Aunt Ada and a hot lunch. She was surprised to find the doors locked, then discovered a paper bag with a note attached.

"Dear Janie - here is your lunch. We had to go to court today. Be a good girl and come straight home after school is out. We'll be home by then. Love, Mommy"

In the bag was a banana and a peanut butter sandwich.

Jane sat on the porch swing, and ate the food. She thought about the cat, Whitey. If he were there he would share her sandwich with her. He had liked bread. Tears came to her eyes. She went back to school. It was a dry day, and a frost had killed the flowers. In another week they would be moving to Cleveland to a strange new house.

Jane would be leaving her best friend, Grace Harris, but what was worse, Dee would be leaving her best friend, Marian 'Skipper' Root, and Dee would have to go to Cleveland's Gates High School. She would not graduate from North Royalton High School with Marian 'Skipper' Root. Jane liked Skipper even if she was older. Dee was fifteen, Skipper fourteen, and Jane only nine, but they had had many good times together, especially before Dee and Skipper had started high school and begun talking about boys all the time.

The new house in Cleveland was the upstairs of a two-family house. It had only two bedrooms, and bath, and of course, kitchen, dining room and living room. Off the living room was an alcove, and this was where Aunt Ada slept. She had a cot and a dresser here, but there was no clothes closet, and the room had no door, only a wide archway, where Grace placed a screen.

Jane and Dee shared the back room, and Grace had the other. There was only one clothes closet, a large 'walk-in' where all of them kept their things.

The lovely furniture that Norris and Grace had collected over the years did not look as well in the apartment, but it helped make it homelike. The big Mason and Hamlin grand piano had had to be brought through an upstairs window with a block and tackle, for it would not turn the corner of the stairs.

The place was heated with three gas heaters, one in the living room, and another in the dining room, and a small one in the bathroom, on which one could easily burn one's leg.

Jane did not like her new school, but she was very proud that it was run on the "departmental" system. In North Royalton she had had one teacher for all her studies, but now in McGinley School, even in the fourth grade, the pupils went from classroom to classroom to different teachers. Jane would have to write to Grace Harris and tell her about that.

Dee for her part did not like Gates High School at all. She was in the ninth grade, a freshman, and she was studying Latin and Algebra, English and Civics. She was doing well enough in the last two, but having difficulty with Latin and Algebra. "I loathe Math" she said, "and would rather have taken French."

"Why didn't you, then?" Jane asked.

"Because I'm going to college after high school, and I have to have Latin. It's a dead language."

"What's that mean?"

"Nobody speaks it anymore."

"Hm. They must have a reason, though."

"Who?"

"Why you have to take it. Why you should know it."

11011, they do. But I hate the stupid stuff. And I hate Gates High.

In Cleveland, Jane and Dee did not come home from school at lunch time. Dee left very early in the morning to be at Gates High at ten minutes before eight. She rode the streetcar. It was not at all like walking to North Royalton High with Marian 'Skipper' Root who had been her best friend since third grade. They had walked to school together all those years, through autumn

leaves and snow, and wearing navy blue hooded rain capes through the spring rain showers. Later, when they were older, they'd worn yellow slickers when they walked in the rain. Skipper would still graduate from North Royalton with all their friends. The most Dee could hope for was that perhaps she and Skipper could go to the same college some day. That is, if Grace could afford to send her to college.

Jane had to walk to school still. Her walk in Cleveland was much longer. McGinley School was nine blocks away from Rosewood Street. Dee got home from school much earlier than Jane.

In early November Aunt Ada came down with a bad attack of grippe. She was miserable in her narrow cot. Her back ached and so did her head. When Jane came home from school, Ada called to her.

“Jane is that you?”

“Yes, Auntie.”

“Would you come here, dear?”

Jane came into Ada's little alcove.

“Are you any better, Ady?”

“Perhaps, a little bit, dear. Dee went down to the corner drug store. When she gets back would you ask her to put the kettle on to boil? I think I'll fix a cup of tea.”

“Did you eat any lunch, Idy?” Jane asked.

“No, but I may take something to eat when your mother fixes dinner. Perhaps I'll have an egg. That appeals to me.”

In twenty minutes Jane appeared at Ada's bedside with a tray with a pot of tea, and a poached egg on toast.

Ada sat up in bed.

“For heaven's sake! I didn't hear Dee come in. Doesn't this look good! You girls are just splendid.”

“Dee isn't back yet. I think she's over next door at her new friend's house.”

“You mean you fixed this all yourself?”

“Yes.” Jane beamed proudly.

“Lit the stove burners and everything!”

“Sure. In New Hampshire I made fires in the wood stove with kindling and matches. Lighting the stove is easy as pie.”

“Always be careful!”

“I will. Aunt Nelle taught me how to be careful with fire, and to always break a match before you throw it away.”

“Break it?”

“Yes. If it’s cool enough to break it with your fingers, it’s cool enough to go in the waste basket.”

“My goodness! That’s a very good idea. You are growing up.”

“At Aunt Nelle’s I learned to iron, and to make “Hermit” cookies, and, pancakes, and I made blueberry muffins one time.”

“Imagine! Janie, this poached egg is delicious. Just think! Instead of me taking care of you, you’re taking care of me. You won’t even need your old auntie anymore.”

“Oh, yes, I will! Jane cried. “I always will.”

But after Ada felt better she began going to Cartwright Street on weekends, since Grace was at home to be with her girls. At Cartwright Street, Ada’s room had remained the same ever since she had left in 1914 to make her home with Norris and Grace. All these years it could have been Ethel’s room, but Ethel had continued to share the same room and doublebed with her mother, as had been the custom since Ethie was a little tot.

Now that Norris was back home, he had his old room back again, the room that was the largest and best bedroom in the house. The tiny room that had been John Rahming’s was used for storage these days.

One Sunday evening when Ada returned to Grace’s, she found Grace waiting with a question.

“Is there any truth in the rumors that are going around town about Norris?”

“I don’t know what the rumors are, Grace,” Ada said.

“That he is planning to be married.”

“Yes,” Ada said. “There is truth in it, I understand.”

“Did he tell you himself, Ada?”

“No, but Ethie spoke of it.”

“I hope it isn’t any time soon,” Grace said.

“Yes, I think it will be very soon. Ethie and Rosella hoped he would wait longer, and be sure he was doing the right thing, but he doesn’t want to wait. He says he has good reasons.”

“He is behind in his support payments for the girls. He has no business getting married if he can’t even take care of his obligations to his children.”

“He says that this marriage will help him in his work.”

“Help him in his work!” Grace said. “Why would it?”

“I can only tell you what Ethel told me, Grace. He says he’ll do better work because this woman is not an artist. She won’t compete with him, he says.”

“What does she do?”

“She’s a seamstress. But perhaps I should tell you more, since sooner or later you’ll learn it and it will no doubt upset you considerably. They are going to be married around the first of December, and then they are going to France.”

“To France! Where would Norr get the money for a trip to France? So he’s going to France!”

“I gather she has money,” Ada said.

“Trust Norr,” Grace said bitterly, “to find a woman to pay his way. To France! Trust Norr! He fixed it so that I never got to go to France, and now he will go with his new lady-love.”

“You should have gone to France when you had your scholarship,” Ada said. “and not let your life get tangled up with Norris Rahming.”

“You are absolutely right, Aunt Ada. That’s exactly what I should have done.”

“Well, you know how the saying goes — ‘Of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these: “It might have been!”’”

“Yes, well it is sad. Very sad. I never should have let him talk me into his plans.”

“Well, you’ve got your two fine girls, anyway,” Ada said. “and your talent.”

“Yes,” Grace said. “I know. But Ada, I won’t stay in Cleveland. As soon as I can I’ll go back to New York. I don’t think I will care to be around, this town with Norr married to someone else. I’d be bumping into them here and there, and I’d hate that. Yes, I think I’ll plan on living in the East.”

“If I were young,” Ada said, “I’d go back to Brooklyn myself. Well, speaking of future plans, Grace, I’ve decided to return to Cartwright Street to live. Dee and Jane are old enough now to

manage without me. I'll surely hate to leave them. They are very dear to me. They made up to me for never having children of my own."

"Then why do you go? We want you to stay with us."

"Grace, you weren't thinking of me when you got this apartment without a bedroom I could use."

"It was the best I could afford, Ada. I am sorry. You can use my room. I'll use the alcove."

"Oh, no - I wouldn't think of that, Grace."

"You see, I couldn't find anything with three bedrooms. I didn't feel I could pay more than forty dollars a month. Norris hasn't sent me one cent, yet, for the girls' support."

"I guess he hasn't got any money, Grace."

"Well, he would best get busy."

"Yes, he certainly will have to," Ada agreed.

Ada left between Thanksgiving and Christmas in spite of Jane's protests.

"Remember now, dear," she said. "You and Dee must come and see us often. I love you both dearly."

"I can't bear to have you go," Jane cried.

"Life is always changing" Aunt Ada said. "Remember that."

With Ada gone, Grace had new worries. She felt that Ada was right; the girls were older and quite resourceful. She would get them off to school and Dee, who was now fifteen, would be home when Jane returned. But Grace worried about vacation time, as Dee didn't like to be tied down to a sister who still liked to play with dolls, and to sew for them. Dee's main interest now was boys.

At Easter time, Grace sent Jane to Oberlin, to spend the Spring holidays with Mim and Trink. Jane promptly came down with measles and had to spend an extra week in a darkened room under the loving care of Aunts Merly and Emmie. Except for when her fever was high she enjoyed all the attention and home-made bread and jelly. She hated going back to school in Cleveland.

Nineteen twenty-six was an eventful year. Maria Martin nearly died of pneumonia, but rallied and pulled through. Norris Rahming and his new wife came home to Cleveland after spending the winter in France. Grace vowed again that she would not remain in Cleveland, and she took the first opportunity. Roger Fison's sister, Millie, had opened a girls' summer camp in New

Hampshire about an hour's drive from Forest Camp, and she invited Grace to spend the summer there in the role of arts and crafts instructor in exchange for a small salary and free board for Dee, Jane and herself. Grace accepted the offer and the plans were laid.

In the end, only Grace spent the full summer at Millie's Camp Norchunkaw.

[The Daily Star, Long Island City, Queens Borough, N.Y. Friday Evening, January 8, 1932

Jackson Heights News Notes

Mrs. Nelle F. Leonard, director of Camp Norchunkaw for Girls, entertained her 1931 campers, parents and staff at a reunion tea at her home in the Greystones.]

Dee, Jane, Mim, Trink, and Babs spent all of July at Nelle and Roge's Forest Camp. For Dee the summer meant falling madly in love with the local minister, a southern bachelor who took some advantage of the situation, till Nelle took notice of what was going on, and packed all the girls off to Camp Norchunkaw for the month of August. But Nelle kept Mim with her for all but the final week of camp, for Mim had an injured foot from sliding out of the hay mow onto the barn floor. The sprain need not have kept Mim from joining the others, but Nelle loved her and wanted her company.

For Jane it was an opportunity to get away from Nelle, who frightened her most of the time.

Both Dee and Jane learned to swim that summer, and to dance the Artton.

Grace, however, though in some ways she had enjoyed the summer, was still filled with anguish and worry. Millie had not lived up to her promises about Grace's salary, so the summer had provided board and room but little more. However, while at Norchunkaw Grace had learned of a southern boarding school, and when September came, Fay and Jane found themselves at school in Virginia. They arrived with nothing more than their camp clothes, and found a box of bedding Grace had ordered mailed from Strohmeier's store in Cleveland.

A southern boarding school was an interesting experience for both girls, but Jane was much too young for the rest of the student body. The school took only day pupils Jane's age. She did not return to Virginia after spending the Christmas holidays at home in Cleveland. Grace considered her much too thin and tired. She did not know exactly what she should do with Jane, who had a funny little cough. Grace could not imagine why. After all, she had had Jane's tonsils removed. Jane insisted that she felt all right and that she would, be perfectly happy and safe going back to McGinley School. She said that she could take care of herself. But Grace had other ideas. She wrote to Nelle.

"Dearest Sis:

I wonder if you could do for me what you did for Merly last year when you took Mim for the winter. Jane has just come home from boarding school and she is very much rundown. I thought



CAMP NORCHUNKAW
"NAH-TAY-SEE"

GRACE AND DEE in front
of window
IRENE
"FAYE"



"CAROL" "TREENY" "MURRY" "ANDREA"
AT
"NAH-TAY-SEE"



CANTO
THE RENTED PONY
AT FOREST CAMP

it would be the answer to my problem, but it isn't. She didn't have the proper supervision, I guess, in her eating and sleeping. I'd like to see her put on a few pounds but I can't be at home daytimes to look after her. I am terribly busy just now getting out Landers' catalog for summer. Could you take Janie for the spring semester? I know how you like to have playmates for Babs.

"Now, I'll let you in on a secret. I am considering marrying again but haven't told the girls yet. They know I've been seeing quite a bit of Carle Semon, but they have no idea that we may be serious. I want them to get used to Carle slowly.

"Carle is a photographer, and has been in the past an acquaintance of Norr and myself. He is older than I, but was in a summer watercolor class with us once years ago. He tells me he has admired me ever since then.

He has some inherited income, and his photographic work. It would make my life easier if I were to marry him, but I haven't decided yet, so don't breathe the tiniest word to the family.

"Do write and let me know whether you can take Jane.

Much love from

Your Sis, Grace"

Jane spent her semester in New York, and was treated to the same adventures that Mim had had the year before: a four-day trip to Atlantic City, and a trip to Coney Island when summer came. In addition to all that she was in New York when Lindbergh came home in triumph from Paris. The schools were closed for "Lindy" Day.

When summer came, Dee was off to Forest Camp again, but Jane was not to go.

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In late 1925 when Ada had returned to Cartwright Street, it was a pleasant change. She missed Jane and Dee, but Christmas was coming, and Grace had assured her that the girls would be free to visit at holiday time. Ada began to plan for Christmas, and she busied herself settling into the old bedroom. There was a stack of boxes piled up in a corner of the room. Rosella said they were wedding presents to Norr and Pauline from Pauline's family. Rosella and Ethel and Ada had given them cash because Norr said that was what he needed most. In addition, Norr had borrowed five hundred dollars from Ada. He and Pauline planned to stay in France through springtime. When they came back, Norris said, he would have a trunk full of oil paintings

It was pleasant to be back in her old room after twelve years. She'd been back from time to time to spend weekends, of course, but that wasn't the same. Now she was back with all her things. It comforted Ada to lie on the bed and look around the room at the furniture that had been her Mama and Papa's in their house in Brooklyn. It all seemed very long ago since she'd lived on Fleet Street. She found herself thinking about it more and more these days. Her Mama had told her that as people got older they thought more and more about long ago days. Well, she was getting close to seventy now; that must be happening to her.

Ada had trouble with painful feet. It was a trial for her to go marketing or downtown. Rosella seemed to feel that they would take up where they had left off in 1913. Ada would do the cooking and marketing, and Rosella would have more time to devote to her practice of Christian Science. But Ada had told Rosella that she was older now, and not able to spend as much time on her feet as before.

"I'll cook, and sew, and mend. I can go to the store, but I can't carry a heavy basket of groceries," she said.

Ada was interested in learning how the neighborhood had changed.

"The Roby's have moved away," Rosella said. "I guess you knew that, though. Old Mrs. Semon is still there. One of the sons still lives with her. She's not very well. I don't know whether she receives callers or not."

"Well" Ada said, "perhaps I'll call on her some day when my feet aren't hurting."

In January, Ada slipped and fell on the icy sidewalk in front of the house. A child passing by ran to tell Rosella Rahming, who put on a shawl and hurried out.

Lying on the ground in great pain, Ada called out, "Be careful! It's icy. Don't you slip too."

"I'll help you up," Rosella said.

They tried, but Ada could not put weight on her left leg. Rosella managed to find one of the neighbor men at home and brought him out to help Ada into the house.

“She ought to have a doctor,” he said. “She may have broke it.”

“Oh no,” Rosella said. “It isn’t broken.”

The man looked doubtful, but with Rosella’s help he got Ada into the house and upstairs to her room, where she wished to be taken. She was shivering and her face was white.

“Best get your doctor right away,” the neighbor said.

Rosella thanked him and saw him to the door.

She got her copy of “Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures it and went to Ada.

“I’ll read for you,” Rosella said.

“I’d rather have a cup of tea,” Ada said, “though I’m not sure it’ll stay down.”

Ada stayed upstairs until Norris and Pauline came home from France in early May. Ethel had gone to Betty Long’s to borrow a bedpan and crutches that had been Betty’s mother’s. The crutches were not quite long enough for Ada, but after a couple of months she had learned to go to the bathroom on them. Rosella and Ethel had to bring Ada’s meals to her on a tray.

“I’m sorry to be such a nuisance,” Ada said.

Rosella only smiled her bland smile, but Ethel said, “That’s all right, Auntie, you’ve nursed plenty of people in your time.”

“In my time,” mused Ada. “I guess ‘my time’ is coming toward its conclusion.”

“Oh Auntie! You’ve no reason to say that. You’ve just had a fall that shook you up badly.”

“Then it’s shaken my brain up badly. I can’t even remember what I was doing outside that day. Was I going to the store, or downtown, or what?”

“I don’t know, Auntie. I was at work.”

“Rosella doesn’t remember either. We’re both getting on, I guess. That’s the way people get when they’re old. Remember things from fifty years ago, but can’t recall what happened yesterday. It really discourages me.”

Ada never walked again without crutches. In April Norris cabled from France asking if Aunt Ada could cable him money to come home. Ethel took care of withdrawing the money and sending it - muttering something about Norr having no business going on a prolonged honeymoon he and Pauline couldn’t afford.

When Norr and Pauline got back to Cartright Street Norr immediately took action on the matter of Ada’s injury.

“You should be up and around by now, Auntie.”

“I guess it takes longer at my age.” “What does the doctor say?” Pauline asked.

“I didn’t have a doctor,” Ada said.

Norris turned to his mother. “Mother, I don’t think this sort of thing should have been handled in ‘Science’! She could have broken something. She should have had X-ray pictures.”

“But Norrie,” Rosella said. “She’s been getting better all the time. Science is healing her.”

“Unless she can go without crutches, she isn’t healed. A sprain would be healed by now. Can you bear any weight on it, Auntie?”

“No, scarcely any weight at all,” Ada said.

“You must have an X-ray. I’ll take you. I’ll arrange it. Louise’s doctor will arrange it.”

“Norrie!” Rosella said. “Science is taking care of it.”

“Nonsense, Mama. This is a mechanical problem.”

Norr took Ada to be X-rayed and the films showed a fractured femur which had healed without being properly set.

“It’s too late to reduce it now,” the doctor said. “The bone has healed and callused on the ends. Whatever caused this neglect of her injury? The pain should have told her she’d broken her hip.”

“It’s a long story,” Norris said. “I was in France at the time. I would have seen that she was taken care of properly. My mother is a Christian Scientist.”

“Oh, ho! I see. So that was it!”

“Mother is a practitioner with many healings to her credit,” Norris said.

“I won’t comment,” the doctor said. “It’s just the ticket for hypochondriacs, no doubt.”

That summer, Norr and Pauline lived in the Cartwright Street house, and Norr busied himself with getting oil paintings ready for a one-man exhibition in a downtown Cleveland art gallery. They got a good write-up in the Cleveland Herald, and he made several sales. Pauline meanwhile was busy making the dresses for the entire bridal party of the daughter of a U.S. Senator. It had been a windfall assignment for her, and had come to her through a shipboard friendship she and Norr had made on the way home from Europe.

A year later, in the spring of 1927, Norris had more paintings in the Annual June exhibition at the Cleveland Art Museum than he had ever had before: four oils and three water colors. He also had a group of six photographs. All the subjects were of the south of France, along the

Mediterranean, or in the Pyrenees. His largest oil painting was awarded the second prize in the class, and two of the water colors received honorable mention.

“I’m finally on my way here in Cleveland,” he told his family. “By the way, Pauline and I are going to France again this winter.”

WHY HAS SHE BEEN ALL THOSE PLACES?

During the spring semester of 1927 when Jane was living in New York with Nelle and Roger, she found herself in very much the same situation as that she always experienced when she was at Forest Camp: fear of her Aunt Nelle and fascination with a new environment. She hated her school, Public School 69, but she loved riding New York's subways and elevated trains. For Nelle permitted Babs to ride the subway into Manhattan alone every Saturday, to take her dancing and piano lessons. When Jane arrived in January, she joined the dancing class and traveled downtown with Babs. The two girls always stood in the front car, peering into the dark tunnel ahead. All her life Jane would remember the warm, dusty 'electrical' smell of the subway, and recall the magnified, lighted buffalo nickels where they dropped into the turnstiles. Babs was so small at eight years of age that she frequently ducked under, while Jane at ten, was taller and had to pay. Nelle always instructed the girls, "If you get lost ever, just go back to Grand Central and start over again."

Roger became a substitute father for Jane that winter. Both the girls called him 'Uncle Daddy'. Jane was devoted to him, and he enjoyed doing for her what he had done for Mim the year before, replacing a missing father. He took Nelle and the girls for a four-day holiday at an Atlantic City boardwalk hotel planning it all as a surprise.

On another occasion, in late spring, Roge took them all out to a pretty park on Long Island where they slept in a tent that Roge fashioned from a tarpaulin and a rope strung between trees. It was fun, but Nelle would be Nelle, and chose the occasion for a little unnecessary discipline. She observed that Jane did not tie her shoelaces in the fashion that she herself preferred. Jane always tied a conventional bow and then took the two loops and tied them once more in a simple half-knot. Nelle had another method of tying a bow which she said was "the only right way", and while Roger and Babs went on a bird and wild-flower walk, Nelle kept Jane sitting on the ground practicing, over and over, the new knot. And, of course, Jane had argued about it. "Everyone I know does it the other way. Aunt Ada taught me years and years ago. It's called a 'double-bow'."

But Nelle had insisted.

In the month of May, Grace had come on to direct the redecoration of the apartment and to mix the paint colors. While she was in Jackson Heights, Millie invited Grace to be a counselor at Camp Norchunkaw again. But money was still owing Grace from the previous summer, so she said, no, and confided to Millie that she was tentatively planning to be married in August. Millie offered to pay off her debt to Grace by inviting Dee and Jane to camp at no cost. This suggestion fitted in beautifully with Grace's plans.

It was soon decided that Babs, Jane and Dee would all go to Norchunkaw for the entire summer. As soon as Dee arrived from the school in Virginia, Nelle and Grace took them downtown to Spalding's to be measured for the official camp uniform - dark green serge bloomers, tan middy-

blouse, bright green silk tie, and Robin Hood felt hats with feathers. Add to that, hiking shoes, sneakers, wool socks and for Sunday, white bloomers and white middies. Next, to Macy's to buy a footlocker for each girl.

Each of the girls must pass a simple physical examination, and when the results were in, the woman doctor got in touch with Grace. She could not give Jane a clean bill of health to permit her to attend camp that summer.

She has a little cough I don't like. I'm ordering a chest X-ray. She may have tuberculosis."

The chest X-ray showed nothing of interest, and Grace was puzzled.

"Well," the doctor said, "I still think she may be tubercular. Take her to your family doctor and see what he says. But she mustn't go to camp."

Grace discussed it with Nelle.

"You hadn't noticed her coughing?" Grace asked.

"No more than usual, Grace. That kid has always had a funny little cough. I thought that's why you had her tonsils out."

"Well - and it would have helped if Aunt Ada hadn't let the furnace get low the day after we brought Janie home. The house got cold and she got a cold."

"I don't remember that at all," Jane said. "Aunt Ada always kept the house cozy. We liked it warm."

"Oh, chicken," Grace said. "You wouldn't remember."

"I do remember," insisted Jane. "I have an unusually good memory, just like Daddy."

"Yeah, and you argue like him, too, Kid," said Nelle.

It was June and the New York schools were still in session. They never recessed for the summer until the very last day of June. The schools were overcrowded and operating double sessions. Babs went in the morning, Jane in the afternoon. All the schools were closed the day Art Lindbergh was in New York for a ticker-tape parade. Jane and Babs each had made scrapbooks of "Lindy" the hero. They begged Nelle on their knees to take them downtown to see the parade or to let them go alone. Nelle refused, so the girls spent the day playing in the hay that had been cut in the vacant field nearby. When they came in Jane was sneezing and coughing again.

"Oh, dear," Grace said. "You've caught another cold."

"It's the hay that makes me sneeze," said Jane.

“I beg to differ with you.” Nelle said. “Babs isn’t sneezing, you’ll notice.”

They all went down to Grand Central to see the campers off to New Hampshire. In the terminal, Jane could see Camp Norchunkaw’s big, felt banner hanging over the balustrade of the upper level, and below it, on the concourse, all the New York contingent were gathering. They were all arrayed in their dark green bloomers, tan middies and bright green ties, as were Babs and Dee. So, in fact, was Jane. Grace and Dee had told her, “You ought to wear it. It’s your uniform. It’s not your fault you’re not going to camp.”

‘But I’m not going, though, and it’s silly to wear it.’

After Babs and Dee and the others had gone down to their train, Jane looked up through Grand Central’s smoky haze to where the stars twinkled on the high blue ceiling. The constellations swam in her tears.

The next day Grace and Jane went home to Cleveland. In the baggage car rode Jane’s footlocker with all her Camp Norchunkaw uniforms, her hiking shoes, new bathing suit, her Lindbergh scrapbook, and her official “last doll,” a cuddly baby from R.H. Macy’s, named “Dimples.”

It was a strange summer for Jane. She was alone much of the time. Grace no longer lived on Rosewood Street in the two-family house. She had rented a small apartment on Grand Avenue about two blocks from Cleveland School of Art. It was old and familiar territory and somewhat comforting to Grace. At the same time it was a continuing and painful reminder of Norris.

The building was four stories high with an additional floor under a mansard roof. There were a number of small rooms up there for storage and Grace had one, filled with excess furniture. Her apartment had a good large living room, a corridor with one bedroom opening onto an airshaft, and beyond, the bathroom. The corridor then led to the dining room and kitchen which were at the back of the building, and were sunny, as they were on the south.

Grace had been able to put her favorite pieces of furniture into the apartment. The living-room was large enough to do justice to the large Mason and Hamlin grand piano and the apple-green velvet Empire sofa. Both pieces had been bought when she and Norris were living in the Cliff Street house in North Royalton, and were their pride and joy. But Grace had paid for the furniture, so at the time of the divorce, Norris had taken only the pieces which were antiques from his side of the family.

Grace had the one bedroom, which was small and dark. There was only room for the four-poster bed and a large chest of drawers. Jane was installed in the dining room. Grace borrowed a day-bed for her.

“What will we do when Dee comes home from camp?” Jane asked.

“Things will be very different by then,” Grace said.

“How do you mean?”

“I’ll tell you about it someday soon.”

Jane had an idea what her mother meant.

She spent her days alone. At first she reread all her Little Colonel books. She had seven of them. There were twelve in the complete set. She’d ask for more for Christmas.

She spent almost a week making a model of Lindbergh’s airplane “The Spirit of St. Louis”. She knew nothing about balsa wood, so made the model of manila paper in built-up layers. It was proportioned well, but its wings drooped. Next she spent several weeks making pictures by cutting up pieces of colored papers and pasting them onto a dark background. The pictures were copied from photographs in magazines.

Grace commented, “You remind me of your father. He liked to cut up paper too. But don’t copy things, chicken. It’s very bad.”

They were living in a fixed routine that summer. Grace was very busy. She was working on the Landers Company’s fashion catalog for the following spring and summer. Next January she would start the following season’s fall and winter presentations. Landers’ biennial catalogs were Grace’s most dependable source of income, though she had work from time to time throughout the year doing fashion drawing for Strohmeyer’s and other Cleveland stores.

Grace did not do this art work at home, the way she and Norr had done years ago with their magazine covers. She now worked downtown where the fashions and the models were.

She got home each day around four and at six-thirty Carle Semon arrived and the three of them went downstairs to “The Tea Kettle” restaurant in the basement level of the apartment and had dinner. It was a cozy place, a tearoom actually, that served delicious food. Jane found eating out every evening a pure delight, with a choice of half a dozen dinners and desserts to choose from.

After dinner they sometimes walked down Grand Avenue to Whitfield Park to sit beside the Lagoon and watch the four swans gliding. On Wednesday evenings they sometimes went to the Art Museum, where they would invariably meet other Cleveland artists. On such evenings Grace both hoped for and dreaded the possibility of encountering Norris. It had happened once, during the first week of the annual spring exhibition of Cleveland artists. Grace and Carle had attended together. The “Spring Show” was the social event of the art community. It was also an economic event, for when times were good the artists could sell pictures at the Spring Show. Cleveland’s top artists, many of them Norr and Grace’s former teachers, won many of the prizes and always sold their work. This year for the first time Norris had won one of the top awards. The most important class was the Painting In Oil group. Therefore the big prize was First Award in that classification. The oil paintings were hung in the museum’s largest room, and the First Award



CARLE SEMON
1927

"ALBERT DYCHEMAN"



VIEW OF CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART
G.M.R. IN FOREGROUND

painting was always hung in the center of the south wall. The Second Award painting was always hung directly opposite, on the north wall. In the large gallery in the other wing, watercolors, the second most important group, were hung. Other smaller galleries displayed etchings, lithographs, wood cuts and so on, and there was a large exhibit of photographs.

The previous year, on his return from his long honeymoon in France, Norris had had little time to ready his paintings for entry in the Show, but this year he had prepared several and was extremely pleased with the outcome.

When Grace and Jane returned from New York the Show was still on, and Betty Long promptly reported that Norr had four pictures accepted.

“He has two oils and two watercolors in,” she said.

“He must have been working pretty hard lately,” Grace said. “Too bad he didn’t start that years ago.”

Grace herself did not submit paintings for the Spring Show. She never had. Ever since her days in New York she’d been totally involved in commercial art. She had always enjoyed illustration. Norr, on the other hand, had always aspired to be a landscape painter, though photography had brought him the greater part of what money he had earned. While in New York, Norr and Grace had collaborated on a number of magazine covers for several women’s publications. Norr would do trees, houses, cars and backgrounds, while Grace always did the figures. On their return to Cleveland Grace took the portfolio of published covers to an advertising agency run by a friend of her late father-in-law. There she had no trouble at all finding a market for her work and she had been busy ever since. Norr, meanwhile, was beginning to paint landscapes and his work was improving rapidly. He did slow and painstaking work (as in the old days when he cut the stencils). He had a natural feeling for trees and light and shadow. Some artists find such a style “niggling” but Norr’s pictures were very pleasing to many, and not all of them featured leafy trees. But even now, most of his earnings derived from photography.

When Grace and Carle Semon first went to see the 1927 Spring Show, Jane wasn’t with them as she had begged to go visit Mim and Trink in Oberlin. Grace and Carle, following a long-standing habit among Clevelanders, turned left to enter the big oil-painting gallery. Grace’s eyes darted here and there looking for Norr’s pictures, while she made a pretense of being a mildly interested viewer. She and Carle progressed along, spotting the works of various friends here and there, and stopping to greet people as they went. Then she spotted a painting she knew at once to be Norris’s. She commented on it as casually as possible to Carle, and they agreed it was ‘nice’. Next they entered the central section of the gallery and moved along till they came opposite the First award painting, a barn scene with horses. They knew at once it was the work of Ralph Keller, who year after year had his pictures hung in that honored spot.

“Wouldn’t you know?” Grace observed. “Ralph is the best.”

He had been one of her teachers in Art School.

“He’s announced that he’ll no longer compete after this year,” Carle said. “He’ll enter his work, but not compete.”

Grace turned to move on, and her glance fell on the big painting directly opposite, on the north wall. She felt immediately that it might be Norr’s work, though it was devoid of the trees that were so often his trademark. Could it be that Norr had won the second prize? She managed to contain her curiosity till they came to the picture in its turn. It was true: the card read: Second Award, “Fishing Village, Provence,” Norris Rahming.

For some strange reason she felt her face flushing. She was angry and puzzled with herself for that reaction Carle noticed it too, and thought, *when will she forget him?*

They had crossed next to the watercolor gallery and had barely turned the corner after entering when Grace literally ran into Norris. He steadied her by holding her forearms. There was awkward laughter. Norr had known Carle for years. No introduction was necessary. But neither Grace nor Carle knew Pauline Hastings Wells Rahming who stood beside Norris smiling, not yet aware that the woman who had collided with her husband was his first wife.

After some hasty comments, in which all four agreed that it was a pretty good show, the two couples went their way. After Norris and Pauline left the gallery, Norr said, “She said nothing about my second award.”

And Pauline said, “And you didn’t introduce us.”

“Well,” Norr said. “It’s just that she caught me off guard.”

“Who were they?”

“I’ve an idea they are the future Mr. and Mrs. Semon.”

Pauline looked annoyed, then puzzled. “Alright, but who are they now? Who is she?”

“She is Grace.”

This time Pauline blushed and felt foolish. But why should she feel foolish? What had she done?

“Norr,” she said, “Why didn’t you tell me?”

“I just did,” he said.

“But Norr...” she began. He wasn’t listening.

“You know,” he said. “He’s much too old for her.”



San Jose Wells
 NORRIS + PAULINE RAHMING
 MATTHEW + "LOUISA"
 1927



—Dural

Most of Norris Rahming's paintings are of picturesque subjects in southern France. He has been there many times and always wants more. He likes to play golf and reads everything he can lay his hands on concerning that man Casanova. One of his oils hangs in the Cleveland Museum. He employs a great deal of ingenuity in photography which is his hobby, and has invented a number of new processes. Some years ago he had a one man show at Korner and Wood's of paintings which he had made with stencils. They were all purchased. The effect of that old experiment can still be seen in the patchy technique he uses so effectively sometimes in his work. He is an old-time member of the Cleveland Society of Artists. He doesn't like to talk about himself and some of his friends who have known him for years are surprised to find out that he is married and has two daughters, one in college. He is not in the least Bohemian. Doesn't look or act arty. Can't stand cold weather and goes around seeing that all the windows are closed. Thinks the French have the right idea about sleeping without benefit of night air since they succeed in living to a ripe old age

about 1933

3/22/27

New Paintings by Rahming Shown

NORRIS RAHMING, Cleveland artist of note, is exhibiting paintings of France this week

at the Gage galleries, 2258 Euclid ave., which he painted while there on a sojourn of a year. The collection includes "The Blue Jar," painted at Le Revest; "The Town of Gordes," and "The Venice of France, Les Martignas."



NORRIS RAHMING

Rahming was a student of the Cleveland School of Art before he studied under the masters of this country and abroad. Two of his works are exhibited in the Pennsylvania academy at Philadelphia, one in Toledo and one in the Newark, N.J., museum.

1927

7827

An exhibition of paintings of southern France by Norris Rahming will be held at the Gage Gallery opening Monday next and continuing until Saturday, April 2nd. The paintings are landscapes and are examples of the finest work of this gifted and successful artist who has met with a great deal of success during the past few years in which he has devoted practically all of his time to his art.

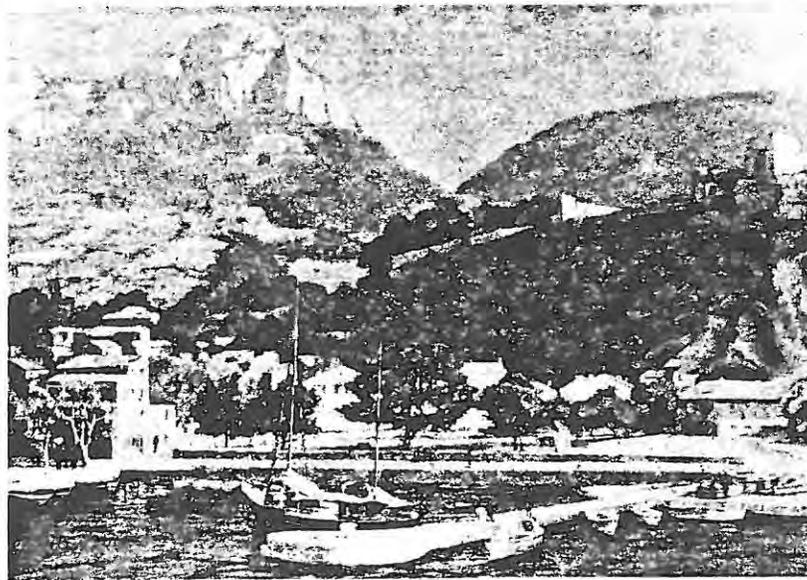
Mr. Rahming received the second award for landscape painting in from 1906 to 1908, and then went to New York where he remained for



MEDITERRANEAN FISHING VILLAGE
By Norris Rahming
(Reproduced by courtesy of Mr. R. L. Williams)

five years studying with such masters as William M. Chase, Emil Carlsen, Robert Henri and George Bridgeman. He spent the winter of 1925 and 1926 in France and Italy, in Paris and the cathedral towns including Tours and the Chateaux district. Among places he visited and in which he painted were Bordeaux, Carcassonne, the Pyrenees district, Nines, Arles, Avignon and the Riviera, spending three months in Cassis, a Mediterranean fishing village near Marseilles. In Italy most of his time was spent at Naples and Palermo.

Mr. Rahming received the second award for landscape painting in



THE PORT OF CASSIS

By Norris Rahming
(Reproduced by courtesy of Mr. Philip Mather)

This picture was awarded the second prize in the landscape group at the 1926 May exhibition at the Cleveland Museum of Art

oil at last year's exhibition of Cleveland artists at the Cleveland Museum of Art. His pictures have been purchased by prominent collectors, including Mr. Samuel Mather and Mrs. F. F. Prentiss. He had two paintings in the 1927 exhibition of the Pennsylvania Academy of Art in Philadelphia and received the honor of having one of them reproduced in the academy's catalogue. He has also received invitations to show his pic-

On the way out they met Betty Long and Anna Ayers Hall with 12-year-old Donald in tow. It was one more surprise in Grace's evening. She had not seen Anna in several years, and here was Anna's boy, as tall as Grace, and looking at her with John Rahming's black eyes, beneath a shock of blond hair. The evening was really unsettling.

Betty and Anna said they each had entries in the show. Betty had water colors, Anna had ceramic ware. Grace promised to see everything on a night when she was not so tired.

In the next few days Grace made up her mind to tell Carle she would marry him in August, but first she had some problems to work out. The catalog would be finished and she'd have time for a honeymoon. Carle wanted to show her Cape Cod. But what to do about Jane and Dee when it was time for school in September? She would have to ponder this.

In the meantime Jane was not having quite as bad a summer as she had thought she'd have. She thought about Babs and Dee up at Camp Norchunkaw obeying all the rules and regulations, while here, alone in Cleveland, she could do exactly as she wanted all day long, till her mother came home and then it was out to dinner to choose whatever she liked from the menu. The two things Jane had liked best at Camp Norchunkaw were the swimming and the food. So, as it was, she only missed the swimming.

One day Jane went to Cartwright Street to visit Aunt Ada. She knew she could get there from 75th Street, so she encountered no difficulties, as she had been there last year with Dee. Jane thought about telephoning first but she was always too shy when she heard the operator's voice. So she decided to surprise them.

Rosella and Ada were delighted to see Jane, and very surprised, though Ada had written to Dee and knew she was in the mountains while Jane was in Cleveland.

It made Jane feel very badly to see that Aunt Ada was still on crutches. Indeed, though she kept them by her chair, she did not get up during the time that Jane was there. Rosella served tea and lemon wafers.

"You are growing tall," Aunt Ada said. "You'll soon be as tall as your mother."

"I almost am," Jane said.

"Are you still enthusiastic about the Greek gods and heroes? I remember how you made yourself a suit of cardboard armor and pretended you were Achilles."

"Yes," Jane said, "and I made myself a piece of armor to protect the heel. And I wondered why Achilles didn't do that too, but I guess Thetis didn't realize his heel was vulnerable, so she couldn't tell him about it."

Jane was practically shouting at Ada, who had grown deafener than ever.

“I have a new hero now, Ady,” she said. ‘It’s Colonel Lindbergh.’”

“Oh my, yes! Isn’t he splendid! It’s hard for me to imagine flying across the ocean.”

“I brought my ‘Lindy’ scrapbook to show you. And my model I made of ‘The Spirit of St. Louis.’ It isn’t very good, though. The wings aren’t strong enough.”

She took the little manila-paper model out of a box and placed it on the table beside Ada. The wings dropped, so Jane put Rosella’s silver sugar bowl under the end of one, and the matching cream pitcher under the other.

“Colonel Lindbergh wouldn’t care for those wings,” said Jane.

“We thought about you in New York this winter,” Her grandmother said. “It made Ader and me a little homesick.”

“Babs and I used to go down town all by ourselves,” Jane said.

“My goodness!” Ada said. “Really? But I don’t imagine you went to Brooklyn, did you?”

“I went once to Aunt Vicky’s house. A brown stone front.”

“Clear to Brooklyn by yourself?” Ada said. “My!”

“Oh, no, I went with Mother.”

Rosella spoke quickly. “Your Mother went to Victoria’s?”

“Yes,” Jane said, wondering if she shouldn’t have reported that fact, but she decided to go ahead.

“We were invited to the wedding, too.”

“Corinne’s wedding?” Rosella said. “Ethel and I sent a luncheon cloth, and your father sent them a lovely picture. Oh, and. Ada sent a check.”

Then she said to Ada in a very loud voice, “She went to Corinne’s wedding with Grace.”

Jane shook her head and hollered, “No, no! We didn’t go. Mother was in Cleveland then, and Aunt Nelle wouldn’t take us. Babs and I were both invited and a friend gave Aunt Nelle two of her daughter’s dresses to shorten for us, but Aunt Nelle decided not to take us. I’ve never been to a wedding. The dress for me was yellow organdy, too. I had a yellow organdy dress once, but that was years ago.”

Ada and Rosella both laughed when Jane said ‘years ago’. She was eleven years old now, and she had been six when her mother made her a ruffled yellow organdy dress for the May Concert at North Royalton School. Five years ago.

“Yes,” Aunt Ada said gravely, “for you that was half a lifetime ago, wasn’t it? Well, it isn’t exactly a long time at my age, but those days do seem quite remote.”

When Jane left, she told the ladies she would come again very soon. But she was not to return for many months, as Grace was making very different plans.

Home again that evening, Jane reported her visit. They were at dinner at the Tea Kettle as usual.

“I went to Grandma Rahming’s today.”

Grace looked amazed. “Did your father take you there?”

“No, I went by myself on the streetcar. I walked through to 75th Street.”

“But chicken! All by yourself?”

“Mom, Cleveland is simple after New York.”

“You didn’t talk to me about going there,” Grace said.

“I just got bored and decided to go see Aunt Ada.”

Grace raised her eyebrows, but then she sighed and said, “Well—it’s been an unusual summer. There won’t be any more vacations like this one for you. Next year you’ll be in camp again with Dee and Babs. You won’t be all alone. But first we have to fatten you up. I’m making arrangements for that.”

“What arrangements?” Jane asked warily.

“Well, a nice camp, dear.”

“Next year, you mean? Norchunkaw?”

“No, Nipper. Real soon. It’s an all-year camp.”

“But school, Mother?”

“You’ll go to school right there.”

“I don’t like the sound of it,” Jane said.

“Oh, you would love it, Nipper. Don’t worry about it at all. Now let’s talk about the wedding.”

####

Grace took Jane back to the same pediatrician who had recommended the tonsillectomy previously. She took with her the X-ray film that she’d brought from New York, and a letter from the woman pediatrician who had examined Jane in Jackson Heights. And she explained that

she had to 'build Jane up'. She also told the doctor that Jane had been at summer camp the year before, and then at boarding school in Virginia, and recently she'd been with an aunt in New York City.

Dr. Wickman pursed his lips and asked, "Why?"

"Why?" Grace said.

'Why has she been all those places?'

"Oh. Because I work. I'm divorced. I used to have someone to stay with her, but she's gone. So there's a problem."

"Yes," said Dr. Wickman. "There is a problem.'

He examined Jane and looked at the X-ray film. Then he sent Jane into the waiting room.

"While I talk with your Mama," he explained.

He read the letter, muttered 'hilus adenitis?' and shook his head and raised an eyebrow.

"This is quite a recent X-ray," he said.

"Yes," Grace said.

"She seems to have no chronic cough now, Mrs. Rahming."

"Well, it's usually in the early summer and late summer," said Grace.

"That is very interesting," Dr. Wickman said. Then he asked, "How'd you happen to go to a woman doctor?"

"She is the official doctor for a girls' camp," Grace said.

"I see."

"Don't you approve of woman doctors?" Grace asked.

"There are some good ones,' he said.

Then he leaned back in his chair.

"So you think you'd like to send her to Sunshine Camp?"

"I've heard very good reports of it,' Grace said.

"Yes, they build them up out there. But Mrs. Rahming, most children sent out there are frankly undernourished and rundown. Your little girl is only a few pounds under average weight for her

height. She's also in a growing spurt right now. They tend to spindle up. The X-ray shows no signs of TB, or anything else, at the moment. Her lungs are clear. The blood test report shows that she's not anemic. Of course, if she were to go to Sunshine Camp, they do a number of other tests. However, I don't see any reason why you can't put three or four pounds on her in no time. It isn't any difficult thing. Know how? Regular hours for sleep, good nutritious food with second helpings, and a quart and a half of milk every day. Outdoor exercise, of course. That's the way they do it at Sunshine Camp. I'm on the Board."

But Grace explained about her forthcoming marriage and honeymoon. She said everything would be much better for Jane when they were all established in a new home.

Dr. Wickman finally agreed to recommend Jane to Sunshine Camp.

"They have a waiting list, you know, Mrs. Rahming. Lots of real skinny kid waiting all the time."

Grace thanked him for everything.

Grace had really hoped to get Jane established at the health camp before her marriage, as it would simplify many things. She soon learned, however, that there would not be a bed for Jane until after Labor Day. Carle wanted to arrive in Provincetown before that holiday, when finding lodgings would be much more difficult. They would go to Boston by train, and by steamboat to Provincetown. Carle then planned on spending a month in the vicinity which he had visited many times before.

The wedding would be on the twenty-fourth of August; they decided it would be at a Presbyterian Church on Price Boulevard, but it would be in the pastor's study for it was to be very private. Only Carle's favorite brother would represent his family, with Betty Long and Jane standing up with Grace.

Grace and Jane met Betty at Strohmeyer's store on the mezzanine level where Dee always said "everyone in Cleveland meets everyone else." They had lunch in the tearoom and then proceeded to pick out dresses for the wedding. Grace bought herself a Navy blue silk two-piece dress with white lace collar and cuffs. Betty decided to buy one much like it in grey.

"Do you like them, Janie?" Grace asked.

"They don't look 'weddingish' to me," Jane said.

"Well, honey, brides don't wear white a second time."

"But they're so dark," Jane protested.

They went next to the children's department where Grace quickly selected a Navy blue two-piece dress like her own selection.

‘Do you like it, chicken?’ she asked.

‘It’s so dark,’ Jane said again. ‘It’s summer time!’

‘Honey, people go into dark colors in late August.’

‘Little girls don’t,’ Jane said. ‘You’re too used to your fashion people. I think light colors belong at a wedding. If I had gone to Corinne’s wedding I’d have worn a yellow organdy dress, only Aunt Nelle didn’t get it altered in time. Couldn’t I have a yellow organdy dress?’

‘Chicken, no,’ Grace said.

‘Or some other pretty color? But organdy, please?’

‘No, Chicken. It wouldn’t be practical at all. Autumn is coming and next year you’ll be too tall to wear it.’

‘You could get a size larger. We could hem it up. I know how. Aunt Nelle taught me.’

‘Chicken, no. See what a pretty accordion pleated skirt it has. Just think! You’ll be my maid of honor, and poor Dee won’t even be here.’

‘Auntie Betty’s your maid of honor, Mom.’

‘Well, you and she can each be maid of honor. Now go try this on, Nipper.’

‘Oh, it will fit. Don’t worry, it’ll fit.’ Jane said.

The wedding was in the afternoon. It was a very pretty day. Carle’s brother Frank and his wife met them at the church. The ceremony was traditional. Betty stood beside Grace, and Jane just behind them. Grace handed her bouquet of yellow roses to Jane. Frank Semon handed the wedding ring to Carle, who placed it on Grace’s finger beside the beautiful engagement ring he’d given her. It had a large diamond that had been his mother’s.

Soon the ceremony was over, the papers signed. They all went to the Tea Kettle to dinner, with the management providing a little wedding cake. Afterwards, Grace and Carle took a taxi downtown to catch their train to the East. Frank and his wife went home, and Betty and Jane went to Whitfield Park and then to a movie. After the movie they had a chocolate soda then they walked home to Grace’s apartment.

Betty had offered to spend the night with Jane. Next day, she would put her on the bus to go to Oberlin where she would stay until the call came from Sunshine Camp.

Jane had assumed that she’d sleep in her couch in the dining room and that Betty would use Grace’s bedroom. Before they got ready for bed, Betty asked Jane about the doors. The front door locked with a standard Yale lock and an additional deadbolt. But Betty had seen a door in

the kitchen. She and Jane went back there. The door had a glass pane in it, obviously an outside door.

“Where does this door go?” Betty asked.

“To the porches, where the back stairways are, where we hang laundry,” said Jane.

Betty saw that the door was locked with an old type key and an ordinary slide bolt. She put the back of the chair under the doorknob.

“I’m always careful to lock up at night,” Betty said. “Your mother ought to get a stronger bolt there.”

“Well, we’re going to move to a larger apartment soon,” Jane said.

“Oh, of course, but that door would bother me.”

They went to bed then, but after a few minutes, Betty came down the hall and spoke softly.

“Janie, are you awake?”

“Yes.”

“Your Auntie Betty is a real sissy. I always feel funny in a strange place at bed time. I’m used to being in my own place. You know I live in the Fine Arts Building.”

‘I know.’

“How’d you like to come and sleep with me? Sometimes when I’m tired I’m more nervous. Ladies my age are just a bundle of nerves. Would you come sleep with me, dear?”

‘Sure,’ Jane said.

They got themselves settled again and Betty said, “The Fine Arts Building is full of people I know, you see. I have friends all around me there, other artists. Before that I always lived at home with my mother. So you see, I’m just a big baby. I’m pretty silly, I guess.”

“Aunt Betty? You know what? We’re just a couple of poor little girls without our mothers.”

“That’s right. Two little maids of honor without our mothers.”

Then they both laughed, and very soon Jane fell asleep.

She woke about three hours later, needing to go to the bathroom. She did not know where she was. The room was totally dark and she was not in her own bed. Then she remembered everything. Mother was married and on her way to Cape Cod with Carle. And Betty Long was

here tonight and she and Betty were in Mother's bed, and Betty was sleeping beside her. Jane sat up very carefully so as not to wake Aunt Betty and get her all nervous again.

She slipped quietly out of the four-poster and put her feet on the floor. She tiptoed slowly toward the door. She could hear Aunt Betty breathing. She reached out for the doorknob, but instead she touched Mother's dresser. Some of the things were gone, but Jane felt the ivory-backed mirror and finger nail buffer. She had come the wrong way. She moved on and then came to the door. Very softly she turned the doorknob and very slowly opened the door. It was very squeaky so she moved it only an inch at a time, waiting a bit each time. Finally, it was open, and she stepped forward. She ran right smack into her mother's winter coat with its prickly badger fur collar and faint odor of moth balls. She backed out of the closet and began closing its door as slowly as she'd opened it. I'm mixed up, she thought. She began inching along the wall. She came to the curtains and a chair and finally was at the bed again. Everything seemed of place, but she turned around and inched along the wall again, past the past the dresser, along the wall till she came to Betty's side of the bed. No door except the closet door. She went around to her side of the bed and sat down. If only she had her camp flashlight she could flick the lamp on for a minute. The lamp was on the dresser. She got up and found the dresser again, but the lamp was not there. She was on the verge of tears, but she knew the switch for the ceiling light was by the door. If she could only find the door! She headed back for the bed again and knocked her elbow on the bed post.

Betty sat up straight in bed. "Go away!" she said. She was not fully awake.

"Aunt Betty, it's me. It's Jane. I can't find the door. I need to get out of this room."

Betty was silent for a few moments, getting herself focused. Then she said, "Oh, yes. Jane. Well you see, I heard someone out back and I..."

"Aunt Betty, I have to go to the bathroom and I can't get out of here. I can't find, the lamp, either."

"It's on the floor. I had to put it down when I moved the dresser. The dresser's in front of the door, you see."

But Jane was already hunting for the lamp on the floor. She found it and turned it on and stood up. Sure enough, the door was completely hidden by the dresser with its attached mirror. They moved it away, and when Jane came back, Betty explained.

"After you went to sleep I got to thinking about that back door, and then I noticed a light coming from the kitchen or the dining room. I hadn't thought it was there before, so I was nervous. And that's why I pushed the dresser over."

"Aunt Betty, that light is always there, all night. It's outside by the back stairway. It shines in. I don't like it."

“I guess you think I’m a real silly, don’t you. Here I am, supposed to take care of you, and you’re having to calm me down.”

They finally got settled down again.

The next day Jane went to Oberlin, where she spent a happy week with Mim and Trink. Staying with Aunt Merly meant eating Emmie’s delicious homemade bread, playing dominoes with Grandma and Grandpa Martin, and going to the library with Mim, where they got out their favorite book, “Egyptian Tales of Magic.” While Jane was there a postcard came from her mother and Carle, saying they were in Menemsha-by-the-Sea and having a lovely time. That afternoon, Betty Long called Merly to tell her that Sunshine Camp was ready for Jane. Two days later Betty took Jane and her suitcase to be admitted.

Jane clung tight to Betty Long. “I wish I could stay with you, Betty.”

“Your Mama will be home soon,” Betty said, “and you won’t be here very long.”

Auntie Betty was summarily dismissed, and Jane was whisked away to a Lysol-smelling basement area.

She was ushered into a cubicle with a bathtub and chair in it. A woman dressed like a nurse came in.

“Let’s take our clothes off,” said the woman. “I’m Miss Bade.”

This invitation startled Jane, but she realized, as Miss Bade stood there waiting, that the invitation was not intended for both of them.

“I had a bath this morning,” Jane said.

“We give everyone a bath,” Miss Bade said.

“Can’t I bathe myself?” At eleven, Jane was growing small breasts, and was much aware of the fact.

“I’m going to help get you clean,” said Miss Bade. “I’m going to shampoo your hair.”

After the bath, Miss Bade gave Jane a white cotton robe, clean but un-ironed and rough. “Here’s a towel. Rub your hair dry, and then we’ll have a physical.”

“Can’t I get dressed?”

“After the physical we’ll give you new clothes.”

“What about my own?” Jane asked.

“We’ll mail them home to mother.”

“Mother isn’t there,” Jane said desolately.

“Well, never mind. Dry your hair.”

After a while, Miss Bade came back and led Jane to a doctor’s room.

She helped Jane up onto an examining table, and took her cotton robe away and covered her with a sheet.

Jane shivered, and her heart pounded.

The doctor came in, and said “hello” to Jane. Then he held a low conversation with Miss Bade.

He came to the table and began his thumping and listening.

“My heart always beats fast at times like this,” Jane said.

“How do you know?” the doctor said.

“I can feel it.”

“Yes? Well, you tell it it needn’t beat fast.”

“I’m very nervous, I guess,” said Jane miserably. “I’m a Christian Scientist.”

“Is that right.” said the doctor, scratching the sole of her foot with a tongue depressor. “Well, anyway, your reflexes are fine.”

“That’s good,” Jane said.

The doctor said, “Raise your knees up now.” He folded the sheet back across her stomach and raised her thighs and looked between her legs.

Jane began to cry. The doctor finished his inspection.

“Why, what’s the matter?” he said. “We’re just finding out what we don’t know about you.”

“I wish my mother had come with me.”

“Come, now, be a big girl.”

Miss Bade said, “Here’s your clothes.” She handed Jane a faded one-piece khaki knicker-suit, and underthings and stockings, and her own shoes.

“Come over here in this little room and dress. Then I’ll oil your hair.”

“Oil my hair!”

Miss Bade had a little pan of liquid and a fine-tooth comb.

“That’s right,” she said. “We always do.”

“But we just shampooed it!” said Jane. “That smells like coal oil.”

“This is a precaution we always take,” said Miss Bade.

“What for?”

“In case you have bugs.”

“Bugs! I don’t have bugs!”

“Just in case,” said Miss Bade.

“I know about bugs. You can see their eggs in people’s hair. We learned it in hygiene. I don’t have head lice.”

“We oil everyone’s hair,” said Miss Bade.

At lunch time Jane stood in line, a stranger among the other faded khaki-clad children.

“You’re new, aren’t you?” a boy said.

Jane nodded. A large lump in her throat made her speechless.

“We get cod-liver oil,” the boy informed her.

“When?” Jane asked him, horrified, looking for a place to run.

“Right now. A spoonful. When we go in the door.”

“A big spoonful?” Jane asked.

“Just a teaspoonful. You’ll get used to it. Then he asked gleefully, “Had any needles yet?”

“Needles!” asked Jane. “What kind?”

“In your arm. Had any yet?”

“No,” Jane breathed, visibly shaken.

“You will. Lots of them. For TB tests, vaccination, and all that stuff. Something called TAT. They got a lot of them.”

“May I can get out of them,” Jane speculated.

“Why?” the boy challenged.

“My Grandmother’s a ‘Scientist’.”

“A scientist?”

“Yes, a Christian Scientist.”

“What’s that?”

“People that don’t believe in doctors, or needles, or anything like that.”

“I don’t see where that’ll do you any good.”

“It got me out of vaccination, at school.”

“It did?”

“Yes, and I didn’t take goiter pills either.”

“Well, you’re lucky,” he said. “But I don’t think it’ll work here. These guys do believe in that stuff. And a lot more too,” he added ominously.

After lunch the girls marched to their dormitory, while the boys went to theirs. A woman named Miss Smith led the girls to their quarters. It was one big room with high ceiling, and many windows. There were thirty-six cots in the room.

Miss Smith spoke up when they were all standing by their beds.

“We have a new girl today. Her name is Jane Rahming. I will review dormitory rules for her and you may all listen. Some of you can afford to listen.”

“We’ll start with now, which is rest period. When we come back here from dining hall, we all go to the toilet, then we wash our hands and brush our teeth. Jane, Marie will get you a towel and wash cloth, and a new tooth-brush, Hang them on the hooks numbered 17. Marie will show you where the tooth powder is dispensed.”

“After washing, we come back to our beds for a two-hour nap. We don’t use pillows; we sleep flat on our backs, to straighten our spines. You may use your pillow at night. Put your pillow on your chair. There is no talking during rest period, and keep your eyes closed.

“After rest we have playground from three to three-thirty, then we have two glasses of milk in the dining hall. Playground again till four-thirty, then we come back here for quiet time, and temperatures are taken. On Thursday we can get library books at quiet time.

“We have dinner at five-thirty. After dinner we come back to dormitory to wash and go to bed. Tuesday, and Friday we take showers, and get clean clothes and bed linen.

“We get up at quarter to seven, wash and go to breakfast, and those whose names are called will go to dispensary after breakfast. Then everyone comes back and makes her bed, and we take

temperatures again. Then at nine o'clock we go to school till lunch-time. We have two glasses of milk in the morning at ten-thirty.

“Visiting hours are Sunday from three to four-thirty. Visitors are not allowed to bring you candy or anything else to eat. Now settle down for a nap.”

Jane was at Sunshine Camp till almost Christmas. From the day she went in until the day she got out, she loathed the place, but she made a few temporary friends, and she gained five pounds.

Her hatred of the Camp was based on three things. One was the despised faded, unironed khaki suit she wore and the fact that they shampooed her hair every two weeks, and then when it was clean and sweet-smelling they combed the stinking coal-oil through it.

Her second hate was a matter of personal needs. During the two-hour daily rest period Jane always felt that she would surely burst or else wet the bed.

The first day she raised her hand to ask permission to go to the lavatory. Miss Smith had frowned and come over to Jane's bed.

“What's the trouble?”

“I have to go to the bathroom.”

You had time for toileting before you lay down.”

“But that was right after lunch. I didn't have to go then.”

“Well, you'll have to learn to go at that time. We couldn't have thirty-six children traipsing back and forth all during the rest period.”

Jane always spent the second hour of every rest period in misery.

Another thing had upset her. All the children must eat two servings at all meals. It was a firm rule, and in general it was successful, for on Tuesday evening when the children were weighed they invariably showed a substantial gain. But one evening Jane had watched a miserable little six-year-old named Claudine trying to choke down her second helping of baked potato with milk gravy. Claudine was a scrawny, unprepossessing child with a nose too large for her wizened face. Jane thought privately that Claudine resembled a Halloween mask. The youngster hadn't felt like eating her first helping, let alone her second. Miss Smith dispassionately told the drooping Claudine to “straighten up and finish eating.”

After supper, in the dormitory, Claudine had just got herself all undressed when she vomited on the floor beside her bed. Miss Smith looked disgusted.

“Go to the mop closet and get the mop and pail and clean that up,” she said.

Claudine, looking ludicrous, wearing only her shoes, shuffled unhappily around trying to mop up the mess. Gagging over her task, she vomited again.

Jane, whose bed was across the aisle from Claudine's had by now got her own pajamas on. She walked to Claudine and took the mop away from her.

"I'll do it," she told the little girl. "Go in the lavatory. I'll do it."

Miss Smith spoke up. "Let Claudine do it, Jane. You don't have to do it for her."

"Someone has to, she can't."

"Don't be sassy to me, young lady! Get into your bed right now!"

"I haven't been to the bathroom yet."

"I said don't talk back to me. Get into your bed."

"Claudine needs help. She's sick." Jane, normally shy, had lost her reticence. Her voice shook. "I want to go and help her."

"Claudine is not sick," Miss Smith said. "She knows how to throw up on purpose, because she doesn't like to eat her food."

"She's too little, Miss Smith, to eat all that baked potato and stuff. She doesn't feel good. She's out there throwing up now. Gee whiz, Miss Smith, she's only six."

The other girls were fascinated with the argument between Miss Smith and Jane, and Miss Smith knew it. Her face was red with anger.

"I told to go to bed, Jane Rahming. You're not running this dormitory."

Jane's own daring had startled her to the edge of hysteria.

"You should be ashamed, Miss Smith. When I'm sick at my stomach my mother holds my head."

"I'll be happy when you're home with your mother."

"So will I, Miss Smith. And I will be soon, too."

"If you don't keep quiet, I'm going after the Camp Supervisor. Do you want me to do that?"

"I think that's what you ought to do," said Jane.

Miss Smith turned from Jane with a choked snort.

“Marie, will you go tell Claudine to hurry up and get washed and get back here into bed. And Jane, since you’re so anxious to do things, you can just go ahead and mop up that mess.”

Miss Smith tried hard to believe she had ended up with a victory, but the furtive smiles on the girls’ faces shook her belief.

Relations between Jane and Miss Smith were extremely hostile after that, but in the two weeks before Jane went home, Miss Smith hadn’t thought up any good way to put her in her place.

####

Not many things troubled Carle Semon on his honeymoon in the East. The weather was delightful. He had a new moving picture camera to record the trip, and Grace seemed delighted with all the favorite places he showed her. He took her to Highland Light and to Truro. They walked the beaches, watched the gulls, picked up shells and horseshoe crabs and dried starfish. They ate seafood dinners with marvelous blueberry desserts. They walked ‘up-along’ and ‘down-along’ and went to the dock to watch the ‘Dorothy Bradford’ come in loaded with tourists from Boston. They made an excursion to Merly’s Vineyard and Menemsha. And everywhere he went, he took pictures. He made still pictures and moving pictures. On one occasion he went out in a dory with a lobster fisherman to tend the ‘pots.’ It was very rough, and Carle was much troubled with seasickness, but he managed to hold on and keep his camera rolling. He came home with very dramatic footage. He got beautiful sequences of gulls wheeling around against a sky with spectacular clouds. Carle was a skilled photographer with an artist’s eye, and a knowledge of the use of filters. He was one of the nine-member Cleveland Camera Arts Club which included Norris Rahming.

Carle thought often about Norris Rahming. Such thoughts were the one flaw in the honeymoon. It was nothing that Grace said or did. She was responsive in bed, and seemed to enjoy that part of their marriage. But Grace had a way of getting a far-away look in her eyes and it worried Carle. It happened often. He was sure at such times that she was thinking about Norris. Was it possible that she would ever forget him? Carle was fifty, Norris was forty-one. Carle was small in stature, Norris was much taller. Norris was handsome and women were much attracted to him, and beyond all those considerations, Norris was the father of Grace’s girls. The girls would always be a bond to tie her to Norris. Even now, on her honeymoon, Grace was thinking about them much of the time. She thought she had to be writing letters to them all the time. She tried to write to Jane every day. He didn’t see why that was necessary.

“Wouldn’t every other day be enough? In fact, twice a week would be more than reasonable.”

“Well, you see, I feel a tiny bit guilty about Jane.”

“I don’t know why you should. She’s a smart little girl. She understood our marriage perfectly well.”

“It’s just that I should have been there to take her to that place myself, and not left it totally. It wasn’t fair to either one of them.”

Actually, Grace spent only a minute or two writing her notes to Jane. And each one was very much like all the others. “This is a lovely place. You must see it someday when you are well and strong. Be sure and try very hard and be a good girl and take care of your dolly. And before you know it, Carle and I will be coming home again and coming to see you. Much love, Moms.”

The notes to Jane took only one small sheet of paper and little time, but Grace spent time writing other letters as well. She wrote to Dee, she wrote to Betty and Merly, and wrote to Nelle and to Aunt Ada. But most of all she wrote to her mother. Carle could really not understand it. Right now, on their honeymoon, she ought to be thinking less about all those other people and more about him. There were places to go, and things to see. She often spent an entire morning writing letters. One morning when he wanted to go to an art gallery he spoke again of the subject.

“I’m just writing to Mother,” she said.

“You wrote to her day before yesterday.”

“I’ve always written to her often. She enjoys it. Don’t you write to your mother?”

“Not that often. She doesn’t expect it just now, though she’s old and may not be with us long. I’ve written her twice.”

“Well, Carle, I enjoy writing letters and I always will.”

Carle had been born in a large house on the corner of Price Boulevard and Cartwright Street. The houses were more expensive at that end. Carle was the oldest son and his mother’s favorite. The second brother, William, was an alcoholic who never married and was never a success. He borrowed heavily from his mother, who hoped to keep his drinking from being generally known among his friends. The third brother, Frank, was a good-natured fellow who held a number of unimpressive jobs and was most recently the assistant manager of a Cleveland amusement park. His wife worked in the millinery department of Strohmeyers’ store. They rented an apartment near Sloane Avenue. But the youngest son was the one who was successful. Paul was not successful by his own efforts, however. But he had married Posey Whitfield, a plump and homely girl who was very wealthy. Her father was an importer.

All the Semon boys had been indulged by their mother. College was offered to all of them, but only two of them sought an education. Carle chose to go to art school. He was two years before Grace and Norris, but he met them at a summer watercolor class, when they were engaged to be married. He fell in love with Grace that summer but resolved to put her out of his mind. When she divorced Norris seventeen years later Carle was on hand to begin a two-year courtship.

It seemed amusing to Grace that she had married another photographer. But after all, not too surprising. Nearly all her friends were creative people. Carle had a studio which he shared with another photographer who was also in the Camera Arts Club. The studio was on Grand Avenue where rents were not cheap. Grace had no idea how much of Carle’s income derived from his work, but he seemed to be comfortably fixed. She knew, too, that he had some stocks and that he would inherit from his mother’s estate. It would be a comfort to Grace to feel secure for a change. On her honeymoon she often thought of this.

Jane was home by Christmas. Grace had had a guilty feeling about leaving Jane at Sunshine Camp, so she had spent quite a bit on her Christmas gifts: a junior encyclopedia, a book about Lindbergh, and one about planes and dirigibles.

“How do you like your things, Nipper?”

“Just fine, Mother. They’re sort of like a boy’s gifts, though.”

“Well, that’s what I know you like. All the airplanes and such.”

“I guess so. When I was younger it was alright to be a tomboy.”

“Nipper, you can always be a tomboy. You’re my boy. I think it’s just wonderful. I named you Jane so we could call you Janie.”

“I’ve been wearing knickers for so long now that I think I’d like to have some pretty dresses and not be a tomboy.”

“Nipper, we’ll get you some skirts and blouses.”

“I really want some dresses, Mother.”

“Well, we’ll see. You’re the tailored type, though. Get to bed now, Nips. I hope you’re happy. Get a good sleep now.”

After Jane was settled, Dee came in and sat on the edge of the bed.

“How’s it feel to be back, Janie?”

“Wonderful! I hated it there. We called it jail. We used to sing ‘The Prisoner’s Song’. We weren’t allowed to sing it after a while, It goes: ‘If I had the wings of an angel, over these prison walls I would fly.’”

Dee laughed. “But you do look better.”

“Oh, I gained five pounds. But I cried a lot. I got all these letters from Cape Cod.”

“Well, everything is back to normal now, Janie,” Dee said, and then added, “except for one thing.”

“What’s that?”

“Carle. He’s kind of funny.”

“What do you mean?”

“You’ll see. He’s sensitive. He sets his feelings hurt easily. Then he sulks. You’ll see.”

Jane did see. In the months to come, Carle's sensitiveness was a great temptation to both the girls. Because of his amusing reaction to injury, real or imagined, the girls took pleasure for a time in that fiendish pastime of children or the childish, tormenting the vulnerable.

Carle visited his mother daily during January and February of 1928. The doctor had said, "Your mother is slipping away."

Grace felt it unreasonable that Carle should spend all afternoon every day at the big house on the corner of Cartwright Street and Price Boulevard. He did not go to his photo studio for days at a time.

"Aren't you getting much behind in your work?" Grace asked him.

"I haven't any pressing orders at the moment," Carle said.

"You could spend the morning at the studio, Carle," she said.

He did not answer her but spent the evening curled up in a big wing chair, his face turned away toward the wall. He felt that Grace should appreciate the fact that he could not work while the grief of his mother's slow passing was weighing him down. He was a late riser, and found it impossible to change his habits and be up and about early. He liked a long, leisurely breakfast, with plenty of coffee, his pipe, and the good Republican Cleveland paper. He liked to glance at the headlines, read the editorials, savor the nature column written by a friend of his in the Camera Arts Club, and finally to check the prices of his stocks.

Carle felt that Grace should not fuss at him about going to the studio. He was paying the bills that he had agreed to pay. When they had discussed marriage he and Grace had straightened out a number of things. They had agreed that since she was forty and he fifty, it would be foolish for them to consider having children. Besides, Grace added, "I certainly will continue with my work. I want Dee and Jane to have a good education, and I don't know what to hope for from Norris. - probably not much."

So it was agreed that Carle would pay the rent and such household bills as gas, light, phone, etc. They lived in an apartment near Cleveland University, in the section preferred by the professors and intellectuals. Grace was in her element entertaining men and women who had been her teachers at the Art Institute. It was further agreed that Carle would supply a weekly sum of money for food for the household, and he would take care of all his personal expenses. Grace would supply the girl's needs in the way of clothing and other expenses from her funds. Also luxuries and entertaining would be paid by Grace.

It would all have worked out fairly agreeably but for the fact that Grace had always been under the impression that Carle's income was derived from the business he did in his photographic studio. It was a big surprise to her to learn, after they were married, that almost all of Carle's



DELIGHT RAHMING (DEE)

"FAYE"

1928

mosey was income from his investments. It turned out that the photo studio was little more than a hobby.

It was knowledge that half sickened Grace to find that for the second time she had married a man whose mother had warped his ambition and resourcefulness. It was comforting to realize that Carle had a substantial amount of money in stocks and savings accounts, but her respect for him dwindled as the weeks passed and he puttered around the house. With the dwindling of her respect went also whatever physical attraction that she had felt for him.

Although she had never felt a passion for him, Grace had found Carle's lovemaking gratifying. He was a better partner in bed than she had dared to hope. He was more skilled than Norris had ever been, and more considerate. The honeymoon had been pleasant. Carle was romantic and chivalrous, and in the dark, amorous in a way that flattered Grace deeply. He was never gauche in the bedroom, nor vulgar as Norris had frequently been for the sake of shocking her. In truth, Carle was almost too gentlemanly.

After a while, Grace's responses to Carle flagged and she found herself thinking of Norris even during the act of love. And at times, a growing resentment that he did not work, as a man should, made her avoid physical contact with Carle.

And Carle was sad. He remembered one of his last talks with his mother. Mrs. Semon looked at him one day, and said, "I've been wondering if you're happy, son."

He looked at her quickly, but before he could answer, she said, "You were too old to marry, Carle."

"I wouldn't say that," he said.

"Her children resent you, I imagine?"

"I don't think so. They are nice girls. Sometimes they get on my nerves. But they are quiet. They read a great deal."

"I suppose they take up a great amount of Grace's time," his mother suggested.

Carle thought about that for a moment, and then shook his head.

"No, no, actually they don't. Other things take her time. Her work, of course. And then she's decorating the apartment, too."

"Doesn't she like the things I gave her?"

"The dishes and linens? Yes, Mama. But we are having the apartment painted and papered, and so on."

“I see.” She sighed. “Carle, I’m tired. I guess I’ll sleep. I miss you, son, and I don’t think I’ll be here much longer.”

“I’ll be here tomorrow mama — same time.”

Mrs. Semon died in March. Carle’s grief was great. He made some effort to bear up, but did not succeed very well. For a number of days he was unable to eat.

“I don’t think you should take it this hard, Carle dear,” Grace said. “Your mother had a long life. Wasn’t she eighty-one?”

“Yes, but I’ll miss her.”

“Of course you will, Carle. But you’ll have to eat something to get back to normal.”

“Wait until your mother dies, and see how you feel.”

“I’m only thinking of your good, dear.”

But Carle felt she was not thinking of his good. His happiness was all ruined now, for two reasons. His mother’s death; and he had come to the bitter conclusion that Grace was still in love with Norris.

In the beginning, she had fooled him completely, understanding as he did, less of women’s minds than of their bodies. Grace had been so bitter against Norris that Carle was convinced there was little or nothing left of her feelings for her ex-husband. During the months when he was courting Grace, she had told him many things about Norris and none of them was complimentary. Carle had no experience with the fact that a woman can love a man, when she considers him a complete cad.

According to Grace, Norris was spoiled, lazy, egotistical, sadistic, and above all things, a chronic liar. How could she love him still? Carle was now convinced that she could and did.

He had not even entertained such an idea until they were home after the honeymoon. It was then that Carle realized that Grace had been shaken by the encounter with Norris at the Cleveland Art Museum, when he and Grace had gone through a doorway and come face to face with Norris and Pauline. There had been awkward laughter followed by pleasantries, but when they were alone Carle realized that Grace was really upset.

“I certainly didn’t want to run into them,” she sputtered. “That’s the last thing I wanted to have happen.”

“It wasn’t so bad,” Carle said. “I bump into him every once in a while.”

“Doesn’t it bother you?” Grace said.

“No. We’re always agreeable.”

“Well, I hope I don’t run into her again. She seemed so smug.”

And now lately Grace had begun talking restlessly about leaving Cleveland.

“This city is the wrong place for me to live, Carle,” she said.

“Why?”

“I could make much more money in New York.”

“I can’t imagine living anywhere but Cleveland,” he said.

“Cleveland is a one-horse town. It’s a poor excuse for a city.”

“That’s all right. I like it.”

“You loved the East, Carle. You know it.”

“For a honeymoon - yes. I didn’t say I wanted to move there. Besides, my work is here.”

Grace controlled an impulse to laugh in Carle’s face.

“Your work! Seriously, Carle, you know you’re not running a studio. You could open up a new one in New York and not lose a penny. Your dividends will come to you just as fast in New York, maybe faster. If you had a clientele, you lost it by not going to the studio during the time your mother was ill. No one answers the phone or anything.

“Now, don’t throw that up at me!” he said. “And I want you to know that I’m not going to leave Cleveland. The only reason you want to is because it bothers you to live in the same town as Norris. You still love him, don’t you?”

Grace made no denial, and Carle went and curled up in the wing chair, his face to the wall.

Grace began to think more and more about a house in Westport, Connecticut, where her mother had been born. Not only would it be for sentimental reasons, but it had become an artists’ and writers’ colony. She would make a fresh beginning.

####

Although Ada again had to send him money for the trip home, Norris's second European trip was a definite success. He again won prizes in the annual May Art Show, and his pictures were selling. However, his photography was still the mainstay of his income, though it was not enough for him to support Pauline in a home of their own. They were still with Rosella, Ethel and Ada, but things were getting better all the time. Through a friend of Pauline's he got in as a photographer for Cleveland's biggest advertising agency.

Pauline, though she sewed for a living, was not an average seamstress. She had studied in New York. She sewed for Cleveland Heights' leading families and was doing very well. Most of her business was outfitting bridal parties and making evening dresses for Cleveland's winter social season and the spring opera week.

In the spring of 1928 the Gates family launched a large land development, out to the south of Cleveland, in Carrollton Heights. It was called Crestwood Hills, and Norris, through the advertising agency he'd been working for, got the job of making photographs of each house built in the development. The photos were used in a big sales promotion campaign that ran in the Cleveland News, and Cleveland Herald, and the city's weekly magazine, the Cleveland Parade. No two houses would appear the same.

Rosella was in raptures with her pride in Norris.

"I hope Grace is aware of Norrie's success these days," she said to Ada.

"He should have worked that well when he was married to Grace," said Ada. "She may very likely feel bitter."

"Well, she shouldn't be," Rosella said.

"Yes, she should. If he'd buckled down to his painting years ago, and watched his temper, that little family would still be together."

"Don't you like Pauline?" Rosella asked.

"She's pleasant enough, but that's beside the point. I feel badly about the children, that's all."

"They have a step-father now," Marcel la said.

"Yes, I know." Ada said.

"Norr and Pauline want to go to France again."

"Well," Ada said. "Tell him to leave some money for you to cable to him when he runs out of funds in Europe. I've used up my savings, and I don't want to sell my stock. I want to leave it to Ethel. She'll need it."

“Norr will have enough money this next time” Rosella said.

In June, 1929 they entertained Dee and Jane on the occasion of Jane’s thirteenth birthday. The girls came for dinner, but Norris and Pauline left early because they had a social engagement. Before he left, Norris quizzed the girls.

“There’s a rumor around town that your mother is planning to leave Cleveland. I met Carle Semon at the Photo Arts Club and he says Grace has bought a house in Westport.”

“It’s true,” Dee said.

“Carle says he has no intention of leaving Cleveland.”

“That’s true too, I guess,” said Dee.

“Then what of the marriage?” Norris asked.

“Well,” Dee said. “I guess it’s coming to an end.”

“He was too old for her,” Norris said. “A nice enough fellow, but too old for your mother. Anyway, she ought to stay in Cleveland.”

Pauline looked embarrassed.

Dee said, “Why?”

“Because she’s established here. She makes good money here.”

“She once was established in New York, Daddy.”

“We barely kept our heads above water in New York.”

Pauline left the room.

“Daddy.” Dee said. “We shouldn’t talk about Mother. It embarrasses Pauline. She had to leave because of it.”

“Nonsense. She’s all right. She just went to ‘wee-wee’ before we leave. I talk about your mother in front of her lots of times.”

“I’ll bet you do.” Jane said. “You aren’t really famous for sparing other people’s feelings.”

Norr turned and looked at Jane with surprise. “My goodness! You’re growing up, aren’t you? Growing up like your mother, in fact.”

After the girls left, Ethie noticed that Ada was crying.

Why Auntie!” she said, and came and patted her on the shoulder. You never cry. Cheer up. I don’t remember ever seeing you cry.”

“I don’t either,” Ada said. “That is, not since my Mama died, I guess.”

“And you cried too when my father died,” Ethie said.

“Yes, that’s right. That was such a shock.”

“But Auntie, don’t cry now,” Ethie said. The girls will be back. Norr doesn’t think Grace will stay in the East. She won’t want to be so far from her parents.”

“Grace’s parents are old, Ethie. They’ll not be around more than a few years. And I won’t be around much longer, either. That’s why I felt bad to see the girls go out that door. I had such a feeling I’d seen them for the last time.”

“Oh, Auntie, it’s not like you to talk this way. Not like you at all.”

“No, it’s not. But Ethie, I’ve not been at all well. I have spells lately when my hands feel numb and I can’t write. My legs feel numb, too.”

“Maybe your fall caused it, Auntie.”

“If it was just my legs, I might think that was it, but it’s even worse for my hands. Mama had trouble with numbness too, in her last year.”

“Auntie, I’ll get Mama right to work on that problem. Maybe you’d rather have someone else do it, another practitioner.”

“No, Ethie, it’s no use. I’m no Christian Scientist. No, I’m just getting old, and that’s the plain and simple truth. I have to face it. But there were so many things I once wanted to do with my life, and now it is nearly over, and I haven’t done them at all. My life hasn’t amounted to anything much at all.”

“Yes it has, Auntie. It’s been a great comfort to all of us to have you with us.”

“I’ve tried to be useful, but that isn’t much to show for more than seventy years of living.”

“You’ve meant more to people than just cooking and mending and washing dishes, Auntie.”

“I would have preferred to use my mind. If I hadn’t got deaf so soon I would have enjoyed office work. I’d have liked to try to learn shorthand and been a stenographer, but the deafness kept me from that. I could only type, and now I can’t even do that. I wanted to write books, but being a spinster I felt I didn’t know enough about romantic matters, so I had to rule that out. A few years ago I started work on a short history of my side of the family. After I went out with Norris and Grace to help them when they were on the farm, I was so busy I set it aside and I’ve never taken

it up again. I wish I could finish it now. I'm chair-bound and it would be a good time to do it, but I'll have to hurry lest my mind gives out the way Mama's did. She got so she couldn't remember anything."

Three weeks later Ada was cheered up greatly by a rare letter from Jane.

"Dear Aunt Ada,

We have been at camp two weeks now, and it is as fine as ever in some ways. Uncle Roge gave Babs and me each a puppy. His boss's dog, who is a Scotch terrier, had a litter of four pups but the father dog is not a Scottie so they decided to give the puppies away. They are what you call mixed breed, or mongrel, but I don't like that word, do you? Babs's dog is a male and she named it Bimmy. He looks like a Sealyham terrier. Mine is a female and I named her Binker. She looks more like a bird dog than anything else, because she has speckled feet. At least, Aunt Nelle says bird dogs have speckled feet. Babs got a puppy from the same mother dog last year but it got out in the street and got hit by a car, so Uncle Roge promised to get her a puppy from the next litter. Mother said I could have one too, because we are going to live in the new house in Westport this fall. Bimmy and Binker are awfully cute together.

This year camp is being run like the army and the kids aren't crazy about it, I can tell you that. That's because Dee and Billy are in charge of us younger kids. They keep little note books and put down demerits for us. That means "black marks" and when you get too many of them then you get deprived of something, like dessert, or going swimming, or a trip to Plymouth. So camp really isn't as much fun as it used to be.

If you are wondering why Mim and Trink didn't get a puppy too, it's because they have a dog at home in Oberlin. It's a good thing because there weren't any more puppies left in this litter.

Yesterday, my puppy was sick, and Aunt Nelle said maybe she had been poisoned. I was very worried. Aunt Nelle gave her warm milk with melted shortening in it. She wouldn't eat much of it, but today she seems to be fine again, so thank goodness for that.

Well, this is the longest letter I ever wrote, so I'll stop.

I hope you are feeling good, and enjoying the radio with headphones Daddy got you.

Much love to you and all, Jane.

"I hope nothing happens to that puppy of Jane's," Ada told Ethel. "She was so heart-broken over the white cat she had in North Royalton. I was so put out with Grace about that. That's a nice long letter for Jane to write to me, isn't it? She's thirteen years old now. I can't believe it! Oh dear, I do miss those girls."

Tears came to Ada's eyes, and Ethel spoke to her mother of it later. "Auntie cries quite often lately, have you noticed it?"

“No.” Rosella said.

“I mentioned it to the girls at the office and they said she might have had a stroke, a slight stroke.”

“Ethie, you know we don’t talk about ‘mortal mind’.”

“But Mama, the people I work with aren’t Scientists. I get used to the way they think and talk.”

“Well, you mustn’t. You must think spiritually.”

That was the next to the last summer that the cousins went to Fison’s Hill in New Hampshire. Also it would be the last time Uncle Roge would be free of financial worries. It was the last summer that cash for gasoline and groceries flowed freely. For with the stock market crash in late October his fortunes in advertising would take a downturn that would never come back to their boom-year level. That summer, Dee and Jane Rahming, Mim and Trink Lemmon, Billy Wooldridge, and Janet (the young daughter of Earl and Ted Hurst) made up the young people’s group. This last addition was to make a radical difference in the camp routine that summer and it resulted in Jane Rahming and Trink Lemmon vowing they would never, never, never return to Fison’s Hill. Billy Wooldridge resolved the same.

Earl Hurst and Louise had made plans to board their only child, with Roge and Nelle for the summer, so that she could take part in the fun that Grace and Merly’s girls had enjoyed so many summers. They lived in a Manhattan apartment, and summers there were stifling and tedious. Roge and Nelle enjoyed their company for they were gay and witty, and reminded them of the old days in New York around 1910 when they’d all been young and struggling, but light hearted and full of fun. It was true that Waldo was dead, and Norr out of the picture, and Merly back in Oberlin nursing the old folks, but it was a lively summer. Don and Louise came for the first two weeks, as did Roger and William Wooldridge, and Grace Rahming Semon (soon to be Grace Rahming again she said). They would stay for two or three weeks only, but Nelle and the children would stay for the entire summer.

Grace had already bought the house in Westport and would have to return to Cleveland to put her furnishings in storage, ready to move into the new house in September.

Meantime she’d be waiting for her divorce proceedings from Carle to come up, and she’d be preparing to draw the Lander Company’s catalog for next season’s line of coats and suits. Between times she must be hinting for art work to do in New York.

But first there would be two weeks of fun. Jane and the other children liked it best when Uncle Roge and Uncle William and other grownups were on the Hill, because during those times there were more hikes, picnics, swimming trips, and campfires planned for every day. The other women kept Aunt Nelle’s mind off what the children were doing, and they had more time to play in the barn or in the fields, or at the edge of the woods in a hideout they’d named “Camp Fluffy

Pine.” There, a young white pine made a sheltered natural play house underneath its low branches. It was the place where the girls loved to go when Aunt Nelle gave them some free time, and it was a spot that they had kept secret from Billy Wooldridge, who teased them continually.

After the other adults had gone back to their responsibilities in New York or Cleveland, the children would be left alone with Aunt Nelle, and the special excursions would end, and there would be work projects to be carried out, such as cleaning the entire attic, or the kitchen cupboards, or scrubbing, and of course the endless hand-washing of the cotton flannel bedding and the underwear, socks, and pajamas, and the khaki knickers and shirts that everyone wore.

But the summer of 1929 was to be different, with the fun part spoiled. It was all because of a brainstorm on the part of Earl Hurst. It was an innocent brainstorm. He’d no notion he was going to spoil things. He’d said later on that he thought the idea would be fun for the children.

Don had been in The War in France briefly. When Nelle had made remarks about how much work there was at Camp, Don had said, “You need to have the chores better organized. Everyone must have duties for which they’re totally responsible.”

“Well, it is that way now, “Nelle said. “Pretty much.”

“You ought to make it more definite. Boy! In the Army there’s never any doubt about chores.”

Within a week Don had worked out a system. The day would start with “Reveille.” Babs had been given a bugle for her birthday, and was learning the army calls. She had been studying piano since she was five, and did better at music than any of the other cousins, a great point of pride with Nelle, because Babs’ s school report cards were not encouraging.

Babs’s rendition of “Reveille” was still a little bit slow, but improving every day, as was her “mess call.” She had fairly well mastered “Taps.”

Slow though it might be, “Reveille” got everyone in camp awake, and they all had to hustle to be ready for flag-raising, and after that, the younger cousins had to line up outside the kitchen door for inspection, conducted by Dee or Billy, on alternate mornings. Babs, Jane, Mim and Trink, and seven-year-old Jeane Hurst were checked for clean hands and finger nails, combed hair and so on. Mim and Jane, who were as tall as Dee now, resented being put on an “inferior” level, and Babs, who saw Billy Wooldridge every weekend when she was at home in New York, resented having him her superior. When Billy and Dee put black marks in their little books for the younger cousins’ shortcomings, the cousins responded sassily ”I don’t care,” and they got more black marks. The whole “army” system fell apart after the first three weeks, when the Hurst’s went back to New York, but Aunt Nelle’s authority was still supreme. With her police whistle and her special code, she summoned them individually all day long for chores. As usual, Jane and Trink were sure that Aunt Nelle blew their code whistle more often than the others.

But that summer marked a certain turning point in Jane's luck at Fison's Hill. Uncle Roge took a whole month's vacation. His plan was to work on the book he was writing, and to paint the house and studio. He had discovered that Jane could paint skillfully, and so, as his helper she got out of many a dish-washing and ironing stint.

When it came time to paint the trim, Jane was a great help.

I bought a bluish-green color. Don't you think that will be pretty." Uncle Roge asked.

"Well," Jane said. "If it's the right kind of bluish-green."

"What do you mean, Anderson?" he asked. Roger had funny names for all of the cousins. He called Mim "Murphy" or M.E. Lemmon. Mim's name was Miriam Elizabeth, and once when she was eight years old she had written Uncle Roge a thank-you letter and signed it "Yours very truly, M.E. Lemmon." Trink, for some reason or other, he called "Trundle-bed," and Barbara was "Babs."

Roger opened up the gallon of paint.

"It's rather dark," Jane said. "Don't you think so?"

"What I wanted was a blue-green like the shutters on the Morgan House Hotel. You know which one I mean?"

"Yes. That tourist hotel before you get up to the Notch."

"That's right. Nelle and I have always admired that place. The shutters are such a pretty color. I asked the man at Brown's Hardware for a nice blue-green. He thought this would do."

"Well, why don't we try one shutter with this, and then you and Aunt Nelle can see how you like it. But personally, my memory of the Morgan House is that those shutters are different. They're an attenuation of this, though."

Uncle Roge looked at Jane and raised an eyebrow and laughed. "Attenuation? Anderson! Where'd you get such a big enormous word?"

"From Mother. What I mean is, the paint you got is blue-green, and the trim on the Morgan House is blue-green too. But it's much lighter. You could mix some white in with this, and get a tint like that."

"And that's an attenuation?"

"Yes, Mother says it's the same hue, only when you lighten it with white, you're diluting it, stringing it out. Then it's a tint, an attenuation."

"Hm. Well, let's put a little white in this, I think there's room."

“Alright,” Jane said. “but I don’t think it’ll work, Uncle Roge.”

Uncle Roge laughed again. “Why not, Anderson? You said...”

“You’ve got to have at least equal parts of this and some white - maybe even more white.”

“How do you know?”

“Because the green is very strong.”

Roger found an empty paint pail, and when he started pouring in the green Jane stopped him.

“Don’t put in too much. Not more than a third of a gallon.”

“But...” Uncle Roge said.

“Start out with just a little green,” Jane said.

She turned out to be right, and Roger was impressed. He began calling her his “right hand man” and Jane had a much pleasanter summer because of it. She would far rather paint than do kitchen work. When it came time to buy paint for the inside of the house, Roger took Jane along to Plymouth with him to help him choose the colors.

“Let’s bring Mim along too,” Jane said. “She’d like to come along too, I know. She’d probably like to paint too.”

“Alright - It’s just that you’ve learned about colors from your Mama.”

“Well, I wouldn’t want Mim to feel mad at me,” Jane said. “I’m fond of Mim. She’s nearer my age than Dee is, you know, Uncle Roge. She’s like my sister, sort of.”

“I understand,” he said. “And Babs and Trink have each other.”

“That’s just it,” said Jane. “They’re both eleven, and they are tent-mates, and Mim and I are tent-mates. Let’s take Mim with us and get her opinion too.”

“Alright, that’s fine with me.”

Jane felt that it was Uncle Roge who made life at Fison’s Hill fun. When he wasn’t there, things were rather grim. Even Mim, who was Aunt Nelles favorite niece agreed with that. The trouble was, Aunt Nelle was forever blowing her police whistle, one blast for Trink, two blasts for Babs, three for Mim, and four for Jane. No sooner had they all run down the field to play at Camp Fluffy Pine than the police whistle sounded its shrill summons, and the hapless one must march back up the field posthaste to do over again some task not completed to Aunt Nelle’s liking.

####

They all returned to New York the first of September. Mim and Trink would be going home to Oberlin, while Jane and Dee would stay in the East. Grace arrived from Cleveland, and Roger volunteered to drive her and the girls, and Jane's puppy to Westport.

Roger left them there waiting for their moving van. He returned to New York. The moving van had not arrived by evening.

"We'll have to go to the hotel," Dee said.

"I'd rather not," Grace said. "We have to be careful with our money."

"Mother," Dee asked, "are we having money problems?"

"We'll be alright," Grace said, "as soon as I'm started."

"There's an old mattress in the attic," Jane said. "The mattress is mildewed, but we could sleep on it tonight."

"Ugh," Dee said.

"I have some new towels in my suitcase," Grace said. "We can put those under our heads."

"Oh, Mother!" Dee said. "I'd be afraid to stay here tonight."

"You won't be any safer with furniture," Jane laughed. "Besides, Binker will protect us. She's a good watchdog. She'll sleep right with us."

"We'll lock all the doors," Grace said. "We'll be alright."

"Ugh," Dee said, "That moldy old mattress."

The moving van arrived at seven the next morning. Thus began their life in Westport.

To Jane, the house was marvelous. It had been built in 1736, on the side of a hill. It had a downstairs room with a fireplace complete with an iron crane and a Dutch oven. This room had been a kitchen in the early days, and could now be a play room, recreation room, or whatever one wished. Above this room was the living room with another fireplace. On this floor also were a front parlor and hall, a dining room, kitchen and pantry.

On the second floor were three bedrooms and a bath, and on the third floor, two rooms and attic space. One of the two rooms had a toilet and wash basin. It was more room than Grace and her girls needed, and more than she had furniture for, but it was a fascinating house and she and the girls loved it.

"The trouble is, Grace told them, "I hope I can make enough money to pay for it."

Both Jane and Dee were enchanted with their new schools. Coming, as they did, from another section of the country, they'd had no trouble in interesting the boys. Dee fell in love immediately. Since her second grade of school Dee had always been in love. And Jane had always teased her about it, something that did not bother Dee at all. Jane announced that Westport Junior High School was "the best one I ever went to."

"Better than North Royalton" Dee asked.

"Certainly," Jane said, "But anyway, that was long ago."

"Yes," Dee said. "Imagine! Four years."

Grace laughed. "Four years isn't long, really, but it does seem like centuries, doesn't it?" Her voice turned sad.

"Yes," Jane said. "Since then, I went to McGinley School when we lived on Rosewood Street, and then we went to Virginia to school, and then you sent me to Aunt Nelle's and then I went to P.S. 69, and then to Sunshine Health Camp, and after that to Price Boulevard School, and then to Morley Junior High. I hated most of them. And every time I made a good friend we moved away somewhere else."

"I'm sorry, Nipper," Grace said. "If your father had been any kind of a father..."

Dee always got nervous when Grace began to talk against Norris, She knew her mother was right, but she did not want to hear about her father's faults. She loved him just the same. She always hastened to change the subject.

"Well, anyway," she said. "We're here in Westport now. I for one adore it here."

"Girls, I know you love it here, but I must tell you that I'm very worried about keeping up the payments," Grace said. "I'd hate to lose this place."

"Oh, Mother, no!" Dee said.

"Well, so far I've had no luck in New York, and I don't know why, either. Don has given me names of lots of people to see, but I haven't landed any work yet. Well, anyway, I'm going back to Cleveland next week and do the spring catalog for Landers Company. And the divorce hearing is supposed to be the first week in November, you know. I'd have to be there then, of course."

"Mother," Dee said. "You can't live here and work in Gatesort"

"No, of course not, but I can always go back and do the catalogs for Landers. I could always count on doing those. It's been my mainstay, you know. But of course I have to get other work in New York right away. Otherwise, I can't keep up payments on the house."

years after we lived there!

J.R.C.

Section

5

REAL ESTATE
ARCHITECTURE

NEW YORK

Herald

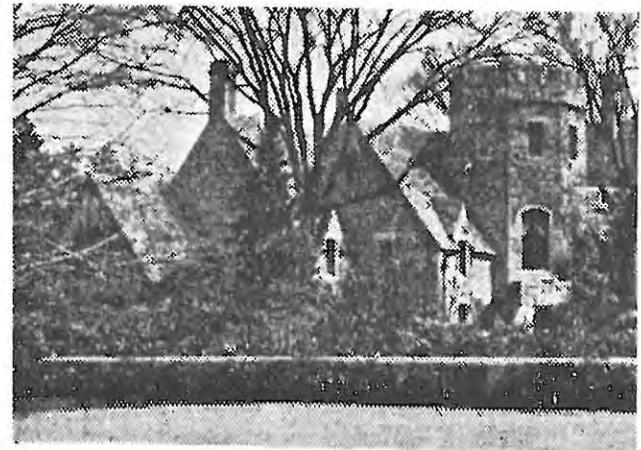
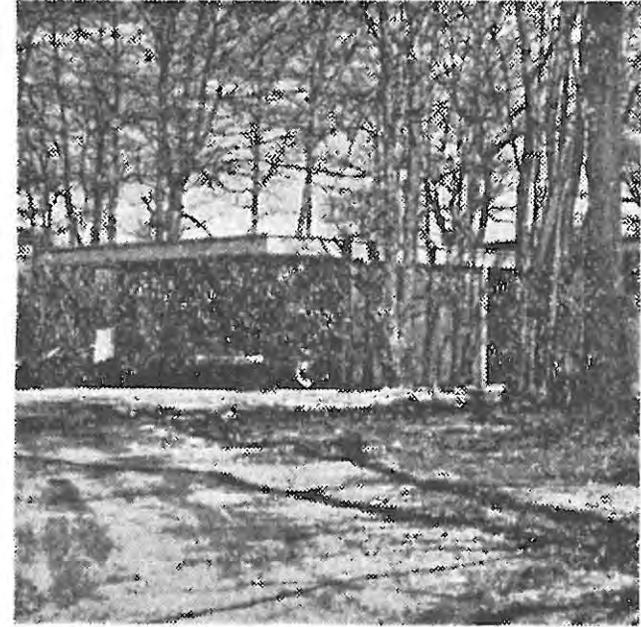


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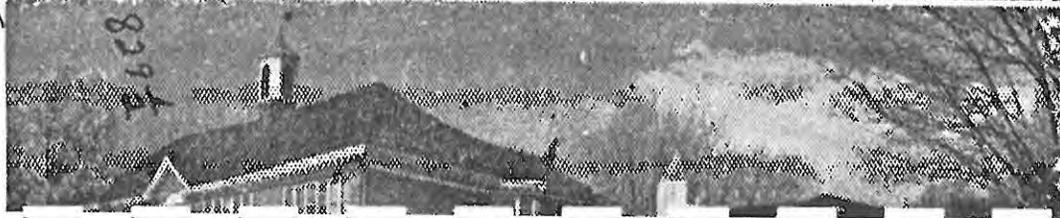
SUNDAY, MARCH 1, 1953

Westport, Hour From City, Guards Its Residential Character and Spaciousness



House at 18 South Compo Road, Westport, built in 1735

GRACE'S HOUSE
(IRENE)
"HIGH ROCK"



Stone mansion on Beachside Ave., owned by Briggs Cu
tial dwellings overlooking the Lo

“I wish we’d never come at all,” Dee said. “I couldn’t bear to go back to Cleveland now. This is the first time in my life I’ve been really truly happy.”

“Oh, Dee, that’s ridiculous,” Jane said.

“No, it isn’t. I’m in love just the way Mother was with Daddy. And Curly loves me. And we’ll be graduating together next June. I couldn’t bear to go back to Cleveland to school. We’ve just to be able to keep this place, Mother.

“Well, Lord knows, I intend to. When I’m back home I’m going to ask Father to lend me some money to tide me over till my work gets going.”

Jane spoke up. “Mother, I wonder if you’ll be able to do that?”

“What, chicken?” Grace asked.

“To borrow any money from Grandpa Martin.”

“Why not, dear?”

“Because of the trust fund,” Jane said.

“What trust fund?”

“The one they fixed up for Grandpa’s money now that he’s so old.”

“I never heard anything about a trust fund. Who told you? Nelle?”

“No, Mim, I think,” said Jane. “Did you know about it Dee?” Grace asked.

“No. What is a trust fund?”

“Jane, just what did Mim tell you?” Grace asked.

“Just that it’s been arranged that Grandpa and Grandma don’t handle their money any more. It was getting to be too much of a worry for them. So I suppose you couldn’t borrow money any more from Grandpa, Mama.”

“Well, who does handle Father’s money? I suppose it’s Nelle, isn’t it?”

“No, it’s a lawyer. I think his name is Robinson, or something,” Jane said.

“Edwards,” Grace said. “I know who that man is. What else did you find out about it?”

“Mim just said it was all done for the sake of Aunt Emmie, so she’d have protection after Grandma and Grandpa die.”

“Well, good grief!” Grace said. “The rest of us would always see that Emmie had a home with one of us.”

“Grandma and Grandpa wanted to be sure of that. Mim says it’s all down in black and white; Aunt Emmie will live with Aunt Merly the rest of her life. And Mr. Edwards will pay out the money.”

“What about the rest of it?” Grace asked.

“What rest of it?”

“Father and Mother’s estate. After they’re both gone, then what? Emmie doesn’t need all Father’s money.”

“I don’t know,” Jane said. “Mim didn’t know about that, I guess.”

Grace went back to Cleveland within a week, leaving the girls to keep house alone. She left a long list of instructions and cautions for them.

“Nelle and Roge will be out to see you weekends,” she told them.

“They don’t need to,” Dee said. “We’ll be just fine.”

“The catalog will take four weeks, perhaps a little more. I’ll be back as soon as possible.”

In October the stock market crashed. Roger Fison could speak of little else. His own business had been worrying him for some time, and he’d been trying to find other work. It had been years since he’d been a telegrapher, but he’d always hoped to make his living writing travel and adventure stories. He’d sold a half-dozen short stories to boys’ magazines, and he had two full-length books started. He often read to the cousins from them and found them well received. They were books similar to Huckleberry Finn, and were based on his own adventures after he ran away from home and his stern minister father. But for years now he’d been selling magazine advertising. He was sick of it. Recently, an opportunity he’d been looking for seemed about to come his way. Through a good friend, a chance to work for National Geographic opened up, and Roger all but had the job, when the question of his age arose.

“I had no idea they had a limit,” he told Nelle. “And I spent so much time trying to land that.”

“Well, you can’t help the year you were born, sweets. Don’t worry you’ll find something. And we’ll get along even if you keep on doing your same old work. We’ve always got along.”

“Nelle, you just don’t realize how bad business is! Things are in very bad shape. You’d better write to Grace, and tell her she’d better try to sell the Westport house and get out from under her obligations there. When is she coming back? I doubt she’ll find work in New York right now. Everyone in business is being very cautious. She never should have bought that house, Nelle.”

“I know,” Nelle said. “I told her that. But Roge, you’ll have to admit no one knew the market would crash.”

“Some did,” he said.

“I don’t understand those things,” Nelle said.

“Not many people do.”

“Well, I’m glad I still own my second fifty acres in North Royalton,” she said.

“I hope you still have the money from your other fifty acres.”

“Roge, you know I haven’t touched my savings.”

“That’s good, because we may have to touch it to eat this winter.”

“Oh Roge, no! Things aren’t that bad.”

“They are! I’m serious. I don’t think my job is worth a nickel, frankly. My commissions are way down. You know that.”

“What on earth would we do?”

The Old Brick

BY

JANE R. CHANDLER

PART FIVE

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YOU GET SO EXCITED, GRACE

When Grace arrived in Cleveland she had much on her mind. She must raise money as fast as possible. The catalog money would not be in for some time. She should, however, get something from the divorce from Carle E. Semon. The judge would surely grant her some kind of settlement, since she'd been the only one in the marriage working and earning money. And she might get the money that John Arthur Martin (her brother Art) had owed her for three years, ever since the time she had spent six weeks helping him re-decorate his moving picture theater in Oberlin, and the tea-room that he'd opened in the same building. He not only owed her money for the time she'd spent consulting with painters and paperhangers, but she'd been out-of-pocket for various things she'd bought for him for the tea-room. He'd always postponed paying her what he owed her, saying that his other creditors would have to come first.

When she first arrived in Cleveland, she went straight to Betty Long's studio apartment where she knew she could stay. After that, she got in touch with her lawyer and discussed the divorce. Next she made her arrangements with Landers Company for the catalog work. She was not yet ready to go out to Oberlin to visit her parents, and the others. She had some inquiring to take care of first.

She decided to call Art. He'd just have to pay her the money he owed her.

As usual, Art was Art, good-natured, but full of excuses.

"Well, Gracey, old sis, I'd love to get that debt cleared up and off my mind."

"Art I don't think you've ever had it on your mind."

"Why I sure have, Gracey. 'Course I have. It's just that I've had so many things to pay for. I had to buy a new projector, you know, right after you did that work."

"But Art, that's been three years ago now. I spent a lot of my own money on that tea-room. I bought all the material for the window curtains, and I bought candle-sticks, and cream and sugar sets for the tables. Those were imported pottery from Italy, you recall."

"I know, and they didn't hold up. They're all chipped. Too soft, that pottery, Gracey."

"Be that as it may, you still owe me five hundred and fifty dollars, Art, and I need it badly."

“Well, the problem is that Jeanne (nee Wilson) and I have bought a new house, and I’m in debt with that. The down payment cleaned me out.”

“Why did you do that, Art, when you already owe money?”

“Well, because Jeanne was unhappy. We lost our new baby last summer, you know. He was only five months old. Died of summer complaint, while we were staying at the farm for Pa. You knew about that, didn't you, Gracey?”

“Yes, of course, Art. Mother wrote me and told me, and I wrote you and Jeanne a letter of sympathy.”

“You’re a good letter-writer, Grace. Best in the family, next to Mother.”

“Yes, well, what about some money for me, Art? Some on account at least. I need it.”

“Trouble is, I haven’t got it, and I can’t hit Pa for it any more, since they've got J. L. Edwards handling their affairs. Pa would always help me out in the old days.”

“I was going to ask you about that, Art. What about this trust fund?”

“This what?”

“Trust fund. I learned that they've set up a trust fund for Emmy.”

“Oh? Well, could be. All I know is that I went to Pa and asked to borrow some money for the down payment on my house, and he said, 'see Edwards about it.' Edwards told me 'nothing doing' so I borrowed it from Jeanne's mother.”

“But who arranged all this?” said Grace.

“I don't know. Pa. I suppose,” Art said.

“Oh, now listen, Art. Can you imagine Pa getting up some morning and saying 'I'm too old to handle my money anymore'?”

“No, but I can sure imagine Ma telling him that.”

“But Father's still spry and alert. He goes downtown and talks to the merchants. He reads the paper and gives forth opinions on politics, and he reads the Bible same as ever. He didn't seem a bit senile to me when I was down in Oberlin to see them all a few months ago.”

“No, but I gather that Ma wanted to be sure that Emmy was provided for, in the years after she and Pa die. After Ma nearly died that time two or three years ago she began to worry about Emmy. So Ma pointed out to Pa that he was getting close to ninety. and that he should arrange something. So they did, I understand.”

“When? How long have you known about it?”

“Me? A couple of months or so.”

“When did they set this all up?” Grace asked.

“Last year when Nelle was out here on a visit to see the family. She comes every June, seems like.”

“Ah, ha! I knew Nelle had her hand in it,” Grace said. “And I’m sure Merly knew. What annoys me, is that they didn’t tell all of us. Now, understand, Art, I’m just as interested in Emmy’s wellbeing as the others are, but she’s just as much my sister and your sister, and all of us should have been in on the discussion of her care.”

“Well, that would have been up to Pa and Ma, I guess.”

“Yes, but Art, don’t you wonder what they arranged for the rest of Pa’s estate? After all, he has assets that are extensive. More than enough for a trust fund for Emmy.”

“Ask William about it. I don’t know the details. I just learned that I can’t get any help from Pa, anymore. I don’t like Edwards anyway.”

“You think William knows the details?”

“I imagine so. Ma says he’s the most practical one of all of us.”

“Well, I’m going to call him, then. Maybe I’ll ask Merly.”

“I can tell you this much. Merly’s provided for in the arrangement. She gets a monthly allowance from Edwards.”

“Oh, she does?”

“But that’s on condition that she makes a home for Ma and Pa and Emmy. And that’s kind of a hard burden on her.”

“But it’s security, Art! Such as you and I may never have. We have to earn what we have.”

“But in Merly’s case, having Ma and Pa and Emmy on her hands will keep her from ever marrying again.”

“I don’t think she would have married again anyway, Art. A few years ago maybe, but Merly’s forty-five now. It’s a wonder she ever married. She was so ‘churchy’ for a while. Wanted to be a missionary. remember?”

“Yes I remember. Well, sis, ask William about it all.”

“And now, just between you and me and the gatepost,” Grace said, “I think the reason some of them got the money tied up in the trust fund is because they thought you and I would borrow all of it and there’d be nothing left for them to inherit.”

Grace slept poorly that night. In addition to her various worries, Betty's extra couch was miserably uncomfortable. It was only an iron day bed with a rather lumpy mattress, that unaccountably slanted toward the front, and Grace spent the night clinging to it to keep from rolling out onto the floor. Next morning she would see that it got turned around the other way so she could roll toward the wall.

Grace was a bit put out with Betty anyway. She had learned on talking with Betty that Merly had told her about the trust fund, but when Grace expressed her surprise, Betty told her that she never gave it any particular thought.

"I assumed you all knew," Betty said.

"Well, we didn't," Grace said. "Some of us weren't consulted at all. Merly nor Nelle never breathed a word of it to me or Art."

"But it's a sound idea, Grace, don't you feel it is?"

"I might if Edwards weren't the trustee. I don't care for that man at all."

"I wouldn't know about him, of course," Betty had said. "I'm sorry Merly mentioned it to me. I didn't think it anything unusual, or to be kept secret."

Since she was Betty's friend, Grace couldn't be cross with her.

At night she tried to plan. Before she went to work on the Landers catalog, she had to take care of several things. A trip out to Oberlin to see her parents. And that, of course, meant seeing Merly and Emmy. Not that seeing Emmy was ever a problem (just a sadness), but she was in no mood to see Merly. The feeling she felt toward Merly (and Nelle) at the time was not cordial. But there was nothing to be gained by getting into a family quarrel over it just now. When she saw Merly she might be tempted to make a sarcastic remark or two at the very least, and if she did that, Merly would go through the roof. Merly was likely to be on the defensive about the whole matter. If only the others had told her at the time just what arrangements were being made. Art was of the impression that all the others knew except himself and Grace. But did Howd know? Grace wondered. Howd'd been out of favor for years.

No, she must not get into any kind of a row When she went down to Oberlin. There were too many questions floating in the air just now, questions involving money. If things went badly, she might even have to borrow money from Merly. If only Norris would keep up his support payments for the girls. He was, as usual, about six months behind on those. Why, oh why, had she twice linked her fortunes with a man spoiled by his mother? Norris and Carle were both so talented, so sensitive and fine in many ways. Oh, and they could be gentle and affectionate when they chose. But they had been ruined, ruined, ruined, by their over-loving mamas.

It was all very sad. She should never have married Carle. She had never loved him in the way she loved Norris. That had been first love, young love, the love of an innocent girl. And for all his weaknesses, and sins against her, he had given her their children, who were her only comfort now, her anchor to

windward. Whatever happened, they would always love her and would never let her down. The three of them could stand firm against the whole world if need be.

She had explained to Carle when he first mentioned marriage, that she might not be able to love him as she had loved when she was young. She had warned him that she was disillusioned and wary of being hurt. She had said she wasn't sure she was able to love again generously and lightheartedly. But Carle had persisted. He had said that time would heal, and that he'd rather have the love of a mature woman anyway. He confessed that he'd had a few affairs but that he had never loved deeply. He said they were both mature now and could have a very beautiful marriage if she were willing to give up past hurts, and let herself be loved. Together they would travel to the seacoast, and they would walk along the beaches and watch the gulls, and feel the salt breeze from the sea on their faces, and see it blow across the sand dunes and flatten the grasses as it went. And she had been persuaded and they had a charming honeymoon on Cape Cod. He had taken many lovely photographs including one of her sitting on a dune with the wind ruffling her hair. Dee and Jane loved that photograph. They said she looked like a little girl about twelve years old. They had had such good times on their trip, and fun hunting for a new apartment and fixing it up. And he'd been a very gentle lover, though nothing could ever match, for her, the high excitement that had gone with the lovemaking she'd had with Norris in their early years, when they'd been discovering life together in New York.

Perhaps Carle had sensed this all along, or else he'd not been prepared to share her with her girls, or perhaps his mother's death had been too much for him, or all these factors and more. Whatever it was, it was less than a year when the silent, depressed moods came on him, and he'd taken to his long, long sulks curled up in the wing chair.

Oh, well, it was all in the past now. She would just have to see what the judge had to say about it. Her lawyer was asking for a cash settlement to make up for the lost time in work and the expenses she'd incurred in connection with the failure of the marriage. And there was the matter of the division of the furniture. Most of that problem had already been settled. She'd taken to Oberlin only her own furniture, and the wedding presents given by her friends. Carle had all his things.

Grace had promised to visit Ada as soon as she returned to Cleveland, and that she must do. Betty had told her that Ada wasn't at all well. In the four years since the divorce and her return to Cartwright street, Ada had never failed to send loving letters and greeting cards to Grace and the girls. Grace would leave it to Betty and Ethel to make some arrangement whereby she could visit Cartwright Street on an afternoon when there'd be no danger of an encounter with Norris or Pauline. And Grace had made it clear to Betty that she'd be more comfortable about it if only Aunt Ada were at home.

"Well, of course, Ethel and Norris and Pauline will all be downtown at work," Betty said, "But Mother Rahming might be at home. She doesn't get about much anymore herself, you see, and she doesn't like to leave Ada alone."

"So you think she'd be at home, then?"

“Probably. But I know you wouldn't want to have Ethie or me tell Mother Rahming you don't want her to be there.”

“No, but I dread her, Betty. I have no wish at all to have conversation with her, Betty.”

“How would it be if I went along? Then you can chat with Aunt Ada and I'll talk with Mother Rahming.”

“I'd be very grateful. Betty.”

But first she went to Oberlin to see her parents. It was a November day. The leaves were all down from the trees on the campus now, and men were raking them into piles at the side of the streets, and burning them, and the air was heavy with that old familiar autumn smell. How she and Merly and their school friends had loved shuffling through fallen leaves when they were young. Oh, why couldn't people stay at least as happy as when they were children. Often you were sad for a time even when you were young, but in no time you were over it, and thinking of something else. So it hadn't mattered so much when Nelle and Merly had gone off by themselves and left her out. Grace's best chum at the Academy, Olive Willey, had more than made up for the loss. Olive was married to a doctor now and living in California, and had lots of money and several children. Olive always had had lots of money, of course. When Grace told her about divorcing Norris and marrying Carle Semon, Olive had promptly sent Grace a linen damask table cloth twenty feet long, with eighteen napkins. When Grace and Carle had stretched it out to its full length they had to stand in two rooms of their apartment, Grace hadn't known whether to laugh or cry. Surely Olive must be aware that few people had tables, or dining rooms, for that matter, where they could serve eighteen people sitting down for dinner. Grace was a trifle put out with Olive. What was she trying to say with that gift? That she'd made a successful marriage? It was puzzling that Olive would treat her best chum in a condescending way. Finally Grace decided that it hadn't been that way at all. Probably Olive did entertain eighteen people for dinner. She probably had lots of long tablecloths herself, and assumed any woman would appreciate such a practical gift.

Grace's second best chum in her Oberlin days had been Elma Pratt. Olive Willey and Elma Pratt had never had much in common, and Grace usually saw them separately, for things seemed to be awkward when they were a threesome, though Grace always had fun with either of them alone, for both had a rollicking sense of humor. But Olive was conventional and used to money, while Elma's family life was rather hectic, but she was happy-go-lucky at heart, even though her father probably earned only half what Olive's father did. Olive considered that Elma was rather “lacking in polish” and Elma's feeling was that Olive was “Just a bit proper for me.” Grace, however, didn't think Olive was too proper, just well-bred. Grace and Olive had spent their school days in giggles.

Elma had been fun too, and so different. It was Elma who had got Grace to thinking about Paris in the very beginning. Elma had also attended the Oberlin Academy. She'd gone to the college for a year too. After that she spent one year at the Art School in Cleveland, and then she'd gone back to Oberlin to work in the Admissions Office at the college.

Walking across the campus now, and thinking about Olive and Elma had made Grace sad. The best years were all over. Grace had decided that she would not plan on or hope for any more romances. She had had bad luck twice, and from now on she would count on her art work and her girls for happiness.

She was tired after her long walk down College Street. She wished often that she had a car and could drive it. So many women were driving cars these days. Norris had half-heartedly tried to teach her once or twice, but it had all ended in acrimonious talk, because he'd been so impatient with her. He'd kept saying, "Let out the clutch!" and she'd let up her foot on the pedal and that had been the wrong thing to do. Well, she'd never learned, and Carle hadn't driven a car either. So they'd gone everywhere on streetcars and buses (or taxis if they had luggage). She didn't usually mind it. A car was a nuisance in the cities anyway. Oh, but in Oberlin, one would be very convenient. Dee was old enough to drive now; she was eighteen, but she wasn't the type to drive a car. Jane was. When Jane was old enough, they'd buy one. Certainly, all this bad news about the stock market crash and depressed economic conditions was only temporary.

When she got to her parents' house, Grace's spirits were further depressed. It was good to see her dear mother again, but Maria had failed so noticeably since Grace's last visit in August that it was hard for her to hold back the tears. When she leaned over to give her kiss of greeting, Maria was still in bed for her afternoon nap.

"How are your dear girls? Are they in Oberlin all alone?" she asked Grace.

"Yes. but they're doing just fine. Dee is almost nineteen remember."

"Imagine! But Dottie, I hope you'll get back to them soon. They shouldn't be alone. It isn't right."

"I'll be back home in a few weeks. And remember, Nelle and Rog and Barbara (Babs) come out every weekend to be with Dee and Jane."

"How nice that you live in Oberlin. How I would have loved to have seen it! But, oh dear, I feel sad about you and Carle. Carle was nice to me, he seemed to be a real gentleman."

"Yes. Well, Muz, dear, there were problems that just couldn't be worked out. I am sorry." Grace wished to change the subject. "I wish you could see our house in Oberlin, Mother."

"Dottie, I'm just no good for anything anymore."

"Muz dear, you are what you always are good for - for us to love you."

Merly had not been at home when Grace arrived. Nor was Father Martin. After talking with her mother, Grace spoke with Emmy.

"Where's everyone?"

"Merly went downtown with the girls and nurse is napping," Emmy said. "Are you going to stay with us here this winter?" (It was the sort of thing Emmy usually said.)



MARIA E. MARTIN
AGE 70

"SOPHIA"



H.J. MARTIN MARIAM. TRINK L.
"JOHN HEDGES" "SOPHIA" "TREENY"

"No, Emmy dear."

"It would be nice if you could. We could practice piano duets the way we used to."

"Yes, wouldn't that be nice? Where's father Emmy?"

"Art took him out to The Old Brick."

"Oh, he did? How is father, Emmy?"

"He's all right. Ma doesn't feel very well, though."

"I was going to ask you. Doesn't she get up in her chair anymore?"

"Yes, but she takes longer naps."

"Bless her dear heart. I wish I could stay with her. And I'm sorry to miss Father. Emmy, I've got to get back to Cleveland."

"Won't you stay until Merly gets back from downtown? You could have supper with us."

"No, Emmy, but I'll be back once more before I go East again. Betty is expecting me back to have dinner with her. Shouldn't the nurse be getting mother up, Emmy?"

Emmy, as was often the case, didn't answer the question. "Give Nelle my love, Grace."

That evening, back in Cleveland, Grace had much to report to Betty.

"I didn't get to see Father, but seeing Mother was the important thing. Oh, Betty, she's so frail! It makes me feel that I may not see her again. She might just slip away in her sleep any time now."

"Before I forget, let me tell you - your attorney called. Your case comes up next Tuesday morning, but he says you should call him tomorrow."

"I'll be so glad to get that back of me. Once that's settled, my mind will be clear to get at my art work in earnest. First, Landers' catalog of course but oh, Betty! I've something so interesting to tell you. Do you remember Elma Pratt?"

Betty shook her head and looked blank. "From where?"

"She's from Oberlin. She went to the Art School one year too."

"Elma Pratt, Elma Pratt. The name sounds familiar, I guess," Betty said.

"Oh, well, she wasn't at the Art School when we were there. Afterwards. And I don't know how old she is, really. She's one of those people you can't tell about. I imagine she's about forty. The kind of blonde that doesn't show grey, and she's got crinkles around her eyes, but she's very attractive and very animated. She's turned into quite a person."

Betty's brown eyes twinkled. "Tell me why you happen to be talking about her. You get so excited, Grace, you forget what you were talking about."

"I left Father and mother's place, and I was so relieved because I didn't have time to visit with Merly this time. I didn't want to get into a fuss about this trust fund. You must understand, Betty. I don't object to arrangements of some sort being made for Emmy and all that. But, oh, Betty! The way it was done wasn't right at all. To go behind the backs of some of us!"

"What about Elma Pratt?" Betty said gently.

"Yes. Well, half way down College Street, I met Merly and her girls. Mim's got so tall, just like Jane! They're both taller than their mothers!"

"Which isn't saying much.," Betty laughed. "Get on to Elma Pratt and whatever it is that is so exciting..."

"Elma was walking with Merly. They were at the Art School at the same time. After I left and went to New York. It was when Merly and Ethie were continuing their ceramics classes."

"I guess I did meet her probably. Redhead?"

"Strawberry blonde I guess you might say, but graying a little now. Well, guess what! She's been in Europe!"

"So have I," Betty said. "Twice."

"Well I haven't," Grace said, "and you know whose fault that was. And he's been there twice too. No, seriously Betty, I mean Elma has been living in Europe for some time, several years in fact. She was just back in Oberlin for a little visit. Her father lives there with Elma's sister."

"Tell me the exciting part."

"I will. She's got a school."

"Elma's sister has?"

"Betty, you are teasing me."

Betty laughed. "Well, I've never known you to take so long to tell something, Marty."

"Marty! You and Norris are the only ones who ever called me Marty."

"Goodness! I've led you off the track again."

"No, you haven't. Elma has a school. A school in Europe. An art school"

"But she's no artist, is she? Didn't you say she went to art school one year?"

"She's an administrator, though, Betty. She worked for years in the office at the college. This is an international school, with branches in different cities. She's got one in London, and one in Berlin."

"Paris?"

"No, not Paris. Elma says there are too many artists in Paris."

"Starving," Betty said.

"I suppose. But Elma wants to work in places where art hasn't been overstressed. Oh, well - and another thing - it's for younger children, quite young, in fact - five, six, seven years old."

"Why so young?"

"To discover them, and for them to discover art. She's going to open three or four more schools. In Poland, Austria, Switzerland, and Tunisia."

"I suppose people from the better families, people with money?"

"No. It's for poor children."

"Did she inherit money?"

"Not much. Betty, but her mother did leave her a little. And that's when she quit her job at the college, and went to Europe. She's made lots of friends and she's getting people with money to sponsor the schools."

"Oh," Betty said. "Well, that is nice."

"And you're still wondering why I'm excited, aren't you? Well, Elma wants me to teach one of the schools."

"What about all those languages? Does she speak them?"

"Elma speaks German very well. And some French. And there's a man working with her who's Polish and Russian, I believe. So he's helping her to make the contacts she needs in the different cities. Elma wants me to go to Tunis because I speak French rather well. Norris and I often spoke French."

"How much would they pay you?"

"Well, it's all in the planning stage now, Betty, so I won't know about that for a while."

"When would you go?" Betty asked.

"Elma hoped it would be in less than a year."

"But," Betty said "You just moved to Oberlin! And what about your girls?"

Grace's face clouded. "Well, everything would have to be worked out. Dee wants to go to college, and Norris would have to help with that. In fact, he ought to do it all; he's years behind in the support payments. I told Elma I'd want to take Jane with me, and she thinks it could be arranged."

"You'd want to be very sure of everything before you went, Grace."

"Oh, of course. But think of the experience!"

"Yes," Betty said doubtfully. "But I would wonder if you'd make a living."

"Europe is cheaper," Grace said.

"Yes," Betty said, "If you know what you're doing."

They went the next day to visit Aunt Ada Norris.

It seemed strange to Grace to be going back to the neighborhood where Norris had grown up, and where she'd known all his family.

On the way from the streetcar they passed the house where her family had lived during her Art School years and afterwards while William and Art were going to high school. They had all gone back to Oberlin soon after Grandma Burns died. It was so hard to believe that Grandma had been gone so long. It had been 1911, eighteen years ago. Now, her mother had reached the same age that Grandma Burns had been. Grace could not bear to think of a world with her mother gone. She would not even want to go to Oberlin if her mother weren't there. No, of course she would go. She'd go for her dear Father's sake. How lonely he would be!

They came to the corner of Cartwright Street and Price Boulevard, and passed the house where Carle Semon had lived with his mother. After her death, Carle and his brother had sold the house, and already after only a little more than a year it looked untidy and neglected.

"This neighborhood is going downhill fast," Grace commented. "Look, how shabby Abbott's house is."

"Yes," Betty said. "Grace, where is Carle living now?"

"Well, I only talk to my lawyer, but I assume he's still where he was, on 64th Street."

"In furnished rooms?"

"Why, I don't know, Betty."

"Don't you imagine, if you and he hadn't married that he'd still be living here in the old place?"

"I never thought about it," Grace said. "Why? Is that some kind of reproach, Betty?"

"No, but I do feel kind of sorry for him, that's all."

“But Betty, you know how funny he acted. I couldn’t...”

“Oh. I know. I didn't blame you. It's just that he never should have married at all at his age. He was too set in his ways. You get used to having your own way when you're single. But I just think he must be so lonely. He had his mother, and he had you, and now he has no one.”

“What about you, Betty? Are you so lonely? You're single.”

“Sometimes I'm lonely, but I'm used to it. I've lived alone quite a while. I wouldn't consider anything else now.”

After they got to the Rahming house, Grace was greatly relieved to find that Norris's mother was not at home. Grace had dreaded the encounter in spite of Betty's moral support. Fortunately, only Ada and the cat, Puffy, were at home.

When they rang the bell, Ada called, “Come in.”

They found her in the dining room, seated between the table and the sideboard. The Cleveland Herald lay on her lap, and a pair of radio headphones was on the sideboard.

After Grace and Betty had greeted Ada with warm kisses, she asked them to take chairs.

“I'm sorry we can't be in the living room. It's more practical for me to spend my afternoons and evenings here. Norris has fixed the radio in the sideboard for me. I'm very grateful for it. It opens up the world for me. I love the Walter Damrosch concerts, don't you?”

“We haven't a radio,” Grace said.

“Well, of course, you get about, that's different. For me, it's good because my deafness is such a handicap. With the headphones I can turn it up and no one else is bothered.”

Grace found Ada deafer than ever, and her hands and ankles were swollen. She saw no crutches anywhere near Ida, and asked her about it.

“Oh, no, I don't manage without help any more. I took some bad falls. I use one crutch on my bad side, and Rosella gets on the other, and I get along. Norris and Ethie help me when they're home. I have a cot, and a commode in the kitchen. Norris arranged a screen around it. I can't get up the stairs, they're so narrow.”

“But couldn't you have the downstairs bedroom,” Grace asked, “since you're an invalid?”

“Oh, I wouldn't put Ethie and Rosella out after all these years,” Ada said. She changed the subject then. “It's hard for people to converse with me, because of my deafness. It seems to be worse, don't you agree? Let me ask you some questions and you won't have to strain your voice trying to talk with me. Are the girls well?”

“Oh, yes,” Grace nodded.

“Jane? She’s not been ill lately?”

“No.”

“And how do you like living in the East?”

“We love it,” Grace said.

“So do I, and I always hoped to go back there when I was old. The trouble is, you’re old before you know it. You wake up some morning and old age has moved in with you. Well, I have my radio to enjoy, and my eyes are good. I’m grateful for that. Have you any pictures of the girls? Any snapshots?”

“Not with me,” Grace said. “I’m sorry. I’ll send you some when I get back to Oberlin.”

“I should very much like to have them. How is your work going, Grace?”

“Fairly well,” Grace said, not wanting to shout into Ada’s ear the whole story of how slow things were in New York for artists. “I’m back here to do Landers’ catalog.”

They chatted a few minutes more, and Ada opened and admired the box of stationery that Grace had brought her, and Betty found a milk-glass vase for the flowers she’d brought.

“I love chrysanthemums. “Ida said.”Autumn would be rather sad if it weren't for chrysanthemums, and all the lovely color in the trees. You and I were both born in October, Grace. We have a lovely month for our birthdays, don't we?”

“Yes,” Grace said. “October's bright blue weather.”

“Who wrote that?” Betty asked.”I learned that in school.”

“Helen Hunt Jackson,” Ada said, and quoted the full stanza from the poem.

O suns and skies and clouds of June,
And flowers of June together,
Ye cannot rival for one hour
October's bright blue weather;

When loud the bumblebee makes haste,
Belated, thriftless vagrant,
And goldenrod is dying fast,
And lanes with grapes are fragrant;

When gentians roll their fingers tight
To save them for the morning,
And chestnuts fall from satin burrs
Without a sound of warning;

When on the ground red apples lie
In piles like jewels shining,
And redder still on old stone walls
Are leaves of woodbine twining;

When all the lovely wayside things
Their white-winged seeds are sowing,
And in the fields still green and fair,
Late aftermaths are growing;

When springs run low, and on the brooks,
In idle golden freighting,
Bright leaves sink noiseless in the hush
Of woods, for winter waiting;

When comrades seek sweet country haunts,

By twos and twos together,
And count like misers, hour by hour,
October's bright blue weather.

O sun and skies and flowers of June,
Count all your boasts together,
Love loveth best of all the year
October's bright blue weather.

Betty leaned forward. "Your memory hasn't grown old, Aunt Ada. It's excellent."

"Oh, yes," Ada said. "For things learned long ago, but not for things that happened just yesterday. Mama was that way when she was old, too. But, oh yes, I do remember poetry. I get to sleep at night reciting poems to myself."

Grace was afraid to stay longer lest Rosella return, so they made their good-byes. Betty promised to call Ethie and come to dinner sometime, and Grace promised to write.

Out on the street again, Grace was depressed.

"I feel the same way I did when I left Mother's, that I may not see her again."

"She certainly is failing," Betty agreed.

"Yes, and she's asked so little of life, really. Just to be useful to others. She disapproved of Norris's behavior, but I'm afraid she may have helped to spoil him. Long ago she should have given Rosella a piece of her mind about Norris's upbringing. After all, they all borrowed money from her and depended on her help."

"Maybe she did give Rosella a piece of her mind," Betty said. "How do we know?"

"No, I doubt it. Ada mostly kept quiet. I wonder if she lost much money in the market crash."

"If she did," Betty said, "then it's Ethie's loss."

"And Norris?" said Grace.

"No. Aunt Ada's estate, whatever it is, is to go to Ethie." Betty said.

"Oh, really!" said Grace. "I didn't know about that."

"Ethie told me. Aunt Ada is leaving it to her, because Norris has already had so much money. He's borrowed over the years, and not paid back. Besides, I think Ada wants Ethie to have it because she's an old maid like some of the rest of us."

"Oh, Betty, I don't think of you as an old maid!"

"Actually, Grace, I'm not..."

Irene looked at Betty in surprise, and Betty smiled and then they both laughed.

"But you won't tell me about it, will you?" Grace said.

“Oh, I might someday,” Betty said.

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Jane was bitterly disappointed that her mother did not get back to Oberlin for Thanksgiving. Grace also missed Dee's birthday. Jane had been more concerned about that than Dee herself was. Dee's mind was so filled with thoughts of her friend Cameron Walton, that holidays and birthdays were trivial.

Thanksgiving, to Dee, meant that Cameron played in a traditional morning football game with Oberlin High School's fiercest rival, Easton. In the game, Cameron, who was fullback and co-captain of Oberlin's team, had his face badly bruised and his mouth cut by his own teeth. His battered condition was all Dee could think of, other than that Easton had won the game 14 – 13, but they had played rough and dirty and everyone agreed it was a moral victory for Oberlin.

Nelle and Roger and Babs came to Oberlin for Thanksgiving. Jane and Babs helped Nelle fix the turkey and all the other traditional food.

“Your sister should be here learning to cook,” Nelle told Jane. “She'll probably be getting married soon, if I know the signs.”

“Dee's going to go to college,” Jane said.

“I doubt it,” Nelle said.

“Why?” Jane asked.

“Two reasons,” her aunt replied. “One, she's so thick with that beau of hers, and two, your mother won't be able to afford college for her.”

“Dee and I are both going to college. Aunt Nelle,” Jane said.

“Don't count on it, there's hard times coming. Your mother's got money troubles already. Her divorce didn't work out the way she hoped it would. She didn't get any money from Carle.”

“I know.” Jane said.

“And the reason she's staying in Cleveland is, she can get a little work to do there. She didn't find any in New York.”

“I know about that, too,” Jane said.

“Well, did you know that she had written me to see if we could come and live here?”

“You mean you and Uncle Rog and Babs?”

“Yes.” Nelle said. “To help with expenses. She can't swing it alone. I told her last year that she wouldn't be able to.”

“Would we all fit into this house, do you think?” Jane wondered.

“I'm not sure about that.”

"Aunt Nelle, do Dee and Babs know about it?"

"Dee does. Your mother wrote and told her about the idea. I haven't told Babs yet."

"May I tell her?" Jane asked. "She is out back with the puppies."

"Yes, but it hasn't been definitely decided yet. Uncle Rog is still turning it over in his mind."

"Can I tell her 'maybe'?"

"Yes, but only 'maybe'."

Jane found Babs out in the yard throwing a ball for the two dogs Binker and Bim. They were littermates but completely different, Jane's female, Binker, black and spaniel-like, while Babs's, Bim, was white and fluffy like an unclipped poodle.

The two girls were not as different as the dogs. They both had brown eyes and brown straight hair cut in Dutch bobs. But Babs was chubby, with red, plump cheeks, while Jane was slender with a tanned skin still dark from the summer vacation on Howard's Hill. Jane was thirteen, Babs eleven; both of them were beginning to show early signs of puberty.

"They've been keeping secrets from us," Jane said.

"Like what?" Babs asked.

"They're talking about our all living here together."

"Hooray! I'd go to your school, wouldn't I?"

"Well, you'd go to the elementary school, next to it."

"Hooray! I hate P.S. 69."

"Babs, it isn't certain. I'm going to find out more."

"What fun we'd have," Babs said. "Oh, I hope they do it."

"You can share my room," Jane said.

"Bim and Binker will just love being together," Babs said. "Jackson Heights is a terrible place for a dog."

Dee did not welcome the idea of having her aunt and uncle move into the Oberlin house, but if it meant the difference between leaving or staying, she had no choice but to accept it.

Grace was still in Cleveland when Christmas came. She wrote the girls that she was heartbroken, but would try and be with them soon after. Maybe they would save the Christmas tree for her? Perhaps Janie would like to be in charge of trimming the tree? Meanwhile she hoped they were continuing to eat good food, and that they were keeping a record of all the money they spent.

When she finally returned in late January, Grace found that Jane had indeed saved the Christmas tree, and their little presents to her were still waiting underneath in a heap of brown tree needles. It was a Norway spruce and its boughs were bent down and almost completely bare.

“Bless your hearts,” Grace said. “I’m so sorry I couldn’t be here. “She wiped away a tear. “Now we must get the place ready for Nelle and Rog and Babs. There’ll be a new semester starting next week, and Nelle wants Babs to start then.”

“Mother, do they have to move in with us?” Dee asked.

“Oh, chicken!” Grace said. “It will help us so much! Nelle will buy all the food, and I’ll pay the rent (which I’d be paying anyway).”

“I don’t see how it will work out. I don’t want to give up my room.”

“You won’t have to. Babs will move in with Janie. Nelle and Rog in my room (though I promised to let Rog have the third floor all to himself for an office to write in, and he’s going to put a cot in there).”

“It’s cold up there, mother,” Jane said.

“He’s got a kerosene heater,” Grace said.

“But, Mother, where will you sleep?” Dee asked.

“I’m going to fix up the lower living room.”

“It’s cold down there too,” Jane said.

“I can make a fire in the fireplace,” said Grace. “Or maybe just stay down there in warmer weather. I can fix it up so that’s very attractive. This is such a lovely old house. We’ll decorate it in the way that it deserves. This house was built before the Revolution. Think of it!”

“But Mother,” Dee said. “That room was a kitchen once. You won’t be comfortable down there. You’ll be two floors away from the bathroom. Why doesn’t Uncle Rog share the big bedroom with Aunt Nelle? Then you could at least have the third floor rooms and then you’d have your own bathroom.”

“Don’t worry about me, chicken. This is all temporary, until business picks up. We have to see that Nelle and Rog are comfortable here. After I get on my feet financially, and Rog’s business improves, we’ll make a change.”

That night Jane made an entry in the diary that her mother had given her for Christmas. It was her fifth entry.

Jan.19 - Mother came home from Cleveland today. Since we have been here she has been gone about all the time. I’ll be glad to have her here and so will Dee, I guess, only she won’t be able to stay out so late on her dates with Cameron. I meant to tell Mother that while she was gone I became a young lady, as she calls it but I lost my nerve to tell her. I don’t think she likes talking about those things. It was Aunt

Merly who told me and Mim all that stuff, when Katherine (Trink) wanted one of the neighbor's puppies, Aunt Merly said we didn't know who the father dog was. Trink said the puppies didn't have any father. So Aunt Merly took us on a long walk down to the college campus and back, and explained things in a nice way. I learned most of those, things when I was down in Virginia in boarding school. The voice teacher's daughter told me, but not in a nice way. I think Aunt Merly was embarrassed but she told us anyway. Mim said..... Mother saw her duty" and we all laughed. I was mad at Dee for telling her friend Geraldine that I was now a "young lady". When I passed them in the cafeteria, Gerry said to me, "How's the little growing girl?" I told Dee later at home, "Don't you even know some things are personal?"

Jan. 20th - I have my room all ready for Babs now. They are coming Saturday. Binker will be so glad to have Bim to play with. We are going to have Binker spayed.

Mother told me about the divorce today., She says Carle was very unpleasant. The judge said that Mother could keep the diamond ring that Carle gave her when they became engaged. She didn't get any money settlement, though, because Carle's lawyer said that Carle was about wiped out when the stock market crashed last fall. I asked Mother why she didn't come home for Christmas since her divorce was all over, and her catalog finished. She said she was hoping to get more art work in Cleveland. I said since we lived here she should look for work in New York. But she said she knows people in Cleveland. I think she still loves Daddy is why she stays there so much.

Feb. 6th - This is Mim's birthday. I should have written to her. I am a bad letter-writer, just like Daddy. He never writes to me. Aunt Ada used to, but she's kind of sick now, Mother says. Babs is here now and she and I have fun. So do Binker and Bim. Babs likes her new school. I told Mother we should get Binker spayed. Aunt Nelle calls it "getting her teeth filed. Mother says she doesn't have the money just now.

Feb. 10th - I just can't write in a diary every day. Sometimes I'm too busy. Babs and I have boyfriends. We went sledding with them today on the hill across the street. A famous artist lives there. There are lots of them living in Oberlin. Artists, I mean. I think Mother planned on getting to know them, but she hasn't been here very much, not long enough to get acquainted. She is usually back in Cleveland, busy with something or other. Mother's only friend here is Marlyn Pelham from whom we bought this house. Dee and I love Oberlin and so does Babs, but of course we have many friends here. I think Mother is homesick for Oberlin.

SHE PREFERRED TELLING IT HERSELF

It was a foul day in Oberlin. Early March was usually still very wintry, but this day it couldn't decide whether to rain or snow. And it was making a treacherous mess out of the streets, which were still covered with a previous snowfall. Everything was turning to slush, ugly, sooty, grey slush.

Norris was driving up Ninth Street. He'd made a stop at the photographic supply shop where he bought most of his dark room supplies, and he was on his way back to his studio in the Fine Arts Building on Grand Avenue. Pauline had taken a room in that same building where she now gave her private lessons in dressmaking. She advertised as a "teacher of fashion and dress design" and did not like to be considered a seamstress, though she still sewed some for old regular clientele. She and Norris usually had lunch together at a spot called The Pantry near the Fine Arts Building.

There were few cars on Ninth Street today and they all had snow-chains on their tires. Foul weather like this always made Norris remember how his father had despised the Cleveland climate. It had been such a disappointment to him. He'd always regretted leaving New York City.

The snow made Norris think of Christmas times in past years. He and Grace had always brought the girls downtown to see the Santa Claus in Strohmeyer's store. He remembered that Jane would never sit on Santa's lap and that Dee had always had to tell Santa what Jane wanted for Christmas. Jane was always so shy of strangers. And yet it was Jane who loved the elevators and the escalators, and Dee was afraid of them. She refused to set foot on an escalator. Jane loved the elevators in Strohmeyer's because they were open wire cages, and she could see all the "workings." Strohmeyer's had a bank of five elevators, and when you were riding in one cage you could see others going up and down beside you, and you could see into the great abyss where they descended to the basement level. Jane's eyes were big and round and shining as she watched the heavy looping cables and the plunging or rising counter-weights that made it all operate.

This Christmas Norris hadn't seen the girls. There'd been only one other holiday season when he hadn't. That had been the first year when he and Pauline went to France. But all the other Christmases of their lives he'd been with them, even since the divorce. Grace had had them Christmas Eve, and in the morning, but they'd always come to Cartwright Street for supper on Christmas night. Aunt Ada had been so sad this year not to see the girls. Poor Aunt Ada, he had a feeling it would be her last Christmas.

Norris was being held up by the traffic up ahead. Most of the few cars were taxicabs coming from the Union Station. Apparently one cab had skidded sideways and got its wheels into the deep snow at the side of the street. Two or three cab drivers were out on foot, trying to push it out of the rut and back into the main way.

There were passengers from the station plodding their way along on foot, carrying suitcases. There never were enough taxis down there on a bad day, and the streetcars didn't go all the way down Ninth. People who didn't want to pay cab fare always had to walk a block and a half to the place where the trolleys came around the corner. There was a woman going along with two suitcases, who reminded Norris of Grace, She had the same kind of legs, the calves just a little too full, and just a wee bit bow-

legged. Her figure'd always been very curving and female, very attractive. She had a nice full bust and a narrow waist and pretty hips, but her legs should have been a little slimmer. Grace always said her developed calves had come from riding her brothers' bicycles, standing up, when, she was small.

When skirts were long, Grace's trim ankles showed attractively below them, but she was annoyed when the mid-twenties brought knee length styles. "They weren't made with my legs in mind," she had said. But really, Norris thought, Grace's chubby calves had been rather attractive. Very female.

The woman with the suitcases was wearing a green coat with a brown fur collar. That was another reason why she reminded him of Grace. Grace had worn a green coat like that. Green was her favorite color.

Now he was even with the woman, and she turned her head toward the street. It was Grace.

Up ahead a few yards there was space to park his car. He drew up at the curb and got out. He walked back toward Grace. She was leaning her head forward because the snow was blowing in her face.

"Hello, Marty!"

She looked up. "Why, Norris! Norr!"

"What are you doing in Cleveland?" he asked. "Carle told me you were back East again."

"I was, but Mother's ill. I'm on my way to Oberlin."

He took her suitcases. "Couldn't you get a taxi?" he asked. "Days like this, I suppose they're scarce. You shouldn't be lugging these bags. They're heavy."

"How gallant you've become. I couldn't wait for a cab; I want to catch the ten-thirty bus. Besides, taxis cost money. These days I have to be careful. Business is terrible."

"I haven't noticed it too much. I'm getting work."

"Then you might be more prompt in sending money for the girls," she said.

"I'll give you a check. Ethel lost her job, though." He was heading towards his car. He put the suitcases in the back seat.

"What are you doing, Norr? I can get the streetcar right up here at the corner."

"Ridiculous. Hop in. I'll take you."

"Norr, I'm not sure I want you to take me to the bus station. We're likely to run into someone we know. People are such gossips."

"What of it? Look, I'll take you to Oberlin. How's that? Can you resist such an offer on a day like this?"

"All the way to Oberlin!"

"Certainly. It's only about an hour."

"But, the roads must be very bad."

"Now Marty. Admit one thing. I'm a good driver."

"Alright, if you can spare the time."

"Sure. But first, let me run into the drug store here and phone. I'll tell Pauline I can't meet her for lunch."

"Do you use the phone now?"

"Certainly. It's all dials now downtown. "He'd always hated to place his own phone calls, because he was afraid of stammering when the operator said "Number, please".

She waited while he was phoning. He had a different car now, a sedan. They had always owned open touring cars, and they'd been so cold in winter, with the wind whistling through the isinglass side curtains. They'd always bundled up in heavy automobile robes. Grace looked in the back seat. The old dark blue plaid she remembered was there, folded up on the seat Dee and Jane had always snuggled down under that rug, shivering and complaining of "frozen" toes.

Norris opened the door and got in.

"It's all right with Pauline," he said.

"To take me to Oberlin!" she exclaimed.

"Well, I didn't mention you. No point in stirring her up. She's busy. She'll lunch with her client. She's doing another wedding party. Say, by the way, where are the girls?"

" You mean Dee and Jane?"

" Of course I mean Dee and Jane!"

"They're in Oberlin. They can't miss school."

"Nelle's with them?"

"Oh, no. Nelle's already in Oberlin. Norr, we don't think Mother will pull through this time. All the children have been called."

"I'm sorry, Marty. I've always really been fond of your mother. Any remarks I ever made were just nonsense - just me talking through my hat when I was in an edgewise mood."

"That's quite a confession for you, Norr."

He ignored that. "Marty, who is staying with the girls?"

"They get along alright, Norr, They're very self-sufficient and competent. They both know a lot about cooking. Jane takes care of the furnace, and does the laundry."

"Jane takes care of the furnace! My God, she's only a baby, Grace! She could burn the place down."

"Oh, no, she won't. She's thirteen. She's fine at that sort of thing. "She knows how to bank the fire at night, and how to get it going again in the morning."

"But she might forget to check the draft some day, and go off to school and overheat the place."

"Norr! She takes care of the furnace even when I'm there. She's like a boy. She's mechanical."

"I understood Rog and Nelle were living with you."

"Who told you that?"

"I don't know. Betty Long, I guess. Why doesn't Rog take care of the furnace?"

"He does, when he's there on weekends, but he travels all the time now. Norr, you can hardly make a fuss about how the girls are managing. I do the best I can under the conditions."

"You should have stayed in Cleveland Marty."

"No. No, I shouldn't have. It was too painful. I needed a new start. If business picks up things will work out."

"How're the rest of your family?"

"Which ones?"

"Any of them. All of them."

"Do you really care, Norr?"

"Certainly. I always liked them."

"You called them 'clods', I recall."

"Oh, Marty! You know me. I always said a lot of things for no particular reason. Now tell me, how's William?"

"Fine. He's teaching. They just have the two boys. Art and Jeanne are divorced, and I don't know whether he'll marry again."

"He will," Norris said. "Just wait and see. And how are all the girls?"

"They're all well. Emmy is the same, no better, no worse."

"You think Merly will marry again?"

"I doubt it," Grace said.

"Why?"

"I don't know. She's immersed in church activities again, you know she always was interested in religion."

"Trying to be an evangelist, is she?"

"Oh, no. She's still a Christian Scientist, and goes to WCTU meetings too."

Norris laughed. "Tell her it's no use, the demon rum is coming back. "Tell her I'll bet with her, within five years booze will be back."

"What makes you think so?"

"Because it's a personal matter. People won't stand for interference with such things. They'll repeal that law."

"But so many families are hurt by drinking, Norr. I agree with Mother about that."

"Families are hurt by all kinds of things," he said.

"Oh, Norrr! That you should say that! I wish you had had such insight in the past."

"Well, we learn with the years, don't we?"

"Perhaps. After it's too late to do any good," she said.

When they arrived at the house in Oberlin he carried her suitcases up to the porch. There were two other cars in the driveway.

"William is here," Grace said. "That's his car. And Arthur is here too, I think."

"I'd love to see them, and your mother," Norris said. "I suppose I'd better not come in, though?"

She was standing on the porch, and he on the bottom step. He looked older, she thought. After all, he was forty-four years old now. Both of them were middle-aged. How sad it was! How remote from the day when he'd asked her to marry him, when they had walked, on a May afternoon, beside a lake in Cleveland Heights. He had probably intended to be a good husband and father. There had been, always, a good side to Norr, and a dark side, such a dark side. But now, standing below her and looking up, he seemed very boyish, even sweet, and a bit humble. Perhaps it was because inside the house, her mother was dying. He had respected her mother, loved her probably, because everyone did. None of her children-in-law had felt hostile to her.

Grace hesitated. "I don't know how Mother is, Norr. I phoned from the station. I was so afraid she might be already gone, I had to call. Merly said that Mother was holding her own. She was sleeping, but she's been perfectly aware of everything. She might know you and be very happy to see you, Norr. But I don't

know. It might confuse her, get her to thinking about the past, and all sorts of things that might have been different. I wouldn't want to trouble her mind now, when she is so ill."

"No," he agreed. "We wouldn't want to do that. Tell me, Marty, are they having Christian Science for her?"

"Oh, I'm sure Merly has a practitioner working for her. But Norris, you know Mother was never a believer in it. She's having a doctor too. We love her so. We wanted to do the best thing for her, but then, you see, Norris, the children weren't all agreed what that was."

"I understand," Norris said, and Grace was reminded that "I understand" was a phrase she'd seldom heard him use. Perhaps he was changing.

"Perhaps I could go in and see how Mother is," she said.

"No, Marty, never mind. It'd probably be best if I weren't to go in. If Nelle's here, she's in charge, and she doesn't like me."

"Well, that doesn't matter, if Mother feels up to visitors," Grace said.

"No, we'll leave it like it is. Anyway, I'd rather remember her as she was, rather than sick in bed."

"Alright, Norr," she said, and her eyes were sparkling with tears.

He came up the stairs and gave her a quick kiss. "I must get back to Cleveland Marty. I'll send you a check."

"Please, Norr. I do need it. "She felt she should have been tougher with him about the child support money, but it was not the time for it. It was a gentle moment.

He hesitated a moment or two, with his hand on her arm, then turned and went down the steps. At the bottom he looked back at her. "I'll hold the right thought for your mother, Marty. So will the rest of us."

"Thank you, Norris. And thank you, too, for bringing me out from town. It was a big help."

"It was my pleasure, Marty."

She turned and entered the house.

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Jane could not sleep. She had a cold and had been coughing. She did not mind being alone when she felt good. She was beginning to be used to it now. When Aunt Nelle went back to Oberlin she had taken Babs with her. Babs had begged to be left behind in Oberlin with Dee and Jane because she didn't want to miss school. Aunt Nelle had hesitated, but in the end she decided not to leave Babs. "you'd be too likely to get into some kind of a pickle if there's three of you," she said.

So it was lonesome at night without anyone in the house. She and Babs had twin beds and they always talked awhile at bedtime. Jane felt that Babs went to sleep too soon, but it was usually fun sharing a room with her. After Binker had been taken away, though, Jane cried in bed at night for several weeks, and she didn't like Babs to hear her. On those occasions she wished she had her own room all to herself. And then, too, now that she was more grown up than Babs and had her monthly period to contend with, she would prefer to have had more privacy. She kept the box of pads she needed, hidden, lest Babs should tease her.

But tonight she wished that Babs's bed were not empty. They might have at least left Babs's dog Bim in Oberlin. But they'd taken Bim to Oberlin with them.

Jane wouldn't be so lonely if only Dee would stay home in the evenings. She came home after school every day and she and Cameron studied their chemistry together. It was their toughest subject and they got good grades by doing their homework together. Cameron always went home for his dinner, and Dee and Jane cooked theirs together.

Before she left, their mother had said, "Now Dee, don't leave Jane at home alone evenings. You can have Cameron come over here, and that way she'll have someone with her, and you'll also have a chaperon. It will appear better to the neighbors. And be better, too."

"As if the neighbors cared," Dee said.

It was true, too. An artist lived across the street from them. He had a huge piece of property and his house was far back from the road. On one side was the corner that fronted on the Post Road, and on the other side separated by many yards, there was a summer cottage owned by someone who lived in New York City, who was seldom in Oberlin.

Dee had started out by staying home evenings, and Cameron was always there. Sometimes they told Jane they were going out for a little drive down to the beach.

Dee always reminded Jane her bedtime was eight-thirty. "Be sure that you are in by then, even if we aren't back yet."

But tonight was different. Dee and Cameron had left for their drive to the beach, and Jane had gone to bed almost on time. She'd lain awake awhile, thinking about her dog Binker and wondering how she was getting along in New Hampshire with Nehemiah Evans. Poor man, he had had his legs amputated. Aunt Nelle said he had promised he would give Binker a good home. But Jane would hate them all forever for

what they had done to her. She hated Aunt Nelle most of all because it was she who'd arranged it. They had all said that Binker, the female, would come in heat and she'd have puppies, and Bim, Binker's brother and litter mate, would be their father. Then the puppies would be bad.

Jane said, "Why don't you take Bim to Nehemiah Evans?"

Aunt Nelle said Binker would keep coming in heat, and have puppies anyway, mongrel puppies.

Jane wanted her mother to arrange to have Binker spayed, but Grace had said she couldn't afford it, and think how lovely a life Binker would have in New Hampshire.

"Why did you people give me a dog in the first place if you were going to take her away from me?" she asked them and none of them could answer.

The morning Uncle Rog and Aunt Nelle took Binker, Jane had got up early and slipped out of the house, and had taken Binker for a long walk. She had wanted to run away from home with her dog, so they couldn't take her. But it was cold, and Jane had no money, and she knew it would not work. She and Binker would have no home and no food. So she brought Binker back to the house. When, they left she had hugged Binker tight, and cried in her fur, and Binker had licked her face where the tears were. Then Uncle Rog had taken Binker from her, and they'd driven away. Uncle Rog had looked as though he was about to cry, too.

Tonight Jane had slept awhile and then awakened, coughing. She got up and went to the medicine chest to see if there were any cough medicine, Uncle Rog usually always had some Smith Brothers cough drops in his suit coat pocket. There weren't any in the medicine chest, nor cough syrup. Mother wasn't a real Christian Scientist anymore, but she wasn't anything else either. She never kept much in the medicine cabinet. There was a little bottle of red liquid to keep you from smelling bad under your arms. It was the same kind that Aunt Ethel and Grandma Norris always used. They'd always been good Christian Scientists. They never had used medicine. Jane wondered why they hadn't used Christian Science to make their underarms smell nice.

There was an old jar of Vick's Vaporub in the cabinet. It might help her cough to rub some on her chest, but she hated the smell of it. All her life, whenever she'd had a cold, Christian Science or no, someone had always put Vicks on her. She opened the jar. Ugh. Its strong, pungent odor made her feel sick, and it made her wish her mother was home. When you were sick you didn't like it to have your mother so very far away. Still, if Grandma Martin was dying, you couldn't blame Mama for going back to Oberlin. It was funny, though, how little time Mama had spent in this house. Ever since the divorce from Daddy, Mama had talked and talked about living in Oberlin some day. She had tried to persuade poor Carle that he would want to live here too. That hadn't worked; Carle liked Cleveland. Oh, he liked to travel and take photographic trips, He and uncle Rog had made a three-week trip down the Tennessee River on a packet boat, with Carle taking photos and Uncle Rog writing a magazine article. That was during the time when Mama and Carle were married. Carle and Uncle Rog were good friends, though Uncle Rog always referred to 'poor old Carle' and had said he was kind of 'an odd duck.' Jane knew what Uncle Rog meant,

but Carle had really been mostly quite nice. She and Dee should have been nicer to him, and not always given him the butter plate with the blue hen. Carle had hated that butter plate.

The wind had come up outside and it was howling in one of the window-cracks. March was always windy, Aunt Ada used to say. Aunt Ada was always full of sayings, such as, 'If March comes in like a lion, it will go out like a lamb. "Jane could make a book of Aunt Ada's sayings. She guessed she had learned about all the famous proverbs and sayings there were from Aunt Ada. She ought to write Aunt Ada a letter and thank her for the Valentine. Aunt Ada had written on it, 'With love to "my little girl" from Aunt Ada, Feb. 14, 1930.' But her beautiful handwriting that they said was Spencerian, had become thin and wiggly.

The nine big elm trees in front of the house were tossing wildly in the wind now, and they made moving patterns on the wall, from the light from the street lamp. This house was spooky when you were in it all alone. Probably that was because it was so old. Or maybe it was because of 'the well.'

The well was something she and Uncle Rog had discovered one evening last fall. They had taken the dogs, Binker and Bim, for a little romp in the back yard before everyone went to bed. Uncle Rog had his big, long four-cell flashlight with him that he always seemed to have handy. It would shine a long, long way, even all the way across a lake up in New Hampshire. They used it the night they chased the bob cat away. On the night when they took the dogs out, they'd gone out through the cellar stairs and the old downstairs kitchen that Mama wanted to make into an extra living room because of its wonderful wide fireplace with crane, and Dutch oven built at the side. There was still another room beyond. It was an added-on little room with a big window on the west side. It opened onto the garden, and it had a shelf all the way down the side by the big window. Mama said it was a 'gardener's room.'

Jane and Uncle Rog had romped the dogs a few minutes and then come back in through the door to the gardener's room. They could have gone around the other way, up the side hill on the east, and into the house on the upper level. But they'd gone back into the house through the gardener's room. Uncle Rog had stepped into the room and held the door open for her and the dogs. Binker and Bim had raced upstairs immediately. Jane had started to follow them. Uncle Rog had stepped in and started to close the door, when the floor under him went 'Crunch!'

"My good grief! The floor broke," he exclaimed, and Jane came back to look.

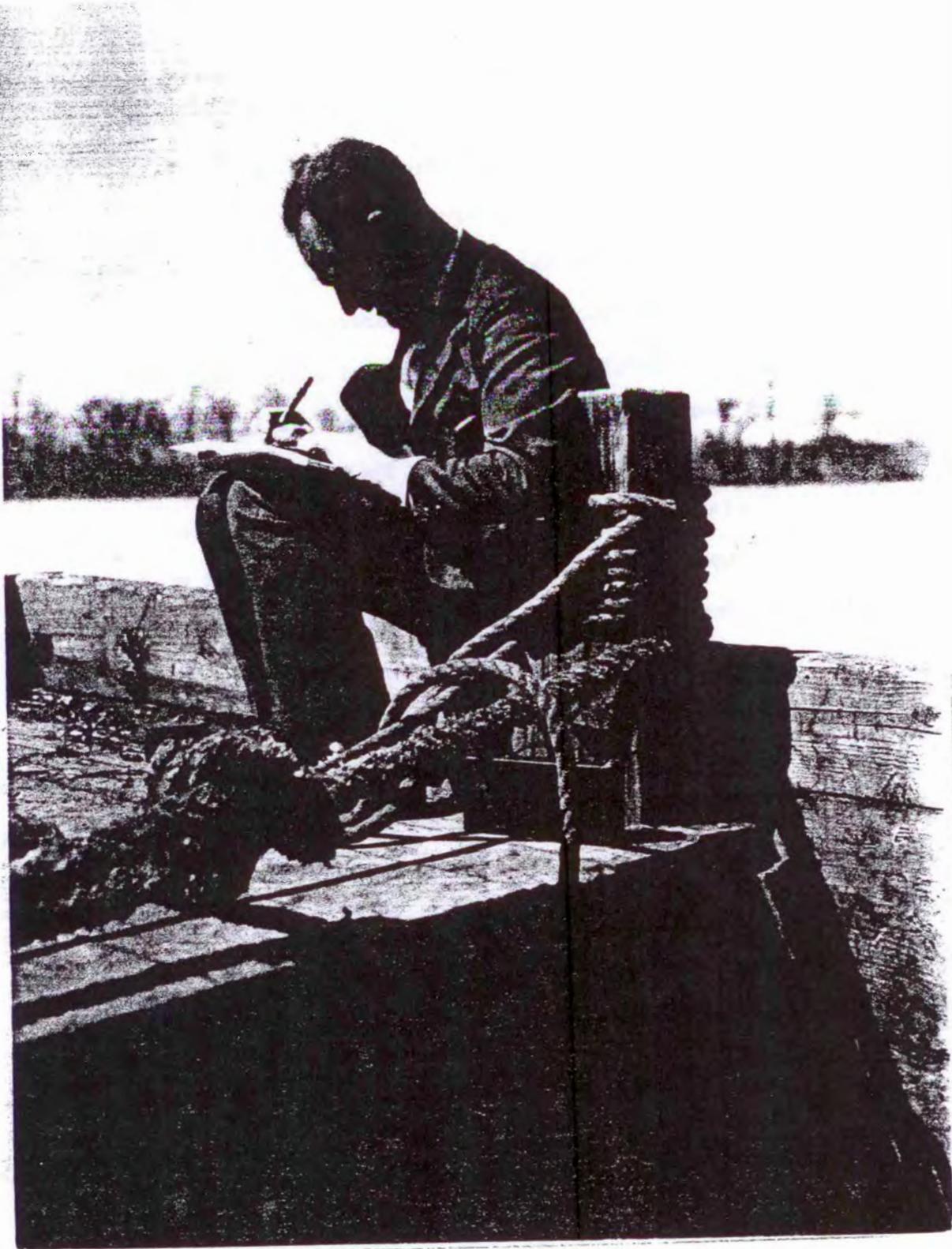
There were no electric lights in the gardener's room. Uncle Rog shined his long flashlight. The floor boards were only two feet long in the place where the floor had crunched.

"It's a trap door!" Jane exclaimed.

"So it is!" said Uncle Rog, and he'd gone back through the lower living room into the furnace area to get a screwdriver.

"Maybe there's a buried treasure!" Uncle Rog said.

"Or human bones!" Jane had said, and they had both giggled delightedly. Uncle Rog loved story-book things.



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He pried up the trap door and they raised it cautiously. He shined the light in. Nothing but a dank-smelling black hole. Carefully, they leaned farther over to see into the space. It was round and lined with stone. Uncle Rog shined his flashlight into it. From far below it gleamed back at them, and they could see the images of their heads as they leaned over.

“Water!” Jane said.

“An old well,” Uncle Rog said. “An old dug well.”

“It’s spooky,” said Jane.

“I wonder why they put it under the house,” Uncle Rog said. “They must not have liked going outside in bad weather.”

“Perhaps the well was here before the house was built,” said Jane. “I think this part was added on.”

Uncle Rog laughed. “Brilliant child you are. Go to the head of the class.”

It was one of his favorite expressions to his nieces and nephews.

“Isn’t it mysterious, though!” Jane said. “I love it.”

“We’ll have to write a nice sinister story about it,” Uncle Rog said. “What shall we call it? ‘The Lost Well’?”

“How about ‘The Secret of the Gardener’s Room’?” Jane suggested.

“I like that. That’s good. You have to have something to wonder about right away.”

“And it keeps the well a surprise, till you’re ready to bring it into the story.”

“Brilliant child,” said Uncle Rog again, and they both laughed again.

“Well, what about the well?” Jane asked. “The well is the secret of the gardener’s room. What is the secret of the well?”

“Oh-ho. We’ll have to work on that,” said Uncle Rog.

Then Aunt Nelle and Babs came down the stairs.

“What’s going on? All the laughing and talking.”

After they’d all inspected the well, they’d gone upstairs to bed. But after that Babs and Jane had loved to talk about the well. Babs said there should be a ghost in the well, a tall, thin, white lady-ghost. Jane said maybe the family had hid their silver down there during the wars.

But tonight, with the wind blowing, and Mama and Aunt Nelle and Babs all in Oberlin, and Uncle Rog ‘on the road’ in upper New York State, and Dee out late on one of her usual dates with Cameron, things

were really spooky. It made Jane suddenly angry that Dee left her alone so much. It was against Mama's instructions, too, something Dee wasn't supposed to do. She'd been told to 'take good care of Jane.' Not that Jane especially wanted to be taken care of, as a rule. But tonight, when she had a cold, Jane would have liked it. Dee could have baked a lemon for her. It was one of Aunt Nelle's remedies and it was soothing for coughs and sore throats. She'd have to fix it for herself. Fortunately, there were lemons on hand, because Uncle Rog always bought them. He and Aunt Nelle considered them to be very healthful. They always took a half lemon in warm water before breakfast, 'to get things perking within.'

Jane got out of bed and put Babs's bathrobe on. It was too short for her but she'd outgrown her own completely and Mama hadn't had money to buy her a new one. Mama had promised that at least by her birthday things would be better. It was just because business was still slow, that Mama hadn't been able to get going in New York. A lot of plans that Mama had had for fixing the house had to be postponed. The most important thing was a new stove. They needed an electric stove. They couldn't have a gas one like at home in Cleveland, because Westport Connecticut didn't have natural gas, nor "artificial" gas either, like in Aunt Nelle's kitchen in Jackson Heights. So they had to make out with the big old fancy coal stove that was in the house when Mama bought it. But Jane really liked that stove. It was wonderful in the wintertime when you kept it going all the time, merely banking it at night and checking the draft. It kept the kitchen cozy and warm, and all you had to do was open the draft, stir it to life and shake it a trifle and add coal when you wanted to do a little cooking.

Aunt Nelle had said, 'I don't know why your mother wanted to buy such an antique house with such an antique stove.'

"I suppose she felt the same way you and Uncle Rog did about your New Hampshire place. "Dee had defended.

"That's different," Aunt Nelle said. "That's a summer place. You don't mind fussing with a wood stove for a couple of months. You see, the difference is that an old house costs a fortune to put in shape. Your mother doesn't have a fortune. Rog and I have literally poured money into that place over the years. "Aunt Nelle liked the word 'literally' and always used it incorrectly.

Jane went downstairs to get the stove waked up. The wind was still making scary sounds. She remembered for a moment about the 'lady ghost' that Babs said lived in the well in the gardener's room. Babs said maybe a man who lived in the house once had murdered his wife and stuffed her down the well. Jane said wouldn't it smell if he had, but Babs said, no, it was probably back around 1800, and it didn't smell anymore because now it was only her ghost. Babs said neighbors had smelled the body and she'd been pulled out and buried, but her ghost was still in the well. Jane said, "What about her husband?" "Oh, they hung him," Babs said. "Hanged," Jane said. "Pictures and laundry are hung; people are hanged. Maybe his ghost is in this house too. ""Oh, it is," Babs had said. "Sure it is. "And they had giggled, but they always came up the stairway from down there, very fast, especially at night. They always felt as though something was after them, about to touch their backs with wraithlike fingers.

But Jane didn't believe in nonsense like that, really. She fixed the fire, and put a lemon in the oven, and went back upstairs to her room. She set her alarm clock for half an hour later. If you weren't careful, a

baked lemon would explode and splatter all over the oven. Also, she didn't want the kitchen stove to overheat because she had left the draft wide open and added coal so that the oven would heat up fast.

It was one o'clock. Dee should have been home long before this. Sometimes when Cameron brought her home they sat in his car out in front of the house for a long time. But not when it was cold. Then they came in and sat in the living room. Dee had long ago had an understanding with Jane that it was alright to hang around for a few minutes and talk with her and Cameron, but that it wouldn't be appreciated if she stayed with them too long.

Jane went over to look out one of the front windows. There was a moon, and the clouds were moving fast across the sky. When clouds did that, they were "scudding." "Scud" was a homely-sounding word. It shouldn't be used to tell about clouds. Ships could scud too. There ought to be a prettier word than that.

With the clouds moving across the moon, sometimes it was bright outside and sometimes dark. Jane looked down the road. There was a car parked in front of the house next door, the house that was used only as a summer place. It was funny that there was a car there. When the people were at home they didn't leave their car out in the road. They put it in their driveway or garage. The moon appeared from behind a cloud, and things were brighter. It looked like Cameron's car parked there, but it wouldn't be. They would be out in front. It was a Model A touring car, though. The moon came out brighter. Maybe it was someone robbing the summer cottage. Aunt Nelle said it was risky to let a house stand empty for a long time. But in the light of the moon, Jane suddenly noticed that the car had a tear in the back part of the canvas top. It was Cameron's car; the tear was just the same. Now why did they park so far from the house? Oh! She knew. They didn't want her to know they were staying out there so late necking. Dee thought that if Jane woke up and looked out and didn't see the car, she'd assume Dee was in bed and asleep long ago. How silly of them! She knew what was going on. They might have to hide it from Mama and Aunt Nelle, but they needn't hide it from her. Dee had already confided over a month ago that she and Cameron had 'gone the limit'. Jane had been surprised to have Dee tell her, but Dee said she was so excited she just 'had to tell someone.'

Jane lay in bed waiting for the alarm clock to ring. She lay there thinking about boys and about Dee and Cameron. It was exciting just kissing a boy. She and Babs had boyfriends. At parties they played "Wink" and "Post Office". Jane didn't specially like kissing lots of boys. They kissed differently, and they smelled differently, and lots of them were silly and dumb. She preferred to kiss a certain particular boy, William Janssen. He was very nice looking, and he had a good complexion. They had gone sledding together on the hill across the street back of the artist's studio. The artist was almost always at his New York apartment, and anyway, even when he was in Oberlin he told all the kids they were welcome to sled back there as long as no little pine trees got damaged. So everyone was always very careful of the little trees. The artist had clear. a nice long space for sledding that was very fine because, at the bottom, it sloped up just enough to slow you, so that you didn't go on across and crash into the fence beyond.

William Janssen's cheeks always got red when he was outdoors in the cold. The day they went sledding he had kissed her, and his face was cold and smelled like fresh air and snow. Ever since then, when she played. Wink and Post Office, she preferred William Janssen, and he always smelled good. Some of the

other boys had various assorted smells; one smelled like his pony and another like his dog (not that Jane had anything against ponies and dogs), and one smelled like grape flavor bubble gum, and another like spaghetti. But William had no particular smell except maybe soap, or maybe it was just that his shirt smelled good the way things do when you are ironing them and the heat makes the soap and starch and outdoor smell come up in your face. Thinking about ironing reminded Jane of Howard's Hill in New Hampshire, where Aunt Nelle had taught them all to iron with "sadirons," the kind that you heated on the stove. They had a removable handle made of wood and metal. You could pick up a hot one and iron with it till it cooled off too much, then you brought it back to the stove and got another hot one. Aunt Nelle always used three of them, and she insisted that the hottest one be always at the front. Jane asked why they were called sadirons, and Aunt Nelle said she supposed that it made children sad when they had to help do the ironing. But Jane had asked her father about it once, and he had said that 'sad' was an obsolete word that meant heavy or solid. Mother could say what she wanted to against Daddy, but just the same, he knew a lot about a lot of things.

The alarm rang. Jane shut it off quickly in case Dee had come in on tiptoe and gone to bed.

It was one-forty-five now. Jane got up and put on Babs's robe again. She looked in Dee's room. It was still empty. Again Jane felt resentful and neglected, and she wanted to cry, but that made her throat tighter and then it felt worse. If she weren't sick she wouldn't care if Dee stayed out late. But all her life, whenever Jane caught cold, she always got very sick and missed a lot of school.

She went downstairs and opened the oven door. Her lemon was just right. It was swollen and smooth and bright yellow. She got a dish and put several spoonfuls of sugar in it. Then she very carefully removed the lemon from the oven with a potholder. Holding it cautiously over the dish of sugar, and aiming it so that it would not squirt in the wrong direction, Jane punctured the hot lemon with a fork. The juice, under steam pressure, shot out into the sugar, and when it was all out Jane stirred the mixture. As it cooled, it set into a delicious sweet-sour jelly, that felt good on a scratchy sore throat, and seemed to help to stop a cough. Aunt Nelle swore by it. She said that her grandmother, Susan Burns, had made it with honey instead of sugar, but that her mother, Maria Martin, had preferred sugar to honey, because honey always gave Uncle William a case of hives, and it was bad enough to have a cold, without having hives too.

Jane checked the draft on the stove. The kitchen was hot. She got a spoon and sat down at the table to eat her lemon concoction. It tasted wonderful but so sharp it made her eyes water. She decided to take it upstairs and eat it in bed. She put out the kitchen light, and went through the dark front hallway carrying her dish. She had not put on any other lights because she did not want Dee to know she was up. She looked out the front-door glass window to see if Cameron's car was still down the street. The clouds were still scudding, but the moon was making everything bright. Yes, Cameron's car was still there. Jane thought they must be frozen by now. But no, they wouldn't be; lovers didn't usually freeze. They kept each other warm with their passion.

The grandfather clock which ran but did not strike said that it was after two o'clock. Dee really ought to come in. Mama wouldn't like it at all having her out there in the road half the night. It was a good thing

that the neighbors were in New York most of the time. Some kinds of neighbors liked to report to parents when their children were up to something.

She really wished Dee would come in. Maybe if she stood and looked real hard at Cameron's car the concentration of her thoughts would reach them, and they would realize how late it was, and then Dee would come. She would stare at them for three minutes by the clock and concentrate. She and Babs used to do that sort of thing, and sometimes it worked.

She stood very still and looked at Cameron's car. She did not take her eyes off it. Then she heard a door-latch click. She whirled around, and looked down the hallway toward the door that led to the basement stairway. In the moonlit house she could see that door opening slowly. Her heart began to pound. She thought of the ghost lady of the well that Babs talked about. Her mouth went dry.

It was a good thing Dee had on her red and purple silk pajamas, Jane told her afterwards. "Or I would have fainted right there. If you had had a long white nightgown on, I'd have fainted, maybe even died."

But when Jane saw Dee standing there in her familiar pajamas, all thoughts of the lady in the well went out of her head. Instead, she was indignant.

"You! You scared me! Where did you come from? Where've you been? It's after two!"

"Well, you scared me," Dee said. "What are you doing up at two o'clock? Pray tell me that."

"I was baking a lemon because my throat is sore. I'm getting a cold and a cough. Why don't you ever stay home like Mother said you should?"

"I've been home for hours," Dee said. "You were asleep when we got back."

"You weren't in your room when I looked," Jane said.

"Well - well, you see - I decided to sleep down in the lower room," Dee said.

"Why in the world would you sleep in the lower room on that moldy, lumpy old bed?" (The brass bed and mattress that had been in the attic had been placed downstairs "for the time being".) Why would you sleep down there in the cold? That's ridiculous."

"Well - I - You see, you were making so much noise with your coughing."

"Oh, Dee, I was not! I wasn't coughing so much as all that. Besides, wouldn't Mother love it if she knew that instead of doing something for my cough, you just went where you couldn't hear it? Wouldn't she just love that, though?"

"But Jane..." Dee began.

Just then a car passed by the house.

"That's Cameron's car," Jane said, and she looked out to see.

"Don't be silly," Dee said.

"There he goes. I could tell by the sound of the engine, even before I looked."

"Oh, Jane. Cameron's been home for hours. Lots of cars look and sound like his. It's only another Model A Ford."

"It was Cameron's, and anyway, his car's been parked in front of the house next door for ages and ages."

"Must have been someone else," Dee said.

"No. it wasn't. Just don't try to pull the wool over my eyes, Dee."

"You got that expression from Aunt Nelle."

"All right, what of it. But anyway .I know Cameron's car by the torn canvas in the back. "She started to cough and had to sit d own on a chair.

"What's that in the dish?" asked Dee.

"My baked lemon," said Jane, and took a spoonful.

"See, it's all cold now. It's supposed to be hot when you eat it. "She began coughing again, and started toward the stairway," I'm going to bed."

Dee was suddenly frightened. She remembered how sick Jane got when she had a bad cold. She knew it sometimes frightened her mother, too. There'd been times when Jane could hardly breathe.

"Maybe I ought to call a doctor," she said.

"No."

"Would you like me to read Christian Science to you?"

"No."

"Here, give me that lemon jelly. I'll heat it up again for you. Go on up to bed. You're shivering."

Fifteen minutes later Dee entered Jane's room.

"Here, take it while it's hot. Are you warmer now? Why are you crying? "

" I just wish Mother was here. I don't like being sick while she's a-way. She knows what to do when I can't get my breath."

"I know what to do, too. You can breathe some steam, and I'll rub your chest with Vicks."

"No, you won't. I'm too big to have you rub my chest."

Dee laughed but Jane didn't.

"I suppose you think Cameron and I were in the lower room all evening?"

"It didn't matter to me how long you were there," Jane said. "But I don't like being worried about you, and I don't like being frightened either. When that cellar door opened, I didn't know what was going to appear."

Dee was silent a moment, then she said, "I trust that you won't say anything to Mother about this evening?"

Jane was silent.

"You won't, will you?"

"No, I won't, but it's not as though you always kept my secrets from her. You used to tattle on me."

"But that's because you are so much younger. I was concerned for your health and welfare."

Jane snorted. "What about your health and welfare? Aren't we to worry about that?"

"Never mind about that. I'm looking out for that."

Jane sat up in bed then.

"The thing is, Dee, what if Uncle Roger had come home this evening He said Friday, but he often comes home sooner than he told us. He would have recognized Cameron's car. And not only that, Dee, he might have come into the house through the gardener's room. He often does, you know. He might have walked right in on you and Cameron. Might have caught you."

Dee said nothing, and Jane went on.

"Uncle Roger would tell Aunt Nelle sure as shooting."

"Maybe he wouldn't."

"Yes, he would. He's very old fashioned and proper. He doesn't even believe in kissing unless you have your engagement ring. And if he told Aunt Nelle, she would tell Mother, and Mother would feel so bad. She would be so disappointed in you."

"Well, she shouldn't be," Dee said.

"Why not?"

"Because she and Daddy were just like Cameron and me."

"How?"

"In love. Too much in love to wait for marriage."

"How do you know?"

"I learned even more than that. I learned that Mother and Daddy were never really married."

"Dee!" Jane said. "What a thing to say! Who told you that? You shouldn't say that kind of thing."

"But it's true!"

"Who told you that?"

"Mother."

Jane began to cry. "That's awful!"

"You read too many Kathleen Norris novels, Jane. Remember, Mother and Daddy are artists. Artists are different."

"But then - you and I are - You know what we are."

"Well, in a way we are, but not really."

"What do you mean, not really?"

"Well, you see, Mother and Daddy had a sort of marriage ceremony of their own."

"I suppose that was Daddy's idea," Jane said.

"I suppose. He read some sonnets to her - Elizabeth Barrett Browning, and Shakespeare's "Let me not, to the marriage of true minds, admit impediments."

"Mother would have liked a real wedding," Jane said. "All Women do. And you have to have some kind of paper that shows you were married. No wonder she was always so mad at Daddy. I wish she hadn't told us, though. We didn't need to know; that was their affair."

"She told people because she was so bitter at Daddy."

"Who else knows?"

"I don't know. Betty Long and Edna Oddy Hurst (Ted)."

"Then Aunt Merly and Aunt Nelle know too," Jane said.

"Yes, I guess so."

"That's awful. No wonder Aunt Nelle treats us so superior," Jane said.

"Well, Aunt Nelle shouldn't. She's got some kind of deep dark secret in her past too."

"What?" Jane asked eagerly. She would love to know something about Aunt

Nelle. especially now.

"It's something about her first husband and why she left him and came home, and the marriage was annulled."

"Tell me!"

"I can't. Only Grandpa Martin, and Aunt Nelle ever knew. She wouldn't tell anyone else ever. It was too awful."

"Grandpa and Aunt Nelle will die without telling," Jane said. "Then no one will ever know. What good is a deep dark secret if nobody knows?"

Dee laughed, but Jane said, "Didn't it bother you when you learned about Mother and Daddy? How long have you known?"

"Oh, a long time. I think it was when she told me she was going to marry Carle. She said 'This time I'm going to do it right.'"

"Poor little Mommy," said Jane.

"Yes," said Dee.

"I feel terrible. I wish you hadn't told me."

"You're old enough to know."

"Nonsense, you never get old enough to know something like that. I'll always hate it."

"Well, I've grown used to the idea myself. I think it's romantic, sort of, like a novel."

"Oh, rubbish," Jane said. "It's alright when it's in a book. But when it happens to you, it isn't funny. I don't like being an illegitimate child."

"But you aren't really, you see."

"I'm not?"

"No, because you see, if you stop and remember that Mother and Daddy were divorced, you'll realize that there was a marriage."

"But you said..."

"I said that they were never really married. By that I mean there wasn't any wedding ceremony with a minister or justice of the peace. But what they had was a common law marriage."

"What's that mean?"

“It means that people live together for a long time, and everyone thinks they are married, and they are known as ‘Mr. and Mrs. So-and-so,’ and wherever they go they refer to themselves as being married, then they are married by what’s called ‘common-law’. Only thing is - in some states they don’t recognize such a marriage.”

“Does this one?”

“I don’t think so - But what difference does that make now. Mother’s had two divorces. All the rest is in the past.”

“I still don’t like it, and I don’t see why she didn’t keep it to herself.”

“I think I know why,” Dee said. “She preferred telling it to people herself, in case Daddy decided to spread the story.”

“Do you think she’ll get married again?”

“I don’t know.”

“I don’t think she will. She still loves Daddy in spite of how terrible he is.”

“I love Daddy,” Dee said.

“He’s still terrible.”

TRY TO UNDERSTAND THE YOUNGER ONES

Emmy was the only one in the house on College Street who didn't realize and admit to herself that Maria was dying. Even the children knew it.

Old Henry Martin knew in his heart that Maria would not pull through this time, the way she had when she had pneumonia four years ago. He wanted to believe the Lord would spare her again, but he knew it wasn't to be. He could tell by the way her face looked. He had seen that look before. His father had looked that way in his last days, and so had Sophy's mother, old Susan Burns, in that hot summer in Cleveland when she lay ill for several weeks before she died. When your time came and you were very old, your eyes sank back in your head. They had shadows around them, and the skin over your cheeks was thin and lay close to the bone. He could not bear to see Sophy that way, but he could not stay away from her long, either. He solved the problem by going in to see her often with a brief communication regarding his activities or those of the others. "I'm going to spade another row in the garden," he would say. Or, "Emma is making graham bread." Or "The three girls got off late to school today." Or some such thing. And Sophy would smile and lift her hand to thank him for coming in to see her. Sometimes she talked a little bit, but her voice was frail and hard for him to hear, and they both knew it, so she didn't try to say much.

Things were at sixes and sevens. Sophy and Emmy were the only ones in the house sleeping in their own beds. Weeks ago John had moved up to the room which had been Merly's, and Merly had taken an extra cot in Emmy's room. A nurse slept in the room with Sophy now, so as to care for her at night. Now that Nelle and Grace had come from the East they had taken over Mim and Trink's room, and Mim, Trink and Babs all had to bed down on the living room floor at night. Things were all upset and he felt overwhelmed in such a house full of females. But Sophy was comforted to have all four girls in the house. He had said to Merly that if all the children came, Maria would think she was going to die. Merly had answered, "Dad, Mother asked me to send for them." "Then she don't expect to get better, I guess," he had said. "She was wrong the last time," Merly said. "Don't forget that."

But Maria was not wrong this time. When her last day came, she knew it, and she spoke to the nurse in a whisper, "Will you get Nelle, please?"

It was early morning, about four o'clock. The nurse, Mrs. Thomson, touched Nelle's arm, and Nelle woke immediately. Mrs. Thomson put her finger to her lips and beckoned.

"I didn't want to wake your sisters. Your mother is asking for you."

At Maria's side, Nelle leaned down. "What is it, Ma, dear?"

Maria said, "I hate to wake you, Dotty, but I don't know how long I've got. Not long, I think. Let Pa sleep if possible. Saying goodbye to each other would be too sad. When I'm gone you can just say you found me asleep. That will be easier on him."

She stopped, for she had to rest awhile. Nelle kept patting her hand and nodding. Then Maria spoke again.

"I wanted to speak to you especially, Dotty. I worry about Emmy. Merly's to take care of her always, but if Merly should marry - well, you never know how a man might be with Emmy -"

"Ma, dear, don't worry one second about Emmy. We all know how you feel about it. We'll never let Emmy be with anyone who isn't nice to her. We all feel that way, Ma. In fact, if for any reason Merly shouldn't be able to care for her I would, Ma. You know that, don't you? Rog is talking about living in New Hampshire year 'round. And Emmy always loved it so. So don't you worry, Ma. I'll see that she's cared for all her days."

"Nelle?"

"Yes, Ma."

"You've always loved me and been good to me."

Nelle's eyes were brimming. "Yes, Ma."

"Do one thing for me, Dotty."

"Of course."

"Try to understand the younger ones, dear. I mean Grace and Arthur and William. I know you've always felt we spoiled them, did too much for them."

"Not William, Ma."

"Well, we spent a lot on his education, too. He changed his mind and started over, you know. But be good to Grace, Dotty. She's had a hard time, and she's all alone with her girls. Don't hold her ambition against her."

"I don't, Ma. I've always known she was a good artist."

"Try to help her, Nelle. She's had a hard time to do for her girls."

"We are helping her, Ma."

"That's good." Maria sighed and closed her eyes a moment, then opened them again.

"Don't tire yourself talking, Ma dear."

"Don't send for the boys again, Dotty. They've all been here to see me. I'm glad Howd could come."

"Yes, so am I, Ma. Father was glad too, I think."

"That's good," Maria said, her voice trailing off.

Nelle sat beside her on the bed still patting her mother's hand with its crippled rheumatic fingers."

After a few moments, Maria spoke again.

"Would the girls come in and kiss me?"

"Of course, Ma."

"Let Emmy sleep, though. She can't understand."

Nelle brought Grace and Merly downstairs and they came in and kissed their mother.

"You're all good daughters," she said. "Look after each other."

Maria fell asleep presently. Nelle continued to sit by her side.

Merly got Mim and Trink and Babs breakfasted and off to school. Old Henry got up and came downstairs. He went in to see Maria, but Nelle told him she was sleeping. He announced that he was going downtown to "do errands". Nelle let him go.

Merly and Grace could not bear to stay in their mother's room. They sat in the living room. Emmy had stayed in her bed.

"I think she knows," said Grace.

"Oh, I'm sure she doesn't," said Merly.

"Yes, but she shuts out reality. She only accepts the ideas she wants to accept. You just watch her. When Mother goes, Emmy will just refuse to acknowledge the fact. You know she always speaks as though Grandma Burns were still with us."

"Yes, I guess you're right," said Merly tearfully. "I almost wish I could be like Emmy, and shut out all unpleasantness."

"It's her own brand of Christian Science," Grace said, "but everyone can't be that way. There's plenty of days when I'd rather stay in bed."

"Well, me too, of course, but Emmy's way isn't real Christian Science. One should get up and face things."

"Face what things? Face problems? 'science' says that problems aren't real. Why face what isn't real?"

"Don't try to confound me with logic, Grace, I like 'Science.' It's a great comfort to me."

"All right then. For you it serves its purpose. But I can't take comfort from it any more. I had enough of it with Mother Rahming. All that stuff about death not being real. It's not helping us keep Mother with us."

"But she doesn't believe in it Grace!"

"Those that do, also die, Merly."

"We shouldn't argue religion just now," Merly said.

"No, you're right," agreed Grace.

"Do you think we should go in and sit with Mother?"

"No," Grace said, "for two reasons. There's Nelle and Mrs. Thomson in there now. If we go in, we'll need more chairs, and Mother will think it's a death watch with a group sitting ghoulishly around. Ugh, no."

"I don't think she's awake."

"Well, anyway, the other reason is that Nelle is the strong one, and she likes to be the strong one. She'll take great comfort from being the one to sit with Mother when the rest of us couldn't."

"That's true," Merly said.

"She'll be buoyed up by it, mark my words. And furthermore all nine of us couldn't be at her bedside,"

"No," Merly agreed.

"It's not that I don't want to go in there, Merly. It's just that there's something simply dreadful about it if we all are there together. I'm sure it would upset her, having us keep a 'watch'. Oh, no! I can't. It's just not the way to do it."

"I know."

"But let's go in and give her a kiss and a little pat. If she's asleep it won't hurt, and if not, she'll be pleased."

When they went in, Nelle looked up.

"She's awake again," she said.

Merly leaned over and kissed her mother.

Maria's eyes were only half open, but she made a little smile for Merly and whispered, "Be sure and have the Baptist minister, Dotty. Mama raised me a Baptist, you know."

"All right, Mama, when the time comes."

Grace came to the other side of the bed and bent over and kissed her mother too. Maria spoke again.

"Will you ask them to play 'Abide With Me' dear?"

"Of course, Mama."

"And 'My Faith Looks up to Thee.' And 'In the Garden' because Emmy loves it so."

"Yes, Mama."

"You're all good girls," Maria said, and closed her eyes again. Then Grace and Merly left the room and left Nelle and Mrs. Thomson still there.

When John got home from downtown, at noon, Maria was gone. He sat by the bed until the men from Jackson and Johnson's funeral home arrived, then with difficulty Nelle and Merly led him into the back yard.

"Spade a row in the garden, Pa," Nelle said. Remember, Ma always said, 'Work is the cure for grief'."

He nodded, but sat down on the back porch steps with his head in his hands.

"You should eat something soon, Pa. We don't want you to get sick."

"When I'm ready I'll get around to it," he muttered.

Grace and Merly went to the funeral home to make the arrangements. Nelle went to take a nap.

Merly asked the funeral director, "Is there anything you can do about my mother's crippled knees and elbows? She couldn't bend them, you see. Can you straighten them at all, so she can lie flat?"

"Mrs. Dillard, to straighten them I could break them if you want," the man said.

Merly turned white and Grace retched and then said, "Oh, my heavens! What a terrible thought! We won't mention anymore about that."

"Well, she asked me," he said, "and the only way I -"

"Never mind. Merly just thought there might be some way you knew of to relax the joints."

"Relax? No, ma'am. You see, they're calcified, just grown together like it was all one bone. If it's any comfort to you to know, we've laid out quite a number of folks that was crippled the same way. Usually it's women, too."

"Could you lay her on her side, perhaps?" Grace asked.

"Yes, ma'am, that's just the way we do it. With her head on the pillow I'm sure you'll be pleased with the way she looks."

Walking home across the college campus in the bleak March afternoon, Grace said, "This is a day I have dreaded all my life."

"I know," Merly said.

"I mean, actively, ever since I was a very little girl I've worried about the day Mother would die."

"Yes, me too. I've had dreams about it, nightmares," Merly said.

“Mother would be eighty-five a week from today. Isn't it strange? Mother told me Grandma Burns died a week before she was eighty-five.”

When they got back to the house, Nelle had called 'Vinia, and 'Vinia had taken over the task of sending all the telegrams to Maria's surviving relatives; the brother in Texas, and the two sisters, Ellen and Isobel, and several cousins.

That evening Jim brought dinner from his hotel, so that his sisters would not have to cook that day, and in the evening, the brothers came. Thomas and Fancy from Cleveland brought Howd from his little house in Fire Valley. Lottie was ill of kidney trouble and did not come, but Arthur came, and 'Vinia. To everyone's surprise Marie actually appeared with Jim in the evening.

“Now that Ma's gone,” Nelle said to Merly in the kitchen, “Marie is on her good behavior. She's beginning to think about the money that Jim might inherit from the old folks.”

“But Ma hadn't anything to leave her,” Merly said.

“No,” Nelle admitted, “but Marie probably figures that Pa won't live much longer now that Ma is gone. So she's deciding to get into the family's good graces.”

Merly smiled, but said, “Jim has always treated Pa decently, though, Nelle, even if Marie's been snippy.”

“Well, that's true, but you know what I think? I think Pa won't live very long, now. It wouldn't surprise me if he just sort of pined away.”

“Well, we'll see. He'll be ninety next year. His father was older than that, though.”

The funeral was two days later. The brother from Texas got there in time, and Maria's sister Isobel came from Cleveland, but “Aunt Ellen”, the sister who lived in New York City, was too frail to travel.

The flowers were beautiful and Old Henry was comforted by the large turnout of townspeople. Many of their contemporaries were gone, but the Martin family were considered pioneers in the area and there were many floral tributes, from merchants and others.

After the services the family all went back to the house. Tommy took his camera into his mother's room. He came out again and picked up a basket of flowers that had been brought from the many at the funeral.

“What are you doing, Tommy?” Grace asked.

In her strident voice Fancy said, “He's goin' to take a picture of his Ma's chair and writing table, with her funeral flowers.”

Grace's soul recoiled, but she didn't want to hurt Tommy's feelings. He was only doing it out of love and sentiment. William, however, spoke up.

“Don't you think that's a little morbid, Tom?” he asked.

Tommy didn't seem hurt. He just said, "Well, if the family will give me the chair and desk, then I won't need to take the picture. I just want something to remind me of the way she used to sit and write, with her shawl over her knees."

"Go ahead and take it, Tommy," Arthur said. "I'll order a print of it right now."

"Me too," said Nelle

"Well," Grace said, "If there's going to be a picture we'll probably each want one."

"Grace," Nelle said. "Help Tommy arrange things. You've seen how Norr works. Let Grace help you, Tommy."

They pushed Maria's little writing table nearer the window, with her small cane-backed rocker in front of it. Grace draped the lavender wool afghan across the chair. And Tommy put the basket of flowers in front. Grace would rather not have had the funeral flowers, but Tommy wanted them.

Later, when the picture was finished, it was quite a success as a photographic composition. The late March afternoon sunshine came in through the window at a slant, and shone on the table and rocker. The rest of the room was dim. To Maria's children it was the vision of a shining presence who had left them. They would always treasure the picture but they would keep it stored away, for they could not bear to look at it without crying.

In addition to Tommy's wanting Maria's chair and desk, Grace and Nelle each wanted it too. But before anyone could put in their claim, Merly's thirteen-year-old Miriam made a sensible argument.

"Grandpa will move back into his room now, won't he? You shouldn't take those things away from him."

"Good for you, Mim," Grace said. "You're right. That settles that, I should think."

Arthur spoke up. "Dad, is there still anything left down below?"

"Yes," Old Henry said. For the time being he was bearing up fairly well.

"Let's go down and see, shall we? Anyone else?"

William joined them.

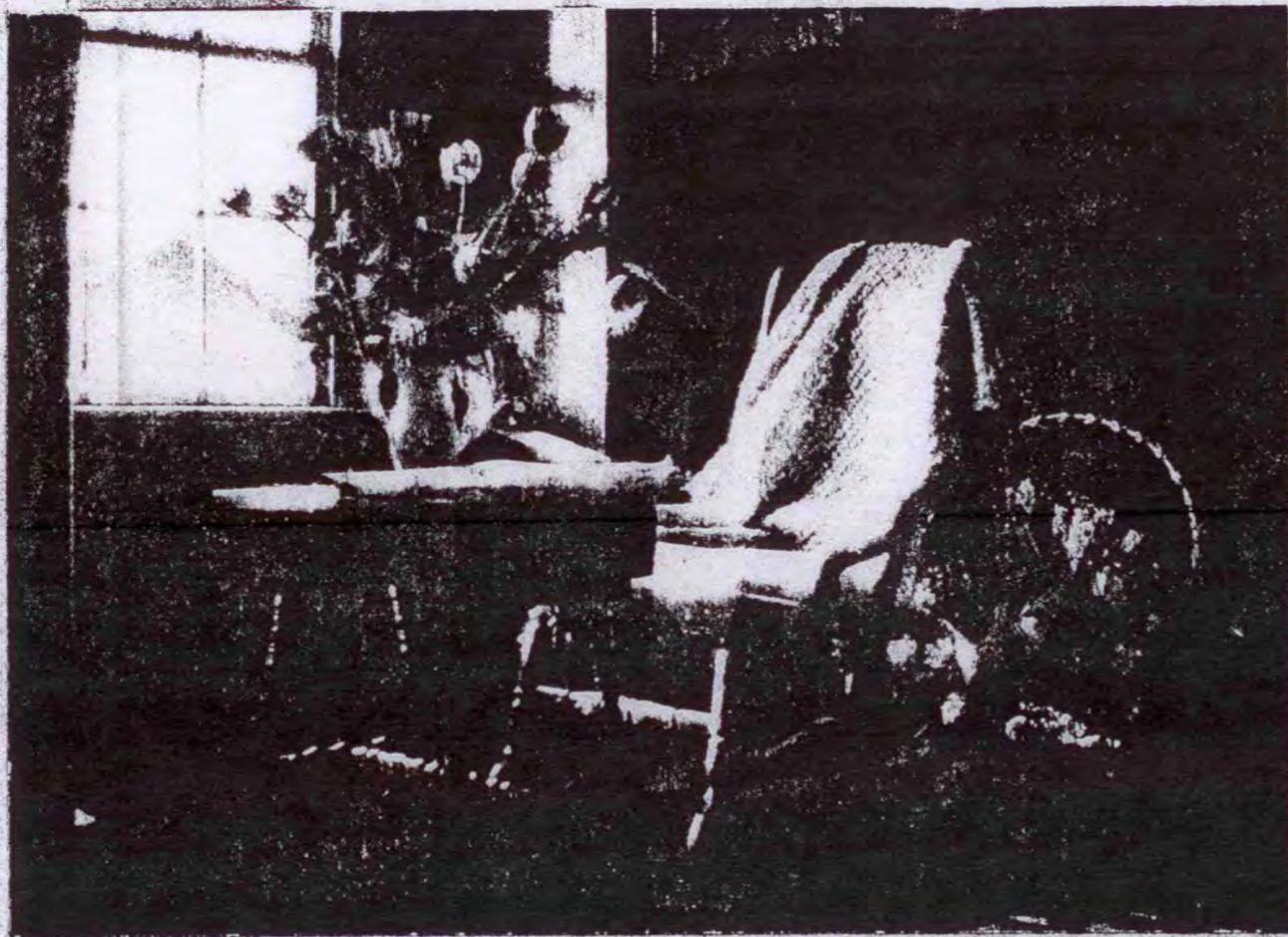
"What are they talking about?" Fancy asked.

"Arthur and Dad have a little keg of homemade blackberry wine down there," Nelle said.

"Oh, for heaven's sake," Fancy said.

"I don't approve," Merly said.

MARIA E. MARTIN'S CHAIR AND DESK
("SOPHIA")



Mar. 12 - 1930

Chair Mother liked to sit in
(S.M.R.)

Grandma kept many diaries & wrote many letters. She was crippled with arthritis in her last 12 years. This writing desk was given in 1963 to Jane Rahming Chandler. Katherine Lemmon Burns has the rocker. This photo was taken by some member of the family the day of the funeral. All nine children were present.

J.R.C.

"Oh, Merly," Nelle said. "Let Dad enjoy it."

"Still in the WCTU, Merly?" 'Vinia asked.

"Yes, I am," Merly said. "But it's alright today."

Marie spoke up. "While Pa Martin is down there it might be a good time for me to say that it's probably time he made his will, don't you all agree?"

"That's all been taken care of, Marie," Nelle told her.

"Well, that's good. I just wondered is all," Marie said.

#####

In a few days, Nelle and Babs returned to Oberlin. Grace, however, had to stay in Cleveland to do the Landers Company catalog. In spite of poor business the company was still limping along. Now in March they were preparing the fall and winter line. Grace would spend a week doing the pencil sketches from the models, and two more weeks doing the finished ink drawings. Mr. Black had told her he was not certain whether there would be another catalog next season, and if there was one it would be smaller. That would mean less money for Grace. She felt tired and discouraged, and her grief for her mother was overwhelming.

Before going home to Oberlin, Grace talked at length with Betty Long, who had let her do the catalog work in her studio in the Fine Arts Building. Betty had an upstairs front studio that overlooked Grand Avenue. Sometimes when Grace looked out she caught a glimpse of Norris and Pauline entering or leaving the building.

Betty said one day, "If only you could forget him, Grace."

Grace replied, "It takes time. I'd have been happier if your studio hadn't been in this building. but of course, that's no one's fault, and I'm glad you can have me here."

"Grace, what are your plans? Your long range plans?"

"Merely to earn enough to live on, Betty."

"Why don't you come back to Cleveland?"

"I wanted to live in the East."

"I know, but you're almost never there, and the girls are back there alone. It seems confusing."

"It is, but I wanted to get away from Norris."

"Yet you keep looking out the window hoping to see him."

"Oh, I do not, Betty."

"Yes. you do. Don't deny it. Look, would it be any comfort to you to know he doesn't love her?"

"How do you know? "

"I just know, from some remark he made about both of you re-marrying in haste."

"Well, he's married to her, though."

"Yes, and remember it's her misfortune, not yours. You always said he was impossible to live with, for all his charm. Seriously, Grace, I wish you would come back to Cleveland. You've lots of friends here. If business is bad and all the artists starve, you might as well starve among your old friends."

“Well, I do have the Hursts in New York, you know. And they, by the way, are far from starving. Don's been very lucky. And to think, none of us thought he had any talent. All he did was develop a special style and get his foot in the door at the right time.”

Grace went back to Oberlin in time for Dee's graduation from high school. She had intended getting back in May, but she got another small illustration job to do, so stayed on longer. This time she was able to finish the work in Oberlin, where she and Merly did their best to cheer their father up. He had moved back downstairs into the room that had been his and Maria's, and at night they often heard him saying over and over again, “Oh, Sophy... Sophy.”

On Grace's arrival at the Oberlin house, she was distressed to find Dee looking worn and unhappy.

“What's the matter, Nipper? You're thin.”

“Nothing, Mother. I'm all right. I like to be thin. I've always been too chubby.”

“Oh, you haven't either. My, you really are thin. Haven't you been eating well? Jane looks all right, though.”

“Mother, I'm quite all right,” Dee insisted. “I've been dieting just a little.”

But Grace was not satisfied. She talked to Jane privately.

“Do you have any idea what's the matter with your sister? She looks depressed lately. I've noticed it when she doesn't think I'm looking at her. She gets this little frown on her face.”

“I'm not sure, but I think she's worrying about Cameron.”

“Why? Aren't they still friends?”

“Oh, yes. But there're two things bothering her. The main thing is he's going away to college in the fall. He wants to go where he can play football. I mean, where they're famous for football.”

“Where's he going?”

“To Alabama or to Southern California. Dee says she knows she can't go to either of those places.”

“We'll be lucky if she can go anywhere, the way things are just now,” Grace said.

“She knows that, Mama.”

“What else is bothering her, Janie?”

“Cameron's car was seen at Dorothy Smith's house.”

“Who is Dorothy Smith?”

“His old girl. The one he went steady with last year.”

“Oh. Oh, well, that didn't have to mean anything.”

“That's what I said to her, but she seems sad lately. She and Cameron are together every day, but still she's sad. It's probably because of going away to college.”

Grace sighed.

That very afternoon a telegram came from Norris in Cleveland. It read.

“Dear Aunt Ada passed away at home this morning. Service Thurs. Brown's. Cremation. Ashes to Greenwood, Brooklyn. Love, Norris.”

“Oh, dear.” Grace said. First Mother, now Aunt Ada. She must have died on that cot in Rosella's kitchen. How tragic!”

Jane began to cry. “I was going to write her a letter real soon.”

“Too late,” said Dee. “The road to hell is paved with good intentions.”

“Oh, Dee!” Grace said. “That wasn't nice.”

“Now, I can never write her a letter again.” Jane said. “Aunt Ada was my special person. She loved me.”

“She was a special person,” Grace said. “She was worth more than Norris, and Ethel, and their mother all put together.”

“Aunt Ethel is alright,” Dee said.

“Yes, but weak. totally eclipsed by your father.”

“Well, let's not get into it about Daddy.” Dee said. “You always get going and you can't stop.”

“Why, Dee! What a thing to say! Well, I'll have to send them a wire. I certainly can't go back to Cleveland for the services. I couldn't even afford to send flowers. We had a blanket of roses for Mother. All the children chipped in, even though everyone is feeling the pinch. I wonder if Aunt Georgiana is going to Cleveland. No, I imagine not, especially since the ashes will be going to Greenwood.”

“What is Greenwood?” Jane asked.

“It's a huge cemetery in Brooklyn. Ada and Rosella's parents are buried there, and the little brother who died, and Jenny. Also your Grandpa Rahming's parents are there, and I suppose his ashes too. I forget about that. Anyway, Ada always intended to go back to Brooklyn; now she will. As she would say, 'her book is closed.' She always visited the family graves there when she went back. She and Uncle Hobbs, a family friend, used to put flowers there. Dear me! Having Mother and Aunt Ada gone just knocks the props out from under me. I feel like an orphan. They were like an anchor to windward. I think I'll phone Aunt Georgiana. I can't afford to, but I will.”

Dee wanted Grace to go into New York with her to buy a white organdy dress for the Commencement exercises, but Grace said they'd have to buy white organdy and make the dress. Dee protested, but in the end her dress was the loveliest of all, and she looked very sweet on graduation night, with her hair in coronet braids, and wearing pink roses.

The class of 1930 marched in to the strains of Elgar's "Pomp and Circumstance," swaying slightly as they went - step, wait - step, wait - step, wait. They looked very solemn, except for the ones who had trouble suppressing a self-conscious smile. Cameron looked very strange in his dark suit with white shirt. Jane felt he was hardly recognizable. He seemed to have worn nothing but polo shirts and khaki pants as long as she had known him, except when he took Dee to the Prom.

After the ceremonies were over, Grace had a little party for Dee back at the house. The Hursts were there, out from Douglaston, Long Island, and Nelle and Roger and Babs. There were little gifts for Dee from everyone, her favorites being two volumes of Sara Teasdale, "Love Songs" and "Rivers to the Sea" from the Hursts.

"Every young girl in love must read these," Louise said, and Dee blushed and gave Louise a hug. "You are so sweet. You understand."

The Look

STREPHON kissed me in the spring,
Robin in the fall,
But Colin only looked at me
And never kissed at all.
Strephon's kiss was lost in jest,
Robin's lost in play,
But the kiss in Colin's eyes
Haunts me night and day.

Come

COME, when the pale moon like a petal
Floats in the pearly dusk of spring,
Come with arms outstretched to take me,
Come with lips pursed up to cling.

Come, for life is a frail moth flying
Caught in the web of the years that pass,
And soon we two, so warm and eager
Will be as the gray stones in the grass.

Joy

I AM wild, I will sing to the trees,
I will sing to the stars in the sky,
I love, I am loved, he is mine,
Now at last I can die!
I am sandaled with wind and with flame,
I have heart-fire and singing to give,
I can tread on the grass or the stars,
Now at last I can live!

Faults

They came to tell your faults to me,
They named them over one by one;
I laughed aloud when they were done,
I knew them all so well before, --
Oh, they were blind, too blind to see
Your faults had made me love you more.

And then Dee was off for an evening of party-hopping with Cameron and their friends.

"Dee looks a little bit puny lately," Nelle said. "She ought to have a good tonic or something."

"I'm going to have her tonsils looked at," Grace said.

"Don't give up on Christian Science," Louise and Earl Hurst advised. "You sound as though you'd abandoned it."

"Well, I think it's just fine," Grace said, "unless your health is bad. I don't think it's any good for such matters."

"Oh, yes it is, dear," said Louise. "You've just got a bit disillusioned because of Norris and his mother. Forget all that and come back to Science."

"But Louise, I've just noticed that my Christian Scientist friends have as many troubles as anyone else."

"We don't, do we Don?"

"No, everything is fine."

"Well, that's nice. I'm happy for you. I wouldn't try to talk you out of it," Grace assured them.

"How about you, Nelle? Are you still a believer?" Earl asked.

"Well, I try," Nelle said. "I try."

The next morning the Howards went off to their New Hampshire hill for the summer. Uncle Rog would be traveling as usual most of the time, but except for occasional trips to the New York office, he would be working from the summer place.

The Hursts had invited Grace to come in to Long Island and stay with them a few days while she hunted for some art work in New York. She left with Earl and Louise.

Dee took the streetcar to Bridgeport to try and get work clerking in a store. Cameron had a summer job putting in miniature golf courses. It was dirty work and his D.A.R. mother was having a "fit," but when autumn came he would be off to college. The problem of getting Dee to college remained. Grace had hoped that Nelle would offer to take Jane to New Hampshire for the summer, but Nelle had said they couldn't afford it. "Times are hard for all of us," she'd said. "We're having no more company on the Hill till business picks up."

So Jane would spend her days alone in the house at High Rock if Dee got work in Bridgeport.

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Before Grace left for New York, Jane extracted permission to go to the Beach as often as three afternoons a week, providing she went with her chum Loretta Simmonds. Loretta and Jane had taken their Red Cross junior lifesaving training at the Oberlin Y during the winter. Jane might swim if they promised to stay together. It would cost a dime each way to ride the bus, and dimes were harder to come by these days. Jane would have to be careful with her money. She had one dollar a week to spend. She and Loretta liked to buy a frozen Milky Way candy bar at the beach. Next week would be Fourth of July, and there wouldn't be money to spend on fireworks. They never used them when they were at Camp Forest Primeval on Howard's Hill because Uncle Rog didn't want to run the slightest risk of forest fire.

Jane half wished that she might have gone to Howard's Hill this summer, but then she reminded herself that every summer she'd ever been there she'd ended up sorry. She and Aunt Nelle got along so badly. But after a winter of having Aunt Nelle right in the same house with her, she guessed she was better off here anyway. It was going to be a lonely summer, though. If Mama found work in New York she'd be gone most of the time, and Dee would be working in Bridgeport if she got her job. Maybe she wouldn't get it.

Jane went into the house to phone Loretta and see if she could go to the Beach.

Loretta's mother wouldn't let her go because she didn't think the water was warm enough yet. She said to wait another week.

Jane wished she still had her dog Binker. It would have been good this summer to have had her. The dog Bim, Binker's brother, had been killed on the Post Road in April. That had been a sad day. They had called him all day, and then a neighbor came over and told them he'd been found dead at the roadside. Uncle Rog had buried him, and Babs, Aunt Nelle, Dee and Jane had all cried and cried. Uncle Rog had, too, but he'd just had red eyes, and he'd gone off up into the third floor room which was his domain when he was in Oberlin, and they could hear his typewriter clicking furiously.

Well, anyway, if Bimmy hadn't been killed, he wouldn't be here now. He would have gone to New Hampshire with Babs and the rest. Jane wished that they would bring Binker back to her, now that Bimmy was dead. But she knew they wouldn't take him away from Nehemiah Evans because that poor man had lost both his legs, and by now, he probably loved Binker.

She went out onto the front porch. It was strange to have no school and not to have Dee and Cameron around, nor anyone else. It wasn't strange at all to have Mama gone, she'd been gone so much. But this was the first time that she was going to be alone for days and days with no one to talk to. Of course, maybe Dee wouldn't get the job.

Jane went down into the street and walked along the sidewalk. The nine tall elms were all leafed out now, and the lilacs were all through. The blossoms had turned brown. But now the roses were in their full glory. Jane came to the place where there was a second gate in the iron fence that ran along the

front of the property. This second gate opened on a walk that led to the back yard. The walk went between two stone retaining walls, and it went from the higher street level to the lower backyard level. There were roses hanging over the walls in such profusion that a person had to walk through with great care, lest they detain one painfully. They must not have been pruned for many years.

Daddy always used to prune the ones at the Cliff Street house when she was small. Jane could remember him fussing when his hands got snagged on the thorns. How nice if Mother and Daddy had never had to get divorced, and could have lived together in this house. Once, on the way home to Cleveland after a summer vacation at Howard's Hill, Mother and Daddy had come through Connecticut and visited the street where Grandma Martin had been born, on Seaside Lane. Daddy had said he loved Oberlin, and wouldn't mind living there. Well, Daddy said lots of things. The latest wish Jane had heard him express Was "to live and die in Southern France."

Meanwhile, Mama was missing the roses at their very best. Jane sat for awhile on the kitchen steps deciding what to do. She had a whole day to do as she wished, but Mama had said that if Dee was going to be working in Bridgeport, Jane should get the dinner. "It will be good experience, and you'll be helping to pull your own weight," Mama had said. "You can begin by dusting and vacuuming the house, then when I get back it will be all nice and neat."

Jane would rather have done something else, something out of doors, but she went into the house and started her work. She began with the dining room. She washed the table and the six blue Winds or chairs that Mama and Daddy had painted years ago in Fire Valley. They'd enameled them deep blue, and hand rubbed them with linseed oil and rotten stone till they had a beautiful satin finish. Then Daddy had painted them with a fine gold stripe for trim. Jane and Dee had never been allowed to put their feet on the rungs of those chairs lest they scratch the paint. The only other furniture in the dining room was the cherry highboy that Mama and Daddy had bought as a dilapidated antique, with several layers of scratched and checkered varnish. They had labored long to remove the finish, sanding it with many grades of sandpaper, till they finally got it down to the smooth beautiful pink wood. And they had bought ten expensive pressed glass pulls for the drawers, but they had never finished the project, never applied the final oil or wax coat that would give it color and protection. The divorce had put an end to all that.

In the front room were two high-backed wing chairs that had been bought in Oberlin, but the other things were from Mama's original furniture brought from Cleveland and Fire Valley, things like the grandfather clock and some antique tables and chairs. Daddy had got the clock to running (though it ran slow) and he'd always planned on getting it to strike the hours.

Mama's furniture looked well in this old house, Jane thought. It was too bad she never got a chance to enjoy it.

In the big living room the Mason & Hamlin grand piano reigned supreme; "the king of the room", Jane thought it. So then the apple-green velvet, carved rosewood, French sofa was the queen. It had made Daddy very angry that Mama got the piano and sofa and the other things, but most especially the grand Piano, for they had both played it. Daddy played Chopin exclusively, while Mama played other things,



"FAYE" '29



"THE TRUNKS"
1929 N.H.
at Forest Camp



"FAYE" "ANDREA"
at "High Rock" 1929



"ANDREA'S" DOG
BINKER as a puppy
in New Hampshire



THE HOUSE IN "HIGH ROCK"
(18 COMPO RD. WESTPORT, CONN)



BINKER before she was
taken away (Westport)



"ANDREA'S" FIRST LOVE 1930
COMPO BEACH



"ANDREA" 1930



SECOND LOVE

909 1/2

mostly German lieder, and other songs by great composers. They had argued at times about music, Daddy maintaining that Chopin was "the greatest of them all," and Mama saying "Norris, that's ridiculous! Probably Beethoven is."

Dee got home at five-thirty, and it was fortunate that she could get off the streetcar so near the house. It stopped at the end of the street and she had only a short walk.

"I'm exhausted," she told Jane, "but as you must have guessed when I didn't come home earlier, I got a job. Just think! The first place I went! And they put me right to work. Just told me how to count back change to the customers, and how to write out the slips for the charge accounts, and there I was selling things."

"How do you like it?" Jane asked.

"I loathe it! I'm terrified."

"You look awful!"

"Well, I'm dead tired. I'm going right straight to bed. I'll get up when Cameron comes. If he comes. It's his first day at work too. And he was working in the sun all day long."

"You can't go to bed now," Jane said. "I've got the dinner almost ready."

"What is it? I'm not very hungry."

"Meat patties and baked potatoes and salad."

"Well, I'll take a little, but I'm almost too tired to eat, really I am."

When they sat down to eat, Dee asked "What did you do all day, all by yourself?"

"Well, I wanted to go to the beach, but Loretta couldn't go. Her mother thinks the water's still too cold. So I decided to do housework."

"Fancy that!" Dee said.

"Well, I want you to know that I vacuumed and dusted the whole downstairs,"

"Good for you!"

"I cooked your dinner too, don't forget."

"It's pretty good, too."

"Well, I'm announcing right now that I'm not doing housework tomorrow. I've got other plans."

"You can't go to the beach alone."

"I'm not going to. I'm going to make a tennis court."

Dee burst out laughing. "Make a tennis court?! Don't be silly."

"I'm not ! I'm going to make one. It'll be a little small, because we don't have that much room, but it'll be big enough to volley back and forth. We can't play a real game."

"Where's it going to be?"

"On the side. Toward the back. Stop grinning! I mean it."

"But you can't, Janie. You couldn't possibly. If you want to volley the ball you can just stand out there and volley it. You don't have to make a court."

"Yes, I do. It has to be smooth. I have to take the sod off, and level it and roll it. I won't be able to do anything about back-stops, but that can't be helped. We'll just have to chase the balls in the back. The wall at the front end will stop most of them."

Dee just shook her head. "By the time you've cleared a five-foot square you'll give it up."

"No, I won't," Jane said. "You just wait till you come home tomorrow night. I'll have a bigger square than that cleared and rolled."

"I can see you rolling it with a rolling pin."

"Don't be a smarty! There's a lawn roller in the basement. It was here when we came."

"Alright. We'll just see. Who will you play tennis with?"

"Who? Anyone. You, Loretta, William, when he gets back from summer camp. Babs, when she gets back from New Hampshire. Maybe Cameron would even give it a try."

"Even if you don't give up on it, it would take you all summer to get it done, and by that time Cameron will be gone. "Dee's face looked bleaker than Jane had ever seen it.

"Where's he decided on?"

"Alabama. He wants to be part of the 'Crimson Tide.'" She sounded bitter but Jane knew that Dee had always been proud of Cameron's football success.

"It'll be tougher for him if he goes to a great big college," Jane said.

"He knows that," Dee said. "I wish he had tried for Yale, though. But that would have been too near. "Again the bitter tone.

"You'll notice we're always second," Jane said.

"Who is? What are you talking about?"

"Girls. A boy always puts them second to what else he's interested in."

“Oh? Are you already an expert on such things?”

“Well, take Cameron. Going to Alabama. Take my friend William. He could have stayed in Oberlin all summer and we could loaf around the beach. Instead, he chose to go to camp in the middle of the State where it’s hot. All just to play baseball. He’s writing letters to say he misses me, but he’s staying away just the same.”

“Fellas are like that,” Dee said. “It’s their nature.”

“Well, it’s our fault.”

“Why?”

“We should treat them the same way. We should go away and leave them behind before they left us.”

“you have a lot to learn. Girls get trapped. Besides, it takes money to go places. We don’t have it.”

“I know,” Jane said.. “but the idea is right.,.

“I suppose. Well, anyway, I want you to teach me to dive.”

“When?” Jane said.

“Tomorrow after I get home from work.”

“But you’ll be tired, and besides, Loretta’s mother is right, the water is still too cold, especially for diving.”

“I don't care if it’s cold. It’ll be good for me.”

“You never like cold water,” Jane protested.

“It’ll be good for me, I said.”

“Well, OK. but the sun won’t be at its warmest - no, wait a minute – We can’t go tomorrow.”

“Why not?”

“It’ll be low water.”

“How do you know it’ll be that low?”

“Loretta and I always keep track. It’s on the blackboard in the bathhouse, and they always print tide-times and beach temperatures in the ‘High Rocket’. It’ll be dead low one afternoon this week. Loretta and I were going in the morning this week. Next week we can go in the afternoon.”

“You’re sure there’s no place where we could dive tomorrow?”

“At the beach?”

“Of course.”

Jane grinned. “Haven’t you ever taken notice of the tide?”

“Certainly, but I don’t pay much attention. Sometimes it’s in, sometimes it’s out.”

“Yes, and you and Cameron are always too busy necking to notice. You’re always there at night anyway. Haven’t you noticed where people dive?”

“Well, I’ve seen the floats sitting up on the beach,” Dee said.

“Well, they’ve got them out in the water now, all three of them. But when the tide is out they’re just resting on the sand.”

“They ought to put them out farther.” Dee said.

Jane sighed with elaborate patience. “They can’t.”

“Why?”

“Because they’d have to be way out. You’d have a long walk, or a long swim, or both.”

“Well, can we go Sunday morning?”

“If you like cold water,” Jane said. “Remember. it’s getting warmer every day. We might wait till Wednesday.”

“Cold water is stimulating.” Dee said.

Jane laughed. “You’re funny.” she said.

That week Jane worked hard on her tennis court. Each night she brought Dee out to see the progress. By Friday afternoon she had half her planned area cleared of grass and raked smooth. She had even rolled a small area flat. Dee was impressed.

“How did you get it so hard?” she asked.

“Rolled it and sprinkled it with water, and let it dry, and rolled it again and sprayed it again. and rolled it again. It gets harder each time.”

“Is dinner ready? I don’t feel very hungry.”

“You say that every night. ‘Is dinner ready? I’m not hungry.’ It sounds crazy.”

“Well, I’m not hungry. I’m too tired to eat. That kind of work is hard, if you want to know.”

Jane pointed to her tennis court. “So’s that.”

“Oh, but you don’t have to do that,” said Dee.

“Yes I do. Because I have to do something. There’s no one to play with and I’m all alone all day with Babs gone, and Mama doesn’t want me to go anywhere when she’s away, except to the beach with Loretta. and Loretta can’t go yet.”

“You said ‘There’s no one to play with.’ Aren’t you getting too big to ‘play’?”

Jane blushed a little. “You know what I mean. I mean there’s no one to fool around with. Besides, what do you do when you’re fourteen? You’re too old to play, and too young to work. So I’m making a tennis court and when I finish that I’ll do something else.”

“Alright. Don’t be mad,” Dee said.

They went in the house and ate dinner.

“I hope Mama comes tomorrow. She said she would.” Jane said. “We need groceries. and we’re out of money. I got ice today. Fifty pounds. Well, if Mama doesn’t come we can live on cereal and milk next week. We can have the milkman leave another quart.”

“Jane?”

“What?”

“I’ll have some money next week. But I have to tell you something. I quit my job.”

“You did?”

“Yes. Because I fainted. I felt sick and I went to the restroom, and I fainted. A girl found me on the floor. I lay down in the infirmary for a little while and then the woman supervisor or whoever the old bat was, said she didn’t think I was strong enough to be on my feet all day.”

“Maybe that’s true,” Jane said. “We’d better tell Mama.”

“No, I don’t want to upset her. I’m quite alright. I was just tired. I is hard work. It made me very nervous.”

“But you fainted! I think we should tell Mama.”

“She’ll be here tomorrow. I’ll tell her then.”

“You promise?”

“Why wouldn’t I tell her? She’ll have to know I’m not working anymore.”

Suddenly Dee began to cry. “I wanted to earn some money to help Mother with the bills, and now I can’t. I’ll only have this week’s pay.”

Jane patted Dee's shoulder. "Maybe you can get a job here in Oberlin."

Dee continued to cry. Finally she wiped her eyes and said, "Don't worry about it. I'll be alright. I'm just tired and upset because Cameron can't come over tonight. They're having relatives from Massachusetts, and his mother wants him at home."

Grace telephoned from Long Island, to say that she was not coming home to Oberlin on the train the next day. She would wait until the following week when Earl and Edna Hurst would be able to drive her out. She told Faye that prospects for art work in New York were discouraging, but she was sure she could find something soon.

"Mother is so brave," Dee said, starting to cry again. "I didn't have the heart to tell her I'd quit my job."

"But you'll have to," Jane said. "We need groceries."

"Mother's putting five dollars in the mail for us this evening. We'll get it Monday. Janie, will it be high water at the beach in the morning?"

"Yes."

"We'll go swimming," Dee said.

"Are you crazy?" Jane asked. "You fainted today."

"Just nerves, Janie."

They took towels and a blanket in the morning and walked down the hill to the bus, which stopped in front of the YMCA building in the center of town.

"How do you feel?" Jane asked Dee.

"I'm OK today."

"You didn't eat breakfast, though."

"I'm watching my weight," Dee said.

"That's ridiculous. You're thinner than you've ever been."

While they waited by the "Y" building, Jane said, "I can't see why you're suddenly so eager to learn to dive. Last winter you could have taken diving lessons right here in nice clear, warm water in the pool. They give them twice just like they did the life-saving courses."

"Well, I wasn't interested then, and. didn't have time, what with school and all."

"What with Cameron and all, you mean. You spent all your time with him."

Dee looked thoughtful and kind of sad. "Maybe I did spend too much time with him."

Jane was so surprised to have Dee agree with her that she couldn't think of anything to say, and then the bus came.

The sun was bright and the temperature very pleasant at the beach, and there were quite a few people there, but most of them were sunning themselves on blankets. Only a few were in the water, and they were mostly fat people.

"It's cold in there," Jane said. "I can always tell."

"How?" Dee asked.

"See all the fatties in the water? They're like seals. They don't feel the cold. Everyone else is on the beach. Loretta told me about it. Her mother is fat."

"I thought maybe I'd see some of my friends," Dee said.

"Too early," Jane said. "You should have come in the afternoon."

"No, no, it's alright. If I'm to practice diving, I'd just as soon not entertain my friends."

Opposite the beach, several dozen yards apart, three floats were anchored in water deep enough for diving. The floats were built on steel barrels. Their decks were canvas-covered. Each had a diving board on one side and boarding ladders on the other sides. The diving boards were lightly padded and canvas covered like the decks.

The girls spread their blankets and took off their skirts and blouses. Their bathing suits were underneath. They would have to wait till the suits dried out before they could go back to town on the bus.

They waded into the waves.

"My God, it's cold!" Dee said.

Jane laughed. "I said it was."

"It's almost July! Why isn't it warmer?!"

"We haven't had enough hot weather yet."

"The water's quite rough, but I'm glad there isn't any wind," Dee said.

"Wait till you climb up on the float, and stand up in the air when you're wet, and then say there's no wind. Hurry up. You have to just plunge in. It's the only way."

When they reached the float, Jane caught onto the rope hand-hold and pointed to the ladder.

"Go on up," she said. "I'll stay in the water."

"I'll be all right," Dee said. "I'm a good enough swimmer."

"It's not that," Jane said. "It's just that I'll be warmer in the water. I'm not going to stand up there in the wind,"

"It's too tippy," Dee said. "I'll fall off the board. Maybe another day would be better."

"No. We're here now. You can go off the edge of the float today."

Dee climbed up and stood up with difficulty.

"I'm going to fall!" she cried.

Jane laughed. "Then you'll be in the water."

Dee laughed and shivered.

"Sit on the edge the first time," Jane said. "Now tumble in face first."

"I'll go flat."

"It doesn't matter. You're not up high."

"Alright."

Dee tried it.

"It isn't bad, is it?"

"No," Dee said. "The water's warmer."

"Do it again. This time stand on the edge."

Dee dove from the edge a half a dozen times but each time she climbed out she shivered and hesitated.

"You're too cold," Jane said. "Let's go in now."

"No, I'm all right. It doesn't hurt me to shiver. It'll toughen me up."

"Alright," Jane said. "But I'm cold. I'm going in. I'm going to start getting dry. I'm not going home on the bus with a wet behind."

"OK. I'll come in too."

On the blanket, in the warm sun, Jane said, "I can't figure you out. I can't figure why you suddenly decide you must learn to dive. I'll bet it has something to do with Cameron."

"Well, sort of."

"But you once said that girls that were great athletes were very unattractive."

"I'm not planning to be a great athlete," Dee said.

When their suits had dried enough, the girls caught the bus and went back to town. When they got home Dee took: a long hot bath and announced she was going to bed.

"I'm exhausted," she said.

"Isn't Cameron coming tonight?"

Suddenly Dee was in tears. "No! He's going to dinner with his parents and some relatives."

"But Dee, that's no reason to cry. You must be sick!"

"He never used to let something like that keep him from a date with me. I'm just not sure he's telling me the truth."

"Well, then! Well, you should just drop him like a hot potato."

"Jane, you don't understand. I'm in no position to drop him."

"Of course you are. Better drop him now, since you're both going to different colleges. Then by September, you'll be used to it."

"Janie, stop it. You just don't understand. I can't 'drop him', as you put it. I love him, and what's more, I need him. I'm in trouble."

THE MAIL IS A PRIVATE AFFAIR

August, as always, was hot and dry in Cleveland. In spite of continued sprinkling from garden hoses, the lawns looked poor. Nothing but a good rain would put a healthy color back into them.

Norris Rahming spoke of this at the dinner table. "Grace always said that rain water was better for plants. She thought that rain brought something they need, probably nitrogen."

Pauline was always uncomfortable when Norris spoke of Grace, and Ethel sensed this.

"Grace was in charge of the 'Cleveland War Gardens'," Ethel volunteered.

"I know," Pauline said. "So I've heard."

"Do you feel better?" Mother Rahming asked.

"Not really," Pauline said. She was experiencing one of her recurrent menopausal sick headaches.

"Will you try to eat a little though?" Rosella asked.

"No, thanks. Just the tea. I'm going back up to bed."

"You'd feel better if you'd eat," Norris said.

"It would only come back up," Pauline said.

She made her way up the narrow stairway to the under-the-eaves room she had shared with Norris ever since their marriage four years ago.

The little Cartwright Street house was always hot and stuffy in summer, for it had no attic. Pauline had been in her bed most of the day, coming down at intervals for glasses of Vernor's ginger ale and cracked ice. Norris said because of her use of so much ice they would have to buy a larger ice-box so that they could buy seventy-five-pound blocks instead of only fifty pounds. She had told Norris that it would be silly to buy a new ice-box now, when everyone was getting electric refrigerators, but Norris had said refrigerators wouldn't keep up with her demand for ice. "You're as bad as Grace used to be when she was 'enceinte!' Worse, in fact. She used to eat lettuce and chew it all the time."

Pauline got very tired of having Norris refer so often to Grace, but she wasn't going to waste any more breath asking him to please not do it. It only made Norris worse if you fussed about something. That was why she had stopped trying to get him to move into a different house. She was convinced that he was staying here in this old place on Cartwright Street out of sheer stubbornness. Even since Aunt Ada's death they were still cramped and uncomfortable. It hadn't helped much having Aunt Ada gone, because she had slept on a cot in the kitchen anyway, and it had merely returned the kitchen to a normal state of affairs.

Pauline had thought it a very bizarre arrangement from the start, but of course, it was true that Aunt Ada couldn't possibly get up the stairs after she broke her hip. And it was true that the kitchen was a

large room, and Aunt Ada's little screened-off corner hadn't interfered with normal activities of food preparation or dish-washing. And that dear, gracious, well-educated lady had done everything possible to help. She had peeled vegetables, and done mending until she became too ill to sit up any longer. No, Pauline had never begrudged anything to Aunt Ada, for Aunt Ada had always been kind to her, always courteous and cordial, as she was to everyone.

After Aunt Ada could no longer go upstairs, they had kept a 'commode' out on the laundry room for her convenience, though getting to it was almost as inconvenient for her as going upstairs would have been. The laundry room was an addition to the rear of the house, and was a step down from the kitchen level. It had been painful for Aunt Ada to negotiate that one step into the area Rosella always referred to as 'outside'. It had always sounded amusing when Rosella said that the woman who came to do the laundry, was 'outside' ironing. In summer time, Rosella cooked out in the laundry room on the gas burner, to keep the kitchen cool. and she often said, "If anyone would like another serving, there's more outside."

After Aunt Ada broke her hip, and had no longer used her upstairs bedroom, it gradually began to fill up with boxes, and other accumulated items, mostly things of Pauline's that she was collecting for the time she and Norris had their own home. Norris seemed in no mind to leave his old home. What upset Pauline was that he was making enough money now. They could certainly afford a place of their own. But he said his mother and Ethel needed him. Ethel again had her job as a biller at Cleveland Builders Supply Company, but she was worried about it because business was bad. Mother Rahming no longer worked as a Christian Science practitioner and her own health was poor. But even with these problems, Pauline could see no reason why she and Norris should not have their own place.

When she first married Norris, Pauline had met many of the friends who had been in his old crowd from his art school days with Grace and the others. It had been in the short period before they left for France for their long honeymoon trip. Pauline had felt that they did not like her, but Norris said that it was only a matter of time. "The divorce is too new and they've been listening to Grace. They'll forget. When we get back and I have a lot of pictures in the May Show, they'll be our friends. People are fickle. When you're having trouble friends fade away. They'll be back."

And, it turned out, he had been right. After the two trips to France, Norris had painted furiously and the juries for the Museum May shows had liked his work. He had won second and third prizes, and honorable mentions (he was still upset not to have yet won a first prize). But his success had got him noticed. He had entries in oil painting, watercolor, and photography, and it all had led to his present good income from commercial photography.

As Norris had predicted, his old friends would not snub him once he was successful. But Pauline noticed at the very beginning that the women were more cordial to them than the men, and she had commented on it to Norris. But he had grinned and said, "But of course! It's because I'm such a delightful fellow!" Then he'd said, "Seriously, it's just that women always know more about the private lives of others than men do, and you see, the women know I didn't have an easy life with Grace, so they are understanding."

But time had passed and Pauline had lived four years with Norr, and now she thought perhaps the women might be friendly to her because they knew that it was Grace who had not had an easy life with Norris, and they knew what she, Pauline, was in for. Or perhaps, she speculated, the women had been sweet on Norris from the start. Because for all his faults, Norris could be irresistibly charming when it suited his purpose.

But Pauline loved him and she was grateful to him for saving her from spinsterhood. Her older sister, Ruth, was a spinster, and had a sour, crabbed expression on her face. Pauline had noticed that about most old maids. (Ethel was an exception). Even dear, kind Aunt Ada Norris had had that rather sour look. (At least, Norris had often said, "Don't look so sour, Auntie). Ethel said that Aunt Ada didn't look sour, just stern.

Pauline's headache wasn't going away. Worrying about things wouldn't make it any better, but she just couldn't help it. Norris had received a letter from Grace a week ago, but he hadn't told her why. Usually when Grace wrote it was because Norris was behind in the support payments for Dee and Jane. And in the first three years she, Pauline, had supplied that money more than half the time. Now, of course, Norris was able to make the payments himself. A few days back she had asked him if he was behind in the payments again.

"No," Norris had said. "Not really."

"Why is Grace writing you then?" she had asked.

He had shrugged. "Oh, she has things on her mind."

Pauline was not happy with that answer.

"Norris, that could mean anything at all. I really think she shouldn't be writing you unless it is about the girls."

"It is about the girls," he said.

"Then you should say so."

"Look here. I don't have to say what's in my letters. The mail is a private affair, you know. Oh, there you go! Now don't pucker up and cry."

That had been several days ago. And now today he had received another letter from Connecticut and they were both lying on top of his dresser. She had the most irresistible urge to read them. The way Norris left them lying there, it was almost as though he wanted her to do just that. She decided that as soon as he left for his meeting with the Cleveland Camera Arts Club she would read the letters. She had a right to know what Grace was writing to him about so often.

But Norris came upstairs before leaving and he decided to change to a fresh shirt.

"How are you feeling?" he asked.

"The same," she said.

"Have you thrown up yet?" Pauline usually got over her sick headaches after vomiting once or twice.

"No," she said.

"Better get it over with," Norris said.

"I don't always do it," she protested.

But he wasn't listening. He was staring thoughtfully at the two letters from Grace. Then he picked them up and put them in his inside coat pocket. He stood in front of the dresser brushing his hair back. It was beginning to recede a little on each side of his forehead. He frowned.

"Norris?" Pauline said.

"Well?"

"What is Grace writing about?"

"She's worried about money."

"Who isn't?" Pauline asked. "Though I must say we've been very fortunate. I'd think that you'd rather keep the payments up to date and not have Grace always writing to you."

"She's not always writing to me. This is something new. It's about college. And it's perfectly reasonable that Grace should discuss it with me. Dee is my daughter. Don't be so Goddamn jealous."

"Well, don't you get so excited," she said, her voice quivering.

"And don't you cry. Grace doesn't have money to send Dee to college."

"And she had to take two letters to say that?"

"It's not that simple. I'm going now, I'll be late."

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The Cleveland Camera Arts Club was a small select group. It had been organized in 1914 by Carle Dychman and Norris Rahming shortly after the latter returned from New York. The club had only nine members, and it operated without elected officers, although each member served a period of one year as chairman, and after they had all held the office, they started over again. Its most affluent member was Fritz Strohmeyer, of the Cleveland family who owned Strohmeyer's department store and other enterprises in Cleveland.

It was strange, considering how small a group it was, that Norris Rahming and Carle Semon had both continued to come to the meetings all during the years. Even when Carle married Grace after she divorced Norris, and again when Grace divorced Carle, they did not drop out or stay away. The two women who belonged to the group commented on it.

"Isn't it really interesting the way Carle and Norris are?" Mary Biggs said to Anna Beaton.

"Women could never have managed it," Anna said. "They are too sensitive."

"But Carle is sensitive. "Mary Riggs had said. "Overly so."

Whenever Carle spoke to Norris it was with a certain old fashioned courteous reserve that had always been his manner, though Norris knew from the old days in art school that Carle had a droll side to his nature that his good friends sometimes saw. The club met only three or four times a year and then it was usually a picture-taking outing, such as a picnic or hike, or perhaps a ride on a lake boat or some such. In the winter they met for dinner at Fritz Strohmeyer's lovely home in Cleveland Heights and displayed the results of their work.

This evening the meeting was in Norr's studio in the Fine Arts Building downtown. The group would plan their October outing. Some of them were trying to develop a simple process for color photography, and the autumn foliage was an opportunity for subject matter. Norris had had some luck with still-life subjects in the studio, but the process involved multiple exposures with different filters on the camera. He hadn't had much time to work on it lately.

Ann Beaton came up to him after the meeting.

"Norr, I hear from Betty Long that Grace might be sending the girls to you."

Norris looked startled. "Betty told you that?"

"Yes. She'd heard from Grace. What does Pauline think about it? Does she feel up to the task of mothering two teen-age girls?"

"Step-mothering,' you mean. That's much more difficult, I would say. Well, Anne, I haven't told Pauline about it. It's not definite at all. Betty shouldn't have told anyone."

"Oh, now, Norr. People always like to hear news of people they've known. I expect several people have heard about it. No need to be cross with Betty. If you don't let Pauline in on it, someone will."

"If it comes to pass, we'll be ready, don't worry, but I doubt it will. Grace won't let the girls go."

"But Betty says artists in New York are having a very bad time."

"There's too many of them there. She should have stayed in Cleveland."

Carle Semon had been standing near, and after Anne Beaton left, he approached Norris. In his characteristic courtly manner, softened with a twinkle in the eye. he asked, "What's the news of our mutual friend in the East? Are New York artists faring well?"

"Apparently no better than here in Cleveland," Norr said. "Grace says things are very slow."

"She should have stayed here," Carle said. "And I told her so many times."

Norr laughed. "So did I. But you know, Carle, Grace was always bedazzled with New York. Ever since our Art School days, you recall."

"Yes," said Carle.

"Well, now. I'll tell you something interesting. Carle. The rumor is going around town that Grace is sending Dee and Jane to me."

"Yes, I'd heard that rumor," Carle said. "But I knew it couldn't be true."

"Ah, but it is true," Norr said.

"That amazes me," said Carle. "Grace is so fiercely maternal."

"It's a matter of necessity. She's not getting enough work, and it's time for Dee to go to college."

Carle wondered privately whether Norris had been sending Grace the support money for the girls, or whether he was, as in the past, months or years in arrears.

"Where is Dee going to college?" he asked.

"Here at Cleveland U."

"And she'll live with you. I see. But why is Grace sending Jane too?"

"She's giving up her house in High Rock. It's a long story. She's going to live in New York."

"Giving up that house! You're not serious."

"Yes. Yes, I am, The two mortgages are too much for her. She's just not getting enough work."

"And just think, we could have had my mother's home on Price Boulevard with no mortgage at all. My brother Paul was quite willing for Grace and me to have it. Paul and his wife didn't want it, but they hated to see it go out of the family. But Grace didn't want it."

"She didn't want to live anywhere near me, I guess," Norr said with a wry laugh.

"She didn't want to live anywhere near me either, it seems," Carle said. It was the last and only time he would discuss such matters with Norris Rahming.

After Carle left, Norr stayed on for a while in the studio before going home. He was in no mood to get back to Pauline with her sick headache, but he must leave in time to pick up more ginger ale before the drug store closed.

The studio was unchanged from the days when he and Grace had shared it except that her easels and paint boxes were gone, and he had bought a comfortable davenport and refectory table. Actually, Pauline had bought them for him shortly after he asked her to marry him. She had said that, when the time came, and they could get their own house, it would be a start toward furnishing it.

The studio was at the front of the Fine Arts Building. It had a ceiling ten feet high, and three great arched windows that looked out on Grand Avenue. The windows were hung with rust-colored plush drapes that Grace had made for them nearly ten years before, the drapes that he had insisted on, and that Grace had said she couldn't afford. Now he was the one who was making the money, and wasn't put in the miserable position of asking his wife when he wanted to buy something. That had been the main thing that hampered him on his two trips to France with Pauline. She had carried with her a supply of her own money, and after his own cash ran out he'd been forced to continually borrow-from her. It had happened on both trips, and it had certainly dampened the holiday spirit. In the end he had to cable Aunt Ada for money.

Now things were different. He was making over three times as much money as Pauline. She was asking him to pay back what he had borrowed, but he'd said no.

"Nonsense," he'd told her. "Our lot is cast in together now. No one owes anyone unless you owe me for saving you from being an old maid."

She had sputtered and looked outraged at that, and he had laughed delightedly.

He sat down on the sofa to re-read the letters from Grace. He wondered just how much she had confided in Betty Long. Apparently she'd told Betty she was planning to send the girls to him. But had she told Betty more than that? Had she told her about Dee?

The first letter was many pages long, something of a record-breaking length-even for Grace, who habitually wrote long letters. She told of buying the High Rock house in the summer of 1928 "when I found life in Cleveland too painful and full of old memories." Carle had at first said he would enjoy living on the east coast, she said, but he'd backed out and he'd been jealous of the girls. Everything would have been all right, she went on, had it not been for the "crash." Now everyone was cautious and

worried, and the situation for artists in New York was terrible. unless you were well established like Earl Hurst was. But she would persevere, she told Norris, in spite of being dealt one crushing blow after another. Roger and Nelle had been living with her in High Rock, but now they had new plans and had gone to Camp Forest Primeval. Debts were really piling up, and she was being forced to lease her house to someone in order to pay the mortgage payments. That way, she could perhaps hang on to it, till she got on her feet.

But he had not heard the worst of the problems, the letter went on. Poor dear little Dee had just come through a ghastly experience. She had been so in love, in fact she still was. But like so many young girls she'd loved too well, and had got into trouble. She'd kept it a secret, of course, and had tried to find an answer to her problem herself. Well, Providence had come to her aid, and the "problem" had gone away by itself, and thank God for that.

But now, Dee was heart-broken and very much shaken by the whole experience. In fact, both girls were, for poor little Jane had been involved in the denouement and she was learning about life in a hurry. Dee was grieving, Grace said, because now that high school was behind them, her path and her beau's must diverge. He was going far away to college and Dee had cried and cried.

The letter went on for several pages more, and it was not very coherent. In the end, Grace said that he must take the girls, for she would have no home for them after October first.

He had written a hasty answer, a frantic answer. "Will you please tell me precisely what happened to Dee? You hint at things, but don't really tell me anything for sure. I want details. And how am I to take the girls? You know how small this house is."

Grace's answer was scarcely more coherent than her first letter.

"You must know, Norris, that some things are very difficult to put into a letter. Some things are better not put into black and white, as it were. I had hoped you would realize this and not force me to be more explicit about Dee. What we have been going through here has been devastating enough. Imagine how I felt when little Jane came to me on a Sunday morning when I was still sleeping, saying, "Wake up, Mommy, and don't be upset, but Dee needs you." I asked her what was wrong, and she said, "Well, you will have to know it all now. Dee is having a miscarriage, we think." Imagine! And Janie only fourteen. She was very calm, but Dee was so frightened, poor little duck. Well, I had to marshal my forces and call a doctor. And he was a wonderful person, Norr. I harbor no lingering distrust of doctors, I assure you. I could not have relied on Christian Science in such a situation. Dee had to stay in bed for a week, and her young man was really a dear. He came every night to see her, and he brought her candy and flowers. He was really very brave, I thought, to face me that first evening after it happened. Poor children! They were relieved, of course, that Fate had solved their problem, but a little sad too. Cameron's mother is a terrible person. She found out about everything. Cameron apparently had to tell her. Well! She wrote me a perfectly vile letter, calling Dee terrible names, and saying that Dee had tried to corrupt her young son. (Cameron is a few months younger than Dee). O, Norr! Can you imagine our dear little girl "corrupting" anyone. She has always been such a loving, giving little person, as ingenuous as I was at her age, in truth. Well, I wrote that woman an answer that put a stop to her raving. She had pompously

stated that she was a Daughter of the American Revolution and could "ruin" us in this town. I informed her that I had roots in High Rock that went back to the early 1600s." I told her that my mother was a direct descendant of the first colonial governor, whose name is on the Memorial Bridge here. I told her that if she could ruin Dee's name here I could ruin Cameron's, but that all that was childish and very unsophisticated. I confounded her with words, Norr, and I have heard no more from her since. I suspect Cameron helped tell her off, too, since I showed him her letter.

"O Norr! I tried to take care of the girls, and earn a living too. It is too difficult, well nigh impossible. But you must admit that in the past I was the only one earning money. All that has changed; the Crash and Depression have defeated me, while I understand that you, at last, are prospering. So be it. What Providence intends, I know not. But I shall send the girls to you.

"Poor Dee needs lots of love. She is not as strong as Jane. Jane is more like a boy. I think she was intended to be our boy. And that woman also accused Jane!

"Dee and Cameron and I talked it all over one evening, and we all agreed that he must have his college education, and that for him to try to go to work, and to marry Dee now would benefit no one. So he will go to college in the South, and Dee says she would not want to live in High Rock without him in any case.

"Norris, one more thing has happened to upset me terribly. I am losing my faith in people that I really thought were trusted friends. We have known Earl and Edna Hurst for nearly twenty-five years. One would think that was long enough to know someone, don't you think? Well, about a month or two ago, we were all at the beach in High Rock; that is. Jane and I were there, and the Hursts were out from New York (they live in Douglaston). It was a Sunday. and we were sitting on a blanket on the sand. Louise. and their seven-year-old Janet were building a sand-castle. and Earl and I were talking and watching Jane dive off the float. She is proud that she can dive. Well. Earl suddenly said to me. Rather 'sotto voce,' "Grace. you should cash in on Jane's figure." I said. "What do you mean, Earl?" And he said, "She should be a model; there's a fair amount of money in it," Of course, I didn't think anything of it at the time, I thought it was just idle talk. I don't even remember what I said to him; I probably just laughed or something. Well - the upshot of it is, that a short while ago, we were all in at their place for a week. That is, Dee and Janie and I were invited to Douglaston, you see. While we were there, Louise and Dee and I went in to Manhattan to shop, and Jane said she would stay with Janet, and Earl promised them he'd take them for a sail in his boat in the afternoon. He said he'd have to go in to his studio in New York first, and get some work done. Well, you know, Norr, he didn't do that. I heard about it later from Jane, and I think she didn't know exactly what to think about it, but in the confusion of what happened to Dee, it all came out much later. The next day Dee and Jane went to the beach (at Douglaston). Dee wanted Janie to help her learn to dive. They have a diving tower there with high boards. Dee never could get up her nerve to dive from the higher boards, but she did jump off. You see, Norr, she was terrified, but was trying to cause a miscarriage. Well, the three of us went back to High Rock, and all that next week Dee felt miserable. And on Sunday, "it" happened! Well, after we had got somewhat calmed down from all that, Dee said to me, "Earl owes Jane some money. Ask Jane to tell you about it.

"Jane was quite willing to tell me. She said that the day Louise and Dee and I went shopping in New York, Earl announced (after we had gone) that he'd rather not go into the city. He told Jane and Janet that he'd have more time to take them for a sail if he could get in a few hours of work at home. But, he said, he didn't have a model. And if Jane would like to earn some money she could pose for him. She said, sure, she'd like to. He mentioned fifteen dollars. A fortune to Janie! Earl sent Janet over to her chum's house to play. Then he took Jane into his studio to pose for him. He was doing three different sketches for Suave Cosmetics. In all of them a girl was seated in a simple pose or standing before a mirror. Well, after they got started Earl informed Jane that he wouldn't be able to sketch her in the dress she had on because it hid the lines of her body. She asked him if it would help if she put on her bathing suit and he said well, maybe, but perhaps he'd better run into New York after all, where he'd met one of his regular models. Well, of course Jane was looking forward to the sailboat ride, and the fifteen dollars, so he managed to persuade her to pose in the nude for an hour and a quarter. I am furious with Earl. I told Louise about it, and she is furious with him, too. After all, Jane is just barely fourteen! And Earl was so sneaky about it all. He must have had it in mind since that day at the beach when he told me I should cash in on her figure. And speaking of cash - he never did pay that child the fifteen dollars he mentioned to her. He is so sheepish about it now, I guess that he can't even talk about it. But he could mail it to her, and Louise could see that he did, but of course, she is embarrassed too. Oh, I am so fed up with people. They are such a disappointment. Such exploitation! But, of course, it wasn't that he needed a model that particular day - no matter what he told Jane. He just wanted to see her without her clothes on. O! And they never did get to go for a sail. When they got down to the Club where his boat is, Earl said it was too windy.

"O, Norr! I feel that our girls are so threatened! So you see, I must turn them over to you, for there is no way I can take care of them. I shall be staying with Pauline "Polly" Patterson for awhile after the house is leased, until I can find some work to do. Please answer soon so that Dee can know what she can plan on."

Norr put the letters away in his desk. He would not take them home again. Pauline should not read them. But perhaps she already had. Sooner or later he'd learn if she had read them. She would at some future date be unable to hide what she had learned in the letters. If she had read them.

Norr drove home on Grand Avenue. He did not always go that way because the traffic lights were not cascaded as they were on Franklin Boulevard. And he did not always cross over to Cartwright Street on Price Boulevard, but tonight he did so because he had an urge to drive past the Art School. He knew it would put tears in his eyes to pass the place where he and Grace had fallen in love. He never drove past the school when anyone was riding with him, particularly Pauline. But a man could cry when he was alone. Sometimes it was a good thing to cry.

He was nearly home when he remembered that Pauline needed more ginger ale. She would probably have vomited and she would smell that way. And she would want to be kissed good night.

He picked up two bottles of Vernor's. the sweet kind that Pauline liked, from the Gray Front drug store at the corner of 75th Street and Sloane Avenue.



"JANE"

N. K. 12112

When he went upstairs Pauline was awake and reading Harper's Bazaar. The only magazines she read were that, and Vogue.

"Did you get my ginger ale?" she asked.

"Yes. Are you any better?"

"Much better. I threw up."

He laughed.

"Is that funny?" she asked.

"Yes, love," he said. "It's funny."

"I don't see it," she said.

"I daresay," he said.

"Norris," Pauline said, "Are you ever going to tell me why Grace is writing letters to you?"

"She's written to me before."

"Thin ones, reminding you to send money for the girls. These were very thick ones. Extremely thick ones."

"Weren't they?" he said. "Didn't you read them?"

"Of course not!"

"Well, I'm going to tell you right now what she's writing about."

Suddenly Pauline burst into tears. "She wants you back!"

He snorted. "She hasn't said that. Of course, she may."

"What has she said?"

"She's sending Dee and Jane to me."

Whatever Norris had expected, Pauline's reaction surprised him. She sat up in bed with sudden interest. She started to say something, then stopped, and sat quiet with a thoughtful expression.

"Well," he said, "What do you think about that?"

"We couldn't stay here," she said, her face alight. "We'll have to move out of this place."

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They had said goodbye to Grace on the train at Grand Central, and then she had to get off because it was almost time for the train to pull out. The porter had been so nice, because all three of them were crying.

"I take care of them real good. Ma'am," he told Grace.

"Thank you so much." Grace said. "Be sure and write me immediately, girls."

"We will," Dee said. "Take care of yourself, Mother. This won't last forever."

"We'll be earning money before long, Mama," Jane said. "Then we can be together again."

"I trust so, dears. Now do write. Promise."

"We promise."

"Goodbye, nippers!"

"Goodbye, Mama."

"Goodbye, Mother."

Their berth was made up. They were sharing a lower. It would be a little crowded, but not too bad. They had done it before, but of course they had been smaller then. Now, Jane, the baby, was the tallest. She was five feet four inches. Dee was five-two, and Grace only five-one.

After they got settled, and had been to the ladies' room and back, they went to bed. When you had a Pullman, that was always more fun than anything, anyway.

They lay in the dark and watched the city of New York slip away in the night. They passed 125th street and Harlem, and on north, and after a while they were running alongside the Hudson River.

They talked for a while. but Jane found that almost every subject she brought up made Dee cry.

"I hope Mother will send me my Little Colonel books."

"Mother doesn't have much money," Dee reminded her.

"I know," Jane said. "She shouldn't have bought us new dresses."

"She didn't want us to go back to Dad and Pauline looking shabby."

"Our things weren't shabby," Jane protested.

"No, but our skirts were too short. All the new things are much longer. Pauline is a fashion expert, you see. This way we each have one dress that's in style. That will show Pauline that Mother knows what's

right. But I'll have to have a lot of new things for college. I hope Dad is expecting that. It may come as a blow to him."

"God only knows what they are expecting," Jane said glumly. "I won't like living in Cleveland. And I hate the idea of not seeing William."

"Oh, don't say things like that," Dee said. "I can't bear it."

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean to. And you probably will see Cameron again."

"I have a terrible conviction that I never will, Janie."

Presently they went to sleep.

They woke up at Albany. with the train bumping and banging around. Going east or going west they always took the night train, and they always woke up at Albany with the train bumping and banging around. Dee always said they were taking a dining car off, or else they were hooking one on. Jane had made the trip once all by herself, when Mama had sent her to New York to spend a half-year with Uncle Roger and Aunt Nelle. She had felt like a very big girl then, ten years old and going to New York on the Twentieth century Limited. It all seemed very long ago.

"All we ever do is move around," she said to Dee. "We never live anywhere very long, do we?"

"It's not Mother's fault," Dee said. "Go back to sleep."

Norris met them at the Central Terminal. The trains no longer came in at the old Lakeside Station, where they had the last time the girls went East. Now they came in under ground the same way they did in New York.

After they came out into the Concourse, Norris said, "Well, what do you think of our new Terminal?"

"It's very pretty," Dee said. "But I do like the ceiling in Grand Central though."

"It has stars, you know," Jane said.

"I used to live in New York, remember?" Norris said.

When they came outdoors into the daylight, Norris had them look up at the tower that was now Cleveland's highest building.

"It has floodlights on it at night," he said. "And you can see it as far away as Fire Valley on a clear day."

Jane wanted to tell him about the Chrysler Building in New York, but decided it wouldn't be polite.

It was very sad coming to the Cartwright Street house and not having Aunt Ada there. Some things were unchanged. On the top steps of the front porch were the two aspidistra plants in huge clay pots. In the winter they would be moved to the dining room, where they would get the east light. The entrance vestibule was as it had always been, with its golden-oak hall rack and golden-oak plant stand with a

mammoth hairy begonia that had always frightened Jane when she was small - with its fuzzy red arms reaching for her with a score of green hands. The hall rack had a mirror surrounded with pegs for hats, and there was a seat below, with a lid that lifted up. Jane could remember that her Grandpa Rahming had kept his rubber overshoes inside, and once she had lifted it up and peeked in and scared herself nearly to death because an old Halloween mask of Dee's had leered up at her from the darkness.

The living room, too, was as she "remembered it, Victorian furniture with Olive-green mohair upholstery, the ornate upright piano, and the oval marble-top table with a beaded lamp shade presiding over all Grandma Rahming's Christian Science books and a portrait of Mary Baker Eddy in an oval frame. And in the corners, more begonias.

The dining room was the same as before, with the Atwater-Kent radio that her father had built into the side-board so that Aunt Ada, who had spent most of her days seated at the dining room table, could reach it and enjoy the programs.



Aunt Ada was gone now, but the radio was still in place in the golden-oak side-board. And on the sideboard were the gilded candelabra with the little squirrels forever chasing each other up the trees, and the crystal prism pendants making rainbow dots of light around the room.

Like all houses one returns to after growing up, everything seemed small to Jane, and this was especially true of the upstairs, mainly because the bedrooms were stacked with dozens upon dozens of cardboard boxes which Grandmother Rahming identified as "Pauline's dressmaking things." They were labeled, for instance - "lace, black; lace, pink; ribbon, navy blue; buttons, white pearl; buttons, smoke pearl; red velvet pieces," and so on and on.

Aunt Ada's old room was the only one available for the girls, the small one being completely filled with more of Pauline's boxes, and things that Norris had brought home from the Cliff Street house when he and Grace separated.

Aunt Ada's room had a dresser, a sewing machine, and a three-quarter bed.

Norris stood in the doorway when the girls first went into the room.

"This room is bad enough for one person. I don't know what we are going to do. We have to work something out. But for a few days this will have to do. I've been racking my brains."

"Isn't there some way the little room could be cleared out?" Dee asked.

"Pauline says she needs all those things. No, we can't do that. We'll have to do something else. Your mother didn't give me much time to prepare for this change in arrangements, you know."

"She couldn't help it, Daddy," Dee said, her chin starting to quiver. "She's had so many things to worry about."

Norris put his arms around Dee and gave her a big hug. "Don't worry, nipper, I understand. Everything will work out alright. We all have some bad times to get through in this life. Plenty of them, in fact. Have to toughen up, Dee."

"I don't think Mama is the type who gets tough," Jane said.

"She should get herself back here to Cleveland, that's what she should do," Norris said. "She could always find plenty of art work in this town. Even now, her work is well known and she has lots of friends."

"But Betty Long wrote Mother that Cleveland is full of hungry artists," said Dee.

"Well. I'm not one of them." Norris said. "And speaking of hunger, we're going out to dinner tonight at Cleveland Heights Tavern. We'll worry tomorrow about how we're going to work out this problem of where to put you both. You'll have to just sleep together tonight. Eventually, Pauline and I will have to get another place to live. She's very anxious to do so, but I'm not quite ready to make the step. Your grandmother and Ethel really need me here. The furnace is getting to be too much for them. But I just don't see how you can fit in this room together. It would be easy enough to get a wider bed, but it still would be too crowded."

"I couldn't possibly share a room with Jane for very long," Dee said. "She's always making something - model airplanes or some such."

"Not for ages," Jane said. "Not since the year of Lindbergh."

"But in college I'll have to study very hard," Dee said.

"It's too bad, Daddy," Jane said. "that you didn't have more sisters."

"How's that?" Norris asked.

"Then you could arrange for me to stay with one of them. That's what Mama has often done in a pinch. She's just sent me to Aunt Nelle or Aunt Merly for a while until she got settled again."

"Hm." Norris said. "Hm. We'll have to think about that."

That night when they were all at dinner in Cleveland Heights, Norris ruined Pauline's evening.

It was a very sumptuous place, with luxurious soft blue carpets, tables with white damask, and elegant glass and silverware. It had been a long time since Dee and Jane had eaten out, what with the Depression having hit Grace and Uncle Rog so hard. In the old days there'd been such treats. In New York City Grace had always taken the girls to Alice Foote MacDougal's for lunch, and there'd been trips to the beach-front hotels in Atlantic City. But not lately. It was very novel to see their father able to spend money freely. Dee could remember the old arguments about money.

Norris was enjoying himself immensely, He was impressed with his daughters, and he wished to impress them. He was delighted to find that they had grown up quite pretty, and they seemed smart, too. He hoped some of his friends would happen in so that he could introduce the girls to them.

Rosella and Ethel looked respectable too. Tall and aristocratic looking, Norris thought. And Pauline. Well, she wasn't a raving beauty, and her figure was plainly matronly, but her clothes looked expensive. Anyone could see that they weren't suffering from the Depression.

But none of their friends happened to be dining at the Tavern that night.

Halfway through the meal, Pauline spoke.

"We really must go right out tomorrow and try to find a house, Norris."

"What we are going to do tomorrow is drive to Oberlin and get Merly to take Janie for a while," Norris said.

Pauline's eyes filled up with tears immediately.

"Oh, Norr," she said, and then bit her lip to hide her disappointment.

"Don't blubber now, please," he said. "I won't be rushed into moving into just any place."

Jane spoke up. "Oh, do you think Aunt Merly will take me?"

"We'll talk to her about it," Norris said.

"You'll have to pay board for her," Pauline said.

"Certainly," he agreed. "And I shall enjoy doing it. I shall really enjoy it."

"I certainly don't know what you mean by that," Pauline said, but Norris only smiled.

IT HASN'T CURED HIM HAS IT ?

Ethel Rahming admired each of her brother's wives, though in different ways. It might have seemed more natural for her to be envious of them, since they had married, while she herself was doomed to die a spinster. Grace and Pauline had brought some interest into Ethie's dull and mother-dominated life. Her office job was boring, with only superficial friendships. Her home life was monotony itself, the evenings taken up with her mother's long phone conversations with her patients. Mother Rahming took these calls on the kitchen telephone. She would go on and on, listening to her patients' recitals of troubles, but continually interjecting a patient "Yes, yes, I know, dear. Yes. Yes. Never mind, dear. Just remember that Divine Love will triumph. Yes. Yes. I know, dear."

Ethie could not recall a time when her life had had any excitement. Norris didn't seem to take her existence seriously. He had even teased her about being single.

Having Grace in the family had been pleasant for Ethie. Grace had always treated her with consideration and Ethie had never realized that this was as much antagonism toward Mother Rahming as anything else. Grace had always felt that Rosella had frightened away all of Ethie's potential suitors.

When Norris and Grace separated, Ethie felt very sad. She had enjoyed Grace's prettiness, her talents, and the fact that Grace had given her two nieces to love and take an interest in. The divorce took the girls out of Ethie's life.

Then Norris brought Pauline into the family, and while Ethie missed Grace, and missed the old days, and Christmas and Thanksgiving with the children, she nevertheless welcomed the coming of Pauline as a break in the weariness of her life with her own mother.

Pauline brought different qualities from Grace's. but Ethie couldn't help but admire some of them. even though she had disapproved of the divorce and remarriage.

Grace had been pretty. Pauline was plain. Ethie had known that Norr loved Grace. She was never sure whether he loved Pauline or not. Both wives had an education. Grace's sophisticated and intellectual. Pauline's more school-marmy and unworldly. Pauline's trip to Europe had helped her acquire polish, while Grace's polish was self-applied since babyhood.

There was one characteristic in which Ethel gave Pauline a higher score than Grace. That was in the matter of standing up to Mother Rahming. Ethie never realized her own resentment of her mother's domination. She supposed her heart to be filled only with devotion to her mother. But she looked on fascinated when anyone stood up to Rosella.

When Grace came into the family, she had been only twenty, and Mother Rahming was able to intimidate her. persuading her to espouse both Christian Science and vegetarianism. With the exception of the sudden heart attack which took Father Rahming, they were a healthy family, Ethie and her mother had goiters. but aside from that they were all well. Norris having perfect health other than that chocolate candy made him "bilious". In Grace's family there were numerous physical problems. Her

father and three older brothers all had hernias acquired from heavy lifting on the Fire Valley farm. Her mother suffered terribly from arthritis. Nelle, Emma and Merly had all lost babies.

To Grace, it had seemed quite plausible that Christian Science was keeping the Rahming family healthy. She had been very willing to study and accept it.

When Pauline appeared at the Cartwright Street house, she was past forty, in change of life, and troubled by her sick headaches at her "time" of the month. The first time that happened, after she and Norris came home from Europe, Pauline excused herself and left the dinner table to go to bed.

Mother Rahming spoke up. "Sit down, deah," she said. "I'll do some work for you."

Pauline looked puzzled, and hesitated, and Norris hastened to explain, "Mother means she'll treat your headache through Christian Science."

"Oh," said Pauline. "I see. Thanks a lot, Mother Rahming. That's sweet of you. But I'd better go to bed for a while."

"Wait till aftuh dinnah," Mother Rahming said. "We'll all hold the right thoughts for you."

"But I'm nauseated," Pauline said, and streaked out of the room.

"Give her time, Mama," Norris said. "Pauline has had no experience with 'Science'. She'll come to it after a bit."

But she never had, and that wasn't all. She liked to eat meat, and had no intention of becoming a vegetarian.

"I've a tendency to be anemic," she told the Rahming family. "I need to eat meat. I'll cook my own if you don't care to join me."

After a while Norris joined her, and presently when Dee and Jane arrived from the East, he said, "Mother, we may as well all eat meat. Everyone does."

Ethel was well pleased with the changes. They made life more interesting on Cartwright Street, though it was plain that Rosella did not approve. But she was older now, and Norris making money of his own, her influence on him seemed at an end.

Ethel herself was not in the best of health. She was forty-three, and change of life and the need for bifocals troubled her. Her head ached often, and Pauline offered her aspirins.

"I wouldn't want Mother to know I took them," she said, "but they help a lot."

"I won't tell on you," Pauline said.

"I'm not a good 'scientist' any more. "I guess," Ethel said, ruefully. "I don't know what's the matter with me,."

"You're older, that's all," Pauline said. "Don't worry about it."

"But I believe in 'Science', Pauline,"

"It's fine, Ethie, all but the medicine part. It's no worse to take an aspirin for a headache than for your mother to use honey and almond lotion to soften her hands."

"I see what you mean," Ethel said. "Grace used to mention some of those things, too. But she took up 'science'. She thought it was good for Norris, because he has so much trouble with his temper."

"It hasn't cured him, has it." Pauline commented drily.

In the night often Ethel lay awake. Her mother was a very heavy sleeper, and frequently snored. In the room at the front of the house, Norris and Pauline talked or argued far into the night. Sometimes Norris made Pauline cry, but Ethel felt Pauline held up better under the quarrels than Grace had. Her tears flowed freely, but she never seemed permanently hurt by a quarrel, On the other hand, Grace had tried to stand up to Norris with a tactic of cool, superior logic. She attempted to wither him with her reasonableness, She would present a picture of patience and sacrifice. Norris, in response, did everything he could to shock Grace, his mother, and Ethel. The more saintly they acted, the more he blasphemed. He threw temper tantrums, thumbed his nose (literally) at the Almighty, and announced that in this world it was everyone for himself.

Norris could present another face, In the presence of people who showed signs of bigotry and prejudice, and the worship of unlimited wealth, Norris turned into a militant upholder of Jesus' teachings. He refused to vote either Republican or Democrat, but always found a "'protest" candidate to support. Grace had liked him best when he was in this mood, for it was his time of greatest compassion.

After he married Pauline, Ethel began to notice a change in Norris. The quarrels were different. Pauline was more resilient. She went about her business with an unconcerned manner, whereas after Norris had staged one of his really elaborate "blow-ups" Grace always had an expression of tragedy in her eyes. Grace's reaction had made the whole performance worthwhile to Norris.

Ethel was never able to decide whether Pauline was less upset than Grace because Norris's temper had moderated somewhat, or whether Norris was less violent because he couldn't get a rise out of Pauline. Sometimes Ethel thought it was just that Grace was more sensitive and high strung. Perhaps Pauline was unruffled because she was not as keen as Grace.

Pauline was stolid, Grace quixotic. Norris could infuriate Grace, but not Pauline.

Ethel had no idea what went on in the sex life of her brother and Pauline but it did not require a sharp intuition on her part to know that it wasn't perfect, because frequently she lay sleepless in her bed at night and could hear conversations from the next bedroom that told of marital problems. Norris had a way of raising his voice even though Pauline begged him to hush. Sometimes out of a silence Ethel would hear Norris suddenly rant at Pauline.

"What in hell do you mean "men aren't nice'?" he might say; or "I suppose that's another one of your mother's notions." Or he might say. "See here, if you'd just forget all those weird ideas, you'd have a good time."

Ethel never had any idea just what the trouble was, no one ever talked about sex to her. No one ever had talked about it to her, though Rosella had explained to her when she was twelve years old, about the monthly behavior of a woman's body. And Ethel was told where kittens, puppies, and human babies came from and why they might resemble their sires. But Ethel knew none of the fine points.

One thing Ethel learned when she overheard Norris and Pauline, was that in one significant way Pauline differed from Grace. Grace had never permitted criticism of her family. She had praised all the Martin tribe liberally.

Pauline, on the other hand, was extremely critical of her family with the exception of a much younger sister, Evelyn, whom she adored. Pauline's father, was dead and her mother and older sister had combined forces to bring her up in old fashioned tyranny. They imposed their will on Pauline and the young Evelyn in a hundred different ways, chose their clothes, decided on their hair styles, read their mail, and scared off their boyfriends, Pauline's mother expected that all her daughters would teach school, and help support her in her old age. But the young one, Evelyn, rebelled, and eloped after finishing high school.

Pauline made no secret of the fact that her mother had been a "pill", and she enjoyed having Norris agree with her. For him, it was a treat to have a wife who did not extol her family, and for this reason he was at first easier on Pauline than he had been on Grace. Pauline needed more sympathy than Grace, Norris thought. Nothing had infuriated Grace more than to have Norris find something for which he might pity her just a tiny bit.

Norris, alongside Pauline, could feel protective, clever, and intellectual. Pauline was afraid of spiders and mice, could not use a hammer to pound a tack, nor draw a straight line, and was completely helpless in Europe where Norris's French got them by in France and Italy. He was feeling much more like a man these days, except in bed. Pauline's headaches and sick spells limited his activity in that respect.

Merly had been totally unprepared for the visit of her former brother-in-law. Norr had phoned (or rather, Dee had) right after Merly got home from church. Dee said her father was going to drive them all out to Oberlin for a little ride, and he would stop in to see her. No sooner had the phone been put back on the hook than Merly began to wonder. Would Pauline be coming? Merly had never met her, but she had lunched in Cleveland one day with Betty Long and Ethie Rahming, and they had described her as "too old" for Norris. Merly was nervous about meeting Pauline. It would be awkward. Why on earth were they coming to see her?

As it turned out, Pauline did not come. It was only Norr with Dee and Jane. And Norr had come straight to the point. Grace, he said, had turned the girls over to him, and he was in a quandary. The house on Cartwright street was too small. Given forewarning and with a month or so he could have located elsewhere, but meanwhile, could she help him out? Could Jane board with her?

They had talked about it, while Jane and Mim chatted excitedly outdoors on the porch swing, and Dee spent the time upstairs with Emmy. Trink was off somewhere playing with friends.

In the end, Merly agreed to take Jane on a temporary basis, just until Norris could find a larger house. She reminded him that her house was small too; there was only her father's room downstairs, and upstairs, her own room, Emmy's room, and the largest room which was shared by Mim and Trink. If Jane came to stay she would have to sleep on a cot in that same room with her cousins. It would be just as crowded as she would be in Cleveland sharing the room with Dee. Merly wavered, but Mim came in and fairly begged her mother to take Jane in. Trink came home, learned of the plan, and added her coaxing to it all.

Merly said she would need ten dollars a week to pay for Jane's food.

Norr offered fifteen, Merly was impressed. Norr must be truly prospering. He'd never had any extra money in the past.

It turned out that Jane had brought her suitcase, "just in case". So it was decided. She was to stay, especially since school opened the next day.

That night after Norris and Dee had returned to Cleveland, Merly lay awake thinking about Waldo. He had been gone five years now, and she had grown used to her loneliness. But Norris had given her a goodbye kiss, and it made her realize how nice it was to have the presence of a man. Norr had smelled so good of shaving soap. She had almost forgotten the feel of a man's face. No matter how spoiled he was, Merly had always found Norr attractive.

Mim wanted her mother to marry again, but Trink did not. Oh, well, Merly thought, there were no prospects anyway. Oh, there was a man whom she saw in church on Sundays, and who liked to sit beside her, or at least near her, every Sunday. The church was held in the upstairs of a commercial building in downtown Oberlin, for there were not very many Christian Scientists. Congregationalists dominated the town, for the college had a seminary of that persuasion, and there was also a fair sized Catholic community. In addition there was a Baptist church, an Episcopal one, and of course the ever-flourishing Methodists.

The 'scientists' wanted a better church but they never engaged in money-raising events such as bake sales or bazaars, trusting always that the Lord would provide through the direct generosity of the followers.

The man who liked to sit next to Merly in church was older than she. His hair was more white than grey, but he was fairly handsome. His name was Paul Fisher. Once Merly told Mim and Trink about him, and how he subtly managed to be either beside her or behind her, but never in front of her.

"He evidently likes to look at you, Mommy," Mim said.

"I think so too," Merly said, chuckling a bit.

"And he doesn't want you to look at him," Trink said. "Is Mr. Fish married?"

"It's Fisher, Trink, not Fish," Merly said. "He's a widower. Mrs. Fisher died last year."

"Fine," said Mim.

"It's not fine," Trink said. "I don't want to be named Fish, or Fisher or Fisby".

"Don't be silly," Mim said. "You wouldn't be."

"All that talk is ridiculous anyway," said Merly.

And in truth, she found Mr. Fisher did not interest her at all in a romantic way. Still, it was pleasant to know that she was not completely past the point where a man could be interested in her.

Waldo had been the only man in her life, actually. Before him, she had planned to go into the missionary field, to Africa or China or some such far-off place. She wondered what it would be like to live with a man again, to sleep with a man again. Waldo had been so sick for the last two years of his life that they had stopped all lovemaking long before he died. Somehow Merly could not imagine doing that with Mr. Fisher. She was not sure why she felt that way.

She could still hear Mim and Jane talking in the next room. She should get up and tell them to be quiet and go to sleep, but they were such good friends and there wouldn't be much school the next day anyway. Only an hour or two in the morning, and then the rest of the day to buy school supplies.

Merly wondered how it would work having Jane in the house. She and Mim were so nearly the same age that they would pair off, and that would be hard on Trink. Mim, of course, was already at the age to be thinking of boys and Trink wasn't there yet. Jane was fourteen, and Mim would be fourteen in February. Trink had just turned twelve, and so far cared nothing for talk of boys.

Suddenly, Merly had an idea. She'd send Trink to Jackson Heights to spend the school year with Babs. After all, Nelle had been saying for several years that Trink should have her turn just as Jane and Mim had. That settled that problem.

So she went to sleep; she would write to Nelle in the morning.



MARIAN MARTHA MARTIN (LEMMON)

CIRCA 1920s ?

"MARTHA HEDGES"

#####

Grace was very depressed and lonely on her birthday. October in New York could be very lovely, but Grace's special day was dark and rainy. Grace had a spell of tears. She wondered if the girls would remember her birthday. Probably not. Aunt Ada had always remembered it, for her own was on the fourth and Grace's on the eighth, what a dear Aunt Ada had been. And now she had been dead four months and, according to Aunt Georgiana. Ida's ashes were now resting in Brooklyn in Greenwood Cemetery with the rest of the Norriss. Poor dear Aunt Ada. she'd always been homesick for Brooklyn.

Grace remembered what a fuss Carle had made over her birthday. They'd had such a lovely time when he was courting her. He'd done everything he could to keep her mind off Norris, and some of the time he'd actually succeeded. And then what a lovely honeymoon it had been - Cape Cod, with all the lovely places. Menemsha-by-the-Sea. Nantucket, Merly's Vineyard, Hyannis, Highland Light. And he'd taken her to such delightful little restaurants, and they'd gone browsing in the shops in Provincetown, and walked in the sand dunes, and along the beach collecting shells. She'd been so certain at one time that Carle would really want to live on the East Coast; he was so wild about Cape Cod. He'd bought a moving picture camera, and gone out on a boat with a lobster fisherman and taken movies of them working among the lobster-pots and buoys. It had been rough and Carle had even been a little seasick, but how he'd loved it! Strange he'd made such a fuss because she had wanted them to live in High Rock. She'd been sure she could win him over to the idea, but no, nothing doing. Carle was very set in his ways. By the time their first anniversary rolled around in 1928, things were very strained between them, and she was up at Nelle and Rog's Camp Forest Primeval. It was August, and she'd only written two or three letters to him, but when the twenty-seventh rolled around a big box had come in the mail, Special Delivery. It was a cake, like a small wedding cake, with "Happy First Anniversary" written on it. He'd had McFarland's, the best confectioners in Cleveland, pack it carefully and send it to her. And it had made her feel pretty badly, too. Carle was always sentimental and thoughtful about such this, Poor Carle, he was just so utterly unable to change his thinking about anything. But perhaps he was right about one thing though - she probably never should have gone ahead and bought that High Rock house. The money that she'd poured into that might better have been used some other way. Not for stocks, though. Certainly not for stocks. Not the way things turned out.

The afternoon mail brought letters from both the girls, and her spirits lifted.

From Jane in Oberlin -

"Dear Mama,

"I am having a fine time here, and I'm really very glad Daddy didn't have room for me. Mim and I just love having the room together. We have so much to talk about and don't have to worry about keeping Trink awake, (Aunt Merly says to tell Trink to write to her immediately if you see her, or talk to Aunt Nelle on the phone.) I hope Trink is enjoying it there in Jackson Heights. Oh. how I hated that school. P.S. 69. I'll never forget it.

"Well, this is a Happy Birthday letter, and I really hope you do have a happy one and that you aren't so worried about money. Any work to do yet? Daddy says you should come back to Cleveland. He does seem to be doing well. Mama. He is going to send me money for a second-hand bike. I can get one at the Campus Bike Shop for seven dollars. Also - Daddy is going to give me money to get a permanent wave for my hair. Then I can join all you Cameron-heads in the family. I always think Aunt Nelle didn't like me because of my straight hair. Still, Trink has Cameron hair and she wasn't a favorite of Aunt Nelle. either. (Don't show this letter to Aunt Nelle, Mama !)

"Mim and I play checkers with Grandpa every evening. We take turns. Sometimes he forgets and moves our men. He seems to be getting a little bit absent minded at times. I think. He says he will be ninety years old in March. Just think of it! Sometimes he looks at me and says I remind him of his little Jenny that died long ago. Also he tells Mim that she reminds him of Maily. I guess Maily had golden curls. And Jenny had straight dark hair, like mine. Mim's "golden curls" are getting darker, by the way.

"Mama, in school I am taking English. Algebra. Latin, and American and MEthieval History. I think I am going to get good grades in all of them. I would be very happy here if I didn't miss you so much. I also miss our house in High Rock and the boy friend I had there.

"Aunt Merly will write you she says, but she isn't feeling very well. She says she has a claim of hot flashes, and she isn't sleeping very well. Last night she had an earache also and she had me phone her practitioner at three o'clock in the morning. She is a more faithful Christian Scientist than we are, Mama. She wants Mim and me to go to Sunday School the way we used to, but we don't 'like to go because we have to get up for school the other days, and we like to sleep late Saturday and Sunday.

"Mama, when Daddy gives me some money I'll get you a birthday present. He is going to send me five dollars every two weeks to take care of the bus to Cleveland for the weekend. Then I get off at the public square and take the streetcar out to Dad's studio in the Fine Arts Building. (It's still the same old studio you and he always had) When I get there Grandma and Aunt Ethel and Dee and Dad and Pauline are always waiting and we go to a restaurant for dinner. That's because Grandma still has Mary come to wash and iron on Fridays, and that makes Grandma very weary, she says. By the way, it's the same old Mary that she's always had. Grandma seems a lot older, Mama.

"Mama, the bus ticket costs \$1.35 round trip, and the streetcar a dime so I can save something each time out of the five dollars. I can get a good birthday present quite soon and I will mail it to you. Remember, Mama, Dee and I are counting on your coming for Christmas. I hope you can afford it.

"Love and kisses for you,

Jane"

Dee's letter was shorter, and that was unusual. As a rule Jane wrote the skimpy little letters or she didn't write at all, and Dee was the better correspondent of the two. This time Dee had little to say.

"Dearest Mother,

Happy birthday! I hope things are going well. I worry about you a lot.

"Mother. I have been so busy you wouldn't believe it. If I tried to write everything that's been going on it would fill a book. But I haven't the time. It's a good thing I've been occupied, though, because I miss Cameron so terribly. I suppose he is very busy too, because he hasn't written: I don't have his address in Alabama so I can't write him, until he sends it to me. That beast of a mother of his would never give it to me. I know. She probably told him not to write to me. I still think he will though. Don't you think so?"

"I have an awful lot of studying to do. I am taking 'PoliSci' (Political Science), Freshman English, beginning French (in spite of all had in high school), and American History. Besides that, I have 'phys ed' which I have always hated as you know. I do think the French will not be too boring, though, since they are moving along very fast.

"This is a strange household here (which I will tell you about later). It certainly is crowded. Pauline wanted to move into a bigger place but Daddy doesn't seem to be in any hurry. He is talking about sending Janie to a private school next year. He is going to put her name in at Hannaway Dodd School. I'd say Daddy was getting pretty fancy ideas, wouldn't you?"

"Guess who I saw downtown in Strohmeys store a few days ago! Betty Long. And she was with Anna Hill, the woman you told me had an affair with Grandpa Rahming, Her name used to be Anna Wyers, n'est ce pas? Et elle a un fils aussi? She seems to be a very nice person, and when Betty introduced me to her she said that it was 'so very wonderful' to see me again.

"Now, Mother take good care of yourself. Do you have enough money to eat properly? I had forgotten what a good cook Grandma Rahming is. You'll have to give her credit for that. Mommy. She isn't a vegetarian any more, by the way. It must be Pauline's influence. She likes meat.

"Mommy, do let me know what you need for your birthday. How would some silk hose be? You always need them, I know. Isn't it a good thing skirts are longer? They hide those runners that come at the top.

"Jane and I are counting on you being here for Christmas, Mother. How about Thanksgiving?"

"I'll write a better letter soon.

Oodles of love,

Dee."

But Grace could not afford to come for Christmas. She had to spend it in Jackson Heights with Nelle and Roger and Babs and Trink. It was not a very jolly holiday. Roger was very much in the dumps about business, and Grace was so hard up that she couldn't send anything to Dee and Jane but some trinkets of her own and one dollar each.

In Cleveland, Norris and Pauline put on an elegant Christmas for the girls. Lots of clothing for both of them, and for Jane some books she had wanted. Everything came wrapped in the white shiny boxes with red satin ribbon that said they had been bought at Strohmeys store. They had the presents on

Christmas Eve, and they all slept late Christmas morning. In the afternoon Norr took them all to the Cleveland Heights Tavern for dinner.

But that night, in bed in Aunt Ada's old room, both the girls cried, thinking of their mother alone in New York on Christmas night.

"She isn't really alone, of course," Dee said." She's with Aunt Nelle and the rest, I'm sure."

"No," Jane said. "There's no room for her to sleep at Aunt Nelle's with Trink there. By now, she'll be back down town, in her room, thinking about us here with Dad and Pauline. It's sad."

"Oh, Janie, sometimes I'm afraid she'll commit suicide, aren't you?"

"Dee, don't even say such a thing! "

"Janie, I'm so blue. Do you know I've not heard from Cameron yet? Not even for Christmas."

"Maybe that's best, Dee. Make new friends now."

"I'm trying, Janie."

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Jane liked to brush Aunt Emma's long brown hair. Aunt Emma always gave a dime or a quarter to any niece who would brush her hair. "It soothes me," she said. Aunt Nelle hadn't liked to have the girls take dimes and quarters from Emma. "They shouldn't take the money," Nelle had said, but Merly said "It's good for Emmy to use a little money for something. Makes her feel more like a person of some importance. I can't tell her not to."

Grandpa Martin had a special chair in his room that his children had given him for Christmas. It was an expensive chair with a down-filled cushion. No one but Grandpa ever sat in it. In front of it he kept Grandma Martin's little writing table that she had used all the years that she was crippled. It had contained in its little drawer, Grandma's fountain pen, her stationery and stamps, and the diaries that she kept to give to her children. After Grandma died, Grandpa kept her rocker in their room, with her shawl laid over it, but he never sat in it; he was afraid he might break it, but he enjoyed using her little writing table. He kept his checkers in the drawer with Grandma's fountain pen and stationery, though he never wrote letters; Grandma had always taken care of all that. For a while, her last diary was in the drawer too, but Merly had taken it out and put it somewhere else, because it always made her father cry. "Maria was the most wonderful woman the Lord ever made," Grandpa would say, his eyes shining with tears.

When Jane came into his room, Old Henry beamed at her. "Aiming to play a game of checkers? I'll get the board," he said. He went to his closet and took down the red and black board that he and Sophie had used for many years, though she had preferred dominoes.

Jane waited while her Grandpa set out the checkers. He liked to do that part all by himself. It was one operation of the game he still felt sure about. He knew his game was slipping, but he wasn't ready to admit it yet.

"He looked at Jane. "You put me in mind of my daughter Jenny," he told her for perhaps the twentieth time. "Did you know that?"

"Yes, Grandpa."

"She and Maily were younger though, when they died," he said. "They died of brain fever."

Jane had been told that Maily and Jenny's fatal illness was now called spinal meningitis. The Martin family's reverence for the memory of those two little girls was shared by Jane, but she'd heard Grandpa tell about them so many times that her mind wandered.

Grandpa was slow when he played checkers. He hummed a little off-key tune and stroked his Van Dyke beard. It was not as well groomed as it used to be. In recent years Uncle William had come out from Cleveland to trim his father's beard. But William was a high school principal and very busy. Aunt Merly did the best she could with it.

Old Henry moved one of Jane's men. "That's my piece, Grandpa."



Uncle Howard

Averill + baby

Grandpa Martin

"YOUNG JOHN"

"OLD JOHN HEDGES"

"MARY ANN"

BABY

4 generations circa 1930

The two "Johns" were speaking again, but young John was "cut-off" with \$100 in old John's will.

"Eh? Oh. Oh! So it is." Sheepishly he moved it back. To cover up his embarrassment he came out with a statement he seemed to reserve for such situations. "I was never sick a day in my life. Did I tell you that? Just a fever when I was twelve. I commenced to mend soon."

"Yes Grandpa."

After Jane let Grandpa win the game, Mim came in for her turn. Grandpa thought that Mim looked like his other lost little girl, the blonde one, Sarah, called "Maidy". Grandpa would be talking to Mim about Maidy's long curls.

Aunt Merly called to Jane from upstairs.

"Do you have homework to do, Janie?"

"No, I finished it at school" Jane was in the freshman class at Oberlin high school.

"Could you come up here to my room a minute, dear?"

Jane went up to Aunt Merly's bedroom. It was a very plain room on the west side of the house, cold in winter, hot in summer. It had an old fashioned spool bed, and a walnut dresser, both very fine, heirloom pieces given to her as a wedding present. But there was nothing else special in the room. In fact, nothing else at all but a cylindrical kerosene heater, and a thin rag rug on the varnished floor. The rest of the house was similarly plain except that the living room had a full-size rug. The furniture there was wicker porch furniture, that Jane could remember from the time when Uncle Waldo was still alive. In one corner of the room stood a set of shelves with a set of Encyclopedia Britannica printed around 1911. They had also been Uncle Waldo's, as had been the ponderous dictionary atop the bookcase. It was at least a foot thick, covered in brown corduroy. Jane loved that dictionary, considering it and the encyclopedia set, the most valuable items belonging to Aunt Merly. Throughout the house the curtains were thin and old. There were no draperies. The thing that kept the place from seeming unbearably stark and plain, was the great number of green plants that Emma kept in very sunny window. But it was not till Jane was much older, that she asked herself why, with Grandpa Martin's money; so little had ever been spent on fancying up that house. Aunt Merly had never seemed to complain about it. There was always plenty of tasty, nutritious food. Aunt Merly bought good cuts of beef and lamb, and roasted chickens, or hams. There was always a quantity of milk, and country butter in an earthen crock. Jane decided, later on, that Aunt Merly had indeed cared that the house was furnished more sparsely than the homes of the poor. But Aunt Merly was always preoccupied with ideas. She didn't see her surroundings as the most important problem in her life.

When Jane came into the room, Aunt Merly was combing her hair. It had always been a trial to her, too thick and too Cameron.

"Thanks for making Grandpa happy, dear. Do you want to know a secret? All of us are getting together to buy him a radio for his birthday."

Jane cried, "That's wonderful! Now we can listen to Rudy Vallee!"

"Sit down a minute. Jane. It was something else I wanted to talk to you about."

Jane sat on the edge of the bed.

"Do you remember Uncle Waldo, dear?"

"Yes. but not very well, because I don't think I saw him very many times, Did I?"

"When you were smaller you did, but you wouldn't remember much about that I suppose. Uncle Waldo died in the summer of 1925."

"I was nine then. We were in New Hampshire then. A telegram came."

"That was a long time ago," Aunt Merly said. "I was going to talk to you about Uncle Waldo. I loved him very much, you see, and he was a good daddy to the girls. What I wanted to talk to you about was that I sometimes think about getting married again. I'm sometimes lonely, you see."

"I understand, Aunt Merly."

"Well, and it often seems to me that the girls ought to have a Daddy. I wanted to ask you one or two things. When your Mama married Carle were you much upset? Do you remember? Did you dislike him or ever feel you hated him?"

"Oh no! I never hated him, Aunt Merly. I don't really think I disliked him, even. Sometimes, lately I've thought about him and felt badly. He was usually pretty nice to me. When Mama married him I don't think that upset me. It was having to be stuck in that Sunshine Camp while they went away for a honeymoon that made me feel bad."

"Do you think if she had married Carle and not gone away on a trip you'd have felt better? I mean, if she had just come right home like a family afterward, no honeymoon?"

"Perhaps. If I could have just come here to stay with you at the time it would have been fine. It's just that I hated Sunshine Camp. It was like prison."

"And you didn't hate Carle?"

" Oh, no. He had his funny sulks, and Dee and I used to laugh behind his back, but we didn't ever hate him."

"I see," Merly said, but she did not say why she had asked.

That winter Mim and Jane continued to play checkers in the evenings with Grandpa Martin. They each played him one game. He was never content with just one. But his age was beginning to tell on his playing, and they had to arrange to let him win at least one game each evening. In fact, the old man was pleased enough when he won both games, but, as Jane said "We have to beat him every so often so he'll think he's beating good players."

"We never could beat Uncle William at checkers," Murray said. "let alone chess, so we're really not good players at all "

"No, but that's not what's important. Have you noticed that Uncle William never lets Grandpa win? It doesn't humiliate Grandpa to have his son beat him. He's proud that Uncle William can beat him, and if he beat Uncle William he'd know something was fishy. But he would be humiliated if his granddaughters could beat him."

"Yes," Mim said. "He'd think he was getting old."

Jane said, "We just mustn't let him remember it too often."

On Thursday nights they did not play checkers with Grandpa. On that night they listened to the Fleischman's Yeast Hour on the radio, with Rudy Vallee and His Connecticut Yankees.

In January Lottie Martin the eccentric wife of Howd Martin, went into Oberlin. She died in the operating room. Thomas Martin telephoned to tell Merly, and to speak of the funeral plans.

"Do you think Dad will go to the services?" he asked her.

"Oh, dear," Merly said. "I doubt it. But anyway, wouldn't it be easier to just not tell him?"

"Won't he read it in the death notices, Merly?"

"I can take that part out. Take the whole page out. He's not as sharp as he used to be, Tommy. He doesn't really read anything past the front page."

Afterward, Merly spoke to Mim and Jane.

"Your poor Aunt Lottie died. I just feel very sad about it."

Outspoken Mim said, "Why? You weren't very close to Aunt Lottie."

"No," Merly said. "But that's the first of my generation to go. Family, that is."

"Oh, goodness, Mama. Aunt Lottie was years older than you. She wasn't your generation."

"Oh, yes she was. She was my own brother's wife. It gives me a strange feeling."

"Can we go to the funeral?" asked Mim.

"Ohm guess so," Merly said. "If you're sure you want to."

"It's a way of getting out of school," Jane said later to Mim. "What's a 'floating kidney'?"

"God only knows," said Mim. "I don't."

Next weekend she told her father and Dee all about it when she went to Cleveland. Jane had discovered that her father found her entertaining. He seemed to chuckle at everything she said, and that encouraged her.

Dee observed, "Janie is beginning to talk smart-alecky, like all high-schoolers."

"Ho!" Jane said. "You're only a few months out of high school yourself."

"Tush, girls," Norris said. "Listen. I want to hear all about the funeral."

"For heaven's sake, Norr," Pauline said.

"Go on, Janie," her father persisted. "Who was there?"

"Oh, all the family, except Mother and Aunt Nelle, and Grandpa."

"Your Grandpa still mad at Howd?"

"I guess so. And after all, he's old. He'll be ninety next month."

"Good grief! Really? Tell me, is your Uncle William still running the farm? "

"Oh, no. Uncle Art is," Jane said.

"Uncle Art!" Norr exclaimed. "I can't picture him farming."

"Oh, I don't guess he's farming. They just live there. He runs the movie house in Oberlin still."

"What is William doing now?"

"Teaching at West Cleveland High."

"And your Aunt Vinnie? How's she?"

"She's fine. She's so funny. Know what she said after the funeral? She said very quietly to Aunt Merly, 'I never would have expected Lottie to die in a hospital bed. I thought she'd be taken away in the dark of night under a wild turkey's wing.'"

Norris laughed delightedly. "Sounds exactly like Vinnie to say that."

Pauline was put out with Norris for his intense interest in Grace's family. She spoke up.

"Aren't you going to tell Jane about our surprise?" she asked.

"I wasn't going to until we're sure," Norr said.

"What surprise?" asked Jane.

"We've found a new place to live." Pauline said.



Henry John Martin on his 90th birthday.
Oberlin, Ohio March 26, 1931
"John Henry Hedges" in "The Old Brick"

"Yes, they have," Rosella said. "And it makes me very sad."

"Me too," Norris said, "and Pauline, if you keep prodding me about it, we won't leave here:"

Pauline's face clouded up and tears filled her eyes.

"Oh. now, stop it!" Norris said. "You can't be forever weeping and sniveling. I'm getting sick and tired of it."

With a choked sob Pauline rose to leave the room, but Norris jumped up and with a hand on her shoulder put her back down in her chair.

He turned to Jane.

"Well, we may be getting a new place," he said, "but in any case I'm enrolling you in Hanaway-Dodd School for next fall."

"It's a private school " Dee put in. "It's the best in Cleveland. It's very snooty."

"I know that," said Andréa, "but I don't remember where it is. Was that the school where they once had the Cleveland Artists' Picnic?"

"That's right," Norris said. "It's out in Carrollton Heights."

"I remember it. I remember that time my new front tooth was loose from when the teeter-totter handle came off and hit me in the face."

"Yes," Norris said. "And it not only loosened your new tooth but it chipped it on the corner. And I told you you'd have to stop wiggling it. or I'd put a splint on your arm."

"Yes. and they had corn-on-the cob, which I love and I couldn't eat it. Well anyway, I've still got my tooth."

"Smile," Norris said. "Let's see if the chip still shows."

She smiled.

"Well, it shows a little," He said, "but I guess it's worn down by now."

"I remember that I played with Mona James that day. We sat down on an anthill, and our mothers had to undress us to get the ants off us."

"Mona lives right around the corner here," Dee said. "Sometimes we ride the same streetcar."

"How did you remember each other after all these years?" Norris asked.

"Oh, she was in the seventh grade with me at Fairmont School," Jane put in. "She used to come over to see me when Mother and Carle were still together. She's the same age I am."

"She seems older than you now," Dee said, and Jane was annoyed.

"Actually. I'm six months older than she is," she said.

"But she's interested in boys," Dee insisted.

"Oh, so what!" Jane said. "She always was. And so were you!"

Norris chuckled while the girls bickered. "That's right. Dee always was boy-crazy."

"Oh, Daddy!" Dee protested, but she didn't really mind being teased about it.

The next day Norris and Pauline took Jane to see the new house where they were going to live. It was in the area of town near the University, not many blocks from the apartment where Grace and the girls had lived when Grace was married to Carle Semon.

The new place was about a block from "University Loop" which was a junction of Grand Avenue, Price Boulevard, and Cleveland Heights Boulevard. To avoid chaos at this intersection, the traffic flowed smoothly in a counter clockwise direction around the circle. Within a two-mile radius lay all the buildings of Cleveland University's complex, which included an Arts College for men, and one for women. the School of Medicine, the School of Law. and the School of Dentistry. In addition, there was a School of Architecture, and a School of Library Science. Beyond the School of Medicine were the numerous University hospital buildings associated with it, and the Institute of Pathology. The complex was dominated by the huge Parkside Hospital.

To the north of University Loop was the expanse of beautifully landscaped property known as Whitfield Park. There was a lagoon, surrounded by Japanese cherry trees, where a half dozen swans swam in summer time. Above the lagoon were formal gardens dominated by a white marble fountain with heroic figures of Greek style sculpture. Over all of Whitfield Park presided the imposing white marble building of Ionic design, which was the Cleveland Museum of Art.

The place that Norris and Pauline had chosen was on Channing Avenue, a scant half-block south from University Loop. It was in an old building of the style referred to in Cleveland as a "terrace". It would be called a "row house" in other parts of the country. There were ten living-units in that particular terrace. Each one had a basement and a first and second floor. The units on the ends, naturally, had more windows than the center ones, and in addition they were larger, having one more room on each floor. When one entered there was a large room with a gas fireplace, and the stairway to the upstairs. It would have been the living room if it had not opened into an equally large room which had bigger windows and was more cheerful. This room in turn opened into a dining room, also bright and pleasant. Beyond this was a serving pantry and the kitchen, and the doors that led to the basement and to the backyard.

Upstairs were four bedrooms, a large one in the front which was to be for Norris and Pauline; next, another fairly large one, to be Pauline's "sewing studio" ; next a smaller room earmarked for Dee, and in the back, a small room for Jane when she was home and not away at Hanaway-Dodd School This back room though small, had the pleasantest view of them all, since it had a window on the south, and

another on the west. The large front room faced the north and in the summer was very dark from the shade of a huge sycamore tree.

Pauline was already making plans for decorating. She had samples of wall paper and carpeting. Norris planned to use the huge sets of draperies from his studio in the Fine Arts Building to make drapes between the two living rooms.

"But where will Grandma and Aunt Ethel sleep?" Jane asked.

"They'll have their own place two doors down the way," Pauline said.

"In this same building?" Jane asked.

"That's right," Norris said.

"Grandma doesn't object?"

"She's agreeable about it," Norris said. "We'll be near, but I hate terribly to leave Cartwright Avenue. I've known that neighborhood all my life. I grew up with the Abbott children there, and Mother and Father Martin lived there for a while. We knew the Semon boys and lots of others."

Later in the day Norris took Jane to the bus for her return to Oberlin. Dee rode along this time and the girls had a chance to talk a little on the way. They were still worried about their mother in New York, but they had finally decided that she had passed the point where she was considering suicide. Her letters were still full of anxieties but they seemed to have some overtones of hope, and she was beginning to speak in terms of having the girls with her again. But they could not speak freely of her in the car with Norris, so they spoke of other things.

"Have you seen Lassie Overton at all, Dee?"

"Oh, yes. At Christmas vacation she called me and we met downtown and had lunch together."

"Don't you ever see her around the campus?"

"Oh, she doesn't go to G.U., Janie. She goes to 'State'."

"What happened? She always said she was going to go to Cleveland U so she could keep her same voice teacher."

"No. She changed her mind. She wanted to get away from the boys she dated in high school, especially Bob Bexley."

"But he's always been her beau!"

"That's just it. And oh, Janie! You should see Lassie! She is so pretty. She's beautiful. She'll have such a good time in college. She doesn't want to be tied to Bob Bexley. He's been so crazy about her for so many years that he wouldn't let her have fun in college. He's going here to Cleveland U. Lassie said he

was so furious when he heard she'd applied to State. She kept it secret till it was too late for Bob to change."

"Lassie always did have big plans for her future," Jane observed.

"Yes and she'll make them all come true," Dee said. "I just wish I was having a picnic like she is at State. or like I had in High Rock. I haven't met anyone I like yet."

"You will," Jane said.

"Where? At the College for Women?"

"Give it time." Jane counseled as though she were the older sister.

YOUNG LADY, WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN ?

Two weeks later Jane took the bus to Cleveland, wearing her Girl Scout uniform. She was very proud of it because although Mim had been a Scout for more than two years. she, Jane, had worked hard and caught up to Mim. She had passed her Tenderfoot requirements, which were quite simple, and then she'd gone on through the Second Class steps. With Mim's cooperation she had learned her signaling, "wig-wag" and " semaphore ". And now she and Mim both were working on the requirements for First Class Scout. They each had green uniforms with insignia and merit badges sewn on the sleeves.

Jane was no longer met at the bus in downtown Cleveland. She could take the streetcar out Grand Avenue to her father's studio in the Fine Arts Building , or if she was later she could take the Sloane Avenue streetcar and go out to Grandma Rahming's on Cartwright Street. All that would soon change, however, because when they moved to the new places in the Channing Avenue Terrace. Norris and Pauline would be giving up their downtown locations, and would have their business places at home, Pauline with her "sewing studio" and Norris with a basement dark room and one of the two parlors as his studio.

On this particular Friday, Jane did not reach the Cartwright Street house until dinner time and the family said they'd begun to wonder about her

"No. I'm alright." she said. "I had to go to Scout meeting after school. I left before it was over though."

They all admired her uniform and Jane asked her father if she might buy a Girl Scout ring. He told her she might, and that she should get one for Mim, as well.

Dee spoke up. "Guess who's coming over this evening."

Jane had a wild, ridiculous thought about her mother, but of course her mother couldn't be coming there.

"A relative?" Jane asked.

"No, a friend."

"Someone important?"

"Oh, I suppose not."

"Well, how would I know?" Jane asked. "It isn't Lassie Overton, I suppose?"

"No. It's Mona James. I told her a few days ago that you'd be here today and she is coming over to see you."

Mona arrived shortly after dinner. Jane was quite surprised by her appearance. Years ago, at the artists' picnic. Mona had been a roly-poly little redhead with pig tails and freckles. Out at Madison School in the seventh grade she had still worn long, thick braids that came to her waist. She had been a bit chubby, and shorter than Jane. She had always worn navy blue pleated skirts, white middy blouses, and a navy

blue chinchilla-cloth coat with brass buttons. Mona was a half-head taller than Jane now. Her red hair was cut to shoulder length and she wore it loose and shining. Her freckles seemed less noticeable and she wore lipstick. She wore a bright green skirt, and over a full bosom, a tight white sweater. She would have been a very pretty girl except for the pale blond, almost white eyelashes, which her father forbade her to darken with mascara. Mona had just recently turned fourteen.

Jane was taken aback by Mona's breezy greeting at the door. "Oh, ho, ho! Ho, ho! Look at the little 'Girl Sprout.' All decked out with badges and medals, eh, Janie?"

Jane laughed, and mumbled something, but she felt deflated. She would not have worn her Scout outfit if she had known it would be amusing to anyone. The family had all admired it at dinnertime. Even Dee had said it looked "very nice." And in Oberlin all the "best " kids were Scouts. It was "the thing" to belong.

"Don't any kids in your school belong to Scouts?" Jane asked.

"I doubt it," Mona said. "There could be some, I suppose."

Mona had brought some records with her. Dee put them on the Victrola, and they spent an hour dancing. There wasn't much room. They had to dance in the dining room. They were trying something new. Mona taught them how. "Step. Step, dip" then back again, "step, step, dip." Mona was willing to lead because she was taller than Dee and Jane. Jane felt foolish dancing in her Scout uniform.

At nine, Mona said she 'd better go home, because her mother had caught her "necking in the alley" and her father was on a rampage.

After Mona left. Dee wanted to practice dancing some more. "You lead, Janie," she said. "You're taller."

"Alright." Jane said, "but I'm tired. I got up early."

"Mona really does seem a lot older than you, Janie."

"Oh nonsense. I don't know why you keep saying that."

"Because she's so interested in boys."

"Well, I like boys." Jane said.

"I haven't heard anything about them lately."

"There isn't anyone I like just now," Jane said. "There is one that I might have liked, but he has a girl that he has had since fourth grade."

"Then you'll have to get someone else," Dee said.

"What's the hurry? "

"But you had boyfriends in High Rock."

"Oberlin isn't High Rock."

It was true. In Oberlin young people didn't date nearly as early as they had in High Rock. There may have been at least two reasons for that. Oberlin, with its college atmosphere, had a highly organized plan for its youth. Girl Scouts. Boy Scouts. Camp Fire Girls, etc. kept them busy and separated. And there was the Conservatory of Music. All children from families of any means at all seemed to be studying music or dance at the "Con." Trink had studied violin. Mim piano, and both of them had been in a Dalcroze Eurhythmics class. Mim had given up her piano lessons, but she and Jane were deeply immersed in the Scout program this year, and while they liked boys, they weren't thinking about them much of the time. However, they were beginning to spend a lot of time setting, combing and brushing their hair. Each of them had arranged a dressing table in the room they shared. On the dressing table they kept jars of Pond's Cold Cream. and Vanishing Cream and Skin Freshener, and little tubes of lipstick and eye shadow. But they used the makeup only very lightly, for while no one minded how much face cream. they slathered on, both Norris and Merly would have ruled out mascara and lipstick. So by beginning with only the most delicate touch of lipstick, they gradually accustomed Merly to their reddened lips. Nor did she notice when they began to pluck and shape their eyebrows. But still, in spite of all this they were busy enough to spend little time thinking about boys. The academic standards in Oberlin were high and they spent much time on school work.

High Rock had been different. The beach brought boys and girls together all summer long. And because it was an artists and visitors' colony, it was less strict and old-fashioned. Dating began earlier. But Jane had lived in High Rock only one year, and now it all seemed long ago, like a dream world. It was as though when she had moved to High Rock, her childhood had been interrupted for a year. Back in Oberlin, with Mim and the Girl Scouts she had resumed it again, for a short time.

But all that changed in late April when spring came to Oberlin. Across the college campus the elm buds swelled as warm sunny days brought them awake. Being a town in the Connecticut Western Reserve, Oberlin presented the appearance of the classic New England village. Virtually every home was surrounded with forsythia and lilac bushes.

After school as Jane and Mim rode home on their bikes they could smell the spring wind blowing across the flat fields west of town. The "peepers" were singing in the roadside ditches and ponds.

Mim threw back her head and sniffed the air.

"Isn't it delicious?" she said. "This time of year always makes me feel like crying, it's so wonderful."

"Yes," Jane said. "There's a poem that goes, 'spring with that nameless pathos in the air.'"

"Do you remember once when you visited us at Easter vacation, we went way out along the railroad track and we brought home some frogs eggs in Mason jars. We found them in the ditch back of the cemetery."

"Yes, and I took some home with me to Cleveland. And I had tadpoles in my room for days. Dee thought I was crazy. She said, 'You'll never grow up.' She still thinks so."

Mim laughed. "Do you remember another Easter vacation When you were at our house and you came down with the measles?"

"Yes, and your mom was so good to me. She gave me nice warm baths, and I was spotted all over. I remember being on the day-bed in the dining room, and the shades were down and the room was dark, and I had crayons and paper to amuse myself with. I wasn't supposed to read. You know. Mim, I spent quite a few Easter vacations at your house."

"Grandpa's house ," corrected Mim. "Not my house."

"Grandpa's house, yes ," said Jane, "but Aunt Merly does the work."

"Don't forget Aunt Emmy. She helps too."

"Don't worry. I'd never forget Aunt Emmy."

After supper on the warm spring evenings, if they had their home work done, Merly would let Mim and Jane ride their bicycles for a while. They weren't supposed to stray far, and nine o' clock was still bedtime.

"Why do you want to go out and just ride around and around? " Merly asked, one Thursday evening. "Aren't you even going to listen to Rudy Vallee's program this evening ?"

"Oh, Mom," said Mim. "It's springtime. It's so nice out."

"Yes." said Jane. "When spring comes you just get this big feeling that you have to do something about it. All we can do about it is ride our bikes around. Since the rain this afternoon the lilacs smell twice as fragrant as they did before."

"They have a powerful perfume, don't they," Merly agreed.

But she was nervous. A couple of weeks later she wrote to Grace.

"Dear Sis:

I've been meaning to write you all spring, but it's been one thing and another. I have entered a contest to sell new subscriptions for the Oberlin Crier. The first prize is \$1,000 and I could certainly use the money. As you know the allowance I have to run this place. and Emmy's little stipend, is none too generous. We have enough for good food, and of course for the telephone and light bills and for coal and so on, but there just isn't anything for extra. I've never been able to make Mr. Edwards see that I really don't have enough for things the girls need. He can understand dentist and doctor bills, but he sees no need for dancing lessons, or piano and violin. If I can only win the first prize in this contest it will be a great help to me. I've been going out every afternoon for several weeks and it is hard work. There is one week left.

But that isn't what I am writing about. Something has come up that has me concerned. It has to do with Jane and I'm not sure just how to handle the situation. Until now, the question of boys has not come up

with Mim and Jane, They have been so busy working on their Girl Scout proficiency badges, that I don't think they've been thinking of another thing. In fact, just lately they had been working to pass the swimming requirements for their First Class Scout status. Now that is all forgotten. and it would seem that their young minds are centered on boys. Spring has come and I guess it has affected their senses. They spend a lot of time doing their hair and primping in general. I don't encourage their use of makeup, but I can tell they have been plucking their eyebrows and I must say suddenly they are looking very pretty. Well, Grace. we have to face the fact that they are growing up, don't we?

But now, here is the problem - You probably don't remember many of our neighbors, Grace. but three door s down from us. there is this Irish Catholic family named O'Neal or O'Neil (I'm not sure which). They have six children, two older boys, Danny and Dennis, and three girls, and a little fellow who is about six years old. The youngest girl is not very bright and she has a hare lip. (I think maybe that sort of thing comes from having a lot of children close together, don't you?) Of course, I understand the father drinks, too. so that may account for it. Well - all that has nothing to do with Jane, has it? But the two older boys have been hanging around here every evening, especially Danny, and now he wants Jane to go to the movies with him. She would like to go, naturally, and tells me that in High Rock she and Babs both went to the movies with boys and to parties. Well, I don't doubt her word on that, because I recall that Nelle was telling us how popular Babs and Jane were in High Rock, and how they all took ballroom dancing lessons. But, Grace - I am in a quandary. This business of Danny O'Neal is not as simple as it sounds. Going to the movies seems harmless enough, especially if Mim and Dennis O'Neal went too, and they all walked down town together. But Dennis is very shy and hasn't asked Mim. He mostly just hangs around and doesn't say much, and Mim is very shy too. But to start with, Grace, Danny is eighteen years old. He is quite good looking in that brunette Irish way - very black hair and blue eyes. His eyes are what attract the girls, I'm sure. But in addition to the three years difference in age, Danny has another problem that worries me. He is just back from a year in the reform school in Hanley. Now, in fairness, I must say that many people think he was innocent in the case. There was a man here in town Who was selling stolen automobile s. He had a garage business in an old barn way out on West College Street, almost in the country. He did repair work, and apparently had a separate room in the barn for painting cars. He had several boys working for him, mostly painting the cars. He did the mechanical work himself. Well, it all came out that the cars that were being painted were stolen cars. The man went to prison, and two of the boys went to reform school, The younger ones they let off. Danny claimed to be unaware that the cars were stolen, but the judge I guess didn't believe that he didn't know. Well, Grace, he has served his time down at Hanley, and I suppose we shouldn't seek to punish him more. I always feel we should be fair to young people, but I can't take the responsibility regarding Jane. You must write me and let me know what you wish. I have told her we must wait till we hear from you. I thought you'd rather I asked you first. I could have phoned Norris, I suppose. I'll be waiting to get your letter, Sis.

Much love ,

Merly."

But Grace did not send a letter. Subconsciously she had been just waiting for an excuse to return to Cleveland and Oberlin. She was homesick for her girls and still grieving over her mother.

Grace had been living in Manhattan on a temporary basis, with an old friend from the Cleveland Art Institute. Pauline Patterson had been a year ahead of Grace and two years ahead of Norris. She had gone to New York after graduation to live with a wealthy aunt whose favorite she was. But she had never done anything with her art education. She had devoted herself to her aunt and never married. And eventually her aunt had left her all her money, and her stock holdings. Pauline had nothing to do after her aunt died. She decided to study Christian Science, which she had just learned about through Norris Rahming. And now that the business depression had set in she was very glad that she had become a Science practitioner, for she was worried about her money. She not only could apply her comforting religion to her own problems, but she could pick up a little cash now and again from her patients.

Pauline Patterson had been called Pauline in her Art School days. She had not been part of Grace Martin's group of close friends, but after Grace and Norris went to New York to live, they had renewed their acquaintance with her, and sometimes had invited her to their parties when Earl and Edna Hurst were there, or when Betty Long was visiting from Cleveland. Pauline was prim and proper, though rather pretty, and Norris liked to tease her. Because of her French surname, he called her "La Belle Patterson." Sometimes he elaborated on this to ridiculous lengths, calling her "Pauline La Bellereen Fontereen." She had pretended to be displeased but everyone had known that she enjoyed Norris's teasing.

When Grace came to New York in the autumn, after renting out the High Rock house and sending the girls to Norris, she had been virtually broke. She stretched the little money she had by visiting friends and relatives. She never stayed more than three or four days in any one place, and since her hostesses were usually lonely they were glad of her company for old times' sake, and it saved Grace the cost of rent payments. She had gone first to Earl and Edna Hurst's for they had given her comfort and moral support during Dee's crisis in the summer. After a week with the Hursts, Grace left, saying "I must get busy and find myself a place I can afford, until I get going."

But she did not immediately search for a place to live. She needed to wait until she had another month's rent from the house. She had to keep up the payments on both first and second mortgages and the whole burden was beginning to terrify her. She felt in need of morale-boosting and she felt secure in the knowledge that Norris's Aunt Victoria had always been her friend. So it was off to Brooklyn for a few days for some of Aunt Georgiana's philosophical counseling. Victoria was a widow now. She had been a lone since the doctor's death and her only child Corinne's marriage a few years after. She was delighted to see Grace, but dismayed to see her looking so tired and thin and distraught.

"You must stay With me a fortnight," Georgiana said. "And you must rest and let me fix you food that will build you up. And we can have some nice long talks. Let's have an egg nog right now. Do you like nutmeg in it?"

Grace did stay for nearly two weeks, but no longer, because she did not want to wear out her welcome. It was good to be able to feel that Aunt Georgiana was always there in the old brownstone front where she had lived for so many years. And Georgiana was a comforting tie to the sentimental past, for it was

in this same house on Thanksgiving Day in 1908 that Norris had stood up at the dinner table and announced to the assembled guests. "Grace and I were married yesterday!"

Now, twenty-two years later, Grace had recited to Georgiana all the troubles that ensued. She had even told her about Carle Semon, and how she had tried to love him instead of Norris, and how it hadn't worked. She still was tormented by her hopeless continuing devotion.

She had not however told Victoria about Dee's unhappy love affair. That wasn't necessary, she decided.

"But you do see. don't you Aunt Georgiana, why I can't live in Cleveland? Not with Norris and another woman stumbling across my path everywhere? It would be very different if we weren't both artists."

"I understand, dear." Victoria said. "And I'm sure you'll be able to succeed in New York again. Especially when business picks up."

Ah, but that was the rub. Business was not picking up, From Victoria's, Grace went out to Jackson Heights to "spend a few days" with Nelle and Roger. Roger's outlook for the future was extremely dark and gloomy. He and Nelle did nothing to lift Grace's mood. They not only spoke incessantly of the bad condition of Rog's company, but they lectured Grace on the folly of her ever having bought the High Rock house which was now a millstone on her neck. But while Grace was with them Roger's sister Milly (who lived two streets away) came calling on Sunday afternoon. She had always been a rollicking, light-hearted person and she scolded Rog roundly for his pessimism.

"If everyone in the country talks the way you do, Rog, we'll never get business back on its feet. Besides, Rog, you aren't fun this way. You always used to be jolly."

"The world isn't jolly anymore," Rog had complained.

"Oh piffle," Milly said. "The world is as jolly as people make it."

"Milly," he said, "You don't understand business at all."

"Well, anyway, Grace, you must come over and stay a few days with me and get away from Rog and all this gloom. You and I will go to lunch and a matinee and I'll get you all cheered up, and then you'll go out and take this town by the ears."

"Yes, I really must get going again," Grace said. "I'll come stay a day or two, Milly, and then I must find myself a little place where I can work. It's so hard to find a place with a good light for color work."

Grace's visit with Milly stretched to a week and they both enjoyed it, but one evening Nelle stopped over and remarked, "Why, Grace! Haven't you found your apartment yet?"

Milly came to Grace's rescue. "It's my fault. I haven't given her any time to go out looking for one. We've just been rambling around in the shops downtown and having a marvelous time, haven't we, Grace?"

Before Grace could answer, Nelle said, "Now, Milly. Grace can't just 'ramble around in the shops'. She's got to get busy and find work so that she won't lose that house of hers. Seriously, Grace, Rog and I think you'd better let it go."

Grace opened her mouth to speak, but Milly spoke first.

"Oh, no! She won't have to let it go! That would be too heartbreaking. That lovely place?" Milly and her husband were afraid of losing their summer camp for girls, and knew all about the heartbreak of foreclosure. They felt a great sympathy for Grace.

But Nelle went on. "What you don't know, Milly, is that I had to lend Grace the money for her last payment on her mortgages. She can't afford that house. At any rate we can't."

Grace hurried to get off the painful subject.

"Oh. Nelle, Milly does know about that. Now I must tell you something exciting."

Nelle looked skeptical. "What?"

"Guess who I discovered today! La Polle Patterson!"

"What's that?" Nelle asked.

"Don't you remember Pauline Patterson? She's from Cleveland, but she used to be at some of our parties when we lived in Morningside Heights. Remember her?"

"Oh, I guess so." Nelle said. "I remember Pauline. I don't remember La Belle. What a name! Is it a sister?"

"No." Grace laughed. "It's Pauline herself. Norr used to call her 'Pauline LaPollereen Pattereen', and sometimes 'La Polle Pattarine'. Well, I managed to locate her, she's still in the place her aunt left to her. She said she decided she liked the name 'Polly', so she uses it."

"Oh." Nelle said. "Well, what's exciting? You said you were going to tell me something exciting."

"Well. it is exciting! Pauline wants me to stay with her!"

"You're fortunate again," Nelle said.

"Again! I haven't been fortunate at all lately!" Grace protested.

"Well -" Nelle said.

"But in any case, I shall be there for awhile, and of course, I'll buy my own food."

Milly spoke up in Grace's behalf. "Pauline's been lonely since her aunt died. It'll be nice for her to have Grace with her."

So Grace had gone, then, to stay with Polly Patterson. And they got along very nicely, but there were times when the atmosphere became too heavy with the teachings of Mary Baker Eddy as applied by Polly. It brought back to Grace the days when Rosella Rahming had used such preachments to interfere in Grace's domestic life. When Grace found things getting too religious she would "run out to Earl and Edna Hursts for a few days." Or out to Jackson Heights "to see Nelle." or to Brooklyn to see Aunt Georgiana. Grace thrived on visiting people. It provided a distraction in her continuing deep heartache over Norr and the girls. She wrote every evening for at least an hour in an informal diary. It was more a record of her thoughts than of her activities. In truth, it was a continuing running letter to Norris. to be read by him at some undetermined future date perhaps after her death.

She was still with Miss Patterson when Merly's letter arrived. The news of Jane's new follower was so unsettling that she was distraught to the point of tears.

"Pauline. I'm so upset." she said. "I need to go back there and talk to that child and I can't afford it. I do wish my brother Arthur would send me the money he owes me."

"I'll do some Science work on it," promised Miss Patterson.

"Which?" Grace asked. "For Arthur to send the money, or the problem with Jane?"

"Why, both, dear. All things work together for good. All is perfect Harmony."

But after a sleepless night Grace decided to go out to Douglaston to visit the Hursts and discuss it with Louise.

She came back again the next day to pack her bag.

"Louise was so convinced I should make the trip back to Oberlin," Grace told Pauline 'LaPolle' Patterson. "that she insisted on giving me the money for my fare."

"You see." Miss Patterson said. "As I told you. Divine Love will provide."

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Danny O'Neil wanted to own an automobile. He had learned to drive when he was fifteen and he had also picked up a bit of mechanical experience from his one-time employer. But Danny's father could not afford a car, knew little about them, and was in no hurry to help Danny own one. However, Danny had an uncle who was fond of him; this uncle had helped him acquire a jalopy that needed much fixing, and this car was taking up all of Danny's spare time. He had to put in two hours every day helping his uncle, who was a janitor for one of the college dormitories. Danny's uncle had hurt his back, so he had asked Danny to come downtown every morning to help him wrestle the huge trash cans and do some of the heavier work, It was an agreement they had made because of the car.

Danny was anxious to get his car running so that he could take Jane Rahming to Cleveland or Hanley. He wouldn't tell her ahead of time where they were going or she would never be allowed to go. So far, he hadn't even been able to take her out on a real date. Her aunt was being awfully strict with her. So all he could do was talk to her in the evening when she and her cousin were out riding around on their bicycles. But he really was hoping he could get her somewhere so that they could be alone. The other night they'd been alone for about ten minutes back of Prospect School. She and Mim had been sitting in the kids' swings and he'd been pushing them way up high. But. Mim felt seasick and had started home on her bike. He'd had a chance then to kiss Jane and tell her that he loved her. He'd asked her if she loved him, and she had said she hadn't known him long enough yet, but maybe later she would. He asked her if she liked being kissed and she said yes, she did. Boy, if he'd only had his car. then she would love him. She was going to be fifteen in June. but she seemed older than that. He wished he had the nerve to put his hand inside her brassiere. There again, if he only had his car! A man had to have a car. if he had a girl. He would also have to get a good job. He might be going to get one at one of the other dormitories. His uncle had put in a good word for him. He was going to need money.. He'd like to marry Jane Rahming.

Danny and Jane walked along the railroad track. They held hands when they came to the place where they had to cross the trestle.

"Going over this always makes me nervous." Danny said.

"I know. I feel the same way," Jane said.

"But no trains run on this track anymore." he said.

"I know. Maybe it's the height that gets you."

"Me? Height doesn't bother me," he said.

"No, me either." Jane said. "It's just because in the movies whenever anyone is crossing a trestle, there is a train coming, and when you get on a trestle you just can't wait to get over it and safe. My Uncle Rog used to write railroad stories. and there was a scary one about a boy and a girl on a trestle in the Colorado Rockies. I would love to go to Colorado some day, wouldn't you? They have narrow gauge trains there. The tracks aren't nearly as wide as this one is."

"I can play 'Springtime in the Rockies' on the saxophone," he said.

"I didn't know you played the saxophone."

"Well, I do, but it belongs to my brother. He got it a couple of Christmases ago."

"In High Rock, I used to play the clarinet in the junior high band."

They were over the trestle now and Jane let go Danny's hand.

"You don't have to do that," he said.

"What?"

"Let go my hand."

"Oh, but I'm safe now," she said.

"No, you aren't. I might run away with you."

She laughed.

He said "When I get my car fixed so it'll run, we could run away."

"And then, what?"

"Get married."

She laughed again.

They had come to the place where the railroad was near the cemetery.

"Are you afraid of cemeteries?" she asked.

"Of course not."

"I mean, do they make you feel spooky? A little?"

"Well, not especially."

"Me either. Let's go home that way."

"You don't have to go home yet, do you?"

"Well, pretty soon. You know Aunt Merly."

He took her hand and led her into a small grove of trees.

"Come in here a minute. I at least wanta kiss you before we go back."

"All right, but I can't be much longer. Mim knows we didn't go bike riding, and if she goes home and Aunt Merly asks her where I am, she'll tell the truth. That's because of the Girl Scout law."

"Ok, but we can't go home without a couple of kisses, can we?"

"But you'll want more than two."

"I only want two million, that's all," Danny said.

He began to kiss her then. She was standing with her back against a tree. He began to kiss her hard. He did not kiss shyly the way William had. She remembered the snowy day in High Rock when she had kissed William, and his face had been so smooth and cold. It was a boy's face, and Danny's was a man's face. His chin was rough and dark, for he had to shave, and his face was warm, almost hot. Suddenly he sat down on the ground and pulled her down beside him. He kissed her hard again, and it was a long kiss.

"Danny, stop. I can't sit on the ground. I can't go home with my dress all rumpled."

"It's ok. The grass is dry. It'll just brush off."

"No."

"Yes. Here. Lie back a second." He pushed her back and she tried to stay sitting up. but he was very strong.

He held her down with both his hands on her shoulders and with his arms straight.

"I'm very strong. You see how strong I am? "

"Yes, sure," she said." But let me up."

Instead, he lay down right on top of her and kissed her again hard. She turned her face away from him and she heard him breathing hard in her ear. She made an effort again to get up but he still held her down. Suddenly she thought of a line from the Bible. "Male and female created he them." She knew that from now on, things like this could happen if she expected to go places alone with boys. And it was exciting, but Danny was in charge, and she didn't like it. She couldn't stand him holding her down when she wanted to get up. She didn't want to get into such a predicament as Dee had. And it could happen to her now, too. She was old enough, Suddenly tears of frustration and anger at Danny came to her eyes.

Her voice broke as she said. "You let me up, or I'll never speak to you again. And that's not all, either."

Danny rolled off her slightly, but he said in her ear. "I wouldn't hurt you. Don't you know that? I would never harm you. I love you too much."

She was only partly convinced. "Then let me up. I have to get back home."

She got up off the ground and brushed off the leaves and grass. Jane thought that Danny might have helped her up, since he had pulled her down. She started walking to the cemetery.

'I'm sorry.' Danny said. 'I was only kidding around. You know that, don't you?'

"Do I?"

"I was. I love you. I want us to be married."

"Danny, I've got three more years of high school."

"That's all right. We can be engaged, and I'll get a good job."

"And after high school I'm going to college," she said.

"Well, OK, if you still want to by that time. Maybe you won't even want to."

"Yes I will. I've always planned on it."

"That's OK. Whatever you want."

"Danny, as soon as school is over I'm going to go to Cleveland to live with my father."

"That won't make any difference. I'll have my car running by that time. I'll come in to Cleveland to see you."

They walked home through the cemetery past the graves of the freed slaves who had escaped North to Oberlin on the 'Underground railway'. Jane always liked to read the poignant epitaphs.

"Hattie Williams 1830-1886. Born a slave, died free."

But this evening she didn't stop to look at them. It was getting late and the light was beginning to fade.

"I've got to hurry," Jane said nervously.

On the way out of the cemetery they met a car driving in. Jane recognized the driver as her English teacher, Mrs. Clark. As the car passed, Jane bent over and pretended to be tying her shoe. She stood up after the car passed. She did not want Mrs. Clark to see her with Danny O'Neal. She had not realized she felt that way until that moment, and she didn't want Danny to know she felt that way.

"She's my English teacher. I don't want her to know I'm not home doing my homework."

She picked up her bicycle from the garage at Danny's house and started home.

"Are you coming out tomorrow night?" he asked.

"I'm not sure," she said. "Maybe, maybe not."

"Are you mad at me?"

"I guess not. Look, I've got to go. I can't stay here talking."

"Alright. I'll be looking for you."

"I don't even know if I can come out tomorrow. Mim's at home already. They'll wonder where I've been."

"Well, whenever you come. I'll be waiting."

Jane put her bike on the front lawn beside Mim's and went into the house. She had no sooner stepped in the door than she came face to face with her mother. Her mother!

"Mommy, mama! When in the world did you come?"

"An hour ago. Young lady, where have you been?"

"Oh Mama. Don't call me 'young lady'. Aren't you glad to see me?"

"Of course I am. I certainly am. I've been worried about you."

"Well, Mama, give me a hug and a kiss. I shouldn't think you'd come all the way from New York and not give me a kiss."

Grace put her arms around Jane and kissed her.

"Of course I'll give you a hug and a kiss, Janie. My goodness, it's been almost a year."

"Eight months," Jane said. "And you're calling me 'young lady'."

"Well, you and I are going to have to have a long talk, dear."

"What about?" asked Jane, though she knew.

"About this young man. Danny O'Neal."

"Mama, there's nothing to have a long talk about."

"Yes, there is, dear. But we'll talk tomorrow. '

"Mama, I've been out riding my bike. It's only quarter of eight."

"But Mim wasn't riding with you, Janie."

"Why should she be? Am I supposed to do everything, only with Mim always?"

"Well - of course not. But we'll talk about it tomorrow."

"Mama! How did you happen to come? I didn't know you were coming."

"Well, this business is why I came. This Danny O'Neal."

"Oh, Mama. I love to have you here, but you mustn't be upset about him. He's just someone I know.

"After what happened last summer, Jane, you shouldn't wonder that I am concerned. This boy is three years older than you. That's the problem. You are only fifteen. Not full fifteen until June, in fact."

"But Mama! You're getting into a big panic! I was never boy-crazy. You must admit that. Everyone says that Dee was always boy-crazy. I'm not Dee. I'm myself."

"Look, dear, I know all about such things. Now, we'll talk about this tomorrow. There's more to this problem than just his age. Now you run along to bed."

"Mama! I don't go to bed at eight o'clock! I'm almost fifteen years old. You're forgetting. Mim and I start to bed at nine o'clock and have our light out by nine-thirty."

"Alright, alright. And remember, we'll have a talk tomorrow."

Jane had noticed Mim beckoning to her from the kitchen door.

"Alright Mama." Jane said. "And let's talk about other things than Danny O'Neal. I want to hear all of your news from New York City."

She went into the kitchen where Mim was standing with two small aluminum pans in her hand. Mim handed one to Jane.

"At trying moments like this," she said, "Fudge is a great comfort to a person, don't you think?"

Jane laughed. They frequently made fudge with each girl cooking up her own batch in a separate pan. They didn't use a cookbook or measure anything. They threw sugar. cocoa. milk. a lump of butter, a dash of vanilla into a pan and boiled the mixture till it made a soft ball in water. Then each girl stirred her own and ate it out of the pan.

They made fudge about once a week, more often on a night when Merly was attending a church meeting or some such, although she would not have prevented them at any time if they wanted to make it. When she was at home she would, however, remind them, "Brush your teeth when you've finished that candy."

When Mim was bored of an evening, she would suddenly say to Jane, "Let's make a mess!" That was the signal for fudge. Mim must have got the expression from Nelle, who always said. "a mess of fudge," not, for instance, "a batch" of fudge. Nelle used the term for other edibles. She cooked "a mess of green beans", or "a mess of Swiss chard".

When their separate concoctions were bubbling briskly, Mim said, "Your mother is certainly upset. She said she thought it would be wise probably if she asked your Dad to let you move into his house in Cleveland right away."

"Right away! And not finish school out here?"

"Yes. I told you. She's really upset."

"Well, I could tell she was, but it's so ridiculous. She's got nothing to make a fuss over. She's panicking."

"That's what -Mother tried to-tell her. By the way. what did you and Danny do this evening? I saw you ride toward downtown, and that's the last I saw you."

"We rode down to the campus and around it and back to Danny's house, and then he said, 'Let's take a walk down the railroad track.' So we did, and we walked clear down as far as the cemetery, and came home that way, past the slaves' graves,"

A Girl Scout is Truthful, Jane thought, but when you start having boys for your friends, things are different. You just don't always volunteer the whole truth. Mama would be twice as upset if she'd known what went on in the bushes out by the cemetery. But Mama didn't know. However, now, she herself had learned not to go into the bushes with Danny O'Neal. And she'd learned that boys were really very strong. However, that needn't make any difference. She'd be able to look after herself always.

While Mim and Jane were in school the next day, Grace continued to worry. By noontime she had decided to call Norris. She was afraid that Pauline might answer the phone, and she had a horror of that. She might tell herself that it was childish, but nonetheless that was the way she felt. She knew that Pauline had a "studio" or a room or something in the Fine Arts Building. Did a dressmaker have a studio? Dee had said that Pauline did not consider herself a dressmaker or seamstress any more, She now only taught dressmaking and design. But Betty Long had said that, in fact, Pauline still did do some sewing for her favorite clients.

Grace wondered whether Pauline and Norris went to lunch together. In the old days, she and Norris had usually fixed their lunch at the studio. They had had a hot plate, and since there was a sink in Norris's dark room, she had been able to fix tea or soup and sandwiches. Oh, they had had delicious little meals, and often they'd got together with some of the other artists at lunchtime and had such good times.

Grace knew that Norr still had the same second-floor front studio. Would he be there now without Pauline? Or with her?

"I suppose," Grace said, "that if she answers, I can just hang up."

"And waste the price of a long distance call?" Merly said.

"Oh, a call to Cleveland isn't much, Merly. You're such a penny pincher."

"I have to be, Grace. And you should be too."

"I haven't any pennies to pinch, as far as that goes, but don't worry. I'll pay you for the call."

"You won't owe me, but I have to be accountable to C.W. Edwards when the phone bill is too high. And Dad still takes an interest in where the money goes. He is a long way from being senile. But really, he's

getting very stingy. He always was thrifty. You know, I wanted to put in some shrubs around the house and had already planted some new tulip bulbs. He made such a fuss about those, I decided to forget the shrubs. He goes down to Edwards's office about twice a week. Just sits and talks about money."

"Poor Father." Grace said. "People get stingy when they get old. After all, he's ninety. But I know one thing, if Mother were alive you'd have your shrubs.

If she told him it would be nice to have them, he'd have been willing. Poor Father! How he misses her!"

"He cries sometimes at night, Grace "It's hard to believe it's been over a year since she went."

"I know. Let's not talk about it; it makes me so sad. Really, now, I must get up my nerve and call Norris."

"If I'd any idea you were going to worry this much, I wouldn't have written to you. I really wouldn't have."

"Well, I'm certainly glad you did," Grace said.

"But, Grace, I'm sure she won't get into trouble with Danny just riding around on bikes."

"It's not that. I'm just afraid she'll fall in love with this boy. Dee was absolutely infatuated with Cameron. And this Danny is beneath Jane, Merly. I know it sounds snobbish, but it's a fact and you know it. He's not only an, Irish Catholic boy with a father who drinks, but he's already got a criminal record."

"Oh, Grace, I don't think - " Merly began, but Grace cut her off.

"No matter how you defend him. it's still true."

"I was going to say that Jane isn't just like Dee. And anyway, she's younger. She and Mim haven't been very interested in boys. They like their Girl Scout activities."

"I know. but in some ways Janie is growing up faster than Dee. No, I've got to get her out of here, and pronto!"

"I've an idea. Why don't you call Betty Long and get her to ask Norr to call you. Then you won't have the problem of talking to Pauline."

"That's a brilliant suggestion, Merly, and I'll have her tell Dee to call me. She doesn't know I'm here,"

Danny O'Neal spent the next week working on his car. It was clear to him, now, that he would need it if he was ever to get anywhere with Jane Rahming. They couldn't go walking into the woods again. She probably wouldn't go. She was mad at him for getting rough with her, and he supposed it was natural. Somehow, things would be different in a car.

He worked feverishly on the engine and with his uncle's help he finally got it running. He drove it into the side yard where it could be plainly seen from the house where Jane stayed with her Aunt Merly. when he raced his engine he knew that Jane and Mim would know that he had his car running at last.

On the morning after Grace's return to Oberlin, Norris was not in his studio. Betty Long, who had a studio on the floor above, came down and knocked on Norr's door after talking to Grace. 'When there was no answer she went back upstairs, got her coat and went to lunch at The Pantry Restaurant next door to the Fine Arts Building. Betty often had a sandwich and a cup of tea in her studio which was also her home, but occasionally she had lunch at The Pantry, and when she did she usually found Norris and Pauline there.

On her way out of the building Betty passed Pauline's studio on the first floor and noticed that there was a different name on the door. The Depression must be catching up to them, Betty thought, though she couldn't imagine how Pauline and Norr could possibly use one studio for both their clienteles. They couldn't be doubling up.

Betty found Norr lunching alone.

"What happened, Norr? I saw Pauline's studio is occupied by someone else." Betty wondered if Norr and Pauline were getting divorced.

"Oh, she's already moved her things out to our new place. I'm in the midst of helping Mother and Ethel get moved and settled, and day after tomorrow we'll all be out of the Cartwright Street house. Do sit down, Betty, so I can."

"Just think after all these years! Leaving Cartwright Street! I knew you and Pauline were planning to get your own place. I didn't realize you already had it, or that Ethie and your mother weren't staying at the old place. Frankly, I thought Pauline wanted to have a house of her own."

"Oh, we have our own place, Betty. Mother and Ethie will be four doors down the street from us. We're in the Channing Place Terrace. Do you know where that is? Across the street from the University Athletic Club?"

"Oh yes, I know where that is. That club's been there since our Art School days."

"Yes, and longer than that. Dee is delighted with the idea of living across the street from all those young men."

"Yes, and your mention of Dee brings me to why I came in here looking for you. You weren't in your studio. I have a phone message for you. From Grace."

"From Grace? In New York?"

"No, she's in Oberlin. She says it's very important. She wants you to call her."

"I was in my studio till a half hour ago."

"She didn't want to get Pauline by chance, if she called you."

"Women are such strange creatures," Norris said.

"Not at all," said Betty. "It's very understandable. It's all been very painful for Grace."

"Well, the divorce was her idea, Betty. It never need have happened."

"That's debatable, Norr, as you know."

"Well, anyway, Betty, I never held it against you for being a witness for Grace. There were problems."

"If only you hadn't both been artists and both been so sensitive, and both been so handsome, and so stubborn."

"-and so young," Norris said.

"Yes, that too. But then, Norr, I don't know about that. You were about twenty-two, weren't you? And Grace twenty-one."

"Such a memory, Betty. How do you do it?"

"Grace and Ethie and I were all the same age, I recall from our Art School days. So you and Grace weren't so unusually young for marriage. Years ago people married in their 'teens and stayed married, mind you. No, you weren't so young, Norr. Not in years. But you both acted young, I must say. Both of you were so jealous of each other's work."

"People say it's because we were both spoiled that we had so many problems."

"Was Grace spoiled?"

"Of course, Betty. Maybe not in the same way, though. Betty, why haven't you ever married?"

"Perhaps," Betty said after a fleeting thoughtful pause, "it's because I was frightened off after I saw what happened to you and Grace. After all, two people more in love couldn't be found on this earth, could they? You and Grace were Romeo and Juliet, Tristan and Isolde, Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning."

"Maybe that was the trouble. Too in love," he said.

"And I think you still are. Anyway, I decided two artists couldn't be happy together."

"You didn't have to marry an artist, Betty."

"All the men I know are artists," she said.

"Was it Allen Grey?" Norr asked.

Betty only laughed.

"It wasn't me, was it?" he asked, grinning.

She laughed again. "What unabashed vanity, Norr."

"I'll treat you to lunch Betty, in spite of that remark. At least I'm still making some money. That's more than many of the other artists in town can say. Now, isn't it?"

"Yes, and you're lucky. If I didn't have the money my mother left me, I don't know what I would do."

"I hope it's in a safe place, Betty."

"It's in the bank. Why? I don't put my money in the mattress."

"Well, I'm just glad it's not in the stock market. I've a very nervous feeling about that. Ethie has some money in Cleveland Ice and Fuel Co. Last time they didn't pay their dividend."

"Oh, no, I'm afraid of the stock market. I've got everything I have in the Cleveland Trust Company. I don't touch the principal. The income's little enough as it is. I really have to scrimp."

"Pauline and I have our savings in United Trust. I think it's safe there."

Yours should be alright too. If those two banks aren't safe none of them are."

"Now you've got me worried, Norr. What's all this talk about the banks?"

"Oh, nothing, only some friends of ours are nervous. Pauline has some stock, too. She gets headaches worrying over where to put her money."

"Speaking of Pauline," Betty said. "Please don't forget to call Grace. "Whatever it is. she sounded very upset."

"I'll call her, don't worry."

But Norr did not call Grace when he first got back to the studio. Because he had always had a tendency to stammer when he was flustered, or in an argument, he had always been afraid of doing so when the operator said "Number, please." And the more he worried about doing it, the more likely he was to do it. So he usually had Pauline get his party on the line, or rather, get the number ringing, before he took it over. But Pauline wasn't in the building now. She was out in the house on Channing Avenue, and anyway, he supposed he shouldn't have Pauline make that call (although it would do her good). He wouldn't want her hanging around while he talked with Grace. He would just stop in at his mother's new place and ask her to make the call for him.

HE SAYS I'M IN A PANIC

It was strange, Norris mused as he drove out Grand Avenue, to think of the Cartwright street house without his mother in it. She had spent very little time away from it over the years. Even when she was young she had left the marketing to Aunt Ada. When he was a boy she'd gone off to Boston to learn how to be a Christian Science practitioner. And of course, for years, she and Ethie had gone to church every Sunday morning and every Wednesday evening. And during the time his mother had been a "reader" she'd gone to church on Sunday evenings as well. But for the most part she had stayed at home. When she ventured downtown to the large stores she'd always been home in time for Norr to find her there when he come home from school or work. She was not as well as she used to be, and in the past year she had frequently missed church on Sunday morning. It had been several years since she had attended Wednesday evening testimonial meetings. And it had been difficult for her to do all the housework and cooking after Aunt Ada had to give it up and become an invalid. Dear old Aunt Ada, full of time-worn famous sayings, one of them "There's nothing permanent but change." Aunt Ada's personal life had changed little over the years; the greatest upheaval had been leaving Brooklyn years ago, after losing her parents. What a good thing it was that she had died in the Cartwright Street house. She would rather have stayed in Brooklyn, but with time, she had grown used to the quaint little house on Cartwright Street. It was where her dear Mama died. Norris could still clearly remember Grandma Norris, though the old Quaker grandmother had been a confused invalid the last two years of her life.

Everything had been very different in Cleveland in those days. There were horses everywhere. Nowadays only the "paper-rag' man, or perhaps an occasional peddler of watermelons or the like, drove a horse and wagon.

On Grand Avenue many of the mansions of the one-time leaders of Cleveland's society had been converted to some other purpose. The Sloane home was now the Cleveland School for the Blind and Deaf. The Whitfield mansion was now the Auto Club. The huge and beautiful Gates place had been given to the city for an Historical Society. The lawns were still kept mowed in these yards, but they seemed to need fertilizer, or perhaps the grime of the expanding steel mills was smothering them. They did not look thrifty. And the buildings which had once sparkled were now dingy with the accumulated coating of soot. Of course, only part of the dirt was from the steel mills. Most of it was from the soft coal that everyone burned for winter heat. He couldn't blame Grace for wanting to live in the East where white painted houses stayed white for many years, because hard anthracite coal was used.

Norris noticed that the new Franklin High School behind the Channing Place Terrace where he now lived, was still a bright tannish yellow after two years. Across the park the complex of buildings that made up the Cleveland University School of Medicine were already beginning to turn grey. Those buildings had been bright and new when he and Pauline were married in 1926. Norr wondered if he would still be living on Channing Avenue by the time the high school had turned as dingy as the rest of the buildings. He hoped not. He wanted to buy one of the new homes that he was photographing for the beautiful real estate development in Carrollton Heights. Those houses were priced high, of course. Too rich for his blood; he didn't have even the start of a down payment. It would be great to own a house. His father had never owned property. All these years, the Cartwright Street house had been rented. Ever since he

and Ethie were children riding velocipedes. The family could have bought that house with all those years of rent payments.

The houses in the Carrollton Heights development called Crestwood, were Tudor-Norman style, and he thought they were quite handsome looking. He would have preferred, however, that another style had been chosen. The developer had assumed that Clevelanders liked Tudor-Norman style best. When the city's leading families had abandoned their Grand Avenue mansions in the imposing Georgian or Greek design, they had gone out to Cleveland Heights to escape the encroachments of the city. The architect who had been in greatest demand in those days favored half-timber and stucco, a Tudor style. Another architect at that time was designing stately homes in Cleveland Heights in the French Norman style of round towers with conical roofs, and steep-pitched high roofs. Many people liked the towers combined with the stucco and half-timber style. Some of them even wanted the added pretension of crenellated parapet walls. These homes had as many as a dozen bedrooms. They had garages for five or six cars, and the large yards required the services of more than one gardener. They were the homes of the Sloans, the Whitfields, the Strohmeyers, the Cartwrights, and the descendants of the Gates family. They had spacious lawns of two or three acres surrounding them.

One of Norris' s objections to the new development in Carrollton Heights was that the lots weren't wide enough. Seventy or eighty feet of frontage width didn't do justice to the quality of those homes. After all, they were to be presented to the Cleveland market as 'prestige' homes. Norris and Pauline had become good friends of the advertising director and his wife, and they had expressed themselves on the subject. Norris had said, "Clevelanders with money won't want to be crowded up close together like that. It might go alright in the area around New York City, but not here. I think they would sell better on bigger lots." But Carl Holmquist had insisted, "Clevelanders will just learn to live like New Yorkers."

"That will never happen," Norr said. "Never happen."

Pauline had told Norr, "I would be willing to live in one of those houses. More than willing."

But Norr had said. "Alright, then. Get your mother to lend us the down payment. I'm willing to live in one of them too. For a while. But not on a long-term basis. I want a home in the country, with a vegetable garden and lots of space around me. I always loved it when Grace and I were on the farm in Fire Valley."

Pauline had shuddered. "You told me that farming was work that would kill a man."

"I wouldn't farm. I'd get back to my painting and live on that. We'd have a few chickens, of course."

She had shuddered again. "Well, we have to eat, you know. You're finally making very good money, and you should be near your work. Besides, I'm a city girl. You're a city boy, too. I don't see why you want to live in the country."

"Because I had a taste of it on the farm and at Nelle's place in the mountains. It's the only decent kind of life. I love it. The air is fit to breathe. Of course, it's better out in Carrollton Heights. Better borrow the money from your mother."

"No," Pauline had told him. "I can't do that. We'll just have to get along on Channing Terrace till we've saved enough to buy a house in Crestwood. I have good reason to not ask Mother for money. And I won't discuss it further. Married people should never get into arguments over money."

Today when he reached his mother's place in Channing Terrace he found his sister Ethie already home from work, and both she and Rosella with eyes red-rimmed from tears.

"Hello!" Norr said. "Now what's amiss here? Are you two both so homesick for Cartwright Street? You'll get over it soon. Ethie, aren't you home from work early?"

"Yes, I am," Ethie said. "Mother phoned me at the office and asked me to come home. She was upset."

Rosella's eyes filled again. "Well, it's because Ethie doesn't want to sleep with me anymore." she said.

"Oh, dear," Ethie said. "I've not been sleeping well at all for some time, for several months, in fact, I get terribly hot sometimes and I just want to throw off all the covers for a while. And then, after a while I get chilly and I cover up again. This goes on all night maybe half a dozen times. It's a dreadful nuisance. Sometimes, I even have to get up and out of bed and walk around, I'm so hot."

"Hot flashes." said Norr.

"Oh I never thought of that." said Ethie. "I've been so afraid that I've been disturbing Mother's rest when I toss around and get up, and all that. I used to be a very quiet sleeper."

"Yes, she did," Rosella confirmed in a sad-sounding voice.

"Well, I thought," said Ethie, "now that we're in this place by ourselves, with two extra rooms and all, that I could let Mother get her rest better if I slept alone. So last night when I got so hot, I just got some sheets and a blanket and went and slept in one of the twin beds. When Mother woke up in the early morning and found me gone she got terribly upset."

Rosella spoke up. "I don't mind her tossing and turning. I don't mind at all. Oh, deah! Ethie has slept with me all these years, all her life, I don't rest at all when she isn't there beside me. I feel strange when she isn't in the bed. And especially in this strange house. I guess I am homesick,"

"Don't you like this place, Mama?" Norr asked.

"It's very nice and convenient, deah. But after all, I lived on Cartwright Street well ovah forty years. I almost feel as though you and Ethie were bawn on Cartwright Street. I'm sentimental about it."

"But Mama," Norr said. "We were born in Brooklyn on Fleet Street."

"Of course," Rosella said. "But Fleet Street is so long ago, and it was always far from here. It seems just like a dream that I ever lived in Brooklyn. I feel as though I had always lived in Cleveland on Cartwright Street. Ada never felt that way. She always belonged to Brooklyn."

"That's because her happiest years were there, Mama, the years when she was in college at Packer. If she'd married and made a home somewhere she would have felt differently."

"Well, she's in Brooklyn now," Rosella said. "In Greenwood. At least her ashes are. I shouldn't say that she is there, should I? She's with Mama and Papa, and Jimmie and Jenny, and poor dear Bertie."

"On a pink-edged cloud that floats forever over Brooklyn," Norr said, and both Ethie and Rosella were forced to smile a little.

"But " said Norr, "to get back to Ethie's problem, if it doesn't disturb Mama, Ethie, you might just as well go on sleeping with her. She's happier that way."

"But the thing is, I don't rest well. I'm so conscious of trying not to disturb Mother. I lie there thinking I mustn't move, and the more I think that way, the more I want to move and thrash around, and I have a miserable time of it."

"But Ethie, I don't mind, really I don't," Rosella said.

Norr was growing tired of the subject. "You'll get over your hot flashes after a while, Ethie. Anyway, why don't you at least stick it out until after Mama gets used to this house?"

"When I get in bed with covers over me, I get so uncomfortable and nervous and I have to fling the covers off. I know that upsets Mama."

"No, it doesn't," Rosella said.

"Why don't you just sleep on top of the covers," Norr asked her.

"No, you don't understand. What man would? I don't stay hot. Part of the time I want covers and part of the time I don't. That's what's so bad. And Mama gives out a lot of heat."

For some reason this last statement made Norr laugh and laugh, but Ethie did not see anything funny.

"It's no laughing matter," she said. "Besides, Norris, I've never in my life had a room of my own."

Norris could think of no answer to that statement, but Rosella could.

"You'll have the room all to yourself after I pass on." she said.

"Oh, Mama! What an awful thing to say! You know I'm not thinking about that. It's just that I was talking about my problem with Betty Long recently. She happened to say that I was the only woman she had known who'd never had her own room."

"Well... Do it the way I suggested. At least wait till Mama gets used to the new house. Now listen. I really didn't stop in to discuss change of life. I have to make a phone call to Oberlin. Grace is there."

"Grace?" Rosella and Ethie said together.

"Yes, and Mama, I want you to put a call through to Merly's for me right away. Betty Long gave me a message to call Grace there. If they'd hurry up and finish changing all the phones to the dial system. I wouldn't have to ask you."

"Norrie. I'm glad to do it for you. But, oh deah, what's wrong? Is something wrong? Oh deah!"

"Mama I don't know. Till I talk to Grace, I won't know, now, will I? Mama! Put the call through before Pauline comes over here looking for me. She'll have a crying spell and a sick headache if she comes in here when I'm talking to Grace."

Jane and Mim always hurried home after school. The first thing they did was head for the kitchen for thick slices of Emmy's bread with butter and strawberry jam or apple butter, washed down with a couple of glasses of cold milk, and then they hurried to do their homework. They studied, lying on their stomachs on the living room carpet.

Today they were already hard at it. when Grace came downstairs. She was about to speak when the phone rang.

"Oh that's probably Norris." she said, but she didn't move toward the phone. It rang again. "You get it, Jane."

Meanwhile, Mim was getting; it, and it wasn't Norris. It was some friend of Merly's.

Later, when Norris did call, Grace sent Jane out of the room.

"It's a private conversation, dear," she said.

Upstairs the girls could hear snatches of the talk. If Grace hadn't said it was a private conversation they would probably have paid no attention to her, but now, their curiosity was piqued, and they strained their ears to listen. At first Grace spoke softly but as the conversation went on she got more agitated, and her voice became louder. Even hearing only one side of the conversation Jane knew exactly what was being discussed; Jane would fall in love with Danny O'Neal. However, Jane knew that her mother was afraid Danny would get her into trouble, that he'd get her pregnant.

The girls heard Grace say, "Well, Norr, even if you are moving; you can find a bed for Janie somewhere. How about at your mother's new place? Janie doesn't have to wait for her new furniture. A cot would do. You could borrow one. Or she could sleep on the sofa for a few days."

There was a pause while Grace listened to Norris, then she broke in again. "The year isn't 'all but over', Norr. There's three more weeks and then their exams come. It doesn't amount to the same thing. Oh, she wouldn't lose her whole year by transferring. I'm not hysterical, Norr. I just couldn't possibly go through what I went through with Dee. Norr, I realize Jane is different, not boy crazy. But Norr, it only takes one boy, you know. She doesn't have to be boy crazy. Norris, one couldn't count on Fate taking care of the problem this time. No, I'm not saying there's a problem. Norr. Not yet. Not yet. What?"

Another pause, then Grace went on, "Norr, it's precisely because Janie is different that she shouldn't start running around with boys. That girl is headed for big things in the world. She's got to get her education. If she got into trouble she'd just get married and have children. She's destined for something bigger and better. Norr, I'm not in a panic."

The conversation wound down finally and Jane knew that her father had said flatly that she should finish her school year in Oberlin.

After Grace stopped talking, the girls came down the stairs. Jane went outdoors without speaking or looking at her mother, but as Mim followed her out she turned and said loftily "Much ado about nothing."

Grace turned and looked at Merly, with raised eyebrows.

"What was that about?" She asked.

"Oh, you know Mim; she likes bookish quotes. But really, Grace, I believe she's right. Jane isn't head-over-heels about Danny."

"That's what Norris says. Merly, but how on earth would he know? He says I'm in a panic. He says (and wouldn't you know that he'd be vulgar) that when two young animals reach mating age there isn't much can be done to keep them apart anyway."

"But Grace, you're getting way ahead of things. Jane is only fifteen. Aren't you panicking now, really?"

"I don't know. Oh, I don't know. When I'm away from the girls I just lie awake nights worrying about them. And now I've got to get back to New York. I have some irons in the fire there. Oh, dear, I really don't know what to do about Jane. He just isn't the kind of boy that - "

"Just tell me the rules you want," Merly interrupted, and I'll try to abide by them. Do you want her kept in the house all the time? Or in the yard? Or home at a certain time? Just say the way you want it to be. Of course I have no reason to keep Mim on such a tight rein. She goes to the library and the store and the movies. And of course, they've been going to Scouts and to swim at the Y. Oh, and they go all over on their bikes. Surely you don't intend to take away all Jane's privileges? If you do, Grace, you'll be making a terrible mistake. Children have such a strong sense of fairness and unfairness. It would be disciplining her when she hasn't done anything. You can't do that."

Grace sighed. "No, I can't do that. But I shall worry myself sick. Get her in by 9 o'clock, though."

Merly thought about it afterwards. All mothers worry. But Grace's children were almost always one place, while she was another place. Of course, a lot of that was Norris's fault. But not all, Merly was sure, not all. Grace seemed to like flitting from one place to another, and it wasn't always in her plans to take the children with her.

When Grace returned to New York she felt that she absolutely could not go back to 'Polly' Patterson. At least, not in her present state of mind. She wanted to talk to someone about all her difficulties, but not

to Pauline "Polly" Patterson, for if she did, Polly would overwhelm her with such a strong dose of Christian Science theory that she wouldn't be able to endure it. Grace wanted to talk to someone who might have some practical suggestions.

She thought about going out to visit Aunt Georgiana again, but sweet and understanding as Georgiana was Grace felt that her viewpoints had been shaped in the Victorian era in history. She would not be able to advise in the matter of Jane's delinquent young pursuer, nor could Grace expect Aunt Georgiana to solve Grace's problems about earning enough money to provide a home for the girls again.

She considered running on out to Douglaston to talk it over with Earl and Louise. but she had a curious reluctance about that, too. It was a reluctance she did not entirely understand, but perhaps it had to do with the business of Jane's posing in the nude for Earl. She did not wish to discuss Jane with them. The matter was still a sore point, although she was fully aware that Louise was blameless in the matter and had scolded Earl about it. But, Grace felt , Louise should have scolded him harder. Louise had said that Earl would 'get around' to paying Jane but that he must still be feeling too sheepish to even talk about it. Grace had no intention of having Jane become an artist's model but in this case it would have been better for her to have the fee, so that the whole unfortunate episode would appear to be the innocent expedient that Earl had claimed it to be. Well... in any case, Grace didn't feel like going to Louise and Earl just at this time. She decided ,while she was still in Grand Central having a cup of coffee, that she would just go on out to Jackson Heights for a few days.

Nelle was always at home, and Grace had a key anyway. Nelle wasn't the ideal confidante of course, but she was 'family' and there were times when family was best. And however much Nelle and Rog might disapprove of Grace's handling of some matters, they were always glad to see her. Nelle was often lonely for any member of her family, and she was still, after a year, grieving deeply for her mother.

Rog had always declared that Grace was "stimulating " and a joy to have around. He even flirted unabashedly in front of Nelle, but for some reason it had never seemed to bother Nelle much. Probably because there was something unsophisticated and 'country boyish' about Roger, in spite of the fact that he was well traveled and worked in downtown Manhattan. Nelle had sometimes wondered what Rog did in the evenings when he was on the road on business trips, but he always made progress on the story he was writing, so she concluded that he must spend his spare time typing in his hotel room. He had a strong moral sense, too, and was so easily shocked that she felt quite certain he wasn't philandering. Never-the-less it annoyed Nelle that he always seemed to have his hands on women and girls, nothing really naughty, just friendly pats and hugs, but still - he had to touch.

Grace was hungry, having passed up an expensive dining car breakfast, but Nelle would have something good in the house, such as crumb buns from Fellenz's bakery on Polk Avenue. Rog always brought home delicious bakery. He looked forward to such pleasures with his coffee for breakfast, or with a cup of tea around three or four o'clock in the afternoon if he happened to be at home.

Grace walked through from Roosevelt Avenue to Polk and halfway to Fillmore. They were changing the numbers on the streets. 25th Street was now 82nd street. As Aunt Ada had always liked to quote," There is nothing permanent but change." Poor Aunt Ada, over in Brooklyn at last.

Grace was grateful that Nelle and Rog were up only one flight of stairs. Apartments in Jackson Heights that were five floors or less didn't have elevators. And carrying a suitcase and overnight case was exhausting.

It was comforting to sit in Nelle's kitchen, with a good cup of coffee and crumb buns and butter. But it was frustrating trying to tell Nelle all about the problem of Danny O'Neal. Nelle kept cutting in with questions.

"Grace, how does Pa seem to you?"

"A little better, perhaps. But oh, Nelle, he keeps dreaming about her, he says. He keeps dreaming that she's still with us, and then he wakes to remember she's gone. It's so sad. Merly says she often hears him in his room making little pathetic sighs that are almost moans. He's so very lonely."

"But is he still active? Does he still walk downtown? "

"Oh, goodness, yes. He goes down to see C.W. Edwards. Now let me tell you about this boy, Nelle. It seems that there is this man, and he had a barn where he kept these stolen cars, and it seems that _"

"But how active is Pa? I mean, other than going downtown to see Edwards. Has he given up his garden?"

"Nelle had missed her father's ninetieth birthday, which had been celebrated in March. She and Babs and Trink had all been ill with heavy colds at the time. And another reason was that Babs could not afford to miss more school. She had lost out in schoolwork the year before when Nelle took her back to Ohio during Maria's last illness.

"Oh, no, he has indeed not given up his garden. It's as big as ever, and he's even got chickens in half the garage. I really thought that was an unfortunate thing. Chickens are a lot of work, and no one knows that better than I after my years at the farm. I used to get up on cold winter mornings and take them hot laying mash. I had excellent results."

"Yes, and all the neighbors were mad at you because your chickens did so well in zero weather. Well, Pa won't get up and take them hot mash. He never did that."

"I took warm water to them, too," Grace muttered. "They can't drink ice."

"Emmy will probably take care of them," Nelle said. "By the way, how is Emmy?"

"Oh, the same. Yes, I'd say just the same, but Merly says she's been staying in bed a lot lately. But, listen now, Nelle, I want to tell you about this boy that's pursuing Jane."

"Did you meet him?" Nelle asked.

"No, but I saw him from across the street. He's quite good looking, in a definitely Irish way."

"How old is he?"

"Eighteen! Isn't that the limit?"

Nelle smiled. "Well, calm down. Is she crazy about him?"

Grace looked blank for a moment. "I don't know. I didn't ask her about that."

Then Nelle laughed her long, loud famous laugh that had so often infuriated her relatives. It was a laugh that didn't bubble forth, but was rather spoken, like a declaration of attitude, a series of separate "Ha's" in a descending scale.

"That's rich," she said. "That really is. You didn't ask her about that!"

"Well, now, Nelle! He's pursuing her! He hangs around her every afternoon and evening."

"Weren't you ever pursued by anyone, Grace?"

"Nelle, this is different. He's been in reform school."

"Merly can handle it, Grace. His hanging around won't hurt anything."

"I wish I were sure of that," said Grace.

But she did not rest easy until June when Jane went to Cleveland to live with Norris. She had been writing frequent letters to both the girls, letters to Jane exhorting her to remember her "serious goal of college" and not to get involved with an Irish Catholic boy who would not want the kind of life she, Jane would want. And to Dee she wrote specific instructions. "Since your classes and examinations are all over by Memorial Day, dear, I am asking you to please do something especially for me, to relieve me of a very great worry about Jane. Her school is not out for the summer until June 10. So I want you to go down to Oberlin and stay until Jane is able to go with you back to Cleveland. You should be able to tell her that you're going to help her get ready. Take an extra suitcase with you. You could be ready to go to your father's the day after Jane's school ends."

Dee hadn't wanted to go to Hayden Hills just at that time, for she had started dating some interesting men. Throughout the year she'd had several dates with this one and that, but after Cameron, they hadn't appealed to her at all. But now there were two or three fellows that she liked, and she didn't know which she liked best.

She didn't want to leave now for another reason. She was fixing up her room in the new house, making curtains and such.

Dee knew that if she went to Oberlin and told Jane that she had come to spend two weeks to help her pack for her move to Cleveland, Jane would die laughing. Jane didn't have that many belongings. And what's more, she'd pack them herself. She'd been doing it since she was quite a little girl, so she certainly wouldn't be fooled by having Dee show up to help. Furthermore, neither would Aunt Merly.

She discussed it with Norris, who commented that Grace had a tendency to get alarmed easily. But he told Dee she might as well get herself on down to Oberlin to relieve her mother's mind.

Dee went, and having, explained things to Aunt Merly she proceeded to have quite a good time, in spite of herself. She went back to Cleveland in the middle of June, taking Jane and Mim home with her. It was after the fourth of July before she wrote to her mother in answer to about eight letters from Grace.

Cleveland, July 6, 1931

Dearest Mother:

Please forgive the long delay in answering, but we have been so busy, and you do write so many letters. Just when I am preparing to answer one, along comes another one with a lot of new questions. Mother dear, do calm down. There is nothing to worry about. Jane is not crazy about Danny O'Neal and I doubt very much if she ever was. He is fairly good looking ,but not very smart - well, that isn't the right word, maybe. He's not sophisticated at all _but then _ he's lived in Oberlin all his life (except for the year in reform school). I suppose he might have learned a thing or two there, but not anything very good, I'm sure. Now Jane is sophisticated (for her age), but don't ever tell her I said so.

I went down to Oberlin in time for Jane's birthday. Dad gave her ten dollars to spend as she likes, and that was pretty good because he is a bit concerned about money just at the moment. He still is busy but he is worried about the Crestwood real estate development. It is his best account, and those houses aren't selling as well as they were supposed to. And another thing - they have spent a lot of money on this new place. Grandma has all her own furniture at her place, and Dad and Pauline had to buy a lot of things, living and dining room furniture, carpeting, lamps, and oh, a lot of stuff. Pauline did get some bedroom pieces from her family, but there still isn't anything for Jane's room yet. She is here now, but she sleeps over at Grandma's. Mim is here too for a visit. They are having the time of their lives. They listen to the radio until one or two o'clock at night. They like to listen to the California stations after our Cleveland stations sign off the air. They try to get the words to all the popular songs. Then they go over to Grandma's and go very quietly to bed, but Dad says they have night turned into day, and he says he's going to have to crack down on them, because they don't get up till noon or later.

I was going to tell you why you don't need to worry about Danny O'Neal. It was really funny the way it turned out.

Well, when I got down to Oberlin, Janie was still in school. In fact, they were having exams, and she and Mim were studying hard every evening. Danny would drive by in this car he is fixing up, but Janie and Mim didn't go out on their bikes in the evening at all. I spent about three days with Aunt Emmy picking wild strawberries, and hulling them and making jam out of them. Well, it seems that Danny wanted to take Jane to the movies in Hanley. Aunt Merly said they could go to the movies in Oberlin but not in Hanley. And she said she thought Mim or I ought to go along too. But none of them wanted to go to the film that was showing in Oberlin. Finally Aunt Merly said if I went along it would be alright to go to Hanley. So Danny said he would get me a date. I guess he thought that way I wouldn't be such a good chaperon. The boy he got for my date was quite cute. He is a senior in high school. Mim didn't go. Well, after we got under way. my date, name of Freddie, said "Why don't we go to Crystal Beach Park instead? " Danny said 'No' but Janie said she'd like to go to Crystal Beach. I said I would too. So Danny said OK. When we got there we all played a round of miniature golf. Janie was very good at it, and

Danny wasn't good at all. Neither was I. but you know me, I'm not athletic a bit. Freddie was pretty good at it. too. He and Jane would have liked to play another round but Danny was really sulky, and said "Let's do something else." So we walked through the park and when we came to the roller coaster Jane wanted to ride on it. Danny said he hated them because they were very dangerous. And you know me, Mother, I'm even afraid of escalators. So Freddy said he'd go with Janie. Danny sulked some more, but Freddy bought the tickets, and he and Janie climbed aboard and naturally he put his arm around her. Fellows always do on roller coasters even if no place else. Well, they went roaring and rattling off and Danny was obviously furious, but he kept quiet and just watched them. Every time they came screaming down one of those ghastly hills, Freddie had both his arms around Jane. After that we all had something to drink and then we walked down to the lake. The boys skipped stones for a while, and then Danny said we ought to start back to Oberlin. Janie and I know that he was counting on parking somewhere. Now I have to tell you about Danny's car. It's a Ford, something like Cameron's only it's a roadster. It was a wreck when Danny got it, and he has fixed it up some. Only trouble was, the headlights weren't working right. It had been broad daylight when we left Aunt Merly's. so of course we didn't know it was that way. When we started out of Crystal Beach Park the lights worked OK, and they didn't go out until we were on the road to Oberlin. Fortunately we didn't meet any cops, or even any cars. Danny slowed the car down and pulled over on the side of the road and fussed around with some wires and got the lights working again, and we drove a little farther, and the lights went out again. Danny would go faster and they'd come on again, but then he'd slow down for a curve, off they'd go again! It was terrible. I was scared stiff. So was Freddie. I don't know about Jane, she tries to act so calm. Well! Finally, when we were turning a corner and Danny speeded up to make the lights go on, they didn't, and the car ran off the road, over a small culvert and into a field, and we ended up about one inch from a tree!

Well! No one was hurt at all, but the car was messed up. The fenders are bent and the bumper, and the glass in one headlight broken, but strange thing - after that the lights worked! Well, Mother, we got home quite safely after that and frankly, I felt rather sorry for Danny O'Neal. He was so embarrassed. But, don't worry about him and Janie. She is not at all impressed with him, believe me. She says she partly forgives him for the car trouble, but not for other things. Probably because he sulked.

Mother, this letter is getting too long. I will have to tell you more in another letter. Believe me, there is plenty to tell. Now that she is in her own house, Pauline is beginning to assert herself. And it is awful! She is just driving me batty, completely batty, batty! BATTY! Janie too. I think.

Much, much love and kisses,

Dee

P. S. Mim is still here, and I don't know why she isn't bored. There is nothing for them to do here. As I said, they listen to the radio at night and sleep all morning. In the afternoon they sew a little, sometimes, but mostly read. I never saw two such readers. They go to the library and bring back all the books they're allowed to borrow. I don't know how they can be happy just reading all the time. Mona James, for instance, likes the company of males, and I do too! I hope I meet someone interesting soon. I still miss Cameron.

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But Mim and Jane were not bored. In spite of their lazy, apparently aimless summer days, they were having a good time, because everything in Cleveland was so very different from what they were used to. They enjoyed the luxury of the new furnishings at Norris and Pauline's place and the security of the familiar old Victorian pieces at Grandmother Rahming's a few doors down. Those old pieces had an elegance, too, though not as much comfort, but to Jane they meant something, because she had more or less grown up with them. As far back as Jane could remember. Grandma Rahming had had the same things. And not only the same furniture, but the same plants, the two huge aspidistras, and the three or four giant begonias with the hairy arms. These things had all been brought to the new place after years and years on Cartwright Street. Mim was particularly fond of the living room at her Uncle Norris's place. With all his well-known wealth. Grandpa Martin had never seen any sense in spending much money on home furnishings. Invested money was money well spent, he said, but sofas, drapes, carpets - ridiculous! Merly had from time to time acquired one or two things, when someone had an auction sale. A living room rug had been acquired, and Merly's valued possession, her Maytag washing machine. The dining room set was her own, from the things she and Waldo had accumulated and it had been very nice when it was new, but during the years when Mim and Trink were small it had been badly battered. Merly had painted it and now it was battered again. The living room was furnished with porch furniture, two chairs and a chaise in woven wicker with cretonne cushions. On one wall was "Emmy's piano". Over the piano was a framed water-color done by Grace, when she was a student in Art School, and given Merly for a long-ago birthday when they were girls living in the big house that John Martin had built on Cartwright Street. The water-color was a still life with an open book, a candlestick, a pair of steel-rimmed spectacles, and a tall stemmed glass of wine. It could have been something seen in Thomas Jefferson's house, and it might have been named "The Philosopher." In one corner of the living room stood the bookcase containing the volumes of the 11th edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica, and on top, the enormous unabridged Webster dictionary. Mim felt that Grandpa and trustee Edwards were tight-fisted with her mother.

But now Mim and Jane were, for the moment, enjoying the new furniture that Norris and Pauline had selected for their downstairs rooms. Except for new wall-paper, the upstairs was nothing special, just a collection of assorted beds and chests of drawers. But the three downstairs rooms had been carpeted with thick, soft rust-colored plush rugs, that filled the floor space. Norris had pointed out that if they had the carpeting done into rugs they could take them along when they moved to Crestwood Village in Carrollton Heights.

The front room which Norris intended to use for occasional portrait photography had only two or three handsome chairs, a velour cushioned bench, and a library table. The second room was the family living room, with a davenport and two delightfully soft chairs fitted with down-filled cushions.

"Oh, Uncle Norr !" Mim said. "I love this room. I've never sat in such squashy chairs in my life. They're gorgeous."

Mim also admired a towering mahogany bookcase filled with Norris' travel books, and the works of Dumas and Henty, and unbound, paper editions of French novels. Mim and Jane seldom took these books out of the case, but they admired them just the same. At this stage in their lives they were reading the novels of Kathleen Norris, Margaret Pedlar and Fanny Hurst. Jane was currently reading everything she could find by Willa Cather.

The lower shelf of the bookcase housed Norris's big Atwater Kent radio, which he declared was "superheterodyne". It could pick up, at night, stations from all over the country.

Beyond the living room, was the dining room, furnished with an elegant refectory table, and Spanish chairs. Over the table hung a wrought iron chandelier with electric lights like candles and frosted bulbs like flames. There was no buffet because the pantry was near. The room was elegantly simple. On the back wall was a large oil painting of the abbey of St. Martin du Canigou in southern France. The walls of the other rooms were also hung with paintings of Norris's, Between the rooms in the arched double doorways, heavy drapes hung from ceiling to floor, made from the drapes that had hung in Norris's studio. It bothered Dee and Jane some, because their mother had made those drapes originally.

But all in all, they found the place very attractive and enjoyed the rooms. There were times however when Jane felt confused and homesick. She was not quite certain just what home she was longing for. Perhaps for that magic house in High Rock, but she had lived there only one year. Perhaps, and most likely, it was for Oberlin, where she'd felt very much at home for the past nine months. And there were times when she longed for Camp Forest Primeval in New Hampshire where she'd been sometimes unhappy, but other times very happy indeed. If she had her way she'd like to live most anywhere if her mother could only be there too, without worries about earning money, and not always talking about her father.

Mim and Jane both missed the kitchen at Merly's. They could fix a snack any time. if it was something wholesome, like Emmy's homemade bread, with butter and jam. And Merly even let them make fudge. There was always plenty of milk on hand. At Norris and Pauline's the girls didn't dare to eat between meals. There was never any extra food on hand. Pauline was a fairly good cook, but she was a frugal shopper. She bought food every other day and just enough for the meals she had planned. There was never more than one loaf of bread on hand at a time, whereas Emmy baked four loaves two or three times a week. She liked to keep the bread box full. Pauline took two quarts of milk a day. Before Mim and Jane came she had had the milkman leave a quart and a pint. But the increased amount was not enough. Mim and Jane were each used to drinking a quart a day and Dee and Norris liked milk, too.

Norris spoke of it to Pauline. "You'll have to buy more food, Luckets."

"I am buying more food," she protested. "For instance, five pork chops, where I used to buy three. I got a ten-pound bag of potatoes instead of five, and I had to order more milk."

"You're getting only a pint more milk a day," he said. "Janie and Mim should each have a quart. They're still growing."

"How long is Mim going to be here?" Pauline asked.

"As long as she likes as far as I'm concerned. She's entirely welcome. Merly did me a favor to take Jane last winter. And I'm sure Janie got plenty to eat while she was there."

"But you paid Jane's board! " Pauline protested.

"Just the same, she did us a favor, and Mim is a very nice little girl. I'm glad she can be with Janie."

The girls spent a week or two listening to the late night radio programs and reading, or strolling up to the corners to buy the latest copy of McCall's and Ladies Home Journal to see if there was a new "Maudie" story. They would stop and buy a raspberry soda, trying to recapture the pleasure they had found in summers past in New Hampshire when on special occasions, Uncle Roger and Aunt Nelle had taken all the cousins to Plymouth to Brown's drug store. Sometimes they all went to Holderness and went swimming in Squam Lake. In Holderness they could buy maple nut ice cream cones, five, ten or fifteen-centers.

One afternoon, when they were sitting at the fountain in the drug store sipping their sodas, Mim asked a question.

"Do you wish we were in New Hampshire this summer?"

"Yes," Jane said. "I wish that every summer. Of course, after I get there I'm always sorry I came."

"Because of Aunt Nelle? " Mim asked.

"Yes."

"Trink always felt that way too. She was so glad to get home to Mama. She could have gone to Camp Forest Primeval again this summer. Babs wanted her to. She wouldn't go."

"I always get to hating Aunt Nelle when I'm with her, and then I forget about it when I'm away from her."

"Well," Mim said, "I never had as many problems with her as you and Trink did."

"She just doesn't like some of us as well," Jane insisted.

"Why doesn't she like some of you?"

"I'm not sure. With Trink, it's because she sasses her, and with me, she doesn't like the way I look at her. As long as I can remember, she's always been saying to me, 'Don't look at me that way.' The fact is, it's because of Mother, She doesn't approve of Mother. It has to do with her being an artist and not very practical. She didn't approve of Mother buying the house in High Rock. She said it wasn't the practical, sensible thing to do."

"Why did she buy it?"

"To start a new life, because of the divorce."

"Well, I don't blame her," Mim said. "I'd like to start a new life myself."

Jane laughed. "We haven't had a life yet. It's all ahead of us."

Mim laughed too. "Well, I would like to live somewhere besides Oberlin. It's so dull in the summertime."

"Are you homesick?"

"I miss Mama, and Trink and Emmy. Oh, and even Grandpa, of course, but I die of boredom when I have to spend a summer there,"

"Well, I'm getting bored here, too," Jane said. "We'll have to think of something to do with our time."

That night at table Norris was in a serious mood. Usually at dinnertime, there was a play-by-play resume of the afternoon's baseball game on the radio. To Pauline's annoyance, Norris always liked to listen to the resume, and Jane and Mim were interested too. Dee had no special interest in baseball, but had no intention of siding with Pauline in any event. And it would have made no difference if she had.

Norris went and switched the radio on just as they were sitting down to the table. It was 7:15 p.m. The announcement came that the game, which was out of town, had been rained out.

"Damn," Norris said.

"We'll have a nice quiet meal, for a change," Pauline said.

"If you'd have dinner earlier we could always have it before the game," he said.

"I can't have dinner earlier," Pauline said. "I had a client here till five o'clock. It's not a real game anyway."

"An hour should be long enough, or an hour and a half, anyway. Now, now! Don't pucker up and cry! It's all right."

But he came back to the table in a bad mood, and half way through the meal he laid down his fork and cleared his throat.

"I have something to say," he said.

Jane smiled at that, but Norris frowned.

"The subject matter isn't funny, it's very serious. We're going to have to tighten our belts around here. The depression is catching up with Pauline and me. Our income has been dropping off lately."

"I'll go home tomorrow," said Mim quickly.

"Tush," Norris said. "Bless your Cameron-headed little heart."

Everyone laughed at that expression.

"No," he went on. "We've got plenty of money for food. Don't worry about that. You stay as long as you want, Mim. Love to have you here. No, it's just that the business outlook is just miserable, and my work has slowed up. I don't know what's ahead this next year. And so, Jane - you'll have to go to public school this year. We can't send you to Hanaway-Dodd after all. It's too expensive, with things so uncertain."

"It's all right with me," Jane said. "I've always been in public schools."

"Oh, no," said Dee. "You've been in private schools before."

"Oh, that three months in boarding school didn't amount to much. I was only ten years old."

"Anyway," said Dee. "If it was me, I wouldn't even want to go to a prep school that was just for girls. That would be pretty deadly."

"Yes?" Norris said to Dee. "And you'd be better off if you were in a girl's school. I've never known such a man-crazy female in my life."

Dee blushed, and then protested. "Oh, that isn't true!"

"Yes, it is. We noticed last year when you started college your grades were just fine. And they stayed that way through the first semester. From then on as the number s of your male friends increased, your grades declined."

"Oh, Daddy!" Dee said, but she could not tell him it wasn't true.

"So what I want you to know right here and now is that Pauline and I won't pay for another year of college for you unless those grades improve."

"I didn't know Pauline was paying," Dee said.

"Well, Pauline puts her earnings into the general kitty, so when I write your tuition check it's all out of the same account. And when we send you to college it's a sacrifice. It's money we could use for something else."

Jane sought to change the subject.

"Where would I be going to school?" she asked.

"East High School," her father said. "If it was good enough for me, it'll be good enough for you."

Jane looked at him with wide-open innocent eyes.

"I only asked. I'm not complaining."

Norris gave a short sigh and began to eat again.

Dee said, "East High was good enough for me, too."

"For Mother and Uncle William, too," Murray said.

"That's right," Norris said, more agreeably. "But they weren't there at the same time I was."

The next day Mim told Jane again that she thought me should go home to Oberlin, but Jane persuaded her to stay.

"It's not as though you shouldn't be here. I was at your house all last winter. Do you realize how many summers we've spent together? Either we were with the other cousins in New Hampshire, or I was visiting with you and Trink in Oberlin. It's always been sort of like the 'Little Colonel' and her friends."

"Except no colored servants here and there to wait on us. And we always had to do the work, at least in New Hampshire we did, with Aunt Nelle."

"But," Jane laughed. "We did have one thing the Little Colonel had. Up in New Hampshire, I mean."

"What's that?"

"A black pony," said Jane.

"Oh, well," Mim said, "One summer that was, and we were all afraid to ride him because he had that trick of rolling over."

"I wonder whether we'll ever spend another summer at Camp Forest Primeval," Jane said. "The thing is that after I've been away from Camp Forest Primeval for a summer I get so homesick for it. I can smell the pines, and see the mildew stains on the white tents, and hear the porcupines chewing on the wood in the barns."

"Oh, yes!" Mim said, "and remember the path to the maple sugar camp, with the Indian pipes and ground pine, and checkerberries?"

"Or the trail over the mountain," Jane said, "where old Grandpa Howard got lost. Remember where the ferns grew so tall that they were higher than our heads? And remember the boggy meadow at the bottom of the mountain? I remember the bog moss grew so thick and squashy, that you and I wouldn't walk on it."

"There were little spiders in it," Mim recalled. "I think what I like to remember best is Camp Fluffy Pine."

"What's 'Camp Fluffy Pine'?" Dee asked, coming into the room.

"Oh, you were too much older to know," Jane said. "It was up at Camp Forest Primeval, at the bottom of the field south of our tents. There was a long-needle pine tree. It had branches quite low down. We played house there. That is, Babs, and Trink and Mim and I did. You and Edward never did,"

"Daddy sent me over to tell you two to get up," Dee said. "You're going to turn night into day again." She left and went back down the stairs. "Get yourselves over to 10720 P.D.Q."

"Mim," Jane said. "I've thought of something to do today. Let's go all over Cleveland today to visit places where we used to live."

"Like where?" Mim asked.

"Oh, like where you lived when you were little and your daddy was still alive."

"Trink says she has a hard time remembering Daddy," Mim said somberly.

"Well, maybe you wouldn't want to see that house," Jane said, "but let's go see the place where I used to live on Rosewood Street after Mother and Daddy were divorced. And McGinley school, and the apartment where we lived when Mama was married to Carle. That's when I went to Fairmont High. We should go there, too. Oh, and I do want to go over to East High if I'm not going to Hanaway-Dodd this fall.

Mim laughed. "We'll never be able to go all those places."

"I'll get Daddy to give us money for streetcar passes." Jane said.

With some reluctance Norris gave Jane a five-dollar bill.

"You girls be careful," he said. "Don't get lost. And you'll have to make that money last all week. I'm a little pressed for cash."

"Don't worry," Jane said. "Two street car passes will be \$2.00, and the rest will be five days' lunches at 25 cents apiece."

"Where can you get lunch for a quarter?" Norris asked.

"Any drug store or dime store," she said. "A sandwich or soup for a dime or fifteen cents and something to drink for a dime."

"Well, you be careful now," he said again.

The first day they went to see the places they had lived once, in East Cleveland, and the old place of Grandma Rahming's on Cartwright street.

The house on Rosemont Avenue was easy to find, for Jane remembered the number.

"We lived here when Carle first started coming to call on Mama," Jane said. "He always brought flowers or candy, or expensive nuts or something like pistachio ice cream."

"I thought Carle was very nice," Mim said.

"Well, he was. Most of the time. I wonder where he is now."

When they got to the Cartwright street house, Jane said it made her feel very strange.

"I feel as though Aunt Ada's ghost is in there," she said.

"Oh, Jane! How awful! "

"Well, it's just that as long as the family still lived there, it was alright. It was as though her presence was still there all around us. But when they moved away from here last spring, it's as though they left her behind and she's still here."

"But you don't believe stuff like that, Janie."

"No, and her ashes are buried in Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn, where her Mama and Papa were buried. But this is the last house I saw her in. I have a hard time getting her moved to Channing Avenue."

Mim laughed. "You're funny. Don't you have anything to remember her by?"

"I have her class ring from Packer Collegiate Institute. Aunt Ada was so proud of having graduated from Packer. She was a scholar and she always said I would be a scholar, too."

" Well, you will," Mim said.

"Anyway, she left me her ring, and a little gold enameled pin shaped like a pansy. That was her class flower."

"All these places are making me sad," said Mim.

At dinner that night, Norris said, "Well, let's have it."

"What?" said Jane, knowing just how her father liked to have a conversation evolve.

"Let's have the report on the pilgrimage."

"It was very depressing," Jane said. " We went to the old places we used to live. They all looked shabby and small."

"Always do," said Norris.

"But we had one strange experience. We went to Fessler Place and this man came out of a door and saw Mim and me, and then real quick he ducked back inside."

" Well," Norris said. "You two are pretty terrifying, you know."

"The thing is, "Jane persisted, "that it looked so much like Carle, I would almost have sworn it really was. But I suppose it was just because I associate Fessler Place with Carle."

"I thought it was Carle," Mim contributed.

"Of course it was Carle," Norris said. "He rents rooms on Fessler Place. He and his brothers sold the old lady's house on Price Boulevard. He's rather pinched for money, he says,"

"Poor Carle," Jane said.

"It seems strange," Dee said, "that Carle would want to live in Fessler Place, where he and Mother lived."

"No, it isn't strange at all," said Norris flatly. "He's still sentimental about your Mother. She's a very charming lady."

Pauline's eyes filled with tears and she excused herself and went into the kitchen.

The following day Jane and Mim took the 105th Street trolley to Sloane Avenue, where they changed cars and rode to 75th Street.

"This is the way I'll come to high school every day," Jane said. "You know, Anna Wyers lives near here somewhere."

"Who?"

"Anna Wyers. The woman my grandfather had an affair with. Remember I told you about that?"

"Yes. There's a boy, isn't there?"

"Yes. And I bet he goes to East High too. Isn't that ironic?"

"Why?" asked Mim.

"I don't know. It just is."

Cleveland's East High was the largest school that Jane would ever attend. It was dark and massive though scarcely more than half as big as the new Benjamin Franklin High that loomed three stories high behind the Channing Avenue terrace. But East High was in its own way more impressive. It occupied about half a block on 75th street. It was dark and old. Its once red brick was nearly black with the soot of many winters. It stood four stories high and had four tall chimneys that poured forth, in cold weather, great clouds of smoke from burning bituminous coal. The neighboring houses, once painted tan or grey, or even white, were very nearly as dark as the brick. The fourth floor had a mansard-type roof, the slant walls of its rooms lighted by many dormer windows. Ivy covered part of the brick walls. but the prevailing soot inhibited its growth. However, the green lawn was well kept and the privet Martin that ordered the curving front walk were neatly trimmed, with sharp square edges.

"It's imposing, isn't it?" Mim said.

"It's frightening." Jane said. "It's bigger than any school I ever went to."

"Jane, how many schools have you been to?"

"Oh, twelve. I guess." Jane said.

"That's ghastly really," Mim said. "Mother went here."

"So did Uncle William and my Dad, and Dee."

"Didn't Aunt Grace go here too?"

"Oh, no. Mother went right from Oberlin Academy to the Art School. She wasn't seventeen yet, and in those days you didn't have to be a high school graduate to enter the Art School. Now you do. Dad thinks that's where I'm going, but I don't think I want to. They all think I should be an artist."

"Well, you should." Mim said. "You inherited their talent."

"No, I don't think so. And anyway. I don't have their interest. I don't have that burning desire that Mother had."

"Maybe not," Mim said.

"You know, Mim, I think that's all in this world Mom had ever really wanted. I don't think she wanted to get married and have children."

"But she loves you and Dee."

"Oh, sure."

"Well, she does Janie. Naturally."

"I know. I wasn't being sarcastic. After we were born she loved us. But I don't think she wanted us so very much before we were born. She had her heart set on Paris, She's talked about it all my life."

"Then why did she have you? Were you accidents?"

Jane smiled. "I don't think so. I think Mother decided to have Dee because she thought a child would make Daddy a more responsible husband. Then a few years later she decided to try again. She thought that I would be a boy and that would inspire Daddy. So I spoiled her plans, and Daddy wasn't inspired."

"But she loves you, Janie, and he loves you too. And he works hard these days."

"That's another grief of Mama's. Daddy didn't work hard for her."

"Anyone who made those stencil pictures just had to have worked hard," Mim said.

"But he didn't make any money in those days, Mim. They almost starved at times."

"Well," said Mim lightly. "That's an artist's privilege, Aunt Nelle always says."

"She would," Jane said. "She would."

The Old Brick

BY

JANE R. CHANDLER

PART SIX

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DON'T ARGUE, JUST GET MAMA

Jane rose early the day after Labor Day. Her room was still unfurnished but she had made a makeshift dressing table of two orange crates from the A & P store. Norris had given her a board to put across the top. He'd promised her furniture 'at least by Christmas time.' Her bed was the narrow cot that had been Aunt Ada's only a little more than a year ago. The last time she'd seen Aunt Ada had been in June of 1929. She hadn't known she'd never see her again. Perhaps Aunt Ada had known, though. Jane and Dee had gone to live in Connecticut. And so much had happened there. Then her mother had lost their house. And Grandma Martin had died, too, two months before Aunt Ada. She could still feel Grandma Martin's presence in the house in Oberlin. It was nice to know that that house was still there, and that Grandpa was there. He still had Grandma's little rocking chair, and the little walnut writing table that Grandma had used. Grandma Martin didn't seem to be as completely gone as Aunt Ada did, because Aunt Ada had never lived in this house on Channing Avenue.

But Aunt Ada had slept on the wooden cot that was Jane's now.

Norris had spoken to Jane about it.

"It won't bother you to use this cot for a while till we get something else? I mean – "

"Aunt Ada died on it, didn't she?" said Jane.

"Yes she did," her father said.

"That's alright. I don't mind," Jane said. "I was fond of her. It won't upset me."

"Well, it's not a good bed, of course."

"I know," Jane said.

"Well, we're going to get you all new furniture soon."

This morning was rainy. When Jane came down the stairs her father was up and reading the Cleveland Herald. Norris had always been an early riser. Whatever her father's faults were. Jane thought, lying in bed was not one of them.

"This is your big day, isn't it?" he said.

"I'm afraid so," she said.

"I'm sorry about Hannaway-Dodd, Janie. Maybe next year we can do it."

"That's all right. I wasn't really certain I wanted to go there. I do like boys."

Jane got the streetcar at the corner of Grand Avenue and 105th street. It was raining a fine drizzle. It seemed as though it always rained on the first day of school. The day she had tried to be a first grader and they had said, "Come back next year when you are six." And then, the next year in the rain again, she'd walked to school. And they had let her start. Jane could remember that, when she heard that clanging school bell she used to run hard and get a sharp pain in her side. The next school had been new, with electric gongs that went off all during the day to announce the changing classes. After that came boarding school in Virginia, with its lovely old antebellum building with pillars out in front. To wake them up in the morning a 'darky' woman had tolled a hand bell.

Next she had gone to P.S. 69 in Jackson Heights. Ugh! How she hated it!

Next Jane had been sent to Sunshine Camp, where school hadn't amounted to much. They were all there to gain weight, not to get on with their schooling.

Jane had next attended a Cleveland grade school, that she hated. She had played 'hooky' for three weeks after Christmas vacation. She'd hid every day in the top floor storage room, which had a window. She'd had a lot of Little Colonel books up there, and the room was plenty warm enough. But the truant officer had at last come looking for her, and Mama and Carle had found out. Mama told her that he had come to the door asking, "Where is Jane Rahming?" Then she and Mama had gone back to the school and to the Principal's office, and there had been a long talk.

The Principal had said, it's very unusual for a little girl to be a truant. It's more common with boys."

And Mama had said, "Jane is very like a boy."

The Principal asked Jane, "Why did you run away from school?" And Jane said, "I don't know."

Mama put in, "I'm afraid Jane has had to change schools rather often."

"I see," the Principal said, but she had preferred questioning Jane.

"Where did you go, when you weren't home or in school?"

"I hid in the storage room," Jane replied.

The Principal seemed a little shocked. "All day in a cold, dark, stuffy storage room?"

"Yes, but it wasn't cold or dark. It's quite a big room with two windows and a steam heater. It was kind of stuffy. I had a lot of books there to read."

"Was there a lavatory?" the Principal asked.

"No," Jane said. "That was the biggest problem."

"Well," the Principal said. "Well! It's quite a story."

"I think," Mama said, "that Observation School was a very big change, after Sunshine Camp, which really is very small and very individualized." I think there were only five students in Jane's grade. And they even had Jane helping with the first and second graders. With their arithmetic."

"Jane," the Principal said, "I can tell by the way you speak that you are a natural scholar. I can't understand it."

"Neither can I," Jane told her. "I guess I'm shy."

"Fortunately," Mama said, "We're moving on Monday and she'll be going to Rosedell School instead."

"Well," the Principal said, "she'll have to go to her class today. The law says she must be in school."

"But this is Friday," Mama had protested. "Why don't we just... "

"Mrs. Semon," the Principal said, "you certainly realize that Jane must have some punishment?"

Mama had to agree.

And so she had been made to go back into her classroom, with the eyes of her classmates upon her as she took her seat. But the day had ended, and she had never had to go there again. The next school, she had really liked – Rosedell School. She had to walk a long way to that school. She'd had to walk home for lunch, too. Four trips a day, but she had liked that school. She had walked past the Cleveland Art Institute where Mama and Daddy, and Carle, had studied. Also, of course, Aunt Merly, Aunt Ethel, and Betty Long, and Ted and Edna Hurst and all the rest of her parents' best friends. Yes, going to Rosedell School had been very pleasant. She'd had a teacher she adored.

Then there'd been Fairmont, which she'd neither loved nor hated. And after that Milford, which had been very special. Next, of course, had come Oberlin High School. and now here she was, ready to enter still another school. If I ever have any children, Jane thought, I hope I can arrange for them to go all the way through school in one place, probably a small town.

Jane had to transfer to a second streetcar when she reached Sloane Avenue. There was a very good looking boy that got on at that corner and when the Sloane Avenue car got to 75th Street he also got off. Obviously, he was going to East High too. There were others, many walking in twos or threes. But Jane saw no one she knew.

It gave her a strange feeling to enter the huge old building where so many of her family had gone to school. There was a sign posted opposite the entrance. "All pre-registered students report to the auditorium. All out-of-town students report to the library, 2nd floor."

At the library Jane had to stand in line. She tried to start a conversation with a rather attractive girl in front of her.

"Hi! Where are you from?"

The girl looked surprised, then said "Indiana. Muncie, Indiana."

"Well, I'm really from Cleveland," Jane said, "but I've been going to school everywhere else most of the time. My name is Jane Rahming."

Again the girl seemed surprised. Mine is Dorothy Scholl," she said.

"I'm going to be a IO-B,!! Jane said. "This is the eleventh time I've changed schools.!!

Dorothy Scholl of Muncie Indiana said, "For heaven's sake!" but made no further comment.

Jane gave it up.

A week later Jane wrote one of her rare letters to her mother.

Dear Mama:

I have started to school at East High. I don't know whether I'll like it or not but I think that I won't. It's just too big. But I'll tell you about it.

"My home room is on the fourth floor way up where the windows are all dormers with pigeons flying around them (doing what pigeons do).

Many of the same teachers are here that Dee used to tell about. And old 'Daddy Davis', the singing teacher who was here when Uncle Lawrence went to East is still around. I am taking second year Latin (Caesar's Gallic Wars, that Dee hated so). I really like Latin, but this year is going to be much harder than last year was. Daddy thinks I am crazy to want to study Latin at all, but I will need at least two years for what I plan to do in college.

Daddy gave me some money to buy some material to make myself some clothes. I decided to make skirts and blouses. Pauline always wants to help us sew, and Daddy says that since she is a professional we should take her advice on everything about clothes and sewing. Dee gets so mad at her, especially about washing dishes. Pauline wanted to show Dee how to do it when they first moved into this house. That's when Pauline first got a chance to use some of the things from her 'hope chest.' Dee told her she'd been washing dishes for years and nobody needed to tell her how it was done. Well, we learned from Aunt Nelle, and she is fussy. But Pauline wants us to wash all her new silverware separately. You can't put forks in with the spoons and knives. And Pauline screams when she sees a bug, too. Oh. well!

I'll write again when I have some news.

Love,

Jane

Jane wrote a letter to Mim too.

I think I'd rather be back at Hayden Hills High, Mim. It may be a pretty dull school as you say, but at least I'd have some friends. I am having to start all over again here. My home room is all girls, and most of them are taking a commercial course. They think I am very unusual to be taking Latin and French and Geometry. Oh, of course there are others taking college preparatory courses too, but it seems that every class I'm in has a different group of kids.

When the bell rings everyone just dashes away in all directions. There is one girl that I knew at Fairmount that I eat lunch with. She and I used to pal around with Mona James when we were in the seventh grade. But Benetta is not at all like Mona James. Mona is more like Dee. Boys are all they talk about. I guess my Girl Scout days are over. It isn't in the picture here. Oh, yes, Mim, I like boys too. But I don't think I'll have any boy friends here. They are not like the boys at Oberlin. Either they are very fast and already going steady with someone or else they are so girl-shy they're even afraid to glance at a girl. When Dee went here to school, she never had any boyfriends. She had two good girl chums, and they were both Jewish. (That's another problem here. I mean, so many of the boys are Jewish and they only go with the Jewish girls). Dee had a marvelous time in Milford. I wish we still lived there.

Oh, well, maybe I'll get to like East High yet. I'm writing this in study-hall and the bell is about to ring, and everyone here will leap three feet in the air when it does.

Goodbye for now,

Janie

P.S. Catch a bus and come up for a weekend. Bring Trink too. There is plenty of room at Grandma Rahming's. I really wish you would come. Life is dull here, but we'd find something to do.

#####

Jane went to an East High football game by herself one Saturday afternoon. Her friend Benetta had promised to go, but in the end she changed her mind and backed out. So Jane went alone. At the game she saw no one she knew. still, she tried to enjoy herself and cheered for the team.

That night she said her throat was sore. The next morning she was feverish, sick with a heavy cold. The cold went into her chest. It was two weeks before she got back to school, behind in all her studies.

By that time, Dee's mid-term grades had arrived and Norris was furious. There were no A's or B's. There were only C's. and one failing grade and one dropped subject.

"I refuse to pay tuition for you, for this kind of effort. All you ever have your mind on is boys. Besides, I can't afford to pay it anyway. Your mother will have to pay it. I'll let you live here."

"Mother pay my tuition!! Dee exclaimed. "She's hardly making enough money to eat!"

"Well, tell her to sell that house and move back here to Cleveland where she's known."

"She can't sell the house," Dee said. "She's already lost the house; the bank foreclosed."

Jane, who had been eating her dinner, stopped in amazement. "You never told me that!"

"I've known it only for about a week," Dee said.

"But you didn't tell me!" Jane said. "Now we have no chance of going back there to live!"

"Why do you want to go back there to live?" Norris asked, her. "You'll do just as well here at East High School."

"I had lots of friends in Milford, and boyfriends too. And I'm not doing fine here at East. I've got so far behind in Latin and Geometry I don't know if I can ever catch up with the rest."

"Oh, you'll catch up," her father said. "You're smart. I'm not worried. Are you behind in your French and English too?"

"No. They're easy. I just feel depressed about everything else. Even the gym classes make me cough. Daddy - I remember once when you wanted to live in Milford."

"Oh, yes. Well, that was a long time ago when your mother and I were together. We dreamed about it then."

At this remark Pauline's eyes filled with tears. "Now why do you do that?" Norris asked. "I didn't say a thing to make you cry. You're sensitive beyond all reason."

Then Norris turned to Jane again, a frown on his face. "You spoke about not having any boyfriends. I certainly do hope you aren't going to be as boy-crazy as your sister."

With that Dee's eyes filled with tears and Norris exclaimed, "I have a household of crying women!"

"There must be a reason." Jane said softly, and fortunately her father didn't hear it.

Stung by her father's rebuke, Dee left the table and went to her room and wrote a letter to Grace.

Dearest Mommy,

Jee, I know I should have written sooner than this, but I've gotten in a frame of mind. I don't know whether I'm in love, or whether it's just a reaction from not having a man around. Anyway, there is one around now, and so he is to blame. Men are always to blame. I've lost my appetite. Whenever I like somebody I just go gaga."

This one's name is Dick, and his family have money. He goes to Cleveland U. too. He is a fraternity man. So maybe I am going to have more fun here after all. Oh, I've had dates with different men this year, but nothing has come of it. I really still love Cameron.

Daddy really made me mad this evening. My first grade report came, and he was not satisfied with it. I don't think he realizes how tough college is.

I am really fed up with Pauline. She thinks she has to tell me how to do dishes. She cries if you so much as look at her. She is driving me absolutely batty! And I know she dislikes me. I can feel it oozing from her pores. I really can never be happy here. I want to live with you, Mommy. And Jane feels the same. By the way, she has discovered a way to make Empress Eugenie hats out of old ones. She made a couple for herself and an adorable blue one for me. She is going to make one for Aunt Ethel and for one of Pauline's clients. Jane charges two dollars to make one, but she did mine free of course. Money isn't flowing quite as freely from Dad. His work has slacked off a bit.

Mother, I have met a whole lot of fellows from the Cleveland College of Chiropody. I have really been rushed, I don't know which to fall in love with.

Mommy, you said you wanted us to come to you and go back to Milford again to live. I didn't quite understand. Do you have the house, or don't you? I thought it was gone. Of course, as you know, I would give anything to live there again. Cameron is still the one I think about most.

Well I must close. I was pleased with your last letter, it didn't sound quite as tragic as your other ones have. I hate those tragic ones.

Oodles and oodles of love,

Dee.

In early November, Jane became ill again. She caught a heavy cold which very quickly settled in her chest. By evening of the second day she could not breathe when she was lying down. She called Dee into her room. She was sitting up in bed.

"I need extra pillows," she wheezed.

"I'll ask Pauline." Dee said. "This room seems cold."

"It is," Jane said. "It's always cold."

Dee went to Norris rather than Pauline.

"Dad, Jane's having a terrible time breathing. I'm worried about her. And she needs extra pillows too. She can't lie down and still breathe easily. Well, she can't breathe too well, even sitting up. Dad, it's cold in her room; can't we get more heat in there?"

"That room is farthest from the furnace. Why don't you let her sleep in your room? Just change places with her till she's better."

"Alright," Dee agreed. "Jane gets very sick when she has a cold. I've never seen her this bad before, though. Maybe it's because she's run down from the cold she just got over."

"Maybe," Norris said. "but we mustn't give voice to 'mortal mind' thoughts like that."

"Don't forget to ask Pauline for pillows," Dee said.

But Pauline said that she had no extra pillows.

"I'll go over to Mother's to see if they'll lend us one," Norris said. "And I'll ask Mother to do some Science work for Jane."

"Get two pillows, Daddy," Dee said. "She needs to be propped up high. She says she's awful tired from sitting up straight in bed."

Norris walked the short distance down the street to his mother and Ethel's place. It was raining, a cold November drizzle. He found Ethel in the kitchen doing the supper dishes. He told her about Jane, and asked where his mother was.

"She's lying down, Norr. She was feeling so very nervous after supper."

"Aren't you two Christian Scientists anymore?" Norr said irritably.

"Well, yes, Norr, but Mama seems to have some difficulty these days in making her demonstration of Truth."

"Well, then you do some Science work for Janie. And tell Mama to hold the right thoughts."

"Norr, you'd better call Mrs. Gannon, I'm not a practitioner."

"Then get me two pillows for Janie, and why don't you bring your books and come over and read some Science to her?"

Dee felt very badly when she moved Jane out of her room and into her own. Jane still had no furniture except for the narrow cot that had been Aunt Ada's, and the little dressing-table made from orange crates. The chair was a wooden box. too. Jane had made a skirt for her dressing-table from crepe paper.

Dee spoke to Norris about it.

"Dad, her room is really pathetic. No wonder she is sick. It's cold and it's dreary in there."

"I know. Well, it's a question of money, and I haven't any too much. When things get moving again we'll get her a nice set of furniture."

Ethel came and sat on the bottom of the bed and read the "Scientific statement of Being" to Jane. It began, "There is no life, truth, intelligence or substance in Matter." Jane had grown up with those words. She lay back on her pillows and wheezed. The cords in her neck stood out with every breath. She did not feel comfortable at all, though it was reassuring to have Aunt Ethel sitting there. But she couldn't breathe and she was frightened. However, after a while she slipped into a brief, fitful sleep. When she woke, the room was dark and Aunt Ethel was gone. She called out for Dee, and Dee came hurrying into the room.

Jane was wheezing hard. She struggled to a sitting position.

"Where's Momma?" she asked Dee.

"Janie," Dee cried. "You've been dreaming."

"I can't breathe," Jane wheezed. "Get Mama!"

"Janie, dear, she's in New York."

Norris entered the room. "How is she?"

"Daddy, she wants Mother. I think she's delirious."

"Don't say that. That's mortal mind speaking. We must hold the thought that she is perfectly well. There is no reality in sickness."

"Please get Aunt Merly," Jane whispered.

"We could call her tomorrow, Janie," Dee said. "Couldn't we, Daddy?"

"Yes, but she'll be fine tomorrow," Norris said. "And we'll get Mrs. Gannon to come over."

Jane had been sitting up, but now she leaned back wearily on her three pillows.

"I can't breathe," she said.

"I 'm going to open the Window," Dee said. "It's so stuffy in here. She needs fresh air."

"She needs warmth," Norris said. "To say she needs fresh air is 'materia medica'."

"But Daddy, to say she needs warmth is also 'materia medica'."

"Oh, don't argue," Jane sighed. "Just get Mama."

"I think we should phone Mother," Dee said, "to see whether she thinks we should have a doctor for Jane."

Norris was about to say "no" to that idea, but he realized that Jane's condition was rather frightening. He suddenly decided to put the responsibility on Grace.

"Yes, I think it's a wise idea to call your mother," he said.

"And y," Dee said, "We're going to telephone to Mama."

This decision seemed to relax Jane some and she seemed to breathe a little easier. But she was very tired and confused. The rest of the night she was only half aware of things. She heard voices in Pauline's sewing room where the upstairs telephone was. She heard them talking but was not aware of what was going on. Dee came in with hot lemonade and helped her drink a little. She slept fitfully and woke from time to time. Presently it was morning, and she was helped to the bathroom by Dee and her father, and then helped back again. They brought her some breakfast, but she seemed too weary to eat it, because her breathing was still tight and wheezy, and she coughed so frequently. Dee had gone to her classes at the University, and Pauline had a client in the sewing room, so it was Norris who waited on Jane.

"We called your mother last night," he told her.

"Havemeyer 9-5951" Jane said sleepily.

"What's that?" Norris asked.

"Aunt Nelle's number in Jackson Heights."

"Yes. Well. Your mother was at Polly's. We finally reached her and asked her whether she would want us to call a doctor for you instead of treating it in Christian Science. Your mother told Dee that she thought you should make the choice yourself."

Jane looked at him wearily, as though she did not understand.

Norris put his hand on her shoulder and called her by the pet name he had used when she was small.

"Squiffy, which do you want, Science, or a doctor?"

"I just want to breathe easier. I'm so tired of trying to get my breath."

"And it's easier when you sit up?"

"Yes, but I'm too tired to sit up all the time."

"Do you want Christian Science, Janie?"

"That'll be alright," she said.

"I'll call a doctor if you wish."

"Whatever you think is best."

"I'll call Mrs. Gannon. She's a practitioner that Ethie and your grandma like."

Jane closed her eyes, and dozed off. The next thing she knew, she was being lifted from the bed. Then her father was carrying her downstairs. She heard Pauline saying, "Oh, Norris, you'll hurt your back! She's fifteen years old. She's a big girl. Oh, my goodness! You'll surely hurt your back!"

"Oh, stop saying that over and over," her father said.

He took Jane into the living room and put her in the most comfortable chair in the room, and he wrapped her in a warm quilt. Andrew opened her eyes and saw that it was snowy outdoors. The windows were all steamed up, and vaguely she noted that it was Thursday, and Minnie must be in the basement doing the wash. In the winter, with the wet clothes hanging from the lines down there, the windows always steamed up. Jane closed her eyes again. She could hear Pauline talking again.

"I can't see why on earth you didn't leave her upstairs in her bed, or rather, Dee's bed."

"Because I want her to have Mrs. Gannon treat her down here. "

"But why? She could walk up the stairs to see Jane, couldn't she?"

"You don't understand Science, so don't keep trying. We won't have Janie lying in bed like she's sick."

"But she is sick!"

"That's not the thought to hold. She's perfect. In perfect health."

"Oh, Norris!" Pauline said.

Jane would only vaguely remember that afternoon. Mrs. Gannon, a plump lady with white hair, had sat opposite her reading from Mary Baker Eddy's "Science and Health" and quoting long passages out of it from memory. As Jane said to the family later, "She had soft, snow-white hair and a soft, snow-white voice. I just couldn't keep awake."

"Mrs. Gannon had told her that it was quite alright for her to go to sleep. Sitting there in the comfortable chair, breathing the warm, moist air from the laundry in the basement, Jane grew more comfortable. Her breathing eased. The monotonous soft voice droned on and on. Jane fell asleep. Norris moved her to the sofa after Mrs. Gannon left. She was still asleep when Dee came home just before dinner time.

"Where have you been so late?" Norris asked Dee.

"The gang all stopped at the Rendezvous," she said.

"You spend too much time there. That's why your grades are bad."

"Oh, Daddy!"

"You should come home after your classes," he said.

"I have to have some social life."

"All you care about is social life."

"No, that isn't all I care about, Daddy."

"Aren't you interested in how your sister is today?"

"Of course I am. How is she?"

"She's better. Mrs. Gannon was here and spent a half hour with her. She's sleeping nicely now."

"I knew she would be better," Dee said. I've been knowing the Truth for her all day."

They talked about it at the dining-room table.

"It's a perfect demonstration of the power of Christian Science," Norris said.

"That's obvious," Dee said.

"I think the moisture in the air helped her," Pauline said timidly.

"What moisture?" Norris asked.

"From the washing. It's always steamy the day Minnie's here. Mama always kept the tea kettle going for us when we had colds and coughs."

"Nonsense!" Norris said. It was a demonstration of Christian Science. Mother and Ethie and Dee and I and Mrs. Gannon were all working."

"And Mother and Aunt Nelle in New York, too," said Dee.

"Exactly!" said Norris.

"Well, I still think it was the moisture," Pauline insisted.

"So do I," said Jane from the other room. "I'm hungry, I think."

"I'll bring you something," Norris said.

"I wish I had some tomato soup," Jane said.

"Have we any?" Norris asked Pauline.

"No."

"Mother will have some. I'll run over there and get it. She always keeps canned soup on hand." He turned to Pauline and said crossly, "And you should have some, too."

"But I only shop for one day at a time." Pauline protested.

"I know and it's a hell of a way to do it, too," he said. Then he went and patted Jane. "I'll be back with your soup, but I may have to go to the delicatessen for it."

After he left, Dee said to Pauline, "I don't believe I've ever seen Dad wait on anybody before."

"I know I never saw it," Pauline said.

Dee wrote a letter to Grace two weeks later.

Dear Mother,

Jane went back to school this week. She is almost over her cough, which hangs on still, especially at night. I'm sorry I didn't write sooner, but when you called the day after she got better, I knew you wouldn't worry anymore. We certainly were worried that night before Mrs. Gannon came. Mother, this has made me a firm believer in Science again. And everyone was impressed by her healing that day except Pauline and Jane herself. They think it was the steam in the air. Ridiculous! And after all, Jane chose to have Science. At least, she didn't choose a doctor. She's afraid of doctors, I'm sure. But now, she doesn't give the credit to Science. It really gripes me. It really does.

All in all, she lost a month of school, what with the two illnesses. Dad thinks this last one was pneumonia, or should one say a 'claim' of pneumonia. Even in Science it is hard to avoid referring to the mortal mind names of things. When Jane got back to school she found, of course, that she is way behind in her classes. She has no problem with the English, nor with the French, because she is ahead of her French class anyway, having taken a whole term of it at Fairmount. But she is terribly worried about the Latin and Geometry. She's just missed so much. Dad had given her permission to drop those two subjects, but the teachers both told her that she is smart enough to catch up and at least get a passing grade. The Geometry teacher told her that he would help her, and she has stayed after school a few times. But she has so much make-up homework that she is up until 1 o'clock at night translating that darn Latin. Then Dad sends her to bed and she weeps over it if it isn't finished. She always thinks she has to get an "A" in everything!

Mother, I have four boys that I have been dating. I am having more fun this semester than I did last, and I have to admit it hasn't helped my grades at college much. But after all, Mother, isn't social life important too? I would really like to become a writer, but so far the courses I am required to take don't really interest me very much.

Well, Mother, now that all the worry over Jane is ended, how about some good news from you? I was so hoping that you would be able to get enough money together so that you could come for Thanksgiving or Christmas, or both. Aunt Merly was in town last week and she called from Uncle Lawrence's house. She was surprised to hear that Janie had been so ill, but pleased to hear of her wonderful healing in C. S. Mother, I hope that you are not giving up on C. S. yourself. I am sure if you would put a deeper faith in it things would really Work out for you.

I must close this and do some studying or Dad will have my head.

Oodles of love,

Dee

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The day after Thanksgiving, Mim came from Jayden Mills to spend the rest of the holiday with Andre a. And Skipper Root paid Dee a visit, too. Skipper was home from college down state. She brought with her the disappointing news that at the end of the fall semester she would have to drop out of college. There simply wasn't any money for her to go on with it.

"What will you do now, Skipper?" Dee asked her.

"The same thing I did all through high school," Skipper said. "Wait on table at Connors' Country Kitchen. I earned most of my college money working summers."

"Oh, but that's dreadful, Skipper. Leaving college to go back to Chagrin Falls and be a waitress again."

"I know, Dee, but perhaps I can save enough to go back again in a couple of years. I'll be working full-time now, although Mrs. Connors did say that their business has been very slow lately. She expects it to pick up, though, in the Spring."

"How were you able to get a job with so many people out of work?" Jane asked Skipper.

"Well, by the time I finish the semester, in February, one of the girls is going to leave to have a baby," Skipper explained. But anyway, Mrs. Connors says that I can always have a job there, because I'm the most popular waitress they've ever had."

Norris had been listening to the conversation.

"I can believe that, pretty girl," he said. "You probably bring in a lot more business. "Norris had always admired Skipper, despite her boarding house background. And he had encouraged her to pursue her intended career of voice training.

"What about your singing, girl? Are you going to keep at it?" he asked her.

"Oh yes. That I am going to do. I'll have to study again with my old teacher in Chagrin Falls. I really think I've outgrown her, but she'll do to tide me over till I can go back to college. Or I may try to get a job in Cleveland later on and then I can study with one of the good teachers here."

"Good idea," said Norris. "Now tell me, Skipper, were you having a good time in college?"

"Oh, yes," she said. "wonderful."

"Lots of dates? Lots of parties?"

He had always teased her, so she turned a little coy.

"Of course."

"That being the case, did your grades suffer?"

She was a little bit surprised by his question, because he had never been serious with her. Even back in the old days in Chagrin Falls when he and Grace and the girls had lived on Cliff Street, Norris Rahming had always teased her. But now he seemed to really want to know how she had performed in college. Her pride dictated a hasty answer before she became aware of what he was up to.

"Well, I still got a B average," she said. "Of course, I daresay, if I had never had any dates at all I could have done a little better."

Norris turned to Dee. "There now. You see? Skipper gets good Grades in spite of her popularity."

Dee, in her embarrassment, could think of nothing to say, and Skipper was embarrassed as well. She tried to fix things.

"Sometimes I have to turn down a date and just get at the books and study. I can't always go when I have an invitation."

Norris snorted. "Can you imagine Dee ever turning down a date?"

"Oh Daddy! You know I turn down dates," Dee protested.

"You've always been boy-crazy," he insisted. "Ever since you were in grammar school."

"Daddy, you're not being very nice. You're embarrassing Skipper," Dee said.

"Skipper knows it's true," Norris said.

He was still on the rampage at the dinner table. But this time it would be Pauline who was the victim. And she had no way of preparing a defense, because his conversation had started out so pleasantly.

He beamed at Mim. "It's nice to have you here again, Mim. And how is your Mama?"

"She is quite well, Uncle Norr."

"And how's the old man? Grandpa Martin?"

"He's very well for his age, we think. He walks downtown every day to see Mr. Edwards."

"That's the trustee?"

"Yes. Grandpa likes to talk things over with him, They're worried about business."

"Who isn't? Norris said. "Still got all his money in rental property, has he?"

"As far as I know, he has, Uncle Norr." Mim said.

"Well, I guess he's better off than most of us."

"People aren't paying their rents very promptly, though. Grandpa does a lot of muttering about it," Mim said.

"But the old lawyer manages everything, is that right?"

"That's right," Mim said. "And Mother gets pretty annoyed with him. He's very tight-fisted with the money. He gives Mother an allowance to run the house on - food, that is - and Mother says it isn't anywhere near enough, really, but she makes it do. Everything else we buy, we charge to Grandpa's account, but Mr. J.L. Edwards pays the bills."

"That must be annoying for your mother," Norris said. "But I guess you get plenty to eat. You look nice and healthy."

"Oh, we get lots of good food," Mim said. "Mother is always shoving food at me. She makes me eat a big breakfast, even though I don't want any breakfast."

"Well, Jane here looks pretty puny lately. She's got really skinny. Last year when she was with you she looked just fine. I expect it was those big breakfasts and your Mama's cooking that did it."

"Aunt Emmie's cooking, really," Mim said. "Aunt Emmie's homemade bread especially. Her bread is always good. She never fiddles with her recipe for bread, but she sometimes makes some amazing cookies and cakes. Puts in some very original things for flavoring. A couple of weeks ago we were out of vanilla for her cookies, so she put in a little cherry-flavored cough syrup instead. The cookies were very strange. But she's a good everyday cook. Her soup is good, and stew. Things like that. And I have to eat her oatmeal every morning. I suppose the stuff is good for me. She cooks it all night long. In the summer we can have cold cereal, though.

Norris seized on the word "oatmeal".

"That's it!" he said. "That's what Jane needs, a good breakfast. She needs hot cereal. Oatmeal, corn meal mush, Wheatena. I like that sort of thing myself. Pauline, why can't you get yourself out of bed in the morning?"

Pauline's eyes filled with tears.

"We don't have to talk about that, I hope," she said.

At this point, for the first time since the meal began, Ethel spoke up. She and Rosella had been invited to dinner because there was plenty of left-over turkey and other holiday food. In their usual way, they had sat quiet and smiling, listening to everyone else at the table.

"Why couldn't Jane come over to our place and have her breakfast? Mother and I are always up early and we have hot cereal all winter long."

So it was arranged. Instead of her usual hasty piece of toast and cold milk, Jane had cereal, toast and hot cocoa at her grandmother's house. It was only four doors down the street, and on Jane's way to the

street car. By the time she got there, on the cold, dark mornings, Ethel had already left for her job as a billing clerk for Cleveland Builders Supply Company.

It was a pleasant breakfast for Jane, for she was surrounded by the familiar furnishings that she remembered from her childhood. The heavy golden oak extension table, with its massive legs carved like twisted rope, was covered with a "silencer" and one of Rosella Rahming's "everyday" white damask tablecloths. For her cereal, there was the fat, fluted silver pitcher filled with rich Jersey milk and there was the matching sugar bowl. Jane had always loved that silver set. Her cereal was served in the yellow bordered Wedgewood ware, and a cup of hot cocoa, with toast to go with it, all served on the same pretty dishes that Jane remembered from her earliest days.

And, of course, Grandmother Rahming looked the same. Rosella had worn the same style for years, dark floral print dresses conservatively long, with a cream-colored lace dickey and a high collar stiffened with whalebone, and a frilly lace jabot down the front. In the summer the dark floral print dresses were replaced in the morning by light colored printed cottons, and in the afternoon with natural tan pongee silk. But always the throat and neck were covered by the lace dickey, which hid from view her large goiter.

Jane had never seen her grandmother in any other mode of dress. Her Aunt Ethel's attire was similar, except that her dresses were shorter and she no longer wore the lace dickey, having had her own goiter removed in 1924, at the same time Grace had also had goiter surgery.

The thyroid surgery had been a touchy subject in the midst of a Christian Science family, but so many friends had urged her to have it done that Ethel had gone ahead with it. Perhaps at that time she had still harbored a few hopes that she might meet a man who would want to marry her, and years of Christian Science treatment had done nothing to remove the disfiguring lump. Ethel had been a very pretty girl otherwise. Tall like her mother, and blond with blue eyes, she had a lovely complexion, the famous English type, fair with pink cheeks. Although she hadn't inherited her father's snapping black eyes, hers had, nevertheless, the same interesting upward tilt at the outer corners. But her pretty looks were beginning to fade somewhat now. Her baby-fine blond hair was getting thinner.

Jane was fond of Aunt Ethel. She was one of the gentle people in the family. Ethel had little personality, but was always kind, never actively involved in a family argument. Grace had resented Ethel because she was never openly critical of Norris, even when he was most flagrantly in the wrong. Grace had never realized how completely in awe of her brother poor Ethie was. Frightened of him, in fact.

Occasionally, when Jane happened to be a bit early in reaching her grandmother's, Ethel was still getting ready to leave for work. She always came to the breakfast table to kiss Jane goodbye. She would lean over and press her soft, rouged cheek against Jane's, and the badger fur collar of her warm winter coat would tickle, and Jane would have to close her eyes to keep the long guard hairs from blinding her. Jane called that badger collar "Ethie's porcupine."

Then off Ethel would go, into the cold dark winter morning, and Rosella would say to Jane. "I wish she didn't have to get up so early and go out into the cold, but I'm just glad she still has her position. So many have lost their employment."

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One day in mid-December Jane came home from school, to find Dee in tears.

“What’s the Matter?” she asked.

“Everything.” Dee said. “At least three different awful things.”

“Well, tell me. Tell me in the order of how terrible they are.”

“I got this real sad letter from Mother. She says she doesn’t have enough money to come for Christmas, she tried to borrow from Aunt Nelle, and also from Aunt Merly, but they said they can’t lend any because they’re worried about money and haven’t got any extra this Christmas. She sounded so sad.”

“I wish I had some to give her.” Jane said. “What about the money you and I saved in our Liberty bell banks that we had when we were little girls? The last time I saw those bank books we each had more than forty dollars.”

“Oh, Janie, Mother used that money long ago.”

“She never told me! I’ve always thought I had forty dollars. I put all my nickels and dimes in there for years. Half-dollars Uncle William gave me, too.”

“Janie! Don’t be mad at poor Mommy!”

“Just that she should have told me, Dee. Well, what’s your other bad news?”

“Freddie has been dating someone else! Jane Pizzi has seen him twice with some dame from nursing school.”

“Who’s Freddie?” Jane wanted to know.

“Freddie Price, for heaven’s sake! I’m crazy about him.”

“Oh, you’ll survive. Tell me the rest.”

“The rest is the worst of all. Jane Pizzi and I were in the Rendezvous at eleven o’clock this morning when who should come in but Dad and Arthur Grey!”

“What was Dad doing there?” Jane asked.

“Spying on me, I guess. They sat in a booth and had a cup of coffee.”

“Well, what’s so terrible?”

“He knew I should have been in class. He came right over and asked me why I was there. I said I didn’t go today because I wasn’t prepared.”

“Well, was he terribly cross about that?”

"Janie, the trouble is only beginning. I haven't been to that class for two weeks. And that's not all. I've lots of cuts in other classes, too."

"Why, Dee?"

"I don't know. I just got behind and I didn't feel like showing up, that's all."

"But why? Why didn't you go to class? Don't you like your courses?"

"Well, frankly, no. I despise most of them. I like French quite a bit, but I'm not wild about that either."

"But why did you want to go to college, Dee?"

"Oh. Jane. Don't be silly. I wanted to be a co-ed. Look, Janie. Nobody likes their courses. I'm not the only one. Everyone I know gripes about classes."

"Well, I suppose. But don't they plan to graduate?"

Dee looked stricken. "Oh Janie! Mother will feel so sad. She had such high hopes for me, and she's already so discouraged."

"Well, then, Dee, why did you do this? You studied hard last year. Why didn't you this year?"

"Oh, Janie, I don't know, I don't know."

"Dee," Jane asked "if you study very hard for the exams and go to every class from now on, do you think...?"

Dee cut her off with a sob, and shook her head. "No, it's too late for that. I've already been dropped from two classes. I've been kicked out, you see. Kicked out."

"You'll have to tell Daddy, then, and write to Mother. But wait till after Christmas. Don't upset everyone's Christmas. Please!"

"Oh, Janie! It'll break, Mother's heart. I hope she doesn't tell Aunt Nelle. I just hate to have Aunt Nelle know."

"That's not so bad. Aunt Nelle's always been fond of you. It would bother me more having Pauline know."

"Don't even talk about that. She'll just gloat, she hates me."

"Oh, Dee, I don't think she hates us," Jane said. "But we ought to do well in our studies because we are Mother's daughters, and I hate the idea of Pauline thinking that Mother's daughters are stupid."

"I'm not stupid," Dee said.

"I know you're not," Jane asked, "Did I say that?"

"No," Dee admitted. "Oh, dear, I wish that Freddie would phone me."

"There's your trouble," said Jane. "Men."

"I guess so," Dee sighed.

Christmas came and went. It was not as sumptuous as the previous one, but there were enough presents to make it very festive and the tree looked pretty in the new house on Channing Avenue, and down the street at Grandma Rahming's and Ethel's place there was a small balsam fir tree also. It was trimmed with all the old heirloom ornaments Jane loved.

Jane went to Oberlin the day after Christmas to spend the school holidays with Mim. She returned to Cleveland on December thirty-first to find a very grim household on Channing Avenue. Dee was closeted in her room and both Norris and Pauline were quiet and uncommunicative. Presently she learned from Dee what had happened.

Dee had not had a chance to tell Norris that she was flunking her courses at the University. The Dean's Office had notified Norris. A letter had come yesterday. There had been a terrible row. Norris would not put forth one more cent toward her education. So what would she do, Jane wanted to know.

"I don't know," Dee said. She was sitting on her bed. "I have to write and tell poor, dear little Mommy. It breaks my heart."

"Why didn't you think of that before?" asked Jane.

"Don't you be mean to me, Jane."

"But you should have thought of a lot of things."

"I know," I've come to my senses at last."

I'LL GET AWAY OUT SOMEHOW

Grace was not as devastated by Dee's letter as one might have expected, though she got little sleep the night after receiving it. Her mind raced. If Dee was no longer attending Cleveland University she really no longer had such a need to continue living with Norris and Pauline. It would be wonderful if Dee could come to New York and get some kind of work. After all, her year and a half of college must be worth something. And it would be just splendid to have a little apartment somewhere with Dee.

Grace was really tired of living with "Polly" Patterson. Polly was really an eccentric person. A devout Christian Scientist, she carried it to all possible extremes. She not only disapproved of doctors and medicine, but also of face creams, toothpaste and rouge and she chided Grace for using them. Grace expected that sometime soon Polly would decide that eating food wasn't necessary either.

Grace speculated about the reasons for Dee's failure to make passing grades in her courses. She finally decided that there must have been two main reasons the stresses and unhappiness caused by having to live with Pauline and Norris, and probably continued grief over her separation from Cameron. Girls didn't get over that sort of an intense love affair. Grace had completely forgotten the fact that Dee's grades in her freshman year had been, all in all, very good. And although Dee's letters bubbled with talk of this boy and that that she was "crazy about", there didn't seem to be anyone with whom she was going steady. No one that was consuming all her leisure time the way Cameron had in Milford. And, after all, Grace reasoned, Dee was older now. She would not act like a high school girl. She was in her twenty-second year. Had it not been for all the moving around from place to place, and falling behind in grammar school, Dee would have been in her senior year in college. She would have graduated in June. Poor baby! Living with Norris and Pauline had been a very bad idea, a big mistake. Pauline must be a dreadful person. All of Dee's letters spoke of it. And she was homesick for her own real mother.

Grace was determined to find a way to get Dee to New York as soon as possible. She'd have to really rack her brains to find the answer. And she'd have to think of just what she would tell people. She certainly was not going to tell a soul that Dee had "flunked." Dee had used that miserable word in her letter, but Grace would not use it, not even the word "failed."

Dee had especially asked her not to tell Nelle and Roge that she'd had to leave college. Grace thought that Nelle wouldn't have been too critical of Dee. In the first place, Nelle had always loved Dee ever since she'd cared for her when she was a baby. And more than that, Nelle would not say much about a daughter with poor school grades, for Nelle's own Babs was anything but a scholar. Of course, Nelle could always claim that the fact that Babs was adopted made anything at all possible in the way Babs turned out. However, Grace decided against saying anything about Dee's failing in college. Nothing to Nelle and Roger, nothing to Ted and Edna Hurst, and certainly nothing to "Polly" Patterson. But she would have to tell them something, for if Dee came to New York there would have to be some kind of explanation.

On the face of it, here in New York, it would be quite simple to say that Norris had found himself quite unable to finance Dee's further education. But the trouble with that was that Ted Hurst went back to Cleveland every now and then, to visit his mother and Edna's mother. And when Ted and Edna went

back to Cleveland they always looked up some of the old crowd and Ted usually saw Norris when he was in town. Norris might tell Ted that Dee had flunked. You couldn't tell what Norr would say, Of course, you couldn't tell what Ted would believe of anything Norris might say. still, since Norris was ever one to brag, he would not be at all likely to tell Ted that his daughter had failed at college, if it weren't true. Ted would know that.

So Grace made her plan. She would explain Dee's difficulties in several ways, and it would be entirely plausible. But she would tell Polly last, for Polly was such a talker that she might spill the news to Nelle over the telephone at the very moment that Grace was on the subway on her way to Nelle's in Jackson Heights. It was because of Polly's zeal as a Christian Scientist that she did such things. She might tell Nelle to be sure and "hold the right thought for Dee."

So Grace went first to Jackson Heights on a Saturday afternoon when Roger would be at home. That way she could tell everything to both of them at once. She wanted Roger to hear things the right way, because perhaps he might be able to help Dee.

When Grace arrived at the 82nd Street apartment, Roger and Nelle were in the kitchen sitting on high stools at the white porcelain tubs. It was so much easier. The tubs had porcelain tops that could be lifted up on laundry day. In the summer when Nelle did the laundry, she would put the basket of clean, wet clothes on the dumb-waiter and haul it up to the roof, where, after she had climbed four flights of stairs, she would hang it out to dry in the sunshine and air.

In the winter Nelle hung the clothes in the kitchen on a wooden rack that could be hauled by means of a pulley, up close to the very high ceiling. Aunt Nelle's laundry facilities were just one of the features of the apartment that had fascinated Jane and Mim and Trink during the period when they had lived in Jackson Heights.

Roge hated the apartment, he said, and he hated New York City. He would have liked to spend all his time at Forest Camp in New Hampshire. He still dreamed of earning a living at writing, but he knew a number of writers, and at present many of them were practically starving. He knew that he was lucky to have his job with the Fruit Growers' Magazine. And he was well aware that any day that job might fold. He had come so near to landing a job with National Geographic, and then he'd found they had an age limit of fifty years. He could only pray that his magazine could hang on and weather out the Depression.

Grace passed Babs on the stairway of the apartment house. Babs was going out to "play." She was going on fourteen years, but she still liked to play outdoors in the "courts" between the apartments. There, she and a friend or two would play the game "roly-poly" and they would play it until the "super " shouted at them and chased them out of the courts.

[Find a flat surface. You will be running so make sure there are no holes or something you can trip on. Also you will need a surface you can write with chalk on, such as a sidewalk or driveway. The game is set up much like hopscotch where you will be jumping from box to box. You will need to make a grid of at least six boxes, two columns and three rows. Boxes should be at least two feet by two feet. You can make more boxes by adding rows but can only have two columns. Write a theme in each box. These

themes can range from colors, girl names, boy names, states, cities, presidents, sport teams and more. Players must line up at behind the first box, roll the ball into the first box and pick it up before it rolls into another box or off the grid. You must pick up ball and be on one foot. As you hop from box to box, bounce the ball and say a name from the theme. Example: if the first box is a girl's names, you must bounce the ball in box and say "Mary," then follow by jumping into the next box, bouncing the ball and saying "Susan." Once complete, go to end of line. When it is your turn again, you have to roll the ball to the second box and pick up the ball before it rolls into another box. Again, go around the grid bouncing the ball and saying a name from the theme. The goal is to go around the whole grid first. If you cannot think of a name or if you do not pick up the ball before it goes into a different box you have to start at the beginning again. First one to complete all the boxes wins.]

"Hi, Aunt Grace," Babs said. "I'm glad you've come. Daddy is in a bad mood again."

"What's the trouble?" Grace asked.

"Same as usual. Worried about his work."

"Well, well. I'll have to try and cheer him up, won't I?"

"Good luck, Aunt Grace."

But Grace wondered how she would be able to cheer Roger when she was bringing only disturbing news about Dee.

Nelle welcomed Grace to a seat at the laundry tubs and poured her a cup of tea.

"Have a crumb bun, Grace. They're fresh today. Babs just got them this afternoon."

"Thanks," Grace said. "I love those buns."

"Well enjoy them while we can afford them," Roger said. "It won't be much longer."

"Oh Roge!-, Nelle and Grace said, speaking at the same time.

"I mean it," he said. "You girls have no idea."

Nelle diverted the conversation.

"What's going on with you, Grace?"

"Oh, a number of things. I'm working on things that may be very promising."

"Let's hope so," Roger grumped.

"Oh, Roge," Grace said. "You're usually so jolly when you're having tea."

Roge only gave a little grumpy snort.

"Well," Grace said breathlessly and turning to Nelle. "I just got a long letter from Dee. Nelle, I should have known better than to send the girls to Norris."

"What happened?" Nelle asked.

"They certainly need to be with me." Grace said. "Jane has had pneumonia twice, and Dee is simply miserable. I've got to get them with me in some way."

"Grace," Nelle said, "I don't see any way you can do that. You're not earning a living for yourself as it is."

"Let them stay with Norris," Roger said. "He's making money hand over fist."

"No," Grace said, "that's exactly what he is isn't doing."

"No?" Roge asked. "The last I heard he wasn't affected by the Depression."

"It's caught up with him now," Grace said.

"Gracie!" Nelle said, "You say that almost enthusiastically."

Grace almost blushed, but she defended herself.

"You'll have to admit it's been very ironic for him to be having luck making money, after all these years of his fooling around while I was working so hard."

"Well, yes," Roger said. "I can understand how you feel. But go on about the girls."

"It's just that Dee has to quit college. She can't go on. She feels terrible about it. She plans to go to work. She wants to come and be with me."

"But Gracie," Nelle said, "she can't very well do that. You haven't a place where you can bring them."

"If Dee can get a job we could get a little place," Grace insisted.

"But what can she do?" Roger asked. "College graduates can't even get work. What's she had? A year of college?"

"A year and a half." Grace said, secretly counting the semester that Dee had just failed to pass.

"Well, that won't help her get any kind of a job," Roge said. "I don't suppose she can type, can she?"

"I don't think so. At least, not the right way. She always planned on college."

Nelle spoke up. "Well, is Norr so hard-pressed that he can't find the money anywhere? I understood his new wife has money of her own."

Grace snorted. "Dee wouldn't go to college on Pauline's money."

"What about Ethel? I guess she has some money of her own," Nelle said.

"Dee wouldn't ask her for that," Grace said. "No, it isn't only the money. It's that Pauline is so impossible to live with. Dee is miserable."

"Pauline seemed quite pleasant when they stopped to see us at camp last summer," Nelle said.

"Humph!" Grace said. "She was no doubt on her best behavior. She isn't that way with the girls. She resents them."

"Grace," Nelle said. "You mustn't get started about Pauline. It doesn't do anyone any good. She didn't take Norr away from you, remember. Get back to Dee. What's she going to do now? Maybe she'll get married."

"Oh, no. She's still in love with Cameron."

"If she were my daughter," Roge said, "I'd have seen to it that she studied typing and shorthand."

"She always wanted to write poetry." Grace sighed.

Roge snorted. "That's fine if you want to make starvation your career."

"Roge," Grace said, "you thought Dee's poems were charming when she was a little girl."

"Yes, but it's a cruel, practical world. Poets starve the same as artists."

"Well, thank you, Roge," Grace said. "I haven't really starved yet."

"Grace," Roge said, "What would you do if you didn't know anyone in New York?"

"She'd go back to Cleveland," Nelle said without thinking. Then she said, "No, I'm sorry. Grace, I know it's been hard for you lately."

"This depression just can't go on much longer," Grace said. "Besides, I want you to know that Polly insists that she wants me to stay with her."

At this point, Nelle chose to change the conversation, though the subject was still money. It made Nelle uneasy to discuss Grace's financial affairs. She and Roger had done so much for Grace over the years since 1913 when Norris ran back to Cleveland to his mama, while leaving Grace behind in New York with little Dee and the unpaid rent. Nelle and Roger had taken Dee for nearly a month then while Grace wound up her affairs in New York. And Dee and Jane had spent their summers in the mountains at Forest Camp Primeval.

Nelle was sure that Grace would be asking to borrow money any day now. Her furniture was in storage, and she was in danger of losing it because of unpaid charges. Some of Grace's most valuable pieces had been brought to Nelle and Roge's apartment - the beautiful ebony Mason and Hamlin grand piano, which Babs could use, as she was still studying. And the wonderful old grandfather clock with wooden works, which Norr had put in running order. Also, an old-time spinning wheel, a fine cherry wood dresser, and a rosewood sofa which was very elegant. All these last pieces Nelle was holding as

collateral for five hundred dollars Grace had borrowed six months previously. Now Nelle was sure Grace was nearly broke again.

Nelle had a little money of her own. It came from the acreage in North Royalton Township that her father had given her years ago. Nelle had sold the land to the Cleveland Park System Board to help complete the chain of peripheral parks surrounding the city. She had put the proceeds into a savings account and had very rarely touched any of it. Roge didn't know anything about the loan to Grace. Ordinarily he wouldn't have objected, but in times like these, he would be very upset that they were losing the interest on the money.

But now, Nelle had something new on her mind.

"I've got something to discuss with you both. I'm thinking of going into real estate. I'm serious."

Roge looked at her in open-mouthed surprise.

"Yes," Nelle said. "I'm considering putting my savings into some land."

"Oh, Tookey, that's nonsense!" Roge said. "Let that money stay right where it is."

"It's not safe where it is," Nelle said.

"Who says?" Roge wanted to know.

"A couple I know at church. The Maples."

"Well, don't pay any attention to them," Roge said. And he left the room, saying he had typing to do on his book.

Nelle turned to Grace.

"I really have a plan for investing my money in real estate, Grace."

"Even if Roge said 'no'?"

"It's my own money if I want to invest it."

"True," Grace said, "but look what happened to me in Milford."

"It's not at all the same, Grace. You bought a house, and you didn't have the money to keep up the mortgage payments. So you lost it. That's different. I'd be paying cash for my lots. Besides, Mr. Maple says that this Depression is going to be over soon, because it is nothing more than mortal mind."

Grace looked so amused at that statement that Nelle had to smile herself.

"Well, it could be so, couldn't it?"

"I suppose," Grace said, "but it seems very real to me."

“Gracie, is your faith in Science slipping?”

“I don't know, Nelle. I don't know. But it isn't if Polly has anything to say about it. Hers is certainly as strong as ever. Tell me what you're planning.”

#####

Since the beginning of the spring semester, Dee had been attending night school at Benjamin Franklin Commercial Sigh School. She studied typing and shorthand and went to classes on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. Norris had told her that he did not expect her to date more than three nights a week. Dee did find a way around that occasionally, but even so, she was studying hard.

In late March Dee received a letter from Grace that was bubbling with enthusiasm.

Dearest little girl,

It looks as if things are beginning to work out for the best. I'll soon be able to have my two dearest little girls back here with me again. O! Things have been happening! I really don't know what to tell you about first. You remember I told you I had been working on something special? Well, I didn't want to tell you until it - was done. And now it is. It is an appliqué wall hanging depicting George Washington at Valley Forge. This is the Bi-centennial of his birth, you know, 1732- 1932. You're probably aware that they have issued a new twenty-five cent piece with Washington on it) and of course you've heard about the bridge? Well, I felt so inspired to do this project after reading several biographies this winter, and I've been busy ever since. I finished it in time for Washington's birthday and it is on display at a school near here. Polly is acquainted with the principal, and they became interested in showing it. (Polly's friend goes to her church). Last night Miss Blakely, the principal, came over to see us. We have found a buyer for the hanging! Polly knows the people, who run a private school here, and she took them to see the hanging. They know someone interested in buying it. I haven't decided what price to put on it. And of course when I do, they will have to decide if they will pay that amount. the only problem is - Polly and her friend each want 10% if the sale goes through! So – We'll see.

Now - the other news. Nelle has made friends with a couple in the Science church, and they do not intend to let this Depression stop them. (Perhaps Scientists do get along better than other people, after all. I had been wondering about that of late). Mr. and Mrs. Maple (that is their name) are starting up a real estate development over in Jersey. It will be called "Maple Park" and the initial investors will be called Maple Park Associates. Mr. Maple showed us a drawing of the entry gates and a prospective layout of the entire development. He had not yet had it blue-printed, but he was going to do that and get brochures printed up right away. They are going to plant maple trees along all the streets, and there will be a very pretty little park in the center of the development.

Nelle has made a down payment on two lots. Mr. Maple has advised her to get in, 'on the ground floor' as the price will go up. Nelle is not saying anything about this to Roge, because she wants to surprise him. She mentioned buying some real estate to him once, and he told her it was a crazy idea, so she's going ahead on her own. Roge is always very leery of investments. He believes totally in savings banks. Mr. Maple says that people would be wise to get their money out of banks and into real estate. He says that land around New York can only increase greatly in value even if the Depression continues a little longer. It's been on for a year and a half and Mr. Maple says it will end this autumn when business picks up after the summer slump.

I am starting a new hanging immediately. I'm just waiting to see if the first one sells, but I've already got an idea for the new one - a Nativity scene. Now don't breathe a word of any of this to your father and Pauline. I have my own reasons, dear. I know that he is making good money and I don't want him discussing what I'm doing at this time. If I can sell a few of these wall hangings and get a little money I shall do what Nelle is doing and buy a lot at Maple Park. Once I get on my feet I'll have you girls back with me. Now I must close and get to work. I'm going to be very busy. Much love to you both. Tell Jane to write. I'm very glad that she has caught up in her Latin and Geometry. I knew she could.

Ever – Your Mom.

Dee had no sooner absorbed that letter from Grace than another followed in less than a week.

Dear Girls -both of you (though Jane hardly ever writes). Well - ! My hanging has been sold. Of course I think I am being charged too much commission, really. But I don't like to make a fuss since I have been staying here with Polly, and on the whole she has been nice to be with. (Though she is eccentric in some ways). O, and it does seem just a little foreign to her expressed beliefs of Christian Science - Love, Principle, etc. etc. - for her top insist on so much commission for herself and her friend. And (I hate to put this thought into words) I do wonder, just a bit, whether the 20% is being divided equally. Really. However, I don't know, for the moment, just how to find out gracefully. I suggested to Polly that we have the friends over for dinner with us. But she didn't want to. Said they're "tiresome." I don't even know her friends' last name. Probably wouldn't call them anyway.

But -all that aside, I'm glad I've found an art form that is new and different and that will sell. So I'm going on full steam ahead with my second hanging. (I'm doing some sketches, and when I get my money I'll get some more materials). I didn't need very many different colors for my "Washington at Valley Forge" because, of course, it was a winter scene with Washington kneeling in the snow to pray, and there were bare trees, gray skies etc. and some red on his cape. I haven't finally decided what my next subject will be, but am convinced it must be timely and popular.

But now, to the main thing I have to tell you. I hope you are working very hard on your typing and shorthand. Nelle and I think we will have a job for you soon. We have been talking to Mr. Maple and he's going to open an office downtown soon for his Maple Park development. Last Sunday afternoon the Maples took Nelle and me over to Jersey to show us some neighborhoods that are similar to what Maple Park will be like. He didn't take us to that area because he said that the streets are under construction there and they are muddy. Well, anyway, Mr. Maple said that if you could be here by the first week of June, you could have the job in his office, if you can type well enough. It's mostly answering the telephone, he said, and only a few letters. The filing will be very simple, too.

Remember, -- Don't tell your Dad yet. Get that Jane to write to me.

Love from Mom.

When Jane came home from school. Dee was waiting for her with the letter. Jane's room was still unfurnished except for the cot, the dressing table made from orange crates, and a straight chair Norris

had brought over from Grandmother Rahming's. There was still no dresser or chest of drawers. Pauline had given Jane a stack of dress boxes from Strohmeier's store to keep her underwear and socks and such things in. Whenever Norris came in the room; (which was seldom) he would remark, "We'll have to see if we can pick up a dresser for you." And then he would forget about it.

But Jane did not spend much time in her room, and wasn't thinking about it most of the day. She got up at 6:30 in order to get to school at 7:40, and everything in the morning was a big hurry. In and out of the bathroom, dressing and putting on make-up, over to Grandma Rahming's for breakfast, then up to the corner by the Adam Hotel to wait for the streetcar in the dark mornings. It had been nicer going to school in Hayden Hills, riding her bike with Mim and stopping at the "Libe" in the afternoon to pick up a big armful of novels and books of poetry. Then on home to raid the kitchen for big thick slices of Aunt Emmie's homemade bread with butter and strawberry jam, and all the good cold milk one might want to drink. But here in Cleveland you couldn't just help yourself to an after-school snack without checking first with Pauline to see if it was alright to take something. Pauline didn't have a cellar filled with canned fruits and jams and jellies. There was never more than one loaf of bread on hand. Usually it was alright for Jane to have a slice of bread with peanut butter, but she never felt that she should take it without Pauline's sanction, for sometimes toast was part of Pauline's plan for dinner. Pauline was usually closeted in her sewing room with a client and Jane would never interrupt in that case.

Dee sat on Jane's cot, and read the letter aloud.

"What do you think of that?" she asked Jane.

"I don't know what to think," Jane said.

"Won't you be glad to get out of here?"

"But to go where, Dee?"

"To New York, of course. Weren't you listening?"

"You and I to move in with Polly?"

"Don't be silly. We'll have a place of our own, now Mother's got started again. And I'll be working."

"I hope it all works out, Dee."

"Don't you have faith in Mother, Janie? She's a very talented person."

"I know that. It's just that it's all so uncertain."

"What do you mean? It sounds fine to me. Splendid!"

"I don't know. Ever since Mother left Cleveland her luck's been bad."

"You're a terrible pessimist, Jane. And a very bad Christian Scientist. You don't hold the right thought."

"I can't help it, Dee. Mother, so often, isn't realistic. She isn't practical."

"Don't talk like Aunt Nelle. That sounds just like Aunt Nelle to me. You should be loyal to Mother."

"Oh, Dee! " Jane sighed. "You should know which one of them I 'm loyal to. But it's true. Mother isn't always practical. There've been times when she's bought pretty things instead of paying her bills."

Dee bristled. " I love Mother's pretty things, and you should too. She always made us an attractive home."

"Yes," Jane said. "I know. But now she hasn't even got a home."

"But that's because of the Depression, Janie, not because she isn't practical. Remember, too, she's an artist."

"But Dee! Can you think of anyone we know who doesn't have a home? Even Mother's artist friends?"

"Well, things are going to be better for Mother. She's had terribly bad luck. And I was part of it. My problems with Cameron were the last straw."

"But Dee, she'd have lost the house anyway."

"Maybe." said Dee.

#####

In April, Jane went to Oberlin to spend Spring vacation with Mim. She returned after the week there, reporting that everyone was well but that Grandpa Hedge's checker game was deteriorating; he could never recall, toward the end of a game, which color men he had started out with, and was always jumping his kings with your kings and taking the pieces for his own. But he was getting his garden ready as always, and he still walked downtown to talk with Mr. J.L. Edwards about business, even though Mr. J.L. Edwards was managing everything these days.

Jane said that Grandpa Martin seemed a bit confused about a number of things, and that Aunt Merly often had to get him to go back in his room in the morning to put on his socks, or put in his teeth. Sometimes he got very put out with Aunt Merly and told her he was "drove to death with women." It was funny, but it was very sad, Jane said. Sometimes in the night he could be heard calling, "Sofie, Sofie" And when he did that, Mim had told Jane, then it made them all cry.

"He was quite a grand old man," Norris said.

"Isn't it strange," Jane said. "When someone's mind starts to get old, people talk about them in the past tense while they're still alive."

"When your mind is gone you might as well be dead. That's why." Norris said, and Jane would remember him saying it.

"Well, Grandpa's mind isn't gone yet. He's still interested in politics," Jane said.

"Oh, yes, and I'm sure he's still Republican."

"Oh, yes. He is. Doesn't think much of President Hoover, though."

"Wouldn't vote for a Democrat, though," Norr said. "Just like Pauline here."

Later, upstairs, Dee said to Jane, "I wonder why on earth Daddy married Pauline, They don't seem to have one single thing in common. Not even politics."

"Perhaps it's just what Mother always said; he wanted a trip to Europe, and Pauline offered it."

"Janie, I don't think it was just that. I think he married Pauline in a hurry just to punish Mother for divorcing him. It was only a Matter of months. I don't think he took time to find out what she was like."

"How did he meet Pauline, anyway?" Jane asked.

"Well, don't ever tell Mother, but it was Betty Long who introduced them. People like to make matches, I guess."

"That explains it. Mother once told Edna Hurst that Betty Long was 'not the most loyal of friends.' I suppose that Was why Mother would like it if all their old friends would help her punish Daddy."

“Why, Janie, what a thing to say!”

“But it’s true. And it embarrasses me for her sake. Because it won’t work. A lot of people like Daddy in spite of his faults.”

“Do you think she shouldn’t have divorced him, Janie?”

“No, I don’t think that. She had to. But she should live with the consequences.”

“But not in Cleveland, don’t you see? That’s why we have to live in the East. I’ll be so glad to get away from here. I wish we could live in Milford, but anything to get away from Pauline. I’m fed up with her tiresome jokes, and her always screaming when she sees a bug, but most of all I’m fed up with the way she hates me.”

“Oh, I don’t think she hates you. I’ve told you that before.”

“Oh, yes, she hates us both. It’s only natural. But me the most, because I flunked and she thinks their money was all wasted on me, and she hates you because you wet the bed and hid the sheets in the closet.”

“Yes, I know. She was mad. But even so, I don’t think she hates me. She knows I was sick.”

‘Even so, said Dee firmly, “she hates us.”

‘Well, I don’t want to talk about it anymore. Do you know what Mim and I did while I was in Oberlin?

“Had an exciting date every night?”

“In Oberlin? Oh, sure. No, we spent all our time reading Grandma Martin’s diaries and Aunt Merly’s letters from Uncle Waldo.”

“Well, thr—r—r—ill!”

“We had a great time reading them.”

“Don’t you and Mim ever think about boys. Janie? At your age, I—“

“Of course. If you want to know, we think about them most of the time. But in Oberlin they don’t start dating early. It’s not like Milford, you know.”

“What about East High?”

“No, that’s different. Some people date, I know. But it’s a huge place and it’s hard to get acquainted. You went there two years and you never dated either. Did you know?”

“No, I guess not.”

“Anyway, I’m too shy. I’m not like Mona James. She’s so at ease with boys. She’s always kidding them. You went and got on the subject of boys, as usual. I remember when I was in the first grade and you were in the sixth, you always talked about boys. I can’t remember a time when you didn’t.”

Dee smiled. “There never was such a time. But I never loved anyone but Cameron. That’s why I want to go East again.”

“He isn’t there, is he?”

“He might be in the summer.”

“I was telling you about reading the diaries. I’m going to start to keep one. I’ve tried to before, but this time I mean it.”

But Jane would write in her diary only a half dozen times during the remainder of the school year. There were far too many days that were much too humdrum to report. Still, when the year was over Jane’s little journal would record a very significant year in her life.

In April she wrote; In all the year that I have been at East High I have never talked with Donald Hall. But I knew, from the first week, that he was here. He is a really odd one. I was sure that he recognized me the first time we passed in the hall. But I am shy, and at first I wasn’t certain that it was he. I mean, I knew it was, but what if I was wrong? And I suppose he may be shy too. He is Art Editor of the Crimson and Gold (our school paper) and I have seen his work when they had an art show at Christmas time. He really has a lot of talent. Mother and Dad keep trying to tell me that I am going to be an artist, but when I see what Donald can do, then I see what talent is. He has it, and I haven’t. And that’s all there is to it.

Once when I was in the seventh grade at Fairmount School, Mother and Dee and I were invited to have dinner at Donald’s home. His mother is an Art School friend of Mother and Dad and all their crowd, so Mother still calls her Hilda Boeker, though she goes by the name of Hall. She teaches music and makes jewelry. She had a nice dinner that night and she and Mother and Dee chatted in the living room. But Donald took me into his room and lit candles and sat crossed legged on the floor and played a Javanese flute. After a while Dee came in and asked what was going on. I remember Donald said, “We are having a séance.” I don’t think that any of us knew what a séance was.

Afterward, Dee and I admired the art work he had pinned on the wall in his room. He uses a lot of color, and wild designs with strange shapes and imaginary animals and birds no one ever saw. I think one of the main things about being a great artist is not the drawing or the painting or the work, but getting a great idea for what to paint. Donald has ideas that no one else would ever think of. I saw him one other time that same year when he came to our apartment when Mother was married to Carle. I can’t remember why he was there, but he and I were fooling around and sort of scuffling, and one of my fingers got sprained. I was quite annoyed with him. I think it was at that time that Dee told me that Donald was Grandpa Rahming’s son. And the reason she told me was because Aunt Nelle was there at the time and she disapproved of Donald’s behavior. He made some rather intellectual wisecracks that

Aunt Nelle didn't understand. She said later that he was a smart-aleck, but that one shouldn't be surprised, all things considered, and she raised her eyebrows and sort of smirked.

Later I asked Dee what all that was about and she told me the whole story of Hilda Boeker and Grandpa Rahming. I was really amazed, but Dee said that Mother really liked Hilda Boeker (Hall) and that the whole thing was Grandma Rahming's fault because she was too "spiritual" to live a normal life. That was the third time in my life that something about the family had been kept secret from me, and then "sprung on me" later. I told Dee the longer you wait to tell something, the more upsetting it is. First it was about Grandpa Rahming's death, and then about the way Dad tricked Mother out of her scholarship to Paris. And then Dee ups and tells me that Donald Hall is my uncle, my father's half-brother. I thought about that for quite a while and wondered what Dad thought about it. But I guess I forgot it soon, because in a day or two Uncle Roge and Aunt Nelle took us to New Hampshire for another summer, and in the fall we didn't come back to Cleveland, but went to Connecticut and had our wonderful year in Milford. Then after that it was Oberlin for a year. For me, that is.

But now, at Last High, here I am, going to the same school with Donald again, and it is a rather queer situation. He interests me because he is related to me and because I don't know if he knows it. Otherwise I probably wouldn't notice him (though he is considered to be a genius). He is not a very attractive boy, although his features are alright. But his head is a bit large around the top (the brainy look) and he has a kind of sallow skin as though he never got into the sunshine. (He probably doesn't; he probably reads all the time, or else paints, etc.) His hair is blond like Aunt Ethel's but his eyes are dark like Dad's. (He is their brother, after all). And his eyes are quite long and tilted up at the outer corners. They are like Aunt Ethel's too.

I doubt if Donald is very popular at East. I never see him going through the halls with anyone else. Brainy kids are seldom very popular anyway, unless once in a while they happen-to be athletic too, and that doesn't happen often.

A couple of days ago Dee was waiting for the streetcar at the corner of 105th Street when along came Donald Hall, and he remembered her and asked if she lived nearby. And apparently he and his mother still live in the same apartment near University Loop where we visited them that time. Donald said that his mother isn't very well. He still is one of a kind, I guess, because he told Dee that she had "Mephistophelian" eyebrows. (Come to think of it, she does pluck them that way). And he was carrying a package which he told Dee had "candles to light my establishment."

This morning in school I passed him on a stairway and he said "Hi" but that was all, and he hurried on. I am sure that he does know who he is, because though he knows me, he acts rather strange. He is sophisticated and at the same time self-conscious. It is very strange, really. He has no family here except his mother. He has an uncle in Java. But here in this city, he has a brother and sister and two nieces. That is, he has and he hasn't. Well — perhaps he doesn't need any of us anyway. As they say, he'll go far. Mom thinks so. She says it will serve Dad right. That isn't exactly logical, is it? It wasn't Dad's fault."

In May Jane recorded:

Aunt Ethel lost her job. That is, she's been laid off, and since May is usually a busy month in the building business Dad is very concerned. I heard him discussing it later with Pauline in their room. They talk loud when they are upset (Dad has always done that, of course. He shouts). I heard Dad say that if Ethel doesn't get another job. we would all go to the poorhouse. I'm sure he knows there are no poor—houses any more. But Pauline told Dad that he and she didn't have to go to any poorhouse just because Ethel was out of work. She said that he didn't have to support them, and certainly she didn't. Then Dad said that he would always feel obligated to take care of his mother and sister because they had stood by him in all the troubles of his life. (That's true. I know). Pauline said there wasn't any way to help Ethel and Grandma, because there wasn't any money to spare to tide them over till Aunt Ethel got another job. Dad said that he doubted if Ethel could get work again, and Pauline said "Why?" Dad said that Ethel was in change of life, and probably she wasn't efficient any more Pauline asked Dad how he expected to help Ethel when they hadn't any money to speak of in their savings account. She said he needn't think he was going to sell any of her stock. Dad then reminded her how when he and she were in France and didn't have enough money to get home, Aunt Ethel and Aunt Ada had cabled them money. "Oh," said Pauline. "But that was different, it was just temporary." "Well, so was this temporary," Dad said. Now, he was contradicting himself, Pauline said. What about Ethel never getting a job again? Dad said he hoped that wasn't the case. He also said, that one thing could be done to help Ethel and Grandma. There was no sense in paying two rents. They could all live under one roof again, and he could have the benefit of his mother's cooking. At that, Pauline let out sort of a shriek and I heard her crying for quite a while after that. Dad won't talk to her when she cries.

Later Jane recorded interesting news:

Mother has sent a letter telling Dee to come to New York as soon as she possibly can, because there is a job opening for her in the office of this real estate company. Maple Park Associates. Mother says she's afraid if Dee doesn't get there soon, someone else will get the job first. Dee's classes at night school won't end until June, but she says she thinks that perhaps if she tells her teachers that she has a job waiting in New York City, they will give her a grade and let her go early. She says that she is more sure of herself in her typing than in shorthand. I thought that shorthand looked like fun, sort of. Mim and I were trying to use it a little bit to write down the words of popular songs on the Rudy Vallee Hour. We like Bing Crosby more, by the way. He doesn't sing through his nose.

Tonight at table, Dee told Dad and Pauline all about the job with Maple Park Associates. Right from the start, I could tell that Pauline was delighted with the idea. There isn't any good feeling between Dee and Pauline since Dee flunked out of the University. Well, things weren't so good before that. I don't think that Pauline is very fond of me, either, but I've been getting good grades at school lately, and she sees me studying my Latin and my geometry, so she approves of that. I still don't think she has forgiven me for hiding some wet sheets in the closet once. I figured she wouldn't understand how when I was sick last fall I wet the bed and didn't want her to know about it. Trink was the same as me that way, and the more we worried about it the worse it got. It happened often when we were little. We hardly dared to go to sleep on a Pullman car for fear we'd wet the bed. Only Mother and Aunt Merly could seem to understand how it was. I was sure Pauline wouldn't.

Well, anyway, Dee is going, and she's all excited. I think she has in the back of her mind that she will go to Milford and see Cameron. I wish she wouldn't plan on it. He never wrote to her after he left, except one funny, very passionate letter that didn't sound like him at all. She suspected that there was a mean trick involved somewhere. Perhaps his mother did it, or a roommate that he'd confided in. Or, quite likely, he wrote it when he was drunk and "uninhibited", as they say. Dee said that they had admitted that they might never see each other again, and she didn't think Cameron would write a letter like that just to upset her. Besides, it was typed, and the signature "Cameron" was typed. It remains a mystery, since he never wrote again, and left no address.

Dad told Dee that he couldn't spare the money for her bus fare to New York. Pauline immediately said that she would lend Dee the money so she could go. So Dee will be leaving, and I'll be staying, unless Mother can work something out for me, too. I'll be sixteen in June.

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Dee left on the first of June. She went on the nine o'clock bus which would ride all night, and she would sleep in her chair, which could be tipped back. She was a bit frightened; she'd never traveled in that fashion before. Norris warned her not to speak to strange men. "If you have trouble, tell the driver about it. Let us know that you get there safely."

The next day, Skipper Root stopped around at the Channing Avenue house, expecting to say goodbye to Dee.

"She's already gone," Jane told her.

"I thought she was leaving on the third," Skipper said.

"No, the first. I guess you heard wrong."

"I'm sorry I missed her. I was going to get her to walk over to the Rendezvous with me. She used to like that place when she was still in school. I went with her once or twice with her friend Alice. I keep forgetting that you're grown up, Jane. Want to walk over with me for a Coke?"

They walked across University Loop, past the marble steps that led down to the lagoon in Whitfield Park. The swans that Jane's one-time stepfather, Carle, had liked to photograph, were sailing serenely around on the calm water, each one doubled by its image beneath it. And on beyond, above a flight of terraced formal gardens, the Cleveland Museum of Art seemed to float in all its Athenian glory. Cleveland's Parthenon" it was sometimes called. "The most beautiful piece of architecture in the New World" Norris declared it. In truth, it had classic simplicity, with a central portal, framed by four Ionic columns, and the rest of the facade entirely plain with no windows breaking the expanse of white marble.

As she glanced toward the Art Museum, Jane was reminded that the May Show was still on.

"I think the 'Show' is on another week."

"What show is that?" Skipper asked.

"The May Show, said Jane. "All the Cleveland artists enter their work. It's been going on as long as I can remember. The Museum was completed the year that I was born. I remember when Dee and I were small, we always were brought in from Chagrin Falls on a Sunday afternoon to see the exhibition and see what pictures Mother and Dad had in that year. It was always such a special event. We always had new orgJanie party dresses and new patent leather slippers for the occasion. I can remember to this day how patent leather smells, can't you? We used to rub Vaseline on it to keep it from cracking."

"I still have a pair of patent pumps," Skipper said.

"One year, when I was six or seven years old, " Jane said, "was very special. Mother and Dad's friend Betty Long had done miniatures of Dee and me, and they were accepted for the 'Show!'"

"What do you mean, 'miniatures'?" Skipper asked.

“Tiny paintings on ivory. Little portraits, about two inches by three inches. I must have been six, because I posed in my yellow orgJanie that Mother made, and Dee had a cerise one. We wore them for the May Concert at school when I was in the first grade. “

“I remember those dresses,” Skipper said. “Yours had about a million little ruffles. Your mother was so clever.”

“I saved that dress.” Jane said. “I wonder where it is now. Probably gone with all my other keepsakes. When Mother left Milford she must have got rid of most everything.”

“Not that piano!” Skipper said. “Nor that apple green sofa!”

“No. They’re at Aunt Nelle’s in New York.’

Skipper changed the subject.

“How is your father doing these days? Still getting work to do?”

“Things aren’t as good as they were last year, no. But he has three things in the Show this year. An oil, a watercolor, and a photograph of me, of all things.”

“Oh, really! Oh, let’s go see them. Let’s not go to the Rendezvous,” Skipper said.

They crossed the formal paths of Whitfield Park beside the lagoon, and climbed the Museum’s many marble steps, and passed through into the galleries with their quiet cork floors, and Rahmingward—slanting skylights.

The first gallery on the left (the Main Gallery) always housed oil paintings, unless there was some large traveling exhibition of a different nature such as archaeological findings, one—man shows of masters, etc.

Much of the year the galleries displayed items from the permanent collection. (Norris Rahming had been very proud when the Museum had bought one of his oils, depicting a scene in a village in the south of France.)

Today the signs over the doorways announced that the current display was “The Eleventh Annual Exhibition of Works by Cleveland Artists & Craftsmen.”

In a corner of the Main Gallery, a desk was always placed, during the May Show, to handle any purchases made by the public. The desk was manned that afternoon by Betty Long, and Jane spoke to her for a moment or two, and introduced Skipper to her.

Farther down the room, Skipper asked Jane, “Who was that woman?”

“She went to Art School at the same time Mother and. Daddy were there. She was Mother’s best friend for years. She and Edna Hurst. Betty is the one who did the ivory miniatures of Dee and me.”

"Is she the one Dee always called Aunt Betty?"

"Yes, she's Aunt Betty. We called her that when we were little. We loved her."

"Well, what happened?"

"Nothing. Only perhaps Mother thinks Betty's too friendly with Daddy. I guess Mother thought they should take her side. Her old friends. I mean. Mother says that Betty is nice, but one can't be sure that she'll keep a confidence. She always tells Mother any news about Dad and Pauline, and Mother thinks Betty relays things about her to Dad. Still, I don't think it's very odd, because Betty has a studio in the Fine Arts Building, where Dad had his studio for years. I can just see Dad passing Betty in the hail and saying 'What do you hear from ol' Hedgy these days?' Betty would have a hard time not telling him anything. Dad would pry it out of her, if there was anything to tell. That's just one reason Mother left this town. To get away from that sort of thing. And of course, Carle wouldn't go along. So that was that."

"Well," Skipper said. "You can't blame Carle for that."

"No," Jane said. "I don't blame any of them."

"Is Betty Long married?"

"No, I don't know why. I never thought about it."

"She's quite pretty. Lovely eyes," Skipper said.

"Yes, she is pretty. But you know - today is the first time I've noticed that she's looking older. She's always been just 'Auntie Betty' to me. She's Mother's age, I imagine. She's forty-five or so."

"No doubt she'll stay an old maid," Skipper said.

"Dad wonders about that. He says he isn't sure whether she's an old maid or not."

"I thought you said she'd never — oh, yes! I see what you mean."

Just then they came to Norris's oil painting, "Mediterranean Fishing Village." It had a card indicating it had won "honorable mention."

"It's his only oil in this year," said Jane. "Last year he had three oils in, and the year before that he had a second prize. He had a second prize one other time, too. He's had several honorable mentions, but he's never had a first or a third. Dad says he'd rather not get any prize at all than get a third. He says it sounds dreadful."

"Does your mother get her pictures in, too?"

"Well, of course, she's not in Cleveland any more. You have to live here. But I don't think Mother ever entered anything in a May Show. She was too busy doing her own art work — her fashion drawings for the newspapers and such. Things that made money."

They wandered into a second gallery of oil paintings, and on into a watercolor room, where something caught Jane's eye. She crossed the room to look more closely at an unusual picture done in white tempera on black paper. Close up it appeared to be an elaborate, highly detailed design, but from across the room it was obviously a portrait, and Jane had recognized the person it represented. It was, in fact, a self-portrait with a time-honored title: "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man" Donald Hall.

"Ah, ha!" Jane said. "I thought so!"

"What?"

"It's a portrait, see? And I recognized it. I know him. He goes to East High."

On each side of the portrait was a smaller picture. Each one of them -was titled "Study in White on Black."

"Just think, he got three pictures in. Wonder what Dad will think of that," said Jane.

Skipper looked so puzzled that Jane added, "He's only seventeen years old. He's some kind of a relative of ours."

"I'm not sure if I understand that sort of art," Skipper said. "I prefer your father's work."

"That's 'realism.'"

"I like it," Skipper said.

"So do I. But I like this too. Mother says Donald will probably go far. He's very original. That's the most important thing. Do something that's never been done before."

But Skipper was losing interest in the talk about Donald Hall "the relative of some sort."

"Where's the picture of you?" she asked Jane.

"On the other side in the photograph section."

They crossed the main hall again, past the knights in armor.

"I always liked this room best when I was little," Jane said. "It's always the same. I bet it always will be."

They passed into the galleries of the east wing. First a room of large watercolors, where one of Norris and Grace's art school teachers still continued to win all the prizes year after year. He was so good that the Museum had this year announced that Frederick Wilson would in the future not show his pictures in competition with the other Cleveland artists. He was a true master of watercolor and his work had been shown in galleries throughout the world. He had given one of his fine pictures to Carle and Grace for a wedding present, but when they were divorced, Carle made off with it.

After inspecting the watercolor by Norris entitled 'Stone Fences, Provence,' the girls proceeded to the gallery where the photographs were hung. Jane dawdled around, showing Skipper three excellent pictures by her former step-father, Carle Semon.

"He made these on a trip down Tennessee River with my Uncle Roge several years ago. I guess he's just getting back into the swing of things after the divorce. Poor Carle."

"Divorces are so messy, aren't they? I hope nothing like that ever happens to me."

"Me, too," agreed Jane.

"Did I tell you that I was going with Bob Bexley again?"

"No, but Dee mentioned it to me."

"You know I went away to college downstate to get away from him."

"You disliked him that much?"

"No, but we used to argue on all our dates. He wanted me to make love and I said no. I thought I ought to get away from him and meet other men. After all, I went with Bob all the years I was at Chagrin Falls High School. From the seventh grade on."

"So now you're dating him again."

"Yes, as soon as he found that I had quit college he tracked me down. Came right to the restaurant."

"Is he through college now? Is he serious? Are you engaged?"

Skipper laughed. "What a string of questions! No, he's not through. He's in the School of Architecture here at Cleveland U. He has one more year to go. Yes, he's serious. He says it, anyway. No, we are not engaged, I don't want to be."

"Do you love him, Skipper?"

"I'm not sure."

"Then you don't," said Jane promptly.

Skipper laughed again. "You sound like 'Mrs. Experience' herself."

"I just think if you really love someone you wouldn't have those doubts."

"I think so too." Skipper agreed, "I don't want to talk about Bob Bexley any more. Where's this famous picture of you?"

"Famous! Ha, ha! It's over there by the door. I hate it!"

The picture was what Norris called a “mezzo print” - a half-tone effect done in a soft sepia brown, and matted in cream color, It had been taken in the autumn when Jane and Dee first came to live with Pauline and Norris. Jane had been fourteen, but she looked a bit younger. Her hair was straight, and worn in a long Dutch bob that would later be called a “page boy” cut. She had used no make-up at that time, and her face had a round-cheeked look of innocence. To Norr she looked like the little girls of southern France. “Very Mediterranean,” he had said.

“You look pretty,” Skipper said. “I don’t know why you hate it. Of course, you’re much older now, and you’re curling your hair, How old are you, Janie?”

“Sixteen.”

“Golly, how the years fly. How the hours fly, too. Gee, I’ve got to get the 4:30 bus. I’m working this evening.”

“Still at the Country Kitchen?”

“Yes, but I’m going to look for something here in the city. Bob’s been coaxing me to, and I know I can make more money here, but I’d have to rent a room, so I might not be much ahead.”

On the way down the Museum steps, Skipper said, “We never did get our Coke, but I’ll walk over to Grand with you and catch the streetcar. Tell me, what will you do now that Dee’s gone back East again? Will you stay with your Father?”

“Guess I’ll have to. Mother can’t send for me yet. I’d like to get away from here. Dad and I hit it off fine when I first came to live with him. He thought I was ever so pretty and ever so smart. But now, he’s annoyed with both Dee and me.”

“Why you? I know about Dee.”

“Oh, Dad and I had a big fight about a month ago. And I guess I showed him that I had inherited his bad temper. It was all so silly, too. On the way home from school, they were selling newspapers up at the corner where I get off the streetcar. They had headlines that said the Lindbergh baby was found dead.”

“I remember that day. Everyone felt so sad.”

“Yes. And our whole family felt bad from the very start, but mostly Dad and I. It happened the first of March, remember? And there was a lot in the papers the first few days; they were describing a car that had been seen around Hopewell near the Lindbergh’s. They thought it was a grey sedan, you know, and that the kidnapers would maybe try to get out of New Jersey. Well, anyway, we had a very warm day about then, it must have been around a week after the kidnapping, maybe less. I got out of school at three and it was so nice and spring-like outside. I decided not to take the Sloane Avenue streetcar, and instead, I walked through on 75th Street. I’d been planning walking on Cartwright Street past Grandma Rahming’s old place, and then I would get the 105th Street streetcar. I like to walk down Cartwright once in a while if I don’t have too many books to carry. Did you know my other grandparents lived on

Cartwright once? But, you know, that neighborhood isn't as pretty as it once was. The houses need paint."

"It's the Depression," said Skipper, "but where does the Lindbergh baby come into this?"

Jane laughed. "I'm getting to that. Well, I walked down 75th Street, and as I was going along, I came to this car parked at the curb. It caught my eye as I got near to it because it had a New Jersey license plate, and it was a grey sedan. And then I really got kind of excited. As I walked by I glanced inside and on the back seat I saw a pink baby blanket and an empty baby's nursing bottle. It occurred to me that I should get the license number but I didn't want to look back at the car, because that might alert the kidnapers if they were looking out the window of the house. They'd think I was suspicious, and they'd leave in a hurry. So I just went on strolling by without hesitating, and I kept on till I got to Cartwright Street. I turned the corner and went down past three or four houses, and then I turned around and went back to 75th Street. I figured that anybody looking out from the house before would probably have lost interest when I walked on by. So I went back by the car again, and this time I memorized the license number without even turning my head toward it. Just my eyes. Then I walked on back to Sloane Avenue again and took the streetcar home the usual way. Oh, and I glanced in the sedan again when I passed the second time. They definitely were baby things. Of course, I don't know if the Lindbergh baby was still using a bottle for his milk or not. Maybe the kidnapers wouldn't know about that either. Well anyway, it was just this wild idea I had, you know? The man hunt was on, nationwide. As I thought about it afterward, I realized that a car with a New Jersey license would be much less noticeable in New Jersey than anywhere else. But maybe they panicked and fled the area at the very first alarm. I mean, that's what one figured then.

When I got off the car at 105th Street and Grand, I bought a newspaper (there was always a new headline with every edition that came out.) Then I hurried home as fast as I could and I told Dad about the car on 75th Street, and Dad was as excited as I was. He didn't hesitate a bit about calling the police. Pauline agreed that it was the thing to do. We knew it was just a possibility, but-. The police seemed interested and took the information and thanked Dad, but of course we all know how it turned out. We grabbed the paper the next morning, hoping to read that the kidnapers had been caught in Cleveland, and that the baby was safe and well. And all the time he was dead in the woods in New Jersey.

"Well, why is your father mad at you? I don't get it."

"Yes, well you see, after the baby was found, the papers had screaming headlines again and everyone was so outraged. I came home from school and saw the news when I got off the streetcar. I bought a paper and took it home. No one was around. Dee was gone somewhere, and Pauline up in her sewing room with the door closed. Dad's car was gone. I sat down to read about how the colored man had happened to find the baby's body in the woods. Then Dad came home and he'd heard the news. He just reached out and grabbed the paper away from me. It made me mad the way he did it. I told him he was rude, that it was my newspaper, and he had no right to snatch it when I was reading it. He told me it wasn't mine, that nothing was mine. He said I was a minor, just a child, and couldn't own anything, it was all his.

"I said to him, 'Now I know why Mother always said you were a real pill.' That really made him furious. He said that I was an 'incorrigible girl' and he'd have to send me away to Blossom Farm Correctional School. He said that he'd thought I was a nice girl, but that he was now terribly disappointed in me. I told him that I had inherited some of his bad temper and that it embarrassed him to recognize it. That really annoyed him. It was all so silly. Of course, things calmed down, but he never has said he was sorry for anything he said."

"Have you?" Skipper said.

"Nope," Jane said, "but he is a pill. He's famous in the family for being one. A charming pill."

Skipper laughed. "He is charming, I always thought."

"Not if you have to live with him. Dee's lucky she went to New York. I'm stuck here."

"Permanently?"

"Permanently! I guess not. I'll get a way out, somehow."

Then Skipper had to catch her streetcar, and it would be two years before Jane would see her again.

IT WAS FUN WHILE IT LASTED

When Dee arrived in New York she spent the first few days with her mother at Polly Patterson's apartment. It was understood by everyone that this was only temporary. Polly's place was too small for three people and their things, but more than that, Polly was an old maid, and a Christian Scientist old maid at that, and Dee was uncomfortable in her presence. She was convinced that Polly disapproved of her. Dee had no quarrel with most of the Christian Science teachings; they had always attracted her. But some aspects of them annoyed her. Mrs. Eddy was no doubt a great leader, but she was prudish. No tea, coffee, alcohol or tobacco. What would one's friends think of these ideas. And Polly (whom Grace still called "Penny" as in the old days) subscribed to all those taboos.

Nelle and Roger enjoyed Dee's company. Since babyhood when they'd cared for her, she had been a pet of theirs. They urged her to stay with them "Until you get started, and you and Grace get a place of your own," Nelle said.

Roger quizzed her about her job with the Maple Park Associates.

"Do you like your work?" he asked her.

"That's hard to say, Uncle Roge. So far there isn't any work to speak of. Mostly, I just sit there wishing the phone would ring. Once in a while there is a contract to type or a letter to write."

"What about Mr. Maple? Doesn't he give you much dictation?"

"He's hardly ever there. I haven't seen him since the first day. I just take phone calls, mostly, and take names and messages. Frankly, most of the time I've been writing poetry."

"It doesn't sound as if Maple Park Associates is exactly booming," Roge said.

"Mr. Maple doesn't seem a bit worried about it," Dee said. "Whenever I've seen him he seems as cheerful as ever."

"Well, that leads me to believe he doesn't understand what's going on in the business world. No one in his right mind should be cheerful at this time in history."

"It's probably just that he's a Christian Scientist, Uncle Roge. They're always cheerful."

Roge left the room muttering that his business was terrible. Indeed, it couldn't be worse, he said.

On a Sunday afternoon in the middle of June, Roge, Nelle, Grace and Dee had a conference.

"We will have to look at all the realities," Roge said. "Christian Science is very fine, but we cannot just sit around quoting Mrs. Eddy and waiting for Divine Love to meet our every human need. We have to do something ourselves. My salary is a disgrace at the present time, it just barely serves to keep us under a roof, what with taxes and upkeep on this flat, Nelle's cosmetic sales haven't worked out. Grace is still waiting (like Mr. McCawber) for something to turn up. And Dee's still waiting for her first week's pay.

(Why this fellow Maple should insist on a hold-back I'll never know). He's apparently not a big outfit, in spite of all his brochures and advertising.

"So what it comes down to is this. Dee is working (and I trust it will, be a good thing). And I must keep on with my job, such as it is, for the time being anyway. But the thing to do is clear enough. Nelle, you and Babs will have to get on up to Forest Camp as soon as Babs's school is out. We've got to have the biggest garden we've ever had. I talked to William downtown yesterday, and he is down and out. His sales have dropped off terribly. Edward is doing better with his janitor service than any of the rest of us. Still, they are living in one room down near 43rd Street. I told William if he'd go up to the farm and put in a garden for us and take care of it, he could spend the summer. He thinks business will pick up in the fall. Many people think so, but I don't know. Anyway, William said he could do it. Says he'll go up Monday and get going on the garden. Button will plow it, I know. Honey, fix us a pot of tea, will you? I feel faint.

They all smiled. Roge had always said "I feel faint," when he wanted tea and crackers.

While they drank their tea, Nelle did some fretting about spending the summer at Forest Camp, alone with just Babs, and her brother-in-law, William Wooldridge.

"In the first place, the natives would gossip about it. In the second place, I hate to spend a whole summer up there when we don't have more people."

"We can't afford a crowd anymore," Roge said. "But I assumed Grace would go up with you.

"Fine." said Lacy. "Would you, Gracie? You could get some painting done."

"I might at that," Grace said, warming to the idea. "Although I should go ahead and get my new tapestry done. Polly is sure it will sell."

"I'm sure it will, too," said Nelle. "And you can do it just as well in New Hampshire. You can work on the tapestry in the evenings and in the daytime you can paint pictures."

"But I never found I could get much art work done up there," Grace said. "There was always so much in the way of cooking and chores."

"Well, Babs is older now, she can do lots of things. She'll want us to invite the cousins, too. Maybe Mim and Trink, or Jane could come too."

"Well, if you have a crowd there's the problem of food again," Roge said. "I only meant to put you and Babs up there."

"When we had lots of people there were cars to get around in," said Nelle. "I hate to be up there all summer when you aren't there."

"I'll get up there a couple of times," Roge said. He was not yet ready to discuss it with Nelle, but an idea was growing in his mind. It involved moving permanently to the farm in New Hampshire. It had been his plan twelve years ago, when they bought the place, to live there and make a living writing. He hadn't

expected to get rich that way. Few writers do, but what a satisfaction in that kind of life! To make one's own hours, and not spend half one's day traveling the subways around Manhattan. How wonderful! Not to have to fight the traffic on the motor highways around New York, just to take the auto out for a little weekend jaunt. But, he figured, he and Nelle and Babs ought to be able to live at Forest Camp the year round. After all, the old couple who'd lived there before had eked out a living there. He and Nelle should be able to do it too, especially since Nelle had such a fine knowledge of farm life. Nelle could do everything on a farm, from raspberry jam to soap made from cooking fat. Probably if Nelle were strong enough she'd be able to even butcher a hog! But they wouldn't keep animals; that was getting into it too deep. Well, maybe they'd have a few chickens, they could use part of the barn for a chicken house. One of the old box-stalls, perhaps. Now that he'd bought the Model T truck with caterpillar tracks, the logistics problem was better. Groceries could be hauled up the mountain. There was another difficulty, however. Nelle was getting reluctant to drive the car. (She had never driven the tractor). In fact, Nelle had only learned to drive in 1926. and she had only driven in New Hampshire in the two summer months while they were 'in camp.' She would never consider, for one minute driving in and around New York City. She had learned too late in life, of course. Nelle was going through the change. (Had been for ten years, in fact.) She was nervous as a cat when she drove. Capable as Nelle was at almost everything, she wasn't at all at home behind the wheel. Like her father, she'd been fine with horses, and Roge always had a feeling that, like the old man, she would pull back on the wheel and cry "whoa!" if trouble arose. Now, Roge didn't know whether Nelle would want to drive at all. The last time they had gone to the mountains, the previous August, they'd spent only three weeks, and since he'd been there, Nelle hadn't driven at all. The year before that, the summer of 1930, he'd left the Buick with Nelle and come back to New York on the train as he had done several other summers. But Babs had reported that her mother "hated to drive" and was a bundle of nerves. All this was one reason he'd been glad that William had agreed to spend the summer at Forest Camp. He could drive the tractor, and maybe the Buick too, Roge decided to leave it, though Roge was a bit reluctant to do that because he had a notion that William liked to get drunk once in a while if he could get hold of something to drink.

But meanwhile, Nelle was speaking. 'It's always better up there when there's more people. It's hardly a circle around a campfire with only three of us.'

"Nelle, we just can't afford summers like that anymore. The good days are all over. Once I could pay for other people's summer vacations. No more. It was fun while it lasted."

"It would have been more fun if more people had done their share of the drudgery," Nelle said.

"That's right," Roger said, warming to the subject.

Grace was embarrassed, because it had always been a sore point with Roge that Norr and some of the others had been lazy when they were at Forest Camp. But then Grace recalled how, over the years, the children had always washed all the dishes, and all the laundry, and ironed, peeled potatoes, raked hay, picked berries, gone for the milk and mail, and weeded the garden.

"The children always helped a lot," Grace said, almost timidly now.

“Well, I should hope so,” Roger said. “Nelle used to slave all summer cooking for a mob of people. It was only right that the youngsters should earn their vacation in the mountains.”

But the whole discussion had put a new idea into Roge’s head.

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True to Nelle's prediction, when Babs heard they would be spending the entire summer at Forest Camp, she begged for a cousin or one of her chums to be invited along. Nelle decided it would be best to have a cousin this year because it would be a very hard-working summer, with the big garden. She couldn't expect one of her neighbor's children to want to work at lots of chores. Babs had invited one or another of her friends several times in past years and it hadn't worked out too well. One of the girls had complained afterwards to her mother that "Mrs. Fison is just a slave driver. She expects us to work all the time.'

Nelle believed in chores for children. Her mother had always quoted the Bible and various proverbs and axioms when Nelle was growing up (indeed all her life) Such phrases as 'Satan finds some mischief for idle hands to do' had apparently sunk deep into Nelle's consciousness. But, while she'd always made her bed and had various chores to tend to, in her own childhood, Nelle had had far more leisure time than her little summer guests ever had at Forest Camp. And the reasons were simple - Nelle's parents had always had hired help inside the house and out, while at Forest Camp there were no servants, and conditions were even more primitive than they'd been at the Old Brick homestead when Nelle grew up. There were some parallels, of course — no gas or electric stove, etc., etc. But the Old Brick had several great advantages over Forest Camp. Number one, it was accessible, being right on a traveled road. Two, no one had to walk a mile and a half for milk or mail. No one had to drive nine miles to the nearest doctor or drug store or grocery.

Forest Camp smelled like the piney woods. It had breathtaking vistas of the White Mountain ranges all the way to Crawford Notch. Norris had gloried in the view, and was quite put out with Emmie for saying it was nice, but couldn't compare with Colorado. And of course, Forest Camp had fleeting glimpses of deer, and an occasional bear! And the very purest air and blue skies, with cloud shadows crawling across the mountains, and sunlit flares of white birch trees against the pines. Now, in 1932, Nelle thought about past years.

Everyone had loved it. And the first summer everyone had helped fix the place up. Norris Rahming and William Wooldridge and Charles Martin had all helped Roger tear down the ramshackle woodshed and carriage shed and the old pig pen beside the barn. (It was in the one-time pig-pen area where the soil was perfect for a vegetable garden.) The men willingly hauled native stone to make a fire 'ring' for wiener and marshmallow roasts and campfire sings. They had moved the privy with much hilarity, and they'd worked on the road up the bill, in hopes of getting their cars up to the house. They hadn't succeeded that first year. It was a steep half mile, but it had been fun and a huge challenge, and Norr had said another year he'd make sure he got to the top of the road.

The second year was more work — this time building and painting and repairing. Merly and her two little girls came from Hayden sills, and brought Emmie with them. Charles didn't come; he was courting his fifth wife. Roger's father Sherwood came for awhile (and got lost on the mountain). Also, for a few weeks, Roger's sister Millie and her two children, came. Norris and Grace came for a month with Dee and Jane. So much of the time, that second summer, Forest Camp was peopled by women and young

children, and Roger had had his hands full with the heavy chores to do alone. While Norris Rahming was there he helped some, but his main interest had been fixing the automobile road. Before the second summer was over, John and Sophia Martin managed to see the Forest Camp 'farm.' Nelle forever regretted that she'd urged her parents to come. Sophia's rheumatism worsened, and she was never to walk again after that summer of 1922.

The third summer was the time when Roger had really poured the money into his summer home. He had hired Frank Button for six weeks during the early part of the vacation period. Frank could build or fix anything, it seemed. And he had four sons who were just like him.

When Grace and Norris came in the fourth summer, they had brought Alan Grey with them. He'd been lots of fun and had stories to tell around the campfire. He had a good singing voice, too, and could harmonize beautifully.

At the end of that summer, Roge's sister Millie had said to Nelle, "I hope you'll invite them all back again next summer."

Nelle had spoken rather sharply to her sister-in-law.

"That's all very well to say, but Roge and I are finding all this company quite a burden, if you want to know the truth. We've had a few contributions of cash, toward the groceries, but nobody wants to share the work. They all just want to loll around and relax."

"But Nelle," Millie protested. "they're on vacation. They work all year and look forward to resting. You shouldn't have invited people to be your guests if they were supposed to work."

"Oh shucks Millie! Guests, my eye! We're family. Everyone is supposed to pitch in and help. Roge and I have provided the place. Anywhere else they went for their vacation would be expensive."

"Well, yes, unless they visited other relatives or friends somewhere."

"Millie, you're just arguing. The whole point is — we have this lovely woodsy, wonderful place, and everyone loves it, but they've got to help. Roge and I have it figured out. There are five main chores around here. Cooking and dishes, laundry — those are women's jobs. And for the men, there's wood-chopping, privy-cleaning, and hauling the provisions up the hill."

"That's the trouble, Nelle —" Millie said.

"What is?"

"Well, that hill to begin with, and the privy. They're always dreadful."

"That's just too bad. Who doesn't like camp life needn't come," Nelle said.

But they had continued to come. However, the next summer was the fifth summer, 1925, and in that year Merly Martin Lemmon became a widow and Grace Martin Rahming became a divorcee.

Nobody in the family had realized how ill Waldo was until he was gone. And, of course, that summer Merly and her two little girls hadn't gone to the mountains.

Nelle had complained, in a letter to Grace, about Norris, and she had said he would not be welcome at Forest Camp again unless there were to be a solid promise that Norr would share in the chores and not leave too much to Roge. Roge, she said, thought that Norr was great fun when he wanted to be nice, and also he was very clever about repairing things and finding solutions to problems, but much of the time he was only thinking about himself or bullying Grace around. But, Nelle had assured Grace, she and the children would be welcome to come to camp any summer.

Grace had been happy to have that invitation, but she informed Nelle that they would not need to worry about Norris in future. She was divorcing Norris; the papers were being prepared.

Except for the sad news of Waldo's passing, the summer of '25 had been a pleasant one for Nelle. She had been alone with the children, without anyone else to question her decisions. Nelle decided that the youngsters were old enough to take over regular daily chores. Dee was fourteen years old, soon to be fifteen, and Billy was nearly fourteen. Jane was nine and Babs was seven. Billy and Dee were assigned to going for the milk every day, while Jane washed the breakfast and lunch dishes, and Babs dried them. Edward would split kindling wood and keep the wood bin in the kitchen full. Dee could help carry stove wood in, and keep the living-room tidy and swept. All four children helped weed the small garden beside the barn.

Nelle did much of the garden work herself, though. She liked to hoe, because the soil was easy to work. It was rich earth; the pig pen had been there. And Nelle liked picking berries, first strawberries, then all the others that came in succession. And she loved to cook the simple things that were part of farm life as she had known it when she was growing up in the Old Brick. When Roge came with the car, they shopped in Plymouth, and had some fresh meat for a few days. In between, they lived on the fresh milk and eggs together with staple shelf groceries and the fresh berries.

The more Nelle thought about it in those days, the more she felt that Grace and Norris's children, and Billy, were unfortunate, their homes broken up one way or another. They didn't have two full-time parents. How they would benefit by the training she could give them at Forest Camp The girls could learn housekeeping skills from her, and Roger could teach Billy Wooldridge all kinds of things. They would start the next summer, 1926.

One of the things that had fired Nelle up with a desire to bring her nieces and nephews to camp, was the fact that Roge's sister Millie and her husband were going to open up a summer camp for girls about thirty miles from "the hill". Millie and Lewis Allard, her husband, had already signed up nearly a full roster of girl campers from Jackson Heights where they lived a few blocks from Nelle and Roger. Nelle had a nagging sensation that Millie was trying to "steal her thunder." Actually, Millie was only trying to find a way to augment the family income. She and Lewis invested all their savings in the camp, which consisted of two old houses and twelve acres on the shores of a small lake in western New Hampshire. Before the next summer, Millie and Lewis would build four sleeping cabins and sanitary toilet facilities. Also, the plans included a dining hail that would double as a recreation area and would be absolutely

necessary. By the time the weather was good enough in the spring of 1926, carpenters were busy building, and it would be all ready for the sixth of July when Camp Nah-tay-see would open.

Nelle went ahead with her plans to have Forest Camp well populated with cousins. She persuaded Merly to let Trink and Mim come. She and Roge would pay the train fare to New York. Jane and Dee would come too, and Billy Wooldridge. Billy Martin couldn't come. His mother wanted him with her.

That year 1926 was a big year for Nelle. The tents for the back field at Forest Camp were filled with cousins. But Millie had persuaded Grace to come to her camp Nah-tay-see, to be a Senior Counselor and Art Instructor. However, Millie and Lewis had spent so much money in camp improvements that they found themselves, in mid season, short of funds to pay salaries. Since Grace, in a sense, was "family," Millie asked her to wait a few weeks for her pay. For Grace, there was little choice, unless she simply left camp and went home to Cleveland (which Carle Semon wanted her to do). The matter was settled by Millie, who invited Dee and Jane to spend the month of August at Nah-tay-see in lieu of salary for Grace, although Millie promised she'd pay that "before too long."

Grace agreed to this arrangement for several reasons — one, it would be a fine experience for Dee and Jane. Two, it was an enjoyable time for Grace. She liked camp. Three, it would give her more time to decide whether or not she would marry Carle Semon while she was at a distance from his persuasive courtship. Grace still missed Norris terribly.

When Nelle learned that Dee and Jane were invited to spend a month at Nah-tay-see, she discovered that Babs wanted to go, too. Babs was extremely fond of her Aunt Millie and Uncle Lewis. And, of course, if Babs were to go, Mim and Trink must go too. And since Nelle and Roger had done many favors for Millie and Lewis when Nelle suggested that all the girls spend a month at Nah-tay-see, Millie had to agree to it.

Everyone had a good time that month, and Nelle invited the entire population of Camp Nah-tay-see to spend a one-night campout at Forest Camp. This was a huge success, but a source of laughing anecdotes for years after, since most of the campers were stricken in the night with some kind of intestinal ailment. This created a near panic, since the sanitary facilities at Forest Camp were no more than one outdoor privy behind the barn, with accommodations for two. There was heavy traffic all night long in that area, with flashlights moving here and there in the fields and in the hay loft of the barn. And poor Billy Wooldridge, who always seemed to be nominated for 'night soil' duty, had toured the fields all the next day with a pail full of wood—ashes and a garden trowel.

Nelle never invited Camp Nah-tay-see to her hill again. They had brought their own food, baked beans and wieners, and they had got sick on it and the whole 'slumber party' had been a shambles. 'Never again,' Nelle told Roge.

And 'never again' Grace had told Nelle, as far as being a counselor at Camp Nah-tay-see. Not that she didn't like Millie. She really did like her very much. Millie was more Grace's kind of person. But - Grace hadn't been paid for her work. All she'd got out of it was her board and an army cot in one of the cabins. Millie and Lewis were too short of funds to pay her salary. They'd let Dee and Jane have a month at

camp, of course, but Grace needed to be earning money. She was, after all, still renting an apartment in Cleveland. She'd lost the summer.

Grace sent Dee and Jane to boarding school that fall and it hadn't been good for Jane. Nelle'd taken her for a semester then, as a companion to Babs.

Then, the next summer, '27, Dee and Babs had gone to Nah-tay-see, and poor Jane had not been allowed to go. Grace had married Carle Semon and that had come to naught. Then there'd been the summers of '28 and '29 with cousins at Forest Camp, followed by the stock market crash and Grace's disastrous purchase of the house in Milford. And now they were all wallowing in this awful Depression.

Nelle was so worried about Roger. If business was depressed, so was he. He was ten times as depressed. He had loved the summers in the mountains. He had loved having money enough to have lots of children up on 'the hill' all summer. He loved being a 'Daddy' to the nieces who needed him. Now he couldn't afford it. They hadn't had the cousins for two years, and Forest Camp had been too quiet and lonely. No big groups singing around the camp-fire. Only himself, Babs and Nelle. In fact, somehow, only three people outside on a dark and lonely mountain around a little camp-fire wasn't especially jolly. It was even a bit spooky. There was security in the big groups, Nelle felt, even when they were made up of children. A big group was noisy and would frighten off anything that threatened, be it animal or human.

Now Roge was planning again for summer on the hill. If Nelle had Grace up there, and Babs and William, things should run quite smoothly. Among them they'd be able to handle the care of the garden. Grace was an expert on gardens. During the War Grace had been director of all the War Garden projects on the east side of Cleveland. She knew all about soil, fertilizers, and such Matters. She'd be worth her groceries if she came to Forest Camp that summer. And meanwhile she could work on her new art project, for that could be done in the mountains just as well as in the city, providing Grace bought all the materials she needed before leaving New York.

But concern nagged at Roger, and he had mentioned it to Nelle more than once. He did not like to leave them stranded on the mountain without a car for several weeks at a time. He could leave his Buick at Forest Camp for Nelle easily enough. But Nelle was becoming more and more loath to drive. It made her extremely nervous. She gripped the steering wheel with white-knuckled fingers, and held her tongue between clenched teeth. Roge was afraid that if she went over a bump she'd bite the tongue completely off. Of course, William could drive the Buick for Nelle, but that solution worried Roge too. According to Billy Wooldridge, his father periodically went on three-or-four-day drunks, returning home disheveled and unshaven, with no idea where he'd passed the time. And, of course, his money all gone. Roge wouldn't want Bill taking the car and disappearing. He could always get booze through Frank Button (whose only fault was drinking). And even if William didn't do that, there was another question. He wasn't sure he'd stay in New Hampshire all summer. He had promised to get the garden well started and cut the grass around the house. He'd also pitch the tents if the girls wanted. Even when there was no crowd at camp, and plenty of room in the house, Nelle liked to sleep in a tent. So did Babs and the other youngsters, while Grace really preferred to sleep in the house. She was game enough for going into the woods in the day-time, but at night her courage flagged. She had tried sleeping in a tent, but lay awake

at night hearing animal sounds in the woods. The natives of the area said that old porcupines often made strange cries in communicating with each other, but Grace was not convinced. Some of the sounds were distinctly cat—like (bob cats? lynx?) and other sounds were stronger and possibly were bears. Grace could rest peacefully and secure in the house, In fact, she felt beautifully safe in the attic.

This summer there would be no need to pitch the tents, not even one tent. Nelle could sleep in the front bedroom, Babs in the back bedroom, and Grace up in the attic, which she loved. In fact, they'd probably all sleep in the attic for companionship so they could talk after the lamps were blown out. And William of course would have the "studio," the little one-room cabin at the top of the hill. In all probability Nelle would ask William to pitch a tent anyway, for when it got hot she liked to sleep outside with the sidewalls of the tent rolled up and tied. Nelle would want a tent pitched just to make the place look "normal." She'd complained last summer about how bare the place looked without tents, It was going to be hard to get Nelle to realize that it couldn't be the way it used to be. The good times were all over in a world that had turned sour.

Nelle was so upset by Roge's gloomy mood and his apprehension about their future, that she had resolved to act. Without telling Roge, she had first bought two lots in the Maple Park development, then she had tossed and turned for the next two nights, unable to sleep. She probably ought to buy two more. If there was profit to be had in this venture she should not be timid. And if Roge should learn what she had done with her money, against his wishes, then she might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb. So she decided she would go ahead and buy two more lots. Accordingly, she went to her bank and drew more money from her long-intact savings account and went downtown to transact the business with Maple Park Associates. Since Dee was the only stenographer in the office, Nelle had to swear her to secrecy in the Matter. Mr. Maple had given Dee forms and instructions for typing them up. Nelle returned home with receipts and agreements, and Mr. Maple's assurance that her deeds would "follow in two or three weeks" from the Recorder's Office. Nelle stopped in at Schraffts for a chocolate sundae, to "compose" herself after the bold step she'd taken.

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While Nelle was keeping a secret from Roger, he was in turn keeping one from her. Gloomy though he had been for months, Nelle had no concept of just how deep Roge's worries went. She did not yet know that he had had to take a cut in salary and commissions. She did not yet know that he had come to the conclusion that they would have to live year round on the hill in New Hampshire, while they rented the Jackson Heights apartment. It was something he had always longed to do. He was sure that if he once got into the swing of things up there on the hill he could make a living writing. He had published more than half a dozen short stories in boys' magazines and they had been well-received. He was now working on two much more ambitious pieces. One was a book-length fictional account of the wanderings of an orphaned boy, not an unusual theme, but one that if well done, is always saleable. His other effort was more dear to his heart and he had been working on it for years. It was a running chronicle of scenes from his boyhood as a minister's son. It featured small-town life in Ohio and Kentucky in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. It was a series of humorous or poignant vignettes, the stars of which were himself and his brother Joseph. He planned to call it 'Joe and Me' or perhaps "Me and Joe." Roger was especially anxious to finish and publish this last work, for he had begun it as a memorial to Joseph, who had died, at age seventeen. Joe's death had left a permanent scar on Roger's life because it had happened during the period when he had run away from home, not to return for six years. Through the years after, Roger would live with a conviction that during the period of Joe's illness and decline, he, Roger, had somehow sensed it; that he had experienced a deep melancholy. He had thought of his poor mother suffering at home, not knowing what had befallen her fourteen-year-old son, after he had run away one night leaving only a note saying, "Dear Mother, I will always love you, Roger." During his depressed period he'd been seized with a strong feeling that his mother was suffering from even greater troubles. He returned home then, to find Joe gone, his little sisters, Millie and Mary, grown into young ladies, his red-headed baby brother. Reggie, a gangling schoolboy.

Roger hoped that if he did nothing else in his life, he might finish "Me and Joe." But he was making no progress. The Jackson Heights apartment was ridiculously small. He had never had a place there where he could really work. They were only one-bedroom apartments to start with, and theirs had been remodeled to make it even more impractical. It was more like three living rooms than anything else. Roger had come to the conclusion that Forest Camp was the only place he could possibly hope to finish his books. And he could work his present job just as well from that base as from New York City, perhaps better, since he travelled so much and had the New England territory.

But Roge was not quite ready to discuss his plan because there were some big problems involved in making Forest Camp habitable as a year-round home. Nelle would have to be there isolated at times, when a heavy snowfall, for instance, prevented him from getting home. So Roge would have to do what he had long planned: install a telephone from Forest Camp to the outside world. He could not tie in with the public phone system, as he was too far back in the hills from their established lines. But phone service reached as far as the Bean's home on the county road. Forest Camp was three eighths of a mile beyond Bean's place. Bean was caretaker for a three-thousand-acre private fish and game preserve that surrounded "Fison's Hill." Roge had accumulated phones, wire, and all the other necessary equipment

to install his own private line to Bean's places and permission to do this had been granted him. It remained to put in three modest—sized poles across the clearing to carry the wire to the edge of the forest. From that point on, trees would carry the wire to Bean's place. But Roge needed the time to fell and trim the three trees for poles, and more time to carry the wire all that distance down the hill and across the valley. He would need Frank Button's help and William's too, And the phone was only one thing that was needed.

Winters in New Hampshire were frequently very severe. The house was not properly winterized. The old bedrooms still had the original plaster and lath walls. The remodeled living room had beaver-board walls. But the attic was all roof with no double ceiling at all, just the bare roof-boards, with shingle-nails sticking through. The added-on kitchen was also without ceiling or inner walls. It would be impossible to heat those areas without doing some work to insulate the walls. Roger had discussed it all the previous year with Frank Button, who had recommended 'sheetrock' and he'd said he could install it.

And there was the problem of heating the house. The wood-stove would heat the kitchen, and the fireplace would help warm the house but it wouldn't warm the two bedrooms, let alone the attic. Roge knew that, because he had been in the house several times in winter and he knew how inadequate the fireplace was. He would have to buy a circulating heating stove big enough for three or four rooms.

All this would take quite an outlay of cash, and Roge didn't have it to spare. He was racking his brains trying to find a way to avoid asking Nelle to dip into her "private fund" as they called it. She had sold her Chagrin Falls fifty acres several years before the Depression began and they had never had to touch it. Occasionally, at Christmas, she would draw some of the accumulated interest, but even so, the principal had continued to grow. Nelle sometimes spoke of the money as "Babs's college education."

And speaking of Babs's education, that was another problem that would have to be worked out if they were to live at Forest Camp the year round. Babs had four years of high school ahead of her. The school bus did not come anywhere near Fison's Hill. There were very few houses and no children along their road. The nearest school bus came up to a covered bridge nearly a mile from where the Button family lived, their house afloat in a sea of Model T carcasses. The Buttons had four sons, the oldest two past high school age. (Indeed, they had not graduated). But Ralph and Jack shared the same wizard hJanieman talents as their father, Frank, and they also possessed his ability to work wonders with ancient Ford cars. There were two other sons, Cliff, still in high school, and Danny, living with relatives in Boston. And there was a little girl, Eileen, about ten years old. Only Cliff and Eileen, then, rode the school bus, and they missed it more often than not. On those days, Cliff took his little sister to school in one of the Model T's. The Buttons usually kept about four of them running. Roge had considered the possibility of setting up an arrangement with Cliff to take Babs to school, but that, of course, would mean paying the Buttons something as it would mean six extra miles of driving for Cliff, as the covered bridge was three miles from the foot of Fison's Hill. But in any case, Roge had rejected the plan, as Bean, the caretaker, had warned against counting on Cliff Button. "Too many days he just doesn't go to school at all. I know, because I see him hanging around in the woods just outside the boundaries of our preserve. I don't see him with a gun, but I'm sure he's watching out for deer. He's well aware we've got a number of rather tame ones in here and he's planning on one, I know. They depend on them for meat

I'm sure and I know they've had them out of season, but I can't prove it. But I will one of these days, I promise you that."

But regardless of that, Roge had not thought out the transportation solution, and there was more to it than getting Babs to school. Nelle should be able to get to town when she needed, but Nelle was fifty-five now, and driving made her so nervous she hated it. She had learned only six years ago, and had never been happy about it. And Babs was only just fourteen years old, and it would be two years before she could learn to drive and get her New Hampshire license. Certainly, even if he left the Buick up there at the hill with Nelle, she wouldn't come all the way down that mountain side to take Babs nine miles to school, return home for a few hours and then come down again and repeat the round trip. Nelle would never have the stamina for such an arrangement (in fact, who would?) and even if she had, she wouldn't have the time for it. Roge told himself it was foolish to lie awake at night thrashing around thinking about these things. Maybe it was totally impractical to consider living at Forest Camp. If only the Depression would end. But meanwhile, something had to be done. And soon.

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While Nelle was keeping a secret from Roge and Roge was not revealing his plans to Nelle, Grace was privately pondering her future. Now that Dee was in New York and working, things looked a bit brighter. And the quick sale of her appliqué wall-hanging had encouraged her greatly. It had been lavishly praised and obviously, Grace reasoned, there was a market for that type of thing. She had already drawn her design for the next one, and she had begun to buy the necessary colored materials and threads. Her one concern was that at Forest Camp she would find little time for art work. It had always been that way, because Nelle was always so full of ambitious housekeeping plans each day. "Let's pitch in and clean this attic!" or "Let's take all the Mattresses out and give them a good airing." The trouble was that Nelle's energies or her concentration did not seem as robust as formerly, and many times she did not get a job done for days, and the clutter caused by sorting things confused everyone. Grace hoped it wouldn't be that way this year. Perhaps with fewer people Nelle could have a more relaxed summer.

But Grace was preoccupied at the moment with something else. Now that Dee had returned to the East, Grace wanted Jane too. If Dee had been unhappy with Norris and Pauline, then no doubt Jane was also, and she should not have to stay in Cleveland. But Jane was no letter-writer. One could not know how she felt about things. When she was small she had written nice little letters, but not since she'd been in high school. She might be still nursing a grievance about the dog, Binker. At the time Binker had been taken to New Hampshire, Jane had said, "I'll never, ever forgive you for this." Perhaps she hadn't. Jane had also grieved a very long time about the white cat that had to be chloroformed because it was sneezing. Grace could see Jane now, as she'd been at nine, crying and protesting, "It was not necessary! Whitey wasn't sick. He just had a scratched nose. How could you be so mean?" Jane was a gifted child, Grace was certain, but she was incredibly stubborn, and apparently unforgiving as well. Probably those old grudges were why she so seldom wrote letters.

Grace had a new concern about Jane. How would she spend the summer in Cleveland now that Dee was gone to New York? In an atmosphere of hostility such as Dee had described, and a long, boring summer to be got through, it was clear what Jane would do. She'd go to Oberlin to be with Mim. (It didn't occur to Grace that Mim might visit Jane). And if Jane went to Oberlin she'd be near Danny O'Neal and he'd begin pursuing her again. One didn't have to be very clever to figure that out. And Grace knew she couldn't expect Merly to watch Jane every minute. Young people could be so devious when they thought they were in love. And given Jane's stubbornness any attempt to discourage her feelings for Danny O'Neal would only make her more determined.

Grace had lunch downtown with Dee and spoke to her about it. "We must get Jane here with us as soon as possible."

Since Dee was staying in Queens with Nelle and Roge, and Grace was staying (off and on) with Polly, Dee asked the obvious question, "Get Jane where with us?"

"Well, up at Forest Camp for the summer at least. Then in the fall we will get a little place together."

"Mother, will be able to afford a place?" Dee asked.

“Honey, I’ll have the money from my new hanging by then, and with you working too, we can surely afford a tiny flat, even if it isn’t very fancy.”

Dee looked somewhat doubtful, so Grace told her more.

“There’s something else I’m counting on, Nipper.”

“What’s that?”

“I’ve bought a little stock in Maple Park Associates.”

“Mother, you didn’t! Stock makes me so nervous.”

“Well, this is different, Dee, because it’s real estate; Father never went wrong with real estate.”

“But why did you buy stock and not lots, Mother?”

“Goodness, I didn’t have enough money to buy lots, or even one lot. Nelle has money. I just bought a few shares of stock in the Association.”

Dee looked thoughtful. “Where did you get the money, Mother?”

“Why, from the sale of the hanging, dear. Except for what Polly and her friend took, I did quite well for such a small hanging. My next one will be twice as large. But to get back to Jane. Do you think your father is going to make an uproar if she comes back to me?”

“I don’t know, Mother. If you write and tell him you’re ‘taking her back’ he’ll certainly make an uproar, because you sent us to him in no uncertain terms. You literally gave us back to him.”

“Oh, Dee, I didn’t give —“

“Yes, you did, Mother. Dad showed me the letter. He was mad at me about something, and he had me read it.”

“Dee, you know how upset and depressed I —“

“Mom, don’t let’s rehash all that. Just write to Dad and tell him Jane is invited to Forest Camp for the summer. Mother, how come she is? Uncle Roge wasn’t going to have a lot of people this summer.”

“They haven’t invited Jane yet, but I’m hoping to get Nelle to understand how very important it is to get Jane here.”

“Why?” asked Dee.

“Why! Why because of Danny O’Neal, that’s why.”

“Oh, Mother! He’s a thing of the past. She never saw him again after she left Oberlin. He phoned her a couple of times, and nothing came of it.

“Yes, but she’ll go to Oberlin because of Mim - she’ll want to be with her, she won’t want to stay there with Pauline.”

“They get along OK, Mother. Better than I did.”

“Yes, but you know she’ll go to Oberlin, and then she’ll take up with Danny O’Neal again.”

“Oh, Mother, no. Now please forget that. She’s much too sophisticated for him and she knows it. (Don’t tell her I said so). If she goes down to visit Mim, there’ll be no problem.”

But Grace was not convinced, and more than that, she was in a different mood now. Not the depressed state of the summer of 1930. She wanted both the girls with her, and she wanted to be certain that Jane didn’t get involved with boys the way Dee had. If she was to get into trouble it might not just blow over fortuitously next time. It might very likely mean that Jane would end up by having to get married and not going to college at all. And she must go to college. It was alright for Dee to take up secretarial work, but that wouldn’t do for Jane. She would make a good art teacher, or possibly a language teacher. And nothing must prevent her going to college or art school.

Grace had a plan in mind. She was currently spending a few days with Aunt Victoria in Brooklyn. She was doing restoration work on an old portrait of Victoria’s mother. It was an oil painting that was cracked and chipped. Grace was happy to make the repairs for Aunt Vicky. She preferred Vicky’s company to Polly’s, and she was eternally grateful that Vicky had understood why the divorce from Norris was necessary.

But now, Grace must make the long trip out to Jackson Heights to talk to Nelle. A thought passed through her mind while she was riding on the elevated train. Norris had always maintained that the way to persuade others to your idea was to finesse them into thinking it was their idea. Norris’s cleverness frequently annoyed Grace, but she knew he was right about that, though in practicing persuasion he was seldom that subtle.

Grace was tired but determined. She got off the train at the Jackson Heights station at Roosevelt Avenue and 82nd Street, walked down the long flight of steps to the street and made her way toward Polk Avenue. She had not quite figured out what she was going to say when she got to the apartment. It would depend on whether Roger was at home or not. If only Nelle was there, or Nelle and Babs, there would be no problem, because Nelle did not like to be at Camp with only two or three people when Roge was traveling, and it might be easy to persuade Nelle that it would be a good idea to have Jane at camp. She’d be a companion for Babs. Jane was convinced that Nelle didn’t like her, but Grace felt that Nelle was heavy-handed with many people. She was bossy, strict, often sarcastic, and given to ridicule. But Nelle had a strong sense of family, a lifelong love of animals, and she liked to surround herself with brothers, sisters, nieces and nephews. Grace supposed that Jane felt disliked because of Nelle’s feelings for Mim and Dee. Grace had said once to Jane, “You see, Nipper, Aunt Nelle has a soft spot in her heart for Dee and Mim.”

“But not for me,” Jane had said.

“She didn’t have you when you were a baby. You know, she had Dee and she had Mim when they were less than two years old.”

“Oh, it isn’t that simple,” Jane had said. “There’s more to it than that, Mom.”

Well, and there was more to it, of course, Grace admitted. In some ways, Jane and Nelle were alike. They both had strong opinions, and liked to make plans. They liked to be tomboys. One big difference was that Jane liked to spend hours reading, and Nelle seldom read. Grace didn’t believe that Nelle ‘hated’ Jane, just that she didn’t ‘cotton’ to some children and Jane was one of several.

Grace had a key to Nelle and Roge’s apartment, but she seldom had occasion to use it, as Nelle was usually at home. She entered the outer lobby and pushed the button. There was no speaking tube, but the latch on the door buzzed and she went on up, grateful that the Fison’s flat was on the second floor. I really should not have come, she thought, unless I had figured out exactly what I was going to say.

Roge opened the apartment door.

“Come in, Grace,” he said. “You’re just in time for a cup of tea and a fresh crumb bun.”

Grace laughed. “As long as we don’t have to give up crumb buns, we can hang on.” As soon as she spoke, Grace wished she had not reminded Roger of the Depression, but it didn’t Matter, for he had something else on his mind for a change.

They joined Nelle at the laundry tubs in the kitchen. Grace would have preferred not to sit on the high wooden stools that gave her a backache, but the small table in the next room was usually graced with Roger’s typewriter and papers when he was at home. Since Nelle never entertained dinner guests, she seldom had occasion to use the table, which in any case would have accommodated only two more people in any degree of elegance. And elegance was no part of Nelle’s makeup. She was all practicality, though it was frequently a very cluttered practicality. In the other apartments in Willow Vista, the room off the kitchen was a dining room. Nelle used it as bedroom, office, sewing room, spillover living room, and occasionally as a dining room. The name family room had not been invented at that time.

Nelle liked sitting at the laundry tubs. Their white porcelain enamel covers were a cinch to clean and they were so handy, for lined up along the back against the wall, she had placed her sugar bowl, salt and pepper, marmalade, etc. And up above, beneath the cupboards, was an open shelf with her blue and white every day dishes (the only dishes Nelle ever used except for Thanksgiving and Christmas).

“Sit down, kid,” Nelle said to Grace (who had for years wished that Nelle wouldn’t call people “kid”). “We’ve had a change in our plans for the summer.”

“You’re not going to the Hill?” Grace asked.

“Oh, yes, we’re going. Bill is already up there starting a big garden. No, it’s Babs whose plans have changed. She’s been asked to go up to Maine to Mrs. Brown’s Eurhythmics camp. She’ll help with the little ones’ classes. Sort of a junior counselor.”

"I didn't know Mrs. Brown had a camp," Grace said.

"It's new this year," Nelle said.

"Everyone's starting a camp, it seems," said Roge.

"Will Babs be paid?" Grace asked.

"Just her board and keep," Nelle said, "but she's told Mrs. Brown she'll go if Trink can go too, and Mrs. Brown says she'll discuss it with her husband. Babs wants Trink to be a junior counselor too. She wants someone her own age that she knows. Trink's been in "Dalcroze" here, and a little bit in Oberlin too, but of course, she hasn't had the years in it that Babs's had. We started her when she was four years old, so that's ten years. It's an opportunity for her, but we really need her with us. Kids can do so many chores that you and I shouldn't have to do at our age, Grace. Like hauling in the wood, and the water for the laundry, and going for the milk and the mail. If you and I are up on the hill this summer all alone, we'll have to do everything ourselves, and there are times when I don't feel up to the walk down the hill."

[Dalcroze Eurhythmics teaches concepts of rhythm, structure, and musical expression using movement. It focuses on allowing the student to gain physical awareness and experience of music through training that takes place through all of the senses, particularly kinesthetic.]

Roge spoke up. "Babs doesn't have to go to Mrs. Brown's camp, Nelle."

"It's an opportunity for her, Roge," Nelle insisted.

"I don't see that it is. What we'd save on her food we'd lose on her help at our place."

"That's not the important part, honey. It's because she wants to be a dancing teacher, and this will be a start.'

"I doubt it," Roge said. "But anyway, if she does go to Maine, we could solve the problem of your going for the milk and the mail, just by my leaving the car up there for you this summer. The only time she won't go up the hill is after several days of rain, and then you'd just have to leave her at the bottom of the hill in the garage."

"Roge, you know I'd never try to drive that huge car up the hill in any kind of weather. It worries me too much to have to back it down when it refuses to climb."

"You just need practice, honey. You don't shift gears at the right time. You let her die."

"If it was a horse it wouldn't die," said Nelle.

"Well, I don't think we can plan on reverting to horses, honey, at this late date," Roge said.

Nelle grinned. "No, but even if you were going to be on the hill with Gracie and me all summer, it wouldn't solve the problem of the other chores that kids can do. Gracie, if Babs goes to Maine with Trink, do you think Jane would like to come up to the Hill with us this summer?"

All things work together for good, Grace thought. Who said that? Mrs. Eddy? No, the Bible. All things work together for good to them that love God. Well, she certainly loved God, even if she wasn't certain just who or what He was.

"I can certainly write and ask her," Grace said, without revealing how very pleased she was. "But I don't know if Norris will have any objections. Of course, Jane is sixteen now. She might have made some plans."

'She's sixteen, is she?' Roge said. "My goodness! Time has flown so. Is she really sixteen?"

"She's old enough to drive a car then," Nelle said.

"So she is," said Roge. "So she is."

####

I THINK IRENE IS PLOTTING

Pauline was upset. She had managed to get through nearly five weeks without being upset. Just after Dee left and went to New York, Norris had said some very unkind things. He had suggested that perhaps Dee had flunked out of college because she wasn't happy, and that had been partly Pauline's fault. That statement had been grossly unfair. Norris had said that Dee thought she, Pauline, hated her. He hadn't been able to support that idea by pointing out any instances where she had been mean to Dee. And she had defended herself.

"I helped her with her sewing," Pauline had pointed out.

"She may not have wanted your help. She sewed quite nicely as it was," he had said.

"But she didn't know everything. I gave her professional instructions," Pauline insisted.

"Yes, and you thought you had to show her how to wash dishes too. As a professional, I suppose? Dee is twenty-one years old. She probably knows more about washing dishes than you do. Grace's sister, Nelle, was a stickler about such."

Always Norris had to be mentioning Grace. Probably just because he had a sadistic streak in him. There was a letter from Grace lying on their bedroom dresser right now. When Norris left a letter from Grace lying there, Pauline knew it was intentional. He wanted her to see it and feel bad. It had been lying there in the same spot for three days. He probably hoped she would open and read it. She wasn't going to though. He no doubt had it arranged just so, and would be able to tell if she had touched it. She made very sure that it didn't get moved a fraction of an inch. She had to suppress her curiosity about what Grace was writing about now. It no longer would be about child-support payments since Jane was here and Dee was twenty-one. So what was on Grace's mind this time?

But Pauline would not have to wait longer to know. Norris raised the subject at the dinner table. It seemed to Pauline that he often brought up unpleasant subjects at dinner time and she felt that it contributed to her stomach problems. But when she mentioned that to Norris he had said "Anything I talk about is likely to upset you, and besides, I have to bring things up at the dinner table. You're always in bed when I have my breakfast, and even when I have my lunch. Oh yes, you are. Often. And then you're sequestered all afternoon and evening, too with your ladies."

This evening Matthew divulged what was in the letter on the dresser.

Grace has written to me." he said.

'So I saw," said Pauline.

"It is only an invitation for Jane to go to New Hampshire, so you needn't have got all excited."

Pauline was indignant. "I didn't get excited. What a thing to say!"

“Well, I know what your reactions always are.”

“No you don’t, And I think it’s just lovely that Jane has an invitation for the summer.”

“‘Just lovely’” said Norris. “‘Lovely’ is just what it isn’t.”

During this interchange Jane had sat quiet. She too had a letter from her mother and had answered it. And Pauline waited for Norris to explain his statement. It had taken several years, but she had finally learned the wisdom of not challenging him when he was hoping for an argument. He had learned, but could not always profit by her wisdom and remain quiet.

“It seems,” Norris said, “that Nelle and Grace are going to the mountains and they are in need of children for the work force.”

Jane contained a snicker.

Norris went on. “Nelle extends invitations to her delightful mountain retreat, but she doesn’t tell people ahead of time what’s in store. If you go for one or two days, as some have, you won’t be put to slave labor, but if you plan on a week you are making a big mistake.”

“Well, it seems only reasonable that guests should lend a hand,” Pauline said.

“Lend a hand? Like helping wash dishes? No, that’s for the children to do. The rest of us, who thought we’d climb a mountain or two, or swim in a sparkling lake, or just go out and sketch a little; well, we had another think coming. Nelle had a schedule and everyone jolly well better live by her schedule. ‘This morning you boys’ll have to chop us up some kitchen wood.’ ‘Today you boys clean that privy.’ ‘Let’s all pitch in this morning and get the bugs off the potato plants. I’ll give you each a can with kerosene in.’ Nelle’s favorite phrase is ‘Let’s all pitch in.’ She’d get us all started at a task and then she’d disappear to plan her next task.”

“But didn’t she work hard too?” Pauline asked.

“She made it seem that way,” Norris said. “She made it seem that way.”

Jane spoke up. “Aunt Nelle does a lot of cooking.”

“Yes “ her father agreed. “but it was never my idea of a vacation. It could all have been relaxed and fun. It was so regimented. Alan Grey would never go back. He paid his board and Nelle still felt he should work. He got asthma just walking up that damn hill. Well, there were lots of people up there in the early years, but most of them never went back. Adults, that is. Nelle spoiled it. It was her camp, though, she could spoil it if she wanted to.”

“Norris,” Pauline said. “Does all this have something to do with Jane’s invitation to visit this summer?”

“Yes, it does. Nelle wants some young people. That’s all she’s had in recent years. Just children to be a work-force.”

“Oh, Norr, she seemed very pleasant when we were there. I can’t believe all this talk. I know you love to exaggerate. Jane, is your Aunt Nelle like that?”

“Well,” Jane said “I’ll have to admit –“

“That Nelle is a veritable slave-driver.,” Norr said, warming to the subject. “Your sister’s words - a ‘slave-driver.’ Dee said the kids did all the washing and ironing, all the floor scrubbing, all the dishes, all the berry picking, and they made their beds, of course, and such things as peeling potatoes. And this year if she goes, Jane gets the privilege of doing all those chores alone.”

“What about the others?” Pauline asked. “The cousins.”

“They aren’t going to be there,” Norr said. “They’re going to Maine.”

“Just Babs and Trink,” Jane said. “Not Mim.”

“Do you want to go?” Pauline asked Jane.

“Only if Mim goes too,” Jane said. “I told Mother that.”

‘Well, I won’t have you going up there,” Norris said. “Just to be Nelle’s scullery maid.”

Jane laughed at that term. “Dad, there won’t be so much work. Only three or four people this summer.”

“I can’t afford the bus fare anyway,” Norris said.

“I’ll pay for her ticket,” Pauline said quickly.

“I don’t want you to,” he said. “I think the whole thing is a trick on Grace’s part to get Jane back with her again. And Nelle’s in on the scheme. I know how those Martin girls are. They put their curly heads together and plan and plan.”

Jane began to laugh.

“What’s so funny?”

“You are,” Jane said, but he wasn’t offended.

“I’ve always been a very great wit,” he said, and he laughed along with Jane.

But when they were in their bedroom that night, Pauline raised the subject again.

“I can’t understand why you don’t want to let Jane go to New Hampshire.”

“And I’m interested in hearing you explain why you are so anxious to get her out of here and send her packing.”

‘Send her packing - hat an expression! You do twist a person thoughts and words so Norr. The reason I offered to buy her ticket is because she deserves a vacation.’

“Who doesn't deserve a vacation?”

“No, but what I mean is, she’s worked so hard at her school work since she was sick. She brought her Latin and Geometry grades up from the 70s to the 90s. Effort like that should be rewarded I think.”

“I think that’s what you think you think,” Norris said.

“What are you saying, Norr?”

“I’m saying that you are trying to persuade yourself and me that you want Jane to go because she’s deserving, and that isn’t the real reason at all.”

“What is my reason then?” Pauline asked.

“You don’t want anyone in this house with us.”

Pauline knew that was true but she did not feel particularly guilty about it. She had married Norris in 1926 and they had gone to France on their honeymoon. She had enjoyed the idea, more than the fact of that trip because she did. not speak French and Norris did, and she’d been left out of conversation entirely. They’d returned to Cleveland to a life on Cartwright Street with Rosella and Ethie Rahming, interrupted by another trip to France in 1928. Their crowded life on Cartwright Street was only complicated by the arrival of Norr’s daughters from the East and after all, it was still very much Rosella’s house, and especially her kitchen. Moving into the Channing Avenue place had been an improvement, but still hadn’t realized her dream of a chance to have a home with Norris without any of his family. Now there was a chance for an entire summer by themselves. A chance to entertain another couple for dinner. A chance perhaps, to have the kind of married life she’d been hoping for for six years. Yes, it was true, she’d be glad to buy Jane a bus ticket.

So she said to Norris now, “It would be a deserved vacation for me to only have to cook for you and me. And we ought go out to dinner once in a while. And be asked out to dinner by our friends.”

“Speaking of our friends that’s one of the reasons I’d rather not have Jane go. When Grace and I divorced she got the children and many of our friends took her side and decided I was a devil with horns and pitchfork. Having the girls come back to me has been a big asset. People have been a lot more cordial to me. Now Dee has gone, but I can easily explain that. She’s twenty-one and gone to seek her fortune in New York. Quite normal. But if Jane leaves now a month after her sister, people will conclude she couldn’t stand living with us and fled to Grace.”

“Not at all,” Pauline said. “All you have to do is state that you’ve sent Jane to summer camp.”

To her surprise, he left off arguing, wavered a moment or two, and then said, “I could say that I suppose. But I still think Grace is plotting to get Jane back.

####

In Oberlin Merly was in a quandary. Her girls were making plans for their summer and things were not working out smoothly. Trink had an opportunity to go to Maine and she did not want to go. Mim wanted to go to New Hampshire and Merly wanted her to stay in Oberlin. All three of them felt they had solid arguments for their positions. But they went round in circles.

To start with Trink had an earlier invitation to spend at least part of her summer with an aunt who lived in Cleveland. Her Aunt Alice Marsh was a high school teacher. She was a sister of Trink and Mim's father, Waldo. Trink was about to enter senior high school, and was for some reason, nervous about it. She'd overheard talk of algebra and Latin and they really worried her. She'd talked to her Aunt Alice about it.

"I dread September," she confessed.

"Why, dear?" Aunt Alice asked.

"I'm shaky in math."

"What were your grades like?"

"B's and C's," Trink said.

"Could be worse, but would you like to visit me and have a little coaching?"

"I'd love it. I'm worried about Latin, too. Scared stiff, in fact. The kids all say Latin is a nightmare."

Aunt Alice laughed. "Well, Latin's a subject you don't dare fall behind in. You need to keep it up from day to day. Each lesson builds on the one before. Not like geography or such. If you come to visit, I could give you a little introduction to Latin. I'm a bit rusty, but it might make you dread it less."

"That sounds wonderful, Aunt Alice."

And so it was arranged. Trink could spend the whole summer at her aunt's if she liked, or could come home again when she got tired of it. But then the letter came from Nelle and things were all upset. Trink had no desire at all to go to Maine, and Merly failed to understand it.

"How can you pass it up, Honey?"

"Mom, I'm not thrilled by a summer of Dalcroze Eurhythmics."

"Why Trink? You've always loved your dancing."

"When I was little. Mom. When I was little."

"But it's such an opportunity, honey!"

"Oh, who says?" Trink asked.

“Aunt Nelle. She says you’d be a junior counselor. Just think!”

“Mom, you always let Aunt Nelle talk you into what she thinks is a great idea.”

But it was no use. Merly decided that Trink would benefit by going to Maine. She said she would write Nelle that Trink would plan on going with Babs.

Mim’s case was different. Merly had counted on having her at home that summer. After all the years of being tied down caring for her mother, Merly had begun to branch out a bit. She had her church and a discussion group or two. She liked to have Mim at home when she went out, as Grandpa Martin was beginning to show signs of senility. He still worked in his garden and read his Bible., but he seemed confused at times. Emmie was always at home, of course, but not dependable, as some days she elected to stay in bed. But, to Mim, these arguments weren’t valid. Her Grandpa Martin was independent, she said, and if he decided to walk downtown to see J.L. Edwards, the lawyer, he went, and no one could talk him out of it.

“He doesn’t let you boss him around, and he certainly wouldn’t let Emmie or me boss him either. Mom, you know Grandpa’s as independent as a Russian hog on ice.”

Merly smiled. “A Russian hog on ice?”

“What do I mean? A Russian bear on roller skates?’ And then they both laughed, picturing ninety-one years-old John Martin skating down College Street to see his lawyer. Mim, like Jane, read books all the time, and she loved to turn a phrase or use a word that took her fancy. When she was younger, she flung her lumpy pillow from her bed, crying, “This old thing irrigates my head!” And her Uncle Roger had been much entertained when Mim called a cream-pitcher “ignorant” because it had a drippy spout.

“Really, Mother, you know that there is no duller place in the entire world than Oberlin in summer. even when Jane comes down from Cleveland to visit we nearly expire of boredom.”

“But you and she always seem to have a very pleasant lazy time of it, going to the library and putting cold cream on your faces.”

“Mother” Mim said. You get so busy persuading us that you forget what all this is about. Jane won’t be coming here this summer. Neither will Trink. They’re going to New England. And I’ll just have to go to the ‘Libe’ all by myself and cold-cream my face all by myself while they frolic in the mountains. And I shall simply stagnate.”

Merly began laughing. “Oh, Mim! For pity’s sake. Don’t be so dramatic. I suppose you may go with Jane.”

###

Two days before Jane left for the East, Skipper Root stopped by on her way from her voice lesson to ask about Dee and how she liked her job in New York City. But Jane had nothing to report, and so they decided to walk down to the “College Rendezvous” where Dee had spent so many hours when she should have been in class.

It was an uneventful afternoon, but nevertheless Jane would have reason to remember it in later years. The girls sat in a booth along the side and ordered cokes. Skipper spoke of her interrupted college education.

“I went away to college so that I could meet other men. I wanted to get away from Bobby Bexley because I had gone with him all through school since we were little. I thought it would be a mistake to marry someone when I had scarcely known any other men. And so now I’m back at home in Chagrin Falls again, and guess what? I’m going with Bobby Bexley again.

“Are you engaged?” Jane asked.

“No, but I suppose it’s just a Matter of time. I’ve never been sure that I loved him. Sometimes I think I do.”

“Is he in college?”

“Oh, yes. They have money. He goes here, to Cleveland U. He has two more years to go.”

Just then Jane heard a squeal, and a little brunette girl appeared beside her. It Was Jane Pizzi, who had been a college friend of Dee’s.

“Where is Dee?” Jane asked, and Jane brought her up to date on that, and introduced Jane and Skipper. The three girls chatted awhile. Jane would be a senior in the fall. She Was Italian and her family were very proud of her. Then Jane gave another little squeal and waved to a young man who had just come in. “Luther” Jane called, and he came to the booth.

“This is Luther Roby,” she said to the others. “Luther, this is Jane, Dee Rahming’s little sister, and this is Skipper — I didn’t get your last name, Skipper.”

“Root,” Jane supplied.

Luther Roby sat down and ordered fresh cokes all around.

“I remember your sister,” he said to Jane. “Dee and I discovered that our parents had played together years ago on Cartwright Street.”

Jane would never remember anything else from the conversation that day, but she would recall in later years that she had first met Luther Roby when she was sixteen years old.

Mim came to Cleveland the next day and that evening the girls took the bus to New York. It was no longer necessary to go to the downtown bus terminal, as the bus line had an eastside station now to accommodate the college students and other passengers who were finding trains too expensive. The station was near the corner of 105th Street and Grand Avenue in the ground floor of the Adam Hotel building. High up in the building Rosella Rahming's old friend Mrs. Manney had a corner room where she could watch the busy intersection with its streetcars and heavy traffic.

Norris and Pauline came with Mim and Jane, to see them off, and to help carry their luggage, as it was only a block and a half from the house on Channing Avenue.

Before the bus came, Norris reminded the girls of the total eclipse of the sun which would be visible in a wide band that would traverse New England at the end of August.

"You are fortunate to be able to be there at that time," Norris said. "I'd like to be there myself but Nelle didn't invite me. I'm a bad egg in her book. Oh yes, and your mother's going to be there, too. Now, be sure and tell her to get some Kodak film that's all black. You don't dare look at an eclipse without protection for your eyes. You could burn your retina. Watch for 'Bailey's Beads' just before totality. And watch for the 'Jumping Jackrabbits' too."

"'Jumping Jackrabbits!'" Mim said. "What do you mean?"

"Shadow-bands," explained Norris. "Stripes of shadow and light moving rapidly across the ground."

"Oh, it sounds so exciting," Mim said. "I sure hope it's in the daytime."

Norris's eyes twinkled. "Well, that's customary for solar eclipses."

And Mim giggled. "Oh, of course! How silly I am!"

Then the bus arrived and they said their goodbyes and went aboard. Pauline had given them a box of cookies from Rosenfeld's bakery

"If we eat many of them we'll be thirsty, won't we?" Jane said. "But this kind are so good. Pauline's not such a bad sort, really."

"She's always nice to me." Mim said. "She just doesn't seem like the right type for Uncle Norris."

"That's a good way to sum her up." Jane said.

Traveling on the bus was a new experience for Jane and Mim. They had always gone by train or automobile when they'd gone East before. The bus was nothing like the privacy of the Pullman car. Presently the bus driver put the lights out and passengers began adjusting their seats backwards, with intentions of sleeping. Mim and Jane did the same. They had been worried about losing their money or having it stolen while they slept, so each girl had most of her cash pinned inside her brassiere.

They were not relaxed enough yet to sleep, so they leaned back and talked about New Hampshire.

“Are we really glad we’re on our way to Forest Camp?” Jane asked, and Mim laughed.

“I’d go anywhere to get out of Oberlin in the summer. And Mother wanted me to stay and the more she argued with me the more determined I got to go.”

“I always used to be so excited when we were on our way,” Jane said. “The first time we went I was five years old and we went with Mother and Daddy. We all went together several times and had a great time. But after the divorce Dee and I went alone. I didn’t have so much fun anymore. I was always so afraid of Aunt Nelle.”

“Trink was too,” Mim said. “Well, Aunt Nelle did have her favorites, there’s no denying that. What got me was that last summer we were there. Wasn’t that awful!”

Jane laughed. “You mean ‘the military summer’?”

“Yes. Do you realize that was three years ago? I really hated all that rigmarole.”

“Did I ever tell you that Mother says Ted Hurst was really embarrassed the way that summer worked out? He’d come up for a visit and he’d mentioned that the camp could be kept nice and neat and efficient if it was run more like the Army, with inspections and so on. He said he had no idea Aunt Nelle would get so carried away with the whole thing and take all the spontaneity out of the entire summer.”

“Well, it surely did that,” Mim said, “How well I remember Billy Wooldridge guffawing in the background when Dee had us poor younger ones lined up for morning inspection. Remember how she used to look for dirty finger-nails and uncombed hair? And how she gave us demerit marks in her little black book?”

“She loved it, and so did Billy.” Jane said. “Well, it won’t be like that this summer. Only Aunt Nelle and Mother and you and I. It could very well be every bit as boring as Oberlin, you know?”

“New Hampshire itself could never be boring,” Mim said. “The mountain is really a magic place.”

“Oh, that’s true,” Jane agreed.

They settled down then and dozed off for a time, to be awakened some time later to find the bus stopped and the bus-driver calling out “Twenty minutes for comfort.” They all piled out then and into a brightly lighted station with restrooms and a white-tiled lunch counter. Everyone was accommodated, but worried lest the bus depart too soon.

Having been wakened thoroughly, Mim and Jane chatted again for a while.

“Tell me,” Mim said, “how did you like East High?”

“I didn’t.”

“Why? What was wrong?”

“Oh, it’s so huge. I’m not the kind of person to enjoy a big school like that. People like Mona James arrived there in February with her whole crowd of friends from junior high school, and she was dating about four different boys. But I got ahead by half a year when we went to Connecticut so I had started at East a semester ahead of Mona. And when I got there last September I didn’t know a single soul except the French teacher, who is a friend of Mother’s. Different people in all my classes. I did make friends with two girls in the French classes who had gone to Fairmont Junior High too. We always eat lunch together. Mona James calls us ‘my scholarly acquaintances.’ She introduced us to her boy-friend that way. I don’t have boy-friends at East High. There isn’t a single boy in that school I have ever had a conversation with about anything. The bell rings and I rush to the next class, and when it rings at 2:15 I rush to the streetcar and home. No, it’s not my kind of school. I liked Oberlin and Milford. I had boy-friends in Milford. Several. So did Babs. It was that kind of place.”

“Well” said Mim. “Oberlin isn’t that kind of place. I don’t have any boy-friends either.”

“Neither did I,” Jane said, “when I was there. Except for Danny O’Neal and he doesn’t count.”

“Why not?”

“Because I never thought anything would come of it.”

“Are you worried, Jane?”

“About what?”

“Because we still don’t have any boy-friends?”

Jane laughed. “No. Because I had boy-friends in Milford. And I’ll have them again, And you will, too. Hayden Hills is a sort of proper school. I don’t think they start dating early there.”

“Oh, no, they don’t.” Mim agreed. “It’s dull and Victorian.”

“And East High is too big and I’m too shy and people think I’m stuck up. Give us time, Mim. We aren’t exactly as old as Methuselah.”

Mim laughed and they dozed off again.

When it was light the bus stopped and the driver said there would be time for comfort and for breakfast. The sleepy passengers awoke. Mim nudged Jane with her elbow.

“Janie, you’ve got to see this.” She chuckled. “Did you ever see such a frowzy looking bunch of people in your life?”

One heavy-set woman had slept in her hat, a pink ostrich feather concoction that had fallen from her head onto her bosom, where it sat, its tendrils waving with every breath she drew.

“It looks like a great live sea anemone,” whispered Jane. The women all over the bus were combing their disarranged hair, and men were tightening their neckties. One sleepy man got up and stretched,

forgetting that he had unbuttoned his trouser-belt. Fortunately when his trousers slipped down he caught them before they passed his shorts.

It was early afternoon before they reached New York. Both girls were weary, and Mim had lost her voice. The bus station was very different from Grand Central. It smelled of exhaust fumes, and it had none of Grand Central's magic, with its high, pale blue ceiling, and the stars and constellations. They had a moment of concern that no one had come to meet them, but soon Mim said in her hoarse voice, "I see Aunt Grace!"

And Jane said "I see Aunt Nelle, too."

There were hugs all around then, and the smell of Aunt Nelle's "Quelques Fleurs" cologne and the feel of her soft cheek. And Grace giving Jane a big squeeze and saying "Oh, my, here's my great big girl! My, how you've grown. Sixteen years!"



"Mama!" Jane protested. "I've been five feet four inches for two years. I haven't grown since we left Milford. Not an inch."

"Well, you look bigger," Grace insisted.

Jane looked at her Aunt Nelle as they walked along. How different she was in the city. A striped silk dress, pretty shoes, and powder on her face, and giving kisses. Even to me, Jane thought. But in the mountains Aunt Nelle would be different. Khaki knickers and shirts, with knee socks and sneakers. And all business, passing out chores instead of kisses. Jane figured that she'd get no more kisses from Aunt Nelle that summer. Just one on arrival, she thought.

"We'll take a cab," Aunt Nelle said. "Let's not ride the subway. I might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb."

Jane and Grace were walking together.

"Why'd she say that?" Jane asked.

"I don't know." Grace said. "I guess 'cause it's expensive."

Soon they were in the taxi and chattering excitedly as it made its way through the city. Mim could only whisper.

"The Queensborough Bridge. I remember it," Jane said.

"Well, it's only two years since you were here," Aunt Nelle said.

"But it seems like ages and ages," Jane said. "There's an awful lot of water gone under the —"

“Queensborough Bridge,” giggled Mim. She sniffed the air. “New York City always smells different from Cleveland.”

“That’s tidewater smell,” Jane said.

“Yes,” said Grace. “And fish.”

“Mim ought to rest her voice,” Nelle said. “And I’ll fix you a good hot saltwater gargle.”

Soon they were in Jackson Heights and at the apartment. Babs came home from school and Dee home from her job at the office of Maple Park Associates. There were more kisses all around.

“Where’s Uncle Roge?” Jane asked Babs.

“Daddy’s in Pennsylvania. He’ll be home tomorrow, and the next day I graduate from dear old P.S. 69.”

“I bet that breaks your heart,” Jane suggested.

“No, but I’m scared to go to Newton High.” Babs said. “Oh, well, that’s in September, I’ve got my summer anyway. I kind of wish I was going to be with you two and not in Maine. We’ll have to have some fun the next couple of days. Wait’ll I get home tomorrow. You know good old New York schools. They don’t let out till the very last day of June.”

The next day Jane and Mim wondered what Babs had in mind in the way of “fun” after school. As far as they could see there just wasn’t anything to do in Jackson Heights except go to a movie. When they were little it was different. Back of the Fison’s apartment building there had been empty lots for seven blocks. They were grown up with grass which the Queensborough Corporation kept mowed from time to time. Babs and her visiting cousins could play in those fields, or even in the courts of the apartment-building, where they played a game called “Roly-Poly” with a tennis ball.

But now the lots were all built up in six or seven story apartments, and besides they were too big for the old games anyway. Probably Babs had a movie in mind, though they doubted Aunt Nelle’d want them to go.

But when Babs came home she had something else in mind.

“Let’s go over to the airport,” she said, and watch the planes. There’s two real cute pilots over there. One of them looks just like Lindbergh. Remember our Lindy scrapbooks Jane? Do you still have yours? I’ll always be so proud that I saw ‘The Spirit of St. Louis’ before it went to Paris. Do you still have your scrapbook?’

“I guess so,” Jane said, “wherever my footlocker is.”

They walked for blocks in the hot sun, and finally came to the rather small airfield Rahming of Jackson Heights. There were a few planes at one end of the field and some buildings, but very little activity, though one little biplane was apparently practicing take-off s and landings. The whole place smelled of

oil and asphalt. Jane had once thought she'd like to be an aviatrix, particularly after Lindbergh's flight, but she hadn't thought much about it for a long time.

The little biplane landed and began taxiing toward the hangar. Babs led the girls along the fence toward the plane.

"Come on, I'll show you how cute the pilot is," she said. "He's been giving a lesson, I guess. He teaches flying, and takes people up for rides."

"Is there only one pilot?" Mim asked.

"No, there's more." Babs said. "but two of them are cute and they're always here in the afternoons."

The pilot and his pupil climbed down and walked away from the plane, and then the pilot noticed the girls and called out, "Hi there, Babs" and waved at them.

Babs blushed and grinned, and waved back.

"You know him?" Jane asked.

"Not really," Babs said, "but once he asked my name."

"How often do you come?" asked Mim.

"Oh. I don't know. A couple of times a week, I guess."

"And what do you do when you come?" Jane asked. "Nothing. Just watch," Babs said. "It's dumb, I know." Mim and Jane laughed and Babs laughed too.

"How much do they charge for rides?" Jane asked Babs. "have you ever been up?"

"It's five dollars. I haven't been up. Mother and Daddy wouldn't let me. Well, I haven't asked them. But anyway, I'm scared, I guess."

The girls walked home then, and Jane asked Babs whether she had school the next day.

"Not till afternoon, then there is a rehearsal for the graduation exercises. Want to come along with me?"

That night when they went to bed Mim said to Jane, "When are you going to start keeping that journal you said you were going to start?"

"When we get a few more days as exciting as this one," Jane said. "Anyway, I'll have to buy a notebook."

"A weeks of days as exciting as this one wouldn't total one exciting day," Mim said.

"I know. And it was on my sixteenth birthday I decided to start a journal, but so far, the only thing interesting has been our bus ride. Mother once told me that when your life is exciting you don't have

time to keep a journal, and when you have time to write in it there's nothing to record but your thoughts. But I don't know what my thoughts are yet, so I'm hoping for something exciting."

"Good luck," Mim said.

WE CAN'T AFFORD MORE CRUMB-BUNS

Jane started her journal the following evening:

Mim and I were determined to make our day interesting. Why, I don't know, but it's an idea we have in our heads. I guess it's just because we know we are going to be on the Hill all summer with no way to get anywhere and nothing to do except chores. And not even Billy Wooldridge to tease us!

Our day started out pretty slow. First of all, Mim, Babs and I went to Fellenz's Bakery for crumb buns for Uncle Roge's breakfast. He just loves them. Next we went to "Rosie's" (his name is Rosenblum, really) and got this notebook for my journal. When we got back to the apartment we helped Uncle Roge load up the Buick for the trip to 'N.H.' Uncle Roge and Aunt Nelle always say N.H. and not New Hampshire. We are supposed to leave Sunday morning early. Mother says she'll believe that if it really happens. Aunt Nelle always has a terrible time getting ready. By the way, Uncle Roge is not his cheerful self at all lately. Mother says he is very worried about business. It is making him gloomy.

In the afternoon we walked over to P.S .69 with Babs because she had to practice for her graduation. There it was, the same old five-story brick building with the glass-walled double stairways, one for up, one for down, where you can see other people's legs going by. P.5.69 is all surrounded by cement paving, no green lawn. I guess all New York public schools are that way. Mim hated it when she was here the year after her Daddy died, and I hated it when I was here in 1927, and year before last Trink hated it, too. Everything was like the Army or a prison, maybe. The "old battle ax" principal used to clap her hands and say, "Left - left - left" whenever we were changing classes.

We went up to the Auditorium with Babs and watched them rehearsing to Pomp and Circumstance by Sir Edward Elgar (that's what Mother says it is) but Mim and I call it "Land of Hope and Glory." The old battle ax principal was making the kids learn how to walk that special way they always do at graduations and weddings. Step - drag, step - drag. Boys always feel like such fools when they have to do that. We got bored and so we waved "bye-bye" to Babs, and we left. When we got outside we tried to think what to do to pass the time. I said to Mim, "What do we do now? If we go back to the apartment Aunt Nelle will put us to work." Mim said, "Let's do what Babs does. Go to the airport." I said, "There's only one good reason to go there." Mim looked at me sidewise and grinned. "Do you mean what I think you mean?" "That's just what I mean," I said. "Can we afford it?" Mim asked. We counted up our money. We only had about ten dollars apiece, and it has to last until we get more from home. I don't think Mom could spare me a cent, and Dad is probably still mad because I left. But Mim and I agreed that once we're on the hill there'll be nothing to spend money on. So we decided to go to the airport and see if \$5.00 a ride meant one person for \$5.00 or whether we could both go for that.

So we headed for the airport real fast. When we got there, there wasn't much going on. It was hot and just a little bit breezy, and it had the same smell of tar and grease or oil or whatever. We stood around and looked at the sign that said "\$5.00 a ride," and then a man came out of the building and started walking toward us. Mim said, "Oh, boy, I think I'm losing my nerve." I said, "Me too, but I ought to go up, I've been wanting to ever since Lindbergh, and I'll never have a better chance." Mim said that was probably true,

Well, the man walked over to us and he was the pilot that Babs thinks is so cute. We asked him, "How much for a ride?" He said, "Five dollars." And I said, "Five dollars for one person?" And he said, "Oh, I'll take you both up for five." So up we went! And it was just great! When he turned and climbed it felt funny sort of like an elevator. He just took us on one wide circle hardly beyond Jackson Heights and we thought it was a pretty short ride, but we were glad we did it. Now we can say we've been up in an airplane. Only trouble is we can't say it! We swore ourselves to secrecy on account of Babs. We feel a little guilty about it all since she was the one who took us to the airport and she's so crazy about that pilot. He does look like Lindbergh only he's brunette. And, of course, Babs had told us that her parents wouldn't let her go up in a plane. When we got back to the apartment what happened was funny, and amazing, too. Babs was home by the time we got back and she opened the door for us. When we walked by she sniffed and said, "You've been to the airport!" Imagine that! The airport has a special odor of oil and hot asphalt and Babs could smell it on us. But we kept our big secret!

In the evening we went to the Commencement exercises and they were pretty boring. We had ice cream and cake afterward.

The next day Jane wrote:

Today was even more exciting than yesterday, but this time it wasn't fun. We were to leave for Forest Camp day after tomorrow (even though it is the 4th of July.) Uncle Roge thinks the traffic going out of New York that morning won't be heavy. Today and tomorrow we were going to be busy loading the car, and packing cookies and fudge for the trip. It wouldn't be a trip to the Hill without Aunt Nelle's fudge. But now our plans are all spoiled.

There has been a terrible row. Mim and I have never seen Uncle Roge so angry, though Babs says she has, once or twice. Almost as angry. From the time we got up today Aunt Nelle acted strange. She was very quiet and not acting like a supervisor the way she always does. We didn't know what to make of it. No one gave us any chores to do. No one sent us to Fellenz's Bakery for crumb-buns. We all ate cereal. Shredded Wheat, too, which we will be eating all summer long, once we are on the Hill. Uncle Roger was at home today, but Dee went to work at her job downtown. She came home at noontime. Dee is going to stay here in the apartment this summer. I wonder what she will do for social life. She says there is nothing to do at work. She is there mostly to answer the phone and it never rings.

Uncle Roger packed more things in the car this morning and then he came in and said, "Why don't we leave tomorrow?" Mother said to him, "Nelle wants to make fudge and cookies."

"Have Jane and Mim make them," Uncle Roge said, and then he asked where Aunt Nelle was, and Mother said she was in the bathroom and had been in there so long that we were wondering if she was alright.

Uncle Roger knocked on the bathroom door and said, "Tookey, are you all right?" And Aunt Nelle came out and said, "We've got to have a family conference." She looked solemn and really strange. But Uncle Roge said, "Well, let's have some lunch first, and let's leave for the Hill tomorrow."

Aunt Nelle insisted there must be a family conference right away, so we all assembled in the living room, Uncle Roge and Babs, and Mim, and Mother, Dee, and I.

Uncle Roge said, "Well, what's this all about?"

Aunt Nelle sort of cleared her throat and then she began to talk. "I have something to tell, but I don't know just where to start,"

Uncle Roge was looking puzzled and I thought Mother was looking a little nervous, and maybe Dee was, too.

Aunt Nelle went on, "A couple of months ago I began to worry about our family fortunes, I hated to see our saving starting to dwindle away so I decided to do something about it."

Uncle Roge scowled and said, "Oh, Tookey!" but he let her go on with her 'confession."

"Yes," she said. "So I took my savings out of the Corn Exchange Bank and I invested it."

Uncle Roge burst out with, "Oh, no, Nelle! Oh, good Lord! You fooled around with our savings?"

Aunt Nelle said, "Well, Roge, that is, after all, my savings account. Father gave me fifty acres of land in Chagrin Falls and I sold it to the Cleveland Metropolitan Park Board. And I put that money into savings a few years ago."

"For goodness sake, Nelle," Uncle Roge said, "I know all that perfectly well."

"Well, maybe Dee and Jane and Mim don't know," Aunt Nelle said.

"I thought you considered that our savings, anyway," Uncle Roge said, and he sounded hurt.

"Well, of course I really do, but still I can say how it's invested."

"I'm afraid so," Uncle Roge said. "How is it invested?"

"In real estate. A couple of lots and some stock in Maple Park Associates," Aunt Nelle said.

Uncle Roge fairly groaned. "Oh, my God!" he said. And Uncle Roger is not one to say, "Oh, my God!"

From there on, Aunt Nelle seemed to get smaller and smaller, and Uncle Roger got more and more excited. He told Aunt Nelle to get all the papers she had received from Maple Park Associates, papers such as deeds and receipts. Then when she got them and gave them to him he read them and he got redder and redder in the face. Finally he flung them down violently and pounded the table with his fist, and everything lying there jumped in the air. I thought about the time at Aunt Merly's wedding dinner, when he turned over a whole table full of dishes, or so the story goes.

"These papers are absolutely worthless," he told Aunt Nelle.

It also turned out that Mother bought a little stock in that company, too, She used money she made when she sold the wall hanging she made. Now she is broke.

Everyone is broke, it seems, Things have been terribly unpleasant here today. Uncle Roger wanted to get hold of Mr. Maple and Dee said he is out of town. Dee did not get paid this week. Uncle Roger is furious. Aunt Nelle said that we'd better have lunch and she would send Babs to get some crumb-buns. But Uncle Roger immediately barked, "No! No crumb-buns! We can't afford any more crumb-buns."

Things are still in an uproar tonight. Uncle Roger has said he doesn't know when or if we are going to New Hampshire. Mim and I went out for a walk this evening because all the talk has been driving us batty. We walked down to Roosevelt Avenue because we like to hear the elevated trains go roaring by overhead, and whether we go to New Hampshire, or back home to Cleveland and Oberlin, it is going to be a very boring summer. We got an ice cream soda at a drugstore, and walked back to the apartment, where the pow-wow was still going on. Uncle Roge seemed slightly calmer, but he says he is going to sue Mr. Maple, though he says he doesn't know where he'll get the money to sue.

Jane did not write again in her journal until the tenth of July:

Well, we are finally here on the Hill. In the end, we finally left as scheduled on the 4th of July. Aunt Nelle stayed in New York to see Babs off to Maine. And Dee, of course, stayed hoping that her job in Mr. Maple's office is still going to work out, in spite of Uncle Roger's mistrust of that whole outfit.

It seems strange to be here without Aunt Nelle. We got here on the sixth and Mim and I and Mother all said it was like a dream to be going up this incredible hill again. We hadn't been here for three years and Mim and I kept remembering things and we just squealed with delight. And just imagine, Uncle William took us up the hill in the strangest vehicle you ever saw. We didn't have to toil up that stony road on foot and huff and puff and stop to rest. Uncle Roger has acquired something he calls a "slow mobile" It is built on an old Model-T Ford, and it has "cater-piller" tractor wheels in back and a small truck bed. Uncle Bait and Uncle William rode in front and Mother, Mim and I climbed in the back with our suitcases and some big rocks (for traction.) Slow as it is, it was wonderful not to have to climb on foot.

Uncle Roger and Uncle Bill put up one of the tents for Mim and me, and tomorrow Uncle Roger will go back to New York to "Get after that crook Maple." He'll be back up here with Aunt Nelle in a few weeks.

So now here we are stuck for the summer with nothing to do but weed that big garden that Uncle William has planted. One uncle, one aunty, and two cousins. Mim said tonight, "How did this happen?"

More tomorrow. More of what?



Thundering ANN

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Although Mim and Jane thought of themselves as bored, they soon began to enjoy their summer. They loved sleeping in the big white tent with the wooden floor. They opened it up wide on warm days and laced it up tight on chilly nights. Unlike one previous summer, when a mother wildcat hissed from a nearby stone wall, there was nothing audible to frighten them. They rose when they wanted to (usually quite early) for neither Grace nor William believed in regimentation. Had Nelle been in camp she'd have been ringing a bell or having Babs play reveille on her bugle. Nelle had a life-time dedication (learned on the farm) to the proposition that chores must always be started at the earliest possible hour. Grace, William and the two cousins, turned that schedule all around. Breakfast was usually at eight o'clock, which Mim termed "very civilized." After that the day could be planned as they chose. Grace, Jane and Mim knew what was expected of them. Tend the garden and keep it flourishing. Harvest all the strawberries, raspberries and blueberries, and make as much jam and jelly as possible. Beyond that, keep the house, tent, and yard clean and tidy.

William also knew what Nelle and Roger expected of him. Select, mark and fell some birch and pine trees on the perimeter of the clearing. Trim the branches off and saw these trees into six foot lengths to be "buzzed" up for firewood by the Button boys and their father. The trees should be six to ten inches in diameter. As an alternate task, Roger expected William to spend part of his time in maintenance work on the road up the hill. And, of course, there was always the wretched task of cleaning the privy.

Grace's work, to be sure, was obvious. Cooking, cleaning, "mothering" the girls, making jam and jelly, but, of great importance - superintending the vegetable garden. Nelle and Roger were counting on Grace's expertise in this Matter because, during the War, after leaving the Old Brick, Grace had been Supervisor of War Gardens in Cleveland. She had been recommended for that post by an official who had learned of her success in using methods advocated by Cornell University. Even Nelle had been impressed at last. At Forest Camp she had no problem with the soil. The kitchen garden was located where the pig-pen had been for sixty years. A darker, richer soil could not be found and the rocks and boulders had long ago been removed and used for stone walls. Grace would have a fine garden because William had planted it weeks ago in May.

In the mornings after breakfast, Jane and Mim did the dishes while Grace put the milk and butter back down cellar in the open air "safe," a screened-in cupboard. Next, Grace swept the floor and tidied the table and wood stove. William carried in armfuls of firewood and stowed in all in its place under the shelves by the sink. After finishing the dishes, Jane wiped the iron sink with an oiled rag. At the drain end of the sink a large galvanized pail collected the cool, fresh spring-water that ran into it and overflowed and drained away. Mim dipped up water from the pail and filled two huge kettles on the wood-stove. Lunch would be a cold meal, but by supertime William would have the wood fire going again for Grace's cooking and hot water for dishes.

By nine a.m. Mim and Jane were off down the hill to "fetch the milk and mail" as Aunt Nelle always put it. Her father had used the word 'fetch.'

As they walked down the hill Mim said to Jane, "I've been noticing something and I wonder if you have too. We've been doing all the same chores we do when Aunt Nelle's here, but they just don't seem to be such a pain in the neck, do they?" "No," Jane said, "they don't. But then there's only four of us."

"If there were eight of us it would still be easier to do the chores," Mim said, "without Aunt Nelle here."

"I think we feel that way because we know that if we slip up on something, we won't be in trouble with Mother or Uncle Bill."

On the way back up the hill they climbed the very steepest grade (where automobiles often stalled) and sat for awhile on the large lichen-covered boulder they used as a resting-stone. Grace had always said it was a "respite" in the long, arduous climb, and since it sat in a cool, ferny hollow, Mim had dubbed it the "rest-pit." High above towered a giant white pine, taller than any other tree on the hill, and hence called "The Old Monarch." The lower two-thirds of the massive trunk was bare of branches, but the top was full and healthy.

Even young people were puffing and panting by the time they reached the resting-stone. But they never tarried long because they were carrying the milk and it must not warm up too much since there was no ice. Aunt Nelle was very fussy about hurrying along once they were carrying milk. Even when Nelle wasn't in camp her preachments were always in force. So Mim and Jane got up off the resting-stone and toiled upward.

When they got back to the house Grace took care of the milk and the girls had some leisure time before lunch.

"Where is Uncle Bill this morning?" Jane asked.

"Up in the Rahmingwest corner," Grace said. "He just brought a big load down and he's gone back up for more."

"Then we're safe till lunch?" Jane asked.

"I'm sure you are," Grace laughed. William was using the Model-T "tractor" to haul down six foot lengths of the firewood he'd been cutting up.

"But we'll go down to the southeast corner to be sure," Mim said. And off they went, each carrying a blanket, a book, a pair of sunglasses, and a jar of Pond's cold cream. Out of sight in a far pasture they would sunbathe in the nude until Grace rang the bell for a lunch consisting of sandwiches and milk. Mim and Jane had decided that since the summer was going to be incredibly quiet and dull, there was nothing to do but concentrate on improving their health and complexions before school time in September. They had embarked on a program of drinking ten glasses of spring water a day, and in addition they each ate a cake of Fleischman's yeast a day when there was a supply on hand.

In the afternoons the two girls and Grace went berry picking in the upper fields. Strawberries were ending, and red raspberries just beginning. Some days they made jam or jelly.

Their suppers were early in true farm tradition, and afterward they weeded the garden, when the shadow of the mountain to the west made it cool and comfortable. The garden already provided lettuce, radishes, young onions, and young carrots, all of which tasted delicious, tender and fresh, as they were.

Evenings were something of a problem. There was no radio and nowhere to go. All four of them sat around the kitchen table by the light of a "Rochester" kerosene lamp and played cards or wrote letters. They decided to read aloud to each other and that was quite successful. They finished William de Morgan's Joseph Vance, and started on Vanity Fair. Grace was not surprised to note that Jane and Mim enjoyed these books, for both girls had always been bookworms. But that William should take such great pleasure in the old classics amazed her. She had never thought of her erstwhile brother-in-law that way. But then, she had to admit, she had not thought much about William at all, except in the same way the rest of the family did. It was always "Poor William," because of the tragic outcome of his marriage to Adeline. Of course, Nelle and Roger knew him better because of the early years in Denver when they were all newlyweds, and Merly and Tommy had each been out there for a short time, but the others had seen little of him at any time and scarcely ever in recent years. William had lived in New York City for a long time now, but he had not been there during the same period when Grace and Norris were. Even Nelle and Roger had not seen him often in New York, for he and Billy lived in Manhattan, while the Fisons lived in Jackson Heights in Queens, and they all lived very different lives.

This strange summer of 1932, however, gave Grace her first chance to talk to William and to get some idea of what life had been like for him. She developed a certain fondness for him, or at least a deeper understanding. He would never be "her kind of person," and he lacked the polish that Grace liked in a man, but William was nice. He was what Norris would have called "a good egg." Grace, at times, wondered what the natives thought of her living up there on the hill with her brother-in-law, and the two girls. Of course, she had explained the situation to Ola Bean, the nearest neighbor, at the farm where the girls went to get the milk. Ola certainly seemed as friendly as ever, so Grace concluded that the Bean's felt that, with the two teenage girls present, there was nothing scandalous going on. And, as for William, he was the soul of propriety. In the evenings after the reading aloud ended and the girls had retired to their tent, he almost immediately retreated to "the studio," the little one-room cabin that had been a part of the original group of buildings comprising Jedediah White's farm. In one of the early summers, Frank Button and his sons had put a fine basement under the studio, and Roger had a workshop down there. But this summer the studio was William's and when Roger came to the hill again he would pitch a tent in a field at some distance from the house, where he would have a cot, a table, chair and his typewriter. In recent years he preferred such a solitary hideaway where he was removed from the activities of other people, a place where he could work on his book Me and Joe.

The house had just two bedrooms downstairs. Nelle always used the small back bedroom that looked out on a view of the distant mountain ranges. Grace used the front bedroom, and any children present used the tents. This summer Grace had the house to herself and she chose the attic, which had a charm of its own in all its unfinished roughness. The gabled roof came down clear to the floor on the east and west. The Rahming and south walls each had a window, and the cool mountain breezes swept through. There were two antique spool beds in the attic and room for a number of cots when they were needed.

This summer Grace was lonely in the evenings after the girls and William retired. It was now seven years since her separation from Norris, and she was as unhappy as ever. In the years with Norris she had certainly been unhappy, but now she was unhappy and unbearably lonely as well. If there was anything that could not be said about life with Norris Rahming, it was that it was dull. And sometimes even apparently compatible married couples were lonely. They were unable to talk to each other. And trapped in a miserable marriage, as Father Rahming had been, he was wretchedly lonely. But, for Grace, marriage to Norris had been living with two men. And each of them was anything but dull. The witty, imaginative, and charming Norris was a stimulating partner. The argumentative, ill-tempered, frequently deceitful, Norris was maddening, even frightening, but never, never boring. One would never be lonely with Norris Rahming. If she had it to do over again now, she'd choose to be with him, and put up with his dark side, in order to have the pleasure of the better qualities of his nature. It would be worth it in exchange for the emptiness of her present existence.

Grace had been in Forest Camp nearly three weeks now, and her loneliness was growing with each passing day. Once she had loved the quiet of the mountain night. She still did, really, but it was a little too much, with so few people. More solitude than she cared to experience, she decided. The house was small and quaint and usually seemed charming, but now it was a bit scary, even with the knowledge that William was out there in the studio and the two girls in the tent. And both of those girls were brave and resourceful.

The only antidote Grace had for her unhappy state of mind each evening was to bring the cheery Rochester lamp upstairs with her and sit and write letters and entries in her sporadic journal until drowsiness overtook her. Letter writing must take the place of conversation for her. There was so much on her mind that she could not discuss with Jane or Mim or William. In fact, there were few people she could discuss things with, only Betty Long and Edna Hurst, and occasionally, Merly. No one else had any sympathy with the idea that she still loved Norris, and had made a mistake when she divorced him. Not Dee, nor Jane, nor Nelle. Not her brothers nor even her gentle mother would agree with her that she could have made the marriage succeed if she'd only hung on longer until Norris finally grew up. They told her she had had no alternative but to divorce him. They all said it had been a good thing for her and the girls to have an end to the violent quarrels and arguments. And it been good for Norris, too, because his pride had made him begin to work hard and prove himself as a painter, and he was finally winning prizes and selling pictures.

But Betty and Edna and Merly all had shown understanding for Grace's distress. Betty and Edna remembered what fun Norr had been at parties in the old Art School days, and afterwards, in New York. And Merly had always liked Norris even with her knowledge of his faults. Women usually found Norr very attractive, so it wasn't surprising that Betty, Edna and Merly all said they could believe her when she said she hadn't stopped loving him. She could talk to them and she could write to them and she didn't mind if they preached to her a little bit. They could say to her, "No one made you marry him in the first place, Gracie." And then, for seven years now they'd been saying to her, kindly, "Grace, you've got to start putting your life together again." But how was she to do that with this beastly Depression?

Tonight she put the Rochester lamp on the antique table that had belonged to the White's and sat down to write to Betty Long. After she finished that she would write in her journal, which in truth was a long, continuing letter to Norris. She would never mail it to him and he must not see it in her lifetime. But she had told Dee about it recently and made her promise to give it to him "after I'm gone." Dee had frowned and pressed her mouth together in a disapproving tight line. "Mother, you shouldn't write this; it's not good for you at all. It's very bad, in fact. Why are you doing this?" And she had explained to Dee. "I want him to know what I've been thinking about in these years since we separated." And Dee had said, "Oh, Mother!" but she had promised.

But first, tonight, she'd write to Betty. Through the open Rahming window Grace heard an animal cry up on the side of the mountain. It was a strange sound, unnerving, and Grace speculated as to what animal it might be - bobcat? Maybe even a lynx? Chills went up her spine and she thought of the girls in the tent. She hastened to begin her letter and, fortunately, she did not hear the sound again that night.

Betty dear,

Well, you haven't heard from me in ever so long, have you? And that's not like me you'll admit. I'm not sure when I last wrote or which of us owes a letter. Things have been so hectic lately, and honestly, Betty, I am so dismayed at the way things in the world are at present. Aren't you? This terrible Depression is turning life upside down for so many people. And now I'm very disillusioned with things that have been going on here (rather, in New York City). I am in New Hampshire at present in a very uncertain situation to be sure. I'll explain that presently, but to go back -

You will recall, Betty, when I was in Cleveland a year ago I told you of my wall-hanging of George Washington at Valley Forge? Well, Betty, I finished it and "Polly" Patterson sold it for me. She took a pretty hefty commission for it, too, if you ask me, Betty. It was easy to sell since this is Washington's Bicentennial. She and a "friend" who placed the hanging with an historical society, each took 10%. And they are supposed to be Christian Scientists, Betty! Polly always preaches love and she knows what difficulties I have faced lately, but there is so much greed in the world, Betty. Wait till you hear the rest of this.

Nelle met some people that seemed ever so nice. She met them at church. The man is a real estate developer. Nelle got persuaded to buy some lots and some stock in the man's company. Nelle put all her savings in it, and I put most of the money I made on that wall-hanging into a few shares of the stock. And in addition to that, this man, a Mr. Maple, said he needed another girl in his office. So Dee came from Cleveland to take the job. Well, I won't go into the details, Betty, but the whole thing appears to be a fraud. Dee is still down there in New York, hoping the man will start paying her her salary. Roge says the man is a crook and our stock certificates and Nelle's deeds are worthless. They are trying to go after the man, but he is nowhere to be found! Well! And this man Maple is also a Scientist.

Well, old dear, in the meantime, here I am up on this mountain, with just my Jane and Merly's Mim, and of all people, Emmie's husband, William Wooldridge. Don't remember if you ever met him, Betty. They were never divorced and you know all about poor Emmie's history. William is a good person, Betty, though not very well educated. However, he is smart, and he is really earning his "room and board" here

this summer (If you can call it that). Bill is down and out; his salesman business is completely dead. We are here tending a big garden, canning fruit and cutting firewood. I hope to do some painting, but our days are so full I don't find that I can. This place is so lovely, but so-inaccessible, and work doesn't "do itself."

I'm torn between wishing Nelle were here, and hoping she and Roge don't hurry back from New York. Nelle seems to make life difficult. She is such a demon for work, but gets everything and everybody in an uproar when she's here, and all the children are in awe of her (and some of the adults, too). Betty, it just makes a very unrelaxed atmosphere, and, to me, it seems totally unnecessary.

This summer it is very lonely at night. We usually have a crowd. I'm up in the attic now, writing to you by oil lamp. I'm all alone in this tiny, old, old house. It is very charming, but there is a strange feeling. I just heard a wildcat cry on the mountain. Perhaps, bear, but I think not. Betty, I've never been here without Nelle and she is much braver than I. In fact, I was usually here with Norris and those were happy times, mostly. When I am here my heart just aches for him. Norr was crazy about this place. He and Nelle used to bait each other, but even that was partly in fun. Betty, to tell the truth, wherever I am, my heart aches for Norr. I have made no progress in forgetting him. We should not have separated. Roge says Norr is a scoundrel, but that doesn't change the way I feel. Life is so flat without him. I'm so discouraged. It's so easy for others to say, "Grace, you're better off without him." They just don't know. I do.

Betty, it seems as though the last seven years have been just one blow after another. My spirit feels utterly trampled.

First Norr and I separated and then Merly's Waldo died. After that, the divorce, and then Aunt Ada felt she should leave, too. I never got over how hasty Norr was to marry again. My girls both think that I was naive to think he wouldn't. They say it's only human nature, and that I don't understand human nature. Betty, I guess I don't understand it, and if it's like Norris, I don't want to understand it. His marrying so quickly was such a shock. I'd have thought he'd have waited a little while at least, to get his bearings. But no, he didn't. She took him to Europe and that's what he wanted. But all that you know. And you know about the troubles I had with Carle, too, and then I went to Milford and that venture failed, and poor Dee broke her heart. I shouldn't have married Carle. We might have been good friends today if we hadn't married. But it's Norris I still care for, Betty.

O! And now Mother is gone, too, and if only I could talk to her. Mother always understood my dreams and aspirations. No one else did. Nelle especially. Aunt Ada was always nice to me and Rahming. But they are all gone now. To their reward? Who knows? Father is still there in Oberlin, and he is so sweet in his old age, but he's getting senile now, Betty, and it's so sad. He wakes at night and calls for Mother. He never loved anyone else. Father had his faults but no one ever could say he didn't love Mother. Nelle says she never heard anyone say that Father had eyes on any other woman. Love like that is wonderful, Betty, isn't it? I just wish that Father had not been so thrifty and practical. His stepmother was the cause of that, he told me. But he never encouraged Mother in having a flower-garden. He felt that all one ought to grow was vegetables. Do you know what he did, Betty? Merly planted tulips and when they

came up Father pulled them all up before they bloomed. Merly was so upset. He said the water bill was too high already without using water for flowers. Father is ninety-one now. He was always thrifty, now he's stingy. They say people don't change when they get old, they get more like themselves. But I love Father. I must get back there to Oberlin and see him. Who knows how long he'll be here?

Betty dear, how are you getting along? The artists in New York are in trouble and so are musicians and anyone else in the arts. Ted Hurst considers himself very lucky to have work, and says that Norris is lucky, too, because other Cleveland artists are struggling. Good thing you inherited a little money, Betty. Do write to me, old dear, as I am stranded on this mountain. Tell me the news of Cleveland. I can't live there, not with Norris and that woman there. Some people say she's pleasant enough, but she bought and paid for him and he even told me so. What do you hear of Carle, Betty? Is he doing anything at all? Did he have anything in the May Show?

Well, Betty, I'm getting sleepy now, too sleepy to write in my journal tonight. The air up here is marvelous. I'll close now, to sleep on a corn husk Mattress!

Much love, Grace.

####

The next morning Grace made blueberry pancakes for breakfast. William and the girls were delighted.

"They're delicious, Aunt Grace," Mim said.

"They'd be better with a little bacon, though, wouldn't they?" Grace said. "The bacon's all gone."

"I don't mind," Jane said. "It's a great change from Shredded Wheat and milk. And I really like Shredded."

"Well, I have to tell you, my little dears, I put the last two eggs in the pancakes, and Nelle and Roge better get back up here soon with some groceries or send us some money. I've got a few dollars in my purse, and the girls do, and I expect you do too, William. But we can't use up the last cent each of us has. We might have some emergency come up or some little personal need. We can't be caught penniless, and besides that, we've got no way to get to Plymouth without asking the Bean's to take us, and I wouldn't do that for two good reasons. They're very busy people down there, and what's more I haven't enough money to pay them for the milk. I told Ola Nelle'd be here soon, so I guess she isn't worried about that. But Nelle and Roge surely must know that we're running out of food. Two weeks supply has lasted us three and a half weeks. I think we've done very well. It's good we had the berries and lettuce and other things."

"But we can't live on just berries and lettuce, can we?" Mim laughed. "I could, if I could also have all the milk and bread and butter I wanted."

"Well, I guess we have enough flour for one more batch of bread," Grace said. "And there's one more box of Shredded Wheat."

"Three days food," said William, shaking his head. "Shall we send them a telegram?"

"Why don't you go for the mail with us, Mother?" Jane said. "Then if we don't get a letter saying they're coming in the next few days you can send a wire to them from Bean's."

"I'll write it out and you can ask Ola to send it. I really don't feel up to that walk. If there's a letter from Nelle, we'll wait and see if we need to wire her."

There was a letter in that morning's mail. The girls waited while Grace read it.

"Well, they're coming," she said. "Coming Friday."

"So that means Monday," Jane said.

"Or the following Friday," said Mim.

"That's more like it," William said. "We'll be living on milk and radishes and blueberries by the time they get here. Nelle never departs on schedule."

“We’ll have to shoot us a bear, I guess,” Mim said.

“Or a porcupine?” Jane said, winking at Mim in remembrance of an episode several years past, when Mim unknowingly ate some porcupine stew.

“Tell you what we can do,” William said. “We can go fishing.”

“Where?” the girls asked.

“Big Perch Lake. We can go in Thundering Ann. I wouldn’t take her out on the paved road, but we can go there. It’s only a mile past Bean’s.”

“Let’s go!” Jane said. “We could use something to eat resembling meat.”

“You’re a poet and you don’t know it,” Mim said. “Something to eat resembling meat.”

And they both took it up, chanting, “Something to eat resembling meat. Something to - .“

“When will you go, after lunch?” asked Grace. “We can have it early.” William grinned. “I can tell you gals haven’t done much fishing. You up before the crack of dawn, if you’re smart. At least that’s when I’ve the most luck.”

“Can we go tomorrow?” Mim asked.

“Why not?” William said. “But I’ll have to make us some poles this afternoon. There’s some line and some hooks and sinkers in the work shop. I think Charlie brought them that summer he was here. Funny that Roge and Nelle don’t have any real fishing gear. They used to fish in Colorado. All of us did. Emmie liked it.”

“Roge bought this place with writing and banjo-playing in mind,” Grace said. “Not fishing.”

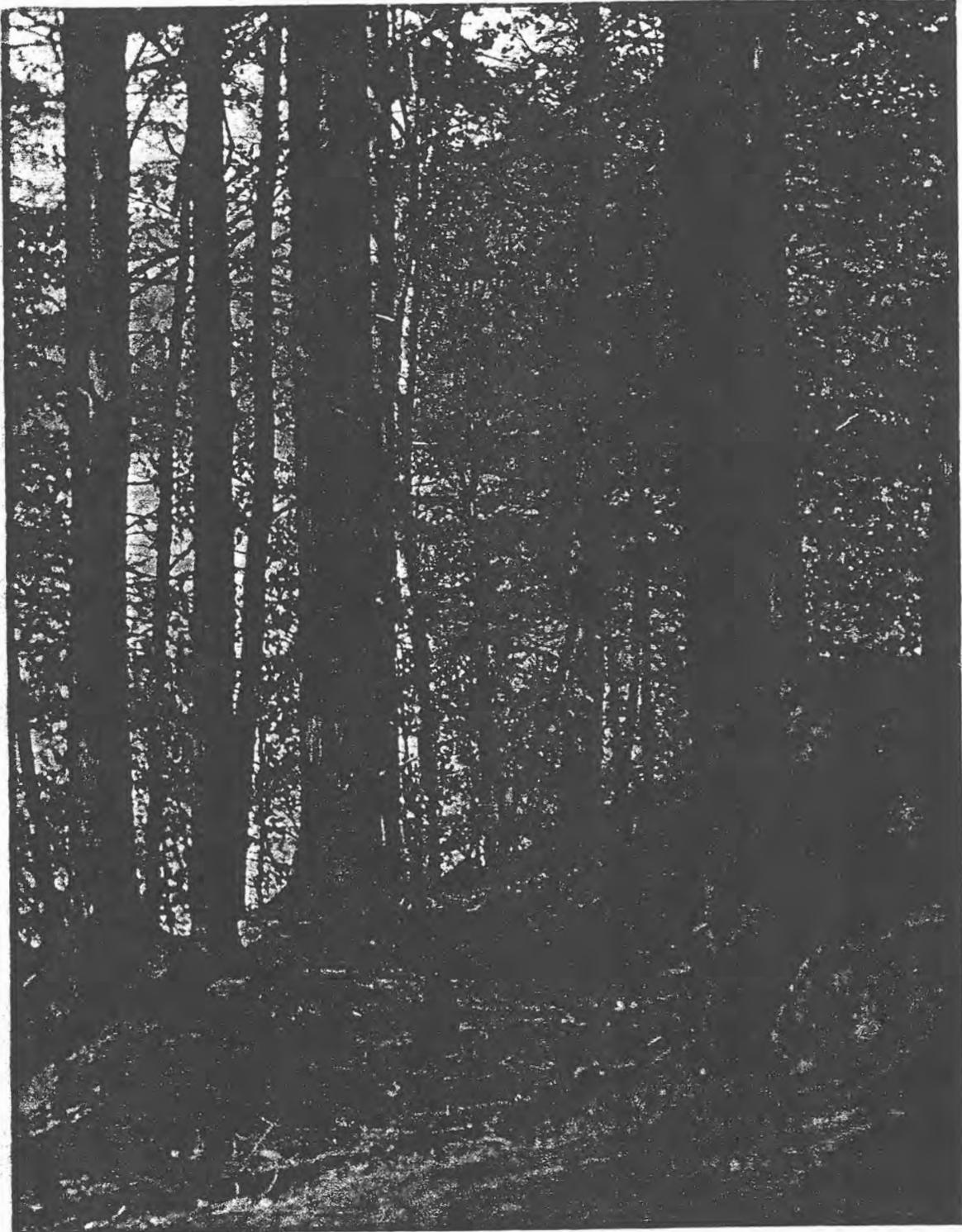
“I don’t think he had wood-cutting, or road-building, or house-painting in mind, either,” William said.

“No. Nelle calls this place ‘Camp Work Like the Devil,’” Grace said, “which makes me think that if you’re going to go fishing you’ll be smart to go before Roge and Nelle come.”

“Yes,” Mim said, “because Aunt Nelle will have work planned for us. You can count on it.”

“Can you be ready to leave at five in the morning?” William asked. “And will you catch us a can of worms this evening?”

They started off in Thundering Ann before the sun had warmed the dew on the grass. Grace got up with them and fixed sandwiches and thermos bottles of milk. It was a slow and jiggly ride, down the hill, past the old Monarch pine tree, past the brook and the dam. Then out onto the road where the mail boxes stood. There they turned right. They rattled on, past the Bean’s house, then past the Bean’s Fur Farm with its cages for mink. Next they went through a deeply wooded stretch and then they approached a



THE PINEY PATH TO BIG PERCH LAKE BEFORE TIMBER
CUTTING SPOILED IT 1923

ramshackle, slovenly-looking house with no screens on doors or windows, and a rotting sofa on the porch from which leapt four savagely barking dogs.

“Oh!” Jane said. “I remember this place. As long as I can recall they’ve had bad dogs here. But they don’t go past their yard.” And true enough, the four assorted mongrels barked beside the truck for a distance and then turned back. “I remember that they barked at Dee and me when we walked by a few years ago.”

“How frightening!” Mim said.

They soon came to the turn off at Big Perch lake and William drove Thundering Ann in as far as the narrow road went. They unloaded the three fish poles which William had made from spindly young trees, and fixed with line, sinkers, and hooks safely stuck into corks. They carried the poles and their lunches and headed down the old familiar path to the lake. As they went along, Jane remembered the way the path had been the first summers she had come there with her father, and others. The white pines had towered over their heads and they grew almost down to the water’s edge. Then one summer they had come to Big Perch, and they’d experienced a rude shock. The whole area had been completely timbered out. Jane recalled that her father had been very nearly in tears when he saw the devastation. Then he’d been angry that the lumbermen had cut clear down to the lake. They could have spared a little, he said. But now as they walked along Jane noted that the new young white pines were already well over her head, and the bare, almost scorched, look was gone.

Jane was so pleased she cried out, “Oh, look! They’re coming back! They’re coming back!”

Mim and William looked around them startled.

“Who?” Mim asked.

“The trees! The pines!” Jane said, and the others laughed.

They had planned to fish from a huge granite boulder along the shore where the deep Water was close in, but as they skirted the edge of the lake they came upon two old flat-bottom rowboats and one had its oars in it. They decided to borrow it. It was a bit leaky, but not too bad, so they bailed it out and shoved off. It only required occasional bailing.

Jane and Mim didn’t really want to put the worms on, so William baited their hooks for them. He took care of Mim’s and handed it to her, then did Jane’s. They put their lines in on opposite sides of the boat, while William put a worm on his hook. By the time his line was in the water Mim had a fish on.

“Give it a little jerk, Mim,” William said. “Set the hook.”

But Mim had already brought her flopping fish into the boat and she had to hold William’s pole while he took the fish, a perch, off the hook and put it on a string. By that time, Jane had a fish on her line and William had to take it off for her, and put new worms on both the girls’ hooks. When Mim handed William back his pole it had a fish on too, this time a “horn-pout,” a scaleless fish called catfish or bull-

head in other areas. They have a black skin and very white flesh and are delicious, though their appearance does not attract some people.

By the time William had strung his fish and re-baited his hook, Jane had another fish on hers. And so it continued. All morning it went on at about that pace, with never a long wait before a fish must be removed and threaded on to the string that trailed in the cool water behind the boat. William was both amazed and amused at the good luck they were having.

"This is the gol-darndest fishin' hole I ever hit," he said. "We used to fish Shale River back near Cleveland, and Lake Erie, and trout streams in Colorado, but never had fish so ready to be caught."

"Something to eat resembling meat," Mim sang.

"Which makes me realize I'm starving," Jane aid.

William looked at his watch. "Why, it's 12:30! No wonder we're hungry. We were up at 4:15."

"How many fish do we have?" Jane asked.

William hauled in the string and counted. "Fifty-three!"

"Oh, my gosh!" Mim said.

"We'd better just eat our lunch and go home," William said. "After all, we've no ice on the hill. After they've been cleaned and are ready for the flour and the butter and the frying-pan they won't look like so much, of course, but it's still a nice mess of fish. We'd better stop at Bean's on the way home and get some butter."

"Goody! We feast tonight!" Mim exulted.

And when Thundering Ann clattered into the yard, and the girls climbed down with their heavy string of perch and "horn-pout," Grace's eyes opened wide with astonishment.

"Why, I expected you'd catch about five or six," she said.

"Only ten times that much," bragged Jane.

William cleaned them and Grace dipped them in milk, then flour, and fried them in butter. With a lettuce salad, they declared it the best meal they'd ever had.

THEY ARE MY FAMILY

It was not a good summer on Channing Street. At 10710 Ethel and Rosella had many worries. Ethie had lost her job again because business at the Cleveland Builders Supply Co. was so slow that they'd had to reduce their office force. The rent for both July and August had to be paid from savings, and Ethie's City Ice and Fuel stock that Aunt Ada had left her had just passed a dividend. Not only was Ethie worried about that, but of course Norris and Pauline were too. Norris did not want to think of Ethie's stock being in trouble. It had long been the family's ace in the hole. If Ethel and Rosella used up their savings, Norris would rather pay their rent than have Ethel sell her stock now while it was down.

But there were problems down the street at 10720 also. Pauline's clients who wanted to be taught how to sew, apparently were feeling the Depression now, and Pauline had only two such pupils a week. She had let it be known that she was again available as a dressmaker, but her old clientele was slow in coming back.

Norris's work had been cut in half when the Crestwood Hills Estates in Carrolton Heights dropped their big sales promotion, stopped building houses, and devoted their efforts to trying to sell the houses already built. They had been put on the market at just the wrong time.

Norris was trying to get some oil paintings done between his occasional photographic jobs, but he was concerned, for all Cleveland artists agreed that fine art wasn't selling at all well.

And now, on top of his worry, Norris was angry. A letter had come from Grace, and Pauline had brought it in from the mail box. She'd gone around the house all day with red eyes and a long face. Pauline was always upset when he got a letter from Grace. She seemed to think Grace was writing him love letters. Ha! Not likely. Grace was reproaching him because the girls hadn't been happy with him. Nonsense. Whatever problems Dee had had, were of her own making. Flunking out of college, and keeping herself in a continual stew over her assortment of heart-throbs. Jane hadn't been particularly unhappy he was certain. She had her school work and she kept busy sewing herself clothes. And if she was thinking about boys she didn't say anything about it. But it was only natural that she'd jumped at the chance to go to New Hampshire for the summer. Who wouldn't?

But now, after all her preachments about the girls being unhappy with him, Grace was insisting that she should again have seventy-five dollars a month for Jane. Well, damn it, when she sent the girls to him two years ago, she'd certainly voided all those child-support arrangements. And what's more, she'd put it all into writing. She'd written several letters saying she'd "failed" and further saying, "I turn the girls over to you." And he still had those letters. So let her try to extract seventy-five dollars from him. It wasn't his fault she'd coaxed the girls back to her again. So she had money problems. Well, so did he. He didn't have seventy-five dollars to spare. He'd have to sit down and write her one hell of a letter.

Norris decided he'd also have to talk with Pauline about the problem of Ethie's unemployment. After one of her clients left one afternoon, he went to Pauline's sewing room and asked her, "Any more 'victims' scheduled today?"

Norris had been wont to tease his mother by calling her Christian Science patients her 'victims'. He knew that Pauline was particularly annoyed when he referred to clients by the same term, but he was in an irritable mood and determined to have a sparring session with her to vent a little steam. Grace was not at hand to argue with, so Pauline would be the target of his frustration.

She replied to his question with a wary frown,

"No, not today,"

"We've got to talk about money problems. Mother and Ethel are in a real predicament."

"Well, she'll just have to get another position," Pauline said, "That's all there is to it."

"No, that isn't all there is to it. She's been trying, and nobody's hiring just now, I know that's true, and furthermore, Pauline, I'm not at all sure she could hold down a job. She's not at all well. Frankly, I wonder if she'll be able to work again, Of course, if this depression ends any time soon, they may call her back. Meanwhile we'll have to help them out when Ethie's savings are gone."

"We can't help them, Norr. Things are tight enough for us."

"One thing we've got to get straight between us right now," Norr said, "is that I would never, ever abandon my mother and sister. All my life they've always helped me when I needed it. Even, perhaps, when I didn't particularly deserve it, such as sending money to you and me when we were stranded in France without money to get home, It wasn't their fault you and I went to Europe two times and ran out of money both times."

"And I recall it was Aunt Ada who cabled us money."

"All three of them contributed to bail us out both times," Norr said. "You should feel some gratitude. "

"I thought you were the one who despised gratitude."

"Only when someone is extracting it from me," he said.

"Well, alright. But Norr, why should we pay their rent before we need to? Ethie could sell her stock before we come to that."

"Oh, no! Oh, no. That's the last thing we'll do. It's way down and we'll, hang on to it as long as we can and hope it starts going up again. Before we get to selling Ethie's stock we'll move Mother and Ethie in here with us and let that place of theirs go."

"Oh, Norris! We couldn't! You couldn't! I mean, you wouldn't do that. We left their house to be by ourselves."

“Times have changed, Pauline. The Depression caught up with us all. Mother and Ethie are living on their savings now — food, gas, electric. If they’re to stay there this winter we’d better order coal now and save a few dollars.”

“Norris, I don’t see how we can take that on. We can’t.”

“Look, Either we keep them down at their place or move them in here with us.”

“Oh! Norris!”

“They are my family.”

###

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE WRITING

Barb and Nelle had said they would arrive Friday, and though no one really expected them, they knew it was possible. So on Thursday morning it was in the back of all their minds that it was the last day when they could individually plan their day's activities.

At breakfast Grace announced that she thought she'd take the day to go into the upper field and do a little sketching for a water-color.

"I know what you're thinking, Aunt Grace," Mim said. Grace just smiled.

"Well, I'm thinking the very same thing," William said. "I think I'll just putter around with my little project today." (William 'was an inventor at heart, and that summer he was working on a process for dry-roasting salted peanuts.)

"Well, what shall we do today, Mim?" Jane asked. "If everyone is taking the day off, we should do something special."

"Anything you like, dears," Grace said, "if you'll please go for the milk and mail first."

While at Bean's, waiting for Ola to fill their milk pail, Mim skimmed through the local weekly newspaper.

"Janie! Look here! 'Grand Hotel' is coming to Plymouth next week."

"Really?" exclaimed Jane. "Oh, we've got to see it!"

"What's this 'Grand Hotel'?" Mr. Bean asked. He had just come in to wash up after working among the mink-pens. "Why do they need another hotel?"

"It's a movie, Ed," Ola Bean said.

"I'll say it's a movie!" Jane said. "It's got all the very top Hollywood stars in it, Listen to this: 'Greta Garbo, John Barrymore, Lionel Barrymore, Joan Crawford, Lewis Stone, Wallace Beery, Jean Hersholt, and many, many more!"

"The matinee is at 2 p.m. and admission is \$1.50," Mim said. "Boy, we've gotta see that!"

"\$1.50!" Ola said. "It must be special. They usually charge \$30. I'd like to see that myself."

"Waste of money," Ed Bean said. "All you females are alike. Movie struck!"

At lunch the girls told Grace and William all about the coming event and what Ed Bean had said.

"Just Ed Bean's New England sense of thrift," Grace said, "But do you think they'll take us?" the girls chorused. "Who? Roge and Nelle?" Grace asked.

“Yes.”

“More likely to see it Ed Bean’s way,” William said. “Roge’s in a very dark mood right now, when it comes to spending money.”

“That’s true,” Grace agreed.

“But promise you’ll put in a word for us,” Mim said, “Please!” Jane added.

“Alright, but could do more harm than good,” Grace warned, “You know your Aunt Nelle once she decides about something.”

Roge and Nelle did not arrive the next day, nor Saturday nor Sunday. A letter came on Monday saying they planned “to leave Monday morning early.” It was possible to make the trip in one day, but Roge and Nelle did not like to do it that way because of the need to buy and haul groceries up the hill after the long drive from New York. They liked to stop for the night in Rahmingern Massachusetts.

“If they leave on schedule,” William said, “they’ll get here Tuesday sometime after noon. I’ll take Thundering Ann down the hill and wait for them. I better take something to read. On second thought I guess it would be smart to take a shovel and rake down and do a little more road work so they can catch me at it when they arrive.”

“You shouldn’t feel that way, Bill,” Grace said. “You’ve worked real hard. And the girls and I have, too.”

“Yes, but Nelle and Roge are upset this summer and I don’t know what to expect. I haven’t seen a lot of them in recent years. I was here in the first two summers when they were fixing this place up and it was fun, but a lot of work. Nelle always has something planned for everyone to do. Roge’s a great guy, but when he’s upset he’s got a very hot temper.”

“I know,” Grace said. “I’ve seen it several times.”

“I remember it from Colorado,” William said.

“But he was never like Norris, Bill. You might not see Roge in a temper for several years.”

“I bet Nelle saw it more often,” William said.

“No, I don’t think so, Bill. Only certain types of things make Roge very angry.”

“You know, don’t you, that Nelle came and stayed with Emmie and me once in Denver after Roge went into a rage and threw a chair at the wall?”

“Yes, Nelle told me about that, and in New York he had a fine display of temper when Merly got married. But, Bill, mostly he’s an old dear and very good-natured.”

“Oh, I know, Grace. And I really like Roge, but I guess I’ve never quite got over an old grievance I have against him.”

“What’s that?”

“Where are the girls?” William said. He and Grace were at the kitchen table where William was busy with a little device for rolling cigarettes.

“They’re out in the Rahming field taking their sunbath.”

“Oh, O.K. Well, I don’t know if you ever heard anything about this, Grace, but about three years after Emmie nearly died in Denver, Roge did something that made me plenty mad.”

“Oh?”

“Yes. Emmie and I had come back East and we had a little flat in Cleveland. You and Norr must have been in New York then. Nelle and Roge were visiting in Cleveland at her folks’ place on Cartwright Avenue. But, anyway, Roge and I were at my place, and Nelle and Emmie must have been somewhere else, at their folks, I guess. We got to talking about Emmie and the way she didn’t seem to be her old self and all that. Well, Grace, Roge asked me if I ran around with women. He said that Nelle had told him Emmie really didn’t like marriage relations right from the start. Roge said he figured that I would naturally have wanted to go to other women and that I may have got a disease and given it to Emmie, and that’s what may have caused the loss of the baby and everything else that followed.”

“Oh, William!” Grace said. “I never heard anyone say that.”

“Well, when I think about it, I still get hot under the collar. Grace, I never went to a professional woman in my life. And before I married Emmie I’d only had one girl and she was a healthy person. And I was faithful to Addle all the time we were together and for a long time after. Later on I had a couple of women I went around with, but I’ve never ever had a venereal disease of any kind. Roge just decided that on his own, or else Nelle thought of it.”

“William, as I said, I never heard anyone suggest that idea in all these years. Really.”

“Well, Grace, I’ve always wondered if someone may have put that idea in Emmie’s head. Because she didn’t turn against me in the beginning after she lost the baby and had her illness. It wasn’t ‘til later. And except for relations in bed, Emmie and I got along just beautifully. She liked to cook and keep house, and we used to go to the theatre and take little trips around Denver. And then back in Cleveland she just decided after several years that she wanted to live with her folks and not with me, and finally she hardly wanted to talk to me anymore. So I’ve often wondered if she’d been turned against me in some such way.”

“Well, William, I’ve been around Emmie quite a lot and I’ve never heard her say anything that made me think she blamed you for the loss of the baby.”

“She might harbor the suspicion in her mind, though, don’t you think?”

“Well, I really doubt that. Emmie’s thoughts are quite odd, sort of abstract. I don’t know how to say it exactly, but she doesn’t usually speak of worldly problems. She mentions names of old friends and

relatives. She speaks of places sometimes. She cooks and she knits. She sits down and plays the piano. She comments on the weather, or the state of the garden. Things like that.”

“But why does she hate me?” William asked.

“I don’t suppose she does, Bill, but she may associate you with a troubled time. I don’t think that Nelle, much less Roge, would have ever suggested to Emmie what you mentioned. Nelle loves Emmie and we were all being so gentle, so protective of her, after she was so very ill. No, Bill, Nelle and Roge could have wondered about something like that, but I’m sure that’s all it came to. If Nelle thought that, I think she’d have told me. I know she would. I’ll bet it was only Roge’s idea.”

“Maybe it was,” Bill admitted.

“Probably just man to man talk. Nelle once told that during Roge’s years as a bachelor he had been with some pretty wild ladies at times. She said. He admitted it when they made up after their big quarrel in Colorado. But all that is so long ago, Bill.”

“I know. And I should forget it, but I can’t. I’ve done quite a bit of drinking from time to time and Roge disapproves. But I never did combine drinking with ‘the ladies.’ I found that, for me, the two didn’t mix very well. And I haven’t been a bum, Grace. You know Roger is pretty straitlaced. I really did love Emmie dearly, and in those days I as behaving myself. Well, we’re all middle-aged now. I am, anyway.”

Grace laughed. “And all the rest of us are growing younger every day. All but you.”

William laughed, too. “Well, some days it seems that way.”

“It’s this miserable Depression, Bill. It’s shipwrecked us. It seems as though the good times are all over. But we must pull ourselves together and work out our own salvation. We’re all smart people. We’ll survive. We’ll even thrive.”

“I hope so.”

####

At the end of the first week in August Jane resumed writing in her journal:

I have discovered something about keeping a diary or journal. When nothing interesting is happening you have no reason to write anything. And when something is happening you have no time to write. Mother keeps a journal and writes in it almost every night. What she finds to write about I'm sure I don't know. Most of our days are the same — get up, eat, wash dishes, go for the milk and nail. Pick berries, eat lunch, wash dishes, pick over berries, take a sunbath, eat supper, weed the garden, wash dishes, read aloud, go to bed. Mother writes many letters, and pages and pages in her journal. I think she is still lonely for Dad and when she writes in her journal she feels that she is 'talking to him.' Dee thinks so too.

Things have been happening here, and this last week they haven't been boring. Aunt Nelle and Uncle Roge arrived (believe it or not, on the day we finally expected them. Of course they brought with them some food, wonderful things we've been hungry for, like the first beef we've had since the week we got here. And they replenished the things we were out of lately — bacon, peanut butter, butter and eggs. If we had ice up here it would be different, but we have to cook our meat the first two days we get it. They always buy fifty pounds of 'taters and they keep very well in the cellar and so do carrots and beets. They put the sugar and the Shredded Wheat up in the attic where it's dry. This time they didn't bring a big can of Campfire marshmallows. Aunt Nelle said they couldn't afford them, we'd just have to eat blueberries. But Mim and I agreed that when you want a toasted marshmallow a blueberry doesn't do the trick.

The first night Uncle Roge and Aunt Nelle were here they sat up late in the kitchen, talking with mother and Uncle Bill about how conditions are down in New York. They have about given up hope of getting hold of that man, Maple. Dee still goes to her job downtown in case he comes into the office, but Uncle Roge is certain that Maple will never show his face in New York City again. The Better Business Bureau have other complaints. Maple never owned any of the lots he was selling, Uncle Roge says. Aunt Nelle feels terrible about the whole thing. And Uncle Roge is upset about politics, too. He was hoping the Democrats would choose Al Smith again, so Hoover could "smash" him the way he did last time. But they nominated Franklin Roosevelt, who is governor of New York. Uncle Roge says no one in New York likes him. (How come he's governor?) But Uncle Roge says Roosevelt won't be as easy for Hoover to beat as Al Smith was.

Mim and I had trouble getting up our nerve to ask if we could go to Plymouth to see "Grand Hotel." Mim knows how to soft-soap Aunt Nelle, so she presented our case. We hoped they'd realize how badly we wanted to see that show. But we had no luck. Aunt Nelle said they were too tired, had too much to do, and we shouldn't spend our money on movies. But Mim looked so disappointed that they took pity on us, and said they wouldn't object if we wanted to go bad enough to hike to Plymouth. I think they were a little surprised when we said, "Sure, we'll walk." In fact, I think they came close to saying they'd take us in the Buick, but Aunt Nelle must have decided it would build our character because she said to Uncle Roge, "Honey, it will be good for them to walk."

It is nine miles to Plymouth from Forest Camp. Mim and I can do three miles in an hour, so we packed a lunch to eat when we were about halfway there. We got up early so we could go for the milk and mail, but Uncle Bill said he'd do it for us so we wouldn't get so tired.

We started at quarter to eleven. We had our lunch and we each had enough money for the movie and an ice cream soda, and as we were leaving Uncle Roge gave us nine cents to buy a couple of lemons for his tea.

We went down the hill, and to the main road, and we were about at Farrell's house (where Ola Bean's folks live, and that's about a half mile on our way) when along came Mr. Maurice Sleeper, who is the caretaker for the fish and game preserve owned by Mr. Webster. Mr. Webster's land is many hundreds of acres and it surrounds Uncle Roge's land. The house we call Bean's is really owned by Mr. Webster, and he hires Mr. Sleeper to ride horseback over the trails on the preserve. The Beans keep house for Mr. Sleeper and raise mink, too.

Mr. Sleeper stepped and asked us where we were going and we said 'Plymouth.' 'Want a ride?' he asked, and of course we said we did. He took us all the way into town and it wasn't even noon when we got there. That left us with two hours to kill. Since it was noon we decided to go sit in the town common and eat our sandwiches and drink our milk. That used up about twenty-five minutes, so we decided to go browsing through the stores. We went into what they call their dime-store, but it's not a very good one. We didn't buy anything because we didn't have any extra money. Next we went to the hardware store, because they have furniture on the second floor and a rest-room, too. We passed the grocery store because we decided not to buy the lemons for Uncle Roge until after the movie, so we wouldn't have to worry about them. We went to the drug-store next and decided to have our ice-cream soda, because it was pretty hot. We used up another fifteen minutes that way. Then we walked to the train station to see if any train was due in so we could watch that, because it was still quite a while before the movie would start. But there wasn't any train due, so we decided to stroll down to the theater to see if they might be going to open the doors early. Then we could go in and sit down and rest till the movie began. We were tired of strolling around town and knew we might have to walk all the way home if we didn't get a lift with someone we knew.

When we got to the theater we nearly had heart failure! We hadn't known there was an amusement tax added to the admission price. We had brought with us just enough money for the price of the ticket because we'd read the ad in the paper. And now we needed the money for the tax. We still had the nine cents for Uncle Roge's lemons, but we were short a penny. One miserable penny! We shouldn't have had our sodas. We'd have been all set if we'd done without them. Mim and I agreed that it would be too embarrassing to ask the cashier to let us in or lend us a penny. We weren't sure what she'd say to that. We were so upset.

Mim said, "If only we knew someone in this town!"

I said, "Uncle Roge does."

"Who's that?" Mim asked.

“Mr. Brown, the lawyer.”

“Oh, that’s right,” Mim said. “Let’s go ask him.”

“If we can find him,” I said. “If he’s in his office.”

Mr. Brown’s office was back the other end of town, by the hardware store, and upstairs over the barber shop. The building smelled old, and we climbed a long, steep, dark-brown stairway. His office was right near the top. We were lucky. When we knocked he said, “Come in,” and he stood up when he saw that we were female-type people.

“What can I do to help you ladies?”

Mim and I were pretty shy, I guess.

I said, “We really don’t need a lawyer.”

And Mim said, “But we do need help.”

I said, “We are nieces of Mr. Roger Fison from New York City. Do you remember him?”

“Yes,” Mr. Brown said, “I helped him buy the White place. I do know your uncle quite well.”

We told him our whole sad story, complete with sodas, lemons, and all, and how Mr. Sleeper gave us a lift into town and we’d been killing time since noon.

“Well,” Mr. Brown said, getting out a penny from his pocket, “You do need a loan. Shall I charge interest?”

“Yes,” I said. 100%.”

Mim said, “We’ll pay it all next time we’re in town.”

“You girls enjoy that movie, now.”

So we thanked him ever so much and then we hurried back through town again past the gigantic historic elm tree and to the theater, which was open by then. I told Mim that if we had borrowed a dime we could have got the lemons, but we agreed that while it seemed amusing to borrow a penny, we wouldn’t have wanted to ask Mr. Brown for a dime. I guess there is something humorous about a penny.

We did enjoy the movie. It was just great and, anyway, we were kind of starved for something different from our pioneer life. But we didn’t get out of there until almost five o’clock, and we had to walk every single step of the way home till we got to our mail box. On the main highway, of course, lots of cars went by, but we don’t ever use our thumbs to ask for a ride and also, those cars are on the way up to the White Mountains. After we left the highway a couple of times strangers went by, but it was a very quiet day. We were so tired; there is a big long hill at one place. Then after that we were on the unpaved road and we didn’t see another car again. Before you get to Farrell’s house there is a deep, woody

stretch where Mrs. Farrell once saw a bear in broad daylight. I remembered that, but didn't mention it to Mim. Probably Mim was remembering it, too. It was quite dark in that stretch as the sun had gone down behind Mt. Prospect. Neither one of us wanted to say the word 'bear.' I had cold chills up my back. Oh, how glad we were to see Uncle Bill and dear old Thundering Ann waiting for us by the mailbox! We hadn't known whether we could climb the hill or not. Uncle Bill said he told Aunt Nelle he was going to meet us at the road. He said he didn't care if she approved or not. But when we got home, Mim and I thought they'd all been a little worried about us. We could tell.

And so ended our second adventure of the summer. (The other one was our fifty-three fish.)

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Jane did not write in her journal again for nearly two weeks, and then she recorded several changes in the status quo at Forest Camp.

Aug. 15 - I've been too busy in the day and too tired at night to write. Aunt Nelle, as is her custom, gets us out of bed early, and she's got so many chores for everyone. Airing Mattresses, and washing blankets (even though we did that last month) and we've been scrubbing everything. Mim and I decided we'd like to go fishing again, and Aunt Nelle and Uncle Roge approved, since we'd caught so many before, but this time instead of 53 fish, we caught 3.

Things are changing fast around here. Dee came from New York last week. Uncle Roge's sister Millie was driving up and Dee decided to give up that dumb job where she hasn't had any salary since the first three weeks. The man Maple has vanished. So Dee had to leave because she has no money. She came with Aunt Millie and on their way they found a poor little kitty beside the road in a lonely area. So now he is here and he is a darling, but very thin. He is black, so Aunt Nelle named him 'Alabaster'. I am very fond of cats, but I have never had one of my very own that someone didn't decide should be 'put to sleep'. This kitty sleeps in our tent at night and I don't want to get too fond of him, because summer will end soon, and I'll be going back to Cleveland. That is, I suppose I will, though Mother says no. She speaks as though she and Dee and I will be living together somewhere. But where? The Milford house is gone, and what will we use for money? Anyway, Dad is expecting me to come back. He'll have a fit if I don't.

Jane wrote in her journal again at the end of the month.

Aug. 30 - Tomorrow is the big total eclipse of the sun and we are all prepared. Dad sent me some exposed black negatives to look through and we all bought some souvenir viewers at McCrillis' drug store, but we may not get to see it after all, for the weather doesn't look good at all tonight. It's cloudy and it sure would be a shame if it doesn't clear up by tomorrow afternoon, because scientists and astronomers have come from all over to study it. So we are all hoping it clears off tonight,

But whatever happens in the sky, things are happening here! Uncle Roge and Aunt Nelle have decided to live here on the hill. They are going to rent the Jackson Heights apartment to an Italian diplomat. They figure that the rent money will be a big help added to what Uncle Roge makes. But Mother thinks that the idea of living up here in the winter time is exciting but pretty scary. The snowstorms are really wild sometimes and Uncle Roge has seen the snow drifts as high as this house. He has been up here in the winter and had to wear snowshoes!

There is a great deal more to this story. Babs has to go to school, of course, and school is nine miles away. The school bus doesn't come anywhere near in fact, the main highway is where it comes closest. Aunt Nelle told Uncle Roge she couldn't possibly go down and up the hill twice a day, let alone drive to town twice. And she said she'd never driven on icy roads ever, and she doesn't want to have to.

Now we come to the part that involves me!

Uncle Roge, Aunt Nelle and Mother had a big confab a couple of weeks ago and decided that since I was sixteen years old, and could get my driver's license, I should learn to drive so that I can stay here all winter too, and drive Babs (and myself) to school. Also that way Babs will have some companionship. And Aunt Nelle wants Mother to stay so that she'll have companionship. Dee plans to go back to New York and try to get another job, but there is nowhere for her to stay, with Aunt Nelle's apartment rented. And then there is Uncle Bill; he doesn't really think that he would want to stay here all winter, either, but he doesn't know what to do. His work in New York has 'gone to pieces', he says. He doesn't have to worry about Billy anymore, because Billy has been very lucky. He had a job in Jackson Heights, being caretaker at the Tennis Club, and a millionaire has taken him under his wing, and had an eye surgeon straighten his crossed eyes and he works for the millionaire now.

Uncle Roge tells Uncle Bill that he can stay here and be in charge of bringing in the wood and keeping the fires going. For that he could stay in the studio and have his meals. It is getting to be a crowd now, and I wonder if there'll be enough money to feed everyone. And what's more, I want Mim to be here too, for companionship for me. Mim has written to Aunt Merly for permission. She says that her mother could probably pay for her food. And Mother says that Dad is legally obligated to pay support for Dee and me until I am eighteen. I told Mother that Dad won't pay a penny, because she turned me over to him and he expects me back in Cleveland in time for the first day of school. Which is soon.

After Aunt Nelle had decided that I was going to stay for the winter (because, after all, it would have been her decision) there came the next question. If I was going to drive to school this winter, what was I going to use for a car? Not Uncle Roger's big Buick. He has to have that at times, though he travels by train often. So they said, 'We'll have to get hold of some kind of a car.'

Of course they went to Frank Button because he knows a lot about cars and also what might be available around here. Meanwhile Uncle Roge has been giving me driving lessons for two weeks and yesterday I passed my driver's license test. He is going to take me down to Concord on Friday to pick up the license. Labor Day is next Monday and school here starts on the Wednesday after. It probably starts about then in Cleveland, too. Mother has sent off a letter to Dad telling him why I should be with her and not with him. I dread getting his reply to that. Frankly, I didn't have nerve to write him myself. I don't know what Mother put in her letter, but I can imagine. Dee wrote to Mother often telling her how much she hated Pauline and I guess Mother assumes that I did too, but really I could never say that I hated her, because I think she really tried to be nice to us and probably tried to understand us. She and I got along pretty well, but Dee was so unhappy and bored, and still so in love with Cameron that she just wanted to get out of there. The trouble is that Pauline is like an old-maid school teacher and so silly about some things, like screaming bloody-murder when she sees a bug, and bursting into tears at the slightest excuse. I guess I scorned her for that, because I'm not used to women like Pauline, but how can you hate such a person? I suppose you can if you get fed up enough.

But back to the events here. Uncle Roge found an old Buick 'Four', as he calls it. It is a 1923 model and it has the same kind of gearshift as the big Buick that I learned on. Uncle Roge got a new battery and some new tires. It is a coupe with a rumble seat and it is a pretty terrible looking thing because it needs paint so badly. But - it climbed our awful hill! Of course, it's been dry weather lately and Uncle Bill has the

road in good shape. It wouldn't come up in bad weather, but then no cars can climb it. Mim and I will paint the car if we get to spend the winter here. But I'll only believe that after Dad answers Mother's letter.

Well, that's enough writing for tonight. I'm tired. Mim and I decided to go to bed and think some Christian Science thoughts to get the sky to clear up for the Eclipse.

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Jane's journal continued the following day.

August 31, 1932 - This has been quite a day! To begin with our morning, we all woke up very disappointed. The sky was completely cloudy, and we all gave up hope that we would see the eclipse which was to be in the afternoon. Mim and I went down to Bean's to get the milk, and we waited at the mailbox until Alexander brought the mail. There was a letter for Aunt Nelle from Aunt Merly and a letter for Mother from Dad. So, of course, we hurried back up the hill to find out what was in the letters. On our way up we noticed a very small patch of blue sky; so we had some hopes it was going to clear up. They say, 'If you see enough blue to make a pair of Dutchman's britches the sky will clear.'

Aunt Nelle insisted on waiting till after lunch (her 'specialty', peanut-butter and banana sandwiches) before she opened Aunt Merly's letter. Mother, though, opened Dad's letter immediately. Of course, he wants me to return to Cleveland 'posthaste', and he wonders why I'm not there already. Mother says that he must not have received her letter yet, or else he didn't understand her hints that plans were under way here to spend the winter.

Aunt Merly's letter had her permission for Mim to stay this winter, so of course, now I'm really counting on it, and, anyway, it's all in the plan for me to drive the car. Aunt Merly went on to say that she did not want Trink to stay here with the rest of us, as she can use her help at home, and also Trink has had her summer in Maine at dance camp and she should be satisfied to come home. Incidentally, Trink and Babs are staying in Maine until after the eclipse, because they are in the path of totality, too.

After lunch it was still cloudy, although the sky was different, and the overcast didn't look as solid as before. Mim and I and Mother and Aunt Nelle decided to go up on the mountain to Tolliver's hill (where Grandpa Fison got lost about ten years ago). The winds were coming from that direction and we thought that we'd be able to see if the sky was going to clear. It seemed pretty nutty for us to go up there, because what could we have done about the weather, anyway? However, it gave us something to do, as we were all so disappointed and anxious, because we knew if we could have seen it, the 'first bite' had been taken out of the sun already. Mim and I got to the top first and we waited for Mother and Aunt Nelle. I love it up there. It is a grassy clearing with lots of granite boulders. Tollivers used to graze some cows up there. I have the idea that it must look like Scotland. I must have seen a picture once, for I've sure not seen Scotland.

When the ladies caught up to Mim and me we all agreed that though the clouds were breaking up, they still were all over the sky and it didn't look very promising. We hurried back down because Uncle Roge and Dee had gone to Plymouth and should be getting back, and, just in case we should get a chance to see the sun, we wanted to be where our negatives were.

The Button boys were here loading hay today and we talked to them about the eclipse, but they didn't seem extra interested, and wanted to get their work done. We did warn them against looking at the sun without using something to see through. Jim Button asked me a few questions about eclipses and mostly he wondered how they could know it's going to happen this afternoon. And I told him they could

even tell the exact minute, and Jim scratched his head and said, 'My golly!' but I wonder if he really believed it was going to happen. I think Jim kind of likes me.

Well, we were so lucky today! About a half hour before totality the clouds began to thin out and we could see how much of the sun was covered. Then it really opened up and we saw the whole big event. When it got dark we could hear the birdies making their bedtime sounds, and the Buttons' horses got quite nervous. They thought they should be home in the barn. Mother and Dee and I expected to see the 'shadow bands' that we remembered from the total eclipse we saw in 1925 in Chagrin Falls. That one was in the winter and I was just a little kid and I was so frightened that I ran back in the house. Shadow bands are moving stripes of light and shadow, and they showed up so clearly on the snow that time that they seemed spooky to all of us. But this time they didn't appear at all. It was only really dark for a couple of minutes, and then the sun began to peek out again. I think the Button boys were quite impressed with it after all. They couldn't get over the fact that it happened on schedule. Mother has spent the evening writing her journal because she was so thrilled with the eclipse. But I know she was upset, too, because that 1925 eclipse was in her thoughts. I think it was the last happy time we had together with Dad as a family. He and Mother were already separated. He had gone back to Cleveland to live with Grandma Rahming, but he used to come back to Chagrin Falls to argue with Mother. When he did that, Dee and I used to run away and go visit Skipper Root. But when he came that day of the eclipse, there was no quarrels and he brought some exposed film for us so that we wouldn't hurt our eyes. It was a nice friendly time and I know Mother is remembering it tonight. Dee has just frowned at her and said 'Mother, I wish you would not write that journal. It's very bad for you.' And Mother just said, 'I'm writing about the eclipse.' Dee made a disapproving face and said, 'I know what you're writing.'

WIRE ME WHEN TO MEET HER

Life at 10720 Channing Avenue was becoming more worrisome. Norris's advertising jobs had dropped off alarmingly, and Pauline's work was as bad. Worse than that, some of her clients were very slow in paying her. It was all dressmaking now, something she had intended never to do again. Two years ago she had told her clients that she was limiting her work to the teaching of sewing and draping (the art of cutting dress material without a paper pattern). Now only Pauline's more well-to-do clients were giving her their business, and more often than not it was alterations (which she hated).

The summer of '32 Norris was bothered by change of life - Pauline's and Ethel's. Ethel was forty-four years old; Pauline, two years older than Norris, was forty-eight. Both of them were childless and Norris had heard that such women had more difficulties with menopause. Certainly it was a handicap to Ethel, for she was extremely nervous these days, and that kept her from having the confidence to go downtown and try to get herself some kind of a job. Not necessarily doing what she'd been doing at Cleveland Builders, but something. Perhaps she could have got a salesclerk job at Strohmeyers' store, for instance. But not the way she was now. Ethie had hot flashes, too, and Christian Science no longer helped. Norris was at a point where he wondered about Christian Science. Maybe it never had solved any of their problems.

Pauline's menopause problems were worse than Ethie's in some ways. Pauline didn't suffer from hot flashes, but she was more nervous than she'd been when Norr first knew her. Her afflictions were different from Ethie's, and they'd been going on for almost as long as Norris had known Pauline. She'd had her first sick-headache while they were on their second trip to Europe. They'd been visiting friends in England and the whole experience had been dampening to what should have been a delightful British holiday. Pauline's headache had lasted all of two days. She had spent that time in their room, subsisting entirely on tea. She had wanted ginger ale but none was available. Finally her nausea had been relieved by vomiting in the bathroom that was not as convenient as those at home. The whole problem had been embarrassing to Norris. Their hosts (shipboard acquaintances from their first Atlantic crossing) had been ever so gracious, but all sightseeing was called off, and Norris was deeply disappointed. He had wanted to savor to the fullest his time in England, the origin of both his grandfathers. There was no opportunity to go to Leeds or to Devonshire, though they had had a day in London. But there were other things Norris had hoped to do. Since he had first learned of Stonehenge he had wanted to see that mysterious circle of enormous stones, and he'd told himself that, if he were ever to get to England, he'd surely do that. He'd expressed this interest to his host, who said he saw no reason why they should not 'run down to Salisbury.' However, with Pauline's illness they'd run out of time and had to be on their way.

On shipboard Pauline had scarcely experienced seasickness and had weathered out an unusually heavy sea aboard the Minnikahda, when the rolling of the ship drove many passengers to their cabins. Pauline had a strange problem, he decided; she was alright if she lived on milk. Norris had heard of people who couldn't tolerate milk, but knew of no one but Pauline who tolerated only milk. Christian Science hadn't helped her because she didn't believe in it, and with the years her stomach upsets and headaches had become more and more frequent. He realized now that in Pauline he really had a wife with poor health. He recalled that Grace had never forgiven him for saying, "My God! Am I going to have an invalid on my

hands?" after she had backache trouble for several weeks after Jane was born. Grace did not forgive the impulsive things he said when he was annoyed. He had chided her for holding grudges, but that had done no good, of course.

But Pauline's stomach problem had really wrecked their sex life. He could not get in an amorous mood when her sick headache had caused her to vomit and she smelled that way. One night as he lay in bed with her sour breath wafting his way, he'd said, "Pauline, why don't you use Listerine when you have these spells?" Of course, she'd dissolved into tears. He came to admit that they hadn't lost much, as Pauline didn't care for sex-life anyway, and had never been more than a totally passive, unimaginative partner. And in the last year or two she'd lost what little interest she'd ever had in lovemaking.

But now, Norris was angry at Grace. She had written to him in midsummer asking him to please send the seventy-five dollars a month child support payments since the girls were again with her. And of course, she reminded him, as was her wont, that he had never lived up to that obligation which had been determined by the court. He had made payments only occasionally, and remained months and years in arrears, Grace claimed.

When he wrote to Grace in June about Jane's hopes to spend the summer in New Hampshire, he had simply ignored the request for child support payments, feeling that tactic would make Grace see he considered her suggestion ridiculous. She had asked for money again in mid-summer, saying times were extremely hard, and Jane had need of dental care. He'd not answered that letter at all because he had no money to spare. But now he was angry, and would write to Grace accordingly.

Norris had met Betty Long in downtown Cleveland, and learned some surprising news. Betty had been suffering, like many of Norris and Grace's old friends, from the awkwardness of that divorce, and though she liked Norris, she knew the whole story from the start and found encounters with him a bit unsettling.

"How are your mother and Ethie?" she inquired.

"They have plenty of need for Christian Science," he said. "Ethie has troubles, and is out of work, and Mother is nervous about it all. So am I, for that matter. I'm going to have to bring them to live with Pauline and me, and that'll be a crowded situation."

"It's good the girls are gone, then, isn't it?" Betty said.

"Yes, but Jane will be back soon for school."

"Oh, have they given up the plan to spend the winter in New Hampshire, then?" Betty asked.

Norris looked puzzled. "You mean Roge and Nelle?"

"Well, I thought from what Grace's letter said that they were all going to live up there. Grace and everyone." Then Betty realized she had let something slip that Norris had not yet heard about.

"What did Grace say in her letter?" he asked.

“Oh,” said Betty. “I must have got the wrong notion. Grace said that Roge was ‘winterizing’ the house up there and cutting up a lot of firewood, and so on.”

“Did Grace say she was going to spend the winter there?”

“I’ll have to read it again, Norr, I’d forgotten, I guess. She did say that the Jackson Heights apartment had been rented to someone.”

Norris had the distinct idea now that Betty knew more than she was saying.

“Well, wherever Grace decides to hibernate, Jane’ll have to come back here in time to start school. I wouldn’t want her going to a mountain school. And after all, Betty, Grace turned both the girls over to me two years ago. You do know that, don’t you?”

“Norr, I know about that.”

“She can’t keep moving Jane around all the time. She’s been in a different school every year since Grace and I broke up. Jane was even laughing because she’d been in three different schools one year.”

“Well, Norr,” Betty said, “Grace has had a very tough time of it. ‘Specially lately. She’s been struggling.”

“But Betty,” Norris said. “I’ve had a tough time, too. I was doing fine for a while, but now Pauline and I are as broke as anyone else is.”

“I know, Norr. I guess being an artist is no good these days. Perhaps it’s never any good.”

####

Norris did not write many letters, and when he wrote Grace it was usually in the privacy of his basement darkroom, where no one entered without his permission. However, this time he took his pen and paper after dinner, and sat down at the dining room table. He was scowling as he wrote, and Pauline asked him no questions.

“Dear Grace,” he wrote.

“I’m sure it will be a waste of time writing, for you are never open to reason. I haven’t answered your request for more child support payments for two reasons. One: I don’t have any money to spare these days (as you should know) and two: You turned the girls over to me two years ago ‘for all time’ (according to statements in your letters) so you have no claim on me. You sent the girls to me without even waiting for me to agree to have them. You knew how small the Cartwright Street house was. You would have known six people couldn’t live there in comfort. So Pauline and I had to move to a larger place. And now you think you can return to the old status. Well, you cannot. I know you are planning to have Jane there, but I don’t want her changing schools again. She was doing well at East High and it should not be interrupted. As far as the money goes, Dee is soon to be twenty-two and I will have no more involvement in her doings. She wasn’t happy here and threw away her college opportunity, and all because of her inability to handle her relations with boys. At times she was very unhappy, but it was never Pauline’s fault. She was very fond of them, but disappointed in Dee’s attitude toward her college work.

“Grace, you should know that it does not cost more than half of seventy-five dollars to care for Jane. I’m now feeding my whole family for ten dollars a week (and that includes Mother and Ethel as well). Jane’s school lunch costs only twenty-five cents a day. I can keep her here very comfortably for a fraction of what you demand.

“From the start, when we were divorced, your main idea was to punish me. The court set the amount of the child support, but you knew perfectly well that I would not be able to pay it. You had been making all the money, as you were always willing to point out to me. I paid you when I could and was even forced to borrow from Aunt Ada, who owed you nothing. You speak so often of my ‘hasty marriage.’ Well, six months was not so hasty, when one considers that my self-respect was in great need of repair. You ignored a fundamental side of human nature. Nothing helps a man’s self-esteem more than the successful courtship of a woman. And I know you are bitter and a little vengeful because I went to Europe. You say, ‘She bought you and paid for you.’ You have long been angry at me because you said I ‘spoiled your chances’ of going to Europe. I believe that actually you are angry at yourself for having loved me, and for not having sent me on my way when I followed you to New York. You could have, you know, but you didn’t. We were young and in love, and in love with New York, and with being artists.

“I suppose we both know now how uncertain a livelihood an artist can expect. I at least can take some satisfaction, and say, ‘I told you so’ to friends and relatives who suggested that I take a factory job, or any job, rather than try to paint landscapes. I’ve had some recognition, and I made a respectable living up to now, when this Depression is hurting all the artists. In fact, in spite of everything, I would be glad

to help if I had any extra money, but I am in as bad a fix as you, and I have people dependent on me, and you haven't. Jane will be with me, and Dee is apparently on her own. I hear wild tales of your plans for the winter, but you have told me nothing of this, nor has Jane. In fact, neither of the girls has written me this summer. Dee used to be a fairly good correspondent, but I suspect that may have been because she has more wants.

"Make arrangements for Jane's trip back here and if necessary, I'll send a money order. I can only afford bus fare for her. I trust she'll be returning as she left, with Mim. It is better for them to travel together, I'm sure. School begins very soon and Jane should not miss the first days. Wire me when to meet her.

As ever,

Norr"

I WANTED TO STAY SEVENTEEN FOREVER

Life at Forest Camp that September was not a bit boring. Something new was happening every day. In fact, Grace was so exhilarated that for more than three weeks she did not write in her journal. This, of course, was partly the unfriendly tone of Norris's letter, but even more because she and everyone else on the hill were so busy they were ready for sleep soon after dark. Since Grace's journal took the form of a continued running letter to Norris (that she expected him to read if he survived her) she did not write in it on days when she had no time to be lonely. Occasionally she recorded something special like the recent eclipse of the sun.

Norris's letter annoyed Grace, but in a day or two she had calmed down and told herself it was "just Norris being Norris." She was more than a little irked with Betty Long who must have told Norris about the plan to winter in New Hampshire. But since she had written to several Cleveland friends telling of her winter arrangements, she couldn't be sure it was Betty. But Betty was the most likely one, Grace was sure. Grace had wanted to tell Norris in her own good time, but she had procrastinated from day to day, and he had sent a telegram on the first day of school in Cleveland. "Where is Jane? She must return to East High."

Jane asked her mother, "Didn't you write to Daddy? You were going to. You said you'd explain everything."

"I will," Grace said. "You know how busy we've been."

It was true. The Button boys and their father were busy 'buzzing up' an enormous mountain of firewood back of the barn. The girl cousins were helping to stack it inside under cover. Babs and Trink were there now, too, having returned from Maine the day after Labor Day. Trink was having a fit because she had to go home to her mother. She wept many tears over it. It was so unfair she protested, when everyone else was going to have a very very special winter, she would have to stay in dull, stodgy, old Oberlin by herself with no one but her mother, Aunt Emmie, and Grandpa.

She made quite a case for herself, and Nelle and Roge were quite upset by her distress, but Roge had to point out to Nelle that it would be a practical impossibility to keep adding people to the camp's population. The more people, the more food to buy and haul up the hill, and if the hill got icy, even Thundering Ann wouldn't climb it. And then there was the little Buick "4" coupe. No more than three girls could ride in the "cab." Barb said, and the "rumble seat," which was more or less makeshift, would be much too cold when the below-zero weather came, and it would come, Roge warned.

But Trink did not give up so easily. She had been told that her mother needed her help. But she had an answer for that.

"My mother will have it much easier without me to cause her more work and trouble."

Nelle couldn't resist. "Why Trink, do you make a lot of work and trouble?"

"Not unless I'm unhappy," she said.

However it was not to be, and Trink was sent home to Oberlin. Roge took her to New York and put her on the train at Grand Central. Merly did not want her to ride the bus alone.

Meanwhile, Mim and Jane were working hard sand-papering and painting the 1923 Buick. It occupied much of their time and when they were not working on the car they were flirting with Jim and Ralph Bump.

Dee was at loose ends and in a state of limbo. Ostensibly, she was having a little 'vacation' from her summer job that had turned into such a mistake. But in truth, she didn't know what to do next. How could she go back to her father and Pauline and Charming Avenue? But what could she do in New York with no place to stay? The apartment in Jackson Heights was to be rented as of the fifteenth of October, and Dee would not even consider asking Polly Patterson to rent her a room in her apartment. Polly was in Dee's opinion so completely goofy, "the weirdest Christian Scientist I ever heard of." Dee's problem also was that she had no prospects whatsoever of a job in New York and she knew that she needed more training in secretarial skills. Nelle and Roge were fond of Dee and so far had said nothing about her presence at Forest Camp at this time when money was so scarce. But the truth was that Nelle felt a bit guilty about Dee. For it was Nelle's doing that Dee had come to New York. The Maples were her friends originally and she had urged Grace to write to Dee and persuade her to come to New York to work for Mr. Maple.

Trink had been disturbed by the fact that "all the cousins, even Dee!" were staying at Forest Camp while she was being sent home. But Dee and everyone else had assured her that Dee was there only temporarily.

"Aunt Nelle just doesn't like me," Trink had confided to Jane. "That's why I can't stay."

"She's never liked me either," Jane said. "I'm only invited because I'm old enough to drive the car."

"So is Dee old enough," Trink said.

'Oh, yes, sure. But Dee is through with high school. There's no reason for her to stay here in the backwoods. She's got to get back to civilization and get herself a job or else a husband. She hasn't learned to drive, anyway.'

When it came time to take Trink down to New York to put her on the train home, Nelle had intended, to go with Roge to get together another load of household goods from the apartment. She wanted more warm blankets and comforters and pillows, as the girls would be sleeping in the unheated attic. On their last trip Roge had the car loaded with things of his own, manuscripts and notes, paper supplies, an extra typewriter, telegraph keys, telephones, and wire for a long-planned phone line down the mountain to Bean's house.

But the day before she and Roge were to go to New York with Trink, Nelle decided she didn't want to go and persuaded Grace to go instead.

"You've been here all summer, Gracie, and I've been down there most of the time. Don't you want to go down with Roge and Trink?"

"I'd love to," Grace said. "I certainly would."

"I'll give you a list of things to bring back."

"You sure It won't scandalize your friends in thu apartment? My going down there with Roge?"

"Oh, piffle!" Nelle said. "What if it does? You probably won't see any of them anyway. I want to stay here and make us a lot of apple butter."

So Grace went to New York, rather pleased to be going, but rather irked with Nelle for insisting that Grace wash all the bankets before bringing them to Forest Camp. That was a perfect example of the fanatic obsession Nelle had about cleanliness, for Grace know that all Nelle's blankets were already clean.

But while in Jackson Heights Grace washed all the blankets, loaded them on the dumb-waiter, hauled them up to the roof, and dried them in the September sun and breeze. She got them all finished on the third day and told Roge tihe had a few errands of her own she hoped to do before they headed Rahming again.

"That's fine, Grace. I'm sorry you've had all this washing to do. Nelle talked about it for weeks while we were here, but couldn't get it done. She's running out of steam, Grace. I worry about her. But then I guess I ought to remember she's older than we are, Ten years older than you, Grace. I'd like her to see a doctor, but she's still a Scientist, I guess, and money is scarce Don't you notice a change in Nelle?"

"Well," Grace said, "It seems harder her to get her projects finished, I think, but otherwise she seems to be fine, Roge."

"We're all getting old too fast, Grace. It's giving me the willies."

"Roge, It's this old Depression. We mustn't let it get us down. Things are bound to turn around soon."

"Well, you're as optimistic as Wilkins Micawber, old dear," Roge said. "I wish I were that way."

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After Grace left for New York, Jane, Mim and Babs busied themselves getting ready for their first day of school. The work of painting the Buick 4 was finished. She was shiny black with yellow wheel spokes. Jane had already driven her to town and back several times. Roge had advised Nelle to drive sometimes, too. "So you won't get out of practice," he told her.

The day before school started, the girls all made themselves matching blouses. They used an old pattern of Nelle's and sewed on her old treadle sewing machine. Jane, who had learned a few dressmaking tricks from Pauline, adapted the pattern so that leg o' mutton sleeves were the main feature. Nelle admired the finished products.

"They're real clever, and real cute," she pronounced.

The next evening Jane made an entry in her often-neglected journal.

Well, we went to our 'mountain school' today, as Dad called it, and he would have been quite surprised to learn what it is like. In fact, if it had been his idea he'd have been very enthusiastic. Somehow, it makes me feel that it must be like a school in England or something. Well, New England, anyway. The principal is called the 'Headmaster'. La-de-dah! How very like Dickens! The school, of course, is not only much smaller than East High School, but also smaller than Oberlin High, or even Milford, but I can get all the same courses that I'd be taking in Cleveland. That will be English, Physics, third year Latin (which is Cicero) and second year French. I was surprised that they had the Cicero because the class is rather small. It has juniors and seniors in it. And next year she will teach fourth year (Virgil) to juniors and seniors. There are only ten kids in the Cicero class, so I really ought to learn something. I really like Latin and some people think I'm nuts. They teach Physics and Chemistry here on alternate years, too, because of small classes. I imagine everyone learns more. The Latin teacher told me she would teach the Cicero and Virgil if there were only two pupils.

Mim and Babs got the courses they wanted, too. Aunt Lucy went with us this morning and she and the headmaster worked out Babs's schedule, for she is just a freshman. I can't wait to tell Mother about this school, then she'll write and tell Dad. In fact, I might write and tell him myself. Mother is down in New York this week. It's kind of funny. Whenever I start a new school Mother is somewhere else. In fact, I can't remember when she was ever around when I went to a new school even when I was little, except the first one I went to in Cleveland after she and Dad were divorced. Aunt Ada went along with me when I started school in Chagrin Falls in the first grade. When we were sent to boarding school, Dee and I went there alone on the train. And then, after Christmas, Mother put me on the train again and sent me to Aunt Nelle in New York where I went to that beastly PS 69. Next, when Mother and Carle went on their honeymoon in August, I was sent to Aunt Merly in Oberlin, and Betty Long came and got me and put me in Sunshine Camp. I went to three different Cleveland schools after that when Mother was married to Carle, and then we moved to Connecticut. I really don't know if Mother went to school with me then or not, but, of course, by then I was thirteen years old, so I guess I was thought to be old enough to enroll in a new school by myself. Well, a year later, it was back to Cleveland and Dad, and Dad sent me to Aunt Merly for a year in Oberlin with Mim while Trink went to New York with Aunt Nelle. It's

so funny, but Mother and her sisters are always swapping us cousins back and forth, and I've been swapped around most of all. Heigh-ho! This is the thirteenth time I've changed schools.

A funny thing happened this afternoon. We didn't have a full day of school, just fifteen minutes in each class, where they issued us our books. By the way, everything is furnished in New Hampshire schools, books, papers, pencils, notebooks, everything. And we are getting all this because Uncle Roge is a taxpayer.

Well, anyway, after we got out of school, we met Aunt Nelle, who was waiting for us. She said we could get a soda at McCrillis's drug-store, so we did, and then we bought a few groceries, and six yards of material to make us more matching blouses for school. Dee thinks we are out of our minds to want to dress alike.

I got side-tracked. I was going to tell what happened this afternoon. Uncle Roge had told Aunt Nelle to be sure and drive the care for practice, so this morning when we got down the hill to the garage, where we keep the cars, I asked Aunt Nelle if she wanted to drive. She said, "you drive to town, and I'll drive when we come home."

When we finished our shopping and went to the car, I got in on the passenger side, and Mim and Babs got in the rumble seat. Aunt Nelle hesitated a minute, and then she got in the driver's seat. The Buick 4 works almost the same as the big Buick. They both have Buick shift. (Other cars have a different shift.) Aunt Nelle has driven the big Buick quite a bit, and she tried the little one one day when it was up on the hill. Uncle Roge got her to drive it around the yard a little and she said she though she'd prefer it to driving the big one. Well, anyway, she got in and started the '4' without any trouble. We were facing south and we had to drive around the Common to head Rahming out of town. The Common is a triangle and one end of it is a hill. Aunt Nell seemed quite nervous, and she was going along pretty slowly. She turned the corner really slowly and started up the hill, and she stalled the car, or maybe I ought to say, 'the car stalled.' But I don't think she was using enough gas. Well, the car started to roll back so she stepped on the brake, of course, and stopped it. The she sat there saying, 'Just a minute, let me think.' She seemed pretty confused and said, 'I don't' know how to start this car on a hill.' I said, 'It's just like the big Buick.' (That's one thing they make you do when you take your driver's test.) You put the emergency brake on, and put the car in neutral, and then you start the car. Then when you put the car into low gear, you hold the clutch and brake pedals down, and release the emergency brake, and use the handthrottle as you let in the clutch and brake. Aunt Nelle must have had to learn to do it, but she sure was nervous. So she said, 'I'm not used to this car. You're used to it. I think you'd better drive it home.' She she told me to get out and come around to the driver's side so she could slide over where I'd been. So right in the middle of town, with other cars waiting behind us, I had to take over and get us started, and up that hill. I have never seen Aunt Nelle give up on anything before, nor have I ever known her to think a kid could do something she couldn't do (least of all me). But I don't think it will make her like me any better, more likely just the other way around. We went right on home then, and Aunt Nelle seemed very tired when we climbed the hill, but of course everyone is tired when climbing that darned hill. Actually, I could have driven us all up in the '4' because the road is still in good dry condition, but

Uncle Roge doesn't want us to take the '4' up, for fear something will happen to it. He also told me that it wouldn't go faster than thirty-five miles an hour, and Jim Button laughed when I told him that.

Well, that's all for tonight. Tomorrow is our first real day of school.

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It was lonely in Forest Camp with the girls at school and Grace down in New York. William was there, of course, but he was busy with various chores Roge had laid out for him. He and Frank Button had lined the lean-to kitchen with sheet-rock which made it much warmer, but at the same time it had done away with many small shelves built between the studs. The main part of the house, a simple Cape-Cod style, was of "post and beam" construction, with the members having been hand-hewn by old Nehemiah Evans from his own one hundred acres of forest. Nehemiah Evans had loved wood; he'd hewed all the massive beams for his barn as well, and he'd been a maker of ax-handles, ox-yokes, and such. His son, Avery Evans, had added on the lean-to kitchen after Nehemiah Evans's time, and he had built it with modern stud-framing, but he had never lined it with anything in spite of the hard winters. Nelle and Roge had learned plenty about sub-zero weather in their Colorado days, and one bitter winter in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Roge's plan for the winter consisted of four basic "musts." A huge pile of firewood in and outside the barn, a new "circulating" heating stove installed in the main room behind the free-standing fireplace and chimney, the sheet-rock lining to insulate the kitchen, and an emergency store of staple groceries stashed away in attic and cellar.

Nelle was having trouble getting herself going these days. She decided she wasn't being a good Christian Scientist. She'd have to snap out of it. The trees in the orchard were loaded with apples, and she must get at the apple-butter. There were plenty of good wind-falls down already, but they would be wormy and would take a lot of work to fix. Dee would help with that, and with getting the jars and glasses washed and sterilized. Dee was a good worker in the kitchen, and Nelle was also very glad that she was there to talk to. Nelle never liked being all alone. She supposed it was because she'd grown up in such a large family.

"Let's get baskets and go up and get some apples," Nelle said on the second day of school.

Dee put down the book she was reading.

"Alright," she said.

"You're bored, aren't you, kid?" Nelle asked her.

"Not really. I've always loved this place. But I'm not particularly happy, either, Aunt Nelle."

"In love again, kid?"

"Not again, just still. I've not been in love since Cameron."

"Don't be like your mother, Dee. She'd be so much better off if she'd get over loving your father and make a fresh start."

"But she tried a fresh start with Carle and that just didn't work."

"Yes, but you're so young. You'll be alright. I got over something at your age. You will too, Dee."

“Aunt Nelle, that isn’t what’s bothering me now. It’s worrying about what I’m going to do next. Mother hoped we’d all be together, but I have no job, and to be perfectly honest, I need more training. I only had one term of typing and shorthand and I need more. I should write to Dad and ask to come back to Cleveland, but, oh, I hate to do that. Pauline doesn’t like me at all. She resents me. She thinks I’m frivolous and lazy.”

“Why, you were never lazy!”

“Pauline is very school-teacherish. She’ll gloat if I ask to come back. But there’s nothing for me to do here. You’ve more than enough people here.”

“Well, you don’t have to decide today. We’ll read some Science and things will work themselves out. I can hardly believe you’re all grown up with all these worries, because it seems such a short time ago that you were the roly-poly baby that Roge and I took care of in Burlington. You know, Dee, I’m glad you’re here. I’ve always loved having a crowd here and so has Roge. That’s a big reason why he’s been in such an awful mood. He’s always enjoyed being able to have all you cousins here. I surely hope his business picks up soon. Well, let’s not talk anymore about Depression and troubles. Let’s go pick up some apples. I know where there is a tree with crabapples. They make the prettiest red jelly.”

It was a beautiful day, and in the manner of such days, the joy of it was touched with sadness. The autumn smell was in the air, and it took Nelle back thirteen years to September of 1919, when she and Roge had first decided to buy the place. The air was sparkling clear, with the pines and hardwoods of Mount Morgan standing out sharply across the way, and even Bean’s house below and Bump’s farther up the valley showing their windows plainly. From the high field where they stood, Dee and Nelle could view the blue distances Rahming toward Franconia Notch and Rahming-easterly to Sandwich Notch. Dark cloud shadows moved across the whole panorama.

“Daddy always loved cloud shadows,” Dee said.

“Look how much color is coming now,” Nelle pointed out. “The yellow is birches and the maples are red.”

Nelle was remembering how that first autumn she and Roge had hiked up to the old “sugar-bush,” and they had spotted all the sugar maple trees by the old spile marks on their trunks, and she had dreamed of tapping those trees again some year and having their own maple syrup.

She spoke of it to Dee now. “Let’s go up to the sugar-bush. It’s such a pretty walk. We’ll get the apples on the way back.”

They went along the old path and Nelle noted that William had been busy clearing out some young trees that had encroached along the way.

“I wonder if we could work it again next spring,” Nelle said. She touched the rows of old wooden sap buckets nested together, poking them with the toe of her shoe. “These are all rotten, but the arch is still fine.” She pointed to the two parallel stone walls about two and a half feet high. “The sap pans are

hanging in the barn and they are perfectly good. But it means staying up all night for several nights. Wonder if William would care to do that. We'd have to work in shifts. When the sap is running it keeps you busy. We'd have to get hold of some pails."

"It sounds like fun," Dee said, but her mind wasn't really on maple syrup. It was far away in Milford in a Model A Ford parked by the beach watching the waves. On just such a day as this she and Cameron had said goodbye. That had been just two years ago, but to Dee it seemed every bit as long as the thirteen years seemed to Nelle.

They went back then to the orchard, where Nelle found her crabapple tree. They picked up many good windfalls, surprisingly free of worms, and picked half a basket of good eating apples from another tree.

"These are old-fashioned apples," Nelle said. "Many of these kinds you couldn't buy today. Everything nice they do away with."

"I hear the girls coming up the hill," Dee said. "I envy them. I wish I weren't almost twenty-two years old."

"I know how you feel, kid. I wanted to stay seventeen forever."

YOU'D BETTER BRACE YOURSELF

When Labor Day came and went with no sign of Jane's return for the start of school, Norris grew more angry with every passing day. He was most annoyed with Grace, but he had not heard from Dee all summer, and had had only one slim letter from Jane. He seemed to forget that he almost never wrote letters himself, but in any case he thought it was outrageous that Grace had not come out and told him of the plan to spend the winter in the mountains. Earlier in the summer she had said that the girls needed her, and that she would again expect support money. That idea was so bizarre, under the circumstances, that he wouldn't entertain it for a minute. Right now he felt that he'd been deceived at the time when he let Jane go East for the summer. He doubted very much that Jane had been in on the plot. He felt sure that she had intended to return in the fall, because she had taken so few of her clothes with her. Pauline had checked Jane's room and reported that only her summer clothes were gone, and one warm jacket, and a raincoat. The new winter coat they'd bought her was there, and all her warm dresses, hats, and winter shoes. Also there were her dearest possessions, her books. It seemed obvious that she'd had every intention of returning at summer's end. Dee, on the other hand, had taken many more things with her.

Norris was annoyed with all three of them now, and sent a peremptory telegram to New Hampshire reading:

"Jane must immediately return to attend Cleveland East High School."

But his irritation extended further. He had just got into political arguments with Pauline, and had even shocked his mother and Ethie with his views. They were apparently expecting him to announce that he would vote for Herbert Hoover, and he had told them all what he thought of Hoover and his Depression. Pauline had said Hoover was a fine man, who hadn't caused the Depression, and when he asked her how she knew that she didn't have an answer.

They'd gone to her mother's for Sunday dinner the day before Labor Day. Present were Pauline's elder sister Madge, an old maid; the younger sister, Evelyn mother of four, with her dentist husband Edwin; and Pauline's young (and only) brother, Sonny, who worked as a floor-walker at Strohmeier's store. All Republicans. Much to Pauline's horror, Norris announced his presidential choice for the November election.

It had begun with Sonny's simple question,

"Norr, what do you think of the candidates?"

"I was disappointed that the Democrats didn't pick Newton D. Baker. That man has a fine mind. I'd have voted for him."

Pauline's mother spoke up. "Norris, have you got something against President Hoover?"

"Yes," said Norris. "Everything, Mother Wells, everything, if the country keeps on with him, there'll be a revolution. You'd better take it seriously when you read in the paper of hunger marches. People are

losing their homes; farmers are losing their farms. Using the Army to drive out the veterans and their wives and babies was the last straw with me. He's had experience with feeding starving people, he's seen suffering in Europe, but he doesn't see it here. He refuses to see it here. He says the Depression is only temporary. He tells us to 'have faith.' He tells us to buy, not to hoard money. Ha! I like that! He tells businessmen to be optimistic. He talks a lot; he does nothing. And he turns against the veterans who are desperate. You can have him, other Walters. He's not for me."

The rest of them were silent save for Sonny.

"And you think that Franklin Roosevelt can get things straightened out, Norr?"

"I have no idea what the fellow would do. He's always had money. Can he understand hunger, d'you think? Walter Lippmann doesn't feel that Roosevelt is qualified for the job. Said that he's a nice man who wants very much to be President. Roosevelt is doing a lot of talking about what he'll do, but he's not being very specific. Says he's going to get a new deal for the American people. What exactly does that mean, I'd like to know. I like a candidate who spells it out."

Sonny turned to his other brother-in-law, the dentist. "Who do you like, Edwin?"

Edwin, who rarely talked at all except to patients whose mouths were filled with his fingers, said, "Hoover," and added no comment.

Sonny asked Norris then, "So aren't you going to vote for President at all, Norr?"

"I certainly am. I'm going to vote for Norman Thomas."

There was a dead silence, and some widened eyes. Then Sonny spoke. "You mean the Communist?"

"No, I don't mean the Communist," Norris said. "Thomas is a Socialist.

"Same thing," Sonny said.

"Not the same thing. There are very important differences. I couldn't tell you in a short time. But in Socialism there are free elections and civil rights."

"Capitalism is the best," Edwin said, still being very sparing with his words.

"For whom?" challenged Norris.

"Everyone," said Edwin.

"Then why isn't it working?"

"It will."

"And thousands will starve while we wait for it to work," Norris said. "I'll vote for Norman Thomas."

Pauline, who had been suffering through all this, finally spoke up nervously. "Norr is only kidding."

"I'm not kidding at all. I mean it. We need to try something new."

Pauline had wept on the way home.

"I was so embarrassed," she said.

"You've no need to be."

"But you let them think you'd vote for that Communist."

"Socialist! And didn't you listen to what I said?"

"You said you weren't kidding."

"And I'm not. Especially now, since being with such stodgy people."

If Pauline had not already been crying she'd have started then.

"That's unkind!" she said.

"Well, they are stodgy. Take Edwin. Said he was for Hoover, and that's all he said. Didn't say why he's for him. Didn't defend his choice at all, because he scarcely knows why he's for him. Edwin doesn't have any ideas in his head."

"He's a very good dentist!" Pauline protested.

"That's a trade. You'd call it a profession. I call it a skilled trade. How many things can you do with teeth? Fill them, pull them, cap nerves maybe, and make false ones. But that doesn't mean he's got a bright idea in his head. Hoover doesn't either. Where are the bright ideas to cure the Depression? Your mother and Madge are for Hoover, too. But they don't know why. Because he is a Republican isn't a good reason. They just feel at home with his stuffy stodginess. Stodgy people like each other's company. Bright ideas frighten them."

"Did you vote for Norman Thomas four years ago?"

"Hardly. We were in France. But I would have voted for Hoover, because I admired him then. He did such a good job with war relief for the Belgians. I wouldn't have voted for Al Smith. Not enough education to suit me. And I hadn't read Norman Thomas yet. But Hoover's been a huge disappointment."

"Well, you can vote for Norman Thomas if you like, Norris, but I pray you'll keep it quiet. Everyone I know is for Hoover."

"I have no intention of keeping my ideas quiet. And I know plenty of people who aren't for Hoover."

"Alright, but I don't think we can afford to lose any of my clients. Talk against Hoover if you will, but better not talk about Norman Thomas too much."

“When would I talk with your clients anyway? They’re as stodgy as your family.”

“Norris, you really are unkind and intolerant.”

“Well, at least I have room in my head for ideas.”

The next day was Labor Day and he and Pauline had gone down the street to have dinner, or “suppah’ as Rosella called it. His mother and sister usually ate their evening meals with Norris and Pauline now, since Ethel wasn’t working. Pauline provided the money, and Ethel, with some help from Rosella, did the cooking. Ethel also did the marketing. All this was a help to Pauline.

But on Labor Day, Ethel had invited them to come to their place for a change. Norr rather enjoyed going. It was only a few doors down and they could walk. He enjoyed spending a little time with the familiar furniture he’d grown up with, the Victorian parlor settee and chairs covered in olive green mohair, the marble-topped walnut table with Mrs. Eddy’s writings, and the same hairy-armed begonia plants that were apparently immortal, for Rosella had had them on Cartwright Street for as long as Norr could remember.

The evening had had a temporary soothing effect on Norris. Ethel had prepared the meal his mother had always fixed when hot weather came and tomatoes were plentiful. There was a big casserole of fragrant New England style baked beans, prepared with brown sugar and bacon and “no sloppy tomato soup sauce” as Norr described it. There was a plate of plain bread and butter sandwiches made with delicious bread from a favorite bakery. And a big platter of tomato slices dressed with Ethie’s special mixture of cider-vinegar, sugar, water, salt, pepper and a touch of dry, hot mustard. Norris loved that particular meal, but Pauline with her touchy digestive system, was leery of the baked beans, and took only a tablespoonful. The rest of her meal consisted of bread and butter and a pot of tea.

After the meal Ethie had served the dessert that was also standard for Sundays, tapioca pudding. In winter Rosella had served it with currant jelly, but now in September Ethie served it with sliced fresh peaches.

“That was a good meal, girls,” Norris said, when he and Pauline said good night to his mother and Ethel, but the contented feeling he had did not last. He came very close to reminding Pauline that they would not be able to keep Rosella and Ethel under a separate roof much longer. But he refrained from raising the subject, since he felt certain it would mean tears on Pauline’s part, and tears meant nausea, and he preferred that she ‘keep her bread and butter down’.

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The following day he sent the telegram to Grace. That was a Tuesday. When Thursday came and he had received no answer, he was really upset. He had forgotten that when the message was received in New Hampshire it would be mailed, and not delivered until Wednesday at best. And whoever came down the hill for milk and mail would have to carry the telegram up the hill, where Grace would read and discuss it. She might not answer it before the weekend.

Monday afternoon Norris decided to phone Betty Long, since Grace wrote to her regularly.

He made short work of preliminary greetings, and got to his problem immediately.

Betty, what in hell is Grace up to? I've heard nothing recently from any of them, and Jane has not returned to start school. Have you heard from Grace?"

"Just this morning, Norr. First letter I've had in weeks."

"Well, what's going on with her?"

Suddenly, Betty was irked with both Grace and Norris. She'd always liked both of them, but knew that Norr had a vile temper, and because of it Grace had had to divorce him. He had frightened the children too badly. But having gone through it all several years ago, they should be acting like mature people. In this case Grace should have written to Norr instead of keeping him in the dark about Jane.

"I don't know just what's going on, Norr, except that she's in New York."

"In New York! Well, where's Jane?"

"Norr, I don't think the letter mentioned Jane. Nor Dee either, for that matter."

"You mean there is nothing in the way of news in the letter?"

"Oh, there's plenty of news, but not about the girls; Elma Pratt has been writing to her about going to Europe to teach Art."

Norris broke in, "Who's been writing to her?"

"Elma Pratt. You remember her. She's from Oberlin, and went to Art School too. She was ahead of us."

"I remember her. Sort of a flighty, eccentric girl. She's going to teach art in Europe? Where?"

"No, Norr. It's Grace that's going to teach art in Europe. At least Elma wants her to. Elma's running something called The European School of Art."

"Never heard of it," Norr said.

"Well, Alma says she has classes in Poland, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Tunisia."

“Tunisia isn’t Europe.”

“She’s expanding, she says.”

“Well, Grace better look into it carefully, because Elma Pratt was always pretty nutty. Anyway, I want to know where Jane is. Do you think Grace brought her to New York to put her on the train or bus to Cleveland?”

“Norr, I don’t know. Her letter was just bubbling with the plan to go to Europe. Other than that she was busy washing blankets. She said she was in New York with Roger.”

“With Roger! Where’s Nelle?”

‘I suppose she’s there too.’

“But nothing about Jane or Dee, or Mim?”

“No, Norr.”

“I’d forgotten about Mim. I’ll call Merly.”

“That’s a smart idea,” said Betty.

“Well, I don’t know why I didn’t think of it before. But Betty, don’t you think Grace has been behaving badly?”

“In a way. But Norr, this depression has her so desperate. She’s worried all the time.”

“I suppose, Betty, but aren’t we all?”

He thought about it after talking with Betty. All the artists were worried, and nearly everyone else in the country was worried. If he had had plenty of money, he could have done everything differently from start to finish. Nothing would have turned out the way it had. Money had been the problem with Grace. And now the situation was almost the same. Pauline was putting the food on the table, and was well aware of that. If Grace had had enough money, she’d have had no need to send the children back to him and get everything all stirred up again. And if he’d had money to send the support payments over the years, he’d have not a twinge of conscience. He and Pauline had once planned to go to France every other year. But he didn’t have money, and the Depression was spoiling everyone’s life.

He called Merly the following day. He had always been fond of her, for in the troubled years with Grace in New York, and at the Old Brick, Merly had never seemed as sharply critical of him as some of Grace’s other relatives, mainly Nelle, had been. He’d even suspected that Merly had been a little bit ‘sweet on him’ as Nelle had more than once declared to be the case. In truth, Merly had known his faults, but she was essentially gentle and tolerant like her mother, and more forgiving than any of her sisters. In the old days, Norris had teased Merly a lot, and she took teasing better than Grace did. Grace always took herself too seriously. Grace had a delightful sense of humor except when she was the target of teasing. Norris had poked fun at Merly about being so slow and dreamy and, in the early days, about her

fascination with evangelism. She had taken it all in good humor when he told her she'd be the last to arrive at her wedding and her funeral. She'd already made good on the first part of that prediction, but she'd assured him that that was only proper.

It had been very soothing to Norris to talk to Merly now. She never seemed to hold a grudge in regard to past unpleasantness, even though she had been totally loyal to Grace at the time of the divorce, and had been a corroborating witness at the hearing. Two years ago when she agreed to have Jane during the school year, she'd made one or two wistful remarks about the old days when she and Waldo and he and Grace had so often been a jolly foursome visiting the Bronx Zoo and giggling in the Primate House over the antics of the mandrill baboons with their gaudy faces and rear ends.

Pauline had overheard some of Norris's conversation with Merly as he spoke on the downstairs telephone. She was quite surprised at his amiable tone of voice and, since he was obviously discussing Jane's continued stay in the East, she wondered at the number of times she heard him chuckling and saying "Isn't that right?" Next she heard him inquire about Grace, and the old feeling of insecurity came over her. He had so often asked Dee and Jane do you hear from your mother?" Presently, Pauline heard Norris talking about someone named Elma. "Oh, she is a flighty one, Merly. Elma was totally wild. I always considered her absolutely wild." Pauline's curiosity grew. But just then one of her clients arrived for a fitting and she had no opportunity to talk to Norris until they were at the dinner table. She was pleased that Norris raised the subject himself and she didn't have to ask him.

"Well," he said. "Jane and Mim are going to school in the mountains, and Merly says she's of the opinion that it's a good school. She says Rog looked into that a long time ago. He's convinced that all the New England schools are good quality and that they follow a pretty strict curriculum of literature and the classics, and also strict discipline. Merly says that Jane and Mim will be able to take the same courses they had planned to take back here. So I guess that part is alright. And Merly said it would do the children good to have a winter of pioneer life. She may be right about that, too. Might make them appreciate what we provide for them."

"Then you think it's alright to let Jane stay up there?"

"Won't hurt her, and might do her some good. I told Merly I thought it had been hard on Jane changing schools so many times, and she said she agreed, but that this time the girls wouldn't suffer for it, because they are having fun and they are all together. She got a letter from Mim just today. Mim says she and Jane and Babs are dressing alike, and they're popular.

"Who is Babs?"

"Nelle's daughter. Adopted. She's a cute little rascal. At least, she was when I saw her last."

"Which is Elma?"

Norris laughed. "Well, not one of the children. She's an old Art School girl. Went to Oberlin College too. I don't think she finished either place."

“What’s she doing up there?”

“She isn’t up there. She’s in New York. So’s Grace. Elma wants Grace to go to Europe to teach art in one of her school over there.”

Pauline’s hopes soared. If Grace went to Europe she might stop writing to Norris so often. The business of child support payments was over. Grace might as well give up on that. The best of luck to her in going to Europe. Pauline began to feel a renewed stirring of hope that she and Norris might finally have a change to have a married life for themselves. For, except for three or four months this summer, and their two trips to France, they had never lived alone. Norris had taken her right home to live with his mother and Ethie, and after that, Grace had sent him the girls.

“Do you think Grace will take the girls with her to Europe?” Pauline asked.

“I doubt she ever gets to Europe.”

“Why not?”

“Oh, Elma is such a nut. Merly says that she’s been after Grace about that for several years. It’s all talk.”

“But if she does go, would she take the girls with her. She would, wouldn’t she?”

“Not Jane. I expect Jane to come back here and finish at East High.”

“Maybe she’ll want to stay in New Hampshire.”

“Oh, no. This will be a one-year affair,” Norris said. “Because life will be too rough for them up there, and one year with Nelle is all anyone can take. Merly is only planning to let Miriam stay this one year.”

“Would Dee go with Grace to Europe?”

“I doubt it. Dee is on her own now, and I’m sure she likes it that way.”

“Well, then,” Pauline said. “We’ll be all by ourselves this winter. That will be really something. If Jane doesn’t come until her senior year starts, that will be a year from now. I thought I’d never see the day we’d be alone.”

“We’ve been alone all summer,” he said.

“But I didn’t think it was going to last. I expected Jane back.”

“I didn’t think you disliked Jane so much.”

“I don’t dislike her at all. I just always wanted for us to be alone, all by ourselves.”

“Alone to do what, Pauline?”

She flushed a little at that question, then tried to express herself. "It's just that I thought we'd have a married life without so much of your family around."

"You knew I had a family when you married me."

"But I didn't think Grace would send you the girls."

"When you get married you take what comes along. That's what 'for better or for worse' is all about."

She didn't say anything and he looked at her thoughtfully for a moment.

"You'd better brace yourself," he said, "for things will get even worse. I'm not going to pay another month's rent down at Mother's place. We've unoccupied rooms upstairs. We're going to move Mother and Ethel in with us."

She stared at him. "Norris! We can't. You wouldn't!"

"We have to, Pauline. It's the only sensible thing to do. We've more room here than we need. And they've more room than they need, but ours is the larger place. We can move them into Jane's old room. They'll like it; it's sunny, And when Jane comes back here she can have Dee's room."

Pauline's eyes swam with tears. "Ethel could sell some stock and pay their rent. Things will get better soon."

"No! We settled that before. We'll hang on to the stock."

"Then I'll take some of my own savings and pay the rent."

"We'll hang on to that money too. We may need it for our own rent. Or maybe even for food. This depression will get worse before it gets better. I was talking to O. Lord last week."

Pauline tried one more argument.

"Your mother and Ethie won't want to give up their furniture," she said.

"They won't have to. They can bring it along."

"Oh, no, Norris!"

"Yes! I'll enjoy living with my heirlooms."

The Old Brick
By Jane R. Chandler
1981
Part Three

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU MEN?

For the first two years of Desire (Dee) Rahming's life, she had for all practical purposes two sets of parents. As soon as Grace and Norris returned to New York, it was necessary for them, immediately, to find art work again, and Grace lost no time in heading straight for her old sources of work. Norris had borrowed a small sum of money from his mother and some from Aunt Ada, but they would not be able to rent a flat of their own until they had money coming in. Norris had brought his photographic equipment with him, but there was no room for him to work with it as long as they were staying with Nelle and Roger Fison.

Nelle was enchanted with the baby, and Roger found conversations with Grace and Norris quite fascinating, but the flat was terribly crowded, and everyone was anxious to see the Rahming's located in their own place. Rog and Nelle considered Norris spoiled and lazy, but admitted that he could be very charming and witty when he wished to be. Grace got work immediately doing magazine covers again, but Norris stayed at home toying with various plans for the future. He might do portrait photography, he might paint landscapes, he might experiment with a new process of printing photographs. He went off with his camera to take photos of the waterfront and the ships. He went to the Palisades to take pictures of rocks and trees, and the Hudson River.

Grace worked hard on her drawings, and Nelle took care of Dee. Nelle had recently gone to two more doctors. They had told her the same as the others. She seemed to be sterile, but there was no apparent cause. She might yet conceive; women sometimes did, after years of waiting.

By the time spring came, Grace and Norris were in their own flat, close to Nelle and Rog's place. Grace was earning a little money regularly, and Norris had sold a picture. Aunt Ada had helped out by sending money when Norris' birthday came on the first of May. Dee's Grandma and Grandpa Martin had given twenty-five dollars to be put into savings for the baby, and Nelle and Roger had given a ten-dollar gold piece. Charlotte (Lottie) Dean, Johnny Martin's wife, had crocheted a pair of booties and a bonnet for little Dee. Emma Pritchard Martin (Emmy) had knitted a carriage robe. Frank Stanley (Stan) Martin still had no wife, since divorcing Julia (nee Mraz), but he had gone back to Colorado to be near his three daughters. Nathan Albert Martin and Edith (nee Broadwell) had ignored the birth of Grace's baby. Nor had they sent a wedding present. Edith apparently had no interest in the Martin family.

But Nelle and Roger had fallen in love with little Dee. Nelle sewed dresses and coats for her. She came and took her for her daily carriage strolls, and home to her own flat, so that Grace could get her drawings done in peace. Usually Norris was at home when Nelle came to get Dee, and she would find that while Grace was hard at work on her magazine covers and illustrations. Norris more often was not. He loved to spend his days talking, and Nelle could not see how Grace could possibly get her work done.

“At least,” Nelle told Rog, “when I take little Dee off her hands, Grace doesn’t have two babies to distract her.”

Occasionally, however, Nelle did find Norris at work. He had converted a large clothes closet into a photographic darkroom, and was making many duplicate enlarged prints of the same scene. Then, when the prints were dry and pressed, with sharp knives he cut portions of the pictures out, to form his stencils. From one print he would cut the entire ground area, from another a house, and perhaps a moon and a few pinpoint stars. Then the hard part began. He cut the trees, shrubs, and such things as telegraph poles, from various other prints. When the delicate stencils were finished, he made his pictures by means of thinned-down paint, sprayed through a nasal atomizer, a device which had a small glass jar for the liquid, a long metal tube with mist nozzle, and a rubber hand bulb to squeeze. The paint came out in a fine spray which could be adjusted by turning the nozzle.

Norris chose colored papers for the backgrounds of his scenes. His most effective pictures were on dark colors, deep blues and grays. With light colors he achieved the effects of winter nights with snow on the ground, or city scenes, with lighted buildings against the night sky.

Norris sold a few of these paintings by putting them on consignment in picture galleries. They sold quite readily, but there was a drawback. It took him a long time to make them, and they were rather small, limited to the size of his photographic enlargements. Small pictures by unknown artists do not bring large prices.

Nelle and Roger admired Norris’s stencil pictures, bought two smaller ones, and helped Norris make a couple more. They encouraged him to turn out more.

Rog asked, “Don’t you think he’s got a good thing here, Grace?”

“Perhaps,” Grace said, enigmatically, and somewhat uncomfortably.

“But why not, Grace?” asked Nelle. “I think they are very good pictures.”

“And they are unusual, too,” Rog said. “I’ve never seen a picture done that way before.”

“It’s been done before,” Grace said. “Norris read about it.”

“Well, I’ve never seen any,” Nelle said. “Not anywhere. I think Norris could sell a lot of them.”

“Yes,” Grace said. “And he could make a lot of them too. All from one set of stencils.”

Now Norris spoke up. “What’s wrong with that? A lithographer or an etcher makes a lot of pictures from one original plate. They make a limited printing and then destroy the original. I’ll probably destroy my stencils.”

“Oh, that would be foolish,” Rog said. “They aren’t etchings. You don’t have to follow anybody’s rules, do you?”

“No,” said Norris.

“Grace,” Nelle said, “I get the impression you don’t like Norris’ stencil pictures. I wish you’d explain why. I didn’t go to Art School, but I like them.”

“They’re quite pretty,” Grace said, “but they’re not a pure art form, for one thing. And Norris knows my other objection to them.”

“What’s that, Norris?” Nelle asked.

“It’s sort of private dispute between us,” Norris said.

“Oh pshaw,” Nelle said. “If you two are going to earn a living selling Art to the public, it’s stupid to have private disputes about it. You’ll need money to buy food for your baby.”

Grace bridled. "It's not that. It's that an artist shouldn't compromise his talent by using tricks to get results."

"What do you mean, 'tricks'?" Nelle asked Grace.

"I mean that it would be better if Norris wouldn't use photographs to make his stencils. I'd rather he cut them from original drawings as he used to do."

"I probably will cut them from drawings in the future," Norris said. "Just now, I'm refining the technique, you see."

"I couldn't do it, with or without photos," Rog said. "Neither could most people. It seems like an art form to me."

"Me too," Nelle said. "Grace, you're too fussy and high falutin' about Art."

"Grace is a purist," Norris explained with a small smile.

Later, Nelle said privately to Grace. "If I were you, I wouldn't discourage Norris in his efforts. He's got something started that seems good. Keep him at it. You have to eat you know."

One morning in June, Nelle arrived at Grace and Norris's flat, with a letter in her hand.

"Did you get a letter from Ma?" Nelle asked Grace.

"No. Our mail never comes this early."

"Well, Ma wrote one to you, too. It's about Grandma Burns. She died, Grace."

"Oh no! Poor, dear sweet Grandma!" Grace began to cry. "Read me the letter."

"All right," Nelle said. "Ma says: - "

"Dear Dotty: Cleveland, June 18, 1911

The life of your dear little grandma went out about four-thirty this morning. I had spent the night with her, lying beside her on her bed. She has failed greatly this past week. It has been very hot for September, and I think the weather oppressed her. Yesterday God told me the end might be near for dear mother, and so I spent the night beside her in case she felt need of me. I prayed that it would be easy for her, but of course I did not pray aloud, lest I frighten her.

You grandma did not voice any complaint but frequently made a tiny moan. And she would reach out her hand at times to pat my hand. I think she did it to reassure me, rather than herself. Oh, daughter, I will miss her sorely. All my life I think I lived in fear of the day my mother would leave us, but I would not wish her back to suffer another minute. She had pain and great weakness I know, but she would never speak of it, so I don't know where she hurt.

Now that grandma is gone, your father wants us to move back to Oberlin. He has been chafing to do so for two years, but had promised me we would stay here while grandma lived, for I was loath to move her. But now she is no longer with us, there seems no reason for staying here. Charlie does not feel he needs any more schooling, and wishes to marry, but Lawrence will go one more year at Oberlin, and may go on to enter the Seminary there. He hasn't yet decided whether a minister's life is for him or not. I would be very proud if he did, however, as my own dear brother Lawrence was a preacher, and his life was ended by consumption when he was but forty-five years old, leaving a wife and five children.

"The news of your poor dear sister Emmy is unchanged. She still is not right. Mother Rahming has been trying to treat her in Christian Science, but I guess Emmy and I don't have sufficient Faith. Somehow that thinking escapes me. I know that our Lord Jesus healed, but I am not sure of the powers of others to do as He did. It is my belief that

Emmy would be helped if we adopted a little babe for her to care for; I shall investigate that after we move back to Oberlin. Your Pa will sell or rent this house. The College Street house in Oberlin is still rented, so we shall move into rooms in Nate's hotel for a while. Emmy is quite interested in being in Oberlin again. I do so hope it will help her. William Irving Wooldridge is back in Denver, but writes of moving somewhere else. Poor boy, he is lonesome. Emmy often refuses to see him. I am provoked with her, but know she is still sick in her mind. I must trust in the Lord to heal her.

There is good news of Merle (Marian Martin). She has a fine young lawyer for a beau (Waldo Lemmon), and they are becoming quite serious. I expect them to come to me soon to say they are engaged. I shall be relieved, for Merle is twenty-seven, and more than old enough to start her family. The problem is, I don't see how we could give Merle a nice wedding if Pa and I live at Nate's hotel for a while. I doubt if we will ever move back into the College Street house; it will be much too large for our needs.

Write soon, Nelle. I know you can't come for Grandma's funeral, but will be with us in spirit. Grace couldn't come with that dear baby girl still so small. I must close now, Dotty, and write to Grace and many others.

Much love from
Your Mother."

"Oh my," Grace said. "It makes me so sad to think that Grandma is gone out of this world. She was so sweet, so very sweet, Nelle."

"Yes, she was, in recent years, but I remember her before, Grace, and she used to be very stern."

"Oh, I never think of Grandma as stern, Nelle. She was always kind to people."

"By the time you came along she was getting mellow, Grace. Now, mind you, I'm not saying she wasn't kind. But she was so strict in her religion. If you had troubles, she reasoned that it was the Lord punishing you for something you did."

"I'll never think of God that way," said Grace.

"Grandma was born a long time ago, remember. In the 1980's I think. She was almost like a Puritan, Grace."

"I suppose. Well, anyway, she did mellow."

"Yes, she finally did," Nelle said. "As you say – sweet, very sweet."

Grace and Nelle were getting along very well these days – better than they ever had.

The ten-year gap between them seemed for the time being, to have narrowed. Nelle felt sorry for Grace because she had to work so hard at her drawings, but she had a strong suspicion that Grace didn't mind known she was the big breadwinner. Norris continued to turn out his stencil pictures, but it took him so long to produce one that it wasn't very practical. Occasionally, Norris got a small job of portrait photography to do, but for every dollar Norris earned, Grace earned three.

The Old Brick
By Jane R. Chandler
1981
VOLUME SEVEN
JANE, I DON'T UNDERSTAND YOU

In the mountains, the autumn colors were at the peak. Maples were in their flaming red among the gold of the birches. They dazzled on sunny days against the bluest of skies, and on misty or rainy days their muted colors had a completely different beauty. Grace was back from New York, and she and Nelle were busy making apple butter and crabapple jelly. Their hands were stained from several days of cutting up apples and coring them. Nelle insisted on leaving the skins on the apples and everyone objected, but Nelle said all the vitamins were in the skins and they'd get used to it. Grace might have been longing to be outside painting the autumn colors, but for two things. One, she had never made it a practice to paint any of nature's spectacular displays – sunsets, rainbows, and such scenes, she would leave to others, and two, her mind was so filled with the prospect of going to Europe, she could scarcely think of anything else. She had written to Elma Pratt (who had gone abroad again) asking many questions about the whole thing, and now she was waiting for an answer. She hoped Elma would not delay long in responding, but she feared that Elma would procrastinate, as usual. It could be weeks before a letter would come. And Elma was so quick and indefinite when she talked. She jumped from one subject to another, and was so animated and sparkling that the listener was overwhelmed. Grace had learned very little she now realized. There were schools in Budapest, Prague, Vienna and a place called Zakopane in Poland. Grace wondered why Elma had chosen those particular cities. Elma spoke French fairly well. She certainly did not speak Polish, Slavish or Hungarian. And goodness knows, Grace did not, and wished that one of the schools were in Paris or somewhere in France or Belgium. Elma had assured her that her next school would be in Tunisia, where French was spoken widely, though Arabic was the principal language. But Grace felt no urge to go to a hot Arab country and live among people whose culture did not appeal to her.

Elma and Grace had met for lunch, after Elma learned from Polly that Grace was in town for a few days. It was the only conversation they'd had at that time. Looking back on the occasion, Grace realized that Elma had bubbled along so irrepressibly that many questions she wanted to ask she'd no opportunity to raise. And many of the questions that she had indeed asked had somehow gone unanswered – questions relating to how much Grace could expect in the way of salary. And also, Grace had wondered whether it would be possible for Dee and Jane to be with her. All that Grace could recall now was that Elma seemed to have answered those two questions with some such remark as "It all depends." She had mentioned that there might be a possibility that Dee could be a governess. So there really were very few specifics with which Grace could satisfy Nelle's many questions. But Elma had been very definite about the plan, and when Grace asked when all this was to happen, Elma had said, "I'm getting it all worked out right now. Be prepared to jump when I say we're

ready. Get your passport, and then when I cable you to come, you can arrange for your passage."

At night, when Grace wrote in her journal that she intended Norris to read sometime, she now could tell of the prospect of going abroad. Again and again she spoke of the excitement of it, but raised the question of what might be "arranged for the girls." And always on page after page she spoke of her continuing loneliness and love for Norris.

After being in school three weeks Jane resumed keeping her own journal.

Sept. 25, 1932 – I haven't written since the first day of school and that's because things have been so busy. Aunt Nelle has not driven since the day she stalled the car, and so I drive on Saturday when she and Mother go grocery shopping. That leaves me only Sundays to have partly to myself. Aunt Nelle is always full of chores for all of us, but Mother did remind her that the other girls have all day Saturday to wash their hair and undies etc., etc.

Speaking of "other girls" we have a new one! When Uncle Rog and Mother returned from New York they had a passenger. Her name is Ruth Chapman and she is fourteen years old, but her shape looks like she's older than that. Why she is here, is a long story. She spent the summer at Aunt Nellie Wilson's camp. Aunt Nellie is Uncle Rog's sister who runs Camp Nah-tay-see (which, incidentally, has failed). Well, anyway, Aunt Nellie told Uncle Rog Ruth's mother was wanting to find a place to board her this year, as she is going to get married again. (Not Ruth, but her mother.) Mrs. Akins is on the radio; she writes cook-books. She is in love with a man who owns a French restaurant. Ruth says, "They want me out of their way for awhile." I feel sort of sorry for her, but really she has a lot to be thankful for. Her Dad (her real one) and her ex-step-father, and the new man, Raoul, all give her spending money. Her mother doesn't seem to be affected by the Depression. Her radio program and her cookbooks are doing well. The attic here has turned into a real dormitory. We call it "The Reformatory." Uncle Rog said it is "Mrs. Fison's Home for Wayward Girls." Mim and I and Babs and Ruth all sleep in the attic. Mother and Dee sleep in the big bed in the front room downstairs and Aunt Nelle has the little back room that she likes. When Uncle Rog was here in the summer he slept in his tent-cabin in the north pasture, but now it's too cold so he has a cot in the studio where Uncle Bill sleeps. The other tents have been taken down for the winter. Uncle Rog is away traveling most of the time. Mim and I just realized that we can't remember when Uncle Rog and Aunt Nelle ever slept together, but we suppose they used to. We are very fond of Uncle Rog but we are a little upset with him lately. He puts his arms around us a little too much, and we feel that we are getting too grown up for all that squeezing. Well, I am getting too tired to write more tonight, but tomorrow I will write about Dee."

In the evenings, they all sat around the long kitchen table, reading, writing, or studying by the light of the good Rochester lamp. It was a kerosene lamp, but it had a large circular wick, and seemed to provide a whiter light than the other oil lamps with their small flat wicks. Bill had suggested to Roger that he buy a gasoline lamp that used mantles and burned with a brilliant white glow, but Roger said he didn't want the children and women fooling around with such a lamp and blowing up themselves and the whole place. They sat in the kitchen because in the living room there was no way

they all could share in the light of the Rochester lamp. The kitchen was comfortably warm because of the wood-burning cookstove. In the living room the fireplace and the new circulating heater kept things warm, and Nelle had fallen into the habit of napping after dinner, rather than joining the group in the kitchen. She would have enjoyed it if they had all been talking and laughing, and of course they sometimes were. But Babs, Mim, Jane and Ruth had homework to do; Grace endlessly wrote letters or her precious journal, and Dee read books or wrote letters. Sometimes Bill joined them all and wrote a short letter to Bill Wooldridge Jr., or read the Boston Transcript that Roger had subscribed

to "for the enlightenment of all." All this study and reading and writing seldom lured Nelle, although occasionally she sat down with the rest and wrote a letter or two. Then drowsiness would overtake her and she would repair to the living-room and stretch out on the cot that served as a couch. The living-room was anything but well-furnished, although there were several antiques of value - two Boston rockers, a melodeon, a good maple table, and the spinning wheel that had been Grace and Norris's in the Summit Street house in Chagrin Falls, and that had traveled to New Hampshire after Grace lost the house in Westport. There was also a canvas-sling deck chair and Nelle's ancient foot-treadle sewing machine. But there were eight people (nine when Roger was there) and one could not sit on a spinning-wheel, melodeon, or sewing machine. With Nelle asleep on the cot, there were only the two wooden rockers and the deck-chair for seating. So it was small wonder that the rest stayed in the kitchen through most of the evening. About the time they all were ready for bed, Nelle came to life and felt talkative.

Tonight Dee had decided to write a letter to Marian "Skipper" Root. Why she was writing to Skipper, she didn't know. She had friends in Cleveland, friends from college, but none of them had flunked out, and the only one she'd seen much of during the spring was her little Italian friend, Jane Pizzi, who was in her last year. Dee had already written to Jane concerning her present situation and inviting any helpful suggestions. Now she was writing to Skipper about job possibilities.

Dear Skipper,

I've thought about you often lately because our plans for our careers have certainly gone astray. Perhaps you are getting yours going again, but for the moment I'm stranded here in New Hampshire. Business is terrible in New York. I lost my job because the boss I worked for was a crook, and he swindled a lot of people, and left town. He owes me three weeks salary.

You remember, when we were kids, I used to tell you about this place? Well, my aunt and uncle have decided to spend the winter up here on this mountain and they have rented out their New York apartment. The reason, of course, is money - this awful Depression.

Mother is here, and Jane, and two cousins and another girl, who is a boarder. They are all going to high school here. Jane drives the car because she's sixteen. And here I am, nearly twenty-two, and

I'm stuck here. I need a job, but I've got to get out of here to get one and I'm broke. I have no place to stay in New York now, so, of course, I have to think about going back to Cleveland, but, are there any jobs there? I'm pretty sure Dad would let me come back, but I don't want to ask him because of Pauline. She disapproves of me, and that's for certain. Aunt Nelle has been very nice about my staying here for a while. She thinks business is going to pick up soon.

Meanwhile, Jane and the kids are having a marvelous time. They are popular and they are starting to have dates. But they are all too young for me, and I have no social life what-so-ever. I haven't figured out how I'm going to get off this hill, but I don't intend to die on the vine. Mother wants me to stay until Christmas, but she is talking about going to Europe in the spring and I'm certainly not going there. Well - write me a letter and tell me about jobs in Cleveland. And your love-life.

Love, Dee.

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At school, Jane, Mim, Babs, and Ruth were known as "the girls from New York." They created quite a sensation from the start. Babs and Ruth were freshmen, Mim was a sophomore, and Jane a Junior. They had separate classes, but ate their lunch together. Because there were four of them, they did not suffer from shyness and the usual strangeness felt on entering a new school.

At the end of their second week of school, on a mild Friday evening, the girls, who were reading in the kitchen, heard a car toiling up the hill. It drove into the yard and stopped. It was almost dusk. Nelle and Babs went out to investigate. The young man who was driving got out.

"Hi," he said. "Is this where Mim and the other girls live?"

"Yes," said Babs.

"Who are you?" Nelle asked.

"I'm in Mim's class," the boy said. "These are some of my friends."

"Are you fellows in Mim's class, too?" Nelle asked.

One of the two boys in the back seat spoke up. "I graduated in June; so did Joe."

"And what's your name?" Nelle asked.

"Frank Halley."

The boy who had been driving said, "We thought maybe the girls would like to go for a ride."

"First of all you ought to introduce yourselves, all of you," Nelle said.

The driver said that he was Tim Halley, and he ran through the other boys' names so fast that Nelle forgot them almost immediately. "My brother Frank, Joe Dodson, Ken Blake."

By this time Mim, Jane, and Ruth had come out of the house and gathered around the car.

Nelle turned to them. "These boys wanted you to go for a ride. Do you know them?"

Mim said, "Tim is in my geometry class."

"And the others?" Nelle asked.

"No," Mim said.

"Do you know them, Jane?"

"No."

"Well, boys," Nelle said, "I couldn't let the girls go off riding with someone they never met before. But, since it's a Friday night, if you'd like to talk to them here, that will be alright." Nelle went back into the house to tell Grace about the boys.

Tim Halley and his friends stayed about an hour. They did not come into the house, but sat with the girls on the wall of the spring-house, talking about New York and Cleveland and the Depression.

Tim Halley was back the next night with another friend, but the older boys who had been with him the first night never came back.

In the following weeks, three boys came regularly to see Mim, Jane and Ruth. They had no objection to Nelle's rule that they see the girls at home.

They played records on Roger's Victrola and they danced on the hardwood living-room floor (one of Roger's early improvements to the place). Ruth had a collection of new records that everyone but Grace enjoyed. She usually stayed in the kitchen by the Rochester lamp, writing in her journal or reading the Boston Transcript. Grace loathed jazz.

Babs and Dee stayed in the living room and they danced, too, although at that time they had no particular boy friend. Babs was too young, Dee too much older. Actually, Babs was a few months older than Ruth. They were both fourteen, though Ruth looked all of sixteen, but, in certain ways, Babs behaved more grown-up. Having been raised by Nelle, Babs did not avoid work and was always the first one to get her chores out of the way. But Babs had a problem; she was short and chubby. "Fat" described it better. In past years Nelle had taken pride in Babs's appealing look of glowing health and good nutrition, and compared her to Trink and Jane who were always, in Nelle's words, "spindly." But the days for "baby-fat" were over, and Nelle worried about it. Babs was pretty, really; she had straight brown hair, shining and healthy looking. Her complexion was good, and her cheeks were rosy, perhaps too rosy. She had good white teeth and big brown eyes. But she was only four feet eleven inches tall and weighed as much or more than any of the taller girls. The boys liked Babs well enough, and enjoyed dancing with her, but they thought of her as a little sister.

Nelle tried to explain it to her,

"You're younger, you see, honey. Your day will come."

"I'm not the youngest, Ruth is," Babs said.

"Ruth is well developed for her age. Too much so , "

"But she has a boy friend, and Jane and Mim have boy friends. I have no one."

"Oh, the boys like all you girls," Nelle insisted.

"No. Tim likes Mim, Narze Samaha likes Jane, and Harl likes Ruth,"

The only comfort Nelle could offer was that in time Babs would have boy friends, too.

"I'm too short and fat," Babs said.

"You'll grow, but you'd better try eating less bread," her mother said.

But, all in all, Nelle liked having the boys come up the hill to see the girls. To have the living room full of young people seemed "normal" to Nelle. She didn't spend all her time watching them dance. Mostly she stayed in the kitchen with Grace, but she enjoyed having them there.

"You ought to watch the kids dance, Gracie." Nelle said. "They're real cute."

"I hate that kind of music," Grace said. "Norris and I preferred good music."

When we were their age we used to go to symphonies all the time."

"Oh, I know. You both were dreadful high-brows. But Norris liked to waltz, though, Gracie."

"Well, that was different, Nelle. Waltzes were romantic."

"But to these kids this is romantic," Nelle said.

"Oh, Nelle! Listen to the words to those songs. they like. 'You go home and pack your panties; I'll go home and pack my scanties, and away we'll go.'"

"But that's real cute, Gracie. Rog likes that song, too. You're losing your sense of humor, kid."

"Oh, piffle, Nelle. It's just that young people's friendships these days lack the graciousness and dignity we used to have. They spend their time wise-cracking."

"We used to kid and have fun, too. My goodness! Don't you remember?"

"I remember how we were," Grace said, and she returned to writing her journal.

Grace now had something new to think about. In addition to waiting anxiously for Elma Smith's letter, she had to worry about her girls, particularly Jane. Of course Dee 's future was uncertain, too, but for the moment there was no man in Dee's life. Grace knew full well that Dee had never stopped loving Cameron Walton. Poor baby, Grace thought, she is like me, completely faithful to her first, great love. But Grace knew that Cameron was permanently lost to Dee. His mother was the reason for that. A vicious woman. And now Dee was talking about returning to Cleveland. She said she'd swallow her pride and write to her father and ask to come back. She said she'd go to night-school and take more business courses. But Grace didn't want Dee to go back to Norris and that woman. It would just be another defeat in a long string of recent defeats. Dee couldn't be happy with Pauline. And Grace was convinced that Norris couldn't either. Her Cleveland friends had told her as much. It was a bad thing for Dee to live with them. A way would have to be found to keep her in the East. But then - what if she herself were to go to Europe? Could and would Dee go along? Dee said that she had no desire to go and live "in some weird town where I can't understand a word." And there was Jane. She had been quite willing to go back to Cleveland. Apparently Pauline had nothing against Jane, whereas she scorned Dee because of her troubles in college. Pauline had no sympathy apparently. Jane and Mim had spent a quiet summer and hadn't expected to stay in Camp Forest Primeval, but now they were having a marvelous time. Was it perhaps too marvelous a time? There were too many boys coming up the hill two or three times a week. And Nelle was no help at all in that respect. She just insisted that it was perfectly natural for the girls to have boy-friends. Well, Grace knew that, but the girls were going out of their way to attract the boys and it ought not be overdone.

Grace spoke to Jane about it.

"Why do you girls want to all dress alike?"

"Because it's fun."

"It's not as though you were twins or quadruplets."

"No, but it worked," Jane said.

"What do you mean 'it worked'?"

"It got us noticed; it made us popular."

"Jane, I don't understand you."

"Look. If I had enrolled at school in the junior class, I'd have just been a 'new girl.' Nothing special. And Mim would have been just a new girl in the sophomore class, and the same way with Babs and Ruth. Two new

freshmen. Nothing special. But by wearing clothes that matched we created a sensation. People said, 'Who are those girls?' and the word got around, 'Those are the girls from New York'."

"And you liked that?" Grace asked.

"Certainly. Why not?"

"Why would you want to go out of your way to be so conspicuous?"

"To attract the boys and have more fun."

"But you are all pretty girls. I don't know where you get such ideas."

"Just instinct."

"Oh, Jane. I thought you were so idealistic and had your mind only on winning a scholarship."

Jane looked at her mother with exaggerated wide eyes. "Mother! What on earth has this to do with ideals and college scholarships?"

"I should judge it might have a lot to do with them."

Grace told herself that she was not being unreasonable. It was just that she naturally was cautious about Jane after Dee's experience. Dee had been foolish at nineteen. Jane could very well be foolish at sixteen, and that must be prevented. There had been the worry about Danny O'Neal, but fortunately that all blew over. Grace had thought that the girls would not have dates with boys isolated as they were, nine miles from town, and more than a quarter of a mile up a perfectly awful hill. But it hadn't worked out that way at all. Harl Pease, the boy that liked Ruth, could always have the use of a car. His father owned a Ford dealership, and Harl could always take one of the demonstration cars. They were the new V8's and they had no trouble at all climbing the hill. Harl brought with him Tim Halley, who liked Mim, and the boy who liked Jane, a dark-skinned youth whom the others called "Narze," and who looked like George Raft, the movie actor. Tim's father owned a drug store; Harl's father, the Ford agency; and Narze's father had a delicatessen. Grace was not much impressed by that fact, and wondered why it was that the least likely one of the three boys had to be the one who was interested in Jane.

Narze had appeared on the hill with Tim Halley the second time Tim came to see Mim. He was interested in Jane. From that evening on, he came on every occasion when Tim or Harl could get a car. Grace took little notice of him on the first evening that he came to Camp Forest Primeval because the weather was

still mild and the young people had spent the evening sitting in a row on the terrace retaining wall chatting and laughing. The thought had gone through Grace's mind that evening that once the snow fell on Fison's Hill, the boys' cars would not be able to climb it, and that would be the end of the social life. It would be confined to school and that would be just as well. But there were many things that Grace did not foresee.

It became evident on Narze's second visit that he had his eye on Jane, so Grace quizzed her later.

"Who is this dark boy you're so thick with?"

Jane started to laugh. "Mother! Really!"

"Well, I'd like to know more about him," Grace said.

"Then please don't call him 'this dark boy.' Next thing you'll be saying 'this darkie!'"

"Oh, I will not. I can see he's not a negro, but he's so dark."

"He's no darker than I am, Mother," Jane still had her usual deep summer tan.

"But your hair isn't completely black like his. He's different. I can see he's some 'nationality'."

Jane laughed again, "Everyone is 'some nationality'."

Grace frowned, "You know perfectly well what I mean. And what is his real name?"

"Narze Samaha. It's Syrian,"

"Samaha?' Isn't that name on that big brick building in town? That's not a delicatessen,"

"That's Narze's uncle's store."

"How old is he?"

"Narze's uncle?"

Grace sighed. "Jane, don't be a smarty."

"Well, you're giving me the third degree."

"How old is Narze? He looks older than the other boys."

"He is. He's nineteen."

"And still in high school?"

"No, he's a P.G. Mother, that's a post-graduate. Narze graduated in June. He's taking two courses."

"Well, don't get serious about him. He's too old for you."

"Mom, I just met him a week ago. We aren't exactly engaged."

But Grace's thoughts had moved on. She began to wonder whether Dee could be a post-graduate student also.

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SHE CAN'T COME BACK HERE

The election pleased Norris, and that puzzled Pauline.

"Why are you so happy? You voted for Norman Thomas."

'As a protest," Norris said. "I'm delighted that Hoover's out. Now things will begin to happen. "

"But you were afraid Roosevelt was too wealthy.'

"I like the way he's talking. He'll take action."

But the election was not topmost in Pauline's mind. If she had one thing in common with Rosella Rahming it was a lack of interest in politics. Her career as a designer was satisfying and absorbing. She knew that she was no ordinary dressmaker, and her clientele knew it. Unless a customer insisted, and she rarely did, Pauline did not use paper dress patterns. She designed completely original clothes, draping and cutting the fabric directly on the figure. Her mind was primarily occupied with this creativity, and she was content to let Norris keep her up to date on current news in the nation and the world. Those remote horizons were beyond her field of interest, and her comments on them were limited to "I don't really know much about that." Goings-on in Cleveland were not beyond her scope, and she sometimes discussed them briefly with Norris, especially if one of her clients had raised a question previously. She quite naturally enjoyed discussing changes in women's fashions and was always happy to display and explain her collection of French dolls, especially her favorites, Minette, Manette, and Monette.

During her years as a single woman, Pauline had lived in her parents' home except for two years when she studied couture in New York City. Finally, a quarrel with her older sister Madge prompted her to move into a small apartment in the Fine Arts Building on Cleveland's Grand Avenue. She was living there at the time when Norris's marriage foundered and Grace filed for divorce.

Pauline's life suddenly became exciting. She and Norris were introduced at a party, by another tenant of the building. Norris had returned to Cartwright Street to live, but he soon began to spend the night in the studio downtown. There, he was free to pursue his courtship of Pauline..There, Pauline could express her sincere admiration for his oil paintings, and marvel at the delicacy of his small stencil pictures. There it was that they began to plan a trip to France, with Pauline dreaming of the couturier houses of Paris, and Norris of the countryside of Provence. When they returned, their funds (largely Pauline's) being seriously depleted

by the extended honeymoon. they both worked very hard. Norris had something to prove to Grace, who had sent him away from the Summit Street house in Chagrin Falls, Ohio,

saying that he was being the ruination of her health, her career and her happiness.

And he now had something to prove to Pauline, for he had told her grand tales about his art education in New York and in Europe. But mostly, he had had something to prove to himself. He had always been sure he could make a living at his painting if only conditions were right. But they had never been right. ;Us

parents had not been happy. He and his father had not been close at all. And although he and Grace had been so very much in love, it had not been good. Grace had been so determined to make her mark. She had never been as interested in his career as she'd been in her own. She was always competing, and always critical. And many of her family had disliked him, especially Nelle. But with Pauline there was no competition, none whatsoever. She loved his painting and she loved him.

Driven by his need to succeed, Norris had done well with the painting and with his photography. And the sweet smell of success had been so heady for the five years or so that it lasted, that Norris had scarcely noticed that the wife who loved him and who admired his work so much, was boring him to tears. For when the Depression turned everything topsy-turvy, and there was no photographic work to do, and no one had money to buy oil paintings, Norris admitted to himself that he and Pauline had absolutely nothing in common. Her plump face had been rather pretty when he married her seven years ago. She was fifty now and certainly looked it, with her matronly figure and heavy legs.

But Pauline's appearance was actually only a small part of the problem. She was simply unstimulating in every way. She had no sexual imagination, and he was completely unable to engage her in a discussion that led anywhere. He liked to argue the merits of a book, a symphony, or a point of philosophy, but such a discussion never developed because Pauline insisted on agreeing with him or, if it was a book, she hadn't read it. She could, and frequently did, recite a lot of grammar school poetry such as "The Village Blacksmith". When they left the Cartwright Street house and moved to Channing Avenue, their marriage was temporarily sparked by the fun of decorating their rooms and buying a few pieces of furniture. One room had been somewhat empty, but it hadn't mattered, because it functioned as an entrance hall. It may have been intended as a front "parlour" originally, but as Norris put it, it was "a room with no walls." The front wall was taken up by a door and a bay made of three separate double-hung windows. The east wall featured a fireplace with gas-burning logs. There was room on each side of the opening for a chair but nothing large. The south wall was absent since it was only a huge arched opening into the next room. And the wall on the west was mainly taken up by the stairway and balustrade. Norris felt that the terrace had been built in a very uninteresting period in Cleveland's development. In truth, he liked very little of the local architecture. Most of it was ugly. Always imitating something else. Among the homes of the wealthy in Cleveland Heights there were mansions in a pretentious would-be Tudor style. Their only real beauty lay in the well-kept spacious lawns, with trimmed hedges and tall elms and maples. And on beyond, in Carrollton Heights were the newer homes of the affluent. Those were imitation French Norman. Ugly. But the houses in the middle-class neighborhoods of Cleveland distressed Norris the most. Row on row they stood, builder's homes, three stories high, a scant twelve feet apart, grimy with coal soot. And there again, imitation. A Gothic window here, a Norman tower there, a bit of "ginger-bread" in the gables, and in one example Norris saw Ionic columns beside

the front door. Wonderful and awful. Norris thought that the gingerbread houses out in the country, all painted white, were often quite charming. Pauline liked to call them "steamboat Gothic" and always seemed delighted when they passed one. But Pauline would not have wanted to live in such a house, or any house, in the country. But he liked the country himself. With all the problems they'd had on the farm and at the Summit Street house in Chagrin Falls, Ohio, it had really been a kind

of life that appealed to him. He decided he'd like to get out of Cleveland and into the country again. Having a garden would be good for him. It would soothe his discontented spirit. But there was no way to make a change now. Pauline would hate it and her work was in Cleveland and so was his, what there was of it. He was still getting a little photography work to do. He could do that as well if he lived in one of the towns on the edge of Cleveland. But Pauline would never go, the mere suggestion would upset her stomach.

This past summer Norris had had a lot of time to think, especially in the mornings, when the house was very quiet. Dee and Jane were gone, and Pauline as always, slept late. Norris was downstairs at seven-thirty or earlier every day. He got himself a breakfast of shredded wheat and milk with lots of sugar. "Baled hay" he called the cereal. He did not fix coffee for himself, nor cocoa, which he would have preferred. He was very glad that his mother and Edie would be moving in soon, for one of them would fix his breakfast for him, something that Pauline had never done. She simply could not haul her body out of the bed of a morning, not even in summertime when getting up and out was usually such a pleasure.

Why had he married her? He asked himself that question more and more often. He knew what his friends probably thought; he'd done it to punish Grace. And also he knew what Grace thought. That he had done it to get to Europe. Well, there was a little truth to both those ideas. Grace had told him once, when he went to see her after his trip to France, "She bought you and paid for you. II And he had said that that was true, but that Pauline felt she had a real bargain. What ridiculous things people say to each other. They are always trying to make a situation clear-cut and simple when there is really so much involved. But why had he married Pauline? Why hadn't he taken a little more time? After all, he'd had a studio in which to work and to entertain, and he'd had a home where he could eat his mother's good cooking, and where he could feel secure in her love for him. And Edie and Aunt Ada had loved him too. Dear Aunt Ada, she'd known his faults and loved him anyway. How he missed her! But, the love of those three ladies did not add up to the love of a wife. Or the love of a mistress, maybe? He saw now that he'd been in ridiculous haste to marry. He should have taken time to have a love affair first, before getting tied down again. That's what a divorced man usually does, he thought. And he hadn't been sophisticated enough to do just that. He'd rushed right into marriage, and the more he thought about it, the more he thought it truly must have been to get back at Grace. For his marriage had certainly upset her to a degree that an affair would not have done. An affair can be ended without great difficulty, but a marriage was something else, and Grace knew it. Well, he'd got even with her

for divorcing him. but what had that accomplished? Nothing good. If he'd waited until he'd calmed down, he still might have made that celebrated trip to Europe. And if in time he had hankered to be married again, he would have given it all more thought. He wouldn't have been beguiled by the first woman who admired his landscapes. Surely he could have found a woman who read books, a woman who knew more about music than who wrote Beethoven's Fifth. a woman who would like a house and garden in the country. Maybe that was asking too much, but Grace had had all those qualifications. Pauline couldn't even live her life according to normal people's hours. Pauline was annoyed with his interest in baseball, whereas Grace had brothers who played it and she understood it. Pauline's feelings were hurt because he liked to play golf. One reason he liked it, he told her, was because he liked to walk on grass. There seemed to be two kinds of people: those who liked to walk on grass. and those who preferred cement. He'd suggested to Pauline once that she learn to play golf, but she'd said that she'd probably not be any good at it. and he'd told her she was probably right about that. That had made her cry, so he assured her that many people weren't any good at it but played anyway. Well. it made no difference now, because he couldn't afford to play golf any more. And. at present, with the Depression. he couldn't do anything to change his circumstances. He had sometimes thought, after he had married Pauline. that he should have found a woman young enough to have children. In the beginning he 'd thought he wouldn't want to be tied down with a new family, and then he began to regret that he'd never had a son, and that he'd closed the door on that possibility. But now he realized that it was just as well, as he couldn't afford it anyway. And it would be too late to start over again.

Pauline was aware that the marriage was in ,trouble. But she did not agree with Norris's diagnosis that their personalities were entirely too different. He had stated that. on a number of occasions. and had made her feel wretched. She had told herself that. Norris was wrong. We are very much: more alike than he is aware of. she thought. We are both creative and we have both been educated in New York City. We both have ancestors who came to this country from England and we are both Protestants and from upper middle-class families. Those were the things that were considered important to a marriage. Those were basic things. Husbands and wives didn't need to like all the same things to have a happy life.

Pauline knew that Norris was out of patience with her digestive problems. He wanted her to cure them in Christian Science and she couldn't and that was all there was to it. There were too many things about it that weren't logical or even common sense. Like the business of drinking tea, coffee and alcohol. Mrs. Eddy disapproved of them. But what difference did it make if material things were unreal? Why did Christian Scientists eat? Norris said they hadn't yet reached the level where that would be worked out. I guess not, Pauline thought. They not only eat, but they like to eat.

Just that evening Pauline had been sick at her stomach. She knew it was coming, by her nerves, and by apprehension. Norris had not been a bit sympathetic. She had told him that she felt wretched.

And Norris had said, "'Retched' is the right word. I heard you retching clear downstairs."

But in spite of his temper and his mean side, Norris was a delightful person most of the time, and Pauline refused to believe that he and she were incompatible. It was the Depression causing their problems. If it had not been for that, Grace would not have shipped the girls to Norris. And she and Norris would be still making money, and Rosella and Edith would not be moving in today.

It was November fifteenth and their month was up. Two men with a small truck were coming to move the piano and the larger pieces. Norris had been getting some of the smaller things for several days. There was no sense in hiring a van because, after all, Rosella and Edie's place was only five doors down the terrace, scarcely more than the length of two moving vans. And, thank goodness, not all the furniture was coming along with Edith and her mother. The golden oak dining-room table and chairs were being sold, to Pauline's relief, but the matching buffet, or "side-board" as Norris and his family called it, was saved and was going to be "jammed into" the dining room with their beautiful dark oak refectory table. Pauline was "just sick" about it, for it not only did not match the table and chairs, but it would move them off-center, and the Spanish wrought-iron chandelier would not hang over the table's center.

"You won't like that, Norris," she'd told him. "It'll look just awful."

"It doesn't matter," he'd said. "we won't be here forever."

"Well, where will we be?"

"I don't know," Norris said. "Kingdom come, maybe. Or the poorhouse."

When Pauline got downstairs, Norris and Edith were seated at the refectory table examining the contents of a cardboard box. Edith and Pauline exchanged greetings. Norris was reading an old letter.

"We're looking at heirlooms," Edith said.

There were cross-stitch samplers, bits of petit point, many old letters, some yellowed baby clothes, and many daguerreotypes. There was also a box of very old valentines.

Norris opened a very small white box and tipped out two old pennies.

"Oh," Pauline said. "I collect Indian pennies."

"Not like these," Norris said.

"I have fifty-five of them. I have one eighteen fifty-nine one, but it's not in good shape."

"But you don't have any pennies such as these. These are 'Jimmy's pennies'."

"I've never heard about any 'Jimmy's pennies,'" Pauline said, and Norris and Edith both laughed.

"There are only these two," Norris said, but Pauline knew now he was teasing her.

"Alright, then. Why are they special?"

"Jimmy would have been my uncle if he had lived. He died when he was five years

old. He fell from the front balcony railing into the stone area below. They carried him into the house dying, and then when he died, they closed his eyes and laid these pennies on them. That was the custom, Aunt Ada told ma."

"Oh, dear!" Pauline said. "That's rather dreadful."

"Macabre, I'd call it. Aunt Ada thought so too."

"But Grandma Norris saved them," Edie said, "and Aunt Ada said she could not throw them away, not when her mother treasured them."

"That' s the trouble," Pauline said. "Families hang on to too many things because they can't part with them."

"Ha!" Matt said. "I counted three hundred and fifty-six green Strohmeier boxes in the basement. They belong to a certain dressmaker lady I know."

"But Norris! Those are ribbons and ornaments and lace and so on. I use those things."

"Maybe so, but I've never seen you come down and get a single box off those shelves."

They were interrupted by the arrival of the men to do the moving, and the rest of the day was hectic. Into "the room without a wall" came most of Rosella's living-room furniture. The mohair settee with the carved rosewood arms and back, was placed in the window bay. The upright piano on which Hilda Boeker had once played "Aus Meinen Grossen Schmerzen" for Garrett Rahming, was placed on the stairway wall. A very fine cherry table which had belonged to Norris and Edith's Grandmother and Grandfather Norris went into the space on one side of the gas-log fireplace, while a rosewood chair that matched the settee, went on the other side. Rosella's oriental rugs went down. on top of the carpet. Four small rosewood chairs were fitted in as best they could be.

"We can't keep all these things," Pauline said. "It's too crowded in this room now."

"Certainly we'll keep them." Norris said. "They're valuable. It's a good thing we had this room. It was nearly empty before. I like these things. I grew up with them."

Next there was a decision to put Rosella and Edie's things into Jane's room, since it was all but empty, having nothing in it but Aunt Ada's old cot and the dressing-table Jane had made from orange-crates. They took those things down to the basement.

"Poor Jane," Norris said. "We never got around to getting her some furniture. Don't blame her for not coming back."

"We couldn't afford it," Pauline said.

"Could have if we'd got it when we had the money. When we bought all the other things."

Jane's room was a tight squeeze for Rosella and Edie's double bed and their other things. The bed was the same one they had slept in almost all of Edie's life. And it still had the same mattress, a hair mattress molded to the shape of their bodies. Rosella had never wanted to replace it with a modern innerspring mattress. She was used to it, she said, and Edie was too.

Into Dee's room went the mate to the twin bed Dee had been using. It passed through Pauline's mind that now the beds were reunited. When both those beds

were in the Cartwright Street house she and Norris had occupied them all during the first years of their marriage, as the only double bed belonged to Rosella and Edie. Pauline and Norris had been married by a justice of the peace in downtown Cleveland, and had not left for Europe till two weeks later. Norris had said they'd have to buy a double bed.

"Couldn't we have your mother and Edie's room for the time being, since we're a married couple?" Pauline had asked. "We can buy a bed when we get back." "They are a married couple, too. Besides, we couldn't stand that mattress," Norris assured her.

Pauline had no intention of living with her in-laws after returning from Europe, but they couldn't afford anything else at first. Moreover, after experiencing Pauline's recurring nausea spells, Norris was not particularly eager to sleep with his face so close to Pauline's, so they continued on in the twin beds. And then, one Sunday morning, when they were awake but still lying in bed, Norris had upset her with an off-hand remark.

"You know, the year that my father died, Grace and I and the girls all shared this room."

"Norris, I wish you hadn't told me that. It's not very kind of you. Do you always have to mention Grace?"

"Nonsense. I was just recalling that winter and how crowded we all were."

"Why were you living here?" she'd asked him.

"Because Mother was grieving."

"But she had Edith and your auntie, didn't she?"

"Yes, but she needed me and so did Edie and Aunt Ada. My father's death was a great shock to everyone. Even caused Grace's sister Merle to have a stillborn baby."

The conversation so often came back to Grace. Pauline disliked the twin beds, in particular, after that, and Rosella's furniture in general. All those pieces were things that Grace had lived with once. They were things that Norris must associate with her.

But Pauline was not using her head. She was forgetting what Norris had told her in the beginning. She was forgetting what he'd told her in bitterness, how Grace had been awarded all their furniture with the exception of any heirlooms from his own family. The judge had ruled that Grace had been the support of the family. And so Grace had the beautiful Mason and Hamlin grand piano, a graceful Empire sofa, six fine Windsor chairs and dining room table, and an old grandfather clock with wooden works, that Norris had restored and got in working condition. Not to mention other things that he cared about less. But Norris did not associate Grace with his mother's furniture.

The long, tiring day ended and the ladies were settled into their new room, with Rosella resting on her bed to "settle her noives," and Edie reading to her from Mrs. Eddy's textbook.

Downstairs. Norris and Pauline sat at the dining room table having tea and crackers. Pauline looked tired and disgruntled, but the room was not as out of kilter as had been expected. The table had needed to be moved only a few inches to accommodate the side-board, which again proudly displayed the treasured crystal

chandeliers.

"You'll find many advantages in having them here, Looly," (Norris only called her "Looly" when he was feeling kindly towards her.) Edie will do all the cooking if you want her to. She said she'd fix timballed eggs for us tonight if you'd like that."

"That would be very nice, "Pauline said. "Easy on my stomach."

"You're not all upset at me any more?" he asked.

"Well –"

"Because I've something to talk to you about."

She had wondered why he was being so solicitous. Now she knew he had some kind of a problem to raise.

He reached into a pocket and drew forth a folded letter.

"I got a letter from New Hampshire today. No, not from Grace. From Dee. She's not in New York. The job there fell apart. The man she worked for there was a swindler of the worst kind. Nelle and Grace both lost money. That crook just disappeared with their money, and there's nothing they can do about it. Dee got paid for the first three weeks she worked, and the son of a 'B' now owes her for four more weeks. Apparently she joined the rest of them in New Hampshire in August, because she had no place to stay in New York and no job. So she's up there on that hill and she's going to school with those kids in high school. Taking a couple of post-graduate courses. It's ridiculous. She certainly can't stay up there."

"Why not?" Pauline was beginning to see where he was leading.

"Because it does nothing for her future. She can't just become a Yankee hillbilly up there. She needs more business training. She'll have to come back here and go to night school again."

"Norris, she can't come back here! Your folks are here now. We can't feed that many!"

"We'll have to. And you can expect Jane back, too."

"Why do you say that? Irena wants her there."

"That won't work out. I told you before. They're all too soft to spend another winter there. They're committed for this year, but that will be it. And, remember, Grace is going to Europe. She'll send Jane back to me again. You'll see."

"But we can't! It'll be just too many people! "

"Six people. A nice old-fashioned family with three generations."

In a low voice, Pauline said, I can't afford it."

"Then you can't afford me, either, because they are my family. I told you that in the very beginning. I wouldn't turn my back on them, especially if their mother plans to go to Europe."

WE'RE BEING PUNISHED FOR OUR SINS

Winter was closing in on Fison's Hill. The inhabitants of Camp Forest Primeval were bracing themselves against the cold.

By the time the presidential election took place, the flamboyant foliage color was gone from the mountains. There had been, as yet, no snow, but the

ground was hard and cold. There had been heavy autumn rains. Toward the end of September a three day rain had pounded the hills. The Beans said that it was the "line storm." By this, they meant weather that was always expected at the time of the autumnal equinox. By mid-October the leaves were falling. There were more rains. They made the fallen leaves on the road up the hill a slippery mess. Cars could no longer climb the steep grades. Grace had expected that the boys who had been coming to see the girls would no longer come, once they had to climb the hill on foot. She was wrong about that. The boys parked their car at the garage at the bottom of the grade and walked up. Grace was amazed and just a bit dismayed. She was in no hurry for Jane to begin dating. Nelle tried to convince Grace that it was silly and futile for her to "try and combat human nature." The girls were growing up.

Everyone at Camp Forest Primeval was stimulated by the prospect of enduring the winter in primitive conditions. The beauty of the mountains with the leaves gone from the hardwoods was something they had not seen before. Roger, however, had come up the hill several times in the early years to check on the place in wintertime. The far-off mountains maintain a blue haze, but the middle-distance slopes lose their summer deep blue and take on a ruddy tone, copperish in some areas, dotted here and there with dark stands of pine and spruce. Grace (and even Jane, though she did not admit it) longed to put that beauty onto canvas or water color paper. Jane did not plan to be an artist, but sometimes her fingers itched to try her hand with oil paints.

The panorama was so splendid that every morning when the girls started out for school they were breathless with viewing the scene. When they arrived home in the late afternoon they were breathless from toiling up the "damnable hill" as Roger referred to it in the sporadic journals.

Everyone at Camp Forest Primeval, other than Ruth, had a deep affection for the place, and wintering there was something they'd always talked about in past years. Now it was happening and it was exciting, but for everyone of them there were preoccupations.

Bill's problem was very different from that of all the others. In New York City he had been turning into a heavy drinker. He had fallen into the pattern of going to a regular spot where he could get liquor. He kept it in his small apartment where at first he only took an occasional drink when he was tired or worried about money. But as the Depression grew worse he had taken to drinking more and more, till finally Billy spoke to him about it and he resolved to give it up. But it wasn't easy. When Roger made him the proposal that he live and work at Camp Forest Primeval, Bill saw it as an opportunity to break his habit. He would find it very inconvenient while living on Fison's Hill to get to town to get a drink. At times it would be impossible. He had no car of his own. He could not drive the Model T to town because it had no license and it was geared too low. So he was stuck without a drink, and that was what he'd counted on. Frank Button could get him a bottle, but he didn't plan to ask him.

Bill's trouble was how to spend his evenings. He spent much of his

time cooped up in "the Studio" because the house was bursting with teen-age girls. Grace and all the girls had assured him he didn't need to stay away.

"You'll get 'cabin-fever,' Uncle Bill," Jane joked.

But it really wasn't a joke. Bill stayed in the house an hour or so after dinner and then left the house to "the ladies." He didn't normally go to bed early, and he was not much of a reader. And without electricity there could be no radio.

Nights when the boys came up the hill, Bill stayed in the house a little longer, sometimes joining in a card game, but on other nights he stayed away. He knew that the kitchen and living room were the only warm places in the house, and that when bedtime approached the girls like to undress in front of the fireplace. Both downstairs bedrooms were cold and the attic was frigid. In the morning, Bill made the fires in both stoves and the fireplace and then retired again to his cabin until the females were all up and dressed.

Bill was particularly sensitive about the whole situation because he had strong views about older men and young girls. He kept his thoughts to himself, but he had noticed that Roger was always hugging his nieces and putting his hands "accidentally" on their breasts. It angered Bill, because he thought that sort of thing was reprehensible, and it was particularly hypocritical of Rog to indulge in such actions after the way he had once questioned Bill's morality. Certainly, the cousins were pretty girls with ripe young figures. Bill didn't want to see them in their underwear, for it made him think of women, and he not only wished he had a drink, he frequently wished he had a woman.

Grace, of course, had problems too, some old ones and some new ones. Whenever Nelle was in residence at Camp Forest Primeval a certain tension was felt by everyone else. It was very hard to understand and explain. Usually, in the summer, the matter of chores and discipline were the sore points. But now with seven grown or nearly grown women in a small house there were not very many chores for anyone of them. Bill hauled wood endlessly and took care of the kerosene lamps. Grace did most of the cooking other than Nelle's famous cookies. And Nelle - well, Nelle always had three or four projects going at once, projects that would never be complete. Sorting and organizing, presumably, but for all practical purposes, creating clutter. In the summer she could direct huge washday operations outdoors in the warm sunshine, or direct the cleaning of the tents, or the weeding of the garden. But now, in winter most of that was shut down. The girls washed their personal things in the kitchen, and occasionally on Saturdays there was a great laundering of flannel sheets. Washing hung outdoors, froze on the line but eventually dried. It annoyed Grace that Nelle seemed to be able to make everyone feel guilty, unexplainably guilty. After the happy relaxed summer with Mim, Jane and Bill, Nelle's presence had, as usual, injected a military atmosphere. It was odd, too, because Nelle was essentially fun-loving.

But Grace had other things on her mind. She would have given anything to know where she'd be a year from now. One thing she was certain of; it would

not be here. But would it be in Europe? She had written Elma Smith several long letters explaining why she needed to know more specifically about the plan for teaching abroad. Dee and Jane's future was involved, too, Grace had pointed out to Elma. Now, finally, Elma had answered Grace's three letters. Her reply was written on a piece of stationery with a flamboyant red letterhead reading - "Warsaw, Vienna, Prague, Tunis." Scrawled in the center of the page in green ink were the two words - "Sit tight!" How exasperating, but how characteristic of Elma! So nothing to do but wait.

Grace, to a lesser degree, was still worrying about Dee and Jane.

Jane had become much too fond of the Syrian boy, Narze. She had announced that she was "going steady," but she'd insisted that that didn't mean they were engaged. Ruth and Mim had boys who came to see them regularly, too, but "Narze" was coming to see Jane three times a week. Grace didn't like that, but it was hard to find a reason to forbid it, for Jane had had her first report card and all her marks were high. One could not accuse Narze of keeping Jane from her homework. In fact he was a good scholar himself and was coaching Babs in her despised algebra, much to Nelle's approval. And there was Dee. She had written to her father and he had told her she might return and live with him again, but meanwhile she was going to school with the rest of the girls and had been allowed to be a post-graduate student on a one-year basis. Because of the depression, Mr. Moors, the headmaster, had agreed to enroll her. She was permitted to take three subjects, shorthand, typing and third year French. However, she planned to return to Cleveland in time for the second semester in night school. Nelle had urged her to stay until after Christmas. But Dee was torn. She longed to see her friends in Cleveland. She missed "the gang." She had gone all summer without a date. She felt "starved for a man," as she expressed it in a letter to Skipper Root. On the other hand, she was having a lot of fun with the younger girls and their boyfriends, and Narze had brought a friend of his along and so she was dating him. Of course, they were all too young, she told herself, but fun nevertheless, and a bit more sophisticated than one might suppose. Dee had just turned twenty-two, and the others should have seemed like babies, but they didn't. Narze was nineteen, his friend Ray Thomas, was twenty and Dee liked him. She liked Narze, too, and put in a good word for him with Grace.

"Mother, don't worry about Jane going with Narze. He's really very well liked by everyone. He was captain of the basketball team, and of the baseball team."

"popularity isn't everything," Grace said.

"Well, he's also very smart. He's taking some advanced math courses and he's very good at it. Jane said he's also a "Life Scout."

"What's that?"

"It means that he got high up in the ranks of Boy Scouts."

"But he has the wrong background for Jane," Grace said.

"Mother, you're quite a snob, you know?" Dee said.

Actually, Grace rather liked Narze.

Jane had had a problem about Narze. Well, not really about Narze; it was about Ralph Bump. He had liked her a lot and had finally, very timidly, asked her for a date. Well, not really a date, but he'd asked her to ride down to Concord with him on a Sunday afternoon. He had relatives there, and had a brief errand to do for his mother. She had gone along and no one had objected. Jim's brother, Glen, had gone too, and Mim was invited. That had all been in early September. Jim had put his arm around her, that is across the back of the seat, but that was all. Later, Jim had asked her to the movies in Plymouth and he'd put his arm around her then, really around her, but hadn't got up his nerve to try for a kiss. Aunt Nelle had encouraged Jim by asking him to "take Jane out driving and teach her how to shift gears on these hills." But then Narze had come along and timid Jim had dropped out of the competition.

"He's so meek, Mother," Jane had said. "I hate to hurt his feelings. He's just so timid and nice."

"I know," Grace said. "It's a pity he isn't your kind."

But now Jane was going steady, and almost all she could think about was Narze. He really rushed her, and part of what made everything so wild was that a girl in Jane's own class was in love with him. She had been his girl all last year when Narze was a senior. For about three weeks this girl wrote Jane impassioned notes advising, entreating, finally insisting that Jane "give Narze up."

Jane discussed it with Mim.

"I don't know what to do about Bernette," she said.

"You don't have to do anything about her, do you?" Mim asked.

"I 'spose not, but she keeps sending these agonized notes."

"If you did 'give him up' would he go back to Bernette?"

"I don't think he would, because they broke up last summer."

"You know he wouldn't, Jane, because you can't get a boy that way.

Have you asked her to stop writing the notes?"

"No."

"Have you answered them?"

"A couple of them. I told her that if I asked Narze to go back to her, I didn't think it would work, because boys don't like to be told what to do.

And she wrote back that I should try it and see."

Then the girl, Bernette O'Brien, wrote a note asking Jane if she let Narze kiss her, and if she let him "go farther than that."

Jane lost patience then. She talked to Mim about it. "It's none of her business. I'm sick of her notes."

"Do you still have them?" Mim asked.

"They're in my desk."

"Put them in an envelope and give them all to Narze, and tell him you didn't know what to do about the problem. He'll know what to do about it."

"I'm tempted to do that," Jane said, "but I think I have a better idea, knowing Narze. He isn't dumb."

"What's your bright idea?"

"I shall just do exactly what Bernette asked me to do. I'll give Narze up."

"And tell him Bernette asked you to?"

"No. I won't have to. He'll know, because she's always been very jealous. That 's why he broke up with her."

And, of course, after Jane told Narze they should break up so that he could pick up where he left off before he met her, he was more enamored of her than ever.

And Bernette O'Brian subsequently stopped sending notes to Jane and began to treat her with astonishing pleasantness, which Jane could only speculate about.

When election day arrived the high school conducted it's own straw vote. The " girls from New York" (of whom only two were from New York) and their local boyfriends all cast their secret ballots for Norman Thomas. That tallied nine votes, and Narze had persuaded his younger brother, Amir, to vote the same way. When the results were counted for the entire school they were as follows: Hoover 256, Roosevelt 43, Norman Thomas 11. Mr. Moors, the headmaster, went from classroom to classroom posting the results on the blackboard. He had a comment. "The Socialists among us will just have to endure another four years of President Hoover's management. My, my! Isn't that a pity?" Meanwhile the mischievous, maverick voters kept straight faces. And the next day Mr. Moors told various members of his faculty, "I am absolutely stunned."

Jane asked Narze who could have cast the eleventh vote for Norman Thomas.

"I know. But I shouldn't tell, because I think that vote may have been serious. And in this community that wouldn't do at all."

"Narze, my dad was planning to vote for Norman Thomas. And he was serious, too. Of course, he just meant it as a protest, because he thought Hoover was no good. Your friend was serious about voting Socialist; he shouldn't worry. In the cities he had lots of company."

"It isn't a 'he;' it's a 'she,' and it's faculty," Narze said.

Jane stopped to think. There could only be one. In the conservative Yankee faculty, one was different.

"Miss Cleveland?"

"I think so," Dee by said.

Miss Cleveland was the French teacher. She was from western New York State and was more worldly than the other faculty members. She was fortyish and single, but there was nothing of the "old maid" about her. Her sense of humor revealed this, plus the fact that at school dances the boys liked to ask her to dance because she was good at it, and could always do the latest dance steps.

Jane was in Miss Cleveland's second year French class for the first three weeks of school and then was advanced to the third year class because she was too far ahead of the others in her vocabulary and conversational skills. In later years, Jane would feel that missing the verb drills of the second year would make her weak in certain areas, such as subjunctive mood and many

irregular verbs. But for the moment being "skipped" was an honor and much more fun, as grammar was only dealt with one day a week, while the other four days they read French literature.

After Dee started going to school with the younger girls, she joined the third year French class, and, thereby, made Jane feel they were on an equal footing in one respect at last. Jane was also taking third year Latin. At Cleveland's East High Jane had found Latin a demanding course, particularly after she'd missed school because of illness, but now she was enjoying it, because of an excellent teacher. Miss Biggs was also fortyish and single, and she was a typical old maid, and more than that a perfect Latin teacher type. But she was good-natured and really knew how to teach. An in all, Jane found the experience of "Yankee" schooling quite an adventure. But most exciting of all was going steady with Narze.

Mim had a problem in common with everyone else at Camp Forest Primeval, a feeling of living in too small a space for the number of people present. Now that winter was here in earnest, one could only spend the evenings in the living room or kitchen. There was no warm bedroom in which to seek refuge. The attic was icy, the two downstairs bedrooms cold at best. The agreement was that the kitchen table with its bright Rochester lamp would be always available for those who had homework to do, or who wished to read or write letters. Those who wanted to chatter were to stay in the living room with its meager furniture. Many evenings Ruth Akins wanted to play her records in the living room and she was asked to keep the Victrola doors at least partly closed to hold the noise down. On evenings when the boys were there the music and laughter were louder, but on other nights many of them wanted it quieter, and sometimes Ruth and her record playing had to be shushed. On nights like that, Mim would think about home with her mother and Trink and Aunt Emmy and Grandpa. She would remember how she used to go to bed and then sometimes Aunt Emmy would bring up an onion, vinegar and butter sandwich. And even though she had to share a room with Trink it was real privacy compared to this, and how wonderful it would be to lock oneself in the warm bathroom and take a nice long soak in a real bathtub. Thinking of home made her think of Trink and how Trink had wanted so much to spend the winter there with the rest of them, and how unhappy she'd been to have to return to Oberlin and miss all the fun. Mim thought she should write a letter to Trink and stress all the drawbacks to winter life on Fison's Hill. Things like sleeping in an attic so cold that some nights water froze in a glass, and you had to take a heated soap stone to bed to warm your feet. And how awful it was to have to go to the outhouse in the dark of night, walking out behind the barn through the creaky snow, shining your way with a flashlight. And you worried about bears even though they were supposedly hibernating, so you didn't want to go alone and took someone along with you, and there went your privacy. Oh, and she'd tell Trink how crowded it seemed sometimes when they were all in the living room and Babs was wanting to play duets on the organ with Aunt Grace, and Ruth wanted to play her records, and Aunt Nelle was stretched out full length on the cot, and

other people were talking and laughing. Well - better not say too much about all the talking and laughing. That would sound too much like fun, and maybe not convey how hectic everything was much of the time. Better to dwell on how weary they got going down and up that beastly hill every day, now that cold weather had come and it was rainy or snowy.

But, so far, Mim had not written that letter to Trink. There was so much to fill one's time. Like everyone at Camp Forest Primeval, with the exception of Ruth Akins, there was the problem of money. The girls always needed clothes, such things as silk stockings, underthings, and skirts and blouses for school. The Sears, Roebuck mail order house in Boston was a life saver, but even so, the girls were always needing or wanting something. They spent much of their time sewing their own clothes, and now even Dee had joined the others in wearing matching blouses.

Babs was the least happy person on the hill that winter. If she had had a boy friend like the older girls had, her other complaints would have been completely forgotten. But as it was, she was quite miserable much of the time. She knew she was fat, and now she decided she was ugly. She was not ugly; she was pretty. But Babs loved food, fattening food, and she had not yet learned how to make the most of her looks. Later she would lose weight, show off her pretty legs and slim ankles with ankle-strap high heeled shoes. But, for now, Babs was just a fat little girl. So, lacking social life, she began thinking of other minuses. She no longer could look forward to her Saturday trip to Manhattan on the subway to take her morning dancing lesson and her afternoon piano lesson. She could no longer pass the time with her Jackson Heights chums, playing "roly-poly" ball games in the apartment-house courts. She grew quite morose for a time and imagined slights. She told her mother that the other girls didn't treat her well, especially Ruth. And Aunt Grace liked the other girls better, she said.

Fortunately, Nelle didn't believe quite all of those complaints. Jane and Mim had always got on well with Babs. They'd both wintered with her in New York, and been good, giggling friends. And in Westport both Babs and Jane had had many boy friends. But they were just kids then. And now, Babs was still a kid, but the other girls had grown up and left her behind. If only Merle had let Trink stay, Babs would have a pal now, for Trink was younger and probably wouldn't have dates. Instead, that smarty Ruth Akins was here, and she was six months younger than Babs, but looked sixteen. She had great pointy bosoms. Well, Babs did, too, but she was so short and fat. Nelle began to dislike Ruth Akins intensely. No doubt Nelle didn't realize just why that was, but it was not only because of Babs's lorn condition, but because Ruth was not afraid of Nelle. Everyone else on Fison's Hill was. But Ruth was free to leave at any time. She could tell her mother a tale of woe, and her mother would get her out of there.

Grace saw Nelle's dislike of Ruth and worried about it. Nelle often gave Ruth her famous "black look" and also gave her the benefit of her equally famous sarcasm. It appeared not to faze Ruth, although actually it

MIM L. HENRY F.



NARZE S. JANE



RUTH C. HARL PEASE JR.



D. YORKER
D. HALEY



JANE NARZE



RUTH HARL PEASE



DEEP SNOW



JANE



RUTH
"JEANNE"

by no means escaped her notice. But Ruth did not want to go back to her mother just now. She didn't like the new fiancé, and if she asked to come home her mother would take it that she was accepting him. That, however, was only one reason she didn't want to go home. The biggest reason was Harl Pease. Ruth was in love, she thought, and though she was fourteen, her hormones and physical development said she was a woman. She had no desire to go back to be cooped up in a Manhattan apartment, however posh it might be. Nor did she want the alternative plan - to be sent a way to a girls' boarding school.

How Ruth stood Nelle's animosity, Grace could not fathom. At length she decided that Ruth was simply too boy-crazy to notice. But she feared that one day Nelle would go too far with her sarcasm and Ruth would decide to go back to New York.

Nelle was given to saying things to Ruth such as, "Good grief, you are the messiest kid we ever had up here. Don't you ever pick up your stuff?" "Gee, Nelle," Grace said, "Do you really want her to get so mad at you she goes home?"

"She won't go," Nelle said. "She likes it here."

"I wouldn't be too sure," Grace said. "Better go easy."

#####

Roger had been away during much of the autumn. He had voted for Herbert Hoover and he was disgusted and even frightened by the outcome of the election. He had been a Republican all his voting life, and Nelle had, too. Oberlin was certainly Republican, and Old Henry Martin had voted for Abraham Lincoln. Roger had lived in New York City a long time now, and he equated all Democrats with Tammany Hall and "that ilk." The Depression was terrible enough, and Roger felt sure that with the election of Franklin D. Roosevelt disaster was certain.

So now, in early December, he returned to the hill in a very depressed mood about the country's future. He was also depressed about the entire venture of wintering at Camp Forest Primeval. True, everyone was eating and keeping warm and the children were getting to school. That is, so far they were. God only knew whether the little Buick Four would hold up through the winter. There were actually too many people. Dee, of course, had never planned to be there, and she was going back to Cleveland after Christmas. But the trouble was some of the people on the hill weren't contented. Apparently Jane, Mim and Ruth were happy enough. They had young admirers. Poor little Babs. It was pretty tough to be the one who had not attracted a beau. According to Nelle's letters Dee had dates too. Babs's day would come, but she would have to diet.

Roger sensed that Bill was restless. The whole venture would have to be abandoned if Bill were to leave the hill and go back to New York. But Roger didn't think Bill would do that. He had his weaknesses, but he was a good sort and he wouldn't go back on his agreement to stay. He wouldn't want to upset the youngsters' school year. And the girls couldn't survive up there without him. He was needed to keep the fires going, but as much as that, he was needed to keep the faithful tractor, "Thundering Ann," running. If anyone were to get hurt or sick, Bill could get them out and to a doctor. Rog could never have left all those people on the hill without the knowledge that Thundering Ann was there in the barn ready for any and all hauling in a time of need.

Rog's mood began to lighten as he neared the hill. He began thinking about the surprise in the back seat of the big Buick. He had told no one that he was bringing anything special. Hadn't even mentioned it to Nelle in his letters because she'd be tempted to mention it. Over the years Nelle'd always liked to dangle treats and surprises before' youngsters to keep them on their best behavior. They were getting pretty old for that, but she hadn't realized it yet. The reason that he didn't want to let the surprise out of the bag was that it might not work out.

Rog had told Nelle in a letter when he'd arrive, and he'd asked to have Bill at the bottom of the hill with Thundering Ann. And there they were, parked in front of the crude garage that housed two cars. Bill had the door open ready for Rog to drive the big Buick in alongside the small one.

Rog got out and stretched his legs. "I get stiff," he said. "How are you, Bill?"

"Well, we haven't frozen yet."

"How's the little Buick running?"

"Just fine," Bill assured him.

"I worry about them."

"Well, Jane says they haven't had problems so far. Not any deep snow yet. We're all wondering how it will go when we get a heavy storm. I think they'll be alright with the chains, though."

"I doubt whether they'll be able to get them on and off," Rog said.

"It'll be alright if there's a lot of snow and they can keep them on. But they can't go running on them on the bare pavement."

"I know," Bill said. "But don't worry. Jane says she can put them on.

They've practiced."

"Yes, but getting them off is something else again when the links are full of ice. I know."

"I know too, Rog. I haven't always been a city boy."

"I worry about those girls all the time."

"I think they'll be just fine. They're young and healthy."

"Well, I'm not. I'm depressed. I don't know what everything is coming to, Bill. What do you think of the election?"

"Golly, Rog, this winter I don't even feel that I'm part of the real world anymore. I was always a Republican, of course. But I don't know. Seems as though Republicans allowed this present state of affairs to come to pass. And I didn't get to vote this year, anyway."

"Well, you surely wouldn't have voted for Roosevelt, Bill. As governor of New York he used tax-payer money to give to the unemployed. He made the legislature feel that people out of work have a right to other people's money. Great grief! We can't have a president like that."

"Well, Rog, as I said, I'm completely out of touch."

"I think I've got a partial cure for that. Help me with some of my baggage here."

Roger began taking his suitcases out of the big Buick and Bill loaded them into the truck bed of Thundering Ann.

"Good old Ann," Rog said. "What would we do without her? I'd never make it up this beast of a hill tonight."

"Well, I think she'll go up alright. The ground is frozen hard, and there's enough snow to catch. I think if it freezes into icy spots sometime, we'll have troubles. She'll just keep slipping."

Rog reached again into the car and lifted out an automobile storage battery.

"My land, these things are so heavy," he puffed.

"Let me help," Bill said. "Your back is bad. Where you want it? In the garage?"

"No, that goes up the hill, too. Put it in 'Ann.' I've got another heavy thing here." He lifted a large rectangular box from the car.

"Help me with one end," Rog said. "It's awkward."

"Here, I'll take it , " said Bill.

"No, just get one end and we'll lift it in. I want it placed so it doesn't bump around."

"What is it? A body? Looks like a casket."

"No," Rog said, "it's really a Christmas present for the girls. For all of us, in fact."

They put it in the back of Thundering Ann and braced it in place with suitcases and the boulders Bill kept in the back to help the traction when climbing the hill.

Rog got a cardboard carton out of his car next, and Bill glimpsed a collection of dry cell batteries.

"Uh, oh!" he said. "I know what the Christmas present is now."

Rog grinned.

"A radio," said Bill. "Right? You'll sure make a hit with that."

"I hope it works up here."

"No reason why it won't," Bill said. "Bean's works fine. "

"Don't say a word to the youngsters, now. I may not make them wait till Christmas, but I want to be sure it works first."

"After they all go to bed, we can check it out in the studio."

They put the big Buick away in the garage beside the little one and locked the doors.

The trip up the hill was noisy in the bizarre Model T vehicle. Soon after the start of the climb they reached the very steep grade that Mim and Jane had dubbed "Terrible Spot Number One." Thundering Ann struggled there, her steel caterpillar tracks slipping slightly, but then they dug in and she triumphed, pulling herself onto a fairly level grade above.

Bill, Norris, and Rog had once discussed re-routing the road in that area to eliminate Terrible Spot Number One, but it would have meant felling the towering white pine they called "the Old Monarch," or, at the least) damaging its roots. They put the plan aside. Rog had said, "If that huge tree ever falls in a storm, we'll move the road."

When they were climbing the easy part, Rog asked Bill a question, shouting in his ear.

"How are they all getting along with each other?"

Bill shouted, "Fine, but it's crowded, Rog."

"The paying guest fitting in?"

"Nelle doesn't like her," Bill said.

"She'd better," Rog said. "That's keeping food on the table. I'll have to talk to Nelle. We wouldn't want to lose that bit of income now. Nelle still doesn't know how bad my business is. Those Martin girls are like that. Nelle's thrifty, and all that, but like her mother she's sure the Lord will provide. Bill, they'll all learn before this is over. Times are going to get worse and worse. I've got to talk to Nelle."

Bill said nothing, and then they reached the steep spot called "Terrible Spot Number Two" and Ann began thundering again. The trip was bumpy, but the coffin-shaped surprise rode safely.

#####

It was the last day of school. The girls were out for their Christmas vacation. It was December 16, a Friday; they had over a week till Christmas.

As the girls trudged up the beastly hill they formulated their plan.

"We'll have to just let them assume it's a home game," Dee said.

"Aunt Nelle would have ten cat fits if she knew it was in Bristol," Jane said.

"She just wouldn't let us go," Babs said.

"What if they ask us where the game is?" Mim wanted to know.

"In that case we'd have to tell them," Jane said, "for we don't want to tell a flat lie. But I'll bet they just won't even give a thought to its not being right at our school."

They were given permission to go to the basketball game, but not without worries and objections on the part of Nelle, Grace, and Bill. It was only because it was the start of the Christmas holiday that the grown-ups consented, and because Dee was older. What difference that made, Jane secretly wondered about, for Dee would be of no particular help with a car problem, nor was she famous for her good judgment about boys. Each adult had a different concern. Grace could not voice hers, because she did not admit it to herself. She was not yet at peace with the idea that Jane was old enough to date boys. Nelle said that she worried about their driving at night, and she privately asked Mim whether Babs would have a good time without a date.

Mim said none of them had dates; they were just going to the game.

Bill's worry was the most well-founded. It was a bitter cold night, and the radio had predicted sub-zero weather throughout New England.

"I sure would hate to have a car problem on a night this cold," Bill told Jane. "I think we'd better put more anti-freeze in both cars. I'm wondering if we have plenty. I think Rog has a two gallon can of it down there in the garage."

"Yes, he has," Jane said, "But I don't think it's full."

"Is any place open in town in the evening? If so, better get another two gallons."

"Durkee's is open."

"Good. And when you come home, could you bring some back up with you?"

I sure hope I don't have to take Ann down the hill and go rescuing you."

"We'll be OK, Uncle Bill," Jane said.

They set off down the hill in the creaky cold snow. Nelle had insisted that the two girls who would be riding in the rumble-seat take heated soapstones with them for their feet. Ruth Akins was not with them. She had left for New York two days earlier with Roger. Ruth would spend Christmas with her mother in Manhattan, but Roger would return to Camp Forest Primeval in time for the day before Christmas. Had he been there this particular day, the girls would surely not have been setting out at night for a destination even nine miles away, let alone thirty.

All the girls were bundled to their eyes. They wore woolen berets pulled over their ears and woolen mufflers over their mouths and noses, and the vapor

from their breaths went up and frosted their eyelashes and eyebrows.

It was Babs's turn to ride up front in the heated cab, while Dee and Mim rode in the rumble seat scrunched down and out of sight under blankets.

The dirt road portion of their route was in fine shape with hard-packed snow.

The "Tarvia" highway (pronounced "tavvia" by the natives to rhyme with "What have ya?") was dry and clear.

They picked up the can of anti-freeze and made the trip to Bristol without incident. But somehow the event did not come up to their expectations.

Bristol won the game, and there was to be dancing afterward with visitors welcome, but Narze wasn't there, as he had to mind his father's store that evening. Harl Pease had sent the message to Jane. Mim no longer dated Tim Halley, but was now seeing a boy named Eddie Fracher, and Dee was dating Eddie's older brother, Henry. But the Fracher boys were not at the game, either.

The girls went out into the cold parking lot where people were starting their cars. One or two cars were refusing to start, and Jane worried about the little Buick, but they had covered the hood with a heavy quilt and the engine started quite willingly. When they were all loaded aboard, she switched on the headlights and put the car in motion.

But then she said, "Oh, dear," and she stopped the car and opened the door and got out.

"What's the matter?" Babs asked, and Mim and Dee popped up their heads to see.

"One headlight's out," Jane said.

She went to the front of the car and jiggled the dark headlight and it went on again. She got back in the car again.

"A wire's loose," she reported.

As she drove out of the lot a policeman held up his hand to stop her and he came to the side of the car. Jane rolled the window down.

"You be sure and get that light fixed, young lady."

"Yes, sir. I will," Jane said, remembering just how Uncle Rog had taught her to address a policeman. She was careful not to say, "Yes, Ossifer," as recommended by her friend, Mona James.

"Is it out again?" Babs asked.

"No, but he saw me fussing with it."

They started home then, going as fast as Jane dared go at night.

When Uncle Rog first taught her to drive the little Buick he had assured her it would only go thirty-five miles an hour, but knowing Uncle Rog, they didn't believe him, since the speedometer could register double that speed.

So they had tested it once on a stretch of road they called "the Flats," a fairly level mile and a half with shallow dips at regular intervals. Jane on two occasions had taken the little car up to forty-nine miles an hour, but at that speed the front wheels shimmied and shook and the steering wheel vibrated in her hand.

Tonight as she drove, most of the other traffic, returning from the game in newer cars, passed her. Harl Pease, in one of his father's new Ford

V8s, went by tooting the horn. The team-bus passed them, and from then on only a few cars went by. It was a night best spent indoors and Jane wished she were already there.

They skirted the shore of beautiful Newfound Lake and went on, with Jane driving at about forty miles an hour. The road was not familiar to her. Presently she came upon a highway warning sign reading "SLOW for HILL." Just as Jane's foot hit the brake pedal, the little Buick hit a patch of "black ice" at the top of the grade. When the car slued, Jane "turned into the skid" as Uncle Rog had instructed, but this maneuver did not prevent a full three hundred and sixty degree turn. In the depths of their blankets in the rumble seat, Dee and Mim felt the sensations of inertia and centrifugal force, and Dee said to Mim, "Say your prayers, Kid."

But the little car had never left the road nor tilted, and when it stopped it was again pointing north on its original course.

In one breath Jane and Babs said, "Wow!" Far down the road behind them Jane could see headlights, so she got underway again, and the girls in the rumble seat were not certain just what had occurred.

In a few moments Jane and Babs noticed the smell of anti-freeze fumes, and Babs discovered that the two gallon can had fallen over during the skid. She righted it again, but reported that some of it had leaked out. They drove on. But presently both girls could stand the fumes no longer and they had to roll the windows down. They would not know until later that it was by that time twenty degrees below zero, and they had to bundle themselves to the eyes again to keep from getting frost bitten faces.

They finally reached the little garage at the foot of Fison's Hill.

Babs, who was always helpful, got out and opened the door. Dee and Mim climbed out of the back. Jane drove into the garage, while Dee and Mim started trudging up the hill. Babs waited to close the door.

Jane emerged from the garage.

"Have you got my pocketbook with you, Babs?"

"No."

Jane called to Dee and Mim.

"I can't find my pocketbook."

After further futile search, the four girls agreed that Jane had had the brown leather handbag with her when they left the Bristol high school gymnasium. And they agreed that the only time she could have lost it was in the parking lot, and no doubt it fell out of the car when she got out to fuss with the ailing headlight.

The situation was serious. Jane's handbag contained more than Jane's possessions. It contained something that Dee had asked Jane to carry for her - a small purse with thirty dollars that represented Dee's bus trip home to Cleveland after Christmas. Norris had sent it to Dee only a few days before.

Dee was in tears. "Oh, this is terrible!"

"Well, I've got problems even worse in a way," Jane said. "I've lost my driver's license, and Narze's class ring and his Life Scout pin, and the

new pen and pencil set he gave me for Christmas, not to mention my five dollars I was going to buy a few little gifts with."

The tears were still running down Dee's face and trying to freeze there.

"What can we do?" she implored.

Babs said, "It's probably lying there in the parking lot."

"Let's go look," Mim said. "Or should we?"

"I guess we'll have to," Jane said. "It'll be late, but we'll tell them we stayed for the dance."

They piled in and backed the car out, and set out again toward Bristol.

But they had gone only about an eighth of a mile, just past the small bridge over the brook, when Jane came to her senses. She stopped the car.

"What's the matter?" Babs asked.

Jane took a two foot wooden ruler from beside her seat. "I just had a prudent thought." She got out.

Mim's head popped up. "What now?"

Jane waved the ruler. "I had a thought."

Mim said, "Oh, my gawsh, yes."

Jane unscrewed the gas tank cap and stuck the ruler down in. She brought it out and looked at it in the red glow of the tail light, then took it around front to see it in the white light of the headlamps.

"I was afraid so," she said to Babs. "It's very, very low."

She went back to tell Dee and Mim. "It's out of the question to go to Bristol. We have very little gas."

Dee had her head up now. "What will we do?"

"There's nothing to do but get turned around somewhere and go home and go to bed before we freeze."

The problem, now, was where to turn around. The road was a single lane with a snow-filled ditch on either side. Jane knew she could turn around at the mailbox out at the main valley road near Bean's place. But she wondered if the gas would hold out if she did that. Then she remembered the logging road. It was just a few dozen yards up ahead. Jane decided to turn around there because there was no ditch at that point, only solid ground.

When she reached the logging road Jane saw immediately that the snow was not deep, though there was a rather deep drift a few yards in. But that mattered little as they were only going to drive in and back right out again. She drove in and stopped the car when it reached the snow drift. Then she put the car in reverse and tried to back out. But the car moved only an inch or so and Jane realized a wheel was spinning. She stopped trying to move the car.

"I don't want it to dig a deep hole or we won't get out. You kids can push and I know it'll go."

Babs got out and got Dee and Mim, while Jane waited. Then the three pushed while the engine worked too. Finally the girls triumphed and the car moved about two feet backwards, while Jane began turning the wheel. But suddenly the engine stopped. Jane thought it had stalled, but it couldn't be started again. It absolutely refused to run.

"I guess it's out of gas now," Dee said.

"No," Jane said, "that's not it. It wasn't that low. There's something else wrong, but I give up. Everything tonight is determined to go wrong."

"We're being punished for our sins," Mim said.

"It certainly looks that way," Jane agreed.

She got out and lifted the engine hood.

"It's funny," she said. "It didn't cough or sputter. It just absolutely stopped very suddenly."

Then she noticed something - vapor rising from the ground at the front of the car where the snow drift was, and a very strong odor of antifreeze.

"Here's our trouble," she cried. "All our water's drained out."

"How could it do that?" Dee asked.

"The drain cock is open. I don't know how it did it, but the snow drift did it. That snow is hard and crusty and it just rubbed against the handle. Well, let's start hiking. Don't forget the soapstones."

"Damn the soapstones," said Dee.

"You going to bring the can of antifreeze?" Mim asked.

"No, we'll need it here when we come back. Uncle Bill is going to be our only salvation. He and Thundering Ann."

They trudged on in dejected silence for a while. Then Babs said,

"Wow! What an evening!"

Mim said, "We'll have to 'fess up now."

"Yes," said Jane and Dee together, but after a moment Jane said,

"I've been thinking about this. See if you kids agree. As Mim says, we have to confess now. But I'm so tired and upset I don't want to confess it all tonight. I want to wait till tomorrow for some of it. Because if we go into the whole story with all the gruesome details Mother and Aunt Nelle will keep us up for hours going on and on about it."

"That's right," Babs agreed. "Especially my mother."

"But how can we only tell some of it?" Mim asked.

"Well," Jane said, "I'm completely willing to tell Uncle Bill the entire story, if we get a chance to talk to him alone. Because he'll just listen and he won't preach. In fact he'll even laugh at some of it, and he'll start right away to plan the rescue."

"Rescue?" Dee asked.

"Of our car," Jane said.

"I need my money rescued," Dee said.

"But we have to tell the Aunties something," Mim said.

"I know. But let's leave all we can till tomorrow. Everything always seems worse at night. In spite of everything, it's no later than if we had stayed for the dance. I vote we just tell them that we couldn't put the car in the garage because the water drained out and it wouldn't go. Neither Mother nor Aunt Nelle will understand why it happened. I'll just tell them approximately where we left the car and they'll rely on Uncle Bill to fix it. How does that seem?"

They agreed to the plan, but Dee said, "What about the missing pocket book, though?"

"I know we'll be able to think better tomorrow morning, and we'll be able to face the music better, too," Jane said.

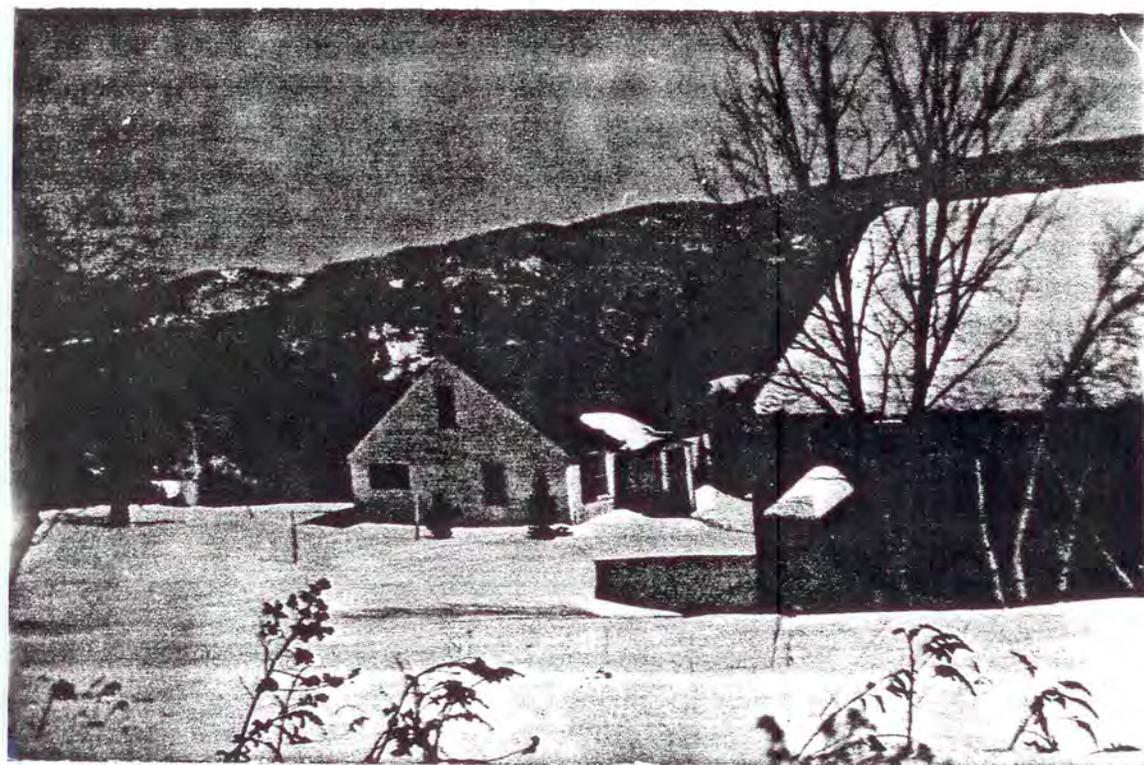
"I lost a pocket book once before," Dee said. "Remember, Janie?"

"I remember."

"Well, I got it back by doing Christian Science. I'm going to do some now."

"Go ahead," Jane said. "It can't hurt."

"Do some to get me up this hill," Babs said. "I think my toes are frost-bitten."



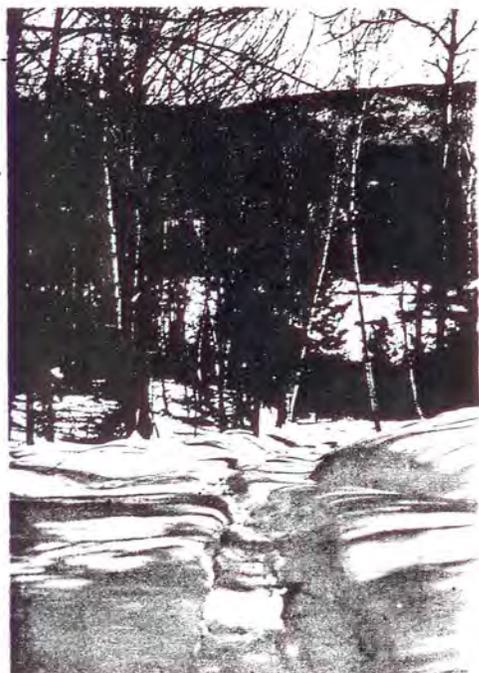
"JEANNE"



AROL "MURRY" "ANDREA" "JEANNE"



"JEANNE" "PETE"



DOWN THE "TERRIBLE HILL"

RECORD SNOW APRIL 12 '33
32"



ALABASTER NEAR THE BARN



"IRENE" "MURRY"

#####

HARK THE HERALD ANGELS SING

Norris was not looking forward to Christmas, for he felt that none of the ingredients that he considered essential for that holiday were going to be present. You really didn't have to have them all; you could get along perhaps with one of them lacking, but certainly not all of them the way it would be this year. What you needed was to be a child, or to have children, so that the pure joy of Christmas morning could be savored. You really needed money to make Christmas memorable, or perhaps time to make gifts. Some people still did that. Grace's family had all made each other Christmas presents; they knitted, crocheted, and sewed, for weeks. And you needed someone to do Christmas baking, cookies and fruit cakes and all that. Another thing that was fine at Christmas time was a church that had the right kind of music. The Christian Scientists didn't do justice to Christmas. They had a hymn that went, "Blest Christmas morn though murky clouds pursue thy way. If What kind of Christmas hymn was that! Norris liked the good hymns his father and Aunt Ada had liked. Good Episcopal hymns like "Angels from the Realms of Glory", "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing", and "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear." They had had all those hymns on Victrola records, some of them with bell chimes, and when Jane was a little girl she had loved to play those records. How the girls had loved Christmas! He and Grace had given them memorable ones, too. He was sorry the girls weren't going to be here this year, though there wasn't any money to spend on gifts. But they would liven things up, and somehow it would be fun. Last year he and Jane had trimmed the tree and done a very classy job of it, too. This year he could not get in the mood for it. Christmas needed youth, and he felt as though he lived in an old ladies' home. Of course, Edie was younger than he was, but she was ailing with changes of life or something of the sort. And Pauline was ailing with the same condition, plus her sour stomach and lately, her sour disposition.

Norris had bought a Christmas tree and he would trim it, of course, at least for his mother who after all really was an old lady, and who knew how long she'd be here in this vale of tears.

He continued in his glum frame of mind as he contemplated the agenda for Christmas Day. They'd not have presents in the morning, the way they'd done when the girls were small. He and Pauline, and his mother and Edie would open what gifts they had on Christmas Eve. He'd have enjoyed going to an Episcopal church for the eleven o'clock service, or even a Catholic midnight mass. He'd enjoy that. He and Pauline had gone to a little church in France and everyone there had been so friendly and happy. That was the key word. Happy. Something missing around here lately. Pauline was frankly unhappy, but she never said so. He and Edie and their mother might not be terribly unhappy but then, they weren't happy, either. They had a cat now and Pauline had objected to that, too, but she needn't have, because Edie took care of it, fed it, and cleaned the sand box. Pauline had a way of screaming whenever the friendly little cat rubbed against her legs. He had a notion that all that was just an act. All this screaming at bugs and spiders and

pussy cats was Pauline's idea of a way to appear appealingly feminine. He wondered if she'd scream that way if she had no audience. Probably not.

The cat was curled up in the best chair. Cats were smart. He picked her up and held her against his cheek. She purred extravagantly and pushed the top of her head under his chin. The cat at least was happy, and she was rubbing some of her pleasure off onto him. He stopped thinking about Christmas dinner at Pauline's mother's house, and how her brother-in-law would probably express his scorn for Roosevelt before the man was even inaugurated as President.

The mail arrived then, so Norris carefully put the cat back in the chair, and since they seldom stay where they are put, she jumped down and headed for the kitchen.

The one piece of mail was not the gas bill that he expected, but was instead, a letter from Dee, and a fat one, too. He sat down and read it through, then put it away until dinner time so that he might read it to Edie and Rosella. He knew they would enjoy it, and it would liven up an otherwise dull meal hour. Pauline would not be significantly delighted with it, he knew.

After the dessert was finished, he brought forth the letter.

"Our life may be very dull here," he said, "but they are having a great time up there. This is what she says."

"Dear Daddy,

Life up here is, to say the least, different. But first let me thank you for sending me the money for my trip home, and I'll have more to say about that, too.

It is really beautiful here. You would love it, I know, for it is different in winter. The colors are sometimes quite red. Mother is frustrated because she hasn't had time to paint but is always cooking. Aunt Nelle is forever puttering around and sorting things. She used to do the cooking.

"I miss my friends in Cleveland, and I want to get on with my secretarial courses, but I'll miss the kids here when I leave. They are too young for me, but we do have quite a lot of fun. We all have dates with boys, except for Babs, who is too little. But we have a radio now and Babs says it has changed her life. She is in love with Eddie Cantor. Mother is in love with the New York Philharmonic and when the Sunday symphony concerts are on, she gets really peeved at us for laughing and talking. You would too, I'm sure. But we nearly died laughing last week when she told us 'don't rustle your programs.' The radio runs on an army of batteries. Uncle Rog gave it to us as an 'advance Christmas present.'

"Do you want to know how 'stir crazy' we get sometimes? One night recently we girls took it into our heads to take a snow bath. We made Uncle Bill stay in the Studio. Then we all went out in the nude and rolled in the snow in the yard. We screamed and laughed and piled back into the house. One thing about all that, though. There was a hard crust under the new snow and we got all scratched up. More fun! Uncle Rog wasn't here. He is in a very bad mood

lately because of his worries about the Depression.

"We had another wild evening not long ago. We have a dear little black kitty here. His name is Alabaster, of course. You would be crazy about him. He has lots of personality. Well, anyway. one night when he was outdoors we heard this terrible cat fight noise coming from the region where the potato garden used to be. It was that terrible yowling and screaming that they make when they are in a clinch and trying to rip each other to shreds. Only this was much, much louder. We just knew that a bob-cat was killing our dear little kitty. We all ran out with some kind of weapon. Mim grabbed the fire poker and I grabbed the shovel. Jane had dressmaking scissors in her hand and she ran out with those. She must like to battle with scissors, because she threw some at me once when she was five. Remember? Babs ran to the kitchen and got a kettle and a wooden spoon. And Mother and Aunt Nelle each got a stick of firewood.. Then Aunt Nelle went and got her revolver instead. By the time we all got out there everything was quiet. Aunt Nelle said, 'Well, I guess it's all over now.' I could have hit her with my shovel. Jane said, 'Why not just fire a shot? It might frighten the wild cat or whatever away. Kitty might be just hurt or something.' So Aunt Nelle fired one shot in the air. Then there was silence. We went back into the house, all feeling so sad and thinking poor little Alabaster was being devoured. We had called him in vain. But after a while we went out and called him again. and in about a minute we heard this gay little 'Prrrrup' and our dear little black kitty came sashaying out of the barn without a scratch on him. We all rejoiced, and we all had to hug him.

"Now, I want to tell you something very important about Christian Science. It is really remarkable. First, I should go back several years and tell you what happened to me one summer here in the mountains. Aunt Nelle took us all to Mount Morgan to pick blueberries. You remember that spot where you took the picture of Lake Winnepesaukee? We went there with our pails and peanut butter sandwiches and picked berries for two or three hours. Well, after we got home to Forest Camp I found I'd lost my pocketbook, and I knew it was somewhere there in that blueberry field. Aunt Nelle told me it served me right for taking my money up there, and she wouldn't drive me back even to the bottom of the road. But Jane, mind you, felt sorry for me and said she'd hike there with me the next day, and you know it is several miles away, and it's past that house where the bad dogs are. (They are still there, too). Well, Dad, I did Christian Science nearly all night, and the next day Jane and I went right straight to the boulder where I had laid that pocket book down, and there it was, safe and sound, with my thirty dollars in it. In that whole huge field, we went right to the spot! That's a real demonstration, isn't it?

"Alright now, here's another story. Last Friday night we went to a basketball game and we had all kinds of bad luck. I can't begin to go into all the details, but it boils down to this series of events: It was twenty degrees below zero, Jane dropped her pocketbook in the parking lot at the school, one headlight went out, and we went into a terrible skid at the top of a hill, the anti-freeze leaked and filled the car with fumes, we nearly froze our faces, and when we got back near home, all the water leaked out of the radiator and the engine wouldn't go. We had to walk home from there. Uncle Bill was our friend and ally. We told him all our car problems and he was so nice, and got them all fixed for us. We did tell Mother and Aunt Nelle about losing the pocketbook. We had to tell them, because all my money for bus fare was in that purse, plus things of Janie's that she treasures. Well, you know how Aunt Nelle is, she preached at me for carrying money around. Nobody wanted to go out that morning because of the bitter cold, but Uncle Bill put water and anti-freeze and gasoline in the car, and Jane and I went to town and put an ad in the lost and found. On the way back we stopped and warmed ourselves at the glowing ashes of a house that had burned down in the night from an over-heated stove. Well - this is turning into a long story, but Dad - here is the amazing part. I got tired of Aunt Nelle's preaching at me about carelessness, for after all, Janie's pocketbook fell out of the car without her knowing about it. I decided to do Christian Science like I did that other time. Well, on Tuesday Jane got a postcard saying something with her name on had been found, and she could have it back if she'd describe the contents. So she phoned from Bean's house, and now she has her pocketbook back with all its contents but what they took out for postage, and I have really become a true believer in Christian Science. I asked Jane if that wasn't a convincing demonstration and do you know what she said? 'No, it's just an example of New England Yankee honesty.' She isn't even convinced that it was Science that healed her pneumonia last year. She says that people often recover from that anyway.

"This is a long letter and I'm sleepy. The only other news here is that Mother is still planning to go to Vienna next summer, come hell or high water, whatever that means. With or without Jane, I suppose. Well, thank you again for the money. I'll be coming right after New Years, but the exact day depends on Uncle Rog's schedule.

"Jane says she'll write to Pauline and thank her for sending the white organdy in time so that she could get her dress made for the Christmas dance. The sewing machine here is the busiest piece of furniture in the place (except for the privy). Jane, Mim and I are sewing all the time, and Babs and Ruth are learning how, too.

"Tell the rest that this letter is for them, too. I will send a wire from New York about my arrival time.

Much love,



JANE RAHMING

AGE 16

New Hampshire, 1933

"ANDREA"

Dee."

P.S. Merry Christmas, and I am bringing a present for the family when I come. But I warn you it isn't much. We are all broke."

Norris laid the letter down.

"My!" his mother said vaguely. "That was long."

"Well, they don't have many diversions up there," Norris said "But that's certainly a very long letter for someone her age, who doesn't have a long list of things she wants or needs."

"She usually does," Pauline said.

"Not any more," Norris said. "That was when she was younger. She know's more about money, or the lack of it, now. But I know one thing, I want to get Jane back here too. It sounds like a terrible car she's driving, or else she's a terrible driver, but I don't think that's it. However, I don't think schoolgirls should be driving, especially dangerous mountain roads at night. They shouldn't be allowed out at night anyway. A car breakdown in those mountains could be very dangerous. I'm going to tell Grace I want Jane back in time for spring semester."

"Wasn't it nice Dee got her pocketbook?" Edie said.

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At Camp Forest Primeval on Christmas morning the real high point was breakfast. There were modest Gifts for everyone, many in the ten and twenty-five cent price range. The mail order Sears in Boston had been a godsend. Silk stockings, yard goods, underwear, lipsticks, hand lotion, handkerchiefs, typewriter paper, etc. Everyone had several packages to open, and Merle had sent fruitcake and cookies. Nelle had made her famous fudge, and everything was jolly enough. But breakfast was superb. Uncle Roger had thrown penny-pinching to the winds when buying the holiday provender. He and Bill hauled it all up the hill in Thundering Ann. Four dozen oranges, several pounds of Jones sausage, extra butter, more coffee, maple syrup, and milk and cream since Bean's cow was dry and due to freshen in February.

Christmas was on Sunday that year and Rog said that on Monday they would also have pancakes and sausage because he still wanted to have everything that was coming to him. He'd had pancakes and sausage on Sunday for years. and when he couldn't have that any more, he'd know there was no hope for the country. So they feasted both days, and there Was a turkey too, roasted to perfection in the wood stove oven which was not very dependable for cake baking, though alright for bread.

Everyone was in such good spirits that day that Rog pulled out of his doldrums for a while and they all had a good sing around the fireplace and Rog played the banjo. They all felt better because Christmas had turned out so nicely and the presents had been nice and more numerous than anyone had expected. The girls spent the next few days sewing dresses for the Holiday Dance at school. There was to be a basketball game at school between the alumni and the varsity and then there'd be dancing.

Roger got wind of the plans and spoke out against them.

"It won't do to go driving around these hills at night. I won't have it.

That little car will have to last out the school year. It wasn't intended for any purpose but to get you to school. I don't want another escapade such as happened recently. I'm sorry. but I forbid you to take the car. ll

The girls were certain Uncle Bill hadn't told on them, and he confirmed this. "But," he said, "he knows something."

When Narze came to see Jane next she told him she could not take the car to the dance.

"We'll get around that." he said. "Henry Fracher will get his dad's car.

Can you go then?"

"I'll approach Mother about it."

Jane went to Grace.

"Mother. will you intercede for us at the throne of God?"

"Wha-at?"

"Will you beseech Uncle Rog to let us go to the dance if the boys come and get us?"

"Is Dee going?"

"Yes. and Charlie's going to come and get us. All we have to do is get as far as Bean's house. Charlie's father just likes him to stay on roads wide

enough for two cars."

Grace liked Henry Fracher. He had nice manners and he was French. That is to say, his father's family were from Quebec. Grace was always interested in French people or things. She was also interested in possible husbands for Dee. She felt that Dee's broken heart would not be made whole until she was married and a mother. As she perceived Dee's nature, it was soft and sentimental and needed protection. Grace felt that Dee would never make it in secretarial work. but she knew that at present she must not squelch Dee's ambitions along that line, for at the moment it was all Dee had. No one in Cleveland was in the offing as a fiancé in spite of the two years Dee had lived there and all the boys she had known in that period. Norris had written a letter, almost a tirade in fact, in which he pointed out that "Dee does not know how to handle boys at all, but shows her interest in them too plainly and pursues them instead of waiting to be sought. "Grace agreed with part of that judgment. It was true that Dee plainly showed her interest in young men. She always had since she was a little girl. But Grace refused to agree that Dee pursued. However, she would add something to Norris' criticism; Dee had no interest in the worthy young men who had serious intentions about her. She always liked best the playboy types, at least since Cameron, who had been, after all, just a boy. So, all in all, she was eager to see Dee married and settled down. That all accomplished, Grace could think about her own long-interrupted career and Jane's education.

"I'll see to it that Uncle Rog makes no objection to your going. It's just the car he worries about, Janie. I'll tell him how nice the Fracher boys are."

"Mother? Mother."

"What?"

"Narze' s nice too, Mother."

"Yes, Janie, I know."

So Grace talked to Roger about the dance, and he could find no valid objection to the girls going. But now, with that settled, and Christmas over, he settled back into his dark mood. Roger was in the best position to gain a perspective on the situation at Camp Forest Primeval that winter, because he could get

away for days at a time, away from the crowding and confusion on the hill. Had he been in a mood to be philosophical about it he would have seen the humor of it all, and the value of the experience for everyone. But he was so worried about money and Franklin Roosevelt that he had little disposition to be objective about things. Otherwise he might have seen that things were not so bad after all on the hill. He would have seen that the wintering was a noble experiment that hadn' really failed; it had merely got a bit out of shape because there were too many people. He could have (perhaps) seen that the cousins at least would long remember the pioneer winter as a very special adventure. And it would have been helpful if he could have been a little less moody and glum that winter. For they would have remembered it more fondly when they told their own children.

Rog did not fully realize how much he had filled the place of a father for Mim and Trink after Raymond died seven years before. And he had to a very large extent done the same thing for Jane and Dee after Grace' divorce , and before they were returned to Norris. But even less did he realize how much these nieces had become his own children. They had taken the place of the family he and Nelle had never had. He would never fully understand why he and Nelle had invited these youngsters summer after summer through their childhood. years. He had always believed that he had done it for the children , and to help their mothers, and to provide companionship for Babs. He had always expressed love for the girls, but neither he nor Nelle recognized that the nieces were there to fill their own needs to experience parenthood. Babs had not been enough to satisfy Nelle's longing for a large family. For Rog it had meant a group of young faces in the glow of a campfire, a group to sing the old songs, and to tell his stories to. And it had been satisfying to be the bountiful provider for these young growing things with no fathers. For Nelle it was something else. She was a born instructor and an admirer of traditional methods and pioneer lore. She was also a subscriber to Parents' Magazine and a disciplinary enthusiast. She never doubted for a moment that her nieces desperately needed training, and she intended not to fail them.

For a number of years all these objectives were realized. The nieces were small and tractable, and life at Camp was rewarding. But the cousins had not been at Camp Forest Primeval for three years, and in that time they had turned into something

Rog would never be able to understand - teen-agers – especially teen-age girls. And further, he began to be preoccupied with the conviction that none of the invited cousins were grateful for their opportunities to come to Camp Forest Primeval.

He would brood over that for years to come. Adopting Babs and borrowing nieces for a few weeks of a few summers had not given him the full experience of parenthood, partly because he traveled so much of the time, partly because he and Nelle were in their forties when they first acquired Babs and Camp Forest Primeval. He and Nelle had borrowed Dee for three weeks when she was a tot, and they'd had Mim. Jane, and Trink in turn for a semester or so in Jackson Heights when they had hated the school. There'd always been some ostensible wisdom in shifting the nieces around between their own homes and Nelle's. It had disrupted their schooling and frequently made them homesick, but this did not occur to Nelle and Roger. And now, Nelle fueled Roger's resentment that these adolescent females did not show proper gratitude for their opportunities to live and work at Camp Forest Primeval. Nelle and Rog were apparently unaware that humans between

fifteen and twenty-five will never be further from their elders' point of view. They themselves had each been rebellious during that period of their lives, especially Rog, who in fact had run away from his parents' home when he was only fourteen and had not returned until he was a young man. Rog's parents had been good people, what's more; his father had been strict, but never cruel. Yet young Rog, far from being grateful to them, had turned his back on them and two

brothers and two sisters, and held gone forth into the treacherous world, leaving his gentle mother to set a lamp in the parlor window every night for six years, before he finally relieved her anguish.

But Roger's thoughts did not turn back to those early years when his high sense of adventure took him forth to seek his fortune. In this strange winter when his young nieces were thinking more about their boy friends than of their uncle, aunts and other elders, Rog's hurt feelings did not heal, but became a chronic condition that would persist and taint his writings for the remainder of his life.

But the nieces, nevertheless, would always love him and they would continue to classify him as "my favorite uncle, who was like a father to me. For after all, they sensed that fathers must expect gratitude.

Between Christmas and New Year's Day, Roger went to Boston on business. That was lucky, for Dee, Jane and Mim went to the Christmas dance at school and returned very late.

Hurry and Jane had been sewing for days on material they'd been given for Christmas. They looked very pretty when they were ready to leave. and it was just as well that Roger did not see them thus, for lately, he had found their blossoming prettiness very unsettling. In an undefined way it was a threat to him. At the least, it meant that the good days were all over, the children weren't children any more. and everything was going out of control.

Dee wore a favorite red dress she'd worn on dates in Cleveland. Mim wore a new blue dress she'd made. and Jane had trimmed her new white organdy with a huge red bow. with the intent to resemble a Christmas package.

Grace had given a funny little laugh when she saw Jane's completed costume. "what's so funny, Mother?" Jane asked. though she guessed what Grace was going to say.

"Well, the dress is pretty Janie, but you are not the white organdy type."

"You don't like white on me?" Jane said, knowing precisely what her mother meant.

"I don't think organdy ruffles fit your personality. You are the tailored type." Grace insisted.

"Mother, I'm just not your boy any more. Maybe I was when I was little, but not any longer."

Dee stepped in at that point.

"Mother. I think Janie's dress is cute."

"Cute it may be." Grace said. but she did not continue. and instead turned to Babs. "Let's take the opportunity to work on our duet this evening while the girls are gone."

All three looked ludicrous enough as they set off down the mountain with their dance dresses fastened up to keep them out of the snow. They all wore high galoshes and wore their short, wooly, warm sport coats. They had knit wool scarves tied over their heads.

Eddie Fracher and Narze Samaha were waiting at the garage, Eddie having broken his father's rule about driving on one-lane roads in winter. They explained that Henry had had "to make a purchase" and would meet them in the

parking lot at the school.

And sure enough. Henry was there waiting with a brown paper bag. which he explained were things for the party.

"What party?" Jane wanted to know.

"After the dance," Eddie said.

"Where is the party?" Mim asked.

"At our place," said Paul, and that intrigued Mim who had heard that the Fracher's spoke only French at home.

Jane had expected that Narze would play basketball with the alumni, but he had decided not to.

"Why not?" Jane asked him. "You were captain."

"I've got other plans for this evening," Narze said.

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They watched the last few minutes of the game. The Varsity won and Narze's alumni buddies berated him for not playing. He wasn't in shape, he told them. But Jane thought he was in fine shape while he was dancing with Miss Cleveland, the popular French teacher. Narze was a very good dancer and he loved to dance very intricate steps, which Miss Cleveland would follow perfectly. Jane was certain she could never dance like that. She and Babs had taken ballroom dancing lessons in Westport and they had a good time, but girls and boys alike had all learned the two-step, the waltz, and the fox-trot. The next year, at Oberlin, she had not gone to dances. Nor had she at East High, and she had very little confidence in herself on the dance floor. She and Dee had sometimes danced at home, but Dee had always made Jane lead, and that had put her at a disadvantage, at least psychologically. It seemed that Dee, too, wanted to turn Jane into a boy. However, Jane did dance some with Narze and others, and at times she felt that she danced well and she enjoyed it.

But tonight they did not stay long at the dance. Henry assured them they'd have more fun at the party. They had to be very careful leaving the dance. Mr. Moors, the headmaster, attended every school dance with the primary purpose of preventing students from necking and "carrying on" in the parking lot. Mr. Moors had established a rule that any student who left a dance must not return. He took the position that from the time students appeared at a dance (or other function) until they left at the end of the evening, they were his responsibility. He lurked in the halls and at the ground floor exits, glancing in at the dance floor on the third floor every few minutes to see if he could catch a couple leaving the gymnasium.

"He must be exhausted by the end of the evening," Jane had said to Narze once. "Running up and down stairs all the time."

Jane and Narze had been caught by Mr. Moors at the "Hard-times" party at Halloween time. Everyone had worn old or ragged clothing and referred to the event as the "Depression Dance". Narze had warned Jane that they'd have to be very careful when they slipped out of the building. They went to the little Buick and stayed for half an hour. They hadn't known each other very long, and Jane was not yet sure how much she liked Narze. They had kissed some and they had talked a lot, and then returned to the school. Mr. Moors was lurking at the south entrance. Narze entered on the north.

It was Jane who got the lecture. Mr. Moors drew her aside and gave her the full measure of the scolding, stating that "it must be the young lady who sets the standard." Jane assured Mr. Moors that she'd only gone out to her Buick to get her pocketbook which she'd forgotten earlier. He told her that she should have asked his permission to go to her car, but he did allow her to go back to the dance. Jane had not realized that Mr. Moors had been paying particular attention to the "girls from New York."

But tonight they did not intend to return. However, they weren't anxious to attract Mr. Moors's notice, either. He had stopped his close interest in the girls from Fison's Hill however, once he had determined that their first report cards were all entirely satisfactory, and he'd decided that the young outlanders were

well-behaved in school. He had real trouble-makers to watch, ones he'd known for a long time.

Nevertheless, the girls kept a close eye out for the headmaster who had such a strong chin that the students liked to say that Mr. Moors' chin appeared around a corner fifteen minutes before he got there.

First Henry Fracher quietly left by the south exit and a moment or two later he was followed by his younger brother.

The girls from Fison's Hill then, very openly, got their boots and coats on and left by the south exit while Narze danced another number with Miss Ashley, while Mr. Moors watched them, thinking that if she were not such an excellent French teacher, he would perhaps have to speak to her about trying to be more conservative in her dancing. In a moment or two Narze went to the drinking fountain, then to the boys' restroom, and then slipped out by way of the north exit, where he walked a block before joining the others in Charlie's dad's car.

"It's safer this way," Henry explained. "If he gets a notion you're someone to watch, he is a real nuisance."

They drove out of town, heading south on the Evans Mountain road.

"Where are we going? Mim asked Pall.

"Our place," he said.

"But your place is up on the road to – "

Henry interrupted. "Our place is on Squam Lake."

"Oooh!" Dee said. "A summer place! I was always crazy about Squam Lake.

Janie and I used to go there with my father when we were little."

"You mean you finally don't think I'm little any more?" Jane said to Dee.

Dee just laughed and soon they noticed a problem. The night was bitter cold and with six breathing people in the car the windshield was frosting up, and Henry could barely see to drive. He stopped the car and from the bag of party fixings he got a bottle of clear liquid. He poured some on a handkerchief and wiped the windshield and it cleared most of it in front of him. He used a little more liquid, and his brother said, "Hey, save some for us!"

"What is it?" asked Dee.

"Alcohol," said Charlie.

"Oh, really?" Dee said. "Isn't that poisonous? Makes you blind? "

"Not this kind. You're talking about the anti-freeze kind. This is good drinking alcohol. My dad uses this."

"I'm not drinking any of that stuff," Narze said to Jane in a low voice.

"Are you?"

"I've never had a drink in my life," she said. "I wouldn't want to start with that stuff, and anyway, not now. Uncle Rog would turn inside out if he even knew we were riding in a car with a little alcohol. "

"Well, I don't drink at all," Narze said. "Coach convinced me it is not good for you. It wrecks your health."

Dee was sitting on the other side of Narze.

"Where do they get the booze from," she asked.

"That is easy," Narze said. "Probably from Pierre, the taxi driver."

They had passed through Ashland, then Holderness, and now were riding along

the shores of Big Squam Lake. They passed many little lakeside cottages, nearly all of them dark. and then Henry turned in a driveway.

"Don't drive in too far," Eddie said. "We don't want to get stuck."

But the drive had been swept by winds and the snow wasn't deep. Charlie turned the car lights out immediately.

"I don't I specially want anyone to know we're here," he said. "Some of these neighbors know my parents."

"What neighbors?" Dee asked. "The cottages are all dark."

"No. There's some year-round houses here and there."

Henry and Eddie led the others into the cottage without benefit of flashlight.

There was no moon. They entered the kitchen and Henry closed the door.

"Do you mean we're having a party without any lights at all?" Jane asked.

"We can have a lamp in the kitchen in a minute, after I hang some blankets over the window."

After he had taken care of the window, with Eddie holding the flashlight,

Henry lit a lantern and put it in the center of the table. "There," he said.

"Gad, it's cold in here," Dee said. "Like Greenland."

"Seems colder than outdoors," Narze said.

"Unheated' houses always seem like that," Jane said.

"It's because you expect it to be warmer, and it's not," Mim said.

"And because the air is so still and dead, inside," Jane said.

"I'll be still and dead at this rate," Dee said. Everyone laughed.

"We can build a fire, Henry ," Eddie said. "We'll have to."

"OK," Henry said, "but not a big bright one."

Just then a car was heard in the driveway and everyone but Henry looked alarmed. "It's probably Dick and Verna," he said. "They're coming too."

Henry hurried out to see, and to get his friend to put his car lights out.

The couple was led in, and everyone gathered around Paul's small fireplace blaze in the big living room.

" It'll take hours to get this place really warm," Narze said.

"We'll all be warm when we've had a drink," Henry said.

"Good idea, " Dee said. "Just what we need."

In the kitchen, Henry prepared drinks from the gingerale he had brought, and the alcohol concoction they'd used on the windshield.

He mixed one for Dee and for himself. The other couple, Dick and Verna, accepted drinks too, but Narze, Jane, Mim and Eddie declined. Henry took a big gulp of his drink and it was plain to see that it was not the best tasting mixture he'd ever had.

The four who weren't drinking went back into the big room where Eddie tried to liven up the little fire. But it was still bitterly cold in the huge room. There were two couches in the room, but they were far from the fireplace. Eddie pushed a big chair close to the fire for Mim and he sat at her feet tending the fire.

Jane and Narze went back to the kitchen where the others were drinking.

Jane tasted a sip of Dee's drink.



TORRIS RAMING

SQUAM LAKE, N.H. (THE LAKE IN "ON GOLDEN POND")

"Oh, ugh! That tastes terrible! How can you drink it?"

"It's not too bad," Dee said.

"You want some gingerale?" Henry asked Jane and Narze.

"Hot chocolate or nothing." Jane said.

She and Narze went back into the big room. It was a very high ceilinged building. It went up into a point at the top, and there was a wide balcony room up in the angle, with a stair leading up to it. A railing across the stairway was draped with deer hides.

Jane pointed to the balcony. "That's where all the heat will be," she said.

"I'm going up there, Narze."

He followed her up the stairs. It was somewhat less chilly on the balcony.

Jane went to the window in the gable and looked out across the frozen expanse of Big Squam. Only two or three lights twinkled on the shoreline. Lonely and cold, it was hard to believe it was the same spot where she and Dee had come with both their parents in years past.

In the dim light Jane could see that the balcony had a built-in bunk on either side. A small table held a pile of "Hudson Bay" blankets. Jane's teeth were chattering. Narze took a blanket and wrapped it around her.

"I'm going down and see if Henry could make us some coffee," he said.

He came back in a few minutes and said, "He'll heat up water for tea."

"Are they still drinking those awful highballs?" Jane asked.

"I don't think they're enjoying it very much. Verna and Jim weren't there. They're in the bedroom."

"Where are Hurry and Paul?"

"Where they were. In the big chair."

Jane was sitting on the edge of the bunk. Narze got two more blankets and unfolded them.

"Here. Lie down and I'll cover you up," he said.

She lay on the bunk and he spread the three blankets over her. Then he crawled under them too.

"Oh, Narze, now here we go again."

"We'll just get warmed up, honey."

"Yes, I know. And we'll end up in a battle again."

"Aw, honey. We never really battle."

"You know what I mean. You get so upset."

"Well, it's just that I love you so, honey. I'm nuts about you. I wish we could get married right away."

"But we can't, Narze. We've been over that again and again."

"I know. College. But honey, just let me lie here next to you. It's so wonderful to lie like this beside you... At night when I'm home, I think about it."

He began kissing her and they stopped talking. As Narze had said, it was so wonderful lying there under the blankets. And Narze did what he had done only once before. He put his hand down the top of her dress under her slip, then under her brassiere. He curved his hand around her breast and Jane did not tell him to stop. She thought briefly about Danny O'Neal. He had tried that and she had got angry with him. But now she was not angry. She was afraid, though. Not

afraid of Narze. Afraid of herself. Afraid because she loved his hand on her breast. And one thing would lead to another. That's what her mother was afraid of with Danny O'Neal. It was her mother's panic about and dislike of Danny that had made Jane loyal to Danny. But she hadn't loved him. But Narze wasn't Danny. Maybe she really truly loved Narze. She had told him she did. But maybe she only felt that way because Mother was in a panic. And Mother scorned him almost as much as she had scorned Danny. But Narze hadn't been in the reformatory. Oh, no indeed. He'd been an athlete, a Life Scout, class president, and everyone liked Narze. She guessed she did love him.

Now Narze managed to pull her dress down off one shoulder. He was kissing her breast and she had to stop him.

"Narze, we can't. We just can't. We have to stop."

But Narze was above her now, with one knee between her legs, and he seemed not to hear her. He was pulling the white organdy dress up and trying to pull her panties down.

She locked her hands around his wrist and whispered harshly at him. "No! I don't want to. Do you hear?"

Jane didn't want to raise her voice so that everyone in the cabin knew what was going on. She continued to keep an iron grip on Narze's wrist. He stopped his effort then and said in a suddenly cool voice, "I guess I should have got you drunk."

Jane let go his wrist and just lay quiet. In a deliberately dead voice she said, "Oh, alright. Go ahead! I guess it doesn't matter that much after all."

It was as though she had thrown a switch and turned off Narze's electricity. He flung himself face down on the bunk beside her and lay quiet.

She waited, but for a few minutes he said nothing. Then he turned his head slightly and muttered, "I'm a rat."

"No, you're not, Narze," Jane said.

She laid her hand on his shoulder and discovered then that he was crying. She leaned over him and whispered, "I'm not mad, Dee by. " She kissed him on the cheek.

He turned over then and said, "Oh, don't kiss me. I'm such a no-good rat."

But she did kiss him again, and his face was wet with tears. He had been really crying! She felt that she was only just getting to know Narze.

"I'm really not mad "she said. "And you're not a rat and I'm not a tease, either. "

"I'm sorry, honey. I didn't come here plotting to do this."

"Well, it might be that some time, some place, I may not say 'no.' But it would never be in some situation like this, Narze. I wouldn't want to remember my first time like this, with other people all around us."

"It's crazy. anyway," Narze said. "When Henry said there'd be a party after the dance I never thought we'd be in an ice cold cabin where we couldn't even turn a light on. I thought there'd be food and we'd play some records or something."

"Well, it isn't the most comfortable party I've been to and I know one

thing. Dee and Mim and I have got to get home. We had one wild adventure this month and we sure don't need another. Uncle Roger would throw us all out if he knew what **we** were up to this time."

"Mim agreed with Jane that they needed to get home, and they had little trouble convincing Dee. Jane was relieved to see that very little was gone from the bottle of alcohol mixture. She watched Henry closely to see if he was drunk. She decided he wasn't. Jane guessed that Dee must have decided that the rest of them were all too young for her. Henry was not yet twenty, and Dee was twenty-two. Dee had said that she really liked Charlie. But Dee was going home in a few days anyway, so there was no point in starting anything with Charlie. So the "party" ended and the boys took the girls home. This time Henry drove as far as the garage. Perhaps he'd had enough alcohol to make him disregard his father's rules. However, the car had no problems on the narrow road. But when the girls got out, Narze said,

"I think we ought to walk up with the girls, Charlie."

"I would if it was earlier," Henry said. "I better get this car back or my dad will give me hell."

"Well, will you wait while I walk up with them?" Narze asked.

"That would take just as long, for gosh sakes, Deeb."

"Okay. Well, can you wait two minutes while I tell Jane something?"

Narze got out and drew Jane aside and put his arms around her.

"Honey, I have to work New Year's Eve in the store, but I'll be up New Year's Day, no matter who else comes. I'll take the taxi."

Jane laughed.

Narze said, "Honey, I love you so much."

"I love you too, " Jane said.

FOR THE PURE WICKEDNESS OF IT

Roger returned to Camp Forest Primeval on the last day of the year. His mood was darker than ever. While in New York he'd acquired a new concern. Now that his own apartment was leased out for the year, he stayed in Jackson Heights at his sister Nellie's place. While there he called Ruth Akins' mother to see if Ruth would be ready to return to Camp Forest Primeval with him on the thirty-first. Mrs. Akins had raised doubts as to whether Ruth would be returning to New Hampshire at all.

"I gather from what Ruth says there have been problems," she said.

"Ruth feels that Babs and your wife don't like her. She seems to get on alright with everyone else."

"I will admit," Roger said, "that my wife is strict with children. But she feels that it's in their best interest."

"Well, I'm all for discipline, Mr. Fison, and Ruth Elizabeth needs her share of it, but she has a distinct feeling that your Babs dislikes her and tattles on her."

Rog knew that the last accusation was true, for Babs had written complaining letters about Ruth when he and Nelle were away from Camp Forest Primeval. He did his best to smooth the situation.

"Mrs. Akins, I'll tell you what that's all about. Ruth is a popular young lady. She has young admirers and so do the two older girls. But our little Babs has none, as yet, and she's feeling badly about it, partly because she's a few months older than Ruth. Babs is unfortunately fat, and until she does something about it she's going to suffer for it. I think perhaps my wife has been a bit upset to see Babs's problems making her so unhappy. I'm sure that's all there is to the problem, though. But, as I said, Nelle is strict and children object to that."

Mrs. Akins said she'd give all that some thought, but meanwhile Ruth would stay in New York until they could decide what was best. Perhaps they'd find a suitable school somewhere for Ruth.

Roger was very much upset. His plans for finishing the school year at Camp Forest Primeval were seriously threatened now. Mrs. Akins paid seventeen dollars and

fifty cents a week for Ruth's board. And that money had been buying almost all the groceries. If that were to be cut off he didn't know just how they'd possibly manage. Because what he was making these days barely covered the other expenses: clothes, gasoline and car upkeep, kerosene, tires, license plates, taxes on the apartment and the mountain place, and on and on. There was a little money coming in from the rented apartment in Jackson Heights, but a monthly maintenance payment to the Queensborough Corporation had to be taken out of that, and this winter, Nelle was having expensive dental work done. And each time she traveled to New York with him it was extra expense. It was funny about Nelle; she practiced so many small economies, made laundry soap in the old-time way from lye and cooking fat, and in camp she used wood ashes to clean the bottom of the frying pans. She loved doing things like that the way they'd done them years ago on the farm when she was a little girl. But she was very impractical about

money itself. She didn't like to save money on food to begin with, because on the farm she'd always had all the bacon and butter and cream her heart desired, and she couldn't imagine eating any other way. She didn't like oleomargarine, but that was the sort of thing she'd have to get used to if this Depression continued. Rog continued getting more and more upset, but he shifted his anger to his other worries, chiefly his futile pursuit of the man who had swindled Nelle and Grace out of money they could not afford to lose. The man, Maple, had disappeared, and there seemed to be nothing Rog could do. And God only knew what would happen to the country now that Roosevelt was in. He obviously was planning to give honest taxpayers' money to the unemployed.

As always before returning to Camp Forest Primeval from a business trip, Roger stopped in town for a few fresh groceries. And in spite of the fact that a short while before he had criticized Nelle for her free spending on food, the prospect of oatmeal for New Year's Day did not appeal to him. He bought oranges, Jones' sausage, bacon, fresh ground coffee, eggs, butter, milk (because Bean's cow was dry) , extra cream and a loaf of cinnamon bread.

As he left town, his anger returned; this time it was prompted by his guilt feelings for buying food they could do without. Nelle had said she was getting chickens from Bean's for New Years dinner, and since the back roads were in good condition, no doubt they had done their weekly marketing. Bill was waiting at the bottom of the hill, with Thundering Ann already turned around, ready to start up the hill again. Roger thought Bill seemed not his usual amiable self, and decided it must be because it was New Year's Eve and he was not going to be able to get drunk. Actually, it was because Bill was cold. He had been waiting over an hour for Roger and he was thoroughly chilled. He was going to have no privacy this evening to break out the jug of hard cider that Waldo Bump had got for him. If he only knew what Rog's reaction to that would be, he'd take a chance, and after the women folk in the house were bedded down he and Rog could partake of some of the cider and forget their worries for a little while. But Bill was afraid that Rog would get the wrong idea. He'd probably think that he'd had hard cider around all the time. No, it was better to not bring it out. Better to keep it safe in its gallon jug in the studio basement where it would be unnoticed behind a similar jug of linseed oil and one of turpentine. Better to enjoy it after Nelle and Roger went down to New York the next time, to take Dee to put her on the bus home and to bring back Ruth Akins. He could even ask Grace if she'd like to sample a little. She and Norris had never been prudish in the old days before Prohibition. They couldn't afford liquor very often, but they weren't disapproving like Roger.

Roger was so upset by his talk with Mrs. Akins that he was in the mood to give Nelle a piece of his mind immediately upon his arrival at Camp Forest Primeval. But, for that evening at least, he would have to postpone it for the girls were all in a festive mood and they were planning an "Open house" party for the next day and were all happily making cookies and fudge. They had invited not only their boyfriends, but the Beans and the game preserve's caretaker, Maurice Sleeper, for whom the Beans kept house, and also they invited the Bumps.

Roger found absolutely no opportunity to talk to Nelle alone. The little house was never meant to provide privacy for more than two or three people. For her part, Nelle was avoiding being alone with Roger, for she knew he was stewing about something, and since Ruth had not returned with him, Nelle had a notion why.

That evening Mim's friend Eddie Fracher appeared for awhile. He told Dee his brother had gone to visit relatives in Montreal for a week and that Henry hoped she wouldn't go home to Cleveland before he returned. But Dee was irked with Henry for he'd not told her his plans and she hated to have a boring New Year's, and she told herself she should have gone back to Cleveland long ago and spent New Year's Eve with people her age. She couldn't wait to see her old friends. Eddie Fracher had brought a message from Narze for Jane, and also a New Year's present. The message was "Happy New Year" and he would see her tomorrow. The present was a five-year diary.

Nelle made pancakes for breakfast to go with the Jones sausage Roger had bought and the good coffee with cream and sugar. Mim squeezed oranges for juice and Babs set the table. Jane and Dee set about straightening up the big room for company. "Slicking it up" Nelle called it. Over the years Nelle had been forever getting people to slick things up. Slick up the yards, or the tents, or the kitchen. Until the summer of 1929 when Earl Hurst brought his Army terminology to camp. Then it was "police up" the yard, etc..

Throughout the day Roger could not make an opportunity to talk to Nelle. He did not want the girls to know how low his financial situation had sunk. He had always been their Santa Claus, their surrogate daddy. It was alright to preach the importance of thrift at any time, but he didn't want the youngsters to know how strapped he really was. He didn't want them to know how important it was to have Ruth's board money. For if they knew, then Ruth would soon know. And that wouldn't do at all.

But Rog was ready to give up on the idea of talking to Nelle alone. When they had finished their holiday dinner of chicken, candied yams and other things in the Martin tradition, Nelle served apple pie, cheddar cheese, and coffee. Everyone but Roger was lavish with praise. Bill leaned back and lit up a Christmas-present cigar.

"Well, Nelle and Grace, that was an elegant meal. My compliments to the chef or chefs as the case may be," he said.

"I never knew anyone to fix meats or poultry better than Nelle," Grace said graciously. "She learned from Mother. "

"Dear little Mother," Nelle said.

"Aunt Nelle's apple pie is the best ever, too," Jane said, "and the yams. She taught me her secret - butter and brown sugar."

Roger couldn't hold back any longer.

"Well, you women can enjoy each other's compliments today if you like, but next week you can eat compliments because there probably won't be any food." Mim looked at her uncle in astonishment.

"Well, Happy New Year! Uncle Rog, I'm glad you didn't talk like that before we enjoyed our dinner. It's a great way to start the new year. " Mim

had always had more courage to speak up Luch and Rog than the other cousins. She had a firm sense of the love they had for her.

"Mim," Roger said, "you girls are changing. You're getting sassy."

"Uncle Rog, we're only growing older and you don't like it. You're changing too. I suppose the reason is the same. Well, excuse me, please." She left the kitchen and went to the attic.

Jane was nearly flabbergasted at Mim, whose speech was more daring than anything she'd ever said.

Nelle spoke up then.

"What did make you say such an unpleasant thing," she asked Rog.

"I said we may not have food next week because you have merely killed the goose that laid the golden egg."

"I have?" Nelle said, astonished, or apparently astonished.

"Yes." said Roger. "You and Babs."

Nelle looked around the table at the others.

I don't know what you're talking about, Rog."

"I'm saying Ruth Akins probably isn't coming back here. I talked with her mother, who says Ruth thinks you and Babs don't like her."

"Well, Rog, to be honest, I can't stand that kid," Nelle said.

"Well, it's too bad, because we can't get along without that board check," he said.

"Rog, when we planned this winter here, we never counted on Ruth Akins and her board money," Nelle said.

"True," he agreed. "But times have got worse and worse, and why do you refuse to recognize it? I can't understand you Martin girls. You're not practical at all about money."

"I'm very thrifty," Nelle said, "Everybody knows it."

"But only in ways that are more of a nuisance than a saving. Like making soap from grease. And then you turn around and throw away three thousand dollars on a no-good real estate venture."

Nelle was silent, and then Roger turned to Babs.

"And, young lady, why can't you get along with Ruth?"

Babs looked a bit sullen. "I don't know."

"Last time your mother and I were in New York you wrote a letter to us and complained about Ruth, didn't you?"

Babs shrugged her shoulders and looked at her hands and studied her bitten finger nails.

"Answer me, Babs," Rog said. "I didn't read your letter, what did you say about Ruth?"

"Just that Ruth is Aunt Grace's pet."

At that point Grace spoke up. "Now, that's not so."

Babs was silent.

Grace turned to her, "Babs, am I ever mean to you?"

"No."

"Haven't we had fun with our Beethoven duets? "

"Yes."

"I don't like Ruth better than you. In fact, Ruth annoys me as much as she annoys everyone else."

"Then what's all this about, Nelle?"

"Babs says that Grace caters to Ruth," Nelle said.

"In what way?" Rog asked.

"Food." Nelle said. " Grace lets her put sugar on her cereal, for instance; and remembers to ask her if she wants second helpings."

"My stars, Nelle!" Grace said. "Her mother's paying board for her. I only try to keep Ruth happy with her meals. Remember, her mother is a gourmet cook who' s on the radio. You can't tell her not to have any sugar."

"Good grief! That we should come to this," Rog said.

"Is she really not coming back? " Dee asked.

"Her mother said she'd have to think it over," Rog said. "I did my best to smooth things out. She said she would write a letter when she's decided. She spoke of a private school for Ruth."

'Good idea!" Nelle muttered.

"Nelle! " Rog said. "Will you wake up to the state of our finances?"

Mim appeared in the kitchen doorway. She had been looking out the attic window. Now she spoke with a full measure of fifteen year old superiority.

"In case any of you might be interested, I'll tell you that the Beans and Mr. Sleeper are approaching and most of the Bumps are not far behind them."

"Oh, good night! Rog, see what you did. Here we sit among our dirty dishes. Dee, you and Babs and Jane slick up this kitchen, quick. ""

The Open House lasted more than two hours. Grace acted as the hostess, partly because Nelle seemed to be somewhat distracted by Rog's rebuke. Grace made tea, and it was served with cookies and fudge and some of the fruitcake Merle had sent. Nelle fell into conversation with Ola Bean and Ethel Bump, while Rog and Bill stood around talking with Waldo Bump, Ed Bean and Maurice Sleeper. Waldo Bump had brought a gallon of hard cider as a present, and the men went out into the kitchen to sample it. Ralph and Jim Bump had come with their parents and they sat around eating cookies and fudge and talking shyly with Mim and Jane and Dee and Babs. At four o'clock the company all left, as they wanted to get home before dark. As they left, Narze arrived, bringing with him a special treat, two quarts of ice cream. Nelle perked up then, as ice cream was never on the menu at Camp Forest Primeval, because there was no way to keep it

frozen. The Beans had an ice-house which they filled every winter with large blocks of ice cut from the frozen pond in the valley. They cut the ice with saws, hauled it in their big truck and packed it in saw-dust in the ice house, where it usually lasted through the summer.

Nelle loved ice cream as she loved all rich foods. But the girls protested that they were too full of cookies to eat it now.

Nelle said, "You'll have to or it'll melt. It's not cold enough out side to keep it hard."

Bill said, "Here, give it to me. I'll pack it in snow and-.salt."

Rog came in then. He'd been saying goodbye to the Beans. He looked

like a thundercloud, and Jane thought she knew why. She hoped he would not start a tirade now, the way he had earlier at the dinner table. Quickly she turned to Mim, who was sitting beside her.

"Oh, boy," she whispered. "Uncle Rog knows about Bristol."

"How'd he find out?" Mim whispered.

"Ed Bean. I think. "

Mim looked puzzled,

"We'll soon know," Jane said.

Mim instinctively sought to head off unpleasantness. Better than any other person, Mim could do things to charm and soothe Nelle and Roger.

"Aunt Nelle ," she coaxed," while we're waiting to get our appetites back , tell us some of your famous stories."

Nelle perked up and looked pleased. In past years, when the children were small, she had always occupied center stage. Lately , the girls were no longer the audience, for their doings, their comments and their boy-friends got all the attention. But Nelle didn't analyze things, and she responded to murry's request.

"Well, what one do you want to hear?"

Jane spoke up, "How about a Colorado story? The Christmas one. That would suit the season."

With a shyness that was uncharacteristic, Nelle said, "Oh, Narze doesn't want to hear any old stories."

"Sure. go ahead," Narze said. "I like stories."

"Well," Nelle began, "it was years ago. Rog and I were living up in the Rockies in a little one-room cabin. Rog was a telegrapher and he worked at a little train station two and a half miles from where we lived. He always walked. We had a horse, but Rog always preferred to walk to the station. After he left to go to work, I would get out the things I was making for him for Christmas. I used to make his shirts and things in those days. I was making him some very nice shirts, and nightshirts too, and linen hankies with hemstitched edges.

"At Christmas time Rog had made an arrangement with the other telegrapher about the way they'd divide their time on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Rog was to work until midnight on the twenty-fourth and then he wouldn't have to go in until noon on Christmas Day. I remember so well. I expected Rog home about one a.m. so I thought I 'd stay up to greet him and say 'Merry Christmas' , I usually went to bed and to sleep when Rog worked at night. And Brownie used to - oh, yes, I forgot to say we had a dog, sort of a medium-sized little dog. She was mixed breed but such a nice dog. We brought her back east with us when we left Colorado. Well, on this night I'm telling about, I was sleepy, but I wanted to wait up for Rog. I finally lay down to rest and I may have dozed a little. But Brownie roused me about eleven O'clock. She had been a little restless because Rog's schedule was different. He was either home and we were both in bed, or else if he worked nights, I just went to bed and to sleep. But, that night Brownie began this growling, real menacing growling ,deep in her throat. I looked out the window but didn't see anything, of course. It was dark. There wasn't any moon. And I couldn't hear anything either. But Brownie surely did. She kept

growling and she stood looking at one side wall of the house. And I told myself, 'There's something out there'. "

Narze was sitting beside Jane, and at this point in Nelle's story he shivered and Jane looked at him. He seemed completely spellbound. Nelle told the story well.

Nelle continued. "I thought about bears, but it was winter and they are supposed to hibernate. Still, there are stories about occasional bears that don't hole up when winter comes. They must be tougher or stronger, or maybe they are mentally deranged. Suppose it was a hungry insane bear. Then Brownie began growling at the back of the house. It was such a mean, low growl. And then I thought I heard something walking out there and Brownie gave one of her alarm barks. Then she growled and growled again, and the hair was standing up on the back of her neck. It was only eleven o'clock so I knew I couldn't look for Rog for a couple of hours. Then I heard a great loud bump at the back of the house, and then I was really scared, and Brownie was just furious. She was so brave. She wanted to get out and get whatever it was. And that loud bump was so high up I knew for sure it was a very large grizzly that was standing on its hind legs and trying to get in. I knew it must be a crazed bear. Brownie was making a dreadful racket. There was a back entrance through our little woodshed. That meant it would have to come through two doors, so I pushed our table in front of the door that went out to the shed. And I piled the chairs on top, and then I ran to the front and pushed our dresser against that door. I think I put my sewing machine there, too. Then we heard more bumps out back, and Brownie was barking and lunging, and then she started growling again at the side of the house and I heard something walking out there because the snow was cold and squeaky. I knew it must be moving to the front door, and Brownie knew it for sure. So I went and pushed on that dresser that was against the door, and my heart was pounding so hard and my mouth was dry. And then - you won't guess what happened next." Nelle paused. "Babs, honey, get me a nice drink of water, please, will you?" She counted on everyone waiting while Babs was in the kitchen, and they did, even though everyone but Narze had heard the story at least twice before. "Come on, Aunt Nelle," Mim said, "We're waiting."

"Well," Nelle said, sipping her water. "I told you my mouth was dry." Then she went on.

"I pushed against that dresser, and I knew that I could never hold it if the bear really wanted to come in by the door. I prayed it'd give up the idea and just go away. I'd been hoping that Rog would come home early, but I was so afraid the bear would kill him if he did. I could tell then that it was starting to push on the door. I ran quick and got the fire poker. I don't know why I didn't get our shotgun, but we never used it anyway, and as it turned out, it's a very good thing I didn't.

"I ran back to the door and I stood close to the front wall, and I raised the poker high like a baseball bat, ready to bash the bear in the face as soon as its head appeared. When the door started to push the dresser an inch or so I yelled in the roughest, loudest voice possible, Get out of here! Get! And then I heard Rog's voice. He shouted, 'What's going on in there?' and he pushed

his way in, lunging with his shoulder against the door. And he said, 'What's the matter with you? You got a man in here?' I said, 'No. But I thought I had a grizzly bear out there.' I shoved the dresser out of the way, and Rog kept looking all around the room. He said I was silly to think it was a bear in midwinter time, and I said, 'Well, I certainly didn't think it was you. You're early. And Brownie didn't think it was you, either.' "What were you doing, sneaking around the back of the cabin?" Rog looked sheepish and said 'Putting things up in the loft.' I said 'What things?' And he said, 'Now you've spoiled it. I was putting your Christmas presents up there.' Well, I told Rog things would really have been spoiled if he'd got hit in the face with the fire poker. Good thing he shouted before he put his head in. I was just about to give a terrible whack with that weapon. He agreed that he should have done things differently. But, by then, there was nothing left to do but say 'Merry Christmas and go to bed.' Narze had a question. "I don't quite understand about the loft. -Where was that, now?"

"We had attic space up in the gable, and it could only be reached from the outside. Rog had to take a ladder and climb up to put the Christmas presents away. He was too noisy about it. That's what the bumping noises were, "And I remember what he gave you for Christmas," Bill said.

"Yes," Nelle said. "Several things, I guess, but the main thing was a good, new teakettle. Wouldn't you know Rog would be thinking about tea?"

"Let's have some now," Jane said, thinking it might put her Uncle Rog in a good mood. He had not showed one shred of appreciation during the telling of Nelle's Christmas Eve story, and that wasn't like the Uncle Rog the cousins had grown up with.

Grace knew something was bothering her brother-in-law, in fact, everyone sensed it.

Babs said, "Let's have the ice cream now."

Mim and Jane dished up the ice cream and made tea. Narze had followed them out into the kitchen.

"I better start walking, Janie, or I might miss my taxi. He's not coming as far as the mailbox, only to the covered bridge,"

"How come?" Jane asked.

"He's afraid he can't make it up that next hill. "

"You mean you walked from the covered bridge?" Hurry said. -

"That's right," Narze said. "I wish I had a car."

"But that's over three miles!" Mim said.

"I know, and I've got to walk it again," he said. "I'd better get started."

"Just stay for the icecream," Jane said.

"I'll stay for a cup of hot tea, that's what," Narze said. "I've got a cold walk ahead of me." But he was sorry soon that he had stayed.

When the ice cream was served, Rog turned it down, but took a cup of tea and a cookie. He had meant to wait until Narze had left before saying what had been on his mind. And now it was Nelle who brought it forth. She should have known better, after his scolding at the dinner table a few hours earlier. But

now she said, "Daddy, you look so cross and glum. Cheer up , it's the beginning of a brand new year. Maybe things will be better this year."

"Not for us. Not as long as we have a bunch of dishonest, sneaky people here."

Everyone in the room was astonished except Mim and Jane, who guessed what he was angry about. But they had not been prepared for such a statement as that. Babs and Dee had no notion what it was about, nor did Nelle. Neither, in fact, did Grace and Bill , but Rog's harsh words made them feel resentful and defensive.

Narze was the first to speak. Standing up, he said, "It's time I went home. You have something to discuss among yourselves, so I'll say good night."

"Thank you for the ice cream, Narze," Grace said, and all of the others added their thanks as well. Except for Rog, who said to Narze. "Just a minute. Before you go. I want to ask a few questions. What part did you play in that trip to the basketball game? The one the girls went to a couple of weeks ago?"

Narze said, "None at all. I didn't go to that."

"You didn't go? What boys did go?"

"With the girls? None. They went by themselves. I had to work that night in my dad's store. Mr. Fison, I've got to go or my taxi won't wait for me."

"Alright, but I notice your father doesn't let you take his car."

"He doesn't have a car, Mr. Fison. Goodnight, everyone."

Narze left, and Jane got up and followed him.

Rog spoke to her. "Just a minute, Jane. Where are you going? I want to talk to you."

"I'll be right back. I'm just going to say goodnight to him. "

Everyone in the room was looking upset.

"Grace," Rog said. "Were you aware these girls took the car to Bristol?"

"Rog, don't give me the third degree," Grace said. "I didn't know any more than Nelle knew. Remember , she was here then."

"How about you, Bill? Did you know where they went that night? "

"Not before they went , " said Bill.

"But after they went, eh? And you didn't tell Nelle and Grace. And you didn't say a word to me."

"Nope, I didn't," Bill said. "Because I didn't think it was important.

But these days, Rog, you get your self all upset over nothing."

"I don't consider it nothing that these girls lie about what they do."

At that, Jane spoke up. "We didn't lie."

"It's the same as lying to let people assume you weren't going out of town. "

"We only did 'What a lot of other students did. We were celebrating the beginning of Christmas vacation. There'll be other games too. I suppose you won't want us to go."

"It's just disappointed and disgusted with all of you. And I've got to go to New York tomorrow with all this on my mind, and the worry about Ruth Akins

too."

"Daddy , calm down," Nelle said. "It will work out."

It was the first thing she had said. She had been subdued since he scolded her earlier. She had not yet decided whose side to be on, Rog's or the girls'. So all she said was, "Honey, I think we're all tired. I vote that we all turn in and get some rest now."

But Rog did not intend to be soothed. "That would be nice, but I really don't have a place to turn in, do I? The studio's small enough for Bill without me in there too."

Almost everyone in the room was thinking privately that Rog should not complain so much, since the whole venture had been his idea, and every person in Camp Forest Primeval was there at his and Nelle's invitation. But not one of them cared to

or dared to remind him of this fact.

And so, at the end of this first day of the new year, most of them went to bed resolving, as they had done nearly every summer in past years, never again, oh, never again.

#####

New Year's Day had marked a turning point at Camp Forest Primeval. Roger's negative frame of mind was still with him the next day. Dee had hoped to ride with him to New York, where she would take the bus to Cleveland. She spent the early morning hours finishing her packing, and though Grace was teary-eyed at the prospect, Dee was very much in the mood to leave. She was eager to see her old crowd.

"Honey, I just hate to have you go," Grace told her.

"Mother, there is no point in my staying a minute longer. Christmas is over, and I don't like the atmosphere here lately. "

But Dee and all the others still did not realize the extent of Rog's anxiety and resentment. The Money worries were now taking second place to Rog's conviction that none of all the friends and relatives who had ever visited Forest Camp had really appreciated the opportunity. He loved the place so deeply that it was like a personal blow when others did not love it equally. He wanted them to show their love. Adults could do this by "contributing" and by returning.

Children could do it by behaving as they should, and by begging to return.

Rog acknowledged only two drawbacks to life at the camp - the punishing hill, and the privy. Wood-stoves, oil lamps, hauling water, were simple "roughing it" experiences. Neither the hill nor the privy should bother the children, since they were too young to suffer from the demands of either. Rog had always been sure the cousins were thrilled to come to camp. But now they were bigger, they no longer showed any respect for the rules - his and Nelle's rules which were all made for good reason.

But the night before, when they bedded down in the studio, Bill could not refrain from expressing his thoughts.

"Rog, I know you're mad because the kids went to Bristol, but to me, it doesn't seem like anything much."

"That's because you're not responsible for them."

"No, it isn't that. It's just that they're normal kids, good kids."

"They're too young, and they think they're smart. They don't have any respect for Nelle and me any more."

"But Rog, what's wrong with them having fun like the other kids at school. They're old enough to drive there."

"I only bought that car for going to school, not for running around the state, particularly at night."

"That's the only trip they ever made. You're too hard on them. After all, look what you did when you were a kid. Left home and ran off and stayed away for years."

But that reminder, of course, only made Roger angry, so the two did not speak again that night.

In the morning, when Nelle got up and saw Dee's luggage lined up ready to be taken down the hill in "Thundering Ann," she came to Dee and said, "We'll miss you, kid. Wish you could stay, but we understand. I'm awfully sorry about what happened with your job, and all that mess. Anyway, I know things will work out. We must all hold the right thoughts."

But, right thoughts or no, things that day did not work out well at all.

Rog told Dee he would not take her to New York on this trip. He did not say why he wouldn't, and when she asked him if he might take her to Boston -to get a Greyhound bus from there, he refused.

He said, "I'm disappointed in all ' you children. You'll just have to go when it's convenient for me to take you. You're all too used to getting your way about everything."

"Uncle Rog," Dee said, "in the first place, it's been a very long time since I've had my way about anything. I'd think you would be glad to help me leave here, then you'd have one less person to be disappointed in. I merely want to get back to Cleveland and go to business school."

Dee's statement upset him, but he did not want to give in.

"I'll take you next trip," he said.

"If you're trying to punish me by making me stay here you're succeeding,"

Dee said, and she stumped upstairs to the attic where she remained until after Roger and his luggage had gone down the hill in the Thundering Ann with Bill. an unsmiling Bill, at the wheel.

It had been an unsettling holiday weekend for Nelle. First, Rog had scolded her about Ruth Akins. He had not been overly pleasant when the Beans were there with Sleeper, the caretaker. and he'd embarrassed everybody by pitching into poor Narze about the trip the girls had taken to Bristol. And then this morning he'd puzzled everyone by refusing to take Dee to New York. So Nelle was embarrassed by it all, and she hated the feeling. She and Rog always backed each other up in matters of the children's discipline and she intended to do it now, but she was upset. She was only comfortable when she was in command at Camp Forest Primeval, and lately she hadn't felt that way. Her foolish real estate venture had begun it. Nelle hated being vulnerable to criticism. Rog had not forgiven her for that, and now he was blaming her in the business of Ruth Akins, and probably for the trip to Bristol, too. She had no intention of taking that blame. After Rog and Bill went down the hill, Nelle's feelings boiled over. It was Monday, January 2nd, a legal holiday, and the girls were enjoying their last day of vacation. Grace was in the kitchen washing up the breakfast dishes. Unfortunately, Nelle felt she must comment.

"Why don't you have the kids do those?" she asked.

"It's their last day of vacation," Grace said. "Anyway , I'm in the habit of doing the dishes when the girls are in school."

"Then this is your last day of vacation, kid."

"Oh, I don't mind, Nelle. It won't take long to do these."

Actually, doing dishes at Camp Forest Primeval was not at all like doing dishes "back in civilization" as the girls called it. It meant water heated in huge kettles on the wood-stove, and two large round dishpans in the big black iron sink, one for washing and one for rinsing with scalding water. Milk pans, pitchers, and milk pails to be done first, next all drinking glasses, then silverware, followed by chinaware etc. Pots and pans last, of course, and when all was finished the iron sink must be rubbed with oil lest it rust.

Nelle watched as Grace went through these procedures, before she spoke.

"You've always spoiled your kids, Grace."



The kitchen at Forest Camp
from water color by G. M. Rahming

Grace turned around to stare at Nelle.

"Now, why do you say that? My girls haven't had easy lives, Nelle."

"Not in some ways, but that's no reason to spoil them, They need discipline just the same."

"They've had discipline, just like adults get disciplined. Life does it to you. And my girls have already experienced it."

"Oh, pooh! That's not what I'm talking about. Your kids, and Merle's too, are rotten spoiled. Get everything they want."

"They're all nice girls, and they haven't ever had much money to spend on what they want."

"Well, they've had good clothes, and music lessons and that sort of thing."

"And you call that being spoiled, Nelle?"

"It's just that you're so soft on them. Never want to scold. "

"And scolding is really what you like to do, isn't it? You're scolding me right now. Nelle, you're too obsessed with discipline and hard work. You make it the only thing in your life. Goodness knows some things are much harder here, but at the Same time, life *is* simpler too. Nelle, why isn't it possible for us all to have a relaxed day once in a while? Now, this is a Monday, but it's still officially New Year's Day. Wouldn't it be nice to forget to harangue people about chores and discipline just for one day?"

"It's not possible to forget them," Nelle said.

"Oh, it is too. They'll wait. Norris once said you try to ran a 'penal colony' here."

"Norris said what?"

"Oh, never mind," Grace said, knowing it had been a mistake to mention Norris's name.

"Norris was a shirker here if there ever was one," Nelle said.

"He worked hard on everything but privy cleaning, and that's because you rejected his excellent idea to build a nice light moveable privy, that would have done away with a repulsive job, and made it easy."

"Oh, piffle!" Nelle said. "We settled that question ten years ago, because I knew that with little children we had to keep our two-place privy so that the tykes wouldn't fall through the big hole."

"Oh, now, Nelle, that's silly. Your bathroom in Jackson Heights doesn't have two toilets, does it? You got Babs when she was three. She never went down the drain, Norris said that all you needed for his 'sedan chair privy' was to have a double lid with the one cut out for little people. Norris was always very clever and inventive and he did a lot of work around here on other things. You know he spent hours improving the road, and he and Bill tore down that old carriage shed and the woodshed too."

"Oh," said Nelle. "I'm aware of that. Norris always loved to wreck buildings. Look at all the wrecking he did when he was at the Old Brick. Father was awfully mad. He said Norris was too handy with a wrecking bar."

"Norris made great improvements at the farm. It looked much neater after we cleared away all those old ramshackle little outbuildings. Nelle, you've never

been entirely fair to Norris. You at least could give the devil his due instead of always maligning him. Norris is a fine person in many, many ways. You just never liked him at all."

"She doesn't like any of us," Jane said. She had just appeared in the doorway. "You never liked me or mother, but till this morning I was sure you and Uncle Rog were fond of Dee."

Nelle turned to glare at Jane. "You've been in there eavesdropping!"

"Eavesdropping! Mim and Babs and I have all heard your argument. We've been sewing. Dee is up in the attic. She's been crying about the way Uncle Rog treated her this morning."

"Uncle Rog," said Nelle, "has terrible money worries."

"Everyone has money worries," Jane said.

"You're getting very impudent, young lady," Nelle said. "You're not old enough to talk that way to me."

"If I were twenty or thirty or forty you wouldn't think I was old enough, Aunt Nelle. You want to treat everyone like babies. It wasn't my idea to be here this year. And *Dad* didn't even want me to be here. He'd be quite happy to send me money to get out of here. Uncle Rog blamed me because we all went to the basketball game. I never should have come here this year. In fact, I never should have ever come here any year. And I'll be happy to get out the first chance I get."

"Good!" Nelle said angrily. "And it can't be too soon to suit me."

"Fine," Jane said. "I'll write to Dad today. And I'll ask for extra money so I can take the train all the way. I wouldn't dream of asking Uncle Rog to give me a ride to New York. "

"I think everyone should calm down now," Grace said, realizing immediately that she reminded herself of Rosella Rahming trying to pour Christian Science oil on troubled waters.

For the remainder of the day everyone in Camp Forest Primeval was subdued and uncommunicative. Trouble with Nelle was no unheard-of thing, though Grace, Mim, and Babs had all been surprised at Jane's outburst (as was Jane herself).

She'd always been afraid of Nelle. But, it was the change in Roger's personality that disheartened everyone. Mim and Jane had decided to overlook and forgive his tending to "fondle" when he greeted them. Older men were sometimes like that, they told each other. But he had always been full of fun and laughter with his nieces and nephews, and lately he was unpleasant, gloomy, and downright depressing to be around. The girls were disillusioned to find him so changed. They would have thought it never could happen.

Nelle and Grace were concerned about it, too, as was Bill, and Dee was angry and hurt.

That evening Grace wrote an entry in her sporadic journal, which so often was expressed in the form of a letter to Norris. Tonight she wrote:

January 2, 1933

"Oh, Norris, it is a New Year and still happiness eludes me. Here I am in this lovely place you and I loved so much. What should have been a truly marvelous adventure here this winter, is falling apart

because of Nelle's inability to get along with people. And O, horror of horrors, Rog is becoming like her. I am afraid we may all go our separate ways. I, perhaps, to Vienna soon. Who knows?"

That night Nelle did not sleep well. She regretted her harsh words to Jane, because they might produce results she really didn't intend. Would Jane really decide to go back to her father? Or was she so fond of Narze that she would want to stay. Nelle couldn't be certain about that, but if Jane left just now it would be most unfortunate. Nelle and Bill would then be the only ones on the hill who could drive a car when Roger was away. Grace had never learned to drive and she herself had learned too late; she hated it and didn't intend to drive again at all, let alone over icy roads. And Rog had never wanted Bill to drive the girls to school. Bill didn't even have a New Hampshire license, but the main thing was, Rog thought Bill might get hold of some liquor and start drinking again. Beyond all that was the question of Ruth Akins. It now appeared that she wasn't going to come back. If so, Rog would be even more depressed. He wasn't acting at all like himself lately. He not only worried about money, but he had hated his job for a long time. Selling advertising had never been anything but a bore to him, but once it had paid them quite well. He had been really happy in the days when he was a telegrapher. And he'd been happy if he could make a living as a writer. That was much easier said than done. Like making a living at fine art.

Nelle was sorry that Rog had been cross with Dee. They'd always adored each other. Too bad that kids couldn't understand why discipline was necessary. She and Rog believed absolutely that girls needed plenty of dishes and housework to build character. And boys needed to chop wood. For city boys it was hard to find anything equivalent to wood chopping and kindling-splitting. Such work, Rog said, was valuable because it was boring and made your back hurt. Bill Wooldridge Jr. was an example. He'd chopped plenty of wood at Forest Camp. Then when he'd got older, he got a Saturday job delivering groceries in Jackson Heights, hauling them up the dumb-waiters in the apartments. Next he'd got work washing floors and woodwork for some of Nelle's friends and Rog's sister Nellie. Next thing they knew, Nellie had introduced Billy to someone at the Tennis Club and before long, he was in charge of all the tennis courts. At the Tennis Club Billy had met a man who was with the Corn Exchange Bank, and that man had been so impressed with Billy's enthusiasm for hard work that he'd taken him under his wing and arranged for surgery to correct Billy's crossed eyes. Nelle had a slightly guilty feeling that the family should have seen about that when Billy was younger. It might have been Christian Science that prevented that, but Nelle couldn't recall that Science had ever been tried. Rog was proud of Billy and maintained that the hours he'd spent in the woodpile in past summers had served him well. There was no argument about it, kids needed good stiff discipline. Some day these girls would be grateful for their hours at the dishpan and the washtub. Grace had trouble sleeping too. She was worried about Jane and Nelle's exchange of harsh words and what it might lead to in the very near future. Jane seemed certain she wanted to go back to Cleveland. Even though she was fond of Narze Samaha she said she was going back to her father. For years now Jane had

been certain that Nelle didn't like her. Grace knew that there was some truth in the idea, but she'd told Jane that if she "showed more love" to Nelle she'd find it returned. Jane had reported that "it doesn't work." The thing seemed to start in 1926. Before that, when Jane was small, Nelle seemed to like her well enough, though after she'd nearly died of Whooping cough she'd looked terrible - dark circles under her eyes, poor color, and thin. "Starving Armenian" Norris had called her. And at the same time Nelle had taken little Mim who was Cameron headed and adorable, and cared for her like her own. So it was quite a contrast. Jane of course had gained weight again and at six she had a certain charm, but in a few years she'd grown thin again - vegetarian food, too much Christian Science, bad tonsils, and other problems stemming from a cold after her tonsillectomy. In 1926 she was thin again and then, at the start of summer vacation Dee and Jane had both had their hair cut in a "boyish bob" which was the latest fashion. On fifteen-year-old Dee it was not unattractive. but on Jane it was a disaster. She was, at ten, thin but growing fast, "spindling up", with long arms and legs, dark sun-tanned skin, and plenty of mosquito bites. Grace could understand why Jane didn't tug at Nelle's heartstrings during those pre-adolescent years. And Jane was too aware of this; often she hadn't really wanted to go to Camp Forest Primeval, but she'd had to, after Aunt Ada left. And she said she'd been most unhappy there, and never wanted to go back. But now, things were different. Jane wasn't an ugly duckling any more. However, there could be new problems. Nelle had Babs to worry about, and it didn't help that the other girls had boy friends and better report cards, while Babs couldn't seem to lose weight. Nelle had told Jane that she couldn't leave Camp Forest Primeval soon enough. And now Jane was angry and planning to leave. Grace had no idea what would result if Jane did leave. How would Babs and Mim get to school? Or would Mim perhaps decide to go back to Oberlin? Bill might have to get a driver's license, but he'd only been staying for the girls' sake. He'd probably leave too. Grace realized how cloudy and uncertain her own outlook had now become. She decided that first thing tomorrow she would have to write to Elma again. But the next day the girls, including Dee, returned to school. When they came home they brought the mail with them. There was a letter for Nelle from Mrs. Akins. She read it promptly, then made an announcement. "Well, old dears." she said "It seems Ruth is coming back to us." "Oh, phooey," said Babs. "Well. Babs," Nelle said, "Daddy says we need the money, so we have to be patient." Grace, Jane and Mim decided not to enter into any discussion concerning Ruth Akins, but Bill had one observation. "Well, I guess we won't have to start eating porcupine after all," he said. The next morning at her first opportunity, Jane spoke to Mim alone. "You'll never guess what happened last night after you and Babs went to bed." she said. "Aunt Nelle told me she was sorry she'd talked to me so harshly

the other morning. As long as I've known her I've never heard her apologize to anybody - let alone me."

"Offhand," said Mim, "I don't recall such a thing either. What were her exact words? Did she actually say, 'I apologize'?"

"Heavens, no! She just said, 'I'm sorry I was cross the other day. I was tired. We don't want you to leave',"

"Well, still, for Aunt Nelle, that's really something," Mim said. "She must like you better than you think she does."

"Oh, no," Jane said. "Oh, no. That's not it. I haven't any such illusions. I know why she talked pretty to me. She needs me to drive the car. It's that simple. And now that Ruth is coming back, it's especially important that I stay."

"What about your letter to Uncle Norris?"

"I talked to Narze for a few minutes. He made me promise to wait at least a week until I cool down. He doesn't want me to go, and of course, I feel the same way. But I can't forget what Aunt Nelle said about my leaving."

"But she said she was sorry. Janie."

"Well, she's not sorry for the right reasons, Hurry. They just need me, right now, to drive the car."

By the end of the week, Roger was back from New York with Ruth Akins. Ruth brought with her most of her many Christmas presents. She had a stack of new records, a suitcase full of new clothes, and several Christmas envelopes full of new money. Jane could not help but recall that only two years ago her father and Pauline had provided just such a Christmas for her and for Dee. Minus the stack of records of course. Norris despised "popular music."

Babs was the most disturbed by all of Ruth Akins' holiday loot, for she, too, could remember glorious Christmas mornings in past years, and she heartily disliked Ruth Akins. But, "She thinks she's good," was all she said.

Ruth privately confided to Jane, "I wasn't going to come back. Mother thought maybe she should send me to a girls' school, but I got lonesome for Harl. I told Mother that the air in New York was making me sick. I did catch a cold. I told her I loved it up here because the air is so wonderful. I didn't tell her that it's Harl that's so wonderful."

A week later, on Sunday, Roger, Nelle and Dee set out for the trip to New York. Grace, Jane and Mim were teary-eyed when they kissed Dee goodbye, and Babs and Dee were frankly crying.

"I don't know when I'll see you, Mother, if you go to Vienna," Dee sobbed.

"Oh, you'll see me," Grace assured her. "You and Janie will both probably be joining me."

Soon they were gone off down the hill, with Bill driving Thundering Ann and Roger beside him, with Dee and Nelle in the back, sitting with the luggage. Camp Forest Primeval was quiet. The tension that had filled the air all during the holidays was suddenly gone. But not forgotten.

Mury said to Jane, "I'm glad I'm not Dee, having to ride all day with them. They're in a bad mood lately."

When Bill got back up the hill it was lunch time.

"I wasn't sure Ann was going to make it," he said. "It thawed some , and then froze, and the hill's got some real bad icy spots."

After lunch , Babs said , "Aunt Grace, would it be OK if we didn't do the dishes right away?"

"I s'pose, but why? " Grace asked.

"Just for the pure luxury of letting them sit there," Mim said. "Just for the pure wickedness of it."

Grace and Bill laughed , but Grace reminded them.

"Aren't the boys coming today?"

"Narze wouldn't give a darn," Jane said. "Let the dishes sit."

"Let's do something different ," Mim said. "Let' s see what we can do with the living room. With the Christmas tree gone , it looks awful again."

"What can be done with it?" Babs said. "There's no real furniture there. Not enough places to sit."

"Let's get another cot, and then we'll have two couches," Jane said.

"They're in the barn, and the mattresses are up in the attic."

Grace got in the spirit of the thing and said she had a box of pretty things in the attic - things from the house in Westport.

An hour later, the room was transformed. From Grace's big box they'd found three pairs of theatrical gauze curtains in a pretty copper color. They'd put the two cots at right angles to each other on the south and east walls, with a table in the corner. They put bright Indian print spreads on the cots and hung one on the wall. Jane had found some bright-colored yard goods and was making covers for the pillows for the cots. Mim was in a chair taking down the white curtains and putting up the bright ones.

Ruth said, "Will Aunt Nelle approve of all these changes?"

Babs said, "They'll be gone a month, Mother said. She has four dentist appointments. We can change it back before she gets here again."

"She might like it anyway," Mim said, and then she gave a gasp. She was staring out the front window with the curtain rod in her hand. "Oh, my gawsh!" she said. "Oh, my gawsh!"

"What?" everyone chorused.

"Here they come," she said. "Here they come back. "

"What? " they all asked.

"Uncle Rog and Aunt Nelle. And Dee."

AT THIS RATE I'LL LOSE MY MIND

Dee found life at the Channing Avenue place very changed from what it had been eight months earlier. When she entered the house it seemed so very small. She had remembered it as very spacious, with its three large rooms in a row; first the big room off the entry hall, with the fireplace and stairway to the second floor, then beyond an archway, a comfortable living room, and after that, through another arch, the big dining room, with only a long table and six chairs. And on the back wall one of Norris ' s mountain landscapes with a view of the blue distances. The three rooms had presented a long spacious vista. Things had been so cramped and crowded at Camp Forest Primeval that Dee was looking forward to the space

and comfort of her father's place. Camp Forest Primeval was essentially only a summer cottage with odds and ends of camp furniture mixed in among a few valuable antique pieces, and crowded with people and their books , records, and items of clothing such as boots and jackets drying by the fire.

On the bus trip home Dee began looking forward to the dignity and charm of the Channing Avenue house. The fact that the rooms were rather sparsely furnished only added to their dignity. Norris had been the decorator and Pauline had been in accord with his choices. Dee remembered it all. The woven drapes that hung from the high ceiling to the floor, where they lay in folds, working wonders with the unsightly archways. The uncluttered dining room where the dark wood expanse of the refectory table was broken only by a blue pottery bowl that picked up the blue of Norris's mountain landscape behind it. Dee could recall, if not all the details, at least the atmosphere of the place, and most of all she longed for her own room. There had been no privacy at Camp Forest Primeval.

When Norris brought her home from the bus station she had experienced a shock on entering.

"It looks so different, so small," she said.

"It certainly does," Norris said. "Can't you see why?"

Dee hesitated a moment. "Yes. All Grandma's stuff."

The piano, the settee and extra tables and chairs filled the front room.

The living room mostly unchanged, but beyond it Rosella's golden oak sideboard had pushed the table off-center, and on the back wall, instead of the blue, mountain oil painting, the large portrait of Norris's great-great-grandfather brought one's gaze to an abrupt stop. Against a black background the ruddy, benign countenance of the Quaker ancestor, born in the eighteenth century, was very impressive, but by his very human presence , he cut the vista short.

Norris would eventually move the patriarch to the wall at the top of the stairs and restore "The Pyrenees" to the dining room wall.

Pauline, Rosella and Edith greeted Dee warmly, helping dispel somewhat the uneasiness with which she had approached her homecoming. There had been some frosty words before her departure last May and she had rather dreaded facing Pauline. But all seemed pleasant enough. Edie, particularly, seemed delighted to have Dee return.

She was very apologetic. "You'll find your room very crowded, dear, I'm

afraid. There are two beds in there now, because Mother and I are in Jane's room. And if Jane comes back, she'll have to – "

Norris interrupted – "If Jane comes back? She will be back."

"That's right, Daddy. I'm sure she will, at the end of the school year.

Because things are coming apart up there. And besides, Mother's planning to go to Vienna."

"One wild scheme after another. She ought to just come back to Cleveland and get back into her old work."

"No," Dee said. "She says she'll never do fashion art again. She doesn't like that kind of art or that kind of pressure."

As Edith had warned, Dee found her room extremely crowded. The room had never been intended to contain two beds, and even if Jane had had a dresser, there'd have been no room for it. So Dee would have to share hers with Jane eventually. And Then she opened her closet she found that Jane's extra clothing had been added to her own things. But, until Jane returned, things would not be too dreadful. Dee got to thinking about Jane, who could have had the room for herself, if the job in New York had turned out successfully. Dee had been tired and she went to bed early that night, but next day she began trying to reach her old friends by telephone. That first day she had no luck, as none of them were home. For a time she felt a bit homesick for Forest Camp and those who remained there, with promise of adventures.

Norris was pleased to have Dee with him. He had always enjoyed having the girls at the dinner table because they livened up the conversation. Pauline, Edith and Rosella were, for the most part, listeners who contributed little in the way of table chatter, although Pauline had a half-dozen anecdotes from her school days that she liked to tell, but these she had used up long ago. Edith enjoyed the girls' conversation as much as Norris, though she contributed only her gentle, slightly breathless, laughter.

Norris had always enjoyed holding forth at the table. In years past, he had entertained Ada, Edie and his parents with information on a variety of timely subjects. Ada, particularly, had been pleased to find that Norris had a strong interest in family geneology, and before she died she had been able to supply him with answers to many questions concerning the origins and vital statistics of her family background. For the Rahming family history he had had to turn to Aunt Victoria to learn whatever his own father had not supplied. For when Garrett died in 1920, he and Norris had never held long conversations about anything, since Rosella had put a distance between Garrett and his son. Norris missed Ada's presence at mealtime. In her years after breaking her hip, she had read the newspaper thoroughly and always had something to report. A real gloom had settled on them all, even Pauline, when they'd had to sit down to a meal with Ada no longer in her chair next to the oak sideboard.

On Dee's first dinner at home, Norris was full of curiosity about Forest Camp.

"So things aren't running so smoothly on the hill?"

"Oh, Daddy, it's Uncle Rog. He's turned into an awful crab lately. I always adored him, and he's been just vile."

"Well, what's the trouble?" Norris asked.

"Money worries, I guess he bit off more than he could chew with his plan to winter up there. There are more people than there ought to be, but it'd be too much work for just two or three."

"Is your mother doing a lot of art work?"

"No. She is working like a kitchen drudge. She's doing all the cooking."

"What about Nelle? She always did the cooking."

"When she's there, she just putters around, sorting things. But half the time she isn't there, she's down in New York with Uncle Rog. They were going to rent the apartment, or lease it. In fact, someone did spend a month there, but Aunt Nelle never could get it in shape to lease it. She goes down there and sorts things and never finishes, and then she goes back up to the hill and sorts things there and never finishes."

"She sounds as if old age is setting in," Norris said.

"Sort of, but she's still the way she always was, except that she sleeps all evening, and wakes up when everyone else is ready for bed. Things were pretty strained up there before I got away. Uncle Rog was furious because we went to that basketball game."

"Well, I'd like to hear more about that. That car Jane's driving around sounds terrible, or else she doesn't know how to drive. Skidding and running into a tree! "

"Running into a tree? We didn't run into anything. We did skid, but that's all. We just came on home, but I did lose my money. Why'd you think we hit a tree? Whoever said that?"

"You said all the anti-freeze leaked out of the radiator. I assumed "

Dee laughed. "No, it's just that a gallon of anti-freeze turned on its side and leaked a little bit. Later, when we turned around to go back, we drove into a deep drift and it opened the little handle at the bottom of the radiator and drained out all the water and then the car wouldn't go."

"Naturally," Norris said. "Jane should have known that. She's too young to drive those winter roads."

"No, she isn't, Daddy. She's just as good as Uncle Rog, and maybe better. He's too angry to drive, and Aunt Nelle's too nervous. Young people are good drivers unless they're wild. Janie isn't the wild type. But let me tell you about Uncle Rog. He wouldn't take me to New York after New Years. He made me wait. It wasn't till later that we went, and we started out last Monday, but the roads were kind of slick and Aunt Nelle was very nervous and they argued and Uncle Rog said he knew how to drive on winter roads, but anyway he decided to turn around and go back. It was silly because we were half way to Plymouth by then. So we had to go back and walk up the hill. And when we got there, we found that Mother and the kids had decided to redecorate the living room. It really was nice, so pretty, but Aunt Nelle was upset. She didn't really throw a fit, but I know that she thought 'when the cat's away the mice will play.' The next morning we left again, and the roads were a little better, but Uncle Rog was in a bad mood again, and he drove the car into a ditch."

"Don't tell me you went back again," Norris said.

"No, but the Buttons got us out of the ditch and on our way at last. But I'm quite sure that I'll never go there again. When I was going down the hill I knew it was the last time I'd ever see it, and it was all covered with snow. I'll try to remember it as it was when I was a kid. It was such a magic place, and I adored Aunt Nelle and Uncle Rog then. But they've changed, Daddy."

"Everything changes. Which brings me to the painful subject of money. I wonder if you young people have any notion of how bad things are. You're going to have to change your ideas. Probably Rog is just worried sick. How does he feed such a mob? How many altogether? "

"Well, there's Mother, Aunt Nelle and Uncle Bill, and the four kids, Mim, Janie, Babs, and Ruth. That makes seven. Uncle Rog himself, of course, and me. Nine in all."

"Good grief! No wonder Rog is cross. Who is Ruth?"

"A kid from New York," Dee said. "Went to Nellie's camp."

"Rog's crazy to try to feed so many mouths."

"Well, Daddy, Ruth is an asset. She pays seventeen-fifty a week board. That's what we used to buy food for all of us. "

"Well, Pauline gives Edith ten dollars a week for the four of us and we manage, but it will have to be enough now you're here. Pauline can't manage any more. She's the only one making money every week, but she doesn't make much. When I get work or sell a picture, I have to use it all for rent or a ton of coal."

Dee. looked worried.

"And now I'm home, you'll all have to eat less , " she said.

Eddie spoke up for the first time. "Don't you worry. We'll manage. I'll just have to figure more carefully."

Rosella suggested, "We can eat macaroni twice a week, or potatoes, green peppers and cheese. We don't have to have meat every day. We could be vegetarians again."

"We'll have some meat," Norris decreed. "Pauline isn't a vegetarian, Mother." But it was not until several days later that Dee fully realized how financially strapped her father was.

Her third evening at home Dee had arranged to meet Jane Pizzi at the old gathering place near the Cleveland University campus. Jane was one of a half-dozen of Dee's best college friends. She was vivacious and emotional, very Italian, and very much in love, she told Dee. Jane was a senior now, for she had been a good student in spite of spending many hours in the "Rendezvous" hobnobbing with "the gang." Jane brought Dee up to date on most of the others.

though she had no news of two art students Dee had hoped to see again. Jane really only wanted to talk about the man in her life. a chiropody student who had one more year in school.

They stayed for an hour and a half, during which time they each drank two cokes. You couldn't sit too long in the college hang-outs without ordering something. Dee said she was almost broke. and Jane admitted that she too. had to pinch pennies. Dee went home that evening without seeing anyone she knew other than Jane.

The next day Dee went again to the University Rendezvous and drank cokes with two girls who had been in her own class. They were now in their third year at Cleveland U. and had become more serious in their studying. They wondered if Dee was coming "back to school."

"Yes," said Dee. "but not here. I've not been forgiven yet by Dad and Pauline. I'm going to take more business courses. I might go downtown to Wilson College of Commerce, or maybe I'll just go to Franklin again, to night school. It's so convenient to go there since it's just over the back fence."

She asked the girls, Pat Brookins and Ruth Collins, if they had seen Billy Huston lately, and they had assured her that they had occasionally seen him in the Rendezvous. They didn't know whether he was still in school or not. During the course of the evening he did not appear, and presently Dee and her friends went home.

The following evening Dee hoped to go again to the Rendezvous in search of more old friends. It was still a week before the new semester would begin, and there was nothing stimulating about her life at home with Grandma, Edie, and Pauline. Norris was always busy in his darkroom, Pauline busy in her sewing room. Rosella and Edie were much of the time in their bedroom. Dee said to herself, at this rate I'll lose my mind. She was certain that Pauline disapproved of her going to the Rendezvous, but for the time-being it was the only way she could get back in circulation with her friends. She counted on her father being more understanding, but nevertheless she approached him very tentatively after dinner.

"Daddy?" she said, "I'm completely broke."

"Well, honey," he said, "so am I."

I don't need much. I just like to go to the Rendezvous and talk to the kids. It's cheap entertainment. A coke is only a dime.

If you could let me have a dollar or two, Daddy?"

"Dee, I can tell you don't realize yet how bad things are. I have some money owing to me, but don't know when I'll get it. Right now, I'm in the painful position of having to ask Pauline for money for gas for my car. Any money I give you has to come from her. I just can't provide an allowance for you.

I think you might arrange to do some household chores for Pauline, though, and she would pay you. You may not like that idea, however. I don't know."

"I'll do work I'm not too proud. I just need a little fun."

"You don't have to go to the Rendezvous every night, Dee."

"I won't. I'm just hoping to meet Billy Huston and let people know I'm back home again. I'll be in night school next week, remember. "

He relented and gave her forty cents.

Within two weeks she was dating again, studying hard, and washing windows and floors for Pauline. But she had seen no sign of Billy Huston.

THE VENTURE HERE IS ENDING

At Camp Forest Primeval life settled into a fairly fixed routine. The weather was very cold, so existence on the hill was rigorous. Bill's life involved the continual feeding of four fires, one in the studio which was his abode, and three in the house – fireplace kitchen, and circulating heater. For half an hour every morning he also split a pile of birch and pine logs. At fifty-three he was partaking of the woodpile discipline that Roger felt every boy should have to build character.

And in the house, Grace was building her character with the valuable dishwashing duty Roger recommended for girls.

For Babs, Ruth, Mim and Jane life was hard as well. Up early, to dress before the fire, to eat breakfast while Bill assisted Grace in preparing sandwiches for their school lunch. Then, bundled against the frigid morning air, it was off down the hill to hope the little Buick Four would start. It seldom did on Mondays. Then they would call on the private battery-operated phone line and Bill would come down the hill with Thundering Ann to try and get the Buick going. Sometimes they simply clambered back up the hill and gave up the whole idea.

But most days they went to school where there was dancing in the auditorium at noon, and they would see their boy-friends, who also, to her delight, would dance with Babs.

Though life was strenuous, it was also never boring, and it was easier for all, especially Bill and Grace, since all the tension and rancor had gone out of it when Nelle and Rog went to New York. The girls were happier, for they did not feel the strange burden of Nelle and Rog's disapproval, and more than that, they were all wrapped up in the fact that all but Babs were going steady. At least three nights a week, Narze Samaha, Harl Pease and Eddie Fracher puffed up the snowy mountain path to spend an evening with the girls. Grace marveled at their dedication and secretly felt that the girls should feel highly flattered.

Grace was not as worldly as she supposed. She was (in spite of Norris's intense pursuit of her years ago) a Victorian at heart, and she had no real concept of the biological **drives** that propelled the boys up the mountain side. Not that there was any privacy for the young couples that winter. Opportunities to be alone were few and far between. But there was dancing, and there was closeness. There was a valentine dance at the school and the girls were permitted to drive to town to attend it. For Jane and Narze there was a chance to be alone that evening, and that time, Jane did not say "No" to Narze. The occasion was followed by remorse and tears on Narze's part. He was angry with himself, and Jane had to comfort him. He began to speak more and more often about getting married, and Jane always insisted that they would first have to go to college. It would be two months before there would be another opportunity for Jane to not say "No". During this long period from January to April, Grace grew increasingly frustrated. Nelle and Roger had been in New York for ten weeks. Rog, of course, had to be traveling much of the time, but Nelle could have been on the hill most of the time. Instead, it turned out that they had not leased the apartment after all. And Nelle was keeping herself down in the city with a nice, modern bathroom,

steam heat, and convenient stores that would deliver the groceries to her dumb-waiter. And there was a good radio, that never had dead batteries. Grace began to wonder how Nelle and Rog could treat her this way. They had left her on the mountain with nothing to do but cope with housework under primitive conditions. The girls got away for five days a week, and they chattered endlessly about their boys. How selfish they were! And what did she have? No man in her life, no chance to pursue her art work, and no money for anything. Grace lay in bed at night wondering why Roger had ever got them all into this situation. Camp Forest Primeval had always been charming and primitive, but two months, in July and August, was a far cry from wintering there. The beauty of the mountain view was all that Grace could now enjoy. Why, if life there was so fine, did Rog and Nelle stay away for ten weeks?

Bill felt as Grace did. He was tired of the whole experience and longed for New York, and he wanted to see how Edward was faring.

"I have the feeling," Bill told Grace, "that Rog got us all here as an experiment. He's always speculated about life up here year round, but he didn't have the courage to do it himself. He could have put Nelle and Babs up here and left them, but he couldn't do that so he used us all as guinea pigs."

Grace laughed and said perhaps he was right. "Yes," she said, "they've proved that people could winter up here, without doing it themselves."

She poured out her frustration in her nightly journal pages, talking mostly to Norris, who might read it all some day.

"I have written to Elma Smith telling her that I absolutely must know what it is exactly that she has in mind for me. I don't want another letter telling me to 'sit tight'. All I know is that as soon as the girls' school is through in June we shall all fly our separate ways from this 'cuckoo nest'. I have loved this place almost immeasurably, Norris, but I doubt now that I shall ever return if I get off this hill. And I will get off.

Norris, we did have one adventure recently that you would have enjoyed. We worked the old sugar bush! You recall where the grove was, up the hill on the northwest corner. Bill got the old sap pans down from the side of the barn and scrubbed them clean. The girls went to two groceries in town and got some old lard and peanut-butter pails to use for sap buckets. Old Nehemiah Evans' wooden ones were all falling apart, of course. Well! It was an exciting time. The girls took a day off from school and we went up there. The trees were all around in that area, and the old scars still showed after all these years.

Bill had his brace and bit, and we had bought two dozen new metal spiles. The girls and I found enough sugar maples to use them all. We had to haul cut fire-wood up there on a sled (Jane's big Flexible Flyer that we brought up here from Westport). Remember how her little sled got broken in Chagrin Falls, when you put it together with Dee's and made a long bob-sled? That was one happy day in that last sad winter on Summit Street.

"Well, we spent four days working the sugar bush. Bill stayed up

there at night keeping the fires going, and the girls tended them in the daytime, and they gathered the sap and extra wood for the hungry fire. I finished boiling the syrup down on the kitchen stove. The girls brought it down to me in mill pails. I canned it in quart jars but we lost track of how much the total yield was because we were making candy of it and so forth.

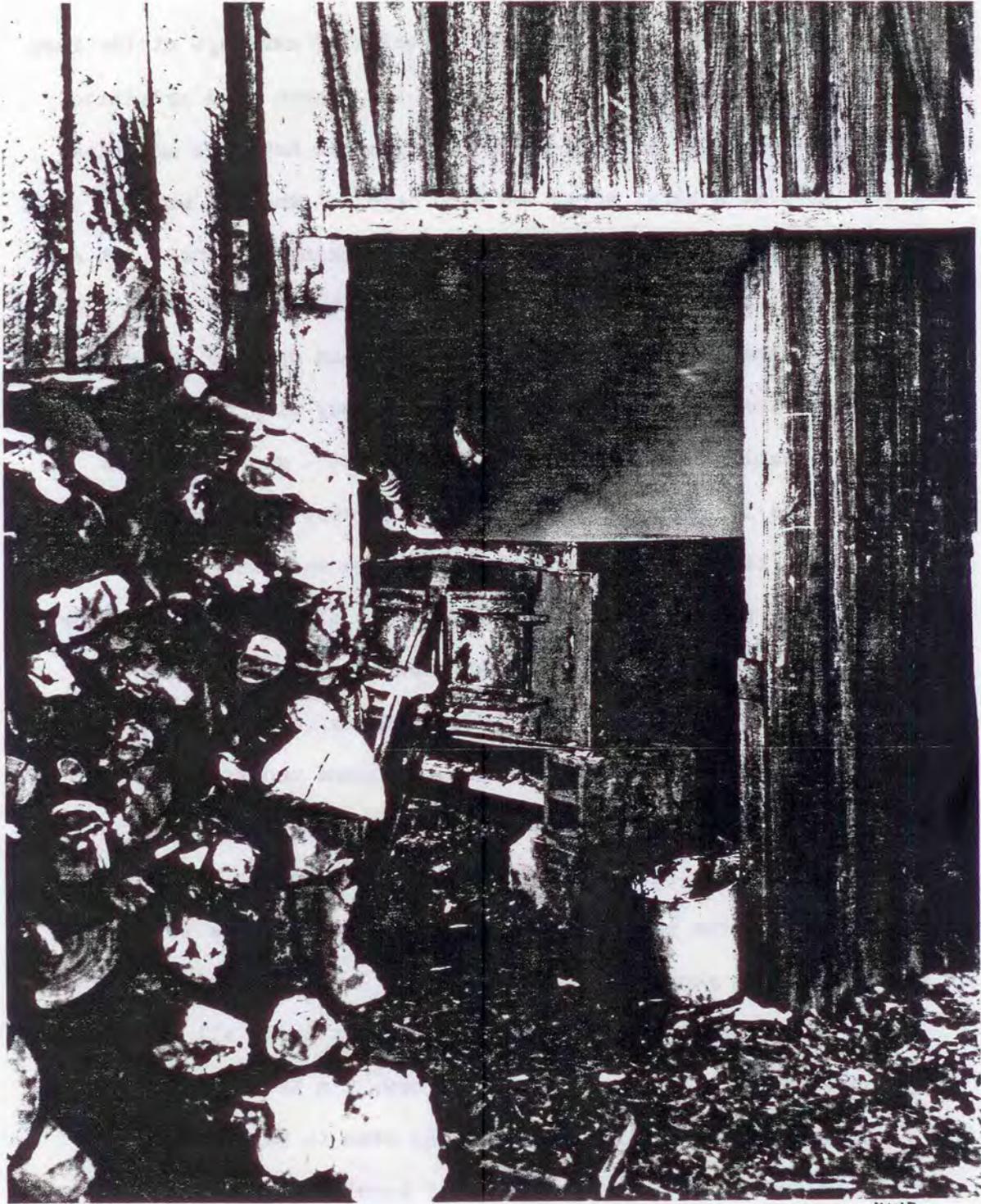
"Oh, Norris!" Making the sugar made me think of our days at the farm when we worked Father's sugar-bush. This was a much more primitive arrangement, but I had only to taste the syrup to have the memories wash over me like a tidal wave. We were happiest when we were working the hardest, weren't we? Well, I'm working hard now, but all alone it seems, and to what end? These young things here think only of themselves and they think they are in love and chatter endlessly in a way that seems to me, inane. The music they play is so primitive and almost, shall we say, obscene. O! but Norris - you would have laughed; there is one song they play that is very meaningful in these terrible times. One morning recently, we were awakened in our little house by the loud tones of the Victrola playing with its doors wide open. We all woke, startled, and resentful, and we cried out, "Ruth! Ruth! Turn that off!" Ruth Akins, our "star boarder" usually plays the records. But it was not Ruth who was the culprit; it was our dear black kitty (named Alabaster) who had poked things with his little patty-paw. (You would love that kitty, Norris). And he must be smart, for he picked the only good record here to play. It was 'Buddy, Can you Spare a Dime?'

"Well, it is late and we rise early. I worry about all these girls even though they exasperate me so. Just now, I'm thinking that Mim must have bad tonsils, for her colds seem to hang on longer. Well, I must to bed now. Sweet dreams, I hope! "

On April 7, 1933 Americans (in some states) began drinking beer again; though it was only 3.2 percent alcohol, there was much rejoicing in many circles. Among these were the college students at the Rendezvous in Cleveland. On that same April evening the girls at Camp Forest Primeval had planned to drive in to town to a dance at the school. The dirt roads were very bad, as the spring thaws brought the frost out of the ground. There were a number of stretches of deep mud in the road, and a quarter of a mile below Bean's house the little Buick Four became mired to its axles. Jane walked back to Bean's and phoned Narze, who called Harl Pease, who borrowed one of his father's Fords. He and Narze came and got the girls. After the dance Harl and Narze brought them all back again to the spot where the Buick was stuck. Harl said he thought he could pull the Buick out with a chain. Mim and Babs said they'd start walking home and if the boys got the Buick out, Jane could give them a lift.

After they left, Harl said to Narze, "You in a big hurry to get back to town, Narze?"

"No," said Narze. "I'm never in a big rush."



NWR

SUGAR HOUSE

"OLD BRICK" FARM

1914

1384

"Well," Harl said, "Ahem. You see, I don't have a chain, but I thought perhaps we could give it a try to push it, but I don't think we can. It's too deep in. Ruth and I'd like to talk a few minutes. OK?"

Jane and Narze got out of the back seat of the Ford. Narze had looked at his watch. "It's 11:20. We'll wait for you in the Buick. Do you think you can drive around it?"

"No," said Harl. "I wouldn't want to risk it."

"Then the girls will have to walk, so they won't want to be too late. Give a little toot when you're ready."

But it was two hours before the girls went up the hill. The boys walked with them as far as the clearing.

Jane had worried about Ruth.

"Narze, she's only fourteen. I hope she doesn't get into trouble."

"Harl knows what he's doing. They went over the line before Christmas."

Jane was amazed. "Narze, you never told me that!"

"Harl just told me a couple of weeks ago."

"Oh, boy!" Jane said. "If Uncle Rog knew, he'd have my head on a platter. "

"But you can't control Ruth!"

"No, but Uncle Rog thinks because I'm older, and I drive the car, that –"

"Look, Janie, you remember when Harl took Ruth with him to Colby to bring his sister home for Christmas vacation?"

"Yes. "

"Well, who gave her permission to go? You?"

"No, of course not. Aunt Nelle, I think. Perhaps Mother, but Aunt Nelle was here at the time."

"OK," Narze said. "That was their first time, and there have been several other times. Remember when they went to the movie instead of the dance? Well, they didn't go to the movie. But Harl had seen it, and told her about it in case you girls asked about it. You weren't responsible for her. A lot of opportunities are possible for fellows who have cars. That's why they all want cars. You know?"

"Is that why you want one too? " Jane asked.

"Yes. but mainly because you live nine miles away. "

Jane sighed. "I guess compared with Harl and Ruth we are just a couple of children."

But in the next hour they did not act like children and they lost track of time. Jane discovered that not saying "No," to Narze the second time was much easier than not saying it the first time had been.

Two days later Nelle and Roger returned to Camp Forest Primeval. They stayed for three days during which Roger discovered that he could not drive his big Seven-passenger Buick over the muddy roads. It put him in a bad mood immediately, but the main thing bothering him was the new Administration in Washington. Rog was terribly upset by the speed with which Roosevelt and "his gang" were rushing all manner of legislation. Grace, on the other hand, was fascinated and optimistic. Perhaps now she would have a chance of improving her situation and she'd be able

DAY OF THE 30" SNOW FALL AT FOREST CAMP APRIL 12, 1932



MORNING
(FIND THE CAT)



AFTERNOON



SPRINGHOUSE



MORNING



AFTERNOON



ABOVE THE BARN

THE POWER OF SPRING SUNSHINE

to earn money again. Roger and Nelle, however, were totally pessimistic, and Rog assured Grace she was dreaming "pipe dreams." He and Nelle returned to New York, saying Nelle had "an appointment with the dentist day after tomorrow." After they left, Grace remarked to Bill, "It seems ridiculous to me that they would come up here for three days and turn around and go right back again to New York. Nelle must have known she had an appointment."

"They only came up to spy on us," Bill said. "I don't think Rog likes it here any more. Life is too rugged; he hates the hill. It was alright when he was younger."

"The hill is hard on all of us," Grace said, "Even the youngsters."

"They don't care about us. We might as well be in Siberia. When I agreed to Rog's plan, I thought I'd be here much of the time. He could have given me a chance to get down to the city once in a while. I'd like to see Billy. Well, when school's out I'm leaving. You're good company, Grace, but we've no freedom. I feel like we're just servants. All we get is room and board."

On May first Grace was very depressed. It was Norris's birthday; he was forty-seven years old. She was forty-five. They were miles apart and growing older. Too many wasted years! And all so needless.

Her mood lifted when the girls came home from school bringing the milk and the mail. The days were warm now, and the girls came up the hill in a more leisurely way, no longer driven by aching cold feet.

The mail brought an envelope that Grace had been awaiting for weeks. A letter with an Austrian postmark. That night she wrote a letter to Betty Long.

"Betty, old dear,

I live in a strange world this year. This hill was once intended to be a place for relaxation. As Nelle so often says, 'It is to laugh'. I have been left up here for weeks at a time to struggle with such primitive conditions as I never had in those years at the Old Brick. Nelle and Roger are here now after staying in New York most of the winter. Eleven weeks in one stretch. But life is easier now. The girls are going to move out into the tents very soon, as the nights are much milder. But enough of the present situation. It is my future that I am thinking of tonight.

I have been waiting all winter to hear definite word from Elma about going to Vienna. And now - a letter - but a different plan. She is talking about Tunisia - imagine! Well! At least, there I could speak French. I know so little of German. She speaks of 'renting a villa' and says that 'living is reduced to a minimum'. But, Betty, now I am all at sea, because I learned recently that the house on Summit Street in Chagrin Falls is vacant. Father still owns that house, but of course it is all in the hands of a trustee, and I would have to persuade him. How strange it would be to go back and live in that place where Norris and I spent seven years! I shall write Mr. Robertson and see what he says to the idea. I shall write to Merle as well. It's in the lap of the gods now, as to where I shall be.

"I was interrupted, and now it is ten days later. The doings of our four girls here sometimes seem to overwhelm all else. The

weather is mild now, and they are going here, there and everywhere. with their "steady" boy-friends. In the winter, except for a few dances, the youngsters were always here in the house with us, playing that fiendish kind of music they seem to love, or talking and being generally teen-agers. However, it is quite different now, and they go out in the yard swing, or out to talk to Bill or something. And of course they are so young - Ruth is fourteen, Mim sixteen, and Jane will be seventeen soon. They talk of boys most of the time. I am sure that they are behaving as they should, but I don't want Jane getting too serious. She says that her Syrian boy-friend is apparently serious too he wants to marry her. And Mim's friend is apparently serious. And the girls wear the boys' rings. Of course, they are only class rings and it is the custom for the youngsters to wear them. But Betty, they shouldn't be talking of marriage at sixteen! These girls will all go to college unless they get sidetracked. Look what Norris did to me! I confess, I will never forgive him for that. Dee, of course, is at an age when it would be fine for her to be married. She has a little college and she is so fine and brave now, to want to study and to be a stenographer. But Betty, Dee is the type of person who really needs to be protected and sheltered by a man. I am really that type too, but my drive to express myself in Art is so strong. There is no reason why I could not have had both. And I would have, too, if I had not broken my first engagement!

"Jane is something else again, she isn't soft and tender like Dee. I simply can't picture her married. She will go far, because she likes school, and driving the car, and she is very willful, and she exasperates me to tears at times. She likes this same obscene popular music that the other girls like. And she talks (as they do) of nothing but boys. So it is just as well that this experimental winter is ending, and I am not sorry to have Jane go back to Norris again where she will return to East High, and next year she'll go to college. And after that she will be a mover of mountains, and then we'll all be able to be together. But O! Betty, I don't know what is in the cards for me. The day I started this letter I'd heard from Elma about going to Tunisia and living in a villa. That was to have been next winter, and I had thought I'd be going back to Cleveland with Jane and Mim, for at least a visit with the family and to see dear Father, who misses Mother so much. But no! I am not to go. Today I have another letter from Elma Smith. She wants me to come to Budapest, Hungary. There, I would live with a parson's family and teach English to the two daughters. So now, Betty, all my plans are changed. When school is finished, I'm off to New York for passport, travel arrangements, etc.

"The whole venture here is ending and though we all love this place, things have been not a little disillusioning. Bill, my brother-in-law, can't wait to be gone from here. At the moment, Nelle

and I are concerned about little Mim. She had several colds , and I know she would benefit greatly by having her tonsils out. Nelle agrees, and we have written to Merle, because the doctor here says they are very bad. Mim wants to wait until she gets back to Oberlin, but Nelle and I agree that we should see that it is done here and now because Merle is a great one to vacillate, and poor Mim should not be burdened with that condition any longer. So that *is* the first order of business.

"Well, Betty, I must close and hie me to bed.

Much love, and I'll let you know about Budapest.

Grace"

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During the last week of the school year Grace, Nelle and Roger centered their full attention on Mim. She was run down, they decided. They based this partly on the idea that she had more colds than the other girls. Mim recalled that she might have had one more cold than the rest. Jane read through her small diary and found that she had had two colds herself, and that all the rest had followed suit. One or the other of the girls was usually "indisposed" with her female schedule from time to time, and Mim had mashed her finger in the door-hinge while helping push the Buick Four through the muddy spot in the road. Otherwise she'd been fine.

"I'm as healthy as anyone here," Mim protested.

"But you look pale and peak-ed t honey, Nelle said.

"We want to put roses into your cheeks," said. Grace.

"Oh, roses!" scoffed Mim. "I've never had rosy cheeks. I don't have that kind of complexion."

"Neither do I," said Jane. "I never had pink cheeks."

"Oh, yes, you did! I said Grace. "You had them when you came home from Sunshine Camp."

"That's because I used to pinch my cheeks to make them pink, so you wouldn't send me back there."

"Oh, Jane, you did not!" her mother said..

"Oh, ho! Yes, I did! I was forever pinching them. If you like rosy cheeks, look at Babs and Ruth. They've got that kind of skin."

"That's right," Mim said.

But there was no talking the aunties out of the idea. They had made all the arrangements that as soon as school was finished the tonsils would come out. School ended in the middle of June. A week later Roger took Bill back to New York, but not before Bill had taken the Buick Four to Plymouth for a two-day drunk. He had come back minus his hat but not particularly ashamed.

"I had it coming," he said to Grace. "A little spree,"

Bfore he left, Bill said to Grace, "It's been quite an experience. I don't think Rog and Nelle were very fair to us, staying away so long and leaving us with all the problems, but some of it has been fun and I'll never forget this year. I've enjoyed a lot of it. It's been as though I had a family of daughters. I've always wished Emmy and I could have had a different life. I'll miss you all a lot."

"We'll miss you too, Bill," Grace said, "but you're right. We wont forget it, I'm sure." And they all kissed Bill goodbye. They would never see him again.

The day arrived for Mim's tonsillectomy. She was to be at the hospital at 7 a.m. and no breakfast. They would not ask Uncle Rog to take them for they did not know how long they'd have to be in town. Mim was to stay overnight, Jane would drive and Grace or Nelle would go along as well. Grace begged off. She had been an enthusiastic promoter of the surgery but when the day came she said she didn't feel up to par.

"I'd like to go along, and I would if she were going to have a local

anesthetic. Then we could bring her right back as soon as she's finished."

"Don't say 'finished' Aunt Grace." Mim laughed nervously. "I think I'm going back to bed and forget the whole idea. "

In truth, Grace had been bothered by the doctor's insistence on a general anesthetic, because she clearly remembered Jane's tonsillectomy which had been done in the doctor's own little clinic. They had let Grace stay with Jane until she was unconscious. Jane, who had been taught not to believe in doctors, had panicked at the last minute. The doctor and his assistant had wrapped her tightly in sheets. She had fought the ether. She had begun to kick. She kicked and kicked hard. Grace had been worried. Norris had used the word "slaughter ". The two men in white coats held the ether cone firmly over Jane's nose and mouth. Grace had watched the kicking slow and then it had stopped altogether and the doctors had escorted her out of the operating room.

She had begun to have unadmitted misgivings about having urged Merle to permit the operation. What if something were to go wrong? It seldom happened, but it was possible. In any case she did not want to go along and watch them put Mim to sleep. So Nelle went along with Jane. And of course, at the hospital neither of them went into the surgery with Mim.

It was a long wait in the visitors' lounge and Jane and Nelle were both in a subdued mood, Jane because in a week or so she would be leaving and she didn't know if she would ever see Narze again. And Nelle had suddenly realized how soon she would be alone on the hill. Bill had already left. He apparently hadn't been grateful that they'd given him a place to live rent-free for a year. He'd lost no time in getting back to New York after the school year ended. Grace was all excited making her plans to go to Hungary. Hungary, of all places! How in heaven's name could Grace teach English to two girls when she couldn't speak Hungarian? It would be much more sensible for her to wait till next winter and go to Tunis, where she could speak French and teach Art. But Grace wasn't practical. She was talented and interesting and had a sense of humor. but she was not practical at all. She was always off on some wild and wilful tangent, to quote Rog. Buying the house in Westport was a classic example. She should have rented a little place in New York first, till she knew she could find work there. Well, that was over the dam now.

A nurse entered the lounge.

"Mrs. Fison?"

"Yes," Nelle said.

"Muriel is just fine. Surgery is over and she's back in her room. After a bit we'll let you go up to see her. She is not awake yet. I

Jane went back to reading her magazine and Nelle went back to her thoughts.

Rog had taken Bill to New York and returned with Trink, who had come by train to Grand Central. Bus would have been cheaper, but Marta felt that Trink shouldn't travel alone that way. In a few days she and Babs would go to Maine again, to the music and dance camp. That was another example of ingratitude. Trink didn't want to go to Maine. She'd wanted to stay home. Kids hardly ever appreciate the nice things you do for them. Babs liked the

music camp. Being a Counselor was very good for Babs. It gave her confidence in herself. And she needed it after this last year when all the other girls were dating boys. Another problem Babs had was her school work. Mim and Jane did well in school. Their report cards were good, while Babs's were, at best, fair. Ruth didn't get high marks either, but a little better than Babs's. However, at the music camp things were different; Babs could really shine there. Music was her strong point. And she was a graceful little dancer. To pursue that career, though, she'd have to lose weight. She could grow fat and still be able to teach piano probably. Nelle would prefer to keep Babs with her on the hill this summer, but she knew it was best for Babs to go to Maine. If only Grace were not going to Europe. Perhaps she wouldn't go. Quite likely the whole thing would fall through and then Grace could spend the summer on the hill. The two of them always got along fine when there weren't other people to cause dissension. Now that the children were grown so big, it was one problem after another. Not so much the boy problem. Grace worried about that. But they had grown so smart alecky. When they were little they were sometimes sassy, and then you could have them sit on a chair for a half-hour, or an hour, or even "tingle" their legs with a switch. But now that they were in high school you could hardly punish them that way. And you couldn't deprive them of allowance money, because none of them had an allowance anymore. Norris occasionally sent Jane a few dollars, and Merle sent Mim some. Ruth Akins, of course, had more than enough to spend. Well, you couldn't take their money away from them, certainly. What did you do to discipline girls that age? You couldn't forbid them to go out with the boys, really, because they seldom went anywhere as it was. The boys came to see them. You couldn't chase the boys off the hill, either, for they were all nice boys. It was entertaining to have them coming. Well, and the girls were nice, too. But oh, when they were little, they'd been so cute, and their needs were so simple. They were happy to just wear khaki knickers and middies, and sneakers. And you could make them happy by letting them roast marshmallows, or by buying them an ice cream cone. Not now. They wanted all the clothes they could get. Silk stockings, brassieres. Well, it was a blessing they could all sew. That way, they could have a pretty blouse for less than fifty cents. It was a good thing she'd brought her old foot-treadle sewing machine up here when she got her new electric. She couldn't bear to part with it. It was the one she'd brought back from Colorado almost twenty-five years ago. Nelle thought that Jane was reading, but actually she hadn't turned a page for nearly an hour. She'd been thinking about Narze and how little time they had left. She'd be leaving in the next two weeks, when Uncle Rog had to go to New York again. Narze now agreed with her that they couldn't get married now. They'd have to wait until after college. After the night in April when the car was stuck in the valley road in the mud, Narze seemed to change. He thought only about a way to get to college. His father was unsympathetic. He wanted Narze to stay and work in the store. Narze had an older brother, two older sisters, and three younger brothers. The older brother had left home and gone to Boston to become a commercial artist. Jane had been surprised to learn about that and she'd told her mother, but Grace didn't seem to be impressed.

"Is that supposed to make me approve of Narze?" Grace had asked.

"Well," Jane said. "It's just that you seem to think the Samaha's are whirling dervishes or something."

"Oh, Jane, don't act so silly! You know what my feelings are about Narze.

He's a pleasant enough boy, and it's not so much his race that concerns me - "

"His race! What race do you think Narze is?;"

Grace hesitated. "Well - well, he's not the same as we are. His background -"

"But what is he" Jane insisted. "What race?"

"Well, I'm not sure about Arabs."

"I thought so," Jane said.

Grace had changed the subject then, a good thing to do when not certain of all the facts.

Now that school was out, Jane no longer saw Narze during the day, but the road up the hill was good and Harl Forest with his unlimited supply of Ford V-8 demonstrator cars could drive all the way. The boys, who had come to Forest Camp three nights a week in winter, were now coming almost nightly. Grace said they came too often, but Nelle had put in a word to defend them.

"They'll soon all be separated, so why worry about it? Don't you remember when you were in love, Grace?"

"Yes, but these girls are so young. :

"I was in love at seventeen," said Nelle. "So were you."

"Well, but that's not real love," Grace said.

"Certainly it is," Nelle had insisted. "Puppy love is real."

Jane had been thinking about how she and Narze would get to college.

Narze said he would work and save his money, and when he got enough for his first year he'd start college somewhere, he didn't know where yet. But he was going to write to lots of colleges and find out what he could do. For her part, Jane didn't know just what she could do about college either, but they had given Dee her chance to go, so they'd find a way to help out. Her mother had said, "If I could win a scholarship, you can too." But her mother's scholarship had only paid the tuition and Grandpa Martin had paid everything else, even after her mother got married. Well, they'd all just have to wait and see what would work out, but her father would want to help her at least as much as he'd helped Dee. Aunt Nelle stood up and stretched and said, "Let's see if we can see Mim now. "

Mim was groggy and nauseated, but otherwise she was alright. Nelle and Jane sat with her a while but she kept going to sleep. They woke her up to tell her they were going home now, but that Eddie had said he'd visit her in the evening, and they'd be back to bring her home in the morning.

The next day was Sunday and Nelle, Jane and Babs went to the hospital to get Mim. They found her all dressed and ready to go, but she said that Eddie Fracher and his family had invited her for Sunday dinner.

"Oh, Mim, you explained why you couldn't go, didn't, you?" Nelle said.

"No, I said I'd go." Mim said. "He's coming to get me."

"But, honey! Your throat! You can't eat a Sunday dinner. "I'll fix you an egg-nog."

"I'm not worried about my throat," Mim said. "I'm just worried about how I'll talk to Paul's parents. They only speak French."

"But, Mim," Nelle said. "You should come home and lie down. You should just rest today."

"Aunt Nelle, I'm fine! I rested all day yesterday and all last night. I'll have Eddie bring me home real early."

When Nelle and the girls returned to the hill without Mim, Roger was angry. He was in a mood of late to criticize anything the girls did that indicated a defiance of adult guidance. But the foibles of the adolescents were not the deep cause of his discontent and ill-temper. They were merely the last straw. Even worry over the Depression was not the greatest cause, nor the new Democratic administration in Washington. Roger had reached a point where he felt he could no longer work for his present employer, the publisher of a national trade journal, "Fruit Grower News". Rog was listed as the "Eastern Manager" but since the current publisher took over his father's magazine, the position had changed. Rog didn't mind traveling but he hadn't expected such shoddy treatment as he'd been receiving for the last two or three years. He'd been made man of all work lately. He was on the road selling advertising space, drumming up new subscribers, writing copy for the ads, and writing articles and editorials. In the past he'd been included on policy decisions and format planning sessions. And his articles were always printed with his by-line. But after the young Barry Bruster took over the magazine, by-lines began to disappear. Rog had been told it was a "new policy." By-lines would only appear on the writings of the publisher, the editor-in-chief and the managing editor. "After all," said Bruster, "this isn't a literary publication. You're just one of the employees, you know." Two years ago Bruster had asked Roger to write the Christmas editorial which would appear on the page with the table of contents. Roger had thought surely to get a by-line. But no, there was no credit printed. In the spring he was asked to write an editorial about Independence Day, to appear in the July issue. Rog had suggested that he hoped it would have his name on it. But the July issue was out now. Rog's editorial appeared, not only without his name, but beneath it, the credit read, "Barry Bruster, Publisher."

The man had spit in Roger's eye and apparently he felt that with the current depressed employment, Roger would have no alternative but to accept such practices. But Rog was seething with rage over this latest insult. He detested the publisher now, and was determined to leave the Fruit Grower News; and in fact, there was a chance he might be able to do so, but not without risk. He had discussed all this with Nelle, but Grace and the girls knew nothing of it. It would have been better if he had told them. Had he done so, they would have been able to understand, in some measure, his recent miserable disposition. He was extremely upset when Nelle, Jane and Babs arrived without Mim. He had told Jane she could drive to the house on this occasion, though normally he insisted that the Buick Four be left in the garage at the bottom of the hill. But Nelle and the girls arrived breathless, having walked up. Rog had been ready to comfort and commiserate with Mim, and be her affectionate uncle.

But the others told him, "She's gone to dinner at the Fracher's."

"She hasn't a brain in her head," he said. "And neither have the rest of you. "

But a couple of hours later Eddie delivered Mim to her door in his father's car. She was safe and sound and laughing over her visit.

"Eddie and Henry let me struggle to make Madame Fracher understand that I could only eat the mashed potatoes, what with my poor sore throat. How do you say it. Paul?"

"Puree de pommes de terre'," Eddie said, "but you ate ice cream too."

"That I s basic food," Jane said , "for tonsil patients."

Roger calmed down then, since Mim seemed alright, but the following day he was upset again, and so was Nelle, when Harl Pease and Eddie and Narze Samaha came and took Ruth, Mim and Jane to the movies in Plymouth.

"Mim shouldn't have gone," he said. "She looks pale."

"Yes , she does, " Nelle said. "She isn't up to par."

"And they could have taken Babs and Trink with them," Rog said.

"They usually do, " Grace said." I guess it's because they won't be seeing each other much longer that they didn't."

"Well, I'm glad I won't be seeing them much longer either," Rog said. "I don 't want to have to worry about any of them anymore."

But he calmed down again, and two days later when the three bigger girls had dates again he scooped up Babs and Trink and Nelle and took them to visit the Nehemiah Evans' who had been the former owners of what was now Camp Forest Primeval. They lived on the highway that led to the Evans mountains. Jane had once hoped to go there to visit her dog Binker, whom Nelle had taken from Westport and given to Nehemiah. That had been well over three years ago and when she had talked of going to visit Binker, they'd finally told her that her dog had been killed in traffic on the highway when Nehemiah Evans threw a bone across to the other side.

"How stupid of him," Jane said, but they all reminded her that Nehemiah Evans drank too much.

"That's stupid, too," she'd said.

On July first, Nelle and Rog took Babs and Trink to the music camp in Maine. Trink hadn't wanted to go the year before, and now more than ever she did not want to go this summer. The director didn't like her, she felt, and also, Mim and Jane were leaving New England just as she was arriving. She was resentful that Aunt Nelle and her mother were always conniving and deciding her fate. She had wanted to just stay at home this summer,

As always, with Rog and Nelle gone, the tensions eased at Camp Forest Primeval. The boys came to see the girls in the evening, and Grace put forth no objection for she knew the three girls would be leaving for New York on the morning of the sixth.

The young people sat out doors in the swing or on the retaining wall, singing "Stardust" and shedding some tears as they sang. There were old-fashioned roses growing beside the wall, and it reminded Jane of the words to the song and she cried, of course.

"Though I dream in vain

In my heart it will remain
My stardust melody
The memory of love's refrain. "

Rog and Nelle came back from Maine and Ruth, Jane and Mim set about packing to go home. On the third of July, Eddie Fracher took Mim to Wiers Beach at Lake Winnepesaukee. Rog disapproved again but had nothing to say to anyone about it. He had told himself that he was washing his hands of his nieces, and nephews too. The good old values were fading fast.

Harl Pease and Narze came up the hill in the evening and took Ruth and Jane for a ride, but they were back on the hill before eleven. Mim was still out. The boys stayed a little while talking. Rog (who had sole possession of the Studio since Bill's departure, kept going back and forth between the house kitchen and the Studio. He had nothing to say to anyone and was making everyone edgy. The boys soon left, and Jane was upset.

She said to Ruth, "I think Narze's mad at me. "

"Why would he be mad?" Ruth asked.

"No reason, I guess. I was worrying about Mim too much. Narze and Paul are both feeling blue about Thursday. "

"Me too. Why were you worrying about Mim? Don't you think she is alright? "

"Oh, sure," Jane said. "But I want her to get home here so Uncle Rog will relax and go to bed. I hope he's asleep when she gets home."

"Oh, he'll probably be up waiting for her to give her hell," Ruth said.

The girls were sitting in the yard-swing, but Jane went back into the kitchen. Nelle, Roger and Grace were at the table by the Rochester lamp. Since there was no ice at Camp Forest Primeval, they were drinking hot tea on a rather warm night. Grace had her journal in front of her, and a pile of travel brochures spread out on the oil cloth. Nelle was leafing through them idly, but Rog scowled at them. He took a definitely dim view of Grace's projected trip to Budapest. He wanted her to stay on the hill with Nelle.

when Jane entered, all three of them looked up at her and waited. She had the feeling that somehow they were holding her accountable for Mim's late return.

"Harl Pease said they were going to have fireworks," Jane told them.

"Tomorrow is the Fourth," Rog said. "Not today."

"Harl said they'll have them tonight too. They'd stay to see that. "

"Well, Daddy," Nelle said, "in that case we may as well turn in. They'll be coming along soon, honey."

"I won't sleep," Rog pronounced, but he went to the Studio and went to bed, and after stewing for a time he dozed off into a fitful sleep. He woke at 3:30 a.m. He thought he heard voices near the tents. He rose and looked out the door and saw a figure with a flashlight.

"Mim?" he called.

"No, it's me, Nelle."

"Is she home?" he asked.

She hesitated. "No."

"Good Lord!" Rog said. "It's nearly four o'clock!"

"I know."

"I'm going after them. They must have had an accident, or at least a breakdown. "

"No, honey. Now, wait. I heard a car in the valley a while ago. I'm sure they're walking up now."

"Could have been another car," Rog said.

"Not at this hour. Now, honey, when she gets here, no words about it tonight. Promise?"

He muttered something and left the doorway. Nelle went back into the house. A few minutes later each of them saw Mim walk across the clearing and go to her tent.

When Jane and Ruth woke, they heard kitchen sounds and rose and dressed. Presently when they entered the kitchen they found Nelle and Grace preparing breakfast in the midst of a discussion.

"I suppose we should just let her sleep," Nelle said.

"Definitely. She needs it, I'm sure. Good morning, girls!" Grace said brightly, trying to lift the pall of impending doom a bit. "Happy Fourth of July!"

Nelle turned to Jane and Ruth.

"Do you know when Mim got in? " she asked.

Both shook their heads.

"It was four o'clock! "

They raised their eyebrows.

"Yes," Nelle said. "Did she tell you why she was so late?"

"I didn't hear her come in the tent," Jane said.

"Me either," said Ruth.

Grace said, "Well, I'm going ahead and make pancakes anyway."

"I doubt if Rog will eat them," Nelle said.

"The rest of us will," Ruth predicted.

Mim was roused a half hour later by a loud argument in the kitchen. Uncle Rog was shouting. She rose, and taking her pillow with her, left the tent and went straight to the kitchen. Roger glared at her and said, "Well!"

But Mim simply passed through the kitchen serenely, and without a word, went to the attic and went to sleep on one of the beds.

Rog turned on Nelle and Grace. "What do you think of that?" he said.

"She gives no explanation at all."

"She could see how cross you are already, Rog, ' Nelle said. "She wouldn't want to talk."

'Cross! 'Cross' doesn't begin to express it. She could at least defend her actions."

"But maybe there is no special explanation," Nelle said. "Perhaps they just stayed out late, that's all."

"And you defend her?"

"Well, it's the Fourth of July," Nelle said.

"That's got nothing to do with it," Rog said. " It's a matter of morals."

"Not necessarily," Grace said.

"No," agreed Nelle. "At her age I stayed out till all hours one Fourth of July. It's not so terrible. A nice warm night. Time flies."

Rog got red in the face. He pounded the table with his fist and made the dishes and silverware bounce. Ruth and Jane opened their eyes wide.

Rog turned to them. "What do you two have to say?"

As in one breath they muttered, "Nothing."

He stood up and pushed back his chair. Then he picked up his teaspoon, and threw it to the floor, where it fell with an insignificant clink. He left the kitchen, and slammed the screen door hard.

Nelle turned to Grace. "I guess we'll bear the brunt of it, kid,"

"Will he scold her?" Grace asked.

"I don't know. He's always doted on her. Je was really worried."

"Me, too," said Grace.

"When they worry him he gets really angry."

Everyone steered clear of Rog most of the day.

In the evening Harl, Narze and Eddie came to see the girls. They brought firecrackers with them and it was a big mistake. Probably Eddie should have known

that Mim's uncle would be in a bad mood this evening under the circumstances.

But the fireworks had belonged to Harl and Narze, and when they arrived at Forest Camp they announced their presence by setting off an entire string of medium-sized fire-crackers. In the mountain quiet, the snapping rataplan seemed horrendous.

The Studio door opened so violently that it slammed against the side of the building as Roger burst forth. Another man would have said, "What the hell!" But his father had been a minister, so in place of swear words, Rog had to vent his steam by his tone of voice. "Now what's going on" he cried.

He sounded so angry that the boys were all silent. The girls and Nelle emerged from the house.

Rog lowered his voice just slightly.

"You trying to start a forest fire here?"

"No, sir," Narze said.

"The grass is damp with dew," Ruth Akins said.

"Doesn't make any difference. We're in a pine forest. And I don't like fire-works anyway. You can;t use them here." He went back inside the Studio and said no more.

"Daddy's right," said Nelle, and went in the house.

After that the young people were subdued. They did not go into the house at all but stayed outside talking. All six of them were aware that they had only one more night to be together.

Narze told Jane, "We were planning a goodbye party tomorrow night. Will he allow that? He seems to be real mad at us."

"He's been cross lately," she said. "Lots of reasons."

"Let's have the party somewhere else," Harl Pease said.

"Where?" asked Jane.

"I don't know. We'll find some place. Maybe my house."

The boys did not stay much longer, but promised to come and get the girls

next evening.

Before she went to bed, Jane went to her mother's room to express her feelings.

"Why is Uncle Rog so cross, when he knows we're leaving? "

"Nelle says he's got terrible worries about his job," Nelle said.

"He used to be my favorite uncle of them all. He's changed."

"Well," Grace said, "he thinks you girls have changed."

"At our age," Jane said, "we are supposed to change."

"Grace in her usual fashion saw the beginnings of an argument and headed it off. "Have you done your packing?"

"Get it done first thing in the morning."

But first thing in the morning, Jane had other priorities. At sunrise when the white walls of the tent grew bright she woke and found that Mim was awake too.

"We'll never come back here again," Mim said. "I'm sure of that."

"There's one thing I want to do today," Jane said. "A place I want to see to say goodbye to."

"You mean the trail across the mountain?"

"No. Guess again," Jane said.

"Fluffy Pine!"

"Yes. Let' s go down there!"

Ruth was awake. "Where're you going?"

"To find our lost childhood," said Mim. "It's a white pine where we played when we were little. We had a lot of old pots and pans and things down there. "

They went down the sloping field in their pajamas, brushing through the dew-wet meadow grass, till they came to the lower edge of the clearing where the forest began. They thought they were heading straight for the spot, but decided they'd misjudged the location. They went south along the perimeter till they came to the road, but failed to see the well-remembered tree. They then went back north till they came to the stone wall. No sign of Fluffy Pine at all. All along the edge of the forest were young pine, birch, and maple saplings ten to fifteen feet tall, and many volunteer seedlings.

"Remember," Mim said, "it would be much bigger."

"That's right," said Jane, "and it wouldn't be on the very edge any more."

"Let's go in a little and we should find it. We should know it by the pots and pans."

Again they went along the forest edge from the road to the stone wall.

Moving along about ten feet into the trees, they found no sign of Fluffy Pine, even a much larger one, nor any artifacts of any kind.

"I'm baffled," Jane said. "what ever happened to it?"

"Maybe it was cut down , " Ruth said.

"No, nothing's been cut down here," Jane said. "No stumps."

"Uncle Bill was cutting trees in the upper field," Mim said.

Just then they heard Nelle yoo-hooing.

"Remember the police whistle?" Jane said. "We better hurry. If Uncle Rog sees us down here in our pajamas he may think the boys are down here too."

If Mim and Jane had gone a few feet farther into the woods, they would have found Fluffy Pine, but they did not realize how much of a cleared field a forest can devour in five years.

The good-bye party that evening was more nearly a "wake" than anything else. The boys said that their houses had "too much family," but at Tim Halley's house there was nobody at home but Tim and his brother, and Tim told Harl they were all welcome to come there.

They sat around the living room in the dark listening to the radio and feeling mournful. The girls had been cautioned not to be late. Each couple had things to whisper about and the radio seemed to play nothing but Stardust and other tender songs.

Narze and Jane promised to write daily whenever possible, and Narze, always emotional, cried and told Jane he wished they could run away to his uncle who lived in Canada. Then they could be married. But then he wiped his eyes and swore he would work hard and go to college. And one way or another, they would see each other again, probably within a year.

And then they all went back to Camp Forest Primeval and walked up the hill together for the last time.

They said their goodbyes at the edge of the clearing, and Narze said to Jane, "Don't forget I'll always love you." Then he said "good night" instead of "good bye." And Jane said bravely, "I'll see you." And Narze turned and followed the other boys down "the terrible hill."

But she didn't believe she would ever see him again.

Roger, Grace, and the three girls left at six the following morning. It was July 6, 1933, a year to the day from their arrival on the hill.

They arrived in New York City at nine in the evening. Grace went to Polly Patterson's. The girls went to Ruth Akins' mother's apartment in the posh "Towers" where they drew straws to decide who would have the first bath in the real bathtub. Roger went to his apartment.

Jane wrote a letter to Narze and wrote in the diary he had given her for Christmas. She shed a few tears on both.

Ruth wanted Mim and Jane to stay a few days with her before she joined her mother on Long Island at their summer place. But Roger and Grace said it was best that Mim and Jane take the bus home the next day. Roger had felt the burden of responsibility for the teen-age girls long enough. He felt he could not bear it another day. He realized now that he had not known what he was getting into. He had thought of them as little girls. He planned to return to Camp Forest Primeval where he would relax a little and plan his next move. Grace, for her part, was delighted to be away from the hill, where she had felt herself nearly a prisoner. She loved New York and she had many things to do. She must see about her passport, sell her Mason and Hamlin piano, and make her reservations. Even as she said goodbye to the girls at the bus her mind was elsewhere.

Jane said, "Mother, I wish you weren't going so far alone."

"Why, chicken. I'll be fine, and it's possible you'll be joining me soon.

"Maybe next year."

"Next year, " said Jane, "I'll be in college."

GOOD THING THERE'S PEANUT BUTTER

Pauline was at a loss to understand why Norris had been so determined to have his girls come back now, when times were so hard. But there were many things that Pauline couldn't understand, because Norris had never told her certain facts for very good reasons of his own. At the time of his divorce from Grace, the vast majority of the artist crowd who had comprised their circle of friends had sided with Grace. They had known Grace was hard-working and successful, more successful in her career by far than he. They had also known about his bad temper, for some of the friends had known him for years. And they had known that Grace had easily won her divorce on the grounds of cruelty and gross neglect of duty. There had been no question that Grace should have custody of the children. The stigma that Norris felt because of such general censure by his friends had been the principal reason for his quickly seeking out new ones. He had lost no time in courting and marrying the dressmaker who had a studio in the same building. He soon knew he'd been too hasty, but he resolved to show Grace and all the other artists that he was not the indolent villain they had thought him. And things went very smoothly. He worked hard and won his long hoped for recognition as a painter. He was erasing the old idea that he was lazy. Then the Depression hit and Grace's fortunes turned sour. When she decided to send the girls to him it mended the rest of the damage that had been done to his image. He had often wondered if Grace had been aware of the effect that move of hers would have. Those who had understood that he had been not only a poor father, but even a reprehensible one, decided that he could not have been so bad after all. But that was in 1930, and after less than two years the girls were both gone again, back to their mother, and the word was out and around that they hadn't been happy with him. Well, actually, it was Pauline they hadn't been happy with. At least, Dee hadn't liked her at all. Well, Dee had earned Pauline's disapproval, he could say that. But he hadn't liked having the girls leave him and go to Grace again. Friends would wonder again, and he didn't need that with all the troubles the Depression had brought. But now both the girls were back again, and he was glad, Pauline notwithstanding.

She had said. "But how will we all eat?"

"We'll manage," he said. "Things should improve now we've got a decent President in Washington."

But he was deeply worried. The last thing he wanted was to have the story get around that he was again being supported by a wife. Things would have to improve soon. He couldn't stand having Pauline hold the power of the purse. That situation could blight the best of marriages, and theirs was hardly the best.

The night that Jane and Mim returned from the East they were both very weary and even somewhat disoriented. They had come from the quiet Evans Mountains in one day to the bustle of New York City. The very next morning they'd been hurried onto a bus and sent on their way West. They reached Cleveland at nine in the evening just as the long summer twilight was ending. After they had greeted everyone in the Channing Avenue house, Dee asked them to go with her to the College Rendezvous. Hurry begged off and went to bed, planning to take an early bus to Oberlin the next day. Jane, however, said she was tired but

too "wound up" to sleep. She agreed to go along with Dee, but was privately quite surprised, for Dee had never treated her as anything other than a baby sister. She was seventeen years old now, of course, and had been dating for a long time. However, she suspected that Dee had asked her along because she didn't want to go to the Rendezvous alone.

On the way she asked Dee, "Doesn't Dad disapprove of your coming here?"

"I guess so, but he doesn't say anything anymore. He knows how boring it is at home."

"What about your friends?"

"Well, some of them are in town, some are away. I haven't seen Billy, though, since I've been back. I've been dating a pre-law student some, but he has to study a lot and nobody has any extra money. We all just meet each other at the Rendezvous and drink beer. You knew beer was back, didn't you?"

Jane laughed. "Well, I wasn't even three years old when it went away, so I can't say I ever missed it. Do you like it?"

"Oh, sure. Do you? Did they have it back there?"

"I don't know. I don't think so."

At the Rendezvous Dee hoped to see some of her old crowd, but only one appeared and did not stay long. Jane Pizzi bounced in and squealed and hugged Dee and Jane both. Then her boy friend arrived and she left with him.

"She's so in love with him. He's Polish. Has a perfectly outrageous name. Stanislaus something. I can't get it straight. Macherski, Michewski, Michota. I guess that's it. He's studying chiropody. He's called 'Stan.'"

"And what about you?" Jane asked. "Are you in love with the law student?"

"I guess so," said Dee. "Sort of."

"Sort of!"

"Well, you know I was crazy about Billy."

"I've forgotten which one he was. It

"The architect."

"Oh, yes. Well, he was attractive."

"Yes, but I haven't seen hide nor hair of him. I don't know if he's even in town anymore. But really, I've never stopped thinking about Cameron."

"I know," Jane said.

"This is really a very dull summer. Sometimes I think I'm going to lose my mind. There is absolutely nothing to do but come here in the evening and hope something interesting will happen."

"It would bore me," Jane said.

"What?"

"Just sitting here drinking beer, hoping someone will come along."

"Oh, well, often someone does come along. What would you rather do? Sit at home with Pauline and Grandma and Aunt Edie?"

"Possibly. I could be thinking about Narze, meanwhile. "

"Alright. Now I'll ask you. Are you in love with Narze? It

"I must be. I miss him so terribly. The last few weeks I've been seeing him four or five nights a week. Now, it's all over. "

"Mother's afraid you'll marry him, " said Dee.

"Well, that's silly. How could we? -We have to go to college. That would be five years from now. Who knows what will happen by then? Listen, Dee, let's go home. I'm awfully tired. I'd like to go to bed and cry. Everything seems so strange here after New Hampshire."

The next day Jane was to learn how strange everything was. It was not just that it was different from Camp Forest Primeval. But life at Channing Avenue this year was not at all as it had been before Jane went East. The house was crowded, to be sure, but the problem of money was far worse than Jane realized.

Mim went home to Oberlin in the morning, and Jane went to her old room to talk to her grandmother and aunt. The room had seemed fairly large with Jane's cot, orange-crate dressing-table, and footlocker as its only furnishings. But now it was almost impossibly crowded with Rosella's big four-poster bed, highboy, and three-mirror vanity. All that, plus two chairs, left no space at all.

Rosella lay on her side on the bed, with her knees bent. The bed had the same hair mattress that, as far as Jane knew, it had always had. It bore the distinct impression of the two bodies that had occupied it for so many years. There could have been only a few positions possible for lying on such an undulating but hard platform. But Rosella and Edie were used to it.

Rosella was not bed-ridden but she was far less active these days. She got up and dressed and came downstairs for breakfast prepared by Edie, and frequently Dee joined them. Norris ate early by himself, as Pauline never came downstairs till eleven. After breakfast, Rosella went back upstairs until lunch time, when she came down to the dining room again. After that it was upstairs again until late afternoon. When Edie was not occupied in the kitchen, she was upstairs reading Christian Science to her mother. It was not so much failing health that confined Rosella to her room, but the simple fact that it was the only place where she felt secure and at ease. However, on evenings when Norris was at home, Rosella usually spent an hour or so in the living room when the family was listening to the radio. She no longer did any cooking, nor did Pauline. That function had been taken over entirely by Edith.

Rosella was dressed exactly as Jane always pictured her, in a dark green print dress, with a high lace collar and dickey with ruffle. Her hair, too, was done in the same style she had worn since she was first married, pinned on top of her head with a fringe of curled bangs in front. It had gone from golden to brown, and finally to grey. She had always rolled the bangs up on kid leather curlers every night, but never wore the curlers outside her room. Her hair was thin now, and Edie put the curlers in for her.

Edie herself looked much the same, too. She was forty-five but her hair showed little grey and it was still blond. Her face was scarcely wrinkled, but it had lost its firmness, and she could best be described as faded.

The two ladies were glad to have Jane come in to chat with them, and she stayed for nearly an hour, regaling them with accounts of the winter on the mountain. She told them of the night they all thought that Alabaster, the black kitty, had been killed by wildcats. And of the strange noises the pond made when the ice cracked and groaned, and how they'd all been sure they heard bears. And she'd told them about the wild night they went to the basketball game in Bristol,

and how bitter cold it was that night. And she recounted how they'd worked the sugar bush, and all about the car getting stuck in the mud, and of Thundering Ann and getting food up the terrible hill.

"My goodness! Rosella said. "It sounds dreadful! I don't see how you managed at all."

"How did your mother like it?" asked Edie.

"Well, in many ways she liked the whole idea, but after awhile she got to feeling that she was in exile. She likes the city, too. And she had a hard time making the food budget work. we had only seventeen-fifty a week for our groceries."

"Oh?" said Edie, interested. "And how many did you feed on seventeen-fifty a week?"

"Six. Of course, when Dee was there it was seven. Some of the time Aunt Nelle and Uncle Rog were there but not for very long, and they always brought groceries with them."

"Do you know how much money I have for a week?" Edith asked. "Eight dollars! Pauline gives me a dollar a day during the week and three dollars on Saturday so we can have a little roast for Sunday. Last winter she gave me five dollars for the weekend, but in the spring she had to cut back. I just hope things don't get worse, because they are really tight. Pauline said she can't spare any more now that you've come home. That really upsets your father, but there's nothing he can do about it right now. But having to depend on Pauline for food is very bad for him."

"I'm sure it is," Jane said. "What time does the mail get here?"

"It may have come already," Edith said. "I'm going down to fix lunch now. We can look and see."

But there was no letter yet from Narze, and Jane was disappointed. She had written to him the evening she'd arrived in New York and mailed it before taking the bus west. Well, probably she shouldn't expect it yet. He would have had to have mailed it before receiving hers. Grace had told Jane that the person who goes away should write first.

Getting lunch with Aunt Edith helped Jane understand just how desperate the money situation was.

"We always have soup and peanut butter sandwiches," Edie said. "Mother used to fix corn fritters or some such thing, but she doesn't cook any more at all. I really don't know whether she doesn't feel up to it, or it's just that she doesn't feel at home in Pauline's kitchen. She cooked until we moved in here. Of course, I helped her after Aunt Ada broke her hip, and even more after I lost my position at Cleveland Builders, But I'm glad to do it here because it's one thing I can do to help earn our keep. I like cooking anyway. I always did."

"What can I do to help?" Jane asked.

"Well, what kind of soup shall we have? Oxtail, mock-turtle, or mulligatawney?"

"Any of them," Jane said. "I'm not particular. "

" I guess you're like Norris. He says that Campbell soups all taste alike. Well, you choose; they're in that cupboard there."

Jane looked. "There's no two alike."
 "That's alright. We'll just use one can."
 "For six of us!"
 "Pauline doesn't eat lunch. She just finished breakfast."
 "Well, for five, then? Is one can enough?"
 "We can just have cups. We won't use soup bowls. I'll stretch it with a little more water and salt."
 "Oh, Edie! I don't need any soup."
 "Well, the sandwiches are the main thing. Our big meal is dinner, you see."
 Jane helped Edie fix the sandwiches. It brought back memories of Aunt Ada when Edie mixed water into the peanut butter. Aunt Ada had done it because "It tastes too strong and it sticks in the throat." But it was certainly an economy measure now, as well as an old family practice.
 "With this Depression," Jane observed, "it's a good thing there's peanut butter."
 "Pauline says she hates it with water in it. Says it's too bland. But I like it because it spreads so nicely."
 "All it needs is a little salt," Jane said.
 Edith made a pot of tea and cut the sandwiches into quarters. Then she served the soup and called Norris and Dee.
 At the table Jane said she didn't care for **any** tea but would like a glass of milk.
 Edith said, Norris, we'll need to take more milk now Jane's home."
 "Yes, that's right, Norris agreed, but Jane heard him arguing about it later with Pauline. Jane heard her father say, "Well, we can't afford to have her sick, either."
 That afternoon she went grocery shopping with Edie, but first she sat at the dining room table with her while Edie made up her list.
 "Does Pauline give you your food allowance for the whole week?" Jane asked.
 "No," said Edith. "She gives me a dollar each day. She puts it under the sugar bowl in the pantry every morning. It makes it very hard to plan that way. but Pauline says she has to give it as she gets it - from day to day. If I got five dollars on Monday and then the three dollars on Saturday it would be easier. Sometimes I have a terrible time making one dollar buy what we need. Today I have twelve cents left over from yesterday, but I need to buy ice today and that will be twenty cents.

Jane looked at Edie's list.

1 lb. oleo	13¢	
1 loaf bread	12¢	
1 lb. ground beef	25¢	
1 bunch carrots		5¢
1 lb. coffee	13¢	
1 roll t.p.	5¢	
1 corn flakes	18¢	
1 box cocoa	<u>15¢</u>	

\$1.06

"I'll cross off the cocoa," Edie said and get it another day. We still have a little. Your father likes it, you know. I need money for the ice today."

"Gee," Jane said. "I knew money was pretty tight, but I had no idea things were this bad."

"They're very bad," said Edie.

Norris spoke of it that night at the dinner table.

"Jane, I wish I could give you an allowance, but I just can't. Dee earns a little change by doing some house-cleaning chores for Pauline. Maybe you girls can work it out between you so that you can each earn a little."

"We need to get real jobs," Dee said. "Everyone says there are no jobs, but we'll have to do something."

"I will need a work permit," Jane said. "I'm under eighteen."

"There's no point in you working, Janie," her father said. "You'll be in school in only a few weeks."

"Two months," Jane said. "That's a long time to be broke."

"If only there were some work taking care of children," Edith said. "I'd be glad for some opportunity to earn a little."

"Well, I need clothes for school," Jane said. "I can make them if I can get some material. I wouldn't turn up my nose at a job clerking in the dime store."

"I'd turn up my nose for you, then," Norris said. "I don't want a daughter of mine working in any ten cent store. Besides, you're only seventeen. You don't need to work. We'll manage somehow."

"But, Daddy," Jane began.

"No. I don't believe in child labor. Things are going to improve now that Roosevelt's off to a splendid start."

"Oh, boy," Jane said. "That isn't what Uncle Rog thinks."

"He doesn't like Roosevelt?" Norris asked.

"That's putting it mild. He thinks he'll make everything much worse."

"How will he do that?"

"I don't know," Jane said. "He didn't say."

"Rog's old-fashioned," Norris said. "He resists all new ideas. He always did. He loves the old-time way of doing things. He likes to write about them and he likes to talk about them."

"He likes to sing about them, too," Jane said. "Like, 'We're Tenting Tonight on the Old Campground' and 'Love's Old Sweet Song.'"

"We all liked those songs," Dee said.

"Yes, but did you ever hear him sing a modern song? He says they don't write good songs any more. "

"Well, they don't," Norris said, and Jane and Dee both laughed.

"Mother hates what she calls 'jazz,' Jane said, "but even she was singing 'Buddy Can You Spare a Dime.' The funniest thing happened one morning. I nearly broke down and wrote you a letter about it. Our kitty Alabaster started the Victrola one Saturday morning when we were all sleeping, and that record was

on. We were all mad at Ruth for waking us up. That's the cutest kitty. Mother calls him Henry the Eighth. I miss him."

"Well," Norris said. "We do need a cat..."

"If we had one," Pauline said, "we'd have to eat it for dinner."

"That's blasphemous talk," Norris said, and everyone at table laughed except Pauline.

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The following morning Jane and Dee went to downtown Cleveland to secure a work permit for Jane. They were both convinced that Norris would permit her to work in a place a bit classier than a ten-cent store. Their trip was a wild goose chase, however, as Jane learned that the birth certificate she needed first, was filed in the East Cleveland City Hall. The girls gave up the quest and went home, as they did not have enough money for the extra streetcar fare. Their spirits were a bit damp.

"I doubt if you could get work, anyway, Janie," Dee said. "I looked everywhere all spring. But Pauline thinks I might get a little sewing work to do. She thinks I sew quite well. I couldn't cut dresses without a pattern the way she does, but I can do hems and alterations, and make things from patterns.

"Who would you sew for? Pauline's clients?"

"Oh, I'd have to get my own," Dee said. "I can't afford to advertise. I decided to type up some notices and leave them in the mailboxes in the apartments around our neighborhood. I'd be willing to sew for twenty-five cents an hour."

"Well, I hope you get work. Now, what will I do for money?"

"Oh, Daddy says you'll be in school soon."

"Yes," Jane said. "But that doesn't help me now."

"No," Dee agreed. "That's true."

But the problem of Jane's low spirits was solved as soon as she got home. She had her first letter from Narze. There was also a letter for Dee from Grace. Jane took her letter off upstairs to read in private, but Dee read hers in the living room.

"Dear Dee (Janie, too, of course),

Well! You two are there and I am here. And very busy I have been too. I have arranged for my passport and got all the information about sailing dates. I've bought a new French grammar in anticipation of possibly going to Tunisia. But -! for the moment, the plan is for me to go Budapest. I learned that the girls I would be tutoring do speak a 'passable' French, and because of that Elma says that I'd have no trouble giving them an opportunity to learn some English. I am staying with Pauline "Polly" Patterson, and believe me, there are disadvantages. She told me today that she doesn't approve of opera. It is very 'immoral' she says. Your father would laugh, I'm sure. He used to tease her. I would rather have stayed with Don and Louise, but they are leaving for their new place in Maine (Depression hasn't hurt them, say I). I'm still a little irked with him about the business of Janie posing in the nude. Poor child! It was wrong, wrong, wrong of him, and also he should have paid her the fee he promised her. Well - that's in the past. I should have liked to have stayed with Nellie too, but she has no extra beds. Camp Nah-tay-see has gone under. They couldn't get enough youngsters to sign up for this summer, and Nellie says their debts have overwhelmed them. Too bad! Everyone is having such a hard time.

___ This is later. I am going back up to the Hill again. Rog came right back to New York and says Nelle needs me. He says I can wait for the

word from Elma just as well up there as down here in the city. So! -- we leave next Monday and I will let you know the latest developments. Elma must write me soon, as I cabled her that I really need to know. Babs's piano teacher has a buyer for the piano, and much as it breaks my heart to sell it, I sense it is the right thing to do. I know that you girls will understand, but don't mention it to your father, dears, as it will only upset him and I don't want that. I must close now and do write me dears. Both of you, not just Dee.

Ever, Moms."

Just as Dee finished reading Grace's letter, Jane came down the stairs, her eyes brimming in tears.

"Oh, Janie, what's wrong?" Dee asked.

"Nothing! Nothing! Nothing! Everything is just wonderful. He's coming! He's coming!"

"Narze?"

"Yes," Jane said. "He's coming here on his way to Chicago to see the 'Century of Progress'."

"Where's he getting all the money?" asked Dee.

"He's going to save up. Oh. He's not coming till August fifteenth.

That's about five weeks, isn't it? Oh, and I didn't tell you. The Fracher boys are coming too."

Dee was more interested suddenly.

"They are? Henry too?"

"Yep. Narze, Eddie and Charlie. The Fracher boys are driving, and they're going to try to get a couple more fellows to share the cost of the gasoline and stuff. "

"But if they're going to the Fair, we won't see much of them," Dee said.

"Narze says they'll stop here on the way there and on the way back , and They'll stay a day each time. Just think! When I left New Hampshire I was telling myself that I would probably never see Narze again, and he's coming. Halleluiah! "

"Do you think Mother knows? " Dee asked.

"Well now, can you imagine that Narze told her, before telling me? , t

"No," Dee said. "That I can't imagine. And I'm sure she'll be quite upset when she hears of it."

"If she's all that worried about me, I wouldn't think she'd want to go so far away from us. She worries about you too, you know."

"I know. But Janie, she feels this is a once in a lifetime opportunity, " Dee said.

"I wonder if it really is," Jane said. "Where will it lead?"

"I don't know," Dee said.

"But do you know what she is expecting from it? I mean, how will it get her doing her real work again? "

"Elma Smith says it will."

"But if she's to be teaching English to Hungarian girls? It doesn't make

sense to me. Mother doesn't speak Hungarian. "

"I know, but Elma has other things in mind for Mother."

"Well, that makes me nervous," Jane said. "Daddy says that Elma is a strange one."

"He should talk," Dee said. "All artists are strange, but I like them."

While Jane, in Cleveland, was in transports at the news of Narze Samaha's trip to the Century of Progress, Grace was excitedly dashing about New York on errands connected with her trip to Europe. She had her passport and information about sailing dates, and while she "waited for the word" from Elma Smtih, she was making herself a suit, but she was thoroughly weary of La Belle Fontaine's eccentric attitudes and prejudices. She'd be glad to be on the hill again to await Elma's cable or letter.

On the hill Nelle was most uneasy and lonely. And what's more, she was thoroughly annoyed with herself for feeling that way. She could not remember when she had last been alone at Camp Forest Primeval. Probably not since that first summer

before she had Babs. It hadn't bothered her then because she'd been younger, and so thrilled with fixing up the place. There'd been a few times when she and Babs had been alone on the hill, but usually there were a number of cousins.

And she had never been afraid. She hadn't really been afraid in the lonely cabin in Colorado. Earle had been annoyed at how brave she was.

And Rog felt the same way. But it was different when you weren't so young anymore. Change of life did things to your nerves.

The tents were still up, and they looked so forlorn with the empty cots. The girls had stripped the cots and folded their blankets neatly the morning they left. Now it was quiet, too quiet. If Rog or Babs or someone were there, the stillness would be a pleasure. But not when you were all alone.

There were red raspberries in the upper pastures now. Too bad the kids weren't here to pick them. Rog shouldn't have rushed them off in such a hurry. He had said he "couldn't stand their escapades a day longer." Actually, that basketball game in Bristol had been the only "escapade." Rog seemed to have forgotten his youth. But of course, he hadn't had a normal youth, running away from home as he had, when he was fourteen years old. Oh, well - no use thinking about all that. She really should go up and pick some of those red raspberries. She was talking aloud to herself much of the time. Nelle alone, of all the "Martin nine" had a New England accent, presumably acquired from her mother. Nelle said "red-'rozz'-berries" and two and a 'hoff'." And she also spoke of "dresser-'draws'" rather than 'drores.' She also pronounced 'won't' as if it were 'wunt.'

The day after the others left for New York City, Nelle took a small pail and went to the upper middle pasture, where she knew there was a raspberry patch. She found there were indeed ripe berries and she picked busily for about twenty minutes. And then she heard dogs barking - or at least one dog. No, there were two, she decided, and possibly more. Camp Forest Primeval was far from any other house

and one never heard other folks' dogs. But one summer, a number of years ago, a

pack of dogs had come out of the woods. They had run across the clearing, yapping all the way and had gone on down the hill. Rog had said they were "wild dogs" but Norris had said, no, that they were "feral" dogs, and he explained the difference. Domestic dogs sometimes became wild and traveled in packs and at times they were quite savage.

Nelle heard the barking again, and now she was certain that there were several dogs. She stopped picking and hurried back to the house. As soon as she was safe in the kitchen, she was very angry with herself. It isn't like me to be afraid, she thought. Then she told herself that it was not fear, but nerves. And besides it was just good sense to come in the house if there were feral dogs on the mountain.

The next morning she had planned to go down to Bean's for the milk and to mail a letter to Rog asking him to bring Grace back to camp. But when morning came she decided not to go down the hill at all. She could get along on canned milk till Rog returned in four days. When he left again she could go with him. But that afternoon Sleeper, the caretaker, came up the hill on his horse to see if she was alright. He had brought a pail of milk, and he took her letter to mail.

Nelle analyzed the cause of her reluctance to go down the hill alone. Could it be the bear? Ella Bean's mother, old Mrs. Farrell, had seen a large black bear in her driveway not long ago. She had at first glance thought it to be a cow, but looked again, and hastened to the phone to call Ella. Sleeper had come and found large bear tracks, though the animal was gone. But they had always known that there were bears in those hills, and they'd sent the children for the milk and mail for ten years. And, after all, she'd lived in lonely spots in Colorado, knowing full well there were black bears and even grizzlies around.

But I am not the Nelle I used to be, she thought. Perhaps when the "change" is over I'll have calm nerves again.

But that night, instead of sleeping in the little back bedroom that from the first, she had claimed as her own, she decided to sleep in the attic. Before everyone left Camp Forest Primeval she had thought she would sleep out in one of the tents,

But it was easy enough to plan that on a sunshiny day with the camp humming with people. It was quite another thing to sleep out there on the first dark, lonely night after everyone had left. Nelle told herself that what she needed was a dog. In Colorado she'd no doubt felt comfortable because she'd had Brownie. So she locked all the doors (something they never did while in residence), and went up to the attic to try to sleep, her revolver within reach.

In less than a week, Grace was back on the hill.

"Honey," Rog said to Nelle. "What peril did you think Grace could protect you from, that you weren't able to handle yourself?"

"Rog," Nelle said, "it's just that there should always be at least two people here in case of illness."

"Well, I s' pose so. But honey, I never leave you long. "

"But usually Babs, at least, is here with me."

"She will be after this summer. I'm sure of that. Things are so bad, though,

I don't know what's ahead for anyone."

But Nelle did not want to talk about the Depression. She proposed they all go to Plymouth to get pectin to make raspberry jam. She felt at ease again.

Grace was just as well satisfied to be back in New Hampshire. She could only endure the company of La Belle Fontaine for a week or two, and then she must move on. She'd finished her business in New York and there was no more to take care of there, but there were things to pack at Camp Forest Primeval. Not personal things, but books and such that had been shipped there after her Westport house had been sold. She was occupied sorting her books and repacking them, when Roger brought her a letter from Jane. She was in the barn at the time but brought the letter into the kitchen to read. Nelle was fixing lunch. Grace read her letter and interrupted the process to exclaim, "Good night nurse!"

"What?" Nelle asked.

"He's going to Cleveland!" said Grace.

"Who is?"

"Narze, that's who. He's pursuing her."

Rog spoke up. "Finish the letter, Grace."

Grace read on, but said nothing after putting the letter down.

"They're going to the Fair in Chicago, aren't they?" Rog asked.

"Yes," Grace said, frowning.

"I met the Fracher boys in town. They said they were planning to go."

"you didn't tell me, Rog," Grace said.

"I forgot about it, frankly."

"Don't worry about it, Gracie," Nelle said.

"Well, I do worry. I was sure that little romance was ended when Jane went back to Norris. "

The following morning Rog went to Boston on business.

The next day, Nelle and Grace went into the upper pastures to pick raspberries.

Nelle did not mention feral dogs.

"I don't think we'll get enough for jam," she said. "Too bad Rog had to go to Boston right now. We always get the most raspberries in the slash piles at Big Perch Lake. Rog could have taken us there. It's too far to walk. "

"Couldn't you drive in the little Buick? There's no traffic."

"Gracie, I don't have a driver's license this year. Too bad Jane isn't here to take us."

"Well, Nelle, she could have been here if Rog hadn't been in such such a rush to send all the youngsters packing the minute school was over."

"Gracie, "You know how upset Rog has been about money. And listen, Kid, you were in a great rush yourself to send Jane packing just to get her out of Narze's reach."

"Oh, now, Nelle!"

"Oh, now, Grace! You know it's true."

A few days later Grace got another letter from Jane.

"Dear Mother,

Will you do me a favor? Will you round up all my things that are there

and put them in a box so that Narze can bring them to me when he comes? Don't forget my patchwork quilt. I want to put the squares together. Mim writes that Aunt Emmy is finishing hers. Lucky Mim! And Mother, it will save postage if you will let Narze bring the box of my junk. So have it ready for him, please. He'll be leaving in three weeks now. Dee and I are having a terrible time about money. We have no allowance. Dee put some notices around in the apartment houses near here. Says she'll sew for people at 25 cents an hour or one dollar a day. She's had one customer. a woman who wanted her to make a wrap-around dress. Dee charged \$2.50 but the lady thought that was too much. Dee thinks she was a prostitute. I was going to get a work permit but Daddy says I shouldn't. Daddy also says it's crazy for you to go to Hungary. He said, What in hell would she do that for." Dee and I feel the same way, Mother. Daddy says, 'Tell her to come back to Cleveland because things are starting to open up. '

"Dee sends love and says she will write.
Love from Jane"

Grace was thrown into a state of indecision by Jane's letter "Why did Norris want her to return to Cleveland? Did it mean something? Or nothing? If she thought for one minute that he really cared where she was she'd give up all thought of going to Europe. But Norris was strange; it was highly likely that he simply did not want her to go to Europe. He'd got even with her for divorcing him by quickly remarrying and going prancing off to France. And now that she was planning to go he was saying that she should not. That was really something, when you thought about it. Here was Norris saying she should not go abroad, and he and Pauline had been there twice and were planning to go again. Obviously, she would do well to pay no attention to Jane's letter reporting that "Daddy says" this, and "Daddy says" that.

As soon as Rog returned from his latest road trip, Grace had him take her to town to send a cable to Elma Smith. She told Elma that she must know immediately whether or not she was to go to Hungary. Waiting was preventing her from making other plans.

Back on the mountain again, she collected Jane's "leftovers" as she called them. They were mostly her few warm winter clothes, sweaters, corduroy skirts and so on, but the box was topped off with the square quilt pieces she'd made from scraps or the other girls' blouse material Jane's pattern was called "Friendship Circle." Atop the quilt was Jane's maroon beret, and a small black looseleaf notebook containing her half-dozen original poems, and notes for a novel she aspired to write someday. The box sat on the floor in Grace's room waiting for several days. Grace was moved to push it into the Closet and cover it all with a blanket. She was at a loss to explain to herself why Jane's things bothered her. Was it that She missed Jane? Or were her belongings speaking a mute reproach? Reproach for what?

IT'S HER JOB TO GET TO COLLEGE

As August fifteenth approached, the visit of the boys from New England became a subject of heated discussion at the house at 10720 Channing Avenue. Everyone except Pauline was in favor of entertaining the visitors for dinner. But Pauline said, "We simply cannot afford it."

"Nonsense," said Norris. "We can and will. Things have not come to such a pass that we can't feed out-of-town travelers one meal."

"But Jane said there were five boys!" Pauline protested.

"That's alright," Norris said. "We'll manage."

"I'll contribute my dollar," Jane offered.

"I'll chip in something too," said Dee.

"We could have macaroni and cheese," Edith said, "or baked beans. And sliced tomatoes with either one."

"Not baked beans," Jane said. "They can be very unromantic."

Everyone but Pauline laughed. She said, "I don't think we'll have very many tomatoes if you're planning on our own." (Norris had planted six tomato plants at the rear of the yard).

"That's alright," Jane said. "Grandpa grows oodles of tomatoes. Mim will bring some tomatoes."

Pauline was still talking about it at bedtime.

"They'll probably want to drink milk, too."

"Pauline, stop fussing about it."

Actually, her fussing about the young people was putting Norris solidly in their camp. A letter from Grace full of her anxieties about Narze had made him very curious about the boy. He was determined to invite the group for dinner and if they couldn't stay on their way to the Fair, he'd plan it for the return trip.

Mim arrived on the fourteenth by bus. She brought tomatoes and cucumbers from Grandpa Martin's garden, and Emmy had sent home-made bread.

The girls did not expect the boys to arrive before late afternoon or sometime in the evening. Narze's letter to Jane had said, "We plan an early start." But Narze had really meant early, and when the girls returned from an early afternoon trip to the grocery store, they found a car with a New Hampshire license parked in front of the terrace. And in the living room, talking and laughing with Norris, were five boys, Narze Samaha, Eddie and Henry Fracher, and two other boys from the high school. Jane had only known the older boy, Bob Wright, in her English class. His younger brother, Gilbert, she knew only as a familiar face.

Jane had been dreaming of the moment when she would meet Narze again, and it was not like this. It was night, and a car stopped in front of the house, and she ran down from the porch and Narze got out of the car and everything was kisses and joy. But in front of the roomful of people all they could do was exchange glances full of happiness and meaning. Jane couldn't believe that Narze from New Hampshire was here at last. And Narze could scarcely realize that he was here in Ohio in Jane's father's living room. It seemed unreal.

Though Jane felt frustrated about giving Narze a kiss to say hello, she was really pleased with the way her father was making the boys feel at home. He spoke

of how he loved the Evans Mountains, and pointed out one of his fine paintings of the Presidential Range. He talked with Narze about baseball and the Cleveland Indians, and Narze talked about the Boston Red Sox. With the Fracher boys he spoke of his desire to spend a third winter in southern France, and of an interest in exploring Quebec province in the summertime.

when Pauline came into the room he introduced all the boys to her, finishing off with "the famous Wright brothers."

Then Norris invited all the boys to come to dinner that night.

"I wish we had room to put you up, boys. but we haven't even a bed for one. let alone five. "

"Can you recommend a hotel near here?" Narze asked.

"Well, there's the 'Adam', a block west on Grand Avenue at 105th," Norris said. It isn't fancy, though, but a friend of ours lives there and it's clean and not too expensive."

So the boys took rooms at the Adam Hotel, and the Wright brothers went downtown to look around. while Paul, Henry and Narze came to dinner. Jane and Narze finally got a moment alone when they went out to the car to get her box of things her mother had sent. They stood for a moment while Narze held her close. His eyes were wet with tears. He said, "Oh, honey. I thought I'd never see you again. I went crazy the night we said goodbye. The next day Eddie and I planned this trip."

In spite of Pauline's fears that they couldn't afford to feed a crowd, Edie served a very adequate dinner with a big pan of macaroni with cheddar cheese, a large platter of tomatoes and cucumbers in sugar and vinegar, and gingerbread with whipped cream for dessert.

Norris was gracious and jolly again at the dinner table.

"What became of 'Orville and Wilber;?" he asked, when only the Fracher boys and Narze came in.

"They're pretty shy," Narze explained. "They went downtown to a movie. Girls scare them, I guess."

Narze and the Fracher boys took Mim, Dee and Jane to an early movie.

They all sat in the back row. Jane had her head on Narze's shoulder most of the time. The boys planned an early start in the morning.

"Bob and Gil are in a big hurry to get to Chicago," Narze told Jane, "so we have to get them there. We sold them on the idea in the first place to help pay for gasoline. Personally, I wouldn't care if I didn't even see Chicago. but I guess we'll have to go. I promised to bring home some souvenirs to my family. All but the old man. He's mad at me."

"Why?" Jane asked.

"He thinks I won't come back. My older brother left home at my age. It's a long story. Look, honey, I may come back sooner than the others. I might hop a bus."

And as it turned out, Eddie and Henry Fracher felt the same way. The five drove to Chicago on Wednesday. They spent all day Thursday and Friday tramping about the Century of Progress Exposition. By Friday night Paul, Henry and Narze had seen all of the Fair they cared about and they were anxious

to get back to the girls in Cleveland. Bob and Gil "Wright had no girls and felt that they had only begun to see the Fair. They arranged to stay longer and return to Cleveland by bus.

Back in Cleveland the boys showed the girls a wonderful **time**. They went to afternoon movies, and evening movies. They went to Cleveland to a doubleheader baseball game with the Boston Red Sox. They went to a stage play. and they went to the airport and Eddie and Narze took Mim and Jane for an airplane ride. The girls kept quiet about their previous flying experience.

As the days ran out and there were only two left, the young things announced that they were all going to Oberlin so that Merle could meet the boys and when they got back they were going on a lake-boat "moonlight cruise."

"You make me exhausted just talking about all that." Norris said. "Well.

I hope the girls can adjust to everyday life after all the gaiety. I'm off for New York myself. so I'll say goodbye to you boys now. I have to be on the jury of an art show. Say goodbye to 'Orville and Wilbur' too."

They did not stay long in Oberlin with the aunties and Grandpa. They left for Emerald Beach, where they swam for a short time, sunned on the break wall and planned their last night party. The boys had a two-room suite at the Adams Hotel with a kitchenette and bath. They had been saving money by C ooking some of their meals, mostly canned spaghetti.

Tonight for the party, they planned something fancier. They bought steaks, sweet corn, salad things, and chocolate eclairs. Although the boys planned to do the cooking. the girls took over.

"We'd better call home and tell them not to expect us for dinner." Dee said.

"Tell them you don't know how late you'll be," Henry Fracher said. "They know about the lake ride?"

, "Oh, yes." Jane said, "but it would be best to call them. Dad isn't home, but we don't want Aunt Edith to cook dinner for us. I'll call her."

It was no trick at all for Jane to explain to Pauline, who Answered the phone in her sewing room. She was with a client.

"I won't keep you," Jane said. "We just wanted to let you know we are staying over for a party, so we won't be home this evening, I don't know, because I've never been on a moonlight cruise, so I couldn't say. But it will probably be very late, or else it will be very early, I should say. But don't wait up, because we will take Mim back to Oberlin after the boat-ride. Well -- it'll be late, but it will save her a bus trip. That's right. Oh, they're leaving tomorrow if the Wright boys get back. They're going to call when they get in.

OK - Yes, we'll be careful. Henry is a good driver. 'Bye."

And the girls were careful -- at least about entering the Adams Hotel where the boys had their rooms. The Adams was hardly a "classy" establishment, but it was old and fairly respectable, with more than half its rooms being occupied by permanent residents, many of them elderly. One of these was Rosella's old friend from her early days in Cleveland, "Aunt Nellie" Hanney. She lived in the third floor corner room. She was nearly eighty now and hoping to retire to a Christian Science rest home. Aunt Nellie loved her view from the corner room. The intersection

of 105th and Grand Avenue was a lively little community in itself. There were four movie theaters, three "dime" or "dollar" stores, two drug stores, and other businesses, and many doctor and dentist offices. The Grand Avenue streetcars rolled by, as did the cross-town 105th Street trolleys.

"Aunt Nellie" Hanney loved to stand or sit by her lace-curtained window and watch the activity around the corners. Jane and Dee knew this, so they walked very close to the building when they passed the Adams Hotel. They had visited Aunt Nellie once or twice with Edith. It was doubtful that she would recognize them if they did go by, and her eyes weren't what they used to be. Still - best to be mindful that she was still living there.

The boys had discovered that there was an alternate exit to the hotel, a door that opened on 105th Street. It opened from the inside twenty-four hours a day, and from the outside, as well, until night time. The boys entered all together by the main entrance on Grand Avenue. The girls came in the side entrance on 105th Street one at a time, at five-minute intervals, each carrying a bag of provisions for the evening's feast. They passed no one on the stairs, nor in the hallways. Nor was there anyone at the front desk when the boys came in.

With the limited equipment they found in the apartment's kitchenette, the girls fixed a very fine dinner, but before they were through eating it, they realized that the steamer "Lake Princess" would sail without them.

As Nelle always proclaimed, there's safety in numbers. And for six young people in two smallish rooms there was no privacy. But it was an unusual night. For Narze and Jane there were tears. Their reunion was ending, their future one huge question.

With all the movies, sight-seeing, ball games, etc. Jane did not make any entries in her journal until after the boys had departed for home, and then her mood was dejected.

Aug. 28, 1932

Narze is gone! I looked forward to his coming for days and now it's all over and the time just flew. They even stayed over an extra day so we could take our lake-boat ride after all. We missed it the night before when we had our goodbye party. Daddy was in New York, and he would have had a fit if he had known we had the party in the boys' rooms. But there wasn't anything particularly wicked about our party. Narze and I were feeling very blue. I suppose Mim and Eddie were too, but I don't think Dee will miss Charlie so much, because she has fellows here that she likes. But she had a lot of fun while the boys were here. The boat ride was nice, but it really made me feel sadder than ever, because they had a band on board and there was dancing. We didn't go in the salon to dance because it was crowded and too warm in there. But we all sat in deck chairs and the band kept on playing our favorite songs, and when they played "Stardust" it made me so sad, especially the part that goes, "Beside a garden wall when stars were bright." There is a wall by the house in New Hampshire where we said goodbye the night before I left. And now I'll remember him on the "Lake Princess" with the band playing "Stardust." We don't know when we will ever see each other again, but Narze says he will find a way to get to college. He said, "Maybe then your mother

wouldn't be quite so upset about me."

#####

As autumn began, Norris's mood was one of frustration. After his trip to New York he had sold an oil painting, but all of the proceeds had immediately gone to pay back rent which was owing. He was thoroughly sick of being virtually penniless and having to depend upon Pauline for their food money. He wanted to be able to give Dee and Jane each a small allowance for their personal necessities, but Pauline felt that couldn't be done. She had said that the girls' needs would just have to be taken care of as they arose, and then *if* she had the money she'd give it to them. But this arrangement was extremely unsatisfactory to Norris. He knew that the girls were both reluctant to ask Pauline for so much as a dime. Instead, they always came to him. Norris felt that Pauline was enjoying excessively- her position of power over all the rest of them.

"You are revelling in the present state of affairs," he told her. "You like dishing money out to us a nickel at a time, don't you?"

"You shouldn't say that, Norris," Pauline said. "It isn't so."

"Yes it is SO, he said, "and I'm not going to play along with your mean game."

"Oh, Norris!"

"I'm going to find out what the girls really need each week, and you can just quietly put the amount on the buffet for them on Sunday evening. That way will be the least distressing to us all. Including you, by the way."

"I don't know what you mean," Pauline said.

"Just that if I have to be humiliated about money, things could get even more unpleasant than they already are around here. I do my best, but my money goes out in much bigger payments than yours. I pay the rent and buy the coal and things like that. Two years ago I was doing beautifully. I didn't order the 'Depression'."

"Norris, I know, and I –"

"Well, let's not hash it over. If I have extra money I'll provide it and you'll know about it. Otherwise you can figure that Jane will need a quarter a week to buy milk for her lunch at school, and she'll need a half-dollar a week for the streetcar pass, and Dee will need carfare too."

"But she can certainly walk to her classes now," Pauline protested. "it's right in our back yard. Why does she need carfare?"

"She's studying hard at her typing and shorthand. I'm not opposed to her doing something that's fun. Anyway , she oughtn't to have to scrub the kitchen floor whenever she needs a dime or a quarter for a box of Kotex."

"Oh, Norris!"

"Well, try to arrange this so the girls don't feel like Cinderella. Things are miserable enough as it is."

Jane's return to East High School was not a joyous reunion , but at least she knew her way around.

Her friend Benetta Thompson was still there and with luck they got the same lunch period. Mona James no longer attended East High, having transferred to another school. The school seemed more enormous than ever , and the mad rush of students in the corridors seemed even more hectic than before. But her homeroom teacher remembered her, as well as some of the students she passed in the halls. And at

least, she was a senior now, enjoying the glory that attends that lofty position. But at home the first night, she got into a battle with her father. It began at the dinner table.

"Well," Norris asked. "How did it go?"

"Alright." Jane said. "but I'll need money for my books tomorrow. I'll try to get used ones if I can. but the Latin book is a new one. she says."

"Latin!" Norris exclaimed. "You should be through with that stuff."

"Oh, no. It's one of my major subjects. That and English and French. Science and Math are my minors."

"How many years do you need for a major?"

"Three," Dee supplied.

"How many years have you had, Janie?"

"Three."

"Well, then. That's more than enough."

"No," Jane said. "I planned on four years. Nobody takes three years of Latin. You either take two, because it's required for your college, or you take four years because you like it."

"Three years is plenty," Norris said. "I won't have you staying up late shedding tears over that Latin."

"I never shed tears over it anymore. I only cried during that time after I'd been sick and I had to catch up. You made me go to bed before I'd finished my translation. I've gotten high grades in Latin ever since that one semester. I've been looking forward to fourth year; that's Virgil, the Aeneid. The story of the Trojan War and all that wandering afterward. I like mythology. and I'm really looking forward to it. The first two years are just a lot of drudgery and learning; the conjugations and the declensions. and the miserable little pronouns. Third and fourth year Latin is the fun part."

Dee laughed at that. "Fun! Latin?"

But Norris said, "You don't need any more Latin for Art School."

"Art School! I'm planning on college."

"Plan on Art School. I could get you in there, no doubt."

"I'm not talented enough for Art School."

"Ridiculous! Why wouldn't you be, with your mother's talent and mine?"

"No one said that to Dee," Jane said.

"We probably should have. Anyway, your mother says you are talented. So go ahead and arrange for an art course instead of that Latin."

"But Daddy! You and Mother have always said that high school art courses are no good!"

"I don't recall ever saying that. Anyway. you can learn the basics. Your grades will show if you have talent or not."

"Even A grades in art don't prove that. Most of the class will get A's. Art teachers don't like to hurt people's feelings. They give A's and B's for trying hard."

"Where'd you hear that?"

"From some of mother's art-teacher friends."

"Alright. Well anyway, the matter's settled. Drop the Latin and arrange to

take some Art."

"Oh, Daddy!., Jane said in anger and tears. She got up from the table and fled toward the stairs.

"Here! Come back here! Eat your dinner." Norris said.

"I don't want it. You can have it, " she cried.

"She's crying about Latin again, " Dee said.

Jane turned around fiercely. "You mean I'm crying about no Latin." And she vanished up the stairway.

"She has a bad temper," said Norris.

"Mother says she gets it from you," Dee said.

But the next day there was a letter from the East which would provide new table conversation. Grace, who had been "waiting for the word" from Elma Smith for weeks, had left the mountains and come down again to New York. And there she had found, at the apartment in Jackson Heights, a cable from Elma that had been lying around for three weeks. Grace did not know whom to blame, as Roger claimed to have been on the road all that time, and apparently Elma had forgotten that Grace would be in the mountains.

"And so," Grace's letter to the girls read, "I now have Elma's message to go immediately to Budapest. But I cannot leave and go so far without coming back to Cleveland to see my dear nippers. I have my passport, and otherwise, too, I am ready to sail, but I haven't bought my ticket yet. Elma urges me to come 'post haste' but before I do, I must come and see you girls and know you are well. Also, I have a very strong feeling that draws me home. It would be wrong to go abroad while I feel this way. I must see my dear, sweet father too, before I go so far. So, dear nippers, I shall see you in a few days."

#####

Grace arrived in Cleveland with the notion that she was there to say goodbye to various members of her family and a few friends. She was telling herself and everyone else that she was going straight back to New York to book passage on the Aquitania. Grace would not admit to herself that now that "the word" had finally come from Elma Smith telling her to "embark post-haste" she was in fact afraid to go to Budapest. Aside from the problem of being a woman traveling alone, the language barrier was appalling to her. She had had a preconceived notion that the language in Hungary was German. She had a slight familiarity with that. But Elma had answered her queries with the alarming statement that Hungarian was "a most unusual language with its sources in many other tongues." Heavens! However to cope with that? One could not even read public signs.

So Grace followed her instincts and headed straightaway to her girls in Cleveland and to Oberlin, whither all those of the Martin clan always returned from their wanderings. Long ago the Old Brick had been the magnetic pole, the safe harbour. Home had always been where Sophia was, and now it was where Merle, Emmy, and their father were. The other children came back from time to time, even (rarely) the exiled Johnny.

Grace did not send a -telegram of her arrival time, for she must save her money. Her plan was to stay a few days in Cleveland at William T. and Gertrude Martins' place during which visit she would spend as much time as possible with Dee and Jane. After that she would go straight to Oberlin and see the family there.

But on Grace's arrival in Cleveland, a phone call to Gertie's house found no-one home, so she called Betty Long and asked her to please try to reach Dee at Norris's and arrange if possible for Dee to meet her at the Hotel Cleveland lobby at noon. Grace called Betty again to verify the plan. Betty said that Dee would be there.

Grace was tired and decided to spend some of her money on a room at the hotel for one night, as another call to Gertie found her still out.

Over their lunch in the Terminal Restaurant, Dee inquired, "Mother, couldn't you have stayed with Betty for a few days?"

"I didn't want to, nipper, because we have so much to talk about. I didn't want Betty discussing me with your father.

"Oh, Mother!" She wouldn't," Dee said.

"But she frequently has. He questions her, I suspect."

"He never sees her anymore, remember. He's not in that building. Oh, Mother, I wish you had your own place."

"Well, never mind. Just let me look at you. You look thin."

"Mother, I don't want to be fat."

"But you look run down."

"I'm fine, Mother."

When Jane joined them in Grace's room at four o'clock, her mother gave her a hug and then made the same observation.

"Janie, you look thin, dear."

"Oh, Mother, you always think that. I weigh the same as I have for a couple of years."

"Well, you don't look up to par."
"I am, though. I'm up to par, whatever 'par' is."
"Tell me something, girls. Is it true that your father's marriage is falling apart?"
"Oh," said Dee, "I guess it fell apart long ago."
Jane said, "I never did know why he married her."
"But," Grace insisted. "Are they about to break up?"
"Why?" Dee asked. "What did you hear?"
"Oh, only that Betty told me that Norris said to her that if he were to leave Pauline, people would all think she was so lovely, and sweet, and they would not know that actually she is a veritable hellion."
"Well – I –" said Dee.
"That is not the right word," said Jane.
"'Pain in the neck' is more like it," Dee said.
Jane said, "People think she is lovely and sweet, because she has the manner of - well, sometimes she's just too sweet to be true."
"Mealy-mouthed," said Dee.
"If I think of a hellion," Jane said, "I think of someone mean and wild. I can't say that Pauline is ever mean and wild. Can you, Dee?"
Dee laughed. "No."
"It's the 'trade -lasts' that burn me up," Jane said. "Pauline sees her clients everyday and different ones say to her, 'Your step-daughters are pretty.' Then Pauline comes to Dee and says, 'I have a trade-last for you.' Then we have to make up something that's a compliment to her, because Dee's friends met Pauline long ago and most of my friends have never laid eyes on her. I think trade-lasts are a miserable practice. Pauline must know we can't produce compliments on the spur of the moment."
But Grace's mind was moving ahead.
"Is she the only one that is earning money?"
"No, but Daddy isn't getting much work," Dee said. "Mother, let's not talk about that. It doesn't do any good. Did Betty tell you about the Art School show?"
"No. What show?"
"The fiftieth anniversary show. Alumni and former students are supposed to submit their most important work of any period since graduating. You should put something in, Mother."
"Good grief!" Grace said. "I don't have anything to put in any show. I was busy doing my fashion work."
"Mama," Jane said, "you had those nice little water colors you did last winter."
"Oh , those!"
"Yes. Where are they?"
" In the bottom of my suitcase," Grace said. But those aren't any -."
"Mama! They're good!" Jane insisted. "Show them to Dee."
Grace extracted four small water colors from the suitcase and Dee was impressed with them too. The girls insisted on taking them home to show to their

father. They presently left , for Dee had a night school class and Jane had homework. Grace said she would stay a few days with Bill and Gertie and then she would go visit the family in Oberlin. The girls said they would visit her at Lawrence and Vinnie's.

Grace lay awake long that night, overtired as she was. She thought about the discord in Norris and Pauline's marriage. This, she thought, put an entirely different face on things. I wonder if the Fates intend me to go to Europe, she thought.

#####

Although the Depression was as much of a trial to Norris as it was to Roger Fison , Norris did not allow it to affect his personality as adversely as Roger did. Norris much of the time seemed to be his normal self. He could still be charming at times, and even-tempered at times. But inwardly, every member of the family worried him or annoyed him. His mother's failing health made him feel insecure and old. As long as one's parents survived, it was a buffer against the consciousness of one's own mortality. His mother had always protected him, too much, some said and probably it was true. But she had given him the greatest love of anyone in his life, and when she went, he would be an orphan, left with only those whose love was diluted with criticism. Norris worried about Edith as well. If only she had a way of earning some money. The only work she was trained to do was running an adding machine and all her efforts to find such work failed. Sometimes she practiced on Aunt Ada's old typewriter, but she said it made her terribly, terribly nervous.

Norris was pleased with the way Dee was working at her stenographic studies, but he was still concerned about her attitude about men. He wanted her to let them pursue her. She still liked to go to the College Rendezvous on her free evenings and he told her he thought that was bad policy, that the boys would know she was chasing them. But, perversely , when Pauline began harping on Dee's social habits, Norris came to Dee's defense.

"She has to have some fun," he said. "Don't worry about Dee."

However, he did, and he also worried about Jane, though not in the same way. Jane no longer went with Dee to the Rendezvous as she had sometimes done in the summertime. Nor did she go out on dates even when Dee and Mona James tried to arrange it. Apparently Jane was being true to Narze Samaha, and that was not such a good thing either. In high school she should not be tied up to a boy hundreds of miles away. She should be having fun and going to dances and football games. She seemed content to stay home and swat away at her chemistry and other studies. It didn't seem like most young girls to be that way. They were always silly over boys.

Pauline thought it was remarkable the Way Jane studied.

But Norris said, "Oh, she's just got a long-distance romance, that's all.

It keeps her at home reading her school books and her love letters."

But Norris was puzzled about Jane's love letters. They came from New Hampshire two or three times a week. Ever since Jane came home in July the letters had come at least twice a week, often every day. But there was an odd thing: since Narze's visit in August the letters had something written on the outside and it probably was just some sentimental secret nonsense, but it had been a source of curiosity to Pauline, and eventually to Norris and the others. On the gummed flap of the envelope, on the point of the triangle, were the initials "M.I."

Norris had raised the question at table one evening.

"What's this "M.I." on your letters from Narze?"

"Oh," said Jane, "that's just our secret message."

"What's it mean?" Norris asked, "My intended?"

"No." Jane laughed. "That's not it."

"My ideal?" asked Pauline.

"My imbecile?" teased Dee.

"Nope." said Jane.

"Well," her father said. "It's not on all the letters. "What does it stand for?"

"Oh," said Jane, "It's only a sort of a little joke between us. Sometimes he forgets to put it on. It'S an expression in Arabic and I can't pronounce it." Her father lowered his eyebrows quizzically, but said no more about the mysterious initials.

But later, upstairs, Dee said to Jane, "That isn't really an Arabic expression on the letter, is it?"

"No," said Jane. "but it'S our little secret, though. Some kids put 'swak' on their letters, but that's never a secret."

"Put what on their letters?"

"Swak.' S.W.A.K. Sealed with a kiss."

"Oh, that! That's for kids," said Dee.

"That's what we thought."

"But you won't tell even me?"

"Not yet," said Jane. "Maybe later."

Norris had upset Jane so much in the matter of her plans to study fourth year Latin, that she had started her senior year at East High in a rebellious mood. She had been told that she must take an art course, and she was much annoyed to find that she could not take the art class that seniors were taking , but must start with the beginning class who were for the most part sophomores or "tenth_graders." Also the art course would use up two class periods each day. She was taking chemistry, which she liked, American History which was required of Seniors, and English, also required for four high school years. She liked history and English well enough but was still so disappointed about the Latin that all her studies bored her except chemistry. However, at the end of the first week of school she found that she could take Journalism in place of English and receive the required credit. She made the change immediately, but said nothing to her father, who did not learn of it until the first report card came home for his signature.

"What' s this Journalism?" he asked Jane.

"Just one of my choices for an English credit."

"I didn't say anythin5 about that. What are you taking journalism for? You're going to miss too much classic literature if you don't take English this year."

"Daddy, I've already read more classic literature than they'll get this year or any other year. More poetry, more Shakespeare, more Dickens, more Chaucer. You know that, Daddy. Don't worry about that. In Journalism I'll learn how a newspaper is published. I have an assignment already. We learn headline writing, sell advertising, do proofreading, cut up galley proofs, and make up pages."

"Alright, but I don't see how this helps an art career."

"Oh, Daddy," Jane began, and then changed her mind. She decided not to tell

him she did not plan to be an artist. She would tell him something else, that would please him.

"The Journalism teacher has asked me to be the art editor of the Crimson and Gold."

"Well," said Norris. "That's something. How did that happen?"

"Oh, the art teacher told her who I am. Or, I should say, she told her who you are."

Norris looked pleased. "Who is the art teacher?"

Mary Sue Coleridge. She said she went to Art School with you."

"Oh yes, I know her. She does still-lives."

"Still-lives are so boring. Well, they told me that there wasn't any art editor last semester. Donald Hall had graduated, and they couldn't get anyone else to do it. He was very good. He did wonderful cartoons. I know I can't do as well, and I have to do one every week. I'll hate that."

"You'll be just fine," her father said.

Later, upstairs in their room, Jane said to Dee, "Daddy didn't bat an eyelash when I mentioned Donald Hall. Does he know who he is?"

"Of course. But he may not know whether you know who he is. In any case he probably wouldn't enjoy a conversation about it."

Norris had noticed Jane's mention of Donald Hall, and he wondered what she knew about the boy. Had she mentioned him because he had been art editor. or for some deeper reason? Jane was a strange girl.

But Norris had other things to occupy his thoughts. The Cleveland School of Art was observing its 50th anniversary with an exhibition of the work of its alumni. This show was held in part to assist the artists who were suffering due to the Depression. If they wished to offer work for sale, they could. Or they could borrow work that was privately owned. As the current president of the Cleveland Society of Artists, Norris was on the jury. It was of some comfort to him in these days when Pauline was feeding the family on her earnings, that his own success had had some recognition. And that artists should suffer during a depression was a fact of life that needed no explaining. He felt sure that Pauline did not fully understand this. Nor did she understand the bond between all the artists in Cleveland who were trying to weather out the economic storm.

Grace had come to Cleveland to say goodbye to Dee and Jane before her planned departure for Europe. The girls had come home from seeing their mother, carrying with them a roll of four Small, but very charming water colors.

"Tell your mother," Norris had said to Dee and Jane. "that these are nifty.

Two of them are real knock-outs. Tell her I'll frame them for her. Also tell her she's crazy to go to Europe at this time."

He had not only framed the pictures but put wide white mats on them, lending them an importance beyond their modest size. They were very handsome, now, and he had them all displayed in the front room, leaning against various pieces of furniture. Every time Pauline walked through that room on the way to the stairs she was confronted with Grace's pictures. It finally provoked her to speak of them to Norris.

"You must have spent quite a lot of money on those frames," she said.

"I have no money to spend," he reminded her. "These are frames that I had."

"But you matted them, too."

"I have plenty of mat board," he said. "Don't worry about it."

"But you shouldn't be using up your supplies," she insisted.

"Look here. Don't be so jealous. If there is anything I can do to help Grace get on her feet again, so that she can be earning some money, I'm going to do it. It will help her and that will help the girls, and that will help us."

"I thought she was going to Europe," Pauline said.

"You'd like that, I'm sure, but I wouldn't. It's better for the girls to have her near them. I hope she doesn't go. I doubt she will. It's not at all practical. Now don't go dissolving in tears."

"Well, how is she going to get these pictures to the museum?"

"I'll take them."

"I thought so. Don't you know how embarrassing that will be for me?"

"Nonsense! The people over there don't pay any attention to whose pictures are coming in. I wish you weren't so silly. My artist friends wouldn't think there was anything unusual in my doing Grace a favor. Artists are much more sensible about such things. I should have stuck to my own kind of people."

Pauline fled upstairs to her sewing room.

They had also quarreled over the adoption of a stray cat. Norris had always loved cats, and so had his parents and Edie. They had had no cat in their home since the passing of the venerable Puffy. A thin and hungry female tiger cat had come to their door recently, making small pitiful mewing sounds and rubbing against Norris's legs. Over Pauline's strong objections Norris had promptly taken the cat into the kitchen and fed it a bowl of warm milk with added cream. The kitty immediately made herself at home, sleeping on any bed in the house except Pauline's, and enjoying much petting from everyone but Pauline, who let out shrieks whenever the cat rubbed against her leg.

"You like that cat better than the rest of us," she told Norris.

"That's not completely true," he said. "Not completely true."

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After staying a few days with William and Gertrude, Grace went to Oberlin. Before she left, Gertrude warned her, "Grace, how long has it been since you last saw your father?"

"Two years ago last spring. I came out from New York to be with him on his 90th birthday celebration, Let's see, that was 1931. Oh my! So that is two and a half years, isn't it? Well, you see I spent all of last year in the mountains at Nelle's."

"Yes, I know. Well, be prepared to see a big change in him, a big change. But after all, it's to be expected, isn't it?"

Gertrude was right. Grace felt a deep shock, when she saw her father. Old Henry had grown so thin that his clothes hung on him. He still wore the suits that he had when his frame was sturdy and vigorous, but now they hung on him loosely. He had once held his trousers up with a belt, but they now hung from a pair of grey suspenders. Grace's first thought was that Merle should buy him some clothes that fit him, but then she quickly realized that their father would have no part of "wasting" money on clothes he didn't need.

But it was not her father's appearance that distressed Grace most; it was his confused mind. But he knew her, thank God, he knew her, and he knew where she'd been.

"Hello, Gracie, girlie. Did you come from New York to see me?"

"I most surely did, Father. How are you, dear?"

"I had my birthday last week, Gracie," he said.

"Last March, Father dear."

He ignored that, or didn't hear her.

"Do you know, Gracie, I'm two hundred years old."

There was no old familiar twinkle in his eye; he really believed it. And the next night when she was helping Merle persuade him that it "as best he wear his pajamas to bed, Old Henry remarked with all conviction, "You know. it was a funny thing - my wife took to sleeping under the bed. I never could understand why she did that."

Afterwards, Merle asked Grace. "What do you suppose makes Dad say a thing like that?"

"Probably something he remembered from a dream."

"Would he dream something like that because he felt guilty about getting Mother pregnant so many times?"

"Oh. I'm sure not. I, for one, don't think dreams have much significance.

They're so outlandish, usually."

"Yes," Merle said, "but after Mother died, Dad said things that indicated he thought he should have spared her so much childbearing."

"Guilt is normal after a loved one dies, Merle. I recall Mother telling me something like that."

They spoke of other things then - of Grace's planned trip, which did not have the support and approval of most of her family, with the exception of Dee and Jane, and even they had some doubts and fears about it.

And they spoke of Roger's decision to leave his present job which had become

so worrisome and unprofitable of late, to go to Canada where he would write script for a Toronto radio station. And during the upheaval of moving to Canada, Nelle had felt it wise to send Babs to Oberlin to be paired with Trink, especially since Mim and Jane had each other as chums. Babs had felt left out of things at Camp Forest Primeval last winter. So, as usual, the Martin girls were swapping their daughters back and forth.

On the second night after her arrival in Oberlin. Grace took time to stop in at the Martin Inn to pay a call on her brother Nate (Nathan Albert Martin). She was happy to find him

at the hotel, and not away buying supplies for the restaurant. He gave her a brotherly hug and kiss, and Marie and Eva gave her one of their meager smiles. Eva was as fat as ever, but Marie seemed to have aged and grown thin and pinched looking.

"I hear you're going to Germany or some such place," Nate said. "What do you want to do that for, Gracie?"

"It's Hungary, Nate, not Germany. I'm going to teach Art."

"Sounds like a wild idea, Sis," Nate said.

Marie and Eva listened but said nothing.

"Nate, do you think you could drive me out to Chagrin Falls to see Tommy and Fancy, and Johnny and his new wife?"

"Well, I don't know Gracie. My car needs new tires and I hate to take it out of Oberlin anymore. Makes me nervous."

"Wouldn't you like to see the Old Brick again, Nate?"

"Well, I don't think so, Gracie. The place doesn't look good at all. I took Dad out last spring. It only made him sad."

Marie spoke up then. "If you were going to see Johnny's wife, you're too late. She divorced him."

Grace was shocked. "Why, my goodness, he just married her! Merle said she was a nice person."

"Two years ago, Grace," Marie said. "You been East."

"But what happened?" Grace asked.

"A younger woman was chasing him," Marie said.

"Chasing Johnny!" Grace said. "Why, he's close to seventy years old. he's past sixty, anyway."

"Eva spoke for the first time then. "Well, you know what they say. There's no fool like an old fool. He wasn't only married to Ginny just a little while, if he was married to her. How long was you married this last time, Grace?"

Grace never liked Eva. The woman hadn't changed. She never had liked any of the Martin family. Jealous, probably, Grace thought, though there may have been other reasons.

"This last time?" Grace said. "Why, Eva, don't speak as though I'd been married many times."

"Maybe I'm getting you mixed up with your brother Charlie," Eva said.

Grace did not stay much longer. Her visit with her brother had been dominated by the two sour-faced sisters.

"When she got back to her father's place, Merle explained to Grace what had

happened to Johnny's brief second marriage to the shy little widow that they had known only as "Ginny". Johnny had been "appropriated" by a strong-willed woman twenty years younger than he. Merle said she knew little about the woman save that she was strong and tall, a nurse and a Jehovah's Witness. She had made a Witness

of Johnny, too, Merle said. And also Tommy and Fancy.

"Oh, for heaven's sake! Poor little Johnny! Oh, and poor Ginny, too. What became of her?" Grace wanted to know.

"When Ora Hill came on the scene, Ginny departed," said Merle. "That's all I know about it."

"Were they married?" Grace asked.

"Ora and Johnny? Not yet."

"No. I mean Johnny and Ginny. Eva implied they weren't."

"Oh. Eva. Well, I wouldn't go by what she says, though honestly, I don't know, Gracie. We all assumed they were."

"Why would this younger woman want Johnny? For Father's money?"

"If so, when the time comes she'll be disappointed."

"On? Merle, do you know what's in Father's will?"

Merle hesitated only slightly. "I know that much. That Father never forgave Johnny really. He speaks to him, but he never forgave him."

"That's sad," Grace said, "and I'm sad that I didn't get to see Johnny and Tommy before I go. And I must go."

But at that point their conversation was interrupted by Mim, who came into the *room* waving a letter.

"Jane just wrote me with exciting news. She's all a dither. Narze's coming!"

"Narze's coming?" Grace said, looking annoyed, as though she didn't understand.

"Why? Didn't he come last month with the other boys? Jane never writes letters. She used to when she was little. I assumed that Narze went to Chicago when the rest did."

Mim was laughing. "He did come. And now he's coming again."

"But why, Mim? What does the letter say?"

"Just that he has a chance to ride out here with people on their way to south Bend, Indiana. Narze wants to get a job in Cleveland."

"Get a job in Cleveland!" Grace sputtered. "Why that's the limit! Good grief! "

Mim opened her eyes wide, and held up her hands as though to protect herself.

"Well, don't blame me, Aunt Grace."

"Well, I think it's terrible!" Grace said.

She did not sleep much that night. For several days she had been recording in her journal her apprehension about going abroad. She had really wanted to go, but in truth, she had no desire to live in Hungary. If it had only been Paris, or perhaps Vienna. Whenever anyone in the family expressed disapproval or doubts, however, she defended the whole venture. There were people who encouraged her to undertake the trip. One was Betty Long. The Hursts, too, were enthusiastic.

But Betty and Don and Louise had scarcely known Elma Smith, who had not been their contemporary in Art School. Thus, they had not seen the impractical, not to say flighty, side of Elma's nature. And in speaking of her plans to join Elma in Europe, Grace had told no one of her misgivings about her friend. Actually, Grace had nearly squelched her qualms, since Elma seemed to have turned her dreams into a successful business with five branches of her European School of Art. But now that Elma had said "Come immediately," Grace could not make the step. In her mind, she was admitting that she was indecisive and doubtful of the wisdom of the whole thing. In her journal, she weighed the pros and cons. The pro side was too light. Number One, it would advance her career. Two, it could solve her financial dilemma. Three, it was a chance to see something of the rest of the world, and she had long set her heart on that. But she could think of no other reasons for going.

On the opposite side were many reasons for not going at this time. She scarcely knew what to list first, but they were all reasons that other people would understand. Her father was old and frail and might not live many more weeks or months. Her own health was not what she would wish, as she had worked hard during the long cold winter at Camp Forest Primeval. And now, she was worried about

Dee, who seemed thin and nervous, and who very probably needed her tonsils out. The more she thought about this, the more certain she was that it must be done, and done without delay. And then, too, there was Jane, who was a senior now. She must be encouraged to seek a scholarship to Art School or at least to college. And the relationship with the Arab boy must be ended somehow. That must be handled skillfully.

All these arguments were ones she would speak of to her friends and most of her family, but there were other deeper reasons for why she could not set sail just now for unknown places. And not only could she not speak of them, but she did not want to admit them to herself.

Although Grace would not perhaps have realized it, the principal reason she had lost her eagerness to go abroad was the knowledge she now had that Norris's marriage was failing. She had hung on every word of Dee or Jane that indicated the extent of domestic problems. She was consumed with curiosity to know how it would all turn out. She tried to suppress the hopes that this news had revived. There were little signs. Dee had said, "When I flunked, Daddy said, "Well, you're certainly not like your mother. She was a good student'," And when Jane had lost her temper at him, Norris had said, "You don't get that from your mother." What did it all mean?

And now there was a new development, Narze. Grace had decided not to say too much about it for the moment. If she got all excited, as she had about Danny O'Neal, Merle would caution her not to interfere with the young people. Merle had got that idea from Nelle, who had always maintained that she would never have married Earle had her mother not raised such strong objections. Grace, however, didn't agree. She was sure Nelle would have married him anyway. He had been incredibly handsome. Meanwhile, Grace would go back to Cleveland. and while taking care of other matters, she'd learn more about Narze's plans.

At breakfast that morning she announced that she felt she must return to Gatesport and get Dee to agree to having her throat examined.

"I see such a difference in Mim since she had her tonsils out last June," Grace said.

"Do you really?" Merle asked. "How?"

"Oh, she's picked up. Put on weight."

"Sh!" said Merle. "Don't let her hear you."

"Well, Trink's thin, Merle. What about her tonsils?"

"She had them out, Grace. They grew back."

"Well, Merle, when my doctor takes them out, he does it right. I'm certainly going to see that Dee has it done. I can't go away until I get that attended to.

Dear me, there's so much to worry about, Merle. "

"Grace, you shouldn't go away if you feel that way. You're worrying about so many things. You should either decide to stay here, or you should just simply go and put an end to this indecision. It's hard on you, and I think it's hard on all the rest of us."

Grace widened her eyes, but Merle went on.

"Sis, you just have to decide whether you can go to Europe without Dee and Jane. I mean, do you think you'll be able to work, and have peace of mind? If you can leave them to Norris's care, then you should just go and stop fretting."

"Well, I'm going as soon as I get Dee's tonsils out and get her built up a little."

A muffled snort came from Mim.

Merle went on. "Are you going to be worrying about Jane too? I mean about Narze?"

"Well!" Grace said, "I'm sure he won't be able to get a job in Cleveland.

They say college graduates can't get jobs. I expect he'll go back home to New Hampshire, but as for Jane, I'm certainly going to tell that young lady that it's her job to get to college and not to get married."

Mim spoke up. "Aunt Grace, when you talk to Jane don't call her 'young lady' _ She hates that. She says it really means, 'little naughty girl'."

"Oh, Mim!" Merle said, and then, "Grace, how are you going to send Jane to college?"

"Well, I'm expecting she'll have a scholarship, and I've always told her that. I expect her to try hard for it. It's all up to her."

BY
JANE R. CHANDLER
PART EIGHT
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WHAT WILL YOU DO IN BUDAPEST ?

On Channing Avenue, Jane was counting the days until Narze returned to Ohio. He would arrive the first week in November. Jane had not told the family what the mysterious initials on her letters from Narze signified. She had thought of telling Delight (Dee), but decided to wait. It was a complicated story. Narze had an older brother, who had left home to go to work in Boston. He had always wanted to be an artist, but his father wanted him to work in the store. He had worked in the little delicatessen from the time he was twelve until he was twenty. He had never had a salary, but his father had given him a few dollars when he needed them. Then one day he left and never came back. After that, Narze had worked in the store. His father was angry at the older son, but he had learned something. He gave Narze more money. But he didn't pay it as wages or salary, he just gave money to Narze when he needed it. It was different however. When they closed the store at nine o'clock, he would say, "You wanta go the movies, you go. You want five dollars? You take it. You need ten? OK. You take a girl the movies?" OK. "

But Narze had no more desire to join his father in the delicatessen than his brother had. He wanted to teach math and perhaps to coach basketball or baseball. He had never played football as his parents had forbidden it, and also because he was only of average height. But he was a natural born teacher and because of that he had done well in Boy Scouts. He got along well with others. Mr. Moors, at the high school had told him he'd make a good teacher. So now, he was saving money for college. When his father let him take "five or ten dollars from the cash register "to take a girl to the movies, " he saved the money instead. He used to walk up town in the evening and talk to Harl Pease. And he spent leisure time writing long letters to Jane. He had explained to her why he didn't want to put his money in the bank. "This is a small town, " he had written. "and everyone knows everyone's business. If my dad learned I had a savings account, he'd decide he was paying me too much. And I don't want to keep it here at home in this house full of kids. So would it be alright, honey, if I send you money to save for me? When my letters have money in them, I'll put M.I. on the envelope, so you won't open the letter in front of the family. Is that OK, honey?"

Narze had started mailing the cash as soon as he returned home after his summer visit to the World's Fair and Cleveland. Jane kept the money in one of her dresser drawers under the paper that lined the drawer. By the time Narze arrived in late November, Jane had two hundred and thirty-five dollars under the paper.

Narze arrived in the afternoon while Jane was in school and he met her when she stepped off the street car. They went into one of the three movie theaters and sat in the back row, so they could be alone before going home to

Channing avenue.

"When I learned I could get a ride here, Honey, I had to come. I couldn't stand that town any longer without you. I've been going crazy. "

They discussed immediate practical matters, such as where Narze would live. It was very tempting for him to rent a room at the Adam Hotel, but acting on instinct, Jane advised against it. The Adam was at the corner of 105th and Grand avenue where Jane caught the street car to go to school.

"I won't be allowed to see you every day, " she told Narze. "I think Dad would be uneasy about us, if you were to live so near. He'll be sure to ask.

So why don't you get a room down town somewhere for a few days? Later, then after Dad has forgotten all about it, you can move to the Adam. "

"First of all I've gotta get a job, Honey. I hope I can come see you tonight. We haven't really said 'Hello' yet. "

"Sure, you can come tonight. Maybe you can come to dinner. I'll ask Aunt Ethel what we're having. "

"No, Janie, " Narze said. "I won't come to dinner. I'm going to be very careful not to wear out my welcome. "

Jane's instincts had been right. On the first evening her father did indeed show an interest in Narze's plans.

"Where are you going to be staying, Narze?" he asked.

"I have a room at the Royal Hotel, " Narze said. "It's five dollars a week. "

"Well, that's not so bad. I guess there's some cheaper, but you wouldn't want to be in a worse neighborhood. It's none too good at 9th and Sloane. "

Before he left for the evening, Norris held more to say. "Jane, remember now. I expect you to keep up the good grades. You may date on Friday and Saturday, and maybe once during the week, but not late. Say, in by 9:30. "

"Alright, " Jane said.

But the fact was, at that time, that Norris was too preoccupied with his own personal problems to worry much about Dee and Jane's romantic attachments. His marriage and his finances consumed his thoughts. The very sight of Louise upset him. Where there had been incompatibility, there was now animosity which was clearly felt by everyone in the household. And Norris knew it was bad for them all. He had been humiliated enough in the years when Grace was earning so much more than he, but Grace had been talented, intellectual, and a very interesting person. Now , it was galling in the extreme to have Louise providing the only dependable day-to-day income. For Pauline Hastings Wells was a

colorless person compared to Grace. She knew nothing of languages, nothing of music and the other arts, and worse, she never read books. In fact, she never read the newspapers and magazines, save the fashion news. When he married her, Pauline had admired him, had felt herself inferior to him. God only knew what she thought now; she was an inscrutable sphinx. Closeted in the sewing-room with her self-centered, "clothes horse" clients, what did she talk about? Did she say, "Norris has; had no work in two months"? And what did her "bitch kitties " reply? "He's very fortunate to have you, my dear"? Probably.



JANE RAHMING

1933

"ANDREA"

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He and Pauline were quarreling lately about the tiger cat. In spite of herself, Pauline had softened her attitude and had even suggested a name, "Miss Minnie Tippett" after a spinster they had met in England. Pauline was quite impressed with the way the half-starved animal had plumped up since receiving dependable rations of petting and cuddling and boiled kidneys. But it had gone right on getting plumper, and Jane had said to her father one day, "This lady is no spinster." And before Pauline realized the cat was expecting, all the others knew, but they were afraid to tell her. When the cat grew fat and round, Jane decided it looked "like a Bavarian beer-drinker." (It's face markings looked like a big mustache.) She began calling the kitty "Otto" which annoyed Pauline and amused Norris, who also began using the name. And now the kittens had arrived, fortunately only three of them, two dark tigers like the mother, and one silver grey.

"Will you drown them?" Pauline asked Norris.

Norris looked so horrified that Pauline hastened to say, "People usually drown them, don't they?" "Not my kind of people. Yours, maybe. You should know better than to suggest such a thing. You just don't understand me at all, do you?"

"I know we can't afford one cat, let alone four," Pauline said.

"We'll find homes for the kittens or we'll keep them. Now pray don't remind me again that you buy the groceries."

In the end, they found homes for the two tiger kittens who were males, and kept the grey one, a female that Norris said was a silver tabby. Jane named it Binker and it spent its days in Rosella and Ethel's room curled up on the white bedspread.

Norris continued to have much on his mind and it was not all worrisome. Some of it was hopeful. Franklin Roosevelt's "New Deal" had a plan for helping people including artists, to earn a living. There would be a program wherein artists would be paid a salary to paint murals, sculpt monuments, produce plays and concerts and so on. A majority of Cleveland's artists were hoping to be chosen for the project, because almost all the fine artists were suffering, and those who had been in the field of commercial art were severely hurt as well. Norris belonged to each of these groups.

When he had been elected president of the Cleveland Society of Artists, Norris had sent a clipping, cut from the Cleveland Herald, to Dee. He felt quite sure that Grace would learn of it. Probably she'd find out from other sources among her old friends like Betty Long. It had given him a strong sense of vindication to know that he was well thought of by his artist friends, after all. After his divorce from Grace, he had felt that many of the artists must think him, if not a cad, at least a rascal. But that was not the case. The divorce was not the first they'd witnessed, nor the last, and it was, after all, merely a juicy bit of gossip to vary the conversational menu. They were quite naturally, wrapped up in their own problems. He need not have worried so much about it at the time; he should have reminded himself how quickly people forget. Ah, but he was younger then. He hadn't known things like that. It was his first divorce. And there was going to be another one. Sooner or

later. Probably later. Who could afford a divorce now? Certainly not he. And he was not going to worry about what people thought. When the time came, he would not care. Any friends that he cared about would still be his friends. They would understand. Many of them were people who had never known Grace. Events worked out in very interesting ways sometimes. Because he was currently president of the Art Society, Norris had been included on a panel who were going to see to getting the federal program set up for Cleveland artists. Mr. Norrisson of the Art Museum had called him, and also Ralph Heller of the faculty of the Art School. Heller was Cleveland's most honored artist and Norris was flattered to be on the panel which would meet with the man from the government agency. Actually, when the three men met with the federal representative, in on office of the Art Museum, it was to select another panel of five Cleveland citizens who would review the preliminary sketches submitted by the artists seeking aid. But when Norris spoke of it at the dinner t able, it was exciting news and he knew Dee and Jane would carry word of it back to Grace.

so that leaves me to cook for Father and Marian's two girls,
and Ellen Maria (Nelle)'s Barbara (Babs) is here this winter too. Life is so complex.
This terrible Depression! Do let me know, Elma, about coming
in the springtime. Will it be alright?

Be sure to write soon.

Love - Grace

But when Grace wrote in her journal, she was more honest in stating her reasons for not leaving for Budapest. She admitted to herself, at least partially, that the shaky condition of Norris's marriage kept her. She must see how that turned out. What did it mean? Did he still care about her? Did he remember November, 1908? My! That was twenty-five years ago! Dee thought the marriage to Pauline would "blow apart any minute now." Jane thought not. "He hasn't the courage to leave," she said.

Grace cited more reasons for staying. And they were reasons Elma would not have accepted. The boy, Narze, was still in Cleveland and taking up Jane's time and thoughts. But he would soon be gone, Grace was sure. He would go back home because he could not make a living. She would not leave until she knew he had left Cleveland. Nothing must stand between Jane and Art School. And there were other matters. Try again to get money from her brother John Arthur (Art).

Get Dee's tonsils out and probably Trink's (Katherine Lemmon) too. Merly was coming to see that it should be done. Grace would be willing to take Trink to the doctor herself. But first of all Dee's must be done. Oh, and there was another thing she must make an appointment with the director of the Art School to see about getting Jane a scholarship.

Oh dear! So many things to see about. But she was getting sleepy.
She put away her journal.

#####

Grace had explained Dee's problem to Gertrude. Dee desperately needed her tonsils removed. Dr. Fishel had said they were in terrible shape. But Norris would have objected and made a "big row. " So an arrangement had been made to have the operation done on a Friday and then Grace would take Dee down to Merly's for the weekend and Norris would be none the wiser.

"What hospital is she going to?" Gertie asked.

"None. Dr. Fishel does it right in his office. "

Gertrude raised her eyebrows.

"Did you have yours done that way?"

"I certainly did and it did me a lot of good, " Grace said.

"How did you feel afterwards, " Gertie asked.

"Well, " Grace said, "It's a local anesthetic, so my throat wasn't sore right away. Of course, later -"

Gertrude was always business-like and practical.

"Look, Grace, " she said. "Bring her here. She won't feel like going to Oberlin on the bus. Let her stay here over the weekend. "

Grace had been hoping Gertie would say that, and it was fortunate too, for Dee was quite exhausted by the time her tonsillectomy was over. Grace brought her to Bill's west-side home in a taxi. Gertie had a bed made up and ready for Dee, who gratefully crawled into it. She looked quite pale and wide-eyed.

"Is your throat awfully sore, " her aunt asked her.

"No, " Dee said. "It's still numb, but I was scared. "

"She had a little problem with gagging, " Grace said.

Dee made a snorting sound. She couldn't talk very well, but she spoke up then.

"Little problem!", " Dee said. "He nearly gave up on me. I gagged and gagged and gagged. I thought I was going to choke to death. "

"Oh, she did just fine, " Grace said.

And true enough, Dee seemed to recover very well. The doctor saw her again the next morning in his office. His method was different from other throat surgeons in the city, and Grace explained it to Bill and Gertrude.

"He gives you medication to gargle with afterward and he insists that you come back every other day for the next week, so he can treat your throat. He swabs it with something."

"I see, " Bill said. "Well, he sounds like an expert. I bet he never turns down a customer though. I bet if I walked in and asked him to look at my throat, he'd say I needed my tonsils out. "

"Well, " Grace said. "You probably do. "

"Oh, shucks, " Bill said. "My tonsils don't ever act up. They must be there for some good reason. " But he tired of the subject. "Grace, are you still planning a tramp abroad ?"

"I surely am, " Grace said. "After Christmas. "

"Why don't you stay here and get in on the New Deal's art Project? What are you going to be doing in Budapest?"

"Tutoring the daughters of a parson in a little village, " Grace said.

"Teaching them English. " she added.

"Have you been studying Hungarian?" Gertie asked.

"No, but I'm going to look into it, " Grace said feeling quite foolish.

"You'll need to make a very good salary to pay for the trip over, won't you? Hungarian parsons must be quite well-to-do, I guess. " Bill had a twinkle in his eye, but Grace was troubled.

"Bill, you're teasing me. You see, I feel that it's a real opportunity for me to get on with my art work. To get back to it, actually. I mean to paint a lot. "

Grace, " her brother said, "you'd better look into the plan the government has for artists. "

"Oh, I shall, I shall, " Grace assured him. "Norris is involved with it and Dee says he thinks I ought to get in on it, too. "

"I think Norris is right, " Gertie said. "I hope you do it, Grace. "

"Well, we'll see. But, anyway, I may not be chosen. Norris told Dee they were swamped with names. "

"Be sure and try, Grace, " Bill said. "If you got over there in Europe and things didn't pan out, I don't know as the family could afford to bring you back. "

"Oh, Bill!" Grace said.

I'm serious, " he said.

DO YOU PLAN TO MARRY HIM ?

For Jane her days at East High in this autumn of 1933 were entirely different from what they had been two years before when she had been a lowly tenth-grader plagued by sickness and struggling to keep up in her studies. This year her health was good, and her grades were good as well. She was a twelfth-grader, a senior, with all the required courses behind her. Well, there was one course she had to make up - physical education, gym. It had not been required in New Hampshire, although girls' basketball was available. But East High insisted on three years of gym, so now as a senior she must make up the missing year, and since she had dropped out of gym two years ago when she was so ill on two occasions, she now had to turn out for "fizz-ed" with the tenth-graders again. And it interfered with her schedule because her art course took two periods every day, the journalism work on the school paper took extra time, as did the chemistry lab work. In addition, she had joined the Chemistry Club, and the Athenaeum Literary Society. and the gym class was so superfluous and such a nuisance. She had talked about it at the dinner table the first week of school.

"And all we do is march:" she said., "Right dress, right face, right about face. "

"Ridiculous!" her father said.

"And it interferes with all my other activities in the eighth period. Only tenth-graders have eighth period classes. "

"Well, perhaps you have "too many activities, " he said.

"No, I don't. Chem Club and Athenaeum meet only twice a month. Listen, Daddy, wait'll you hear this. They've changed the uniform again. I can't wear the black bloomers, white middy, and black tie you paid for two years ago. They've changed to silly little cute blue suits, and I have to buy one. I have to. "

That did it. Norris was too pressed for money to stand for that.

"That's outrageous!" he said. "You'll have to drop it. "

"I can't. Not without a doctor's written excuse, " Jane said.

"Alright. We'll get it. "

"Do you know a doctor?" Dee asked.

"Yes", Norris said. "Doctor Cutler. He delivered Janie. "

"He's still around?" Jane exclaimed.

Norris laughed. "You're only seventeen, my dear. But I guess it is time I paid him for bringing you. "

"Daddy! Really? You never paid him?"

"I'll give him a picture, " Norris said.

Which he did. However, by the time Narze arrived in Cleveland Jane was still taking gym, and Narze thought it was amusing. Dr. Cutler had been delighted with the small oil painting Norris had given him in payment of the old obstetrical bill. He amiably

wrote a note to whom it might concern, recommending that "Jane Rahming be excused from athletics. "Her gym teacher told Jane that the note was "not specific enough. " At this juncture, Grace got into the battle and she and Jane called on Dr. Cutler, a genial grey-haired doctor, who proudly told Grace he had delivered over three thousand Cleveland babies. This time, the doctor, based on what Grace related, wrote a note saying Jane had a "history of recurring respiratory problems. " The gym teacher whom the students called "old iron-pants", would not give in.

"She sent me to the school doctor, " Jane told Narze.

"And he wanted to know all about my respiratory problems. I told him I usually got bad chest colds in the fall months. He asked me if my other doctor thought it was "seasonal asthma. " I said Dr. Cutler hadn't mentioned it. So anyway, the school doctor listened to my chest and he said it sounded quite clear. So he wrote a note for the gym teacher saying he recommended I be excused from gym for the fall semester, but next spring, I could take it. Daddy is just furious. He says that the school could be forced to accept Dr. Cutler's recommendations. "

"They probably could, " said Narze. "But Janie, do you really think you shouldn't take gym? Do you really think it would hurt you?"

"No, but I'm just awfully busy this year and it's silly to make me take it. That old biddy just wants to win the battle. "

"And you want to win the battle yourself, " Narze said.

"Yes, " Jane admitted.

"And your dad and mother want to win the battle too. "

"Yes, we're all stubborn. "

Narze laughed. "That's apparent. It's a war of wills. Gym could be good for you; you're such a book worm. you know. "

"I don't think marching does me any good, " she said.

But now she saw Narze in a new light. She had known that he was very smart at math. but now she realized that he was also smart about people.

It might have been said at that time that Jane was leading a double life - her life at East High, and her life with Narze Samaha.

She rose at 6:30, dressed and spent some time on her hair and make-up. She and Dee both used an eyelash curler on their lashes, and a small amount of eye make-up. Norris raised a fuss about mascara and such, so it had to be subtle. Jane was pleased with the results of her make-up and had overheard her father tell a friend once that his daughters were "damn good looking. " Narze had told Jane, when he saw her "Senior" photograph, that she looked like a movie-star. But he hated it when she wore lipstick, so she reddened her lips with mercurochrome, which did not come off on

him when he kissed her.

When Jane came downstairs in the morning, Norris was already up and reading the Cleveland Herald and Ethel had cooked hot cereal. There was cocoa, as Norris usually preferred it to coffee. Grandma Rahming was still asleep at this hour as were Dee and Pauline. It would be nearly noon before Pauline appeared.

At seven-fifteen, Jane left for school and walked to the corner of 105th and Grand Avenue, where Narze might be standing to wait with her till her street car came along. He had rented a room at the Adam Hotel after two weeks at the Royal, downtown. So far, the only jobs' he could find were selling work and these paid only a small commission and few folks could afford to buy anything anyway. But he was trying to sell magazine subscriptions. Mornings were dark and gloomy now, and there had already been several snowfalls. At school Jane reported to her old fourth-floor homeroom where the girls seemed to have nothing in common with her. She was preparing for college and they were commercial students. Her first class was American History which she liked quite well. this was followed by a study-hall, then two periods of tenth-grade Art, then lunch which she always ate with Edna Williams, a girl whose race was as plain-as her name. They had met at lunch-time when they were tenth-graders. and had lunched together all that year. When Jane had returned from the East they picked up where they had left off. They shared no classes, they did not live near each other, they had nothing in common but lunch. Sometimes Jane wondered who Edna had lunched with when she herself was away in New Hampshire. They were studying entirely different courses except for American History which was required for all seniors. Jane thought Edna looked a bit like Aunt Ada, long nose and weak chin.

Chemistry was Jane's favorite subject and her greatest challenge. She always spent her entire study hall on chemistry problems. She had pointed out to her father that if she were not taking Art which took two periods a day. she would have an extra study hall and would not have to bring much homework home at all. He had said "Oh, I'm not worried about your grades. " And she had said "Well, don't send me to bed when I have to be up late doing homework. That's what you used to do, but I'm two years older now. "I'm aware of that" he had said. But in truth, Norris was paying little attention this year to what Jane did in the evening as he was very often not home when she went to bed. and when he was, he was usually in the basement in his darkroom. Dee was out more often than not, and Rosella and Ethel retired early to their room. Pauline had clients most evenings. Study-hall in East High Was the auditorium. It was built like a conventional theater and occupied a large part of the second and

third floors. It was not a gymnasium. The students were assigned to every third seat, in order to allow for better study conditions. There were two teachers maintaining quiet and order on the main floor and one in the balcony. From where Jane sat, high in the balcony, she could see everyone upstairs and a majority of those on the main floor. There was seldom any nonsense. Most pupils studied, a very few dozed. The teachers reigned over all, because those who disturbed the peace were assigned two weeks of ninth period detention study hall and that meant being in school till 4 P.M.

Jane had a strange complex about study hall. It puzzled her and amused her, but it would not go away. And it would be years before she understood it's probable cause. She had changed schools so many times, usually entering in the middle a semester, coming into a classroom full of strangers all staring at her as a new teacher assigned her a seat. She was always shy, always hated it, particularly in certain schools such as McGinley, P. S. 69 in New York, and particularly the teachers' training school where she had played "hooky" for three weeks. She had a phobia about embarrassment at school. She had witnessed the suffering that it caused others. In the first grade a disaster had befallen her chum, Grace Harris, who had a talent for whistling. Grace had been invited to perform for the class and she had brought a phonograph record to school to accompany her warbling. She whistled very prettily standing in front of the room and then, before the whole class, she had wet her pants and a puddle had collected about her feet. She fled to the cloakroom in tears. And there had been other incidents, though none to Jane. During her tenth grade year at East High she had attended an Honors Day ceremony in the auditorium. A senior girl had gone up on the stage to receive the Latin Medal, and as she turned to leave, her pink panties fell down about her ankles. There was nothing to do but step out of them; she could certainly not pull them up. The school principal with great alacrity and aplomb, stepped forward and pocketed the little silken heap which seemed to fairly shimmer in the footlights' glow. The whole school buzzed all afternoon with those who saw it happen describing the horror of it for those bored individuals whose gaze had been wandering.

It was much more comfortable to go unnoticed in this huge school. Easier to turn in a written book report than give an oral one. Easier to hurry directly home from school than to go to the corner drugstore which was a hangout for "kids who were fast". In the tenth grade, Jane would sit in the quiet study-hall and imagine things happening that would shatter the silence. Something worse than a ruler or protractor dropping to the floor. Supposing, without any warning. she became violently nauseated

and vomited all over the people in the row in front. Or what if she involuntarily and suddenly shouted out a dreadful four-letter word such as "shit", or the worst one of all that began with "F". Horrors! Sometimes she pretended that she was about to do it. Maybe it was a little like the dread that you might jump out a window. That was an idea too. Suppose she were to jump over the balcony and onto the main floor. That would rouse everyone up. But she only entertained herself with such thoughts when her homework was all done and she was sitting there bored. And, now she was a senior. she didn't do it anymore anyway. She was no longer in awe of the student body. Most of them were younger. But sometimes Jane played a different study-hall game. Her old friend, Benetta sat near her, and once in awhile they would exchange eye signals or small grins. They were in the same American History class, and once had been in the same French class. Mona James had teased Jane and Benetta for getting high grades. They had all been in junior high school together, but now Mona attended another school and Jane was just as well satisfied. Mona had been dating since the eighth grade. Benetta had never dated at all, and Jane had said little to her about the events of the year in the mountains. Benetta seemed only interested in her studies. Mona had her pegged right. On the other hand, Mona who was very bright, now seemed to care for nothing but boys. They were both extremes Jane thought, and it was better to be in between.

Jane was wearing Narze's class ring again. and Benetta had noticed it. but she had got the notion that it was Jane's own ring from the New Hampshire school. Jane would not be able to order an East High ring because she had been away during her junior year. When she said goodbye to Narze last July she'd given his ring back, and he'd not wanted to take it but she had said, "I don't know when we'll ever see each other again. "

Grace had frowned when she saw Jane wearing the ring again.

"What does that signify?" she asked.

"Same as before. We are going steady. "

"Does that mean you plan to marry him?"

"We aren't engaged, mother. I don't plan beyond college. "

"You mean Art School, don't you?" Grace asked.

"I don't think so. "

"But you're going to be Art Editor on the 'Crimson and Gold'. "

"That doesn't mean anything, mother. "

"Oh, Jane! You know it does! Is it Narze's plan for you to go to college?"

"Of course not! I had that idea years before I met him. "

Grace sighed. "Jane, I don't understand you at all. "

"No one understands another person. Not really. "

Jane thought about it later in study-hall. Mother doesn't understand me because I have big ideas about my future and because Narze travelled five hundred miles to be near me. And yet she had big ideas about her future and Daddy travelled five hundred miles to be with her. But she would say that was different. It isn't different. But, no, she doesn't understand. None of them do. She wouldn't understand either, Jane thought, eyeing Benetta. Wouldn't she be shocked if she knew her studious friend was leading a double-life.

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Jane would have liked to see Narze more often, but as it was, she was with him more than the family thought. They were all taken up with their own affairs.

Norris was gone very often in the evenings, implying that he was trying to sell pictures, or would be at the art club. He no longer stated where he would be. When he was at home he was more often than not in the basement, sometimes working with a young apprentice photographer, named Ben, who was willing to assist in darkroom work, for no pay, in order to learn the craft of portrait photography.

Pauline was nearly always in her sewing room all evening with a client or two, and she stayed there even after the clients left. She sat there sewing and brooding, wondering if Norris had found someone else.

In the evenings and even much of the day Rosella and Edie kept to their room. Rosella's health, and with it, her faith, were failing. Since Ada's death she had gone rapidly down hill. She leaned on Ethel more than ever. They occasionally sat in the living room briefly listening to radio, but Rosella soon tired and told Edie she felt "ready to go now. " That meant she was ready to have Edie read to her from Mrs. Eddy's "Science and Health" textbook. It was a fixed habit now, and her faith in the teachings was also merely a habit. Ethel read until her mother fell asleep, then prepared for bed herself.

Dee had various things on her mind - her own romances and those of her friends. Marian "Skipper" Root was working in Cleveland now. She had a waitress job at a classy dining room in the Tower Building. She had broken off with her old friend, Bob Bexley," to whom she had been engaged. "I'm through with him for all time, " she told Dee. Skipper was now dating a senior law student at Cleveland U. Through Skipper's recommendation Dee now had a job on Sundays, as a hatcheck girl at the dining room where Skipper worked. The job paid twenty-five cents an hour and meals, and since the regular hatcheck girl was an older woman who frequently called in sick, there were opportunities for more work. She was not permitted to accept tips, but some men insisted. Dee was grateful, especially since she no longer had to ask Pauline if she could wash the kitchen floor for fifteen cents!

Dee's little Italian friend, Jane Pizzi, had married her Polish sweetheart a month ago in Ripley, New York, a Gretna Green town on the Pennsylvania border. She was deliriously happy and three months pregnant. She and Stanislaus were planning a church wedding for her parents' sake. Jane's happiness stirred up bittersweet memories of Cameron in Dee's heart, but she was currently dating a new man herself and if not enjoying her Sunday job, at

least pleased with the small , but certain wages and occasional tips. She was also still attending night school at Benjamin Franklin High and marveling that nobody at the Channing Avenue house, save Jane, knew she'd had her tonsils removed. She had merely let it be known she had a sore throat.

So none of them paid much attention to Jane and her busy schedule. Benetta had persuaded her to join the Epworth League group at the Whitfield Park Methodist Church which was only two blocks from Channing avenue. The League met on Sunday evenings. Before long Jane had also joined the youth choir, which practiced on Wednesday evenings. On Mondays and Tuesdays she stayed late at school working on the four-page school paper, the "Crimson and Gold" which must be ready for the printing presses by 5:30 p.m. Tuesday. As a rule, most of the journalism class stayed and worked to make the deadline, but they were not all always there. On Thursdays after school Jane sometimes stayed for Athenaeum Society, and she always stayed for the Chemistry Club, of which she was recording secretary. On Tuesday and Friday evenings Narze came to Channing avenue, and on Saturday afternoons he and Jane went to a movie. Sometimes Narze was invited to dinner on Sunday evening and he always brought a quart of ice cream. After the second time that Narze came for dinner Pauline complained to Norris.

"We can't afford to feed that boy on our budget. "

Norris gave her a long look.

"I marvel at you, Pauline. I really do. What are you turning into? A pinch-fisted old tight wad? Don't you know that stinginess is probably the most unbecoming trait a human can possess? It's far worse than slovenliness. "

"Don't bludgeon me with a lot of words. That boy has been here two Sundays in a row. I'm just worried about the food budget. "

"And Dee doesn't eat here on Sundays at all anymore. Did Ethel ask you for more food money?"

"No, " Pauline admitted.

"And didn't you get enough to eat yourself?"

"Yes, of course, but, I don't think Jane should get the habit of inviting him to dinner. "

"It was my suggestion both times. I like him to come. He's good company. Sparks up the table conversation. You and Mother and Edie aren't exactly scintillating, you know. "

"You never say anything nice anymore, Norris. "

"Well, I don't feel nice. I'd like to know what happened to that poor little mother cat, and I think you know something about it. You were at me to call the Humane Society. "

"Norris, I don't _"

"Never mind. I know you say you don't know anything about it,

but you hate cats, so I've got my thoughts. She wouldn't have left her kitten yet. And she wasn't in heat either. She knew this was her home. You knew the rest of us were fond of her. I don't know why I can't have a wife who likes cats as well as I do. Grace wasn't crazy about cats, but there was one she liked once. "

"Well you'd better get a cat for a wife, " Pauline said.

"At least I'd like a wife who likes them. There's something wrong with people who don't like animals. There's something missing. Why would anyone shriek bloody murder when a sweet furry little kitty rubs against her legs?"

"You just don't understand me at all, " she said.

"No, and Grace was right; I was in too much of a hurry to marry again. I should have understood, then, that I would never grow to understand you. "

"Well, I understand, only too well, that we never should have married. Grace was right about why you did, wasn't she?"

"Your money, you mean? That might have seemed like the main reason, but that wasn't it. I did it to punish Grace, because she divorced me to punish me. She belittled me and you were admiring me. You don't do that anymore do you? Well, it isn't my fault that the Depression has knocked the artists out. And you don't hesitate to let me know it's your money buying the groceries. Well, I'll tell you now that it wasn't worth it. Marrying you to punish Grace just wasn't worth it. "

SHOULD WE ALL STUDY HUNGARIAN?

Save for Ethel and Rosella, members of the Channing avenue household saw little of each other that winter. At breakfast there were only three - Norris reading the morning paper, Jane hurrying with her toast and cocoa before dashing off to school, and Ethel quietly waiting on both of them.

When Jane came home after school the house was silent. Norris would be in the basement or away somewhere, Pauline shut up in the sewing room, Rosella and Ethel resting in their room, and Dee would usually be gone to the campus rendezvous in search of livelier prospects, though occasionally she would be at home busy with sewing.

Because of Jane's many after-school activities no one expected her home much before dinnertime, and only Ethel seemed to be able to keep in mind that on Mondays and Tuesdays Jane was late because they were "making up the paper, " and Thursdays it was Chemistry Club or Athenaeum. Recently she had joined another, the Scholarship club, for students desiring to visit colleges throughout the state to investigate financial help toward tuition. Everyone in the family was always present for dinner. Indeed it behooved them to be there, for there were no between-meal snacks, and dinner was a meal one would not want to miss. But it was no longer a conversational meal except on the Sundays when Narze was there. Norris seemed to emerge from his current gloom on those occasions and he would enter into a political discussion or talk about New Hampshire or sports or recall his boyhood or the few years when he'd been a farmer. There is nothing like a fresh audience to stir up memories.

But on weekday evenings the atmosphere was flat. The strained relations between Norris and Pauline were felt by all and the conversational efforts were feeble to say the least. Jane was running out of ways to answer Pauline's nightly question, "How is school?" She told herself that she must not be cross because Pauline was just trying to be nice.

But dinners were boring at best and Norris had taken to listening to a news broadcast on the radio during the meal. He had expected a protest from Pauline at least, but she, as well as the others, were happy to just listen and not have to make conversation. Norris had always carried the ball in this respect, mostly bouncing it back and forth to Dee or Jane, while his mother smiled vaguely and his sister laughed nervously. Pauline, according to Norris, had never been able to carry on a decent conversation. Privately, Dee and Jane knew that their father overwhelmed Pauline, particularly after he got warmed up and going strong on a topic that interested him. Now, however, he was moody and quiet, and while it might have been Pauline's opportunity to

talk, she did not know what to talk about so she remained quiet and they all listened to the radio. For the most part the news concerned the New Deal and the economy. Norris offered a few comments. He admired Roosevelt and when his opposition lashed out at F.D.R.'s recovery efforts, Norris scowled and called them "greedy bastards. " They railed at F.D.R. for "dooming the free enterprise system. " "Ha!" Norris said, "They are the ones who keep free enterprise from working. It simply has not been working. " In a lighter mood the family listened to Amos 'n Janie who provided most of the dinner-time laughter.

But Jane talked about it later to Narze.

"I don't like it around there anymore, " she told him. "Dad is grumpy, and Grandma and Edie are both nervous, and Pauline is mournful. "

"And how about Dee? Is she grumpy too?"

"No! She's not a grumpy type. But I'm sure she isn't happy. She wishes she had enough money. She'd rather not live with Dad and Pauline. She'd like to live with Mother and so would I, but Mother's going to Europe. I don't know what's ahead for any of us, Narze. "

"When the Depression is over things will be OK , honey, " Narze said. "It's hard on everyone. "

Narze was more discouraged and depressed than he sounded. He was a naturally good-natured and light-hearted person, but he was quite acutely homesick now, except during the time he spent with Jane. He loved her and he hoped to marry her, but he knew he faced formidable opposition from her mother, who declared that he and Jane "must hitch their wagon to a star" and focus on their education. And Narze knew perfectly well that Grace Rahming was thinking in terms of two wagons, not one. She wanted Jane to go to art school, but Jane said she had no such intention. She wanted college. She said she wanted to teach languages or ancient history. But she had also said, "There is no use arguing about it now with Mother. "

Narze knew that Jane's mother did not consider him a member of the white race. Just how she did catalog him Narze didn't know. His own inquiries had revealed that his parents' people were of Semitic origin. Narze supposed that that would be no more acceptable than Negro or Mongolian ancestry.

Although there were some things about a city that were fascinating to a small-town boy, Narze really was beginning to hate

Cleveland, but he felt he might hurt Jane's feelings if he said so. Now, in November, the weather was miserable, dark and damp. There had been two snows already, fairly heavy , and by the second day, they were covered all over with flecks of grimy coal soot. In the city streets the whole thing was churned to rutted black

slush.

Narze missed the cold, dry, white snow of his home environs. Even in the center of town there was rarely any slush because the low temperature and dry air kept the snow powdery. The common was a triangle and one side of it was a hill and they usually put sand on it, but that never turned the snow black the way the cinders did here in Cleveland. Of course, downtown was the worst. Out around the University and the art museum the winter scene was really pretty. From the upstairs windows of the Rahming's Channing Avenue house, according to Jane, you could see a large part of Whitfield Park, across the Lagoon to the beautiful white Art Museum. Jane said that at one time they had allowed skating on the Lagoon before they put the formal gardens in. He and Jane often walked in that area after dinner on Sunday when she was on her way to Epworth League. She had invited him to join and he had visited once, but he hadn't cared for it, and she admitted she didn't enjoy it either. It was just a way of getting out of the house. Someday she would get up her nerve to go to Narze's room in the Adam Hotel, but so far she was afraid. She was afraid someone in the family would learn about it. She had discussed it with Narze at length.

"I'm pretty certain Daddy isn't paying any attention to what we do. He has other problems. But I'm not sure. I hate family row's. It was bad enough last year in New Hampshire with Uncle Rog upset all the time. I don't know if Daddy understands people our age, or knows what it's like to have no spending money. Well, of course, he hasn't any spending money either. "

Narze had not told Jane how worried he was about money. He now saw that he would not be able to save a penny toward going to college if things continued the way they were. He could only get salesman jobs, and he couldn't sell anything. People listened, mostly, but they hadn't any money to buy necessities let alone magazine subscriptions. Jane sometimes asked him how he was doing and although there were days when he had sold nothing at all, he did not tell her that, for it sounded too dreadful, too discouraging. So he would tell her, at least, that he had sold one subscription. One day he sold three, and there were several days when he sold two. But more often than not he sold none at all. In the beginning he had gone to Strohmeier's on Jane's suggestion, and then to the other department stores, seeking to be hired on for the Christmas shopping rush. But he had been told that all such positions had been filled for several weeks. Just before Thanksgiving he gave up trying to sell the magazines. A new publication was starting up in the city. It was called the "Cleveland Weekly, " and it was hiring men and boys to sell subscriptions and develop circulation quickly to attract

advertisers. It could be sold on the street by the copy , or door to door to secure subscriptions. Narze decided to give it a try but it was not going very well. He was now dipping into the money that he had given Jane to save for him. For he had to eat. And pay his room rent, and buy a streetcar pass. And there were his shirts to be laundered. Jane had offered but he would hear none of that. "That's not the way to impress your folks, " he told her. Twice a week he took her to the movies - on Wednesday evenings and Saturday afternoons. Some small theaters charged only fifteen cents admission, but the better first-run theaters cost thirty or thirty-five cents. In downtown Cleveland, at Grand avenue and 20th street there was a cluster of cinema theaters, two or three of which also had vaudeville shows. This area was called Footlight Square and the admission charge was as high as seventy-five cents. Two or three times Narze and Jane went to one of these shows. Jane sometimes protested when he spent his money thus, but Narze said, "We can't always go to the library after all. "

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All through November Emmie had been thinking and talking about Thanksgiving. Almost daily, she said to Merly and Grace, "Let's have all the family here this year. " She said it wistfully and tentatively in the shy, wide-eyed way she said so many things.

"We haven't had a reunion in so many years. "

Grace was immediately interested, but Merly knew a reunion was impossible in that house. Still, it would be nice, Grace said "It would be a big lift for Father's spirits, " she said, "and I'd love to see them all before I go to Budapest. "

"If you go, " Merly said.

"Oh, I'll go. Eventually. Look, Merly, we can do it. I'll write to them all, and everyone will contribute to the cost of the turkey bird. And everyone can bring something, too. "

"Nate and Edith won't come, " Merly said.

"Maybe they would. "

"No, and anyway, if they did, Edith is - well, she's the way she is. "

"I know, " Grace said. "Poor Nate. "

Thanksgiving day was festive, though Grace was very disappointed that Dee had been asked to work on that day. Ordinarily she worked only on Sunday when the regular hat-check girl had her day off. For Sundays Dee was paid two dollars. For Thanksgiving day she would also earn two dollars. Grace protested to Dee in a telephone conversation the day before.

"It isn't worth it for two dollars, dear. You shouldn't have been asked to work tomorrow. You'll miss our nice reunion. "

"Mother, two dollars is two dollars! I can't tell them I won't work. I need this little job. "

There were twenty for dinner. Merly had put all possible extra leaves in her dining room table, borrowed a table from Nate's hotel restaurant, and set up a card table besides. Grace and Merly had invited all their siblings though they knew full well who would accept. Nate and Edith said they'd be too busy at the restaurant but they'd try and drop in sometime that day to hello to everyone.

Young Henry Howard, who was hardly "young" anymore, called to say that he and his "new friend" Ara, had made earlier plans for Thanksgiving day.

Bill and Gertrude, and their two boys came from Cleveland, stopping by in Olmsted Falls to pick up Thomas and Mary Alberta "Bertha". Charlie arrived with his two younger boys, whom Eleanor had permitted him to bring. And Jane and Narze came from the city on the bus.

Grace drew Jane aside at her first opportunity.

"Narze knows he can't stay here certainly?" she said.

"Oh, mother, mother! We know. Besides he's going to work:

tomorrow. I may go back with him this evening, in fact. "

"Oh, no! Mim's (Miriam Lemmon) counting on you to stay till Sunday. Don't you want to be with your old Mom, Janie? I see so little of you. "

"Of course, Mother, but I wish you wouldn't be so funny about Narze. He never planned on staying overnight. He was invited to dinner, after all. "

Grace asked, "How is his job going, by the way?"

"Not very well, " Jane said.

"I doubted it would. "

The surprise of the day was the arrival of Nelle and Roger Fison who had driven from Toronto. Rog was writing radio scripts for a children's program in that city but he had not actually severed his connection with his former employer. He was still selling advertising for agricultural publications. The two jobs were barely keeping them going financially.

"They look older, " Mim said to Jane.

"I know, but it's only five months since we saw them, " Jane said.

"I saw them in September when they brought Babs, " Mim said.

"But they do look older. "

"It's the Depression, " said Jane. "It' s doing them in. "

But it was a happy day. Stan (Martin) and Bertha had brought six pies and Nelle had brought candied yams all the way from Toronto. Merly, Grace, and Emmie had fixed all the other things, and all the men chipped in for the cost of the turkey. Narze also insisted on making a contribution and he had brought a box of chocolates. Bill, who was an expert at that task, carved the bird.

Old Henry was in excellent spirits. Before dinner he invited all his sons and sons-in-law to the basement to sample home made elderberry wine (made with Stan's help).

Narze spoke of him to Jane.

"How old did you say your grandfather is?"

"Next March he'll be ninety-three. "

"He's amazing, isn't he?"

"He's happy today, " she said.

It was true. At the table, Stan asked the blessing, repeating the words his mother had always used:

"Oh, Lord, bless this food to our use and us to Thy service.

Amen. "

Old Henry looked around and beamed at everyone, his eyes a bit moist.

"All the family's here, " he said contentedly and began to eat.

"Are they?" Narze softly asked Jane.

"Are they what?"

"Is all his family here?"

"No. Two sons are missing. But there're plenty of grandchildren

here. We all look like family to Grandpa. "

Narze laughed. "Not me, I bet. "

Narze and Jane, along with Mim, Trink, and Babs sat at the extra tables in the living room together with Bill's and Art's boys. They ranged in age from Narze who was now twenty, down to Art's youngest, David, who was seven. And the conversation ranged from the Erector set that David expected Santa Claus might bring him, to Trink, who said she wasn't going to something for Christmas, she was going to lose something.

"What?" David wanted to know.

"My tonsils, " said Trink.

"And really, won't you get anything?" he asked.

"Chocolate ice cream, " she said.

"How do you know you'll get that?"

"I always do, " Trink said. "Whenever I have my tonsils out. "

"She's teasing you, Dave, " his brother Johnny said. "Don't worry, you can't have your tonsils out again once they're gone. "

"You want to bet on that?" Trink asked.

"Oh, please, don't show us, " Mim said. " It'll upset my delicate sensibilities. "

"Well, it's going to upset my Christmas vacation, " Trink said.

"No kidding, " Narze said. "How can tonsils come out twice?"

"They grow back, " Jane said, "from 'tags' that were left. "

"Gosh, can an appendix grow back?" Narze asked.

"No, " she said. "That's made out of different kind of stuff. "

Narze laughed and Trink went on to say, "Mother and Aunt Grace have been plotting against me. They think Mim is so wonderful since she had her tonsils out. "

"Are you wonderful, Mim?" Narze teased.

"Of course, " Mim said. "But I don't know if I feel better. "

"We've each had one cold, " Trink said. "Babs, Mim and I. "

"Well, " said Jane, "Daddy always said, 'Beware the Martin girls when they get their heads together'. "

At the big table in the dining room, all the Martins present and their spouses were getting their heads together, but not over the tonsils. Rather, it was Grace's imminent trip to Europe that interested them. They were almost of one mind that it was the wrong time to go.

Only Emmie said, "I think it would be a lovely trip, " and then she added, "if we all could go. Should we all study the Hungarian language?"

"Oh, merciful heavens, " said Bertha. "Imagine that!"

But Bill said, "Really, Grace, you do realize that

European countries are having problems too, don't you?"

"Oh, yes, but that won't have anything to do with Elma and me, Bill. "

"I would think you'd want to get in on the government's program to help artists, " Bill said.

"My name is in, but so are scores of others, " Grace said.

The talk turned, then, to Franklin Roosevelt, and at that point Roger, who had been his old, sunny self all day, promptly clouded up like thunderstorm, and began grousing about the president and the money he was spending.

"We are going to hell in a hand basket, " Rog said.

"Maybe so, " Bill said. "But we are not going there quite as fast as we were before Roosevelt. "

Nelle spoke up, "You don't really like him, do you Bill?"

"Yes, indeed, I do, " her brother told her.

Charlie recalled, "Bill even voted for Al Smith. "

"That's right, I certainly did, but he didn't have the education F.D.R. has. I'm very pleased with the things he's started. "

" So am I, " said Grace.

"I am too, " Merly said.

Roger gave a superior laugh, but said nothing.

Grace said to her father, "Dad, what do you think of Roosevelt?"

The old man cupped his hand back of his ear.

"What's that?" he asked.

"What do you think of our new president?" Grace repeated.

"He's a Democrat, " Old Henry pronounced, and Rog threw back his head to laugh again. Then, everyone laughed, but Old Henry went on.

"He ain't been president very long, but he's got some ideas.

Hoover didn't do anything in particular, did he?"

Grace gave Roger a triumphant smile.

"Remember, Father voted for Lincoln, " she said.

"That' s alright. " Roger said. "Less than three years from now and it'll be election time again. You FDR-lovers will have had enough of him by then and you'll be only too happy to help us get rid of the reckless fool. He's always had money so he doesn't mind throwing it all around. He won't ever get re-elected though.

The taxpayers won't stand for it. You'll see. "

"Well, that's right; we'll see, " Bill said amiably.

LET'S NOT WASTE ANY MORE TIME

By the time Narze reached his room in the Adam Hotel, he was as depressed as he had ever been in his life before. Even last July when he and Jane had said goodbye in New Hampshire he had not felt as down-hearted as he did tonight. He realized that the happy afternoon with Jane , Babs, Mim , and her sister Trink , and the holiday mood of all the others , had served to emphasize the loneliness of his life under the present arrangements. The only time he was at all happy was when he was with Jane and those occasions were limited in time and place. Wednesday evenings and Sunday dinners at her home, and Saturday afternoons at the movies, or sometimes Saturday evenings. Otherwise it was a walk in the park, or to the library. Movies were the only opportunity for him to sit with his arm around her. At her home he had the feeling that the family would not approve.

Narze's money supply was continually shrinking. Not one week since his arrival had he earned enough to live on, let alone save money for college. He was going to have to tell Jane that he couldn't afford to stay in Cleveland. And one thing was certain ; he had to find a way to get the college education he wanted and needed. If he had had any doubts about what an education was worth , Jane's aunts and uncles were a good illustration. It was a large family ; the oldest one was twenty-two years older than the youngest, Jane had told him. The oldest one was the only one he hadn't seen, for the other missing brother had stopped in briefly. Jane had told him that the older ones hadn't wanted to go to college, but the younger ones had all desired some kind of training, with one exception, the very youngest brother, Art. Starting with her Aunt Emmie (who had been a legal secretary), they'd all studied something, and gone through school. Jane said that even her Uncle Art had learned to play the violin.

It had been interesting to see how something like that shows up when people are together. The younger ones all used good English, while those two oldest ones said "it don't" and "it ain't" and things like that. Jane had told him that her Uncle Rog had run away from home and never finished school, but had got an education in other ways. His father was a minister and a scholar, Jane said, and Roger had always read books and he'd picked up a little German here, a little French there, and so on. And his wife had learned things from living and traveling with him.

Jane had told Narze that her own parents hadn't either one of them gone all the way through high school, but they had gone to Art school and they had put on a lot of "finishing touches" such as studying French and piano, etc. Jane said they worked hard because each one of them wanted to be smarter than the other.

The one Narze was really impressed with was Jane's Uncle Bill, the one who taught history and civics in one of the Cleveland high schools. He had gone through Oberlin College, played fullback there, and made the State's All-star team. Then he'd gone out West somewhere and studied, for a while, to be a minister. He'd changed his mind and come back East and then taken up teaching as a career. Jane and Narze had listened for a while to the aunts and uncles talking at the table after the young boys went outside. Narze had said to Jane, "I like your Uncle Bill best of them all, though they were all pleasant to me. But he seems like the kind of teacher I'd like to have. In fact, he's the kind of teacher I'd like to be. I could teach math. I know I could. "

They had taken a short walk in the early evening, so that they would be able to be alone a few minutes before he went back to Cleveland to his so-called 'job' that didn't pay anything. Jane was going to stay in Oberlin till Sunday afternoon in order to be with her mother for the holiday weekend. She would have fun with Mim and Trink and Babs. And he'd be in the city missing her. He'd been strongly tempted to tell her how discouraged he was, but he didn't want to ruin her holiday. It wasn't the time to tell her when they were saying goodbye for a few days. When she came back to Cleveland on Sunday he would meet her at the bus, and then on the streetcar they'd have to talk about their future. His only chance of being acceptable to her mother was to go to college and she probably wouldn't like him even then. Jane's aunts had been very nice to him today in Oberlin. Her Aunt Nelle had been surprised to see him and she'd given him a big hug and a kiss and said that it seemed just like old times up on the hill. But Jane's mother after saying, "Hello, Narze, " never said anything to him again all day, not even goodbye. Roger Fison had been very genial. He had asked "Aren't you homesick for those mountains, Narze?" And he had told them that he was only homesick for his mother. "We are all that way, Narze, " Nelle had said. "I surely miss mine. "

Narze looked out the hotel window and watched the cars and street cars passing below. It was starting to snow again for which he was thankful. He really hated the grimy city snow. He watched the street cars stopping at the corner of 105th street and Grand avenue. The street cars on Grand were new and during busy hours they pulled a second car or "trailer" as Jane called it. On 105th street the trolleys were old with straw seats that were beginning to wear out. Grand avenue cars had soft leather seats. Jane took the 105th street car when she went to school. She called it the "garlic line. " She said that everyone riding the 105th street cars lived on garlic. He had told her there was a

lot of alcohol mixed in the garlic smell.

Narze had come into his room without putting the room lights on. There were so many theaters at the intersection that their brightly-lit marquees illuminated his room enough that he need only turn on the lamps if he wanted to read or write. When he was ready to sleep he could pull down the window blind and darken the room.

He took off his things now and get ready for bed. Once t here, he lay sleepless a long while. He thought about his family at home. He missed them, in a way, but mostly just his mother and one younger brother that he was especially fond of, and who looked like him according to his mother. He could picture little Ameen now, a roly-poly little five-year old with red cheeks like apples in the winter cold. Ameen was always laughing. He'd like to see them all, but he knew that once he went home he would start aching to see Jane again. He wished that she were with him now, and could stay the whole night.

But again and again Narze came back to the knowledge that the longer he stayed in Cleveland, using up his savings, the farther he would be from marrying Jane. He hated to tell her that he must go back and live at home again and work for his father. That was his best way to save money at the present time, and his father was lucky to have his little store where he did a pretty good business in spite of the Depression. Jane would feel bad but he was sure that she would understand. He just wished that she was happier at home. With her parents divorced, it was too bad that her father and step-mother weren't getting along either. Dee and Jane would rather have lived with their mother, but she was going to go to Europe and they were worried about that. He wished that he could have stayed around to be near Jane if things really got bad for her. Her father was pretty nice but he was away from home a lot, so maybe that meant another divorce. He wondered where on earth Jane would live if that happened. Damn! If only they were a year or two older and could afford to be married. Her mother was fussy about who Jane might marry, but it didn't seem to him that anyone was really thinking about her future. Their plans didn't include Jane it seemed. Narze's mind went round and round but he finally fell asleep lulled by the sound of the trolley cars.

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By the time Jane returned from Oberlin late Sunday afternoon, Narze had new ideas running around in his head. His bleak mood had brightened if only slightly. On Friday he'd received a letter from his mother, written by his oldest sister. There was news that his brother in Boston would be home at Christmas time. (The Samahas were certainly not Christians, but they had been New Englanders for so long that Christmas was almost as much a part of their lives as anyone else's. They practiced no religion at all.) Narze's mother hoped he would be home while his big brother was there. And further, she suggested that he visit his uncle in Detroit before he came East.

Narze's mind fed on that last idea. Perhaps he could find work in Detroit where he could earn enough to save a little and maybe take some night courses at one of the city colleges. That is what he had hoped to do in Cleveland, but he hadn't been able to earn enough. How could a person get any work experience if the only positions open were for people already experienced? Jane got off the bus with her small suitcase. Also, she had a large paper bag. It was good to see Narze standing waiting for her.

"I missed you, honey," he said.

"Me too."

"I hope you don't have to go right straight home," he said.

"Not immediately."

"Are you hungry? Shall we go get a sandwich somewhere?"

"I guess not. I'm not too hungry, but if you are though, we could get a bite. Or we could go home. I've got a loaf of Emmie's home-made bread, and Aunt Merly gave me a 2-lb can of peanut butter. It's a Christmas present because mother said that I look thin."

"You look great, honey," Narze said.

"Well, I had mentioned that Pauline doesn't believe in eating snacks between meals. At least she doesn't keep anything in the house. So I've got bread and peanut butter to take home."

"Good. It may save your life sometime."

"Maybe I'll hide it in my room. But the bread won't keep and I should share it with Dee and we'll have to share it with the family. But the peanut butter is mine. Aunt Merly said so.

Depression or no depression, we can always eat between meals at her house. Aunt Merly thinks school kids need to."

"You can buy some crackers and keep them in your room."

"That's right. We did that at boarding school. We were often hungry, specially in the evening. They used to sell candy bars at bed time, but sometimes we didn't have money. I always liked Hershey bars. Even when I was in the first grade I loved Hershey bars. Usually I bought nickel ones, but sometimes I

bought the ten-cent size and then I thought I was queen of the whole world. "

"You're making me hungry, " Narze laughed.

"Do you want to come home and eat peanut butter bread. "

"No, " his face grew sober. "I want to go where we can talk, Janie. If your family is around we couldn't talk. I've been needing to talk to you. "

"I know you have, Narze. I've been expecting it. "

"You have?"

"Yes, of course. " They were passing the Tower Building on their way to the Grand avenue street car. "We can go sit in the terminal waiting room. With my suitcase we won't be at all conspicuous."

"Why did you say you were expecting that I wanted to talk to you?" Narze asked.

"Well, because I know what's been on your mind lately. "

They went down a ramp to the white marble depths of the train station. Narze had never been in that part of the Tower Building before.

"This is quite a place, " he said.

"It's not as glamorous as Grand Central, " Jane said, "but it sounds the same. " An earthquake-like low roar could be heard and felt.

"Where are the trains?" Narze asked.

"Beneath us. "

"I wish you and I were on one, " he said.

They entered the huge waiting room and sat down.

"If we were on one, where would we go, Narze?"

"God only knows, honey. "

"Well, I know what you are going to say. You are nearly out of money, and you don't know where you'll get more. "

He looked at her and she could tell that he didn't know exactly what to say. He was an emotional person and he didn't want to have her see tears in his eyes in public.

He finally said, "It's true that I don't know where I'll get more. But I still have some money. "

"You're going home to New Hampshire, aren't you?"

"It's all I can do right now. But I'm not giving up. I'll just start saving money again for college. I might go to college there. I have some other ideas, too. Before I go home I'm going to see my uncle in Detroit. Maybe I can get work there. I'd be nearer to you, anyway. "

Jane looked at him.

"Narze, could you stay for Christmas and for Prom?"

"Prom! That's in the spring time! "

"Yes but we have two proms, Narze, because we have Seniors graduating each semester. The 12 A's will finish this January.

And I'm a 12 B; I graduate in June. My class is giving the prom for the 12 A's. It's going to be December 15th. Can you stay, honey? I already told someone that I had a date I and couldn't go with him. "

"Who was it?"

"A 12A in my journalism class. "

"Do you like him?"

"No, but he's a brain. "

"So are you, " Narze said.

"Well, so are you. Can you stay and take me, Narze?"

"Sure, you can take me. "

"Will you stay for Christmas?"

"If my money holds out. "

"Well, you're not taking me to any more movies. "

"Let's go to one now. It'll take out mind off our troubles.

The Metropolitan is only fifteen cents. "

Jane looked thoughtful.

"Well, I'll have to phone home and tell them I'm back in town and that we're going to a movie. That'll be fine with the ladies. Dee is at work today, and Dad quite likely isn't home either. Do you want to see where Dee works? It's on the other side of the concourse. There's a pay phone near it. We can peek at her and wave if her boss isn't in sight, but he's very stern looking. I wouldn't even dare go in and say hello to her. "

They walked past the Winchester Room twice, but could not catch Dee's eye, though they could see her sitting at the check room door. There appeared to be no one in the dining room.

"It's very expensive, " Jane told Narze.

When she phoned home, Ethel answered and Jane told her that she and Narze would probably go to the vaudeville show at the Palace as long as they were downtown.

"It's fine with Edie, " Jane told Narze. "Pauline went to bed with a sick headache and Dad went to the Club. "

"What club is that?"

"The Art club, I suppose. He uses any excuse to leave the house, especially when Pauline has a sick headache. And she has them often. She gets them because he leaves, and he leaves because she gets them. Such is marriage. "

"It doesn't have to be, honey. "

"No. I know, " she said.

"If we are going to the Palace we ought to get going. "

"We shouldn't spend the money for. the Palace. I just said we'd go there so we'd have plenty of time. Would you like to go to Epworth League with me?"

He looked at her. "Not really. "

Jane laughed. "Me either. Let's go out to I05th and buy

some White Castle hamburgers. They're cheap and I'm beginning to get hungry. Then we can go to one of the movies out there. "

They had little to say as they rode the Grand avenue streetcar, but they held hands.

Narze had started out by saying, "I'll still keep trying to sell the Cleveland Weekly subscriptions. "

Jane's eyes were moist. "Let's not talk about it anymore."

"I was surprised that you didn't cry, " he said.

"I'll cry later. "

But by the time they got off she had perked up again and seemed to be amused at something.

"What's funny?" Narze asked.

"Oh, I was just thinking of something. How many hamburgers shall we get? They're so little I could eat two. "

"Heck, I can eat three, at least, " Narze said.

After they bought their hamburgers, he asked, "Do you have homework to do?"

"Heavens no! I did it all day Friday. Chemistry. Mother said I was 'overdoing it'. I never leave it till Sunday evening. I hate that. Now. I want to go buy a great, enormous Hersey bar. "

They came out of the corner drug store. It was starting to snow, and being early December, it was dark now.

"We can't eat all this food in the movie, " Narze said. "And I think maybe we should go to your place. No, we could go to the bus station and eat it there. "

"We could, " said Jane, "but we're supposed to be downtown at the Palace. Instead of going to my place let's go up to yours. "

They were standing opposite the Adam Hotel.

Narze's eyes widened.

"You mean it, Janie?"

"Yes, I mean it. You're going to go away from me. Everyone I ever love goes away from me. Or else I have to go away from them. I'm tired of it. Mother is going away, and I think Dad will soon. All the friends and pets I ever had are gone. And now you will be gone too. Let's not waste any more time in the movies or at the library. After you go home, I might never see you again. "

THIS IS A DUMB PROM

After Thanksgiving, Grace brought Trink to Cleveland to have her tonsils removed. Trink had protested a bit. but gave up early, knowing herself outvoted by her mother and by her aunts, Grace and Nelle. They stayed at Bill and Gertie's place and Bill had teased Grace about it.

"What on earth will you do when you run out of nieces' tonsils? Start on the nephews'?"

Young Bill clutched his throat and said "Help!"

Grace said, maybe you should have yours out. Bill. You have a little nagging cough.

"They're just fine. Always have been. "

"Well. But tonsils are no good. Bill. "

After four days Trink went home to Oberlin and Grace stayed on a week at Bill's. She wrote a letter to Elma Smith.

"Dear Girl:

I am so busy, but I am wondering why I haven't heard from you! I do need to know if it is alright to come in the spring, Elma. There are so many things here holding me up. The girls' problems, of course, and this week I am at Bill's as Gertrude has a cold and I am helping her.

Now --there is another delay, but it may be a help, quite a big help.

Since coming back here my funds are sadly depleted. I have had to do things for the girls that Norris couldn't, or at any rate hadn't done.

I have outfitted Jane for her 'Prom' (which is very important at her age, Elma). And Dee and I have needed things too. And her tonsils I had to pay for- (removing them, that is.) Well, Elma, the news here is that the government is establishing a program to help the artists who are having a hard time. This will be an opportunity for me to earn something more toward my expenses of coming over to Budapest. (I do want to make some inquiries about studying the Hungarian language.) I'll have to find a private teacher. There are no classes apparently. Have you been in touch with the minister, Elma? Does he still want me to come to teach his girls? It has been so long since I have heard from you. I have accomplished some of the things that needed doing. I interviewed Father about his family history and of the English village whence his father came. All most interesting. I should like very much to travel there one day. Have you thought of opening a school in England. ever?

Well - I must learn more about the government art project. Many of those you know have applied. Besides myself. Norris. Alan Gray. Betty Longmont, Anna Wyers (she does craft work), Eric James (who has a daughter Jane's age), and ever so many other Cleveland artists, have put in their applications. We must all submit sketches of what we plan to do.

First of all they want murals for public places. I will let you know what comes of all this. But Elma - write me. The last I heard from you was "Sit tight, till I say 'Come'". Unless I hear from you I shall assume the Hungary plan is off.

In haste.

Grace. "

Grace was really very excited about the government assistance to artists, but she was worried too. She had heard from Betty Long how many of their old friends were hoping to be accepted. They could not all be chosen. But those who were would be salaried, and that would be splendid. As it stood now, she did not have enough money to go to Europe even if Elma did write or cable and say "Come!" She would have to borrow more from Merly or Nelle and she hated to do that. She owed about a thousand dollars to each of them.

Jane and Dee did not really want her to go abroad. Dee appeared to be practically engaged at the moment to a young law student. If Dee married it would be such a splendid thing. She was so sweet and so brave and needed taking care of. It would be hard to leave the girls with their affairs so unsettled, but she might have to do just that.

Jane was full of objections to the trip, especially now, in winter. She still talked about "icebergs in the Atlantic. " She also wanted her mother to "wait until after graduation. " Poor child! Grace thought. It's understandable. And Jane insisted that the venture wasn't practical. Jane could be very positive about things, sometimes a bit bossy, like her father.

Norris had not given Jane any money toward a "prom" dress or material to make one. Jane declared that she could not wear the organdy one she had worn to prom last spring in New Hampshire. It was a winter prom, she said, and they didn't wear pastel organdy and such. Jane said they wore dark colored velvet or satin perhaps, with white lace collars. Jane wanted some red velvet, poor child! Norris hadn't given her any money toward it, nor had "that woman" done anything to help. Dee had no extra money. Jane said she had "no suitable shoes" either. What miserable times! Surely, the worst of times.

Grace took stock of her own wardrobe and decided to part with a brown and beige dress she had bought in New York last summer. It was long and she thought it would be suitable to wear in Europe for dressy occasions if there should be any. The dress needed shortening but would probably be the right length for Jane. She hated to part with it, but it could solve the problem of a Christmas present for Janie, and the "prom" problem as well. But that Norris would have to come up with the money for her shoes. According to Dee, Norris did not take an interest in any of them anymore. What had happened to him? What was he going to do with his life? Surely he could not go on forever in his marital limbo. Surely he could not.

Jane showed Narze the brown and beige silk dress her mother had given her and he looked most unenthusiastic.

"That's a Prom dress?" he inquired.

"Oh, I know. You're used to pale blue, and daffodil and Easter-lily white. Organdy and dotted swiss. But this is winter-time, Narze and it's the city. It's going to be in the Tower Building in the Chamber of Commerce. I couldn't wear a summer dress. You'll see when we get there what the girls are wearing. "

"OK. OK honey. It's just that I'm not wild about brown. "

Jane burst out laughing. "Oh Narze. That's funny. "

"Why?"

"Because. Your brown suit, Narze. You've got one suit that you wear all the time and it's brown. "

He grinned. "So it is. But I'm a guy. That's different. "

"I don't think so. But why did you pick brown?"

"I don't remember. It came from my uncle's store. For my graduation. I never thought about the color of it. What color do you like?"

"I don't know. Grey maybe. Or dark blue. Someday if you get a new one. The one you have is OK, but it'll wear out. "

"It is wearing out. "

"Well, we can't worry too much. I know other people who are pinched for money, too. "

On the day of the Prom a special delivery letter came to Jane from Grace in Oberlin. Norris brought it to Jane and he waited while she opened it.

"What's the matter?" he asked. "Why special delivery?"

A five-dollar bill fell out of the envelope. Jane read the enclosed note.

"It's just money for me to get shoes for tonight. I can't wear my school shoes. Edie was lending me a pair, but they really don't fit me very well. "

"I don't remember you asking me for money for shoes. "

"It's alright, " Jane said.

"Well you tell your mother I'd have given you the money. "

"There's one thing you could do, Daddy. "

"What's that?"

"Drive Narze and me to the Prom tonight?"

"Aren't the street cars running this evening?"

"Yes, but, I have a problem. My dress is long and my coat is short. It'll look ridiculous. "

"Pauline can help you pin it up. If I'd known earlier I could have taken you. I've got to go to the Club. We're getting it decorated for our Christmas party. "

"It's alright, " Jane said.

"If I'd known earlier, " he said again.

"I've been talking about it for two weeks, " she said.

Jane had made alterations on the brown and beige silk dress. She'd got an idea from one of Pauline's Vogue magazines. She bought a yard of white silk material and fashioned two large flat bows, one for the left shoulder. the other on the right hip. The touches of white made the dress come to life. Jane had

dashed to the 105th street corners to buy her shoes, and she had modeled the whole outfit for the family.

"Darling, " Dee said.

"Really smashing, " pronounced Norris.

"Quite effective, " Pauline admitted.

And "Very nice, " Edie and Rosella said together.

When Narze arrived his comment was "Wow!"

He had brought Jane a corsage of white rose buds, red ribbon, and holly leaves. She kept it in the box to pin on later.

They took the street car downtown. Pauline had given Jane a length of elastic to tie around her waist in order to raise the hemline of her dress to the same length as her coat. Pauline had helped her to arrange it. It looked ludicrous, , but it would do. Jane put on her coat and they set off for downtown. Once inside the Tower Building, Jane found a public phone booth where she untied the elastic and let her dress fall to floor length again. Upstairs on the 22nd floor they checked their coats and for the first time Jane saw that Narze was wearing a new suit.

"Narze! Your suit! How did I miss it! It's gorgeous!"

He grinned. "You like it? It's Oxford grey. "

"I love it. It's nearly black isn't it? You didn't buy it did you? Oh, you shouldn't have spent the money!"

"My mother sent some so I could go to Detroit to visit my uncle. I can still go. I'm not broke yet. "

They pinned on the corsage and went out onto the dance floor. It was far from crowded. Jane saw no sign of her friend Benetta , nor of Edna Williams, her lunch hour friend, or anyone she knew well.

Narze, who had gone to Epworth League with Jane once had met Benetta and asked after her.

"Is Benetta here tonight?"

"No, I guess she doesn't date. She never talked about Prom to me, and I didn't want to ask her. So far I haven ' t seen any of my friends. Narze, you don't realize how lucky you were to go to a small high school. There are over three hundred kids in my class, and there are that many I2A's too. Right now I can see some people whose names I know who are in my American History class, and there's a boy that's in my chemistry class. He plays football and I know who he is, but I've never spoken to him. I can see quite a lot of familiar faces, but whose names I don't know. That's what it's like at East High. It's big. "

They danced a few numbers and then went for a glass of punch.

Suddenly Narze said, "What happened to your dress?"

He had been behind her as she walked to the refreshment table.

Jane turned in dismay. "My dress? What did happen?"

"The skirt is all wrinkles, " Narze said. "In the back. "

Jane twisted around to survey the back of the skirt. It was a mass of hit or miss creases from mid-thigh to the hem.

"Oh, God!" Jane said. "It's ruined! It looks awful. "

"But what happened to it? It looked great at home. "

"That damned elastic bunched it up, and when I was in the street car it crushed all those creases in. It's that kind of material. I'm not going to dance anymore. It looks too terrible. "

"Aw, honey, it's OK. The front is really pretty. "

"And what shows when I dance, the front or the back?"

"Well, lets sit down and drink our punch anyway. " Narze said. "Maybe it will smooth out. "

They sat in chairs at the side of the ballroom.

Jane said, "I see the boy who asked me to the Prom. He ' s over there near that 'Exit' sign. The tall boy. I guess he came 'stag'. He's with a bunch of fellows. "

"Do you like him?" Narze asked.

Jane smiled. "You asked me that before. I still don't like him. He's front page editor of the 'Crimson and Gold', but he's all brains and no personality.

Narze, this is a dumb Prom. Let's not stay. If it was crowded we might dance, but as it is, this awful dress will stick out like a sore thumb. I hate it here. It isn't my idea of a high school prom. Let's leave. "

"Where should we go? To a show?"

"No. Let's buy a giant Hershey bar and go to your place where we should have gone in the first place. In two weeks you'll be gone. "

CHOCOLATE IS A SOLACE

Elma Smith kept Grace on tenterhooks throughout most of December, but a few days before Christmas a letter finally arrived. It was typical of Elma's letters, breezy, somewhat incoherent and exuberant in the extreme. Also, as usual it was totally lacking in specific information and put its emphasis on future opportunities to sketch and paint. However, it settled one question once and for all. Grace would not be going to Hungary.

"I am, " Elma said, "working on something else, that will prove to be very exciting and much better. "

"Oh, Mother, " Dee said, "you can't keep on waiting around for Elma's plans to materialize. "

"No, " Jane chimed in. "You can't. And after all 'a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush'. "

The bird in the hand, for Grace (and also for "Norris and Betty Long and others) was the government art project. They had passed the first hurdle. They were among those selected to submit sketches for possible murals. The word on the grapevine had it that they might receive as much as forty dollars a week. They all prayed that this was true. After more than three or four years of barely getting by to eat and pay the rent, a salary seemed almost like the rainbow's end.

Now that Elma Smith had put an end to Grace's Budapest plans, with much reinforcement from family and friends, Grace began to see the whole idea as unworkable from the start. How could she possibly have tutored two Hungarian girls? She stopped talking about going to Europe in the near future, and referred to it as something she fully intended to do "eventually. "

Dee and Jane were delighted. They had long been worried about the trip too far, too alone , and too uncertain. The government art program was a godsend. Finally their mother would be able to get her own place, some kind of place, if only a rented room.

"You can't keep staying with friends and relatives" Dee said.

"Well, Merly had a cold, " Grace said, "and I've been helping her with Father, and fixing the girls' breakfast when Emmie stays in bed. And she does stay in bed, you know. "

"I know, " Dee said, "but whenever you come to Cleveland you have to stay with Aunt Vinnie or Betty Long. "

"Oh, say, I can't stay at Betty ' s. She has the most awful day bed. I just roll right on the floor. Almost. "

"But, Mother. You miss the point. You need a little place of your own.

Going to Aunt Vinnie's isn't the answer, either. "

"Actually Gertrude had a cold, too, " Grace said.

Dee gave a little sigh and Jane spoke up.

"Mother, if you rent a room we could visit you there. Spend the night maybe. "

Gradually, over Christmas, Grace began to plan her life in terms of living in Cleveland indefinitely. She had once told herself that she would never live near Norris again; it was too painful. But that was before she knew that his

second marriage was in trouble. Now the future, Norris ' s future, was a great question mark. Who knew what lay ahead for any of them? But the girls were right ; she must get a place to live and renew her old friendships, and plan to stay in Cleveland. And it was right and good; for all the people near and dear to her were in this part of the country. The girls first, and Norris. Yes, Norris. No matter that he was tied to someone else, at least for now. And her family. -- all her brothers were nearby, and two of her three sisters, and her dear old father whose days must, of course, be numbered. Yes, she must stay here now. For Dee would no doubt be married soon, and Jane would go to Art School. How splendid that she was to be Art Editor of the school paper. It might be wise to go and see the present director of the school about Jane. He was one of her own old artist crowd years ago.

Grace, however, decided to wait until after Christmas before doing anything about renting a room. She wanted to wait until her commission was definite and her preliminary sketch approved. But the expectation of regular funds in the weeks ahead relieved her mind and brightened her Christmas. She dared spare a little money from her shrinking funds to buy a few gifts for Dee and Jane, and for Merly and the nieces. She bought silk stockings and linen hankies for them all, and books of poetry for Dee and Jane. For Emmie who loved to knit, she bought three skeins of wool yarn, and for her father a pair of warm pajamas. For Nelle and Roger she framed a water-color painting of Camp Forest Primeval in the winter snows.

And Nelle and Roger came down from Toronto to spend three days. It was Roger's inclination to be gloomy about the state of the country, but he was overwhelmed by the spirit of Christmas and a continuous state of reunion. Christmas fell on a Monday that year, so the entire week-end was festive. Bill and 'Gertie came from Cleveland bringing a bushel of McIntosh apples and a huge box of cookies. Thomas and Bertha came from Olmsted Falls Township bringing potatoes from their garden and winter squashes. Nate stopped in to say hello and leave two mince pies. Nelle had bought a large tin box of her famous fudge. Charlie made a brief call with his oldest boy, Charlie Jr, and left a bottle of elderberry wine for his father. Old Henry seemed confused, and more frail, but he looked happy.

The weather was Christmasy, very cold and snowy. The three girls Mim, Trink, and Babs, went coasting a lot with three brothers who were quite handsome. Nelle was pleased to see Babs having such a good time. The six of them would come stamping into the house all snowy and red cheeked. Rog called the boys, "the brothers Jones. "

Many of the family had been present on Saturday the twenty-third. Grace was amazed at how rapidly the news of her affairs had spread about the family. "Glad to hear you're not goin' to Europe, Reeny, " her brother Thomas said.

"Well, I may go later on, Stan. "

"Better not, Sis. These' re bad times coming in the world. Ever listen to Judge Rutherford on the radio?"

"No. Who's Judge Rutherford?"

"He's got the Watchtower program. Jehovah's Witness. Don't you believe in

Armageddon, Sis?"

"Oh, Stan. No. No, I don't. "

"Are you still a Christian Scientist, Gracie?"

"I guess so. Pretty much. More than anything else. "

"I'll send you some Watchtower pamphlets, Sis. "

"Well, alright, Stan. "

Later Grace asked Bill, "Where did Stan get his new religion, Laurie?"

Bill chuckled. "From Johnny and his new wife, Ara. They're deep into it. "

"Did Johnny marry that woman really?" Grace asked.

"Well I suppose he did. He says he did at any rate. "

"Well then he did, " said Grace and Bill chuckled again.

Then Bertha came up and button-holed Grace. Bertha had a habit of holding on to the arm of the person she was speaking to as though she was afraid her own voice might blow the person away. As well it might, for Bertha's voice was high-pitched and nasal and her expression was severe and slightly cross-eyed.

Bertha said, "I heard you was goin' to be workin' for the government now, Grace. "

"Well, it's not exactly -- " Grace began, but Bertha cut her off.

"Good, that's good, Grace. They'll put you in charge before you know it, the way they did with the war gardens. Remember, when you was in charge of the war gardens?"

"Well, yes, I remember, but, Bertha, this isn't like that at all. "

Bill re-entered the conversation.

"Bertha could very well be right , Grace. If you stick with this government project, you might get a supervisory position. "

"Oh, Bill. Why do you say that?" Grace asked, though she looked pleased.

"Because 'taking charge' runs in the family, " he said.

"Oh, do you think so, Bill?"

"Sure. That's why Dad never worked for anyone else. Nor did Johnny or Nate, or Stan, nor did Charlie. They all wanted to be their own boss. And, of course , I'm the exception. But not entirely. I like teaching. Like the academic life, and in my classes I certainly am the one in charge. You've always been a free lancer yourself, Gracie. "

"Yes, but Bill, I had deadlines to meet, don't forget that. "

"That's alright. Even in business for yourself, you have to meet obligations.

Well, I hope you take advantage of the government thing Gracie. Don't give in to your 'Wanderlust'. "

"Oh, Bill! I don't give in to Wanderlust. "

"Now, Reeny, you know you love to pack your things and move on. "

Nelle had been in the house on College street half a day before she said to Grace, "I haven't seen Dee and Jane. Aren't they coming?"

"Not till the day after Christmas, and I'm so disappointed. Dee has to work Sunday and Christmas day, too. And Jane has to sing in the choir on Sunday morning and Christmas Eve, too. "

"What choir is that , Grace?" Bill asked.

"Oh. Why, I don't know. I think it's that one near the Arctic Palace. "

"That's Whitfield Park Methodist Church, " Bill said. "I knew it wouldn't be a Christian Science church. Not with a choir. "

"Well, we do sing hymns, " Grace said. "Nice hymns. "

"Oh, come on , Grace! I've seen their hymnal. They don't sing those wonderful lung-busters, like we have in a real church. "

"Let's sing Christmas carols, " Nelle said. "Let's sing Muz's favorite, 'Joy to the World'. "

The door burst open and the three girls came in with blowing snow, stamping their galoshes as the singing began.

Emmie beamed on everyone and asked, "Are we at the Rahming Pole?"

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While their mother's family were having happy holiday times in Oberlin, Jane and Dee in Cleveland were having a hard time feeling the Christmas spirit. For Dee, there were frustrations connected with her current romance and also with her one-day-a-week job as checkroom girl in the Winchester Room, but she had a real shock a week before Christmas when she learned that a boy she had dated during her second year in college, had been killed in a fiery automobile crash. He had burned to death it seemed. Dee learned this while at the Rendezvous, and she wondered why she had not learned of it in the newspaper. She was told it had happened several weeks before. She had not particularly liked the young man, but news of his horrible death upset her. And she was depressed because she had so little money to spend for Christmas gifts. Her Sunday job paid her only two dollars for the whole day and since tips were not allowed, she was given only a few dimes by customers who insisted. Jane was even more depressed than Dee because Narze's departure from Cleveland was to be the day after Christmas. They saw each other nearly every day now, but Jane could not often go to Narze's room. She was up to her ears in school activities and choir rehearsals. The Athenaeum Society had put on the football banquet. The Chemistry Club had a Christmas party. Grace came in from Oberlin two days before Christmas to be with her girls for the afternoon. They had lunch at Strohmeier's store and went to the movie "Alice in Wonderland", but it made Grace sad because "Alice" had been a favorite of Norris's and he had loved to recite the "Lobster Quadrille" and "Jabberwocky". Grace took the bus back to Oberlin after the movie. The girls went with her to the bus.

"I wish you had a place to stay here in town," Jane said.

"After Christmas, dears. After Christmas I will."

Jane was upset because she had no money for Christmas presents. At the last, Norris gave her five dollars. She bought hand lotion for Pauline, Edie, and her grandmother, cologne for Dee, and bittersweet chocolate for her father, and a pair of warm gloves for her mother. The five dollars was used up, she lamented to Dee.

"Now, I have nothing left to get Narze anything, and I have no wrapping paper or seals either."

"I have some white tissue and red ribbon" Dee said.

"I have one of my senior pictures for Narze. He saw the proofs, but I held back the finished ones to give for Christmas, but that's not enough."

"What would you have got for him if you had money?"

"I'd give him what he'd like. About two dozen brownies."

But I don't have the makings. I used to make them up in New Hampshire for him. He used to bring Baker's chocolate, and nuts, and butter from the store, and we had the other stuff and then I made enough for everyone and extra for him. He said he never got enough brownies. "

"I'll give you some money for chocolate and nuts. He probably have the other things. I can spare a dollar. "

"Thanks, Dee. I'll design you a Christmas card. You can use it next year. "

Pauline bought presents for all of them, though she was not in a happy frame of mind. Her thoughts turned back to the first Christmas after she married Norris. They had been in southern France, and their apartment had been chilly with only a fireplace. They had been worried about running out of money, but a Christmas check had come from Aunt Ada and Edie and Mother Rahming and they had made a very happy holiday celebration. They had decorated their little flat with mistletoe, and bouquets of heather and little sprigs of gorse. And they had bought fine chocolates that Norris loved so much, and delicious cakes and pastries, and figs, dates, oranges, apples and walnuts. Oh, and they bought wonderful cheeses and some green Chartreuse, and they had been so happy. At least she had been happy, and Norris had seemed to be happy too. But probably that was because he was in France, and not because he was with her.

Edie was not in a festive mood either. Though her life had not been eventful, she had always loved Christmas because somehow Aunt Ada had made the family traditions important. When Aunt Ada died, Rosella no longer felt like bothering to make the holiday fruitcakes and plum pudding. They could buy them both, but the fun had been in the making of the goodies. Pauline had been too busy to do those things, but now Edie would do them herself if money were not so scarce.

Dee had made some fudge and Jane had made brownies for her boyfriend. Pauline made some date bars.

While Pauline was thinking wistfully of the happy time in Cassis, France in 1925, Ethel's thoughts went back to a few sad Christmases of her past. For her, Christmas had always been the best time of the year. They had all loved it, her Grandma Norris, her father, and brother, but most of all Aunt Ada, and later Grace and the girls. Of course, Mama liked Christmas too, but she always went to the Science church and they paid almost no attention to the holiday.

Edie remembered one disappointing Christmas when Aunt Ada stayed in Brooklyn with Auntie and Uncle Couch. Grandma Norris had already passed on by then, and it was not a cheerful holiday. She had resented Auntie Minnie Couch that year and other times when Aunt

Ada went to Brooklyn. But, bless her heart, Auntie Couch had left money to Aunt Ada, and Aunt Ada had left it to her. Of course, it had dwindled away considerably, but she was grateful for what was left.

In the fall, she had sold a few shares of her Cleveland Ice and Fuel Company Stock and bought herself a winter coat and new galoshes. She'd bought new nightgowns for Mama too, but she had kept them as Christmas gifts. She had a little money left to use for presents for the rest of the family. She had made one trip downtown to Strohmeier's where she and Mama had always traded. It would not be like Christmas without the familiar white boxes tied with red satin ribbon. For Pauline, Dee, and Jane she got silk stockings and Irish linen hankies, for Mama, the warm brown lisle stockings she liked, and the nighties. For Norris she bought a two pound box of the finest chocolate candies to be bought in Cleveland, a kind called "H.M.C. 's". Norris had always said "Christmas isn't Christmas without H.M.C.'S. "

So there would be a few presents at least, but Edie could not feel happy. The strain between Pauline and Norris had worsened, and Norris was so often gone. And the girls were gone a great deal of the time as well, and Mama was nervous and sad and she missed Aunt Ada so.

Edie's thoughts turned back to the past. It had been a bad Christmas in 1920, the year her father died. But, Norris, Grace, and the little girls had made things lively, and Christmas was eleven months after Papa's passing.

Probably the worst Christmas of all was in 1925 when Norris was in France on his honeymoon with Pauline. He had married in such haste. She and mama and Aunt Ada had felt terrible about the whole business. Grace had taken Dee and Jane to Oberlin for Christmas. One could not blame her at all for that.

But for Mama, Aunt Ada, and for herself, it had been so lonely. They had never spent a Christmas without Norris and his family since they came home from New York in 1913. And there they were, two old maids and a widow trying to celebrate. The little house on Cartwright Street had seemed so quiet. They had played their Christmas records that Papa had loved. Madame Schumann-Heinck singing "Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht, " and Caruso, singing "Cantique de Noel. " And that had only made them miss Papa more, and especially the children, who had loved to play the records. This year they weren't seeing very much of the girls either, but of course they were popping in and out all the time.

Dee had her night school, and her dates, and now her Sunday job downtown.

Jane was busy every day with many things and singing in a choir. Her young man took her to the movies two or three times

a week.

When Christmas Eve came, they all decided to have their presents that evening after Dee got home from work. It was a Sunday and Dee would work the next day as well. Jane's friend, Narze, came to dinner with his arms full of packages. He brought oranges, apples, tangerines, grapes, and mixed nuts, and a present for Jane.

Norris, Jane, and Narze finished trimming the tree. The weather had turned very cold. As soon as Dee arrived, Edie served hot cocoa with whipped cream on top, a favorite of Norris's since he was small. Aunt Ada had once said that Norris was always good-natured when he was eating sweet things, in fact everyone was, but unfortunately life wasn't all sweet things.

But they were all in a good mood as they opened their presents, and presently, they were all laughing. Jane had given Narze a box of fudge brownies, and Narze had given Jane a box of H.M.C. chocolates because she had once mentioned that they were the very best. Jane had given her father a large bar of "Dot's" bittersweet chocolate, and Dee had given him fudge. Ethel had given Norris H.M.C. chocolates and Pauline had given him chocolate covered raisins.

Rosella who scarcely ever said anything these days, observed, "Gracious. What a lot of chocolate candy!"

"I think it's a perfect scream," said Dee.

"We'll all ruin our complexions," said Pauline.

"How did we happen to all buy chocolate?" Edie wondered.

"Because it is the worst of times," Norris said. "Chocolate is a solace."

"A what?" Pauline asked.

"A solace. A comfort when life is wretched," he explained.

"If you like it that well," Pauline said. "But it doesn't solve my problems."

"Well, it helps mine a little," Jane said. "I'm going to want a lot of chocolate after Narze goes home."

Norris was surprised.

"Are you leaving, Narze?"

"I'm afraid so," Narze said. "I can't make any money."

"I'm sorry, boy. Things can't get any worse. They're bound to get better."

"Well, I'm running out of money. I'll go home and work for my father for a while and save all I can. I'm going to Detroit day after tomorrow to visit my uncle and talk to him about it. He has a store too, but I doubt if he can hire me. He has kids of his own to help out. But when I get home I'm going to start writing to lots of colleges."

"Good for you, boy," Norris said. "You're bound to get somewhere. We'll miss you though."

"I plan to be back, Mr. Rahming, " Narze said.
"It's Christmas day, " Ethel said, looking at her watch.
"Merry Christmas! Merry Christmas!" they all cried.

BUT WHERE WOULD YOU GO ?

It was the strangest Christmas morning in Jane's memory. There had been two or three before, when her mother was elsewhere on Christmas. But she and Dee had always been with family and they had always been up early to a jolly opening of presents, and after that a breakfast of pancakes and sausage, or scrambled eggs and bacon.

But this morning was quiet. When Jane woke at nine o'clock Dee was dressing to go to work again. On Christmas Day! It seemed outrageous. And when they went downstairs, there was no one around but Norris. Pauline was still asleep. Edie and Grandma Rahming had breakfasted on cereal and cocoa and gone back upstairs to their room.

Dee and Jane breakfasted on toast and apple jelly and milk, and then Dee left for downtown.

"It doesn't seem like Christmas at all, " Jane said.

"There's a lot more snow, " her father said.

"It's too quiet. Not enough people around. And the tree looks so forlorn with all the presents gone. I don't think I like opening them on Christmas Eve. "

"Well, Pauline likes it that way, so she can sleep late, " Norris said. "She says Christmas morning is only for little children. Anyway, your sister had to go to work. "

"I know. Well, I guess that's what we need. Little children and toys and music. "

Norris turned the radio on and a church organ was playing "Hark the Herald Angels Sing".

"Well, that's better, " Jane said. "That helps a lot.

Daddy, is everybody still going to Pauline's mother's for dinner?"

"That's the plan. "

"Well, Daddy, it's Narze's last night, and he'll be leaving tomorrow. He wants to take me out to dinner and downtown to see a show, probably the Palace. Is it alright if I don't go along to Mother Walters' for dinner?"

"Yes, go ahead. You're lucky you have a good excuse. I'll have to endure an attack on President Roosevelt, no doubt. "

"If we go to the Palace, it'll be late, " Jane said.

"Narze shouldn't spend money taking you to the Palace. "

"I know. I told him that, but it's our last night. "

"I guess you're going to miss him, " her father said.

"I'm going to miss him terribly, " she agreed.

When Narze arrived to call for her, it was snowing and very cold. The family had already left for Pauline's mother's. When her father and Edie helped Rosella down the porch steps and to the car, Jane realized how frail her Grandmother had become.

Narze came in, shaking the snow off his boots first.

"I'm all ready, " Jane said. "I made us each a turkey sandwich. "

"We can still go to' dinner. Crosley's is open today. "

"No. Let's not. This'll be more fun. But we won't need to buy a giant Hershey bar, will we?"

"No. Believe it or not, I haven't eaten all the brownies yet. "

They walked down to the corners in the blowing snow.

"This is really a blizzard, " Jane said. "It's a good thing we aren't going downtown. "

They had never planned on going to the Palace vaudeville show. They had learned long ago that no one at Jane's house ever asked them to tell about a movie, although Edie always asked if they had enjoyed it.

This evening they followed their usual procedure. They crossed I05th street and one after the other they entered the corner drugstore acting like strangers. Narze bought an evening newspaper and left the store. Jane went to the magazine rack, and after looking them over a minute or so, she selected one. She would spend a minute more gazing at merchandise before paying for her magazine and leaving. By that time Narze would have crossed the street again and entered the Adam Hotel by the Grand avenue main entrance. Jane crossed over, then turned and walked south on I05th along side the hotel. When she came to the side entrance she very quickly disappeared inside. As usual, she met no one on the stairway. She was still covered with melting snow when Narze opened his door for her.

His room was the way she liked it - lit only by the neon signs and street and theater lights from the corners below.

She was still shy when bright lights were on but she had told Narze "It's cozy and romantic with just the light from out there. And I don't feel bothered by my conscience. With the lights on bright, I feel that I'm not supposed to be here. Maybe its partly because it's not a pretty room.

"I don't think we should feel guilty, " Narze had said "What else do we have?"

Narze hung Jane's wet coat over a chair by the steam radiator.

His suitcase was open on the floor, with most of his clothes already packed. On the desk, beside the package with the turkey sandwiches, and the box of brownies, was her senior picture with the inscription, "To Narze, with my love always, Jane. "

"I'm crazy about your picture, honey, " Dee by said. "You look just like a movie star, "

"Daddy doesn't like it. He says they retouched all the character out of my face. "

"Hell, I like it. Last night I turned it so that I could see

it from my bed. And that's the way it'll be when I get back home. I'll keep it where I can see it when I wake up in the morning and when I go to sleep at night. "

"Oh, Narze! I wish it was me you'd be seeing not just the picture. I can't bear to have you go!" She began to cry and he put his arms around her.

"Honey, we're wasting time standing here. Let 's go to bed and kiss our tears away. "

They talked about things that evening that they had never discussed before, even though it had been their custom, in the last weeks, since Jane began coming to Narze's room, to talk and talk.

"I wasted a whole month, " Jane said. "I could have been coming here from the time you first arrived. "

"I've wondered why you finally decided you would. "

"Aunt Milly's cataracts. "

"Wha -a -a t?"

Jane laughed. "Aunt Milly Hanney is an old friend of the family. She lives in the fourth floor corner room. She has a view of the whole intersection. I was afraid she'd see us or I might run into her on the stairway. But Edie went up to call on her just before Thanksgiving and she reported to us that Aunt Milly is old and quite frail and has cataracts. I haven't seen her in years. She wouldn't know me if she could see me. "

"What on earth do you mean by 'cataracts', " he asked.

"The eyes get cloudy. The sight gets blurry. She's going to go to the home for retired Christian Scientists. I stopped worrying about her. Then I learned last week that Dee's friend, Jane, and her beloved, 'Stan', live here now, too. They're married and expecting a baby. "

"I wish we were, " Narze said.

"You do!?"

"Well, married, anyway. Not expecting a baby, no. Honey, I realize more than ever, now that I met your father, that I have to go to college. I wouldn't fit in with either him or your mother otherwise. They're both so intellectual. I'd be out of place. "

"You'd only have to fit in with me, honey. "

"Yes, but you're going to be the same way. You already are, in fact. "

Jane was silent and then she said, "This is such a different Christmas from last year, isn't it?"

He held her close. "In some ways it's better, honey. "

"Being together is, yes. But it was fun up there on the Hill. "

"Do you wish you were back there?"



JANE RAHMING (1934)
high school senior picture
"ANDREA"

1549 $\frac{1}{2}$

"No, not really. The Hill is a magic place, but I'll never go back again. Uncle Rog and Aunt Nelle keep everyone upset most of the time. Maybe they don't mean to, but they do. "

"Honey, do you know what? I'm worried about you. "

"You are? Why?"

"I worry about whether you'll have a home. I wonder where you'll be a year from now. Do you really think your dad and Pauline will separate?"

"It's hard to say. Dee thinks so, and they often talk that way. I don't think Dad has the courage or the money to make a break. Divorces are expensive, Narze. "

"But, honey, if they do split up, where would you go? Would your dad make a home for you?"

"I doubt it, because he can't afford anything now. If Pauline were to leave and sue for divorce, Dad would be out of luck. "

"But where would you go?"

"I don't know, Narze. With Mother, maybe. "

"But she's going to Europe. "

"Not right away. She might never go. "

"I'm betting that she will. She talks about it so much. But anyway if she doesn't go, can you and Dee live with her? Seems like she's always living with some relative. "

Jane sighed. "I know, Narze. But it wasn't always like that. "

"Damn it, honey. I wish we could get married and I could take care of you. Everyone needs to have a home they can count on. Even I have that. No matter where I go I could always go home and live with my family and work in the store. My dad isn't mad at me. "

"How do you know he isn't?"

"My sister said so in her letter. They want me to come back. He's not even mad at my brother Norman. And do you know why? Because my dad left home when he was my age and he remembers. He said so when I left. "

"That's nice, Narze. Then maybe they won't be mad if you go to college. "

"No. That part'll be alright. Raising the money for it will be harder. "

"Even so, " Jane said. "Raising the money will be even harder for me. Mother and Daddy both tell me to try for a scholarship. Mother, particularly, is sure I can get one, and I think it's because she got scholarships in Art school. But I don't have her kind of talent no matter what she says. I think you should plan to do what you do best. "

"So do I, " Narze said.

"Narze, if you could look ahead ten years or so, what would you like to be doing and where would you like to live?" Narze leaned back on his pillow, his arms folded back of his head.

"Well, I'd be through college, of course. And you and I would be married. I'd be teaching math in high school, and I'd be coaching baseball and maybe basketball too. I like working with kids. That's why I stayed in Boy Scouts so long. They asked me to be assistant scoutmaster this year. "

"Well, when you get this teaching job where would you like it to be? Where is your dream place to live?"

"I'd just as soon live in New Hampshire, honey. I miss the mountains and I miss my family, specially my mother and the little brothers. But I'd want you there, too. I'd like to have Mrs. Moors' job, actually, and be a high school principal. But I guess I could live anywhere, though, and be happy with you. OK , now you tell me what you want to be in ten years?"

"For a long time, I dreamed of going back to Milford where we lived in Connecticut. I loved the seashore. My grandmother was born there. I think I'm an Easterner at heart. And I love New Hampshire too. But first I want to go to college, and then I'd like to teach - languages probably, either Latin or French. "

"Have you changed your mind about getting married?" he asked.

"Oh, no, Narze. I would want to get married, too. And have kids. I don't know if I could have it all. "

"As far as I'm concerned you can. "

"Well, it all seems very remote and impossible. I don' t know if any of it will ever happen. "

"Some of it will, " Narze said. "Some of it will. "

NOBODY EVER PUSHED YOU, DELIGHT

After Narze left for Detroit Jane spent the rest of the Christmas vacation in Oberlin with her cousins. The weather was crisp and cold and they went sledding every night with the Jones brothers. The land around Oberlin is all flat, but the slanted sides of the water-works reservoir were ideal for coasting. Jane had fun with the rest of them but she shed tears every night because Narze was gone. And she was resentful because her mother was glad he had left Cleveland and gone home.

"Aunt Grace said it was 'all for the best', Mim told Jane.

"Mother shouldn't look down on Narze, " Jane said. "He has a good home, with a mother and father who are married to each other and they love him, and they are making a living in spite of the Depression. "

"I know, " Mim said. "That's true. Janie, do you and Narze plan to get married?"

"We can't plan. anything yet, Mim. What about you and Paul?"

"The same goes for us, but I still have the engagement ring he gave me, when I returned his class ring. "

Jane laughed. "And I have the ring Narze gave me when I gave back his class ring; I don't wear it either, because it's a wedding ring. Mother would throw a fit. "

"We'll probably never see them again, Janie, " Mim said.

All during November and December, Grace had fretted about Narze's presence in Cleveland. Now that he had gone home she could rest easy about that romance. She could turn her attention to the mural she would be painting soon. Dee had told her Norris was sure she'd have her sketch approved. Still, she was nervous about it. How she needed the money! She had been worried sick about that when she was planning the trip to Budapest, and she'd been torn between the desire to go, and the instinct to stay safe in the U. S. And now that the venture was off, once and for all, she was both disappointed and relieved.

She lay in bed at night wondering about Norris's marriage. What if it were to really end, definitely and finally, for all time? What would Norris do then? What if they were to come together again. How magical it would be if he and she were to go to Europe together! To go to all the places they had planned to visit so many years ago. In their Art School days when they were engaged, they had taken long walks up around the lakes in Carrollton Heights and they had spoken of what they would do in Europe.

Norris had said, "You and I will not be content to go to all the obvious places where tourists always go. We'll go to Bayreuth and sate ourselves on Wagner operas, and in Italy we'll go to Capri and Amalfi; in France, we'll go to Brittany and to fishing villages in Provence, and to find the town on the Aube where my great-great-grandfather lived as a boy. Of course, we'll live in Paris and make our excursions from there. And you will be my princess and we will be happy ever after. "

Oh, Norris had said all those wonderful things and filled his letters with them and so many times he had said, "And you will be my princess. " But that was

more than twenty-five years ago, and they were just a boy and girl then, with dreams and big ideas. I suppose, Grace thought, that we were sure we would never ever quarrel.

She must stop thinking of all that. Norris had gone to Europe twice and she not at all. He had once told her when they lived in New York, "You'll go to Paris with me or not at all." She had laughed at him then for being so arrogant. She would like to show him even now that she could get to Paris herself

She began to lay her plans for the immediate future. She would get a room in Cleveland where she could do her painting and she would renew old friendships, particularly among the artists.

By the end of the first week in January she came to Cleveland to look for a room. She stayed a few days with Betty Long, enduring the uncomfortable, slanting day-bed that rolled one against the wall, or out on the floor, however one chose.

Grace learned that Betty had decided not to paint a mural for the Government, even though she had been among those chosen as eligible. She told Grace she didn't feel that she had "the energy to tackle anything as big as a mural."

"But couldn't you use the money, Betty?" Grace asked.

"Oh, yes, but I get by alright."

"You look thin, Betty. Do you eat enough?"

"I eat as much as I want, Grace."

"Seems to me you are trying to live on tea and toast."

"Oh, no," Betty laughed. "I'm fine, really."

Grace found a suitable place on 75th street, south of Cartwright street. It was on the third floor of a single family house, built in the style of thousands of others on Cleveland's side streets. A wide porch in front, with bridal-wreath bushes and hydrangea plants. The street was shaded by the sycamore trees that had been fair-sized even thirty years ago when John Rahming walked through on his way home. But, of course, the trees were bare now. However, it was a bright shiny morning when Mrs. Clark showed her the "room with bath, third floor, \$5 a week."

It was a large room at the front with a wide two-window dormer, adequately furnished, and with a double bed. In the large stair-hall there was a little kitchen table and a two-ring gas burner.

"If you'd like to fix your breakfasts, and lunches such as soup, I allow that. But no frying or anything like that. We'd prefer you to eat your dinners out. There's a tiny little restaurant on the next street just two doors down from Sloane. She serves a very good dinner for fifty-cents -- meat, potatoes and a vegetable. And you get a little dessert, too and coffee."

"That sounds fine," Grace said.

"Now I advertise 'room with bath' but there's no tub in here." She showed Grace the little room beyond the stair-hall. "There's just the wash stand and the commode. But when you want to use the tub in the bathroom down below just let me know. It's better if you use it during the day when the mister is at work."

"That would be fine, " Grace said, and she explained to Mrs. Clark about the art work she would be doing. Mrs. Clark seemed favorably impressed. And Grace decided that the light in the room would be suitable for painting. She said she ' d like to rent it.

During the next two days she discovered that the Clarks were Christian Scientists, and very amiable people. It was quite alright for the girls to visit Grace at anytime and if one would like to stay the night that was permissible , too.

Jane soon fell into the habit of stopping in several times a week on her way home from school. The family were used to her coming home late frequently as it was. Jane had added another activity to her school program. Anything to help ease the emptiness caused by Narze's leaving. She had joined the Scholarship Club, an organization for juniors and seniors who were heading for college. And now that she had finished a semester of journalism, she was officially named Art Editor of the Crimson and Gold. She continued as recording secretary of the Chemistry Club, and remained in the Athenaeum Literary Society, although she had decided it served no useful purpose, and was a "snob outfit. "

Grace was immediately interested in the Scholarship Club. "Just what does that mean? That you'll win a scholarship?"

"No, Mom. It's just a club to help kids try and get scholarships. Our adviser is Mr. Parks, the vocational dean. He also arranges for us to go on trips to visit various colleges. Next month I'm going to Wooster on High School Day where I'm going to take a big terrible chemistry exam. Wooster gives a number of science scholarships. Then in March we're going to Wesleyan to take a general exam. If I had taken Latin this last year I'd have signed up for the Latin exam, but everyone I know that's taking it, is in fourth year Latin. We may visit Oberlin, too, but for me that would be kinda silly. I know a lot about it already. Beside s it's too expensive. "

Grace lay awake at night thinking about Jane. What had happened to make her lose her old interest in Art? She had drawn pictures all the time when she was small. I must do something about it, she thought, and she promised herself that very soon she would go to the Art School and have a talk with Clark Hunter, the present director, who had once been her teacher of perspective. But first she must take her detailed sketch to be approved by the administrative committee in charge of the C.W.A.'s art project.

Within the week, her final sketch was approved. She made a quick trip to the Oberlin Public Library to see the place where her small mural would hang in the children's room. She took measurements and then hastened back to Cleveland to buy her canvas and new oil paints and a few brushes. It was an expense but she would soon have a check for \$42.50 and what a wonderful help that would be!

And now Grace began picking up the threads of friendships dropped in 1929 when she left Carle E. Semon and went East to live. She was asked to dinner at the Jack Raper's. John Rahming's old friends had always liked Grace and had told her once that she could be assured they "understood the divorce. " Elsa Lord was now crippled with arthritis, but they had a maid who served the dinner, and

Grace learned that was still writing his popular column of philosophy and satire ("Bullpen"). Both the Lords assured Grace that they were "very interested" in President Roosevelt, and thought he'd made a good start.

Grace also looked up another older couple from past years when she had headed the war garden committee. The McGuires were involved in Cleveland political affairs, both being firm Democrats. In fact Mary McGuire was the only active political worker Grace had ever known and she was awed by her. Mary had attended party conventions as a delegate and her voice was heard and heeded by Cleveland committeemen. She looked the part. She had an ample, full-bosomed figure, a ruddy Irish complexion, and a ready grin. She wore her hair in a graying pompadour, piled on top of her head. When Grace came to dinner, Mary McGuire enfolded her in a pillow-like bear hug and her rather shy husband, Jimmy, gave Grace a kiss. Jimmy was as slight as his wife was big and sturdy, but he was not eclipsed by her, as he had a keen sense of humor, which had not diminished with the years, though he seemed a bit frail to Grace.

During the dinner Mary teased Grace.

"Well! Are you still a Republican, girlie?"

"Oh, " said Grace, "I think Roosevelt is just splendid. But remember, Mary, my father voted for Lincoln. "

"Oh, piffle! That's no excuse for being Republican. "

"I don't think I am a Republican. I'm not registered to vote. "

"Not registered! Shame on you!" said Mary.

"But I've been living in the East, " protested Grace.

"People vote in the East, girlie. Haven't you noticed?"

"Well --- "

"Don't let Mary buffalo you, " laughed Jimmy McGuire,

"Never fear, " Grace said. "You don't have to , sell me on Roosevelt. "

"Grace, " Mary said "If Abraham Lincoln were alive today he'd be a Democrat. "

"Yes, I suppose he -- " began Grace~

"You know he would, " Mary McGuire said. "He understood suffering , "

Having their mother near them that spring was a great comfort to Dee and Jane. She had been away from them so much of the time for more than seven years that being with her had always seemed to be a special treat. And, so often, when they were reunited Grace had felt a need to "make it up to them" in some way. There must be a celebration of a sort, something special, lunch downtown at Strohmeyer's store, or a stage play or such. Even when she was financially strapped, there would be a splurge of some kind.

Life at the Channing avenue house had grown so dismal that the girls hated to be there. The atmosphere between Norris and Pauline had grown, in Dee's words, "poisonous." And Rosella made ever-increasing demands on Ethel's time. They were closeted in their room at all times unless Edie was out grocery shopping or in the kitchen preparing food or washing up. Edie spent most of her spare time reading Mary Baker Eddy's textbook to Rosella who was more and more "noivous." The silver tabby kitten that remained from the mother cat, "Otto's", litter, could usually be found curled up on the bed beside Rosella.

Edie had confided in Jane that reading so much to her mother was very tiring. "My eyes give out, and my voice, too."

"I think my glasses aren't right," Edie said, "but I haven't had them very long. I'd hate to sell stock to get a new pair."

When Jane came home after school, the house seemed gloomy and empty. The days were still short, the weather wintry. The downstairs was empty, with Norris either gone or in the basement dark-room preparing the canvas for the mural he would be painting soon. Pauline would be in her sewing room, with or without a client. And Edie and Rosella would, by then, both be napping with the kitten. Dee was usually gone in the afternoons hobnobbing with her friends, at the "Rendezvous."

The girls fell into a routine, now, wherein one of them was with Grace nearly every night. On the evenings when Dee went to her night school classes, Jane stayed with her mother. On her free nights, unless she had a date, Dee would go. Sometimes, Dee would visit during the day, because, what with her Sunday job at the Winchester Room, and her dates with her friend Al, she had fewer free evenings. The girls talked about how nice it was that their mother had a "place."

However limited and temporary, it was a place, an address. The address was not that of a close friend or relative. They felt that, now with the government commission, good things would follow. Their mother would get "back in the swing." They became convinced that the European venture was no longer a threat. Neither of them had been happy about it from the very start. It was all so vague and uncertain and the plan had never really taken either of them into serious consideration.

Elma's letters had, at the most, only contained, once or twice, some vague statement such as "Possibly the girls might join you eventually."

"I don't think she's dreaming about joining Elma anymore do you?" Dee said.

"No. In fact I think she's kind of peeved at her" Jane said. "And she's beginning to enjoy life a little, seeing her friends and all. Did you know Carle had sent her an announcement of an exhibit of his photos at Polk Gallery?"

"Oh, really? That's interesting. Still nothing will come of that. You know she is sort of interested in another man. I don't know if you ever knew but



Delight Rahming
"Faye"

circa 1934

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she's been fascinated for several years with her insurance man. "

"Her insurance man!"

"Yes. She has a small life insurance policy for us, and it's with Prudential or Equitable or something like that. Well, the man is older than Mother, white-haired and distinguished looking, and in a very reserved way he seems quite interested in her. But he is the sole support of his mother and two unmarried sisters. He's a bachelor himself, but Mother thinks he'll never feel free to marry. I know she thinks about him quite a lot. She told me the other day that while she was in New Hampshire she got an envelope with a folded sheet of his business stationery, and it enclosed a receipt that showed that her premium had been paid in full. Mother said she was in a quandary as to what she should do. She was sure it wasn't a mistake. She figured he had paid it for her knowing how tough things were and she thought he should be thanked, but she wasn't sure that was the right thing to do. Oh, Janie, I wish he'd marry her. Oh, no, I guess that's silly. What I'm counting on is her getting back into her real work again. Daddy thinks she can. If only business will pick up. "

"Just think! Now she'll be here for my graduation. It did seem so awful that she was going to miss it. Now she won't. And maybe now that they have this government work I'll get to go to college after all. Don't you think maybe, between the two of them, they could help me with my first year?"

"Don't you think you'll get a scholarship? We all figure you will. Mother's counting on it. "

"I sure don't know why she is, " Jane said. "It' s a mistake to count on it. "

"Why? Your grades are so high. "

"They're high, yes, but they weren't high that year when I was so sick two different times. I spent that year dragging my grades up from C's to B's, and finally to A's. And I should not have let anyone talk me out of dropping some courses. Now I have to figure them in for my accumulated average. I'll end up with about 90 for the whole four years. To be sure of a scholarship you need 95 or better.

"I thought you were taking some exams or something. "

"I am, but so are a lot of other kids with high grades. Nobody ever pushed you to get a scholarship, Dee. "

"Well, Jane, times are different now. "

"They sure are. And it's my tough luck. "

"Well, cheer up. Something will work out, " Dee said.

By the end of February, Grace had finished her first mural oil painting. It was a scene in rural France with a group of children at play. The picture was taken (by Norris) to the Art Museum where the first completed works were put on exhibition. Next they were photographed, and the photos sent to Washington. Norris was the photographer who did the work. His own mural was not yet finished but it mattered not as he was on salary, too.

Grace was pleased to learn that she was to do a second mural similar to the first. And more than that, she was astonished with the attention that Norris was giving to helping her. Astonished and touched. What did it all

mean?

And there were other events occupying her mind. One day, on her way to meet Betty Long in Strohmeier's Mezzanine Lounge, she was speeding through the main floor on her way to the elevator when she literally ran into a man she had known for years. She cursed her luck. She could not abide this person. He had pursued her when her marriage to Norris was falling apart, and again when he first learned that she and Carle were at odds. Somehow he always managed to learn her address and he would begin sending her sentimental greeting cards with messages of his affection added. Upon his expressed surprise that she was back in town, she had assured him it was only temporary, and that she had "no address". She was staying in Oberlin with her sister and was leaving for Europe "almost immediately." No, she told him, she was sorry but she would not have time to lunch with him.

Nevertheless, within a week, a florist delivered to her 75th street address, a dish of blooming narcissus bulbs. How on earth had he learned where she was? She was never to know, but it probably had been easy, for William Henry Baker knew many of her friends, and under various pretenses he might have obtained her address. Since he was in the advertising business, her friends might well have thought he had some art work for her. Her guess was that he had learned from Betty Long (though Betty assured her that he had not). Betty had always thought it rather amusing the way William Henry Baker persisted in his courtship (yes, courtship) of Grace. His very name made her laugh and she always said it in full. "William Henry Baker has money Grace. It would solve your problems if you marry him."

"Solve my problems! Betty, the man is one colossal problem."

"That bad?"

"That bad. He repels me. I don't like his looks or anything."

"He isn't so bad looking, is he?"

"Oh, Betty! He has a nose like a - - Oh, like one of those tropical birds. The kind where the bill is larger than the bird."

"Grace, you are entertaining. I'm so glad you're back in town."

"Well, anyway, I wish that horrible man didn't know I was back in town."

"Poor, horrible William. He must love you, Grace."

"Now, I do know some men I might consider marrying."

"Oh, who?"

"Now, Betty, I'm just talking. What I mean is, there are men I find most attractive. Men I've met."

"Anyone I know?"

"Nope. Anyway I'm just talking. And besides, if there were somebody, I oughtn't tell you, for you never tell about anyone you like. You never have told about your affairs of the heart."

"There was never anything that interesting to tell."

Grace had no intention of telling Betty or anyone the name of the insurance man who was so attractive. She had told Dee about him, but only referred to him as "that nice man." When he gave signs of being interested in her, she began thinking of him at night. She asked herself whether Paul Carter could be

the man who could make her forget Norris Rahming. Perhaps.

After Narze left Cleveland the day after Christmas, he resumed writing to Jane. She got his first letter while she was in Oberlin for New Years. Once back on Channing avenue, she got two more letters from Detroit. He told her that it would not work out for him to stay and work there. He was heading home to New Hampshire.

All through January and February his letters came regularly on Tuesdays and Fridays, and as before they usually had "M.I. " marked on the back. He had been writing to many colleges in Ohio , Pennsylvania and Indiana. He told her he wanted to be no more than a half day's bus ride away from her. He said that people in town had been great about writing letters of recommendation for him. Mr. Moors , Miss Cleveland, Harl Pease's father , the Scoutmaster, and the basketball coach. Mr. Moors had furnished the record of his high school grades. Now he was waiting to hear from the colleges. He had told them he would have to have some kind of job to earn room and board.

Jane could not manage to write two letters a week to Narze, but she always wrote him a good letter on Sundays when she usually stayed at home on Channing avenue all day. Saturday she and Dee went together to see Grace and sometimes the three went to a movie together. Her letters to Narze reflected the pattern of events that winter and spring.

Feb 11

"Dearest Narze,

I've been so busy. I'm not sure that I like the job of Art Editor. I have to do a cartoon every week for the editorial page. It is a pain in the neck because I don't consider myself a cartoonist. If I'm doing Art I like to work with colors and of course, I can't do that here. I think I have a pretty good sense of humor, but the subjects they choose for the cartoons are pretty dumb most of the time. I looked at some of the cartoons the last art editor did and he 'vas really terrific. I mean he could draw very well, though the ideas were still dumb. What I really like doing on the school paper is write articles.

I report on some of the club activities and lately I've written some poems and she likes them and has printed them. By 'she' I mean our journalism teacher. So now there is talk about my being , 'class poet' at the Commencement.

"Well , that's the news for now. Let me know t he minute you hear from those colleges. Oh, I do miss you Narze.

All my love,
Jane"

Two weeks later, she wrote.

"Dearest Narze,

I've been spending a lot of time with Mother lately. Her room is on 75th street, so I just walk there after school several days a week. She always has milk and crackers and jam and cheese. I'm always absolutely starved after school. Apparently Pauline's family don't believe in eating between meals, and all my life I've had after-school snacks. Aunt Ada used to give me bread with butter and sugar on it , or peanut butter. Aunt Nelle and Uncle Rog always had tea and crackers and cheese every afternoon. That's a custom they inherited from England. But Pauline says we should just eat at mealtime. It's not just a matter of money, either. Well, we're a long way from hunger. Edie fixes very good meals for us.

Mother is busy painting her mural and when I am with her I usually do my chemistry homework. I'm trying to learn everything in the text book. Some of us are going to Wooster next month to take an exam for their Chemistry Scholarships. It'll be tough I 'm sure.

"I was interested in what you heard from those colleges. Wait till you hear from the rest. I know some are cheaper.

Heaps of love from

Your Jane "

In early March she wrote:

"Narze dearest,

Oh, how I miss you! Busy as I am at school, I still keep remembering things. I haven't bought one of those giant Hershey's since you left, even if Dad did say that chocolate comforts you when you're blue.

"Guess what! I'm making an oil painting. Last week I was at Mom's place and I was looking at her tubes of paint and asking her questions. She said, 'Why don't you paint a picture? Ask your father to give you a canvas.' Well, so I did ask him, and he immediately found me some brushes and a medium sized canvas. So I'm painting a landscape of New Hampshire. It's a scene up on the Hill in winter looking toward Mt. Morgan and the Notch. I'm having a pretty good time anyway, no matter how it turns out. Mother has finished her first mural, and has started another. Dad is painting one, too. It is nice to have them earning some money again. It improves everyone's disposition, but I am convinced that it is just a matter of time before Dad and Pauline break up. Dee and I think that he is probably seeing someone else, and it is also just a matter of time before word of that gets around town. If Pauline learns of that, she'll want a divorce I'm sure. So then I don't know where I'll be living, but anyway I'm very glad that Mother is living in Cleveland again. She and I are getting along very nicely just now. We have our easels set up side by side and we paint together. I can only paint about forty-five minutes on school days; then it gets too dark. We usually go out to dinner at 'The Hole in the Wall', a tiny restaurant. I really enjoy that. Then on Saturday's or Sunday's I can paint all day if I want. Lately I've been with Mother more than at Dad's. This is a long letter. I must get it mailed.

All my love,

Jane

P.S. Have you heard from any more colleges lately? You didn't say anything about it in your last two letters. "

At the end of March, Jane's letter to Narze recounted the events of John Martin's ninety-third birthday.

"I am on Spring Vacation this week , so I got to go to my grandpa's birthday party in Oberlin. It was quite an event. All of his nine children were there, even my Uncle Henry (Henry Howard Martin) who is the oldest. Everyone was so pleased he was there because he and Grandpa were

'on the outs' for years and years. But Grandpa is old and confused and Mother thinks he has forgotten about it. Aunt Nelle and Uncle Rog came down from Toronto to be here. And Dee's boss at the Winchester Room found someone else to take her place on Sunday when she explained to him what a special event it was. Grandpa is often sad and Mim says she hears him calling Grandma in the night. (She died four years ago this month.) But he seemed happy on his birthday and he had such a twinkle in his eye that I think he was amused by it all. I heard him ask Mother, 'How old do they say I am?' And when she told him 'ninety-three,' he said, 'I'm nearly three hundred.' Maybe he feels that old or maybe it's because he reads the Bible so much, about Methuselah and those old guys. Anyway it was a nice day and Grandpa blew out all his candles. Not in one breath, but he did blow them out.

"I studied very hard all this week while I've been in Oberlin. Next Saturday we go to Wooster to take that horrendous Chemistry exam. Wish me luck, Narze.

"By the way, Mim says that her mother told her that my mother would like to marry my father again if he and Pauline break up. I told Mim that Dee and I would hate to live with Mother and Dad again because we are certain they would quarrel as bad as ever. But I will say this; Dad has been very nice to Mother lately, framing her pictures, delivering them and so on. And Edie and Grandma would like it just fine. Grandma once thought Mother was wrong to divorce Daddy, but later Grandma realized that Mother was right. And now Mother has the crazy idea that she was wrong. That's silly because it was the only thing she could do. Daddy had everyone upset all the time. And he has only changed a little. He does say awful things to Pauline and I don't know how she stands it. I feel sorry for her even though I don't like her too well. Trink says 'Maybe Uncle Norris can't help being the way he is. Maybe it's the only way he can be.' But Mim said) 'Nonsense. Of course he can help being the way he is. If he wanted to be different he could be.' Well, I really don't know which one of them is right. And actually, Mim is quite fond of my dad. Trink is very tolerant of everybody, Aunt Merly says. Well, Narze this is a long letter for me. Maybe it will make up for the ones I didn't write. Don't think that I meant I didn't miss you when I said that a week goes by so

fast. It's because I'm busy and I'm glad I am.
All my love,
Jane"

QUITE UNEXPECTEDLY IRENE WAS GONE

Throughout the spring, Grace and Dee attended the Wednesday evening testimonial meeting at the Christian Science Church. Jane always begged off because of homework. She did not tell them that she found the meetings insufferable. There were long silences, usually, between which believers got up and told of their experiences with healing. Jane was a doubter. Her recovery from supposed "pneumonia" had failed to convince. The perfidy of the man, Maple, had caused a further weakening in her belief. The fact that her aunts, Nelle and Merly, still held to 'Science' did not impress her. But she could see that Dee and her mother enjoyed it, and she guessed they did it for "old time's sake." Indeed, Grace, somehow felt nearer Norris when she sat in his family's church.

But Grace had others on her mind as well. One morning she was painting on her second mural when Mrs. Clark came up the stairs to say that a gentleman was calling to see her. Dee was visiting Grace that morning. After Mrs. Clark had been thanked and had gone back downstairs, Grace said to Dee "Oh, gud!"

"What's wrong?" Dee asked.

"Well, nothing. But look at me. I'm a mess. I'm in no shape to have a gentleman caller see me."

"You're alright, Mother. You look fine."

"No. No, I don't. I meant to have Mr. Spencer cut my hair.

Honey, I want you to go down and tell the man I'm too busy working on something to see anybody today."

"Mother! I can't say that. Your hair always looks great."

"Well, Dee, it isn't really that. It's that I can't abide that man.

"You don't even know who it is."

"Oh, yes I do. Indeed I do. Now go and tell him, please dear."

Dee went downstairs, and Grace looked out the front window hiding behind the lace curtain while she watched. She expected to see William Henry Baker departing from Mrs. Clark's front porch, but it was not the lank figure of the advertising man who walked toward a handsome car.

The man who walked away was shorter, very well dressed and as he turned left at the end of the Clarks' walk she realized it was Paul Carter, her life insurance agent.

"Oh dear! Oh, dear!" Grace said. "Oh, my heavens."

"What's the matter?" Dee asked as she entered the room.

"Oh, dear. That lovely little man!"

Dee couldn't help but laugh at that.

"It isn't a bit funny." Grace said. "It's dreadful. Not for anything would I have had you send Mr. Carter away. What will he

think of me?"

"Well, who is he, besides being 'that lovely little man'?"

"He's a very fine person. He has my life insurance policy.

He's just splendid, and he's been ever so nice and he liked me.

And now I've been rude to him, and I feel just terrible. I made such a dreadful mistake. "

"You said you knew who it was. "

"Well, I was sure it was William Henry Baker. "

Dee laughed again. "What a name!"

"Well, I can't stand him. I wonder how Mr. Carter happened to be calling on me. Oh, I feel just sick about it. "

"Mother, why don't you just write him one of your famous charming little notes and explain it all to him?"

"Well, I certainly will do that, " Grace said, "but what exactly do you mean by my 'famous charming little notes'?"

"Well, you can turn on the charm in your letters, and be very delightful otherwise, too. Dad is the same way. Extremely charming. It's just too bad you didn't charm each other more. "

"We did, " Grace said. "In the beginning. "

"Well, anyway, Mother, I love you both. Jane does too.

In spite of everything. "

Grace looked at Dee quizzically but did not pick up on her remark. It was Paul Carter's visit she was thinking about.

Grace wrote her explanatory note that same day and later that week , she received a return note from Paul Carter saying he understood perfectly. He enclosed two tickets to a concert by the Singers' Club, of which he was the current president.

Grace lay awake nights wondering. Was he delivering the tickets the day he came calling? He could have easily mailed them in the first place. But he had chosen to bring them personally. What did it mean? Perhaps he had not even been bringing the tickets, just coming to see her. And no doubt her foolish behavior the other day had spoiled everything. For several years Paul Carter had made a practice of sending her a Christmas card signed, "With highest regard" and even, "My high personal regard. " So that had seemed significant, and he had finally bestirred himself to come calling (even though he seemed to be a confirmed bachelor tied to a mother and two sisters.) But, now she had very likely ruined it all, as he was a shy man, and might not ever bestir himself again after having been sent away. Quite likely, just the knowledge that she had "thought he was someone else" would discourage him. Damn that "someone else!" He had caused the fiasco.

One evening the following week Grace entertained Betty Longmont in her room. She prepared a tasty little dinner with out abusing her cooking privileges a bit. No frying, just a nourishing

cream soup, a shrimp and apple salad, and delicious bakery croissants. She would remember two years later that Betty had said her "tummy was acting up" and she had partaken only of the soup and rolls and some tea. Grace had not thought much about it at the time.

And they had had a very pleasant time of it, for a time.

Betty commented very favorably on Grace's second mural, which was a "sister", but not a twin of the first. That one had depicted French children at play in the country side, while the second one showed Swiss youngsters climbing in an Alpine setting.

"It's splendid, Grace," Betty said. "I like the style."

"It's new for me. I've not done figures in oil paints before."

"I know, but now you've proved you can, you see."

"You know, Betty, I think I had half lost my confidence."

"I had, too. I mean I have. That's why I didn't apply for this work. Well, I sent my name in, but then I didn't follow up on it. I just haven't been feeling up to par."

"I guess perhaps it's our age, Betty."

"Probably it is, but I've never felt I was old till just lately."

"We aren't 'old Betty; I suppose we're middle-aged though. But cheer up. Being depressed goes with change of life. Betty, some days I don't feel middle-aged a bit. Why do you know, right now there are two men that are paying attention to me. One is really pestering me, and the other is very reserved but he's ever so nice. And then, not only that, but Carle actually sent me an announcement of his exhibition at Polk Galleries. And Norris has been doing all kinds of nice favors. He's been so helpful."

"Well then, Grace. You're situated splendidly; you have four gentlemen on the string."

"Oh Betty, what nonsense! None of them is 'on a string' except possibly 'Horrible William', and I refuse to even touch the string in his case."

Betty laughed. "Well, anyway, you have four men to think about, and who is your favorite among them?"

"Betty, you know the answer to that."

"I hope it isn't Norris, but I'm afraid it is," Betty said.

"You sound like Merly and Nelle. They think we wouldn't get along any better than before. But we're older now, Betty."

Betty had turned serious. "It isn't that, Grace. But I don't think you should be entertaining thoughts about you and Norris getting together again."

"Why do you say that?"

Betty looked uncomfortable. "Oh, gee, it isn't my business, Grace. I mustn't advise you."

"Come on now, Betty. You had something on your mind when you said that. "

"Well, Norris is married, Grace. "

"That isn't what you were going to say, Betty. After all he's been married nine years, and you never told me before that I shouldn't be thinking about Norris. So what makes you say it now? "

"Alright then. I only say it now, because Cleveland is such a gossipy town, especially the artists here. We artists tend to only associate with each other. We gather at the events at the museum, and we talk to each other and make dates to have lunch together, or go to a concert together. "

"Betty, you always used to accuse me of taking a long time to tell something. Now you're doing it. "

Betty was floundering a bit. "Well , it's just that you would hear it from somebody if not from me. It seems that Norris may have found himself a candAdate for a third marriage. " Grace felt as though she had sustained a blow to the pit of her stomach, but she managed to appear quite calm.

"What makes you say that? "

"Well. he's been seen with somebody. "

"Somebody. A woman?"

"Yes, of course. More than once. In his car. And it wasn't Pauline. "

"It could have been Dee. "

"No, it wasn't Dee. I'd have recognized Dee. "

"You mean you saw him yourself, Betty?"

"Yes. Twice. "

"It could have been someone he was taking somewhere. "

Betty said nothing and her silence had meaning.

"I mean he might have been just giving someone a ride as a courtesy. Perhaps it was a model. He used models in his photography. "

"Yes, of course, " Betty said. "That might be it. "

"I don't think that because you saw him a couple of times with a woman in his car, that he is necessarily planning marriage. "

"No , of course not. Alan Grey saw him, too. "

"With the same woman?"

"We think so, " Betty said.

"Well, per haps he is running around. From what the girls tell me of Pauline, it wouldn't be surprising. "

"No, I guess not. "

"You know, Betty, Norris is such an egotist about his charm with the ladies. He used to brag to me that he could seduce anyone of my women friends and my sisters too. He tried to hurt me by saying those things. "

"Well, he did try me once, " Betty said.

"You never told me that. "

"Well, you see it didn't matter then, because you had already divorced him and in the second place he didn't succeed. "

"He was testing your loyalty to me, Betty. "

"No. I think he was testing his charm. He wanted to learn how much it had been damaged by the divorce. Most people were on your side then, as you know. "

"He told me when he married Pauline that his ego was in need of repair. "

"No doubt it was. " Betty said.

"Betty, do you think if he and Pauline separate that people will side with her this time. "

"I don't know, Grace. She has family and friends, of course, but our old crowd don't really know her. We see her at the museum functions and that's about all. But you know he is president of the Art Club. Norris is popular. There are a lot of younger artists in the club. They don't know the old sad story Grace. And then, too, Norris is not the only naughty boy among the artists. "

"What a strange thing for you to say, Betty. Norris was not just 'naughty.' He behaved like a cad, especially when he left me in New York alone with Dee. "

"That's a long, long time ago, and best forgotten, " Betty said. "And there are plenty of cads around and that's had a lot to do with why I've stayed single. "

"Oh, Betty, that's so sad. "

"Well, maybe, but let's get off this sorry subject. We were having a nice time before we started talking about Norris. And it isn't good for you, Grace. That's what got me started in the first place. I said that you ought not dream of remarrying Norris. You should put him out of your mind, and start afresh. " Later that night she tossed and turned. It had been a most disturbing evening. And now she began to wonder about Betty's loyalty. She had seemed to be somewhat defending cads. Oh, Grace thought, I knew I should not have come back to Cleveland.

And then, quite unexpectedly, Grace was gone. She was gone from Mrs. Clark's house on 75th street, and indeed, gone from Cleveland. Within three weeks of her little dinner with Betty Longmont, she was on the high seas.

The events of the month of April are best told in Jane's letters to Narze. The experiences of Grace's summer of 1934 were recorded in detail in her very faithfully kept journal. Jane wrote to Narze on the last day of April.

Narze dear,

I never meant to be such a long time in answering your letters. I know I've not been as good a letter writer as you, but I have been studying very hard to get my final grades as high as possible because that will bring my average up and I need that if I am to finish on the Honors List. - But, Narze, I have a better excuse than that. Things have been absolutely crazy here. And can you believe what happened? Mother went to Africa. AFRICA of all places! It really took everybody by surprise and I was really upset by it, because I was so certain she was finally going to make up her mind to stay in Cleveland.

Well I'll begin at the beginning. I got your letter telling me the good news about college. I have heard of that one but didn't know exactly where Reliance was. I wish it was nearer Cleveland, but it could be a lot worse. Did they say what kind of part time job it would be? I want to hear all about it, and I don't want you to think that I wasn't interested when I didn't write immediately, but this is what happened. Your letter came on the 7th, and that evening I didn't go to stay with mother because she was having an old friend come to dinner. I did homework and then I started a letter to you but didn't finish it. The next night I did stay with Mother. We went to dinner at a little place we like that Mother calls the "Hole in the Wall." She was in a strange mood and asked me some questions about Dad - did I think he was seeing some woman? I told her that I had no idea, but that it had occurred to Dee and me that it wouldn't be strange. Mother seemed to think that was scandalous. She seemed unhappy the rest of the evening. I told her the good news about your college plans, but I have to admit that didn't cause her to jump for joy either. However I think that is because she has no bright ideas for how

to arrange that I get to go to college too. She keeps talking as though it is something that I am going to be able to manage myself. Well - anyway - the very next day she got this letter from Elma Smith. Remember I told you who she was? The one that was writing to mother last year about going to Budapest. Well, so she wrote this wildly enthusiastic letter to Mother from Tunis, which is in Tunisia. Do you know exactly where that is? Neither did I except in a general way. It's on the north coast of Africa. It seems that Elma Smith has rented a villa there for one of the projects in her International School of Art. She wanted mother to come and join her there, and without taking a day or two to think it over, much less writing or cabling to learn more about it. She said she had made up her mind to go "immediately. " She told Dee and me that because Elma's letter arrived that particular day it proved that she was "meant to go. " We don't know for sure why she said that. Mother is a Christian Scientist, sort of, and they are always saying that the "right thing" is sure to happen. I don't believe that for one minute. In the first place I don't think it is the right thing for me to have her go just now. I tried to get her to stay until my graduation and I told her to write to Elma and ask her more about it, like exactly what her salary will be. I thought Mother would want to know that much at least. Elma didn't say one word about the salary and that seems funny. But it didn't worry Mother because she says that Elma Smith is a very fine person and she is a Christian Scientist too. So Mother sent a cable the very next morning. She only slept on the idea one night. Dee feels badly to have Mother gone too , but she pointed out that when our dad went to Europe it seemed to be a big help to his career as an artist. I guess it was a turning point, because when he came home he had some oil paintings and a lot of sketches of Southern France and he won some prizes at the May Show and sold his paintings for very good prices. Dee says it ought to be a big help to Mother, too, especially since she sketches easily and fast, and is also good at drawing figures. And I suppose that is true, it would help her gather some material for paintings. But Dad thinks she ought to stay here, and try for more work with the government. He says people aren't buying pictures now because they can't afford to. Well,

THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF ART

ELMA PRAT · DIRECTOR · STROHGASSE · 24 · VIENNA · AUSTRIA

March 14, 1934

Dear Grace,

Long silence. I am wondering how your plans are progressing. I would really like now to try to persuade you to change your plans about Hungary and come to Tunis instead. I am going down about the second week in April. No expenses would be involved there, for you could look after us - us varying from two to three persons. Life is there informal and the shopping end of it is really a huge adventure, the old Arab house and experience in itself. You could get a very cheap rate from Paris to Tunis. At one time it was \$20 That means that you will have to go to Italy. It is a long ride but an interesting one. The other way is, of course, to go from Paris to Marseilles and then by boat to Tunis. If you can come cable me at once because then I could take an artist with us whom I would like to take along very much. She is a cripple and I cannot take the responsibility of her alone. You would certainly enjoy working there, Grace. It is a paradise for artists. House-keeping is only an incidental factor and we shall not waste much time on it. Cable me c/o Cooks - you can use their cable address.

I hope you saw the Polish Exhibition in Oberlin.
Heaps to tell you and not the time for it.

Much love,

Elma.

*If you start at once after cabling
& go to Tunis - go at once to
Hotel Commodore & then look
me up at 18 Rue Mederra El
Slemimia.
Heaps of love.*

VIENNA STUDIO · EMMY ZWEYBRÜCK · LANGEGASSE · 72
WARSAW STUDIO · MARY WERTEN · SENATORSKA · 6
ROME STUDIO · HELENA ZEŁEŻNY · VIA MARGUTTA · 54

*Bernstein's line
is cheap.*

1584½

the way I feel about it is, I understand why she wanted to go, but she at least could have waited for my Commencement, because it meant a lot to me and it's only a few weeks. Tunis will still be there on June 15th. Narze, I'm getting sleepy. I'll tell you more in my next letter. There is more to tell and some of it is funny. But not all.
All my love and kisses & Congrats.

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Jane

Dear Narze ,

Now here I am making excuses again for being late. My club work at school has had a lot of events lately and also I went downtown yesterday and bought material for my graduation dress. It is white organdy with a "shadow pattern" if you know what that is. Of course you don't. We have to have the hem no longer than eight inches from the floor. They laid down some rules. The letter I started the day I got your news about college, I tore up. It was a lousy letter. I was happy for you and the letter said so, but I was also very upset about the chemistry exam I took at Wooster. It was the type of exam that is arranged to start out easy and then it gets increasingly difficult. I just sailed through that thing, up to a certain point and then it got asking questions and giving problems that were way beyond anything in our textbook. (And, of course , we aren't through our textbook yet, as it is) There were a lot of questions asking for graphic formulas as. I did really well in a graphic formula contest that our Chemistry Club did for fun, but those were just common compounds like ethyl and methyl alcohol , and sugar, and the common acids and bases and salts. But in the exam at Wooster there were several pages of questions that were all made up from organic chemistry. When I got that far along I looked around and there were only two or three people still working; the rest had given up. So I'm sure one of those three boys that were doing those last questions won the Scholarship. Anyway, I didn't.

I told you about going to Wesleyan, didn't I?

Now there is where I would really like to go. They have a beautiful new dormitory for women, Stuyvesant Hall. I was so impressed; there is a bathroom for every two rooms. I took a general achievement type test there and I know I did well , but I have put Wesleyan out of my mind, because even with a full tuition scholarship, I could not scare up the room and board and fees money. Dad is still broke, Mother is gone, and poor Aunt Edie's stock is dwindling away. Well, that's enough about my problems. I'll have to answer your question about Prom. Yes, I'm going. After all, Narze, it's my last high school prom and

God only knows if I will ever go to a college one.
As you would say "I doubt it awful. " But I sure wish
I was going to Prom with you. Yes , I'm going with that
boy you saw at the December prom. He asked me so far
ahead that I was put in that horrible position, where
some people say no because they hope to get a better
invitation. Well, anyway, I told him I'd go with him,
and later I did get asked by someone I'd rather have
gone with. But, Narze, what difference does it make?
Neither of them is you. Well , this is getting kind of
long. You'll admit, I don't write as often as you,
when I do , I write a long one.
All my love,
Jane
May 16 '34

Dear Narze,
I did say I had more to tell and something that
was funny. Well, sort of funny. I should go back to
the time before Mother actually left. It was such a
hectic time. She was here for about two and a half
weeks after she cabled Elma that she was coming. She
rushed around trying to say goodbye to family and
friends in Oberlin, Olmsted Falls and Cleveland.
I guess she went away with the idea of staying a very
long time. She didn't talk about my going to college,
she just kept saying that she hoped to arrange to get
me "a year or two over there. " If I ever go to Africa
that isn't the part I most want to see.
The day before Mother left, she and Dee and I
had lunch downtown at Strohmeyer's. Mother bought me
a square, red leather compact for face powder and a
beautiful red linen handkerchief. These were graduation
presents, so of course they got me feeling sad. Dee
and I would have liked to have given Mother going-away
presents, but as usual we were broke.
The next day Mother left. I couldn't go down
to see her off because I couldn't skip school. I had
to get a cartoon in. Well, I'll be through with all
that in about three weeks. I would rather have done
more writing for the paper instead of being Art editor.
Dee saw Mother off at the Union Terminal in the
Tower Building. It was a lousy day rainy and cold.
That afternoon Aunt Nelle called to ask me what happened
to my mother, and didn't she leave for New York. It
seems that Babs and Aunt Nelle came in from Oberlin

on the bus to say goodbye to Mother and they waited in the rain at the Union Station and Mother never showed up. Well, Mother left from the Union Terminal, not that ancient station down there by the lake. It's still in use, of course, for some trains. Anyway, Aunt Nelle was burned up. She said, "We stood in that rain and Got thoroughly chilled. "

That's only part of it. This week we got a letter from Uncle Rog. He was in New York when mother sailed. She went on the "REX", the biggest ship of the Italian Line, and for economy's sake she went third class. It seems that Uncle Rog, his sister Aunt Nellie Wilson, Mother's old friends, the Hurst's, and their daughter, and another friend, Miss Fontaine. all went down to the pier at West 18th street to see Mother off and say "Bon Voyage. " Uncle Rog says he was "ailing, with a bad cold, when Grace jumped in so suddenly and with no warning. " I guess she was just in New York 24 hours.

- Well, Uncle Rog says he kept running back and forth from Third Class entrance to Second and saw not a sign of Mother. There was a sea of people most of them "shouting in Italian" as he put it. No one ever did see Mother, even Miss Fontaine, who waited in Mom's Stateroom until 15 minutes before the REX sailed. They all kept looking at every deck and scanned every porthole but never saw her. They had flowers and candy and a camera for her. Uncle Rog said there must have been ten thousand people at the dock.

Well, we got a letter from Mother today and she is there, with Elma in Tunis. Her letter is long and full of descriptions. I'll have to tell you about all that later. She did get the flowers, candy and the camera at her table the first night on board ship. I've got to end this, but there is a bit of news.

Dee got a job as a secretary to one of Dad's friends who is opening an insurance office. She will get only \$8.00 a week to start, but she is thrilled and I may get her Sunday job at the Winchester Room. I'll let you know. I got word that "Northern" is offering me \$125.00 a semester if I go there. Well I'd like to, but where will the rest of the money come from? I've got to get a real job this summer. Prom is this Saturday night. I'll tell you about it in my next letter.

Don't worry, I don't like him!
All my love (really)
Jane

Tuesday, Room 11 10,
280 Madison ave.,
New York, N. Y.,
U.S.A.,
May 1st, 1934.

Mrs. Grace Martin Rahming,
Care Miss Alama Pratt,
10 Rue Medersa, El Sliminia,
TUNIS, Africa.

Dear Grace:

Saturday, April 28th, was a "ruined day" for myself, Lucy F. Leonard, Pauline La Patterson, Earle Hurst, Ted Hurst, Joan Hurst. All of us went down to the Italian Liner REX at the foot of West 18th street (all except Lucy who waited one solid hour for me at Grand Central Station, through a misunderstanding.) Not one of us, not even Pauline who waited in your stateroom until 15 minutes before the REX sailed, got a glimpse of you.

Earle Hurst had a camera for you.
I had a box of candy for you.

In my own case I got out of a sick bed to come down to the boat. I had been ailing with the grippe and a bad cold for two weeks previous. You jumped in on us all so sudden, and with so little warning, that we were in no wise prepared for you.

I got down to the dock at 11 15 a.m. and spent all of the time running from Second class entrance to Third Class entrance, not being sure which one you were on. I looked in the waiting-room time and again, I scanned every deck on the ~~REX~~, scanned every port hole, and every window. Not a sign of you anywhere. If you had purposely tried to keep out of sight you could not have better succeeded. I never did find Pauline. About fifteen minutes before the boat sailed, I spied Earle, Ted and Joan. We joined forces then and all of us looked and looked and looked and looked for you. As the boat pulled out of her moorings we watched every possible crevice and nook on the boat for you. We even wared at people on the Third Class deck thinking you might be looking right at us and we not seeing you.

After the boat pulled out we started to send a RADIOGRAM, then when we found it was 21 cents a word, and all of us being without funds, we looked kind of sick and did nothing. I went to lunch with the Hursts at some East Side bakery where we all dined on about ten cents each. It turned out to be Ted's birthday so I gave her the box of Schraft's I had got for you. Later in the day we called Pauline Patterson and she was as much at sea about your disappearance as any of us. Even to this day we do not know whether you sailed on the REX. I'll bet there were ten thousand people down at that boat and to find any one person without explicit directions was like looking for John Smith in London or New York.

We can only hope that you got aboard the REX okay, that you met Pauline's friend who was sailing on the same boat, and that you are enjoying the bounding deep as you speed toward the Mediterranean. By the time this reaches you will no doubt have set foot on the Black continent. Tell us when you get time, how you happened to evade us all. We were a disgruntled and disappointed bunch, I can tell you! 1589 1/2

So don't get the idea now that all your friends and relatives deserted you in your hour of need. We were the ones who felt we should be commiserated. All of us were low in spirit when we left the docks. We were in deep gloom the remainder of the day.

To this hour the whole business remains a deep mystery!

Earle Hurst and I wondered whether you had Earle Simon aboard, whether you had married again (in secret), whether you had missed the boat, whether you had hidden behind a mast or in a lifeboat---

As I wrote you before you left Cleveland, the opportunity to go abroad seemed an excellent one. I hope everything turns out 100 per cent satisfactory, hope that you have a restful sea voyage, that you meet with many good friends en route--that you will land in an atmosphere of Sunshine and Happiness. Perhaps you have, at last, discovered the thing you really want to do!

The next time you sail for far away places you had best take friend and relative down to the dock with you. Otherwise they will never find you. I am sending this account to Nelle so she can explain to the people in Cleveland and Oberlin. Otherwise they may think we all--Lucy, myself, The Hursts and Pauline Patterson---played deep dyed villains and deserted you at the sailing of that huge leviathan, the Steamship REK.

When you get time and feel so inclined, drop us a line and tell us how it feels to cross the ocean, whether the food was all steeped in garlic and how it seemed to land on African shores.

All send their love.

Rog.

P.S. I am Class Poet and why can't they let it go at that, but no, I have to write a Class Poem and recite it at Commencement, darn it. I have no idea what the poem will be about, because I've been so side-tracked by Mother's leaving that I haven't thought about it. but time is running out now. Oh dear!

MY DEAREST FRIEND IS GRADUATING

Jane's "12A" Prom was a better evening than the one in December, but she would rather have had Narze as her escort. Narze was a good dancer and Herbert was not. Herbert was well-liked though he never would be thought of as "popular". He was respected as a "brain". He had been the front-page editor of the Crimson and Gold during his Senior year. As a "P.G." he had continued to write feature stories for the weekly publication. As soon as Jane joined the staff of the paper, Herbert had shown much interest, but she had told him she was going steady. That had only partly discouraged him. When she consented to go to Prom with him, he concluded that she was no longer going steady. He assumed she would be willing to "neck" or "lolly-gag" as they called it. She was not willing. After the dance, which was at the Cleveland Club, they went to a night spot not far from the Adam Hotel. The next day, Sunday, they went with others to Emerald Beach, where she had once gone with Danny O'Neil. But at no time did she feel like kissing Herbert. She didn't like him, and she didn't like his name. He had myopia and he gazed at her in a way that got on her nerves. They parted on Sunday evening with Herbert in a sullen mood, but Jane did not care.

Dee had started her new job in the insurance office. Her old boss in the Winchester Room had been quite agreeable about letting Dee bring her sister in to learn the job.

"He thinks you are already through high school, Dee said.

"I practically am, " said Jane.

"True, " said Dee, "and he also thinks you're eighteen. "

"One more week and I will be. "

"That's right. "

"But I really need a full time job this summer. "

"Perhaps something will turn up, " Dee said. "You should have studied typing and shorthand. "

"No one ever gave me that advice, " Jane said.

"Well, the Depression won't last forever. "

"Perhaps not. "

During her last weeks, Jane had little time to write to Narze. She was studying for her final exams. She was composing and memorizing the class poem, and she was making her dress for Commencement night. In addition she was shortening a cotton dress for "Kid Day" an East High tradition for seniors.

Her birthday was the third of June. At her request, Edie made an "Edie's cake. " Dee, Edie, and Norris each gave her a dollar, and Pauline gave her enough material for a blouse. There had been no birthday message from Grace, but in the evening Gertrude called to give Jane her best wishes, and to make a

suggestion. She said that she and Uncle Bill had been in Oberlin and talked to Mim. They were wondering how many guests Jane could have at her Commencement Exercises. Gertrude said she'd be glad to drive to get Mim and the other girls if they could attend.

"Wasn't that nice of Aunt Vinnie?" Jane said to Dee.

"I didn't even know she knew it was my birthday. I can get as many as ten tickets if I need them, so Babs and Trink can come, too, if they'd like. You know, Dee, I got the impression that Aunt Vinnie and Uncle Bill don't think much of Mother's trip to Africa. "

"Why? What did she say?" Dee asked.

"She didn't come right out and say as much. She just said "Bill and I were amazed that she up and left so suddenly, at a time like this. And I don't think she meant because of my graduation. She thinks Mother would have better chances of earning money here in Cleveland.

Jane's Commencement was to be Friday the fifteenth of June, but a problem arose. On Thursday morning, Mr. Ernest Howard from the Winchester room telephoned to ask if Jane could come to work, for the regular girl had called in sick. Jane said she could. She was very busy but she could not tell Mr. Howard that she was about to graduate from high school. She didn't want to do anything to jeopardize her job. So she went to work. The job at the Winchester room was an odd one, and for the one day, Sunday, it paid just two dollars. And the worst part was it was a split shift. The dining-room opened at 11 a.m. and closed at 9 p.m. The hat-check girl and most of the waitresses however, were off duty between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. One waitress remained on duty all afternoon. Jane arrived a half hour early and had a bite to eat before going on duty. When she left at 9 p.m. she ate lunch in the adjoining restaurant which was not as classy as the Winchester Room. She then wandered through the Terminal shops until 5 p.m. when she went back on duty again. When she left at 9 p.m. she ate her dinner in the restaurant. Meals were part of her earnings. She arrived home at 10 p.m. having been gone twelve hours.

But working on Thursday was different from Sunday. The Winchester Room was much busier, especially at noon when businessmen came to lunch from the offices in the Tower Building and other nearby stores and office buildings. These men were executives, and lawyers and brokers. Most of them were regular patrons.

They liked the elegant dignity of the place.

At 3 p.m. when Mr. Howard excused her for the afternoon Jane told him, "A lot of those men didn't want to take a check. They just handed me their hats and started to walk away. "

"Well, you're new, and they shouldn't expect you to know them and know their hats. Give 'em a check. "

But Jane had noticed a stack of white cards in the drawer where the numbered hat checks were kept. The cards had names written on them, obviously the names of patrons.

She said to Mr. Howard, "Some of the men tried to insist on giving me a tip. What do I do about them?"

"Just point out the sign, and say you can't take tips, and if they still insist, be grateful. "

There was a sign that said "Checking attendant is not permitted to receive gratuities. " It was a lighted sign over the door to the checkroom. Many patrons never noticed it.

"You know why they have the sign, " he said. "It's because we don't allow anyone to take his hat or coat into the dining-room. We have no hat racks in there. It would look terrible if we did. And you can't take a man's hat away from him then make him pay to get it back again. "

"I see, " Jane said, "and it's classier that way. "

"Exactly, " said Mr. Howard.

Mr. Howard's title was "Dining-room Manager, " but patrons tended to call him the head-waiter. Others called him the "mater-dee" He told Jane that he had been a maitre d' hotel at one of the Statler hotels for seventeen years. He had come to Cleveland when the new train terminal opened in 1929. in time for the Depression, " he said.

When Jane returned from her afternoon time off, Mr. Howard had something to tell her.

"The dear lady called in and said she has a bad case of phlebitis".

Jane looked a bit puzzled. She didn't know who "the dear lady" was, nor indeed what phlebitis was.

"Did you say 'flea bites'?"

Mr. Howard laughed. "No. She has phlebitis. It's something the matter with the circulation in her leg. She's had it before. Now she tells me that the doctor has ordered her to bed for two weeks with her leg elevated, so she won't be coming to work for awhile. Can you fill in while she's gone?"

"You mean every day?"

"Sure, " he said. "Can you do it?"

"Oh, yes. I certainly can. I need a full-time job. And I suppose that means tomorrow, too?"

"Yes, indeed. "

Jane began to feel panicky. Tomorrow night was Commencement! She thought of a possible solution.

"Mr. Howard? I wonder if Dee could work instead of me tomorrow evening. If I had known ahead of time -"

"It's OK with me. You got a heavy date tomorrow night?"

"Not exactly. It's just that my dearest friend is graduating from high school tomorrow night, and she'll feel terrible if I don't go. "

"It's alright. Go ahead. Let your sister come. Only you'll have to settle it with her about the pay, because I've got your name on the time sheet now. And I better tell you the week day job doesn't pay 25¢ an hour. It's more like 22¢. But, of course, your meals are worth something. "

"Yes, they are, and it helps the budget at home. "

And so Dee made it possible for Jane to graduate and keep her job at the same time. Dee said that, after all, commencements were about as boring as anything can be and she could on living if she missed it. However, since Jane's class numbered three hundred and three graduates, the ceremony was held in the huge Public Auditorium, which was only four blocks from the Tower Building, so Dee walked over after work and got there in time for the awarding of diplomas though not early enough to hear Jane recite the class poem, nor receive her High Honor Award for Scholarship.

True to her word, Gertrude, with Bill, went to Oberlin and brought Mim, Trink, and Babs back with them, and then Vinnie asked everyone back for chocolate cake and ice cream. Norris and Pauline were included in the invitation, but Pauline said her stomach was queasy and begged off, so Norris had to take her home, much to his displeasure for he had always liked Grace's brother Bill, and would have enjoyed talking to him. "You are always spoiling something with your stomach, " he told Pauline.

"Well I feel a little awkward with Grace's family, " Pauline said. "I always have. "

"Then you mean there's nothing the matter with your stomach?"

"There is now, " she assured him.

Mim had planned to stay a few days with Jane now that school was out and even though Jane would be working she said she'd stay till Monday.

"Wasn't Aunt Vinnie sweet?" Jane said. "She knew I felt bad that Mother wasn't here. Everyone was nice to me. "

"Congratulations on your honor award, " Mim said. I thought you'd get something like that. "

"It's not worth any money. I just got in under the wire.

90.6% for the four years. The highest award was a 96.5% accumulated average. "

"Well, it's great considering that you've been always changing schools. "



The Senior Class
of
East High School
Commencement Exercises
Friday, June fifteenth
eight o'clock, P.M.
Music Hall Auditorium
(1934)

EAST HIGH SCHOOL, February 1933 to June 1934
Rahming, Jane Class 10.2

received the standings indicated below for the present semester.

Grade	Subject	First 7 Weeks	First 13 Weeks	Final Report	Parent's or Guardian's Signature	
10.2	English	83	86	90	Helen Rahming	
10.2	Geometry	90	93	93		
10.2	Latin	84	94	93	Helen Rahming	
9.2	French	95	95	96		
10.2	Spoken	85	90	85		
Number of days absent					3	
Previous Credits					12	
Credits this Semester					4	
Credits to Date					16	

Passing Grade—70 College Certification Grade—80 Honor Grade—90

Promoted to Teacher

EAST HIGH SCHOOL

Jane Rahming
In recognition of your services as
Art Editor

for 2 terms on the "Blue and Gold"
of East High School, Cleveland, Ohio,
you are herewith presented with a two-
year subscription to that paper, and
the assurance of the esteem and grati-
tude of your fellow-workers.

Hazel Murray, Adviser
R. C. Goldbach, Adviser

JANE RAHMING
1934
"ANDREA"



"The whole evening was an absolute total disaster, " said Jane.

Mim looked amazed. "Jane! Why?"

"Because they didn't play 'Pomp and Circumstance' and so I don't feel graduated. They played 'Shepherd's March', for gosh sake. "

"Oh, Jane, you goof. And so now you're a working girl. "

"For two weeks, till the 'dear lady' gets her leg down. "

"Wha -a -t? "

"Till the regular girl gets over 'flea bites', and can walk again. "

"Graduation is making you talk riddles, " Mim said.

"Well, after two weeks, the other girl will be back, and then I'll only work Sundays. I could come down to visit you between weekends. "

"I know and I can come here, but it'll be different. I have a strong feeling we'll never have one of our lazy summers again. "

DON'T MENTION THIS TO ANYONE

When Grace sent Elma Smith the cable saying she was coming to Tunis she had been in a very disturbed state of mind. She was angry at Norris for his supposed philandering, but her anger cooled, particularly after he sent her the photos he'd made of her two murals. She began to persuade herself that he might be completely innocent - merely (giving an acquaintance a "lift" in his car. Before she left Cleveland she wrote him a warm little thank-you note and went away as in love with him as ever.

She began keeping a journal immediately, even on the train to New York. From then on, she had a complete record of her most unusual and sometimes terrifying summer. She also asked her friends and relatives to save her letters for her, for they did not always parallel her journal. On days when she wrote long letters she was too tired to write in her journal, but always a good record of her adventures was preserved.

She began writing in her journal immediately when aboard the giant liner Rex, telling of the huge crowd at the docks and how it was not possible for third class, or even second class passengers, to get anywhere near the rails to wave goodbye.

She told of the "shouting, seething mass" of Italians saying goodbye to their relatives on their way back to Italy. In fact, later, on the ship, she ' decided that "every Italian in New York was going back to Naples. " In her cabin, she was forced to give up her lower berth to "a heavy-set, stubborn Hungarian woman who, though she could speak English, only stared at me. " Grace gave up and took the upper berth, deciding it might be all for the best anyway. She said that the ship was "immaculate" but the passengers were not. She said that at her table was "a nice undertaker and a woman with a really dreadful child. "

The ship was huge and Grace was grateful that most of the third class passengers preferred to crowd the forward deck "noisy and uninhibited, elegantly at ease with their toothpicks. " Grace preferred the quieter rear deck where she could "watch the boiling wake this great monster leaves behind. " She thought of how her own grandfather Martin had made the trip from Liverpool to New York in three months on a sailing vessel. The Rex would reach Naples in seven days. The rear deck was deserted most of the time. She realized that today's third class on a large ship was a far cry from the "steerage" that had brought the hordes of immigrants in past years. Nevertheless, third class was third class, and all the pictures she had built up about it over the years were basically correct. The food was certainly adequate, though "mostly macaroni. " She made friends on the upper decks and went up several times to Second to have tea with two women that she said "had good taste but were not- heavy thinkers. " At night, in her berth , she had much to think about. She'd had a curious experience in her last week in Cleveland. Ethel had called her and expressed that she and her mother would very much like to see her and say Goodbye. And so she had gone to Channing Avenue on an evening when Norris and Pauline were out. It had been very odd to be there amid Norris's paintings and the old familiar furniture from the Cartwright street house. Mother Rahming had seemed extremely frail and sad, and Edie had told Grace, "Norris said to me that he would like

to have said goodbye to you, but he felt it would be bad for both of you. " Oh, how strange it all was, and to think how they had intended to be together always. Why, oh why didn't we keep it that way? she thought.

The arrival at Naples was terrifying, though she had anticipated it with pleasure. She had been thrilled with passing the Azores, and later Gibraltar, even though it was evening and not clearly seen. She had sympathized with the emotion of a woman returning after years away who stood at the rail breathing "Napoli, O Napoli!"

But disembarkation was to Grace, incredible. The emotions of the leave-takings at the Pier in New York were nothing compared with the near-hysterical joy of the greetings in Naples. The sobbing, shrieking, and laughter of people who had been waiting for as the great ship docked was like nothing Grace had ever witnessed. And she was frightened. For a week the great ocean liner had been like a nurse or mother - predictable and safe. And now the protector had cut her loose alone.

She went through anxiety about her luggage and about her lodgings and about paying too much for her taxi. But she survived feeling only somewhat preyed upon. She concluded that a visit to Naples by a woman alone was an expensive education. But she took time to take a delightful side trip to Capri, which to her artist's eye was a riot of color. But she felt she could only half enjoy it. If only Norris were with her!

Soon Grace was on shipboard again, and this time third class was much more like her original concept of steerage. She had a berth, true, but the air in the cabin below was bad. She was furious with the travel agent in Cleveland who had failed to give her a true picture of what third class would be on this small boat from Naples to Tunis. She was in a depressed mood, having come away from Naples with the feeling that the Italians wanted to extract a lira or two for even the smallest favor, such as answering; a simple question or giving absolutely minimal help. On that last day even the beauty of Naples seemed to have a sinister quality. And once aboard the boat bound for Tunis it was wait, wait, wait, while cargo was loaded. There were thirty-six beds in the cabin below decks and they were without sheets or pillows. She knew she could not bear it for two nights and days. And she was getting a cold! But thank God, the head cabin steward promised her something better, and for twelve lire and fifty centissimi she found herself in a six-bed cabin with a wash stand and water, and clean sheets on the beds. There were pillows, too, though lumpy ones filled with matted cotton. Everything so strange and different from anything she was used to. Even her poorest days in New York seemed like luxury. She thought of the New Hampshire hills and the piney breezes. She thought of Cleveland where Norris was, and her girls. Oh, dear. she should have stayed for Jane's graduation! But some great good must come of all this. She would grow because of this, and oh, she would paint and paint and paint.

As the boat neared Tunis, the panic came over her again. She must leave the safety of the humble boat (could one call this a ship?) and land again among people who did not speak English. If Elma where there it would be great, but what if she were not? And what if the people spoke only Arabic and not French as she

had assumed?

Elma was not at the dock, it turned out, and the panic took hold of her, and so did a husky short Arab in a European suit and a red fez. He marshaled Grace through the customs and to a carriage driven by another Arab. She was then transported through narrow cobblestoned streets. (It seemed as if they must have gone on every street in Tunis.) At last she was deposited at Elma's address in the rue Médersa Slimaniya.

And then, at last, after talking and writing letters about it for more than four years, Grace found herself enfolded in Elma's arms, and ushered into a most exotic dwelling.

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After three days in Tunis, Grace wrote her first letters home to Dee and Jane, since leaving the liner REX. She had been quite overwhelmed and excited and then exhausted.

Tunis, May 11, '34

Darling girls,

Here I sit in my "bedroom." It is 33 feet long! and 18 feet high. There is a wide part in the center that is 15 feet wide, and areas at each end which are 9 feet wide. The walls are white-washed and there are no rugs but the floors are very beautifully tiled, as is the open court over which the swallows fly. There is a couch for my bed and it is covered with a beautiful silk and metal striped spread. There are a few other simple pieces of furniture quite unlike what we are used to and some willow chairs.

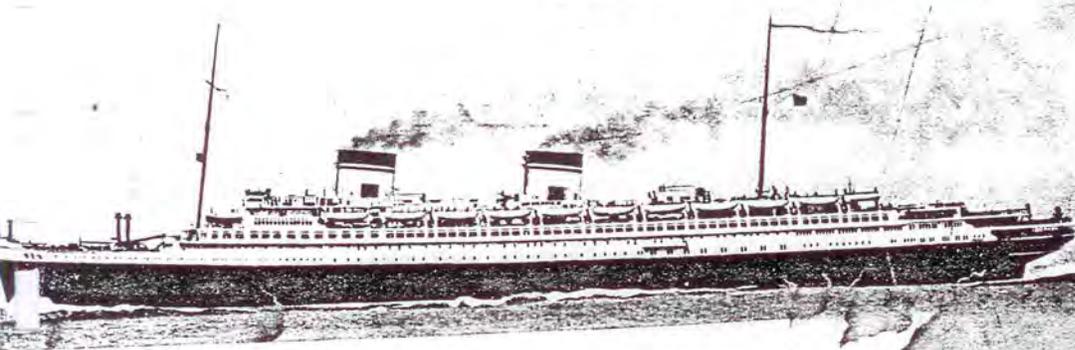
There was no one to meet me at the dock as I hadn't telegraphed Elma, thinking she would guess when I would arrive. So I had another hair-raising time similar to what I had in Naples. (I have written in my journal about that.)

Everyone greeted me with open arms - Elma, and Oliver Franck and Harriet Hunt (who is also from Cleveland and who left about the same time I did.) Oliver Franck is a pianist and he is German, really, but was raised in the states. They are all wonderful people. Elma wanted me to stay here and develop it after she leaves and then go on up into Europe with her to work on something. But that will depend on the result of the school. However I do not want to stay away from you girls too long and I lack the courage to stay here alone. The Arabs are all around us and they make me feel as though I am very strange and foreign and I don't feel that I am at all adapted to working here, but Elma also wants to establish work in America, and that is where my heart lies and with my girls without whom I couldn't be happy. But Elma is just a darling and I have the highest regard for her, and Oliver is a peach. He is working on the music end of it. I was interrupted here, when Elma came in and held forth for about an hour on the fundamental idea that should be back of all teaching. So I just gave up trying to write letters and Harriet and I just listened. Somehow I don't find myself responding to this place, but perhaps I shall feel differently by the end of the month. Elma has roamed around Europe for so long that she feels quite at home anywhere. If I come home sooner than I thought, don't be surprised. And Dee - will you call up Alice Whitman and ask her to do some Christian Science work for me. Elma used to be a practitioner herself, but she is too wrapped up in this work at present.

Much, much and most love

Mommy

Liner REX King of Sea Lanes



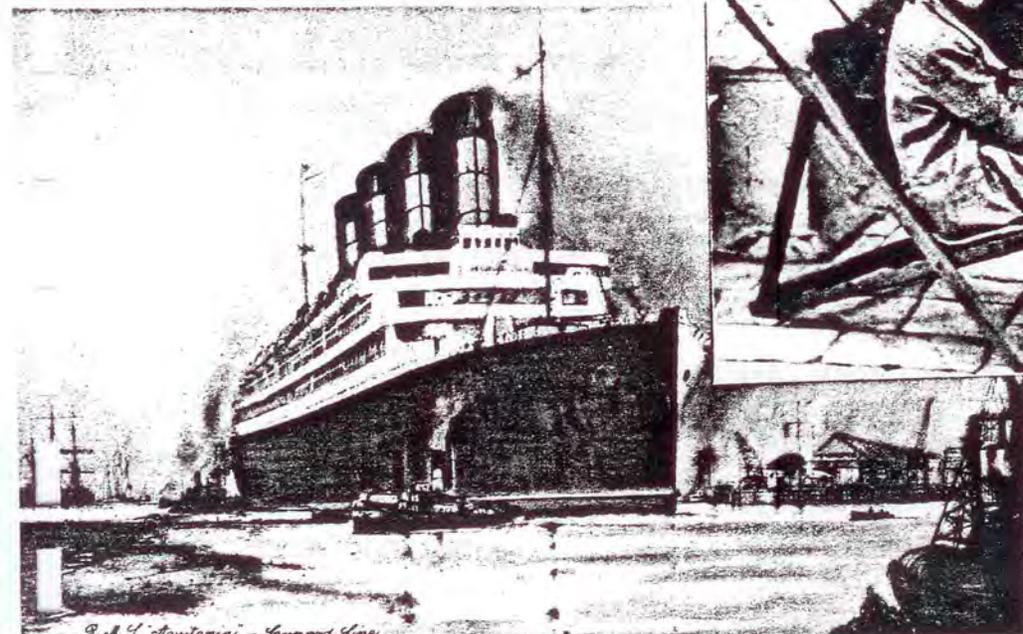
"MONSIEUR"

← Boy scout leader in Tunis (young friend of GMR in Tunis)

MUHAMMAD



GRACE IN AFRICA
("ALMA'S VILLA")
"IRENE" + "HARRIET"

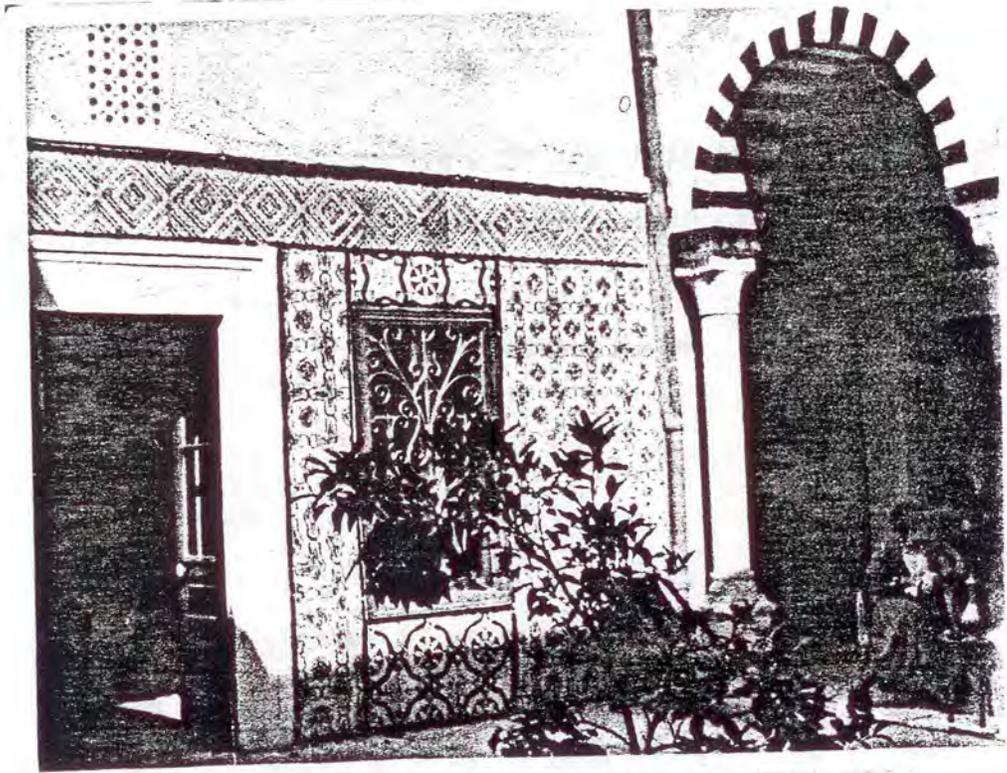


R.M.S. "AQUITANIA"

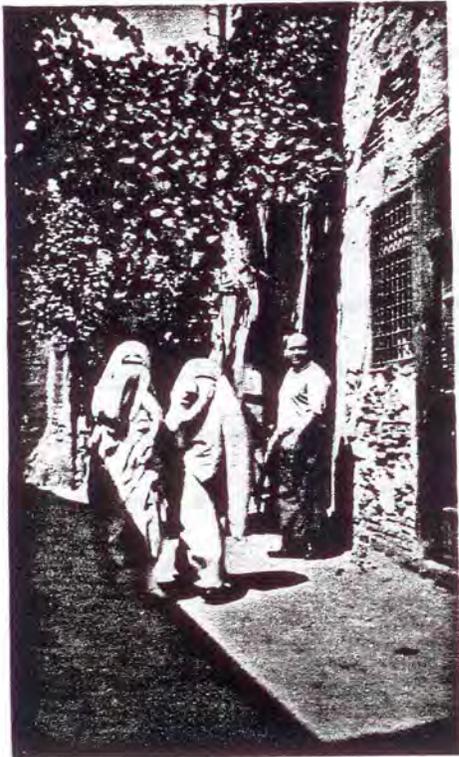
1604 1/2

TUNIS

1934



COURTYARD IN "ALMA'S" VILLA



ARAB WOMEN



MILK VENDOR

1607 $\frac{1}{2}$

At the end of the month Grace.. wrote to Dee.

Darlin' Dee ,

Your letter was a great joy to get after so long without a word from you or Jane. I'm sorry things were such a mess at the time of my departure, but it was one of those things. I'm beginning to get a slant on things here. I was so overcome at first by my trip alone there were times I thought I'd rather pass out.

Elma is such a genius with people and the contacts she has all over Europe are simply amazing, and with it all, she is so approachable and so direct, and I love her for it. I feel a bit ashamed that I was so lost at first. I wanted to come right back to the States. I may be able to help Elma work out something in America - we are talking of it. I can not say what may come of this. Nor must you or Jane say anything to anyone. Just say that I am having a grand time, but that I do not expect to stay very long as I must get back to work. No, perhaps you should simply say you do not know just what my plans are. Are you getting milk? I do want you to have it. Let me know. And how are things with Lewis? Tell him I am not an extraordinary person at all, only the most utterly simple type. He need not feel in awe of me. Dear Dee, I only want you to be happy.

I'm glad your daddy sold a picture and that it has made things more agreeable there. We have made a trip to Carthage and I have been taking pictures. But oh! I get homesick for New Hampshire, don't you? I shall put a note for Jane in with yours. How I hate to miss her graduating! And I hope the next boat brings a letter telling me all the things she is doing.

I love you both heaps,
Mommy

And in June Grace wrote:

Dearest Nippers!

Six weeks and no word has yet come from Jane. I am desolated. But Dee has been a good girl and I have had two letters from her. This is the end of nowhere when it comes to mail. And I don't know how long I shall stay, but I have somewhat got over the fearful feeling I had at first. But Elma leaves two weeks from today. She has some financial setbacks or something she counted on did not go through. Can't tell you in a letter but say nothing of it to anyone. (It has nothing to do with me.) I am getting a lot out of this in spite of certain things that are not so pleasant. I am having to rise above some things. I am making no definite plans just now.

The time for going will work itself out.

How I do miss our good clean fresh milk. I have only canned milk. Fresh milk here is sold in the markets in big open crocks, open to dirt and flies! Elma is used to everything such as that. Too picturesque for me! They need birth control here. - I'd teach it

to the cats first. And there are more bugs in Africa! In a room 18 feet high I would need a gallon of FLIT to kill them all. And there are all manner of crawly things in the cracks of the tiled floors, centipedes and something that looks like a giant sowbug. Ugh! O! and the water here is so thick with lime it is quite impossible to shampoo with it. Sometimes I can catch rain water. But there is much color here in this strange land, to offset the white of the robes the Arabs wear. I am looking for letters from both of you and from Nelle, and the folks in Oberlin. I wrote to everyone and not a word has come since one from Roger in the very beginning and one from the Oberlin Hills folks when I was aboard the REX, and two from Dee.

Most love to you both
Moms

Darlingest Jane,
June 15th

You are, I think, graduating today. I wonder. I thought about you all day. Don't make any change in your dress till I come back. In fact, keep it as it is and save it as a keepsake. And my arms are right around you this very one minute and I hope you are getting all the love that is going from me to you. I'd give anything to be there now, but I'll tell you one thing, when I get back we'll find us a snug little place and we'll all work like nobody's business and then - if not this year, then next year we'll put you into some school - or college and some day I'll see you graduate from there, 'n then Ole Dee will get married pretty soon 'n O! Gee, that'll be so exciting!! But I still can't imagine why you haven't written to me. All I have had are two letters from Dee and one from Rog. None has come from Merly. And now Dee has let more than three weeks go by. You girls don't know what it is like to be way off from those you love in a strange land and alone in a strange house. Don't I mean anything to you anymore?

The boy next door comes in for an English lesson, but pays no money, for he is poor. I may go up to Budapest for three weeks on my way home, but I'm not sure. I shall not stay here more than four weeks in any case. I can get the work in Budapest free, but will have to pay my fare. Don't say anything to anyone about that though. I may not do it at all. But of course, I will let you know.

Most love from
Moms

And later she wrote:
My beloved Jane!

But bad - O! very bad. Almost three months and not one scratch

from you. I'm heaping coals of fire on you. They will make you feel like a snowball in that place where snowballs don't exist! That sounds fierce, doesn't it? But really - you are une mechante. _ Now, I may go up into Poland, Hungary, etc. but one needs much money for the little necessities, and Elma's school is suffering from the conditions, and some of her plans fell through. Well I must close this, and "With all thy faults I love thee still. " And I'm glad you were class poet. I'm proud of that and I hope you may go on doing whatever it is you may want to do.

Oh, by the way - who took you to Prom? But I shall have to wait for that answer because the time is too short now.

All my love to my girls.

Mommy

Then finally. on July 1st Grace wrote to both the girls.

Dearest Nips.

What a preachy little letter that was from you, Dee. It really made me laugh at my big grown-ups, for I guess that's what you are. I'll tell you why things have been so queer here. Elma has changed a great deal. Don't mention this to anyone - not for anything. when I first got here she told me that pictures made in this part of the world don't sell. Imagine! After getting me here! Hell, she just wanted me here so that she would be free to travel around with Oliver Franck. She never hinted of that in her letters to me. I had admired Elma so much! It only goes to show that one cannot depend on personality. Elma just used me to further her own plans and the unfairness of it has bowled me over. And that is not all. She treated Harriet Hunt in much the same way. Harriet told me plenty when I first got here, but I still had so much faith in Elma. But you see she got Harriet over here with the idea that they would spend a year together. Well! When Harriet arrived she learned. that Elma's plan was that she and Oliver and Harriet would travel around Europe and Harriet would foot the bill! Imagine! And then Elma said that she and Oliver would be leaving soon in any case and Harriet could stay on in this place if she wished, alone. (This was before I arrived, you see.) Well, Harriet was so ill over the whole thing that she has gone back to the states now. Gut don't say anything to anyone, as she is so ashamed. to have anyone know about this fiasco.

And another thing - when Harriet told Elma that she wouldn't consider staying here alone, Elma said that she wouldn't either. And yet she sent for me with the plan for me to stay alone. And here I am.

Alone!

And something else Elma told me before she left. The "family" I was supposed to stay with in Hungary was really a bachelor! Something else she didn't tell me. I would not have considered that for a minute. But, Elma is not a Christian Scientist anymore, and

she did not tell me that, either. And with her brilliant personality she buffaloes people. But I told her what I thought about it all. This whole experience is giving me more backbone. And I can also say that I have much material to work up later when I get back to an environment where I can work. The Arabs do not permit one to sketch the whole figure. That is a great sin, I'm told. But I have many snapshots. I shall only be here a short while now and there are a few things I want to do. Fortunately, I have made two or three good friends here, all Arabs, but very fine people and two of them are cultured and they speak beautiful French. One is working with the Boy Scouts here and both of them are in the government. Then there is the young boy who sits outside our door and plies his trade as a tailor.

Well, I must get this into the post. Are you getting enough milk? I must stop feeling that everything depends on me, and stop worrying. As you say, Dee, you are big girls now, and well able to take care of yourselves, and Janie is now in line for the next step. Before long we will have our little place.

Much love from Moms

DO YOU HAVE TO LIVE THERE ?

Life for Edie Rahming was bleaker than usual that summer, for Dee and Jane were gone most of the time, and Norris too, seemed to be away more often than not, and when he was at home, he was not communicative. Pauline stayed in her sewing room now throughout the entire afternoon and evening. And lately, even when she had no client with her, she kept the door closed. Life for Edie had been particularly dull since she lost her position at Cleveland Builders' but now it had taken another turn. Her mother's health was very poor. One afternoon in May she had suffered some puzzling type of fainting spell. Her eyes looked very odd and Edie and Norris had both recalled the fainting spells she was known to have had in past years. Aunt Ada had set them all at ease once long ago when Grace had been alarmed about such a spell. She had said calmly, "Rosella will be alright in a few minutes if you just let her be. "

But this time it was something serious and real. Pauline had said, "Call a doctor. " But Norris had said that wasn't what Mama would want, and Edie had agreed. So they had called the practitioner. Rosella had come to after about half an hour, but she had been dazed the rest of the afternoon, and lay on the couch without talking to anyone. The next day she had seemed alright and she ate her meals, but since then, she'd taken long naps every day, morning and afternoon. And when Edie read "Science" to her now, Rosella always fell asleep. So after a lifetime of clinging to Edie and laying claim to all her leisure time, Rosella was letting go, but Edie felt abandoned.

Dee got up in the morning and hurried to be downtown at nine o'clock. She was home again at dinner time but her day was so slow and boring that she seldom wanted to spend an evening at home, especially since Jane did not get home till after ten o'clock. At work, Dee was learning how to type insurance policies, but the agency was struggling so there was little to do. At night when she didn't have a date she went to the Rendezvous to see her friends. But Jane was never at the Rendezvous anymore as her baby had arrived and she was totally absorbed in her new son. After spending a month with her mother Jane and Lad had moved back into the Adam Hotel. One Sunday Dee and Jane both visited them there and Jane felt a sadness, remembering her happy times in the winter with Narze. But they admired the baby, who was named for his daddy, and Jane said she was certainly glad there weren't five of him like those quintuplets in Canada.

Of all the dwellers at 10720 Channing Avenue that summer, Jane had the most eventful life as far as anyone knew. No one really knew where Norris went when he was away. Sometimes he played golf, sometimes he went to the art club, or to the photo club, often he didn't say.

After Jane's graduation she was to work two weeks in place of the regular girl who was home favoring her leg. But when the time was up, Mr. Howard told Jane, "The dear lady says she needs another week. Can you work?"

"Certainly I can, " said Jane.

And at the end of that week "the dear lady, " whose name was Mrs. Johnston, called in again and said her doctor thought she should have surgery on her veins, but she hadn't made up her mind whether to have it done or not. Meanwhile she wanted more time off.

Mr. Howard told Jane, "So far as I am concerned, the job is yours. We can't go on this way all summer. I just learned that her husband is employed. She had told me otherwise, but now she let it slip that he is working. So he can take care of her. She's in no shape to work and I told her so. "

Jane's life had assumed an entirely new dimension. There were minuses and pluses. Narze was gone, her mother was gone, and her hope of going to college in September was also gone, because the time had passed for all the necessary arrangements. There had been two places she had longed to attend - Wesleyan and Wooster,

and the one that had offered her the small grant - Northern. For a short while, that had seemed to be a slim possibility, but then her mother left and her father had assured her that "he hadn't a sou" for college or anything else. In the back of her mind, she had still kept one plan in mind. She might start at Cleveland Downtown College, but that would depend on money from somewhere. The only hope seemed to be that the Depression would end and her father would start to make money again, but now in midsummer there were no signs of that. He had sold a picture in the May artists' show, but the proceeds had all gone for rent,

So Jane tried putting college out of her mind. And there were certain aspects of life that were pleasant now. The first, of course, was money. Every Monday, she received \$10.44 in cash for six eight-hour days. This was an hourly rate of 21 3/4 cents. But there was sometimes a bit extra in the form of tips. Most of the Winchester Room's patrons were happy enough to abide by the instructions of the sign that declared "gratuities" weren't permitted. However, much of the clientele was comprised of businessmen from Cleveland's top industries. They came down from the expensive office suites in the Tower Building, and the Cleveland Trust Company, and the new Halsey's store which adjoined the Tower Building on the east, and the only old building in the group, the Hotel Clevelander, a city landmark to which the Tower Building was attached on the north. These men were busy doctors, executives and corporation lawyers, with a few company presidents, and a chairman of the board. Men like these expect to tip for extra service. And Jane soon learned that, in the matter of checking a hat, a man who thought of himself as important expected to walk into the Winchester Room lobby, hand her his Panama, and walk away without taking a numbered check.

The Winchester room was very busy at lunch time but evenings were usually slow, particularly at the beginning of the week. The men who came to lunch lived in Cleveland Heights or Carrollton Heights or other out-lying suburbs and were not inclined to return downtown when they took their wives or guests out to dinner. So the evening trade at dinnertime was made up largely of guests staying at the adjacent Hotel Clevelander, or other nearby hotels. And in this summer of the Depression, hotels were far from fully occupied.

The very first night she worked, Jane began to learn some ways to make the most of the job. At five-thirty a portly gentleman with a cherubic face entered and handed Jane his hat. She took it and held out a blue cardboard check, but she saw Mr. Howard shake his head ever so slightly, and then smile and say, "Good evening, Mr. Mills,:" and then he ushered the Gentleman to a small table on a side wall.

Jane riffled through a stack of white cards in the drawer. Sure enough, there was one with "Mills" printed on it. She inserted it in the hat band. When Mr. Howard returned to the lobby he explained.

"Mr. Mills is one of our 'regulars.' He comes in every evening at this time. He's a single man. You'll get to know our regular patrons, and then you won't give them a hat check. You'll find they appreciate it. Whenever I get a chance I'll tell you their names. "

Jane soon had added many more white cards to those of Mrs. Johnston. For within three weeks she had noticed who the other regulars were, and she listened carefully when Mr. Howard greeted them. Not only did she spare these patrons the bother of taking a check, but she picked up the practice of greeting them by name when she took their hats. And if a regular customer came in with several other men as his guests, Jane took all their hats and put them away with his. Then when she saw the group approaching after their lunch, she had all their hats ready for them. When the lunch hour was extremely busy as, for example, when a convention was in the city, Jane used more numbered checks, but as a rule the special patrons were catered to and flattered and pleased to be remembered. And all this was worth while. These men did not give the usual dime tip, but from time to time they pressed a folded dollar bill into Jane's hand, and in the case of Mr. Mills, he gave her five dollars at the end of the month.

Mr. Howard often was able to tell Jane something about these business men. Some of them he said he had known since his days in the Statler system. Mr. Mills is president of the Fidelity Casket Company, " Mr. Howard said.

"He looks too jolly for that, " Jane said.

One man who always came in with a group was only in Cleveland temporarily, Mr. Howard said.

"He's the federal liquidator of the Guarantee Bank. Folks who had their money there are out of luck. "

From time to time he identified others. There were doctors and lawyers and city officials occasionally. One of Jane's most generous givers was the president of one of Cleveland's chief industries, a huge paint and varnish factory. But there were other successful executives who apparently did not intend to reward special service with any material form of gratitude. Usually these were the same men who couldn't spare any verbal thank-yous either. Jane found herself speculating about the early training of such people. Mr. Howard pointed out to her that people of "real class" will say thank you to public servants always.

"Is that what we are?" Jane asked. "Public servants? "

"Well, that's the way some people feel, " Mr. Howard said. "The other night one of our 'guests' complained about his lobster. Said it wasn't a Maine lobster, it was a Florida lobster. I told him Florida lobsters don't have those big claws. And he says to me, 'What do you know? You're nothing but a public servant.' And do you know why he talked that way? To get out of tipping me. You see, it's the practice in a dining room of this type, when a guest orders lobster, the waitress always asks him if he wants to pick it himself or if he wants us to do it. If

he wants us to do it she calls me, and I bring a little side table and crack the claws and fix it for them in style. That means a nice little tip for me, sometimes quite a handsome one too. But that man thought that by griping about the lobster he'd make himself an excuse for not tipping. If he's short of money he shouldn't come in here in the first place. "

"Tell me ,;" Jane asked, "did he eat the lobster?"

"Yes, he certainly did. "

So Jane was learning some new things about people and learning about dining out (vicariously). Her life was about as different this summer as it could possibly be, from the way it had been two years ago in the New Hampshire mountains. It was now completely urban and even her hours for eating and sleeping were unusual. She ate in the restaurant that adjoined the Winchester room and she could order from the menu with only a few entrees not available to employees. She was getting plenty of food these days and enough milk or nearly enough. She never had such a meal as breakfast anymore, for when she arrived downtown at 10:30 a.m. it was late for breakfast and too early for the luncheon specials. So she ate a sandwich. At 3 p.m. she sometimes ate a real meal, but often another sandwich. The same thing applied at 9 p.m. when she went off duty. She got "runs" on certain items. Once she ordered bacon and tomato sandwiches, and chocolate ice cream, three times a day for two weeks.

Jane spent her two-hour afternoon free time, touring through the lower downtown stores looking at the merchandise. She usually went directly into Halsey's store on the basement level, because it adjoined the terminal concourse near the Winchester Room. It had been such a long time since Jane had had any spending money that it was a pure delight to look at the nice things in the stores and know that she could have a few necessities without asking anyone for money. And she was quite frugal, but she needed clothes, now that she was working, for she couldn't, after all, wear the skirts and colored middy blouses that had been required at East High. She did not have to wear the uniform that the waitresses wore, but she was expected to wear a dark dress with a white collar. Well. she had one to start with, and she had to buy a couple more, and shoes, too. But week by week, she was able to get things she needed, and it was satisfying. Skipper Root, of course, worked in the Winchester Room for it was she who had recommended Dee for the check room Sunday job. However, since she did not work Sundays, Skipper had not seen Dee nor Jane during the times when they worked there on Sundays. But after Jane became the regular checking attendant , she saw more and more of Skipper. In the beginning "seeing" was all it was, for Skipper was busy in the dining room while Jane's territory was the lobby. But since the posh Winchester Room wished not to have such a plebeian touch as a cash register with its cheery but insatiable "ding-ding, " the dining room waitresses went to the cashier in the adjoining restaurant. They crossed through the Winchester room lobby with their silver-plated salvers with twenty-dollar bills. They came back again with the one-dollar bills and change, speculating as they came on how much of it might be left for them.

Whenever Skipper Root passed through the lobby on her way to the cashier she smiled or winked at Jane at her post at the checkroom door. She didn't

speak as she went by, for Mr. Howard was usually standing by his high lectern-like desk where the reservation book and menu cards were kept. Mr. Howard was strict about the employees chatting among themselves. They must not do it. Mr. Howard stood at the entrance to the dining room with one eye on the concourse beyond the lobby, and the other eye on the state of affairs in the dining room. He had a genius for spotting a guest with a problem or a complaint, or a need. And he could easily recognize those eating contentedly. He was frequently away from his station up front, and if Skipper passed through the lobby at that time, she liked to make Jane laugh by pretending to trip over her own feet. Then one afternoon they spent their free time together in the women employees' lounge.

"I've been meaning to come out to see you and Gaye, " Skipper said. "I wanted to ask about your mother, who's in Africa. I guess. Is she still?"

"Our mother who art in Africa, " Jane said, with her hands folded as if in prayer.

Skipper laughed. "Well, is she having a wonderful time?"

"I don't think that's quite the way to describe it. " Jane said. "but I guess you could say she's having an exciting time. But she's planning to get out of there soon and come home. "

"Why? Wasn't she going to stay a year or more?"

"Yes, but things didn't work out as she expected. All her American friends cleared out and left her in Tunis alone in the middle of the Arab section. "

"How terrible!" Skipper said. "That's scary. "

"Yes. And it's hot. And there are scorpions and centipedes in the room where she sleeps. Oh, and there's no fresh milk. "

"Why did she want to go there, for goodness' sake?"

"A friend urged her to come, and she hurried over there. "

"And then the friend left after your mother got there?"

"Yes. " Jane said.

"Why, that's outrageous!" Skipper said. "How are things with your dad and the rest?"

"Not good. " Jane said. "I wish I didn't have to live there. "

"Do you have to live there?" asked Skipper.

Jane looked a little surprised.

"Well, I don't know. Maybe I don't. " she said.

"The room I rent is only four dollars a week. "

"That's something to think about. " Jane said. "It really is. "

Mr. Howard had mixed feelings about Skipper Root. She was his most popular waitress. Popular with the patrons, that is, not with the other waitresses. She was also the youngest, not yet twenty-three, while the other "girls" were in their thirties and forties. You had to be experienced to get a job in the Winchester Room, and you had to be good to keep it. Skipper was good, and she had come to the job with glowing recommendations from Connors' Country Kitchen in Olmsted Falls, which in spite of its name, was a restaurant of long standing repute in the Cleveland area. In the Winchester Room, Skipper lost no time in achieving the same status she'd had at Connors', the most asked for waitress. Although she was delicate of build, she could carry the heavy silvery trays high in the air in the tradition of the most skilled waiters. The Winchester Room would not permit a waitress to hold a tray low, nor serve plates "from the arm" as in cheap hash houses. Skipper could hold a loaded tray high with her left hand while with her right she positioned the serving stand. But it was Skipper's sunny personality, poise, and evidence of good breeding, alone; with her pretty face, that made her outstanding. But Mr. Howard, while knowing Skipper was an asset to the dining room, still did not particularly like her. As a waitress, she was no better than two or three of the other girls. In fact, the woman who was the least attractive of them all was probably the most skilled.

Mr. Howard was certain that Skipper felt herself to be superior to the other girls. She never said anything to indicate that she felt that way, but he knew she did. And she no doubt thought she was above him, too. He was a little frustrated about it, because Skipper didn't make mistakes. If she had, he would have been more at ease. He could not have analyzed it himself, but he wanted Skipper to have a different attitude toward being a waitress. It was no secret around the Winchester Room that Skipper did not intend to be a waitress indefinitely. She wanted to be a singer and was taking voice lessons. Meanwhile she did very well with her tips and was saving her money. She had thoughts of going back to college and preparing to be a voice teacher. But lately she had something new on her mind. She felt that she had finally met the man. She talked about it one afternoon when she and Jane were on their free time.

"He has a marvelous personality, a terrific sense of humor. And he's no dummy, either. He'll be in his last year at law school this fall. And then there's a little extra bonus, too. His family have quite a bit of money. So that's always nice, too. "

"What's happened to Bob Bexley? He was always so persistent. "

"He was, Hasn't he ?" Skipper said. "Well, that's a long story. "

"So he's not in your life now, at all?" Jane asked.

"No , he certainly isn't. "

"Sounds as though you're really serious about this law student. Are you engaged?"

"Unofficially, so far. But, I was engaged to Bob Bexley, you know. I'd like to wait a while and be sure nothing goes wrong this time. I don't want to set a date. Besides, he's got to finish school and take his bar exam.

What about you, Janie? Dee said you're all tied up with this New Hampshire boy. "

"Sort of, " Jane admitted.

"She said you have a wedding ring. "

"Oh, " Jane said, "well, that's sort of a joke. You notice I wear it on the little finger, right hand. Narze bought it for me to take the place of his class ring that I thought he should have back. "

"You aren't supposed to be still going steady, are you?"

"In a way I am, and in a way I'm not. I just told Narze that I wouldn't go steady with anyone else. I mean by that, that I could date once in a while but I wouldn't concentrate on any one person. "

"Well, that's good. "

"You know Skipper, everyone is trying to get me to date. "

"Who's 'everybody'?" Skipper wanted to know.

"Mostly Dee and Mona James. You don't know her. She's the daughter of one of the artists Dad knows. I've known her since I was small. We were in junior high together. She's younger than I, but she and Dee have been hobnobbing together. They keep fixing me up with blind dates. I think there's a conspiracy maybe. And I wonder if Mother is at the bottom of it. She's so anxious for me to forget Narze. Well, I don't know what will come of it. He's saving money to go to college this fall, and he's going, too. I haven't told Mother that yet. "

"Probably she thinks you're too young, " Skipper said.

"No, it isn't that. All of a sudden I'm not young. I got out of high school and now I'm not young. Mother writes a letter , and she says, ' You're a big girl and will be able to take care of yourself.' And Dad is charging me for my room now. I was really surprised, because when I got this job I stopped eating at home except Sundays. I thought that would help them. And I don' t ask for money for carfare anymore, or clothes. Or anything , Skipper. But he asked for two dollars a week. Oh, I know it's because he's got money problems. But what would he do if I hadn't got a job? Throw me out?"

"No, " Skipper said. "I'm sure he wouldn't do that. "

"It's just that I hadn't had any new clothes for ages and he knows that I sew some things, but I can't make my own shoes and silk stockings and stuff. When you work you need clothes. Ten dollars a week doesn't go very far. Sometimes I get a little extra in tips, but it's not a regular thing. One week I got five dollars. This week I haven't had a cent so far. I'll never get to college at this rate, that's certain. "

"What do you hear from your mother 'who art in Africa'?"

Jane smiled. "Well, she's coming home, but I don't know just when. She may go up to Budapest, or to Rome again, or Marseilles. "

"Well, cheer up. Go out on dates and have some fun. "

"But Skipper, I hate a date where I have to spend the whole time battling some fellow I just met that evening. I'd much rather just stay faithful to Narze and not go out on dates at all. These blind dates are a pain if you ask me They're in too much of a hurry. It was months before Narze really gave me a problem. "

"These blind dates you've been going on - who are they? College boys?"

"Yes, " Jane said. "They're guys that Dee and Mona meet at the 'College

Rendezvous' "

"There's the key to it right there. College boys. That's the way the game is played. See how fast you can get it. First date is their objective. Oh, I learned about that right away. That's the reason wily I started going with Bob Bexley again. He hadn't been that way. It was years before he 'gave me a problem,' as you put it. But when I gave up college and came home and started going with him again he wasn't just a small town boy anymore. He had turned into 'Joe College.' But, of course, I'd known him since I was little, so it didn't seem terrible and we got engaged, and that was that. "

"And now that's over, and you're in love with another 'Joe College,' "

Jane said.

"Oh, no. Wes Darrell isn't typical. Well, I don't mean he isn't perfectly normal. But he's really somebody. No, what happened between me and Bob Bexley is a long story. And the story is ended. "

YOU SHOULD WRITE A STORY ABOUT IT

Though Dee and Jane were not aware of it at that time, their mother was approaching a state of panic. In her letters to them she had told of her landing at Naples and leaving the protection of the ocean liner to land in a crowd of voluble Italians. There had been near-panic then. Next, the landing in Tunis with no one to meet her had all but overwhelmed her. But in her next letter she had said she'd been foolish to be so frightened. She'd told of her fascination with the exotic city and its dwellers, Then, when disillusionment came, with one blow after another, she had clearly told the girls she could not possibly remain in Tunis under the circumstances. So they knew she would be returning ere long.

But one thing she had not told them, and that was the seriousness of her financial plight. But she had told all that story to Merly. Told her how Elma had led her to believe that she, Grace, would be teaching in the International Art School, and how the "school, " at least in Tunis, had amounted to nothing. It was just a matter of inviting neighborhood gamins in to draw, and even scribble, on the cheapest paper. And if all that weren't bad enough, Elma had misled her terribly about the cost of everything, with the exception of the price of the steamship tickets. Elma had summed up a list of expenses and they had been totally unrealistic. The meager amount she had allowed for tips was ridiculous, and other expenses too.

Grace had arrived in Tunis about the middle of May, but it was not till the end of the month that she fully realized that she would not be earning any money in Elma's so-called "school. " She wrote to Merly of that daunting discovery, and by the middle of June Merly had cabled her \$25 "to help out. "

But by the time that money had arrived, Grace had had the further shock of having Harriet Hunt leave, and then Elma and Oliver left too. "I had the feeling that I remained on a sinking ship after those rats had left it, " wrote Grace.

Before June was over, Grace had written a truly desperate letter to Merly, stating that she was in a serious position, having arranged for her passage home on the BERENGARIA, but aside from that she had very little funds, and they were dwindling. She would have to borrow money and hoped that Merly could cable it to her as soon as ever possible. This especially, since she must leave as soon as she received it, for the heat was mounting, and some days now it was as high as 113 in the shade.

By July 9th, Grace got a letter from Merly saying that she would send an American Express money order on the 9th. Grace was relieved and set about packing and calculating when the money would arrive in Tunis. She still lived very frugally lest something go wrong, but she felt much cheered up, and sometimes in the afternoon she would make her way through the narrow, snaky streets to the "Monoprix" variety store, the only place she knew of that had ice-cooled air. There she could buy, for one franc, a dish of glace (ice cream) and for a bit more, a type of sundae called "Poire Helene", a half pear with ice cream and topped with whipped cream (which was sour but she had come to enjoy it). What's more, the Monoprix played a limited (very) repertoire of American popular

music. They had three records: "The Big Bad Wolf, " "Shuffle Off to Buffalo, " and "Please. " For the first time in her life Grace admitted to herself that she could appreciate "jazz" which she had loathed always. It made her feel at home.

But soon her cheered-up mood sagged. When the time elapsed that the money order should have arrived, Grace began going daily to the American Express office to inquire, but nothing. And nothing in the mail. Her Arab gentleman friend tried to reassure her. It might have been delayed going through New York, and again delayed in a Paris bank. A second letter had come from Merly saying the order would be sent the same day and now it was nine days after receiving that second letter, but no money order yet. Why, oh, why the delay? If the letter came so promptly why should the money order be so much slower? Perhaps a slower boat? And of course, Merly perhaps had not actually got it off the very same day as she said.

It was heartbreaking to get ready every day and then to be disappointed. The money was the only thing that was keeping her. She decided these trials must be meant for her spiritual growth. She had always been too impatient when she was anxious to take a new step and move on.

On the 24th she resolved to see the American consul because she felt that the letter with the order must be lost. Perhaps the consul could do something. She had hoped against hope to be able to sail from Cherbourg on the 28th on the AQUITANIA.

On the 25th, still no order came and Grace suddenly made up her mind to leave Tunis on the morrow. She would have barely enough money to get to New York.

She would have to skimp on food. There would be no money from Merly to provide a cushion of safety against emergency. But she would go! She would go while it was still possible.

She left Tunis on the 26th on a dirty French boat bound for Marseilles. She reached Paris and found no letter with money waiting for her there, as she had thought possible. But she was in time to sail on the AQUITANIA. She had not enough money to linger even a day in Paris. Paris that she had dreamed of for so many years!

The AQUITANIA made the crossing in six. days and when Grace arrived in New York there was no one to meet her at the dock on August 3rd. Roger, Nelle, Babs and Polly Patterson had all been on hand a few days before, to meet her at the BERENGARIA on which she had first told them she would sail. New York had looked so wonderful as the great Cunard liner approached the dock. Grace could sympathize with those people who kneel and kiss the ground of a beloved homeland. How grateful she was to be home at last in her beautiful America! And how grateful to have come on a British ship. Basically, she thought, I am British at heart.

27

July 22-

You can get some idea of my privacy when I tell you I am sitting here with my door - open - it is the door to the saloon - and I am stark naked excepting as to feet. I am naked because it is too hot to be otherwise in this insulated house. I know there is a breeze because I can feel it out in the middle of the court - but it isn't particularly revivifying and it doesn't come as far as my door. If it weren't that the people above look out of their windows I might drag my bed out but they have many windows and they are night hawks. I believe truly it must be as warm as it was the other day - 113 in the shade. I fully believe it must be twenty degrees more in the sun. It seems incredible that people can endure it. There again the call to prayers! It is about nine thirty then! So I am going to turn in early tonight and get out early because of the heat - only I have to go to all of the banks - or at least all those that might have received my money order.

July 23

Day by day passes and still no word. I had a visit again from Béchin and he assures me it is apt to be delayed because if the order was sent thro' a bank at New York - and then one at Paris - it would be delayed at each place. Nevertheless - it is now a full ninth day since I was received Marion's letter sent the same day. But of course a delay of two or three days - and perhaps a slow boat could make - much difference. But it is heart breaking to get ready each day - and each day to be ^{disappointed} delayed. Must be for my growth! I have been too impatient

always when things
(read other side also) 16275

August 2nd.

The day the *Berengaria* was supposed to land according to my young friend at Cook's. And instead the *Oquitama* lands tomorrow at N.Y. I wonder if anyone will be there.

Oct. 16. '34

Good and great Heavens! Can it be possible that I could have let more than two months bury them selves into oblivion without a word of my exaltation at being back in this perfectly jayous country. To me it was like landing in something quite too wonderful for words. The sight of our harbor and its majesty - a beauty so thrilling to me that nothing else could quite compare with the consciousness that those buildings rearing them selves gloriously out of the water, it seemed - were a symbol of my home land. Never has New York looked so positively beautiful in my eyes. Not - excepting when you and I Horis, arrived there one October day in 1908 in love - so much - with each other - and in love with the world! And now again I was approaching it again with eyes that saw it for the first time - and from the water - from the deck of a great liner and I could feel a horribly nationalistic pride in the fact that here lay a city I knew and a City I could almost say was mine too.

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When Grace got over her mixed ecstasy in arriving in New York and greeted, if not by her friends and relatives, then at least by the beneficent lady in the harbor with her torch held high in welcome, she went straight to a telephone. She must at first see who was at home before she would know what to do about her heaviest luggage. She suspected that Nelle and Rog and Babs would be in the mountains. She called the Jackson Heights number and no one answered. She then called the Hurst's and no one answered. She then called Polly Patterson, though she did not want to stay with Polly really. Polly was at home and pleased to learn that Grace was in town once more. She invited Grace immediately to "come stay with me awhile." So Grace arranged to have her heavy luggage held, and she went to Polly's where, for two days, she regaled her with an account of her summer's often harrowing adventures. On the first day, Polly said that the Hurst's were at their Summer place in Maine, and Nelle and Rog had gone to Camp Forest Primeval.

"But we were there at the dock to meet the BERENGARIA on the 28th," Polly said.

"That's the day I sailed on the AQUITANIA from Cherbourg," Grace said "I can see that my letter telling you I couldn't make it in time for the BERENGARIA didn't get here."

"Until two days later," Polly said.

"Was Rog furious?" Grace asked.

"No," Polly said, "he was amused. Very amused. He was in a good mood that day, perhaps because they were going to the mountains so soon. They were leaving in a couple of days."

Grace had hoped that Roger might be in New York so that she might ride with him back to join Nelle and Babs at Camp Forest Primeval. She spoke of it to Polly two days later.

"I'm ever so anxious to go to Cleveland and see my girls. But it's hot back there, and all the while I was in Tunis I kept dreaming about Camp Forest Primeval and those

cool piney woods and the nights so chilly one would need a cozy fire. Polly, you know they speak about "darkest Africa." Do they mean the people? Because Africa where I was, was glaring bright, with a burning sun day after day. So I would love to nip up to Camp Forest Primeval for a week or so. Did Rog say whether he'd be back in town soon?"

"Sooner or later he'll be getting Babs," Polly said.

"Where is Babs? Maine?"

"No, she's here."

"Here?"

"Jackson Heights. At the apartment."

"She is? Alone? Why, Polly! Why didn't you tell me?"

"I didn't think about it."

Grace renewed her conviction that Polly was "an odd one." The next day she hastened over to Jackson Heights to stay at the apartment. There she learned that

Babs (who had wintered in Oberlin with Trink and Mim) had failed to get a passing grade in both Latin and Geometry. A neighbor in the same apartment building was a high school teacher and it had been arranged for Babs to board and tutor that summer with her so that she could at least pass the Geometry.

Babs seemed glad to see her Aunt Grace and was a ready listener to some of the Tunisian horror stories. Grace's emphasis was on the fact that she had had to live in the Arab section where the streets were filled with only white-robed men, and very few women at all, and those being perceived only as pairs of eyes behind the inevitable veils. She told also of the bugs and lizards, the pitifully thin cats, the pitifully over-burdened donkeys, the beggars, and the old people who were pitiful too.

"Oh Aunt Grace!" Babs said. "It must have been terrible. "

"Yes, but a very valuable experience. "

"You should write a story about it. "

"Oh, I mean to, Babs. I certainly will do that. "

"Aunt Grace, let's write a letter to Daddy and have him drive down and get us.

"I'm really well-coached now in my geometry. I know I can pass it now. And up at Camp Forest Primeval you can write that story. "

"Oh, yes!" Grace said. "And paint! I mean to make lots of pictures. "

So Grace wrote to Roger and Nelle about going to Camp Forest Primeval, and to Merly about

tracing the lost money order and with an urgent request for a small loan. She also wrote to Dee and Jane to tell them she was safely back in New York, and would leave for Cleveland as soon as she "took care of some important loose ends. "

The truth was that she longed for Camp Forest Primeval because it had always been an escape

from reality. For the money panic was on her now, almost as fiercely as the desperation she had felt in Tunis. Where was she going to live until she got started?

Now that she was returned from her long talked-of venture abroad, what did people expect of her? Most of the family had questioned her wisdom in the first place.

Now they would be "I told you so-ing " relentlessly. "Merly had already done so in her letter after Grace had asked a second time to borrow money. What was she

thinking now? But of course she should be able to recover the funds from the lost money order. Meanwhile she waited in New York to hear from Roger and

Merly.

I'M GOING TO MOVE OUT OF HERE

During the days when her mother in Africa was anxiously awaiting money from home, Jane's situation changed. She talked with Skipper Root frequently about the trials of living on Channing Avenue in the present strained atmosphere.

"Dad is gone much of the time, and when he is at home he is like a bear with a sore tooth. He growls a lot. Pauline is a mess. Her eyes are almost always red from crying. Dee and I aren't certain what is going on, but we have a darn good idea. And Grandma sleeps most of the time and poor Aunt Edie is mournful. When I get home at night there is no one in sight; the house is like a tomb unless Dee is home, and she usually isn't. She's met a new man and she's crazy about him. I don't think she's ever been really in love since Cameron.

dating Lewis anymore. The new fellow is an artist. He's really good looking. Well, anyway, I hate it around there. It's so gloomy and boring. I've gone on more blind dates with Mona James and I haven't met anyone I like yet. And they always want to climb all over me. That's OK when you're in love. "

"True, " said Skipper. "Very true. "

"And, going out with 'Mona James and Company' means getting high as a kite, and Mona usually gets sick but she never learns. And about two weeks ago she came downtown on a Friday night with the fellow that she's been going with, Jim Wynn, and another guy who really seemed very nice. He had good manners, and you could tell he was educated and he was so good-looking. Terrific! And, Skipper he seemed different. He didn't try any rough stuff with me, Oh. he put his arm around me and wanted a few kisses, but mostly he just wanted to talk about life and his aspirations and all that. We drove down to Lake Shore Park and he and I walked out on the break-wall and sat on the rocks. Mona and Jim stayed in the car. Well, anyway, I was really impressed with him. I thought about him a lot the next day, and tried to remember his last name. His first name is 'Al.'"

"The next night was Saturday, and when I got off work they were waiting for me again. Jim, and Mona, and Al. This time Mona said, 'We're going out to the Delt House, to pick up a couple of kids and then we're going out to Emerald Beach.' So we went to the Delt House and there didn't seem to be anyone around but the place was open and the radio was playing though the lights in the big living room were out. There's only about five fellows staying there this summer and the housekeeper isn't there at night.

"Well, Mona and Jim said they were going upstairs to see if their friends were up there. They didn't come back down, and then I had a real fight on my hands. This ever-so-nice Al came close to raping me, and I got very angry and I insulted him. Fortunately, someone came in and it turned out to be a fellow I knew from East High. He was a life-saver, really. Al got mad and departed in a very bad mood. My friend took me home. I really was angry with Mona. She was still upstairs when I left. "

"I don't blame you, " Skipper said. I won't put up with rough stuff. "

"Well, that isn't all, " Jane went on. "Yesterday Mona was down here on my afternoon break. She tells me that she has to have an operation. She's three months pregnant, and she says it's Jim Wyn's fault. How does she know? She went to her Epworth League adviser for advice and he talked to Jim, and Jim's family

is going to pay for it. Can you imagine! Oh, and here's something else, and this is the last straw. Mona was laughing. She said that she saw Al downtown a few days ago with a woman and two little tiny kids, and Al was holding a baby! Imagine! He was married all the time, and Mona got me a date with him. "And she knew he was married?"

"No, but she didn't know one single thing about him. She never saw him before that Friday night at the Rendezvous. 'A pick-up.' I'm fed up with her, with everything. And I'd like to live by myself. Do you suppose she has any more rooms to rent where you live?"

The next day Skipper told Jane that the landlady had been planning to raise her rent from \$4.00 to \$4.50, but if the girls wanted to share the room they could have it for \$6.00. She would take out the single bed and give them a studio couch that could be made into two beds. They'd all be ahead that way.

"But will you be as comfortable?" Jane asked.

"Sure, " said Skipper. "The couch is a Simmons. It's very nice. And you and I will only have to pay \$3.00 apiece per week. "

"It sounds great. Now it will take me a little while to break the news at home. I want to tell Dee first. She and I don't think we're going to have a home with Dad much longer. Things are about to blow up. It's just a matter of time. "

"What will Dee do?"

"Mother's sure Dee will be getting married any day now. But she talks about our getting a place together. I'll believe it when I see it. None of us can afford it. Three dollars a week is the most I can afford, and Dee is still making less than I am. Of course, that will change, but the company she's working for isn't doing very well. So I don't see any way we can get an apartment. Dee has talked of moving with Mona. Mona says her parents will throw her out if they find out the mess she's in. Skipper, I'm not sure Mother really wants us to have a place together. She keeps saying she does. She's been saying it for almost four years. "

"Then why don't you think she wants to?" Skipper asked.

"Well, she thinks she wants to, but what she really likes is moving around. She loves a change of scenery. I think it's because when she was young she was stuck in Oberlin or at the farm. She dreamed of seeing the world. Paris. Well, I guess she'll see Paris now, on the way home. But Skipper, if she comes home, and we get a place together, she'll become restless and want to go somewhere. She's not terribly interested in Dee and me. "

"Oh, Jane, sure she is. All mothers are interested. She loves you and Dee. "

"Oh, I know it. But her thoughts aren't on us much of the time. She's been writing to us all summer and she's never asked one question about what we're doing. But there's a reason for that, Skipper. It's because she's still in love with Dad. She tries to get over it and she can't. So she just keeps on going places, and no matter where she goes she's always thinking about him. That's why she doesn't wonder about what Dee and I are doing. All she says in her letters to me is why don't I write to her. Well, I don't have any news to tell. How

much can you tell about checking hats? She's the one that's having adventures. She did ask who took me to Prom, and noted that I was class poet. And she asks at the end of every letter if we are getting milk. But that's all. She hasn't asked me one other question about anything. Nothing about boy friends, nothing about college, or how I like my job. Would your mother ask you things like that?"

"Yes, " Skipper said. "Yes, she would. "

"Well, Mother's different and that's why I have to think about my own future, because all mother ever says is that she expects me 'to do big things.' And Dad doesn't care, either. He's thinking about his own problems this summer. But I think it would be a good thing if I do move out. The air is poisonous at home. When mother gets home, probably she and Dee can get a room together too. I'll have to figure out, now, how I am going to break the news to Dad. That part is going to be difficult. I'll do it soon though. "

She did indeed. That weekend the boy who had taken her to Prom invited her to a beach party on the lake. Jane did not particularly like Herbert, but she had not yet forgiven Mona James for the matter of the man named Al. And she was extremely bored with her routine of no life but the Winchester Room weekdays and home with the old folks on Sundays. Furthermore, a few other East High Graduates were going to be at the party too, all of them from the journalism class and the staff of the "Crimson and Gold. " Jane was surprised to learn that of those at the party she was the only one who was working. She also learned that of the ten young people present only one was going out of town to college, and one was going to live at home and attend Cleveland U. However, all the rest announced their plans to go to Cleveland Downtown College. She would never what any of them did with the rest of their lives, for she would never see them again. That evening she again frustrated Herbert's plans for the occasion and he didn't ask her out again. But it was late when she got home, because they had stayed late at the beach, having sung songs around a fire, and having thirty miles to travel back to Cleveland.

As she arrived home, she saw her father had just come home himself. As she entered he was about to go upstairs. He turned and scowled at her.

"What are you doing, getting in at one o'clock?"

She hesitated. "Well. Just getting in at one o'clock is all, I guess that's not so late. "

"Well , that's no answer. This is Sunday. You have to work tomorrow. "

"You know I don't have to get up at the crack of dawn. "

"Well, it's too late. Where were you, anyway?"

"Dad, I was with friends at a beach party at Cranden-on-the-Lake. Don't treat me as though I was a baby now that I'm paying my own expenses. "

"Well, you're only paying two dollars a week. Pauline and I think you ought to pay three dollars at least. "

"But I only make ten dollars, and I don't eat at home. Lots of times I only eat Sunday breakfast. Like today when I was at the picnic at the beach until dinnertime. "

"Well, you must be aware that now that you are eighteen I don't have to

support you any longer. "

Jane thought of several things that she might say in rejoinder. She could mention all the child-support payments he had never sent and all the fatherly letters he had never written. She could say that he seemed to be in a great hurry to get part of the first wages she had ever earned, And she could say that she would think he would be proud that she was buying her clothes and anything else she needed. And why hadn't he ever discussed with her anything about college? But she said none of these things, because she knew he was broke, or nearly so. However, his remark about not having to support her anymore had solved a problem for her.

But her chin quivered as she told him, "Alright, Daddy, you've made it easy for me. I'm going to move out of here. If you're so glad I'm eighteen. and not your responsibility anymore, I might as well get some of the benefits. "

"Don't be ridiculous. You're not making enough money to live by yourself. "

"I can't rent a house, but I can rent a room, or half a room. "

"What does that mean? Are you going to your mother again?"

"Hardly. She's still in Africa. "

"Dee told me she's coming back. "

"God knows when. And no, I'm not waiting for her to come back. I'll room with a friend. "

"You mean Narze? You'd just better not. "

"I do not mean Narze. He's going to college. I'll room with Skipper Root. "

Norris looked surprised.

"Well, it won't work , " he said. "You'll lose more than you'll gain in freedom from me. "

"I never see you anymore, so what's the difference. "

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By the time Grace arrived in New York the first week in August, Jane was settled in with Skipper. There had been problems in moving her things, which were mostly clothes which she carried in a suitcase, making a number of trips. Skipper's room was in a huge old house on 97th Street near Grand Avenue. Every morning Jane got up early enough to bring one load of things to the rooming house before going to work that day. Her only concern had been the footlocker with her 'treasures. " She couldn't possibly move it herself, but Skipper's friend Wes had a car and he moved it for Jane. She thanked him profusely.

"It's very heavy, I know, " she said. "That's because it's got a bunch of books in it, and my old dolls. Stuff I'm saving for my kids some day. "

"Oh, are you planning on kids after all?" Skipper asked.

"Why not?" Jane asked.

"Oh, I don't know. I just always understood you were going to have a career. "

"That's what people tell me, " Jane said. "It's their idea. I haven't announced my future plans. Beyond wanting to go to college, that is. Skipper's landlady had treated them well. She had not only substituted the convertible studio couch for Skipper's bed, but she had moved in a larger chest of drawers, and an extra dressing table, so both girls had them. They used

Jane's footlocker as an end table.

"I was afraid it would crowd the room, " Jane said, "but I hated to leave it behind with Dad mad at me. "

"Oh, he wouldn't deliberately throw out your treasures, would he?"

"No, he wouldn't do that. Dad wouldn't do that. But everything is going to break up over there. He might just leave and not care what happened to things. I don't know. But I've already lost lots of things I really wanted to save for my kids. They were all gone after Mother's divorces and moving around from place to place. If I do have children I hope they can grow up in one place and never leave it until they're grown up, then if they want their old books and dolls and teddy-bears they'll be there in the attic and they can take them. Most of my things are gone.

One night Jane opened up her foot locker to show Skipper her dolls. Skipper remembered two of them, because when she and Dee were in grade school in Olmsted Falls she had often come to play with Dee.

"Oh, I remember Polly, " Skipper said, picking up Jane's Schoenhutt doll. "Does Dee still have Nellie?"

"Yes, and the 'Kant Krack' baby doll. Hers was Mary Ann and mine here is Emily. And here is my 'official last doll', that I got a Macy's the year I was in New York with Aunt Nelle. "

"Mother gave them away to Mim and Trink about the time she married Carle, I guess. And then I guess Aunt Merly must have given them away to someone else when her girls got big. "

"Too bad, " Skipper said. "What else do you have in there?"

"My 'Little Colonel' books and Arabian Nights, and the book We by Lindberg and my Lindbergh scrapbook I made when he was my hero. And the candy box is full of notes and snapshots of my first boyfriends, and pictures from the winter we spent in the mountains. And of course there are my letters from Narze. " Jane, however, did not tell Skipper that under the paper at the bottom of the footlocker she had more than four hundred dollars, the money that Narze continued to send in envelopes marked M.I.

"These aren't absolutely the only thing left from the houses where we used to live. Mother has three or four barrels and a wardrobe trunk in Uncle Rog's garage in New Hampshire. Mother plans to send for them when, and if, she gets a place, but I'm not very optimistic about it. I don't see how she can afford to because she didn't make a cent on this trip to Africa. "

"But you have to hold to the thought that all need will be met, " said Skipper.

"Are you still a Christian Scientist?"

"Oh, our entire family is, " Jane said, answering Skipper's question by not answering it at all.

"I have every confidence that all things work together for good, " Skipper said, "and this depression will end, and you and I will finish our education. "

"Skipper, don't you feel that people have to make things happen through their own efforts?"

"Yes, but I also feel that Divine Love and Intelligence will prevail. And that if something is good and right, then that is what will happen. "

"That is the way mother talks in her letters. She's had a disillusioning experience, but on the whole, she feels that it will prove to have been the right thing. "

"She's right, " Skipper said. "There is no doubt a higher good is intended to come out of it all. "

Jane's silent observation to herself was that. Skipper had certainly learned to think and talk like a Christian Scientist.

But later that evening when the girls were settled for the night and the lights out, the talk turned to other things.

Skipper was in a confiding mood.

"I noticed that you had a big stack of letters from your best beloved in your little trunk, " she said. "That's a big collection. "

"Yes, " Jane said. "He still writes once or twice a week. In the beginning we wrote almost daily, but a person can't keep that up forever. There's not that much 'new' news. and I just can't seem to write as many letters as Narze does. "

"Well, I had a big stack of letters from Bob Bexley, too, that he wrote while we were going to separate colleges. I hardly wrote any because I was so busy. But I burned all his letters recently. "

"Oh, Skipper, " Jane said. "You shouldn't have done that. You would have enjoyed reading them when you're old. "

"Oh no! I won't want to be reading them when I'm old. I want him permanently out of my thoughts. "

"You sound so fierce. I bet you never get him out of your mind. You remind me of my Aunt Nelle. "

"Why?"

"Oh, she had an early marriage that was annulled. He was supposed to have been perfectly terrible. But Aunt Nelle would never tell the family the story about it. Her father knew, but not the rest. Mother says that Aunt Nelle always said, 'I never want to talk or think about him again.' But she said that year after year and apparently never forgot"

"Well, " said Skipper, "I hope I have better luck. Maybe your Aunt Nelle's trouble was worse than mine. Probably. "

"Well, now, you wouldn't like to tell me about it, would you?"

"Alright, " said Skipper. "I will. It's a story with a moral. "

"It is, eh?"

"Yes. You've heard why I went down state to college, haven't you?"

"Yes. Dee told me. To get away from Bob Bexley. "

"Well, it's not that I disliked Bob. But I had gone with him all through high school. And I know if we went to the same college we'd keep on the same way probably. And I thought I ought to get to know other fellows before I decided to marry Bob, because we'd both just grown up in a small town. Well, you know the story. I had to quit because of the Depression, and I never did fall for anyone when I was away, although I had a lot of fun, really. But, as you say, you always have to battle with these fraternity guys. They made Bob Bexley seem like such a nice person. Not that he didn't have all the same instincts, but he was never obnoxious about it. The other fellows just have their darn hands all over you.

"I know, " said Jane, thinking of Herbert.

"Well, so I came home and worked at Connors' and Bob and I started going steady

again and then we became engaged, and he gave me a diamond ring, and that was that.

But, I wanted to wait until he finished college before getting married, and I also wanted to keep on working and saving money for things I want, and also to pay for my voice lessons. So I persuaded Bob to wait, but he didn't give in easily. This was more than a year and a half ago. He thought that since we had to wait before we could get married, but we were engaged. I needn't keep on saying 'no' to him. Well, I finally told myself that he was right, we needn't wait. And Jane, that's when I found out just what Bob Bexley is really like. I'm lucky I learned it then and not after I married him. "

"OK, Skipper, what happened?"

"Alright. Don' t call me 'Aunt Nelle.' After he and I first became intimate, as they say, Bob was walking on air for about two weeks. He was so deliriously happy, one would think. And he was wanting a date every night after I got through work. Well, actually, after we had a terribly busy evening, I sometimes wanted to just go home and to bed. My knees ache sometimes when I'm tired. Well, after a month he began changing his behavior toward me. He used to pick me up at Connors' after work and we usually drove into Cleveland to Lakeshore Park or else, or else we'd go to the airport and park and supposedly watch the planes land and take off. Of course, sometimes we just went home to my place, or to the second show at the theater, or to his place occasionally. But naturally, little Bobby preferred to park somewhere. Well, in the winter that isn't always so great and after the objective is completed there's nothing much to do but go home. Well, a couple of times Bob was quite late picking me up, and I waited for half an hour before he showed up and all he said was that he 'lost track of the time.' It was almost Christmas by then and his fraternity was having a big party. I had to work but Bob went anyway. However, he said he'd leave early and come and pick me up, and if I wasn't too tired we'd o back to Cleveland and the party. So I brought my new green dress to work so that I could change out of my uniform and be ready to go. Most girls like to wear red dresses at the holiday party but I can't with my red hair. The green dress is so pretty, with a bright corsage of red and white roses or red and white carnations. And bob always got me a corsage for a big party or dance. Well, Mrs. Connors let me off a little early so I'd have time to get dolled up. So I was ready in plenty of time. But Bob didn't arrive on time, and a half hour went by, and then another, and I was getting plenty peeved. Mrs. Connors was getting the dining room in order for the next day. She said that maybe Bob was allowing extra time for me to change and I ought to wait a little longer. Well, I waited another half hour and then I decided to go home. Mother came and got me. Bob never did show up. The next day he came around and was apologizing like mad. "

"What was his excuse ?" Jane asked.

"Just that he got drunk as a skunk and forgot about the whole thing. " I told him not to bother, I didn't want to hear about it. He kept saying he was sorry and that some of the 'brothers' at the party thought he ought not to drive so they kept him at the house until morning, and then they gave him coffee and blah, blah, blah. I told him I just wasn't interested b the details. He could have waited until I got off work and then we could have gone. He said he didn't blame me for being annoyed. I told him that 'annoyed' was

not the right word. He said he'd wait till I wasn't so 'hot under the collar' before we talked again, but at least he would be over on Christmas Eve with my gift. I told him not to bother but he said, 'Oh, I'll be there.' Well, I wasn't there and when I got home after being at my brother's house, mother said Bob had called and said he couldn't make it because a lot of his family were there, but that he would be over the next afternoon. Mother asked him what time he would be coming as we were going out to my grandmother's house for dinner at four o'clock. I told Mother that I would not be at home when Bob came. She thought I was being unreasonable. I went to my brother's again, and I left a small box with mother to give to Bob. And he left a large box for me. I didn't want to open it, but, mother insisted. It was a pair of boudoir lamps, and a card that said Merry Christmas, Skipper. These my help you see the light. Love, Bob. The box I had given him contained the diamond engagement ring. And that was that. He kept phoning me, but I was through with him. Mother said that I was unforgiving but she didn't know real story. you see. "

"He was taking you for granted, " Jane said.

"The whole point is that after I gave in to him after more than six years he changed his way of treating me. It took him a couple of weeks to get over his surprise and then he began to think differently of me. Consciously or unconsciously he felt he had won a victory and I wasn't in charge anymore. He was. It's just the old, old story. "

"The double standard. " Jane said.

"Yes. Well, it finished him forever with me. And he thought just the opposite. How stupid of him to think he could get away with being less considerate than he'd been before. He thought my loss of virginity made me less independent. He hasn't been convinced yet. He still calls me when I'm home. I don't think he'll give up till I'm married. To someone else, that is. Too bad. "

"What about Wes?"

"What about him? Well, we're waiting. That's the way I want it to be for several reasons. I told Wes all about it. I told him I hate making love in automobile back seats, or in the woods with leaves and twigs and bugs, or on the beach with sand and stones and dead fish. "

Jane was laughing.

"I know a bed would be the best place, " Skipper said.

"Yes, " Jane said. "Bed is the best place. "

"You mean--? You mean you know it is?"

"Yes, " said Jane. And she told Skipper all about Narze.

"Well, I'll be darned, " Skipper said. "You're not just a kid. "

"No. But Skipper, Narze is the only one. No others. "

"You Know, Janie. There's more to the way I feel than just not being crazy about leaves and sand and dead fish. I guess it's that I don't think I trust any man, even Wes. About the double standard. I mean. "

"You know what, 'Skipper? I think I know why you could break off so completely with Bob Bexley. "

"Why?"

"Because you have so much pride, and I don't think you were really terribly in love anyway. "

"Probably not, " Skipper agreed.

"I wonder if it would have been so easy if you'd been madly, wildly in love. "

"That's something to wonder about, isn't it? I'm not sure I know what madly, wildly in love is. But with Wes I'm as close to it as I've ever been. I know that, because I think about him all the time. "

"That's the way I was about Narze, " Jane said, "but I haven't seen him for a long time, and I don't know what's in the future for us. If anything. Anything at all. "

####

I UNDERSTAND ARABS NOW

After letting Dee and Jane know she was back in the States, Grace lingered on in New York. Roger had written to say that he could not afford to drive down from Camp Forest Primeval to get her and Babs. He would like to but he couldn't. Grace was disappointed, but as always in the last five years her biggest problem was money. Merly had sent a little, but only half what Grace hoped for. She had not yet recovered the money from the lost American Express money order. Grace felt that she could not ask Nelle for a loan at this time. All the people who had warned her that it was foolish to go to Africa had to be ruled out as possibilities for a loan. There was only one other avenue to investigate and that was the sale of something else from the items she had salvaged when the Milford house was lost. The piano had been sold in the previous summer. Indeed, the proceeds had kept her going until she got the commission from the Federal Art Project. Her books and keepsakes were in barrels in the garage at Camp Forest Primeval. She worried about those because the place was abandoned for so much of the year, standing at the foot of the "terrible hill, and with only a common padlock securing it against trespassers. Of course, the barrels were extremely heavy and they were all nailed up. They were the same barrels that had come with the movers from Cleveland to Milford in the autumn of 1929, after her separation from Carle Dychman. Later they'd gone by American Express to Hew Hampshire, and the Button boy's had conveyed them to the garage at Fison's Hill. But other things that Grace had considered treasures, had been sold right out of the Milford house. Nelle and Rog had "made room" in their apartment for a few more things. They had the room to store them because they had so little furniture of their own, having taken some things to Camp Forest Primeval, and Nelle had never had the slightest instinct for interior decorating, Grace had helped her choose colors when the place was painted, When Grace's furniture was added to the apartment it had helped the place, and some useful things had been given to Nelle and Rog in exchange for their help. But little by little Grace had sold off antiques of value. There was little left to sell that did not now belong to Nelle and Rog, but there was the grandfather clock. A friend of Nelle's had wanted to buy it but Irena hadn't wanted to part with it. She and Norris had bought it in Olmsted Falls in the little shop where they found so many fine pieces. The clock was a real treasure. It had the classic painted face with a smiling sun and moon, and it had wooden works. The wonder of it had been that Norris had got it running again, all but perfectly accurate chiming. He had fooled around with the weights, even replacing a missing one with a can filled with tacks. Grace hated to let it go. But let it go she did, hoping that Jane would never ask about it. It had been necessary, because she must come home to Cleveland and give the impression that it had not been a mistake to go to Tunis. Of course, Merly knew what had happened, and Dee and Jane knew also. But Grace trusted them not to noise it around. Grace had asked Merly not to tell anybody what an unprincipled person Elma had turned out to be. Especially Merly ought not tell Betty, because Betty could not

always keep things to herself. She was forever running into people around town and letting something slip.

Grace felt that she could not come back to Cleveland and just visit people. She'd have to get a place of her own. It was alright if she came to town on a temporary basis. Then she could spend a few days with Betty, and a few days with Bill and Vinnie, and even a few weeks in Oberlin with Merly, Emmie and the rest. After all, Nelle did that nearly every year. Sometimes Nelle stayed for months in Oberlin.

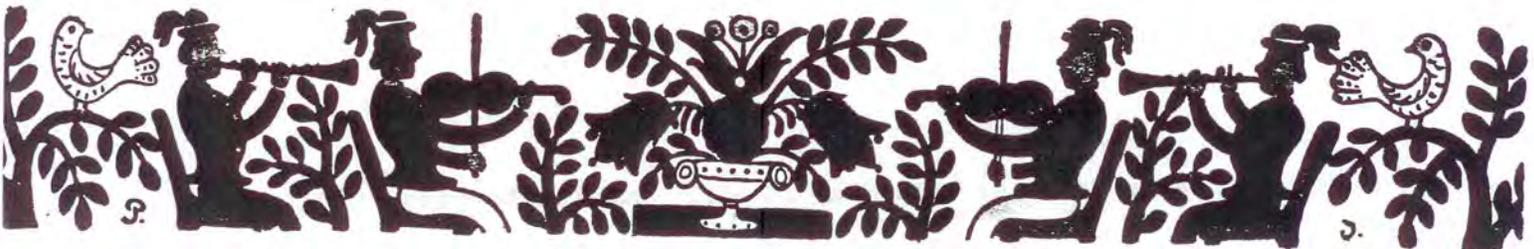
But this was different. She was coming back to Cleveland to stay. There was no point in living anywhere else. No one could say just what was going to happen, because the situation at Norris's was still deteriorating according to Dee. What would happen? What would Norris do, and what of the girls? She must be in Cleveland when these questions were answered. And she must find a place immediately and get to work.

On here train going back to Cleveland, Grace's thoughts churned round and round with her plans. There were worries connected with renting a place. The cheapest thing would be to find a place such as the room she'd had at Mrs. Clark's. But that sort of thing would not do, really, for the conditions for painting were not ideal (even though she had made her two small murals there). And further, she must find a place large enough to have Dee and Jane with her. Their contributions towards the rent were part of the total plan. Dee had written that Jane was staying with Skipper Root. Heavens! Things must have been terrible at Norris's house to drive Jane out. She had been more tolerant of Pauline than Dee had been. Dee's letters were filled with her problems with Pauline. Not Jane's though. But then Jane scarcely ever wrote anyway. Well, they'd all be together now, the three of them, and maybe eventually there'd be a way to get Jane into college.

The great problem was - what direction should her work take? Her strong compulsion now was to write about the events of her incredible summer. She had kept a faithful and even detailed record of it all. But how to present it in a saleable form? The reading public would not be interested in the crushing disillusionment brought by finding Elma not the dynamic, idealistic friend she'd thought her to be, but a self-centered amoral fraud. So, while that was a terrible blow to her, it could not be part of an article about Tunis. But how to make it more interesting than just a travelogue? She would have to emphasize the near panic of an American woman who finds herself in the heart of an Arab district. Oh, she was fairly itching to get at it. But it would have to wait because she would have to do something; that would bring in money right away. She had two possibilities. She had made several watercolor pictures while in Tunis. She must frame them and try to sell them, in spite of what Elma had said about pictures made "in that part of the world " not selling. But Grace had a nagging fear that Elma might be right about that. She had said "People want paintings of Notre Dame de Paris, or the Arc de Triomphe, or St. Mark's in Venice, or the Ponte Vecchio in Florence. People haven't any imagination. They just want the familiar tourist spots. " "Well, we'll see about that, " Grace thought. But it would take time to write and edit and type an article, then send it away and wait for it to be

accepted. But she would have to start making money right a-way! She needed money coming in in just a few weeks at the most. She would have to do what she did not want to do – get in touch with William Henry Baker and see about doing some fashion illustrations for the department stores. He had assured her that he could always get such work for her. But, oh how she hated to let him know she was back in town. He would begin anew his old campaign to get her to marry him. How too bad it was that she didn't love him and that her heart was still with Norris with all his flaws. If she could only love William Henry Baker it would solve all her financial problems and she could get Jane into college, and be freed of perpetual worry over a place to live. Betty Long and Mary McGuire had each suggested half seriously that she really ought to marry William Henry. "He's much older than you, Grace, and you'd survive and inherit what he has. He has no children has he? What does it matter if it isn't a beautiful romance? That only happens when we're young and full of dreams and high ideals. "

"Young and full of high ideals, " Grace thought. "Yes, and that's just the way Norris and I were. And could be. There is no reason why all ideals have to be smashed. No, they could not persuade her to marry William Henry Baker just to have a comfortable home.



INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF ART

Elma Pratt, *Director*

Elmer B. MacMillan, *Exec. Sec'y*
127 East 65th Street, New York

Elmer J. Frank, *Sec'y*
U. S. Consulate, Vienna, Austria

October 27, 1934.

Mrs. R. Rehming,
1460 E. 88th St.,
N.Y.C.

Dear Grace:

Well, that's better! I should have had sense enough to know after years of experience how things look before and after, and waited for the "after". This is not an answer to your letter but just to tell you that I am glad the bogabogues are receding into the distance and the light, glorious, blue sky above those white, white buildings is coming into its own.

I was glad to hear that you are taking an apartment with the girls. What a jolly winter you will have. I surely hope to look in upon you one of these days, or weeks, or months. There is so much ahead to do in this country and so much for which to get back to Europe.

Good-bye for now,

Much love,

Elma.

EP/KW

P.S. Am glad the pedestal has toppled over. Hate them!

Mother's letter from Elma after June's fiasco

1652 1/2



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They were coming into Cleveland now. The train slid underground. It rumbled under the downtown buildings and slowed to a stop in the Union Terminal beneath the Tower Building. Oh, what a difference coming home to an American city and knowing just what to expect and what it would cost. A redcap, a storage locker for her heavy luggage, a phone booth, and a streetcar.

She had called Dee at her office, and they met for lunch.

Grace was full of questions, but first she said, "You look thin, dear, and pale. "

Dee laughed. "Mother, you always come home and say that. I'm thin. And I'm not. And I have a pretty good tan, too. "

"Well, maybe it's the light in here. Tell me about your father. How are things at home?"

"Terrible. "

"What's going to happen?"

"Mother, I don't know. "

"Well, we must all get a place together now, and work hard, and I hope you're making more money now, " Grace said.

"No, not a penny more. My boss is hard up. "

"And what about Jane? How much does she make?"

"Oh, it's ten-something, but she gets a few tips. "

"How nice! Well! I'm so proud of you both. We'll be able to get a place together now, and just work hard. "

"Mother, Janie was hoping she could at least go to Downtown College this fall. "

"Good! Well, maybe she can. Don't they go evenings there?"

"Well, she hoped to go full time. But anyway, Mother, Janie works evenings. She doesn't get away before 9:30 by the time she eats her dinner. "

"Well, if we all work hard, we'll see that we get her to college next year. Meanwhile, I'll find us a place tomorrow. When does she get her lunch hour?"

"She's off at three. If you walk by the Winchester Room a little before, she'll see you and you can wait for her to come out. But Mother, don't forget Janie just took a room with Skipper. She's sort of committed to that arrangement. "

"Sh, " said Grace, "Skipper will understand. "

"Skipper was brushing her hair one hundred strokes when Jane came into the room that night. Skipper's hair was a pretty auburn color that some people called "red. " But it wasn't what Jane considered red. Uncle Rog's sister, Nellie, had real red hair, and so did both her children, and they had skin that turned the color of raspberry sherbet when they got sunburned. Skipper's skin wasn't like that, but she did have to be careful about the sun lest she get freckled. Skipper had beautiful eyes, a warm brown, with brown lashes. Mona James was another redhead. Hers was the type called "strawberry blond. " She was very freckled and her eyelashes were a pale blond color, nearly white. She put mascara on them but she was allergic to it and her blue eyes always looked irritated. Jane thought it was amusing that she and Dee, both brunettes, had teamed up with redheads, and that Dee was chumming with Mona who was Jane's old schoolmate, and she, Jane, was not lassie's roommate. In each case the older girl was with the younger girl.

Jane sat down and took off her shoes.

"Guess what, " she said. "Our Mother art no longer in Africa. Or New York either. She's here in Cleveland. "

"Oh? When did she get in?"

"This morning. She lunched with Dee, and then she met me at three. We had quite a talk. She's glad to be back. At least, she's glad to be out of Africa. "

"I'll bet. And she must be excited to see you and Dee. "

"I guess. But she scolded me. "

"Scolded you!"

"For not writing to her. Well, I had nothing to tell, and I felt bad because she didn't wait for my graduation. Anyway, she'll forget. She's got so much on her mind. She's got photos, and sketches and notes, and even a few finished watercolors. So she should be able to make something of all that. And she says that she is going to do fashion art again. "

"Oh, that's good, " Skipper said. "She was a whiz at that. "

"I thought so too. So does Dee. Mother says she thinks I can go to college next year. She was flabbergasted when I told her Narze is starting this fall. She thought he'd never do it, I'm sure. "

"Where is your mother now?"

"Tonight? At Uncle Bill's. But tomorrow she's going out to find an apartment. She's expecting Dee and me to be with her. "

"Of course, " Skipper said.

"But I told her that "'d just recently moved in with you. "

"Well, that's alright Jane. I understand why you must go with your mother. I won't be mad at you. "

"Well, mother had an idea. For the same rent we're paying now, or a dollar more, we'd each have a room and a kitchen to use, and bath of course, but the best part is we'd have a living room to entertain our friends. What do you think?"

"Wes would like it, I'm pretty sure. I'll tell him about it. I can see a lot of advantages. "

####

For Grace, 1934 would go on record in her journal as an incredible year. It had started out momentarily, with her growing knowledge of Norris's marital unhappiness. It became eventful when she was chosen to participate in the Federal Art Project. Then from April to August she was totally caught up in her African adventure. But all of these happenings were eclipsed for her emotionally, when measured against the strange events of the autumn months.

To begin with, she spent a week in September finding a suitable apartment with enough rooms so that Skipper Root could be part of their cooperative plan. She found at last an apartment on Sloane Avenue not far from the house where John Rahming had first brought Rosella after Norris's birth. This apartment had windows that looked directly down on the passing traffic and streetcars (which would be noisy at night). But there was room for everyone. A small bedroom in the back Jane said would do for her. And there were two larger bedrooms. one must be for Skipper, and Dee and Grace would share the other. Up front there were two rooms connected by an archway. One would be expected to serve as a dining room, the other as a living room, and you could take your choice as they were equally far from the kitchen.

But now Grace faced the next problem – furniture. Dee and Jane had worried about it from the start, particularly since Skipper had been persuaded to leave the room on 97th Street which had everything that was necessary for comfort. And now they were all going to a flat that was completely bare.

"Don't you worry, " Grace said. "My barrels are coming. "

"Barrels!" Dee and Jane chorused. "What do we sleep on?"

"Oh, " said Grace, "You girls are so funny. But don't worry, I'm going to borrow some things. Rog is shipping the barrels with my dishes and things. "

And borrow she did. And in fact, many of the items she borrowed, she was told she could keep. Her friend, Mary McGuire, lent a card table and four folding chairs. Grace's friend Alice Whitman, the Christian Science practitioner (who also wrote children's books) said she could donate a dresser and a bed and a chair. These would be used in Skipper's room. Gertrude supplied a cot which was put in Jane's room. Bill spent a Saturday hauling all these things for Grace.

It was fortunate for the household that Skipper and Jane ate all their weekday meals at work and that Skipper went home to Olmsted Falls on her day off. So, except on Sunday when Jane was home, Grace and Dee fixed their meals alone and until Grace's barrels arrived it was like camping out.

Grace and Dee had had to buy a studio couch that opened into two beds. The trouble was it had to serve as a sofa in the living-room so it couldn't be put back in their bedroom. and that was because Jane reminded them that Skipper had given up her old room on 97th Street with the idea that she'd be in a place where she could have Wes visit her.

"We can't have an empty living-room and expect Skipper to be glad she moved in with us, " Jane said.

Things were a little homier after Grace's barrels arrived. One barrel contained dishes packed carefully in curtains and towels, et cetera. Another had books and small Rumdah rugs. When the barrels arrived they could not be opened, but Jane bought a

hammer, screwdriver and pliers on her afternoon free time, and when she got home from work she pried the head off the first barrel.

"We'll need the tools anyway, " she said. "I got a small box of nails too, for hanging pictures or something. "

When the head was successfully removed from the barrel Grace said, "There! Splendid. I always said you were just like a boy. "

"Oh, Mother, for heaven's sake. this doesn't prove anything. "

As they removed the contents of the barrels, Jane kept discovering things she said should be put in Skipper's room.

"How come Skipper gets so much stuff?" Dee asked, rather amused at Jane.

"Because I talked her into coming here, " Jane said. "Skipper's our 'goose', you know. "

"Our goose!"

"Our goose that lays the golden egg, " Jane explained. "Don't you remember up in New Hampshire when we depended on the board money for Ruth Chapman? Babs accused Mother of spoiling Ruth and favoring her. But Mother felt we'd all be smart to keep Ruth happy. "

"OK, " Dee said. "But Skipper isn't exactly 'laying golden eggs'. "

"No, " Jane said, "but we can't afford this place without Skipper's share of the rent, and so far she hasn't gained anything by joining us. I promised her a living room and all it is so far is your bedroom. "

"Well, " said Grace with her usual optimism, "that's only temporary. As soon as I get started a lot of things will improve. "

She did not know it then, but things soon would at least change, if not improve.

Dee and Jane had other things on their minds than the apartment. Dee had a new boyfriend. He was the first man she had met since leaving Milford who could begin to make her forget Cameron. Frank Nekola was very handsome, he could play the piano and he was a freelance artist.

Grace was very interested, but at first she asked, "what nationality is he?"

"He's Czech, " Dee said.

"Oh, Well, they are good people. Fine people. "

Jane was laughing.

"What's so funny?" asked Dee.

"Mother is, " Said Jane. "She says Czechs are fine people, but Narze is Syrian (actually his people are from Beirut in Lebanon). Mom doesn't think Narze's people are fine people. "

"Why, I never said they weren't, " Grace protested.

"No, but you might as well have said it. You spoke of Debby as being of a different race. "

"Well, I don't know about that and I don't know his people at all. "

"That's the point I'm making. Well, I looked it up in Dad's encyclopedia. They're Caucasian. In fact, they're Semitic. "

"They're all under one huge language group. Dad and I were reading about it. Assyrians were of an eastern origin, and Jew of a western group. there are northern and southern divisions too – but all Semitic. "

"But the religions, Jane! They're so completely different, " Grace argued.

"You're not going to tell me Arabs and Jews are the same. "

"No, I'm not, but you were talking about 'race' before. Now, you're talking about religion. Religion is how you think about stuff such as God or gods and all that. "

"Grace smiled. "Janie dear, I know what religion is. "

"Well, you don't know what Narze's religion is though. Truth is he doesn't have any special religion. "

"His parents must be Moslem, " Grace said. "I assume they are anyway. "

"No, I don't think so. You shouldn't assume so much. You probably assume that I'm a Christian Scientist. "

"Well, aren't you? I thought you were, " her mother said.

"No, " said Jane. "I'm unconvinced. Totally. "

Dee spoke up. "How can you be unconvinced after the way you recovered from pneumonia? And the way Mother got home safely from Africa, after being there alone with all those Arabs. Alice Whitman was doing Science work for her. "

"Well, " said Jane, "I expect everyone else on the AQUITANIA got home safely too, without Alice Whitman's special prayers. Or did the angel's wing that was sheltering Mother take care of all of them?"

"Why not?" asked Dee. "It's all Divine Love. "

"Sure, " said Jane. "It's fun. "

"Well, I will say one thing, " Grace said. "Getting back to the subject of Narze. I always did think he was a very nice boy. And I feel differently about Arabs since I got acquainted with 'Monsieur' in Tunis. I understand Arabs now. "

####

SALLY, HAVE YOU HEARD THE NEWS ?

Grace's warm and complacent feeling about Arabs and Narze suffered a setback a few days later when Jane called from downtown to say that she would not be home at the usual time.

"Narze is in town, " she announced. "so we'll be going out. "

"Narze! What's he here for?" Grace asked.

"To see me, of course. He's on his way to college. You know he was going, Mom. "

"I didn't know it would bring him to Cleveland. "

"Sure. Reliance is west of Cleveland. Listen, Mother, don't stay up for us. We'll be late. "

"Where are out going so late?"

"I don't know. But somewhere we can talk. We'll perhaps go to a movie. "

"You could talk here, Jane. "

"No. No, we couldn't. Not with you and Dee sleeping in the living room. "

"But dear, I'd like to see Narze. "

"You will. He'll be in town until Sunday afternoon. "

All this was disquieting to Grace, particularly since Jane stayed out very late that night and the next night too, and she apparently spent her afternoon free time with Narze both days. The next day was Sunday and Narze came to dinner. Grace hated to have him see the sparsely furnished apartment.

She explained it to Narze. "We still aren't at all settled. I still have some very nice things in New York at Roger's. I'll have to arrange to have them shipped.

Narze looked older to Grace. He'd apparently bought some new clothes for college. He was twenty-one years old now. When Grace inquired, he said he'd been staying at the Adam Hotel. She breathed a sigh of relief when he left Cleveland that afternoon on a west-bound bus.

"I suppose he'll be stopping off here every time now, on his way to and from college, " she said to Jane.

"I hope so, " Jane said.

"What are your plans?"

"My plans?"

"Yours and Narze's. "

"Nothing beyond college at this point, " Jane said.

"Did you go to Narze's hotel while he was here?"

"Mother! You don't ask Dee where she goes on a date!"

"It's all the same now. We're both through high school and on our own. Nobody's giving us any money any more. "

"That's not the point Jane. "

"But it is. To me, it is. And besides, when you were young in New York and your father was still supporting you, you weren't answering to him what you and Dad were up to. " Grace looked distressed, but she said indignantly, "Jane, you are a sophist in your reasoning!"

"Oh well..." Jane said. "I guess mothers and daughters never agree on things like this. "

Grace's anxiety had been heightened by things Dee had told her about Mona James. It seemed that Mona had gotten into trouble and had an abortion in July. She had been afraid to tell her parents, but the boy who was responsible had gone to their Epworth League counselor for advice. The counselor had told the boy he must tell his father. He also gave the boy the name of a doctor. And so it was arranged and the matter resolved.

"You mean their church's youth advisor told them to have an abortion!" Grace was amazed.

"Well, not exactly, Mother. But he made it clear to Bill that he was responsible and should do the honorable thing and not turn his back on Mona. He merely gave him a doctor's name and left it up to Bill and his father to decide. "

"But, Dee, wouldn't the honorable thing have been to marry her? I mean you'd think the church's youth counselor would say so. "

"Mother, " Dee said, "Mona and Bill were only seventeen. And that's too young. "

"Yes, I'm sure it is. Oh, but where have all the ideals gone? Things aren't nearly so nice as they used to be. "

"Mother, that situation isn't new. And Mona just couldn't have had the baby. She says her father would have beaten her black and blue. And he's no good himself. "

"Why, he was always very nice when we used to meet him at artists' get-togethers. "

"No, Dad says he's awful. He comes into the Art Club with prostitutes and floozies. "

"What a pity! And his wife is so sweet. I like Frances. "

"Mona says her parents are separating, " Dee said.

"Oh, that's sad. Poor Frances! And how she must worry about Mona, even if she doesn't know what goes on. "

But Grace had other things on her mind more important than Mona James. She was still trying to round up more furniture for the apartment. She also let the word leak out that she was back in town. A mutual friend let William Henry Baker know where she was living. He lost no time in calling her, and they went out to dinner. He assured her that if she really wanted to get back into fashion illustration he could probably get her some work, particularly for Strohmeyer's store. He did remind her, however, that advertising was slow these days and not what it used to be.

Although Dee had moved away from Channing Avenue she was still transferring her belongings to Grace's apartment and making trips back and forth. Grace never failed to inquire into the status of family relations at Norris's.

"How are things at the "House of Mirth'?" she asked one day.

"Oh, Mother!" Dee exclaimed. "That's awful!"

Grace laughed a little. "Well you can't blame me. After all, your father made his bed. He didn't have to marry Pauline. "

"I know, but you shouldn't gloat. When Pauline met Dad he was a divorced man. "

"But he tried to back out of his engagement to her, " Grace protested. "She wouldn't let him. He wanted to come back to me. "

"Well, let's not talk about it anymore. It's water over the dam. "

On a Sunday morning soon after, Dee made an announcement that had Grace in a fine state of agitation.

"Mother, the last time I was at Dad's I was talking with Edie and Grandma and I

mentioned how much Jane and I miss being able to use Pauline's sewing machine for our dressmaking. We were always able to use Pauline's electric. Well, anyway, they told me we could have Aunt Ada's old treadle machine. It's in the basement over there and it works fine and Dad said he would bring it over this evening. "

Grace's eyes opened wide. "Your father? This evening? Here!"

"Yes Mom. Don't look so terrified. "

"Oh, don't be silly. I'm not terrified, but I'm not sure that I care to see Norris. "

"Well you could go out then, if you won't stay here. "

"Go out where?"

"Well, " Dee said, "then stay back in Jane's room till he goes. "

"Well, I'll think about it. " Grace said.

Later that night, Grace was unable to sleep. She got up and wrote in her journal.

"Well! This evening I got through an ordeal I've been thinking about --- that of having Norris come here. I could have absented myself but I decided to get it over with once and for all. He brought things for Dee and was here but a brief while, but now I'm stirred up and there'll be little sleep for me tonight and other nights too, I'm sure --- I know that Norris was shaken. He looked pale and had an odd expression on his face. I said --- at least I think I said, "Norrisie" and I just took his hand and patted it. And then I turned away and he said "Hedgy". And then Dee left the room with a box of her things and we were alone. And then -- our arms were around each other and there was a brief kiss --- breathless and hurried --- but I know the old love is still there, in spite of all. "

####

While Grace's spirits were lifted higher than they had been in months, indeed years, Jane was entering a period of despondency. She had looked forward for weeks to seeing Narze on his journey to college, and now he had come and gone and they had only had a few hours alone together. We would probably not seem him again until Christmas time, though he spoke of coming back in November to take her to Cleveland and for the Notre Dame – Navy game. Narze was quite a sports fan. He had told her that if he came in November to take her to the football game he would not be able to come at Thanksgiving time, but in any case, it was all tentative, depending on his part-time job at the college. His Christmas plans were uncertain too, but he hoped to spend part of his vacation time in Cleveland even if he could afford to go home to New Hampshire. But while in Cleveland he would have to stay at the hotel and that cost money.

"Because we have to face the fact that there's no room for me at your place, and even if there were, your Mother still isn't any too fond of me. "

"Mother doesn't think she's a snob, Narze, but she is. I had a boyfriend who was Irish and she got terribly upset about him. Of course, there was more to the story than that. "

"What kind of guy does she want for you?" Narze asked.

"I don't know, " Jane said. "Maybe no one. "

When Narze arrived Jane had presented him with all of his money that she had been saving for him since he left Cleveland in December the previous year. It was all in five- and ten-dollar bills, mostly fives, and it came to four hundred and forty-five dollars. She had kept it under the paper in the bottom of her foot-locker, and she had a bad scare when she was getting it out, for Grace nearly caught her in the act. Not that there was anything so terrible about her taking care of Narze's money for him, but inevitably it would mean having to answer a lot of questions about why Narze entrusted his money to her instead of putting it in the bank in a savings account. But, fortunately, when Grace entered the room, Jane was on the floor in front of the foot-locker holding two five-dollar bills. She was sitting on more than four hundred dollars.

"Is that where you keep your money?" Grace asked.

"It hasn't been, " Jane said, "but I'm going to try to always keep ten dollars in her just in case. "

"Just in case of what?"

"Oh, anything, " Jane said. "I'd like to save more but unless I get tips I can't and " haven't had any at all for two weeks. Business in the Winchester Room is terrible and when it is slow it is so boring. "

Jane was seeing less of Skipper, now that she was living with them, than when they had both lived in the rooming house. There were no more bed-time confidences since they now had separate bedrooms. Skipper worked on Sundays and was off on Tuesdays. Jane worked on all week-days and was off Sundays. They still occasionally saw each other during afternoon free time, but that was infrequent because Skipper, the waitress, needed to get off her feet when she was off duty. She had once admitted that her feet and ankles often ached, and she was trying to meet the problem with Christian Science. But she said that she felt it did her good to spend the afternoon with her legs up on one

of the chases in the women's lounge. But Jane, on the other hand, had many opportunities to sit down at the door of the check room. When three o'clock came, she was eager to get out of the lower regions of the Union Terminal and up and out into the light of day. She now had a rather fixed routine. She would eat her lunch quickly in the back of the Terminal restaurant. Then she would walk through the Concourse to the basement entrance to Halsey's department store and get on the escalator there. She would then ride it up to the fifth floor, sometimes going to the women's lounge, but mainly just to look at the merchandise displays which changed from time to time. She would next ride the escalator down to the main floor and go out Halsey's east entrance opening onto Cleveland's Public Square. If she lucky the sun would be shining and she would feel relieved to be out of the nether regions, which Dr. Hennessey liked to call "the salt mines. "

Jane would then begin a quick tour down the south side of Grand Avenue traveling east. The south side for some unknown reason was made up of stores that served women primarily. Dress shops, shoe shops, dime stores, and from the Square to Twelfth Street there were three more large department stores. May Brothers, Tilford's, and finally Strohmeyer's, the one the family had patronized for years. Jane became familiar with them all and she decided she liked Halsey's best, which was fortunate because on rainy days she could go there without going out. On an afternoon that was pleasant, Jane would venture east as far as Strohmeyer's, but she decided it was "stodgy and old-fashioned" and however esteemed and respectable it might be, she preferred Halsey's. Tilford's was nice, but small, and May Brothers was patronized by an uncultured class of folk who were given to pushing and shoving, and deliberately grinding the sharp heels of their shoes into the instep of one's foot. However, May Brothers had the best department of house wares and domestic goods.

Jane had grown up with pretty things and she missed having them. Her mother had lost all the best things with the departure from Milford. Her father's place on Channing Avenue had been attractive in the downstairs rooms at least. The room on 97th Street with Skipper had been furnished adequately and cheerfully, but now Jane had a barren room again. There was only a narrow cot and the little foot-locker, and a half dozen corrugated packing cartons which contained her belongings. Fortunately there was a clothes closet and Jane stacked most of the cartons within. She was considering making herself a dressing table from orange crates as she had three years before but, "Darned if I will, " she said. She went to May Brothers' unpainted furniture section and found a dressing table with a split leg for three dollars.

"Why didn't you buy yourself a dresser?" Grace asked. "You need it more than a dressing table. "

"Dressers don't cost three dollars, Mom. "

"Don't you have any money tucked away in the little trunk?"

"Not at present. Remember, I bought curtains for my window last pay day. "

(Grace's barrels had contained only enough curtains for Skipper's room and the living room).

"They ought to pay you girls a lot more, " Grace said.

Jane was extremely bored with the job in the Winchester Room. During the summer, even the evenings had been fairly busy, for several times there were business conventions in town and the downtown hotels were filled and their dining rooms crowded. The Winchester Room profited on such occasions and time did not drag for Mr. Hennessey and his crew. The conventioners were a bit rowdy, a few were really drunk. They plagued Jane and the waitresses with pinches, leers, and invitations but they tipped heavily and, on balance, the employees preferred putting up with all that, to suffering through a slow evening with little or no business. Mr. Hennessey was driven to distraction trying to anticipate how many waitresses to hire for the evenings. Sometimes, there were only three tables or "parties " of guests all evening. On a night like that two waitresses would suffice. But he could not take risks like that, for usually there were more guests, and occasionally they had an unexpected rush of business and Mr. Hennessey would have to borrow waitresses from the adjoining restaurant. He told Jane that his line of work gave a man ulcers. He also told Jane that he knew her job was boring, but she said she was glad to be working. He told her that at times when things were very slow she could read, providing it was a small book and she put it down the moment "business " walked in the door.

Being able to read a little on the dull evenings helped somewhat, but now that autumn had come she could think of nothing but college. She had told Narze she envied him and he must forgive her. Always emotional, he had tears in his eyes when she gave him his four hundred and forty-five dollars. He said he ought to give it to her and forget about college for himself. But she had laughed and told him not to be silly. He had said that if she didn't find a way to get to college, then if they got married some day, he would see that she got what education she wanted.

But now he was gone, and in her bed at night she thought about what it must be on all the college campuses everywhere. The leaves would be falling, and the students shuffling through them, and of course, that delicious fragrance of leaf smoke. Living and working where she did, she had no way of shuffling through fallen leaves, and usually when she came up out of the train terminal all she could smell was the peppery and somewhat sickening odor from the huge paint factory to the west.

She knew exactly what a college campus was like in the autumn because of her long-time familiarity with Oberlin and its college. The year she had spent with Mim she had savored it all, though she had never wanted to go to that college. It had excellent standing, but it was different, no fraternities, no sororities, no automobiles, and it was church-related besides. Mim had told her that the college's rules about "curfew" were very strict for women. "They cater to the men. " And it was expensive.

Well, forget it! Stop lying in bed at night grieving over college. There were no signs that she would get to go next year either. Her parents were both in debt one way or another, and prospects for work were still terrible. Strohmeyer's store had given her mother one small fashion job to do, but she had said that she wasn't sure she could "stand the pressure of deadlines. "

Sometimes in bed at night she thought about the alternatives to going to

college. Certainly she was not going to check hats forever. It led precisely nowhere and there was no pride in it. Any fool could do it. When she had been hired on for the full-time job, she had recommended to Mr. Hennessey that he might hire her old lunch hour friend from East High, Edna Williams, for the Sunday job. And Edna was grateful to earn the two dollars a week. So she herself, should be glad of her job. But not forever, no indeed.

She thought of going to business school like Dee, but in the first place that wasn't where her talents lay, and in the second place, she couldn't go to any kind of school in her present working hours. Night school was out of the question. And her mother expected her to continue working "for the time being. "

So what were the other possibilities for the future? To keep on working here until Narze finished college? Four more years in the Winchester Room? It seemed unthinkable! Her mother had always said, "Jane, you are so smart, you will do great things. You'll be taking care of your Mom". " What "great things" was Mother talking about? She never said, "You shouldn't be checking hats. You should be studying something that will get you somewhere. " But she did say, "I'm so proud of you. " Proud of you for being good at checking hats? Maybe what would happen was just that she would get married. Mother was so sure that she was not the type to get married. Now why? Boys had always liked her, just as they had always liked Dee. And yet Mother had decided that Dee was the type to get married and she Jane was not. Mother had never asked her what she wanted to be when she grew up. She had always just said, "You're going to be an artist. " And Dad had said the same. "You ought to study Art. " But he had never said that she was not the type to get married. Had Grandma Martin ever said that Mother was not the type to get married? No. But Mother had planned on a career and the way she told it, she got tricked out of her plans. Mother might have been a good traveling salesman. She was always packing up and going somewhere else.

If I get married, Jane decided, I'll try to live in one place if possible.

And if I have children they could go to school in one town, and we could have a house where there could be nice things and we wouldn't always be losing our belongings because of moving around. And the children would be able to save their toys to hand down to their children. We wouldn't live in any more apartments.

Well, perhaps at first, of course. But later we'd have a house. And who was "we"? Herself and Narze? Maybe. Could Mother be right in thinking Narze's family was so different from hers that marrying him would be simply terrible? In Mother's family all her brothers and sisters had married people from American families. And look how many divorces there were. If marriages were terrible, whose fault was it? Jane decided that when she had children she wouldn't try telling them who to marry. Then if they got divorced it would be their own mistake.

But Jane had been wondering whether she could even have children. Something Aunt Nelle had told her once had made her have doubts. Aunt Nelle had always said a girl should never go in swimming during her period. She said that

she'd known of a young woman who went. in swimming in chilly water during the time when she was unwell. "Unwell" was the word Mother and Aunt Nelle and Aunt Merly usually used. Anyway, the woman never ever had another period, and she got married and couldn't have babies and she died of melancholia. Other people Jane had talked with thought the story was "a bunch of baloney". But a strange thing happened. Jane had gone to Emerald Beach with friends on Sunday the day before Labor Day. She hadn't felt well; she'd had cramps all that day and her period was due on Monday or Tuesday. The Lake was cold for there had been a storm and summer was ending anyway. But she and all her friends went in swimming It would be the last time that year. Jane got very chilled in the water. She feared that she would catch one of her terrible chest colds, but she did not. However, she continued having cramps and her period did not start until late in the week and amounted to very little. In October when her period was due she had three days of cramps but that was all, no period. She was frightened then; something bad had happened. She had not the slightest reason to fear pregnancy, even though Narze had been in Cleveland for three days. He never allowed her to have anything to worry about. But it was the swimming in cold water at the wrong time that had done something to her "works. "

When November came, Jane did have a period but it seemed not to last as long. Perhaps it was her imagination. She felt somewhat relieved, but still there were fears. What if, like Aunt Nelle, she could never have any children of her own? Mother had said that probably Aunt Nelle would have been different if she had a family when she was young. She'd been too old when she adopted Babs. Jane decided that it was better to have your children when you were young. you could understand them better.

And so, at night her thoughts circled round and about, and when morning Then came she was tired. All through the autumn months it had been going on that way and in the mornings she was tired.

"I don't sleep well at night, " she told her mother. "I don't get enough fresh air. " "Maybe, " Grace said, "your tonsils have grown back in. "

Jane laughed. "No, Mother. They haven't. The doctor said. "

"Then why don't you do what I do? Recite the 'Sonnets From the Portuguese' "

"I don't know the 'Sonnets from the Portuguese', Mom. "

"Then learn them, " Grace said. "Reciting helps one sleep. "

"No, " Jane said. "They're beautiful , but too much about love. I don't need to think about love right now, when I can't do anything about it. "

"Well, I don't know what you mean exactly by that, but tonight take one of my Amytal capsules before you go to bed. "

"What's that?" Jane asked.

"Sleeping medicine, " Grace said.

"Horrors! Aren't we Christian Scientists anymore? No, I guess not.

Well. now is the autumn of my discontent. And insomnia, too. "

"Now, you're being a clown , Jane. "

####

Suddenly, the Sunday before Thanksgiving, Grace's world was turned upside down.

A phone call came at noon for Dee. Jane answered it.

"It's Aunt Ethel, " she said.

"Ethel?" Grace said. "What's she want?"

"Sh!" Jane said. "I don't know. "

When Dee had finished talking to Ethel. she turned and said simply. "I'm going over to Dad's for dinner. "

"Why is that?" Grace said.

"Edie asked me, Mother. She said she needed to talk to me. "

"Why, what's the matter? Is Mother Rahming ill?"

"I don't think so. Listen, I'll know later. "

"Seems funny Ethel would invite you and not your father, " Grace persisted.

"I mean that he didn't ask you. "

"Dad isn't there , " Dee said.

"Oh?" Grace said. "Do you think- " Her eyes widened.

Dee broke in. "Mother, wait until I get back. "

Grace stewed all evening waiting for Dee to return from Channing Avenue.

She said several times to Jane, "I would think she'd be back by now, wouldn't you?"

"It's only eight- thirty, Mom. "

"But Dee has to work tomorrow. Edie shouldn't keep her. "

"Mom, it isn't late. And Mom, I wish you wouldn't think about them so much.

It isn't good for you. "

"You don't know what I'm thinking about. "

"You don't hide it very well, Mom. "

"Here's Dee now. "

Dee entered and took off her coat, hat and gloves.

"It's getting colder out, and starting to snow a little. "

Grace and Jane just sat looking at her. It seemed to Jane that Dee looked tired and she just might have been crying. Her eyes looked funny.

"Well?" said Grace.

"I'm tired, " Dee said.

"Yes, but tell us what Edie had on her mind, " Grace said.

"She had plenty on her mind , " Dee said, "and I feel sorry for her. I feel sorry for all of them , but especially for Aunt Ethel. "

"Is Mother Rahming - " Has she passed on?" Grace said.

"No, no. It's that Dad and Pauline are separating. "

Grace's eyes went wide. "You don't mean it!"

"Yes, I do. Dad wasn't there. He's moving out. "

"Where?" asked Jane.

"He's staying downtown someplace. "

"How can he afford that?" Grace asked. "What precipitated this? Was Pauline there? What did she say? What is she going to do?"

"Mother!" Dee said. "So many questions!"

"Well, what is Pauline going to do?" Jane asked.

"Move out, I guess, " Dee said, "but I don't know where or when. She was in her sewing room when I got there, and she called down to dinner, but she didn't say much. She asked how Jane was, and about my job. After dinner, she excused herself and went back upstairs. Edie had told me before dinner that there had been a big row and Dad had taken some things and left, and they will separate. After dinner I helped Edie with the dishes, and then she told me more. One of Pauline's lady friends told her that Dad has been running around with some dame. " "Edie told you that!" Grace said in a hushed voice.

"Well, she didn't say 'some dame,' I said that. But he's been seen with somebody more than once by one of Pauline's friends. And he admitted it and I gather that Pauline is all broken up about it. "

"Well, she brought it upon her self, " said Grace.

"I really don't know why you say that, Mother, " Jane said.

"Because it's true. 'The mills of God grind slowly, yet they grind exceeding small.'"

Jane and Dee both looked at Grace in wonderment, and Dee said, "Mother, what on earth do you mean by that?"

"I mean she's paying for the pain she caused me. "

"But you divorced Daddy!" Jane said.

"Well, Jane, you have a lot to learn. " her mother said, and turned to Dee.

"So what is Pauline going to do now?"

"I don't know, Mother, and Edie didn't know either. "

"So she's going to divorce him, is she?"

"Don't know that either, but I suppose so, "Dee said.

"Oh dear! Oh dear! What a mess, anyway you look at it. "

Jane spoke up. "What I'm wondering about is – with Dad gone, and Pauline washing her hands of him – where does that leave Grandma and Edie?"

"That's just it, " Dee said. "That is what Edie is wondering. "

"Your father is being selfish, as usual, " Grace said.

But Dee said, "Well, Mother, can you think of any better way for Dad to get free? He certainly has no grounds to divorce Pauline. "

"No matter how awful you think she is, Mom, " Jane said, "she has lots of friends who would testify that she is hard-working and very pleasant. You can't divorce people for being pleasant. "

"Or for having no sex appeal, " Dee said.

"Oh, you girls are the limit!" Grace exclaimed.

At this point Skipper came home from work and the subject was dropped but Grace went to bed and tossed for hours. She finally got up and went into the kitchen and wrote in her journal her feelings about the incredible news from Channing Avenue.

Grace had first felt a sick feeling of despair at the news that Norris had been seeing another woman. And she recalled that Sally Longmont, six months before, had spoken of this, but she put it out of her mind in Africa. But Betty Long years before had seen Father Rahming and Anna Wyers on a street car together and she just put that out of her mind too. Her thoughts went round and round wondering what Norris was involved in, but the longer she thought about it the more she convinced herself that Dee had

been right. It was the only way that Norris could get free of the marriage. Pauline would have clung to him like a limpet forever, Grace told herself. Pauline must have already forgiven him all his other faults, his argumentative nature, his violent temper storms, his insulting criticisms and his Jekyll and Hyde changeability from a delightful fellow of high ideals and humanitarian instincts, to his mother's egotistical, grown-up spoiled brat.

After nine years of living with that, Pauline had loved him still (just as she, Grace, had unfortunately). So Pauline, who had forgiven many things, had finally had something she refused to ignore. Obviously, her pride had been dealt the ultimate blow. With her Cleveland friends talking about Norris's infidelity, Pauline apparently had finally rebelled. No doubt Norris had counted on her reaction. So having come to this conclusion Grace finally went to sleep telling herself over and over again that it was Norris's "one way out."

In spite of lying awake much of the night, Grace woke early with a new thought in her head. How damaging would a second divorce be to Norris's professional standing in Cleveland? The first one hadn't helped him any, but he had managed to achieve some success, and made new friends. But while people will forgive some things, will they continue to do so? The girls said Pauline was considered to be a nice person. People would feel sorry for her. Was she really a nice person? Suddenly, Grace felt the need to talk it over with some old friend. Who? Not Betty Long. Who then? Someone older. Elsa Lord or Mary McGuire.

Grace decided on Mary McGuire, but the conversation she hoped for could not take place. It was not Mary McGuire who answered the phone, but her daughter Jessamine, who said, "I do indeed remember you Mrs. Rahming, but I'm sorry to say Mother can't come to the phone. She's sleeping and I don't want to disturb her. I gather you've heard about my father?"

"No, my dear," said Grace. "What happened?"

"He was killed Friday evening. Hit by an automobile. Just after he got off the streetcar. He had just stepped from the safety zone."

"Oh, my dear! How terrible! Oh, I'm so sorry!"

"Well," Jessamine said, "Mother and I feel that it's a blessing he never suffered. They say he died instantly. The funeral is this afternoon at Donnell's. It's at two o'clock."

"I'll be there, Jessamine. When Mary wakes, tell her I send all my love and I'll be there this afternoon."

So now Grace had a greater need than ever to talk to someone. She was shocked at Jimmy McGuire's sudden death and still reeling with the other news of the previous evening. Dee and Jane had both left for their work and she did not want to talk to either of them about their father. They could not understand her feelings. They disagreed, rather vehemently, when she said that she should never have divorced Norris. They often said, "It was the only thing you could do, Mother." And she had told them, "No, we could have weathered it through and your father would have matured. He has learned how to work." But Jane, in all her adolescent sagacity, had pronounced, "No Mother. You know a leopard does not change its spots." Maybe Jane was right at that. Could she have aptly compared her father to a leopard, a beautiful but treacherous animal? Certainly, he was a cat lover.

But she must think today about Mary McGuire, who had forever lost her loveable, droll little Jimmy. Grace had an intense dread of funerals, not only because of the genuine

grief among the bereft, but for a reason she could not explain funerals embarrassed her. Something was all wrong about them. One should pay respects to the one who had passed on, but Grace always felt that the parlors were filled with people who came because they felt they ought to, and not because they cared. Well, she probably shouldn't feel that way – she was probably wrong.

She didn't want to go alone. She would call Betty Long. She hadn't seen her since her return, although they were planning to get together as soon as Grace got her apartment in order. Betty was not the person that Grace had wanted to talk to about Norris. Grace had always felt that Betty was sweet on Norris, while at the same time a loyal friend. But it often seemed that she couldn't discuss him satisfactorily with Betty. However, she knew if she saw Betty today, she would speak of Norris to her.

Betty agreed to go to the funeral. She knew Mary McGuire from the old days when Norris and Grace entertained their friends.

"I thought Catholic funerals were always in the morning, " Betty said.

"They're not Catholic, Betty. "

"Oh. I assumed because they were Irish – "

"No, they're theosophists, and from what I know about Mary, the funeral won't be as awful as they usually are. "

Grace was right. The funeral was unfunereal; the reading was quite brief and hopeful. After saying a few loving words to Mary McGuire and her daughter, Grace and Betty left. So far, they had had no chance to talk, for they had met in front of the funeral home and gone right inside. Betty declined Grace's invitation to come home with her and stay for dinner, but they did stop at a lunch counter where they each ordered a cup of tea.

Grace said, " Betty, don't you want to order a sandwich or a piece of pie?"

"No. My stomach is acting up today. My doctor said I have an ulcer. I'm supposed to drink a lot of milk and cream. "

"And do you? You look thin Betty. "

"Well, I am thinner. I don't eat big meals anymore. "

"Betty, have you had your tonsils out?"

"My tonsils!"

"Tonsils are responsible for all sorts of problems. "

"Well, my doctor would tell me. I had a physical. I don't have any throat trouble. It's just the ulcer. "

"Why don't you have a glass of milk instead of tea? "

"Grace, I never did like milk. I hated it as a child and Mother made me drink it. "

"Well, you do look run down, Betty. You have such circles under your eyes. "

"I always did. "

"But not like this. You haven't, been taking good care of yourself, Betty. "

"Yes I have. It's just this ulcer. They keep you awake at night, you know. Then I get up and take a little food or some medicine and that makes it a lot better. "

"Alright. Well, try to more good food and gain some weight. "

"I'm alright, Grace. "

"Betty, have you heard the news about Norris? "

"No. What news?"

"That he and Pauline have separated. "

"Really? Are they getting a divorce?"

"God only knows, Betty. Dee went there for dinner at Edie's behest and she came home with the news that Norris has left. Moved out. "

"All this doesn't surprise me, Grace. I'm surprised it didn't happen sooner. "

"Why do you say that?"

"Don't you remember I told you about seeing Norris with somebody? I told you that before you went away. I think maybe he's living across the street. "

"Across the street?" Grace said, looking toward the door.

"I mean across from the Fine Arts Building, where I live. "

"What's over there? All I remember is one of those huge old millionaire's mansions. "

"Well, the 'huge old millionaire' must have died, because the mansion's been made into studios and apartments. "

Grace laughed in spite of her serious mood. "Oh, Betty! You're thin, but you're still whimsical. Now tell me. Norris lives over there? How come you didn't tell me that before?"

"I don't know he lives there. I've just seen his car driving in and out of that driveway for some time now. "

"Was there a woman with him?"

"Sometimes. "

"Betty, why on earth didn't you tell me?"

"First of all, because you get so upset about Norris, and secondly because I learned my lesson years ago. "

"What do you mean?"

"When I spilled the beans about Father Rahming. "

"But Betty, this is entirely different. "

"Oh, it is and it isn't. Grace, I just wish you could forget him. "

"Well, I can't. Tell me, Betty, weren't you interested in him yourself once?"

Betty sighed and leaned back in her chair. "Long ago when we were all young, I found him very attractive. "

"And then?"

"Then you married him and I saw clearly what his faults were. Oh, I didn't mean to put that that way!"

"Well, I saw clearly what his faults were certainly, " Grace said, "but it hasn't cured me. "

"That's too bad. Maybe his current escapade will help to cure you once and for all. "

"Have you met her, Betty?"

"No, but I've seen her. They've come in this building together. She's young Grace. "

"She is ?" Grace said in a hushed voice. "How young?"

"Her late twenties, I'd guess. "

"My God! What an egotist Norris is!"

"Well, Grace. Is it so different from Father Rahming and Anna? She was half his age. "

"I hope you don't think I was like Mother Rahming Betty!"

"No indeed. But maybe Pauline was. Don't forget Pauline. "

"Do you think he's serious about this girl?"

"How could I know that, Grace?"

"This may have been his only way to get free, Betty. "

Betty looked thoughtful. She nearly said, "Couldn't he have just told Pauline there was someone else?" Instead, Betty said, "I never thought of that. "

###

THINGS HERE ARE NOT ROUTINE

Grace had needed to talk to someone, and she had hoped to talk to someone older, wiser and more detached than Betty. Mary McGuire would have been perfect. She might have helped Grace to calm down and wait patiently to see what would happen next at the Channing Avenue house.

She did not have long to wait. The following evening Ethel Rahming came alone to "talk about things." She and Grace had an opportunity to talk freely and frankly, as Jane and Skipper were at work, and Dee was out with Frank Nekola. Edie came in from the cold with snow clinging to her shoulders and the stiff guard hairs of her badger fur collar. She gave her characteristic little nervous laugh as she greeted Grace. She looked so weary and worn that Grace felt moved to take her by the arms, and reach up to kiss her.

"Hello, Edie," she said. "It's good to see you again."

"Good to see you, Grace. It's been a very long time. I'm grateful to be able to come and talk to you."

Grace took Edie's coat and hat while Edie removed her galoshes.

"I guess winter is here now," Edie said. "Thanksgiving is next week and we are in a sad state of affairs."

"Yes, Dee has told me about it," Grace said gravely. "Come and sit over here. As you can see, we've little furniture."

They sat on the studio couch and Edie said, "Well, Mother and I will soon be in the same condition. I imagine Norris has taken a few things already for his studio, and Pauline will want some things too."

"What are her plans, Edie?"

"Pauline's? We don't know yet. She told Norris she would get a divorce, but beyond that he knows nothing. He has no idea what she will ask for and I don't think she has a lawyer yet. Well, she may ask for money but she certainly knows he has nothing. The court may award her something. but that's as far as it will go."

"History repeats itself," said Grace.

"In a way," Ethel said, "But the Depression was the final blow to this marriage."

"Do you think it would have lasted anyway, Edie?"

"It's true they are not suited to each other at all," Edie said, "but having Pauline handing out a little money every day was the last straw for Norris. It was terribly hard on his pride."

Grace sighed, and then she asked, "What about the girl, this young woman?" Now, it was Edie's turn to sigh. "I don't know. mother and I are so upset about that. Norris seems 'mesmerized'." That was his own word. He says she has helped his pride. He says he couldn't stand being around Pauline any longer."

"Is he serious about the girl?" Grace asked.

"Well, one wouldn't think so from one thing he said to all of us. There was a dreadful row last week and he said that he had only two women in his life, you and Pauline. Said he'd been an innocent boy then, but now he was middle aged and time was running out. He says he's going to sow a late crop of wild oats." Grace was surprised at her sense of relief, but she spoke very disapprovingly

now.

"Has Norris no regard for what he is doing to you and Mother Rahming?"

"Oh, Grace, Norris has assured us he'll get us out of there and with or near him as soon as he possibly can. He's been waiting to learn just what Pauline is going to do. "

"Well, it really is a mess, isn't it, Edie?"

"Yes, and I shouldn't be bothering you with it, I know. It's just that it is so awful here now that Norris has gone. The house is like a tomb. Pauline is miserable, she never smiles and her eyes are always red from crying. She always has cried a lot as long as we've known her. "

"Did you know, Edie, that Norris had wanted to come back to me before he married her? But she would not release him, said she didn't want to be embarrassed. "

"No, I didn't know that, Grace. "

"Well, it's true. Maybe she'd have been better off to have let Norris go then. "

"Well, she won't die an old maid, like me. "

"Edie, I'm sorry you're all so unhappy. "

"Grace, it's Mother I'm worried about. She's very frail and she's sort of bewildered by it all. When Norris left it seemed as though all the life went out of the place, even though he has been gone often lately. He was home for dinner most of the time and that cheered Mother up. And it's very quiet now. Norris took the radio so we don't have that to provide a little diversion. We used to enjoy the nice concerts. But that's the least of it. I'm concerned about getting out of there before we have to buy more coal. I'm afraid to use it up; it's getting low. But I want Mother to be warm enough. "

"Norris left you to take care of the furnace, did he?"

"Oh, that's alright. Mother and Aunt Ada and I took care of it in past years when Norris wasn't with us. So that's alright. Even Pauline will put on a shovelful of coal. At least she did it yesterday afternoon. But Grace, I should get to the point. I'm wondering if Mother and I could stay with you for a little while until Norris knows what's going to happen. "

"My goodness, Edie, " Grace said. "Well! I don't know what to say. "

"Norris said he thought you had enough room. "

"Was it Norris's idea for you to come to me?"

"No, Grace. Honestly, it was mine, but Norris said he thought it a good idea to talk to you. He said you were a kind person. "

"He said that, did he?"

"He always speaks well of you, Grace. "

"Not always, " Grace said.

"It's been years since he said anything otherwise. Not since the time of your divorce. I wish that had never happened, Grace. "

Grace agreed with Edie, but she could not bring herself to say it. She was not going to bare her soul. No indeed.

She was silent a Moment, and then she saw tears well up in Ethel's eyes and slide down her faded cheeks, making tracks across the pink rouge spots.

"I shouldn't have asked you, Grace , " Ethel said.

"No, that's alright , Edie. I do see what difficulties you are in. Something must be done. "

"It's just that I know Mother won't be with me much longer, and I hate to have her so sad and upset in the time she has left. She has always been sorry about you and Norris and she's fond of the girls. She's missed them. "

"Edie, " said Grace, "there are a great many 'might-have-beens' in this whole sorry business. "

"That's true. I often remember the good times we all had in past years on Cartwright street and in Olmsted Falls. In fact, that's all Mother talks about lately. She seems to have gone down hill ever since we moved away from Cartwright Street, but especially after we had to move in with Norris and Pauline. It was good for Mother to do the cooking, as she did when she had her own kitchen. She and Aunt Ada used to love Christmas and Thanksgiving. They used to cook so many nice things. We all had money then, of course. But I don't care so much about the money. It's being alone in that house this winter that's been so sad. First Jane left, and then Dee, and now Norris. Mother and I were always alright when I could work and Mother was still a practitioner. If this was going to happen I wish it had happened earlier when I had a job and felt useful. When the girls and Norris were around, at least I felt that my cooking was a help to the family. Now Mother and I are just one of Norris's problems. Dear me, I must stop talking this way. Perhaps it's because it's holiday time I'm taking it so hard. "

Suddenly Grace made up her mind. She would take Ethel and Rosella in their time of need. It was perhaps significant that Norris had told Edie to talk to her. Oh, if one only knew what was really in his mind. He had said that she was "a kind person. "

But there were problems. "Edie, " Grace said, "you can see that we haven't enough furniture for a home, really. If we can solve that problem you and Mother Rahming may come on a temporary basis with the understanding that Norris is going to make some other arrangement as soon as possible. "

"Mother and I will have our own bedroom furniture, Grace. There might. be a few other things as well, though I don't know what Pauline is going to want. "

Tears welled up in Edie's eyes again. "Grace , I'm ever so grateful to you. "

"Well, I don't know how it will work out, Edie, but we'll try it. "

"I often think how happy we all were in our Art School days. Do you remember those days Grace? "

"I remember. "

####

In Jackson Heights, in the autumn of 1934, Nelle was exhausted from scrubbing the apartment. She had been at it for weeks and she was discouraged because she tired so easily. Nelle had always been a cleaner and scrubber even though no one else thought her house was dirty. Cluttered, yes, but never dirty. Her mother had thought once Nelle had been scrubbing things ever since she came home after her bad first marriage. She seemed to be scrubbing away the memory of Earle.

Be that as it may, she was now scrubbing from the apartment the dirt and grime left by the family who had leased it the previous winter while she and Roger were in Toronto and Babs in Oberlin. Babs had been in the apartment most of the summer while tutoring in Latin and geometry. But Babs hadn't cleaned the place up. Her mind was only on boys these days. Nelle had spent most of the summer at Camp Forest Primeval, some of the time alone. If Grace had not been

in Africa, Nelle would have persuaded her to spend a few weeks on the hill. Forest Camp would never seem the same again, now that Rog refused to have the cousins there. "They might not come if you did invite them, " she told him. "The kids are growing up. "

Nelle hated the way she got tired so easily. It took her an hour to clean the woodwork around one window and the apartment had eight windows, not counting the small one in the bath. The worst problem was that the renter had spattered something all over the kitchen walls and even the ceiling. Rog said it was "coke" or soda pop of some kind. In any case, it disgusted Nelle, and she found she couldn't wash the ceiling, it was too high for her. Rog had said he would do it, but she knew he had no time to do that nor any other housework, as he was working long hours as it was, and for small enough commissions. He was back again with the old magazine and the despised editor, and his nerves were frazzled.

But Nelle's greatest worry (after her own flagging energies) was Babs's trouble with her school work. She had tutored for several weeks last summer in Latin and geometry and it seemed to have helped the Latin some, but not the geometry, both of which subjects she was repeating. Babs professed to hate geometry and her grades were failing. Nor was she doing very well in English. This particularly upset Roger. She surprised them somewhat by getting a good grade in French, which she was trying this year at Grace's suggestion. In fact, Grace had said it was too bad Roger had insisted on Babs studying Latin. "I'm a good language scholar, " Grace had told Nelle, "but I wouldn't have liked Latin. Dee hated it, but she was good in French. Rog shouldn't try to fit Babs into a certain mold. She has her own talents, with her piano and her dancing. "

"Rog and I think she's too fat to be a dancer, " Nelle had said.

"She doesn't have to stay fat, " Grace maintained.

But so far, this fall, Babs was staying fat and not studying and just thinking of boys. Up at Camp Forest Primeval Nelle had been concerned because the other girls had steady boy friends, and Babs didn't. Now, two years later, she was afraid for Babs to go with boys. Babs had a lot of growing up to do. She was

still very much a little girl. She and Trink had been chums in Oberlin and both of them were sophomores. Now Trink was a junior but Babs didn't have enough credits to really be a junior because she had flunked geometry and Latin. And Mim was a senior now, and Jane had graduated and had a job. They were all leaving Babs behind. Maybe she would never graduate. Rog would be so disappointed in her.

But she must stop thinking about that. Babs could go to her school next year. She would put that out of her mind. These were difficult times, as Grace said and everyone had troubles. Grace wrote that her apartment in Cleveland had very little furniture. She had said, "We have beds and trunks and suitcases, but that's about all. We have no dressers or chests of drawers. " And Nelle had written back in answer, "I know just exactly what it is like to not have places to put things. We have boxes of Roger's manuscripts, and beds and typewriters, but that's about all. Last year Roger took two dressers up to New Hampshire and only left one here. We are living in boxes and closets. "

Grace had written also that Dee was engaged. This was interesting news. but Nelle wondered whether it would really be good news for Grace. She had been talking for two years of having "a place with the girls". If Dee married and left, there would be only Grace and Jane to share the cost of an apartment. Grace would certainly have to start earning money, especially as she hoped eventually to get Jane into college. Grace said Dee's beau was an artist. Well, Grace thought that was fine, but Nelle didn't. Not in times like these. Grace herself had said that Cleveland's artists were having a dreadful time. Nelle could have told Grace years ago that being an artist was not a good way to make a living. But artists weren't practical anyway. Grace had not only been an artist, she had married two of them, one right after failing with the first one. Carle wasn't the same kind of artist as Norris, of course, but he had the same attitude about work. Artists were different. They didn't like to work for a boss. They liked to wake up in the morning and think about what they'd like to do that day. Should they paint a water color or an oil painting? Or should they get a haircut or go for a walk? Or maybe just turn over and go back to sleep? If Dee married an artist quite likely she couldn't count on ever having much money.

If the Depression kept on, no one would have money. All day long Nelle's thoughts went round and round. She was planning to help the family finances a bit by selling her homemade bread. For years friends had assured her that they would buy it. Ever since her disastrous real estate investment she had felt the need to redeem herself in Rog's eyes. However, Rog was against the plan to sell bread. But she continued to plan the venture. Rog should swallow his pride.

Nelle was feeling down in the mouth one day in early December when Babs came home from school bringing the mail up with her.

"Here's a letter from Aunt Grace. " she said.

"Good, " Nelle said. "I was feeling so gloomy about Christmas with money so short. I'm so homesick to see Merly and Grace and Emmie. If we weren't so hard up I'd hop on the train and go home. "

"I thought we were home, " Babs said.

"Never! Jackson Heights? Home? Never! "

"Well. why do we live here?"

"Babs, we came here because Daddy worked downtown and we had to live in New York. So we came out here when most of these streets were nice open fields where you could play outdoors. That was years ago. "

"I remember. I wish it was still like that, " Babs said.

"Well, the reason I never felt that Jackson Heights was home is because , for me, home would be where my mother was. And that was Oberlin, and before that the farm, the Old Brick in North Royalton. " She was opening Grace's letter. "I sure hope

she's got some interesting news. I hope it isn't more about problems. I need cheering up today. "

As Nelle read, she kept on saying at intervals, "Well, I'll be darned, " until Babs said "Mother! Tell me what's happened. "

But Nelle read on to the end, then she said, "I'll read it aloud tonight when Daddy gets home. "

"Alright. Listen, I'm going over to Merly's to study. "

"Be sure you study. Don't just play records. And be home in time to help me with dinner. "

"Alright. "

Nelle held back the letter until they were having their after dinner coffee.

Then she brought it forth. But first she said to Rog, "Honey I'll give you three guesses. What wild thing do you think Grace has done now?"

"Got married?" he asked.

"No. "

"Got a wonderful high-paying job? "

"No, unfortunately. "

"She got a low-paying job?"

Nelle laughed. "No. You've got to guess even wilder than that. "

"I guessed three guesses, " Rog said.

"But this is fun. Guess some more. "

"Oh now, Tooky. "

"One more. Guess the wildest thing Grace might do. "

"Entered a convent, " Rog said, laughing. "Oh, Tooky, I give up. "

"Well, " Nelle said, "I give up too. She's done just about the last thing you'd expect her to do. She's taken in Mother Rahming and Ethel to live with her. "

"Now Tooky, stop teasing. "

"I mean it. That's just exactly what she's done. Grace's ex-mother-in-law and sister-in-law now have become a part of her household. Listen to this letter. "

"Dear Nelle,

I would have written much sooner, but the most incredible events have taken place here and I have not had a minute to write letters, though there is so much to tell, but I will try and condense it. A week before Thanksgiving, Dee went to her father's place at Edie's invitation. She came home with the news that Norris and Pauline were separating.

Norris had moved out and Ethel and Mother Rahming were terribly upset ('bewildered' is the right word actually). No one knew just what the next step would be. A few days later Ethel came to see me to ask if she and her mother might stay with me until Norris was able to get a place where he could have them with him again.

Nelle, I could not say 'no' to poor Ethel. When I think of all I went through in past years. But I do pity Ethel and Mother Rahming is very frail. She's not going to be around long and poor Ethel's world is crumbling. And so - I took them in.

I scarcely had time to adjust to the idea when a new development came along. Pauline suddenly moved out of Norris' s place, taking all her own things. She says she will file for divorce and will ask for "other considerations. " I suppose that means money? Property? Who knows? Well! So Ethel and her mother were then all alone in that house.

I had to take them in then and there. Norris came and told me how grateful he is to me. He tells me I am a 'dear person' and has been very affectionate. What all this means I don't know. But time will reveal where all this is leading. He now comes here often.

Meanwhile I have given up my room to Ethel and her mother. Of course, I had no furniture in there, just my easel etc. Dee and I sleep in one of two front rooms. We have a studio couch. Jane has a small room in the back, and Skipper Root, who lives with us, has a room of course. We managed to scout up furniture for her, and Ethel and Rosella have their own. Other than that, it is very sparse around here. but I hope to get some more things soon. With all that has been happening I haven't been able to do anything myself. I want to do some painting and some writing while my impressions of Africa are fresh. I did a small fashion ad for Stromeier' s Store, and quite likely will get more, but meanwhile life is pretty difficult for us, and Christmas is almost upon us.

Dee is very happy with her beau, but quite upset because he is going to Pittsburgh to work there, and she will not see him very often.

The poor girl is still working for eight dollars a week and she thinks her boss is in trouble. He has an insurance agency, and is not doing well. Jane earns more, but it varies. Her salary is a little over ten dollars plus some tips, but Dee had that job before Jane, and she says there are few tips because the girl is supposed to refuse them. It seems silly but there is a reason. The girls' friend, Skipper. makes lots of money in tips. She is a waitress and can have tips. I hear her counting her change in the evening. She has stack of quarters, dimes and half-dollars and she gets some dollar bills as well. She must do very well, but I can hardly raise her room rent, as her room is not furnished lavishly, to say the least.

Well, old dears, I must close as I am getting sleepy and tomorrow I must try and get some painting done. I hope to have a number of things for the May Show. But it is very difficult to do anything under

the present arrangement, although I will say that Ethel has been fixing our dinners. (Norris pays something for having his ladies here). But he is just waiting to see what Pauline will do. And I, old dears, am waiting to see what he will do. He kisses me quite unabashedly when he comes here, but I do not know what is in the back of his mind. Sometimes he talks extravagantly of sowing a belated crop of wild oats. He had been seeing a young girl in her twenties (which is why Pauline decided to call it quits). But Norris has told Ethel he has absolutely no intention of marrying her. But, Norris is an egotist still, and I expect he is flattered by a young girl's interest.

Well, you can see that things here are not routine. Nelle. I still do need the things that are there. If you can get a barrel for 40 cents, go ahead and let me know what it costs to have it headed up.

Much love to all three of you and more news later. Grace. "

Nelle put the letter down wordlessly and waited for Rog's comment.

He was silent a moment, then shook his head. "Amazing!"

"What does it sound like to you?" Nelle asked.

"It sounds as if Norris and Grace are on kissing terms. "

"Don't you think they'll get back together again? It sounds that way to me. And that would be a huge mistake after all she put up with for years. "

"Maybe he is changed, " Rog suggested. "Chastened. "

"Oh, piffle! People don't change. I'm going to write Grace a letter, and tell her what I think about it. "

Rog smiled. "That ought to do the trick. "

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BY

JANE R. CHANDLER

PART NINE

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I WILL HAVE A COLD ONE

Christmas and the entire holiday season were a mixed experience for dwellers at Grace's Sloane Avenue apartment. There were trials and little joys.

For Skipper (Marian Root) there was a recurring health problem. From time to time she suffered from aching knees and ankles. She did not like to talk about it, since she was a Christian Scientist, but it was a problem at work, because some of the other girls had known of her trouble and told Mr. Hennessy that 'Root' should be persuaded to see a doctor. Skipper had only mentioned it once to Jane. She had had the trouble in the springtime and it had gone away in the summer. It had come back in late October and was still with her in December. Not only did her knees and ankles ache, but her wrists, and she tired easily, but she did not tell any of the Rahming family, and her practitioner was 'working' for her. She had not discussed it with her boyfriend, Bud (D.D. Irwin), except to say that she was a little tired lately.

But Skipper became officially engaged on Christmas Day when Bud Irwin gave her a diamond ring, and so she was happy in that she could now plan for the time when she could give up waiting tables. She would keep on working until Bud graduated from law school, passed his bar exam, and began practicing.

Dee's holidays were both good and bad also. A week before Christmas she came home with the news she had been dreading. Her boss had to let her go – he was forced to close his office for lack of funds.

Grace was particularly dismayed. "You mean he fired you right before Christmas!"

"Mother, he didn't fire me. He had to let me go."

"But right now, just before Christmas! That's awful!"

"Well, he has a family, Mother. Christmas is a problem for him, too. Kids always expect presents. I sure don't know what I'm going to do about gifts this year."

"Well, we're all in the same boat that way, I guess. Ethel is saying the same thing. No money for Christmas. She's going to make some candied orange peel, she said."

"Oh, that's a bright idea," Dee said. "That stuff is good."

Dee should have been more upset over the loss of her job than she appeared to be. She was worried, of course, but her 'beloved' (as Grace called Frank Nekola) was home from Pittsburgh for the holidays, and she could put her other troubles aside for the time being. Money worries could wait.

For Jane, things were just the reverse. Her 'beloved' did not spend the holidays in Cleveland, but instead went home to New Hampshire. She was puzzled by the whole thing, for up until the start of his Christmas vacation, she had expected Narze (Samaha) to come to Cleveland for about four days before going on to Boston and then New Hampshire. Actually he had not been certain that

he could afford the trip home to see his family, but hoped to be able to get to Boston, where he would be able to get a ride home with his brother.

Narze had come to Cleveland in early November to see a big football game. He and Jane had made their tentative holiday plans at that time. Narze's problem was having to stay at the hotel while in Cleveland. There was no other solution, for there were no extra beds at Grace's apartment. And after Ethel and Grandmother Rahming joined the ménage this was especially true. There wasn't even a carpet on the floor for any makeshift pallet to be put down. But Narze had said he would at least have money to stay two nights at the Adam Hotel and Jane said she would give him two more as a Christmas present, though Narze said he couldn't let her do that.

Just when Dee was feeling the money pinch because of losing her job, Jane was experiencing unexpected prosperity. Mr. Hennessy had told her she'd be getting 'a little extra cash' for Christmas. "Not in your pay envelope, mind you, but from our customers. If a guest hands you a tip and says, 'Merry Christmas,' you don't have to refuse it. Christmas is different. The public takes pity on us public servants."

But Jane was unprepared for the size of her Christmas tips. Most of the regular patrons to whom she never gave a hat-check gave her a generous tip, at least a dollar, but there were many fives and the casket company executive gave her a ten. She kept the extra money separate from her regular pay and thought of it as her Christmas fund. She knew that she would have more money to spend for presents than anyone else at home, not counting Skipper of course. Jane made her Christmas list carefully. She would do her shopping during her afternoon free time. She wanted to get Ethie and Grandma Rahming's presents at Strohmeyer's, so that they would have the familiar white boxes tied with red ribbon. She decided to get some pretty dishes and glassware 'for the house.' She would wrap each piece separately to make the Christmas present opening ceremony last longer. She would buy silk stockings and a slip for each of the ladies at home. And then if she had enough money she would buy some little dime store gifts as well.

As the week before Christmas began, Jane started her shopping and her Christmas fund grew larger. But her spirits sank. December the nineteenth arrived. She had expected him to come to Cleveland by bus that day. Although it had all been somewhat in question when then had been together in November, he had confirmed his plans in his recent letters. He would come to Cleveland on the first day of his holiday vacation, but he would let her know what time he'd see her. But it had been two days since she'd heard from him. December 19th came and the 20th as well, but there was still no letter from Narze. Since he had always been so dependable and faithful with his letters (indeed he wrote twice as many as Jane did) she was really worried and she spoke of him at home.

"If something should happen to him at college, his parents would be notified, but I would probably never hear about it. They wouldn't know my address, and they'd be mad at me anyway."

"Why?" Grace asked.

"For luring him out here."

"Oh, well, you're worrying needlessly," Grace said. "Probably he just went home instead of coming here."

“He wouldn’t just go home, Mother. It’s not like him.”

“She’s right,” Dee said. “Narze’s totally devoted.”

“And I’m sure something has happened to him,” Jane insisted.

“What would happen? Don’t get all in a panic,” Grace said.

“Anything could happen,” Jane said. “Such as what happened to Dee’s friend Dick – killed in a terrible auto accident. Burned to death.”

“It was a terrible shock when I learned of it,” Dee said.

“Well, don’t let your imagination run wild about Narze,” Grace said. “I’m sure he’s all right.”

Later, after the holidays, Jane would recall how unconcerned her mother was about Narze’s failure to appear on time, or to write and say why.”

But the next day, the twenty-first, word came from Narze. Jane was puzzled and angered by his short note.

Narze wrote:

Dear Jane,

I decided to go right home without stopping in Cleveland. My mother sent me money for the bus fare, so for several reasons I thought it best to do it this way. I hope that everyone in your family has a good Christmas. I expect that I will have a cold one.

As ever,

Narze

Jane shut herself in her room with the letter. She shed tears of disappointment and then tears of anger. She told herself that she was not upset that Narze had gone home to his family, but that he waited so long before telling her his plans. And the tone of his letter was not at all warm. Whatever his reasons were, he should have told her earlier.

The next day during her free time in the afternoon she wrote a letter that started out frosty and ended up in bitter sarcasm. College was doing wonderful things for him, she said. He was apparently taking courses she hadn’t heard about. He must be majoring in discourtesy, and minoring in egotism. More likely the other way around. It was very plain that after three months in college, he now considered he didn’t have time for hat-check girls.

She mailed it immediately in the terminal. It was Saturday, the 22nd. Narze would receive it in New Hampshire probably the day after Christmas, though perhaps it could get there on Monday, the day before. Good! She had ended it with “And Merry Christmas to you, too.” She had not signed it “As ever” in her usual way. Nor had she even signed her name.

She spent the remainder of her free time completing her Christmas shopping. She worked methodically from her list and felt satisfied that she had taken care of everyone. And after all, there would still be Monday. She would have to work part of the day on Christmas when the Winchester Room would be open from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m.

As soon as she got back to work for the evening shift she regretted having fired off the 'hot shot' letter to Narze. You were never supposed to write letters when you were first angry. You were supposed to wait until you had cooled down. Mother was always writing letters when she was upset. In fact, she was always writing letters. Or her journal. Dad had said that Mother wrote too many letters when she was upset. Dad said it was better not to write letters at all if they were going to be nasty ones. He said people tend to save letters and it is horrid to read old letters if they are nasty ones. They get you all worked up again, and revive old grievances.

Her letter to Narze had been pretty nasty and she was sorry she had sent it, because the more she thought about it the more Narze's note puzzled her. There was something very strange about it, as though it was written by another person, not Narze. It wasn't nasty, it was just terribly brief and distant. It said 'Dear Jane' instead of his usual 'Dearest, darling Janie.' And it wasn't signed 'With all my love forever.' It was as though Narze was angry about something. What would make him angry? Not that she didn't write to him often. That had never made him mad at her. No, it was something else and probably now she would never know.

####

Ethel and Rosella were so relieved to be transported away from the gloom of the Channing Avenue house that in spite of everything this Christmas was surprisingly pleasant. Ethie, particularly, enjoyed the holiday. The company of Grace and the girls was a pure delight, for Ethie's life was spent reading 'Science' to her mother, or fixing meals. Grace found Ethie a spellbound audience for the recounting of the Tunisian adventure.

Rosella seemed contented too, except for spells of 'noives.' The room she had occupied in Grace's apartment was larger than Jane's old bedroom at the Channing Avenue place. Rosella spent most of her time in the bedroom, resting on her bed. Surrounded by her familiar furniture with the dresser-top toilette articles arranged in their accustomed places, Rosella felt at home. She was aging fast. She took long naps, and was losing touch with the outside world. She had Ethel, and now that she was away from Channing Avenue, Norris was coming to see her often. It seemed nice. And when she sat in the living room or at the kitchen table and saw Grace moving about the apartment it seemed normal and like old times.

When the movers had brought the bedroom furniture from Channing Avenue. Norris had sent with it a few other pieces of Rosella's, some antique chairs, a dresser which had been Ada's, and a couple of small tables, etc. Along with two small oriental rugs, the things helped the appearance of the living room. By the time Dee and Jane had set up and trimmed a small Christmas tree things were quite festive. And there was Jane's new little radio to provide the hymns and carols. On the strength of a fashion illustration job for Strohmeyer's, Grace bought small gifts for everyone. Dee earned a little cash doing some sewing for Skipper, and with that money she was able to put a few more little packages under the tree. And Ethie made her candy and gave silk stockings to everyone. Jane wrapped her presents in deep blue tissue covered with silver stars, and in the case of a set of ruby red drinking glasses, she wrapped each one individually. Skipper went home to Chagrin Falls for Christmas Eve and morning, but like Jane, she had to work on Christmas afternoon. Skipper left a big box of candy under the tree. And so Santa Claus did not completely pass them by, and another Depression Christmas was accomplished and celebrated.

But Jane was unhappy over Narze, and Grace was completely wrung out emotionally by the events of the past month. After years of preoccupation with her love for Norris, he was back in her life in a perfectly maddening way. From day to day it was from the heights to the abysses, as far as Grace's hope fared. First, the news that she had hoped to hear for years (though she would never put that hope into an expressed wish) that Norris and Pauline had separated. Her heart soared, then sank when Dee said that Norris had been unfaithful. It rose again on the thought that he was just forcing Pauline to end the marriage. Then down again on learning that Norris was really being seen with someone. Hope again; he was having a middle-aged 'fling'. Despair on learning the someone was a young woman.

Grace had had only a few days to adjust to all this, before Ethie came to see her, and before she knew it, Grace was providing shelter for her one-time in-laws. And from day to day now, she was continuing in a state of uncertainty. Norris was in and out several times a week. Ostensibly to see his mother and sister, but spending much time talking with Grace; and Dee if she was

there. To Grace, Norr was a puzzle at this time. He had never been a calm person, but now he seemed particularly high strung and keyed up. She wondered whether he might be on the verge of a nervous breakdown. Most of the time, these days, he was demonstratively affectionate, but again he would talk about his need to have a period of freedom before settling down to await old age. They should all be together, he told Grace, and could have been these past ten years if she had not “shoved him out.” And, he said, they must go out on a “date” soon. And she must come downtown to his studio. But, oh, she told herself, not yet, not yet.

After the gifts had been opened on Christmas morning and the tissue paper and ribbons picked up, Jane went back to bed for a while. She did not have to be at work until 2 p.m.

“I’m going to make some pancakes, or crepes suzettes,” Grace said. “Don’t you want to stay up for them?”

“No, thanks. I have cramps. I don’t feel good.”

“You look thin, dear.”

“Oh Mother! You always say that. Why would I want to be fat? Will you call me at 12:30 please?”

“It’s too bad you have to work, I must say.”

“Well, it’s good I have a job though, isn’t it?”

“Yes, but they oughtn’t to be open Christmas Day.”

“It’s a rotten Christmas anyway – so call me at 12:30.”

Jane retired to her room and closed the door.

“She’s feeling peeved because Narze didn’t come,” Grace thought. All during the past month she had (most of the time) nearly forgotten the letter she had written to Narze after his visit to take Jane to the football game in Cleveland. She had thought about it so little because right after mailing the letter, Norris, Rosella and Ethel reentered her life and turned it upside down. It was only when she caught a glimpse of Jane’s glum face that she thought again about the letter. She decided that apparently Narze had given its contents some serious thought. If so, good! Perhaps how that association was at an end.

Grace’s mind left Jane and went back to its accustomed preoccupation – Norris. She could hear Ethel reading Christian Science to Rosella in their room. “My room!” She hoped they both appreciated what she had given up. Just because it had no furniture didn’t mean she wasn’t using the room. She had had her clothes in the closet, and her easel and art supplies in the room.

Grace stood in the doorway now and Ethel looked up with her gentle smile. Ethie was gentle by nature, and years of reading Christian Science had made the placid smile a habit she could not break. Even in these difficult times she rarely looked other than completely agreeable. Grace said now, “Excuse me for interrupting your reading, Ethel, but what time do you suppose Norris will get here?”

“Probably not till tomorrow.”

“You mean he isn’t coming here today?” Grace asked.

“He said he might possibly stop in here this evening but he was afraid it would be too late when he got back.”

“Back from where?”

“Springfield. He took Mary (Arndt) home.”

“Mary. Is that the girl’s name?”

“Yes.”

“And she lives in Springfield? I thought she lived here in Cleveland.”

“It’s her parents that live in Springfield, you see.”

“Oh,” Grace said, “then he must be very serious about this Mary. He’s being taken home to meet the parents. He must intend to marry her.”

“No, Grace, he told me he has no such intentions. He says he wants to savor his freedom.”

“Savor his freedom! Well, what do her parents think about her running around with a married man?”

Ethel looked distressed. “I don’t know about that, Grace, but she isn’t just a school girl. She has a baby girl.”

“Is she married too then?” Grace was astounded.

“I suppose she’s divorced. But I don’t know anything more about her, Grace.”

“I’m certainly surprised that he didn’t come here on Christmas Day – at least to see his mother.”

“Perhaps he’ll come this evening,” Ethel said. Her mother had fallen asleep and seemed to have heard nothing of the conversation.

Seeing Rosella thus, Grace thought, “How near she is to the shadows. Why doesn’t Norris come? He cares nothing for any of us. Not for his mother nor his sister. Not for Jane. Not for Dee. Not for me.



ROSELLA NORRIS RAHMING
"MARCELLA"
1934

Rosella Norris Rahming
1712 $\frac{1}{2}$

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As so often in her life, when Grace was upset, she turned to writing. Many were the letters she had fired off when she was angry and/or hurt. These letters sometimes upset their recipients and it was so much safer to pour out her emotions in her journal. The entries in that journal reflected her wide swings of mood. Often she addressed them directly to Norris in which case she used the second person singular. But as her stream of consciousness meandered on, her grievances floated or boiled to the surface and she began writing in the third person – speaking of “Norris’ incredible egotism.”

But this Christmas night she felt she must put Norris out of her thoughts (Oh, how often had she resolved to do just that, but in vain). She was determined to develop her many friendships. She had not sent out Christmas cards – now she would write New Year’s greetings.

She wrote to her cultured Arab friend in Tunis – the man she called ‘Monsieur’. She wrote in French and it pleased her to be able to do it well. She thanked him again for the three little bottles of very special perfumes he had given her on the day she left Tunis. And she wrote to Edna and Earl Hurst in New York and also to Pauline "Polly" Patterson and others. She also wrote to a woman in Rome whom she had met through Elma Pratt. The woman was an American whose husband, an Italian, worked at the American Embassy. Clare Bellini spoke quite freely in her letters of her scorn for the Italian dictator, Benito “Il Duce” Mussolini. She apparently did not feel it risky to write such thought, and her mail to and from America traveled in the ‘embassy pouch.’ Grace found her letters fascinating. Everywhere Grace went in her travels, she acquired new friends. It was her one dependable solace in her anguish over Norris.

But by bedtime on Christmas night he had not appeared and Grace, Ethel and Rosella were all disappointed. It mattered little to Jane and Dee for they had worries of their own. Jane was still upset about Narze’s behavior and Dee had a bad case of blues because Frank Nikola had told her he must get back to Pittsburgh. He would not stay in Cleveland for New Years.

When Jane returned to work after Christmas she had a pleasant surprise. Winchester Room guests were still in a holiday mood, and more of her regular patrons gave her generous gifts of money. Before the holiday week was over, she found the grand total had come to \$125. She had spent quite a bit on gifts for the family, but now she had money to buy some things she had been longing for for herself. There were after-Christmas sales going on. She bought herself a good pair of shoes for \$6.50. Normally she paid \$1.99 or \$2.99 for shoes. She bought some blouses, and material to make a suit. That year ‘man tailored’ suits for women were very much in style, inspired by Marlene Dietrich. Snap-brim fedora hats completed the look. Jane bought a fedora as well. It was a soft, furry grey hat and went well with her last and best purchase. She had been longing for weeks to own a lapin jacket. ‘Lapin’ was just the French word for ‘rabbit’, but when the fur was clipped, dyed and well-tailored the jackets were very attractive. Jane chose a grey one. It cost \$19.95 on sale. That night she went home proudly with her purchases. New clothes went a long way to raise one’s spirits.

When she got home she found her mother in an indignant mood.

“Your father was here this evening. Honestly, he is the absolute limit.”

“What now?”

“Oh, he is such an egotist!”

“Well, Mama, why do you keep on being surprised at the things Dad does. You had seventeen years to get used to the way he is.”

“But I would have thought that he had learned his lesson. Now he is waltzing this young girl around and I imagine she thinks he is Prince Charming himself.”

“Mr. Wonderful,” Jane said. “That’s what Skipper calls these conceited men.”

“Your father tells me he doesn’t intend to get married again, but I think differently. Why else would he be getting himself tangled up with her family.”

“Well, perhaps he isn’t tangled up. Maybe they are just friends.”

“Oh Jane, it would be naïve to count on that.”

“Alright Mother, but Dee and I think it’s naïve for you to think that you would be happy if you were to be married to Dad again.”

“I just feel that it would be better for all four of us. And better for Ethel and Mother Rahming too. They’re happy with us.”

“I know, Mama. I’m sure they are. But you wouldn’t be happy with Dad. No happier than you were before.”

“Why not? There is a fine side to your father’s nature.”

“Sure, but it’s not enough. He’s hard to live with. I wouldn’t live with him. That’s why I left before. Ask Dee.”

“Well, I don’t want to talk about it anymore. What do you have in those packages?”

Jane showed her mother her purchases and she modeled the lapin fur jacket.

“Well, that’s pretty spiffy. You’re getting more tips now, aren’t you.”

“No, but I got some more Christmas money this week.”

“You ought to save it towards your college,” Grace said.

“Then who would buy the clothes I need?”

“And...” Jane thought caustically, “...how long would it be before it got ‘borrowed’ for some emergency.”

“Well, did you really need that jacket?”

“I sure did – it cheered me up.”

“Well, all right. By the way, there’s a letter from Narze.”

Jane’s face lit up. “Good! Where?”

“On the kitchen shelf.”

Jane got the letter and vanished into her room. A few minutes later Grace went down the hall and stood in the doorway.

“What’s the news from Narze?”

Jane was still reading and she silently frowned slightly, but her mother waited till she was finished.

“He’s going to stop here on his way to Reliance.”

“Jane, I would think that you might be starting to get over your obsession with Narze.”

“Well, it’s taking you much longer to get over you obsession with Dad.”

“There’s no comparison there at all.”

“Sure there is. Only thing different is that Narze’s always been nice to me – always.”

“You have a great deal to learn.”

I'LL HAVE TO SHOW YOU THIS

If November and December had been eventful and disturbing for Grace, January seemed about to be their equal. She was uplifted with hope one day and downcast or angry the next. She tossed around at night mulling it all over till the wee hours. She got a few small illustration jobs for Strohmeyer's store but found herself so preoccupied with Norris and his 'goings-on' that she found it difficult to concentrate on her work. One day she would be sure that Norris would remarry her, and the next she wished he were ten thousand miles away.

Merly came in to Cleveland a few days after Christmas and presented Grace with a signed receipt stating that all the interest on a \$1200 loan had been paid in full. It was Merly's Christmas gift. Grace's eyes filled with tears of gratitude. Temporarily, it eased her money worries. But Dee was still unemployed, and the weekly room rent contributions from Jane and Marian Root (Skipper) feel far short of covering the rent and utility costs. Norris paid something for his mother and sister, but he was frequently late with that. All sources of income put together were not enough to cover everything, what with food, phone and unforeseen expenses.

Two days after Christmas, Norris came with a large box of chocolates.

"For everyone. I had no money for gifts this year, as you all know."

He also brought with him the large carton of Norris and Rahming family keepsakes and other things that had remained behind at the Channing Avenue house. Grace's apartment had storage bins in the basement and she had permitted Norris and Ethel to put trunks and boxes in her locked bin.

But Norris cautioned Ethel. "Keep the family mementos in your room Ethie. My Christening dress is gone out of this box, and so is the package of old valentines. I know that that 'bitch kitty' stole them. She drooled over those things. I had to get them out more than once so she could show them to her ladies."

"Oh, surely Pauline wouldn't take them," Ethie said. "They must be somewhere there."
"No, they're not. They're gone. She always coveted those things. She would do it to get them for herself, and also to get even. I've looked everywhere for them. She didn't take all the valentines, just the best ones. All the ones with red tissue paper."

"Oh," said Ethel, "that's different. I thought maybe they were just mislaid among our things."

"To tell the truth, I thought maybe I might sell them, but that bitc..."

"Norris!" Grace interrupted. "Even you wouldn't sell your family's keepsakes!"

"I'm in debt. I've already sold my stamp collection. Many of those were my father's stamps and all I got was \$30. And I have a terribly sore throat as well."

Neither Grace nor Ethel could keep from smiling and the abrupt whining complaint and Norris was not amused at their amusement.

“It’s not funny I want you to know.”

“It certainly isn’t,” Grace agreed. “But you were talking about something so remote from your health. Norr, aren’t you a Christian Scientist anymore?”

“Certainly, but not in that aspect of it. Not in the matter of physical health.”

“I agree with you there,” Grace said. “At least, I’ve come to the conclusion that Jane is right – Christian Scientists have just as many troubles as everyone else.”

“However,” Norris said. “They don’t talk about it and that’s a fine thing right there.”

“Jane insists that they do talk about it, only in their own language. They say ‘I have a belief of a sore throat, a claim of a sore throat,’ and everyone else says, ‘I have a sore throat’.”

“Jane likes to argue,” Norris said.

“Well I wonder who she inherits that from.”

“Now Hedgy, she inherits it from... both of us. Admit it.”

“Oh now Norr... everyone knows...”

“Hedgy, I argue loudly, whereas you argue softly.”

“Oh, Norris!” Grace decided to change the debate. “I would have thought you’d have wanted to spend Christmas with your family.”

“Actually, I half expected to get back here Christmas night.”

“You ‘half expected’ did you?”

“Yes, but the family, my friend’s parents, had their dinner planned so that didn’t work out.”

“So you stayed there?”

“Yes, and the doctor treated my throat. That’s Mary’s father. He’s a fine old gentleman. I’m very much impressed with him. He has a splendid library and he’s a good radical like me. He’s a delight to be with and talk to.”

“So I suppose you’d like to join that family?”

“I have no such plans in mind.”

“It is convenient that your friend’s father is a doctor but you say your throat is still terrible?”

“I’m coming to the conclusion that it’s tubercular.”

“Your throat! What a notion!” Grace almost snorted.

“Haven’t you ever heard of extrapulmonary tuberculosis?”

“Of course I haven’t. You turned me into a Christian Scientist and now you abandon it. I suppose that doctor has converted you.”

“Grace, all this would never have happened if you had not shoved me out. I’d have no need to look for a new circle of friends.”

“Norris. Isn’t it time you abandoned this fiction about our divorce being my fault. No one buys it.”

“Well... It was both our faults. We had to grow up.”

This was a relatively mild version of the old blame game and just then Jane came home from work. She usually came in at night, tired but talkative – full of whatever might have occurred of interest. She always brought with her the final edition of the Cleveland News from the public square where she caught her street car. Tonight she was very quiet, in fact, she wore what Grace perceived to be ‘a black look’. She acknowledged their greetings and, saying she didn’t feel very well, disappeared into her room behind a closed door.

“What’s the matter with Jane?” Norris asked.

“I have a good notion. She expected Narze to be in town today and obviously he hasn’t come.”

“She’s still interested in that one?”

“Yes, and it’s completely out of the question, Norr. Surely you agree that he’s from too different a background.”

“I’m not convinced of that. He seems to be a very nice boy, Grace.”

[See end of section for more about Norris Rahming’s “good radical” nature]

“Well, ‘nice’ isn’t all that’s required. I wrote him a little letter explaining my viewpoint.”

“You wrote him a letter! One of your famous letters.”

“It was a very kind, courteous letter, Norr.”

“I’ll bet you fairly overwhelmed him with words. I know how you can express your viewpoint, Grace. Besides, I’m sure that interfering with young people only makes them more determined. You’d do better to sing his praises, if you want Jane to lose interest in Narze.”

“That’s really ridiculous!”

“No, it isn’t. Kids are contrary; people are contrary. By writing him a letter like that, you’ve no doubt made their attachment stronger. She’ll be determined to thwart your machinations.”

“She won’t know about my so called ‘machinations’ Norr. Apparently Narze took my letter seriously and saw the light. He was supposed to be here today, but obviously he decided not to come.”

“You are naïve if you think that’s the last you’ll hear of this business. If your mother had written a me a similar letter, would that have kept me away from you?”

Grace smiled. “Oh, Norr, we were different.”

[“Breaching Jericho's Walls: A Twentieth-Century African American Life”

By Allen B. Ballard

p107

I was, at graduation, the winner of the award that went to the athlete with the highest scholastic average in the class. ...Penn and Temple – to which many of my white classmates were applying – did not have scholarships for me. Given my family’s circumstances, a scholarship was essential. Almost by default I applied to Lincoln, which did grant me an academic scholarship.

{description of his hatred of Freshman hazing at Lincoln} ...

One spring day, a messenger came to my classroom and asked that I come upstairs to Dr. Cornog’s office. I was surprised, of course, and a little nervous, though I knew the principal well enough to have had conversations with him in the hallways. With him was a short, pleasant-looking, well-dressed man.

“This is Professor Norris Rahming, the admissions officer from Kenyon College in Ohio, and he’d like to speak with you.”

Nothing could have prepared me for what Professor Rahming had in mind.

“Would you like to follow in Jackie Robinson’s footsteps?”

“I don’t understand sir.”

“I’m talking about your becoming one of the first Negro students to integrate Kenyon College. I’ve been in Ohio and there’s another Negro student – Stanley Jackson, of Steubenville High School – who’s interested, so you wouldn’t be totally alone there.”

Dr. Cornog chimed in to say that although I might not have heard of Kenyon – I hadn’t – it was “one of the finest institutions in this land, and you’ll bet an unmatched education, I promise you that.”

Professor Rahming said he’d looked over all my records and was sure I’d be eligible for a scholarship, and what I didn’t receive in scholarship aid would be made up waiting tables. With a summer job, I should be able to go through college with only minimal assistance from my family.]

####

Grace had been wrong in assuming that Narze had not come to Cleveland that day. But he would not have dreamed of coming to the apartment. He had arrived in town by bus and gone straight to the Union Terminal where he put his luggage in a rented locker. He then walked past the Winchester Room till he caught Jane's eye. He indicated that he would meet her in the main waiting room. They had met there before, and they liked it because a train station is a place where people are not conspicuous if they kiss in greeting and again in goodbye.

At three o'clock Jane went through the east concourse, across the main concourse where a tall Christmas tree still stood. She entered the huge waiting room with its high-backed polished benches. Although the place was crowded with holiday train travelers, she spotted Narze immediately. He was wearing a new grey suit she had never seen before. It looked nice – an improvement over the dark one he had bought to go to the prom with her, and that had been an improvement over the old brown suit he'd had when she first knew him.

Their first moments were awkward. They could have kissed but didn't, for neither one felt confident. There was too much strain between them.

He noted her grey fur jacket. "Santa Claus has been good to you I see."

"I bought it from my Christmas money from our steady patrons. They were my Santa Claus"

"It's very pretty."

"And Santa was good to you, too. I like that light grey."

"My Dad was Santa Clause. He took me to my Uncle's store to get the suit, and Uncle gave a good discount. And my mothah gave me a sweatah."

Jane had seen so little of Narze lately that his New Hampshire accent sounded strange again.

"So your Christmas was pretty nice I guess?"

He looked at her somberly. "It was, and it wasn't, Janie. I felt terrible when I got your letter. You weah so angry at me."

"But Narze! I was so disappointed that you didn't stop for at least one or two days. Christmas is very important to me and you and I were together on the last two of them. I wasn't angry because you went home – only that you didn't let me know till the last minute."

"Janie, the-ah we-ah things you didn't know. I didn't know what to do, or what to tell you. I kept mulling it ove-ah in my mind."

"Mulling what over?"

"Janie, your mothah doesn't like me."

“She just never likes boys who like me, Narze. I’m supposed to have a career. I’m off to a roaring start with that – I work where all sorts of men hang their hats...”

“I guess she doesn’t, but she specifically doesn’t want you seeing me at all. She doesn’t like the ‘origin’ of my hat...”

“She just doesn’t want us to be serious, Narze. Of course she’s way too late to stop that!”

Narze’s eyes filled. “I really wish we could have a room somewhere but, Janie, I have to get right back to Reliance. My bus leaves at 7:10 this evening. I’m due back at my job tomorrow.”

“You can’t stay over even one night? Would it be so terrible if you went back tomorrow morning?”

“No, I promised I’d be there. I need my job if I don’t want to starve to death. Anyway, you have to work. We couldn’t be together even if I could stay.”

“You could come home with me after work and even stay at our place. You could sleep in my room and I could bunk with Skipper.”

“Janie, I would feel unwelcome at your place, even if I could stay over.”

“Why Narze? There is something wrong!”

He reached into a pocket and pulled out a folded letter. “I’ll have to show you this. She sent it to me before Thanksgiving. I guess she was afraid I’d show up for the holiday.”

“Oh, Narze!” Jane recognized her mother’s handwriting and her hand reached for the letter.

Narze held it back. “I’m sure she didn’t want you to know about this, let alone read it, but after I got that angry letter from you I had to let you know what happened. The way I mulled about it, the way I knew I had to. We aren’t thirteen-year-olds. I couldn’t stand for you to think I didn’t love you anymore!”

Jane took the letter and read...

My Dear Narze,

Writing this letter is a very unpleasant task for me. I want you to know it is not intended as a personal criticism. When you young people were in New Hampshire two years ago I took a very dim view of this business of going steady. It is a very wrong kind of commitment of boys and girls too young to marry. However, I overlooked it then, because I felt certain it would end with the school year. But I was wrong, because you followed Jane when she returned to Cleveland. I had no idea you would do such a thing. She has not had an opportunity to meet other young men because she has been bound by her arrangement with you. This is unfortunate at her age. She is a number of years from marriage as she still has her college training ahead of her, and she will no doubt start next September. As for marriage, it is difficult enough, even for people who have

been raised in similar environments and you and Jane certainly have not. Coming as you do, from a family with origins belonging totally different religion and culture, it would never do.

...

Jane caught the source of what Narze had said about the 'origin' of his hat and she glance up. She saw only Narze. The concourse filled with people seemed far away.

...

It would never do at all, and Jane should not continue to be tied up with you emotionally. If you are not in the picture she will get over it in a short time. And so I must ask you to step quietly, but very definitely, out of Jane's life. But, be assured that I wish you well in all you do.

Most Sincerely,

Grace Rahming

Jane was unable to say anything. She just sat there shaking her head, and Narze too was silent, looking at her.

Finally Jane spoke. "I didn't know Mother was that much of a snob."

"Well that lettah sure hurt my feelings. You'd think I was the original 'Terrible Turk'."

"But it's a funny thing, Narze; when Mother came home from Tunisia, she said she felt she understood the Arab people better now, and that, since talking with the man she calls 'Monsieur,' she found some fine things about their customs."

"Well, I don't considah myself an 'Arab'. I just think of myself as a boy from New Hampshah, whose parents came from Lebanon when they weah young."

"I know Narze, and that's what I think too. But Mother just groups all those Moslem countries together. It isn't that though – she isn't going to like any boyfriend of mine. She's afraid I'll get married."

"Most girls do."

"It's not Mother's plan for me though."

"How about youah plan for you?"

"Don't worry about that. Nobody else is going to decide my life. Narze, I sure wish you didn't have to be back at Reliance tonight. Can't you stay possibly? I'd like to show Mother that we aren't going to take her letter seriously. I'm on my own now. She can't send my friends out of my life."

"Janie, I wouldn't have the nerve to go out to your place. Your mother scares me. Anyway, I really can't."

She looked so downcast that he said, “Honey, don’t feel bad. Next time I get a chance to come to Cleveland, I’ll come foah at least a couple of days and I’ll get a room at the Adam and you can come theah and it’ll be like old times. I’ll have to try and save some money though.”

“I’ll save some too,” Jane said, cheering up a little.

“And we’ll be writing to each other. Maybe when I’m through college it’ll make a difference with your mothah.”

“It ought to – especially if I don’t get to go at all.”

“Maybe I’ll be the one to see that you go.”

Jane was looking thoughtful. “I wonder of Mom would interfere with my letters from you.”

“She bettah not.”

“The thought would never have entered my mind if she hadn’t written that letter to you. Now I’m not sure what she would do!”

They spent the rest of Jane’s free time talking of other things. Narze brought her up to date on all the news of those back home in New Hampshire, and Jane passed on the news of how her Christmas had gone and what her father and mother and the rest were doing.

They parted teary-eyed at 5 o’clock when Jane had to report back to work.

I HOPED HE MIGHT HAVE CHANGED

With the new year, Grace's entries in her journal became more and more distraught. Everyone in the household seemed to have problems or to be a problem. Jane was not like herself. She was usually so talkative and animated, full of chatter about one thing or another, but lately she was 'in a black mood' and had little to say, at least to her mother.

And Dee still could not find work. Skipper had given her some sewing to do, repairing the ruffled organdy aprons the Winchester Room waitresses were required to wear. Dee did up three of them for Skipper. The work was fussy and complicated, but still Skipper thought Dee charged too much. Grace was more outraged than Dee at Skipper's "penny-pinching." Dee said "Let's just forget it." But it had a dampening effect on all concerned.

Mother Rahming was frequently ill and nervous, and Ethel worried and weary from waiting on her.

Merly came into town from Oberlin and stayed at Bill and Gertrude's. Grace went over to join them all for dinner one night and the evening left her feeling quite ruffled. The Depression was discussed at length and how Roosevelt was doing. Gertrude said that it was too bad that Grace had gone to Tunis and dropped out of the Federal Art Project.

"But I couldn't have counted on that," Grace had said. "It was only a temporary thing."

"But it might have led to something else, Grace," Gertrude said.

"Actually," said Bill, "that program is still continuing."

"I'm going to write the story of my trip and illustrate it with sketches. I brought back quite a lot of material. And I've had two little fashion jobs for Strohmeier's. I expect to get more of that work."

"What you really need now is some kind of 'regular work where you get paid at the end of the week or the month - even if it wasn't art work. These are poor times for art work."

"I know, Gertie, I know." Grace felt irked.

Then something else further upset her.

The conversation at the dinner -table turned to Father Martin's health. While everyone agreed that he was failing somewhat, they all felt that he was remarkable. He would be ninety-four years old in March. Then Gertrude asked Merly a question.

"Tell me, how did Emmie react to the news of William's death?"

"I haven't told her," Merly replied. "Do you think..."

But Grace broke in. "Wait a minute. Did you say Bill Wooldridge died?"

It came out that Nelle had written to Merly sometime last fall to say that they'd been out of New York when it happened, and that Billy Wooldridge had tried to reach them but they weren't in

Jackson Heights, so he had sent a telegram to New Hampshire, but they had left for Toronto and it had been quite a while before they got back to New York, and Billy had called them to let them know. Billy said that his father had been found dead in his room. He'd been dead several days.

“Oh, how sad! Poor Billy! Merly! Why on earth didn't you let me know?” Grace was shaking her head.

“I don't even remember when Nelle wrote me of it. I probably assumed she told you too. I'm sure that's what she thinks.”

“Wel-l-l, We'd have spoken of it if I had known. Surely you realize that Merly!”

“All you've spoken of lately is Norris and his people, Grace.” Bill and Gertrude both laughed.

Grace went home that night feeling irked, ruffled, mad and very sad about Bill. Only a year and a half ago they had all been such a close-knit little group and Forest Camp Primeval, and now he was gone. She thought about her brothers and sisters and their spouses, and how they were beginning to depart this 'vale of tears'. Merly's Waldo had died much too young; he'd been gone nearly ten years now. Howd's Lottie had passed too but she had been one of the oldest. A sense of her own mortality struck Grace but she reminded herself that these were all spouses that were gone. 'The Martin Nine' all survived. “We are a long-lived clan,” Grace thought, and felt better.

But Norris was foremost in her mind. Her spirits had soared so high when he had reappeared, but now they were drooping low. It was obvious that the 'mere fling' that Norr had assured his family about was, in fact, an enduring involvement. Norris came several times a week to see his mother and sister and each time, he would spend the better part of the evening talking to Grace. He would invariably speak of Mary Arndt and her daughter, Patricia Moore who was two years old.

Ten days into the new year, Norris' throat infection moved into his ear. He did not rely on Christian Science, nor did he consult a Cleveland doctor. Instead, he went to Springfield with Mary and had her father lance his eardrum. After convalescing in Springfield for a week, Norris returned with the proposal that Grace, Mother Rahming and Ethel meet Mary's baby, Patricia. Grace felt the idea was outrageous.

“It would be ludicrous for you to bring part of your 'new collection' here for my approval and admiration,” she said sharply.

“I can't understand why you are so rigid and unfriendly,” Norris counterattacked. “She's such a beautiful baby girl that I wanted all of you to see her.”

“Of course I have nothing against an innocent baby! But you are anything but 'innocent' Norris. If you had any sensitivity you'd see that it's completely inappropriate to propose such a thing. What about your own 'beautiful baby girls'?”

“What about them?”

“Just last week you were talking as though we could all be a family again. Don’t you love Dee and Jane anymore?”

“Certainly, and if you hadn’t thrown me out ten years ago we would still be a family. But, anyway, the girls are grown up and independent now. They don’t need me.”

“Oh, Norr, they do need you! Dee can’t find another job and Jane needs your help to go to college.”

“I have no money to spend on college for anybody. I had to borrow money from Ethel to buy food this week. I don’t know what I’m going to do about my debts.”

“And here you are getting yourself into another mess. Or is it she who’s getting into it. Does she earn money?”

“Yes, she does, and she’s grateful to have me for her friend.”

“That sounds so egotistical. You always think women are fairly swooning for the opportunity to serve you.”

He grinned. “That’s largely true, isn’t it? Seriously, she needs a friend. She’s had bad luck.”

“The ‘beautiful baby girl’ isn’t yours by any chance is she?”

“I’m really surprised you waited so long to ask that question – the inevitable question. Well, no, she isn’t my offspring. When she was born I didn’t yet know Mary. She had a bad first marriage. But she had troubles right from the time she was a little girl. She was badly burned in a fire. It was lucky her father was a physician. He gave her very special care which saved her life, there’s no doubt about that.”

“She must be badly disfigured,” said Grace, “or isn’t she?”

“Her face fortunately wasn’t burned. She has plenty of scars, of course, but they don’t bother me. Just the same it was a dreadful thing to happen to a child – bound to affect her.”

“So you’re the antidote for her troubles then?”

“I’m sure she can just use a friend.”

“If that’s what you are. Oh, Norr, don’t you realize what people are saying?”

“I can imagine what you think they are saying and I don’t give a damn what they are saying, anyway.”

####

Grace's journal pages now reflected her dysphoria. The euphoria of November had dissipated and her growing conviction that Norris would marry Mary, the girl he said was "grateful" to have him for a friend. It was plain that he was becoming dependent on her. He was addicted to the admiration she gave him, no doubt, and probably her earnings were necessary to him as well. "Why, oh why, must he always prey on women," Grace asked her journal, forgetting that she often treated it as a record that Norris would someday read. And why, oh why, must she keep on loving him, or, rather, loving the idealistic young man he had been when they first married (or had seemed to be).

So obsessed was Grace with Norris's perfidy, that her journal, that spring, scarcely mentioned Dee, Jane or Skipper – their doings or romances. Sometimes she mentioned Rosella Rahming's failing health, or made a pitying observation about Ethel.

There was no further mention in the journal of Dee's engagement to Frank Nikola and, indeed, that relationship had ended. Not officially, not abruptly, but still it was over. He was not in Cleveland and Dee no longer heard from him. When Grace questioned her, Dee said "Frank is old-fashioned. I shouldn't have told him about Cameron Walton."

"Well, dear, that is because he is from a European background and they are very fixed in their ideas about things like that."

"It's the double standard. It's rotten!"

Dee was still unemployed as February came and went. She hunted for work but had no luck.

Another event went unmentioned in Grace's journal. Mona James reappeared after being out of the picture for several months. In her inimitable way she recounted to Dee and Jane the details of her second abortion. Dee later told Grace.

Dee and Jane had both been quite horrified by Mona's account and they had thought that after the first abortion, it would be the last of such dilemmas. This time, however, things were worse because Mona's promiscuity was so widely known that she could not lay fatherhood on any particular man. She had stewed about this for weeks – not knowing what to do. Help from her parents was out of the question. They had troubles of their own. Her father, who was one of Cleveland's artists, was a no-good character who had left her mother to run around with "floozyes" (as Norris put it). Mona's father came home occasionally to quarrel with and generally abuse his wife, a small son, and Mona. Both parents were English - the mother timid and small, the father a lanky bully. Mona was afraid to have them know of her second pregnancy. Finally, when she was five months along and her figure beginning to thicken, she again turned in desperation to the youth advisor at the church.

"He came to my rescue again," she reported. "He scared up some money for me."

"Twice?" Jane asked. "Didn't he pay before?"

“No, the first time he got Nate to pay. I don’t know why he helped me out, except that he likes me.”

“Didn’t he lecture you about getting into trouble so soon again?” Dee asked.

“A little, but not anything like the way the doctor did when he found out how far along I was. He was really cross, for I had told him I was only three months gone, and when it was all over he said I was almost five months along.”

“Didn’t you know that?”

“I was afraid to tell him in case he wouldn’t do it and you know what? He discovered I have a double uterus. He got in the wrong place at first and thought I wasn’t pregnant until he found the other side.”

“Gee, I never heard of a double uterus,” Dee said.

Mona laughed bitterly. “Well, there certainly is such a thing and wouldn’t you know I’d have it. He called it ‘bicornate’ and you know, he did things differently this time. He said that under the circumstances, the way things appeared, I was more than three months and he was ‘going to disturb things and let nature take its course’. He sent me in a taxi to spend the night at this nurse’s house. Holy Smoke it was awful! I got regular labor pains and they went on all night and she wouldn’t even let me have an aspirin. She said aspirin makes you bleed more. Toward morning it finally happened and the nurse said it was a boy but she wouldn’t let me see. She said she had to save the ‘tissues’ for the doctor to see. Well, he came about 9 a.m. and that’s when he gave me the crabby lecture. That I ought to learn how to count and learn what makes babies. He told me not to ever come to him again and that I should tell any other doctor about my double uterus right at the start.

You know where all this part went on? Right next to the place where your grandma and auntie used to live on Channing.”

“I remember that taxis used to come there a lot,” Dee said. “How long ago did this happen?”

“About a week ago.”

“How do you feel now?”

“OK.”

“Well, you know, Mona. That doctor was quite right. You better find out what causes it.”

Mona burst into her rollicking laugh. “Oh, Lordy! I guess so! I really will won’t I? This time it was terrible – what a night that was!” She laughed again.

Dee had to tell her mother part of the story later because from where she was writing in her journal at the kitchen table, she could hear the girls talking. Grace asked plenty of questions and was predictably amazed and disapproving. What seemed to interest her the most was that the church’s youth counselor had given Mona the money for her abortion.

“That’s the church where Carle and I were married. Such a proper church too. I guess the youth counselor must have felt it the wisest thing to do. Times are changing aren’t they. I wonder where he got the money.”

“Mona wondered that too.”

“I really think you shouldn’t see Mona anymore, girls. She’s apparently pretty wild. Such a shame. Nice mother.”

But Grace soon went back to writing in her journal, taking up where she had left off in mid-sentence. Since the subject was Norris and his mad, erratic ways, she forgot to mention anything at all about Mona’s visit. And in truth, Grace’s journal rarely chronicled events, with the exception of her future work or travel plans, and anything pertaining to Norris, be it fact or rumor.

One event that one might have expected Grace surely to record, she did not mention at all, though she did say something about it in a letter to Nelle. In the middle of February, Marian Root (Skipper) took a week off from the Winchester Room and went home to Chagrin Falls. When she returned at the end of the week, D.D. Irwin (Bud) was with her. They came in with broad grins and announced that they were married. More than that, they had rented a tiny apartment on 97th Street near the rooming house where Skipper and Jane had recently lived. They were there to pick up Skipper’s things, and couldn’t stay long, they said, but they did answer a few questions.

Skipper said, “We went out of state, and only Mother and a friend of Bud’s went with us.”

“I always thought you’d have a fancy wedding,” Dee said.

“Not in times like these. Bud is too busy at school. We haven’t time for all that.”

“Will you keep on working?” Grace asked.

“Goodness, yes, until Bud has passed the bar.”

Grace was so absorbed by other things on her mind at that time that the import of Skipper’s leaving did not sink into her consciousness immediately. It meant that now the only contribution toward the cost of the apartment was the weekly rent that Jane paid. Dee had still not found work. Grace had just had some fashion work from Strohmeyer’s and a friend who wrote adaptations of children’s stories had asked Grace to make a half-dozen black and white illustrations. Grace was in a mood of confidence about her ability to earn money.

“Let Skipper go,” she thought. “Now there will be a bedroom to use.”

She and Dee could share it. Ethel contributed a little money each week, and that was used to buy groceries.

But Grace put thoughts of money out of her mind. She was all taken up with the treachery of Norris. He had installed his people with her by means of a campaign of bear hugs, kisses and blandishments of all sorts. Then, after Rosella and Ethel were all settled in, the picture began to change. With every day that passed, it became more and more obvious to Grace that Norris’ talk of reconciliation had been a heartless stratagem – that he actually planned to marry Mary Arndt.

How clever he must think himself. "I am diabolically clever," he had frequently said. Well, it was true. Now, her own friends were beginning to tell her that Norris was making a fool of her, and that she was making a fool of herself, letting him get away with it. Nearly all the people she currently came in contact with knew of Norris' affair with Mary. Mary Raper, Edna "Peter" Whiteman (the writer of children's stories), Ralph Hunter (her intellectual insurance man), William Henry Baker (her unwelcome suitor), Ted and Edna Hurst, and Betty Long. Most of them advised her to "not let Norris get away with it" though the Hurst's and Betty said they sympathized with Ethel and they grieved for her. They said they knew that she must be happier with Grace and Dee and Jane. But Nelle was the most vehement of them all in her conviction that Norris was up to his old tricks.

The last straw for Grace was when Dee went downtown to her father's studio and Mary was there.

"You mean he invited you there when that girl was going to be there? He wanted you to meet her?!" Grace was angry and let Dee know how she felt.

"Mother! Don't get so upset. There's nothing so terrible about my meeting Mary."

"Indeed there is! Under the circumstances it's outrageous and I believe he did it to be outrageous."

"Oh, Mother, it's not that big a thing."

"Was the baby there?"

"Yes," Dee said. "She's darling."

"Darling! It sounds like you're getting ready to be a part of that entourage."

"Mother! You really ought to stop agonizing over Dad. It's no use. Don't think about him anymore. Please!"

"How can you say that when he keeps coming here and making overtures to me?"

"No matter what he does or says, it's just his way. You know by now exactly what he's like. If you'll just get over the idea of you two taking up where you left off, you'll be alright. You and Dad can just be friends."

"Oh! I couldn't possibly be friends with a man who acts like he does!"

Jane spoke up for the first time.

"Then how could you possibly consider living with him again. You know what he is like. You had time to learn that."

"I hoped that he might have changed."

"But, Mom, you are the one who always told me that people don't change, they just get more like themselves."

“Well,” Grace turned from the room, “I don’t want to talk about it anymore.”

I HOPE YOU UNDERSTAND, ETHEL

Jane's mood was low during this time. Narze was away at college and she had so far received only two letters from him since the day they had talked in the train terminal waiting room. Her mother's letter had hurt his feelings deeply, Jane knew, and everything she had said to repair the damage, had only partially helped. He had said goodbye in a very somber mood. Jane wondered whether her mother might intercept letters from Narze. She hoped not, but the two letters she had received from him, she had taken out of the mailbox herself, and in the morning before leaving for work at ten o'clock. Some days the mail came later. Would her mother do such a terrible thing? She had certainly written an incredible letter to Narze. Jane had not yet faced her mother on the subject of that letter, but the time would come when they would 'have it out' about Narze.

Jane was having trouble with insomnia. Her working hours and unusual meal times contributed to that, plus an uncomfortable cot to sleep on, worry about Narze, disappointment about college, and the beginnings of a new worry. Her boss, Mr. Hennessy, was beginning to take a romantic interest in her and she wondered how best to handle the situation. He had begun to touch her or pat her arm when he could find an opportunity. It was leading up to something and she didn't like it.

She tried taking an amytal sodium capsule at bedtime but they did not work fast enough, and only made her sleepy the next morning. After two weeks she stopped taking them and started to try her mother's system of reciting sonnets. Something about the cadence of that form, fourteen lines of iambic pentameter, could make one sleepy. Harl Pease, who sat back of her in English class, had thought poetry pretty tiresome. She had studied it in her junior high school year in New Hampshire. Back in Westport Connecticut, during the summer of Dee's unhappiness and worry, both sisters had immersed themselves in modern poetry. Sara Teasdale, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Dorothy Parker and others. And the summer in New Hampshire when she and Mim had so much time on their hands, they had borrowed books of poetry from the quaint little library on the hill in Plymouth. Then they had dipped into other poets – Amy Lowell, Robert Frost, Carl Sandburg. It was then that Jane had first written some poems of her own.

But now, she began to buy a few volumes of verse. Edna St. Vincent Millay was the favorite, and there was a new Millay volume hot off the press. It was "Wine from These Grapes" and Jane bought a first edition. The book contained an outstanding series of sonnets, the Epitaph for the Race of Man, which was a portent of the human species' self-destruction by wars. In the hours when Jane could not sleep, she recited those eighteen sonnets, having learned them one by one. Every night she went through all eighteen. They did not solve the insomnia problem, and Jane resolved that she would have to have a different bed, a wider bed, a better mattress.

Grace, of course, had insomnia too. She worried most about Norris and his ways, but now she was concerned about Jane's mood. She was certain now that Jane knew about the letter to Narze. One night she had been writing letters at the kitchen table and she had remarked that she was weary. Jane had looked at her and said without smiling at all, "You write too many letters. It

would be better if you didn't write all those letters." And then Jane had gone down the hall to her room without saying more.

It annoyed Grace that Narze had told Jane about the letter. He might have even shown it to her. That was not an honorable thing for him to have done. She was tempted to point this out to Jane, but decided against it. There was just a chance that Jane did not know about the letter after all.

There was the question of getting Jane into a college. Something must be done about that so the girl could really earn money.

There was a stone that remained unturned. Grace had been in school at the old Oberlin Academy with a boy who became the registrar at Oberlin College. Grace decided to go immediately to Oberlin and talk to her old friend about getting a scholarship for Jane for next September's class. If she was successful in getting the tuition taken care of with the scholarship, Jane could stay at Merly's and the college cost would be slight. Something paid to Merly every month for Jane's board.

No sooner had Grace formulated the plan, than she acted on it. She told Jane of her friendship with the registrar and her intent to talk to him. Jane made no objection and gave Grace her papers showing high grades and various honors.

Grace stayed three days in Oberlin. When she got back to Cleveland Jane seemed interested enough to inquire about the interview.

"What did he say?"

"Who?" Grace's mind was, as usual, on Norris.

"Why, the registrar! Didn't you talk to him?"

"Oh. Why yes. I certainly did. He was impressed with your school record. He said you seemed like a real achiever."

"And?"

"And what?"

"And, did you ask about scholarships?"

"Yes, and he said the first thing to do is to apply for admission to the college. So we filled out an application and I brought it with me. You can add some more information and then sign it. They will get a report of your grades from East High."

"Yes, and what about the scholarship?"

"Well, after you are accepted, the committee will consider you for a scholarship. He thinks we're too late probably for next fall. But we'll hear from them."

"It's an expensive college, Mother."

But Grace's mind was taking up something else now. She was having dinner that evening with Grace V. Kelly, who was the art critic for the Cleveland Herald, and had taught at the Art School for many years. She had known Norris and Grace when they were in drawing classes years ago. Grace Kelly knew all the artists in Cleveland. She attended all the gallery openings and the Art Museum and Art School exhibitions and receptions. And, of course, she knew all the scuttlebutt.

Grace liked being with Grace K these days, because Grace K was helping her stiffen her resolve to not be used by Norris whilst he carried on his quest for new romance. Grace K told her that she could still "go places" if she could only free herself of her attachment to Norris.

This evening she returned home from her dinner with Grace K in a seething mood of indignation. Her mind was at last made up. She wanted no more to do with Norris Rahming. She wanted not to see him again. Grace K had told her more about Norris' shenanigans. He was not just dating Mary Arndt apparently, but was living with her. They both had living quarters in the same building – a remodeled old mansion on Grand Avenue.

"I don't know what the room arrangements are," Grace K had said, "but Norr has a studio and another room, and the girl and her child live in that building too. Everyone assumes they are living together; she and Norr I mean. And 'baby makes three'. A curious ménage a trois isn't it."

"Doesn't she have a job? What about the baby?" Grace asked.

"Some woman cares for the baby. Yes, Mary works; she's a secretary. Grace, frankly, between you and me and the gatepost, that girl is paying the bills."

"Really!" Grace said in a hushed voice. "How do you know?"

"Because he hasn't any money. He told Pauline he hadn't any. And Grace, I want you to know, that I know Pauline. She sews for me. I have such a dumpy, difficult figure and Pauline does a good job for me. She's not a terrible person. We all have our peculiarities. But she deserves better from Norris than the treatment she's been getting. After all, she's been putting the food on the table for a couple of years. There's such a thing as loyalty, Grace."

"But Grace (K), I guess she's never been a real wife to him. I mean from what I understand, Pauline doesn't care for - - you know - - well, the physical side of marriage."

"Oh, poof! He rushed into that marriage. He should have learned more about Pauline before he sailed away to France with her."

"He asked her to release him before they were married. He wanted to come back to me. But she wouldn't let him out of it. Said she'd be too humiliated. She'd told her friends."

"Oh, that's what Norris told you. You should know you can't believe all he says. Or any man. I'm often glad I'm single. But I'm also Catholic. I think people should stay married. At least they should try."

"Well, I've lost track of the point you were making, Grace (K)."

"I'm making the point that you should just discard, once and for all, the notion that you would be happy with Norris Rahming. Because you wouldn't be; he's a womanizer."

“He never used to be.”

“They get worse as they get older Grace. He knows that you are on to his faults. And so is Pauline. So now he must have a new one to impress. No, Grace, you must buckle down and concentrate on your own career. You’ve plenty of talent. Don’t brood over that man. By the way, that’s the very same advice I gave Pauline.’

“Is she very broken up about the separation?” Grace asked.

“Yes, she is. She certainly is. Because in spite of everything she really liked being married. But this last was too much. Don’t put up with it Grace. He’s using you and everyone knows it. Saddles you with his mother and sister while he runs around with a girl in her twenties. Do you want people to think you are a complete fool?”

“No,” said Grace, “of course not.”

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Ethel Rahming rarely cried. For years, events in her life had been anything but happy ones and she had grown accustomed to adversity. Her mother had taught her long ago to seek help in Christian Science when things went sour. She would immerse herself in the confident, reassuring phrases of Mary Baker Eddy, and thus tide herself over the tearful mood.

Ethel had enjoyed being with Grace and the girls. They were all animated and, to Ethel, every interesting. Grace spoke of books and current events. She found the symphony concerts on the radio and talked about the composers. She spoke of her friends and relatives, and talked about the recent adventure in Africa. Dee came and went on dates, and did a lot of sewing. Ethie was impressed that Dee could make herself a charming blouse with thirty-five cents worth of material. Jane sewed too, but she had only Sundays at home. When Jane came home at ten p.m. she regaled the family with accounts of the day's business in the Winchester Room. Sometimes there were celebrities in the restaurant – occasionally an unpleasant and complaining customer. Jane usually had something to relate, and Ethie was always entertained. It made a welcome relief from her worry about her mother's health. So when Grace broke the news to Ethie that their cooperative living arrangement could not continue, Ethie was very sad. She came as close to tears as she had done in a long time.

Grace had explained the situation in her characteristic, somewhat incoherent fashion. She had appeared in the doorway of Ethie and Rosella's bedroom. Rosella was napping, as she usually was, of late. Ethie was buffing her fingernails with a chamois buffer, just as she had done since she was twelve years old. No lacquer polish for her.

"Ethel," Grace said, "could you come to the front room for a few minutes. We need to talk and I don't want to disturb your mother."

Ethie followed Grace into the living room. Already she felt a foreboding of trouble. As soon as Grace had said 'we need to talk,' Ethie could guess what might be coming and her heart sank.

"Ethel," Grace began, "I haven't wanted to have to talk about this. It makes me sad that I have to. Of course, you'll recall that last November, when you and Mother Rahming came, I did say that it was a temporary arrangement until Norr's situation got straightened out."

"Yes," said Ethie meekly, "you did say that, I recall."

"Well, Ethel, I find I cannot go on. It's just too much."

"Is it because of money worries?" Ethie asked.

"Well, of course, that's always a problem, but - -"

"Because, if you need it, I could manage to give you a little more each week. I still have a little stock. I could sell some."

"No, no, Ethel. Money is the least of the problem."

“I thought perhaps with Skipper gone and Dee out of work that things would be difficult,” Ethie said.

“Well, of course, they are difficult, but I’m getting more art work now. However, I am going to look for a different place to live. But no - - no it isn’t that. It’s Norris and his actions. You know, when he brought you and Mother Rahming here how affectionate he was to all of us and he spoke as though we should all be a family once again. He said we never should have separated. Oh, Ethel, he said a great many things. He said it would be good for Dee and Jane, and good for you and Mother Rahming. And what is more, he said it would be good for him and good for me.”

“Yes,” Ethel said, “I know he did say that.”

“I believed he meant it, Ethel. Over the years I’ve felt that Dee and Jane ought to have had both parents. And I thought that now Norr was older, he’d be wiser. But he isn’t. In fact, he’s not showing that life has taught him anything at all. All Cleveland is talking about what Norris is doing now, and it’s not doing him any good I can tell you. Norris is insane if he thinks he can get away this crazy affair and not have to pay the piper.”

Ethel finally broke in to say that she did not know what to say.

“Well,” Grace explained, “all this I find extremely upsetting and very sad. And I don’t want to have anything at all to do with it. Whenever Norr comes here he wants to treat me as though nothing had happened. He soft soaps me, Ethel. Norris is very good at that, and then he goes back to his new lady love, and everyone is laughing at me.”

“Oh, Grace! I don’t think anyone is laughing at you. They just probably think you were very kind to have use here. They won’t judge you by what Norris gets into.”

“Even so, Ethel, I will not be put in this ridiculous position. Norris comes and goes here, ostensibly to visit you and his mother, but also he pretends that he is so fond of me, and he has told me that he sees no reason why we should not be the very best of friends, and that we should be able to go out together on dates.”

“Well, Grace - -“ Ethel began, but Grace cut her off.

“No, Ethel, I will not be part of Norris’ harem. And as long as you and your mother live with me, he would be coming here, and that is most upsetting to me. I cannot make plans for my future and the girls’, with Norris waltzing in and out of my life. I hope you understand, Ethel. I have no animosity toward any of you, but I cannot wait in the background for Norr to come to his senses. You’ll have to phone him and ask him to find some other arrangements. I won’t rush you out in a day or two, but I am looking for another place, and I won’t be here beyond the end of this month.”

“I feel very bad about this,” Ethel said, “but I’ll call Norris and tell him. I won’t tell Mother till we know where we are going. She wouldn’t be able to eat if I tell her before it’s all arranged.”

####

April 15

Dear Sis,

Well! Here I am in a new abode, this week. I don't know how well we'll like this place, but I did have to move out of the apartment on Sloane Avenue. I had made up my mind that Norris could not deposit his mother and Ethel with me while he frolics around with a young woman. For it has become apparent that being seen with this girl publicly, was not just a ploy to make Pauline want out of the marriage. He is really involved with her, and what is even more apparent is that he is fascinated with her father, and his home and library. The father is a doctor and it is really amusing that all those years when Norr and his family busily worked at making me a Christian Scientist, he now turns to what he used to revile as 'materia medica.' His philandering here in Cleveland has alienated his friends. Grace Kelly has told me of this and she knows. Well, Norris assures us all, still, that he does not plan to marry this girl, but I know better, and Dee and Jane agree with me. Mother Rahming and Ethel are just bewildered by it all. He has always bewildered them, I do believe.

Well! Anyway. Norris was very quarrelsome when I told him he'd have to find other arrangements for his people. He strode around in his same old way, talking loud, and dwelling on past grievances. He proclaimed that he had been seriously thinking of coming back to me, but now he never would. He told me he would have been eternally grateful if I would keep his mother. Can you imagine? I keeping Mother Rahming while Norris takes up with another woman! What a bizarre idea! Nelle, I believe he is a mental case. He tells his mother can't eat and it is my fault. Enough about Norris.

I am now living on 116th Place, which is a little dead end street, near when I lived at the time I married Carle. I like the location because it is on the Grand Avenue streetcar line and it is in the old familiar part of town. It is a two-family house and we live in the upstairs. Dee is still without a job but she keeps on looking. I have had a little fashion work for Strohmeier's but they don't pay well anymore. I am supposed to do some illustrations for a fairy tale book but don't know when that will materialize. I'm sketching some ideas. As I told you, Skipper Root left to get married so we don't have her rent money now either. Nor what Ethel paid, of course. Jane is still working, but I do hope she'll go to college next fall. Something will just have to work out. This Depression can't last forever.

I will close now because I'm weary and I have a bad cold that I got when we moved here. There was no heat for four days, because we have to buy our own coal and it wasn't delivered. It is very cold for April. I'm not sure I'm going to like this place. It is cheaper, but since we have to heat it, it's about the same. Dee's friend, Mona James, is going to live with us and pay for a room. We do need more furniture. Jane says she has insomnia and says she's going to buy a new bed. She says she will pay for it on the 'installment plan.' She bought herself a small radio that way and we all enjoy it. She takes it into her bedroom at night because she says it helps her get to sleep. I wish she and Dee were not so wild about this so-called 'popular' music. It certainly is not at all popular with me. Well, as I said, I am very weary. I've done a little 'rush' job for

Strohmeier's and with my cold I am really 'done in.' I'm not sure I can do this type of hurry, hurry art work. I'm not as young as I used to was you know, Sis. I do want to write my African story.

Dee and Mona have just come in from a date. Jane has a cold too, and she has gone to bed early. She has been very moody lately. It may be because she feels that Narze Samaha is the boy for her. I know she wants to go to college and I am trying to get her into Oberlin College. I know that all things work together for good and if it is right for her to go, the way will be shown. We all have to try very hard these days to earn whatever we can. Good luck with your homemade bread project.

Much love to Roge and Babs as well as yourself - - Sis Grace

P.S. I forgot to include the information that Norris took his mother and Ethel downtown to live in the same studio building where he and that girl and her child live. Can you imagine a more insane arrangement?

WHY DID YOU BUY A DOUBLE BED?

As spring advanced Jane's mood was indeed not the best. Her relationship with Narze seemed to be going nowhere. They had exchanged only two or three letters since the first of the year. Jane had wondered whether her mother would intercept her letters, but she finally decided that that was probably not the case.

Jane had been sorry to see Skipper leave the apartment, but she had not been surprised. There had been no special advantages for Skipper in being a part of the cooperative plan. The flat had been too sparsely furnished and decorated to be attractive, and entertaining D.D. "Bud" Irwin had been difficult with Grace and Dee using the two front rooms for their own. No wonder Skipper and Bud had decided to marry and get their own place.

And Jane had not liked moving to the new place. She had learned that the last month's rent for the Sloane avenue apartment had not been paid. She spoke of it to Dee.

"I can't see," she said, "how Mother can pay for this place, if we couldn't pay for the other. We've lost the rent that Skipper paid, and the rent that Aunt Ethie paid, and you're still looking for work. And I can't afford any more than I pay now. And Mother's work is so irregular."

"I'm bound to get a job soon," Dee said, "and Mother's going to write her African story."

"But that doesn't take care of now," Jane said.

"No. I know it," Dee agreed, "but Mona will pay something."

Jane still saw Skipper at work, The Winchester Room waitresses always passed through the foyer on their way to the cashier. If Mr. Hennessy was not standing at his "lectern", they sometimes exchanged brief greetings and inquiries.

One day in April Skipper asked, "Do you have any plans for your free time this afternoon?"

"As usual, nothing exciting," Jane said. "Why?"

"Want to meet me in the lounge at three o'clock? I want to go shopping with some of my wedding present money. You can help me decide. I'm going to buy towels and stuff."

In the women employees' lounge, the girls chatted while Skipper changed out of her uniform,

"How do you like the new place?" Skipper asked.

"Not very well. We nearly froze the first four days. Mother thought Spring was here and didn't order our coal soon enough. Also, it's pretty ugly. Dark woodwork and atrocious wallpaper. I'd like to fix my room up."

"Our apartment isn't too wonderful either. It is furnished, but Bud and I want to brighten it up with cushions and decent lamps. Let's go into Halsey's and look around."

The girls hurried into Halsey's through the Terminal entrance and rode the escalator to the fifth floor where the house-ware and linens were. Skipper picked out her towel sets.

"Don't you love these colored towels?" she said. "All we ever had at home were white ones. Some of them have pink stripes, but none of these luscious new colors. I'm buying all lemon-yellow for our bath."

"They're wondrously soft," Jane said.

Skipper laughed "'Wondrously'. I like the words you use."

"Oh, Mim and I always like to take words out of the books we're always reading. We've done it for years. I never see her anymore. We used to be like sisters almost. Oh, Skipper, I hate the life I have right now. Checking hats is such a bore."

"Well, so is waiting tables," Skipper said.

"Yes, but you're married and having fun buying lemon-yellow towels. Oh, Skipper, I envy you sometimes. Tell me, are you glad you got married. What's it like?"

"It's wonderful! We love it. Bud treats me like a queen. I can't get over it. You know what happened on our wedding night?"

Jane looked sidewise at Skipper and raised her eyebrows.

Skipper laughed. "Well, aside from what you'd expect, I mean. I would doze off from time to time, and whenever I woke up, Bud was propped up on his elbow, just looking down at me with such an adoring look. He'd say, 'I can't believe we're married'."

"Pretty romantic," Jane said. "I'm envious."

"What about you?" Skipper asked. "Still going with Narze?"

Jane sighed. "I think we're drifting apart. We don't write each other very often anymore. Mother wrote him a letter telling him to step out of my life."

"She did? That sort of thing often backfires. Wes's mother didn't think I was good enough for him, but that only made him mad at her."

"I was mad at Mother, too, but even so, Narze and I are in a hopeless situation I guess that's why we're drifting apart."

"What about college? Do you still want to go?"

"Sure, but there's no money for it. Mother keeps talking about it. She's trying to get me into Oberlin. She said to me 'Jane, I thought you would move mountains to go to college'. What does she mean? Darned if I know."

"Well, it's too bad we were born when we were. I wish I could have finished college myself. Maybe someday. Bud says after he's practicing law I can go back to school. Let's go up to the sixth floor and look at lamps."

They also looked at the model rooms that Halsey's displayed with beautiful furniture.

"All this is making me discontented," Jane said.

"Everything is so pretty," Skipper said. "Wouldn't it be great to have a brand new empty house and buy things for it?"

"Well, anyway. I've made up my mind. I'm going to redecorate my room at home," Jane said.

"Will they let you do that?"

"I won't ask. I'll just do it. It's terrible the way it is. The wallpaper's trying to come off. I'll take it all off. And I'm going to buy myself a decent bed. I've been sleeping on cots for years. I'm tired of it. When we lived in Milford Mother had just bought new beds for the room I had and then we moved away. I'd like to get settled someplace and stay. Meanwhile, I'll tear the wallpaper off my room and paint the walls. Aunt Ada used to say that if you were unhappy you should keep busy."

"I'm sorry you're unhappy," Skipper said.

"I'll get over it, I guess."

####

The following week, Jane received her letter of acceptance from Oberlin College.

Grace said, "I knew I could get you admitted."

Jane just looked at her mother.

"Did you read it all, Mom?" she asked. "Did you read the list of fees?"

"I looked at them," Grace said.

"Did you see the enclosure that said there are no more scholarships being awarded for the upcoming year?"

"Yes, but by September, I may be able to—"

"Mother, a room deposit is due right now."

"Well, I think you might be able to stay at Merly's."

"Mother, you can't figure any longer on parking me with Aunt Merly. I'm not little anymore. Mim and Trink ought to have rooms of their own as it is. They can't have me jammed in there with them. Besides, Aunt Merly has already got an extra kid. Are you forgetting Bill Lemmon is there this year?"

"No, I'm not forgetting. But he won't be there next year.

"Why not? He's only a freshman."

"Merly doesn't want him there next year. He and Mim are getting chummy."

"Oh, what's wrong with that? He's her Cousin."

"That's just it. It won't do at all. It worries Merly."

"Oh, for Pete's sake! Well anyway, Mother, you can't plan on my staying at Aunt Merly's. There just isn't room for me, and anyway, where will the rest of the money come from?"

"Jane, I can't understand you at all. You don't have a positive attitude anymore. If you put your mind to it I'm sure you can find a way to get there."

"Mother, if I were able to save every cent I make without paying you any for my room, I'd only have five hundred and twenty-three dollars. That wouldn't even pay the tuition at Oberlin College, let alone all the other costs. You wouldn't want me to stop paying you rent for my room, would you?"

"Not right yet, but as soon as I get going—"

“Alright, but I’m being realistic. I’m not counting on this September, Mother. Maybe something will work out for the next year. Meanwhile, I’m going to buy a new bed. My primary objective is to get a good night’s sleep.”

“How can you buy a bed? Have you been saving your tips?”

“Mom, I really don’t get many tips. If I get three tips a week I’m lucky. They read the sign that says no tipping is permitted and that suits them fine. Some weeks I don’t get even one dime. I’ll buy the bed on the installment plan. Skipper’s going with me tomorrow to see about it. At least that’s our plan. Her legs were aching today, though. I don’t know if she’ll stay home tomorrow or not.”

“Her legs have ached before,” Grace said. “I don’t think I’d want to be a waitress.”

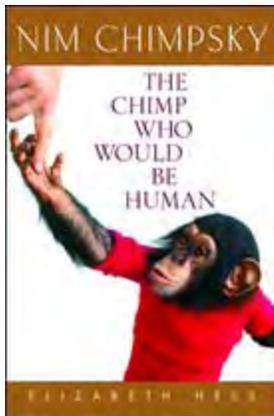
[Mim said that Bill Lemmon was her first lover and taught her to smoke, and she connected smoking up with him and all that she felt for him and thought it was one of the reasons she had such a hard time quitting smoking. He got drummed out of Oberlin and went on to become a psychotherapist and more. Much more.

5/17/2008

Hi, Willie, I'm so glad to hear from you! I've been thinking a lot about you lately. I know quite a bit about my cousin, Bill Lemmon. In fact, he lived at our house for one school year while he was attending Oberlin College on a scholarship. I think his subject was zoology. He and Mim had a love affair and he lost his scholarship. I was completely oblivious of the whole thing. Anyway he was very nice to me and taught me lots of interesting things. We would take walks and he would show me living things like fairy shrimp living in spring puddles. We would bring some water home and look at it under a microscope. I drew pictures of what I saw for him to put in his manual for school.----etc. etc---- ...

Love Trink

]



Chapter One: Early Days on the Chimp Farm

Nim's story begins at the research facility in Oklahoma that was founded by the notorious Dr. William Lemmon. Early in his academic career chimpanzees became the focus of Lemmon's lifelong research, and helped to make him — for a time — the most prominent psychologist in Oklahoma. Over several decades, he authored many of the state's mental health policies, helped to shape numerous public programs, and virtually founded the clinical psychology department at the University of Oklahoma (OU), where he remains a legendary figure thanks to his early chimpanzee experiments. From its inception until its demise, Lemmon ran the Institute for Primate Studies (IPS), the place where Nim Chimpsky was born. Lemmon bred and owned Nim. As a result, the psychologist was responsible, often behind the scenes, for every major event that shaped the chimp's life, both before and after Project Nim.

Virtually everyone who ever had anything to do with Lemmon (Bill, as he was called) or his chimpanzees came away with strong feelings about the psychologist, but what those feelings were varied considerably. Some loved Lemmon, some despised him, and some still won't speak about him at all because it's just too painful. Lemmon, who has been dead for more than two decades, remains a controversial figure in Norman and the wider primate world, where his unconventional methods of animal husbandry and research are often attacked. He ruled his chimpanzees with an electric cattle prod, as many unenlightened keepers still do, and tried every possible disciplinary technique, including shock collars, all kinds of guns, and a pair of Doberman pinschers trained to tree escapees. (This last was not an effective method; the chimps dominated the dogs and ripped one of them apart.) When asked by a friend, "How do you discipline a chimpanzee?" Lemmon responded, "Any way you can."

The chimps learned to respect their keeper. Lemmon's graduate students also understood their place. One claims that he locked her in a cage inhabited by a few adult chimps, just to see her reaction. She survived to tell the story, one of many about the sadistic pleasure Lemmon took in pushing people to the edge. Lemmon's protégés, employees, and patients all worshipped him — or fled.

Still, however much he was feared by both his experimental animals and his students, Lemmon was one of a very few researchers in the 1960s who had any expertise in raising and breeding chimpanzees in captivity, where they rarely survived or reproduced. Lemmon and his carefully selected graduate students studied chimpanzee mating habits, sexuality, and social development, and they even collected data on the personalities of individual chimps. Unfortunately for Lemmon, and for the field in general, little of this research, apart from a handful of articles, was ever published. Lemmon's vast knowledge of chimpanzees mostly benefited those who became members of his prestigious inner circle in Norman. Ultimately, the scientific community labeled his work "anecdotal," their way of deeming it worthless. For better or worse, he was an outsider who was destined to remain on the margins because he refused to maintain his academic status by regularly publishing his results or writing books. In the long run, this arrogance did not serve him or his animals well. But in the short run, it made IPS, known as the "chimp farm," a compelling place for students to cut their teeth on primatology.

Lemmon was born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1916. A prodigy of sorts, from a working-class family, he earned his doctorate at Ohio State University, where he studied with Carl Rogers. The promising young psychologist had a background in biology and a passion for the theories of Sigmund Freud.



Next of Kin by Roger Fouts

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“Mr. Hennessy says that Skipper is the only one of his waitresses that gets aching legs,” Jane said. “He says that all waitresses have feet that hurt. He says he doesn’t think Skipper is strong enough to be a waitress.”

“I’ll bet a hat,” Grace said, “that she needs her tonsils out.”

Jane and Dee both laughed, but Jane said, “You, better not preach that gospel to Skipper. She’s still a devout Christian Scientist, Mother, even if you aren’t anymore.”

“I am, too,” said Grace, “but not about health matters.”

“I know,” said Dee, “that twice it helped me recover lost pocketbooks. You know that, Andy. You witnessed it.”

“Mm,” Jane said. “Well, I’d like to see it find me money to go to college.”

“It won’t,” Dee said, “unless you have the right kind of thoughts. Your attitude isn’t good. You don’t believe in it.”

“That’s true,” Jane said. “It goes against what makes sense to me. I don’t think I’ll get to college until I can afford it and I don’t know right now when that will be. I would go to Downtown College if I didn’t work evenings and I can’t quit the job. We need the money.”

“I may be able to borrow money,” Grace said.

“No!” Jane said. “That isn’t the answer: You owe everybody already.”

“Oh, I do not” Grace protested.

“Just Aunt Merly and Aunt Nelle and Uncle Bill - maybe other people too.”

Grace did not respond to that and Jane went on.

“Borrowing is out of the question when you owe so much. Anyway, it isn’t the answer.”

“I’ll maybe have a job soon,” Dee said.

“That wouldn’t be the answer either. You’ll need all you earn.”

“Something will work out,” Grace said.

“Meanwhile,” said Jane, “I’m still going to buy myself a decent bed. And I’m going to get a good one that will last for years.”

She went the next day with Skipper to make her purchase and arrange for installment payments. She did not go to Halsey’s or Strohmeier’s as they were more expensive, and Skipper had recommended Bingham’s, a rather second-rate store a block south of Grand Avenue.

“They are just dying to have people buy on time. You do know it costs more that way, don’t you? A percentage they call a ‘carrying charge’.”

“It’s the only way I can do it,” Jane said. “Dee and Mother are buying the studio couch that way.”

Jane had no trouble arranging the credit because she was employed. The bed would be delivered in a week) the credit having been approved.

She chose a Simmons Beautyrest mattress which had been her heart’s desire. With it, a coil spring and a wooden bed frame of solid maple. She had planned on buying a single bed.

The salesman said, “May I make a suggestion?”

“Sure,” said Jane.

“Why don’t you buy a double bed? It costs just the same.”

“Really?”

“Yes. The mattress is \$39.50 whether twin or full. The spring is \$19.95, twin or full. The bed is only a dollar more.”

“You might as well,” Skipper said. “More for the money.”

“But my room is rather small,” said Jane.

“Supposing Mim comes to visit you - you’ll have a place.”

And the salesman said, “I’ll bet you’ll be married in a year.”

When the bed was delivered Jane was at work, but the men from Bingham’s carried it in and set it up in Jane’s room, and even took the cot up to the third floor.

When Jane got home that night she flung herself down on the bed and reveled in its soft expanse.

“Oh, marvelous Oh, heaven It’s level, but it’s squishy. Eight hundred and thirty-seven coils, I think the man said. Oh, joy: It’s the best thing I ever bought for myself. It’s the best thing I ever owned. Of course, I’ll have to pay on it for fifteen months. Ooh, how soft it is. It’s like a cloud. I can’t wait to go to bed.”

“Why did you buy such a big bed?” Grace asked. “That’s a double bed.”

“I got it because it didn’t cost anymore than a single bed.”

“You aren’t planning on getting married are you?”

“Certainly,” Jane said, and waited a while before saying, “but not immediately.”

“Dee ought to be married before you get such ideas.”

“Mother; That’s an ‘old country’ notion: Making the younger daughters wait.”

“Well but you’re just eighteen—”

“Soon to be nineteen,” said Jane.

“Dee will be twenty-five in November. You do sound as though you plan to get married. I thought that you and Narze were cooling off a bit.”

Jane sat up and looked straight at her mother.

“You ought to know. It’s your doing.”

“Why what do you mean?” Grace asked.

“I know what you said to Narze in that lovely letter.”

“He showed it to you? He shouldn’t have done that.”

“You shouldn’t have written it. Your mother didn’t interfere when you wanted to marry Dad.”

“I wish she had. My judgment wasn’t mature.”

“Mother,” Jane said. “You yourself told me Grandma made a mistake in making Uncle Nate marry Aunt Edith. And again she should not have urged Aunt Emmie to marry Uncle William. You said that mothers shouldn’t interfere when young people were in love.”

“When did I say that?”

“When Cameron’s mother was so nasty about Dee.”

“Oh,” said Grace. “Well, that was entirely different.”

“Oh, sure. Different. Well, I’m going to bed now.”

Jane slept well that night in her new bed, enjoying the size of it as much as its firm yet soft surface. She tried occupying all possible bed space curling up or sprawling wide with a leg or arm in each corner.

But Grace slept poorly. It seemed quite clear now that Jane and Narze planned to get married. Grace knew that Jane hated her job checking hats, and it was understandable. The thing that must be done was to find the money to get her into college. If only Art would pay up the money he’d owed for so long. Small chance of that though. He wasn’t even running the tearoom anymore. Blamed it on two factors, the Depression and a poor location. He’d given up the movie-house too. He had a new wife (his fifth) and a new plan for making a living. He had bought a failed restaurant in a downstate town, and had turned it into what was called a “bar and grille”. Art always had been the Martin boy who liked to drink, but not so much that his mother had ever been aware of it. Grace was grateful that Art had not opened his tavern during their mother’s lifetime. The family was keeping it a secret from Father Martin. Poor Father: He was ninety-four years old now and quite confused. Nevertheless was still interested in the garden that was really Merly and Emmie’s project now. Grace had not gone to Oberlin for the old man’s birthday and she felt sorry she had not. It might be that it was his last one too, but she had been so preoccupied with Norris’s perfidy and moving from the Sloane Avenue apartment that she missed Merly’s phone call reminding her of the birthday. It was one more grievance she had against Norris. He had messed up her life from start to finish. Well, not quite from the start, of course, but her adult life certainly. And he had better not mess it up until the finish. And, as so many times before, she assured herself (mistakenly) that she was, once and for all, cured of her love for Norris. Oh: she decided, she never should have returned to Cleveland. It had been nothing but stress and heartache for her. But, at least, it had revealed to her that Norris had still not matured and straightened out his thinking. She wanted to get herself a million miles away from him. And, what is more, she was getting nowhere at present. The work for Strohmeier’s store was hard on her and didn’t pay enough. She had no idea when or what she would get for the fairy-story illustrations, but it would not be enough.

She finally got to sleep and dreamed about being once more at Forest Camp in New Hampshire. She and Nelle were gathering blueberries in the field above the house. Next they were rambling

in the woods on the way to the sugar-bush. The path in her dream was lined as always with ground-pine, Indian-pipes in their translucent white beauty, “checker-berries” and the curious semicircular *Coriolus* fungi that grew on dead wood. These were the ones that she and Norris had often collected so that they could make sketches on the fresh white underside with a pointed tool. Later the marks would turn brown and then the whole surface would dry and harden leaving a permanent picture. In the dream, she and Nelle had tried to break one off but failed and a storm had come up and they had been soaked and had hurried home, but, in the manner of dreams they could not find the house.

But she woke from the dream in a better frame of mind. She felt that her subconscious or a Higher Power had pointed the way. She must return to New Hampshire, “lift up her eyes to the hills”, as it were. She must stop putting off what she really should do. She must write the Tunisian story and New Hampshire was the quiet place where she could do it. Without the children there would be no hubbub and fewer incidents to upset Nelle and Roger. Grace resolved to write Nelle that very next evening. Evenings were the very best time to write for Jane was at work, and Dee and Mona were always out on dates.

Grace wrote as follows:

Dear Sis Nelle,

Well, we have been here over a month and we are not freezing to death anymore for Spring has come to Cleveland, and all the trees are leafing out. This two-family house is quite ugly but we do have an upstairs porch and it is going to be nice and shady when the leaves are full out. —It seems we have a cat— more or less. It is so thin that we’ve been putting out a little food for him. Don’t know if he has a home or not. He’s pretty- looks something like our Alabaster but has a little more white on his chest and —I was interrupted there. I guess I was going to write “paws”. It is now two weeks later and I do have good news. Dee has landed a job: She’s been out of work since Christmas time. Sweet thing: She is so loyal and brave. She’s working for an insurance office again.

Jane did what she had threatened— she bought herself a bed and a Beautyrest mattress. (We all do envy her.) Having done that, she has proceeded to redecorate her room. She took all the wallpaper off and then painted the walls and woodwork pale green. It does look better, but I never saw anything like Jane when she decides to do something. No one can talk her out of it.

Nelle, do you and Roge plan on opening up the place in N.H. this summer? Things have been so hectic for us all lately that I can not but think it would be such a benefit to us (you and I and Roge) to be there for awhile without the young people. (I don’t mean Babs, of course. She’s a good scout.)

I am hoping to get a quiet opportunity to finish my Tunisian chronicle. I know I can sell it. Every one gives encouragement to do it, and I have all the notes and sketches that I need. Oh and I have had notice that I have a watercolor accepted for The May Show. I have never entered it before. Dee tells me that Norris is most upset that he got none of his oils in this year only two little water colors. He is too taken up with all his misadventures.

I was interrupted again— Now there is more news and I am not happy about it. Stan and Bertha have bought the Old Brick. Did you know that, Nelle? They sold their house in Cleveland. Well,

of course, it's alright with me that Stan should buy the farm and live there. Most of the land is gone now, as you know, but it's still a big piece of property and I hope Stan realizes what an honor it is to own that wonderful home that our Grandfather Martin built in 1841. Just think, Nelle, in six years it will be a hundred years old! But I'm so upset. Stan said to me "I want to build a modern house there, Grace." And I told him that he has enough land there to build a second house. But Stan said that the old place is starting to fall apart and the brick is "soft". Oh, Nelle, please write to him and beg him to be sure and spare the Old Brick. You and Stan have always been such good pals. He's so fond of you, he'll listen to you. For that place could easily qualify to be an historic site.

Well, I must close. Jane has just come home from work. She has been upset lately because her boss has been making overtures to her and of course he is at least twice her age, a married man (though separated from his wife). Jane wants no part of it, but she needs that job. Oh, dear there is always something to worry about, isn't there. Please write to Stan won't you, and let me know about New Hampshire. After what Norr put me through this past winter I need to breathe some of that pure fresh mountain air.

Much love,

Grace

MAYBE HE JUST FEELS FATHERLY

Jane had owed Narze a letter since the third week in March and it was the middle of May. So much had been going on - the moving, her mother so upset about her father's "treachery", and then buying the new bed and "un-papering" and painting her room. She had only Sundays to work on her own projects, after all. But, of course, it was procrastination, too. She could have written to Narze on her afternoon free time. But she had never written as many letters as he had. His last letter had said that his cafeteria job had changed. He was no longer a bus-boy and general helper. He was a cashier. He also had two students he was tutoring in trigonometry. He might stay in Reliance all summer, he said. He wasn't sure. On the other hand, he might go home to New Hampshire. It would be smarter to stay in Reliance all summer. He'd have a job there. But he missed his mother and the two small brothers. His letters had been different ever since he'd had that letter from her mother. He still signed them, "All my love, Narze," but they were more reserved and the lines were no longer filled with endearments. He was obviously still smarting from Grace's cool rhetoric. And the tone of his letters was partly why Jane postponed her answer. Day followed day with the notion that she would write the next afternoon, but gradually she thought about it less and less.

There was the problem of Mr. Hennessy. Jane spoke to Skipper about it.

"Have you ever had any trouble with the boss?"

"What kind of trouble? You talking about Mr. Hennessy?"

"Yes. Has he ever made passes at you?"

"No. He doesn't like me, remember."

"Have any of the other girls had trouble?"

"If they have they haven't told me."

"Well, he asked me if I'd like to go with him some night after work to eat Chinese food. He asked me if I didn't get kind of tired of the menu here. What do you think?"

"On the face of it, it sounds harmless," Skipper said, "Yes, but he's married," Jane said.

"I know. Still - they're separated. He hasn't been the sort of boss to try fooling around. He must like you, Andy."

"He does. He thinks I'm clever because I study French when there's nothing to do. But I'm not crazy about having a man his age interested in me. He must be at least forty-five years old.

"Maybe he just feels fatherly toward you."

"Maybe," Jane said. "Maybe."

But she had not told Skipper something else. One day about a month ago the Winchester Room had had a very busy lunch hour. A lot of business men left the dining room at the same time, all

wanting to reclaim their hats. Some of them were “regulars” who held no numbered blue checks. There was a convention in town. Some of the men were in a hurry. They all clustered around the check room door. Some of them were impatient; two of them were obnoxious. Most of them had had several cocktails. Their impatience seemed to upset Mr. Hennessy more than it did Jane. The guests had caused problems in the dining room and Mr. Hennessy, usually so calm and gracious, was feeling harassed. He snapped his fingers at Jane and told her to “Look lively.”

After the men were gone, Jane, her eyes bright with tears, retreated to the back of the checkroom where Mr. Hennessy sought her out and apologized. He put his arm around her and comforted her.

“I’m sorry, little dolly. I didn’t mean to be so cross. We mustn’t let those drunks get our goat. They get treated like royalty in this place, and they don’t appreciate it or even know good service when they see

it. I know you do a good job with the hats, remembering all those people. They ought to tip you for it, too, no matter what the sign says. Don’t feel bad about what I said. I didn’t mean to make you cry.”

“I’m OK,” Jane told him. “I’m too sensitive.”

“I like girls to be sensitive. Not like those hard-boiled babes in the dining room,” Mr. Hennessy assured her.

From the day that he had made her cry, Mr. Hennessy treated Jane tenderly, in fact affectionately, and it worried her. It seemed to be leading somewhere. He had, from the start, after finding her to be well-read, consulted her about the spelling and pronunciation of words. He had confided that he had quit high school after the ninth grade and got a job as a bus boy one summer, and he had never gone back to school. He had been a waiter, and then a headwaiter during the early twenties, and then finally, a maître d’hôtel in the Statler chain. Until the depression hit he had made a decent living, but tips had dropped off and times were bad. Then the job at the Winchester had been offered him. He was made “Dining-room Manager” at a better salary but fewer tips. The tips only came when he performed some special service like cracking lobsters or serving wine. Otherwise the waitresses got all the tips. So he was not happy with his income and he liked to grumble about it to Jane. He also expressed concern about her income and asked her if she would like to try out as a waitress. She didn’t know, she said, She thought it would make her a nervous wreck. “Try it for a week,” he said, “and then if you don’t like it, come back to the checkroom. The Sunday girl can take your place out here. You’d make three times as much money,” he said.

But Jane, at the end of the week, decided she didn’t like it. It was a terrible strain and worry because it was such a classy place, and the heavy trays had to be carried so high.

“That’s alright. I understand,” Mr. Hennessy said. “I wanted to give you your chance to try it. You’re not a real waitress type anyway. And I’m just as glad you’re back out here. I missed you.”

It was after that that Mr. Hennessy asked her out to dinner.

The invitation had been simple enough.

“Do you ever get tired of eating here all the time?”

What else would one answer but “yes”? Actually, Jane was getting better meals, at that time, than her mother and sister, and she appreciated that fact. There was, of course, a rotating sameness in the restaurant menus from day to day, but the food was good and Jane could always choose among five or six different entrees. She ate in the adjoining Terminal Restaurant, as had her predecessor. All other employees ate in the Cafeteria, as did the railroad employees, “red-cap” porters, and economy—minded general public. The food there was “steam-table” fare with no daily change in selection. Skipper ate there and had nothing good to say about it. But Mr. Hennessy took his meals in the Winchester Room after the rush business was over. He ate at a secluded far corner table where he could see if any late business entered the foyer. His meals were better than any other employee in the Cleveland Terminal Restaurant Co., for even the higher management ate in the Restaurant.

But Mr. Hennessy said to Jane, “I get a hankering to eat somewhere else every once in a while, don’t you? Do you like Chinese food?”

“All I’ve ever had is my mother’s version of chop suey. But I like it, it’s good.”

“How would you like to try some authentic stuff?”

“It sounds interesting,” Jane said cautiously.

However, after she talked to Skipper, Jane did go to dinner with Mr. Hennessy. He met her at the taxi-stand in the main concourse after the Winchester Room closed. He took her to a part of downtown where she had never been. It was indeed authentic Chinese, unpretentious, scarcely more than a hole in the wall. The meal was served by the members of a Chinese family. Jane realized that it was a place where Mr. Hennessy would be very unlikely to be seen by anyone who knew him. Indeed, they were the only guests in the place. But the food was delicious and Mr. Hennessy’s conversation was entirely proper. He told Jane he had a big decision to make. He was tempted to leave the Winchester room for another job. The waiters’ union was after him to be the business agent. He had always been active in union affairs and he had been “in the game” a long time. The members felt that, with the Democrats in office, there was a better day coming for the working man, and unions would not be “pounded down” the way they always were under Republicans.

“Of course, I was raised a Republican,” he said.

“So was I,” Jane said, “and so was everyone I know.”

“At your age you wouldn’t be interested in politics, I bet.”

“Yes, I am. All my family is, too. My mother and father both like Roosevelt. They’re going to become Democrats.”

“Well, I imagine I will, too.”

Besides talking about his possible job change, Mr. Hennessy only spoke about the Chinese food. He explained the various dishes to Jane and said he found food interesting and might have liked being a chef, but only if he could have been one of the very best.

He took Jane home in a taxi, too, and got out and saw her to the door. He gave her a small quick kiss on the cheek and a little pat. He said, "Good night, little dolly. I hope you had a good time." She said she had, and thanked him.

Two weeks later Mr. Hennessy proposed another spree. Jane had told her mother and Dee about the first one, and they seemed to think that it was probably harmless as long as nothing "more adventuresome" happened.

As May drew to a close a stage show came to Cleveland that had the whole town talking. It was called the "Parisian Follies," and it had live nudes on stage. What's more, it was no burlesques show; it was at the Palace and it was said by critics to be a classy show.

Mr. Hennessy proposed that they take in the show and then "go somewhere for a bite to eat". They would miss the first part of the performance, but at least they would find out "what all the fuss was about".

As before, they took a taxi. He had bought loges seats. They sat quietly and watched the stage. The costumes were spectacular and most of the dancing girls were very beautiful. The costumes were also extremely skimpy, but it was not until the grand finale that there were "live nudes" on stage. And then it was a towering tableau of girls whose bodies were made up in chalk white, like marble statues, It was probably a disappointment to many men who had hoped to see the girls in natural pink flesh with darker accents of pubic hair. Even the strategic fig leaves were chalk-white. Nevertheless, it aroused Mr. Hennessy to the extent that he put his arm across the back of Jane's chair. But then the show was over and they left to get their bite to eat. This time, since it was late, he took her to a dine and dance restaurant, also Chinese. The place was dimly lit with very few diners, and no dancers. Mr. Hennessy ordered for both of them at Jane's request, and he ordered rice whiskey as well. Although Jane drank less of it than Mr. Hennessy did, this time it was she who did most of the talking and he was entertained. She related some of the adventures of the winter at Forest Camp, the story of the walk to see the movie Grand Hotel when they had borrowed the penny from the lawyer. And the story of the disastrous trip to see the basketball game in Bristol in bitter minus 20 degree weather. She told of catching fifty-three fish, and of the night all the girls had gone "skinny-dipping" in the snow. Later she decided she probably should not have told that story, for it might have put ideas in Mr. Hennessy's head.

He said, "I bet that was a sight to behold. You know, you have a lovely figure, dolly."

She told herself she might have known his proper behavior was too good to last. She was nervous when she got into the taxi when he took her home. He put his arm around her and sat close beside her on the way out Grand Avenue. Probably the presence of the cab-driver limited any further advances. When they got to 116th Place, he got out with her and he dismissed and paid the cabbie. He told Jane that he would take the street car home, since he lived only half a block from Grand.

It was when he said good-night that she had trouble with him. He reached out and drew her to him. His voice was trembling. "Come on, you pretty little dolly. I need a nice kiss." And suddenly he began clutching at her breasts. "Oh, what lovelies you have!"

Jane said, "Oh, please! You mustn't do like this."

It was hard for Mr. Hennessy to calm down, but he did exactly that. "I'm sorry," he said. "I didn't mean to get carried away. It must have been the show we saw."

Jane didn't say anything and Mr. Hennessy took one of her hands in both of his and held it.

"Now, don't you go to worrying about your job. I know all about that sort of thing. You're the same age as my daughter, you know, and I know you're a really nice girl. So just forget my impulses. All right?"

"OK," said Jane.

They did not go out together again. During the following week Mr. Hennessy told Jane that he had made up his mind to take the job as business agent with the waiters' union. In spite of the recent problem with him Jane was sorry to see Mr. Hennessy go. He had always treated her well and been lenient about letting her read during slack times. And frequently when the dining-room had been empty, or nearly so, at the end of the evening, he would excuse her fifteen or twenty minutes early. She decided that she would miss him. But she didn't think about it much because, during Mr. Hennessy's last week in the Winchester Room, Luther Roby came into her life.

I THINK WE OUGHT TO GET NARRIED

In the summer of 1935, neither Jane nor Grace were keeping a journal. Jane had written nothing since finishing high school and going to work. She told herself that her days in the Winchester Room were too uneventful to record.

Over the years, Grace's journals were inclined to be very inadequate as a record of events. When things were happening she forgot all about her journal. Most of her entries were emotional and came during her long periods of despondency about Norris, or occasionally when she was excited over some new venture she was about to begin. Still it seems strange that there was only one brief entry between late April and the first of October, for it was during that period one of her daughters married, and her aged father died.

During the early summer Grace was still so preoccupied with Norris's doings and with her own lack of funds that she was not taking much notice of how the young girls in her household were spending their leisure time. While not writing in her journal at that time, Grace was busily writing letters. Since she had decided to leave Cleveland again, she began renewing her contacts in the East. She wrote to the Hurst's, of course, and to La Belle Fontaine, and to Norris's Aunt Georgie who had always been her friend. Georgie still lived in a brownstone house in Brooklyn where her doctor husband had had his offices. In the summer, even though she was a widow now and her daughter, Corinne, was married, Georgie still went to the summer place on a lake in Connecticut. Georgie was nearly eighty years old, but she was still active and kept house with the aid of a cleaning woman. Her mind was still sharp. Grace poured out the whole story of Norris's present love affair, knowing that Georgie would be unsurprised by it all. To La Belle she told the story in greatly abbreviated form, as La Belle, a devout Christian Scientist, rejected all talk of discord, controversy and human frailty.

Grace also wrote to Roge's sister, Lucy, who also lived in Jackson Heights. Grace liked Lucy's light-hearted disposition, and did not hold it against her that she had never been able to pay the money she owed Grace for nine years. Lucy would be interested in Grace's news and she would not moralize.

Writing all these letters was an emotional outlet for Grace and she spent her evenings thus occupied. She also wrote to her friends in Europe, Alma in Vienna, the pen-pal in Rome, and "Monsieur" in Tunis. She scarcely noticed that not only did Dee and Mona go out on dates every evening, but that Jane, as well, often came home quite late. She knew that Jane had met someone she liked at last. Finally, she would begin to forget Narze Samaha, and that was all to the good. Jane had finished decorating her room and had been spending her Sundays sewing summer clothes. She had started wearing lipstick again, something she had stopped because Narze hadn't liked it. She had worn her hair curly for several years now and Grace had abandoned trying to talk her out of it. And she accepted the lipstick too, but eye makeup and curled lashes drew a protest.

"Why do you insist on doing that to your eyes," she asked.

"I'm not doing anything to my eyes," Jane said. "Just the lashes."

“But why?”

“Because it makes the eyes prettier. Mother, Dee and Mona use an eyelash curler, too.”

“I know they do. I’ve noticed that. But you aren’t the type for all that fancy business. I’ve always told you, you are a tailored type. You can look very ‘distinguè’.”

Jane gave a long sigh. “Mother, I want to look pretty. All the while

I was growing up you kept telling me I was your ‘boy’ and. every summer when

I got sun-tanned Aunt Nelle liked to call me a ‘little Indian squaw.’ Neither of you ever thought about how I felt.”

“Oh, Jane, things like that shouldn’t bother you.”

“Well, they did then, and they still do, Mother.”

Jane’s first date with Luther Bryant Roby, Jr., had been early in June on her nineteenth birthday. It had come about on an impulse of Mona and Dee’s. They had been sitting in the College Rendezvous having a glass or two of beer and had been joined by two of the college men who frequented the place, and presently Luther Roby drifted in and joined them. Mona, who was always full of ideas, proposed they all go downtown to the Elite Dance Club, a night spot in Cleveland’s black ghetto. It was a popular spot for white people to go for the lively entertainment and bawdy songs. On any evening the club was filled with about one third whites and the rest black. The name “Elite” was pronounced to rhyme with “delight”, accent on the first syllable.

“I better not go,” Dee said. “It’s Jane’s birthday.”

“I thought it was yesterday,” Mona said. “I thought that lemon pie your Mom made was Jane’s birthday cake.”

“It was. But we celebrated yesterday because it was Sunday. Today’s the real birthday.”

“Alright!” Mona said. “Let’s go downtown and get her. Tell her it’s a surprise.”

Mona’s date had a car, so off they went, and when Jane came off duty all five were waiting for her in the Terminal Concourse.

Later on, when Jane tried to recall that birthday, she had only a blurred memory of the evening. They had all gone to the Elite Dance Club. Luther Roby turned out to be her date. He and she decided that they had met once before in the College Rendezvous when Gina Rizzo had introduced them. She had been only sixteen years old then, she told him. Later she would recall that, on this eventful nineteenth birthday, everyone in the group had ordered beer and that she had said she wasn’t crazy about beer. “What did she like?” they had asked. Whiskey sours, So Luther Roby had ordered her a whiskey sour, and then another one, and presently they had got up to dance and it had been such fun. She had no trouble at all following Luther. With Narze, who had had a reputation of being one of the best dancers in town, she had always been self-conscious and she hadn’t enjoyed dancing with him. She’d felt she wasn’t good at following the

“fancy stuff” he did. But with Luther Roby she’d had no problem at all and she’d gone to sleep that night a bit dizzy, but with the impression that she’d had a very jolly evening.

The following day when Jane got off work for her afternoon free time she found Luther Roby waiting for her in the Concourse.

“For heaven’s sake!” she said, “How did you know where I worked?”

“You told me last night,” he said.

“I did? And did I tell you I got off at three o’clock?”

“No, but you said you worked a split shift, It wasn’t too hard to figure out that you’d be off in the afternoon. I’ve been waiting here twenty minutes.

“I’m flattered. But didn’t you say you had a job too? Don’t tell me you work the same hours I do.”

“No, but I work for my Dad. I told him I’d take a late lunch hour. Can we go somewhere for a sandwich or something?”

“I’ve already had one, but I could have a coke with you.”

“Or a beer?”

“No beer,” she said.

“That’s right. It was whiskey sours you like, wasn’t it?”

“Yes, sort of. But I can’t indulge this time of day. I guess, though, I’d better learn to like beer. Everybody is saving money drinking beer these days. It always tastes so bitter.”

They went to a little place called Shapiro’s and learned more about each other.

“It must be nice to work where you decide what time you’ll go to lunch,” Jane said.

“When you work for family it’s not always dandy,” Luther Roby said. “Lately business has been so slow that the ‘old man’ can’t always pay me all he owes me. He has to pay the union men first.”

“What kind of business is it?” Jane asked.

“It’s a non-ferrous foundry.”

“Guess what,” Jane said. “I know what ‘non-ferrous’ means. I studied chemistry. It means it isn’t iron.”

“That’s right. Go to the head of the class.”

Jane smiled. “My Uncle Roge always says that. He was my favorite uncle.”

“Is he living?”



LUTHER LANE ROBY JR.

JOHNNY ABBOTT JR.

“You might say so, but the Depression has made him pretty crabby.”

“Well, it’s making my dad upset, too,” Luther said.

“Don’t you have to get back to work soon? I’m off till five-fifteen.”

“I can go back then. He’s not going to make another ‘heat’ today. All Dad wants me to do this afternoon is cut some castings off the gates.”

“All that is Greek to me.”

“Well, we make brass and bronze castings. To explain it very simply, you pour hot metal into sand molds, and it cools and hardens and then you shake the castings out and you cut them off the gates with a band-saw. I usually do that job.”

“What are ‘gates’?”

“That’s the hunk of metal that’s formed where you pour the stuff into the mold.”

“I see. Do you handle the hot metal? I mean, do you do that part? Pouring it?”

“Only on simple stuff like ‘pigging’ tin. My dad and the molders do the real job, especially on certain special jobs we do. But we make a lot of the same kind of brass castings for my Uncle Frank’s company. I help when we’re pouring those sometimes.”

“Where’s your dad’s company?” Jane asked.

“On West Fourth Street. Not far from here, really.”

“I was afraid you ought to be getting back.”

“No, it’s only about five or six minutes from here. It’s a pretty old building. It was built by Uncle Frank’s father-in-law. He had a lot of patents for brass fittings for steam locomotives. Uncle Frank married the company. There was just the one daughter. She inherited the business. The Hillman Manufacturing Co.”

“Where does your father come in?”

“The foundry is in the same building. It’s in the back. Dad leases the space in back of the shop.”

She looked a little puzzled.

He went on. “When I say ‘shop’ I don’t mean ‘store’. I mean ‘machine shop’. Dad’s business is the Roby Bronze Foundry. About a third of his work is for Uncle Frank.”

“I see,” Jane said.

“Pretty boring talk, eh?”

“No, not at all,” she said. “I like to know about things.”

“What are you doing tonight?”

“Going straight home to catch up on the sleep I lost last night,” she said.

“I’ll ride out with you if you’re going home alone.”

“I’m going home alone.”

“Doesn’t it bother you being downtown alone at night?”

“I don’t think about it. Where do you live?”

“Not far from your place. I live on Carle Road near Grand.”

“I thought it was all fraternity houses in there” she said. “I was in the Delt house there with Mona last summer.”

“Is Mona a pal of yours?” he asked.

“Not anymore. She’s too wild for me.”

“I’m glad you said that. She has a terrible reputation.”

“I ‘spose so, Luther, but I can’t worry about her. She’s rooming with us and I wish she weren’t, but it’s a practical arrangement. We all chip in to pay the rent. Dee only recently found another job. She’d been out of work since Christmas time. And Mother is an artist; so is Dad. It’s been a very bad time for them. Before the Depression they were doing fine.”

“Everyone is feeling the pinch,” Luther said.

But at that time, Jane had no idea that the Roby family was certainly not feeling “the pinch” to the same degree that the Rahming’s were.

In subsequent days, however, she would learn a great deal more about the Roby’s. Luther’s father, Luther senior, and his Uncle Frank, and his Aunt Adalyn, all lived in affluent Carrollton Heights. Uncle Frank, who had married Adalyn Hillman and her father’s business, had the grandest place, Luther said. That had come along with the marriage. The widowed mother-in-law was included as it had been her home. “But she’s nice,” Luther said. Another uncle lived and worked in Chicago, and had two daughters. Uncle Frank and his wife had a boy and a girl, both adopted. And Luther’s Aunt Adalyn had married a successful interior decorator, and they also had an adopted boy and girl.

“My father married a second time and they have two girls, my little half-sisters. Betsy is twelve and Betty is seven. They won’t have any more, Dad says, so that leaves it all up to me to carry on the Roby name. I’m not exactly off to a flying start, for sure.”

“Well, for heaven’s sake,” Jane said. “You’ve got plenty of time. How old are you?”

“Twenty-four on the twenty-fourth,” he said.

“This month?”

“Yep. I’m a June bug too. I celebrated your birthday with you. You’ll have to celebrate mine with me. Shall we go back to the Elite Dance Club again?”

“Let’s,” Jane said. “I had more fun dancing that night than I ever had before.”

He began seeing her every day, at least once. If he could not get away to spend the afternoon free time with her, he would meet her at nine in the evening. Then they would ride the Grand Avenue streetcar out to the University area. They had at first made a practice of going to the College Rendezvous which Mona and Dee frequented, but as their interest in each other grew, they preferred to be by themselves. The Admiral Hotel was only three doors from the Rendezvous and it had a Bar and Grille off the lobby. Jane and Luther began spending their late evenings there. It was quieter and had more claim to class than the other spots in the area. Jane was making a determined effort to learn to like beer. Luther would order a glass for each of them, and while he was enjoying his, she would valiantly sip hers, never really liking the flavor. By the time Luther had finished his, Jane would have struggled through a third of hers. “Let me order you a cold one,” he would say, and take her glass and finish it. This process would be repeated one more time, and then Jane would say that he must get home. Luther would have had three beers while Jane had one.

When she got home it would be after midnight, and Grace would remind her that it was late for a working girl to be getting in. And Jane would remind her mother that she could sleep, as she didn’t have to be at work until eleven in the morning. Actually, Grace was rejoicing that Jane was so taken up with her new admirer. Now, at long last, the affair with Narze Samaha appeared to be over. He had stopped writing letters, but Jane did not seem to be grieving over anything these days.

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When Jane had known Luther Roby nearly two weeks, he said to her, "I'd like my Aunt Connie to meet you. Trouble is she's gone to Canada for the summer. Aunt Adalyn's up there too, and all the kids."

Jane was curious as to why Luther wanted his Aunt Connie to meet her. What about his own parents? His father? His stepmother? And what about his mother. Was she dead or divorced?

"I'd like you to meet my parents, Luther. Separately. They're divorced. Are yours? You never mention your mother."

"My mother died when I was five weeks old," he said.

"Aw, Luther! What happened?"

"She died of something called mastitis. It turned into blood-poisoning. She and my father only had one year together. Losing her nearly killed him."

"So then who took care of you?" Jane asked,

"My Grandma Roby. The other grandmother wasn't very well. Grandma Roby hired a nurse for me. Aunt Connie was still at home then, and she helped spoil me."

"Are you spoiled?"

"Uncle Frank says I am."

"Everyone is spoiled. Well - not everyone. But my father is spoiled, and my mother and my sister Dee and I. At least my Aunt Nelle says so. And some in the family say Grandpa spoiled her. There is always someone to call another person spoiled."

"I guess so," Luther agreed.

"So your grandma raised you. What about your father? If he married again, how come you didn't live with them?"

"I did. But that was later. After my mother died, my father traveled awhile. I don't think he ever talked much about where he went or what he did. But then he came back home to Cleveland and lived at home with his parents and began to take an interest in me. Grandfather helped him get started in the foundry business. I was ten years old when he got married again. I went to live with them then. She's a nurse and she used to be quite pretty. She's very business-like. She set about to unspoil me."

"And you have two half-sisters, you said?"

"Yes. They're nice kids. They call me 'Buddy'."

"But you don't live with them."

“No. Clara and I don’t hit it off. In fact, the Roby’s have never been any too fond of her. I once heard Aunt Connie say that Clara was a ‘far cry’ from Julia.”

“Julia?”

“Julia was my mother. Aunt Connie says that she was a lovely person, smart and educated, and with a sweet disposition. That’s what Clara doesn’t have.”

“That’s too bad. Maybe she’s that way because the Roby’s aren’t fond of her and she knows it.”

“You could very well be right, I suppose, but no one has been nasty or anything like that. It’s just that the rest of them do things, and Dad and Clara aren’t part of it.”

“You mean they don’t invite them?”

“No, but when they all put together to buy the place in Canada my father didn’t have the money. He would be welcome there, but Clara won’t go. She says she wouldn’t want to go unless they owned their share. Dad says he’s too busy to go. But I spent plenty of summers there myself.”

“Where is it?”

“In Georgian Bay. It’s on an island. Aunt Connie named it ‘Camp Cleveland’ years ago. It’s a great place though it’s hard to get to. I haven’t been there for three years. I’m in the doghouse with Uncle Frank.”

Jane laughed. “Well, isn’t that a coincidence. Our family has a place where we all went in the summers, too. It’s in New England and it’s wonderful, but it’s hard to get to. And I haven’t been there in three years. I guess one could say I’m in the doghouse, too. With my Uncle Roge. My cousins and I stayed out late with boys. Uncle Roge thought that was outrageous. Why were you in disgrace?”

“Same kind of thing -fooling around with a girl.”

“Uncles must forget what it was like to be young.”

Luther laughed. “Uncle Frank was never young. He was born a successful business man with a wealthy wife.”

She laughed at Luther, and then she entertained him with stories about the now-famous winter at Forest Camp, and how she and Mim had borrowed a penny from the lawyer in Plymouth.

“I trust that you paid him back,” Luther said gravely.

“Oh, indeed we did,” she said.

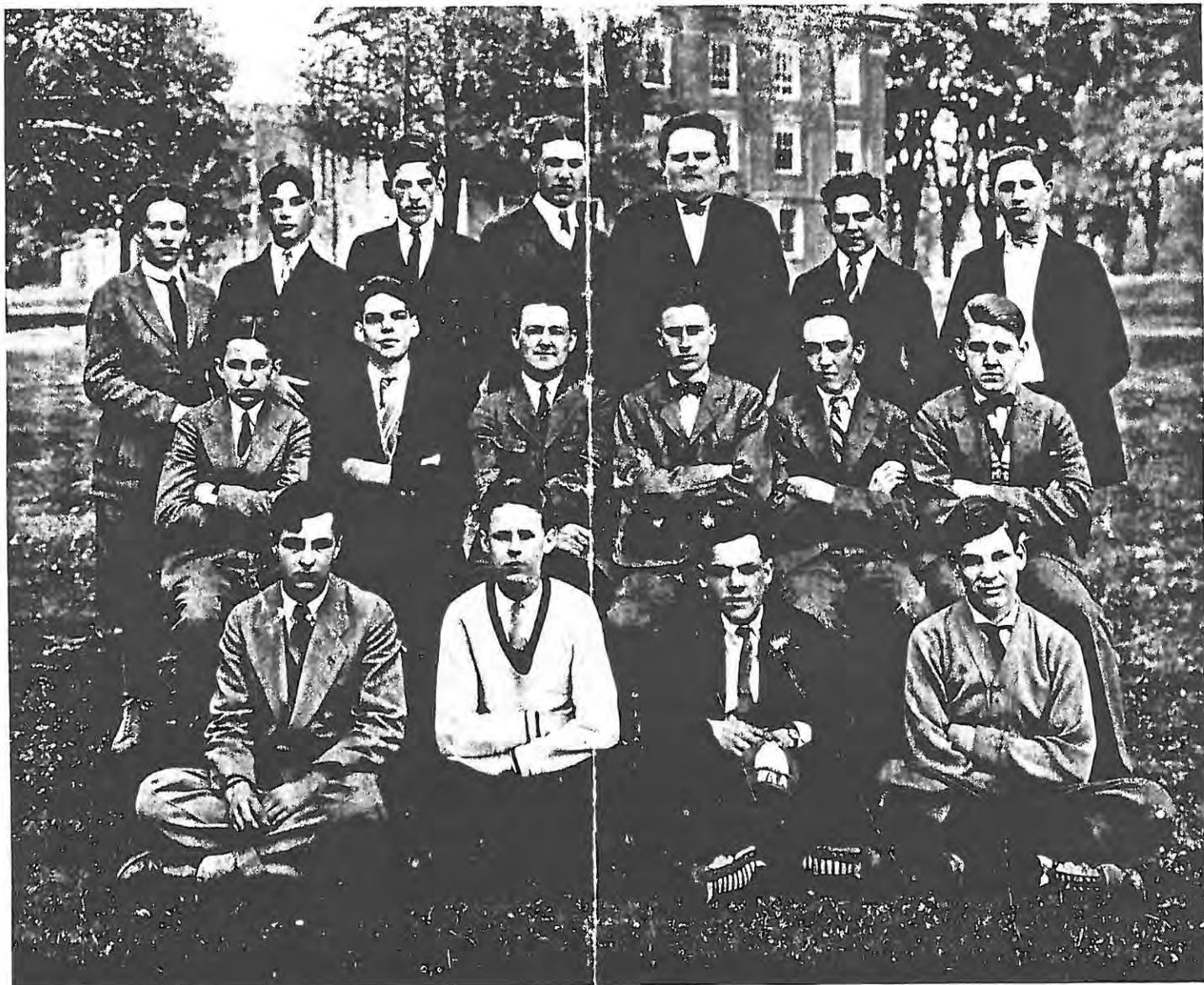
“I always wanted to be a lawyer,” he said.

“It’s not too late, is it?”

“Perhaps I’m not too old, but financially it’s too late.”

“The Depression?”

Fifty-six



Luther Lane Roby jr. in Prep School, Western Reserve
Academy
circa 1927

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“Yes, but more than that. I threw my chance away. When I was sixteen my grandfather died. He left his money to my grandmother, of course, but I got a legacy of my own to use for college. My grandfather probably knew that my father would have a harder time making money. He’s not like Uncle Frank. He’s not aggressive and he didn’t marry money. Anyway, I got my money in a lump sum and I went to college and proceeded to spend it,”

“All of it? Did you graduate?”

“I didn’t even get through the second year, but I used up the money for four years. Uncle Frank was disgusted with me. Aunt Connie and Grandmother were disappointed, and Clara said ‘I told you so,’ and my Dad said nothing.”

“Then what?”

“Oh, I went one semester to Cleveland U., and since then I’ve been marking time. I was lucky to get into Cleveland U. It was because my math grades were high.”

“And yet you said you’d like to be a lawyer.”

“Yes. But I like math, too. And English.”

“And yet you flunked out. That’s funny. And Dee did, too.”

“Some of us aren’t ready for college at eighteen.”

“If not college,” Jane asked, “What then?”

“Probably many fellows should do a couple of years in military service. Then they would be glad to have a chance to go to college and actually study hard.”

“What about the girls? What do they do after high school?”

“Well ---. Let’s see. They should marry the men who have finished college.”

“But what about the girls who want to go to college?” Jane asked. “Some girls have big ambitions and don’t want to get married.”

“Are you one of those?” Luther asked.

“No. I want to do both, Get married and do something else beside.”

“Such as?”

“I’m not sure. Just something interesting. They’ve always been telling me I’ll be an artist. I’m not all that good at it and not interested enough. I used to want to design clothes. One summer when I was fourteen I was alone a lot of the time. We lived in Connecticut. I used to go up to the third floor, where I had my so-called studio, and I made paper dolls and designed their outfits. Not children-dolls; they were grown-up dolls. I never cut them out. I just kept drawing them, dozens and dozens of them. It got hot up there in the afternoons, so I’d come down and go outside and work on my tennis court for a while.”

He looked so puzzled that she went on to explain.

“I was building a tennis court that summer - an under-sized one.”

Luther shook his head and laughed.

“You’re one of a kind. Building a tennis court! Are you crazy about tennis?”

“I guess not. I sold my tennis racket, cover, and press for five dollars.”

“What’d you do that for?”

“For the five dollars.”

“Ask a silly question, get a silly answer,” Luther said. “I’ve sold a few things myself. Wonder if this depression will end soon.”

“Do you think it ever will?”

“Someday. But Dad and Uncle Frank think it will take a long time.”

“I bet they’re all Republicans.”

“No,” said Luther, “as a matter of fact they aren’t. They’re Democrats. Great admirers of Newton D. Baker. Uncle Frank knew him and I met him. I worked one summer in a law office as a sort of errand boy. I took briefs here and there and to Cleveland sometimes. That’s how I met ‘Newtie Cootie’.”

“What do they think of Roosevelt?”

“Well, they think he’s trying sincerely. They aren’t sure if what he’s doing will work, but they think something had to be done.”

“My Uncle Roge thinks F.D.R. is simply terrible. He’s sure his ideas will ruin the country. But my Uncle Bill is all for him and so are my mother and dad and some of the others.”

By the end of two weeks Jane and Luther had told each other the stories of their childhood. She told him about the many different schools she’d attended in five different states, and about the various pets that had been taken away from her.

“The most recent one was a pretty black and white cat that we had for a while in Connecticut. He came to us half-frozen on a below-zero night. He could barely say ‘meow’ he was so chilled. Aunt Nelle wrapped him in a blanket and put him by the stove to warm him up. Of course, I got very fond of him, as usual. But he had to grow up and he sprayed in Mother’s closet, so they had him taken away and put to sleep. Later on, when I got back to Cleveland, Dad asked me, ‘What did you do with your kitty?’ ‘Which kitty?’ ‘Your mother wrote me that you had a pretty black and white ones’ ‘Oh, yes,’ I said, ‘that was Buchanan. They had him put to sleep because he sprayed in the closet.’ My dad was mad. ‘They could have had him fixed,’ he said. And guess what. We’re feeding a stray cat now. It hangs around and it’s so thin. But something will happen to it. I’m not counting on keeping it because I doubt if we’ll stay where we are. I can tell by the way Mother is talking. She’ll be going east again. She’s not a person to stay put very long.”

They walked along Grand Avenue one evening after Jane got off work. They passed a pet store with puppies in the window. Three of them were asleep, snuggled up in a corner, but one was up and moving around. It was a black one with white on its chest.

“Oh, it looks so much like my ‘Binker,’ Jane said. “Someday I’m going to have my own place, and have a dog that no one can take away from me. And also, when I do get a real place of my own I’m going to stay there and not be forever moving all the time.”

“I had a puppy once,” Luther said, “but he didn’t stay around very long. He chewed one of Clara’s shoes and she got rid of him.”

“I don’t think grownups realize how it breaks a child’s heart to do that! I hope I never do it to any children I might ever have.”

That evening Jane went with Luther to his room on Carle Avenue. It was four o’clock in the morning before he took her home. It had been an incredible night. She realized that making love with Narze had been a novice experience. There were many things neither she nor Narze had understood. And even though she never doubted for a moment that she had loved Narze (and still did, in a way) she now classified it as “first love.” Luther was only two years older than Narze, but he had lived in an entirely different world, an urban world, a sophisticated world. He had made love-making an amazing experience.

While they were walking home to her place the eastern sky was getting light. It was June 21st, the shortest night of the year. Jane told Luther about Narze.

“I suppose you knew you weren’t the first, Luther.”

“It doesn’t matter,” he said. “The same goes for me.”

“But you’re a man. It’s always that way,” she said.

“Oh, no. There has to be a first time even for guys.”

“Not when they’re twenty-four years old.”

“Well,” he admitted. “Not usually.”

“Anyway,” Jane said, “you are just the second for me.”

“Was it the ‘Sheik of Araby’ you told me about?”

“Yes, but I didn’t call him that.”

“I know. Is he very good looking?”

“He looks a little bit like a gangster. But he’s nice.”

“You might be surprised to know that I’ve only had two girls before you.”

She waited to see if he wanted to tell her more.

“Yes,” he said, “there was the girl in Canada. We used to go sailing together. We could have been together here and there, in the woods, or on the little islands all summer long. But the only time we ever did it, Uncle Frank caught us. We were in the boat-house. I was sent home and I’ve not been back since.

“Do you still care about her?” Jane asked.

“She was a nice kid,” he said, “But there’s been someone else since. She’s a year older than I. She’d been married and divorced. I went with her about a year. It wasn’t a romance, just an affair, I guess. She’s married again now, anyway. She was looking for someone with money. She found out I don’t have any.”

“Well, and what were you looking for?” Jane asked.

“Someone to go to bed with, I’m afraid,” he admitted.

“Oh? And is that what you’re looking for now?”

“A guy is always looking for that,” he said, “but often more beside. You aren’t like Catherine. She didn’t have any culture. She worked in a drugstore at the soda fountain.”

“And I’m cultured,” Jane said dryly. “I’m a hat-check girl.”

“Doesn’t matter - you are cultured.”

“I had hoped to be,” she said.

“Another thing about you I like;” he said, “you’re so feminine.”

Jane laughed. She paused and laughed again.

“What’s so funny?” he asked.

“Well, it’s just that Mother doesn’t like me to be too feminine. She discourages it.”

“Why on earth?”

“Because she doesn’t have a son.”

“That’s crazy. You don’t walk like a boy. I like your ankles. Boys don’t have slender ankles. I like those sheer dark-blue silk stockings you wear, and the blue shoes to match and the high heels. I like your figure. I like your hips when you walk. And I can see the lace through your blouse and your shape, too. Doesn’t your mother know what kind of figure you have?”

“She knows about my figure,” Jane said, remembering the time Earl Hurst got her to pose for him.

They were at her door now and he kissed her good-night.

“I think we ought to get married,” he said.

“Married!”

“Yes. Why not?” He went down the porch steps and turned. “Be thinking about it,” he said.

THE MOST INTERESTING ALTERNATIVE

Grace was upset with Nelle. She told herself that she should not have told Merly about working for Mrs. Norton. Mrs. Norton was an old friend of their mother's. She had asked Grace to come and stay with her for a few weeks while she moved into a different apartment. And Grace had agreed and after two weeks the old lady was in her new place. She was in but not settled. She wanted Grace to stay longer and help her get all her possessions arranged.

Grace had spoken about it to Merly.

"I can't do it," she said, "If I did that, I wouldn't be able to get at my real work. She wants me to be her companion."

"What is your real work, Grace?" Emmie asked in her gentle voice, but, as all the family usually did, Grace ignored her.

"I want to do paintings and write my Tunisian story."

"How much would she pay you?" Merly asked.

"Fifteen dollars a week," Grace said,

"Gee, 'Rene, that's sixty dollars a month. You should take it. You can live on that nicely. You'd live with her and have room and board."

"No, I can't do it, Merly. I want to be with my girls and do my real work - my art work."

Apparently Merly had written to Nelle, because along came a letter full of advice and lecturing:

Dear Grace,

Roge says we might all do better to swallow our pride... So you told Mrs. Norton you didn't have time; you were writing a story... In times like this, how can you afford to pass up a chance to earn a few dollars? If I do say so, and I suppose it won't please you, Grace, remember that you owe a considerable sum of money to Roger and me, and you also owe money to Merly, That money, if it were in the bank, would be getting us some interest, and Roge thinks that we should have arranged it that way with you, too. Just holding the ring that Carle gave you, and your sofa, isn't making us any better off. Roge and I think you should take any work that comes your way, even if it isn't writing or art, We cannot be choosy in times like these, I gather what Mrs. Norton wants is for you to help her go through her things, before her sons put her in a nursing home. It is too bad she didn't have any daughters who could help her do this. I guess daughters-in-law are not very sympathetic, and just want her to throw everything away. Now, Grace, Mrs. Norton has enough money to hire you. Don't turn it down. Jane's earnings didn't support all of you all winter, did they? Do tell us more about Dee's fiancé and about her new job. You didn't tell us much. Your letter was incoherent. I guess you were excited. Much love, Nelle

Grace was put out with Nelle but she decided to not fire off a hasty answer. Nelle would get over her preachy mood and she would probably want some company at Forest Camp come August at least, if not July. She liked to have someone with her when Roge was travelling.

So Grace wrote to Nelle and mentioned nothing at all about Mrs. Norton and her offer of the position as a companion. Instead, she explained how it happened that Dee's engagement to the young artist, Frank Nikola, had come to an end.

"He is much too "Old World" in his thinking. Dee came to realize this and knew that he would be a problem if she married him. His parents are from Czechoslovakia and they view things in the old time way. Dee told him that she had been in love before, and this young man could not accept or understand that there had been someone before him. What egotistical creatures men are! Most of them, that is. Oh, well!

"Jane is still at her same job in the Terminal. She doesn't like it. Her boss has given her a problem. (Fortunately he has left now.) But she says that there are customers that bother the girls, too. What cads some men are! Of course, I will admit that girls do a great deal to make themselves tempting to men. They curl their hair and now they have taken to curling their lashes, as well, and putting eye shadow on the upper eyelids. Fortunately, Dee and Jane don't use much of this, as I think eye make-up cheapens a girl's appearance. But Mona uses more of it and it irritates her eyes and is not attractive. Where is their idealism and modesty? They think only of their looks and their clothes. Jane uses all her spare time, before and after work, at the sewing machine making clothes for herself. Dee, of course, sews her things, too, and does a beautiful job of it.

"I am thinking of finding someone else to rent another room here. At the moment, Dee, Jane, and Mona each pay a few dollars a week. With one more girl I could swing it to stay here, but I would have to ask Jane to move up to the third floor and I hesitate to have her do that as she just redecorated her room. I couldn't ask a stranger to take a third floor room as there is no bathroom up there. I'll have to get more furniture in order to take in another roomer. Life is so complicated!

Nelle, you did not say whether you were going to Forest Camp this summer. I should ever so much like a few quiet weeks to write. Let me know. I must close as Jane is feverishly making herself a white sharkskin suit for some occasion this weekend, and she wants me to mark the hem for her. She is going to take two or three days off work this week and she will lose the pay, but she says that she has had no time off in more than a year and she needs a vacation. I suppose she does, but in times like these every dollar counts, doesn't it?

Oh! One bit of news - Jane's long-standing connection with Narze has come to an ending and I am so relieved. It wouldn't have worked out well at all. She is seeing another young man and seems to be infatuated. I'm afraid she is losing too much sleep, poor child, but if that is what it takes to get Narze out of her thoughts, so be it. They come in at all hours of the morning, and she knows I don't approve.

Well, Nelle, let me know about N.H.

Much love, Grace

P.S. Dee has a new beau too. Seems very nice.

####



On the morning of the 25th of June Jane dressed herself in her new white sharkskin suit. She had new white shoes and handbag and a favorite white hat she'd had since last summer. Her stockings were fastened to a pale-blue garter belt. Before leaving the house she opened Dee's top dresser drawer and took a white linen handkerchief. "Thank you, Dee," she said under her breath. Dee was at work and Grace was still in bed. Jane went in to say good-bye.

"I'm leaving now, Mother," she said.

"Aren't you early?" Grace said drowsily.

"You're forgetting I'm on vacation. Luther and I have a big day planned. We're going with a couple of friends."

"Where?"

"Up along the lake. Maybe Geneva. Maybe farther. I don't know when we'll be back."

"You'd better get in early. You haven't been getting enough sleep."

"I know. I'm going to do something about that, too."

"You'd better. Well now, be careful."

Luther's friend was an old classmate, Billy Jones, who had been at Carrollton Heights high school. With him was his girlfriend, Virginia. Billy had a car, and had volunteered to take Luther and Jane to Ripley, New York, which was a busy "Gretna Green" on the Pennsylvania border.

It took most of the morning to reach Ripley, but it only took seven minutes to obtain a marriage license at an office on the main street. Jane, who was nineteen, said she was twenty-one, and no one asked her to show proof,

Justices of the peace were everywhere. Jane chose one whose office was a rather pretty house. The justice was a fatherly type. His wife came out of the kitchen and took off her apron. She and Lewis Jones and Virginia McGee witnessed the marriage of Luther Bryant Roby, Jr., and Jane Rahming.

Matrimony, "which is an honorable estate, not to be entered into lightly and ill advisedly, but reverently, discreetly, advisedly and soberly."

Jane would recall those words of the justice of the peace.

They had indeed been married "soberly," but later they celebrated. Lewis Jones drove a few miles further east to Westfield, New York where he bought a bottle of whisky. "For drinking toasts," he said. On the way home to Cleveland they drank some of it straight from the bottle,

though Jane hated it that way, but by the time they reached the Admiral Hotel they were all in very high spirits indeed. They went into the Admiral Bar first, for drinks they didn't really need, but they decided against the Admiral dining room because it would be too expensive. They went instead to the University Grille for the "wedding feast" with Jane expressing the hope that Dee and Mona would not chance to come in.

Jane explained to Bill and Virginia.

"Dee is my sister," she said, "and of course she'll have to know I'm married, but I don't want her to know before I go home and tell my mother myself.

SANCTUARY SET UP BY NEW YORK TOWN TO HELP ELOPERS

Ripley, N. Y., Bids Fair to
Establish Record as New
Gretna Green.

Ripley, N. Y.—Elkton, Md., must look to its laurels as the Gretna Green of the East, for Town Clerk Clarence E. Barden can now rightfully claim the record of issuing more marriage licenses than any marriage license clerk in a town the size of Ripley in the United States, and his "business" continues to grow.

Ripley's nearness to Pennsylvania and Ohio and the ease with which licenses may be obtained here, has made it a favored spot for runaway couples from those states.

"Business" on Boom.

Within the last two years 3,716 couples have applied to Town Clerk Barden in Ripley, population 2,500, for a marriage license and the 1933 total, falling slightly behind that of 1932, has passed the 1,600 mark. Of this number, many were refused licenses for one reason or another, but the majority departed as man and wife.

There is nothing secretive about the "Ripley Marriage Mill." The town clerk's office where the master and his mate apply for passage on the uncertain sea of matrimony is located on the ground floor of a brick front garage.

When the office is closed for the day, Clerk Barden picks up his official sealing device and a pad of marriage blanks and takes the marriage license bureau home with him.

It Never Closes.

The mill operates 24 hours a day seven days a week. Midnight marriages are no longer a novelty in Ripley and electric signs advertise the homes of the marrying justices while porch lights illuminate the dignified names of Protestant clergymen.

Facts about Ripley romances show that Ohio couples usually arrive in the late afternoon or in the early hours of the morning. Couples from rural districts in western Pennsylvania apply for their license during the hours between 1 p. m. and 6, and that those from the cities prefer the early evening.

Those who marry in Ripley include couples from all walks of life. They arrive by train, bus and all manner of conveyances. They alight from smooth purring 16-cylinder cars and wheezing 4-cylinder flivvers. One recent couple came all the way from Tulsa, Okla.

"Your mother doesn't know?" Virginia asked.

"No. She would have made a big fuss."

"Won't she still make a big fuss?" Lewis Jones asked.

"I'm not sure. Maybe yes, maybe no. But it'll be too late."

"Are you staying at the Admiral?" Virginia asked.

"For a honeymoon, you mean? No," said Jane. "It's not in our budget to have a honeymoon."

"Besides," Luther said, "We have no luggage. The Admiral isn't a place you could register without luggage."

"Oh," Bill said, "but you have your little white book. That would do the trick."

"Let's see the little white book again," Luther said. "What all did we promise? I forget."

Jane took the little book the J.P. had given her from her purse and gave it to Luther. It was a copy of the marriage service and had everyone's signature. Luther perused it and quoted:

"With this ring I thee wed and will all my worldly goods I thee endow. Poor Jane! All she gets are my clothes and about a dozen books. Hey, honey, can I have my six new shirts? I don't need the P.J.'s. Oh! I don't think you can use my shoes, either. But I don't have any worldly goods, honey."

"That's OK," said Jane. "I don't have much of a dowry either, aside from a new double bed."

"Oh!" Billy Jones said. "That's the most important item of all."

“Oh, oh!” Jane said, grabbing the marriage service book out of Luther’s hands and stuffing it away in her purse. “Now, remember, don’t anybody spill the beans, I’ll tell Dee later when we get home.”

But Dee and her date did not stop at their table to talk. Dee only grinned from across the way and gave a little wave at Jane and Luther as she and her date proceeded to the rear of the restaurant.

“I know that fellow,” Luther said.

Virginia said to Jane, “Do you really mean to say that you are going to go home tonight to your mother and say ‘Mama, I’d like you to meet my husband?’”

Jane grinned. “Well, not just like that, but almost.”

“You’ve got more nerve than I would have,” Virginia said.

“Well, I do feel a bit nervous about it,” Jane admitted. “I think maybe I need a drink after all.”

####

Grace got little sleep the night that Jane came home a married woman. Several times she thought of getting up and writing in her journal? Once she actually got up and got out her paper and pen and prepared to write but gave it up. She could not organize her thoughts enough to write a line. She put out the light and lay in her bed with her mind racing. Jane had not married Narze! More must be learned about Luther. Dee had told her a little.

“Daddy knows his family,” she said. “He says that he played with Luther’s aunt and uncles when he was a boy. They lived on Cartwright Street here, but they live in Carrollton Heights now.”

“They must have money.”

“Yes, but Luther hasn’t,” Dee had said. “But Dad says the Roby’s are a fine Cleveland family.”

“You’re getting very thick with your father, I must say.”

“Mother, after all he is my father.”

“Then you think it’s alright what he did to me?”

“I didn’t say that, Mother. Really!”

The day after their marriage Jane stayed home. She was still on vacation, but Luther went to work downtown. He had not yet told his father about Jane.

Grace took advantage of Luther’s absence to talk to Jane.

“I trust Luther is going to be paying rent money,” she said. “After all —“

“Mother, of course he’ll pay if we stay here.”

“What do you mean ‘if you stay here’? Why wouldn’t you be staying?”

“Because I’m married now,” Jane said.

“It’ll cost you more anywhere else.”

“Not if we only rent a room somewhere.”

“You won’t like that. If we all live together in a cooperative arrangement we all benefit by it.”

“If we can all get along together it might work out,” Jane conceded.

“Why were you in such rush to get married? Are you pregnant?”

“Mother! That’s ridiculous! I’ve only known Luther three weeks. I’ve not had time to even miss a period,”

“Well, it’s outrageous to marry someone you’ve only known three weeks. Why did you do it?”

“Because I was fed up with the way my life was. It’s not the first time anybody married on short acquaintance.”

“Well, it isn’t wise. It’s very risky.”

“You knew Dad for two or three years and then married him. Look how risky that was. I should have a much better chance. Luther has all the qualifications Narze lacked. Things you worried about. He’s pure American and comes from a cultured, successful family. How can you object to that?”

“I don’t want to talk about it anymore,” Grace said.

“That’s good,” Jane said, “because I have a doctor appointment at 2:30.”

“Why, what’s the matter?”

“Nothing. I’m just going to see him about a new type of contraceptive they have these days.”

“Well,” said Grace, “thank God for that, at least.”

After Jane had left for downtown, Grace felt the need to talk to someone about the new turn of events. She tried to call Betty Long, but there was no answer. She thought of talking to Mary McGuire, but she knew Mary would be certain to tell her to calm down and everything would work out just fine. She would surely say, “Young people must be allowed to live their lives.” If she talked to Mary Raper or Grace V. Kelly they also would tell her much the same thing.

Grace finally decided to call Gertrude who was, after all, a pretty sensible person. Gertrude was at home.

“Trudy?” Grace said. “The most incredible thing has happened. Jane has run away and got married.”

“She’s gone?”

“No, no. She came back. But she’s married!”

“Well, Grace, people do that.”

“But she’s a child!”

“Not exactly. And isn’t Narze several years older?”

“She didn’t marry Narze!”

“Oh,” said Gertrude. “Well, that is sort of a surprise, isn’t it.”

“Dee tells me the boy is from a very fine family.”

“Well, that’s good, Grace. Maybe that’s the answer for Jane,”

“Trudy, I don’t know why you say that.”

“Because of that job she had in the Terminal. She probably felt stuck there with no future.”

“But, Trudy, I’ve told Jane again and again that if she’ll just be patient we’ll get her to college.”

“But youth is impatient, Grace. Young things don’t want to wait for future possibilities. They want to start their lives. Tell me, are you planning any little party or reception for her?”

“I haven’t had time to get that far in my thinking, Trudy.”

“Because we’d like to get a little gift for them and to meet the young man. What’s his name?”

“John Bryant Roby, Junior.”

“Well, that’s a splendid name, Grace. Very impressive.”

“We’ll see about that, I guess,” said Grace.

Later that day Gertrude told Bill about it.

“I’m not surprised about it,” she told him.

“The urge is pretty strong at nineteen,” he agreed.

“Well, I think she simply despaired about college.”

“She’s probably heard Grace’s talk of ‘getting started’ a few too many times,” Bill said.

“Yes,” said Gertrude, “and she may have observed in her mother the Martin’ trait of procrastination.”

“Come on, Gertrude, it’s only my sisters who are like that, In fact, I didn’t think Grace was as bad as Merly and Nelle.”

“Grace can keep an appointment on time, I will say that,” Gertrude said, “but for five years now she keeps talking about doing art work or writing a book or something and all she does is go to New York or New Hampshire or someplace and then she comes back here. I don’t believe she stays anywhere for six months at a time. It must be very confusing for Dee and Jane. Probably Jane got married so she’d have something she could count on.”

“I suppose,” Bill said. “Hope it turns out that way. Probably marriage is the most interesting alternative she has right now.”

“How would you like to make one of your famous devil’s food cakes?”

“Right this minute?”

“No. This weekend. I told Grace we’d bring a picnic. I’ll fix deviled eggs and things,”

“And deviled ham sandwiches and deviled crab? A Satanic picnic?”

“Seriously, Bill, will you make a devil’s food?”

“Why, sure.”

“Jane was so pleased last year when we baked one for her Commencement.”

“Standing ‘in loco parentis’ are you?”

“It’s just that Grace is so upset, it’ll be a help to that young couple if we can help make it a happy event and not the catastrophe Grace thinks it is. I’m going to buy a pretty cake-saver and we’ll take your devil’s food in that and give it to them for a wedding present.”

“Gert, you’d like to have had a daughter, wouldn’t you?”

“I’m very fond of my nieces. In the fullness of time I’ll no doubt have daughters-in-law.”

HANG ON, DON'T FALL, LUTHER

The party that Gertrude brought to Jane was a success, even though it was small. Merly and Mim came from Oberlin, as well, and it was a pleasant Sunday, with Gertrude having quite a lengthy conversation with Luther Roby. She later told Grace she found Luther to be a “charming young man with excellent manners.”

But the spotlight that weekend was not entirely on Jane and Luther Roby. Mim was a subject of concern for her mother and her Aunt Grace. Merly had discussed it all with Grace, and Grace had seen fit to give Mim a “talking-to.” Of course, that was after the party was over and Bill and Gertrude had left with their two young boys to go and pay a call on Great-aunt Isobel who was very old and frail now, and lived in Cleveland with one of her four sons.

Mim had just recently graduated from Oberlin high school and was planning on entering Oberlin College in September. But the problem was Mim’s relationship with a boy cousin on her father’s side. Young Bill Lemmon had been a freshman in the college this past year and had been boarding with Merly and her father because living in the college dormitory was so expensive. His family lived in Cleveland. In fact, Bill Lemmon had been in Jane’s class at East High.

The problem was simple and unamazing (at least to anyone more worldly than Merly and Grace). Mim had been discovered by Merly going into Cousin Bill’s room at night. It would probably have happened the other way around had not Mim shared a room with Trink. Cousin Bill would not have sneaked into the sisters’ bedroom. When Merly faced Mim (and later, Bill) with her knowledge of their “goings-on both the young people “confessed” that they got together “for a cigarette” every evening.

“That’s their story and they are both sticking to it,” Merly told Grace.

“And I see what’s worrying you,” Grace said. “You’re wondering whether instead of just smoke there is some real fire?”

“Precisely. And I’ve talked to them but I don’t know whether it’s done any good. I wish you’d speak to Mim.”

“Why, Merly?”

“Because your girls are older. You’ve been through some of these situations. You can point out the pitfalls to Mim. Please do speak to her, ‘Rene,’”

“Alright.”

And Grace did take Mim aside and sat her down on a low chair and with round eyes and a grave face she lectured her niece for most of a half hour. Mim listened respectfully, but at the end of the preachment, she said, “Aunt Grace, I’m aware of the pitfalls already.”

And all Grace could think of to say was, “Well, in any event, it’s unfeminine and unwise to take up cigarettes.”



MIRIAM E. LEMMON

"MURRY"

1935

With Jane married and going to bed behind a closed door every night with Luther, Grace's thoughts turned more and more to Dee. She would so much rather Dee had married. It would have been right and appropriate, for Dee was in her twenty-fifth year and, in Grace's opinion, "the marrying type," What a shame that Frank Nekola had been so narrow-minded and "old country" in his thinking. Dee had seemed truly in love with him.

Oh, but now Dee had two new friends. One didn't amount to much. Just a rather shallow young man who lived across the street. Dee frequently liked to go to the College Rendezvous and drink beer with Bud. Grace did wish that Dee didn't like beer so well. Jane's Luther liked beer too, he said. Beer seemed so plebian.

Dee's other new friend seemed far more promising to Grace. He was older and he was educated. One could talk to him about books and art and politics. He liked F.D.R., though he said he'd been raised Republican. His name is Clement Chandler and he was twenty-nine years old. Dee thought that was a bit old, but she agreed that he was "nice".

Well," Grace told Dee, "don't let that throw you off. You seem to be so often attracted to men who are less than nice."

"Oh, Mother, that's ridiculous. Cameron was very nice."

"Yes, but what he did was selfish."

"Everyone's selfish. And you said yourself you thought Cameron was very good about the whole business."

"He shouldn't have caused it in the first place. I, for one, still believe in idealism. This man, Clement, seems as though he would be the idealistic type."

"Well, don't get the idea he has no selfish thoughts in his mind. He's not that different from other guys. And, for heaven's sake, don't sing his praises if you want me to like him, Mother. Oh, and by the way, he doesn't like to be called Clement. He prefers to be called 'Chan.' His mother calls him Clement."

"Doesn't he like his mother?"

"Oh, I suppose so, but he says she likes to baby him."

"Oh, dear! I'd be careful of that. Mother Rahming liked to baby your father."

"There's no comparison there. Daddy likes being babied; Chan doesn't."

"Well, that's a good thing. I was quite impressed with him, actually. You really may have a very good thing there."

If Grace as favorable impressed with Clement Chandler, it also had to be said that she as fast becoming impressed with Luther Roby Junior. His good breeding was apparent and she learned that he knew a first cousin of hers who as a lawyer in Cleveland's most prestigious law firm. And the Roby's knew and liked the columnist Jack Raper, who had been John Rahming's confidant. Grace also learned that Luther could play the piano, an accomplishment she admired



TEMPER

CLEMENT WARREN CHANDLER
"MIL" 1924

1807½

greatly. And, surprisingly, most of the Roby's were admirers of Franklin Roosevelt. They had money but they were Democrats. But, added to that virtue and all the others, was Luther's amiable personality and his infectious laugh. Everyone who came to the apartment on 116th Place and met Luther liked him. Some of Dee's college friends already knew him, but the relatives and Grace's friends were meeting him for the first time and they all spoke well of him.

Jane, for her part, was amazed at herself. She did not doubt for a moment that she loved Luther, but she could not understand how she could have recovered from her feeling for Narze so quickly. She had not forgotten him, and she felt tender toward him when she thought about him. But that was just it - she simply was not thinking about him. It was all Luther now.

Their life in bed was excellent, but their domestic life was strange. Jane's job included her meals and that was worth something, so it could not be dismissed. Her hours were unusual. Luther adjusted himself to her schedule, but there were drawbacks to that. He went to work earlier than Jane on mornings when the foundry was planning to "pour a heat". For when that was going on his father and the two molders were totally occupied and Luther was needed to make himself useful in other ways. Some days there was no pour, but there were the cooled castings to "shake out", and band-saw work to be done, and castings to be polished. It was work that could be done in the evening and Luther's father had no objection to that. During Jane's afternoon free time Luther walked over from the foundry on 4th Street and the two of them would go to Shapiro's when Jane would have a coke while Luther had a beer and sometimes two. He would work at the foundry during Jane's evening shift. That is, he would work if there was work to be done. Sometimes there was nothing to do in the evening but to tidy up the shop a little and dampen down the molding sand. Luther's dad went home to his family in the evening. On those nights when there was no foundry work to do and occasionally even when there was, Luther fell into the routine of passing the time in Jimmy Black's Cafe which was two doors down from the Roby foundry. He went there for lunch, as well, on days when he came downtown early. Luther always drank beer when he was in Jimmy Black's, and every evening when he met Jane after she came off duty, he smelled like beer, but except for the evening when they returned from Ripley, she had never seen him anything resembling drunk. She did not like it that he always smelled like beer in the evening, but so many others did that Luther was not conspicuous in that respect. Mona James, and Dee, and her new friend, Clement Chandler, all spent most of their evenings drinking beer. It was a relatively cheap form of social life and according to Dee, "everybody does it."

"Doesn't Luther make more money than you?" Grace asked.

"Yes, but he doesn't get free meals like I do. He has to buy his downtown."

"Well, if he would contribute toward the food he could have his meals here with Dee and me."

"No, Mom. Luther likes to stay downtown until I come home. He doesn't think I ought to come home alone."

"You always came home alone before. You're a very self-reliant person."

"Alright, but that's the way Luther feels. He thinks there are some very unsavory characters that hang around the public square. I'll admit I've seen some myself, and Daddy says that Luther is right."

“Daddy says?’ Have you been seeing your father?”

“Not yet. But he’s having a party for Luther and me on Saturday night.”

“That’s just peachy! I suppose she’ll be there? Frederica Brandt, I mean.”

“I know who you mean, Mother. I wouldn’t be surprised to see her there,”

“I’m surprised that you would go down there under the circumstances,” Grace said.

“Mother, the circumstances are that he is my father and he wants to meet Luther.”

“Alright. He is your father, but I am your mother, and –“

“He’s my father, and you’re my mother, and I can no longer see you both at the same time. That’s the way it is, but you never seem to resign yourself to it.”

“You may be married, Jane, but you have a very great deal to learn about people. I just don’t think it’s at all appropriate for you to take your Luther down there to where your father is running a very bizarre ménage.”

“Oh, not so bizarre that Luther can’t understand it. Anyway, Mother, remember, I showed Luther to you first.”

####

Norris's little party for Jane was a very jolly evening. To start with, Norris alone had greeted them, and then Ethel had joined them, and for a short time Marcella, too. But she had tired and Ethel had put her to bed. Then Norris had brought in Frederica Brandt and a woman named Pamela, who Norris said was "another denizen of our building."

Norris had been his most charming self. (Surely not for me, Jane thought.) No doubt it was for Luther's benefit. One never knew when there might be an opportunity to sell a painting. In fact, Norris had been so pleased to learn that Jane had married an Roby, and on meeting Luther he decided that he had a genuine liking for the boy.

"I recall playing with one of the Roby boys," Norris said. "Was there one called 'Stew'?"

"Yes, I have an Uncle Stewart. He lives in Chicago. He's the second oldest. My father's the oldest son."

"As I recall there were a couple of younger ones, too."

"Aunt Connie and Uncle Frank, yes. They live here in Cleveland. They're all in Canada now. That is, the women and children are. They'll all go up in August."

"That's marvelous," Norris said. "There's nothing like those pine woods and beautiful lakes, is there?"

"That's right," Luther said. "But how too bad some of us have to stay in town and earn a living."

"Or try to," Norris said.

"Isn't that the truth," Luther agreed. "Dad's business is very poor right now. I'm going to look for another job."

That was news to Jane, but she paid little attention to him because her father had been serving highballs and everyone was getting very giddy. Luther and Norris had begun telling jokes and their laughter was getting more and more hilarious. Frederica Brandt had seemed very quiet and shy at first, but she had loosened up a lot. And her friend was very animated indeed. It passed through Jane's mind that it might be a pain in the neck for poor Frederica to have to be presented to Norris's daughters, knowing they'd probably go home and have to answer their mother's question, "And what did you think of Frederica?" Oh, well.

In later years, Jane would look on that evening as the first of several turning points in her marriage to John Roby junior. For that night, when they had been married a month, was the first time Luther's drinking upset her.

They had gone home, of course, on the street car, and Luther had been too loud, but there had been few people in the car so it hadn't mattered. And they had got off the car and made it home alright and got ready for bed.

Grace accosted Jane in the hallway coming from the bathroom. "You're pretty late. I guess you've been drinking," Grace said, "A little," Jane admitted.

"Why would you want to do that?"

"Because it was a party. A celebration. Daddy thought I should have a party."

"Is he so pleased that you are married then?"

"He seems to be," Jane said. "It keeps him from feeling guilty because I couldn't go to college. He feels that I married well."

"Luther drinks often, doesn't he? He frequently smells like beer, I've noticed." Grace kept her voice low.

"Have you smelled Dee? She likes beer, too," Jane said. "Well, I'm going to bed," Grace said.

When Jane got back to their room, Luther wasn't there. He could not have passed her in the hall. He was not in the living room. She went back to the kitchen to see whether he had gone there, even though she was positive he wouldn't be there. And he wasn't. She said nothing to her mother or Dee, who had come home from a date. Instead she went back to her bedroom again. Luther was certainly gone, but he had taken off his street clothes and apparently he was wearing his robe, because it was gone from the closet. Where would he go in his robe? Then Jane remembered about the upstairs porch which was reached from the living room. They didn't use it because they had no porch furniture, no place to sit.

But Luther was out there and he had found a place to sit. He was balanced on the porch railing more than twelve feet above the stone steps leading to the lower porch. Topsy as Luther was, Jane was terrified lest he lose his balance and fall. She did not dare call out to him for fear that he might be startled. But just then he turned to her with the amiable, bemused grin of the thoroughly inebriated.

"Hi, honey! C'mon out. It's nice'n cool out here."

"Hang on, Luther. Don't fall."

"Won't fail," he said. "C'mon, sit down."

"OK, but you hang on."

She went to him, then, and took his arm.

"Honey," she said. "You shouldn't sit there. Not even if you were sober."

"An' I'm drunk as a skunk, honey. Was a real good party. I like your ol' man, y' know?"

"Come on in, Luther. If you fell you wouldn't even land in the bushes. You're over those hard steps. I can't bear to have you sitting on the railing."

"Well, I'll come in 'cuz I gotta sharpen my skates, honey."

“Lucky you didn’t fall,” Jane said, as she steered him into the house. “You gave me such a scare.”

“Aw, honey. Don’t you know that God looks out for drunks and babies?”

“So I’ve heard. But does He look out for the wives of drunks?”

“Aw, honey, sure He does,” Luther said cheerfully.

But Jane, despite having had quite a bit to drink herself, lay awake a long time. She was sure that she loved Luther. He was good-natured, interesting, had a great sense of humor, was good looking, and a great lover. But was her father right in thinking she had married well?

YOU'RE LUCKY TO BE LEAVING

Things were not turning out well for Grace that summer. She had banked on everything working out so that she and the girls could keep their place together. But Dee had been out of work from December to April. Skipper Overton had married and left. She had had no choice but to ask Norr to take Ethel and her mother. And Mona had stayed only two or three weeks, then she had found a job and another place to live.

The only way that Grace could have continued to pay the rent and other expenses would have been that everyone contributed his part. After Dee got her job she was able to pay something and add it to what Jane had been giving. And when Jane married, Luther contributed his part, too.

But the trouble was that Grace needed to make money, too, and she had decided that she could no longer do fashion illustration. At least, not the kind of work that was now available in Cleveland. That meant rush assignments for the newspaper advertisements. If only the Landers Company had not gone under! Their twice-a-year catalogs had been the backbone of her income for ten years.

There had been only three reasons for her living in Cleveland, and two of them were gone. First, of course (she told herself and, actually believed) was to be near Dee and Jane. Second was to be near Norris, and third was to do art work in Cleveland where she was known.

Most of the reasons didn't apply now. Jane was all wrapped up in her husband. Of course, there was Dee, but she would marry one of these days, too, perhaps to the new chap, Clement Chandler.

But Norris was a lost cause. Lost probably to another foolish marriage. Oh, how sad!

As for work in Cleveland, she should have known better. She should have stayed in the East. And, to the East she would go. She had not told the girls and Luther that the rent on their upstairs duplex was in arrears. She had paid April and May, but June's rent wasn't paid and July was more than half over, and that was owing now, too.

She spoke to Dee and Jane one evening while Luther was out to buy ice cream.

"We really ought to find a better place to live," she said.

"Why?" Jane wanted to know.

"Because taking care of a coal furnace is too hard on me," Grace said. "I learned that during that winter when we lived in Milford."

Jane smiled. "Mother, that winter when we lived in Milford, you lived in Cleveland. It was nearly spring when you came back to us."

"Oh, Andy, that's not so."

"Yes it is. You were working on your Lander's catalog, and also divorcing Carle, and when you came to Milford you went back again because Grandma Martin was dying."

“Dear little Mother,” Grace said. “Well, anyway, I don’t want to have to shovel coal any more. It would be better to get an apartment with steam heat we didn’t have to take care of.”

“But then why did we leave Sloane Avenue and come here,” Jane persisted. “Mom, we had steam heat on Sloane Avenue.”

“I left there because it was the only way to get your father to take his mother and Ethel. I’d have been willing to stay there, though I don’t like the Sloane Avenue street car service.”

Dee spoke up. “It would be nice to live nearer downtown.”

“Yes,” Grace said, “and on the Grand Avenue carline.”

“But not too near Dad,” Jane said, “then we might have to move again.”

“Andy,” Dee said, “you shouldn’t tease Mother, She has never moved without a good reason.”

“But I put all that work into redecorating my room,” Jane said, “and now we have to move again. I hope the day will come when I can stay somewhere for at least five years.”

Grace, after several days of hunting, found an apartment in the eighties a half block from Grand Avenue. She arranged for Jane and Luther to meet her there during Jane’s afternoon free-time “to see if Luther likes it.”

“Oh, he’ll like it,” Jane said. “He’s totally agreeable.”

Grace had thought that Jane might not like the place, but that was not the case. It was much more modern than their quarters in the duplex, though it was much smaller. However there was room enough for all four of them. It was a one-bedroom apartment, but off the living room there was a sunroom alcove with an in-a-door bed that could be pulled down from its pivoting wall door. The alcove could be closed off with French doors.

“Dee and I could have the sunroom,” Grace said, “and you and Luther can have the bedroom,”

The living room was large enough, and there was a dining room as well. But the modern bath and kitchen were what sold Jane. The bathroom had a white tile floor instead of the usual linoleum. And the tub was built-in and had a shower. Most places Jane had seen had free-standing bathtubs with “claw and ball” feet,

“It’s just like Jackson Heights,” she said.

But the kitchen was the best of all and the main reason was that it had an electric refrigerator, something they had never had, No more ice to buy; no more drip-pan to empty.

“We can make ice cubes and our own ice cream,” Jane said.

And there was one more modern feature. On each floor the building had a chute down which you could throw your garbage where it would be burned in an incinerator. How nice.

Jane was enthused, “Do you like it, Luther?” she asked.

“Fine with me. How about Dee? She see it?”

“She said if we all like it, she will,” Grace said. She couldn’t take time off to see it with us. Her boss isn’t the most understanding person.”

“She could see it in the evening,” suggested Luther.

“Oh, we can go ahead and take it. She’ll like it. We need to go right ahead and get moved, because I’m going to run down to New York as soon as we get our things moved. And Nelle wants me to go up to New Hampshire for a few weeks, too. I’ll be able to do lots of writing while I’m there. I’m going to work like the dickens and get it finished.”

“Well, OK,” said Jane. “Tell the man we’ll take it.”

A strange thing happened when they went down to the superintendent’s quarters to pay the first month’s rent. At least it all seemed strange to Luther, and Jane told him later she had been surprised, too.

The superintendent had said, “I’ll give you a receipt. How do you spell your name, Ma’am?”

Grace waved her hand in Luther’s direction. “Well, that’ll be in my son-in-law’s name,” she said. “Oh,” said the superintendent, “I thought —“

“Well, I’m going to be in New York for some time,” Grace said, and it’s —“

The superintendent turned to Luther. “Well, then, what’s your name, sir?”

“Luther Roby, Junior, That’s R-O-B-Y,” Luther spelled, and the man handed him the receipt.

Grace had paid the thirty dollars, but even so, at his first opportunity, Luther spoke to Jane about it,

“That was pretty slick,” he said. “We were renting a room from your mother, and suddenly it seems she is living with us. Things happened pretty fast, didn’t they? Who pays the rent when your mother’s away?”

“We’ll have to work this all out with Dee, but I don’t think it will cost any more than what we’re paying now.”

Luther did some figuring and decided that was probably true. A month’s rent for the apartment would be cheaper than renting a room by the week and having to eat in restaurants. And that was taking into consideration the fact that there’d be electric and gas bills to pay. They totaled the foreseeable expenses and estimated the cost of food and worked out an arrangement with Dee.

They moved into the 83rd Street apartment on the first of August and when they left they took with them the little black and white cat that they had been feeding for weeks.

Grace advised against taking the cat, saying she suspected it belonged to the Italian family downstairs. But she was overruled by Dee, Jane, and even Luther.

“Those people down there didn’t feed him, Mother,” Dee said.

“No, he was half-starved when we first saw him,” Jane said, “and besides, those kids abuse him.”

“You’ll have to keep him in if you take him with you,” Grace said.

“We’ll fix him a cat-pan,” Luther said. “He’s too nice a kitty to walk out on.”

So when they left, “Kitty” (who had no other name) went with them.

But a problem had arisen just before they moved. Dee lost her job. Her boss was an unforgiving type who was never particularly friendly and understanding, and was worse these days, because of financial worries. Dee had made a significant error when typing some money figures on to part of an insurance policy. The boss fired her summarily. She was very discouraged and spent most of a weekend trying to drown her worries in beer in the company of Mona James and her friends.

Luther and Jane were almost as upset as Dee, for as far as they could see, the full cost of the apartment would now fall on them.

In spite of this development Grace continued, to pack for her trip to the East.

Jane was put out with her mother for fleeing back to New York and New Hampshire, for, after all, it was Grace who had talked them all into a cooperative living arrangement. And now she was leaving them “in the soup” as Mr. Hennessy would have put it.

And speaking of Mr. Hennessy, Jane missed him. He was gone from the Winchester room and things were different. The new boss, a Mr. Jones, was pleasant enough and Jane had no complaint regarding him. He had been the manager of the restaurant that adjoined the Winchester Room, and had always substituted for Mr. Hennessy on Tuesdays, and Jane liked Mr. Jones.

But there was a complication in Jane’s situation now. The management employed a woman whose function was to be a sort of ‘dean of women.’ She was more or less in charge of the waitresses and other female employees. Her name was Mrs. Traynor, and she hired the waitresses. Both she and Mr. Hennessy could fire them if they proved unsuitable. Mrs. Traynor had been a good friend of Mrs. Johnston, the older woman with the bad legs who had held the hat-check job before Jane. She had never forgiven Mr. Hennessy for replacing her friend, even though the woman had not been well enough to work on a regular basis. She disliked Jane for that reason and because Jane, she felt, was a pampered protégé of Mr. Hennessy’s. It infuriated her that he had permitted Jane to read when there was nothing else to do. And it angered her even more that he had instructed her to take her “free” meals in the restaurant rather than in the employee’s cafeteria.

When Mr. Hennessy left, Mrs. Traynor decided that after a certain interval Jane would be given notice. She didn’t want Mr. Jones to get any idea that she was merely getting revenge on behalf of Mrs. Johnston. She devised a plan. She appeared one morning a few days after Mr. Hennessy’s departure with a tray full of small potted ivy plants and distributed them on the end tables and lamp tables of the Winchester Room’s foyer. She gave Jane her instructions.

“It will be your job to care for these ivies,” she said.

“They won’t thrive down here,” Jane said.

“Why not?” Mrs. Traynor challenged.

“There’s not enough light for them”

“Each one is by a lamp; they’ll do fine. Just water them every morning when you come in, and Mr. Jones will tell the Sunday girl to take care of them, too. Ivy doesn’t like sunlight. Didn’t you know that?”

A day or so later Mr. Jones spoke to Jane.

“I’m sorry, kid, but Mrs. Traynor says the management says you’ll have to eat in the cafeteria from now on. I’m really sorry, Jane.”

“It’s OK. It won’t kill me, I’m sure.”

“She’s an old bitch. I know what’s bothering her.”

“So do I,” said Jane.

She kept a close eye on the little ivy plants. She saw that the soil was moist, but she found that they did not need water every morning. They stayed damp longer because they were not growing in the poor light conditions. Also, the Winchester Room was air-conditioned. The lamps had bulbs which gave a soft, warm, but rather dim light. And more than the poor quality of the light was the inadequate quantity. In the lobby, the lamps were only turned on for two four-hour periods each day. When lunch and dinner hours were over the lobby lights were put out to discourage late guests. As the days went by the little plants grew sickly and their leaves yellowed.

Mrs. Traynor came in one day to inspect them.

“They aren’t getting watered regularly,” she said.

“Every day,” Jane said, and indeed she always went through the motions of watering them, so that Mr. Jones could bear witness to the fact, but often she only pretended, because she would have drowned them otherwise.

Dee had lost her job a few days before they all moved into the apartment on 83rd. She had been depressed for several days and Grace was concerned that it was causing Dee to dissipate and drink too much. She hated to leave while this was going on. She became convinced that Mona James was a bad influence,

The day after they moved, Grace told the girls and Luther that she had good news.

“How would you like to live at the beach for a while?” she asked them.

They all looked amazed.

“Mother!” Jane said, “we can’t move again! We just got here,”

Grace laughed “No. I don’t mean we should move. But Alice Whitman is going away for a month and would prefer her house be occupied. She wondered if we might like to stay there while she’s away. I told her I’d be gone to New Hampshire, but she says you all could come and stay. Just bring your own linens.”

“Great!” said Dee. “Alice lives on the beach, Luther.”

“Can we take Kitty?” Luther asked.

“Of course,” Jane said, “or we can’t go”

The next day Dee got a new job and everyone felt very much better. Grace immediately left for the East, and Dee, Jane, and Luther packed suitcases and Kitty and moved to Alice Whitman’s house by the beach. It was a long ride for all of them when they went to work, for it was on a short street that ran north to the shore from Lakefront Avenue in the 140’s. The street, like others near it, was a private club originally. Now, with the Depression, some of the places needed painting. Alice’s place was just two doors from the beach and at night you could hear the lapping of the waves. They all loved it, but with Jane having to work all evening and Luther staying downtown to ride home with her, they got little time to enjoy the beach. That soon changed. Within a week Mrs. Traynor fired Jane because the ivies had to be declared dead.

####

Grace had gone to New York on the train although the bus would have been cheaper. She felt that the bus trip was too strenuous and she preferred arriving at Grand Central Station. She and Nelle both always had maintained that if you get lost in New York City, just go back to Grand Central and start over. Actually, over the years, Grace had spent enough time in New York to be very familiar with Manhattan, Queens, and Brooklyn.

She went immediately to Jackson Heights, where she found Nelle in the usual uproar of sorting things. Nelle was still in a state of indignation over the condition of the apartment which they had rented out to tenants while they were living in Toronto, Canada.

“It has taken me months to get this place clean,” Nelle said. “Those people spattered Coca-cola or root beer or something all over the kitchen walls and ceiling.”

“I know,” Grace said. “So you said in a letter.”

“Well, it was just terrible. Those people were filthy. I would never rent this place again, believe you me.”

“When do you plan to go up to the Hill?” Grace asked.

“As soon as I get straightened out, ‘Rene.’”

“Oh, Nelle, don’t wait for that! The nice weather will end soon and it’ll be chilly up there.”

“I love it up there in the autumn time, Don’t you?”

“Yes, but I did want to do some sketching out of doors.”

“Roge doesn’t want to go till after Labor Day. In fact, he can’t. And Babs is still in Toronto in summer school. How come you want to paint New Hampshire? I thought you wanted to work on your African story.”

“Oh, I do!” said Grace. “But I’ve got another story in my head of the children’s adventures in New Hampshire. I’d like to make sketches that I can illustrate it with.”

“That’s not a bad idea, ‘Rene, but you must get one or the other finished and sold, so you’ll have some income. You can’t go on this way. You’re lucky the girls are on their own and not depending on you anymore.”

“Well, that situation isn’t so unusual, Nelle. Lots of young people work and help out at home.”

“But we never did, kid. Father and Mother carried all of us along for years whenever we needed their help.”

“Well, but I did think the girls and I could have had a little place together for a while. I never expected Jane to rush into marriage like that.”

“It’s pretty natural, kid. I was terribly restless after I was seventeen. I could hardly bear it living at home with the family.”

“I don’t recall ever feeling that way, Nelle.”

Nelle just grinned. “You have a good forgetter, kid. But then you never were completely ‘down to earth.’ Always up in the clouds someplace.”

“It’s a better place to be,” Grace said. “Down to earth isn’t a very nice place. And marriage is a colossal disappointment.”

“You’re bitter about Norris, ‘Rene.’”

“Yes, I am,” Grace said.

“Well, I don’t blame you for this last business. He’s the limit. But let’s not talk about him. Let’s not start.”

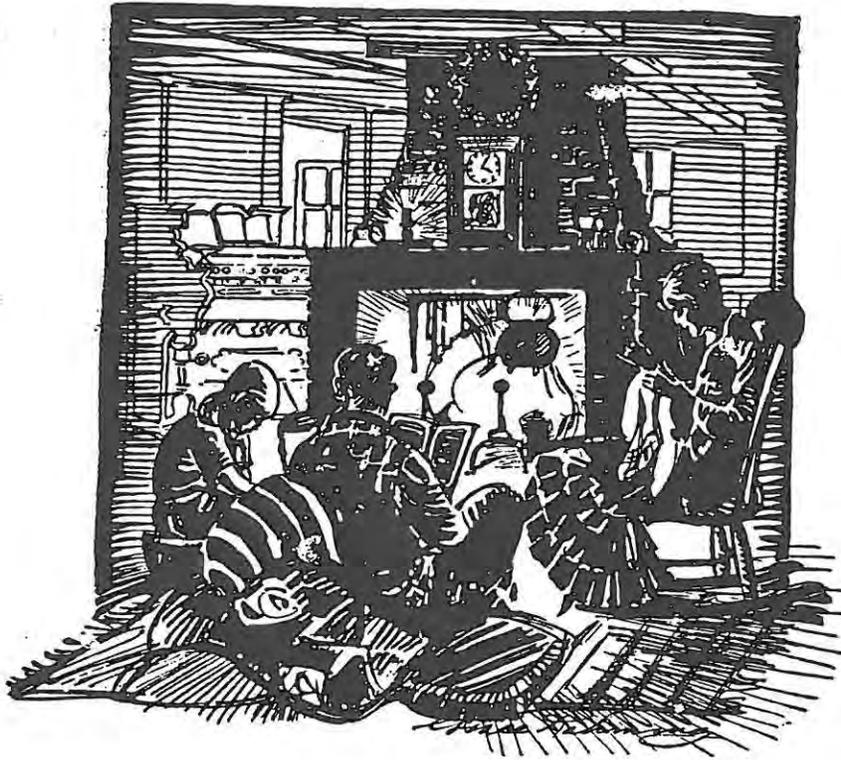
While Grace was waiting for Roge and Nelle to go to Forest Camp, she decided to touch all her bases in New York City. She went first to visit Pauline Patterson, where she spent a week waiting for the Hurst’s to return from their cottage near Damariscotta, Maine, and for Aunt Georgie to return from her summer place in Connecticut. She knew that the Hurst’s would be back in New York by Labor Day, so that Janet could start school. And Georgie had written that she would be back about the same time.

Grace visited all, in turn, for Roge had postponed his departure for the mountains. She also went to lunch with Roge’s sister, Lucy. And all of these old friends told her not to be so disturbed that Jane had married.

“You just can’t plan their lives, my dear,” Aunt Georgie said.

Grace recited to Georgie the whole story of Norris’s outrageous behavior the previous winter, and Georgie’s principal comment, beyond a few interjections, was simply the observation, “Norris is taking a most unusually long time to grow up.”

Roge and Nelle had managed to get away to New Hampshire by the last of August. Thus Grace’s time at Forest Camp was spent in the autumn, not as she had hoped, but she and Nelle had a good time together alone on the mountain surrounded by the flamboyant color of the changing foliage of the hardwoods sprinkled among the dark stands of pine. Birch and aspens in yellow, maples in red. The two sisters loved it. They got along best when they were alone together. In fact, under those conditions they were jolly companions. They rambled in the woods, taking their usual little hike up to the old sugar bush. They considered walking up over the mountain toward Plymouth by way of Tolliver’s Hill, but the trail had not been re-blazed for several years, and they would never forget that it was while walking that trail that old Father Fison had got himself lost years ago. And more than that, the Bump’s had recently seen a bear right on their own road. They decided against going up Tolliver’s Hill. But they went happily down the hill to get the milk and mail each morning. If Roge had been there, their companionship would not have been the same. Subconsciously, at least, Nelle had always felt a bit insecure when Bert was around Grace. There were three main reasons. Grace could talk about books. Grace had a more feminine face. Nelle



"CAROL"
BAGG

"BART"
ROGER

"LUCY"
NELLE

*The walk-around fireplace at
Forest Camp*

had always disliked her strong Burns chin, even though she had been popular as a girl. She had been considered pretty, and had beautiful hair. In fact, Nelle felt that she and Grace had the nicest hair, for Merly's was too curly, and Emmie's was too straight. The third reason was that Grace was more than ten years younger than Nelle.

But Roge was not in Forest Camp at present. He had brought Nelle and Grace to the hill and stayed through the Labor Day weekend and then gone on the road again. He was back with his old company again and hating it as much as ever.

So the two women were alone on the mountain and they were enjoying it. It was just a little bit scary at night, but their isolation gave them a certain security. They felt quite safe in the house, and, after all, Nelle reminded Grace, she had her gun.

"But I kind of wish we had a dog," she said. "I remember when I lived in Colorado how safe I felt with Brownie in the cabin."

So they took walks after the milk, and carried in their own firewood, and made apple jelly, and had pancakes for breakfast, and had fun.

"How nice it would be if Emmie and Merly could be here, too," Grace said. "We'd have our own girls' camp."

"My goodness, yes," Nelle agreed, "but probably Emmie wouldn't come. Not the way she is now. She doesn't like to get out in the public or travel. Merly would enjoy it, though."

But Grace wondered whether it would be the same with three of them. Somehow there had always been something competitive among them in past years. When Nelle came from New York to visit in Cleveland or Oberlin, Grace and Merly vied for her time. And years ago when Nelle and Grace lived in New York City they competed when Merly came to visit. But likely in Forest Camp it would have been different. However, Merly wasn't there.

After a week Grace decided to start making sketches in the daytime and writing her African chronicle at night. She had been at this for two days, when Nelle turned her ankle while climbing the hill. She had trouble getting to the house, and a few hours later she could bear no weight on it.

All the work for a week after devolved upon Grace. She went down the hill one morning to get the mail and milk and came back with bad news from Oberlin. Father Martin had had a bad fall. He had broken his hip.

Merly had phoned Dee in Cleveland and asked her to write to Grace. Dee had decided to telegraph instead. She sent a night letter, which had been delivered by mail.

"Grandpa Martin fell and broke hip. In Memorial Hospital. Merly wired Jackson Heights."

"Oh, dear!" Nelle said. "Roge isn't there. He'll be here next week. He would take us to see Pa."

"What about Babs?" Grace asked.

"Roge's gone to Toronto to get her."

“Poor, dear old Dad,” Grace said.

“At his age,” said Nelle, “it won’t knit fast. I doubt if he ever walks again.”

And, of course, she was right.

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Although Jane's feelings were hurt when Mrs. Traynor fired her "for failing to water the ivy plants," she only felt depressed and aggrieved for about half of one day's work. Then her mind began to leap ahead. She and Luther would miss the money, no doubt of that. But she was finally free! Free of "life in the salt mines" as Mr. Hennessy had called it. "We never see the light of day," he had complained.

When Mr. Jones had told her she was through, he had been somewhat upset.

"I tried to make the old lady change her mind. I told her you were never late and that you did a good job with the hats and that you knew the customers and didn't give them checks. And she said you should give them checks, you probably made a lot of mistakes that way."

Jane was indignant. "But her friend, Mrs. Johnson, did it that way and Mr. Hennessy liked it that way!"

"I know," Mr. Jones said. "I told her all that, but she said she did not like the way you read all the time on the job."

"Read all the time! I only read when there was no business. I never read when there were customers."

"I know, and it was OK with Hennessy and OK with me. I told her you were studying French and she said, 'What's she doing studying French?' Well, she's just done it to spite Hennessy, and I'm awfully sorry, kid."

"Well," Jane said, "I don't think it's fair, but it's not as terrible as it might have been. You see, I got married the last of June."

Mr. Jones broke into a big smile and he reached out his hand to shake Jane's. "Why, congratulations! And we never knew it! Wouldn't Hennessy be surprised, Well, I wish you all the happiness. You're lucky to be leaving."

When Jane told Skipper Overton Darrell that she was leaving the Winchester Room, Skipper said the same thing as Mr. Jones. "You're lucky to be leaving. I wish it were me. Bud would love to have me quit this place. Just think, now you can lead a normal married life! Well, as soon as Bud gets a practice built up, I'll be leaving here too. He passed his bar exam you know. Isn't that great?"

"Good!" Jane said. "Well, I'm going to make the most of my opportunities. I'm going to lie on the beach all day long and soak up sunshine. I'm starved for it."

"What beach do you lie on?" Skipper asked.

"Oh, I forgot to tell you. We're living at the beach."

"Gee, no wonder you don't mind being fired. You must have married a millionaire."

Jane laughed. "Hardly." She explained their temporary situation and added, "Mother always says I'm thin and peaked. I intend to be so tan by the time she comes back she'll decide I'm the picture of health. We'll be there another ten days. Why don't you and Bud come out some evening when you're off, and we'll all have a swim and a campfire down on the beach. We'll get Dee and her new boy-friend, Clement Chandler, and we'll have fun. I've only had Sundays off for so long. I won't know how to live like other people."

Luther was quite taken aback by Jane's loss of her job, though he tried not to show it. It was fortunate that Dee had found new employment. Otherwise Luther would have felt quite overwhelmed by the full responsibility of the new apartment on 83rd Street. Luther did not earn enough to carry the rent and utility bills alone, let alone the food, for his father's work was so slow some weeks that he was hard put to pay Luther. His pay ranged from fifteen to twenty-five dollars a week. He had not told Jane that his father was continually urging him to try and find a better job. But now, he felt that his father was right.

"I gotta look for another job, honey," he told Jane.

"Well, so do I," she said. "But first I want a vacation, just a short vacation, because I went to work the week I graduated from high school, and I want to get a tan. I look like I've been living under a board."

Luther laughed and put his arm around her and talked baby-talk to her and assured her she could take her vacation and get her tan.

Her life was very different after that. She did spend her days on the beach, and sometimes Luther came home early and joined her. They made love night after night and wondered whether they ought to.

Luther said, "I asked Dr. Stapleton about that the day I made your appointment. I told him I didn't want to be all 'burned out' by the time I'm thirty-five. And Doc just laughed at me and said, 'You'll be in your prime when you're thirty-five. Don't worry about it.'"

Dr. Stapleton was the Roby's family doctor. He had fitted Jane with a diaphragm and he gave her appropriate instructions for its use.

She was a bit nervous. She had never been on the table with stirrups before and she didn't like it. "Little bit of a uterus," the doctor had observed, and Jane couldn't decide whether it was an appreciative remark or a critical finding. She had worried about it ever since.

He had told her about the diaphragm. "It's important how you use this. Use it every night when you go to bed, no matter what you have on your mind. Don't wait till the 'need' arises. And remember, if you don't use the cream, forget the whole idea, and start buying baby booties. The average healthy young bride will be pregnant in two or three months."

But Jane was not at all sure she was the "average healthy young bride." She had had bad colds all her life. And her mother was always concerned about her being too thin, or too pale, or something. But it was more than that that worried her. She talked about it with Mim when she came up from Oberlin to spend a weekend.

While Luther slept late on Sunday morning the two girls walked far out on the stone breakwater and sat down to talk, Mim would soon be starting college, but they didn't talk about it, because they both knew how much Jane wanted to go.

"How do you like married life?" Mim asked.

"Oh, I like it. But up till the last few days, it hasn't been the way it ought to be, what with me working evenings. Now I can stay home and cook dinner. I like to cook. I wish I didn't have to look for a job. I have no idea what I can get. I wish they hadn't all said I should take a college preparatory course. What good is it to me now? I should've taken typing and shorthand."

"Why don't you take it in night-school the way Dee did?"

"Probably I will, although I'll hate it. I never did want to be an office worker. I'd like to study a language - maybe German. I had a lot of French and Latin."

"And what will you do with German?" Mim asked.

Jane laughed. "I don't know. Just sample it."

"You know what? Trink envies you. She says if she was married she'd start a baby right away."

"Oh, she does? There's a depression on, tell her. Trink always was wild about babies."

"Yes," Mim said, "she has a whole scrapbook full of baby pictures."

"You know what, Mim? I doubt if I can have children."

"Why not?"

"Well, I just have a feeling I couldn't. Now, Grandma was extremely prolific, but look at her daughters. Aunt Nelle had no children, Aunt Emmie didn't either, and your mom lost three babies and just had you and Trink. And my mother only had two."

"She had two with no trouble," Mim reminded.

"I know. But I just have this funny feeling about it. Aunt Nelle told me about a girl who went in swimming when she had the 'curse' and she never had another period."

"Do you believe that? Anyway, what has that to do with you, Jane?"

"Well, once last summer I went swimming on one of the last days of my period and, next time I was two weeks late."

Mim laughed. "Oh, Jane. You're being ridiculous."

Jane laughed too. "I guess so. But I still have this funny feeling about it. And all this summer I've been very irregular."

"Oh, you're just not adjusted to married life yet."

"Maybe," said Jane. "Maybe."

I'VE GOT TO GET TO THE BARN

Mim went home a day or so later, and there were only four days left of their beach holiday. Jane was trying to persuade Luther that now that he didn't have to wait for her to get out of the Winchester Room, he didn't have to stop off for a beer or two after work. It seemed hard for him to break the habit.

One night Luther came home with a surprise.

"It's a new game," he said. "It's called 'Monopoly.' Everyone is talking about it. Get Dee and Clement and we'll try it out tonight."

"He doesn't like to be called 'Clement'" Jane said. "He prefers 'Chan'."

"OK. 'Chan' it is. Are they serious? I like the guy. He's nice."

"Yes," Jane said. "That's the problem."

"What is?"

"That Chan is 'nice'. Dee usually doesn't like nice guys."

They played the new game for three consecutive nights, each night leaving the game unfinished.

"I know why this game is fun," Luther said. "We get to handle all this money. Somebody had a very brilliant idea to market this game during a depression."

"Well, it is fun, but it sure takes a long time for anyone to win," Dee said. "I think I'm about to go bankrupt, and I do know I'm sleepy. I have to be at work early, unlike the rest of you. Luther's dad won't fire him, and Chan's mother won't fire him."

"No kidding, Chan," Luther said. "You work for your mother?"

"Not exactly, but for the same outfit. It's not what I went to college for, however."

"What sort of business is it, Chan?" Luther asked.

"Collecting for a cosmetic company," Nil said, "Not very impressive."

"But you do other things, Chan," Jane said. "Dee says you build things. Furniture and stuff."

"I like to, yes," Nil said.

"Is that what you studied in college?" Jane asked.

"No. Far from it. I majored in psychology."

Jane began sneezing.

“Oh, here we go again,” said Dee.

Jane had been sneezing for a week, but only in the evenings.

“It must be the night air,” Luther said.

“But there’s always night air at night,” Jane said. “From what I read, I’m allergic to something.”

“That’s right,” Chan said. “I used to have that trouble. I had hay fever, but I had shots for it and got over it.”

“What causes it?” Luther asked.

“Different things,” said Chan, “Weeds, dust, foods.”

“I think it’s this old house,” Jane said. “All day, when I’m down on the beach, I’m fine, Then at night when I’m in this house I start sneezing.”

“Why aren’t we all sneezing?” Dee wanted to know.

“No,” Chan said, “that’s not how it is. It’s Jane that’s allergic to something.”

“Maybe it’s ‘Monopoly’ you’re allergic to,” Dee said.

“No, I had it before we got this game. And I had it once before when I played in some old bay in somebody’s barn years ago.”

“Well, I’m going to bed,” Dee said. “You three can divide my assets among you if you want to continue.”

Chan said he’d be going and they put the Monopoly game away. Jane and Luther went upstairs to their room and closed the door.

“I hate to have ruined our honeymoon by sneezing so much,” Jane said.

“Was this our honeymoon?”

“Yes. You know why? Because Mother is in New Hampshire. It cramped my style having her in the room next to us when we were first married. Well, the honeymoon ends tomorrow, doesn’t it?”

“Why?”

“Well, I mean the lake shore part of it does.”

“Doesn’t it bother you having Dee in the house when we’re in bed?” Luther asked.

“Yes, it does, but when she’s out on a date we’re alone in the house.”

“In the new place things will be better. She won’t be sleeping right in the next room. One of these days we’ll have a place of our own, honey,”

“A house?”

“Sure, a house. Where shall we build it?”

“Milford, Connecticut,” Jane said.

“Alright, but we should have a swimming pool. Let’s have an indoor pool. Heated. We can’t swim in the Sound in winter.”

“That’s true. Alright, we’ll have a pool ,“

“Well, it’ll take a little while to build it,” Luther said. “Meanwhile get’s go to bed, honey. The honeymoon is still on.”

The next day, with Clement Chandler’s car and his assistance, they moved back into the city with their cat and their belongings, and began their life at the 83rd Street apartment. Jane’s sneezing ended with the move away from Alice Whitman’s house on Courtney Shores Drive. And it was some time before the foursome played Monopoly again for a number of reasons. To begin with, the Roby clan came back to Cleveland from their island in Georgian Bay, and Luther said that he wanted her to meet them all,

He had told his father a few weeks ago that he was married, and then he had told Jane of his father’s reaction.

“He was funny,” Luther said. “He turned and looked at me with one eyebrow up and the other one down, and he said, ‘What would you want to do that for, in times like this?’”

“And how’d you answer that one?” Jane asked.

“I said, ‘Time is passing; everyone can’t wait for the Depression to end to start living.’”

“Luther, that was a wonderful answer. I wish I’d said that to Mother when she asked me the same question. And so then what did he say to that?”

“Nothing. Because there isn’t any argument with it, when you think about it.”

“Mother could argue with it, She had other plans.”

“Well, I’m sorry I spoiled them.”

“You didn’t. I did. Before I met you, Luther.”

“Well, anyway, Dad wants to meet you. He says that Clara is going to invite us to dinner real soon.”

“That’s nice.”

But the first of the Roby family that Jane would meet would be his beloved Aunt Adalyn and her family. And after that she would meet the somewhat formidable Uncle Frank and his wife, wealthy mother-in-law, and two adopted children. Both families lived in Carrolton Heights in beautiful houses with third floor servants’ quarters. Frank Roby and his wife, Rhea Talmage Roby, employed a colored couple, he to garden and drive the cars, she to cook and serve the meals, and to make the beds. A cleaning woman came in twice a week to vacuum, dust, and do windows, and a laundress came once a week to wash and iron. Every Friday morning a hairdresser came to prepare Rhea Talmage Roby and her mother for the weekend. She did their hair, eyebrows and fingernails. When the children were younger they had had a nurse, but were past that stage now.

At Aunt Adalyn’s home, she and her husband, Ray Irvin, also employed a colored couple for cook and chauffeur-gardener purposes. They also had a laundress and cleaning woman to come in each week. But since Adalyn’s mother lived with them and she was old, they employed a fulltime nurse for her. The Irvin’s also had adopted a boy and girl. They, as well as Uncle Frank’s children, attended the public schools, but in Carrolton Heights, the public schools were attended primarily by children from wealthy families.

Jane and Luther went to dinner at the Irvin’s home first. She immediately liked everyone there, for they were warm and friendly. Luther took her upstairs to meet his grandmother, who was effusively affectionate to both of them. Luther was her pet, and she was delighted that he was married. She was mildly senile and did not understand the Depression. She wanted to be kissed by both Jane and Luther before they went down to dinner. “Bless your dear hearts,” she said.

Jane was grateful that she had been in homes before where servants waited on table and that she knew how to get along with the silver and napkins, and what to do with rolls and butter and so on. There were relatives of her mother’s living in Carrolton Heights, too.

The dinner at Uncle Frank Roby’s house was very similar and everyone had been most courteous to Jane, even cordial, but not as warm as the Irvin’s had been. Jane had really liked Aunt Adalyn and her husband. She had felt comfortable in their presence. Uncle Ray Irvin had one of the two best interior decorating businesses in the Cleveland area. Jane had known of it for years, ‘Irvin and Greenwald, Interiors and Antiques,’ on Carrolton Square. Uncle Ray had seemed pleased, if a bit surprised that Jane had commented on a piece of Majolica ware which she said reminded her of one of her grandmother’s. After that Aunt Adalyn realized that the two families had lived as neighbors on Cartwright Street years ago and that Jane was the daughter of Norris Rahming, the painter.

“He does fine work,” Uncle Ray said. “Our neighbor has one of his oils.”

“One of the French ones?” Jane asked.

“No,” said Uncle Ray, “New Hampshire, as I recall.”

“Oh, yes,” said Jane, rapidly gaining confidence, “We spent our summers there, but this Depression has put a crimp in that. Depressions are no picnic for artists.”

Uncle Ray grinned, “I know just what you mean. No picnic for my business, either.”

Afterward, Luther told Jane that the family liked her, that his father had told him that Aunt Adalyn was “impressed” with her.

“Not just any dumb hat-check girl?” Jane said.

“Well, I never told Connie you checked hats, anyway,” Luther said. “Dad said Clara is going to have us to dinner real soon. Wants to have your mother, too. I told him she was in the East.”

“Lord knows when she’ll be back.”

The next day they got the phone call from Merly that Grandpa Martin was in the Oberlin hospital with a broken hip. Dee sent the night letter telegram to New Hampshire that evening. It was the first of a number of events that served to take Jane’s mind off the disturbing fact that Luther never came home from work without smelling of beer.

####

Old John Martin woke up from his nap confused. He had been dreaming that he was at the farm, and that Sophia was churning fresh butter. "You'll hurt your hands," he'd warned her, "Let the girls do it." "The girls are all gone," Sophia said. "Shucks, they'll be down in the barn, I'll go after them." The dream had continued, but he never succeeded in getting to the barn. Something kept preventing.

When he woke up he thought, "I've got to get to the barn."

He stretched a little, and sat up. He rubbed his eyes and found his specs and put them on. It was a hot September afternoon and he'd taken his shirt off when he lay down to nap. But he forgot that. He had his summer weight underwear on, and over that his galluses lay across his thin old shoulders. He started to leave his bedroom, but came back and got his hat.

When he reached the kitchen neither Merly nor Emmie was there. They must be upstairs napping. He would have liked a drink of milk or maybe some of Emmie's homemade root beer. He thought about going downtown, but it was hot and he was too thirsty, besides Merly would fuss at him if he went. She would say he'd get sunstroke. He guessed he'd look at the corn and maybe pull a few ears for dinner. Then he remembered that he was going to the barn. But the barn wasn't out back here; it was at the old place, the North Royalton place. Old John decided he'd go downtown to the hotel, and get Nate, or one of his boys to drive him out to the farm.

He went through the dining room and then he found Merly had the house all mixed up. She'd varnished the floor. He couldn't go out the front door. It was varnished there too. He went to the back door and stepped out into the bright sunlight. Squinting at the vegetable garden beyond, he saw two people standing there. Emmie was in the sweet-corn now, hunting for ripe ears. Trink was picking corn too. He always liked to pick the ears himself.

He stepped down to the top step, still watching Emmie.

He did not know why he was on the ground. Something hurt him. He had been on his way to the barn. What was it he was going to the barn for?

"Sophie!" he cried, but his voice did not carry.

A girl on a bicycle rode into the yard. It was his granddaughter Mim. She flung down the bike, and came running to his side.

"Grandpa what happened? You fell. Are you all right? Oh you poor dear."

She saw Trink in the corn rows.

"Trink Trink! Grandpa fell. Come help me. I can't get him up alone. Maybe we should get Mom."

John Martin said, "I'm all right. Help me up. I'm going to the barn to fetch Sophie."

Mim and Trink helped the old fellow to his feet, and he tried to stand. Suddenly he gave a sharp cry and fainted.

The doctor explained it to Merly and Bill at the hospital. Bill had come from Cleveland as soon as Merly phoned about their father's accident.

"No, there's nothing special we can do. Ease his pain. At age 94, it's just too much. He'll develop a fever, and maybe last about a week. I'm sorry. It might have been a little better if they hadn't tried to put him on his feet. It made a compound fracture of it you see, at least that's the way it appears the way the bone fragments come through. Any time someone falls like that, someone old especially, make sure nothing's broken before you get them up."

"Mim says he said he was alright," Merly said.

"Please don't blame anyone, Miss Martin," the doctor said.

"I'm Mrs. Lemmon," Merly said.

"Oh, that's right. I'd forgotten you were a widow, Merly. You are Merly aren't you?"

"Yes. My husband died nearly ten years ago. We lived in North Royalton that summer."

"Yes. Well, I remember you and your brothers and sisters. A fine, big family, the Martin. But don't feel too badly about the old fellow. He's had a remarkable long life, success in his business, and a happy marriage."

"Oh, my goodness, yes," Merly said, her eyes filled with tears. "Such a happy marriage: And since Mother went he's been so lonesome for her."

"Then he's just as well to go," the doctor said. "Now, don't worry about him. We'll keep him comfortable."

"I must let all the others know," Merly said. "They'll want to come."

"I don't think he'll know them." Bill said.

"But they'll all want to come any way," insisted Merly.

That week old John Martin was visited in the hospital by many of the family. Merly was there every day, usually twice and often with Emmie, though Emmie hated hospitals. Mim and Trink came at different times with their mother. Nate and Edith came often for they lived nearby in Oberlin. Stan and Bertha came from North Royalton where they lived in the Old Brick which they had bought from the Martin estate a few years ago. Art had bought it from his father in

1925, but he had not kept up the payments and he had lost it back to the estate. But Stan had bought it and he and Bertha owned it free and clear.

Bill and Gertrude came with their two boys. Bill had worked the Old Brick from 1920 to 1925 having taken it over shortly after Norris and Grace Rahming gave up on it. Bill had wanted to buy the farm too, but found it hard to meet the payments. He was somewhat bitter when his father sold it to Art for he knew that Art would not prove up.

So there were inevitably various tensions and resentments among the Martin siblings, but they set them aside when they gathered around his bed. Luther came with his new wife but she remained outside saying the old gentleman would not know her. However, he did not really know many of them, except to realize that they were his children, and their children. Several times he repeated (as if in bewilderment) an old boast of his.

“I was never sick a day in my life after I was twelve years old. Sick of a fever. But after three days I commenced to mend. Never sick again.” His voice would fade into sleep.

On the Sunday after Grandpa Hedge’s accident, Dee and Jane and Luther came to visit him too. Clement Chandler was kind enough to take them in his little car. Luther remarked to Jane what a nice fellow Chan was, and he wondered why Dee didn’t seem to appreciate him as much as she ought.

“Oh, she likes him, Luther, only Mother made the mistake of calling him ‘a fine young chap’. It is absolutely a death sentence when Mother says that about Dee’s friends. She is always falling madly in love with some no-good handsome fellow who doesn’t have marriage in mind.”

At the hospital that afternoon Jane and Dee knew that their grandpa was dying. But he had a very sweet smile on his face. His color was poor, and he looked small and flattened in his high bed. But his dark brown eyes were bright and they crinkled at the corners as he looked at the faces of those around his bed. The hospital allowed any number of relatives to visit him.

Around the bed that afternoon stood Bill and Trude, their older boy, fifteen year old Bill Jr. Next, Bill and Nate, and then Merly with Mim and Trink, and Dee and Jane.

To old John, they were familiar faces, Martin faces. He could no longer attach the right name to each face, but he knew they were his people, his clan.

He smiled with pleasure and pride, totally unaware that his eldest and youngest daughters were not present.

“All the family’s here,” he said happily.

####

Mr. George Forester, the funeral director, in Oberlin, was very upset. He had nearly lost his temper with his assistant mortician, Elbert. He had come into the preparation room where the body of John Henry Martin II was being readied for the visitation and funeral.

“Great heavens - what are you doing there?” he cried.

Elbert looked up and said, a bit unnecessarily, “Shaving him.

“My God! His beard is half gone! Don’t you know Mr. Martin always wore a Vandyke?”

“How would I know?” Elbert said peevishly.

“Because he was a landmark in this town, that’s why.”

“I just assumed his beard grew while he was in the hospital.”

“Pretty stupid assumption - A full length Vandyke don’t grow in a week.”

“You didn’t say how long he was in there. You just said go over to the hospital and get him.”

“Alright. Well, thank God, you haven’t shaved off the moustache. He won’t look like himself, but be sure you leave that moustache.”

“OK, OK. I got you,” Elbert grumbled.

“His kids are really going to be mad. I offended Mrs. Lemmon the last time, when she asked me about could I straighten her mother’s knees.”

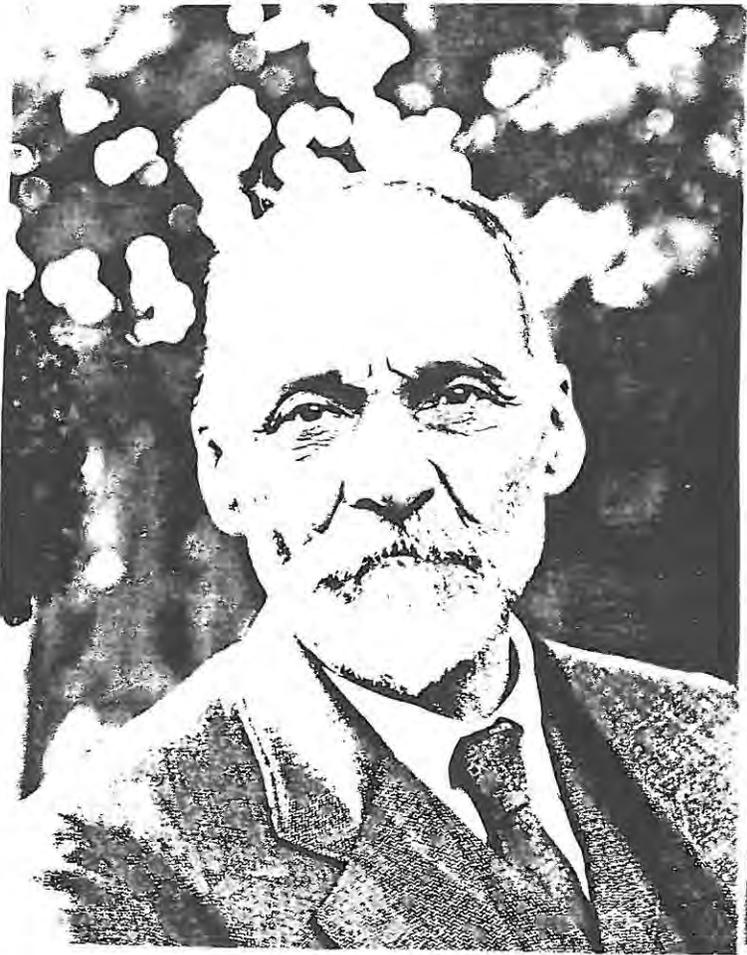
It was true that the Martin children were upset that their father looked so strange as he lay in repose. Without the beard, the painful gauntness of his cheeks was much more noticeable, and furthermore not one of his children, even the eldest, had ever seen his face without the Vandyke. The very line of his chin was unknown to them. The grandchildren seemed to be the most indignant about the mistake.

Jane said, “It’s a good thing Mother and Aunt Nelle couldn’t be here. They’d be fit to be tied.”

“I’ll say,” said Mim. “I can hear them now.”

“Well,” Trink said, “we’ll remember him with his beard, so this isn’t really important.”

Jane was glad that she was not still working in the Winchester Room because she felt that she should be at Grandpa’s funeral to represent her mother. This especially since Dee was not able to attend. Dee was new on her job and had already asked for two days off for illness, and dared not ask for more. Jane had expected to go to Oberlin by bus, but Luther told her that would not be necessary.



Henry John Martin
John Hayes

FALL FATAL TO VETERAN BUSINESS MAN

HENRY J. MARTIN DIES AT
HOSPITAL AT THE AGE
OF 94

HAD BEEN RESIDENT OF OBER-
LIN SINCE 1885—FUNERAL
THURSDAY

Henry J. Martin, well known citizen of Oberlin, where he had resided since 1885, died at Allen hospital Tuesday morning at 5 o'clock. Death followed a fall about a week ago which resulted in a fracture of the hip.

Mr. Martin was born March 26, 1841, on a farm near Royalton, which had been purchased by his father from the Connecticut Land Co. in 1832. The farm has been in the Martin family since its purchase. Mr. Martin sang in the First church choir while attending the Academy in Oberlin and was ready for college when the war broke out. He enlisted in the volunteer regiments raised to repel the Morgan Raiders and went with his regiment to Cincinnati. Because of a crippled foot, he was unable to march and was given an honorable discharge.

On his return to Oberlin Mr. Martin was urged by his father to enter college here, but the young man preferred to return to the farm. He married Miss Maria E. Burns on June 29, 1865. Mrs. Martin died in March, 1930.

In March, 1885, Mr. Martin came to Oberlin and opened a grocery. He spent the rest of his life here, remaining in business until added years forced his retirement. He had many friends here and throughout the county. Mr. Martin was properly proud of the fact that he cast his first vote for Abraham Lincoln.

Surviving Mr. Martin are the following sons and daughters: Howard and Stanley Martin of Royalton; N. A. Martin, Oberlin; Mrs. Ellen M. Fison, Jackson Heights, N. Y.; Mrs. Emma Wooldrige and Mrs. Marian W. Lemmon, Oberlin, the latter of whom made her home with her father and cared for him in his declining years; Mrs. Grace M. Rahming and William T. Martin of Cleveland, and J. Arthur Martin of Postoria.

Funeral services will be held at the Edgeman parlors Thursday afternoon at 2 o'clock. Burial will be made in the family lot at Royalton.

Henry J. Martin of Oberlin Is 91 Today

Tales of early days in the Western Reserve are being related today by Henry J. Martin, as he celebrates his 91st birthday in Oberlin. He was born in a log cabin in North Royalton on a farm which his father bought for \$6 an acre after coming from England in 1832. Land in Cleveland was cheaper, he recalls his father telling. It was only \$3 an acre but was thought too sandy.

One of the stories Martin likes to tell is how his father built what was then one of the finest homes in the county. It was a brick house and the bricks were made right on the farm. His father split his own shingles from whitewood logs. In money the house cost him \$28, which went for nails and locks hammered out by the blacksmith. Money was scarce in those days and the rest of the labor was done by trading work. The house still stands on Edgerton Road in North Royalton.

Martin was studying at Oberlin College when the Civil War broke out. He joined the "Squirrel Hunters' Brigade" and served in the southern part of the state.

When he has open house in Oberlin today among his guests will be his nine children, twenty grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

“We’ll go by car,” he said. “I told Dad about your grandfather and I guess he told Uncle Frank. Anyway Aunt Adalyn learned of it and she called me at work and asked me if I would like to use my grandmother’s car to go to the funeral.”

“Why, how sweet of her,” Jane said.

“I told you she liked you. I’ll go after the car this evening.”

Jane had felt a bit conspicuous riding in the procession of cars behind the hearse that carried John Hedge’s body to its resting place in the Martin family plot in the cemetery at North Royalton Center. Grandma Roby’s car was a dark green Lincoln and it was quite noticeable in the line of Pontiacs, Nashes, Plymouths and so on. There were many family cars and several cars of friends.

Old John was buried beside Sophia, and his children’s eyes were wet as they left their parents’ graves, in the shadow of the huge block of granite with the carved letters, MARTIN. On the opposite side of the monument, were the graves of John Henry Martin I, and his two wives, all three of whom had come to North Royalton in the 1830’s with a group of settlers from Berkshire, England. It was more than ninety-four years since Old John was born in a log house on the nearby farm where his father would soon build the Old Brick. Old John was gone, and his father, but the Old Brick still stood.

After the interment, Nate Martin invited members of the family back to his hotel for “a bite to eat.” Jane had a moment of hesitation about taking Luther to the Martin Inn. For Luther’s background was not only urban, but it was sophisticated and privileged. Would he understand her older uncles and the small-town hotel? Well, she decided, he’d have to. Uncle Nate might possibly change into his white kitchen apron and wait on people. And if he did, he did, and that would be that.

The cars did not return to Oberlin in a procession, so Jane had Luther drive out School House Road so that she might show him the Old Brick, and tell him about its history. She also told him about Maily and Jenny, the little girls who had died sixty years before, and how after that Grandma Martin had had such a large family. She told how she had almost been born in the Old Brick herself when her parents ran the farm, and how Uncle Bill took his turn there, and then her Uncle Bill, and now her Uncle Stan owned it.

“It is a family institution,” she said. “I hope Uncle Stan takes proper care of it.”

“They were a real pioneer family, weren’t they?”

“Yes,” Jane said, “and most of them have lived right near here most of their lives. My mother, and my Aunt Nelle and Uncle Bill got away and became “city people”, and Aunt Merly did too, for a time, but her husband died ten years ago. He was a lawyer. Uncle Bill is a teacher, and Aunt

Nelle's husband is in advertising, but he has done some writing, too. He's published boys' short stories. And, of course, Mother's an artist."

"They sound like a very interesting family," Luther said.

"Well, they are, but they're all different, and so are the people they married. The older brothers aren't city people at all."

"Are they farmers?"

"No. I guess you'd call them small town business men. They like to run restaurants and hotels and theaters and so on. When we get to Uncle Nate's hotel don't be surprised if he puts a white apron on and serves us pie. He makes all the pies they serve there and he's famous for them. All the Martin children like to cook. All the brothers make pies except Uncle Bill and he makes bread. I guess it's a family tradition."

"Did their father cook, too?" Luther asked.

"I never thought about that, but I'm sure he didn't. That's funny, now that I think about it. I wonder why those uncles do like to cook?"

"Well, you know the greatest chefs in the world are men."

"Yes. Well you are about to see the greatest pie chef in Oberlin in action."

Jane was grateful that Uncle Nate did not put on his white kitchen apron. He did serve pie and Stan helped him. Edith and Bertha served coffee. Uncle Nate explained that the dinnertime waitresses were not yet on duty. He said that the hotel was busy this week as college was just starting and there were many parents in town. He wished business would always be that good.

Jane and Luther excused themselves because they had to get back to Cleveland and on the way back to town Jane said, "I hope you weren't too shocked that my relatives were all chatting away so happily just now."

"Oh, no. Aunt Connie says that funerals are always family reunions, and people are glad to see each other."

"Yes, I guess that's right." She was silent a while and then she said, "Well, I think some of them weren't feeling too sad today."

"Oh?"

"Just as we were leaving, I heard Aunt Edith talking to Aunt Bertha. They're both daughters-in-law. I heard Aunt Edith say, 'This puts an end to Edwards and his tight fist.'"

"What's that mean?"

“Edwards is a lawyer and he has been managing Grandpa’s finances since before Grandma Martin died. It was getting to be too much for him, so he put his affairs in Edwards’s hands, and also at that time a new will was made.”

“Well, what’s this about a tight fist?” Luther asked.

“Well, it’s just that Grandpa Martin has always been very generous to his children, some of them anyway, and when they wanted to borrow money from him he would help them out. So when Edwards took over all that ended, and some of them have been very upset about it. They’ll be glad to see Edwards out of the picture. Then they’ll get their share of the estate and that will be that.”

“By the time it’s divided nine ways, each portion is going to look small to them,” Luther said. “I suppose it’s left in equal shares?”

“Oh, I imagine so. Grandma Martin would have insisted on that. She always was so fair and so kind. But, of course, there’s the question of Aunt Emmie. She can’t look after her own interests. Something special may have been done for her.”

Jane was right about that.

That night when Luther got home from returning Grandma Roby’s car he had interesting news for Jane.

“It’s an odd thing what happened up there,” he said.

“Up where?”

“At Aunt Connie’s. I got some information I ought to save till later on, but I just can’t. You remember that on the way home from Oberlin, we were talking about inheritances and so on?”

“Yes.”

“Well, Aunt Connie had a letter for me from a relative on my mother’s side of the family. She didn’t know where to find me so she sent it in care of Aunt Connie. She could have sent it to my old man. I don’t know really why she didn’t - perhaps because of Clara.”

“Because of Clara? Why?”

“Well, frankly, Clara has never been popular with the rest of the family. You’ll understand better when you meet her.”

“Am I going to meet her?”

“Oh, yes. She’ll get around to having us to dinner. But she doesn’t knock herself out to do the proper thing. I gather that the family was crazy about my mother, and Clara was so totally different that they never really warmed up to her.”

“That’s kind of sad, Luther.”

“I know. Well, you can form your own opinion. Aren’t you curious about the letter I got?”

“Sure.”

“Well, it’s from an old maid cousin of mine. Mother’s cousin, actually. They were college chums. Cousin Bess lives here in Cleveland. Her parents had a dry goods store downtown. Well, both of her parents are gone now. Her mother died a couple of months ago. Cousin Bess was their only child and she is the executrix. She is also the principal beneficiary. But there are a few small legacies and Cousin Bess’s letter says that I’ll be getting a little gift of money pretty soon.”

“Luther, that’s just great!” Jane said.

“I think so, too. But listen, it isn’t all the money in the world though.”

“Well, I suppose not,” she said.

“It’s just a thousand dollars.”

“Luther! That is all the money in the world. In times like these it’s a miracle”

Luther laughed. “Cousin Bess doesn’t say how soon we’ll get it.”

“Oh, but Luther! What a comfortable feeling to know you’re going to get it.”

“What’ll we do with it?”

“What’ll we do with it? Put it in the bank!”

“Yeah, you’re right. That’s what we ought to do. We’ll have to do just that.”

WE DIDN'T KNOW, SALLY

Grace felt that 1935 was turning out to be a very bad year. She could not recall a year with so many reverses and sadness's. 1925 had been terrible also, but it was all connected with her separation from Norris and his remarriage. Of course, Merly had lost Raymond that year too. And in 1930 her mother had died and she'd had to give up her own house in Milford and send the girls away to Norris.

But this year- oh, so many troubles. It started with Dee's lost job and her broken engagement. Then worries - that Jane would marry the Arab boy. That concern had caused her to make the mistake of writing him a letter. That had angered Jane. Then Skipper Overton had skipped out and married and put a burden on the finances.

Ah but, what happened with Norris was, of course the worst of all- a bitter, bitter disappointment. Coming after ten years of lonely dreaming, interrupted only by her misbegotten marriage to Carle, Norris's treachery had been the ultimate disillusionment. And in attempting to recover from that, she had thought- at least I still have my girls to be my anchor to windward. And then what should happen but Jane's running off to get married without anyone's blessing but her own, selfish girl that she was. Well, there was still Dee, sweet loyal Dee. But she must marry, too, because marriage was right for Dee. She was tender and a bit soft, not too strong, though she was brave and determined. Dee was the type of girl who needed a man to stand between her and the world. Jane was not the type for marriage, she was mechanical and imaginative. She would have been good at any number of things that required her particular talents. She had totally given up on trying for college. No patience whatsoever. And no ingenuity on her part to finding the means to go to college. No, Jane's actions were one more disappointment.

And now, in September, the sad news of her father's passing. And she and Nelle marooned on this mountain. They had no idea when they got word of his broken hip that their beloved father would be gone in a little more than a week. It was ridiculous of Merly to assume that they were coming when she had not even wired them that Father was sinking. Nelle had written Roge at Buffalo to tell him of the mishap, but they had not insisted he come and get them at once, and so they had not even been able to be at the funeral. How sad!

"I feel that we are orphaned now, don't you Nelle?" Grace said. "As long as Mother or Father was alive I didn't feel old, but now..."

"I know, kid. I feel the same way. They aren't there to give us advice or answer our questions."

"Mother was always free with advice, but it was so very gentle and loving one could never resent it."

"Mostly her advice had to do with religion. She really didn't criticize us much ever."

“No, she didn’t. She felt that we had gone astray when we took up Christian Science. And, Nelle, I’m beginning to think we did. I read in Mother’s diaries how she felt about it. She couldn’t accept Christian Science’s idea that sin, disease and death are not real. She wrote, ‘that is a lie, pure and simple’. And now I feel she was right. I know she was right. ‘Scientists’ don’t get along any better than anyone else. Whenever they fail to solve their problems, they blame it on their own wrong thinking, or more likely, somebody else’s wrong thinking.”

“I know, Rene, but don’t you think they have a better attitude? I mean not talking about sickness and such.”

“Shucks Nelle, they talk about it. What’s the virtue in saying, ‘I have the belief of a sore throat’, rather than, ‘I have a sore throat’?”

“Yes, I suppose. But it’s been a comfort to me, many times, kid.”

“Well, that’s alright,” Grace said, “but I’ll tell you one thing - I’m going to go to a doctor, after this, when I have health problems. And as for the rest of it, Nelle, I’ve tried to practice ‘Science’ all year and it’s been a perfectly terrible year. It’s been one catastrophe after another.”

“Oh, kid, all your reverses haven’t been catastrophes.”

“Mostly, they were, Nelle. Mostly they were.”

But Grace was not yet free of 1935’s reverses and disappointments. There were several in store for her. She had not intended to go back to Cleveland at this time. She had told all her friends that she was going to the mountains to write and paint. And now she was going back to Cleveland and had nothing to show for it, save one water color and a few sketches. As usual the days had slipped by with chores and distractions and Nelle always wanting to talk. If only she could get to her work. But now Nelle announced that she wanted to go back to Oberlin. Even though their father was gone and the funeral was over, she wanted to go home. Once Nelle had stated her plan, Grace could no longer concentrate on the idea of writing. Roge couldn’t be ready to make the trip west for two more weeks, but when he and Nelle left, Grace had no choice but to go with them. She had been alone in Africa, but she could not stay alone on the mountain.

They went first to Oberlin to see Merly and Emmie, but Grace went the second day to Cleveland to join the girls and Luther. The situation at the 83rd Street apartment was not comforting. She had hoped to find Dee engaged to Clement Chandler, or nearly so, but that was far from the case. Dee was still dating Chan, but she was also dating other men, and was once more associating with Mona James. Grace found that very disturbing.

“Don’t you like Chan?” she asked Dee.

“Well, sure, but not the way you mean.”

“Why on earth not? He’s so nice.”

“That’s the problem,” said Dee. “He’s so nice.”

“You always seem to like the other kind.”

“The trouble with Chan is that he’s always around. He’s over here as often as I let him come.”

“Why I would think that you’d find that nice.”

“Nice! There you go again with that word. It’s not very exciting when someone likes you that much.”

“He must love you,” Grace said.

“So he says.”

“Well, why do you always want the kind that will break your heart?”

“I don’t know. Maybe I’m just that kind of person. Always happy when I’m unhappy.”

“Oh, good night nurse, Dee! How ridiculous.”

“You’re the same way, Mother.”

“I certainly am not,” Grace protested.

“Yes you are, else you’d put Dad out of your mind. You should think about it, Mother.”

But Grace’s dismay over Dee was outweighed by Jane’s situation. Luther Roby might come from a very fine family, but he drank too much beer. That, she told Jane, would have to stop.

“And you look thin and peaked too.”

“Oh, I don’t. You always say that.”

“But you have a cold. You girls need me I guess.”

“It’s not a cold; it’s an allergy.”

“A what?”

“Allergy. Another name for hay-fever and things like that.”

“Well, you don’t look well, Jane. You need to be more careful. How long has Luther been working at night?”

“About two weeks.”

“I wouldn’t think his father would give him such hours as that. Why that’s terrible”

“Mom, Luther isn’t working for his dad anymore.”

“He isn’t? Why what happened?”

“Nothing. But he just couldn’t get enough work from his dad. The foundry’s business is terribly slow. So he went out and got himself another job and I’m proud of him. Jobs aren’t easy to get, and the only opening they had was at night.”

“Why that turns your life upside down.”

“No, I adapt to his life. He goes to work at 10:30 p.m. and I go to bed then and read an hour or two and then when Luther gets home at 7:30a.m. I get up and get his dinner and...”

“Dinner! In the morning?”

“Yes, and then we go to bed. I get up again about 10:30 or 11 a.m., but Luther doesn’t get up till dinner time.”

“And then he has another dinner?” Grace asked.

“Sure.”

“Goodnight nurse: What a way to live! But you oughtn’t go back to bed with him in the morning, Jane.”

“Why not?”

“Well, because you shouldn’t, that’s all. It’s a bad habit to fall into. You ought to be up and doing your work.”

“There isn’t such a terrific lot of work to do.”

“Don’t you plan to look for another job?”

“No, not if I don’t have to,” Jane said.

“Why not?”

“Because I’m married now, and I want to learn to cook and do a lot of sewing and such things.”

“Jane, I don’t understand you.”

“I know.”

“You showed such promise.”

“Oh, Mom! Please.”

####

There was more bad news ahead for Grace. It came in three parts. She had been speculating about her father's will. She was loath to go to Oberlin to inquire about it. She didn't want to seem overanxious. She was quite certain that it would be some time before the money would be distributed. Those legal matters take time. She remembered that from the time when Carle's mother had died. So she would just have to be patient and then one day an envelope would come in the mail from Mr. Edwards. Grace had no idea how much she would inherit. Divided nine ways, it meant that none of them would come into a fortune. And the Depression would have hurt some, but thank God Father's money was not in stock. Real estate was solid, one could never be completely wiped out. There should be a number of thousand dollars for each of them. Ten? Fifteen? More? Father had many properties. Perhaps the lawyer, Edwards, would call them all together for the reading of the will. Why had he not already done so?

Then something came along to take her mind off such things for a period, at least partially. While downtown in Cleveland one day she ran into Mary Sue Coleridge, who had been in Art school, and who had taught Jane at East High.

"Mary Sue," she said, "have you seen Betty Long lately?"

She doesn't answer her telephone. I've tried several times to reach her."

"No, I haven't. Not in ever so long. But I saw Allen Gray one day some time ago, and he told me she had been ill and needed some surgery,"

"I wonder why he didn't let me know," Grace said.

"You weren't in town probably. Why don't you call him?"

"I shall certainly do just that."

When Grace reached Arthur Grey, she could tell that he had been drinking as usual.

"Grace" he said. "Well, it's high time some of her old friends asked about Betty."

"I've been away, Arthur. I've been in the East."

"Don't they have the U.S. Mail in the East?"

"Don't lecture me Arthur. I've had my problems, too."

"You don't look like you're dying," he said.

"Allen you're so crabby. What's the matter with you?"

"Betty is dying."

“Oh, Allen Oh, dear, what happened?”

“Cancer.”

“Oh, how awful”

“They operated, but it was too late. I can tell she’s on the way out.” His voice broke. “I’ve loved her for years, you know.”

“I do know, Allen. Tell me, where is she?”

“City Hospital.”

“Can she have visitors?”

“Yes, but they keep her doped up. She knows people but she drifts in and out of sleep.”

“I’ll go see her tomorrow, Allen.”

“That’s good.”

Grace was afraid of cancer, afraid of being anywhere near it. No one in her family or Matt’s had had it. Roger’s mother and sister had died of it. Grace would need someone to go with her to the hospital.

In the night she thought about it. How would Betty look? She dreamed of it. In Betty’s room the shadowy figure of the Beast made its presence known. The beast that was cancer. It lurked in the corners and had shiny black wings. It was faceless. It would fold its wings around Betty’s bed and shut her away from Life. Oh! Grace awoke. She was lying on her back, as always when she dreamed. Oh, she thought, what has become of my Christian Science? Mrs. Eddy where are you now when I need you? Have I sent you away?

She went to City Hospital with Dee who had adored “Onty Botty” for years. She had always been full of funny little stories children love. Dee remembered posing for Betty when she had painted her portrait in miniature on ivory. Where were those tiny portraits now?

Cleveland City Hospital was a huge hulking complex of grey buildings on the west side high ground above “the Flats” where the steel-mills poured forth smoke above the great blast furnaces. There were four hospitals - the tuberculosis wing, Humphrey Pavilion, and next, Cleveland State Hospital for the Insane. On the north were the General Hospital, and Mother’s Hospital with maternity and pediatric departments.

Betty was in General Hospital. They found her in a twelve-bed ward in a glass-walled cubicle. They had tried to prepare themselves for the way Betty might look, but they were still shocked.

She had been a most attractive woman with lustrous, dark brown hair, and big brown eyes, and a merry smile.

Betty was awake when they came in, but not really alert. Her speech sounded slurred and weak. But she knew her visitors and reached out her hand to grasp Grace's.

"Oh, how nice to see you" she said.

"We didn't know, Betty. I've been away. I just learned you were here."

"I've been here quite a long time," Betty said and she closed her eyes trying to think. "I've forgotten when I came here. After I get a shot I can't think."

Dee had been unable to say anything, though she had given Betty a kiss. She was so shocked at Betty's hollow cheeks, and purple circles under the eyes. Dee was reminded of Grandpa Martin when last she saw him a few days before he died. Betty's hands and arms were so thin.

Grace, too, found it hard to talk to Betty. She did not know whether Betty knew that she had cancer. Why had she not asked Allen Grey about that? Never mind, she would not mention it to Betty in any case. She kept on patting Betty's hand. She thought of telling her that Father Martin had died, but she ruled that out. She would talk of something else.

"Betty I must tell you that our Jane is married." Betty looked confused, then she said, "Oh, you don't mean your little Jane?"

"Yes. She married in June."

Betty shut her eyes and said, "June?" She seemed to be trying to remember what month it was now. "My goodness. Is she old enough? Time flies."

"No, she isn't old enough. She's nineteen."

"Oh, well," Betty said, "that's alright. Is Dee married too?"

"No," Dee said. "I work in an insurance office."

"I should have," Betty said drowsily.

"Worked in an office, Betty?" Grace asked. "Why?"

"Married Allen Grey," Betty said.

"He loves you, Betty," Grace said.

"He comes to see me, Grace. He's been very good to me. He comes here often. He's my best friend." Betty seemed to be going to sleep.

Grace said they would let her rest now.

“Is there anything I can bring you next time I come?”

“No, thank you,” Betty said. “There’s nothing really.”

When they were outside Dee said, “Why is Betty in this dreadful place? Why isn’t she in University Hospital?”

“This one is for people who haven’t any money. Betty must have used up all her mother left her. Too bad.”

“Hasn’t she any family?” Dee asked.

“Nobody. There was only the one brother, who died years ago and her mother. She had no cousins, or aunts or uncles. Poor Betty: I don’t think she’s been eating right for years.”

“Mother,” Dee said, “we couldn’t possibly know what she’s been eating.”

“Too much tea and toast,” Grace said.

Grace went again the following week to see Betty, but Dee said it made her feel too sad.

On her second visit Grace found Betty too heavily drugged to converse, though she opened her eyes once and smiled a little.

Grace asked a nurse whether Betty had other visitors. “Only the one gentleman is all. He’s here every evening.”

Grace wondered why others did not come. Betty had other friends.

“People have a dread of cancer,” the nurse said. “They don’t know what to say or do.”

Jane wondered, later, why Allen Grey had not urged friends to visit Betty. She supposed it was because he had pursued her for years and now he had her all to himself. How cruel and selfish! What must Betty think? But now she probably was past wondering why her friends didn’t visit her. Perhaps it wasn’t Allen’s fault.

Grace decided to get Mary Sue Coleridge to go see Betty. Perhaps she’d be more awake another day.

But it was too late. Betty was in a coma when Grace and Mary Sue went to see her two days later. She died in early November.

Allen Grey arranged for the funeral and there was a fair turnout of Betty’s old friends. Betty was buried beside her mother and brother in Lakeview Cemetery.

I'M VERY PUT OUT WITH HER

Grace was still being patient while she waited to hear about her father's will. She went to lunch with Grace V. Kelley, who made a point of asking her what work she had accomplished in the mountains.

"Good old Grace, always cheering me on. Well, I'll tell you, old dear, I had really bad luck this summer. Nelle hurt her foot and I spent most of my time waiting on her and cooking. I only did one water-color and a few sketches."

"Grace, you must stop this sort of thing. You have talent and you must begin to use it again. You're still young enough to do good work. Stop visiting with your relatives and get yourself a room somewhere and get to work."

Grace was a little peeved with Grace because she knew that she was right. But how could she get a room when she had almost no funds. Of course, later when her father's money was distributed she would most certainly get her own place.

Things were crowded in the 83rd Street apartment. Grace secretly wondered how she had come to agree with Dee, Jane, and Luther that it was a suitable place. Of course, she had not intended to be there, she had still hoped to stay and live in the East, but there always should be room enough when she came to visit.

This arrangement was bad. Jane and Luther had the one real bedroom, and Dee's room was the sunroom with its In-a-door bed, which she now had to share with her mother. And the skimpy closet space had to be shared as well. This situation could only be temporary. There were many awkward things about it. One thing that Grace could not get used to was having Luther work at night, and Jane going to bed with him just when she ought to be up and doing. Subconsciously, at least, their closed bedroom door was an affront to Grace. At night, one would not find it strange for bedroom doors to be closed. That was normal. But in the day time, it was inappropriate. If Luther had to work nights it did make a problem it was true, but there was always Saturday night when he was at home with Jane all night. Grace's parents had never gone behind a closed bedroom door during the day. It would have embarrassed the children (those old enough to "know about things") and furthermore it would have embarrassed the parents, particularly Sophia. Why was Jane not self-conscious about crawling in bed with Luther in the morning? She'd already had a night's sleep. Grace actually was bored and lonely in the mornings. She did not realize it, but she was just like Nelle; she liked to have someone to talk to. She was creative and she loved to read, but she did not enjoy solitude. That was a large factor in her persistent longing for Norris's presence. Norris was interesting to talk to, and so was Jane, though they both could be self-centered and exasperating.

In the morning after Dee left for work, and Jane and Luther retired, the house was quiet. Grace would have liked having Jane's company at breakfast. She would have talked about New

Hampshire and the news of people there. She'd have told her about the bear that had come so near to Bump's house. And how one of the Button boys had shot Mr. Miller's "pet deer" the day before the deer season opened, and how the game control authorities had gone to Button's house and caught the entire family dressing, cutting, and canning venison. Mr. Miller might not have reported them if it hadn't been that the deer was so tame that it came when it was called.

It was not Nate Button who had shot the deer, but his brother. Nate was married now, and it was a long story that Grace would have liked to tell Jane. And there was news of Narze. Grace had thought she might see him, but on the few occasions when they'd come to town she'd not had a glimpse of him, but Roger had, and he had told Narze that Jane was married.

"And how did he react?" Jane had asked.

"Roge didn't say," Grace had said.

Sometimes, in the morning, when the bedroom door remained closed after ten o'clock, Grace would attempt to get Jane up by making more noise in the apartment. The bathroom was directly opposite the bedroom door, and off a small uncarpeted hall, where footsteps sounded loud on the wooden floor.

Inside their room Jane, and sometimes a very sleepy Luther, could hear Grace walking around in the hall. Into the bathroom, out of the bathroom, into it again, and while not really slamming the door, not closing it quietly either. And always the sound of her heels on the hardwood floor. One morning Luther commented on it.

"Doesn't Mama have any rubber-soled shoes?" he said amiably. Luther never seemed to sound cross about anything. He had heard Grace's heels outside their room for two weeks before he said anything.

One day it seemed to them that Grace must be sick, for the toilet flushed so many times, but it was not until Grace ran the vacuum cleaner in the next room one morning that Luther spoke again.

"Does it seem to you that Mama is being noisy on purpose?" he asked.

"Yes," Jane said. "It does indeed seem so. I'll say it does."

"Why? It puzzles me."

"She wants me to get up and doing."

"Doesn't she want me to sleep?"

"She probably doesn't think we're sleeping. I'm going to speak to her about this."

"Maybe you'd better not. Let's not make a big thing out of it."

“No, I’m going to. Mother’ll have to adjust to the idea that I’m married. She’s taking it hard.”

“Isn’t she though!” said Luther. “I guess that’s it.”

Jane did speak to Grace but it had little effect on her. She seemed to feel innocent about making any undue noise.

“After all, it is daytime,” she said. “I ought to be able to use the bathroom.”

“Yes, but so many times, Mother?”

“I don’t ask you how many times you go to the bathroom.”

“Well, we’ll have to put a rug in the hall. Every time you walk by our door we can hear your heels. And anyway don’t use the vacuum while Luther’s sleeping.”

“How long is he going to work these ungodly hours?”

“I don’t know, Mother.”

“Well, it’s very disrupting,” Grace said.

“Luther and I are alright. Don’t let it disrupt you.”

“Well, I’m not going to be here, of course. When I get my money from the illustrations for Alice Whitman’s book I’m going to get a little place. Alice hasn’t got her money yet either. Meanwhile I’m going down to Oberlin in a few days.”

But Grace was still there a week later when it was Jane’s turn to be in and out of the bathroom. From the sound of it, Grace thought that Jane must be ill. She spoke to her when Jane came out of the bathroom.

“Are you alright?” Grace asked.

“I think so,” Jane said.

“You sounded sick to your stomach.”

“Yes

“What do you think upset you?”

“I’m not upset. It’s morning sickness.”

Grace looked stricken. “Oh, my Lord, Jane! No!”

“Yes. I think so.”

“But you were taking precautions, you said.”

“Yes I know, but well...”

“Jane, that’s just terrible!”

“Oh, Mother, it is not!”

####

Grace had only one week during which Jane's pregnancy was her greatest worry, and even then, there were other things to think about. But first, she felt a compelling need to talk to someone and to write to someone, Grace had been that way all her life. Any upsetting development caused her to reach for her pen or the telephone. Usually, it would have been best had she waited a few days to calm down and write coherently. In the year after her divorce from Carle she had begun writing to Norris, and during that next summer when Dee and Cameron got into difficulties, Grace's letters to Norris were so rambling and emotional that he thought of them as just short of hysterical. The result was that he was henceforth on his guard against anything Grace was excited about. Her letters were not at all like the ones she had written before they were married.

It had been a long, long time since Grace had not been upset about something. Her first thought had been, "I'll call Betty." Then she remembered. She thought next of Mary McGuire, but Mary was not at home. Alice Whitman was not the type you discussed a pregnancy with, and Mary Raper was Catholic, and so was Grace V. Kelly, the art critic. She could not speculate or hint at the possibility of an abortion to those ladies. In fact, Mary McGuire had been a Catholic once herself.

Grace was planning to go to Oberlin shortly, but she was hoping for a letter with a check from the publisher of Alice Whitman's fairytale book. It seemed outrageous that she hadn't been paid for the drawings she'd done for that book. Alice said not to worry, that it was just the hard times causing the delay. Grace had written to the publisher and now she was expecting an answer soon.

She decided to call Gertrude and discuss Jane's dilemma with her. In the evening, she would write to Edna "Ted" Trunk. She longed to talk to her. Ted had been such a comfort to Dee in that sad summer of 1930, when she had sent both girls back to Norris because there was nothing else to do. Heavens! That was five years ago.

When Gertrude answered, she greeted Grace in her cheery voice, and as Grace had expected, Gertrude asked her if she had got a lot of painting done while away. Grace had to explain about Nelle's hurt foot. Next they had talked about the passing of Father Martin, and of what a remarkable hard-working old fellow he had been. Then Gertrude inquired after the girls and Luther.

"Oh, Trudy, speak not of it!" Grace said, using one of Nelle's favorite expressions (and fully intending that they should speak of it).

"Why what's the matter?"

"Jane is expecting," Grace said in somber tones.

Gertrude gave a slight laugh. "Well, that's not so surprising is it?"

“To me it most certainly is. It’s no time to have a baby.”

“Well you know, Grace,” Gertrude said, in her unhurried Pittsburg manner of speech, “in wars, depressions, or whatever, people keep on having babies.”

“But she was intending to practice birth control,” protested Grace.

“Well, she must not have been practicing faithfully.”

“I’m very put out with her, Trudy.”

“Well, remember she’s your mother’s granddaughter. It’s probably just a strong nesting instinct. Your mother was always tickled pink to hear a baby was on the way. Did she scold you when you told her Dee was in the making?”

“No,” Grace said, “but I waited two years before I had Dee.

“I know,” Trudy said, “but I gather conditions weren’t ideal for you and Norr then either. When is Jane’s baby due?”

“On her birthday in June. She thinks that’s wonderful.”

“Well, it is. I had Laurie on his father’s birthday. And you know Bill and I were married in 1919 and Laurie was born in 1920. A year is a respectable period of time.”

“But you and Bill had your education.”

“Yes, but you didn’t provide Jane with that opportunity. You shouldn’t criticize her for choosing another kind of life. As I said, Mother Martin would have approved, I’m certain. She felt that raising a family was all a woman would want to do.”

“But, Jane isn’t that type. She’s like a boy.”

“Oh, Grace, they used to call me a tomboy, too. Still I wanted to have a family. Let Jane decide what type she is.”

“Well, of course, Trudy. I shall do that. But she’s so young. She has no notion what she’s getting into.”

“Grace, neither did you. And neither did I. No one does.”

Grace tried once more to get Gertrude to concede that Jane’s Pregnancy was inappropriate. She got nowhere. When she mentioned Luther’s fondness for beer, Gertrude allowed that was probably because of repeal which many young people were enjoying. As for Luther’s working at night, Gertrude said there must be thousands of men in Cleveland who worked at night, and fathers at that.

Grace gave up. Gertrude had been the wrong person to look to for sympathy. At least Dee agreed with her. There would be no room for a baby in the apartment. Nor in their lives. Imagine trying to paint pictures in the uproar that is always present in a household with a crying infant.

A few days after Grace's conversation with Gertrude, Luther's father and step-mother invited all the members of the household in the 8rd Street apartment, to come to Sunday dinner.

Luther Roby senior, his wife Clara, and their two daughters lived in a substantial, but modest brick house in Cleveland Heights. Aunt Adalyn and Uncle Frank Roby had their homes in the wealthier Carrollton Heights area, Luther's father's house was only a six-room single with a one-car garage in back, whereas his sister and his brother had much larger homes with servant's quarters and three-car garages, but the house was comfortable and everyone was friendly.



Luther's father was a tall quiet man, with Luther's same slender face and brown eyes and the two little daughters were quite pretty, one brunette with freckles and the other a wisp of a child with blond curls. Clara Roby was an attractive woman with a hollow-cheeked face and a no-nonsense manner. (Within a few months people would be talking about the new king of England and his lady-love, Wallis Warfield Simpson, and they would note that Clara Roby was the "image of Mrs. Simpson").



Clara was very gracious that day. She cooked a delicious dinner, with a roast and all that should go with it, topping it all off with apricot charlotte russe.

Grace took quite a liking to Clara Roby, in part because Clara also thought that it was a poor time to be having a baby. However she did not seem to be as positive in her disapproval as Grace was. When Grace, who knew Clara was a registered nurse, sounded her out as to her thoughts about terminating a pregnancy, Clara was guarded in her answer.

"Well, of course, it isn't legal, except in certain emergency conditions, but there are situations, of course, where it might be the best thing to do. But it is risky; so is having a baby for that matter."

Grace found those views unsatisfying, but since her own opinion about Jane's pregnancy had found some support, she went home feeling vindicated.

And later, when they were alone in their room Luther said, "Clara had a wise crack to make. She said, 'You were in quite a hurry to start a family, weren't you?' And I said, 'Well, there's many a slip twixt the cup and the lip.' And she laughed and said, 'That's no place for a cup.'"

Jane laughed too and she said, "Actually it was. But we forgot it one night. Perhaps Clara doesn't keep up with modern birth control methods."

“Apparently we didn’t either. When do you think it happened?”

“Labor day, I think,” Jane said.

“Labor day! ‘Labor’ day will be next June.”

“Luther, you know Clara was very friendly to me, but she isn’t like your Aunt Connie. I can’t imagine Aunt Connie making that remark about the cup.”

“No, she certainly wouldn’t. There’s no comparison really between the two of them.”

“What will Aunt Connie say when she finds out?”

“I told her a few days ago,” Luther said.

“Oh, you did?”

“She said, ‘Give Jane my love.’ And she also said, ‘Luther, don’t let her down.’”

MOST OF THIS WAS LUCY'S IDEA

Whether or not her mother approved, Jane was ecstatic with her 'dilemma'. She did not see it as such. Not for one moment did she consider an alternative. And, in fact, while Grace had thought about it at some length she had never said the word "abortion" aloud. However Jane had. One day when Grace had been talking about the untimeliness of the pregnancy, Jane faced about and spoke her mind.

"Mom, don't go on about this anymore. I am not for one minute thinking about an abortion. I don't feel unlucky to be pregnant. I heard you telling someone on the phone yesterday. You called me 'Poor little kid' I don't like that. I was afraid I wouldn't have children. I'm just delighted to be expecting. I'm going to take very good care of myself so that I won't lose it."

"Why would you lose it?"

"Because Aunt Emmie, and Aunt Nelle, and Aunt Merly had bad luck that way."

"I never did."

"You only had two pregnancies."

"Well," said Grace, "if you are going to have it, you may as well make up your mind to have as healthy a baby as possible."

"That's what I've been planning to do. Mom, I've been wondering about a doctor. What do you think of Dr. Cutler? Did you like him?"

"Why, yes, I liked him. But you met him, Jane."

Jane laughed. "Yes, he was the first man I met in my life, wasn't he?"

"I mean last year. When you wanted to be excused from gym at school. Didn't you think he was nice?"

"Yes, but did you think he was good as a doctor?"

"He's delivered several thousand babies he told me."

"Then he should be an expert, shouldn't he? I like the idea of having the same doc who delivered me."

The following week Jane visited Dr. Cutler who confirmed her condition, weighed her, talked about her diet and told her to come back in a month.

Once Grace heard the official confirmation of Jane's condition, she took herself off to Oberlin for a visit with Merly. The house seemed very strange now that the downstairs bedroom had

been rearranged and was occupied by Mim who needed a room of her own now that she was in college and had to study. That room had been Father Martin until the day he fell down the porch steps, and five years before, it had been his beloved Maria's. Ah but, Grace reminded herself, there is nothing permanent but change, as Aunt Ada always said.

She talked briefly with Merly about the coming baby but did not dwell upon the subject since Clara Roby and Dee were the only ones who shared her viewpoint. She had even written to Norris's Aunt Georgie, and got no sympathy in that quarter. Georgie had written back with her usual wisdom, and seventy-eight year old perspective. "You must let the girls go, Grace. They aren't children anymore. They will be making their own life and their own mistakes, just as the rest of us did."

Grace had hoped that J.L. Edwards would have contacted her, but since he hadn't, she would have to ask Merly what was going on with the estate. Somehow, she had been reluctant to ask Bill or Gertrude, for she did not want them to feel that she was overly anxious about it. But she felt that she could lead the conversation in such a way that Merly would bring the matter up herself, for Merly was frequently annoyed with J.L. Edwards, and would no doubt be willing to talk about his handling of the Probate. Grace was wrong about that; Merly was not at all eager to discuss their father's estate with Grace, nor with Art, nor her eldest brother Luther. For that matter, she would be happiest if she could avoid discussing the will altogether with any of her siblings. Some of them were already upset about what they already knew. It was not an equitable will. Merly had carried the knowledge of this fact around with her for nearly seven years, and it had been a burden. It was not that she felt guilty. Nelle had been the strong force in the designing of the will, and arranging for the trust that put so much in the hands of J.L. Edwards, attorney-at-law. It had all begun with Nelle's concern that Father and Mother should no longer be burdened with looking after their financial affairs. Sophia had always kept the accounts, balancing the books, writing the checks to pay their bills, and reminding her forgetful husband to bank the rent monies as they came in. So in January of 1929 Nelle came west from New York to see that the burden was lifted. Most of the children agreed to the plan to let Edwards "collect the rents", which is the way Nelle had explained the trustee's duties. "Muz will still have the checkbook to pay the smaller bills and so on," Nelle assured the others. And Nelle had no trouble in persuading her siblings that "something special has to be arranged for Emmie so that Merly can continue to care for her after Dad and Muz are gone." They had not argued with that plan either. "It will be included in the Will," Nelle had assured them, "and for the time being Edwards will give Merly an allowance and Emmie a little spending money."

And so the will was drawn up and duly signed and witnessed (though Sophia was not really happy about it and would record in her diary, "There are some things I would not subscribe to. There are some things against the children I would eliminate.") An earlier will had seemed to Sophia, "a wise and reasonable one. But Old Henry had not been willing to sign it. He had never got over his peeve at his eldest son, Luther. As for the rest of it, Nelle had pointed out that Art, with his many wives and divorces, had "always been borrowing money to keep those ladies

housed and happy.” And Grace had married a “spoiled, lazy egotist”, and she had had “to depend on Pa half the time”.

Sophia had protested at that, saying that it wasn't true at all. But Nelle had countered by saying that Pa had sent Grace to Art school and sent her money in New York, and let Grace and Norr live on the farm.

Sonhia reminded Nelle that Grace had won scholarships at the Art school after the first year, and that Merly had gone to Art school, too. Also, Bill had been sent to Divinity School in Berkeley, California and later to Oberlin College, and he and Gertrude had lived on the farm, too. Sophia had said, “we helped you all at one time or another, and probably we helped Howd the least of all.”

J.L. Edwards drew up several agreements and wills before the final evening when everything was signed. (They had been thrashing it all over for three weeks.) Sophia recorded in her diary on January 30th, “So much business going on and so many papers to sign, it was too big a strain on my nerves, and I slept very little thru the night.”

After it was all taken care of, the “Martin nine”, as the brothers an' sisters were called, all knew a trust had been arranged and a will made, but only Nelle and Merly knew exactly what had been finally wrought that January. Sophia lived another fourteen months, and Old Henry more than six years after, but all that time Merly knew that when the complete final terms of the will and the trust were known, there were going to be many surprised people, and unpleasantly surprised, too. All these last years Merly had been troubled by that fact - but not her eldest sister. Nelle was, after all, Nelle. The will was to her liking. Oh, she had nothing against Howd; had been her father's doing. But Nelle did have something against spoiled children. In fact, it was an obsession with Nelle, ever since her parents left Oberlin in 1904 and moved to Cleveland because the baby sister wanted to go to Art school. It had never made any sense to Nelle. And yes, Art was spoiled rotten, too. He could talk Pa into anything. So Nelle felt justice had been done, and she hated to miss seeing the reactions to the Will.

But Nelle had returned to New York, as Roger had written that he was lonely and also concerned about Babs. So Merly was left to face the uproar that the others were sure to raise. She had expected them to start asking about their inheritance as soon as the funeral, but she soon realized that they were being patient out of respect for the old fellow who was gone. Even Edith and Bertha hadn't let their curiosity get the better of them. So far. Howd knew, however, and he had nothing to say.

But now here was Grace wondering about the estate, and it was only fair to tell her and not wait for Edwards to tell the whole family. Edwards was taking his time as always, trying to appear to be earning his fees through hard work.

“When,” Grace asked, “is the probate going to be finished?”

“Well,” Merly said, “I’m not sure what Edwards is planning to say to all of us, but I can tell you something about it, that I do know. Nothing will be changed.”

“I don’t know what you mean,” Grace said.

“Well, everything in the trust remains the same.”

“The same?”

“I mean the trust goes on, even though Father is gone.”

“But why, Merly? Why should it?”

“For Emmie. The trust goes on for her.”

“What do you mean, ‘it goes on’? For how long?”

“While she lives.”

“But surely not all Father’s money. Certainly the estate is worth enough to provide for Emmie and leave something to the rest of us. How great are Emmie’s needs anyway?”

“Well, Gracie, that’s the way it was set up.”

“It looks to me like Edwards did it for his own benefit.”

“I expect that’s partly the case,” Merly said.

“And what happens when Emmie dies.”

“Then the trust ends, and the funds will be distributed. Grace sat silent for a moment or two figuring, then she said, “Emmie is only fifty-two. She could live thirty more years easily. Half of us may be gone by then. The older boys certainly.”

“I know, Rene.”

“And nothing is to be distributed till Emmie’s gone?”

“That’s right, except that at the trustees’ discretion, there could be a distribution if the funds in the trust were to increase and prosper to an amount to warrant it. Edwards says the Depression hurts now. He can’t always keep the places rented and so on.”

“And that’s it, is it?” said Grace.

Merly hesitated. “Well, I should mention one more thing and some of the others may not think it’s fair until you take time to really think about it. I’m to be provided with ten thousand dollars,

so that Emmie and I can get into a better house where the basement doesn't flood. I'm supposed to continue to care for Emmie. I had to agree to that, and of course I would have in any case."

Grace sat silent a few moments thinking, then she said, "This must have been arranged after Mother was gone."

"No. No, Rene, Muz was aware of the provisions. You know how protective she was of Emmie. She wanted to be sure Emmie'd be cared for."

"I don't mean the provision for you to be able to care for her, Merly. That sounds like Mother alright. But to hold the entire estate in trust till Addle dies, that doesn't sound like Muz at all. Because, it's not at all fair to the older ones. They won't live to inherit anything, no doubt. Mother had good common sense. She'd have thought about that. Father may have been peeved at Howd, and he's certainly helped Nate a lot with the hotel, but I don't think Stan owed Father anything. And, Merly, all those boys have worked hard, 'specially Howd and he's such a little fellow. Muz always felt sorry that he was so small. I'm sure she didn't understand this business if she agreed to it, why probably even Nelle won't live to inherit. She's six years older than Emmie."

"But, Rene, most of this was Nelle's idea."

Grace said, "It was? When was this will drawn up?"

Merly thought a second or two. "1929 - in January. Nelle was here for more than a month."

"Oh, ho! Yes, I remember when she was here so long. Now it's beginning to come clear. Nelle wouldn't care. She made out like a bandit when she sold her fifty acres to the City Park chain."

"Now, Rene, Nelle said, at the time, that she doesn't think Emmie would live to be very old. She has those frequent headaches and she isn't normal. You know that."

"Yes, but I also know she has never in her life had any money worries. She's always been cared for by someone. She'll live to be old because she hasn't a serious care in the world. This is a blow to me, I can tell you. I've had six years of worrying myself sick. Nelle thought I was foolish to buy the Milford house. But I was making good money up till the depression hit me so hard. How could I know it was going to happen? No one else knew did they?"

"No, I guess not," Merly agreed.

"I moved there with the girls in September, and in October came the crash. Things have been very hard for me ever since."

"I know, Rene, but if you had been the one in my place, the one who got ten thousand dollars to make a home for Addle, you wouldn't have wanted to do it. And remember, I've been tied down

for ten years. Ever since Raymond died I've been taking care of people. You wouldn't have wanted to do that. You're too restless."

"I didn't say anything about your ten thousand dollars Merly. I know you've been tied down, but you've had security. That's worth a lot."

"I know," Merly said.

"I'm going back to Cleveland on the 4:30 bus."

"I thought you'd be staying over."

"No, Jane needs me. She's having morning sickness."

####

Grace had intended to stay a few days with Merly but she was so upset that she had a great need to get away. She must get home and talk to the girls. Again she felt the void left by Betty Long's passing. It was a time when she needed Betty who was always calm and reasonable.

The girls were surprised at her news, but they told her they were sure there was nothing she could do. However, she spent several sleepless nights wondering what the rest of her brothers and sisters thought about the trust. Her first impulse was to call Bill, but something held her back. She didn't want to create the impression that she wasn't concerned about Emmie's well being. She finally came to the conclusion that her parents had been terribly afraid that their holdings were dwindling away and that the only way to make sure Emmie would always be protected, was to sew up the entire estate for her.

After three days despairing about her own financial straits, Grace decided to talk to Bill and try to get him to pay her some of what he owed her. It was her decision to call Art that brought her spirits lower than they had been at any time since her disillusionment with Norris the previous winter. And it was then that she learned the rest of the story of her father's will. Merly had told her "the trust goes on for Emmie", and Merly had explained her special legacy which was also an indirect provision for Emmie. But there was more that Merly had not told her, probably in the hope of postponing the day when Grace would learn. Perhaps Emmie would outlive Grace, Merly may have thought.

But Art had more information. The will had stipulated that Howd would receive exactly one hundred dollars upon his father's death. J.L. Edwards had distributed this amount, and Merly's ten thousand. Howd had seen the will and he knew the rest of the story. After Emmie's death all the "residue and remainder" of the estate would go in equal shares to James, Stan, Nelle, Merly, and Bill. So the will stated.

Grace was dumb-founded. She asked Art to repeat the names. He did so.

"But Art that's only five out of the nine children"

"That's right. But Emmie will be gone, and Howd will have had his share, and you and I, kiddo, are left out."

"Left out completely?"

"Well, no. We're mentioned. We're to receive nothing because we've already had too much."

"The will says that?"

"The words amount to that, Gracie."

“I can’t believe it, Art I’ve had no more help from Father than Nate has. I don’t know how much you’ve had but I do know I haven’t had more than some of the others. Father paid my first year only at Art school. I got scholarships from then on, even when I went to New York. And at the farm when Norr and I lived there, we made rent payments. And the same goes for when we lived in the Cliff Street house. We wanted to buy that house eventually, but you know what happened, Art. Now that’s no more help than Bill got when he went to divinity school in California. He took over the farm after Norr and I gave it u in 1917. Bill was there till 1925. That’s eight years. Eight years, Art. Norr and I were only there three and a half years. I’ve got receipts from Father, Art, for the Cliff Street house. For the rent, Art.”

“Don’t blame me, Gracie.”

“I’m not, but I certainly am upset. I just can’t understand it, What about you? Has Father done so much for you’?”

“Well, Pa’s been good to me, of course, but I don’t think he’s done more for me than he’s done for Nate, do you?”

“I wouldn’t know about that Art.”

“Well, he helped me with the theater and Nate with the hotel. And sometimes, we were late with our rent and so on. But, hell, Grace, he was good to all of us, and they know it.”

“You know who worked out that will, don’t you?” Grace asked.

“J.L. Edwards,” said Art.

“Well, yes, but mainly it was Nelle. Merly’s known about it since 1929. Perhaps she had something to do with it, too. You can be sure it was Nelle that persuaded Mother to sign such a Paper. Muz was probably confused about it all. And Nelle could always turn Mother against me. She’s done it all my life.”

“Nelle disapproves of me,” Art said.

“Why?”

“All my wives, and she called me ‘Pa’s spoiled baby’.”

“Well, she was mad at me because the family moved to Cleveland when I went to Art school.”

“Lord, yes I remember. I can hear her now,” Art said.

“Well, it wasn’t my fault they moved to town. I’d have got on fine if I’d rented a room. But Muz loved it in town. They stayed on Cartwright Avenue for years.”

“Till Grandma Burns died.”

“That’s right. Well, Nelle has other counts against me.”

“What’s that Rene?”

“Well, I owe her some money, and I owe Merly some, too. And Nelle thinks that Roge... Well, never mind about that. But anyway, if I had my share of the estate I could pay both of them.”

“Yes,” Art said, “and if I had share I could pay you what I owe. But I don’t think many of them are going to get any. Emmie will outlive ‘em.”

“I think so, too, Art. I’ll bet money she will.”

“Ha! The money you don’t have, kiddo.”

Jane was reveling in her pregnancy. She was so relieved to learn that her fears that she was sterile had been completely ridiculous. They had been based on some of her Aunt Nelle's "nonsense", the story of the woman who had gone swimming in cold water, before, or after her period. Aunt Nelle had said, "From that time on she had terrible cramps, and when she married she learned that she was barren. She never could have any children." Jane had gone swimming once the summer before and she had had cramps the next day. She never could get out of her head what Aunt Nelle had said about a girl swimming in cold water. But that was all bunk.

Once or twice a week she measured her middle with a tape measure, and she was astonished to discover that her figure was already changing. She had gone to the library and borrowed an armful of books about pregnancy and childcare. When Luther asked questions she was able to tell him the answers. He was amazingly innocent about the subject of gestation. But he was more interested than Jane would have expected, and read the books and looked at the pictures with fascinated exclamations, and usually had Jane laughing.

Jane was so interested in her new condition and still so absorbed in the newness of marriage, that it was hard for her to realize the extent of her mother's distress about the terms of Grandpa Martin's will.

"Mother, you can't lose money you never had. Supposing Grandpa had been poor."

"But he wasn't poor. What hurts me is that Mother was in on the arrangement. She always told me I was her most faithful correspondent."

"Well, don't be hurt, Mom. I know Grandma loved you. You've got to remember she was old and she wasn't well. Someone talked her into it, or else they put one over on her."

"Of that am sure," Grace said. "And it was mainly Nelle. She knows how hard I've worked with little or no help from your father all these years. And she's always called on me for help, too."

"Well, it's done now, Mom. All you can do is forget it, and pretend there never was any money to leave."

"It's easy for you to say that, but I had every reason to expect to inherit something, even if they deducted whatever help Father gave me."

"Well, anyway, Mother, all the rest of them have to wait for Emmie to die."

"Except for Howd and Merly. Why I even envy Howd his \$100. Why didn't Art and I get \$100 too, if we were to be cut off?"

"Grandpa left him that to punish him. He left him that to get even for being knocked down. It was like a special insult."

“Well if so, it makes me feel ill. It’s a terrible, spiteful will. Well, I hope Nelle enjoys what she has wrought. She’ll have to live with her conscience all these years while she’s waiting for Emmie to die.”

“Mom,” Jane said. “Mom, let’s not talk about it anymore. It’s no good to go on about it.”

By the time November ended Luther Roby had received his inheritance of a thousand dollars. Jane had counseled him to say nothing about it to anyone. She told him that when people know how much money you have they take it into account in their dealings with you. She said they would no doubt need some of the money when the baby came. Luther agreed and in a day or two he came home and showed Jane the bankbook with the \$1000.00 entry. They put it in their top dresser drawer under the paper.

They had worked out a financial plan with Dee for sharing the household expenses. Luther would pay the rent and the gas and electricity, while Dee would provide a weekly allowance for groceries. It was, appropriately, a two thirds and one third split. The phone bill would be shared equally, since Dee who was dating would be using the phone more.

When Grace came the balance was changed, but she pointed out, “I’ll be buying little extra grocery things, and I’ll be helping with cooking and, anyway, I’m not going to be here. I’ll be getting a little place of my own. I expect that I’ll get my money for the fairy-tale illustrations very soon now.”

Jane had been having quite a time with morning sickness. Every day she lost her breakfast and had to try again. She would go to the grocery store in the afternoon and, depending upon what was in the bag she carried back to the apartment, she would become nauseated on the way home. She could not stand certain odors. Washing powders, toilet soap, such as Palmolive or Camay, set her stomach churning; even the aroma of fresh autumn fruit such as apples or blue grapes upset her. She would barely make it to the bathroom after entering the apartment.

Grace talked about it to Gertrude on the phone.

“It certainly is a good thing I came back from New Hampshire. Jane is having a simply awful time with morning sickness. She loses her breakfast every day.”

Gertrude laughed. “My goodness, I did too. I never kept the first one down. What are you doing to help her?”

The question caught Grace a bit off guard. “Oh. Well, I certainly don’t have a cure for that malady. She shouldn’t have got pregnant when she’s so young. I’m helping with the house work. Jane is no natural housekeeper.”

“How long has she been married, Grace?”

“Well four or five months I would say.”

“Give her time. She’ll be alright. When is the baby due?”

“About the first of June,” Grace said.

“Let’s see. Oh, she’ll be over the nausea soon. Tell her to eat two or three soda crackers before she gets out of bed.”

“Crackers in bed, Trudy?”

“That’s right. Tell her not to let her stomach get empty. That’s the latest advice.”

Jane and Luther had fallen into a routine. When he went to work at night, she retired and read a book till midnight or later, with the black and white cat curled up contentedly beside her. When Luther came home she got up and fixed him something to eat, and then they both went to bed again, and soon “Kitty” joined them purring loudly and rubbing his head around their chins.

“I like him,” Luther said. “He’s affectionate. I didn’t think cats liked people.”

“Oh, they do! I didn’t want to get too fond of him though.”

“Why?” he asked.

“Because something always happens to every pet I’ve ever loved. The cats get put to sleep, like my Whitey, and Buchanan in Milford. And they took Binker, my dog, away from me.”

“I remember you told me about that.”

“Yes and Babs’s Squiffy was killed in the road in Oberlin, and her Bimmy was killed in the traffic on the Boston Post Road when we lived in Milford. And even my Binker was eventually killed in the road in New Hampshire. So I didn’t want to get fond of Kitty.”

“Well, he’ll be safe here with us, and he won’t get killed in traffic either,” Luther said, “because he never goes out.”

But Luther was wrong. Kitty did not go out, but he was growing up and he was a torn-cat. One evening they all noticed a strong odor. It was in the hail outside the bathroom. Kitty had not used his pan which was in the back entry, beyond the refrigerator.

“We can’t keep him,” Grace said. “He’s starting to spray.”

“We’ll get him altered,” Jane said.

“That’s expensive,” her mother said. “Besides it’s too late. Nelle says it’s too late to alter them once they’ve started spraying.”

“‘Nelle says’, ‘Nelle says’ - why does Aunt Nelle always have to be the authority on everything?”

Dee spoke up. "Because she has a great deal of very practical knowledge."

"Piffle," said Jane. "She's full of old wives' tales."

The next day another spraying crisis arose. Kitty had gone into the closet in the sunroom, next to the fold-down In-a-door bed where Dee kept her shoes. He had sprayed against the wall in there. Dee was livid. Jane went to work with a scrub pail and sudsy ammonia water. She washed down the wall and floor.

"He only sprayed the wall. He didn't spray on your shoes," she told Dee.

"But I can still smell it," Dee said.

"We'll open the windows and clear the air," Jane said.

"We can't have this," Grace said.

"I'll have him fixed," Jane promised.

"It's too expensive," Grace said.

"Luther has some extra money," Jane said.

But the next morning Grace called the Animal Protective League to ask them to come and get the cat. She said nothing to Jane or Luther, nor even to Dee. And the following morning while Luther and Jane were sleeping the A.P.L. took Kitty away.

Jane did not miss him until dinner time when he was usually in the kitchen looking for his supper. She went into the bedroom where Luther was up and getting dressed. The cat was not on the bed where he usually spent much of the day. Jane looked under the bed.

"Lose something?" Luther asked.

"Wondered if Kitty was under there," she said. She looked in the closet and saw he wasn't there.

Grace was writing letters at the dining room table.

"Have you seen Kitty? I was going to feed him and I can't find him. I hope he didn't slip out the back door."

Grace hesitated a few moments. She had been dreading this encounter all day.

Jane walked to the back kitchen door, opened it and her head out and called, "Kitty, Kitty, Kitty."

Grace went to her then and said, "Andy, don't call him. He isn't here."

Already guessing Kitty's fate, Jane asked with a grim face, "Where is he then?"

"I thought it best to have the Animal Protective people take him."

"Oh" Jane cried angrily. "You've done it again: They need a league to protect cats from you."

"Now, Jane..."

"It wasn't your cat to do away with."

"Well, Jane, it wasn't your cat either. It belonged to that Italian woman."

"But you're the one that started feeding Kitty in the first place because he was thin. I don't feel like talking to you about it. Why do you keep on doing this to me? You've done it to me all my life."

"Oh, Jane, don't get so dramatic."

But Jane vanished into her room and shut the door. Grace could hear her talking to Luther in a low voice. About twenty minutes later she and Luther came out of the room. Dee had come home from work, but Luther and Jane put on their coats and went out.

"What's the matter with them?" Dee asked Grace.

"It's because I had the A.P.L. take the cat."

"Aw, Mother! Why didn't you wait till he was altered and see if he'd be alright? Jane said she'd get him fixed."

"Well, listen to me, honey, and don't be mad at me. I know you all liked the kitty, but Jane shouldn't have a cat when she's going to have a baby. She's going to have her hands full, and she has no idea what she has let herself in for. Neither has Luther; he's amazingly boyish and naive about some things. They are going to find that having a baby will change their lives."

"Well, I suppose that's true with anybody, Mother."

"But what worries me is that Jane is so utterly unfitted to be a mother. She has always been so mechanical, so creative. She likes to make things. To be a mother you have to be extremely patient; you have to be willing to sit and hold a baby and to rock it."

"Mother, I don't think they rock babies anymore."

"Why not?"

"I don't know, but that's what Jane Pizzi says. She won't let Dad rock their baby. It gives the baby bad habits."

“Well, be that as it may, the point I was making is that Jane hasn’t the right temperament for having children. She’s too interested in making things.”

“Well, but Mother, you can’t undo it. She is going to have children.

“One, anyway. When she sees how much work a baby makes she won’t have any more. And Dee, we can’t stay here in this apartment. We’ll have to move to a larger place and moving will be a lot of work too. And money. So you can see the cat would have only added to our problems.”

“I guess you’re right, Mother, but he was a nice kitty.”

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There was a definite chill in the air for some time after Kitty was taken away. For several days Jane scarcely spoke to her mother. She spent more time in the bedroom during the day when Luther was home sleeping. And several nights a week she and Luther went to the movies. They went to the early show and since the theater was on Grand Avenue at 83rd Street, they had time before Luther went to work. Jane was finally over her morning sickness, and beginning to feel decent again. After the movies, if there was time she would coax Luther to buy her a chocolate sundae.

Christmas came and it was impossible for Jane to continue to give her mother the silent treatment, for they had always made a big celebration of Christmas. Both the Martin and the Rahming families had spent days making fruit cakes, cookies and fudge. So Jane and Grace achieved a tacit truce while engaged in these holiday activities.

There wasn't a great deal of money to spend on gifts, but since there had been five such Christmases in a row, they were all used to it. Jane, however, was overwhelmed when Luther appeared on Christmas with a stack of boxes from Strohmeyer's store and put them under the tree. They were all presents for Jane, except for a big box of candy each, for Dee and Grace. Luther had had a personal shopper help him with Jane's gifts. There was a beautiful blue brocade hostess gown, and an assortment of other delectable feminine finery. Jane was afraid that Luther had spent far too much money. She supposed that he had withdrawn from his savings account with the thousand dollars. But she would learn about that later.

The biggest Christmas surprise for Jane came ten days before the holiday. Luther got out of bed early one afternoon.

"Let's go Christmas shopping," he said.

"You have some money?" Jane asked.

"A little. The old man gave me some yesterday morning when I stopped in."

They hopped on the streetcar at 82nd Street and Jane assumed they were going downtown, but they got off after they had gone only three stops.

"Where are we going?" Jane asked.

"You'll see. There's a shop here where I want to look at the merchandise."

It was a pet shop with a big sign in the window which said "Christmas Puppies Here Now."

"Oh, Luther Whatever are you thinking of?"

"What do you suppose?"

“It’s madness. I can hear Mother already.”

“So can I. But, remember, she’s living with us now. She’s the one that said the apartment was to be in my name. So we aren’t living with Mama. We can have a puppy if we want one.”

“Luther, I’m afraid to go in. If I see a puppy I like I’ll want it and…”

“I was thinking of a parrot,” Luther said.

“A parrot!” Then she saw the twinkle in his eye.

“I’m kidding you,” he said. “Come here and look at these. What are they?” In the window was a pen with four black puppies, three were asleep, and one awake and alert.

“They’re dogs,” Jane said.

“Alright! What breed are they?”

“I was kidding you. I think they’re Scotties. Oh, look how precious!” The awake one had one ear up, the other one down.

They went inside and learned that the pup was indeed a Scottish Terrier, female, five months old, and the price was \$25. The males were \$30. The pups were purebred.

The proprietor could see that Jane had fallen for the little female, with the alert look, but he lifted the others out for her to see.

“I like this one best,” she said.

“Don’t worry about that ear. She’s teething. It’ll come up.”

“Don’t you want to look for one like Binker?” Luther asked.

“Binker’s mother was half Scottie. I don’t know what all Binker was. Aunt Nelle said she had ‘bird-dog’ in her. I’d never find one made by the same recipe.”

They bought the puppy and some food for it, and a small harness and leash, and they walked the three blocks back to 8rd Street, carrying the new baby most of the way.

Grace did not have as much to say about it as they had expected. She knew she would not prevail. She made a few remarks about housebreaking and what would Jane do when she was busy with a baby. But by the second day she was won over by the puppy completely. It was irresistible.

Jane decided she did not want to call her Binker. She was Scottish. She would be Bonnie. She was housebroken by the end of her second day. Jane or Luther took her for walks outside and even Dee occasionally took her down.

“Dr. Cutler said I should get plenty of exercise,” Jane said. “Going up and down these stairs will do the trick.”

“When you get big and heavy you won’t enjoy it,” Grace predicted.”

“By that time Bonnie will be older and she’ll only need to go out three times a day, not every two hours,” Jane pointed out.

“Yes,” Dee said, “but then you’ll have to change the baby diapers every fifteen minutes.”

“Oh, come on They sleep from one feeding to the next most of the time,” Jane said.

“They cry most of the night,” Dee said.

“Yes, in the beginning,” Grace said, “and you have to nurse them every two hours.”

“Oh no” said Jane. “Oh, no. Not anymore.”

“Well,” Grace said. “I raised you two girls according to Dr. Emmett Holt. And he was the authority. Very fine.”

“Yes, but he’s passé. Babies are fed every four hours, on the dot. If they’re undersized, then every three hours.”

“Jane, Mother’s had experience in these matters,” Fare said.

“I know, but times have changed. I get my information out of the latest books. Baby care has been brought up to date.”

“Well,” conceded Grace, “I imagine that there are changes. But then, you can consult Dr. Cutler and see what he says.”

“I just might decide to have a pediatrician,” Jane said.

“What is that?” Grace asked.

“It’s a child specialist,” Jane said. “You see that’s what comes of our being Christian Scientists so long. We don’t know one kind of doctor from another.”

“I’m still a Scientist,” Dee said. “They have the right idea.”

“Mother’s a Scientist, too,” Jane said, “unless someone still has his tonsils.”

“Oh, Jane, you’re such a smarty,” Grace protested.

Late in January, Jane had her fourth appointment with Dr. Cutler. She came home alarmed and full of questions.

“Mother, how old do you think Dr. Cutler is?”

“Gee, I don’t know. How old is he?”

“I’m asking How old would you guess him to be?”

“Well, that’s hard to say,” Grace said.

“Was he a young man when I was born?”

“Not real young, no. Approaching middle age, I guess.”

“Then he would be at least in his sixties now, wouldn’t he, Mom, I’m worried about him.”

“Why what’s the matter?” Grace asked.

“He’s all mixed Up, Mom. When I went in today I know he didn’t remember me at all. He picked up my chart or report or whatever they call it and then he laid it down on his desk again, and then he went to a file cabinet and thumbed through a little and didn’t take anything out. Then he came back to the desk and picked up my chart again and do you know what he said?”

“What?”

“He said, ‘Let’s see now. You’ve got about three more weeks to go, haven’t you?’ I told him we had figured it would be the first week of June. And he didn’t even act too embarrassed. He sort of reminded me of W.C. Fields. You know? Sort of bumbling.”

“You think he drinks?” Grace asked, looking quite horrified

“No. I think maybe he’s sick.”

“Or getting senile?”

“Something like that. But, Mother, he has never taken my blood pressure. From what I’ve read, that is very important. I’m frightened by that, Mother, but I don’t know how to change doctors now. Dr. Cutler is so nice.”

“Probably you should change, Jane,” Grace said.

“He even asked me how I was doing with the morning sickness. Now you see that’s crazy. One minute he’s saying I’m about to deliver, and then, ‘How’s the morning sickness?’ He’s in bad shape.”

“Well, you’ll have to have someone else, that’s all.”

“Yes, but how? And who?” Jane asked.

Part of the question was answered three days later when Luther came home with the morning paper. He had already spotted the news item and showed it to Jane. The heading read: "Noted Doctor Victim of Stroke". The item went on to record that Dr. William R. Cutler had delivered more than 6000 babies on the eastside of Cleveland during a practice that spanned nearly four decades. It was also noted that in a number of cases he had delivered two generations of a family's children.

"I guess I got into that picture a bit too late," Jane said.

"Well!" said Grace, "He was a sick man, wasn't he? He must have already had a little stroke."

"So now I must find a new doctor," said Jane.

"And we must find a new apartment," Luther added.

YOU'D BETTER START FRESH YOURSELF, MARTY

None of the inhabitants of the 83rd Street apartment was satisfied with the cooperative living arrangement. Jane and Luther wanted to live by themselves for privacy's sake and to be away from Grace's impulses to supervise Jane and to treat her like a child. Dee would have enjoyed her own place so that her social life would have more freedom, but for Dee there were advantages in living with her mother. Dee hated to cook and it was nice to come home and find dinner ready. If she lived alone she might have to cook. Even when she got married she hoped not to have to cook every night.

Grace, of course, was still hoping to get her 'little place'. She had been paid finally, for the illustrations in Edna Whiteman's fairy tale book, but she needed the money for her everyday expenses. She had not wanted the girls to know that she had left the Sloane Avenue place, and also the 116th Street apartment owing each landlord two months rent. But she was quite sure the girls knew or suspected it. She felt it better not to rent an apartment for awhile. Her creditors might make trouble.

At this time all of them knew they could only afford to live together. Grace paid the least of all, in that she only contributed a few extra food items, but they were usually extras like fruit, and were enjoyed. Sometimes she bought extra eggs.

"We need more protein," she told Jane.

"I do the best I can," Jane said, "with what I have to spend."

"You didn't need to buy the puppy."

"I don't buy her food from our food allowance, Mother."

But now they must find a larger place. It must fill certain requirements. It must cost no more than the present place. It must have a real bedroom for Dee and Grace to share. It must have a bedroom for Luther and Jane, and a room to serve as a nursery.

Jane and Grace conducted the search, and it turned out to be fruitful. They found a place that met the requirements and it was five dollars a month cheaper. There was a reason; it was on Sloane Avenue, a definitely less classy neighborhood. Also the building was older, the refrigerator was older (but at least it wasn't an ice box) and the stove was older. But there was a good sized bedroom, off the living, room, for Grace and Dee, and another one off the hall for Luther and Jane. That room had its own door into the bathroom. Another door into the bathroom came from the long hall. This arrangement would have a bearing on the domestic tranquility of the establishment. Across the hall from the bathroom was a small room that would be fine for the baby. At the end of the long hall were the kitchen and dining-room.

When Dee and Luther came to see the apartment they found it acceptable, too. And again, Grace said that the place should be rented in Luther's name because, she declared, "I am probably going to be leaving. I should get back to New York."

With Clement Chandler's help they managed to get moved to the new place by March 1st, and they decided to have a house-warming party. Present for the occasion, were Skipper and Bud Irwin, Jane Pizzi and Stanislaus Michota, Mona James and her current date, and, of course, "Chan" Chandler, who had been such a hero in the moving.

Grace still felt strongly that Dee ought to be married, because running around with Mona James was definitely not good. There seemed to be a continual parade of different men. It was leading nowhere. Dee declared that she was in "no big rush to get married." But Grace would not be able to breathe easy until Dee settled down. She was certain that if Dee's first love, Cameron, were to reappear in her life, Dee would marry him in a minute. Grace thought it would perhaps be good if Dee and Clement Chandler were to make a match, but Dee said that Chan was nice but she "didn't get excited about him." Grace thought it might be workable to marry someone who didn't "excite" you, if that person were wealthy. But it probably wouldn't work if you thought you were bored and you had to worry about money besides. And Chan certainly was not wealthy. He didn't even have a real job at present. He had been a case worker for the city relief agency, but when WPA came along, many case workers had been laid off. They had been promised good jobs, but it hadn't worked out. So now he was doing various bits of work wherever he could find them. He was very handy at repairing furniture and making picture frames. He was learning to upholstering. He seemed to be quite artistic and creative. He had brought some of his work for them to see. But none of these interests were in line with his college training. Apparently, his parents had steered him toward engineering, but he had preferred something else and ended up majoring in psychology. He seemed to have many interests; he liked poetry, philosophy, and was quite well-read. In fact, Grace observed, he was more her kind of person than Dee's. But Dee said Chan might be educated and creative but he was too moody to suit her.

"In fact he's not moody. He's a terrible pessimist. I never knew anyone so gloomy. He has such a dark outlook."

"Why, he seems quite witty to me," Grace said.

"Oh, he tells a lot of good jokes, but he's still gloomy.

"It's the times, dear - this damnable Depression."

Actually, Grace had recently got an encouraging bit of news. A friend of Grace V. Kelly, the art critic, was on the Cleveland Board of Education and a project was being planned for the schools that would teach the principals of soil conservation and prevention of land erosion. There would be a half a dozen little booklets printed. The state was cooperating in the project, with the help of federal money. Grace V. had put in a good word for Grace to get some of the illustrations to do.

So Grace was feeling a bit more cheerful. If only she could forget about Norris. She made up her mind to concentrate on putting him out of her mind. After all there were other things to worry about - Jane for instance.

Jane's health was fine and she had a new doctor. He was not an obstetrician, but he seemed competent. He was, in fact an osteopath, someone who had married an old friend of Grace's. Luther wondered about how good an osteopath was. Jane explained they were thoroughly trained, and they were not the same as chiropractors. Dr. McWhirter was no older than forty and he did all the things the books had told Jane to watch for. He took her blood pressure every time she visited, measured her pelvis, did blood and urine tests the first time, and gave her a spinal osteopathic manipulation which worried her a little, but she came home and slept beautifully all the afternoon. She had first felt the baby moving at New Year's time. She was so excited that she awakened Luther.

"It feels nothing like the rustling of a leaf, or the fluttering of a bird," she said. "It feels like what it is."

By the end of April Luther and Jane were both fascinated by the baby's strong movements and could follow the course of a foot pushing across from one side to another. And Luther was counting the rate of the heartbeat, 136 per minute. That was slow, the doctor had told Jane that might mean the baby was a boy, or else a "big fat girl".

Jane was by now a big fat girl herself. She had, for a long time, seemed not to be puffing up much, but at seven months she was suddenly very pregnant.

Grace had finally realized that the baby would soon be in their midst and it appalled her. Her own memories of childbirth were bad. It came back to her in glaring detail what a difficult time she had had when Dee was born. Mother Rahming had been in conflict with the doctor who had suggested the use of a little chloroform. No, no chloroform, said Mother Rahming. There would be no pain problem, for Truth would prevail. And chloroform was very dangerous. It could kill both mother and baby. What a ghastly time it had been: And there had been pain, oh good heavens, yes, there had been pain. Of course, Jane's birth had not been as bad, and her head had not been as bruised and misshapen as Dee's. And Mother Rahming had been kept out of the room. But Merly had had bad luck with babies and a terrible time with Mim (another Christian Science birth.) Oh, giving birth was an ordeal, no doubt about it. Poor Jane! She was so tragically young for such an experience - she had no notion at all what she was getting into.

"Have you got the baby's clothes all ready?" she asked Jane.

"Yes," said Jane, "all I'm going to buy."

"What all do you have?"

“Two dozen diapers, three shirties, three tummy binders, three nighties, three pairs of stockings, three receiving blankets.”

“That’s all?”

“That’s all.”

“But you’ll need more things than that! What about little dresses? And baby powder? What about bonnets and sweaters?”

“After the baby gets here I’ll get more things. I’m a little superstitious about buying a lot of stuff. What if something were to go wrong?”

“Why do you think something will go wrong?” Grace asked.

“It’s just that Aunt Nelle and Emmie, and Aunt Merly all lost babies or they were born dead or something. So after the baby’s safely here and alive, I’ll give Luther a list of little necessities to get, and then when I’m up and around again I can shop for the baby myself.”

A thought went through Grace’s mind suddenly.

“How long do you think it will be before you are up and around?”

“Dr. McWhirter says ten days in the hospital if all goes normally, and then another week at home mostly in bed. He says no climbing stairs for a month.”

“Well, I ought to tell you that I may not be here to help you at that time, because I’m quite likely to be in New York. Edna Whiteman thinks I ought to talk to her publisher.”

“What about?”

“About writing a story about you cousins and your adventures in New Hampshire.”

“Not your Africa story?”

“Well, I’ve got to finish that. But anyway, I’m planning to do a story for young people. And speaking of you cousins, why don’t you see if Mim will come and help you when the baby comes’?”

“Maybe she’ll still be having classes then. Actually Trink would be the logical one. She’s wild about babies.”

“Well, ask Trink then.”

“We’ll see,” Jane said.

Luther was surprised when Jane told him that Grace planned to be in New York when the baby arrived.

“I thought grandmas got all excited about blessed events.

“Mother isn’t typical,” was all Jane would say to that.

A few days later while Jane was gone to see her doctor, Grace had a most unexpected visitor. Norris was up the stairs and into the apartment before Grace could compose herself. She patted her hair into place, wished she had on a touch of lipstick and a different dress.

“Hello, Marty,” Norris said, and he caught her off guard and gave her a quick kiss. Flustered, she ducked away and then challenged him.

“Now, Matt, what brings you here?”

“You’re being prickly, Marty. Don’t be prickly. Why can’t we be friends?”

“Why should we? You’ve chosen other friends. Friends you live with.”

“I might not have chosen others if you had been more willing to let the past be forgotten and over. We might have made a fresh start last winter, but you somehow had to scold me about the old days. We might have spent Christmas all together you know. But I went downstate because I couldn’t be sure that Christmas would be a happy day. You were so peeved at me most of the time.”

“Oh, Matt, did you come here to scold me?”

“No, I didn’t, but right away you questioned my right to come. Doesn’t Jane live here?”

“Yes, of course.”

“Well, really I came to see her. Where is she?”

“She’s gone to see her doctor,” Grace said.

“Is she alright?”

“Oh, yes. But she’s in her last month; she goes every week.”

“Having a baby is always a bit risky. I just thought I’d stop in and see Andy before she goes to the hospital.”

“How did you know where we lived?”

“Why, Dee told me. I see Dee once in awhile, and I suppose you think she shouldn’t come to see me. I guess you think she isn’t being loyal to you.”

“I’m not saying those things, you are. But you’ll have to admit you’ve been flying in the face of the accepted conventions in this town.”

“Well, I still have friends in this town, Marty - friends who are broad-minded and have a little human tolerance.”

“You’re very fortunate.”

“But I don’t plan to stay here much longer. I think the smart thing for me to do is to start all over again somewhere else.”

“You may be right,” Grace said.

“Well, I’ll be running along now. I have things to do. You’d better start fresh yourself, Marty.”

“I already have. And if you are moving away I, doubt very much that our paths will cross again.”

“Oh, who knows? I don’t intend to forget my daughters entirely. I’ll turn up from time to time.”

“Well, alright, but I shall probably be living in the East.”

“And perhaps I shall be living in Southern France.”

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Jane had hoped her baby would be born on her birthday, the third of June, but nature said not yet. She had made two more weekly visits to the doctor after the day she missed her father's visit. (Her mother had talked for several days about that.) Jane was so heavy in her pregnancy that she refused to ride the street car. She could walk to the doctor's office, though it was a long walk, and she hoped it would bring on labor. The trees were fully leafed out now and the weather was warm and seemed to be settled for an early summer.

Jane had made all her maternity clothes and had thought them quite attractive, but now nothing she put on looked decent. She had huge bulge in front and there was no hiding it. Luther had been counting the baby's heartbeat and it was 136 still - maybe a boy. But the last time she was at the doctor's he had said there was a possibility of twins. He hadn't heard a second heartbeat, but he had thought he felt two babies' heads, one low and in position, as it should be, and the other higher and on the left side. "Couldn't he take an X-ray?" Luther had asked. "Yes, but he doesn't want to," Jane said. "Do you think he's a good doctor?" "Yes," she said.

The last trip she made to the doctor was very uncomfortable and a little upsetting, She had a sore spot on the right side just below her ribs. It had been that way for several days and made her wish the whole thing was over. And it worried her too. What was wrong?

She walked up Sloane Avenue to Price Boulevard and turned south on her way to Grand Avenue. It was a very warm day for early June. She felt awkward and very, very pregnant. Just after she passed Cartwright Street and the house where Carle Semon's mother had lived, she saw a girl coming toward her up ahead. She was suddenly quite certain that it was a classmate from East High. Without giving it any further thought Jane crossed Prize Boulevard to the other side. She walked along with her head turned away from the street and toward the yards and houses. When she felt that she must be past the girl, she stole a quick look and realized it had not been the person she thought it was. She was annoyed with herself for being so silly, but still, she told herself, it would have been alright if the girl had known that she was married and expecting. She didn't like a sudden encounter, after two years, when she looked like a hot air balloon.

When she got to the doctor's he examined her and said that all was well, the event would be "any time now". She asked him about her right-side pain and he said that it was probably "the baby kicking her in the liver." He said that he expected to hear from her before her next scheduled appointment. "I might try to shift the baby's position," he said, "so that its feet would be on the left side. But I don't want to do that since there's a possibility of twins. I wouldn't attempt any maneuvering. Later, when you're in labor we can X-ray if necessary to see how the land lies. Meanwhile, don't worry about that. Call me as soon as you get the idea labor is beginning."

Things were different at home now; they had been for three weeks. Luther was no longer working nights. He had been funny about the whole thing. He came home from work one Friday morning with an announcement.

“I’ll be working days, after this,” he said.

“How’s that happen?” Jane asked.

“They’re not going to run a third shift.”

“Gee, you’re lucky to get on days,” she said.

“Oh, yes, I’m real lucky,” he said, but she did not notice that he had said it rather oddly.

“Well, it will be nice to live normally, won’t it?” But secretly she wondered about it. As long as Luther had worked the grave-yard shift, his drinking had been no great problem, for when he got off work at seven o’clock in the morning his favorite bars were not yet open. Two or three times he had gone to his father’s foundry (or so he said) and he had got home around noon smelling of beer. Fortunately Grace had been unaware of this. Once she’d been away in Oberlin, and once she’d been in bed with a cold. Luther had come in and gone straight to bed without eating anything. On Saturday nights, which Luther had off, he and Jane had often gone out with Dee, and Chan Chandler to a local restaurant and bar. However in the last two months of Jane’s pregnancy they hadn’t been going out, but had stayed home and played cards or Monopoly. One Saturday they’d had a party with some of their old friends. Skipper and Bud Darrell were there, and Gina and “Zad” Maleski, Chan Chandler, and also Mona James and a friend. Everyone seemed to make much of the coming baby. Skipper told Jane she envied her. Gina offered to lend Jane a small sized crib for after the baby outgrew the bassinet. Mona James told how a small pendulum would indicate the sex of anything it was suspended over. It would swing in circles if it was a male and to and fro if it was female. So they tied Jane’s wedding ring to a piece of string and hung it over the bulge that was the baby. The ring began to swing in a circular path. A boy. Several people tried it. Still a circle. “What do you know” said Luther. “I think it’s mind over matter,” Jane said. “Everyone feels the first baby should be a boy.”

But Jane had more things on her mind than the sex of the child. What if there were two babies? She had a strong feeling the doctor was wrong. Why? Because it only felt like one baby. One foot usually would push or move across. Or maybe one arm. Perhaps both. But she’d never felt anything like four arms and four legs.

Grace said to Jane, “Shouldn’t you be buying more baby clothes? Shouldn’t you get more diapers and nighties and so on.”

“No,” said Jane. “Not until we know. If two babies arrive I’ll send Luther out for more things.”

“How will he know what to get?”

“Mother! I’ll give him a list. He can match what I have.”

“He’s been drinking some lately, hasn’t he?”

“A little beer after work sometimes.”

“He’s been late for dinner two or three times,” Grace said. “I know.”

Jane minimized it but she didn’t like it that Luther, who got off work at three o’clock supposedly, went to his old haunts near the Roby Bronze Foundry, his favorite bar, Jimmy Black’s.

On Saturday morning the 6th of June, Jane woke to the sensation that labor had begun. She had a definite pain. She waited and in half an hour came another pain. In thirty-four minutes another one. They were supposed to get closer together. Maybe this wasn’t labor. Then a pain again in half an hour. Then while in the bathroom another sign, a slight bleeding. Now she was sure. She woke Luther.

“Wake up! The great day is here. I’ve started”

“You sure?”

“Yes “

“Did you talk to the doctor?”

“I’m going to wait till eight o’clock.”“Do you dare do that?” he asked.

“Oh, yes. They’re half an hour apart still.”

“Don’t let’s take chances. Pity the poor taxi—driver.”

“Don’t worry.”

She decided to tell her mother. Grace wakened immediately and sat up wide-eyed when she heard the news.

“Oh, good God”

“Mom, you know the day was bound to arrive.”

“Yes, but... My! Dear me. Are you leaving right away?”

“I don’t know. I’m going to call Dr. McWhirter.”

“Oh, do!”

“Yes, but Mom? Will you take Bonnie out for me while I’m in the hospital? For her walks I mean?”

“Well, Luther can, can’t he?”

“When he’s home, yes.”

Dee was awake and she said, “I’ll take her out if I’m at home.”

But Grace said, “You would better call Mim and see if she can come.”

“I thought that was if you went to New York,” Jane said.

“Why should she come? Of course, I’d love to have her, but she’s probably in the middle of final exams.”

“I am going to New York, but not yet. I think I’m going to be helping Mrs. Norton.”

“Who is Mrs. Norton?” Dee asked.

“You remember. She’s an old friend of Mother’s. She had me help her out when she moved.”

Jane left the room and Dee asked, “What does she want now?”

“She’s going through her things so she can make her will.”

“Can’t it wait a few weeks?”

“She’s wanted me to come for some time, and Mim will work out just fine.”

Luther was puzzled when Jane told him about her Mother’s plan.

“Who in hell is Mrs. Norton?” he asked.

“An old family friend,” Jane said.

“I guess blood isn’t thicker than water.”

“Not in some situations,” Jane said. “Not in Mother’s anyway.”

“Call the doctor, now. It’s eight o’clock.”

The doctor told Jane to prepare to go to the hospital. The pains were still only a half an hour apart, and the last one came after forty-five minutes.

“Go in as soon as they are less than half an hour,” the doctor said. “I’ll be there when the hospital tells me to come and I’ll be in touch with them.”

They called Mim who said her exams were all over. She would take the bus and come and stay till the baby was born and then, go home again and come back when Jane came home from the hospital.

Jane went to tell her mother.

“It’s all arranged, Mim says she’ll come. So you can go and take care of Mrs. Norton. If Bonnie has to wait till Dee gets home, the worst thing that can happen will be something to clean up.”

At two-thirty Jane decided it was time to leave. “I’ll call the taxi,” said Luther.

“No,” said Jane, “not yet.”

“Why not?”

“Because I want to stop at the drug store and buy something I need. Get my suitcase. We’ll call the cab from the drug store.”

“Don’t you think we should go straight to the hospital?” Luther asked. “Are you alright?”

“I’m fine. The pains are nothing yet. There’s plenty of time.”

“You sure?”

“Yes.”

They walked to the drug store, about a half a block, and once in, Jane sat down in the soda fountain area. Luther assumed she was feeling bad.

“I’ll call the cab,” he said. “What were you going to buy?”

“A hot fudge sundae.”

Luther stared. “You are out of your mind!”

“No, I’m not. I need it to sustain me. And soon as I get it and start to eat it you can call the cab.”

“You’ll have that baby in the cab.”

“No, I won’t. I’m feeling fine.”

She finished her sundae while Luther nervously drank a coke. The cab arrived and they made a safe trip to the hospital. Luther said to the driver as he paid him, “I hope you weren’t nervous.”

“No, but you are, Daddy. I make these kinda trips once in awhile. I never hadda catch a baby.”

Jane was whisked upstairs, while Luther was ushered to the office. Next he was told to wait in the lounge till he could join his wife in her room. He gazed out the front windows at the traffic on Grand Avenue. Across the way he recognized the building where Jane’s father lived. It was one of the huge old millionaire’s mansions that had been converted to studio apartments. In fact the Cleveland Osteopathic Hospital had also been a mansion once. The millionaires had all moved to Carrollton Heights.

After an hour and a half, Luther entered Jane's room. She wore a hospital gown and was in bed.

"How come a private room?" he asked. "We aren't paying for it."

"This was all they had. They'll move me as soon as they get a bed empty."

"How are you doing? Aren't you supposed to be hurting?"

"Well, I do once in awhile, but it's going to be slow. They told me so. I'm not very far along."

"How do they know?"

"They have some painful ways of investigating I've been insulted in several different ways, in fact, and so now I'm prepared. 'prepped' as they say. But I'm only 'one finger' dilated the intern said, and he doubts it will be before midnight, maybe not even till early morning. On the other hand, he said he could be wrong about that."

"If it's going to be that long you're going to be getting tired."

"I brought a book; it's in my suitcase. Honey, you go home for dinner and then come on back and see how I'm doing. By then, I'll want your moral support."

"Maybe I'll go over to Jimmy Black's and get a sandwich."

"No. Don't go to Jimmy Black's, Luther, please. You might not get just a sandwich. Besides, Mim will be there at home. Promise me?"

"Alright. Sure. I'll go home. Don't you worry. I won't start to celebrate ahead of time. I'll be back soon."

During the time that Luther was gone Jane's labor made little progress. A nurse appeared with a "dinner" tray, a small pot of tea. The pains were twenty-five minutes apart.

"It might be a good idea for you to walk around awhile," the nurse said and left the room. Jane walked around the room, to the door, to the window. She out on her robe and walked down the hall. It was a small hospital and the hall was empty. Midway in the hall was a desk. There was a reading lamp lit but no one was there. As she walked by Jane stole a glance at a paper lying there. It said: "Room 12, Mrs. Roby - in labor." So then it must not be a dream. She must be finally here, about to bring forth the wiggly little guest within. She really was Mrs. Roby, in labor. She was not her mother's "boy" She was not her aunties' "little adolescent". She was not Mona James' "little Girl Scout". Unless something bad happened, this time tomorrow she'd be a mother, and all of a sudden that would make her different from Dee and Mim and Trink and Babs. Yes, and different from Mona James who might have had three children by now. Good grief! It was impossible to think of Mona with even one. But she was certainly good at starting them.

Luther returned at eight o'clock, and he'd had no beer.

"I called at six," he said. "They said nothing was changed."

"No, it hasn't," Jane said. "At least not much. The intern says there's a little progress, but it'll be a while."

"How are the pains?"

"Well, they are definitely pains now, but not terrible. They're about twenty minutes apart though, and I'm getting impatient. It ought to be faster. Did Mim get there?"

"Yes. She says she's worn out from final exams."

"Well, I'm worn out from rectal exams," Jane said.

"Rectal! Is that what they do?"

"Yes, and it hurts plenty. That's how they check progress."

"Good grief." He sat down in a chair by the bed.

"It's nice to have you here, I've been mostly alone," she said.

"That's a helluva note! Where are the people who should be here?"

"Oh, they're in and out. A nurse checks my blood pressure quite often, and the intern insults me with his rubber glove. But mostly I'm just here. I can call them if I need them. I had no idea it would be so tedious. But I can't read my book. I keep reading the same page. Did I ever tell you about my grandmother having to cut and tie the baby's cord all by herself?"

"No. Was she all alone?" he asked.

"Might as well have been - my great-aunt Isobel was with her, but she was no help."

"What do they do when they tie the cord? Tie with a string or just tie a knot in the cord?"

Jane laughed. "You're such a naive baby. They tie it with a string."

A nurse came in then. "How are your pains?" she asked. "Oh, I've got 'em," Jane said. "They're a little bigger." The nurse sat with them through two pains. She put her hand on Jane's stomach during the pain. She also listened to the baby's heartbeat.

"Everything seems OK. Eighteen minutes. Slow, but you'll get there."

Jane told Luther more birthing stories. About the Christian Science births when Dee and Mim were born and the troubles they had. And how Uncle Bill had weighed almost twelve pounds, and Grandma Martin had to get on her knees.

“You’re scaring me, honey,” Luther said.

“Oh, that was years ago. Things aren’t that primitive now.”

“I hope not.”

At ten o’clock the intern checked the progress again and said to Luther, “You better go home and get a few hours sleep, fella. I think it won’t be till around four or five in the morning. I’ll call you when she goes into the delivery room.”

“You better go, Luther,” Jane said.

“Then you’ll be all alone.”

“She won’t be alone,” the intern said. “As soon as she gets busy, we’ll give her plenty of company.”

“I’ll be back,” Luther said. “You’ll see me soon, honey.”

After Luther went Jane asked if the ceiling light could be turned out. It hurt her eyes. They were tired, she Bald.

“Yes, but of course we’ll have to put it on from time to time,” they told her.

She lay in the half-dark room. In the hall, a nurse walked by from time to time. Outside, she could see an occasional flash of far away lightening. It had been a hot day. She wondered if Dr. McWhirter was sleeping, or out celebrating Saturday. The nurse said they were keeping in touch with him.

Jane’s pains were getting downright unpleasant now and the thought of them going on till, say, four o’clock, was pretty discouraging.

Another hour and a half went by. Between the pains she watched the far away lightening. At a time like this one oughtn’t be alone, she thought. Hospitals were a terrible place to be. They were friendly enough, but the people were just professionals doing their job. She was sorry she had sent Luther home. He could have slept all day tomorrow.

By midnight, Jane was hating the pains. They were five minutes apart. Then suddenly, the bed was wet, soaked. She called the nurse.

“I’ve had a flood,” Jane said.

“So you have,” the nurse said. “Good.”

Then Jane had a big pain. The nurse said, “Hold on,” and she went to call the intern.

BY

JANE R. CHANDLER

PART TEN

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YOU MADE ME A GRAMPA ON MY WEDDING DAY

By four in the morning Jane was back in her bed; by five-thirty she was awake enough to begin remembering something of what had happened. It had been thundering outside for some time, and dawn had come but it was raining. Someone had said, "Call Dr. McWhirter, right away." They had asked her to slide onto a cart. They had said, "Don't hold your breath, just pant like a dog." They were going down the hall. Someone was talking on a phone. "Jump into your shoes, Doc. She's ready." They were in an elevator. "Don't hold your breath. You must not hold your breath." "Watch out for your arms. Keep your arms in." "Pant like a dog."

Next they wheeled her into a bright white room. "Don't hold your breath." They were smearing cold cream on her face and then the hated ether cone came down over her mouth and nose, just as it had when she was little, about to have her tonsils out. And just as she had then, she kicked. Then the intern's voice said, "Oh God, are we going to have another one of these." Then she'd behaved; she was ashamed. "If you don't like the ether, just blow it away." There was a humming then, and she was turning over backward off the table. Someone had hold of her legs. The humming died away. They were throwing warm water over her thighs. She heard a smack. "It's another boy." A squalling cry. "Push again now, honey. That's a good girl." After awhile the elevator again. And a baby crying once again. Someone said, "Good morning, Grandma."

It was still thundering outside and rain was running down the window. She dozed off again, woke again. It was brighter now, and the rain had stopped. She felt funny, a bit nauseated. She had no pillow. Her stomach was flat and bound down with a wide firm muslin binding. The baby was gone, but where was it now? They said it was a boy. They had said, "It's another boy." Were there two? She was becoming much more awake. Just then a voice said, "Good morning." She turned toward the door. A nurse stood there holding a bundle.

"Are you ready to see a beautiful eight pound boy?" the nurse asked.

She brought him to the bed, and held him so Jane could see him.

"This one is a beauty," the nurse said.

The baby was awake and moving his hands, the fingers wide like star points. His skin was white, his cheeks pink. His hair was golden blond - his eyes the slate blue of newborns. Jane was fascinated. "He is pretty. I thought they were usually all wrinkled and red."

"Many of them are, but not all. He's just a sweetie-pie."

"Is he the only one?"

The nurse looked puzzled. "The only one what?"

"Well, Dr. McWhirter said I might have twins."

"He did? Well, all you had was this one, and he's a nice big one - eight pounds and three-quarters of an ounce. Why would you want more, honey?"

"I don't. But I thought I heard the doctor say 'It's another boy'."

“Last night? Well, we’ve had mostly boys this week.”

“May I hold him?”

“Not yet, honey. You’re still woozy. Do you feel nauseated?”

“A little. I’m thirsty.”

“I’ll bring you some ice. You mustn’t drink water yet.”

Jane drifted off to sleep again. When she woke up Luther was sitting by the bed.

“They didn’t call me to come back,” he said.

“That’s my fault. I really surprised them. Have you seen the baby?”

“Not yet,” he said.

“Go see him. They’ll show him to you.” Luther came back a few minutes later.

“Hey, he’s really cute. Did you notice his hands? Did you see his little finger nails?”

“Yes, but they only showed him to me. I don’t get to have him till 2p.m.”

“Can I see him then?”

“No. No visitors when the babies are out of the nursery. You won’t get to hold him till we go home.”

“I’ll be scared stiff I betcha.”

It was a euphoric day for Jane. She was hurting here and there, but she finally had the baby to nurse at p.m. She found him perfect. At 3p.m. Luther returned and they agreed that the baby’s name would be Luther Lane Roby III. At 4 p.m. she had more visitors. Mim and Dee and Clement Chandler appeared.

“Is Mother coming?” Jane asked.

“She said she’ll come tomorrow,” Dee said. “She’s worn out from waiting for the news last night.”

“I’m a bit worn out myself,” Jane said.

“Mother really is tired, Janie,” Dee said. “Dr. McWhirter called her at 3a.m. and said, “Good morning, Grandma.”

“And what did she say to that?” Jane asked.

“I don’t know. Mim and I were asleep. When Luther came home he said there wouldn’t be any news until four or five o’clock so we all went down the street to the Kit-Kat Club for awhile and when we got back there was still no news, so we turned in. Don’t worry, Janie, Mother’ll be coming to see you and the baby.”

"I'm not worrying," Jane said. "Once she sees him she'll like him. Mim! What's the matter?"

Mim was sitting in a chair by the window. She was looking quite pale. Suddenly she keeled over and fell sideways off her chair.

"Luther!" Jane said. "Go get someone! A nurse or somebody."

Luther went out of the room and Chan and Dee went to help Mim, but Luther was back immediately with the intern who had been close by in the hall.

The men laid Mim on the bed beside Jane, and the intern looked at her eyes, but she came to promptly.

"I'm alright," she said.

"Are you diabetic?" the intern asked.

"No-o-o:" Mim said, but she put her hand to the back of her head and it came away bloody. "I hit my head."

They brought a wheel chair and took Mim upstairs to the surgery and put two clamps in her scalp. She had hit her head on the steam radiator when she fell.

When they brought her back down, the intern lectured her.

"Now you be sure and see your doctor and find out why you fainted."

After he was gone Mim said, "Shucks, I know why I fainted. I just haven't had any sleep all last week, and I'm not used to celebrating like we did last night."

Soon they were gone and Jane was thrilled to be visited again by her baby boy. She was feeling better now, and prettied herself up for Luther's evening visit.

The following day Grace came to the hospital and, as Jane had predicted, she fell in love with the baby.

"He's just beautiful. Now you must be sure and take good care of him."

"But Mom, why wouldn't I take good care of him?"

"Well, it's just that I know you're so interested in so many other things."

"Sure. And, right now, he's the thing I'm interested in more than anything else."

"Alright, but you're pretty young for this job, Janie."

"Mother," Jane said, "I'm the exact same age that your mother was when she had her first baby."

"Well... Did you have a very bad time?" Grace asked.

"No. It was kind of long, but it wasn't too bad."

“I had a terrible time when Dee was born. The doctor finally told Mother Rahming it was a question of saving the life of the mother. He used forceps and poor little Dee was so bruised.”

“Well, you were also burdened by your mother-in-law. My doctor didn’t have that problem to put up with. Of course, if Luther’s mother were alive it wouldn’t have been like that.”

“I should hope not. Mother Rahming always interfered with our affairs.”

Jane got a strange expression. “Luther has a mother-in-law,” she said. Before Grace could react to that, a nurse put her head in the door.

“Visiting hours are over,” she said.

Jane had two more days in her cloud of euphoria. On Monday Aunt Gertrude visited in the afternoon and was ever so genial and admiring of the baby whom they now called Jack. She brought him a beautiful soft white blanket.

Just as Gertrude left, Marian "Skipper" Root Irwin arrived. She was on her free time from the Winchester Room.

“But I’m going to quit,” she said. “Bud wants me to. And my knees are tired of waiting table. They’ve been telling me to quit lately. Bud wants me to take it easier.”

After she went to the nursery window where they showed her the baby, Skipper came back to Jane’s room.

“He’s wonderful: I’m going home and tell Bud we need one.”

The next afternoon, Norris put in an appearance. He gave Jane a kiss.

“Well, I stopped off to see the offspring. That looks like a very fine boy you have there.”

“Yes, isn’t he something?”

“But you know what you did? You made a grandfather out of me on my wedding day. Now that’s a hell of a note.”

“I didn’t plan the coincidence, Dad. Who’d you marry?”

“Well whom do you suppose I married?”

“Mary?”

“Yes, of course. We were married in her parents’ home. I shall probably move down there to live one of these days.”

“Soon?” Jane asked.

“Not immediately. Why?”



MARY ARNDT RAHMING
CIRCA 1937

"FREDRICA"

1931 $\frac{1}{2}$

“Well, because I thought maybe I’d bring Denis to see Grandma sometime. He’s her great-grandson.”

“Yes, and you better not wait too long: Grandma is getting very frail. I don’t know how long she’ll be with us.”

“I’ll come as soon as I’m up and around.”

“Good. You nursing the baby?”

“Of course,” Jane said.

“Fine. That’s the only way. Well, I’ll run along. Don’t forget to come see Grandma now.”

####

The next day Jane came down out of the clouds. Luther had been coming to see her every evening at seven o'clock when the visiting hours began. He stayed until eight-thirty when the nurses cleared all the rooms of visitors. But on this Wednesday evening Luther did not appear at seven o'clock. Jane kept expecting to see him coming around the corner by the door. Every evening there was something new to tell Luther about the baby. And today there were two problems. The baby had not nursed well. He had been sleepy every time they brought him to her. The nurse had "snapped" the soles of his little pink feet with forefinger and thumb. He would rouse and start to nurse and then go back to sleep. Jane was afraid he would starve, but the nurse had said, "Honey, don't you worry; we offer him a bottle of formula after he goes back to the nursery. We do that with all the breast-fed babies in case they don't get enough when they nurse."

Jane thought about that afterward. No wonder Denis was sleepy. He had had his fill of formula. He had no reason to wake up and nurse. She was angry and helpless, but she decided to ask Dr. McWhirter about it. For if the baby would not nurse she would fail in her plan to breast-feed him.

And there was something else to think about. The intern had spoken to her about circumcising the baby. Was she planning to have it done? She didn't know, Dr. McWhirter hadn't said anything about that. Well, he probably would, the intern said. It's usually done on the fifth day, he said. So now she had that to worry about.

Now, this Wednesday evening, it had got to be ten minutes after eight and in twenty minutes visiting hours would be over. When Luther came five minutes later, he found her in tears, and she found him drunk.

He was elaborate in his apologies, cajolery, and his explanations. And he was flowery in his praise of their son.

"I stopped by the nursery. That baby is like a little cherub, isn't he? He's so pink and white. They've got his hair brushed up into a little curl on the top, a little golden curl."

"Didn't you go home for dinner, Luther?"

He grinned rather sheepishly. "Why?"

"Because you've been to Jimmy Black's, I can tell, and you must have been there a long time."

"Aw, well, honey, I had to pass out a few cigars."

"Why at Jimmy Black's? That's out of your way."

"Well, I stopped in after I finished at the shop," he said. "I was shaking out some flasks for the old man."

"You were at your father's shop this evening?"

“Yes, so I just stopped in at Jimmy’s to pass some cigars. For the baby. You know ‘bout that, don’t you honey? Cigars?”

“Yes, I know about cigars for babies. Strange idea too. And Luther, tell me, is your dad’s business getting better? How’s it happen he needs you to come in after you’re through at the factory?”

“Well, he needed me to— Oh, honey, I got something I oughta tell you. I didn’t want to tell you till after the baby came.”

“Oh, dear, Luther: What is it?”

“Remember when I stopped working nights and started on days?”

“Yes?”

“Well, I got laid off at the factory at that time. They did lay off most all the third shift. Those of us that had no seniority. So I’ve been working for the old man again. He agreed with me that I should not upset you till after the baby came.”

“So it’s OK to upset me now, I guess,” Jane said.

“Aw, honey, we’ll be alright. Cheer up.”

“Will he pay you as much as you got at the factory?” she asked.

“Well, no, but things have to get better soon.”

“Do they? Luther, it was better when you worked nights. Then you didn’t come home smelling like beer.”

“I was just celebrating, honey,”

“But I’m not celebrating,” she said.

Later, when the nurse brought the baby in at 10p.m. she said, “Your eyes are red; you’ve been crying. Don’t you know why, honey? You’ve got ‘after-the--baby blues.’ That’s all it is. All mummies get them. Everything will be just fine.”

But Jane wasn’t so sure.

The next day Jane finally was moved from the private room into a four-bed ward, and she had little time to brood. The four women talked what they called “baby-talk” from dawn to 10:30 at night. They were all confined to their beds, not allowed to set foot to the floor at all. That is the way things were managed in those days. It was truly “confinement.” All that would begin to change in less than ten years.

Jane asked her doctor about circumcision. He said it wasn’t necessary. She told him the nurses and the intern thought it was needed. Dr. McWhirter seemed angry. Jane was confused. She had been told by the nurses that if it was done it was usually on the fifth day. What should she do?

On the ninth day Jane was told she might “dangle her legs” over the side of the bed while sitting up straight. Dr. McWhirter had left orders that she might go home the next day with the baby. She was allowed to dangle her legs for twenty minutes.

The next day she was taken in a wheel chair to the nursery and taught how to bathe the baby, and instructed in the matter of preparing the small bottle of Similac which the nurse said must be offered to the baby after every breast feeding.

“How does it happen that my mother nursed my sister and me without having to give bottles, too?” Jane asked.

The nurse said, “This is the modern way. This way you take no chances that he will be hungry.”

The next day Luther arrived with the suitcase with the baby’s clothes, and things for Jane, as well. How strange it was to be flat in front and to look down and see her feet. The nurse insisted on dressing the baby, and Jane must ride to the car door in the wheel chair. Aunt Connie had volunteered Grandma Roby’s Lincoln for the baby’s trip home.

“But none of them came to see me in the hospital, Luther.”

“The old man said they want us to come to dinner as soon as you and baby are up to it. And Aunt Connie said the same. Grandma can hardly wait to see Denis.”

When they reached the apartment building Luther carried Jane up to the third floor, stopping to rest on each landing. He had carried the baby up first.

“This business is ridiculous,” Jane said. “You’ll ruin your back and I’m sure it is harder on my insides than if I walked upstairs myself.”

“Yes, but if the doctor said no climbing stairs for a month, “Luther said, “there must be a good reason.”

“I don’t believe it,” Jane said. “It makes no sense at all.”

The new baby was deposited in his small bed, and everyone gathered around to admire. John Bryant Roby III was asleep and cherubic. The Scottish terrier, Bonnie, went under the little crib and lay down. She had accepted the baby as her responsibility.

“Do you think she should be in here so close to the baby?” Grace asked.

“What harm can it do? She isn’t licking the baby’s face or anything like that,” Jane said. “Mom, I’m tired and I’m supposed to lie down and rest when the baby is sleeping.”

“Don’t you have to feed him pretty soon?” her mother asked.

“At two p.m. and at 6 and at 10. Every four hours around the clock. It’s all on the instruction sheet.”

Mim had gone back to Oberlin, but now that Jane was home she had returned.

“I really don’t know if you need me,” she told Jane, “as long as Aunt Grace is here.”

“She still says she’s going to be at Mrs. Norton’s, but I don’t know when. I hope you’ll stay awhile Mim. I think I need moral support.”

“Moral support:” said Mim. “From me?”

“That’s right. Everything is going to be different around here. I’m not sure how it’s going to work out. Mother’s going to have trouble realizing I’m a mother.”

“Because you’re ‘her boy’?”

“That, sure, but also, just that I’m her child, and I guess when your child grows up, it’s upsetting.”

“Well, my mother will be the same way,” Mim said, “when the time comes. Listen Jane, changing the subject, I’ve been going to tell you something for some time, but it didn’t ever seem to be the right time. Maybe this isn’t the right time either. But the baby is here and you’re happy, so I don’t know why I shouldn’t tell you. I was told to tell you.”

For heaven’s sake,” Jane said, “what is it?”

“Well, last fall when Narze was on his way back to college, he stopped in Oberlin to see us. Uncle Roge had met him on the Street in Plymouth and told him you were married.”

“You know, Mim,” Jane said, “sooner or later that was sure to happen.”

“That’s right,” said Mim.

“What did Narze say?”

“Of course, I have no way of knowing what he said when Uncle Roge told him. But there was something he wanted me to tell you. He said, ‘Tell her I’ll always love her’.”

Jane looked thoughtful.

“Dear Narze. Well, I’ll always love him, too. But all that has nothing to do with Luther and my life now. The times with Narze seem far away and long ago.”

“Not so long ago,” Mim said. “When did you last see Narze?”

“Let me think. About a year and a half ago, after Mother wrote him a certain letter. Oh, but Mim, it might not be long ago in point of time, but when it comes to events that have happened lately, it seems like two other people.”

Grace appeared in the doorway then and said, “I think the baby is hungry, Jane.”

“Why? It isn’t time to feed him until two o’clock.”

“Well, he’s about to wake up,” Grace said. “He’s making little sounds.”

“I’ll feed him when it’s time, other.”

“Alright, but he’s wet, Jane.”

“Mother, the nurse at the hospital said not to wake him up to change him.”

“But he’s making little sounds, Jane.”

“When he starts making big sounds I’ll get him right up. But let sleeping babies lie, Mother.”

“Oh, my! You have a lot to learn, Jane,” Grace said.

NEW BABIES ARE PERVERSE

In this summer of 1936 Carle Semon was living in one room on Fessler Place, the street where he and Grace and her girls had lived during the brief marriage that had begun in August of 1927, and ended in such bitterness less than three years later. But the divorce was six years ago and there had been plenty of time for thinking long thoughts. He and Grace had both been at fault. She for thinking she must live in the East, he for thinking he could not possibly move there. There had been nothing to keep him in Cleveland really. His mother was gone and the only brother left was Paul, with whom he had nothing in common. His brother William had drunk himself to death, and Frank, his favorite, had died of a heart attack. True, he had friends in Cleveland, but Grace had assured him that he could make new ones. Perhaps he could have.

Carle also realized he had been unreasonable about the children. They were young and mischievous and he hadn't understood them. He knew now that he should not have suggested to Grace that she keep them in boarding school.

After Grace moved to Connecticut, Carle had gone through a period of deep and bitter depression. His mother, his brother, and his marriage all gone in two years time. When Grace left to live in the East, he had moved out of the apartment and into a pair of rooms in East Cleveland. He had no furniture, but he had many, many cartons of various things he could not part with - primarily photographic supplies, photos, and cameras. Some of these cartons had been a source of annoyance to Grace as they had crowded the apartment they had shared, taking up half their bedroom space and half the dining-room as well. Grace had asked him to put the boxes in storage, but he had refused, saying he wanted his things where they were. It was one more point of discord.

Two years after his mother's death her estate was settled and divided between her two surviving sons, Carle and Paul. In early 1931 when they came into their inheritance, it was of substantial value, though the stock market crash had reduced it somewhat. The Widow Semon's holdings were in part, blue chip stocks which had held up quite well. But much of her fortune was in savings deposits in several Cleveland banks and it was in this area that Carle and Paul took a disastrous loss when the banks were closed down. But Carle lost more money than his brother, because Paul had not left all his shares in the banks but had invested some in bonds and he had bought up some stocks which were cheap after the crash. Carle had been more afraid of the stock market and had not bought any new shares. He had left much of his money in three Cleveland banks. One of them had paid off at three cents on the dollar, another would pay its depositors over a period of several years making three separate payments. One bank, the Cleveland Trust Company, had been prudent and stood solid as a rock throughout the debacle. Fortunately Carle had enough in that bank to sustain his simple life style. His few stocks were down but not out and would later pay him a bit more.

After living in East Cleveland a year and a half, Carle hankered for the old neighborhoods where he had spent his whole life. His mother's house on the corner of Price Boulevard and Cartwright Street, his studio on Grand Avenue, and his apartment with Grace on Fessler Place. All were in walking distance of the Art Museum, the Art School (now renamed the Cleveland Institute of Art), Cleveland University, and the beautiful Whitfield Park with its white swans in the lagoon.

Carle's landlady was complaining about all the cartons he had stored in his room. She said they were a fire hazard, and she nagged him about it. He moved back to Fessler Place where he had, for such a brief period, been very happy with Grace. He had been only too glad to leave it, but had been irresistibly drawn back. He could not get out of his mind the last Christmas there. It had been such a happy time. The living room had been so pretty. Jane and Dee had trimmed the tree beautifully with silver icicles hung very carefully, and silver balls, and blue, green, and red lights with star-shaped reflectors. And Grace had a big bowl of holly on the mantle, and more on her beautiful grand piano, and she had played Christmas carols and hymns and everyone sang. They had had a lovely evening with so many of their artist friends, including the "grand old man" of Cleveland art, Ralph Heller. And on another evening the favorite brother, Frank, and his wife had come bringing beautiful jig-saw puzzles that Frank had made. And Grace had seemed to be happy at times. How much better it would have been if he had not married her. He would have done better to have settled for just being her friend. For she would always love Norris Rahming. She was totally and forever captivated by his charm.

Carle had found the little room on Fessler Place after hunting for a week in the old Cartwright Street area. There were no rooms for rent at the nicer, eastern end of the street. But when he saw the ad in the paper for a room on Fessler Place he knew it would do. And so he moved in with all his cartons, a half a block from where he had lived with Grace.

As time went by, Carle thought more and more about becoming Grace's friend again. He kept up with her comings and goings through Norris Rahming or their mutual friends. He learned that Grace had lost her house in High Rock. He knew of the rugged winter in New Hampshire, and he knew when Grace went to Africa and when she returned. Because he and Norris both belonged to the photographic club, with its membership of only seven, Grace's affairs were occasionally mentioned. Carle always learned when Grace was back in Cleveland after another sojourn in the East. Some of what he learned amazed him. He couldn't understand how Grace had taken Mother Rahming and Ethel in to live with her and the girls. Then for a long time he heard no news of Grace because Norris hadn't been coming to the photo club meetings. But recently he had learned that Norris was married for the third time. This put to an end Carle's speculation and fear that Grace and Norris might remarry. This was an immediate thought when gossip spread among Cleveland's art community that Norris and Pauline Rahming had separated. Carle had been so depressed by that knowledge that he had gone into one of his depressed "retreats". He had stayed away from the photo club for months. Then he learned Norris was "running around" with a younger woman. This cheered Carle and he began to think again about becoming Grace's friend. At the time of the May Show he thought long of calling Grace to see if she might care to attend with him. Perhaps even on opening night? But, no, she would not want to do that. Too conspicuous; tongues would surely wag. He would have to propose a more discreet occasion. Or a more casual occasion. They could just simply attend the exhibition some weekday afternoon, for the May Show was always on for the entire month. The opening night, or "Premier" viewing was always on the first Tuesday in May. It was by invitation only, and was a gala event attended by the artists and their patrons and Cleveland dignitaries. The rest of the month, Wednesday evenings and Sunday afternoons were well attended by the artists who had their works for sale. Prospective buyers often enjoyed meeting the painters, sculptors, and craftsmen.

Carle toyed with the idea of asking Grace to see the show with him, but he vacillated so long, that the month of May ran its course and he had not acted. Then he learned that Norris had in.

Carle Semon
"Albert" ↓



Grace M. Rahming ↑
at the time
of her renewed friendship
with Carle Semon

1936

1945¹/₃

deed married his lady friend. It was the encouragement Carle needed. Now he made up his mind firmly to try and bring Grace back into his life. Surely they could have some type of companionship, because they had many tastes in common. He must now think of a suitable occasion for a reunion.

This summer of 1936 Cleveland was celebrating its centennial as an incorporated city. An exposition was on in an area along the lakeshore. It was like a state fair with an urban flavor. The city hired some unemployed architects and designers who did a fine piece of work in creating a dramatic and colorful setting. Carle saw it as a photographic opportunity and also it was at last the something special he had been waiting for.

The centennial celebration lasted the entire month of August. Carle and Grace attended on four occasions and went to dinner twice. It gave Grace something new to think about aside from how Jane was caring for her baby.

####

Jane had been sent home from the hospital with a printed instruction sheet on exactly how to feed the baby. It was all-important to keep him on a very strict schedule of feedings every four hours. She could choose the hours, but she must keep the four-hour interval. Disaster would follow if she relented and fed the baby early. She might nurse the baby if she wanted, but he must always be offered the bottle of Similac afterwards. It seemed to consume half her time. First a half hour to nurse him, and then fussing around with the bottle took more time. The two o'clock at night feeding continued for five weeks and was exhausting for everyone; since it was the period between 2a.m. and 6a.m. that little Denis chose to do most of his crying. Jane tried to pacify him with water, as she had been instructed to do, but not until she nursed him at 6a.m. would he settle down and sleep. There was no one to tell Jane that newborns were frequently like that; they turned night into day - sleeping like little cherubs during the daylight hours, and tuning up at night. Denis sometimes fussed in the late afternoon as well, and almost always he cried during the evening.

Jane went to the nearby branch library and came home with an armful of books on baby care (although she had read many of them during her pregnancy.) She was in search of an explanation as to why a baby who was growing and gaining weight and developing normally should have to cry so much at night. Out of all the suggestions for checking for open safety pins, dirty diapers, and gas bubbles (all of which Jane could rule out) there were two theories about night crying that seemed like reasonable causes. One was that many babies had colic for three months due to an immature nervous system. Another theory was that newborn babies, used to the quiet and dark of the womb, found the noisy, daylight world too much to take. They then escaped into sleep, waking at night to assert themselves with the only thing they could do, cry.

But in spite of gaining some understanding about Denis' crying, it was still a difficult period for them all, but especially for Jane who had to stay rested so that she could nurse him successfully. The night crying did not seem to be running its course. If anything it seemed to be worse. But Dr. McWhirter had no helpful suggestions other than that it would pass in a month or two. Jane became so exhausted and exasperated that often when Denis cried, she cried too. And she was particularly upset because her mother seemed to be sure that Denis cried because Jane was doing something wrong, one way or another. His diaper was wet, his diaper was dirty, he should be fed oftener, his bottle was not warm enough, his bottle was too warm, and on and on. Grace was in the habit of saying to Jane when Denis' crying got on everyone's nerves, "You aren't the type to enjoy being a mother." This remark always infuriated Jane, but she felt quite vindicated one Sunday when Gertrude and William arrived for a visit. The baby, Denis, was sleeping like a little angel as he always did in the daytime hours.

"What a darling lamb he is!" Aunt Trudy said.

"He's always a lamb this time of day," Jane said, "but not at night. He cries for hours."

"Oh," said Trudy, "new babies are perverse that way. Don't worry about it too much."

"Whenever Denis cries, Jane cries," Grace said.

"Oh, Mother: That's not true! I don't always cry."

“Well, it seems that way,” Grace insisted.

“The first few weeks are always tiring,” Trudy said.

“Yes,” Grace agreed, “but I don’t think Jane has the best temperament for the domestic life.”

“Why not?” Trudy challenged.

“Well... just because... well, she’s interested in so many different things,” Grace said,

“Weren’t you? Wasn’t I? It’s alright to have babies and be interested in something. You had Dee when you were an artist, didn’t you?”

“Well, Trudy,” Grace said, a bit uncomfortably, “it’s mainly just that I think it wasn’t a very wise time for Jane and Johnnie to start a family. Times are hard, and they are so young.”

“You and Norr started your family when you were young in New York, living exclusively on dried lima beans without salt.”

“Oh, Trudy” Grace exclaimed. “Who told you that?”

“You did,” said Gertrude. “Several times.”

“Well,” Grace said, ruffled, “I had hoped to protect Jane and Dee from that sort of struggle.”

“It’s wrong to try to protect them,” Gertrude said. “You must let them chart their own course. That baby looks fine.”

Jane felt better after that Sunday. And she also was less upset when Grace criticized her efforts as a parent. But while feeling better about those matters, she was more worried about Luther’s drinking. He always came home smelling like beer and as summer ended he often was an hour or two late for dinner. At such times he would say he was working late in the foundry but Jane knew better. If he worked late he should be earning more money but he was not - quite the contrary. Grace would have had more to say about Luther but, as August ended, she was increasingly taken up with her renewed relationship with Carle Semon and was quite often away from the apartment at dinner time. This was fortunately the case one evening in early September when Luther came home for dinner at 9:30p.m. He was very drunk indeed. He did not eat dinner; he collapsed on the bed still wearing his suit. When bedtime came Jane tried to get him to undress, but she could not rouse him at all. She succeeded only in removing his shoes. She finally went to bed herself after feeding the baby. An hour or two later she woke to find herself lying in a soaking wet bed. Furious, she got up and hauled Luther out on the floor. She could not really waken him but she hauled off his wet trousers and wet suit-coat, and not knowing what else to do with them, she threw them on the floor.

Next she tore the wet sheets off the bed, leaving exposed the huge wet spot on her prized Beautyrest mattress. She burst into angry tears. The odor was strong of beer. She could never forgive Luther for this. There was nothing she could do for the mattress but cover the wet place with a thick layer of towels. Next she put clean sheets on the bed and crawled in, leaving Luther sleeping on the floor in his wet underwear. An hour later, she relented and got up and covered him with a blanket and put a pillow under his head.

Luther slept through the baby's 6 a.m. feeding, but finally woke an hour later wondering why he was on the floor. Jane decided that a minimum of words would be most effective in this case.

"Look at your suit," she said coldly.

Luther looked in sheepish wonderment.

"Honey, I'm sorry," he said.

"Sorry doesn't fix the ruined mattress," she said. "It's a good thing you have another suit."

"Gosh, isn't it I guess the cleaners can take care of this one, can't they?"

"I wouldn't know," Jane said, "but I'm sure I can't wash it with the diapers."

Again Luther said that he was sorry, but Jane did not reply.

Then Luther said, "Jane we ought to have a talk, I'll be home early tonight."

"I'll believe it when I see it," she said.

A half an hour later he left for work in his other suit, an expensive hound's-tooth check that was a bit shiny on the elbows. And he did come home early, but there was no good opportunity to talk. In fact it four days later, when they were at last alone one evening, that Luther finally said what had been on his mind all summer. He was naturally an amiable person, in fact Jane had never known anyone with a better disposition, but now he had a complaint to register. Since Dee was on a date and Grace was having an evening with Carle at the movies Luther felt free to talk.

"If all our evenings were like this I'd always come home early."

"You know why we're all living together, Luther."

"Yes, but I think things could be better. We don't have any privacy the way things are."

"I know."

"When we rented this apartment I had no idea that this floor plan would be such a pain in the neck. We should have taken the room Dee and your mama have."

"We chose our room because of the bathroom being so hJanie. And with the baby it really has been."

"Janie," Luther said, "I really like your mama in many ways, but I can't stand the way she won't let you grow up."

"I'm grown up."

"But she keeps fussing at you about the baby, and walking through our room on her way to the bathroom. For the life of me I can't see why she does that. Why doesn't she go into the bathroom from the hall?"

"Well, usually she does, Luther, unless the baby's in our room. She's fascinated with him."

That's no excuse, though. And anyway, he usually is in our room. For crying out loud, Jane, we're a married couple and she just walks in any time she wants."

"I know," Jane said. "It's because she hasn't yet managed to realize that I'm married. She feels that I'm still her little child."

"And I bet she always will feel that way. I'd like to come home at night and if we felt in the mood we could just jump right into the hay for a little hanky-panky. As it is, with Mama and Dee here we can't do that. If Mama saw our door closed she'd come knocking and saying, 'Jane, the baby needs attention.' She's done it several times."

"Luther, Mother's scared stiff I'll get pregnant again."

"No one has to worry about that but us," Luther said.

"It's because of the Depression, Luther."

"No, it's more than that, Janie, and you know it. It's just that she wants you to live your life according to her plans. Let's get a place by ourselves."

"We can't afford it yet, Luther. Not till you're making more money. And it's too bad since we have so little that you have to spend any of it at Jimmy Black's Tavern."

"Aw, honey. I don't spend so much," Luther said.

"But it just postpones the day when we can get our own apartment."

"I know, honey," the amiable Luther replied. "You're right."

IT'S STRANGE TO HAVE HER GONE

Jane worried a great deal about Luther's drinking but other matters took her attention as well. All during the summer the baby had continued to grow and bloom and gain weight, though he still did a lot of evening crying. He had been off the 2 a.m. feeding for weeks, but he still fussed a great deal between 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. This was bad because Dee and Grace were usually at home then, and the baby's crying always caused them to do much speculation as to the cause. To Jane, all the various guesses invariably implied that she was in some way remiss in Denis' care. "He needs his diaper changed," was the most common suggestion. "You should take more vitamins." "Denis may need more orange juice." Or codliver oil. Or not be getting enough formula. Or getting too much formula. And on and on.

It was the last straw when her mother suggested that Jane was spending too much time sewing new clothes for herself, instead of doing housework.

"Mom; that's ridiculous Denis' three months old. He isn't crying because I'm at the sewing machine. I'm making clothes because last year's things are too tight. Do you think I should wear my maternity dresses?"

"Oh, don't be silly, Jane," Grace said. "It's just that I know children do better in an orderly household."

"Well, you live here, too," Jane said. "Anyway, I'm taking Denis to a pediatrician. Dr. McWhirter has no bright ideas as to why he cried in the evening. Doc may be a dJanie osteopath, but he's no baby doctor."

"He certainly made me feel, much better," Grace said.

"He doesn't know beans about babies."

Jane took the baby to a woman pediatrician and that lady was most helpful in her questions and answers.

"His weight and length are normal," she said.

"But he hasn't gained for two weeks," said Jane.

"Probably isn't getting quite enough to eat. You're nursing him, you say?"

"Yes, and giving him Similac afterward."

"But you say he cries all evening?"

"Yes. He always has and he used to cry all night sometimes."

"Well," said the doctor, "he isn't getting enough to eat at six o'clock. That's often the case with breast-fed babies."

"I always offer him the Similac. He doesn't like it."

“We’ll try something else. Now tell me, is there any reason why he might not be getting as much when you nurse him? Are you very tired? Or worried? Or some other problems?”

“Hay fever,” said Jane, “and some worries.”

“That hay fever could do it all by itself. Well, don’t give up; it’s still the best for babies. Now I’ll give you a formula for evaporated milk and corn syrup feedings. See if the baby doesn’t do better on that. Let me know if he doesn’t.”

Denis was enthusiastic about the new formula. Evaporated milk seemed to hit the spot, and since he got plenty to satisfy him, he now slept through the evening and things improved in the apartment. One Saturday afternoon Jane and Luther took the baby downtown to show him to Grandma Rahming and Ethel. They found Rosella very frail; she did not get up from her bed. Jane assumed that she was taking a nap. She did not realize that her grandmother no longer walked. But she and Ethie seemed very pleased to see the baby.

“Are her eyes blue?” Rosella asked.

“He’s a boy, Grandma,” Jane said. “Yes, they’re blue, but they’re changing.”

“He’s very nice looking,” Ethel said. “And I’m so glad you brought him, for we are going to be leaving Cleveland next week. We’re going to be moving downstate.”

“To Springfield?” Jane asked.

“No, but it’s near there. To Ramsey. It’s a small town there’s a nice little college there Norr says. But, in fact, we’ll be living in a farm house outside the town.”

“Ethie, what’s Daddy going to do for a living in that small town?”

“He plans to teach painting. Oil and water color.”

“Well, I hope that works out, Ethie.”

“He thinks it will, after the word gets around. He expects college students to sign up. And Mary will be working for the college as well.”

Well, Ethie, I don’t expect I’ll see you much after you move downstate.”

“I’m afraid not, dear, but I hope you’ll come and visit.”

“If Luther and I get a car someday we’ll surely do that.”

Later, when Jane was home again, Grace asked many questions about Norris’s plans and when she heard them she had some dry remarks.

“As you once said, Jane, ‘the leopard doesn’t change its spots.’ Your father is following his old ways. Depending on a woman to pay the bills.”

“His painting classes may be a success, Mother,” Dee said. “Not in these hard times,” Grace said. “How was your grandmother feeling?”

“Not very well. She was lying down all the while we were there. But she seemed pleased to see Denis. Still I don’t feel that she realized that she is a great-grandmother.”

“Grandma Rahming hasn’t been in touch with reality for several years,” Dee said.

“As far as that goes,” said Grace, “if you ask me, she has never been in touch with reality.”

The three of them did not see Rosella again, but a few weeks later they saw Ethie at her mother’s funeral. It was a sad and awkward occasion.

Shortly after Norris and Mary moved to the place down state near the town of Ramsey, Rosella’s health took an abrupt turn for the worse. She seemed to be completely prostrated and over a period of less than a week she failed and died. Mary’s father attended her and he signed the death certificate. Norris did not doubt Dr. Arndt when he assured them all that there was nothing that could be done for Mother Rahming. Her body was tired; it was her time to go.

Norris and Ethel grieved but they took the loss of their mother in stride, having had some time to prepare themselves. Ethel, from force of habit, a lifelong habit, turned to her Christian Science books for comfort. “There is no death,” she repeated to herself. Ethel, through her mother’s passing, had acquired freedom, but it would be a freedom she was ill-equipped to handle. She was so used to waiting on Rosella, that she didn’t know what to do with her time. She would have been happy to help in the meal preparing, but Frederioa preferred to work alone in the kitchen.

Norris had a decision to make: should his mother’s funeral services be held in Cleveland where her (and his) old friends lived, or in nearby Springfield where Mary’s family and friends lived? He decided on Cleveland of respect for his mother and her long years in that community, particularly the Christian Scientist group she had known. It would have been far simpler (and less expensive, as well) to have taken care of everything in Springfield. And it could have been easily done as Rosella’s ashes would be sent to Brooklyn to be interred in Greenwood beside those of Garrett, and near Ida’s grave, and those of Mama and Papa Norris, and Annie and Baby Jim. Norris felt suddenly very much alone, for of all the people in his life, his mother had loved him best and she had overlooked all his flaws. He knew that had not always been in his best interest, but she was gone now, and he would never have such a defender again, not even Ethie, who had always been loyal to him.

He explained to Mary why he felt the funeral services should be held in Cleveland and the arrangements were made.

####

Rosella's funeral posed a problem for Grace. She had been so bitter about Norris's third marriage that for a while she was beyond words. But when the phone call came with the news of Mother Rahming's death, Grace's emotions were mixed. Rosella Rahming had contributed nothing to the success of Grace's marriage to Norris. Not once had she ever chided him for his violent temper storms beyond saying weakly, "Oh, Norrie, Norrie:" or some such phrase as, "All is perfect Harmony," or "love is reflected in Love."

But now, Grace's thoughts turned back to the snowy day when he had given her a ride from the train in Cleveland to Oberlin a few days before her mother died. There had been a sympathetic feeling between them that day. Norr had understood her sorrow. She felt sorry for him now, but he would be better off without his mother. No doubt he would always have been better off without her. It was interesting to speculate what Norr would have been like if his mother had died when he was born, Well, at least when Ethel was born. While speculating, there was no point in doing away with Ethie. Norr would have been two then, young enough to be salvaged. Father Rahming would have married again, not Hilda, but someone. Well! She must not muse on such notions. She must decide whether she would go to the funeral or not. Dee and Jane were going but that was different, of course. If only Betty Long were still alive she would go with her. As an old friend of Ethie's, Betty would surely have gone. Perhaps Merly would come in from Oberlin. She had been a very close friend of Ethie's. But when Grace called her, Merly said she had a dental appointment that she must keep.

Grace thought of asking Mary McGuire to attend with her, but she remembered that Mary was a theosophist and she didn't know if that made a difference in her feelings. Then too, Mary had recently lost her beloved Uncle Jimmy. No, she wouldn't ask Mary.

And she wouldn't ask Grace V. Kelly, because Grace V. was annoyed with Norris and felt that Pauline had been given a raw deal.

Grace also considered calling Carle Semon to see if he would attend the funeral with her, then she ruled that out immediately. Carle and Norris were good enough friends at the photo club or the Art Museum. But for Carle to go with his ex-wife, to an occasion where he would encounter her ex-husband with still another wife... Well! That would be a little too awkward for Carle's conservative soul.

And awkward it was. Grace finally decided to go with Dee and Jane.

"Mother," Dee said, "I don't know why you thought you had to go with someone else." -

"Because you and Janie are family and at these things the family all sit separately."

"Why?" Dee asked.

"It's the custom, that's all - because of their grief no doubt. And I certainly can't sit with the family."

"It would mean a lot to Ethie, Mom."

"I'm sorry, but you don't need to think I'm going to sit with Ethel and Norris and his wife. I'll sit where the other people sit, thank you."

"Mother you should be more modern," Dee said. "There are families where ex-wives and ex-husbands get along just fine with new wives and new husbands and everyone mingles and has fun."

"I bet there aren't many like that," Grace said. "And it's not for me. I just wish Betty Long was still here so that she and I could sit together. I'll feel so conspicuous sitting there by myself."

"Why," said Jane "will you be sitting by yourself? Dee and I will sit with you. We don't need to sit with the family."

"No," said Dee, "if we didn't sit with you, Mother, that's what would be conspicuous."

But as they approached the funeral home Grace felt nervous again. She was sure that when she entered the parlors, all eyes would be upon her. Some people would whisper, "How nice of Grace to come." But others would say, "What is Grace doing here?" And when she and her girls entered the place, quite suddenly she had the feeling that she was a stranger entering these parlors with Rosella's granddaughters. They might belong here but she did not.

But Grace had a surprise when she got inside the parlors. She did not face a large group of people, or even a small group. There were three women sitting on one side of the room in a front row, and on the other side a rather elderly colored couple. The simple casket at the front of the room was closed. Organ music played softly.

"Do you suppose we are early?" Grace asked. "Maybe it was to be at 2:30, not 2 o'clock."

"No," Dee said. "It was 2 o'clock."

Just then, one of the three women turned and looked at Grace and smiled. She said something to the others and they turned and smiled too.

"Why, it's Auntie Keeler," Grace whispered to Dee. "And Marjorie and Edna."

"So it is," said Dee. The organ was playing Christian Science Hymns now and the short service began. It was conducted by a reader from the church where Rosella had been a member for nearly fifty years.

Grace knew that in a room adjoining, Norris and his wife must be sitting with Ethel, and possibly some of the new in-laws. But possibly they wouldn't make the trip from downstate.

Grace began to wonder about Pauline.

She whispered to Dee, "If I'm here, why isn't Pauline?"

"She doesn't live in Cleveland anymore," Dee said.

The services ended and Grace talked to the Keelers while Dee and Jane went to speak to their father and the others.

Outside, afterward, Grace was full of talk.

“Poor, poor Norris: So few mourn his mother. And all because of his irresponsible behavior.”

“Oh, Mother: Dee said. “That’s nonsense. Lots of Grandma’s friends are dead.”

“Well! said Grace, “Grace V. Kelly wouldn’t come because she thinks your father treated Pauline shamefully.”

“That’s only one person,” Dee said. “Anyway, there’s two sides to that story.”

“I still say that if I could come to Mother Rahming’s services, Pauline could have come too.”

“Morn,” said Jane, “Pauline doesn’t have as close ties to Grandma Rahming as you do.”

“What closer ties are you talking about?” Grace asked.

“Dee and me,” said Jane.

Grace did not reply to that, but asked, “Who do you think that colored couple could have been?”

“Oh,” said Dee, “didn’t you know who they were? That man was Henry Rahming. Remember him?”

Jane spoke up. “Henry Rahming!”

Dee laughed. “Not a relative, Janie. One of Grandma’s Christian Science patients. He came from Nassau in the Bahamas. He told Daddy that he was a descendent of one of great- great- Grandmother Rahming’s slaves. The slaves took their owners’ names when they got their freedom.”

“Sounds like one of your father’s tales,” Grace said.

“Henry Rahming himself said so, Mother,” Dee reminded her.

“Well, alright. But isn’t it ironic that all of Mother Rahming’s patients, only that colored man came.”

“Grandma hasn’t been a practitioner since they left Cartwright Street” Jane said, “and that was five or six years ago.”

“Yes,” Dee said, “and, Mother, most of Grandma’s patients have died.”

“Well,” Grace said, “Scientists do die, don’t they? Where’s Aunt Millie Hanney? Why isn’t she here?”

“She’s in a nursing home in Massachusetts,” Jane said.

“Mother,” Dee said. “Anyone who disapproved of Dad’s way of life wouldn’t take it out on Grandma.”

“And anyway,” Jane said, “wherever she is, I’m sure she doesn’t care about the attendance at the funeral.”

“Norr and Ethie will care,” Grace said. “It’s too bad.”

Later Grace talked about it to Gertrude and as usual Gertrude talked logically and unemotionally about whatever was exciting Grace.”

“I didn’t see any obituary, Grace. Was there one?”

“No, but there was a funeral notice.”

“Most people don’t go through those columns. This is a big city Grace. How old was Mother Rahming?”

“Seventy-five.”

“Oh, well, you see many of her friends have departed.”

“But, Trudy, when Mother died there was standing room only at her services.”

“Yes, but she was a Martin and they were a prominent family in a small town. That’s different, Grace.”

“Well, Trudy, I still think people in Cleveland are fed up with Norris Rahming’s behavior.”

Gertrude laughed. “If so, they’d have attended out of curiosity. Notoriety is like that. I doubt if people really care that much. They all have their own problems and many people detest funerals.”

Grace gave up. “You know, Trudy, Mother Rahming was mostly pure trouble for me, but it’s strange to have her gone. She’s the last of her generation. It makes me feel very much older. We have no parents alive anymore and I don’t like the feeling. Our generation are the old ones now.”

“My mother’s still alive, Grace. I’ll share her with you.” Grace laughed. “Alright, Trudy, and I thank you. Well, another chapter is closed and ‘Divinely Tall’ is on her way to Greenwood.”

WHY ARE YOU SO WORKED UP ABOUT IT?

After Rosella's funeral, the family in the Sloane Avenue apartment had other things to think about. Everyone was interested in the royal scandal in England and the newspapers were full of the showdown between Bill VIII and Stanley Baldwin, the prime minister. Would the king marry his American divorcee?

Grace was also intensely interested in the forthcoming election. Almost everyone she knew was planning to vote for Roosevelt. All the artists who had been helped by the Federal art program, of course, were for him, but there were others among Grace's friends, too. Jack Raper and his wife Mary, Mary McGuire, (who was active in Democratic politics) Edna Whiteman, the author of children's books, Grace V. Kelly, the art critic, and many more. They felt, as did Grace's brother, Bill, that F.D.R. was a man who had done something about the Depression and would continue to do things to help people. Who was this man Irvin? Dee said everyone in her office was for Roosevelt, and Luther Roby said most all of his family was, too, although Uncle Frank and his wife and mother-in-law would no doubt vote Republican.

Merly and William were strongly for F.D.R., but Grace supposed the rest of her siblings would remain Republicans, for they had been so indoctrinated by Maria and Old Henry that they could not and would not change. They were not inclined to read on topics of current events but busied themselves only in their own affairs. But while Grace was being enthusiastic about President Roosevelt, she was finding three men in her circle were bombarding her with pro-Irvin arguments. Roger was the worst. F.D.R.'s first term had only increased his intense dissatisfaction with the administration. He hated all their ideas, Social Security and W.P.A. in particular. They had no right to take honest hard-working taxpayers' money and use it as they chose. Wm. Henry Baker felt the same, but since he was still pursuing Grace, he was not vitriolic about the president. And then there was Carle. He was a conservative, and like the others, a life-long Republican, but he was not noisy about it. When he and Grace were married, they had both been against Al Smith, a man in their opinion totally without a shred of culture. But Grace had always been more liberal than Carle, and she hadn't thought Hoover an effective president. And now that Carle had emerged from his long period of bitterness, he sought only to please Grace, and soft-pedaled his distaste for F.D.R. Carle came perilously close to scuttling his newly-gained friendship with Grace, by making an impulsive remark that Roosevelt was a rather Hebrew name. Grace sputtered at him that it was a Dutch name, and the name of a place in Holland, and he had no basis for saying F.D.R. was Jewish. And with November, when the president was re-elected by a landslide, Carle was even quieter about politics.

The election over, Grace turned her attention on the king's problems in England. They were fast coming to a crisis. There was talk of amorganatic marriage and also of abdication. The papers were full of it and Grace was fascinated, Her English background dominated her thinking in the matter.

She lunched with Grace V. Kelly and spoke of it, but Grace V., being Irish, spoke with amused scorn of the British monarch's romantic troubles. She changed the subject.

"What are you doing these days, Grace?"

"Well, taking care of the baby much of the time, Grace V.."

Grace V. sputtered. "Taking care of the baby! I'm talking about your art work. And what about your Tunis story?"

"It's very nearly impossible to get anything accomplished at home. A young baby is very disrupting."

"You must go into your room and shut the door and work. Or better yet, get a room of your own somewhere."

"The children need me, Grace V."

"Why?"

"Because they're so young. They have no idea of their responsibility. I worry about that darling little baby."

"Why?" Grace V. challenged. "Is it sick?"

"No," Grace said, "but—"

"Now listen, Grace, you must get on with your own life and let the children live theirs."

"But, Grace V., you see Jane is only twenty and her husband likes to drink."

"Twenty isn't too young. In Ireland all the husbands like to drink, and girls marry young, and babies are born and grow up and life goes on."

"This isn't Ireland, Grace V.."

"The point is, Grace, that you're too good an artist to just be a grandma, worrying about Jane's baby. You must get a place of your own."

But Grace could not afford a place of her own, and so she stayed on with Jane and Luther, and Dee. She was fascinated with little Denis, and so was Dee. Secretly Grace lamented that it was not Dee who had the husband and baby. Dee needed to settle down. Her friends were marrying and here was Dee still chumming around with the promiscuous Mona James. Toward the end of November, Skipper Root Irwin stopped in one evening with her husband. They had news; Skipper was three months pregnant and she was thrilled. Bud Irwin was starting to practice law and doing quite well in spite of the depression. Again Grace wished that Dee would get married. If only she would be more attracted to Clement Chandler. He was such a nice chap, an intellectual, well-read, and quite witty. He had finished college and done graduate work until the depression dried up his finances. Chan was quite artistic, too, and was a real craftsman. He liked to build furniture and he had made picture frames for Grace.

"Don't you think Chan is nice?" Grace asked Dee.

"Oh, sure he's nice. That is, he is and he isn't."

"What do you mean? Don't you like him?"

"Well, yes. You know I like him, but not the way you mean."

“The trouble with you, Dee, is you never like the marrying type.”

“What’s so great about getting married? I’m in no rush.”

“But why couldn’t you be attracted to men like Chan?”

“Mother, you ought to know that praising him isn’t going to make him exciting to me. Besides he isn’t as nice as you seem to think. He’s moody and he’s cynical.”

“But then if you feel that way why do you still go out with Chan?” Grace asked.

“Because he comes around, and we enjoy passing the time over a glass of beer. Anyway, he likes to come to see Luther and Jane and you. He doesn’t come to see just me. And Mother, I doubt if he’s ever going to have any money. He’s just drifting. Puttering around with furniture and stuff.”

“It’s the damnable Depression,” Grace said.

It was true that Clement Chandler hadn’t much of an income. He had graduated from college the same year that Dee Rahming graduated from High Rock high school, 1930, the beginning of the depression. In the following year he discovered the hard way that, in these times, a college diploma did not automatically open any golden doors to a great career. It was known that one of the big oil companies was hiring only college graduates to pump gasoline at its service stations.

Chan was luckier than many. He did get a job. His father knew one of the department heads at a lithograph company that printed advertising posters and billboards. Chan got work in the office where he had various duties. When the depression deepened and business dropped off, the office force was cut down, but again Chan was lucky enough to be given a job in the stockroom. He worked there for two years, and then as business worsened he and others were laid off. They were called back during the first summer of the New Deal, when they had a huge order printing NRA posters. After that for a long time Chan had no luck at all except for a little work collecting payments for a cosmetic company. Things were very discouraging, but Chan finally interviewed for a job with the county relief agency. They were looking for college graduates to be caseworkers. Chan was a psychology major and he was hired. He worked with the agency until, with the advent of the WPA, the relief agency drastically cut its work force.

Out of work again, Chan began puttering around at home. He painted a picture or two, he designed a chair and built it. It was during this time that he met Dee Rahming and her family. Before long he was making picture frames for Grace Rahming and after she acquired a Victorian sofa from her friend Edna Whiteman, Chan reupholstered it. For this project, he went to the library for information.

Dee asked him, “If you’re a psych major, how does it happen that you’re doing this sort of thing?”

“Sheer economic necessity,” said Chan. “Well, maybe I did inherit something from my grandfather. My mother’s father was a real craftsman. He carved wood beautifully. In his own house every room had carved woodwork done in several different kinds of wood. Are you familiar with the Grand Arcade downtown? The one between Grand and Superior Avenues?”

“Of course,” Dee said.

The Arcade

CONTINUED



under attenuated arches spanning four floors in each of the "wings" and under one multi-storied arch in the central "tower". The lower stories of the Superior facade are faced with red Pennsylvania sandstone; the upper stories are of rich, dark Anderson brick, manufactured in Chicago.

The rounded arches, the rusticated stone, the small window openings in the band directly above the entrance arch and at the top of the "tower", all suggest the Romanesque.

There are many refinements in the building, including the railings around the promenades. Executed by the Van Dorn Iron Works, these are (or were) considered to be works of art. The "crowning glory" are the newel posts at the head and the base of the grand stairway connecting the Superior and Euclid levels. Originally many of the lanterns of the first two arcade levels were illuminated by gas.

The pattern and wood carving firm of ~~Hausika~~ and Schellentrager played an important part in effecting many of the artistic touches. This firm made the wooden models after which the abbreviated cluster of stone columns flanking the great Superior level archway were patterned; also the wooden models for the other ornamental detailing of the building. They carved the patterns for the railings, the newel posts, and the metal gargoyles decorating the top of the cast iron columns supporting the maze of ironwork holding the glass roof in place. An innovation was the use of cast iron as a load-bearing material.

When completed in 1890 the Arcade was the last word, from its six steam-operated elevators to the dial clock which recorded the watchmen's visitations to their appointed stations.

ONE CLIPPING which we encountered in the course of appreciating this historic building made reference to a Frank Lynch, still active as a union official in 1946, who threw hot steel rivets to iron workers far above his forge, who caught them in tin pails. Being a sidewalk superintendent must have been fun in the late 1880's.

A few of the present tenants have been in the Arcade almost from the beginning. Among these are H. W. Beattie and Sons, jewelers; Fred C. Gollmar Cigar Co.; H. H. Hessler & Co., surgical supplies; and Chas. B. Fishel, optometrist.

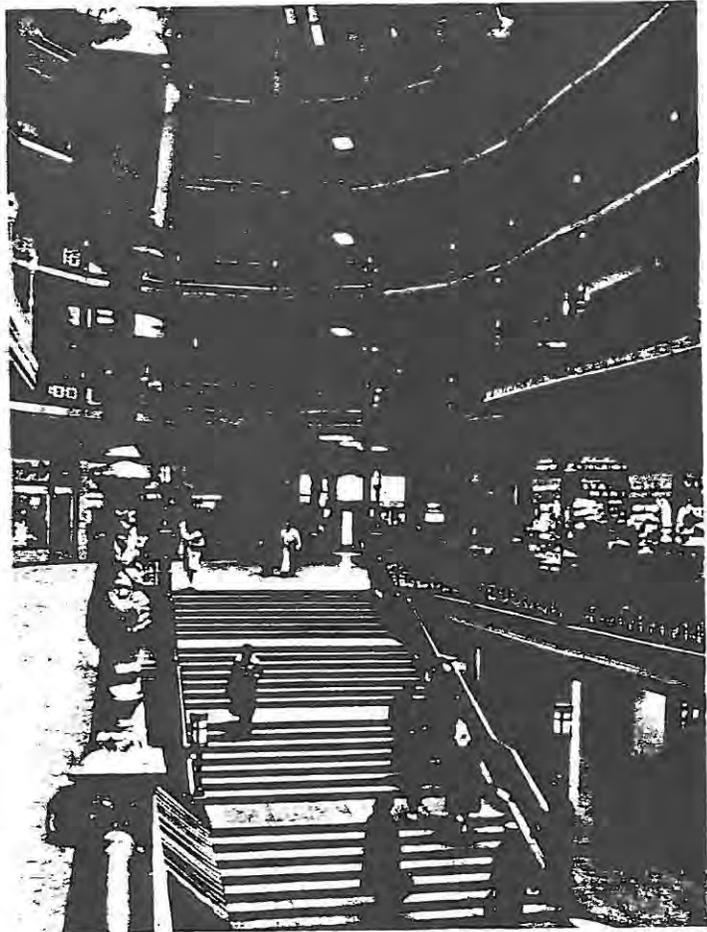
N. Hexter of the Arcade News and Stationery Depot put out a "Guide to the Arcade" before the turn of this century from which we quote:

"Cleveland is fast doffing her conservative habiliments and acquiring the dignity of a highly metropolitan community, and no single enterprise has helped to achieve this end more than the erection of the Arcade.

"To see Cleveland without including the Arcade would be like seeing Rome without St. Peter's, or Paris, without the Eiffel Tower."

This is still true.

Hausika *Dode and Edna's father*



Looking toward the Euclid Avenue end.

Applause for the Arcade

photostory by RICHARD N. CAMPEN

CLEVELAND has one structure which has been designated an "Historic American Building" as a consequence of a continuing survey by the American Institute of Architects in behalf of the National Park Service. This is The Arcade at 412 Superior Avenue.

The Arcade consists of two 10-story office buildings—one on Euclid Avenue and the other on Superior — which are joined by a cavernous shopping enclosure 300 feet long, 60 feet wide and more than 90 feet in height. The conception of the building is attributed to the banker and ambassador, Myron T. Herrick, who in 1887 was struck with the idea that in a building such as the Arcade many individual shopkeepers and specialists could offer, under one roof, a variety of products and services. It was an alternative to the department store which, as we know it today, did not exist in Cleveland.

The Arcade was conceived of as a city within a city where at the time anything from a pair of shoes, a piece of sheet music, or a truss to a cigar or a ice cream cone might be purchased where the services of an architect, insurance man or attorney might be sought. The upper floors of the 10-story buildings and of the Arcade itself were contemplated as offices; the bottom two floors were reserved for shops.

The Arcade remains today the largest structure of its kind in the United States. To the best of our knowledge is surpassed in size, by buildings of its type, only by the reconstructed Galleria in Milan, Italy.

Well-known Cleveland names were among the original incorporators of the Arcade. In addition to Herrick the were Charles F. Brush, inventor of the arc light, John D. Rockefeller, L. Severance, M. R. Keith, S. V. Harkness

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

“Well, you’ve noticed all those carved balconies and stair railings, haven’t you?”

“I guess so.”

“My grandfather made the patterns for all those castings,” Chan said.

“I don’t know what castings are,” Dee said.

“Luther could tell you about it,” Jane said.

“Well, anyway,” Dee said, “I get the general idea.”

Indeed, Clement Chandler had an interesting background. The grandfather, who was a woodcarver, came from Germany as had the maternal grandmother, who was of a more aristocratic family with some connections at the Court.

Chan’s father was born in China, his grandfather having been a Methodist missionary. But the family returned to America so that the children could pursue their higher education. Clement F. Chandler studied the classic languages at a fine midwestern state university. He enjoyed literature and philosophy and prepared for a career as a journalist. During his college years he kept a journal and in his senior year he confided, “I will be managing editor and proprietor at a leading newspaper before I shuffle off this mortal coil.” It would take him only four years after graduating from college to realize the first part of that ambition. He signed on with the Cleveland Herald as a reporter immediately after leaving school. He went quickly through various newspaper positions, copy writer, re-write man, night-editor. And he had been made managing editor before he was thirty years old. He had been interested in a young woman, who was nearly his own age and who shared his interest in books and philosophy. He had not yet asked her to marry him. He was not certain what he wanted in this life and indeed he had asked his college journal many times - what is the meaning of life? But he supposed that he would marry and have children. There, at least, was continuity, though continuity of what he did not know. Perhaps when he was older he would see things in a more positive way. He enjoyed discussing such questions with his friend, Anne Talbott, and he had made up his mind that the next time they went for a walk he would ask her to marry him.

And Anne Talbott had been hoping for just that. She had loved Clement Chandler for two years. She did not consider herself an attractive woman; she was tall and red-haired with a white complexion that sunburned too easily. But she and Clement had good times together and she felt that eventually they would marry. For the present he seemed to be absorbed in his work and not quite ready to settle down. But one day he met the wood-carver’s daughter.



Clement Forsythe Chandler
 father of
 Clement Warren Chandler

8 years old

"Allen Milward"
 and
 "Alan Milward"
 ("Mil")

1940
 →



1974 1/2



JOSEPHINE
LOUISE SCHELLENTRAGER
"MINNA"

AGE 15
←



Josephine L. Porter was seventeen years old. She was twelve years younger than Clement Chandler, but he was a romantic and this demure German beauty fascinated him from the start. She had the most beautiful big brown eyes he had ever seen and a flawless complexion in the peak bloom of youth. Her hair was brown and luxuriant and she seemed to know how to dress it with professional skill. Clement speculated that judging by the fullness of her coiffeur; her hair must be a glorious sight when she unpinned it at night. But perhaps the most attractive quality that Josephine

possessed was her perfect daintiness. She wore a white dimity dress with a waist of very tiny tucks. When she sat down she always carefully smoothed her skirt so that it was quite free of wrinkles when she was seen from behind, and not all creased and messy like so many other girls and women. A young girl as fastidious as Josephine would be a wonderful homemaker, Clement decided. He learned more about Josephine in the next few weeks. The woman who introduced them told him that Josephine was an excellent seamstress, who made all her own dresses and shirtwaists and did beautiful embroidery. She also had studied piano. Did she like books; did she read? Well, Josephine was a good student in high school, their mutual friend told Clement, and she thought Josephine had said she was fond of poetry. Clement was pleased to learn that Josephine's family spoke German at home and Josephine spoke it beautifully, though her English had no trace of accent. Good, he thought, he would be able to polish up the German he had learned in college.

Within three months Clement Chandler had married Josephine Harvey, she was pregnant, and they were on their way to New York City. And Anne Talbott was left behind in Cleveland, wondering just how it had all come about. But she tried to be philosophical as she walked in the autumn woods alone.

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As Christmas approached, Clement Chandler and his friends in the Sloane Avenue apartment were all feeling the pinch of the depression. Clement had been making a few dollars with his furniture work, but he knew he wouldn't be able to give Christmas presents unless he made them.

As for Jane and Luther, things were rather strained. Luther's drinking continued, though it was sporadic. He sometimes went as long as a week without coming home late and drunk. He told Jane that he felt like drinking because they had to live with her mother and Dee. Luther complained that when Grace criticized and bossed Jane, Dee always sided with her mother.

"Well," Jane told Luther, "Dee has been my older sister all my life, and I guess she'll always be my older sister."

"No, it isn't just that," Luther said. "It's because you're married. They don't want you to be married because you're the younger one,"

"But Dee doesn't want to be married, Luther. She said so."

"She would if the right one came along."

"Well, I can't do anything about that. Anyway, all that has nothing to do with your drinking, Luther."

You'd be surprised," he said. "We need to live alone. Chan agrees with me."

Chan was rather put out with Grace, too. He was doing upholstery work lately, and Jane was helping out by doing some of the sewing for him, such as cording for cushions. She needed a chance to earn the money. She was also making miniature furniture for dollhouses and selling some of it. But according to Dee, Grace didn't think Jane should be doing those things.

"Why?" Chan asked.

"Because she has the baby to care for. She doesn't have time."

"Why?"

"What do you mean 'why?'"

"Well, doesn't the baby ever sleep?" Chan asked.

"Of course," Dee said.

"Well, then, why shouldn't Jane spend some time doing different things?"

"It's just that Mother thinks Jane has a lot of interests and that she shouldn't have gotten married and had a baby if she wanted to do other things too."

"Didn't your mother do that? Get married and have two babies when she wanted to really be an artist?"

“Chan,” Dee asked, “why are you so worked up about it?”

Chan wondered about that himself.

But, in truth, that winter, Grace had many other things to think about besides Jane and her husband and baby. Her long-standing preoccupation with Norris, was at least somewhat muted because she now had two other men demanding some of her thoughts. William Henry Baker was again in hot pursuit and that was unwelcome, but Carle was attentive again and showing the gentlemanly charm that reminded Grace of the time just before they were married ten years earlier. Carle had many complimentary things to say, but it was tacitly understood between them that it was companionship not marriage that they needed. Marriage was never mentioned.

With William Henry Baker it was another matter. Grace felt that he was trying to “railroad her” into marrying him. She could not bring herself to like the man, even though several of her best friends urged her to consider it seriously. Louise Trunk wrote her a letter about it saying: “Why don’t you marry him, Grace, and just let him take care of you? Wouldn’t it be nice to not have to worry about money? You are a good artist, dear, but you are the type who shouldn’t have to go it alone.”

And Grace V. Kelly said, “He’d probably die in a few years, and leave you enough money to be secure.”

But Grace had explained that William really repelled her, so Grace V. agreed that if that was the case she shouldn’t marry him for it would be “too disagreeable.”

But both men enjoyed taking Grace to dinner even though she would not please William and say that she would marry him; not please Carle by being a Republican.

Grace was all absorbed in the King of England’s difficulties, all of which had been sharing the news along with the Roosevelt - Irvin election campaign. With the election over to Grace’s satisfaction, she followed very closely the events in London, finding it very hard to decide which side to support, the Prime Minister or the king. On December 11th she and Jane listened in fascination as Bill VIII abdicated his throne.

“My goodness!” Grace said. “How strange that we Americans should be so concerned about all this. But then I guess at heart I’m quite British after all. My, I hope I’ll get to England in my lifetime.”

The next day Jane went downtown to do a little Christmas shopping and to buy some materials for her new hobby of making doll-house furniture. Her enthusiasm was mounting because encouragement was coming from all sides and she had even sold several pieces to a friend, of Luther’s Aunt Adalyn, This woman’s daughter had a colonial-style doll-house and Jane had been making miniature eighteenth century furniture. The lady had ordered a couple of pieces for Christmas presents for her little girl. Jane was going to make a Governor Winthrop secretary-bookcase (full of books) and a Federal mirror (the circular convex kind, in a gold frame topped with an eagle.) Jane had a convex watch crystal that she was going to take to a place where they re-silvered mirrors. She worked on a scale of an inch to a foot, so the crystal would be perfect.

Jane had asked her mother to take care of Denis while she went downtown. She had hated to ask her to do it, because Grace so frequently told her friends on the telephone that she wanted to go to New York to live, but she couldn't go because Jane needed her to help with the baby. Dee and Jane had discussed it and Jane had been upset, saying that her mother was trying to make all her friends think she, Jane, wasn't able to take care of her own baby.

"It isn't that," Dee said, "but we have to understand other. She has terrible money worries; she can't afford to go to New York. She doesn't want her friends to think we are supporting her. She has her pride."

"But she must remember I have pride, too. She wants people to think I'm incompetent."

"Nonsense. You're better off with Mother with us because of Luther's drinking."

"You must think that Luther drinks less because of Mother's presence," Jane said. "Well, I don't think so. It upsets Luther to have Mother treat us like children and if we could afford it, we'd live by ourselves."

Dee frowned a little but said no more at that time.

Actually, Grace usually offered to stay with Denis so that Jane could go to the stores for groceries, and Jane tried not to ask very often herself, but on this December Saturday, she'd made an exception.

She went first to the mirror place to leave the watch crystal, then to a hobby shop for balsa wood. After that she went to Halsey's department store next to the Tower Building to buy small pieces of colored velvet and other things she needed for her dollhouse furniture. She even made a quick trip down into the Terminal concourse to steal a little peek at the Winchester Room, but as she walked by she saw nobody she recognized within.

She had arranged to meet Luther at the foundry when she was through her shopping. Luther's father liked to stay at home on Saturdays, but Luther came into the shop to work on the castings, sawing them off the gates and filing off the burrs.

Jane walked from the Tower Building across the Public Square to Superior and on to West 4th Street where she turned north. She passed Jimmy Black's Place on her way to the Roby Bronze Foundry. It was a restaurant, supposedly, but when repeal was enacted three years earlier Jimmy Black put in a bar on one side of the place, and that was not a good thing for Luther Roby. Some days when he left the foundry for lunch at Jimmy Black's, Luther did not return that day. His father had told him, "Listen boy, remember, I'll pay you only for the hours that you are here, working."

As she walked past the place, Jane said to herself, you are my enemy, Jimmy Black.

Luther still had work to finish when Jane arrived. He led her from the front entrance, through his Uncle Frank's offices, back through the machine shop part of the Hillman Manufacturing Co., to the Roby Bronze Foundry area in the rear of the building. The machine shop room was bright and sunny with its windows on the south. All the machines were quiet this Saturday afternoon, the overhead belts still and slack.

When they went into the foundry room it was like going from day to night. The place was dim, and dark in the corners, with hanging electric light bulbs here and there throughout the high ceilinged area. There was a lamp over the big bandsaw where Luther was working, a lamp over each of the three molder's benches, and another over Luther's father's cluttered desk in one corner. Jane had been there once before at night, and she was surprised to see that it was almost as dark at midday. She noticed that one side of the big room was almost entirely windows. They faced the south like the windows in Uncle Frank Roby's machine shop, but no sunshine came through them, nor much light. They were the dirtiest windows Jane had ever seen. But there was one clean pane that let in a rectangle of sunlight that fell on one of the molder's benches.

Jane asked Luther, "Is it supposed to be dark in here?"

Luther had finished with the pile of brass castings and he had turned the bandsaw off.

"What do you mean?" he asked Jane.

"Well, it's so dark in here and the machine shop is so bright and sunny? How come?"

"I guess it's on account of the furnace in here," Luther said. "I never thought about it before."

"I'm really curious about why someone washed just one of those panes and let a little light in there."

Luther glanced over at the relatively clean pane and he laughed. "We didn't wash it - we just had a broken one replaced. A board we had fell over and smashed it."

"Why doesn't your dad get them all washed?" Jane asked.

"I guess he's used to it this way," Luther said. "They'd get dirty again soon anyway and the old man's short of cash lately."

"Did the window get broken just lately?"

"Naw," Luther said. "Couple years ago, before we were married I guess,"

"Well then, it would pay to wash them. Look how clean that one still is after two years. When were the others washed?"

"Lord, I don't know. Maybe never."

"Let's do it Luther"

"Huh?"

"Let's wash the windows. Surprise your dad."

"Good grief When?"

"Tomorrow. I'll ask Mom to stay with Denis again."

"Oh, don't do that, honey."

“Yes! I’m just itching to do it. I’ll sell the idea to Mom. I’ll tell her we want to do it for a surprise for your father.”

“Surprise? He’ll drop dead,” Luther predicted.

DID YOU LOSE MOTHER'S RING?

For the sixth year in a row Christmas was not so much a season to be jolly, as a time to worry about money to buy even the most modest gifts for the immediate family.

Jane was worried about what Luther might do about gifts this year. He had showered her with presents a year ago. It had been their first Christmas and Luther had gone to Strohmeyer's store and had a personal shopper select a number of beautiful lingerie items for Jane. Several months later Luther confessed that he had charged all those things to Grandma Roby's charge account. In past years he had always been allowed to charge his clothing needs to that account. It was a way that his grand-mother could show her love for both Luther and his father, whose life, she felt, had been grievously wounded and even warped when Luther's mother died. "It took all the heart and spirit out of him," Corra Roby had told her daughter, Adalyn, "and it's hurt his business success. He doesn't care enough about his life."

What Luther had not known, a year ago at Christmas time, was that his grandmother was no longer in charge of her own finances. She was on the edge of senility and was tired of worrying about balancing her checkbook. Her daughter, Adalyn, had been made her guardian who paid all her bills. And possibly Aunt Connie might have paid Luther's Christmas bill, for she had always doted on him nearly as much as her mother had. But things had taken an unexpected turn. Adalyn had suffered a bout of pneumonia three weeks after Christmas. She'd been very ill the whole family had been worried about her, but she'd pulled through it. During her illness, her brother Robert had taken over their mother's financial affairs. He had discovered the bill that Luther had run up for Christmas. There had been the devil to pay then, as his Uncle Frank complained to Luther Roby, senior, and then called Luther into his office and read the riot act to him. Luther was to pay his bill to Strohmeyer's and not ever to charge to his grandmother's account again.

So Luther had paid the Strohmeyer's bill out of money he withdrew from the one-thousand dollar savings account. It was the first time it had been touched and Jane felt badly. And then in June, when Denis was born, they had touched it again, \$50 for the doctor, and \$65 for the hospital for ten days stay. That had left a balance of nearly \$800 and during the summer the passbook had remained under the paper liner of their top dresser drawer. But when Christmas approached Jane began to worry about what Luther might do about Christmas-present money. This year he would not dare try charging anything at Strohmeyer's. Jane knew what Luther would do and she really couldn't stop him. The savings account was his money. It had been left to him, but she hoped he wouldn't use much for presents and she told him so. Luther told her not to worry. She tried not to and of course, there were other things to think about. She was very busy these days for she had orders for dollhouse furniture that people wanted for Christmas gifts. And Al Chandler was building a dollhouse for a Carrollton Heights child. It was a beautiful piece of work. He had agreed to make it for \$25 and Jane was helping with the windows. The house was Tudor style and the windows were the casement type. Jane was putting small strips of balsawood on the glass to make the appearance of small panes. The finished house was splendid. Chan had even planked the floors with separate strips of wood. Everyone agreed that it was worth twice as much money at least. Ten years later they would say it had been worth ten times what Chan had asked. However in 1936, he could not have had that price. And it had been fun making the little house. It had a kitchen, dining room and, living room with fireplace downstairs, and a stairway leading upstairs where there was a large bedroom and a nursery and bathroom.

“I wish it were mine,” Jane said. “I’d love to make furniture for it. I’d have to put a Christmas tree in it.”

“I’d like to design a modern dollhouse, myself,” Chan said. “I’ve a lot of ideas for a real house I’d like to build someday. I could practice on a doll house.”

“That’s right,” Jane said, “but it’s more fun to make eighteenth century doll house furniture. The modern things are too plain.”

The whole family had been fascinated with the project because Chan had brought it over to the apartment when it was nearly finished and the last touches were being put on. Luther said it was criminal that the lady was getting it so cheap, and Dee and the others agreed. Chan and Dee occasionally went out in the evenings to drink beer and pass the time, but he had become more like a friend of the family these days than Dee’s date, particularly since she went out with other men as well.

Chan had recently learned of the death of his father and had spoken of it to Dee, Grace and the young Robys. He talked about it one evening when he and Jane were painting the roof of the doll house.

“Were youp and your father very close?” Jane had asked.

“Hell, no!” Chan said, so positively that Jane asked him, “Didn’t you like him?”

“Oh, sure, I liked him, the few times I ever saw him. I hadn’t seen him for eleven years. He died in California. He went there about five years ago because of his health; he had heart problems. I saw him last in 1925.”

She looked a little puzzled and Chan said, “You’re wondering, if I liked him, why I hadn’t seen him for eleven years.”

“Well, no. Divorces are funny. I know how it is.”

“Well,” Chan said, “my father hadn’t lived in Cleveland since before I was born. He lived in New York City till he went West. I was born in New York City myself.”

“You sure don’t speak like a New Yorker,” Jane said,

Chan smiled, “That’s because I left there before I learned to speak, you see. Mother divorced my father when I was very small, maybe two years old, and she came back to Cleveland. She was very young herself, only eighteen when I was born. And he was nearly nine years older than she.”

“Oh!” said Jane.

Chan hastened to say, “But the age difference was no great problem. That wasn’t their trouble. My father was quite an intellectual, a newspaperman. Mother was very different; she didn’t read books. She liked to sew and embroider. They didn’t have much in common.”

“But if she was so young-”



CLEMENT FORSYTHE CHANDLER
FATHER OF CLEMENT WARREN CHANDLER

CIRCA 1918



Clement W. Chandler ↑ 18 mo
about 4 years →



C. W. C.
about
6 years ←

about
9 years →



“Didn’t you read books at eighteen?” Chan asked.

“I read books at eight, as a matter of fact,” she said, “but my whole family did. We had so many books around the place. They gave me books right from the start.”

“Well, I don’t know why she didn’t read. She still doesn’t, except for newspapers and magazines. But anyway, she claims she divorced him because he drank and came home with his pockets empty.”

“Ah, yes,” said Jane. “Ah, yes.”

He looked at her, but she said nothing further. Then she asked, “Did you say your father died in California?”

“Yes, they went there about five years ago for his health.”

“He married again then?”

“Yes. He married the girl he knew before he met Mother.”

“That’s interesting. Did you ever meet her?”

“Oh, yes. She’s real nice - his kind of person. They were living in New York City when I was a freshman in college, back East. I went up to visit them two or three times from Philadelphia. He paid for my college education and I liked them both, but I never saw them after my freshman year. He wrote me once in a while though.”

“How come you only saw them that one year?”

“Because that’s the only year I went to Penn. I finished up at State. Soon after, he went to California to stay.”

“Oh,” Jane said. “It’s funny, but I got the idea your father lived here in Cleveland.”

“No.”

“Well, one night when Luther and I went out with you and Dee, we passed some building, some hotel, and you pointed it out, and I’ll swear you said, ‘My dad lives there’.”

“Well, I probably did, and he does. Only my ‘dad’ is not my father; he’s my step-father. I never called my father ‘Dad’, though he signed himself ‘Daddy’ when I was younger. Now, Harry is ‘Dad’ and he does live in the Carleton Square Hotel when he’s here in Cleveland, and Mother wishes he wouldn’t. She wants him to get their furniture out of storage and get an apartment again. I don’t think he has any intention of doing it.”

“How come?”

“Likes his freedom. When the Depression caught up with Harry he took half-pay for a while, then he had to take work out of town, or lose out all together. He’s an architect for Torgesen Co. They’re engineers and Harry just recently got back in town. Mother has been trying to persuade

him that they can afford an apartment. But Harry insists he can't. Mother moved in with my Aunt Edna when Harry went away."

"Couldn't they all live there?" Jane asked. "So many families double up in these times."

"Harry wouldn't do that. He told Mother he didn't intend to crowd into Edna's house; there isn't room enough and also, he doesn't see eye-to-eye with Aunt Edna."

Jane smiled. "Well, Luther and I don't see eye-to-eye with Mother and Dee, but we're all together out of pure economic necessity."

"I know," Chan said, "but there's another angle to Harry's position. In the first place, there really isn't room for him at Edna's place. He wouldn't feel right sitting around in her living room of an evening. But there's more to it than that; Harry has a friend, a lady friend."

"Oh, ho," said Jane.

"Mother doesn't know about that though. They used to run around with quite a frisky crowd and Harry flirted with Beryl, and Mother flirted with this one and that. It was all the thing to do. But Mother doesn't know that Harry is seeing Beryl now that he is back in Cleveland."

"So what's going to happen?" Jane asked.

"Nothing. Things will go on as they are, I suppose."

"Is she beautiful? Beryl? Is she young?"

Chan laughed. "No. Neither."

"I thought married men preferred them that way."

"Well, you'd have to know Mother and Beryl to understand. Beryl's the type people call a good egg. I imagine Harry feels comfortable with her. No pressure."

"Well, I can understand that sort of thing," Jane said. "Luther and I know about that. Mother always has something she wants me to do and it burns Luther up. And he says Dee always agrees with her. Luther says they put pressure on me all the time. Actually, though it's mostly Mother."

"Well, that's the way Mother is with Harry. She always had something she wanted him to do. Take her here and take her there. She doesn't know how to drive a car and it's a pity, because she loves to gad around."

"I wonder if I still know how to drive a car," Jane said.

"Sure you do; it's like riding a bike or swimming."

"Well, that's good, because it'll be a long time before Luther and I can buy a car."

"It'll probably be just as long before I can get a place of my own to live."

"Do they bother you too? I mean where do you fit in at your Aunt Edna's?"



Harry + "Dode" Porter

Josephine Schellentrager Chandler Porter (Dode)
"Minna"

Harry Louis Porter
"George"

Circa 1930 ?

He smiled. "I fit in the attic. I have a room up there. Aunt Edna and I are alike; we like to make things and that makes clutter. Mother thinks I'm pretty messy. But she loves me. She just complains a lot."

"Maybe," Jane said, "after the Depression is over we'll all have our own places to live in and we can live our own lives."

"'After the Depression is over'," Chan said. "That's the magic phrase, isn't it?"

####

Jane lay awake long on Christmas night. It had been a happy day, all in all, but not without its worries. Luther had come home late on Christmas eve. He had told Jane he would be home early that day. His father had given everyone the whole day off as had Uncle Frank Roby. The molders and machinists had been given turkeys, fruit baskets, and bottles of whiskey. Luther had said that he only wanted to “tidy the shop up a little” and dampen the molding sand. “I have one or two Santa errands to do,” he said. “I’ll be home by lunch time.”

But he wasn’t home for lunch, nor for dinner, and Jane’s eyes were filled with tears, and Grace was muttering darkly. Dee and Chan were out.

Luther came home at eight o’clock, very much in his cups, grinning broadly, his arms filled with packages. He distributed the gift-wrapped boxes under the tree. Jane worried when she saw the familiar Strohmeyer’s packages.

“Don’t worry about it. I didn’t charge them,” Luther told her.

“But Strohmeyer’s is an expensive store. You should do your Christmas shopping at the dime store like I did.”

“Aw, not for my sweetie-pie and my baby boy. Not on Christmas. And Strohmeyer’s is the only store I’m familiar with.”

Jane was hurt that Luther had come home drunk but she could not stay depressed on Christmas, and before long she was singing carols accompanied by the radio.

The next morning was festive and fun. Baby Denis entertained everyone by jumping most energetically in a little bouncing chair. He had a number of baby toys but his little chair made his first Christmas a huge success. The women in the family had exchanged modest useful gifts, and for Luther, Jane had bought such things as socks, handkerchiefs, and two shirts. She felt guilty about all the lingerie and finery that Luther had showered her with. He had spent somewhat more than the previous year, but Jane had no way of knowing how much or where the money came from. Luther maintained that his father had given him a bonus because he was so pleased to have the foundry windows washed. But Jane had not seen the savings account passbook for a long time and she was certain that the balance of nearly \$800 must have been eaten into. When she asked Luther why the passbook wasn’t still in the too dresser drawer he said merely that it was downtown in the desk and he kept forgetting to bring it home. Jane wanted to ask him why he had taken it downtown in the first place, but she refrained from doing so. However, she didn’t believe his story that he had paid for Christmas with bonus money from his father. The presents represented too much money. Business at the foundry was not that good. And what’s more, Luther’s father had given something else to Jane to thank her for the “Herculean task” of window washing. Luther had told her that Jane needed some machinery to use in her hobby of miniature furniture making. She needed a motor to power the small lathe she had bought for turning the tiny chair legs and bedposts of the little Colonial-style pieces.

So under the Christmas tree were some very unusual presents for Jane. A 1/3 horsepower electric motor to turn the lathe, a small electric hand motor with many small carving tools. And Christmas afternoon Chan arrived bringing gifts for everyone, mostly books, but a versatile piece

of furniture for Jane. It was a stout desk-like table, strong enough to support the lathe and motor which Chan said he would fasten down. He had brought along the necessary tools to do the job. He had also brought for Jane a package of fine hardwoods, such as walnut and mahogany, a mere one-eighth inch thick, just right for doll house tables and desks.

For Jane and Luther and Denis, Christmas night meant a trip to Carrollton Heights to play poker with the assembled Roby family members. It was a long standing tradition. Aunt Connie's husband, Uncle Ray Irvin picked them up and drove them through the snowy streets, to the Heights, where the wealthy homes were, their living room windows showing beautifully trimmed Christmas trees within.

Denis was taken upstairs to Grandma Roby's room where her nurse would take care of the baby while the others played cards. Grandma Roby was delighted to have the little one. He was the only true great-grandchild she would ever see, for her son Frank, and daughter Connie each had adopted children. Her son Harold had two daughters, but they were still young, and by the time they married and had children of their own, Grandma Roby would be gone. And of course those children would not carry on the family name in any case.

Aunt Adalyn did not join in the holiday poker game. She had been ill again with another bout of acute bronchitis and was under doctor's orders to be very quiet. But the baby was brought into her room and admired most sincerely. And Adalyn presented him with a wooly suit for his winter airings. She also presented Luther and Jane with a subscription to a brand-new magazine called "LIFE". It had just started publishing and was so in demand it was hard to come by a copy.

The poker game was fun. Jane had to have a piece of paper made out to tell her the values of straights, flushes etc. For the first time she met Luther's other uncle, the middle son, Harold, and his wife and two daughters. Everyone was in a holiday mood, and after cookies, fruitcake and coffee, Uncle Ray took Jane, Luther and the baby home.

When they were finally getting ready for bed, and the baby settled with a nice warm bottle, Jane said, "You know, Luther, I had a good time, and poker was fun, and I like your Uncle Harold and his family, but one thing bothers me."

"What's that, honey?"

"I don't think Uncle Frank likes me."

"Aw, honey. Sure he likes you. He's not wild about me though. He's kind of jealous you see."

"Jealous! Why?"

"Because I'm the one to carry on the family name and I'm such a son of a bitch. But I've got a son; I've got Denis. And his kids are adopted."

"Well, Luther, I hope he doesn't hate Denis."

"Aw, no. It isn't that bad. I don't even think he hates me. You should have heard him singing our praises the Monday after we washed the windows in the foundry. He told Dad you were really something."

They got into bed and Luther went to sleep, but the Scottie dog, Bonnie, asked to go out, so Jane had to dress and take her do to the street for a short stroll in the snow. After she got settled in bed again, Jane was wide awake and thinking about other Christmases in her life. There had been some that were better than others; there had even been some sad ones. The ones when she was small had been quite wonderful, because no matter how much they might have quarreled at other times, her mother and father were always happy on Christmas. The surprises they put under the tree made them happy, and there'd been cornucopias full of hard candies and candy-canes that got sticky and the pine needles stuck to them, and there was the year they first got electric lights on the tree. And Aunt Ida always loved fixing the holiday turkey and dressing and boiled onions and the rest. Aunt Ethel and Grandma Rahming always brought armfuls of white boxes tied with red satin ribbon bows that showed they were all bought at Strohmeyer's store.

There was the sad-happy Christmas of 1924 after Daddy had moved out of the Cliff Street house in Fire Valley and gone to live with Grandma and Ethie on Cartwright Street. But they had all come out to Fire Valley for Christmas. It was a bitter cold day, and that was why they had brought the new canary in a wrapped cage with warm hard-boiled eggs to keep it cozy. The canary, Peter, had been given eventually to Grandma Martin, and had outlived her only to be killed by Trink's dog.

And Christmas 1925 had been sad indeed, for Daddy was gone, the divorce was over, and he and his new wife were spending the winter in southern France. Mother had been very grim and bitter. She and Dee and Jane had gone to Oberlin on the bus, to be with Aunt Merly who was spending her first Christmas without Uncle Waldo.

The Christmas with Carle had been quite festive and there had been plenty of money for presents, but things were not the same. And the one Christmas in High Rock had not been very happy either, for Mother had stayed in Cleveland and hadn't come home to join Dee and Jane till February, when the tree was brown and naked of needles. After that were all the Depression Christmases, not all of them bad, especially the ones when she and Narze could be together. But those were all Christmas-past memories.

The last two Christmases were mixed - still Depression, still short of money, but happy waiting for the baby, happy with the new puppy, and now happy with darling little Denis, and much of the time, happy with Luther. But things to worry about too - always Luther drinking.

Grace, of course, was lying awake as well. She was an expert at insomnia, and on Christmases was wont to do more than the usual amount of agonizing over Norris. Often she would weep as she thought about the troubled years when the girls were younger. The Christmases had always been such bright spots.

But tonight she was thinking not o much of Norris as of Carle Semon, and even of William Henry Baker. She had seen them both that day. William had stopped by in the afternoon with a Christmas gift, a beautiful book by Rockwell Kent, illustrated with woodcuts. William had wanted to stay awhile but Grace had headed him off by informing him that she was having dinner with friends. Of course, the "friends" were just Carle and herself. She reflected that it was good that they were still friends, for a few weeks ago Carle hadn't been in a good mood at all. Irvin's loss in the election had really upset him. And it had been such a bad loss. Carle surely must have been embarrassed by the landslide. However, he would get over it, but he had been

pretty testy for awhile. One Sunday evening in November, when they were having dinner together Carle brought up a painful subject. She had noticed more than once that he had eyed her left hand rather pointedly. But that evening he suddenly came out with what had been on his mind for some time.

“Did you lose Mother’s ring?”

She was taken aback, but said calmly, “No, Carle.”

“You didn’t sell it!”

“No, Carle. Not that either.”

“Then why don’t you ever wear it? I thought you valued it.”

She was surprised that he had raised the matter all now that they had restored their cordiality. For at the time of their divorce hearing, it had been a point of ultimate bitterness that the judge had said that “the lady should keep the diamond engagement ring”.

Put Grace knew that it was not the diamonds value alone that troubled Carle, but that it had been his own mother’s engagement ring. Grace would not have taken it if she had had anything but grief in that marriage, and if she had been awarded any other kind of settlement.

She had answered Carle, “I do value it; it’s a very lovely ring.” Truthfulness would be best, as it always was. “But, Carle, I had to use it to secure a loan.”

“You pawned it?” he asked.

“Nelle has it. She lent me five hundred dollars a few years ago. She’s holding the ring.”

“You should have let me give you the money for it.”

“We weren’t speaking at that time, Carle. Anyway, I wouldn’t have thought you had the cash either.”

“I could have raised it. You shouldn’t have let it go, Grace.”

“Oh, Carle, it isn’t gone! Nelle promised me she’d keep it for me. It’s in her safe deposit box. I’ll get it back just as soon as I pay her off. If there’s one thing to be said for Nelle, it’s that she doesn’t go back on her word.”

“Alright,” Carle had said, and he had not spoken of it again. And this evening had been so pleasant; They had been able to understand what their past difficulties had largely been. She had not had time to get over the shock of her divorce from Norris, and had been worried about Jane’s health; he was grieving over his mother’s death, didn’t understand teen-age young eople, realized she would never completely stop caring for Norris. They were both very candid and they agreed that from now on they would be “very dear friends”.

As she grew sleepy Grace thought about William Henry Baker and how he had again today proclaimed his consuming love. But, oh: she didn’t like him. How strange to have, at this time of her life, two men in love with her, but not the one whom, in spite of all, she truly loved.

IT'S YOU I CAME TO SEE

In the middle of January, Grace wrote a letter to Nelle.

“Dear Sis,

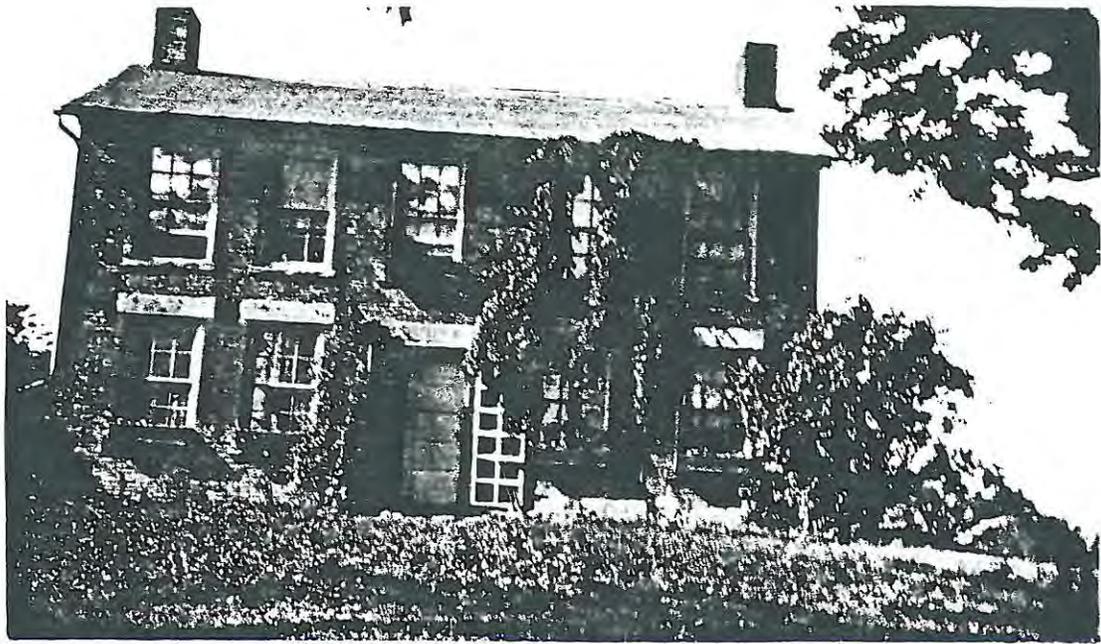
“I see by your Christmas card that you three are all still in Toronto. Does Roge think the radio venture will work out this time? My word How our lives have been changing! And here I still am. Jane’s baby is such a little darling and I do feel that it is good for him to have me here. Jane has so many interests that I just don’t see her in this domestic role, really. I wish she had not seen fit to rush into this unwise marriage. As I told you before, her young man drinks, and I see no indication of his overcoming the problem. He is from a very fine family too, but that doesn’t count for much. I’m quite convinced the marriage won’t last, and it would be all for the best. Jane might yet get an education.

“Well! Enough! On to other matters. I learned something recently that distresses me no end. Stan has bought the Old Brick from Art. Now, I can hear you saying, ‘What’s distressing about that?’ In itself it sounds alright. Certainly I’d rather have Stan have the old place than Art (who is not very responsible.) But what upsets me is that Stan says the Old Brick really ought to be torn down. He says that the brick is ‘rotten’. Do you believe that Nelle? I think all that is needed is a good job of pointing up that brick and Stan could certainly do that. But he said, if he could afford it he’d build a good sound frame house on the old foundation. Nelle, I hope you’ll write to Stan (he’s so fond of you) and beg him to forget the idea of pulling down the - dear old homestead. Mother and Father would have been broken hearted. By the way, I learned from reading one of mother’s old diaries, that Art bought that place for only \$6000! That’s outrageous, Nelle. The Old Brick should be a Historic Site. Stan should look into that really.

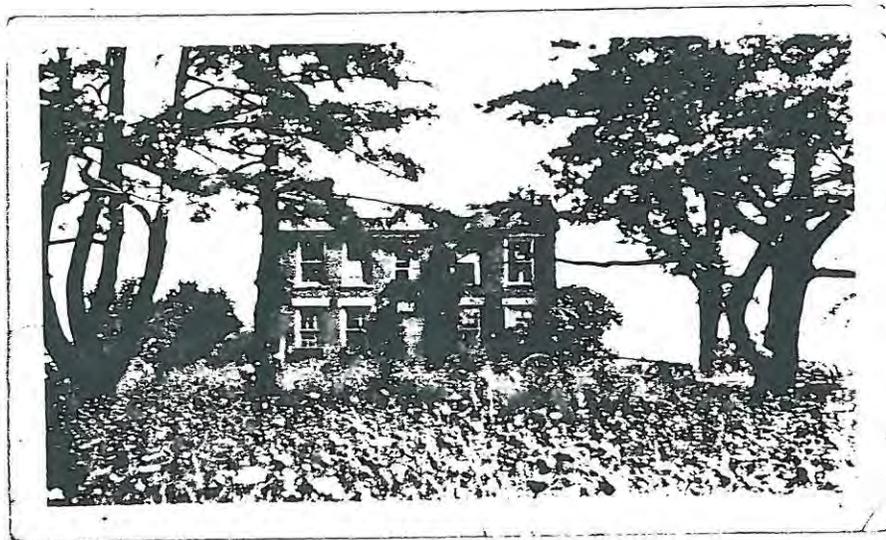
“Well, Nelle, to change the subject, our holidays were quite festive in spite of our money shortage. Luther got Jane a lot of finery again and also a couple of electric motors. Imagine that! I did tell you that she makes doll house furniture? She’d much rather do that than housework. Well, anyway, we all got some nice gifts and Carle was here Christmas evening. He has mellowed, Nelle, and is being most amiable.

“We had quite a New Year’s party. Jane invited Mim, and Mim brought her new beau, a young piano student from Oberlin Conservatory (quite a genius really). We have a piano again, an old upright Edna Whiteman let us have. It’s not very wonderful, but it was fun and we sang and sang. Mim’s Bill (yes, another Bill!) can play anything by ear, even if he doesn’t really know it. You hum it and he’ll play it. Such talent! And such fun. Dee’s old school chum, Skipper Root, was here too, with her young lawyer husband, Bud. Their baby’s due in May and they are so excited. Skipper has a fine soprano voice and added to our song fest. We were going strong and in full voice when midnight came and Bill; (his name’s Tallmadge) struck up Auld Lang Syne. We . . . , you know, the ‘super’ here, a simple-minded fellow, came and knocked on our door and told us to stop the noise or he would call the police. Well, I told him to go ahead and call them if he thought he could find any police who would stop a New Year’s Eve party. Ridiculous! We heard no more from him.

Mim and her young man stayed over and we put them up in the living room on the two parts of our studio couch, with my folding screen in between, a la ‘It Happened One Night’, Such fine



THE OLD BRICK



THE OLD BRICK WITH
ITS SCOTCH PINES

young people. I wouldn't be surprised if they become quite serious. We were all impressed with William's talent.

"Well, Nelle, old sis, I'm getting sleepy and must wind this long letter up and hie me to bed. I do hope you and Roge are feeling more cheerful. You both would have enjoyed the singing at our New Year's party. Our 'wild' evening ended up with Luther and Bill Tallmadge settled in for a game of chess after Clement and Skipper and Bud went home. We had a nice little midnight supper, too. You'd have enjoyed it, Nelle. Wish we weren't all so far apart.

Much love

Gracie

P.S. Please do write to Stan about the Old Brick.

####

After finishing the letter to Nelle (which she had ended because she was sleepy) Grace could not settle down. She lay awake a long time after, thinking about Jane and Luther. The marriage would not, could not, last she was sure. Luther had come home drunk several times since Christmas. If Jane divorced him what could she expect in the way of alimony and child support? Luther didn't seem to earn very much money at present, but of course the family was wealthy. However, Jane could hardly sue the Roby family for divorce. If she had only not rushed into this marriage. She must have done it because she was peeved that she hadn't been able to go to college. Well, and she should have been able to go, too. If only she herself had known how that ill-fated trip to Africa was going to turn out, she could have at least paid for Jane's first year tuition. And then Jane might have been able to get scholarships for succeeding years. Of course, if only Father's will had included a modest bequest for her to use for the girls' education how it would have helped. It was very unfair when Nelle connived with Merly and Edwards to leave Art and her, Grace, out of the Will. She had worked hard from the time she started in New York City. It wasn't fair for Nelle to compare her with Art. Father may have spoiled Art, but he hadn't spoiled her. He'd helped her, but he'd helped the others too. The boys especially, all but Luther. And the other girls had never had to scramble for a living. Addie had had a tragedy but Father, then, had protected her for all of her life, as it turned out. And Merly, of course, after Waldo's death, had acquired security along with the responsibility of caring for Mother and Father. But in all fairness, it had to be said, that in her last years, Mother had practical nurses to wait on her needs. Of course, Merly was tied down to the responsibility, no question about that, and there was nothing wrong with providing an extra sum for Merly in recognition of her years of daughterly service. Merly could have had her legacy without any need to cut any others out of the will completely. It was something vindictive on Nelle's part and had nothing to do with how much money Father had given in the past to any one of them. Was Nelle bothered by the fact that Roger always enjoyed her, Grace's, company? I can't help that, and I wish he wouldn't, Grace thought. But it was only recently that Grace got to realizing that Nelle had leaned on Father for many years herself. Nelle had said more than once (of Norris) "You picked a lemon in the garden of love, kid." And always, Grace was so discomfited by Nelle that she got defensive. But she now knew, with the clear view of hindsight, that she should have called attention to Nelle's first marriage. Earle had been a much "sourer" lemon than Norris ever was. And Nelle had rushed home to Father and Mother, lost her baby, and lived at home for ten years before leaving to marry Roger. Was that so different from the kind of help that Father had given Grace and Norris, or for that matter Art? Father had lent them some cash from time to time; Nelle he had supported completely.

Oh, piffle! It was idle to mull it all over and over. But if she could only figure out how to get Jane out of her disastrous marriage and into college where she belonged. Mim was in college in Oberlin, and Trink was about to start at Michigan. All that was possible because of Merly's legacy. Her only hope for getting Jane into college was to get to work and write her African story and sell it and paint many pictures. For, she thought, Jane's divorce is inevitable.

Jane lay awake nights, too. Ever since Christmas there had been one thought uppermost in her mind. She and Luther must find someplace where they could afford to live by themselves. The drinking problem might never be solved but certainly there was no chance of any improvement as long as they lived with her mother and Dee. Luther had been talking for months about how he

hated to come home to his mother-in-law's disapproving stare. "Dee does it too, but not as bad as your mama, and Dee isn't always there. They both make their mouths in a tight straight line. 'Grim' is the word. Just grim." Luther explained that the reason he liked hanging around in Jimmy Black's place was that "everyone there likes me."

"Dee and Mother like you, Luther," she had told him.

"Not really," he insisted.

"Yes, they do. Really! Except when you're drinking."

"Dee drinks too," he pointed out.

"But not in the same way, Luther."

At New Year's Jane had an opportunity to talk with Skipper Root Irwin. For the time being, Skipper was living at home with her mother in Fire Valley, while Bud was living at his parent's home 150 miles downstate while he got his law practice going in the town where he had grown up. They had talked the whole thing over and decided Bud would have a harder time getting established in Cleveland, and since his father's family were well-known business people in East Riverport, that was the place to start his practice.

Skipper had spoken of all this to Jane. "We don't like being separated so much, but till after the baby comes it's better. I like my doctor here and the hospital too. I don't want to have the baby in East Riverport. And I won't live there until Bud and I get a little place of our own. I absolutely refuse to live with Bud's folks. His mother does not want me to be a Christian Scientist. She asked me if I was planning to raise the baby in those odd beliefs. Bud said, 'Mom, let Skip alone about that, will you?' But she was at it again the next day, so I told Bud I'd spend most of my time up here. He comes up every weekend and I've gone back with him for a week a couple of times, but I won't stay. Bud will have a place for us by the time I bring the baby home from the hospital. Believe me Jane, all married couples should live by themselves."

"I agree," said Jane. "The problem is being able to afford it."

She thought about the problem more and more, and she had a new reason for being anxious to move somewhere with just Luther and the baby. There would be some disadvantages she supposed - mainly that she would have to take Denis with her when she went to the store. She wouldn't be able to leave him with his Grammy. Nor could she and Luther go to a movie without making arrangements for Denis' care. They would have to adjust to such inconveniences.

But there was more weighing on Jane's mind. Something had happened during the week between Christmas and New Year's. She had gone out one evening with Dee and Chan, to a place in Cleveland's "Little Italy" called the Sorrento Club. It was the currently popular spot on the eastside of Cleveland, especially in the area surrounding the university. Mona James had brought it to Dee's attention, and mentioned that the "old crowd" was all going there.

It was not Jane's idea of her favorite way to spend an evening. Sitting at a table or a bar all evening drinking and chitchatting was neither relaxing nor diverting. What she enjoyed was an evening such as they had spent New Year's Eve when they all sang around the piano. And she

liked to go to the movies occasionally, or to go for a drive. Dee had advised her to go out drinking with Luther once in a while as a possible help in his drinking problem. Jane had strong doubts that such a prescription would be curative, but when the others suggested going to the Sorrento Club, she did not object, as Mona had said the music there was good.

Now that more than two weeks had passed since that evening, Jane wondered how accurate her memory was about what was done and especially, what was said at the Sorrento Club bar that night. They had all had more to drink than usual (except for Luther possibly) and certainly Jane had had more than she usually ever took.

When they came into the place, they found it very crowded with no tables available, but two couples at the bar were leaving, so they sat there. Thinking back on that evening, Jane's recollection of events was hazy especially as to sequence. But she was certain of some things. She had been drinking whisky sours; she had no idea what the others were drinking except that it wasn't their usual beer, although Luther had started with beer. Jane knew that she had not had that much to drink since the evening after she and Luther got married. She remembered that Mona was there with somebody new and she said hello and left. And then Dee saw other people she knew sitting at a table and she wandered off to talk with them. Chan saved her place for her till she came back. Luther knew the couple sitting on the other side of him and talked to them for a few minutes, while Jane talked to Chan and Dee. Dee suddenly gave a surprised gasp.

"Why there's Jan!" she exclaimed. "My gosh!"

Frank Nikola had come in with another man and the two of them found seats at the far end of the bar. Dee hesitated only a minute or two then turned to Chan.

"I'm going to say hello to a friend of mine down there," she said. "Frank is back in town."

"Okay. Bye-bye," Chan said.

"I'll be right back. Save my seat."

"If I can," he said and turned to Jane. "Who is Frank?"

"A fellow she went with a couple of years ago. He's an artist."

"Oh, yeah. I remember. He moved out of town?"

"That's right. They were more or less engaged."

Dee stayed at the other end of the bar so long that someone else claimed her seat.

"I'm not going to fight with the guy over a barstool," Chan said to Jane.

"Well you couldn't save the seat forever for her, after all. She's been talking to Frank a long time."

"And I'm not going to fight with him over her either."

"Well I can't say I blame you considering everything. Chan, you're too patient and good to Dee. She always goes for the guys that are hard to get. She takes you for granted, Chan."

Luther was still talking to the man on his other side, whom he had told Jane was a former classmate at Carrollton Heights High School.

Chan said to Jane, “She may take me for granted, but I guess you realize, don’t you, that it’s you I come to see?”

“And Mother, and Luther, too. Isn’t that right?” If she had not been drinking, Jane would have begun to feel nervous at this point. But Chan went on.

“You know that I’m in love with you, don’t you?”

Those words cut through the haze of the whiskey sours and she put her hand on his arm impulsively.

“Oh, Chan, I’m so sorry. Really I am. But—”

“But you’re married,” he said.

She nodded wordlessly.

“And you plan to stay married.” It was a statement, not a question.

Again she nodded solemnly.

“Well,” Chan said softly, “don’t worry about it. I shall no doubt survive.”

From that point on, according to Jane’s memory, the evening had turned ridiculous. Dee had come back to find her bar stool occupied, whereupon they had all departed to find another night spot. Dee said that the Virginia Club downtown was supposed to be fun and they had enough room for dancing. So they had gone there for a short while but it too was crowded so they left. The trip home was what Jane remembered. All of them had recently been entertained by Denis’ baby talk word for peek-a-boo. He could manage to say “pee-boo” and the whole family had taken it up as a greeting. So they rode home through the streets of Cleveland sticking their heads out the car window yelling “Pee-boo” at any and all pedestrians they passed. They entered the apartment still laughing, but after Jane got into bed, she realized that incredibly, despite the number of drinks she’d had, she was not at all ready for sleep. She was, in fact, very much sobered. The short conversation at the bar came back to her. Had she imagined it? No, she had not. Chan really had said he was in love with her. So now what to do? It was a complication; it would change things. She would not know how to act around him. He had said that she was the one he came to see. Was anyone else aware?

Was Luther? Probably not, because Chan had been almost like a member of the family for so long that his presence was never surprising. Whether he was dating Dee, making picture frames for her mother, or bringing upholstered cushions for her to sew, Luther was used to it all. And what about Dee? Did she know how Chan felt? Possibly. But she would not have died of a broken heart over it. Chan was not really her type. Dee was always pining for someone else. What about their mother? Jane wondered about that. She did know that it would suit Grace quite well if the marriage to Luther didn’t last. But surely she wouldn’t promote anything with Chan. Once Grace had wanted Dee to marry Chan, but she never talked about it anymore.

Jane thought about it all and came to one positive conclusion. She and Luther would just have to find a place where they could live by themselves. They had wanted to for a long time, but now they really must. It would not do to stay with her mother and Dee and have Chan coming around to see them all. No it would not do at all now that she knew how Chan felt - she and Luther would have to wage the fight against his drinking all by themselves. It made it harder for Luther as long as there were others around to witness, and if he found out what she had learned this evening, things would be even worse. The best thing she could do to help Luther would be to find a place as soon as possible. But when they moved out of the apartment Chan would probably understand why.

She made up her mind that night to start looking for an apartment right after New Year's.

####

Clement Chandler lived at his Aunt Edna's house on Cartwright Street and his mother lived there, too. His aunt's name was Edna Freebern now, but when she first moved to Cartwright Street all the houses were brand new, and so was Edna's second marriage to a man named Walter Majors (originally Janousek). Edna had been married when she was seventeen to a man much older than she. The marriage hadn't lasted and Edna and her family never talked about it. She was very much in love with Walter, but her second (and longest) marriage was anything but placid. Walter was famous for a very bad temper and Edna was an independent person, who though even-tempered, did not always do what Walter expected of her. They had no children and it was not discussed why. But in his thirties he discovered that he had a bad heart. His doctor told him that it had been caused no doubt by syphilis which Walter had acquired years before while in the Philippines during the Spanish-American War. The malady was said to be "innocently acquired". In any case, Walter was walking with a cane before he was forty years old, and one day Edna came home from shopping in downtown Cleveland to find Walter dead in the front entranceway. She concluded that he had become violently angry and had a fatal stroke because she was not at home where he expected her to be when he returned from work. Walter had worked as a real estate man for the Cleveland Brewing Company. It was his business to buy saloons and keep them leased out. The proprietors of course would sell the products, Sunshine Beer and Sunlight Ale.

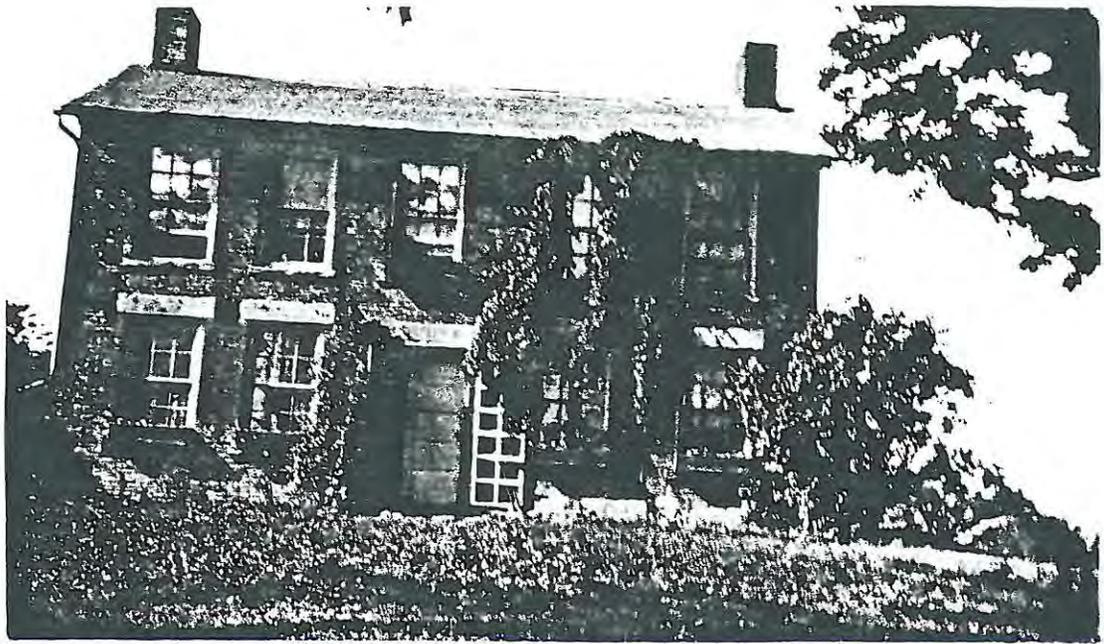
Fortunately for Edna, when Walter died so suddenly, their house on Cartwright Street was free and clear. In time she received a widow's pension, and she had several ways of earning money. She painted china and sold it, she made lampshades, crocheted handbags, and French dolls and sold them. Also she designed hats for a Cleveland millinery company. In the late twenties Edna married for a third time and thereby lost her widow's pension. However, when she and Bradley Freebern were divorced in the early thirties, Edna succeeded in having her pension reinstated. And she continued to make and sell things, and she enjoyed doing it, though it did not make her rich.

Edna's younger sister, Josephine, (sometimes called "Jo") had lived with Edna for nearly five years ever since her own husband, Harry Harvey, had to take employment in another city. Harry and Josephine had given up their apartment and put their furniture in storage and Josephine and her son, Clement, (sometimes called "Chan") had moved in with Edna.

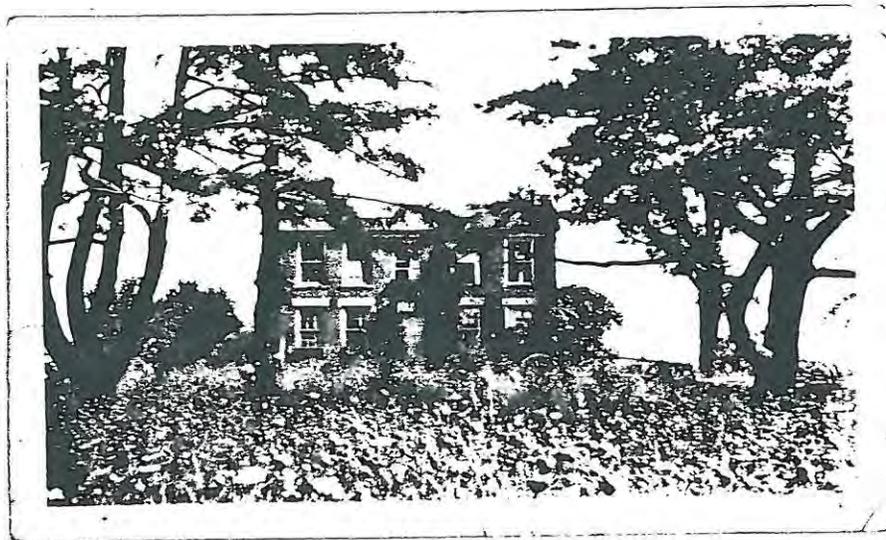
Josephine and Edna did not call Clement by the name "Chan" until after he came home from four years of college and told them very definitely that he hated to be called "Clemmie" and wanted them to stop it. They had a hard time remembering. Edna particularly slipped up often, but Chan forgave her because he was fond of her. Edna liked to make things and so did he; they were kindred souls.

Jo had less trouble learning to call her son "Chan" because his father Cement Chandler had also been nicknamed Chan. She too, occasionally forgot and said "Clemmie".

Except that he would rather have a good job and his own home, Chan was not unhappy living at his Aunt Edna's house, He had the attic bedroom all to himself and he had fixed it up comfortably with all his books and a few pictures. Aunt Edna was quite willing to let him work on furniture or picture frames in her basement. She did not fuss about the mess and clutter it



THE OLD BRICK



THE OLD BRICK WITH
ITS SCOTCH PINES

made. His mother had always deplored the disturbance and general disorder that arts and crafts projects always made. When Chan was a little boy his mother cleaned up after him as soon as he left whatever he was working on, and he grew angry and frustrated, often protesting, "But, I wasn't through with that!" She complained about him as a moody and sullen boy. Nevertheless, she doted on her son and often bragged about how very clever he was and how artistic. Edna chided Jo about her passionate neatness.

"You shouldn't be forever picking up Clemmie's tools and materials when he's making something. No wonder he gets mad at you.

"But, Edna," Jo said, "I thought he was all finished and it was such an awful mess."

"Oh, you're always housekeeping. You don't understand at all what it's like to make things."

"I used to embroider and sew quite a bit," Josephine said.

"But not anymore - I swear you gave it up because it spoils your tidiness."

"Well, I'm not happy in a cluttered house, and I'm looking forward to the end of this depression, when Harry and I can have an apartment again."

Edna never commented when Josephine started talking about getting an apartment with Harry again, because it was fairly common knowledge that Harry was in no hurry to do so. He said he couldn't afford it yet, and that he was not in Cleveland on a permanent basis and it was much simpler for him to just check in at the Carleton Square Hotel. Edna had heard from a friend, a rumor that had it that Harry was in town to stay and that he had a small apartment at the Carleton Square. What's more he'd been seen more and more often with the woman who had been his secretary during the early twenties when he was still in business for himself as an architect, Beryl Simpson had also been part of Harry and Jo's social crowd in those earlier days, and she wasn't pretty, so when Harry kidded, around and flirted some with Beryl, it hadn't bothered Josephine much. She had been busy with her own flirtations. But when Edna heard that Harry was seeing Beryl again after being out of town for several years, she had some thoughts of her own. She doubted very much that he would ever come back and live with Josephine again. Edna was well aware of the qualities her sister had that could drive one to distraction. Josephine loved to socialize; she liked to go to luncheons, style shows, dinner parties and dances. And since, very often, there were no such events to attend, Jo was discontented and restless much of the time. She fussed about it and it got on Edna's nerves.

"Why don't you get some crocheting or knitting to do?" Edna suggested. "Or why don't you read a book? I've got a couple of new mystery stories that are real good."

"I don't feel like sitting and reading just now," Josephine said.

"You never feel like it," said Edna.

"Well, you know how I am. I like to be doing things. I like to be active. I wish I was a dancing teacher. At least if Harry were home we could go to parties like we did in the old days. We used to have lots of fun dancing. I'd still like to go out the way we used to. Holy Toledo! I'm dying on the vine. I'm not ready for the rocking chair yet Edna. I'm still in my forties."

“You’re forty-nine,” said Edna.

“Not till April,” said Jo.

“This is February,” Edna said.

Edna got on Josephine’s nerves, too. But it was Edna’s house, after all, so Jo could not complain as much as she would feel inclined to do. In fact, her son told her she should not complain at all.

“Don’t gripe at Edna, Mother. We’re lucky we can stay here. It would cost us a lot more anywhere else.”

“We pay our way, don’t worry,” Jo said.

“But she had more peace of mind when she had her house to herself,” Chan pointed out. “You make her feel uncomfortable.”

“What makes you think that?”

“I know,” said Chan, “because I feel that way too.”

Jo would have been ever so happy to leave and let Edna have her house to herself. She didn’t like the atmosphere or the decor. Edna liked to keep the house close-curtained and dimly lit, with the warm, rosy glow cast by frosted orange light-bulbs, and dark, beaded lampshades. Her davenport and easy-chairs were upholstered in dark red crushed velvet, with piles of velvet cushions in similar, deep and seductive colors. It was definitely the decor of the early twenties. There were some very interesting pieces of bric-a-brac in Edna’s house and Josephine could appreciate those. Walter had picked up many curios of carved ivory, teak, and brass while in the Spanish-American War. He had brought home an opium pipe which always fascinated people, and a full suit of oriental armor which stood in a corner, completely black and wearing on its facemask a baleful grimace. The floors were covered with oriental rugs of many sizes.

But now it was not the early twenties, it was the late thirties and Josephine would not decorate in what she considered the “Theda Bara style”. She would not curtain her windows in pongee silk so that scarcely any light entered. Instead, when she and Harry got their things out of storage and got an apartment again, she’d decorate in a more up-to-date way. She’d let the sunshine in with filmy curtains at the windows, and she’d have nice bright wallpapers, instead of dark grass cloth like Edna had. She might even enamel some of the furniture in ivory or cream. Or maybe green. Oh, if only Harry would agree to their getting an apartment!

But Josephine had another worry, almost but not quite as troublesome as her yearning for a proper married life of her own. Her son Clement her only child, was thirty years old, college-educated, a very intelligent man, but he was getting nowhere, and he was getting there fast. He had no career, not even an ordinary job with wages. He wasn’t aggressive enough. Intellectual people were like that. They hated to assert themselves. Clement should be among those in the country who were employed, not among the others, the ones the papers called “the army of the jobless.” Harry had been in that army for a while, too. And then the Torgeson Company had let him work at half pay. After his four years out of town he was working for Torgeson Company again. Harry was lucky; also he was an architect. Too bad Allie wasn’t an architect, too. He

should have studied something more practical. He'd started out to study engineering, and then changed and studied psychology. He wasn't lazy, of course, he had tried for a year after getting out of college, and he'd managed to get work, till the company had been forced to let workers go. So here he was at thirty making and repairing things and just drifting along. And no sign of getting married either. He needed to find a good job or else to find a wife with money. Or both. That would be best of all.

FREDERICA IS MAKING YOU A BROTHER

But Jane spent the entire month of January and part of February looking for a suitable apartment without finding anything she and Luther could afford. Of course she could not go looking more than once or twice a week. There was a spell of very cold weather and also she could not leave Denis at home with his grandmother, for Grace had gone to Oberlin for a visit. Under the present arrangement Luther paid the rent and gas and light, while Dee provided grocery money. The phone bill was divided between them. When they went by themselves they'd have it all to pay.

Jane was about to give up looking when a thought occurred to her. If she and Luther could not afford a regular apartment perhaps there was some other answer. She recalled the place where Skipper and Bud Irwin had lived while Bud was finishing law school. It was on 97th Street not far from the house where she and Skipper had shared a room in Jane's first summer after high school. The place where she lived now was a three story apartment on the corner of 97th Street and Sloane Avenue, but on 97th nearer to Grand Avenue there were many once fine old homes that had belonged to well-to-do Cleveland families. They were big impressive houses with three stories of large rooms, and almost always on one front corner, a Norman style tower. Many of the streets in the eighties and nineties near Grand Avenue had been built up with such homes just before the turn of the century. But now they were approaching shabbiness and more than half of them were rented out in furnished rooms or light-housekeeping suites.

One day late in February Jane found a place on 97th Street that she felt she and Luther could afford. The landlady, a Mrs. Columbo, assured Jane that she did not mind renting to couples with a baby, since she had three small children of her own. Mrs. Columbo was a widow and she and her little family lived in the basement of the house, and rented out all the upper rooms.

The 'suite' that Jane found suitable was an unusual set of rooms, so unconventional that Mrs. Columbo was asking just \$7.50 a week for it with gas and electricity included, and of course, steam heat. This meant that they would be better off on their expense for rent and utilities but they would no longer have the food allowance that had been Dee's contribution. "It will cost us just a little bit more," Jane told Luther when she brought him to see the place.

The apartment consisted of one large furnished room that had once been a back parlor. It was furnished with pieces old enough to be scarred and shabby, but not old enough to be interesting. What had been a fair-sized closet was now an incredibly small kitchenette with a small sink, small stove and very small icebox. The shelf space was large enough to set out four dinner plates.

Since there was no clothes-closet available, the room had a large wardrobe. There were two dressers, several chairs and a table, and a studio couch.

Attached to the large room and at the rear of the house was a small sunroom, with two walls made up of windows. This could be Denis' room. Fortunately it was heated.

"But will he be able to nap with all that sunlight?" Luther asked.

"There're window shades," Jane slid, "and I'll hang something else up to dim the glare a little."

"Where's the bathroom?" Luther wanted to know.

“Two doors down the hall. We have to share it with one other tenant.”

“And what about Bonnie?”

“It’s alright. We can have her. Mrs. Columbo has a dog and a cat. I told her about Bonnie. And also we can bring our own bed to have in place of that studio couch. We have to use our own sheets and towels but we can do our laundry in the basement. Diapers, too, Mrs. Columbo said.”

And so they decided to make the move. The plan did not sit well with Dee and Grace who voiced strong objections.

“You can’t afford it,” said Dee.

“Yes, we can,” Jane said. “It’ll cost us about the same.”

“It’ll be bad for Denis.”

“Why?”

“He needs Mother,” Dee said.

“I don’t agree,” Jane said. “Mother just dotes on him, that’s all. I can’t help that.”

“But Mother does lots of things for him, Jane. She bathes him and all kinds of nice things.”

“That’s her pleasure to do it. She thinks I wouldn’t do those things if she weren’t with us.”

“But we worry about Denis.” Dee said.

“Yes, I know, and you mustn’t do it. You and Mother have your own stuff to worry about. Denis is my child.”

“Mother has more experience,” Dee said.

“I’m not so sure,” Jane countered. “Aunt Nelle helped other with you, and Aunt Ida raised me.”

“Well, what we really worry about is Luther’s drinking,” Dee said. “We don’t know what you’re going to do.”

“I know, Dee, but it still is Luther’s problem and mine.”

Grace’s arguments were the same as Dee’s and she had more of her own.

“When you’re living by yourself, what would you, do if you got sick and couldn’t care for Denis?”

“Mother, most young couples live by themselves, don’t they? What do they do? I suppose Luther would stay home from work and take care of me till I could manage.”

“Luther! You couldn’t count on him!” Grace said.

“Maybe under those conditions I could. We’ll have to see.”

“Well, I think you’re making a big mistake to go it alone. And what’s to be done with all the things we have here? What will you do for furniture? I’ll probably run down to New York for a few weeks, but Dee will have to have furniture and she won’t be able to stay here in this place.”

“Luther and I don’t need the furniture. All we’re taking is our bed and Denis’ things. The rest is yours and Dee’s.”

“I don’t know where we can find a place.”

“You could find the kind of place Luther and I found.”

Dee, however, made arrangements to share rooms with Mona James. Mona knew a woman who had attic rooms to rent. The house was in East Cleveland, far out on the Grand Avenue Street car line. Chan helped her move her things, making several trips with her trunk, suitcases, and the studio couch which she was buying on the installment plan.

Although Jane had hoped not to have to ask Chan to help with the moving of the things she and Luther were taking to Mrs. Columbo’s house, Chan made the offer and Luther accepted gratefully.

He said, “We can’t ask to borrow Grandma’s Lincoln to haul furniture on top.”

Jane’s plan to see very little of Chan in the future was being frustrated in another way. He had more furniture work for her to do, and she could not turn it down, as she needed the money. She felt fortunate that Dee had not put in a claim for the old treadle sewing machine that had been Aunt Ida’s. Jane’s work for Chan was primarily the re-covering of sofa cushions, and “I haven’t the heart to take it away from you,” Dee had said.

“Daddy gave it to me,” Jane pointed out.

“Well, but I like to sew too,” Dee said. “However I’d like to get an electric machine when I get through paying on the couch. God, I wish I was rich!”

As for Grace, she went to Oberlin, after getting William to take her and a few of her valued belongings to be stored in the garage “attic” of Merly’s new house which she had bought with her legacy from her father’s estate.

Up to the last, Grace had tried to get either Dee or Jane to take the upright piano to the new abode.

“We can’t possibly, Mother,” Jane said. “I’m sorry.”

“Neither can I,” said Dee. “and Chan can’t haul it and I can’t afford professional movers, can you?”

“No, I can’t,” Grace said, “but it’s such a shame. We had so much fun with it on New Year’s eve.”

“Yes, we did,” the girls agreed.

But they all moved out and left the piano behind.

####

Since it was their first home by themselves, Jane and Luther were quite excited about settling in. There was not much they could do to change the general appearance of the big room since the only piece of furniture to be substituted was the bed. Ah, that bed! How fortunate it was that the salesman had persuaded her to buy a double, rather than a single bed. And within three months she was married.

Luther and Chan had gone back and forth all one afternoon moving belongings, It was not there were so many things, but that Chan's little Willy's car could carry so little - only one big piece at a time. They would put small things inside the car and then, for instance, the mattress, carefully wrapped in old sheets, on top. On another trip, the bed springs and dismantled frame, and next time the sewing machine strapped to an ingenious wooden platform secured to the rear of the car. Finally, the men finished and Jane invited Chan to stay for dinner. She had splurged and bought steak even though it was thirty-two cents a pound. And Luther bought a bottle of wine.

"This could be called a house warming," Jane said, "but really it is a 'thank-you' to you, Chan, for helping us."

Just before Jane had dinner ready, Dee appeared.

"How's Denis? I wanted to see if he stood the move alright. Is he OK in a strange bed?"

Sure he's OK," Jane said, "Come and see him, but he's asleep and it's his own bed he's in."

She led Dee out to the sunroom, where she had draped the many windows with cheap black cotton fabric to darken the room. All Denis' little furnishings were there, his baby carriage, bouncing chair, high-chair and playpen. Also a set of shelves for his diapers and clothes that Chan had made for him, and in another corner the work table, with motor and lathe, another piece of furniture made by Chan for a Christmas present.

Denis was sound asleep looking like a cherub with his light golden-brown curls clinging damply to his forehead.

Dee had tears in her eyes.

"He's such a little lambie. I'm going to miss him so. I wish you hadn't thought you had to move away."

"We aren't 'away' very far. We're right here. You can always come see Denis. You moved way out far. Stop in sometimes on your way home."

"But I used to see him every day," Dee's eyes brimmed again.

"I know, Dee, I know."

Denis started to stir so they went back into the big room.

"I can't stay," Dee said. "I'm going out tonight, but I've got some big news. Oh, and that reminds me that I saw Skipper downtown in Strohmeyer's. She's more than six and a half

months along and she really looks it, too. She said she was in town to see her doctor. I hadn't realized she was going to have a doctor."

"Oh, yes! Jane said. "She promised Bud."

"But, I thought that was just for the birth," Dee said.

"I doubt if a doctor would agree to that arrangement," Jane said.

"They wouldn't," Luther said, "Not in this day and age."

"I don't get what you're talking about," Chan said. "Skipper doesn't want to see a doctor for the baby'?"

"Just that she's a Christian Scientist," Dee said.

"Oh," said Chan. "I get it. I guess I do anyway."

"Well, but Skipper wasn't my news," Dee said, "Today Daddy was in town and guess what he told me Janie"

"Gosh, I haven't the slightest idea."

"Go ahead. Take a guess," Dee insisted.

"Federica's expecting?"

Dee's face fell, but only slightly. "I didn't think you'd guess. How'd you learn?"

"You mean it's true?" Jane asked.

"Yes, it is."

"Oh, my God!"

"What's so awful? Daddy's thrilled."

"But Gee! He's fifty years old, Dee."

"What of it? He seems young to me. You know what he said to me? He said, 'Mary is making you a little brother.' I'm sure he's always wanted a son."

How does he know it's a boy, though," Chan asked.

"Of course he doesn't know that. But he said that if it turns out to be a little girl it will still be alright, because then Mary's daughter, Adele, will have someone to grow up with."

"Is Mother still in Oberlin, Dee?" Jane asked.

"Yes."

"Then she doesn't know about this, does she? All hell will break loose when she hears of it. I hate to think of it."

Dee soon left and Jane, Luther and Chan sat down to their steak dinner shortly after. Chan did not stay late, however, and shortly left Luther and Jane to their first night by themselves since their marriage.

“Well,” Luther said. “We never had a honeymoon. I guess this must be it.”

“Luther,” Jane asked, “will things be better now?”

He put his arms around her. “Sure they will, honey girl. Our living room is all ours, our little kitchen is all ours and, wonder of wonders, there’ll be no one walking through our bedroom on the way to the bathroom. This is a vast improvement for us.”

And in many respects it was, for though it was shabby it was nevertheless cozy. It lacked certain conveniences, but for Luther and even more for Jane, it meant freedom from the pervasive atmosphere of continual criticism caused by her mother’s presence. Dee was critical also, but that usually seemed to be a matter of Grace’s influence.

Luther said, “Just think! We can get undressed in the living room and dance around in our skins and no one to prevent.”

In fact,” Jane said, “we have to undress in the living room, since it’s also the bedroom. Oh, and we mustn’t forget to always pull the shades. We aren’t on the third floor now. But at least it’s easier to take Bonnie out for her walks now. So there are some minuses and there are some pluses but at least we are by ourselves.”

“Yes,” Luther said, “and it’ll be great to come home at night to one woman. Coming home to three women is an entirely different proposition.”

They went to bed that night with Jane’s radio playing softly beside the bed. They were full of food and wine and contentment and optimism.

####

“I think it is outrageous!” Grace said to Merly. “In fact it’s ridiculous!”

Merly found that she could not suppress a smile at Grace’s choice of words. Ever since Grace had hung up the phone after talking to Dee, the sparks had been flying.

Grace did not ignore the smile.

“Really, Merly, do you think it’s so funny?”

“No, I suppose not,” Merly said. “Still I don’t find it so surprising.”

“But Norr is fifty-one years old! Well, he will be in a couple of months, anyway. That’s no time of life to start a family, Merly.”

“Still,” Merly said, “these things happen. After all, didn’t you say she is twenty years younger than Norr and that she has a little girl?”

“Yes,” Grace said.

“Well, from her point of view, she may feel that she doesn’t want to raise an only child.”

“Oh, Merly, don’t talk to me about ‘her point of view’. It’s terrible just the same. Norr couldn’t even scare up a penny toward college for Janie, but he goes ahead and gets a new wife and now he’s going to be a father again. So I haven’t any sympathy for their point of view.”

No,” Merly said, “and I understand why you feel that way, but that doesn’t change matters.”

“And another thing,” Grace went on, even more indignant, “Dee says that Norr is teaching at Kenmore College. Can you imagine that?”

“Well,” Merly said, “I imagine Norr would be good at teaching. He always loved to talk and explain things to people. He’s good at it, too. I can see him teaching, yes.”

“But, Merly! Ye gods! Norr didn’t even finish Art School. How can he possibly get into a college as a professor? Dee said he told her he’s a professor! Why he has no degree of any kind. He’d have to have a college degree. I’m certain of that.”

“You can’t prove it by me, Gracie,” said Merly. “You’ll have to ask William when he comes. He and Trudy will be here Sunday. They’ll know.”

“Yes,” said Grace firmly. “They have degrees, both of them.”

But when William came he set Grace straight about professors.

“Oh yes,” he said. “We saw a little item in the paper about Norris. Kenmore College has an endowment from the Duerson Foundation to establish an Art Department, and Norris has been named.”

“Named? Dee said Norr told her he was a ‘professor’. He didn’t even graduate, William. He has no degree.”

“Wouldn’t have to have, Gracie. All he has to do is occupy the chair. In this case the Duerson Chair of Art. According to the item in the Herald, Norr’s credentials looked pretty impressive. I wasn’t aware of it, but he’s got his oil paintings in some of the best art museums in the East, in their permanent collections, and it mentioned his training in Europe.”

“Training in Europe!” Grace sputtered. “He never trained in Europe. He was there twice. As a tourist! Trust Norr to tell them he’s ‘trained’ in Europe. What he did is see to it that I never trained in Europe. A fine professor he is!”

“Well,” said Gertrude. “Life is full of irony, Grace. Many things seem very unfair and there’s nothing we can do but just accept them.”

“It’s all very well to be philosophical, Trudy,” Grace said, “but it isn’t easy.”

“No,” Gertrude said, “but it’s the way we survive.”

WE'RE IN A PICKLE NOW, LUTHER

During the first month of living by themselves, Jane decided that Luther actually was doing better about his drinking. He almost always was home by six o'clock. It was true that he always smelled like beer, but he told her he just liked to stop in at Jimmy Black's at the end of the day for "just one cool beer." The foundry was a hot place to work, he explained.

Denis was growing fast. A month after they moved into Mrs. Columbo's house, Denis at almost ten months was spending most of his waking hours on his feet in his play-pen, going round and round holding on to the rail and laughing triumphantly. He had very sunny disposition, which Jane decided he certainly got from his daddy. She often reminded herself that, whatever his other faults might be, Luther Roby certainly had a most amiable and equable nature. He loved the cartoons best, when they went to the movies, sitting and chuckling away with delight, and complaining only that they were too short. Jane had been so amused their first night in the new place when Luther had undressed for bed, and as he threatened to do, "danced around in his skin" hilariously before joining her in the bed to celebrate "our first one" in the new house.

March had gone out like a lamb and now in early April, the buds on the trees were so advanced that the quality of the light shade on the side walk was changing daily. In the afternoons Jane would take Denis in his cheap canvas baby carriage with the Scotty dog, Bonnie, on leash, and they would walk down Grand Avenue toward Whitfield park. They would pass the Adam Hotel with its memories of Narze, and finally they would come to the formal gardens and lagoon that reflected the classic Grecian-style art museum. There were memories connected with that museum, too, particularly, of when she and Dee were children and they were all dressed up in patent-leather slippers and organdy dresses. It would have been a Sunday afternoon in May, when Daddy had paintings in the Spring Show, and there was the year that Betty Long had the two ivory miniature paintings of Dee and Jane. That was all of fifteen years ago. Daddy could not have any more paintings in the Spring Show because he had moved away from Cleveland. And Betty Long was gone for good. Everything was changing fast in the world, except for the beastly Depression. That went on and on.

Jane was upset this April day. She had not planned to be in her present condition for, at the very earliest, another six months, better yet another year, and even then only if the Depression was ending, and Luther's earnings were much better. Jane really wanted more than one child. How many would depend on how successful Luther was in stopping his drinking, and in being able to earn a living. All things being as they should be, one could expect him to go into his father's company. But all that depended on better times, and on what Luther did about his habit, though things had seemed encouraging about that. But they had made a mistake on their very first night in the new place. Of course, it wasn't confirmed, but she knew. She had known for a week. Somehow she had known when she was two days late, for she was never late. She would not tell Luther until she was positive, and of course, only a doctor could say that. But she would know for sure herself in another week or two. That's when she would begin to have morning sickness. Oh, dear! She hated to think of that.

She would wait just a little longer before telling Luther so that there wouldn't be anything to distract him from the "new leaf" he was trying so hard to turn over. She didn't want him thinking

and worrying about how they could not afford another baby. No - not yet. Wait a few weeks longer. Maybe business would pick up downtown at the foundry and money wouldn't be so tight.

But telling her mother and Dee was another matter. Jane would wait as long as possible before telling them, especially her mother. For Grace's reaction to the coming of her first grandchild had been bad enough. What would it be like when she learned about the second? More than once she had muttered to Jane, "You can't continue to live with this boy." So Jane would postpone the day when she would have to face the inevitable "run-in" with her mother. Meanwhile Grace was in Oberlin and Jane hoped she'd stay there until the six weeks of morning sickness ended. After that she could get through half the summer before she'd show, if she wore the right clothes. And anyway probably her mother would go to Forest Camp in June or July.

But things worked out differently.

The morning sickness started on schedule, though it didn't seem as bad as the first time, at least if she didn't come near a bar of Camay soap. After losing her first breakfast she was alright for the rest of the day.

The first week in May she went to a baby shower in Fire Valley for Skipper Root Irwin. Dee had a date and couldn't go along but sent a gift with Jane, who had a ride out to Fire Valley with a Cleveland friend of Skipper's. Mildred Carter had known Skipper for years.

"It's too bad Dee didn't come along," Mildred said. "She's going to miss seeing a lot of the gals who were classmates when she and Skipper were in Fire Valley School together."

"Dee has this brand new boy-friend, and felt it was important she not pass up this date," Jane explained.

It was true there were many of Skipper and Dee's old friends at the party. They were all four or five years older than Jane but she remembered several of them. There was Gloria (the girl who had been "fast"), and Cornelia (the red-headed pug-nosed) and Janice Dale (who sucked her thumb through twelve years of school). And, of course Skipper, now "big as a house" and exclaiming over all the pretty baby presents.

At the shower, Jane began to feel happier about her pregnancy. Skipper was so thrilled about the coming event, and several of the other young women were new mothers and one of them had her adorable one month old baby with her, Jane found an opportunity to whisper her secret to Skipper.

"I may not show the way you do," she said, "but, guess what! I'm expecting too."

"Really? When?" Skipper asked.

"Late December, I figure it."

"Gee! How old is Denis now?"

"Eleven months. I know. They'll be very close together. About nineteen months. It will be nice for the babies, but rough on me, I guess. I didn't really plan it this way. Luther and I had a sort of

housewarming party one night in March. We forgot all about this possibility, but now I'm beginning to plan for it. I hope it's a girl."

"Jane," Skipper asked, "does your mother know about it?"

"No!" Jane said. "Not yet, and oh, boy! don't mention it."

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Jane's plan to postpone her mother's knowledge of the pregnancy went away a few days later. And it happened in the worst way Jane could have wished it to happen.

About four days after Skippers baby shower, Grace came to Cleveland after several weeks in Oberlin. She spent the night at William and Gertrude's and while there, she tried to call Dee at her new address. Dee and Mona were out for the evening. She reached Jane, who assured her that Denis was just fine and she and Luther and Bonnie were fine, too. Grace told Jane she'd be out to see her in a day or two. In the morning, Grace called Dee at work to arrange to have lunch with her. The time and place were set and then Dee passed on some news.

"Mom," she said. "I got a thank-you note from Skipper for the shower gift I sent to her. It just came and it says 'What do you think of Jane's December secret?' What do you suppose Skipper means?"

"Jane's December secret," repeated Grace. "I have no idea... Something about Christmas, do you suppose? Or - I wonder. Oh dear God, I hope she isn't pregnant again."

"I haven't heard anything about that," Dee said.

"That would be a tragedy," Grace said. "I'm going to run out to see her right away. But - I'll meet you at 12:30, though."

The morning was rainy. Jane had waked early because Denis was crying. She went to him and knew at once he had a dirty diaper, not just wet. It was the wrong time of day. He was usually just wet. He must have had too much mashed banana. Luther often helped feed Denis the foods he liked such as pudding and strained fruits. Luther had been so amusing about prepared baby foods and Pablum. He had asked so innocently the first time he saw Jane feeding such food to Denis, "Can humans eat that stuff, too?" He had even been surprised when Jane had laughed so hard, until she said, "No, but adults could."

Jane picked up the dirty tot and a clean diaper and headed for the bathroom down the hall, but she came right back because the other tenant was in the bathroom. She cleaned Denis up as best she could using wet washcloths dampened in the kitchenette. His sleeping suit as well as the diaper were soiled. She washed his legs and his little bottom, while she fought waves of nausea and retching. She piled the soiled clothing and washrags on top of the diaper pail, and pinned a clean diaper on the baby and put him back in his crib while she fixed him a bottle. She laid a dry towel over the damp spot in the crib,

Meanwhile, she began the morning struggle to get Luther awake. He never woke easily, but it varied according to how much beer or whisky he'd had the night before, and lately he'd been better. Once he was up and having canned orange juice, toast, and coffee, he was his normal agreeable self.

This morning as they sat down together Jane gave a gagging sound and left for the bathroom. When she got back Luther questioned, "Smatter, you sick?"

“No,” she said, “but Denis was in an awful, dirty mess this morning. We’ll have to take it easy on the mashed bananas in his Pablum. Strained prunes are even worse. It always gets me to change dirty diapers. It doesn’t usually happen at breakfast time. It gets me.”

Her explanation seemed reasonable and shortly after, Luther left for work. Jane then ate some toast with orange juice. She couldn’t stand coffee at present. Next she got Denis out of his crib, since he was awake again and wanted to get up and about. She changed his diaper again and put on his socks and shoes, and one of his little suits that buttoned between his legs. She left the buttons unfastened (what was the use; he’d soon be wet again) and put him in his playpen.

She decided to sit quietly at the table for a while reading yesterday’s Cleveland Herald. Luther always brought the final edition home. Jane had found that sitting quietly after breakfast helped. If there was anything that Christian Science might be helpful for, it was nausea of pregnancy. Sometimes, just thinking about certain odors would start her stomach rolling. So she sat quietly for a time reading about the upcoming coronation of the new king of England. Anyone who wanted to get up very early in the morning on May 12, could listen to the ceremonies, which would be transmitted by short-wave radio. Mother wouldn’t want to miss that. How excited she’d been last December when King Charles had abdicated.

Thinking her stomach might be depended on to behave now, Jane decided to rinse out Denis’ soiled diaper and sleep suit, but when she got near them she knew it was too soon. She would wait till later. She carried the breakfast dishes into the kitchenette and left them in the sink. She headed into the bathroom down the hall, with the plan to brush her teeth. As soon as she was in the room, she knew that the other tenant had been using Camay soap. She couldn’t see it anywhere, but she could never miss that scent. She gave up the battle against nausea and got rid of her breakfast. She was in the bathroom about ten minutes, washing her face, brushing her teeth, and tidying up. She tried to air out the room and freshen it up, also hoping to get the hated Camay odor out. Then she went back to her apartment. As she reached her door, she was startled to hear someone talking within the room. She paused a moment, her hand on the door knob. Then she recognized her mother’s voice. Grace was speaking to Denis.

“Why you poor little lambie! Grammy’s poor little nipper! That a mess you’re in and wherever is your mother?”

“I’m right here,” Jane said. “I was just in the bathroom for a few minutes. I didn’t think you were coming today.”

“Well, there’s a reason why I did,” Grace said. “This baby’s in a terrible mess.”

Jane saw that her mother was right. Denis had soiled his diaper again. Not only that; his socks, shoes, and the floor of his play pen were involved in the problem, for he had been tracking round and round the perimeter spreading the evidence.

“You poor little dear,” Grace soothed. “You need your Grammy around to keep you sweet and clean.”

“Damn it, Mother! He’s only been that way for a few minutes at the most. He’s got a problem, because I guess I let him have too much ripe banana last evening.”

Grace's expression changed then, and she got a knowing look in her eyes. "As I went past the bathroom, I heard you retching in there, didn't I?"

"Not really. Someone uses a brand of soap in there that I just can't stand. It always makes me gag. It's sickening."

"When you have morning sickness, you mean."

"Oh, Mother!"

"You're pregnant, aren't you? Don't deny it, because I know about it," It was somewhat of a shot in the dark, because she did not know for sure. But it was an old established tactic that she gambled on. And won.

For Jane was completely at a loss.

"How on earth could you know such a thing? I myself don't know it."

"Skipper Root wrote to Dee and mentioned a 'December secret'." "Skipper did? I don't believe it! I'm learning that nobody can be trusted. And everyone meddles in other peoples affairs. I wish to hell people would stop being so interested in my personal life."

"You show yourself to be too young to have a personal life."

"Mother, that's a preposterous thing to say and you know it." Grace actually had known as soon as she said it, that she had not chosen the right words.

"You're too young for two children. You're a child yourself."

"I'll be twenty-one in a few weeks," Jane said.

"The whole point is that Luther drinks and that you are not naturally domestic. It's hard on Denis."

"Denis' just fine. He's happy and growing well."

"There are more dirty things of his out there in his so-called room. I saw them lying there on the diaper pail. They smell."

"Of course they smell. But they haven't been there long. Mother will you let me alone, please?"

"I'm going downtown to have lunch with Dee, I'll see you later. You know you really must not go through with this pregnancy. Luther can't support you, as it is, with one child."

"He supports me," Jane defended.

"Just barely. Have you been to a dentist lately?"

"No, have you?"

"Yes, I certainly have," Grace said.

“Have you paid him, though?”

“He’s going to take a water color. Listen I’ve got to hurry to meet Dee. This has to be discussed further. I worry myself sick about your health. You have those allergies you know. They interfered with your nursing Denis.”

“That was a different time of year. This time it will be winter.”

“It better not take place at all.”

“Oh, Mother,” sighed Jane, “go ahead and have your lunch with Dee. You’ll chew it over, both of you. I know you will.”

And now Jane knew that she must tell Luther as soon as he came home. There was no telling when Grace would put in her next appearance, for she had told Jane the night before that she planned to rent a room in Cleveland until it was time to go to New Hampshire with Roge and Nelle. Jane had not mentioned this to Luther. She had not wanted anything to upset his efforts to stay “on the wagon.” She felt that the longer he went with no more than one beer a day, the better his chances were. But now she must tell him about the new baby and it was going to be harder now, because since talking with her mother today, her mood was completely changed. She had been dismayed when she first suspected her condition, in part because Denis was still just a baby himself; but after Skipper’s shower she had felt happy about a second child, perhaps a little sister. But now, she was filled with doubts again and was at a loss to; present the news to Luther in a way that would not be a shock to him. She had no faith in her ability to do so. There was no way to change the fact that they couldn’t afford a family. Of course, there was still half of Luther’s thousand dollar legacy. But what a pity to start eating into that five hundred dollars. They’d probably have to dip into it for the doctor and the hospital, for they certainly couldn’t seem to save a penny. The trouble was the way Luther’s father paid him. He would give him five dollars one day, and five dollars another. But he did not give him an end-of.-the-week paycheck. But Luther said the “old man” did the best he could.

When Luther came home she could tell that he had more than one beer, but he was not very late, so she said nothing about it and decided that telling him might even be easier in his mellow state. But she waited until their dinner was over and then decided not to beat around the bush.

“Luther. Brace yourself. Do you remember the night we moved in here and we had the steak dinner and all the wine?”

“Yeah.”

“Well, I’m afraid we celebrated not wisely, but too well.”

“Not Wellesley, but too while?”

“Really, Luther. This is serious. I had too much wine that night, and I forgot all about precautions, and I guess we both did. Anyway, we’re in a pickle now, Luther. We really are.”

Luther understood. He pursed his lips as though to whistle, opened his eyes wide, and raised his eyebrows. Presently he said, “Oh, boy!”

“It is a pickle isn’t it?”

“Well,” Luther said, “it complicates things. It sure does. We couldn’t stay in this place, that’s certain.”

“Of course, we wouldn’t be staying here indefinitely anyway. But it’s the money that’s the problem. You just don’t earn enough at the foundry.”

“No,” he agreed, “but it’s my best bet to stay with the ‘old man’.”

“Luther, I should tell you something else. Mother was here this morning. She knows.”

“Oh, boy!”

“Yes, and of course she thinks it’s terrible. She thinks I shouldn’t go through with it.”

“You mean an operation?”

“Yes.”

Luther pursed his lips again and mused a moment.

“Gee, I don’t know. It’s not an idea I’m crazy about. It’s something ‘other people’ do.”

“I know,” she agreed.

“But it’s true we can’t afford it. Well, we don’t have to make up our minds tonight. We can ponder it a while.”

“But not too long, Luther - it’s better sooner than later. I know that from Mona’s two experiences. She waited too long the second time, or maybe it was the third time.”

“My God, what a bitch”

“Well, Luther, if we decide not to take that way out, it’s a good thing we have that money in the savings account.”

Luther looked just a bit off balance but he didn’t respond to that. Jane said, “We do have \$500, still, haven’t we?”

“Not all of it,” he said.

“Not all of it! Where’d it go?”

“I hadda lend the old man some.”

“Oh, Luther How much is left?”

“I don’t know. The passbook is down at the shop.”

“You must have some idea. Half of it? Or more? Or less?”

“Less,” said Luther unhappily.

“Well, that’s awful. I feel terrible about that.”

“So do I,” said Luther.

THE'S ONLY ONE THING TO BE DONE

Jane had thought it a disaster the day before when Grace arrived to discover the pregnancy and Denis in a dirty diaper, but what happened in the next forty-eight hours was worse.

Luther went to work troubled. He was more upset that Jane had learned about the savings account than he was about the pregnancy. And he had not told her the worst of it. The money was gone. The foundry was busy in the morning because his father was pouring a "heat", but when Luther went out to lunch at 1 p.m. he did not go back to work. Instead he stayed in Jimmy Black's tavern all afternoon drinking beer and whisky. But by 6 p.m. Jimmy Black persuaded him to go home. He had asked Jimmy Black to always tell him to go home by 6 p.m. But usually he came in at 5 not 1 p.m.

Luther made it home stumbling drunk at 6:40 and he passed out on the bed, not to be heard from again that evening. Grace and Dee arrived at 7 p.m. They took in the scene of Luther on the bed and Jane who hastily dried her tear-filled eyes. They went out to Denis' sun-porch nursery and played with him for a while, then returned to the big room. Jane spoke softly of Luther.

This is the first time this has happened since we moved here," she said, "and there was a reason. But you won't believe me."

Neither Grace nor Dee responded to that, but each of them wore a grim expression as they prepared to leave.

Jane took the opportunity to introduce a more comfortable subject. "Don't forget the coronation tomorrow morning. It'll be on the radio before the crack of dawn. Four o'clock I think."

"Good grief" Grace said. "So ungodly early?"

"That will be nine o'clock in London, Mom."

Jane set her alarm clock and turned her radio on early. She roused Luther somewhat, but he could not stay awake being still under the effects of his binge the day before.

"Just think, Luther! We're hearing it right from London from Westminster Abbey right when it's taking place."

But Luther only made an occasional mumble and did not rise until the pomp and circumstance were over and Harry VI, his queen, and the two little princesses and others of the royal family had waved from the balcony of Buckingham Palace. The sound of the broadcast had been periodically blurred by the distortions of short wave transmission, but Jane had found it fascinating and would have liked to have listened to it with Luther, or anyone else.

"Did you really wake up at 4 a.m. and listen to the whole ceremony? How come?" Luther asked later.

"Oh, I love history," she said. "And then my origins are British."

"I see. Well, I'm off to work now. By the way, were Mama and Dee here last evening or did I imagine it?"

“You didn’t imagine it,” Jane said. “They were here, and you were too. On the bed.”

“I thought I heard Mama’s voice. I thought she went to Oberlin.”

“She did,” said Jane, “and she came back. She came back at the best possible of times.”

Ordinarily, Grace would have been up early and listening to the Coronation ceremonies, but she had spent a sleepless night and was sound asleep when the broadcast was on. She was staying at William and Gertrude’s and they had said that while they were Anglophiles, they doubted if they’d be listening in that early. They would wait and read about it later.

Grace had decided not to tell Trudy about “Jane’s plight” (as she termed it). That way, the matter would not need to be noised around the family. Grace had no idea what Gertrude’s views might be on the subject of abortion, but one thing Grace felt sure about Gertrude would be almost certain to say, “Grace you must allow the young people to work out their own predicaments. You shouldn’t try to solve things.” So she said nothing to Trudy on the other matter, but while Trudy was out back in the garden, Grace put in a phone call to the Roby Bronze Foundry.

Jane was just getting Denis up from his afternoon nap when Grace arrived.

“Sit down,” she said to Jane. “I have something to tell you.”

“Wait till I take Bonnie out to piddle. I’ll be right back.”

Jane wanted to give her mother time to calm down. She had recognized a certain expression on Grace’s face. It was a look that, in later years, Jane would think of as “Mother’s ‘the battle is joined’ look”. She had looked that way once when she announced, “Well! Carle is planning to contest the divorce.”

When Jane came back in with the Scottie, her mother still looked wide-eyed and keyed-up.

Grace plunged right into her subject.

“I talked to his father today,” she said.

“Luther’s father?”

“Yes. He agrees with me absolutely.”

“You actually went ahead and phoned him!”

“I went to see him,” Grace corrected.

“At home or in the foundry?”

“In his office at W. 4th Street.”

“Well, you must have been in Uncle Frank Roby’s office, because all the ‘office’ Luther’s dad has is a desk in the foundry. It’s in a corner. Were you back there? Back where the furnace is?”

“No, it was a regular office with a desk and a couch and chairs and so on.”

“Oh boy, that’s Uncle Frank’s office. Why did you have to go down there?”

“Uncle Frank was out of town. I went down there because one doesn’t discuss this sort of problem on the phone.”

“I wish ‘one’ wouldn’t discuss it at all.”

“I had to do something. You can’t be trapped in this situation. It’s terrible enough as it is with one baby to worry over.”

“But, Mother! You take so much on yourself. Really you do.”

“I want you to know Mr. Roby agrees with me that there is only one thing to be done.”

“He does? I’m surprised. I bet you suggested it.”

“He agreed that this Depression is no time to be having babies, and he can’t pay Luther any more than he does. But he’ll help with the cost of - of the -“

“Of the butchery?”

“Jane! Don’t talk like that. You have to admit this isn’t an unreasonable solution. And I’m sure you realize Luther spends a lot of his earnings on beer.”

“He hadn’t been just lately,” Jane said.

“Don’t you agree this is the wise thing to do? Don’t you really?”

Jane sighed, “I spose so, but I hate it. You certainly are in a hurry.”

“It’s not good to delay. Dee said Mona advises you not to wait. She did and it’s very much worse.”

“Great: I love taking advice from Mona. She’s a bitch.”

“Well, right at this time, Mona’s knowledge is important to us.”

“You didn’t need to drag Mona in; Dee knows who the doctor is. But, anyway, I have to talk to Luther about all this. For no matter what you say - you and Dee and Mona and Luther’s dad - if I don’t want to go ahead with it, I won’t.”

Nevertheless, a few evenings later, four women walked down 97th Street toward Grand Avenue. It was a very warm May night, the kind when one knows that summer is almost here to stay. In Cleveland, winter is long time departing, and springtime is often cold and wet, but this year Spring had been very pleasant. In later years, Jane will remember this as a very awkward promenade. Why were there so many of them needed on this venture? Mother and Dee, walking in front, followed by Jane and Mona. Were they all giving Jane moral support? No, that wasn’t it at all. Grace, Dee, and Mona were giving each other moral support. And they were paired off thus, because Grace shrank from walking with either Jane or Mona, so she walked with Dee. Grace was feeling extremely nervous. She kept talking about what a warm night, it was, and Mona said that her mother predicted it would turn cold and miserable in June. The conversation

lagged, and then Dee remembered to talk about the Coronation and how darling the little princesses had looked in their royal regalia and little coronets.

The group turned east on Grand Avenue and crossed over at the 101st Street traffic light. They entered a building a short way south on 101st. They went to the third floor on a self-operating elevator. No more conversation now, just awkward silence.

In the doctor's office they had not long to wait.

"Mrs. Roby?" the doctor said, and he ushered her immediately into an examining room.

The doctor was a pleasant enough man apparently about forty years

"So you think you're pregnant?" he said. It seemed funny to Jane.

"I know I am," she said.

"You have a child I understand."

"Yes."

"Well, slip your parities off. I'll be back in a minute."

There was no nurse or assistant present. When the doctor returned, he assisted Jane on to the table, probed painfully a moment or two, without comment. Then assisted her to a sitting position.

"Many married ladies must limit the size of their families. Don't be troubled about it," he said. "I can take care of you at eleven tomorrow morning. Bring \$150 with you and a friend or your husband to take you home in a car or a taxi. Also, you must see that you get a shave. We don't take care of that."

The conversation afterwards was limited. They all walked with Jane on Grand Avenue as far as 97th Street. Then Dee and Mona took a street car which would take them east to Halcyon Avenue, and Grace took another car going west to take her to William and Gertrude's. Before she left her, Grace spoke to Jane.

"And you're sure Luther will have what is needed?"

Jane noticed that it was apparently as difficult for her mother to say "money" as it had been for her to say "abortion".

"Do you mean the \$150?" Jane asked.

"Yes. Does he have it?"

"No, not yet, but his father said he'd have it tomorrow morning."

"Good," Grace said, nodding somberly. "Well, that's good."

When Jane got back to the apartment she found Luther looking dignified and sober. He wore glasses, always, for reading, and Jane told him he looked like an accountant. He said he would

rather look like a lawyer. This evening he was reading the editorial page of the morning paper. He looked respectable, domestic, and mature. He looked just the way he should have looked the evening that Grace and Dee discovered him dead drunk, snoring on the bed.

“Denis go to sleep OK?” she asked.

“Yep.” Luther laid the paper down. “How did it go?”

“It’s all arranged. Eleven o’clock tomorrow. I’ll need the money then.”

“The old man will have to get to the bank when it opens, so I can get back here with the money.”

“Does he come to work that early?”

“Oh, sure. He’ll be in early. They’re pouring a heat tomorrow.”

“I hate getting the money from him,” Jane said. “I hate all of it.”

“So do I,” Luther said. “It wasn’t my idea, remember.”

“I wouldn’t have let myself be talked into it,” Jane said, “but for two things. One is that you haven’t stopped drinking, and the other is that there is no more money in the bank. It really scares me Luther. Unless you stop drinking there’ll never be any money saved.”

“I was doing better though, wasn’t I, honey?”

“I thought so till the other night. Well, anyway, it would be better to wait till after the Depression ends before having more children. Which brings me to the business at hand which I hate. I hate everything about, it. The doctor said I’d have to be shaved. I mean before I get there. I mean I have to do it myself and I don’t know how I can. Oh, dammit!”

“I’ll help you,” Luther said.

“Oh, no! Oh, that’s too awful. It’s not a bit romantic. I’ll manage somehow. I just wish tomorrow was over.”

Luther left early to go to work. He promised to be back by no later than 10 a.m. with the money. He would go with Jane to the doctor’s office and wait until she was ready to go home in a cab.

“We’ll have to call our cab from the corner drugstore,” she had told him. “Mona told me that.”

“Doesn’t want too many sick-looking girls leaving his place, I suppose,” Luther said.

It had been arranged that Grace would come to stay with Denis while Jane was gone. She arrived at 9:30 wearing a concerned and anxious look, that bothered Jane.

“Mother, don’t look so grim. This business is bad enough without you putting on such a face,”

“I don’t have any special ‘face’ on,” Grace protested.

“Yes, you have. Go play with Denis. Cheer yourself up.”

“How soon do you leave?”

“About 10:30 - hen Luther gets here with the money. His dad had to get it from the bank. Luther should be here by 10 a.m.”

But Luther was not there at 10 am. Nor had he appeared at 10:30, when it was time to start for the doctor’s office. She had been trying to decide whether to call the foundry to learn whether Luther had left, when Mrs. Columbo came to tell her there was a phone call for her. It was Luther.

“I’m still down here, honey,” he said.

“But I’ve only got barely enough time to get there. You’ll have to come right out and meet me there.”

“I’m not coming, honey.”

“How come, Luther?”

“The old man didn’t get the money. He didn’t say he couldn’t; he just said he didn’t. I think he got cold feet. He doesn’t seem to even want to talk about it. So it looks like you’ll have to call the doctor and tell him you’re not coming.”

“Luther,” Jane said in a hushed voice. “That’s wonderful! I’m so glad.”

“I’m glad too, honey. Now you better call that doc.”

“I’ll have to think what to say,” she said.

“Hell, it doesn’t matter, honey. Tell him you changed your mind. Tell him you got cold feet.”

“Yes, I’ll do that,” Jane said. “Oh, this is really marvelous. Your dad is just great.”

“I’ll tell him you’re pleased about it, but he’s being pretty quiet this morning. I don’t think he wants to talk.”

“It’s OK, you can wait till the right time some day.”

When Jane returned to her apartment Grace was up and pacing around.

“Jane It’s nearly ten of eleven!”

“Don’t worry. I’m not going.”

“You’re not going: Why not?”

“Because of plenty of good reasons, but right at the moment, it’s because Luther’s dad decided he didn’t want anything to do with it. He doesn’t even want to talk about it, but he decided not to get the money. So that’s that.”

“Well! - “ Grace said, “I think you would better call that doctor and let him know.”

“I already have, Mother.”

“And what did he say?”

“Well, I told him that I had changed my mind and all he said was, ‘Suit yourself’.”

Grace got up and walked across the room and stood by a window looking out through Mrs. Columbo’s lace curtains. Presently, she turned and said to Jane, “Well, I guess I’m somewhat relieved.”

####

In the two weeks following the aborted abortion, Jane and Luther were in a state that could not quite be described as euphoria, but was nevertheless light-hearted and positive. A great burden had been lifted from their hearts, if only temporarily. Grace had gone to Oberlin in full retreat, and Dee again was occupied with her own interests.

During this period, Luther was on his good behavior. He seemed to be sobered in his emotions, as well as in his alcoholic intake. The strain of having his mother-in-law and his father conferring about the fate of the coming baby, and indeed of the marriage itself, had plunged him into a deeper discouragement than usual. But when the abortion plans were cancelled, his spirits rebounded. He felt a warm feeling toward his father for his change of heart on the matter.

One night Jane asked him, "Did your dad have anything further to say about why he decided to back out?"

"A little; not much. He said that he decided only one person should decide about such a thing and that is the mother herself. He had asked me if I thought you really wanted to go ahead with it. I told him that you had been talked into it as near as I could tell. He said that he didn't want any responsibility for it. He'd never forgive himself if something went wrong. And he remembered how you washed the windows "

Jane said after a moment, "Of course, something can go wrong with childbirth, too." She was to recall those words a few weeks later.

Although Jane had supposed that moving into separate quarters away from Dee and her mother would result in seeing much less of Clement Chandler, things had not worked out that way and the main reason for that was that Chan continued to bring furniture-restoring work for Jane to do. The work did not bring in much money, but every little bit helped and Jane was glad of the opportunity.

When the first of June arrived Jane planned a little birthday party, since she and Luther and Chan all had their birthdays in June. Jane thought of inviting Dee, too, but decided she couldn't afford a dinner party for four. She and Luther felt they owed Chan for many favors he'd done them involving the use of his car. Jane had saved enough money to buy a steak and other treats.

The date for the birthday party had not been set when Bud Irwin called to say that Skipper had produced a fine 8 1/2 pound baby boy. The baby had been born the last day of May. The labor had been rather long, but everything was alright, and Skipper was ever so happy. The baby was very good looking everyone said, but he was somewhat bruised from the forceps. The doctor had once suggested he might do a Caesarean delivery, but Skipper and her mother had not wanted that at all, and as it turned out everything was fine.

The next day Skipper's friend Mildred Carter took Dee and Jane to call on Skipper in St. Joseph's Hospital. All three girls had gifts for the baby and as Bud had reported, Skipper was happy and the baby looked adorable despite his bruises. Skipper said his name would be Dudley Budley Irwin III, which would please his grandfather, though Bud didn't think much of it himself. Skipper said she couldn't wait to get out of the hospital and take the baby home. She hoped to leave in ten days but her doctor said he preferred to keep his mothers in for two weeks.

“I’ll be bored to tears by then,” Skipper said. “Good thing I’ve got roommates to chatter with about our babies.”

“How would you like me to bring over some Life magazines?” Jane asked.

“Wonderful. They’re so hard to get. Where do you buy them?”

“We got a subscription for Christmas,” Jane explained.

“You’re lucky. Bud says we can’t get a subscription till they catch up with the demand.”

“I’ll bring you a pile of them.”

And two days later she visited Skipper again, this time with Bud. Jane remembered to bring along a half dozen Life magazines.

“I promise to bring them back,” Bud said. “Everyone is after them. I guess I’ll dole them out to Skipper one or two at a time, so the nurses don’t swipe them. Skip wasn’t feeling so chipper last night. Kind of tired. I think she’s just been running on pure excitement since the baby was born.”

“Don’t be surprised if she gets kind of weepy one of these days soon,” Jane said.

“Oh? Why?”

“It’s normal. ‘After-the-baby blues’, it’s called. They don’t know for sure why it happens. Some say it’s because the baby is getting all the attention and the mother feels neglected. I doubt that myself, but it’s a real downhearted feeling.”

In the parking lot of the hospital, Jane noticed across the way, on the other side of the valley through which ran the Carrollton Heights Rapid Transit cars, a familiar looking group of gray, wooden buildings, among tall maple trees.

She said to Bud, “See those buildings over there? That’s the Sunshine Camp. Ten years ago I spent three months there. We used to watch this hospital being built. We could see it from the play ground.”

“What were you doing there?” Bud asked.

“Mother parked me there to fatten me up, I was too thin.”

“So now you’re grown up, it’s no trick getting fat, I guess.”

But their light-hearted mood was dampened when they got to Skipper’s room. A nurse told Wee that Skipper had been moved to a private room because she was running a fever.

Bud asked anxiously. “Is she alright though?”

“Doctor Evans said you can call him this evening. He will answer any questions you have. He tried to reach you this afternoon.”

“Can I see her?” Bud asked.

“Oh, yes. She’s in 410. But don’t stay too long. She’s not feeling too well this evening.”

Wee and Jane walked to Skipper’s room and Jane said. “You go in by yourself and I’ll wait. You see how she feels first, and then if she’s OK I’ll come in and say hello, and then I can wait while you visit with her.

“Alright,” Bud agreed, but after a few minutes in Skipper’s room, he came out and beckoned Jane in.

She found Skipper looking very different from the vibrant girl she had been two days before. She looked wilted. Jane thought, just as some of the talisman roses that Bud had sent her were beginning to wilt.

“Gee, I’m sorry you’re not feeling well, Skipper,” Jane said. “I brought you some Lifes to look at.”

“Thanks. When I feel better I’ll enjoy them. I’m sure I’ll feel OK tomorrow. I just feel so weak.”

“I’ll come again when you’re peppier. I’ll let Bud have some time with you. I’ll be in the lobby, Bud.”

On the way home, Bud talked about Skipper’s unexpected illness.

“I’m worried,” he said. “and I’ve got a big problem. I reached the doctor and he’s afraid it’s an infection that’s causing the fever, though he says sometimes women do run a temperature after delivery, but he says they are usually back to normal by now, if they get plenty of fluids and rest. He doesn’t like fever after the third day, because in his experience, it’s either infection, or phlebitis, or a breast problem, such as an abscess. But he’s thinking it’s an infection, and he says by tomorrow, he’ll be more certain. And he’d like to try a new drug, called Prontosil. He says he understands it was used for the President’s son with good results, and University Hospital has been using it successfully.”

“Sounds good.”

“Well, the trouble is this business of Christian Science. You see, I talked to Skipper after I talked to Dr. Evans, and I didn’t tell her everything he said. I said nothing about infection, or phlebitis (whatever that is). I just said that Dr. Evans had a brand new medicine he wanted to give her and then she should be feeling much better soon. I really wish I hadn’t said anything about it.”

“Why?” asked Jane.

“She doesn’t want the medicine; she wants Christian Science. Her mother was here this afternoon, and she’s arranged for their practitioner to come tomorrow.”

“It would be good if she could have the medicine and the practitioner, too,” Jane said. “She’s believed in ‘Science’ as long as we’ve known her.”

“I suggested that she have the practitioner and still let Dr. Evans give her this new medicine, but she says that they don’t either of them work when you do that.”

“Well, that is what they always have said,” Jane said.

“Do you believe in it?”

“Gosh, Bud. I don’t know what to say. I guess for myself I don’t have that kind of faith in it, but Dee feels that she’s seen it demonstrated several times.”

“It isn’t anything I can swallow,” Wee said. “But I’ve always told Skipper that I wouldn’t interfere with her religion. But now, I don’t know what to do. Well, I’ll wait until after the practitioner sees Skipper tomorrow. I should go back to East Riverport, but I’ll have to wait and see how this setback turns out. Skipper feels so bad because she can’t nurse the baby. They put him on a bottle this morning.”

When Bud dropped Jane off at Mrs. Columbo’s, he promised to let her know just as soon as he could) how Skipper was, and what was being done for her.

“I’ll be keeping in touch,” he said, “and if she’s definitely better in the next two days, I’ll be going back to East Riverport for a couple of days. I have to be in court on Monday, but I may be able to have this hearing postponed. Did we tell you I got an apartment for us down there? But she’ll probably spend a couple of weeks at her mother’s when she gets out of the hospital. Then we’ll have our own place at last.”

“Oh, great, Bud! That’s good news.”

“Well, I’ll be calling you.”

“Thanks, Bud. You do that, please.”

I DON'T WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT

Grace was at Jane's three days later, when Bud Irwin stopped on his way from the hospital. He was in a very distressed state of mind, but was apologizing for not having phoned.

"Skipper is very ill. The day after you saw her she seemed about the same, but the next day she got very much worse her fever shot way up and she is so weak. Dr. Evans said he wanted to start that new drug. But Skipper's mother argued against it, and even said that Skipper would be better off at home. Dr. Evans had a fit at that idea."

"Bud," Jane asked, "is Skipper willing to try the new drug?"

"Skipper barely realizes what's going on; she's delirious most of the time. Well, last evening I told Mrs. Root that Christian Science had had its chance. So Dr. Evans started her on the drug and he hopes it's not too late. And this morning they gave Skipper a blood transfusion. Her brother, Bill, has the right type blood. But the doc said I'd better see if I could find some friends willing to be donors, because he'll probably want to give Skipper at least one more transfusion."

"Oh, sure, Bud, of course we'd be willing," Jane said.

"Well, you're pregnant so you can't give, but do you think Luther would be willing?"

"Oh, Bud, I'm sure he would. He'll be home soon."

"Well, what they want is for the donors to go to the blood lab at St. Joseph's to be typed - tomorrow morning if possible. I called Dee and she and Chan are going. They can stop by and get Luther.

Grace had been hearing the conversation and she stepped closer. "I don't believe Luther ought to give blood," she said.

"Oh?" Bud asked, "Why not?"

"Well," Grace said. "Luther drinks a lot of beer."

Bud was running a bit short of patience with mothers-in-law at this stage.

"So does Skipper's brother Bill drink beer," he said. "It doesn't matter."

After having his blood typed Luther went on downtown to work, but he called Jane to report that neither he, nor Chan, nor Dee had the right type blood. However, Skipper's friend, Mildred Carter, did have compatible blood and was scheduled to give Skipper a transfusion that afternoon. Luther also said that Chan had blacked out for a few moments after having blood drawn, and that he'd felt queasy himself.

In the next two days they learned that Skipper was holding her own and that her fever had subsided. And on Sunday Bud stopped by to bring the news, and to return the Life magazines.

“Skipper never felt up to looking at them, but I did, while I was sitting with her. I thought I’d bring them back. It’s going to be a long haul before she’s peppy again. She’s still very gravely ill, but it appears that Prontosil has wiped out the infection.”

“What an amazing thing! How about the baby? How is he?”

“Oh, he’s doing just fine. He’s on the bottle of course, and he’ll be two weeks old tomorrow. I’m taking him home this afternoon.”

“Home?”

“To East Riverport - to my mother. She’ll take care of him until Skipper is well again. He was a fairly good-sized boy to start with and he’s more than gained his birth weight back. Skipper hasn’t been strong enough to give him his bottle but they’ve brought him once in a while for her to see.”

“That’s good. And, Bud, when she gets to the point where she would like visitors, let us know.”

“I will, Jane.”

But in the next week she would have troubles of her own. With Skipper on the mend, Jane turned her thoughts back to the postponed birthday party. Her own birthday had been the third of June, with Chan’s on the eighth and Luther’s on the 24th. It was more than ever appropriate to invite Chan to a dinner celebration because again he had proved to be a genuine friend of the family, in his willingness to give blood to one of their friends, even though blood-letting gave him “the willies” he said.

But the birthday party was not a success. In fact, it never really happened. Chan had been told to come at six-thirty so that Denis would be fed and bedded down for the night, and the three of them could have their dinner without interruption. However, when Chan arrived, Luther had not yet come home from work, and Jane had already guessed the worst. Luther telephoned at seven from Jimmy Black’s tavern and said he’d be starting home in fifteen minutes. She urged him to start home immediately, and he said he would, as soon as he finished his beer. Meanwhile, Chan played with Denis, who also had had a recent birthday, his first.

At eight-fifteen Mrs. Columbo called Jane to the phone again. It was Luther again, this time really drunk, his voice fuzzy, slurred, incoherent.

“I’m comin’ home now,” he said.

“No! You wait at the Square. I’m coming downtown. You wait for me. Wait on one of those benches where I’ll get off the street car. Right there on the Square. You hear, Luther?”

“On the Square. Yeah.”

“Wait for me at the Square.”

“Atta Square. OK. I be there, honey.”

Jane told Chan she must go down to get Luther or he might step into the street and be hit by a car. She told him she would see that the birthday party took place sometime, but she didn’t know

when it would be. She asked him if he would take her to the street car on Grand Avenue. But Chan said, nonsense, he would take her downtown in his car, and they would bring Luther home.

Luther, somewhat to Jane's surprise, was where she had told him to be, on a pigeon-guano-decorated bench. He managed to stand up and smile amiably, as always, and rocked slightly on his feet.

They got him home and in the back way through Denis' sunroom, where Bonnie kept watch under the crib.

Luther took off his tie and one shoe and lay down on the bed and was soon oblivious to all.

"If I go home now," Chan asked, "will you be alright?"

"Oh, sure," Jane said.

"I mean, he doesn't get... well, it doesn't make him mean or anything like that?"

"Oh, no. He'll just sleep. He's always good natured, no matter what."

"That's good."

"Chan. Thank you so much for taking me tonight. I'm so sorry about the party turning out this way."

"I'm sorry, too," he said. "Better luck another time."

####

The following morning Luther left late for work. He had offered pleasantries and apologies but Jane had no inclination to talk to him.

“I’m awful sorry about the party, honey,” he said. “I guess I forgot about it.”

“Yes, and you wet the bed, too. I don’t want to talk about it.”

As he put on his hat to leave he said, “Well, anyway, I’ll see you later.”

Jane did not answer him.

After Luther had gone she tore the sheets off the bed, and went down into Mrs. Columbo’s basement to wash them. After they were hanging on the line, she came upstairs to get Denis up from his morning nap. She was all through with morning sickness now, having passed the three month stage of her pregnancy. It was one thing to be thankful for. Almost the only thing, she thought. If she had anywhere to go, she would go, but there was nowhere.

But that would change. Within an hour Mrs. Columbo came to her door to say she was wanted on the telephone.

She had not heard her father’s voice since Grandma Rahming’s funeral the previous September.

“Hello, Squiffy?” he said. (Nor had she heard that nickname in years, not since she’d been sick with pneumonia in 1931.) “I had a letter from your mother. She’s worried about you, she says.”

“Daddy. She’s always worried about me. About Dee, too.”

“I know, but maybe this time she’s right. Is that the case?”

“She’s right about Luther’s drinking. Not about ether things.”

“How would you like to come down to Springfield for a while? Give you a little rest and a chance to think. Would you like that?”

“Yes,” said Jane without a moment’s hesitation.

“Well, I had an errand to do here in town, but I have to go home this afternoon. Can you be ready in a couple of hours?”

“I could be ready in a half an hour, maybe even twenty minutes. But I’d have to bring my little dog Bonnie. I couldn’t possibly leave her. But she’s a good little dog.”

“Does she get carsick?”

“Never has.”

“Alright I’ll pick you up at two o’clock. What’s the house number there?”

“2218. Come around the back. Don’t forget it’s not just a dog I’ll be bringing. I’ll have Denis and his stuff, too”

Norris laughed. "I didn't forget. I'm very baby-minded right now. Mary and I have already got Adele's old crib set up for your little brother. Denis can use that."

While getting ready to leave, Jane wrote a conspicuously brief note to Luther.

"I have gone to my father's with Denis and Bonnie."

Before leaving she told Mrs. Columbo where she was going.

"I left a note for my husband," she said. "This trip was unexpected."

"I understand, honey," Mrs. Columbo said. "I've went through it."

The three hour ride to Springfield was beautiful. Spring and summer normally came two weeks earlier downstate. Rambling roses swarmed up over the porches and trellises. In the fields, the farmers were already cutting hay.

"Oh, I love that smell," Jane said. "I've lived in the city too long. Lucky Mother, she gets to go to New Hampshire."

"Roge still has that place, eh?"

"Oh, yes, but he never has a crowd there anymore; can't afford it. And I suppose people can't afford to go there either."

"How come your mother's going? What's she been doing lately?"

"She did a little illustrating for Edna Whiteman's new book of fairy tales. Hasn't been paid yet. But Mom always has traveling money to go East."

"Well, she's worried about you. I can't see why a boy from a fine family like the Robys should have a drinking problem."

"Does a fine family have anything to do with it, Daddy?"

"It ought to. They don't have as many worries as poor folks."

"Luther has lots of worries. His family is all so darn successful. It discourages him. He doesn't say so, but I know it's true."

"He seemed to be such a nice fellow."

"Daddy, he is a nice fellow, except for the drinking and that is ruining everything. He's talented in many ways and he has such an even disposition. He never gets cross."

"Not even when he's drinking?"

"Not even then.. Well, except for once, when I was trying to get him up to go to work, and he just flung out his arm at me. But it was more like he was swatting at a fly. No, he's just amiable all

the time.. But when he's drinking he's not at work, and he's not at home either. And we can't live in this way. He's not earning enough money, but that may not be the worst part of it,"

"Well, something will have to be done, that's certain."

The rest of the way, Norris spoke of other things, himself mostly, and of Kenmore College, which he said was a rather expensive, privately endowed school for men. The students, he said, were from moneyed families, but the academic standards were high. He enjoyed the life on campus, he said, and could do things his way, because the art department was new and he was it.

"Mary is secretary to the Kenmore Literary Review and she likes her job, but of course, she'll quit in August. The baby is due in October."

"Daddy?" Jane said. "I suppose Mother told you I was pregnant."

"Yes, she told me the whole story about that."

But they were arriving now at Norris's current residence, so the subject was changed. Norris turned the car in through a stone-pillared gate in a high iron fence which enclosed a large park-like area. A winding driveway under tall elms and maples led to a large and picturesque house.

"My this is elegant!" said Jane.

"Well, it's a good house, but we're only renting the second floor. I'd like to own it if I had the money, but it's not for sale, in any case. By the way before we go up, I should tell you that Ethel isn't well. She gets these funny spells. Dr. Brandt, Mary's father thinks that it may be epilepsy. It's rather similar."

"Gosh, do you think it is? I mean, isn't that hereditary? And here I am pregnant. Mary, too. I mean, if it's in the family..."

"I'm not going to worry about that. That's not the kind of thought to hold. Anyway, Dr. Brandt said it might be just the change of life."

Ethel seemed pathetically happy to see Jane and the baby. She kept making her strange little nervous sound that was half laugh, half cough. It was a noise that, Mary had told Norris, was driving her insane."

Mary came home from work and while working in the kitchen she and Jane compared their pregnancies. Jane was three months along, Mary five. They laughed because Jane's Denis would be older than his uncle.

"Or aunt, as the case may be," said Mary, "but Norr is sure it's a boy."

"Hope he isn't disappointed," Jane said. "I was to be a boy. Now myself, I'm hoping for a girl this time."

"Well," said Mary, "your father wants a boy, but he assures me we wouldn't drown a girl baby."

Ethie, who was standing near, gave her breathy laugh and Mary rolled her eyes toward heaven for help.

During the evening Luther phoned, apparently sober and totally contrite and loving. He told Jane he missed her and Denis, and he loved them, and how was Bonnie Dog? He told her that if she wanted to come back, he knew he could get Grandma Roby's car and he would come and get her.

"We only just got here, Luther."

"I know. Well, I'll call again day after tomorrow, and see how you're doing."

"Alright," said Jane, but she had not yet thawed.

She slept in Ethel's room that night, sharing the four-poster that had been occupied for so many years by her aunt and grandmother. Its hair mattress was permanently molded into gently rolling hills and valleys, but oh it was hard. Jane spent a miserable night thinking of her lovely Simmons Beautyrest at home, (the Beautyrest on which Luther had twice put a big, wet stain.) Ethel's body had apparently, over the years achieved a configuration that permitted her a good night's rest on the horsehair slopes. Denis slept surprisingly well in the unfamiliar crib and Bonnie, as always, slept underneath. Ethel's silver tabby, Binker (the same kitten born in the Channing Avenue house) slept in the curve of Ethel's knees.

The next morning Norris took Jane for a tour of the campus, and showed with pride his classroom-studio. Since it was summer, academic activity was minimal but Norris was teaching a small water-color class two days a week. Jane could tell that her father was brimming with enthusiasm over his new situation, and she thought about his coming offspring. He is starting over, she thought, and he loves it. If only her mother could start over.

In the afternoon, Jane and Ethie went outdoors while Denis took his nap. With the Scottie roaming around on a long piece of rope, they sat out in the shade of a long needled pine tree. Jane sat on the ground on the brown bed of pine needles.

"My, it's wonderful to smell pines again," Jane said. "Makes me long for New Hampshire. In Cleveland the streets are nothing but sycamores - millions of them."

"With ailanthus trees in the backyards. 'Trees of heaven' Mother used to call them. Their blooms were sickeningly sweet. I think this pine tree is just like the ones at your grandfather's old brick farm. Did you know I took care of you for a while when you were a baby and your mother was busy with her art work? Aunt Ida had to make a trip back to Brooklyn. She was gone about a month. I really liked the Old Brick. And, you know, except for a few arguments, I think your father was happy there, too. He loves to garden,"

"One of my uncles owns the Old Brick now," Jane said, "and he wants to tear it down."

"Oh, no! What a shame," Ethie said. "Your father said just recently that it should be a state historic site."

"Well, Mother, and her sisters and Uncle William are trying to talk Uncle Tommie out of the plan."

"I hope they prevail. My! Isn't this a beautiful afternoon? They do say 'What is so rare as a day in June?'"

“Yes,” Jane said, “and I’ve always been glad my birthday is in June. Yours is, too, isn’t it?”

“Yes, it’s the 8th.”

“That’s Chan’s birthday, too. He’s a friend of ours. And Denis’ is the 7th, and Luther’s is the 24th. Mine’s the 3rd. Too many birthdays in one month when everybody is so poor.”

“I should say so. I don’t have any spending money at all. I haven’t been able to buy birthday presents for some time, We used to always make ‘Ethel’s cake’ on all our birthdays. Do you remember it?”

“Oh, yes! Yellow cake with fudge frosting, it was so good. Let’s make one! I’ll help.”

Ethel’s face fell. “Mary doesn’t allow me in the kitchen.”

“Doesn’t allow you in the kitchen! Why on earth? Oh, but Ethie, you were in the kitchen last night when I was there.”

“I was looking on. She doesn’t even like that, really. And she won’t let me cook, or even help her cook, or even make a salad or anything. She says there’s only room in the kitchen for one woman. But Mother and I and Aunt Ida often were all in the kitchen at dinner-time and sometimes your mother helped us too. Mary doesn’t really want me doing anything beyond tidying my own room and dusting a little around the house. She will let me dust.”

“I would think she’d love to have you cook since she’s working. It would make it easier I should think.”

“Pauline certainly was glad to have me cook. I think Pauline liked me fairly well.”

“I think she did too.” Jane agreed. “And she certainly didn’t bar Dee and me from the kitchen. We had to do the dishes.”

“Mary won’t even let me do that,” Ethie said.

“That is strange.”

“Well, it’s because I’ve had some funny spells. I get times when my muscles cramp up and I can’t talk.”

“Dad spoke of that,” Jane said.

“Well, it doesn’t happen often. Most of the time I’m alright. I could surely do dishes,”

“Of course.”

“I feel so utterly useless here, Jane, and I don’t like it at all. I’d like to feel that I earned my keep at least.”

“But Ethie, you’ve lent Daddy plenty of money and you sold your stock to help him out.”

“I know, but I still feel useless. I would do some sewing or crocheting but my eyes aren’t very good.”

“Can you read, Ethie?”

“I can read some of the headlines, nothing smaller.”

“Ethie You need new glasses.”

“No. Because Dr. Brandt says I’m getting cataracts and there’s nothing to do for the time being. I wouldn’t mind so much if Mother were still here. I miss her. Your mother always told me that Mother was too demanding of me, but. Jane, I wish I still had Mother to care for. At least, I’d be doing someone some good. Mother and I were good company for each other.”

Suddenly, Jane noticed that Ethie seemed to be trying to catch her breath or maybe she was trying not to sob. But soon, she began to make strange little sounds almost like squeaks. Jane was frightened but Ethie gestured with her hand, as if to say “I’m alright”, and as Jane looked on, Ethie recovered her voice.

“Isn’t that strange?” she said. “Sometimes I just can’t talk. Something happens and all I can do is try to squeak.”

“Was that one of the spells you told me about?”

“Yes,” Ethie said, “but two or three times it’s been worse than that.”

Jane spent another night on the punishing terrain of Ethie’s horsehair mattress. Ethie was used to it, but wouldn’t Ethie rest better on modern innerspring comfort? Jane lay awake long, trying to arrange her hips on the hill and valleys in such a way that her back didn’t begin to ache. It had never ached before Denis was born, but now it sometimes did in certain positions. She must have inherited it from her mother, who often complained of lumbago. Perhaps it got worse with each pregnancy. Heaven forbid! She would have to find a new doctor soon. For several reasons she didn’t want to go back to the man who had delivered Denis. She had decided that he hadn’t had much obstetric experience. He had said to her, “If I’d known your labor was going to take awhile I’d have given you something for pain.” That seemed like a very strange statement. She’d had ether at the last, of course. And afterwards, Dr. McWhirter had been uncertain about the circumcision, refusing to do it in the hospital, but coming to the house to do it on the first Sunday after Jane was home. And afterwards it was obvious that no circumcision had been done. “He must think we’re stupid or blind,” Luther said. And so she’d get another doctor. In fact, she might have to go to Charity Hospital or something like that.

She wondered what Luther was doing tonight. He had been sober when she talked to him. Would he have stayed sober a second night? Tomorrow he had said he’d phone again. That would be Tuesday. And Thursday was Luther’s birthday, his 26th. Should she let him spend it alone? He had ruined the other birthday party, but he hadn’t done it out of meanness. In fact he had given an explanation for getting so drunk. He was feeling sad, because he couldn’t afford to buy presents for them all.

In any case, she couldn’t stand many more nights on this horrendous mattress. She would have to return to Cleveland and, as Aunt Nelle liked to say, “tackle her problems.”

I'M AFRAID IT ISN'T GOOD NEWS

Luther came to get Jane on his birthday. He drove his grandmother's Lincoln. Aunt Adalyn had not been reluctant to give permission but she had lectured Luther gently about the second pregnancy, saying that his Uncle Frank thought it stupid." She herself said it was "not wise at this time."

Norris had hoped to find an opportunity to have a good talk with Luther, but the way everything worked out he had only a few minutes while he showed Luther his vegetable garden. He could only generalize a little about life, and tell Luther that he had known his father and the other Roby children years ago on Cartwright Street, and he recalled what a pretty woman his grandmother had been. Norris had told all this and more the first time he met Luther. But he had given one bit of advice,

"Try to get another place to live, somewhere out of the city. The city is grimy and depressing. Sometimes it makes a man think there's nothing to do but drink. But that never really helps. If you have a nice place to live somewhere out where there is fresh air and a place to go for walks, you'll get along better. There ought to be some place you could rent that wouldn't cost any more. It would be better yet if you could find a place where you could have a garden. It's good for your inner spirit and for peace of mind - keeps a man good-natured."

And Luther, who was already good-natured, agreed with everything Norris said, or at least he seemed to.

Before they started back north to Cleveland, Jane gave a wistful Ethie a big hug.

"Ethie," she said, "when I have a bigger home some day, you can come and cook for me to your heart's content."

It was late when Jane and Luther finally got settled in bed on the Beautyrest mattress, for Luther had had to return the Lincoln to Carrollton Heights, and come home on the street car. But he was very tender and loving, and he told Jane, "I'm gonna do a lot better, honey. You'll see."

The next morning, Jane talked with Luther about living farther out, nearer to the outskirts of the city.

"Daddy thinks this place isn't very good for us, but I did like it at first because we were by ourselves."

"We couldn't stay here with a new baby, anyway," Luther said, "because we'd just have to have our own bathroom. I'd think by autumn we ought to move, before you get too big."

"Speaking of new babies, I want to go see how Skipper is. I wonder if she's able to have visitors."

"Bud stopped in. He says she's improving every day. Not very strong yet, but the doctor says he's very impressed with the way that drug worked. He says if she'd had it at the very beginning of her infection she'd be out of the hospital by now. But they're building her up. Bud says she's very anxious to be with the baby, and Bud says the doctor wants to be sure that she'll be well enough before he lets her go home."

“But did he say she could have visitors Luther?”

“Yes, but he said, not to stay too long. She gets kinda tired.”

“I’ll wait two or three days,” Jane decided. “Give her time.”

The next day after Denis woke from his nap Jane took him in his carriage and went to buy groceries at a small nearby store. It was run by a middle-aged couple from the old country who had a married daughter living with them because of the Depression. The daughter had a baby boy a little older than Jane’s Denis. There were living quarters in the back of the store and sometimes the daughter brought the baby out front. She and Jane had exchanged maternal ideas and admired each other’s babies. The other boy was of much sturdier build than Denis though only a month older. He could be described as “hefty”.

“How much did he weigh when he was born? Jane asked.

“Nine and a half pounds,” the young mother said proudly.

“My! Really? What hospital did you go to? I’m expecting again.”

“I had him at home. I don’t like hospitals. I think you’re better off at home. Safer. Besides, hospitals are expensive.”

On the way home, Jane pondered the idea of having a baby at home. She had read some viewpoints on the subject and she knew that most doctors were against it. Their principal argument was the possibility of complications. Other than that, as far as Jane could see it was a matter of convenience - but, whose convenience? Jane resolved to go back to the little store and ask the girl what doctor had delivered her baby. She would go tomorrow, and meanwhile, she would discuss the whole idea with Luther. For surely now, with the savings account almost gone they could not afford the hospital.

But Jane would not go to the little store the next day, nor for some time to come. For when she came in from the bright sunlight into the dimness of the hall, she met Mrs. Columbo who was carrying a pile of clean laundry.

“There was a phone call for you, honey,” Mrs. Columbo said. “I put a little note on your door. I’m afraid it isn’t good news. Somebody died.”

While her eyes adjusted to the dimmer light, Jane read the message on the paper.

“Skipper Irwin died 2 p.m. this afternoon.”

Jane gave a startled exclamation and then said, “Oh dear, no”

“Was it a relative, honey?”

“No. An old friend. Well, a young friend, really. Just a few years older than I. About twenty-five years old. She had a baby a few weeks ago. There was trouble, but she was getting better.” Jane’s voice was choking up. “I can’t imagine why she died.”

“I’m awful sorry, honey.”

“Who called? Did they say? Was it a man?”

“No. A women. She’ll call tomorrow when they know about the arrangements. She said you and your sister might want to go to the funeral with her.”

Three days later Jane and Dee rode to Fire Valley with Mildred Carter, the friend who had taken Jane to Skipper’s baby shower.

“I was at the funeral home last night,” Mildred said. “You never saw so many flowers.”

“I’m glad,” Jane said, “because Luther and I were flat broke this week. The day you called I had squandered all my money on groceries.”

“Well, they couldn’t have found room for another floral arrangement,” Mildred said. “I’ve never seen so many flowers at a funeral.”

“Mother says it’s that way when a young person dies,” Dee said. “I’ve only been to one other funeral. I’m not at all up on what to do, and ordinarily I’d hate to go, but with Skipper it’s different, of course.”

“I sent flowers,” Mildred said, “and I was going to send Talisman roses, but I decided not to, for I thought maybe Bud would do that, since he knew Skipper was always so crazy about them. And I was right; there’s a beautiful spray of them from him. But other people sent Talisman roses too. Most of her family did, in fact. And there are ‘glads’ and asters all over the place.”

Jane wondered if Mildred kept talking about the flowers because she couldn’t bear to talk about Skipper. But there were things Jane wanted to know.

“Mildred, have you learned yet what on earth happened? I mean she was getting better and...”

“All I know is what Bud’s sister told me last night. It seems that Friday afternoon Skipper’s mother was sitting beside her and they were discussing Skipper’s diet. And then, all of a sudden Skipper just sort of threw her head back and gave a little gasp and a sigh, and that was it. She was gone.”

And that’s all?” Paye asked.

“Yes,” said Mildred. “The doctor told Wee that her heart had been affected by all the fever, and the fact that the fever was what he called ‘spiking’. Way up and then down. That went on for a full week.”

“Have you talked to Bud?” Jane asked.

“Yes,” Mildred said, “but he didn’t say much. He just gave this sweet, kind of dazed smile when anybody came up to speak to him. But his sister, Clara, told me he is just crushed. And he’s bitter, very bitter.”

“I’ll bet he is,” said Jane.

“But Jane,” Dee reminded, “you have to remember that Skipper was a Christian Scientist herself, not just her mother.”



MARIAN ROOT
IRWIN
called Skipper
"Lassie Overton"



D. IRWIN junior
+
D. IRWIN III
WES" +
mo. → "LADDIE"



D. D. IRWIN III
3 years



D. D. IRWIN III
10 years

“I know, I know,” Jane said, “and Bud respected that and went along with it for a week, but that was bad for Skipper. She only got worse and she was in no shape to know what was what. She was delirious. And when the new drug was started she got better.”

“But she died,” said Dee.

“And so Bud is bitter,” Jane said, “and I’ll bet the doctor is disgusted.”

“I’ll tell you one thing,” Mildred said. “Skipper’s mother is bitter too. She thinks the medicine should not have been given at all.”

“Oh, but that isn’t logical,” Jane said. “If medicine can’t help people at all, then it can’t hurt them either.”

But by that time the discussion had to end, for they had arrived at Jackson and Johnson’s funeral home.

As they entered, Dee whispered to Jane, “This gives me the ‘willies’. I dread going in here.”

“Me too” Jane said. “I hate seeing her here.”

But see her they did. It was all something they would remember in a blur. Soft organ music playing the Christian Science hymns they knew so well. And Dee seeing the sad faces of her old classmates from her Fire Valley school days.

And finally, filing by the casket where Skipper laid, looking ethereal and lovely, her chestnut hair beautifully arranged, and her slender white hands lying quiet in the folds of a coral chiffon gown and clasping one Talisman rose. At the foot of the casket the magnificent spray with dozens of Talisman roses and white baby’s breath, the tribute from Bud. After passing the casket, Jane noticed a very impressive basket of Talisman roses, with a card saying “Deepest Sympathy. Frank Bexley.’ This was the man to whom Skipper had been engaged for more than a year. A man said to have been totally broken up when Skipper ended the engagement. But Dee, who would have recognized him, said she thought he wasn’t among those present.

When the girls encountered Bud, where he stood with his father, they were unable to speak but took his hand and gave it a sympathetic squeeze.

“Hello Dee. Hello Jane. Thank you for coming.”

Dee just nodded, her eyes brimming, and Jane managed to say, “Keep in touch with us, Bud.”

“I will,” he said. “I won’t forget my Cleveland friends.”

Since Jane and Dee came from a family who had adopted cremation as a sensible solution (at least on the Rahming branch of the family) they would have been pleased to not go to the cemetery to see Skipper’s casket lowered into the ground. But when Dee asked Mildred whether she planned to go to the burial, Mildred said, “Oh, yes. I want to stick with Skipper to the list, if it’s alright with you.”

“Certainly.” Dee and Jane said, though each of them was already persuading herself that what was in the casket was no longer Skipper. Skipper would just take her place in their memories

now. A very vibrant, glowing memory of a young woman meaninglessly cut off at twenty-five years.

They were very quiet on the way home, no longer wanting to discuss Skipper's passing. But after a time Jane spoke.

"Mildred, is the baby still in East Riverport?"

"He sure is," Mildred said. "With Bud's Mom."

"Is that going to be permanent, do you suppose?" Dee asked.

"Yep," Mildred said, "unless Bud marries again someday."

"I've a feeling Skipper would want her mother to raise the baby," Dee guessed.

"But," said Jane, "not if it meant he didn't grow up with his father."

"No," Dee agreed, "she wouldn't want that, but she and her mother were very close."

"And she didn't like her mother-in-law," Jane recalled. "How things can change overnight. Much as I blame Skipper's mother, I feel sorry for her."

"She worshiped Skipper," Dee said. Her one girl."

"Well," Mildred said, "it's all very tragic."

And Dee and Jane agreed that nothing sadder had ever touched their lives, for as Jane said simply, "You're supposed to be old when you die."

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It was to be a strange summer. Many nights, and especially at first, Jane had dreams in which Skipper was still alive. She had so many such dreams that she spoke of it to Luther.

“Why do you suppose these dreams keep on?”

“Because it was such a shock for you,” he said.

“Well, I wish the dreams would stop. I wake up and discover she isn’t alive and I’m so disappointed that it was dream. How long do you suppose this will go on?”

“Until the memory of it fades a little,” Luther said.

“Dreams are funny anyway. I never found very much sense in what I dream about.”

“Well, you’ll probably get over it as soon as you have something new to think about. By the way, we are invited to spend the Fourth with Grandma. She wants to see Denis.”

“Who all will be there? Is it a big family gathering?”

“Heck, no. Most all of them went to Canada last weekend. Uncle Frank and his family went, and Aunt Connie, went with Ray and their kids. I expect Uncle Hal’s family are there, too. The men will stay for two weeks, and leave the women and kids up there for the rest of the Summer. The men always do some work on the boats and canoes and the boat house, and they clear the brush out of the paths. They get a lot of sore muscles and they come home. They’ll go up again the last half of August.”

“Is your Dad up there with his family, too?”

“No, they never go. Dad stays here in town to mind the business. Clara wouldn’t go anyway. Betsy has been up there a couple of times. Dad is invited to Grandma’s too, he said.”

So they did spend the holiday in Carrollton Heights, and Grandma Roby was delighted with Denis and doting as ever with Luther and even his father.

“Three Johnnies in my room,” she said. “How nice,”

They took their supper in her room. It was served on a card table, and Grandma was very happy and pleased with her holiday, though outside it was grey and drizzly and was said to be the coldest July 4th in Cleveland’s history.

They were very tired when Luther’s father dropped them off at Mrs. Columbo’s, and that night Jane dreamed again of Skipper Root when they both worked in the Winchester Room.

The next day she recalled the dream, and thought about the trouble that Skipper used to have with her knees and elbows and ankles aching. Could that have anything to do with her dying?

Before going to New Hampshire, Grace stopped in to say goodbye.

“You must get into a better place,” Grace told Jane. “You can’t have two children in this little apartment.”

“I know, Mother, but there’s no hurry. We’ve got almost six months to find a place.”

“I don’t see how you’re going to potty-train Denis as long as you live here without a private bathroom.”

“I can guarantee that I won’t, Mother, but I’ve got plenty of time for that, too.”

“Why, Jane, that’s terrible. He should be trained already.”

“No. I read an article about that. In the first year it’s not the baby that’s trained, not the mother.”

“Oh, that’s nonsense! And if it’s true, it’s still better. You’re not as modern as I am, Jane.”

“What!” Jane laughed. “Mother, you’re so funny.”

“Well, anyway, I’m going to New Hampshire.”

In the next two weeks the weather was extremely hot, and the apartment was stifling. Denis’ sun-porch nursery was especially hot in the late afternoon, and it seemed that their quarters were placed so that they never got the benefit of any breeze that chanced to blow. Luther agreed with Jane that they must find a better place. The problem was, as always, to find something they could afford.

Responding to an ad in the Cleveland Herald, Jane rode far east on the Grand Avenue street car. She passed the street where Dee and Mona rented their room. The conductor told her when to get off near Latham Street. Three houses up the street she found the house. It was a two-family “up and down”, and the third floor rooms were for rent.

The landlady who lived on the second floor showed Jane the rooms. It was hot up there, but she opened a window in a room on the east and another in a room on the west. A fresh breeze swept through the suite.

“Cross ventilation!” Jane said. “Wonderful; that’s what I need. It’s so stuffy where I live. I think we’d like this place, but I must tell you that we have a little boy.”

“1-tow old?” the woman asked quickly.

“Almost fourteen months,” Jane said.

“Oh, that’s alright. I like little ones. It’s bigger kids that are a problem.”

At home she described the place to Luther.

“There are two fair-sized rooms and a kitchen, and a bath. A real decent-sized kitchen and our own bath. We’d have to pay for our electricity and gas, but the rent is nine dollars cheaper so I think we’d be even with what we pay here. When can you come to see it? It isn’t furnished.”

“Call her up and tell her we’ll take it, honey. If you like it, it’s fine with me.”



4 months



18 months



2 years

↑
Six months



Denis 2 yrs. 1935

2 years

DENIS MARTIN CHANDLER
"JACKIE" (L.L. ROBY jr)
at this age

“You’re sure? Oh, and Luther can you get Gramma’s car again? I don’t want to ask Mil.”

“Why not. Is he mad at us?”

“No, of course not, but I don’t want to strain our friendship. He’s always helping us move. It’s terrible.”

They were established by the first of August, and though they had so little furniture, they were pleased with the new quarters. They chose the smaller of the two rooms for their own, for they had only their bed and a small radio, but as usual Jane made use of painted orange crates for bookcases and nightstands. She had several paintings to hang, and so the room was decorated. Their bedroom, as before, was their living-room.

“I like this better than Mrs. Columbo’s place,” Luther said. “It’s cozier. How did you do it?”

“The ceiling is low,” she said. “That helps, but ever since I was small, I knew how to make a nest. Mim and I used to fix our tent in New Hampshire, and at boarding-school in Virginia Dee and I had one of the prettiest rooms. Of course, Mother sent us drapes and bedspreads. But it’s fun. I like to decorate. I’m like a bird; I line my nest with feathers and yarn.”

Luther laughed, “Will this nest do for the new baby bird?”

“I hope so. It will if it’s warm enough in winter, but we won’t know till the time comes.”

AT THIS TIME I CAN'T BE A CHOOSER

When Jane and Luther moved out to the far end of the city, Jane discovered that there were certain things she had not anticipated. She had completely overlooked the additional traveling time for Luther to and from the foundry. She had also failed to anticipate how inconvenient the phone situation would be. Mrs. Columbo had acted as a switchboard for the entire rooming house, but it was different now, of course. She could go to the pay telephone booth a block away, on the other side of Grand Avenue, or possibly walk the seven blocks back toward the city to Linden Avenue, where Dee was staying. She and Luther had decided they could not afford a telephone. The result was that she was alone much of the time for the second time in her life. She never saw the landlady, or the other family, who lived on the first floor, except on occasion when they passed on the stairway. Her mother was in New Hampshire, and Dee only stopped in sometimes on a Sunday afternoon to see Denis. She felt cut off from everything. She had not seen Mim since last New Years, and she had no idea what the latest news was about any of them.

She remembered one other summer when she had been alone all day long. That was 1930 when she and Dee were in High Rock, and their mother back in Cleveland doing the Landers' job and getting a divorce. Dee was usually away at the beach with her friends all day, or with Cameron in the evening. So she been alone all day working on her undersize tennis court in the mornings, and up in the third floor all afternoon, sitting at her mother's drawing board, designing dresses for adult paper dolls. In some ways it was fun doing everything her own way, but it was so lonely, and she had kept wishing that they had not taken her dog to New Hampshire. It had been the same time of year, full summer, with long hot afternoons and no one to talk to, no money to spend, and nothing to do but stay at home, except for the infrequent times when she could afford to take the bus to the beach.

This summer, of course, she was seven years older, and now she had Denis, and the puppy to talk to.

And she did talk to them when they were awake. And Denis was learning to walk and he was busy and active all morning, having given up his after breakfast nap. However, after his lunch, of baby food and bottle, he slept all afternoon, with Bonnie asleep under the crib. They went for morning walks with Denis in his canvas carriage and Bonnie with her leash tied to the handle. If it was not too hot they went again after Denis's afternoon nap. They went east on Grand Avenue alongside vacant fields with clover, butter cups. and Queen Anne's Lace. Denis was beginning to learn a few words. Clover he pronounced "ko-ber". street-car was "dree-gar", and from day to day he made language progress. But Jane missed adult conversation. She needed something to do. She never saw Clement W. Chandler anymore, and she supposed that since he must have learned of her second pregnancy he had decided to stay away. He had no doubt been waiting to see whether she would continue her marriage to Luther. So now there was no furniture work to do and since the little apartment was so small and bare, tidying it up was not a big task. Merely making the bed took care of the living room most days. Doing the laundry was the greatest problem with no washing machine, but Luther had his shirts done at a laundry.

After they had been in the Latham Street place two weeks, Luther's drinking habits worsened again. He came home for dinner later and later and he could not even telephone to say that he'd

soon be on his way. She had learned not to pay attention to such messages, but it at least was contact. Now the long hot, lonely afternoons stretched into long lonely evenings. Luther's excuse that he avoided coming home because of Grace's disapproval, no longer applied. Grace had been in the mountains for weeks. Jane wondered how the African chronicle was coming along. Finishing that had been her mother's stated purpose in going to Forest Camp for the summer. Right now, Jane would have welcomed a visit from her mother, just to hear some news of the family and how things were at Forest Camp. But she was almost certain that if her mother were to drop in at any time, she would be sure to immediately put Denis on his potty- chair and then give him a bath and shampoo. After that, she would look into the diaper pail and say, "You aren't going to leave these until tomorrow, are you?" It was more comfortable being alone.

Luther had fallen into a pattern by the end of August. He was almost never home at dinnertime. He could have been there by six, and was, when he left the foundry at five when his father left. But he fell back into his old pattern of stopping in at Jimmy Black's, and as the days went by, he lingered there later and later. It was a rare evening when he was home before seven, and more and more it was closer to ten in which case he was swaying drunk. Sometimes he made excuses. "I stayed in the shop to cut some castings off the gates." One night he was out until after 2 a.m. and Jane worried that he might have been killed in a street accident. She could see the street car stop from a window in Denis's room. She hated herself for doing it, but when she heard a street car coming she would stand in the dark and watch to see if Luther got off. Finally after watching a dozen cars go past, one stopped and she saw Luther get off. So- he was not lying dead in the police morgue, but home again, rolling drunk. She told herself she would never watch the street cars again. Luther would never stop drinking. There was nothing to do but wait out the pregnancy. What she would do after the new baby came God only knew, but for now, she could do nothing.

After the night when Luther came home at 2 a.m. she was very silent. She said nothing to him about it, and very little about anything else. He was very contrite, as always, and made another of his "fresh starts." He brought her home a present, the new novel "Gone With the Wind." It came at a welcome time, for the ragweed season was at its peak, and she stopped taking Denis and the dog on their long daily walks, for the vacant lots nearby abounded in the weed, covered with its evil yellow pollen. So she lay on her bed in the afternoons while Denis slept and made her way through Margaret Mitchell's long novel. Reading it revived in Jane her long-standing urge to write a book. There were so many colorful stories in her family- tragedies like poor Aunt Emmy, mysteries like Aunt Nelle's first husband, and romances like Grandfather Rahming and Anna Wyers (Hill). And then, of course, the stormy marriage of her own parents. Oh, there'd been unhappiness to go around, but out of all those people in the family there hadn't been anyone with a drinking problem. Even Uncle Art, who owned a tavern now, was not famous for being a drunk. He liked to drink socially some, and he liked the ladies. But his numerous marriages were not because he drank. Well, Jane thought, I will bring a new kind of unhappiness to the family history. But she was beginning to doubt very much that her marriage to Luther could last.

She was still dreaming of Skipper almost as often as ever. Skipper at the Winchester Room, Skipper in the annual high school operettas in Fire Valley in the 20's. And Skipper one winter day when she went coasting on the steep hill at the end of town, with Dee, Jane and their father. Skipper with her red hair blowing in the wind and wearing a navy blue stocking cap and a navy blue chinchilla cloth coat. And Norris with a bright green muffler. (In the dream he had a bright

green muffler.) When she woke up she tried to remember whether he had really had one. Now she knew that dreams had colors. Someone had doubted that. But when would the dreams of Skipper stop?

On the Labor Day Saturday Dee came to say that Aunt Gertie had phoned her at the office to tell about a Martin family get-together at Merle's new house in Oberlin on Monday, Labor Day.

"She wondered where we lived now, and if Mother was home from New Hampshire yet."

"Is she?" Jane asked.

"I think she's in New York now. You ought to write to her."

"I haven't any new news. She's the one that's having the travel adventures."

"I know," Dee said, "and Aunt Gertie asked if Mother had finished her African article."

"Has she?" Jane asked.

"No. She says that Aunt Nelle hurt her foot and she can't concentrate."

"Aunt Nelle can't?"

"Mother can't. So she has started a new story."

"About Nelle's foot?"

"Jane for heaven's sakes!"

"Well, does it make sense to you, Dee? Why not finish the African article first. What's the new story about? Did Mother say?"

"Yes. It's about the cousins' adventures at Camp Forest Primeval. Mother said she's making sketches for a children's story. Well, I can't stay, Janie, I have a date. If you want to go to Oberlin let Aunt Gertie know. They'll come and get you and bring you home again. I think Aunt Gertie is very nice to you, Jane."

"She mothers me when she thinks I need it. She started when Mother went to Africa."

"But, Jane, when Mother is here she mothers you."

"Yes, but differently. Mother gives me advice, Aunt Gertie gives me chocolate cake."

The family picnic at Merle's on Labor Day was a pleasant break in the summer's loneliness for Jane. The new house was much larger than the one where Merle, Emmy, Mim and Trink had lived with Grandma and Grandpa Martin. It had a large first floor with three rooms and kitchen and a lavatory; on the second floor were four bedrooms and a bath, and more sleeping space on the third floor.

Stan Martin's wife, Bertha, asked, "Merle, what you gonna do with such a big house? Your family's smaller now, and this house is at least twice as big as the old one."

"I have plans," Merle said. "I'm going to rent out rooms to college students."

A debate then ensued as to who made the best roomers, male or female students.

"Girls will want to use your kitchen," Gertie predicted.

"Boys are so untidy," Bertha said.

And the people were still worrying about Stan's idea that the Old Brick farmhouse should be torn down.

"It can be restored," Bill insisted.

"It's going to fall down first," Stan said.

"It just needs roof repairs and the brick needs pointing up. I'll help you with the work, Stan."

"Listen, Bill, it needs a whole new roof. And if we point up the brick, in a few years the pointing will be all that is left and the bricks will be washed away. Those bricks are soft and old and rotten."

"Aw, shucks," Bill said. "Stan, that's nonsense. Listen, I'll help you put on a new roof."

"I can't afford the materials," Stan said.

"Then you certainly can't afford to build a new house. Look, I'll bet some of the rest of us would chip in to pay for a new roof."

"Everybody's too broke, Bill."

"I can raise the money, Stan," Bill said. "Just hold off for a while. I'll write to Nelle about it. If we could interest the state in the old place, buying it I mean, Nelle would sell you a piece of her property for a good price."

But they did not win Stan over to their way of thinking.

Jane caught up on the news of her cousins. A letter from Nelle said that Babs had finished high school in June, and had her heart set on studying to be a dancer. Mim after two years at Oberlin College, had decided to change to business school and learn secretarial work. It was her plan to help her boy friend, William Tallmadge stay in college. He was an extremely gifted musician but like everyone else the Depression was hurting. Mim and Bill had plans for their future, but it would take a while .

Trink had been out of high school for one year doing miscellaneous things to earn a little money, but this fall she was going away to college in Michigan, and she was in love. She had met a young Russian engineering student through Ann Arbor friends who had once lived in Oberlin. Trink had persuaded her mother that it was better to go to Michigan than to try to get into

Oberlin which had a higher tuition. Trink was thrilled at the idea of college, she told Jane, but said that in some ways she envied her with her darling little Denis and another baby on the way.

"Well, in some ways I envy you," Jane told Trink. "No wonder you're thrilled. Michigan's a great school."

"The reason she's thrilled," said Mim, "is because Sergei Guins is there."

"Well," said Trink, "many people arrange their plans because of some man. Some might be engineers, and others might be music students, Ahem."

After going to the family picnic at Merle's, Jane felt more isolated than ever. And she was depressed. It was hay fever season again and this year seemed worse than ever. Uncle Bill suffered from it too, and he and Jane had sneezed all the way home from Oberlin. Aunt Gertie had presented Jane with a chocolate cake to take home.

"She's nice to us," Luther said. "Too bad they live so far away."

"I think we are the ones who live far away," Jane said, "and what possessed us to move way out here?"

"Dee and Mona said the air was so lovely."

"Well, it was lovely then, but it isn't lovely now. It's full of ragweed. I'd be better off in the city."

"When are you going to a doctor?" Luther asked.

"Soon," she said.

"You're five months along. You should go."

"I know, but I'll have to find the right one."

Two days later while Luther took care of Denis, Jane went back to Mrs. Columbo's neighborhood and to the little delicatessen where she got the name of the doctor who would deliver babies at home. She made an appointment and saw the doctor the following week. He was Polish and lived and had his office in a Polish neighborhood. He was a family doctor, a general practitioner. Like other modern doctors, he preferred hospital delivery, but he put up no argument against Jane's wishes to have the baby at home.

"I liked him," she told Luther. "I think he knows his stuff. He wants to see me in a month and after that every two weeks till the last month. I can see him in the evenings, then you can take care of Denis."

"That's not a very good neighborhood to go in at night."

"Oh, it seemed alright. Or you can go with me and we can leave Denis with Dee, or she can come here."



KATHERINE LEMMON

1936

"TREENY"

2105 $\frac{1}{2}$

The weather turned cold in early October, and the little apartment did not heat well. Jane realized it would be an uncomfortable place to spend the winter, and an impossible place to deliver a baby.

Her hay fever had been followed by a bad cold, and by the time Grace appeared Jane had a bad cough that persisted. Dee had a cold, too.

Grace's first comment was, "You girls need me with you. You both look thin and pale."

"We aren't pale, and I'm not thin," Jane said. "I'm certainly not thin. It's just our bad luck that you caught us with colds."

"I don't think you eat right when I'm not with you," Grace said.

"Well, Mother, you can't live with everyone who might get a cold."

####

By the First of November, Luther and Jane, were again teamed up in living quarters with Dee and Grace. Jane had pointed out to Luther that, for the time being, it was the smartest thing to do. They didn't have to think of it as a lifetime arrangement. But until after the new baby came at least, it was a good idea. They would all have a better place to live for the money spent.

"Your mother has never spent any money on the overhead," Luther pointed out.

"No," Jane admitted, "but when she lives with us, I'm able to go to the store and so on, without always taking Denis along with me. And I'll need help with him for a couple of weeks after the baby comes."

"Will she do it?" he asked.

"Why wouldn't she?"

"She didn't help when Denis was born. You had to ask Mim."

"Well, that's true. Anyway, having Dee with us is a mutually advantageous thing, no matter what Mother does. Don't worry, someday things will be different, And, I hate to say it, but you drink as much when we're by ourselves as when we're with Dee and Mother."

Luther did not comment on that, but he said, "Well, you know I can get along with your mother if you can. You didn't like her fussing at you all the time."

"Luther," she said, "at this particular time I can't be a chooser, can I?"

Grace was quite horrified when Jane told her that the baby was to be born at home. She didn't want to admit it to anyone, but she was afraid of the ordeal of labor and birth. Even though she herself had an easy time when Jane was born, she still carried the stronger memory of Dee's very long and difficult birth. She dreaded having all that going on where she was and she decided she hadn't the courage. She said to herself, I'm afraid I'm like my Aunt Isobel.

But Grace was nevertheless interested in Jane's preparations for her "accouchement". Using a United States government publication, Jane assembled the necessary supplies. In addition to diapers and clothes for the new arrival, there were items that would be needed for the birth itself. Umbilical dressings and sterile cotton cord, belly-binders, pads for the bed made of several layers of newspaper basted between muslin sheeting, and a good supply of other items such as gauze, cotton and necessities.

"Don't you think things are more sanitary in the hospital?" Grace asked.

"Look what happened to Skipper in the hospital," Jane said. "She got an infection."

"You don't blame the hospital for that, do you?"

"I wouldn't know who was to blame for that. But my supplies will be just as sterile as the hospital. I have to put all these things in paper bags and bake them in the oven for hours."

"My goodness! What a girl you are"

Clement Chandler was back in the picture again. Dee had joined a little theater group and had persuaded Chan to join as well. As Thanksgiving approached they were in rehearsal, and as a result Luther and Jane were seeing Chan frequently again. He had helped Dee move her furniture again, and was doing little favors for Grace such as picture framing. But Jane had again told Luther that she did not want to impose on Chan by asking him to haul their furniture. Once more they borrowed Grandma Roby's Lincoln.

The new residence was a great improvement, especially for Jane because it was the first floor apartment of a two-family house and now that she was in the eighth month of her pregnancy, she would have hated living on the third floor as they had on Latham Street. In the new place there was a room for Dee and Grace, one for Luther and Jane, and one was the nursery. The other rooms were comfortable and Grace set about "scaring up" furniture again. The things she had stored in the big garage at Merly's new house, William once again transported for her. In addition to these, Grace managed to find an old settee and a library table at the Salvation Army. Chan and Jane could restore them, she decided. William hauled these things as well.

"It seems to me," Gertrude said, "that you should buy a truck if you are going into the moving business."

William smiled. "Grace is something of a nomad. I told her this time that she should decide whether to make her home in Cleveland, or in the East. She said to me, 'The East always beckons to me, but worry over my girls draws me back to Cleveland.'"

"I wonder," Gertrude said, "whether it is all worry over her girls. Or is it Norris? If the girls were in the East, Grace would still be coming back to Cleveland."

"I 'spect you're right," he said agreeably. "He has a fatal charm, hasn't he? Always did. All you girls liked Norr."

"Oh, so did you," Gertrude said. "You always said he was fun."

"Well, he was. Probably still is. I wonder what he would think of Stan's talk about tearing down the Old Brick. Norr always loved that farm, even if they didn't make a go of it. You know, Trudy, there are people in this family who are going to feel sick about it, and those who don't care one way or the other. Luther doesn't care about it and that might be because Father threw him and Lettie off the place. And Jim and Marie aren't sentimental about it; Stan's for demolishing it and Fancy's got no love for it. She's got no imagination at all anyway, and Charles sold it to Stan after that third baby boy died out there. Charles only has bad memories of the farm, I guess."

"My," Gertrude said, "such a lot of analyzing. The fact is that you and your sisters were always more alike and cared a great deal about your parents. The three older boys and Charles weren't so family minded."

"They all loved Mother, Trudy. And Stan always likes to get together. No, I think the reason he plans to tear the place down is because he likes the place and the trees and the old family turf, but he's a born carpenter and he wants a brand new modern house. To him the Old Brick is outmoded and deteriorating and for him it has no value. Tom Martin has no sense of history."

“Too bad,” Gertrude said. “It really is too bad.”

“Maybe I can still make him see the light.”

Gertrude had been right, of course, about Grace’s preoccupation with Norris. Although her journals for two years had recorded again and again her disenchantment with Norris’s character and his actions, nevertheless the old romantic longings burned as strongly as ever. She was wondering whether Mary had had her baby yet. Somehow Grace had got in her head that Jane’s pregnancy ran parallel with Mary’s. She supposed that Norr’s baby would arrive in December.

But Dee and Jane had been keeping a secret for a month. Sooner or later they would have to let it out, but not before they had to. They knew that in time their mother would ask.

The fact was that the “little brother” whose coming Norris had foretold, was here. Garrett Norris Rahming had been born in late October. Norris had phoned Dee with his exciting news and she had passed it on to Jane, but neither of them had mustered the courage to tell Grace, knowing she was certain to be upset. She would be especially upset because the child was a boy.

On Thanksgiving, Merly and Addie, with Mim and Trink, and their young men, came from Oberlin for a cooperative turkey dinner. Sergei Guins and Trink both seemed to be serious in their relationship, but Trink had decided to quit college and go to Cleveland Institute of Art instead. What had been the Cleveland School of Art in Grace’s day had been renamed. Trink was interested in sculpture, she said. Mim was persevering in her secretarial studies at Oberlin Business School while her friend Eddie continued his music studies at Oberlin College.

All these careers being pursued, Jane thought, and here I am eight months pregnant and big as a barn.

Before the company left Grace cornered Jane and said, “You would better ask either Mim or Trink to come and help you when the baby comes.”

“Mother, they can’t. They’re in school. Unless the baby comes during vacation they couldn’t come. I wouldn’t ask them.”

“Well then I will. Because I can’t lift Denis. It’s too hard on my back.”

“But you’re always lifting Denis,” Jane said.

“Yes, and I’ve got to stop doing it.”

“Well, Luther can stay home if that’s necessary, Mother.”

But as it turned out, Trink, who was always wild about babies and once said she’d have twelve of her own, said that she could come and help. She was not going back to Ann Arbor.

The following day Grace asked Jane, “Isn’t it almost time for that other baby to be here? Mary’s baby?”

“It’s here,” said Jane. “Born the end of October.”

“Does Dee know that?”

“Sure.”

“And neither of you said anything to me about it. Well, what is it, a boy or girl?”

“A boy,” said Jane.

Grace’s mouth set in a grim line, but she said nothing.

“Dee and I knew you’d be upset,” Jane said.

“Upset is not the right word. Disgusted is more like it. Your father is fifty-one years old!”

“I know but he has started over; you should start over too.”

“I can’t start over that way. You think you’re so wise. When you’re older you’ll be wiser.”

“I’m not at all sure that’s what happens,” Jane said.

WE WOULDN 'T HAVE HER BUT FOR ME

It was not the best of Christmases. Denis was still too young to understand it, though he liked sitting in his bouncing chair near the tree with its pretty colored lights. Luther as usual brought home a number of gifts for Jane, though this year they were fewer and less costly. He was not home until nearly midnight on Christmas Eve and this was very upsetting to Dee and Grace, as well as to Jane. On Christmas morning he could not wake up in time to see Denis' first glimpse of the tree.

Jane experienced false labor pains all Christmas day and was afraid to eat anything. Grace protested that she should take some food, but Jane had said that the doctor had cautioned her against eating. She was to let him know when the pains were regular and twenty minutes apart. But they were never regular and never closer than a half hour apart. And finally they stopped.

The next day Luther was saddened to learn of the death of Newton O. Baker in Cleveland. Luther had hero-worshipped the man. The Roby family had known him and Luther had worked in his office one summer, and dreamed of becoming a lawyer himself. Jane had never seen Luther so depressed. He had been drinking more and more often lately, and she had stopped discussing it with him. She no longer believed that he could overcome his habit, but she did have to talk to him about money. Not only would they need money to pay the doctor and the nurse who would assist him, but there was continual concern over day to day expenses. Instead of bringing home a paycheck at the end of the week, Luther now gave Jane two or three dollars every day or so. So far, the rent and utility bills were paid but Jane worried constantly. She and Luther shared expenses equally with Dee and Grace (though Grace's contribution was indefinite and sporadic). Denis' expenses were extra but they were not large.

Jane had no doubts as to why Luther brought home his pay in piecemeal amounts. His father would not give him a full week's pay lest he spend it all in Jimmy Black's. Now was not the moment to think about doing anything drastic. But sometime after the new baby was born, she would have to think about a solution to Luther's problem. There was so much good in Luther that was being wasted because he drank. Luther was smart, he had musical talents, and Aunt Connie said he was artistic as well. He was witty, charming, nice looking, and above and had an even, light-hearted disposition. That had seemed so wonderful, when compared with her father and Uncle Roge's bad temper, and Carle Semon's fits of sulkiness. And in addition to his other good qualities, being in bed with Luther was a pleasure. But drinking was outweighing these qualities lately.

On the morning of December 30th Jane decided that she was definitely in labor. Her pains were regular and she kept in touch with her doctor. Luther did not go to work and was on his best behavior. He went to the store for needed items, and took care of Denis. Dee went to work (eagerly) for the birth was something she did not want to witness or hear. (Grace felt the same but had no excuses to leave.)

By late afternoon, Jane's pains were twenty minutes apart and the doctor called his assisting nurse, who arrived within the hour and examined Jane. The nurse then called the doctor and told him there was no need to hurry, that it would not be before late evening or even midnight.

The family ate dinner, Dee having come home expecting to find the new baby had arrived. Jane paced around the house, hungry and beginning to tire. Her pains were stronger but not much closer together.

Jane's bed was made ready. It was elevated on four large wooden blocks (supplied by Chan and made to specification) in order to raise the bed by six inches. The sterile supplies were made ready, and Jane got into her cotton gown and robe. She continued to walk.

By midnight the nurse summoned the doctor. He arrived and examined Jane, pronounced everything normal and the baby's heartbeat strong. He then said that he would rest on the couch until he was needed.

Jane's labor dragged on and on. The pains, she described as "quite strong". She was tired she said, and she had not eaten for a day and a half.

Grace went to bed. Luther and Dee sat in the kitchen drinking coffee. At 2:30 a.m. Dee went to bed. Luther brought a chair into the bedroom, where the nurse sat with Jane, and the three of them conversed, with ten minute brief interruptions, when Jane appraised them of her pain. The labor seemed to be making little or no progress.

Grace got up and came into the bedroom.

"I can't sleep," she said. "I do wish this baby would arrive."

"I know how you feel," said Jane, and the nurse and Luther laughed.

The nurse began telling jokes and anecdotes from her years of nursing experience. Their voices and the laughter in the room grew louder. The landlord upstairs pounded on the floor with a broom handle or some such.

"Don't they know what's going on here?" the nurse asked.

"Yes, they certainly do," Grace said, "because I told them."

But they lowered their voices for a while at least. Then the doctor came and examined Jane again and returned to the couch. He had pronounced that there was "a little progress." They all fell to talking again and this time the landlady knocked on the back door. Grace went to speak to her. When she returned to the bedroom Grace said, "Mrs. Hawthorne refuses to understand."

Dee was up again now and said, "She is a bitch."

The nurse laughed and said, "I agree with you."

Dee and Grace returned to bed and Luther went to the kitchen and dozed with his head on the kitchen table.

The labor dragged on. Jane was tired and grew weepy, "I thought a second labor would be easier."

"It usually is, but it all depends. The baby is in a different position this time. But it's alright, honey."

Morning came and the doctor rose again and assessed the situation. He decided to go home and take care of some morning office appointments. Jane was assured that he could be back promptly.

Grace spoke to the doctor at the door as he left.

“Why is it so slow, doctor? Is there some problem?”

“No,” he said. “It’s just the way the baby is lying. It’s not in the ideal position for a quick birth.”

“I wanted her to go to the hospital. I was afraid of a breech birth.”

“Why, Ma’am?” he asked.

“Well, you see, my brother’s boy was a breech. It was difficult.”

The doctor smiled. “Well, that isn’t the situation here.”

“It isn’t?”

“No. And I’ll be back soon,” he said.

“Oh, I hope so,” Grace said.

In the bedroom, the nurse said, “Well, now things will start to happen.”

“Oh, do you think so?” Jane asked.

“Isn’t that usually the way things go?”

And the nurse was right. Now, with the doctor gone, labor finally began to progress rapidly. The pains became frequent, and the membranes ruptured. The nurse hurried to the phone to call the doctor back.

“Don’t hold your breath,” she warned Jane. “Don’t start any pushing. Just pant like a dog.”

When she came back she asked Luther to be ready to help. She opened a can of ether.

“You can help drip a little of this,” she told Luther. And to Jane she said, “Now don’t dare hold your breath. Just pant.”

Next the sickening smell of the hated ether, and the cone on her face. “Just blow it away, honey.” A whining, humming sound near her head. Then she was swinging in space in wide circles, turning on a great wheel.

She woke to a sunlit room and heard the protesting cry of a newborn. Luther was standing beside the bed.

“Hello,” he said. “Wake up. We have our girl.”

“Wonderful!” Jane said, and drifted off again. She woke soon to ask, “Has the doctor come back yet.”

“He came and officiated, and he has gone again,” Luther said. “Nurse is still here. She’s to watch you for awhile. Your mother is giving her some breakfast.”

“She must be tired.”

“Yes.”

“I want to see the baby,” Jane said.

“I don’t know why you can’t, but I’ll get the nurse.”

“You can pick the baby up yourself!”

“She’s too new,” Luther said. “I’m scared to carry her. But I did help ‘when she came. I dripped ether, and I helped the doctor by holding one of your knees.”

“Good. Let me see her, Luther.”

“Alright, but just a peek.” The baby had been bedded down in the baby carriage, so Luther rolled it close so Jane could get a glimpse of the baby girl wrapped snugly in a blue blanket.

“Mary Ellen,” Jane said.

“She wouldn’t be here if it weren’t for me, don’t forget. You know what I mean, don’t you?”

“I thought it was your father who gets the credit.”

“He’d have got the money if I’d wanted him to. It was easy to talk him out of it. He never liked the idea.”

“Well, we have her now,” Jane said, and slipped back into sleep.

In the dining room, Grace asked the nurse, “Why was it so slow?”

“It was a posterior presentation.”

“But,” Grace said, “the doctor told me it was not a breech.”

“No. It wasn’t. ‘Posterior’ doesn’t mean a breech.”

“But posterior means ‘buttocks’,” Grace said.

“Not in obstetrical language, Grandma.”

“Well, it was terrible,” Grace said. “Poor child.”

“Baby or mother?” the nurse asked.

“Well both, I suppose,” Grace said, “but I meant my daughter.”

“Grandma they’re both fine. It was a normal birth even though it was slow. Posterior means the face was presenting, not the crown. But the contractions rotated the baby so there was no problem as it turned out. If necessary doctor would have used forceps.”

“And you’re sure she’s alright?”

“Yes,” the nurse said, “both of them are.”

“Well” said Grace. “she mustn’t ever go through that again.”

“At least,” the nurse said, “she has a boy and a girl now. Isn’t that nice? And on New Year’s Eve practically.”

“I’ll bet this has ruined your New Year’s Eve. You must be just exhausted.”

“Well, now. I’m going to check the patient’s tummy one more time and see that it’s staying as it should be, and then I’m going home to sleep all afternoon, and by evening I’ll be raring to go. Doctor is going to stop in this afternoon.”

“I’m glad for that. I guess no one here will be doing anything very exciting tonight,”

“Sleep all you can. The baby will keep things exciting.”

####

Jane was kept so busy in the next week that thoughts of her troubles receded into the background. Luther stayed home for several days, and Trink, who arrived New Year's Day, was a delight to have around. She had always been fascinated with babies, and assisting in the care of a newborn was fun. Mary Ellen was a very good baby, crying far less than Denis had. She slept from feeding time to feeding time, and having been fed was ready to sleep again.

"First babies must cry because their mothers are terrified," Jane said.

Mary Ellen had darker hair than Denis' had been and she was a redder newborn, but she had an appealing face with a button nose, and a pixie chin.

"She's darling," Trink said.

"But you think the homeliest babies are cute," Jane said. "Do you still plan on twelve children?"

"Well," Trink laughed, "not quite that many, I guess."

"Are you serious about Sergei Guins," Jane asked. Trink tipped her head and her eyes twinkled. "It's getting that way it seems. And Mother likes him."

"What does she think about his being Russian?"

"She thinks it's just great," Trink said.

"My mother thinks so too. She's been reading about the revolution in Russia,"

"Well, she should know that Sergei's people were not on the side of the revolution. They got out of Russia. They went to Manchuria. But he was born in Russia."

"Well, it sounds very fascinating. It's funny isn't it. Mother thinks your Sergei is wonderful because he's Russian. But she didn't like my Narze who was Assyrian. Well, I expect he still is Assyrian, too." And Jane laughed.

"Do you ever hear from Narze?" Trink asked.

"Oh, no," Jane said. "No, that came to an end."

A visiting nurse came every other day to care for Jane and Mary Ellen. Aunt Adalyn sent a soft white baby blanket, and a dish of baked custard, Clara Roby sent a soft blue baby blanket and a dish of baked custard. Grandma Roby sent a pair of woolen booties and a bonnet she had knitted herself. She also sent a check for ten dollars. Cousin May Quinby sent a crocheted carriage robe. She was the distant cousin whose mother had bequeathed Luther the one thousand dollars.

Jane's ten days in bed came to an end. Trink went home to Oberlin and Jane assumed full care of the children. Luther had returned to work as soon as Jane was on her feet again. There followed immediately a period of the heaviest drinking Luther had ever done. That he came home at all at night seemed remarkable. He had scarcely any money at all to give Jane and she was at her wits end about it. She could not conceal the situation from her mother.

When the new baby was three weeks old, Grace said to Jane one morning, “Something has to be done. Things can not go on this way.”

Jane said nothing.

“Well, can they? Can they go on this way?”

“No,” Jane said. “No they can’t. But I need some time before I can do anything, Mother. I want to nurse this baby and I don’t want to be doubly upset.”

“What does that mean? Doubly upset?”

“I mean that I am worried about Luther’s drinking and then you fuss at me about it. What good does that do? Your fussing and looking grim won’t make him stop. If anything it…”

“Now don’t say that my being here makes him drink, Jane, because he drank when you lived alone.”

“That’s true, but other people’s disapproval isn’t going to solve the problem. If it could solve it, it would have long ago. His drinking trouble is beyond all that. I wonder if there isn’t something doctors can do to help someone who drinks when he wishes he could stop.”

“Well, I don’t know about that. What I do know is that I am very concerned about your precarious financial situation.”

“And yours,” Jane said.

“What?”

“Luther’s drinking makes your situation precarious too, doesn’t it? You live with us.”

“That’s only because I came back to be with you while you were waiting for the baby. I’m planning to go to New York in a week or two. I don’t intend to live in Cleveland. But I’ll have to stay here until your situation is resolved.”

“Mother,” Jane said, “you can’t resolve it by yourself.”

“Probably not,” Grace said, “but something will be done.”

Grace's thoughts were diverted for all of a day by the arrival of a letter from Nelle.

Dear Gracie, Jan. 24

What ever has happened to Jane's baby? I had the impression it was due at Christmas time. If it's here I hope it was a little girl. I had such a feeling that it was. I want to know what Jane would like. A little money or something for the baby? I've been thinking about a silver cup and hope that I'll have enough money for it. Things have been so bad for Roge this winter. So much of the business he got was cancelled and that cut down our income. It nearly floored him for a time. He worked so hard to get it. And he is so disgusted with those people down in Washington. Now they are trying to put through a Reorganization Bill. It just makes me sick.

Well, do let us know the news about the baby and tell Dee to write. How does she like her new job? Babs graduated and could do office work, but she still wants a dancing career and that worries us.

Well, Gracie, it's late and I'm tired and I must hie me to bed, but do write us the news of the baby.

We all send love-Nelle

Grace was annoyed with Nelle's letter. Apparently Roge was still a Roosevelt hater. Why couldn't he see that F.D.R. had done a great deal to help people who were really down and out? Nelle and Roge felt that the WPA workers were just "loafers on the dole." Times were tougher for everybody, but Grace was sure that Nelle and Roge were never quite as hard up as they said they were. They were never hungry. They still owned property in three states, for in addition to the Jackson Heights apartment and Forest Camp in the mountains, Nelle still had some acreage in Fire Valley adjacent to what had been the section of land that was the original Old Brick homestead. She could sell that if she needed.

But when Grace spoke of Nelle's land to Jane and Dee, Jane said, "Maybe they're what you call 'land-poor'."

And Dee said, "They probably wouldn't want to sell their property now. It will be worth more after the Depression is over."

"Meanwhile," said Jane, "they have to pay taxes, don't they? And the last I heard, Aunt Nelle was baking bread to sell to her friends for 15¢ a loaf and cookies for 20¢ a dozen."

"Nelle gave that up," Grace said. "It didn't pay and she doesn't have as much strength as she used to have. I haven't either for that matter. I don't know what's to become of us if this Depression doesn't end. Jane do you realize that the rent will be due soon? The February rent?"

"I remember," Jane said. "We'll have our half, don't you worry. We've always paid our share of the rent."

"And the coal is getting low, too," Grace said.

"Mother, it would help if you would contribute toward that. I know you have some money."



MARY ELLEN ROBY
1938
age 2 months
"JULIE ANNE"

MARY ELLEN
1938
age 6 months



“Well, if I could get at my own work, I’d have some more money. I’m always doing things for Denis.”

“Forget Denis, Mother, and get at your own work. Just leave the children to me, and do your art work. Or finish your African chronicle. Anything. But do it.”

“Well, as I said, I plan to go to New York, but first there is something I have to see about here.”

Jane talked to Luther about the rent. She was very definite about it, and said that if he didn’t bring it home she would have to go down to the foundry and ask his father to lend it to her. Luther promised her he would have it the next day and he surprised her by coming home with it, and early.

That night, since he was not drunk, Jane talked with him when they were in the bedroom and she was nursing the baby. He had been, as usual, admiring Mary Ellen, who at nearly one month had lost her newborn redness and was getting plump and dimpled. She would smile when a finger touched her chin. Her brother Denis seemed to like her and called her “Sarrie.”

“Luther,” Jane asked him. “Why are things so much worse just lately?”

“Are they worse, honey?”

“They certainly are. You’re bringing home less and less money, and we need so many things. Money for food, and for more coal, and we’ve got to pay the doctor his first installment. I’ve got to see him next week for my check-up and I want to have it for him then.”

“OK, honey, I’ll see what the old man can do. Business has been slow lately.”

“Yes, so you say, but you always have beer money. A glass of beer costs as much as a quart of milk. You’re buying beer with money we should have for food, and I can’t understand why someone as nice as you would do like that.”

“I don’t understand it either. I’m in a bad streak lately, honey.”

“But why?” Jane asked.

“I don’t know. Things are discouraging; we can’t get ahead.”

“We never will at this rate.”

“I know. I was doing better wasn’t I, honey, though? Wasn’t I? I was good when Mary Ellen was born, and I didn’t have a drink for quite awhile, did I? I went so long without a drink that I felt rotten. And I felt so bad that “Newtie Cootie” had died. It got me down. I was even having dreams about him. You know how that is. You dreamed about Skipper.”

“Yes, but I didn’t turn to drinking, Luther.”

“But drinking isn’t the same for you as for me” he said..

“That’s certain, but why? And what is the answer?”

“I don’t know,” Luther said. “I don’t know.”

HE NEEDS A REAL JOLT

Winter in Cleveland always depressed Grace. There was so much more winter sunshine in New York. She decided to write Nelle about coming for a few weeks. She would visit the publishers again. On second thought she would not stay with Nelle and Roge, not while they hated Roosevelt so. She would stay with Polly Patterson.

But she could not leave while Jane's affairs were in such a mess. It was time to do something about it. If Jane wouldn't act then she herself must.

Grace began by making a phone call to Luther's father. He said that foundry work prevented him from talking to her at that moment, but that he would call her later that day. However, later on that day it was Luther's Aunt Adalyn who called. She proposed that Grace come to her home on the coming Sunday afternoon. Luther's father would call for her at 1:30 p.m. The stated purpose: "so we who are concerned about these young people can discuss this situation."

Grace did not sleep well at all and, as always, even when other matters were troubling her, Norris continued to march through her dreams. Again and again she had persuaded herself and her journal that she had conquered her obsessive love for him. Repeatedly she failed in this struggle. And always after some new affront to her sensibilities, she felt constrained to flee from Cleveland. True, Norris was no longer in Cleveland, but the memory of him was everywhere. The buildings that they had known together, the Art school, The Museum, the Fine Arts Building, Symphony Hall, and even the downtown stores and restaurants. Every one of them evoked memories of sad or happy times. The cruelest blow to her feelings in many years came shortly before Christmas when Dee and Jane belatedly told her that Norris had fathered a son. And, ironically, that son was born in October, her own birthday month, the October when she turned fifty. Fifty years old. The years when she could have had a son were over. Now, all she could think of was getting away to New York where there were fewer memories and more distractions.

Just as soon as something was done about Jane, it would be possible to leave. If only Dee were happier. She should be married and settled and Jane should really be the one pursuing a career. Dee was twenty-seven years old. She should have the two babies not Jane. Their personalities were different. She had learned something disturbing however. Only yesterday she had said to Jane that she'd like to meet Dee's new boyfriend, and Jane hadn't commented. Then she, Grace, had said that since Dee usually met him downtown for dinner and then came home late from a date, it didn't seem likely she would meet him. Jane agreed. Next Grace had said, "I hope it's somebody nice. I wish she'd get serious about somebody that wanted to get married. I'd feel better about it if she were settled down. I hope this is the one."

"He isn't," Jane had said.

"Why?" Grace had asked. "Why do you say that?"

"Because he's married,"

"Oh, dear, no! Are you sure?"

"Yes, but I don't know anything more about it, Mother."

“Well, but is he separated, do you think? Perhaps he and his wife are planning to be divorced.”

“Maybe - but I just don’t know.”

“Oh, dear! Now I don’t like that at all.”

So now she had something additional to worry over. But that was foolish, for certainly Dee would not pursue such a relationship. She would see the folly of that sort of thing, and concentrate on other friends.

The principal thing on the agenda now was the Sunday conference, and she must not let too many other worries cloud her thinking. She had been debating the question of telling Jane about the appointment to meet with the Roby family to discuss Luther. But she had told Dee about it, and Dee had given her some advice.

“Mother,” she said, “I hope you’re going to tell Jane where you’re going on Sunday.”

“Do you think I should? I’ve been wondering about that.”

“Yes,” Dee said, “I do think so, because if you don’t, it’s going to seem sneaky, and she’ll have a fit when she finds out.”

“She will anyway, Dee. I’m quite prepared for her to say I’m interfering in her affairs. She resents my advice.”

“Didn’t you say Luther’s Aunt Adalyn invited you?”

“Yes.”

“Well then, all you have to do is tell Jane that.” And that is all Grace told Jane. (For the time being.)

Jane, however, was puzzled by her mother’s invitation to visit at Aunt Adalyn’s house on Sunday. She spoke to Luther about it. Luther had come home sober for the last two days, and when he was sober Jane could talk to him.

“Mother’s going to Aunt Connie’s for this Sunday and we’re not invited. Doesn’t that seem strange to you?”

Luther pursed his lips and raised his eyebrows, in a characteristic way he had when he learned something new.

“Isn’t that kind of odd, Luther?” Jane asked again.

“No,” he said. “I don’t think it’s odd.”

“Why not?”

“I suspect a family conference. How is Mama getting there?”

“Someone is picking her up,” Jane said.

“Uh-huh! It’s a conference alright - about old Luther.”

On Sunday Jane and Luther stayed in their room as Grace prepared to leave, but Jane came out in time to see her mother leave with Luther’s father.

“She left with your dad,” she told Luther.

“OK. That’s it. It’s a conference. They’ve had them before. Ever since I was little. I guess because I didn’t have a mother.”

“You have a stepmother.”

“They don’t like her. They never did. She probably won’t be there.”

“Who will be there? Your Uncle Frank?”

“Oh, you bet!”

“His wife?”

“No. Probably just Frank, Ockie, and the old man. Ray might sit in; it’s his home. But he’s no adversary of mine.”

“And there’ll be Mother. Luther when they had those conferences in past years what was the outcome?”

“Oh. I usually lost some privileges,” Luther said. “Uncle Frank usually was good at devising the punishment. Poor Aunt Ockie’s heart was never in it, neither was Grandma’s. I wonder what privileges Uncle Frank will find to take away this time.”

####

Luther Roby senior had brought Grace home from Carrollton Heights, but there was not much talk beyond a few observations about how very little snow there had been so far this winter. On the way to Adalyn's home, earlier, Grace had been able to speak of Luther and Jane, but Mr. Roby was a naturally quiet person whose responses were limited primarily to nodding his head in somber agreement, so that conversation had lagged.

At Adalyn's house, the discussion had started in an uneasy, tentative way, but it finally worked up to a conclusion that Grace had never foreseen. She arrived home nervous and exhausted, quite undone by the afternoon's result.

She had expected that someone would want her to talk about her day and she dreaded it, but neither Jane nor Luther said anything to her when she came in. Both of them were busy with the children, Jane nursing the baby, and Luther giving Denis a bath in the big bathtub, a ritual that entertained them both.

At the dinner table, Grace feared that Jane would ask questions, and if so, she would have to beg off; she could not discuss matters with Jane and Luther both. But no questions were asked, and to Grace that seemed strange indeed. They must have known something.

Grace went to bed with the plan to speak to Jane after Luther left for work. But through most of the night she tossed about, recalling the afternoon's discussion. Somehow it had all turned into something almost incredible. And in the final analysis Frank Roby, the youngest brother had taken charge and determined the outcome. Fragments of the conversation came back to her.

Adalyn had said in the beginning, "Luther's drinking is not a new problem. It began in high school. We never have understood it."

Frank Roby said, "No one else in the family ever drank."

"We know that when he was little, we spoiled him," Adalyn had said, "because he had lost his dear mother."

Frank Roby said then, "Luther has never ceased to be spoiled. Not to this day."

"Clara never spoiled him," Adalyn said.

Surprisingly, as it seemed to Grace, Luther's father said nothing at that point, nor had he had much to say the rest of the afternoon.

There were more surprising things. Grace had known that Luther had inherited a little money and that certain expenses had been paid with that money, such as the hospital and doctor expenses when Denis was born. But recently, Jane had told her that Luther had lent the remainder of the money to his father because business was so bad. There were surprises for nearly everyone. Frank Roby had brought out the facts after Grace's remark that Luther gave Jane so little money.

"I'm surprised that he brings home any money at all," Frank said, "He's never at work."

"Oh," Luther's father said, "He's in some of the time every week."

“I never see him there,” Frank Roby said, “but I suppose you pay him anyway.”

“Not much,” Luther Roby said, “but he has some in the bank.”

“I don’t think so,” Grace spoke up. “He told Jane it was all gone. He told her that he lent it all to his father.”

“To me!” Luther Roby spoke up, “No, I didn’t borrow any money from Luther”

“You borrowed from me though,” Frank Roby said, “and if you were not paying Luther for work he doesn’t do, you might not have to borrow from me, and you could even pay me back for the loan. So Luther has probably drunk up all his thousand dollars and then lied about it to his wife.”

Grace recalled how uncomfortable Adalyn Roby Irvin had looked during all this airing of family linen, and how she had said nervously, “I have read that people who have a drinking problem often tell fibs.”

“Fibs” Frank Roby had sputtered. “The word is ‘lies’. He tells lies.”

“Oh, Frank,” protested Adalyn, “what I was trying to say was, it’s part of the trouble. It goes with drinking. That boy needs help.”

“That ‘boy’ is a man, and he is a father. And he needs to face up to his responsibilities. And he never will if you all just keep carrying him along in your arms! He’ll never grow up at this rate, and he’ll just father more kids.”

“Oh, no,” Grace had said. “I’m sure Jane won’t have more. She has a boy and a girl; she doesn’t want more.”

“I wouldn’t count on it,” Frank said. “They shouldn’t have had the two they have. If Luther goes on as he is, they’ll have more, and the rest of us will have to support them all.”

Grace was very upset at that. “The only thing I had in mind was that, maybe you people might persuade Luther...”

“Years of persuasion haven’t worked,” Frank Roby said.

“No,” Adalyn said sadly, “that is true, I’m afraid.”

“What he needs is a real jolt,” Frank said, “to bring him ‘round.’”

For the first time, Ray Irvin, Adalyn’s husband, spoke up. He had been present, but listening quietly.

“I think the boy might benefit by a complete change of environment,” he offered.

“Such as what, Ray?” Adalyn asked, brightening a bit.

“Such as getting him out of the city into the country.”

“I can’t see him milking cows and slopping hogs,” Frank said.

“No, no,” Ray said. “I was thinking of something like an apple ranch in Washington State or that sort of thing. He ought to have an entirely different kind of life. Get out into the fresh air. I don’t think that foundry is a good place for him to be. He looks thin and pale.”

“So does his lather,” Adalyn said. “And they both cough.”

“Only a cigarette cough,” Luther Roby slid.

“I think the apple ranch idea sounds lovely,” Adalyn said. “Or perhaps Luther’s uncles on his mother’s side might know of something similar. Do you think so, John? They live in the West, don’t they?”

“Yes, but they’re in the Army, They’re career officers. One’s in El Paso and the other’s in Missouri, I think. They don’t run any apple ranch though.”

“Well,” Adalyn said, “they might know of something somewhere, Of course, I don’t know what might work out best for Jane and the babies. The new one is so tiny; moving wouldn’t be easy just now.”

Frank Roby spoke with explosive impatience, “That fellow shouldn’t be allowed anywhere near them. He doesn’t know how to treat a family. He’s lucky to have a baby boy and girl. He needs a real jolt. Do you think for one minute he would ever change unless something decisive is done to wake him up? He won’t change, I can tell you that, unless we get very firm with him. And I think I know what we must do.”

And Frank Roby had proceeded to stipulate what he believed should be done about Luther. And before the afternoon’s meeting was over he had persuaded the others that his plan should be tried. The others had expressed some doubts, but Frank Roby was the strongest personality in the group and his arguments prevailed.

And so Grace lay awake for hours, remembering all that had been said, and wondering how on earth she could possibly tell Jane what had been decided.

TEACH HIM TO PLAY WITH A BALL

Clement Chandler had been dating a school teacher during most of the summer and autumn. He had decided to stay away from Jane and Luther Roby after he learned of the second pregnancy. But when Grace came home from the East, and the Rahming's and Roby's were all together again, Chan began seeing them all once more. Sometimes he did some little favor for one of them, and was asked to dinner. He still dated the school teacher, Evelyn, on a regular basis, but occasionally, now, he went out with Dee again. As Jane's accouchement drew near, Chan began allowing himself to think about her again. Dee had told him that Luther Roby was drinking heavily again, and she said that she was sure that someday Jane would have to divorce Luther.

After the baby was born, things had not improved and it was so obvious to Chan, that he had trouble feeling any kindly feeling at all toward Luther. He had originally liked Luther (as everyone always liked Luther) and he had liked Grace and Jane, too. He had, in fact, been very much impressed with Grace, with her talent and her intellectuality, and he had been romantically interested in Dee for more than a year and a half. But Dee decided Chan was not her type and dated other men, so their relationship cooled. At the same time, Chan was discovering that he and Jane had their craftsmanship in common. Before long, it was not Dee, Grace, or Luther that Chan had come to see but Jane. Then had followed the long summer of staying away and trying to find new interests with his school teacher friend. But now he was back again seeing the Rahming's and the Roby's, and his mother took notice.

"Edna says you're building a baby crib in the basement, is that right?" she asked.

"Yes," Chan said.

"Do I dare ask what that's all about?"

She was so wide-eyed as she asked the question that Chan had to tease her a little. He returned the wide-eyed look before he asked, "What do you think it's for?"

"Well, I don't know. I was wondering," she said.

"I'm not about to become a father; be sure of that."

"Who is it for then? It's not like any baby crib I ever saw."

"It's for Jane Rahming. It's a special modern crib. She told me what she wanted, and I designed it for her. It's made to be high enough to care for the baby without breaking your back in the process."

"You're pretty clever," his mother said.

"So is Jane."

"You like her, don't you?"

"Yes."

"How does it happen you're seeing those people again?"

“I like them,” Chan said.

“But what about Evelyn? I thought you were dating her.”

“I am dating her - occasionally. And Dee Rahming too - occasionally.”

“I was thinking maybe you were getting serious about Evelyn.”

“Nope. I wasn’t. I’m not,” he said.

“Well, don’t get interested in someone that’s married.”

“You’ve done that yourself, Ma.”

She looked surprised, but she said, “Oh, nothing serious. The only married person I’m interested in is Harry, and I wish we could get a place of our own again. But I’m afraid he’s in no hurry.”

“That seems obvious,” Chan said.

“He says it’s the Depression, and I suppose that’s part of it. But I think he could afford it. I’d like a home of my own.”

“Well, so would lots of people. So would I.”

“Yes, I suppose, but I certainly hope you’ll look for a girl that isn’t married. You have no reason to hope that she’ll be free. Or do you?”

“Maybe,” Chan said. “Maybe.”

For a week, Chan had been preoccupied with the startling information he had learned from Dee at a recent rehearsal of the little theater group they had joined.

The Campbell Players had the use of a small auditorium in an old building in Cleveland. On rehearsal nights Dee stayed downtown after work and since Clement Chandler had a part in the current play, he sometimes gave Dee a ride home afterwards.

During a short “cigarette break” the cast sat around on the edge of the stage. Chan sat down beside Dee.

“Tell Jane the crib is almost finished,” he said.

“Good,” Dee said. “Listen. I have some news. Things are changed at our house.”

Chan raised one eyebrow in a characteristic expression.

“Oh?”

“Luther is no longer with us,” Dee said.

Chan was not expecting this. “You mean he left?”

“Yes, he’s gone, but it’s quite a story.”

“I’ll be darned,” Chan said. “I used to like the guy, but lately I hate his guts.”

“You like Jane, don’t you?”

“Sure,” Chan said. “You do too, don’t you?”

“Come on, you know what I mean, Chan.”

“Well, I find her very attractive, but after all, she hasn’t been available. Of course, if Luther has decamped...”

“I don’t know what’s ahead for Jane, Luther is gone, but the situation isn’t very simple. Luther didn’t leave willingly.”

“She threw him out?”

“No, she didn’t. The family did. Jane’s all upset about it. In spite of all, she still loves Luther, and I don’t think...”

“Wait a minute,” Chan said. “What do you mean, ‘the family’ threw him out?”

“His family. The Robys. They had a big confab.”

“What gives them the right to take charge? Jane and Luther are married and they have children.”

“But it was a matter of money, Chan. Luther hasn’t been supporting Jane.”

“I know. But I still don’t see how the Robys have the authority to ‘throw Luther out’ as you put it.”

“Chan, I don’t really know what was said at the meeting. I only know what Mother reported to me.”

“Your mother was there?” Chan asked.

“Well, yes. She’s the one who decided it was high time someone did something about the situation.”

“I know, but...”

“Listen, Chan, Mother’s been worried sick about Jane. Luther hasn’t been bringing home enough money. So Mother went to see his father, and she found out he hasn’t been earning what his father gives him. Half the time Luther doesn’t even show up. Luther’s uncle is disgusted with him.”

“His uncle is? Where does he come in?”

“I don’t know, Chan.”

“Well, I don’t see how they can throw Luther out of his own house,” Chan said.

“I’ll tell you why they can. Because they want to make Luther come to his senses and stop drinking. They don’t want him to come near Jane and the babies until he straightens out.”

“And what did Luther say about all that?”

“Luther had no choice in the matter,” Dee said.

“Why not?”

“Because the Robys are going to support Jane for a year. They’re going to send her \$60 a month, and she’ll be much better off and Luther knows it.”

“My God though, that’s pretty cold-blooded of them. They have him over a barrel, haven’t they?”

“Well, if he wants his family he’s supposed to straighten out.”

“I doubt if he can,” Chan said. “He’ll probably just get worse.”

“Mother said they talked of finding him a job on a ranch somewhere out West.”

“And what’s he doing meanwhile? Where’s he live?”

“I don’t know. That’s his problem, I guess.”

Chan shook his head. “I never heard of anything like it.”

“It was the only thing to do,” Dee said.

“It won’t solve anything for Luther. There’s no logic in it at all. And I don’t see where they have the right to bar him from his children. Legally, I mean.”

“They’re going to support her though.”

“For a year. Well, even so, I think only a judge could order him to stay away from his wife and kids, and only if Jane filed suit against him and won her case.”

“But they don’t have to pay Jane money, Mu.”

“I know, and they’re counting on his concern for her and the babies. The poor bastard!”

“I thought you hated his guts,” Dee said.

“Well I do in a way. But I feel sorry for him. This could be the final push downhill.”

“I don’t see why it has to be. All he has to do is just simply stop drinking.”

“‘Just simply stop drinking,’” Chan said, “It isn’t that easy. My father couldn’t do it, even to keep from losing my mother and me. But he did straighten out and was successful enough in his work later on.”

“That proves it can be done,” said Dee.

“No, that was different, because Mother just left him and came home to Cleveland. And that happens to married people. One of them walks out and the other one can usually get over it in time. My dad did; he had his pride. He knew he was worth something even if Mother left him.”

“I don’t know what point you’re trying to make,” Dee said.

“The point is this is different in Luther’s case, because Jane didn’t throw him out. His whole family turned against him and forced her to go along with their plan. They make him feel like a worm. They leave him with no pride left at all. He won’t stop drinking. And where does that leave Jane? She’ll have a little allowance but what else? She’s in limbo, neither married nor single. The thing is that she didn’t leave Luther and she didn’t throw him out either. So everything is up in the air and nothing is settled.

####

And during these troubled days, what of Jane? Her emotions had never been more confused. During almost the entire two and a half years and more that she had been married to Luther, she had been hurt and frustrated by his drinking. While it seemed to be, in truth, Luther's only significant fault, it was a hellish and perhaps fatal one. She had known for months that she couldn't and wouldn't live in that fashion indefinitely. But she had to wait; she could do nothing until the babies were older. What she would do, then, she had no idea, for she was not trained for any work such as the kind that Dee did, and which Mim was learning in business college. Furthermore, she was sure she had no aptitude for office work. And she could not work unless arrangements could be made for the care of Denis and Mary Ellen. How lucky her mother had been to have had Aunt Ida. If only Aunt Ethel were in good health she could be a "nanny" for Denis and Mary Ellen. Aunt Ethel was not at all happy living with Mary and Norris and the children, because she felt useless and in the way. What a waste of a willing human being

Jane could not even think about working for a living just yet, not seriously, but she had to begin to consider the possibilities. She knew she did not want her mother to raise Denis and Mary Ellen. There were several reasons; one was that Grace would inevitably say to them, just as she had always said to Dee and Andres, "If your dad had been any kind of a father, etc. etc." She would try to turn them against Luther, just as she had tried to turn her own daughters against Norris. And Jane planned to have Jack and Mary Ellen respect their father. She would say to them simply, "He was a very nice person, but he drank too much." And she would say, "He was very smart and witty and kind. He had a wonderful disposition, he could play the piano, he was good at Math, he understood the Law, and he could play tennis and sail a boat."

Grace would never tell them those things.

Jane cried herself to sleep every night the first week that Luther was gone. He had gone without a real struggle and that made it so much worse.

"What could I say?" Luther said. "They are right. I can't argue with the facts."

She had not told Luther what she had learned from her mother about the now vanished savings account. Not told him that everyone now knew that it was all gone, all squandered and absolutely not loaned to his father. It was no good to reproach him about it. It would not set anything right.

Luther expressed no anger, but Jane saw tears in his eyes many times in the last two days before he left, and especially when he was with Denis, or watching the baby Mary Ellen as she slept or nursed.

As he packed his old college suitcase with underwear and shirts and other things, Jane watched him.

"Where will you be staying?" she asked, weeping.

"I'll get a room in a day or two," he said.

"But tonight, where?"

"Probably in the shop."

“In the shop! That gloomy place?”

“I’ll use the couch in Uncle Frank’s office.”

“Get a room tomorrow, Luther. Promise.”

“OK, honey, I will.”

That first night with Luther gone, unaccountably, Jane dreamed again of Skipper. In the dream, they were both working in the Winchester room once more, but they had babies at home, and the boss (who was not Mr. Hennessy) was keeping them late and not letting them go home. She woke up shaking, realizing that Luther was gone, and lay awake the rest of the night alternating between crying spells and waves of resentment against the older ones in the family who had taken their father away from her children. She had not yet learned that Grace had precipitated the conference that caused all this upheaval, but experience had taught her that her mother would always treat her as a child, and she was certain that she had done it again. And without a doubt she would have painted Luther blacker than he deserved.

When Grace first told Jane of the separation plan the reaction was predictable. Jane couldn’t believe her ears.

“They want to throw me out of their family? I’m not good enough for them?”

“Now, Jane, that’s not it at all. They think Luther’s not good enough for you.”

“Oh” Jane said, “They could think that, and still think I’m not good enough for them.”

“No,” her mother said. “They said that they knew you were a fine girl.”

“Oh yes. A fine girl. A fine child who was dumb enough to have babies. I can imagine how the conversation went. It did, didn’t it? Didn’t it?”

“Jane, now calm down. This had to be done; it’s the only way, though I do think the allowance might have been a little more.”

“Well, perhaps it seemed to them that since their family is helping me, you might want to contribute to the welfare fund, too. Perhaps they didn’t realize that you lived with us.”

Grace had looked at Jane a moment to determine just what that remark had intended. Then she said a bit vaguely, “Dee contributes.”

“Yes, she does,” Jane said, “but she didn’t feel that gave her the right to play God with Luther and me.”

“Dee is in accord with what’s been decided,” Grace said.

“You are always good at persuading Dee.”

“Well,” said Grace, “in any case I’m going to Oberlin. Merly’s wanted me to come.”

And so Grace was absent the day that Luther left the duplex house on Walcott Avenue and headed for the streetcar with his old college suitcase.

Jane had tried not to cry when he left and fortunately Luther said something at the last that made a difference in her mood and turned it from sorrow to anger.

Luther had said, "Now remember that \$60 allowance is just for you and the babies. It's not for anyone else."

"I know." Jane said. "Dee and I will figure out how to divide our expenses. I'll buy the babies' food and Dee and I will split the other food cost and the rent and stuff."

"Whet about Mama?" he asked.

"She's not going to be here, she says."

"I learned from the old man that it was Mama who called the conference."

"I guessed as much," Jane said. "No wonder she went to Oberlin. But, Luther, I really don't think she ever guessed it would turn out like this."

"What else did she have in mind?" he asked.

"Probably she thought the older generation could lay down the law to you."

"They have. Dad says Uncle Frank says I must stay dry for a whole year before I can live with you again."

"Oh, Luther don't you see that if you stop drinking and start earning your pay we can get along fine now. If you do that we can be together soon. Their rules don't mean a thing if you can support the babies and me. I would dearly love to mail the check back to your Aunt Connie. Make it happen, Luther, please, because this whole thing is just terrible. It was bad before, but this I can't believe. You know how to get us out of it. Just earn your pay, Luther."

"OK, honey," he said and gave her a goodbye hug.

He had gone half way down the front walk, when he turned around and came back to her as she stood in the doorway.

"One thing I've been thinking about, honey. Teach him to play with a ball,"

"What?"

"Denis. Teach him to play with a ball. No one ever did that for me and I missed out on something good."

"But you played tennis," she said.

"It's not the same. I never was on a team. It would have been good for me. I could have played baseball. So be sure and teach him to play with a ball."

"You'll do that, Luther."

“Well, in case I don’t, be sure someone does.”

“Oh, Luther!”

“I’ll call you this evening,” he said.

“Yes, and let me know when you find your room.”

“OK, honey, I will,” and he struck off once more in the snow with his suitcase.

Jane tried to never cry in front of Denis, for the little boy seemed puzzled and disturbed by it. He was twenty months old now, a handsome little fellow with brown eyes and blond curls. He was learning new words every day and Jane realized that sometimes he was trying to ask where his Daddy was. This began after Luther had been gone nearly a week.

The first evening had been lonely. With Dee downtown on a date, Grace in Oberlin, and the babies asleep, the house was quiet. But Luther called and they talked for a long time. Somehow, talking with him on the phone was different, more objective. He said that he hadn’t found himself a room yet, there had been no time to get away, because they had poured two heats that day.

She had gone to bed and cried again, of course, and had restless dreams, one concerned her high school graduation, another was of Skipper and her baby, and one of Narze who had arrived with a grocery bag filled with chocolate bars.

The baby, Mary Ellen was seven weeks old now, but she still woke for a 2 a.m. feeding. Jane was finding that all the turmoil was interfering with her successful nursing of the baby. Mary Ellen wasn’t getting all she needed and had to be given an extra ounce or two of formula after nursing. This was because Jane was tired, depressed, angry, and she had lost her appetite. She was sad that she was gradually failing at breast feeding the new baby. Jane had enjoyed nursing, enjoyed the bonding that it represented. She was certain now that she would have to wean Mary Ellen soon, and never again would she experience that special relationship, for she would never have more children. Life was too uncertain.

The second night Dee again stayed downtown rehearsing at the Campbell Players and then having a date with the current man in her life. Luther did not call that evening. But on the third night, Dee was at home and Luther did call. Jane learned that he still had not got himself a room. Too busy, he said. She worried about him. How could he take a bath? What did he do for covers when he slept on the couch? What about a pillow? He must get a room the very next day. And yes, the babies were fine.

When Jane hung up, Dee spoke. She had been standing nearby frowning during the conversation.

“You’re not supposed to do that,” she said.

“Do what?”

“Not supposed to talk to Luther.”

Jane’s anger was quick and intense “Not supposed to talk to him!”

“Those were the arrangements, I think,” Dee said.

“Don’t talk to me of the ‘arrangements’.”

“Well, you weren’t to be allowed any contact with Luther.”

“Allowed! Don’t talk to me as though I were a child.”

“But you are, after all,” Dee said, warming to the dispute.

“I’m nearly twenty-two. The fact that Luther drinks doesn’t make me a child. Plenty of women have husbands who drink. And anyway, it isn’t your business, Dee.”

“Yes it is, because I’m your sister.”

“Alright then! As your sister I have the right to tell you that you shouldn’t be allowed to date a married man.”

Dee hesitated only a moment. “That’s not the same at all.”

“Oh,” said Jane, “but the question here is ‘interfering’ and who has the right to do it.”

The Old Brick

By Jane R. Chandler

1981

Part Eleven

YOU MADE A BAD MARRIAGE, TOO

Curiosity brought Grace home from Oberlin after two weeks absence. Her curiosity was mixed with a tiny measure of guilt. Sometimes at night when she lay awake she had wondered how things would have fared with Jane if the older generation had stayed out of it altogether. And what would happen at the end of the year? And how was Jane getting along with Luther gone? She came home to find out.

Jane seemed silent, in fact sullen. She announced that she did not wish to discuss Luther, the Roby's, or anything.

"Is he still drinking?" Grace asked.

"How would I know? You saw to that."

"Don't blame me," Grace said. "It's not my fault."

"I know about your part in it."

"How do you know that?"

"Luther's father told him and Luther told me."

"Has Luther been here?" Grace asked quickly.

"No, he hasn't, but I talk to him on the phone."

"You aren't supposed to do that. It was supposed to be a 'clean break' with Luther."

"I don't believe they ever said that. I'm going to call Aunt Ockie (Adalyn Roby Irvin) and ask her and even if she says 'yes', Luther and I will talk on the telephone and you have no way of stopping us."

"Well, never mind calling Ockie. I'm not sure exactly what was said, but I do know what the Roby's had in mind – Luther is to be deprived of contact with you."

“Yes, I understand. He’s being disciplined. But just tell me – why am I being disciplined... and the children? Some people’s conscience is going to bother them for taking their father away from Denis and Mary Ellen.”

“But, Jane, you made a bad marriage.”

“Don’t talk about that. You made a bad marriage, too.”

It was a troubled time.

During the next week the tension among them began to ease somewhat for a variety of reasons. One of these was Grace’s preoccupation with her brother Stan’s plan to tear down the old brick homestead in North Royalton. He had been threatening to do it for at least two years, but now his talk was getting more serious. And it seemed that none of Stan Martin’s siblings approved of his plan, but neither could they think of how to prevent him from carrying it out. He owned the property free and clear.

And Grace was full of other talk. Merly was remodeling her new house. She was making the upstairs into small housekeeping apartments for female college students. That way she would have additional income from those upstairs rooms. And Grace commented on that.

“Merly inherited money and bought her house, and she still has a living allowance to care for Emmie, but I guess she’s planning on getting rich. Merly never used to be that way.”

“How many rooms will she rent?” Jane asked.

“Four – and there will be two little kitchenettes.”

“She won’t get rich from renting those. She’s probably trying to get the money for Mim and Trink’s education.”

Grace looked at Jane and wondered whether she was trying to resurrect the old sore point of her inability to attend college. Grace steered the conversation along a slightly different path.

“Nelle and Roger are doing to be disappointed that Merly’s going to rent rooms to students. Roger has been thinking about asking Merly to let him bring Nelle to stay there. Nelle doesn’t do very well alone anymore. Roge is traveling so much and Nelle seems to need someone.”

“What about Babs?”

“They can’t count on her. Roge says she’s boy crazy. And she’ll probably get married. He wanted to pay Merly something to take Nelle there.”

“Hasn’t Aunt Merly had enough of that sort of thing - taking care of relatives?”

“Roge would pay Merly. And he says that Nelle did plenty for Merly over the years, and plenty for Mim and Trink too.”

“Oh, mostly that was for Babs’ sake,” Jane said. “She used to ‘borrow’ cousins to play with Babs.”

“Oh, no, that wasn’t all Nelle did. She was always good to Merly. And right now Roger wouldn’t borrow any more cousins.”

“Why should he? We’re all grown up,” Jane said.

Grace laughed. “Oh, you are? Well, Roge is very peeved at Trink in any case.”

“At Trink! I can’t believe that. Poor Trink. So she has joined the rest of us cousins who have fallen from grace. And what did Trink do to deserve that?”

“Well, she and a friend biked up to Forest Camp last summer and stayed a few days with – “

“That was the summer before. They took a youth hostel trip after Trink graduated from high school.”

“Well, whenever it was,” Grace said, “Roge thinks both the girls were brash, rude and ‘know-it-all’. He said they contradicted him in a very impertinent way.”

“What on earth were they talking about?”

“I gather it was politics. Probably Roosevelt. It’s a sore point with Roger.”

“Oh, yes, but really it’s just that he won’t admit that we girl cousins have grown up, and that we are entitled to have opinions that differ from his. In fact all of your generation wants to keep us as children forever. That’s why you and the Roby’s thought you had the right to put Luther and me asunder.”

Grace began to smile at Jane’s words but Jane went on.

“You know what I’m talking about? That’s in the marriage service: ‘Whom God hath joined together let no man put asunder.’ I guess none of you have any regard for that.”

“Jane, it’s no use for us to discuss that anymore.”

Actually, Jane was beginning to emerge from the worst of her despair and longing for Luther. A curious thing had happened. Before Luther left, she had spent all her days wondering whether he would come home sober from work on time, or whether he would be drunk and late. Now that she knew he would not be home at all, a strange and unaccustomed peace of mind expanded

from day to day, and Jane began to live purposefully once again. She had suffered a bad cold in March and reluctantly weaned the baby. But this, though it had made her sad, had given her a new freedom to be her own person again, and to be a girl again. She lost the extra weight accumulated during her pregnancy and began to sew clothes for herself again, and with her small but dependable income she was able to buy the materials she needed to make herself three dresses and a spring suit for Easter. In the evenings she knit sweaters and rompers for the babies.

Grace began to worry about Jane. The child was losing too much weight. Perhaps she was grieving more than anyone had expected. How could that be, with Luther such a hopeless alcoholic? True, there was much that was lovable about Luther. And Jane's remark about 'let no man put asunder' was disturbing to Grace, who had been brought up by a deeply religious mother who considered Scripture the absolute guide to life in this world. Grace did not have her mother's faith, but she carried a lifelong respect for Maria's values. She was having some uneasy feelings now about the separation enforced on Jane and Luther. She resolved to try to do something to help Jane find herself again and make a new start. Grace enjoyed taking care of Denis and Mary Ellen was a good baby, so she approached Jane with an offer.

"Why don't you take a day and go downtown or something? I'll look after the babies for you."

"Why? I haven't any extra money to spend."

"No, but you've been housebound for so long. A day off will be good for you. You can just window shop or maybe go to the library."

"I'll go to the library," Jane said. "Window shopping would be much too frustrating just now."

Two days later, Jane came home from downtown Cleveland with an armful of books and record albums. Inspired by listening to a Saturday afternoon Metropolitan opera performance of Wagner's "Die Walkure" with Kirsten Flagstad as Brunhilde, Jane had decided to study all the 'Ring' operas. Grace owned a book on Richard Wagner with a comprehensive explanation of the stories and the music. The book had been given to her by her girlhood chum, Olive Willey, on the occasion of Grace's graduation from Cleveland School of Art. Jane was studying it intensively now, and Grace was enthusiastically sharing the pleasure. As Jane played the records, Grace recognized and pointed out the 'leit-motifs' to her.

"That's the fire music, the 'Flames'," Grace would say or, "That's Brunnhilde's Sleep."

Their mutual enjoyment of the music that spring was a welcome pause in the conflict that had been going on ever since boys first began to notice Jane. Grace began to hope once more that her youngest daughter might even yet 'make something of herself.'

One day Grace said, "I still hope you'll be able to get more education. I have an idea for a book, and if I could get it published you could go to art school or college."

“What about the children?” Jane asked.

“They could be cared for,” Grace said. “We’d figure it out.”

“Mother you should finish your African story,” Dee said, “and not start on anything new till you do. And Jane may very much enjoy studying opera, but she ought to take up shorthand and typing so she can support herself in the future.”

“I don’t expect to make a living by listening to opera. I’m just finding things to get my mind off my problems. But I don’t see any point in my fussing around with shorthand, because that isn’t my sort of thing.”

“What is?” Dee asked.

“I once wanted to do something with languages or chemistry. There’s lots of things I’d like to do. I’m planning to write a book myself. I’ve already started.”

“What’s it about,” Dee asked.

“Oh, life and its sorrows,” Jane said with a grin.

Later Dee said to Grace, “I think Jane is recovering, don’t you?”

####

And in fact, Jane was adjusting quite well to life without Luther. They still talked on the telephone, but not as often. Sometimes he called her, and sometimes it was she who called. But when the phone rang in Uncle Frank Roby's office more often than not Luther was not there. When she thought about it, Jane could not blame Luther for not wanting to spend all his evenings alone in his uncle's office with no one to talk to, no radio, and nothing for comfort but a rather narrow leather couch. Quite naturally, he would go to Jimmy Black's for his dinner, and he would stay there afterward (and he might not even get around to eating dinner at all). She was teaching herself not to think about it all the time, but when she did, it was to decide that the Roby's plan for Luther was cruel and stupid, in fact, insane. It could not possibly help Luther stop his drinking. The family certainly should know that. The entire situation was so disheartening to think about that she was learning to put it out of her mind for several hours at a time.

But at the very end of March something disrupting occurred on a cold, snowy night with high winds. The month was 'going out like a lion.'

The room where Jane slept at the rear of the house had a feature which the other room, the babies' room, lacked. There was a door leading on to a small porch with no access to the yard such as stairs, but it was only three feet from the ground. It had a solid-walled railing around it, and on its ends, honeysuckle vines on trellises. It had been very pleasant last November on a few mild days, and would be fine for the babies when spring came. Jane and Luther had chosen this room also because the babies would need the larger room for their two cribs, baby carriage, kiddy cars and all such paraphernalia. It had been pointed out that Dee and Grace would be far more comfortable at the front end of the house where they shared the large sunroom, and where they'd be far from the sound of the new baby crying in the night. And of course, Jane and Luther knew it would be better for their own conjugal privacy, to have Mama and Dee up front. At present, nothing conjugal was happening, of course.

It was after midnight on that late March Tuesday, when Jane became aware that a tapping sound had aroused her. She decided that the wind was blowing a branch of shrubbery against the window pane. But next she realized that the tapping had a rhythm. Dum-da-da-dum-dah. Dum-dum: 'Shave and a haircut, Bay Rum.' The wind does not tap advertising jingles.

Putting aside a certain fear, she looked out the east window. Below in the snow stood Luther. He had been tapping on the window pane with a stick. Jane raised the sash and put her finger to her lips to tell him to speak softly.

"Let me in, honey. I'm hurt," and she saw then that his hand was wrapped in a huge bandage.

"Go around to the little porch. I can't let you in the other doors."

They managed to get him in over the porch railing by putting a chair so he could step on it. She had closed the door from her room to the hall.

“We’ve got to be very quiet. Mother and Dee would have a fit. Now tell me what happened.”

He sat wearily on the edge of the bed.

“I cut three fingers in the band-saw.”

“Oh Luther! How badly?”

“I still have them, but that’s about all you can say. My index and second fingers are off more than halfway down to the nail and the tip of my next finger is gone.”

“Oh, God! That’s terrible Luther! Who took care of you?”

“Well, I fainted right on the spot and the old man took me to St. Alexis Charity Hospital and they cleaned everything up and bandaged it. I’m supposed to see a hand specialist tomorrow. The emergency room doctor thought it wouldn’t be too bad when it’s healed because my fingers were curved downward and the cut was slanting. He thinks I’ll have feeling in the pads of those fingers but not in the tips.”

“Luther, why didn’t your father take you home with him tonight?”

“You should know that – Clara won’t have me in the house. She’s disgusted with me lately.”

“She could have had you for one night.”

“She’s a nurse; she knows I’ll survive.”

“What time of day did this happen?”

“Just before quitting time. After the hospital, the old man brought me back to the shop and then he went on home.”

“Unbelievable! Did you have anything to eat?”

“I didn’t want anything to eat. Dad said he’d get me a sandwich at Jimmy Black’s but I didn’t want anything. I took some pain pills and went to sleep.”

“Right there in the office, of course.”

“Yeah...”

“You were going to get a room and you still haven’t. Never mind – I know why. Listen, are you hungry?”

“I don’t know. I don’t think so. I gotta take some more pain pills.”

“Shh – don’t talk so loud. I’ll get you a glass of milk. I don’t know what I’m going to tell Mother and Dee.”

Just then there was a frantic scratching at the bedroom door. “It’s Bonnie. I’ll let her in but please, we’ve got to be quiet, Luther.” She opened the door and the Scottie came in all tail-wagging and wiggles. She leapt up on the bed and nearly bowled Luther over, covering his face with kisses. Luther was obviously pleased. “She loves me anyway.”

“Sure she does. Doggies don’t ask much of people, do they. And Bonnie has no reason to feel insecure. Listen, I’m going for the milk, but Luther, I don’t know what to do about your being here. Shall I tell them now or wait till they just discover you?”

“Can’t I stay?” How could Jane not extend her hand to her pathetic, drowning husband.

“I couldn’t send you back downtown. Just stay here and I’ll get your milk. I’m going to tell them and then you can get cleaned up.” He held up his white-bundled right hand. “Never mind,” Jane said. “I’ll help you.”

She went through the darkened house to the room where her mother and sister had slept through the talk in her back room. “Mother! Wake up. Dee! Wake up.”

“What’s the matter,” they sleepily chorused.

“Luther is here. D’you hear? Luther is here.”

That brought them full awake, but only Grace sat up, wide-eyed. “Good grief! Is he very drunk?”

“He’s not drunk at all. He’s hurt,” and she explained the situation.

“But he can’t stay here!” Grace protested.

“Yes he can,” Jane said firmly.

“How long?”

“I don’t know, but tonight at least.”

“Where’s he going to sleep?” Grace wanted to know.

“In my bed of course.”

Dee finally spoke up. “Mother, it will be alright.”

“But the Roby’s didn’t want...”

“My God, Mother!” Jane scowled. “Don’t talk to me of the Roby’s.” She turned and left them to get Luther’s milk. He was asleep but somehow she roused him, got him undressed, washed and into one of his old shirts. He took his pills with the milk and crawled into bed.

When she got in beside him he said sleepily, “I needed my mommy, didn’t I. Do you like me anymore, honey?”

“I don’t know who I like these days.”

“I know honey. Can I see the kids?”

“I wondered if you’d ask. You can see them tomorrow.”

####

When Grace woke in the morning she remembered that Luther Roby was in the house. Grace was on one of her frequent cycles of retiring late and sleeping late. It was eleven when she rose, and learned that Luther had left.

“I should think if he can go to work he wouldn’t have needed to come here last night.”

Jane gritted her teeth. “He has gone to a hand specialist this morning. He hasn’t gone to work.”

“I’m sure that the Roby’s would not approve of his coming here.”

“The Roby’s can take a long walk off a short pier – but Luther’s father knew he was going to come here last night.”

“He did?!”

“Yes, and I’m sure Aunt Ockie would have understood, too. She’s a more sympathetic person than you are.”

Grace was miffed. “It’s not that – it’s just that I don’t think you and Luther should be sleeping together.”

“I always knew that bothered you. Right from the beginning you didn’t like it. You’re afraid I’ll have more babies. Well, don’t worry – I know how not to have them. Narze and I might have had babies too if we hadn’t been smart. For two and a half years we saw to it that we didn’t get into trouble.”

Grace’s eyes were wide. “I didn’t know that you and...”

“Of course you didn’t, Mother, but you know now.”

Grace was silent a moment, and then she said, “Well, you better be very careful, you and Luther.”

Luther came back again at midnight, tapping on the window pane as before. “Why didn’t you come earlier?” Jane wanted to know. “You could have had dinner with us.”

“No, I’d rather not run into your mother. I had something to eat at Jimmy Black’s. And beer, but only two beers. Can I stay another night? You see, I still can’t button or unbutton my shirt with my left hand. Thank God for zippers in pants!”

“What did the hand specialist do for you?”

“He photographed it. He’s writing a book. He teaches hand surgery at University Medical School.”

“OK, but did he do anything for you?”

Luther laughed. “Yes. It’s quite interesting; he put on some little pieces of wood for guides to show the fingernails which way to go when they grow again. I’ve gotta take more pain pills now; it’s starting to hurt like hell again. Lady, can you spare another cup of milk?”

“I think so…”

“What I’d especially like is a real bath, but I need help.”

Jane felt strange talking to him this way, and stranger still, helping him with his bath. He had only been gone two months and yet she felt oddly embarrassed while getting his shirt unbuttoned, and helping him bathe without getting the bandage wet. And when he got into the bed and settled down he asked, “Are you coming to bed now?”, she told him, “As soon as you get to sleep. You’re an invalid.”

But Luther came back one more night and that time they made love and afterward he went right to sleep. Jane lay awake for a long while. She knew that it never again be the way it was before, whether or not Luther were to stop drinking. For after two months of not having to wonder whether Luther would be home on time, she knew she never wanted to risk that kind of life again. She wasn’t very happy these days, but she wasn’t miserable the way she had been. But she was angry at the Roby’s and sorry for Luther. So far his family had done nothing, absolutely nothing of what they had suggested would help Luther. And Luther himself did not seem to be trying. He should have taken a room somewhere far from Jimmy Black’s tavern.

He did not come back again to spend the night and it was a week before he called her to let her know that his hand was healing well.

“I noticed when you were here that you were thinner,” she said. “Be sure and eat enough, Luther.”

“I eat breakfast, and I usually eat a pretty good dinner.”

“No lunch?”

“No, because then I don’t go to Jimmy Black’s so early.”

“And you must go to Jimmy Black’s?”

“In the evening, yes, what else is there to do?”

“Go to a movie, Luther.”

“OK, honey, I will.”

But she knew he would not.

A month later, after warm weather arrived, Luther came out from downtown one afternoon to get his topcoat and spring suit. Jane noted that he had a cigarette burn in the vest of his winter suit and that he had broken a corner off a front tooth.

“How did you chip your tooth?”

“I don’t know. I woke up one morning last week and I felt it with my tongue. Now my tongue is sore.”

“You must get it fixed.”

“That costs money.”

“Luther, you can go to the University Dental School and get it done for the cost of the materials. Mona James and her family always go there.”

“Do you see Mona anymore?” he asked.

“No, but Dee does sometimes. They double-date.”

“Dee ever date old ‘Change Ling’ anymore?”

“Not exactly, but they’re still doing ‘little theater’ together. They’re in the Campbell Players.”

“Never heard of them.”

“You move in different circles, Luther. Anyway, they have a lot of fun.”

“While you stay home and keep house. Chan likes you Janie. Why don’t you set your cap for him?”

“For one thing, I’m not a single lady, am I.”

“Poor Janie, you’re neither fish nor fowl right now.”

“No, but I’m young.”

“I know. But with the kids you need someone like Chan.”

“Listen, Luther, first place, I don’t see much of Chan.”

“Don’t you do furniture for him anymore?”

“No. And besides, Chan has a new girlfriend. He hasn’t been here since he brought the crib he made for Mary Ellen. That was weeks ago.”

“He’s the kind of man you need, Janie. He’s the kind of man the kids need. Can I see the kids? Are they napping?”

“Yes, but you can see them, Luther. Anytime.”

He looked at Denis and Mary Ellen in their cribs, but told Jane not to wake them. Each was sucking a thumb.

“God, they’re growing so fast! Do you know what causes that?”

“Growing fast?”

“Thumb sucking. It’s insecurity that causes it.”

“I didn’t suck my thumb,” Jane remembered, “and I was insecure.”

“Well, anyway, you ought to marry Change Ling, Janie.”

“OK, I will,” said Jane laughing, “if you insist.”

When he left he gave her a kiss and said, “Take care now, I’ll be in touch with you.”

“Luther, get that tooth fixed.”

“OK, honey, I will.”

WHY ARE YOU HONOR BOUND ?

Spring was welcome and raised everyone's spirits. Grace relaxed her worries about Jane and shifted to plans for a summer in the East, but then she began worrying about Dee who should not be dating a married man. When would Dee ever marry? Both girls were in limbo it seemed. Grace concluded that for her own sanity she must get away from the girls and think more about herself. All her friends told her that the girls were grown up now, but it was hard to think of them that way.

Carle Semon was one of the ones who kept on telling Grace she must stop fretting over Jane and Dee. He insisted the girls would get along fine because they were both smart. But he did not want Grace to go East. Her continual trekking to New York or New England had always been a sore point with Carle. She had been doing it for years.

Carle and Grace were good companions these days and quite often he took her out to dinner. In turn he frequently came to Sunday dinner with Grace and the girls.

On Palm Sunday, Mrs. Root, Skipper's mother, called to tell Jane and Dee that Bud Irwin would be bringing the baby up to Chagrin Falls for a brief visit on the following Saturday, the day before Easter.

"I'm asking all of Skipper's best friends if they would like to see the baby that afternoon. If so, come between one and three o'clock."

"We'd love to come," Jane told Mrs. Root. "I'm sure I can speak for Dee. Is it alright if we ride there with a friend? I think our friend Chan might take us."

"Certainly. I remember him. He offered to give blood."

"That's the one. He knew Skipper."

It was a strange afternoon in Chagrin Falls. Skipper's little boy, eleven months old, was called 'Laddie'. He was a pretty child, with his mother's big brown eyes. His hair was light brown, but his father said that many people assured him it was going to be red eventually, like Skipper's. Bud seemed in a pleasant mood and proud of his little son, who behaved well, sitting on the floor in the center of a room filled with women, his mother's high school classmates, and his doting grandmother.

On the way home, though, Dee said the visit made her sad all over again. Her eyes were bright with tears.

“She’ll never see him grow up.”

“And I doubt we’ll see Bud again,” Jane said.

He said he’d keep in touch.”

“I know,” said Jane, “but he probably won’t. He’ll marry again one of these days.”

Chan said, “He should. I don’t think it will help the little boy to be raised by his grandmother.”

“She might be better than a stepmother,” Dee said.

“Who knows?” Chan said. “Psychiatrists argue about such things. I had a step-father.”

“But you have a mother,” Dee said. “That’s what counts.”

“I don’t know,” Chan said. “Maybe she is my trouble.”

And from that day, Chan began coming once more to the house on Walcott Avenue. In January when he first heard that Luther had left under unusual conditions, Chan had been consumed with curiosity. He had heard the story from Dee, and he knew that Jane was very upset, but he felt he could judge better if he saw and talked to her. Still he did not want to be opportunistic, nor did he want to appear opportunistic. He knew he would just have to be patient. He had long believed that Jane would inevitably break with Luther, and now he wondered if the beginning of the end had come. Recently he had asked Dee whether there were any signs that Luther had stopped drinking. Dee had told him that Jane had seen no signs of reform.

Chan had been invited for Easter dinner and so had Carle, who brought his camera along and took pictures of Dee, Jane and the children. He had wanted to get a few pictures of Grace as well, but she would not pose, as her hair wasn’t ‘right’, she said. But Jane wore the new navy blue tailored suit she had made, and the baby Mary Ellen had a pretty new dress and bonnet, and Denis had a new suit. The pictures that Carle took that day were particularly pleasing to Jane when he brought them to her a month later.

While Chan was not seeing Jane in a social way, he had begun doing little favors again for her and for Grace. He repaired things, made frames, and took Jane to the doctor with the baby. One day, at Aunt Ockie’s invitation, related by Luther, Jane took the babies to Carrollton Heights as Grandma Roby had begged to see them. The chauffeur that day was Chan. The senile old lady was pleased with the babies and Jane could tell that she knew nothing of Luther’s troubles. There was no one else at home at the Irvin’s that day except Grandma Roby and her nurse.

On the way home, Jane said to Chan, “I suspect that Luther’s Aunt Adalyn would have been too embarrassed to see me.”



MARY ELLEN CHANDLER ↑
"JULIE"
Six months



↑ MARY ELLEN + ↑ JANE
3½ months 22 years



Jane, Mary Ellen, + Dennis 3 yrs

Summer 1938

14506 Woodworth ave.



Mary Ellen

Easter Sunday 1938

“I should think so,” Chan said and then spoke his thoughts. “Jane, how long will you go on this way?”

“Well, of course I’m honor bound to give Luther his year.”

“Why? Why are you honor bound?”

“I suppose because I’ve been accepting the monthly checks. In doing that I was agreeing to their proposal that Luther have a year to straighten out.”

“You’re being fairer to Luther than he was to you.”

“I know, but if he were really trying to stop drinking – I mean he may be trying.”

Clement Chandler signed and said nothing.

Before Grace left for the East, Dee promoted a bit of social life for Jane.

“How would you like to have an evening out, while Mother is still here to take care of the babies?”

“What kind of ‘evening out’?”

“Well,” Dee said, “you could come downtown and meet me at the office and we’d go to dinner and to a show. Maybe we might even go to Emerald Beach Park.”

“Sounds like fun but I don’t know if I should.”

“Oh, for Pete’s sake! Of course you should. Mother even suggested it. She said you were ‘cooped up’ in the house too much.”

The day was set, a Friday evening. Dee called at noon to tell Jane to bring their bathing suits and towels, because they might swim.

“The water will be pretty cold,” Jane warned.

“If it is we’ll just build a fire and sit on the beach.”

Jane went downtown on the streetcar carrying the striped bag of beach paraphernalia. She reached Dee’s office just after closing time. Dee let her in.

“You got here quickly. The fellows will be along in about five minutes.”

“What fellows?” Jane wanted to know.

“Bill and a friend.”

“You didn’t tell me about them.”

“I thought it would be more fun. You never do anything that’s fun anymore.”

“Is Bill’s friend married too?”

“I don’t know. I never met him.”

“For gosh sakes Dee! I don’t...”

“Shh! Here they are now.”

There were introductions and Bill Rand was presented to Jane, and Harry Patterson to both Jane and Dee.

They drove out along the shore east of Cleveland, stopping for dinner at an inconspicuous restaurant outside a small town. By the time the meal was over Jane was certain that Harry Patterson was married. She was furious with Dee, but was for the moment reluctant to make a scene. She was certain that the evening was going to be a problem but equally certain she could handle it.



They went to a beach afterward. Jane had brought along her white rubber bathing suit and she hated to put it on, because Luther had always said it was the sexiest swimsuit he’d ever seen. Rubber suits had come into fashion three years earlier and would soon disappear from the stores because wearers had found that they deteriorated and came apart.

Dee dressed for swimming but didn’t stay in the water long. She and Bill sat on a blanket on the beach. Jane and Harry stayed in the water longer. Harry was a big blond fellow. She guessed his name might have been Pedersen originally. He looked Swedish; he also looked strong. She had to think about how to put him off, without making him angry. She decided she would stay good-natured if at all possible. She remembered an

incident in a fraternity house when a friend of Mona James had got rather nasty.

She fooled around in the water trying to avoid Harry Peterson. He complimented her on her swimsuit and on her figure. He stood in the water exactly up to the bottom of his swim trunks, showing off his readiness for a little sport.

“See? Cold water doesn’t affect me at all.”

“Not even when someone throws it on you?”

“Well-I, they usually don’t. Look, I’m ready.”

“I know, but I’m not.”

“Why not? Come here and I’ll get you ready. How long does it take?”

“It would never happen the first night I met someone.”

“Come on, honey, that’s silly.”

“No, it isn’t. It’s smart. I never laid eyes on you before tonight, and neither did my sister.”

“Don’t you like to fool around?”

“Well, sure. Sometimes.”

“But you stick to your first night rule?”

“That’s right.”

“OK, you win,” and he stayed grumpy.

####

The girls did not discuss the evening's events that night, because Jane had to give Mary Ellen a bottle when they got home, and she did not feel like getting into a possible argument, nor did she want her mother entering into the matter. But the next morning when Grace was asleep Jane spoke to Dee about Harry Patterson.

"Dee, do you remember when I was still working in the Winchester Room, you and Mona got me a date with a man named 'Al' and he turned out to be married?"

"Yes, I remember," Dee sounded wary.

"Well, I didn't like it then, and I didn't like it last night."

"Look, I didn't know he was married. Bill just said he'd bring a friend."

"You might have known he'd be married, since Bill is. If I had know, I wouldn't have gone along."

"Oh, Jane, you're making too much of it. After all, you're not a little virgin girl anymore. Why is it such a terrible thing?"

"In the first place I shouldn't be dating at all, and in the second place, dating a married man leads nowhere unless maybe to trouble."

"I thought you'd be glad to get out of the house."

"I was glad, but I don't want to do something that's risky for me in any way. And one way would be to fix it so that I couldn't get a divorce."

"Are you getting a divorce?"

"Eventually I may have to."

"Thank God you're starting to think about it."

"Oh, heck, I've often thought about it, just didn't say it out loud."

"You would have no trouble at all getting a divorce."

"Probably not. I don't think Luther would contest. But I don't want the remotest question about custody of the children. That's why something like last night is out for me. The Roby's and Luther know a lot about the law, and they also know lawyers. I don't want anybody saying I'm an unfit mother."

“Well, I see what you mean. You’re right, but I’d think you’d be bored to tears having to stay home and be a model of morality all the time. After all, Luther is out on his own. Who knows where he goes.”

“I know where he goes – Jimmy Black’s. He’s never given me any reason to think women were part of the trouble.”

“How can you know?”

“Instinct, I guess, and because he had so much ‘enthusiasm’ for lovemaking.”

Dee giggled, “Don’t you miss that?”

“Yes. I guess I do, but I can certainly wait awhile.”

“A year?”

“Half that year is gone. I can hardly believe it.”

“And what happens at the end of the year?”

“If I knew, I might tell you.”

Grace had not learned about the double-date that upset Jane so, though Jane had been sorely tempted to tell her. However, that would have only made Dee angry and there was nothing to be gained that way. Jane had once called Grace’s attention to the fact that Dee was dating a married man, and as far as Jane knew, Grace had not criticized Dee for it. Jane had noticed long ago that her mother was blind to Dee’s worst shortcomings, while continually finding fault with Jane – blind to her best qualities. Jane felt keenly that her mother loved Dee more because Dee had been born during her parents’ early years of romance. She, Jane, had arrived when her mother’s disillusionment with Norris was growing. Also, Grace had wanted a boy and Jane stubbornly insisted on remaining a girl. When she was much older, Jane would understand that there were additional factors involved as well.

By the middle of June, Grace had made her long-awaited departure for the East. The always obliging Chan had taken her and her luggage to the train. She left Cleveland with very little cash, and very big plans to visit publishers in New York followed by going on to New Hampshire to ‘write and write and paint and paint.’

“Keep an eye on the girls for me, Chan. I hope they’ll be alright now that they’re by themselves.”

“They’ll be fine.”

“Drop in on them once in awhile.”

“Oh, I surely will.”

“I haven’t forgotten I still owe you some money. I’ll take care of that soon.”

“Don’t worry about it.”

The day her mother left for New York, a special mood came over Jane. It was identical with what she and the other winter denizens of Forest Camp Primeval had felt five years ago, that Sunday after Nelle and Roger had left Fison’s Hill for New York City. Their departure triggered a frenzy of transformation. Jane and Miriam, Babs and Ruth Chapman, even Grace and Uncle William had pushed living room furniture around, changed curtains, and so on. It had been exciting and fun, something instinctive and compulsive and freeing. Of course they’d been caught in the act when Nelle and Roger returned the same day because of bad roads. ‘When the cat’s away...’ Nelle had said.

Now Jane was driven by the same urge. She would rearrange the living room, and do it all her way. By the time Dee came home, the room was very different and also dusted and cleaned. On a table was a bowl of pansies.

Dee was amazed. “What happened here?”

“I felt inspired to redecorate.”

“You’ve been housecleaning too. How come?”

“I like to do it when I’m on my own.”

“Where did the flowers come from?”

‘I discovered something wonderful. If you walk east three blocks you come to a place called the Farmer’s Market. I went down there with the babies and got a whole basket of pansies for 50¢. Denis calls them ‘pennies’. The lady told me the market will be open three days a week from now until cold weather next November. They’re open Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. You must go with me next Saturday afternoon.’

“You know,” Dee said, “it may be kind of fun being here by ourselves for awhile without Luther or Mother.”

“The trouble with Mother,” Jane said, “is that she has an opinion about everything I do. I wish she were not so interested in me and the kids.”

“But she’s your mother, Janie, so that’s natural.”

“It may be, but what I really resent is that she got on the phone and told my whole sad story to every one of her friends.”

“Oh, not everyone, Janie – just people like Aunt Gertrude.”

“That’s what you think! She told them all! With me right here she would recount my woes to Mary McGuire, Edna Whiteman, Grace V. Kelly, and even Mary Raper. I see no reason why they had to know. It’s none of their business. And not only that – she didn’t just tell them once – she kept them up to date practically from day to day. Frankly, it makes me very peeved at Mom.”

“Don’t be mad at her Janie. Remember, she isn’t really very happy.”

“But Dee! I’m not happy either! Does that give me the excuse to get on the phone and tell people about your private life? Like telling people about your boyfriends?”

“No, you shouldn’t do that.”

“And I wouldn’t, so why does Mother?”

“I don’t know,” Dee said, “but you must make allowances for her, Janie.”

“Alright – then do me a favor. Ask Mother to make allowances for me.”

Through the month of July, Jane and Dee went often to the Farmer’s Market to buy flowers and vegetables. They would take the babies in the carriage. Little sister was now old enough to sit up with pillows and enjoy her ride. Denis, who was now two years old, would sometimes walk and sometimes ride with ‘Sisser’.

The gloomy, sad winter seemed far behind. Jane rarely missed Luther anymore. The nights when she had to get up at 2 a.m. and feed Mary Ellen and then crawl back into a cold, empty bed were over. Mary Ellen now slept through the nights from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. The first weeks had been the worst - Mary Ellen first sleeping in the baby carriage and then in Jane’s footlocker with the lid removed - such a poor bed for a baby girl. But then, didn’t stage-people’s babies sleep in trunks? Soon, of course, Chan had brought over the special crib he’d made. And now, in midsummer, he had brought over another piece of baby furniture – a set of deep shelves for baby clothes and diapers etc. It had a dressing-table too. Such a nice person, Chan.

One Sunday evening in late July, Jane and Dee invited Carle Semon to dinner, and to make it four at table, they invited Chan as well. Jane fussed over the food and had a good time doing it. She liked cooking, while Dee said she hated it. The dinner was a success with both men full of compliments.

Summer 1938 - letter from Corle Simon to Grace (in Maine)

deedivay - do they get know in out anywhere?

Fane says she has written you - has had difficulty in finding some of the things you wanted - and is sending the typewriter soon. Her Aunt Gert-

made sent you something and it was returned to her. o o o Such a nice day I had at the

house - Dee and Fane had flowers in places all over. From the near-by market and the rooms looked so attractive - just as you would have liked to see. And incidentally, Fane is fast becoming a good supper-getter - salads, home-made ice-cream-ice-box-pie-pudding, etc., better look out. Children very well and lively - the feminine one is doing so many things she will soon be running races with little brother, in thinking.

Are you all right, dear Grace? Tell me what kind of country you are in - fields, woodland, lakes? haven't the faintest idea. Are there any varieties of birds around, and what fun are you having, and has anyone used a kodak on you yet - I'd sure like to see. Well, be careful - for you must have an enjoyable time. And accomplish what is in your

Carle said, "I shall write your mother and tell her you girls are getting along just fine and she mustn't worry. The house is neat and clean, and you are eating well. Your mother is over-inclined to worry about you two. She wishes you would write to her."

Jane said, "I'm a terrible letter writer, but Dee sometimes writes."

"Has she written you about her secret yet?" Carle asked.

Dee didn't know what to say. The last letter from Grace had news that was 'not to be told to a soul.'

"You mean what she is working on?" she asked.

"Yes, your mother seems very excited."

"It's alright to tell Chan," Jane said. "You can keep a secret, can't you, Chan? Carle is talking about the book that Mom is writing."

"A new one?" Chan asked.

"Sort of," Jane explained. "This one is for children. She's mentioned the idea before."

Dee said, "I don't know why it's a secret really."

"Perhaps because of Uncle Roger," Jane said.

"He knows about it," Carle said, "and so do her friends, the Hurst's. I don't see why she can't write the book here in Cleveland."

Dee spoke up. "She wants to do the sketches in New Hampshire. You see," she said for Chan's benefit, "Mother did the pictures for Edna Whiteman's fairytale book and it was published by Milton's in New York. So Mother went there and talked to them and sold then her idea for a story about the children who spent their summers at my aunt's place in New Hampshire."

"The famous Aunt Nelle?" Chan asked.

"Yes. That's the aunt I told you about, Chan," Jane said.

"I met her," Carle said. "She's a strong-minded lady."

Jane and Dee both laughed and Jane said, "Yes, that does describe her."

Carle chuckled and took off his spectacles and cleaned them with a spotless pocket handkerchief. Next he took a briarwood pipe from a pocket and rubbed the bowl on the sides of his nose till it (the pipe) was shiny. Jane and Dee watched, fascinated. They had forgotten Carle did this.

"My father always said this was the best way to oil a pipe," Carle said.

“That’s true,” Chan agreed. “It’s the approved way.”

“Did your letter from Grace mention that she is going to Maine for the month of August?” Carle asked.

“We haven’t heard from her this week,” Dee said. “She must be going to Ted and Edna Hurst’s summer place in Damariscotta.”

“Yes, that’s what she says, and your Uncle Roge is none too pleased. He had counted on her being in New Hampshire with Nelle. So, she’s to be in Maine a month writing and then in New Hampshire making all the illustration. Why she’ll end up staying all winter.”

“Oh, no, Carle,” Jane said. “one cold winter there was enough.”

“But,” Carle lamented, “when she left she told me she would be gone two weeks.”

“She always stays longer than she expects,” Dee said.

“I know.”

Later, Jane said to Dee, “Carle is lonely. He’s very fond of Mother. I wish she cared as much for him.”

I CAN'T GO RIGHT FROM UNHAPPY TO HAPPY

Chan was at the house on Walcott Street more and more often. It was understood tacitly now between Dee and Jane that it was Jane that he came to see. There was usually an errand of some sort, or else he came to dinner when Dee was there too. Jane was ever mindful of being most cautious lest she jeopardize the future divorce which was probably inevitable. The monthly check from Adalyn Roby Irvin, "Ockie", always arrived promptly, but Luther rarely telephoned. Perhaps, though, at the end of the year, Luther might simply say, "Well, the time is up. I'm coming home." But, no, he would not do that. For she knew and Luther knew, it wouldn't work. And he had advised her to team up with Chan.

And so, in early August, Jane and Chan had a secret understanding. One night they went to a movie, something they had not yet done. He held her hand, he put his arm around her, and when they came home, after Dee (who had babysat) went to bed, Chan stayed until three in the morning. When he went home he had reason to believe that sometime in an uncertain future, he would acquire not only a wife, but a family.

Chan was thirty-two years old and he knew that he would have to get busy and get a real job. He would not be able to support a family by repairing furniture.

The pace of events picked up. Grace was writing letters often and each one was filled with requests to have certain of her things mailed to her in Maine or else to be sent to Forest Camp Primeval. Jane tried to round them up – Grace's easel to be shipped by Railway Express to New Hampshire ('would Chan please find a way to package it – and my watercolors too?').

"Please send to Damariscotta," Grace wrote, "my green stockings; any silk stockings you can't wear to work, Dee; my old brown felt hat I've worn forever, and my heavy Matrix shoes, and my brown heavy skirt, (it's getting very chilly here now.) Oh, and that fur jacket Skipper's mother gave me. Find a heavy corrugated box to mail them in. I know it's work, but I need all those things. O! and Jane has a list of other things – my thyroid tablets, ear drops, thumb tacks etc. – etc. and I'd like to borrow Jane's Roget's Thesaurus too, - for awhile. My how busy we all are. Write and tell me the news.

I miss the babies! Much love, Mom

Jane had trouble locating all the things her mother wanted. The heavy shoes were nowhere to be found, the green stockings, where? And she must try and get a packing box at the grocery store the next time Chan took her. Lately he had been taking her to a large grocery store where the prices were lower.

And now there were new things to think about. Chan was going to Michigan for a week to join friends who had invited him weeks ago.

“I don’t really want to go now, but they’ve made plans. They’ve got the blankets for me and so on. How would you like to have my care while I’m gone?”

“What’ll you do for a car?”

“I’m going by bus, and I’ll ride back with the Chisholms.”

“Gosh, I haven’t driven for five years. I’ll need to practice.”

So she practiced, and when Chan had gone, she had his little Ford roadster. Almost every evening she and Dee drove through the Park Chain to Liberty Park on the Lake. They took the children along and Denis was wildly ecstatic. He was putting longer sentences together now and his Auntie Dee doted on him. All day Denis talked of the evening joyride. At dinnertime he danced with anticipation.

“Wan’ go way in Chan gah an’ see boats!”

In Liberty Part they would sit in the care where it was parked by the shore and they would point out the different kinds of boats to Denis and teach him to say them.

“Say boat”, “Woe boat”, and “Moe boat”, he managed.

When little ‘Sisser’ began to get fussy they would take the little ones home and bed them down. After that, if Dee had a date, Jane would work on her ‘book’. She and Mim had talked for years about writing novels. In fact from time to time, Jane had made outlines for stories. She knew, from her mother’s accounts, some of the family history, the bizarre contrast between her two religious grandmothers, the poignant story of her paternal grandfather and his love-child, and the tragedy of her Aunt Emma. All that and more. But, just now, it was her own story she was working on. For the most part, she was only making notes. She discovered that the times when she liked to write came when she was unhappy. *I guess*, she thought, *you have to live and suffer*. But the main reason she was writing was to keep busy and keep her mind off what seemed to be a nearly impossible condition. She had convinced herself that she must wait till the stipulated ‘year’ was over. But she knew that Luther would be no different then, or ever. She still felt it would be wrong not to wait till January. She wasn’t in love with Luther anymore, but he was Denis and Mary Ellen’s father and she certainly loved his children. What she felt for Luther these days was remembered love and, of course, she was sad for him. She refused to think she pitied him; it was too horrible to pity someone you had been in love with. She didn’t think she would be any better off when the year was up – she wouldn’t have any money to get a divorce or anything else.

Chan. She was torn about him. She wished she had waited before taking him into her bed. She needed more time to find out how she felt about him – or anybody. She was all confused about the men she knew or had known. She couldn’t remember whether she had ever really thought she’d marry Narze Samaha. And she had married Luther without having the experience to know

he was an alcoholic – married after knowing him only three weeks because she had loved him. But, too, she had wanted to change the boredom of her life in the Winchester Room. She had recently dreamed twice that she was going to marry D.D. ‘Bud’ Irwin . That puzzled her but didn’t upset her, because she had never been especially attracted to Bud. Dreams were unexplainable in any case – probably it was because Bud’s baby had no mother, and her own children had no father (for all practical purposes). But dreaming about Bud also proved she was all mixed up and she needed more time to sort things out. She really had made a serious mistake to let Chan plan on their being married sometime, because her mind was too uncertain.

And that wasn’t all the story either. The last evening before Chan came home from Michigan, Dee did not go out on a date. She sat and talked to Jane about Chan.

“You and Chan are getting pretty thick, aren’t you?”

“Chan’s a good guy.”

“I hope you aren’t getting serious – he seems pretty happy lately”

“Isn’t it alright to be happy?” Jane asked.

“Well, it isn’t his natural way. He’s usually griping about something.”

“But he’s fun lots of times,” Jane said.

“Yes, and lots of times he’s grumpy. Would you want to live with somebody who’s only agreeable when it suits him to be?”

“Isn’t everyone like that?”

“No. and with Chan it doesn’t suit him often enough.”

“Oh, Dee! I don’t see him that way.”

“Wait till you’ve known him longer. He gets peeved when people disagree with him, then he sits around with a sour look on his face. It gets very wearing.”

“Listen, Dee, I’ve heard you say more than once that Chan is ‘too nice’. So, if that’s the case, how can he be so disagreeable and also so nice?”

“Oh, you’ll see what I’m talking about. Now that he’s coming over here all the time, you’ll have a chance to get to know him.”

“You think he has a split personality, Dee?”

“I don’t know. Perhaps.”

“What bothers me is, I need more time to think, to know my own mind. This has been a funny year for me. I really shouldn’t rush to get involved with the man that’s available firsts, should I?”

“No, you shouldn’t.”

####

By the time Chan returned from Michigan, Jane's unsettled frame of mind could be described as a turbulent ocean storm. The morning mail had brought a criticizing letter from Mother. Where was the box of needed items? Why so few letters telling how things were going? Only two from Dee and none from Jane 'who doesn't give a damn.'

Jane never felt like writing after a scolding, and it seemed as though her mother always went away without taking the things she needed. She invariably would write to ask that things be mailed to her somewhere. This time, Grace arrived in New York City without her pills, without a certain favorite girdle, without some silk stockings... By the time Jane had located a small box for these items, a new letter arrived with a new list of desperately needed items to be sent this time to Maine where Grace planned to write the children's book. The girls sent the thyroid pills, but needed a larger box for the other things, some of which they couldn't find.

Three weeks had gone by, and the pile of things still sat waiting to be mailed. But wait! Now a letter appeared redirecting the needed things to New Hampshire where Grace would be with Nelle for a part of September. More items of warm clothing were required – a still larger box would be required.

Along with this latest letter, a phone call from Jane's father, Norris, in Springfield. He entreated Jane to please allow Ethel to come for 'a little visit' to give Mary and himself a chance 'to rest up a bit'. Norris had first asked if Grace was there.

"No, she's in Maine, and about to go to New Hampshire."

"I thought she'd be in the East. What a taste she has for junketing about."

"She loves the mountains," Jane said.

"Who doesn't? But she ought to stay in Cleveland and get herself reestablished. Well, never mind that, honey. About Ethel – I do hope you can help out. Mary's nerves are really frayed. What with the baby and all, things have been very hard on her. I'd like to bring Ethel up this weekend if that will be alright."

"It's alright with me. I expect it will be OK with Dee too. But we'll need help with food money. We're pretty poor all the time, Dad."

"I'll give you some cash. Your mother wrote me of your continued troubles with Luther. I hope things will be better."

"Yes. Well. Dad, you see I think I..."

"I can't understand it. Such a nice family, the Roby's"

“I know, but Dad...”

“Listen, honey, I mustn’t talk long on the phone. I’ll be up with Ethel Sunday afternoon then. Alright?”

“Yes.”

“Goodbye, honey. Thanks a lot.”

And that very morning another telephone call had been disturbing. Luther had called for the first time in a month. From his tone of voice she guessed he had had something to drink though perhaps not much. His news was that his father had told him his Uncle Frank said he guessed he’d get Luther a job now.

“What kind of job?” Jane wanted to know.

“Got no idea. We’ll havta see.”

After the phone call her thoughts were churning. *What if Luther got a good job? Could he hold it? What had made Frank Roby say that now he would get Luther a job? Had he seen signs of improvement? And what if Luther was doing better? Could she stand it to take up her life with him again? Wouldn’t she have the old day to day worry and fear?* Now she must be honest and admit to herself that she didn’t want Luther to come back even if he was Denis and Ellen’s father. But that didn’t mean she wanted him to fail. No, she would always want him to succeed in his battle. But what on earth could she tell him if she were to learn that he was on the wagon (not drinking) and planning to come home again?

And off and on all day, midst thinking about her mother’s chiding letter, her father’s entreatings phone call, and Luther’s laconic message, she had been turning over in her mind Dee’s words of advice about Clement W. Chandler’s gloomy nature. Jane knew what Dee was talking about, but she had seen less of that side, because her association with Chan in the three years that she had known him, had been for the most part when they were working together on a creative project. Chan was at his best then, often in good spirits, and she told Dee that.

But Dee had said, “You and he couldn’t be always making or repairing things. No, I tell you he likes to be morose.”

And so, while Jane did not believe that, she was not in a very good mood when Chan returned that afternoon from Michigan. His friends, the Chisholms, brought him to the house so that he could pick up his car. He came in all bubbling with enthusiasm to see Jane, and she had difficulty trying to match his pleasure, and to return his kisses. He had a five-day growth of beard and he said he needed to get home and shower and change. She couldn’t have agreed more, for he had been headquartered in a tent during his vacation.

Chan left, saying he'd return that evening, and as he drove away, Jane shook her head in doubt and apprehension. She ought to have more time to figure out what her feelings were. Things had happened too fast with Luther, and the babies had come too soon as well. She had not learned enough about Luther. She must not make the same mistake again. She should know more about Chan, for she had met him three years ago, but now that they were talking about a future together, she realized she didn't know him well enough. But how should she explain all this to him, without losing him as a friend?

The month of September 1937 was so eventful that while Jane's doubts persisted, she had no time for brooding. With the Labor Day weekend, Norris arrived bringing Ethel, her suitcase, and her fall coat and hat.

"The weather may turn cool while she's here," Norr explained. At Jane's somewhat surprised reaction, he said, "I hope you can take her for a few weeks."

Jane was even more surprised, but she said, "It's alright, but I don't know when Mother will be coming home and need the bed."

"Well, let me know then," Norris said, "and I'll come up and get Ethel." He was soon on his way, saying he had various things to take care of in Cleveland before he started back downstate.

Dee had not seen Ethel for several years and was quite dismayed at her condition, but Jane had seen her only a little over a year ago and saw little change.

"What on earth is the matter with her?" Dee whispered (Ethel had gone to bed).

"When I was in Springfield last year," Jane said, "one doctor said 'menopause' and another said 'epilepsy.' I think that was Mary's father, Dr. Arndt, who said that.

"Epilepsy! Good Lord!"

"Dad doesn't think that's it. Old Dr. Arndt is out of touch with modern medical knowledge."

"Look it up in that 'doctor book' of yours."

"I already did. It doesn't fit the description for epilepsy."

"Well, she certainly seems totally ineffectual as a conversationalist," Dee said.

"But Dee, that's the way people get if they spend all their time reading religion. Too many years of Mary Baker Eddy."

“Maybe Christian Science would do her good now.”

“Feel free to use it on her,” Jane said. “I wouldn’t know how, nor have I the faith in it.”

Ethel had a little nervous laugh that substituted for conversation. She would make a small cough when she was amused or as a comment or exclamation. It seemed to Jane that the cough made Ethel seem older than her chronological age – more than half a year younger than Grace. Some old people talk a lot, others just sit and look on and chuckle a little. Ethel had become like those and Jane could not understand why. Eventually she would learn some answers.

“She seems so completely futile,” Dee said.

“She sells me that her eyes have gone bad,” Jane said.

“She should have new glasses then.”

“No, it’s cataracts – she’ll have to have them removed. So you see, that’s why she doesn’t read.”

“Poor Ethie! But she does get on one’s nerves.”

“Yes, I know, but everything is on my nerves lately.”

Things were not going well between Jane and Chan. On Labor Day they had gone to an air show and they had had a good time, but Jane had worried about the babies left at home with Ethel and Dee, and although she knew she was probably foolish, she was uneasy about being seen in public with Chan. She had reached the point where she knew she would seek a divorce in the not too distant future. She didn’t want anything to spoil her chances of getting that divorce. Her mind turned on these matters and at times she found herself not listening to what Chan was saying. Often he was saying romantic things for which her mood was all wrong.

After the air show, it had taken them nearly an hour to find Chan’s car in the huge and terribly crowded parking area. It was found at last and then it took an hour to free themselves from the impatient, horn-blowing traffic jam.

They got home quite late and Ethel and Dee had been worried. Jane was tired and on the edge of being cross, but, “I had a good time,” she lied.

“You did?” Chan wondered, with one eyebrow raised.

“Why of course. Why wouldn’t I have a good time?”

“Well, I didn’t think you looked very happy today.”

“Just tired, mostly. Well, maybe I’m not really happy. I’ve found you can’t always go straight from unhappy to happy and everything is just peachy. There’s still some of the unhappy part hanging on like a bad habit.”

“I was hoping that I had helped somewhat.”

“Well, you have, but I’m not good for you in the confused mood I’m in.”

“Let me be judge whether you’re good for me.”

“Chan, it’s like this. When Luther left I had been angry with him for being a drunk. But after the Roby’s forced him to leave, I was sorry for him and myself, and I was angry at the Roby’s and Mother. Still very angry, and also lonely. The bed was so cold and empty at night. But after a month or two I got used to it. I got over the worst part of my anger. I got used to the loneliness and found that I had calmed down. I liked being calm. I had the kids, and music and I started working on a book and things were better. But, you see, I mistook calmness for happiness, and I haven’t reached that yet. It’s too soon. I need time. This year has been really strange. Ethel is here, Mother is mad at me, and Luther tells me his Uncle Frank is threatening to get him a job.”

“Oh? What kind of job?” Chan asked.

“I don’t know, and he didn’t know. Chan. I’m really tired; I’ve got to get to bed. Mary will be wanting a bottle by quarter of six and I won’t want to get up.”

“OK, I’ll run along. See you tomorrow night?”

She hesitated, then said “Alright.”

He said then, “If Luther has a job, he’ll be wanting to return.”

“Oh, don’t worry about that.”

But Chan did worry about it. He had noticed Jane’s hesitation. Something was bothering her, and perhaps it was Luther, in fact it probably was Luther. She must still love him. After all, she had put up with his drunkenness for so long. But, on the other hand, maybe it was just that Jane was like her sister and didn’t think he should come over every evening. In the days when he’d been dating Dee, she had told him to come see her only on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. Other nights were for shampoos or laundry and such. Perhaps Jane felt the same.

When he saw her next she confirmed these latter thoughts, but she had more to say. She told him that the landlord’s wife, Mrs. Hawthorne, might very likely be getting very curious about seeing his little Ford roadster parked out front night after night.

“But she’ll probably think I’ve come to see Dee.”

“Not on those many evening when she sees Bill call for and take Dee away.”

“When should I come? How often?”

“How about coming Wednesdays and Saturdays? Because Dee is usually here then.”

“And you want us to be chaperoned?”

She laughed a little then. “No, I didn’t mean that, and besides, Ethel is here all the time anyway.”

“But that’s temporary, isn’t it?”

“I trust it is. I hope so.”

He went home quite downhearted. He had suggested that he park his care farther down the street and then walk to her house, but Jane had said that wouldn’t fool Mrs. Hawthorne a bit for she’d see him entering. Mrs. Hawthorne, it seemed, spent a great deal of time looking out through her sunroom lace curtains. So now he was to see Jane just on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

It’s Luther, Chan told himself, she still loves him.

Chan’s preoccupation showed on his face, and at home his mother noticed it.

“What’s the matter?”

He loathed that question. She’d been asking that for years.

“Why should something be the matter?”

“I can tell,” Josephine L. Porter said. “You look gloomy lately.”

“I can’t help how I look to you.”

“But you had been looking so happy before you went to Michigan. Did something happen up there? Something about the Chisholm’s?”

Chan came close to laughing, but, as it so often did, annoyance won out.

“No. All is lovely with the Chisholms.”

“Well, then, I suppose it’s the girlfriend.”

Chan did not answer that but his mother kept on looking at him and he presently said, “You can speculate all you like, I suppose.”

THIS COULD ONLY HAVE BEEN A HURRICANE

During the next week Jane had other things to think about. She was busy with the children, as usual, and with the problem of mailing a package to Forest Camp Primeval. But for the moment, Ethel was Jane's bit interest. In talking with her aunt, Jane was dismayed to learn how little Ethel knew of what went on in the world outside her brother's home in Springfield. She spoke of the children, Patricia Moore, and the baby, John Christopher Rahming III. They called the boy, 'Chris.' He was standing alone, and would soon be walking. He'd be a year old in October. "Your father is very proud of him," Ethel said. And Mary's daughter was six years old; she'd just started the first grade. "She's a pretty little thing."

"Mary and Norr don't let me care for the children when they go out. They have a colored woman who comes every day. She takes care of the children except when Mary is home. Mary went back to work when Chris was a few months old. I suppose they worry about the 'spells' I get, but I don't see why Mary won't let me help in the kitchen. I really like to cook."

"Well, you can cook for me," Jane said.

"I can cook anything as long as I don't have to read a recipe. But then, I know how to prepare lots of dishes."

"Dee and I haven't a very fat food budget, but we'd love to have you cook some good old Rahming-family recipes. I should think Dad would like that too."

"They both think I'm incompetent, I guess."

"Women are funny about their kitchens, Ethie."

"But Mother and Aunt Ada and I always worked together fixing meals. Especially on Sundays and holidays. Mary wouldn't even let me help with Christmas dinner. Pauline was happy to have me fix the whole meal."

"Pauline was not a bad sort," Jane said. "She was kind."

"She certainly was," Ethie said, with rare conviction.

It was September and the World Series was on the radio. Jane liked to do her ironing when baseball was on. The job went much faster. Narze Samaha had made a baseball fan of her during his time in Cleveland. Now, since Ethie couldn't read because of her cataracts, Jane tried to explain the game to her. It isn't easy to explain baseball to anyone, let alone to Ethel Rahming.

Jane tried hard. She explained the baseball diamond and the nine positions in the field. Next, she told Ethie about the team at bat, and how they could get runs, and even homerun, and the various



ETHEL RAHMING
"EDITH"

ABOUT 1929

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ways a player could be 'out'. 'Strikes' and 'balls' were hard for Ethie to grasp. When the game was next on the radio, it happened that a batter had a full count (three balls and two strikes). He kept hitting foul balls and Jane's explanations to Ethie dissolved them both in laughter and they gave up.

"I'm just awfully stupid," Ethie said.

"No, indeed," Jane assured. "I'm realizing that baseball isn't so simple after all."

Next, Jane attempted to show Ethie how to knit, for at one time, Ethie could crochet handily. But even with large needles and yarn, Ethie's eyes were not good enough and the strain of trying to see made her nervous.

"I guess all I'm good for is washing dishes."

####

At Forest Camp Primeval that September, Grace was having a hard time making any progress on her projected story for girls. She had intended to do her writing in Maine while staying with Ted and Edna Hurst. But it had been quite impossible; there had been too much going on. There'd been picnics, sailing in Ted's boat, shopping trips to Boothbay Harbor and so on.

And now, on Fison's Hill with Nelle, she was still bogged down. Nelle had come down with an intestinal complaint. She was certain it was a case of food poisoning, while Grace leaned toward the theory it was intestinal flu. Neither of them were still followers of Christian Science when it came to health.

"I couldn't be food poisoning, Nelle. We all ate the same things."

"Well how could it be flu? We haven't been around anyone who had flu, have we?"

"Maybe in Plymouth you could have picked it up when we had a soda."

"Maybe," Nelle said.

Meanwhile, Grace was doing all the work. Walking down the hill every day for the mail, and the milk from Bean's. Bringing in the wood for the kitchen stove, and now with the cool evenings, for the fireplace, too. And, of course, Grace was doing the cooking too though Nelle was on toast and tea. But there was the dog, Keeto, to feed. Keeto was a lovable female Samoyed that Roge and Nelle had found lost along the highway between New York and New Hampshire. She was a beautiful dog and she made good company and gave the ladies a feeling of security while Roger was traveling.

And they had the radio, but to Grace, the news was unsettling. Bad things were happening in Europe. That man Hitler was threatening the peace with his claims on poor Czechoslovakia. Roger thought that Grace was needlessly worried about Europe. He asked her what possible difference it could make to the United States if a part of Czechoslovakia was joined to Germany.

"Hitler doesn't need Czechoslovakia," Grace had told Roge. "But if he succeeds in getting it, it will just whet his appetite, and then he'll want some other country, maybe even France. No, Roge, I just don't like the sound of that fellow at all. We heard him speak and we heard what Kaltenborn had to say. Hitler seems off-balance to me. It's scary."

Grace was upset about something else as well. Jane never wrote to her at all, and Dee only infrequently. Carle, however, wrote to her two or three times a week and his letters were almost as affectionate as they had been in the days before they were married. But now, his little note brought disturbing news. He told her that he had been invited to dinner the previous Sunday at Dee and Jane's place. Everything had been neat and tidy, Carle said, and she should not worry about the girls. They looked well, and so did the babies. Jane had cooked a fine meal and there

were even fresh flowers throughout the house. Then Carle mentioned that Ethel Rahming was staying with the girls and Ethel did not seem very well and her eyes were very bad. Carle went on to urge Grace to finish up her sketches in New Hampshire and to return to Cleveland and write her book. She could get a little room of her own and then she could work without being distracted by the children who were so fascinating, but very demanding.

“And don’t worry about Dee and Jane for they are getting along just fine, and the house is always orderly when I am there.”

The one thing Grace retained from the letter was that Ethel was staying with the girls. She did not take a day or two to think about it, but as was her wont, immediately wrote an emotional, reproachful letter to Dee and Jane.

“What is your father up to now?” Grace wrote, “And why have you been keeping it a secret from me? Carle says that Ethel Rahming is with you. I suppose Norris thinks he can pull another fast one on me while I’m gone from there. He can’t get away with anything like what he did three years ago, foisting his family onto me while he went about romancing Mary Arndt. You know how I feel about that, so I suppose it’s why you didn’t want me to know Ethel Rahming was there.”

Within a week Grace had an apologetic letter from Dee, but by that time events had put the matter of Ethel Rahming entirely out of Grace’s mind.

Roger was traveling again and the weather had been rainy for several days. Nelle was over her digestive trouble and up and around again. On September 16th she and Grace went down the hill to the place that had been Bean’s but which was now Flint’s. It was still where Nelle and Grace could buy fresh milk. They did not have to get milk every day now, as the weather was cool and the water in the spring was cold and they could keep the milk cans there. But they usually went down as far as the mailbox each morning (at least Grace did). However, it rained steadily on the 17th and 18th and they did not go down again until the 20th. At that time they found the road on ‘terrible hill’ was badly washed out – rutted and gullied. The brook in the floor of the valley was rushing and wild – the water streaming over the top of the little bridge. Water over the wooden dam was making a roaring sound – something they had never heard before.

While they were at Flint’s house it began to rain very hard and they were soaked but laughing by the time they reached Forest Camp Primeval again. They built up their fires, put on dry clothes, and dried Keeto with a towel.

They heard it raining at times during the night and Nelle, when they were both awake, remarked, “Gracie, this most certainly must be the ‘Line Storm’ and it’s right on schedule, isn’t it.” Her New England mother and all the natives hereabouts always called any storm coming at the seasonal equinox, the Line Storm.

Next morning the sky was black-looking with beautiful, white, luminous spots through the mist and heavy clouds. It was still raining. Nelle and Grace spent the afternoon doing chores in the rain. Instinctively, they were doing things they knew should be done – filling the kerosene lamps, bringing wood and coal, and closing and locking the barn doors. At times the rain stopped, but late in the afternoon over Mount Morgan and to the southeast they saw a black wall of rain approaching. They could hear it too. It was a driving rain with an ever increasing wind force. It grew worse and worse. Nelle shouted that they must nail closed the window shutters (something they normally did when they prepared the place for winter). Fortunately, the little house had not too many windows with shutters. Some, such as the two attic windows, were inaccessible. Soon they had to go inside as the gale was so fierce. Water was driving in around the unshuttered kitchen windows. They kept busy wiping it up. Soon they had to go out again into the wild storm, for the covered garden swing had tipped over and was banging against the side of the house. In the fury of the wind and rain they took it apart and laid it on the ground. Then into the house again for dry clothes once more.

The strength of the storm mounted, and Nelle and Grace rushed into the cellar to close forgotten little windows there. There were afraid the wind might lift the roof off. The wind seemed to come first from the east, then later from the southeast, and finally at its worst from the south.

The shriek of the wind was something they never could have imagined, but the word ‘hurricane’ never entered their minds that night. The radio had been acting badly. At times they had heard a little and then it would fade. The battery and radio were new! They had heard no forecasts of severe weather – it was strange.

The gale roared and shrieked for five hours while the girls and Keeto huddled together for comfort. At eleven the three of them fell asleep in the big walnut bed that Roge had set up in the living room for warmth – all was calm once more. Keeto resumed protecting his ladies.

They rose early in the morning before light. The stars were out but they couldn’t see much. A bear called a intervals. They returned to sleep – waking to bright sunshine.

The havoc was unbelievable! Cherished apple trees were snapped off. Their beloved, great, old lilac tree by the kitchen wrenched and twisted down, its trunk broken. Shingles from the roofs of the house and barn were scattered all over the clearing, but the buildings themselves were all intact. The house, barn and even the little ‘studio’ were built with sturdy, heavy, hand-hewn posts and beams. None of the buildings had moved an inch – not even the spring house which was built of white birch logs with the bark left on. Roger had covered the old clapboards on house and studio with cedar shingles, but the barn had vertical board siding. Some of the boards had blown away.

After a little breakfast, Nelle and Grace walked down the hill to inspect the road. As they looked out across the valley, they could see buildings that had never been visible before. They were

astonished to realize that thousands and thousands of trees had been blown down, either uprooted from the soft rain-soaked earth, or else snapped off. The forest seemed to be horizontal.

“Nelle,” Grace said, “I believe it must have been a... Why, I think this could only have been a hurricane!”

“Not a tornado?”

“No. A tornado is gone in a few moments and it leaves a narrow path of destruction.”

“That’s true. Yes, I guess that’s true. Well, kid, you and I are lucky to be alive. Very lucky!”

They went down the hill to talk to the Flint’s and learn more about the storm. It took them more than twice as long to get there. Two years earlier, Bill Bean, who had kept minks there, had inexplicably ended his own life. With no thought to how he would look after he died, he chose to put his shotgun muzzle in his mouth and blow the top of his head off. After that Ola Bean sold the minks and moved into the village to live with a sister. Maurice Sleeper, the caretaker for the Webster game preserve found another couple, the Flints, to keep house for him. Like the Bean’s, they kept chickens and a cow, and when Nelle and Roge were in residence that was fortunate for them.

At Flint’s, Nelle and Grace learned the extent of the great New England hurricane of September 21, 1938. Flint’s radio was working because they had a gasoline generator that give them electricity. Roge had wanted no part of a generator on Fison’s Hill. They learned of the widespread devastation but that day they could not yet possibly begin to picture the full extent of what happened for lines were down all over Long Island and New England. Those who reported the news did not have the full story themselves.

Later, Grace would be stunned to read of the loss of life through drowning and the violent force of the wind and waves. Houses, boats, trees, all gone or smashed, and the roads and railroads blocked with downed trees and telephone poles. Again they realized they had been fortunate to be on Fison’s Hill. Because Mr. Sleeper could get out to the main road on his horse, they could send telegrams to Cleveland and Oberlin to let the family know they were safe. Three days later, Rog appeared at the top of the Hill, having made the climb over and under the fallen trees. He had been in Cincinnati the night of the hurricane. He told Nelle, “Somehow, I felt certain that you and Grace and Keeto were safe and sound in this good little house.”

Cleveland. September 26 -
Monday, 1938 -

That storm! How terrifically appalling.

I had no idea of its magnitude - least of all that it would strike so hard way up in your region. But you are fortunate in being situated so well, and high - and I am thankful to God that he took care of you and those with you safely. Your note from Bech

Pond Farm to-day apprising me was the first information of its seriousness.

I hope his letter reaches you. Let me know if there is anything you want - and how the mails are being taken care of.

Use your Kodak - you may get some

GUESS WHO IS STANDING HERE

In Cleveland and Oberlin Grace's family had had no notion that the hurricane in the East had reached so far north. They had heard the reports on the radio of the terrible damage and loss of life in Long Island and Connecticut and other coastal areas. And they had heard of much damage to trees throughout New England. Somehow, they had not thought that Nelle and Grace would have been reached by the hurricane. And subconsciously, too, there was always the impression that the little house was ever so snug and sturdy, and during the week before there had been so much else to think about.

In Oberlin, Merly was much dismayed by the goings on in Europe between Hitler and Britain's Neville Chamberlain. Her heart ached for Czechoslovakia – whose friends had decided to abandon her.

Even Dee and Jane, young as they were, had taken note of the crisis in Europe, for not long before they had heard the voice of Adolf Hitler, over the radio, ranting and distorted by the erratic short wave sound quality.

“That guy sounds completely nuts!” Deed had said, and Jane and Ethel had agreed.

But their own affairs were topmost in their minds because a few days before the New England Hurricane, something surprising occurred. Narze Samaha had arrived in Cleveland most unexpectedly.

Jane had been occupied one morning sewing herself a suit for the autumn weather. She had got her old slim figure back and had lost the excess weight she'd had after Mary's birth. She felt inspired to make herself some pretty clothes. She was at the sewing machine when the phone rang. It was Dee, calling from work.

“Jane? Guess what.”

“What?”

“Guess who is standing here in my office?”

“Mother?”

“No,” Dee said with a laugh in her voice. “More unusual than that. Guess again.”

“I haven't the slightest idea.”

“It's Narze.”

“Narze! Really?”

“Yes, and I’m about to take my lunch hour and he’s going with me, and I’m going to give him directions to get out to the house. You better get the babies dolled up.”

“Don’t worry about that. Ask him if he’ll be staying for dinner.”

“After a moment Dee said. “Narze says don’t worry about a thing.”

“Alright.”

She needed a few moments to collect her thoughts, then she told Ethel, “Company’s coming. Do you remember Narze?”

“Certainly – your New Hampshire friend.”

“Yes. Well, he’s in Cleveland and he’ll probably be here in an hour.”

“Would you like me to vacuum and dust?” Ethie asked.

“Bless your heart, yes.”

Jane flew around. Thank God she had done her hair yesterday. She bathed the babies and put them into fresh clothes and tidied up here and there. And then she began to feel more flustered than she had ever felt in her life. What would she look like to Narze now that she was the mother of two children? Thank heaven she was back to her proper weight and could fit into her favorite dress.

From behind the sunroom curtains she could see him coming up the street. Oh, yes, it was Narze! He looked the same, and yet he looked quite different. After all, he was nearly four years older now. He would be twenty-five, she figured. But it was his clothes that were different. He had always worn suits, like a small-town boy dressed up for the city, or for church, or for his girlfriend. Now, he definitely was dressed like a college man. He wore a sport jacket and sweater, and corduroy trousers. As he drew nearer, Jane left the window and retreated into the kitchen. *What a silly I am!* she thought, and went to the door to open it and wait for him.

He saw her in the doorway and came up the walk grinning.

“Narze! I can’t believe it!”

“Hello, sweetie – you look great.”

“So do you.” She couldn’t remember that he had ever called her ‘sweetie’.

“It’s been a hell of a long time,” Narze said, and now that he was inside the house, he gave her a bear hug and a rather shy kiss. Then he glanced around as though looking for someone.

“The kids are napping and so is Aunt Ethel. She is visiting for a few weeks.”

“That’s what Dee said.”

This is a bit awkward, she thought, but that wouldn’t last she was sure.

“It really is amazing, Narze, seeing you here. I mean so much has happened. Tell me what’s been going on.”

“Don’t you wonder why I’m in Cleveland?”

“Well, yes, I sure do wonder why you’re in Cleveland.”

“I’m on my way back to reliance to teach Math. I graduated in June.”

“Right on schedule - Narze that’s great! Wait till I tell Mother.”

“Maybe she knows. I met your Uncle Roge in the post office in Plymouth and he asked a lot of questions, and he had things to tell me too.”

“I suppose. so you know then that my state of affairs is rather uncertain. I imagine Mother told Uncle Roge a long and harrowing story about my life with Luther.”

“Listen, Janie, you don’t have to tell me things you’d rather not talk about. But your Uncle Roge did say that things had changed for you, and he gave me Dee’s address at work.”

“Not mine?”

“Yes, he gave me that too, but I thought I should talk to Dee first. I didn’t know whether you’d want to see me.”

“Narze! Of course I would. Always!”

“Well, I thought maybe your...” he was reluctant to say the words ‘your husband.’

“You thought maybe Luther might be here. No. That wouldn’t be likely. He rarely is. We’re separated in a most peculiar way. I don’t know what Dee or Uncle Roge told you.”

“Dee told me a little about it.”

“Narze, I hear the kids waking up. We can talk later. How long will you be in town?”

“I don’t know. We’ll see. I have to be in reliance Monday.”

With the children and Ethel up and around, there was no more chance to talk until evening. Narze got acquainted with Denis who showed him all his little toy cars and proudly told him their colors. Mary Ellen bounce and laughed in her special baby seat. Narze pronounced them

both cute and smart kids, and he fed them their supper – Pablum and mashed bananas among other things.

“Pretty gruesome food,” Narze commented.

“Luther once asked if ‘humans’ could eat it too.”

Dinner was festive. Narze had gone to the store and bought steak and ice cream. They had loaded the kids into the baby carriage and walked to the farmer’s market, which was now open four days a week, with the September harvest coming in. they bought sweet corn and tomatoes, and bunches of cut flowers. Ethel busied herself making a cake.

When Dee came home she said, “I almost wish I didn’t have a date tonight. This seems like old times, Narze. Remember the time when you boys came on your way to the World’s Fair in Chicago? Remember, you boys bought steaks and sweet corn then, and we girls cooked dinner in that apartment in the Adam?”

“I remember,” Narze said. “That was quite a party.”

After their dinner was over, Narze helped Ethel do up the dishes, while Jane got Denis into bed. Mary Ellen was already asleep. Presently, Dee left on her date, and Jane and Narze were left with Ethel.

“Ethie, would it be alright if Narze and I went for a little walk down to the drug store for ginger ale?”

“Fine,” said Ethie.

When they were walking, Jane explained that Ethel wasn’t in very good health and that her eyes were bad.

“She is very quiet,” Narze observed.

“It gets on Dee’s nerves that Ethel never contributes to the conversation, but just sits and smiles or laughs. But she’s quite a help to me and she’s a loving person. She’s had a rotten life. But that’s a long story.

Dee and Jane had persuaded Narze to stay over till Sunday morning. He could sleep on the studio couch in the living room. Narze said he’d have to go downtown to the bus station to get a suitcase, so after going back to the house to tell Ethel, they took the streetcar downtown. Jane decided that it would be very unlikely that anyone who knew her would see her on that car-line.

On the way downtown, Narze brought Jane up to date on the happenings in New Hampshire since she had last heard the news.

“What’s Harl Pease going these days?” She wanted to know.

“He graduated this year too. Right now he’s selling Fords for his father, but I don’t think he’ll be doing that long. He got Bernette O’Brien in trouble last summer.”

“I can’t believe it! Harl and Bernette? I can’t imagine that combination.”

“Oh, they weren’t going steady or anything. He just dated her a few times and knocked her up – or she said he did anyway.”

“So what then?”

“She wanted him to marry her, but he told her he planned to join the Army. He wants to get into the Air Corps. He’s sure there’s going to be a war. I talked with him just last week. He thinks Hitler is going to grab most of Europe. He’s sure the U.S. wouldn’t stand for that.”

“I s’pose not – and Hitler sounds terrible, doesn’t he. But tell me about Harl and Bernette – he didn’t marry her?”

“No, he took her down to Boston and had the ‘problem’ removed – he told me about it.”

“Poor Bernette!”

“Yeah, well, I guess she had turned into something of a tramp. Oh, hey, I know some more news that might interest you. You remember that Bump boy that liked you?”

“Ralph.”

“Yes, well he is married. He married a pretty little girl who was a waitress at the Pemmi Inn. The poor kid was in trouble and her boss was to blame. He was married and was going to give her some money for an abortion, but she didn’t want to do that. I don’t know why it worked out this way, but Ralph married her. He was working there at the Inn, I think.”

“Ralph sounds like quite a hero.”

“Well, he’s got a prettier wife than he might have got otherwise. After all, Ralph isn’t exactly a sophisticated fellow with an education. He never finished high school.”

“No, but Uncle Roge always said that Ralph and all the Bump boys were very smart.”

“Well, I was jealous of Ralph, I admit.”

“In any case, it sounds as though he’s turned out to be a nicer fellow than Harl Pease. I’m disappointed in Harl.”

“Don’t be. You don’t know what Bernette is like. Harl had no way of being sure that he was the father. She’d go out with anyone. Harl may have been a hero after all. He got her out of it at least.”

“Life gets more disillusioning all the time. So, Harl thinks that we’ll be in a war, does he?”

They talked then about Narze’s college years – how he had earned his meals by working in the cafeteria and earned additional money tutoring students who were weak in Math. Now he was to be an instructor in Math at the college. He would also teach a once-a-week class for adults in ‘Introducing Mathematics.’

By the time they got back to the Walcott Street house, Ethel had retired. So far they had avoided talking about what happened to Jane in the years since they had last seen each other. But, now, Dee came home from her date and after some chat they all went to bed – Narze on the studio couch.

Jane lay awake thinking how strange it was that Narze was out there in the living room. She wanted to tell him about Luther. Tomorrow, Clement Chandler would be coming – how to explain Narze to Chan or Chan to Narze? She’d just have to bear in mind that she was still married to Luther Roby and, after all, she really had no idea what Narze had in his mind, for they hadn’t really talked. She certainly knew what Chan wanted, but she wasn’t at all sure what she herself wanted! One thing she was dead certain of though – it was out of the question to even consider the possibility of living with Luther ever again.

The next day was taken up with the care of the children, fixing food, talking with Ethel, and going to the farmer’s market. Again no chance to talk with Narze alone.

Jane phoned Chan and invited him to dinner, saying that an old friend was in town. It all sounded very commonplace, but that evening when Jane introduced the two men, she could tell that Chan remembered very well who Narze was. She had, in the past, referred to him once or twice as her ‘first love’, and she had the feeling that Chan was wondering what Narze was doing there. She decided to be quite frank about it.

“Narze’s on his way back to Reliance where he went to college. He’s got a teaching job there now. He’s visiting us for a couple of days. He’s brought us up to date on all the people we used to know in New Hampshire.

“Well, not all the people you know,” Narze said.

At the table, there was more talk about New Hampshire and of who was married, and who had gone through college. Ethel, as always, was quiet, but entertained by the conversation. She sat smiling and occasionally breathing out a small laugh. Chan, on the other hand, was not particularly entertained. Normally he joined in the conversation, but there was very little that he could contribute this evening, and he was not in a mood for smiling. An unpleasant thought was bothering him. Only two weeks ago, Jane had told him that they should only see each other twice a week. She had said that it ‘wasn’t wise’ for him to be there too often – it might jeopardize her

divorce. Ah, but was that her real reason? Here is her 'first love' spending the night. What is going on? An old flame being fanned to a blaze?

After dinner Denis asked to “go wy in Chan gah an see boats?” Chan suggested a ride down to the lake shore. Ethel stayed at home to be with Mary Ellen who was already asleep for the night.

Dee and Denis rode in the rumble seat. Denis was, as Grace put it, the apple of his Aunt Dee’s eye, and now that he was beginning to talk, Dee found him entertaining and quite irresistible.

When they reached Liberty Park on the Lake, they all walked out on the break-wall, Jane holding tight to Denis’ hand. Narze, who had no idea that Chan wasn’t Dee’s friend as much as Jane’s, walked with Jane and Denis. Chan walked behind with Dee.

“Are they planning on being a family?” Chan asked her, indicating the threesome walking ahead.

Dee looked a little surprised, “I doubt it. Well, really I wouldn’t know. I don’t know what goes on in Jane’s mind.”

“Neither do I.”

“Well, don’t be upset.”

“I’m not upset.”

“Well, you look very upset,” Dee insisted.

“Someone’s always telling me that.”

“That’s because you don’t hide your feelings too well.” He didn’t respond to that and Dee went on, “Anyway, I think he’s just her friend these days.”

It was beginning to get dark so they left the break-wall and returned to Chan’s car. They got in again as before, with Dee and Denis in the rumble seat because Denis liked to ‘wide ow doors’. As before, Jane sat in front between Chan and Narze but this time Narze put his arm around Jane. Dee couldn’t see Chan’s ‘upset’ face, but in the rumble seat she certainly saw the way he was driving.

Chan was angry. On the way back he drove too fast, he turned corners too fast and too wide. There was a close call when passing another car. His passengers were nervous and one passenger was very angry with him as well.

At the Walcott Street house, Chan said he would be running along. Narze said he was pleased to have met him, and Chan said as much to Narze. Neither Jane nor Dee would speak to Chan at all.

Inside the house, Jane got Denis settled into his bed and joined Dee, Ethel and Narze in the living room where they were listening to a radio program.

“That friend of yahs drives like a manic,” Narze immediately said.

“He was in a bad mood,” Dee said.

“Ordinarily he’s a good driver,” Jane said.

“I thought I was going to meet my makah!” Narze’s witty comment in his New Hampshire accent set them all laughing.

But Jane was very angry. Even if Chan was peeved about Narze it was unacceptable for him to have endangered them all – driving so recklessly. *What’s more*, she told herself, *he needn’t have been so incensed about Narze putting his arm around me. With three abreast it’s always more comfortable that way. It’s ridiculous for him to react like that!*

Very shortly the radio program ended and Ethel retired. Dee said she was tired and headachy and left Jane and Narze, at last, alone.

“Who is this fellow, ‘Chan’?”

“We’ve known him for about five years. Dee started going out with him about the same time I married Luther.”

“But it’s you he likes, isn’t it?”

“He thinks so.”

“I didn’t think he was very agreeable.”

“He’s usually much nicer than he acted this evening, Narze.”

“Are you planning on marrying him, Janie?”

“No. I’m not. I’m still married to Luther. I really ought to tell you about my marriage – why it happened; why it didn’t work out; why it will never work out...”

“I’m listening Janie.”

“Narze... it’s a long story. I don’t know. It’s a sad story too. You know what I wish?”

“Tell me what you wish, Janie.”

“Don’t sleep on the couch tonight Narze – sleep with me.”

####

Narze had left Cleveland on the Sunday before the New England hurricane. He and Jane had talked most of the night. Yes, they had made love, but they had mostly talked. Jane had been able to successfully explain to Narze how she had married Luther so impulsively.

“You and I drifted apart, we weren’t writing letters anymore.”

“Your mother made me believe I should ‘step out of your life’. I would hold you back.”

“Oh, Narze! Mother thought she know what she was doing, but she didn’t. Well, anyway, you see I simply hated that job. There were men bothering me, and finally my boss after me too. And Skipper was married and she was so happy. And Mona was having all those abortions.”

“Wh-a-t?”

“Oh, that’s another story. It doesn’t matter. I was just so sick of everything. You were gone and I wanted to change my situation. And just then I met Luther, and I guess I was very much impressed with him. He really is a nice fellow, he’s got such an amiable nature, he’s fun to be with, and Daddy knew his family and said they were wonderful people. I thought I’d be getting some stability in my life – some security.”

“But did you love him?”

“I certainly thought so – sure I did.”

“And you had stopped loving me?”

“No. No, I hadn’t, but I thought you were a chapter of my life that was finished. It seems long ago now, but I guess a little more than three years isn’t so long.”

“It seems long to me too,” Narze said. “It’s been very long. Do you know what I did the night I found out you got married? I went out and got drunk. Can you picture me drunk?”

“No, I sure can’t.”

“I met your Uncle Roge on the on the street in town. He told me you were married. I went down to the Ford Agency and told Harl Pease about it and we went out drinking that night.”

“Your drinking I could never be very worried about. I’ll bet you haven’t been much of a drinker in college.”

“No. I’m just not crazy about it. I’d rather spend money on other things. Some people like it, some don’t.”

“Yes. Well, Luther Roby is one of the ones who do like it.”

“And that’s what went wrong, isn’t it. Dee told me something about it the other day.”

“You should know more about it that Dee’s viewpoint. She wouldn’t have told you how discouraging it was for Luther that we all lived together. We tried it once living by ourselves, but everything worked against it. I got pregnant again, and we were all so short of money. Mother and Dee wanted me to have an abortion, but Luther didn’t. I had the baby at home. It all came to a crisis then.”

She told him the whole story. They talked until 3 a.m. and yes, they made love again.

“You’re different now, you know?” he said.

“What do you mean – my lovemaking? Well, I suppose so. I’ve been married. It makes quite a difference, I guess. I used to be pretty shy.”

“Yes, and I liked it then. I was shy too.”

“Time passes. Nobody stays the same.”

“Don’t worry Janie. I like the way you are now and besides that, I still love you. I wish we had a future, but as it stands now, we haven’t. You’re still married and you say you don’t know what’s ahead.”

“Narze, my life is all confused, but I love you too. You were my first love, and I don’t think a person ever stops loving the first one. I never will.”

He left the next morning. They spoke of seeing each other again, but neither of them promised to write.

Jane said, “Narze, I’m so proud of you for finishing college and you’re going to be a teacher. I’m looking forward to telling Mother about it. In fact, I’m going to really rub it in.”

“Maybe you’ll go to college yourself, Janie.”

“No. I never will. The time for that, for me, came and went. If I went now, it would mean that Mother would raise my kids, and I don’t want that. She’s too obsessed with my Dad, and it’s done things to her personality. It’s affected the way she feels about me.”

“Well, I hope everything works out for you, Janie.”

“And for you Narze.”

On the next day, Tuesday, September 20, 1937, Norris was in Cleveland and he took Ethel and a load of artists' supplies back to Springfield.

The house seemed quiet and lonely with just the children for company. She knew that she was let-down after Narze's visit and even though Ethie was not a great conversationalist, she was amiable, helpful, and good company at lunchtime when Jane often talked to her about Aunt Ada and the old days on Cartwright Street.

After Ethie went home, Jane went back to making notes for the book she wanted to write. She had discovered something; when she was happiest she felt no particular urge to write, but when she was depressed, writing was a comfort, and when she was bored, it was entertaining.

Dee was seeing more of Ed, her married friend. She saw him only on weeknights – never on Saturday or Sunday.

Jane played the radio for company on the first night when Ethel was gone. She heard some news of a severe storm in the East, but the report said that Miami was no longer in danger of a feared hurricane, and the storm had turned northward along the coast. This was Tuesday the 20th. Jane turned the radio off and went back to her writing project.

On Wednesday she did not turn the radio on at all, but played records for Denis, and whenever both children were asleep she worked on her story. She and Dee did not take a daily paper. Luther had often brought home the Cleveland Herald, a morning paper, which Uncle Frank always threw into his office wastebasket when finished with it. But now they had no paper because it was one of many things they had ruled out of their strict budget. But on Thursday Dee came home and talked about a bad hurricane in the East.

“There's a terrible lot of damage in Long Island and Connecticut. Houses have been blown away and boats carried into the middle of town, and lots of people are dead or missing. I hope nothing happened to our house in Milford. Course it's not 'our house' anymore.”

“I haven't been playing the radio,” Jane said. “Oh, dear, I wonder if there was damage in Denisson Heights.”

Even when they did put the radio on, they did not learn the full extent of the hurricane. There were various reports of details of the catastrophe, and there was the ongoing coverage of the Czechoslovakian dispute, but Jane and Dee had no idea their mother had been in the path of violent weather.

But on Friday a telegram came saying “Nelle and I are safe. Letter follows. Love, Mother.”

“Safe?” Dee asked. “Is she talking about that hurricane?”

“Must be,” Jane said. “What else could she mean?”

“It never occurred to me that the storm went way up there,” Dee said. “I wonder how bad it was.”

On the following Monday, Grace’s letter came with all the details, and the girls relayed the news around the family that Nelle and Grace were safe. They found that Merly and the others had had no idea that the hurricane had reached as far north as the White Mountains in New Hampshire.

By the middle of October, Grace wrote to tell the girls that she was in New York and had ‘a few things to attend to.’

“I hope she doesn’t stay so long she needs us to mail another box of stuff,” Dee said and they both laughed, but it was a lonely time for Jane. It seemed that she had nobody but the babies these days and, though she loved them dearly, they were still too young to talk to of an evening. All the adults that she loved, had loved, or might love were absent. Even the people she’d been in conflict with, like her parents, were elsewhere. This was partly her doing. She had told Chan he shouldn’t come to see her more than twice a week. That night he drove so recklessly she hadn’t spoken to him when they parted. She hadn’t seen him since then and Dee had made the point that a man with such a short temper would be even worse if one were married to him.

Other things made her sad. all the oldest people in the family were gone, people who had been nice to her like Aunt Ada and all the grandparents. And her father who was good fun at times, lived far away now, and her mother was either gone away somewhere, or else if she was back in Cleveland, she was never happy about whatever Jane was going. Trouble like that had all started when she was fifteen years old and her mother was upset about Danny O’Neil. Before that, everything had been better. When she was little, there had been many bad times what with the quarrels between her parents, but there had been great times, too. Her father could make everything fun when he was in the right mood. At such times her mother could be light-hearted as well. And always in those days, there had been Aunt Ada to count on. Aunt Ada had loved her mother than anybody else had. She had loved Dee too, and stayed to take care of them both, even though the quarrels upset her and she would really rather have lived in her beloved Brooklyn, New York.

After the divorce and Aunt Ada’s leaving, one place where one could be happy was Oberlin where everyone was very easygoing and comfortable. The grandparents and aunties were loving and the cousins, Mim and Trink, were good companions. She had done a lot of visiting there whenever her mother was hopping off on some new venture.

Jane missed Mim. They were only a few months apart in age and had more or less grown up together – spending many summer vacation weeks together at Forest Camp Primeval, Oberlin and later in Cleveland. She had a longing now to talk to Mim and find out what she was thinking about these days and how the romance was going. Perhaps there would be a family get-together on Thanksgiving day, but that meant a crowd and no chance for confidences. Even if she could

really talk to Dee (which she couldn't), Dee was gone much of the time at work, or rehearsing, or on a date with Ed.

One day Luther came 'to see the children', but they were napping and he only looked at them a few moments, then he wanted sex. He reeked of beer and was not very steady on his feet. Jane wasn't about to take a two in the afternoon drunken husband into her bed – she told him it was the wrong time of the month.

“Besides, you're drunk anyway. It doesn't mean anything; it's no good when you're drunk.”

Before he left, Luther repeated what he had told Jane once before. “You oughta marry ‘Ball-n-Chan’. Get yourself someone that's worth something.”

“Luther, you are worth something. You are worth a whole lot, but for the one problem. I have never ever criticized you for anything else. But it's the kind of problem that spoils all the rest. I only wish you were able to do something about it.”

“So do I,” Luther said, but that was all he said, and there were only three months left in his 'year to get straightened out.'

It was the end of October and Grace was still in New York. Dee was in rehearsal with the Campbell Players for a November opening of their first play of the season. While Jane was spending the autumn evenings alone, she wondered how she and Dee were going to pay for the first ton of coal. In the mornings now, the house was chilly. There were two furnaces in the basement and the landlord, Mr. Hawthorn, had already fired his up several times, but Jane had used up the last coal in her bin. She and Dee might have to buy a half ton, but that was a poor bargain because the Cleveland Ice and Fuel Company charged extra for a small load. Dee's income was almost the same as Jane's, \$60 a month and their expenses varied. They shared the household bills including the groceries. Jane bought the baby foods and other such things out of her own money, and Dee of course, bought her lunches downtown, and since she was working, her clothing expenses were higher. Neither of them had enough money. It was discouraging. Jane hoped that when their mother came home she could or would contribute something to the overall costs. Maybe if she had luck with that book, she'd be able to help out a little.

Meanwhile, Jane kept on making notes for her own book. She was so occupied on the evening of October 30th when people who tuned in to an extraordinary radio program without hearing some important information, took to the streets and highways, fleeing a 'Martian invasion.' Jane and Dee would only learn later of what was to become a very famous radio event, Orson Welles' presentation of H.G. Wells' The War of the Worlds. But both girls had preoccupations of their own and other things interested them much more. At the moment it was the price of a ton of coal.

NEVER, NEVER RUSH YOUR PUBLISHER

After the hurricane, Roger had appeared on the Hill to see that his ‘three ladies’, Nelle, Grace and Keeto were all safe. He left again on another business trip saying he would be back on October 10th to take them all back to New York. He hired the Bump boys to start clearing the fallen trees from the road up the Hill. The county had lost no time in opening the main roads, thought the timber had only been cut enough to be pushed to the sides for the time being.

There was much to fret about. In spite of Nelle’s poor health, Grace had found time to do some writing on her story for children. Long before the hurricane, she had sent several chapters to the publishers in New York. It was nearly a month and she had heard nothing at all. Roger had told her not to worry. Publishers were slow and you shouldn’t hurry them.

“But, Roge, the juvenile editor told me when I got several chapters written to send them to her. I want to know what she thinks of them. Are they good or are they bad? I want to know because if Milton’s doesn’t want it, I shall take it to another publisher.”

“Grace, if you sent your stuff in around September first, you shouldn’t be getting impatient so soon.”

“But, Roge, I need the money!” Grace protested.

Roge had laughed at that. “Grace, you are very naïve about publishers. Everyone, well almost everyone who sends in a manuscript needs money. That doesn’t alter things. She probably has a pile of things to read. Stuff sent in by hopefuls like you.”

“But, Roge, she told me to write this story.”

“Even so. And that’s because you got an appointment because you had illustrated Edna Whiteman’s book. It gave you some recognition and an entrée. She knows you can draw. But don’t hurry her with the manuscript. Remember, Grace, if you were a successful, published author that they know they would make money on, you might ask for an advance. But you aren’t in that enviable position, my dear. Take my advice, which comes from professional wisdom: never, never try to rush your publisher.”

Grace was irked with Roge. He was talking to her as though she were a child. He was patronizing. Suddenly Grace was fed up with being at Forest Camp Primeval. The place was a shambles since the hurricane. It was depressing to look at all the downed trees and she was fed up with Nelle and Roge. Roge thought he knew everything but he didn’t, for he had limited his reading to certain types of books – mostly Mark Twain. She herself read a wide range of topics. And Roge and Nelle were both nasty about President Roosevelt.

And Nelle was always a mixed blessing. She had been a real dear sister during the wild night of the hurricane and the darkly threatening hours before it hit. Together they had withstood all that

fury. But Nelle had such obsessive notions about the work that must be done. Even when her food poisoning, or whatever it was, incapacitated her, Nelle was outlining things that Grace 'must get done today'. Airing the blankets, putting penny royal in all the dresser drawers. Washing the outhouse floor (when all it needed was to have a few fallen leaves swept out). Grace was tired of it all; she got the distinct feeling that Nelle could not bear to see someone sitting still for more than fifteen minutes. Jane had made that observation years ago. Even when she was small, Jane had figured Nelle out. She liked to see everyone working. That wasn't quite it though; Nelle was bothered by idleness just like her father, only worse. And now Nelle had reached a time in her life when she couldn't finish her own work projects. Her little back bedroom was a mess – cluttered with the strewn contents of the dresser drawers. The entire attic was in the same condition. It was getting on Grace's nerves, what with the outdoors in such a state of devastation. She wanted to get back to Cleveland and see the babies. Carle insisted that Jane and Dee were getting along fine by themselves. Very likely the girls were not eating as they should. They were so young. They had not yet learned the really important things. She wanted to get back and see for herself if they were alright as Carle and Gertrude said they were.

Grace wondered if Ethel Rahming was still with the girls. She would not go back to Cleveland until Norris came and took Ethel home. He had no business bringing her up to stay with the girls - typical of Norr to pull a fast one like that.

While she was in New York she would try to get another appointment with the woman at Milton and Sons. Perhaps she could find out just how things stood – and she could show Miss Carroll the sketches she'd made from which she would make a quantity of black and white line drawings and perhaps a dozen full page color illustrations. She had made sketches of the barn, the house, the spring house, the tents (from memory, for Roge had not set them up this summer). How fortunate that she had made the sketches before the hurricane. Yes, she would go to see the publisher when she was in New York, no matter what Roger said. Now, if only Roge would come back and take them off this hill. Autumn was here and it was definitely chilly. Thank God, the box with her warmer things had finally come. It was like pulling teeth to get the girls to mail the things she needed when she was away from them. For weeks she had waited for this second box. The first one had gone to Maine to Hurst's cottage and arrived after she had gone to New Hampshire. It had had to be remailed. The girls always made the excuse that they couldn't find the things she wanted. It was true that she had left in somewhat of a hurry and she had gone away thinking to be in NY two weeks, and now it was almost four months and cool weather was here. Nevertheless, the girls must learn to be more organized and not procrastinate about such duties.

By the middle of October Grace was finally in New York City; again with much on her mind. In addition to trying to arrange an appointment to see about her book, she was dashing about the city trying to visit all her friends. First it was out to Douglas Manor to see the Hurst's and to talk

about the hurricane and her book. Earl said his sailboat had been damaged but fortunately could be repaired. He and Ted (Edna Oddy Hurst) read a little of Grace's manuscript and said it sounded good. Earl said he thought it 'might be alright' to try and talk with the editor.

Next, Grace went to Brooklyn to visit Norris' Aunt Georgiana who had always been a sympathetic friend. Georgie had a grandson now, and when Grace told her about Jane's marriage and children and the problems that she'd had, Georgie Sauer said, "Grace, you must let them make their own life, mistakes and all."

Grace also went to visit Polly Patterson, who had good news, modest though it was. She had sold two small watercolor pictures for Grace for ten dollars each. She charged 15% commission and told Grace she had seventeen dollars for her.

Grace was delighted but, as she told Nelle later, "I had to stay at Polly's for a week waiting for her to pay me the money."

Roge's sister, Nelle, was present at the time, and she laughed and laughed and said, "And then did she charge you for one week's room and board?"

"Oh, no, Polly wanted me to stay another week."

At that Nelle said, "Come and stay a week with me, Grace, while you're waiting to see that editor."

Grace did stay a week with Nelle, who also lived in Denison Heights and they had a good time, as Nelle was a light-hearted soul. Even the hard times and Depression had not turned her sour and pessimistic as they had done to her brother Roger.

What with one thing and another, Grace did not get back to Cleveland until mid-November, the day after Dee's twenty-eighth birthday.

####

Jane never was certain just how it came about, but by Thanksgiving, Clement Chandler was once more a frequent visitor at the Walcott Street house, and by the end of the year he and Jane were quietly planning to be married.

Much of it was Grace's doing, though she never realized it nor intended it. And it was years before it occurred to Jane that her mother had been the one who brought Chan back again.

Grace arrived in Cleveland in mid-November apologizing to Dee for missing her birthday.

"You see I kept waiting to see that editor at Milton's," she had explained. But first she had greeted the girls in her characteristic fashion.

"My goodness, you girls look thin and pale. You just don't eat right when I'm not with you."

They laughed first, but then they protested.

"We aren't thin," Dee said. "I don't know why you always say that. I like the way I am."

"And I'm certainly not pale," Jane said. "I still have my summer tan."

"Well, anyway, you both look tired."

"Well, I am tired," Jane said. "Any mother of young children is always tired. Ask Dee if she's tired."

"I suppose you stay out too late, Dee. You should get your rest, dear."

"Mother, actually I don't stay out very late."

"Is it still that married fellow?"

"Mother, you don't understand about that, and I don't want to discuss it."

"Alright, but it isn't wise, dear."

Grace was upset because Denis seemed to have forgotten her and would have to get acquainted all over again. In a day or so she made a proposition. She would take care of the babies for several days so that Jane could go to Oberlin and 'have a nice rest.'

Jane was enthused with the prospect of going to Oberlin for a visit with Mim, but not please with Grace's plan for getting her there.

"Chan would drive you down, I'm sure," Grace said.

"We haven't been seeing Chan lately, Mother," Jane said. "I wouldn't ask him to take me."

Dee spoke up. "Chan acted ridiculously while Narze was here. Jane and I were very annoyed with him."

"Well," said Grace, "Chan is still my friend and I don't mind asking him. I have an oil painting for Merly, because she's going to lend me a little money to carry me until I get some from the publisher."

"I'll go to Oberlin on the bus. Uncle Bill will take the painting when he goes down. I'd rather not ask favors of Chan."

"I don't understand your attitude," said Grace.

"I do," said Dee.

It was strange being in Oberlin at Aunt Merly's place, because it was not the same little house where Jane had always visited when she was younger. She'd carried the picture in her mind complete with Grandma Maria Martin sitting in her little rocker with her small writing table in front, and her letters and diaries spread out before her. And Jane remembered Grandpa Martin hoeing in the garden out back, or in his last year, sitting in his special comfortable chair, asleep with the cat curled on his lap.

But now Aunt Merly had bought a house with her special legacy. It was a bigger and better house, and large enough so Merly could rent rooms upstairs to college students. It would give her an income to augment the money that the Martin estate paid each month for Emmie's care. The house was large enough for Merly and Emmie to live on the first floor which had a bathroom and a large bedroom in addition to the usual rooms. Upstairs on the second floor were a bathroom and four bedrooms. Merly was remodeling to provide kitchenettes for two of the rooms she would rent.

Meanwhile, Miriam's domain was a room on the third floor. She shared the room with Trink when Trink was in Oberlin. Trink was going to Art School in Cleveland this year and Mim had the third floor all for herself for the time being.

During her visit, Jane shared Mim's attic eyrie and the two women talked for hours each night. Jane did not at first talk about the state of her marriage and her romances. Rather, she asked about Trink and her 'mad Russian'. Were they still serious? Mim said that they certainly were, and she expected they'd be married as soon as Sergei finished his education.

"And what about Trink's education?" Jane asked.

"Well-I," Mim said, "you know what Trink's real ambition has always been."

"To have twelve children," Jane said. "That's right. And what about you and your romance? Is it still flourishing?"

"Oh, yes, I suppose you might call it that. And since I'm working hard to be an office worker, while Bill goes about acquiring an education for a musical career, it better be flourishing."

Jane laughed, then she asked, "Do you think what Trink told me about Sergei can possibly be true?"

"What's that?"

"She said that he is 'perfect'. I asked her if he didn't have at least one fault and she said she couldn't think of any."

Mim laughed. "She told me that, "too. Well, I can assure you that I'm not so lucky as to find a human without a single fault. But I'll have to admit that I also can't think of any flaws that Sergei has."

"In the course of time," Jane said, "I'm sure there'll be some. But, seriously, Mim, Luther came close to having no faults. He had only the one, but that was a bad one. If it weren't for his drinking, everything would have been alright. Luther was smart and neat and polite and he came from a good family, and to top all of those things he was so good natured and loads of fun to be with. When he was sober that is."

"You're speaking of him in the past tense, Janie," Mim said. "Does that mean-?"

"Yes. I'll divorce him sooner or later. There's nothing else to do. He'll never stop drinking, Mim. I blame his family for much of it, but not all. They were going to do something to help and I don't think they've tried, but I don't think he has either. Anyway, I have given up all hope that I have any future with Luther."

"So now what?" Mim asked.

"I don't know, Mim."

"Narze?"

"Well, I'm very fond of Narze. He and I will always have our special memories."

"Oh, you make it all sound so sad," Mim said.

"Well, it was sad, it is sad. But we fell in love in that most unusual winter and then he followed me when I came home and Mother was so upset, and everyone was so very poor. We couldn't have married anyway. If we could have I'd have different children now." Jane paused and laughed. "Mother was afraid I'd have 'black' babies."

"Ridiculous," Mim said. "Narze isn't a negro."

"Mother was never comfortable about Narze. Maybe she was right in some ways. He was brought up differently. In fact, he was brought up better, in a way. Parents who stayed married and who lived in one place. But Narze and I are different and there's no getting around that."

"So then, what's this about Chan?" Mim asked.

"He wants me to marry him, and I was planning to, but after Narze was here I wasn't so sure. In fact even before that. Things about Chan worry me."

"You mean he isn't perfect like Trink's Sergei?"

"He sure isn't. He's very moody. Sometimes up and sometimes down. He's critical and crabby when he's down. Dee keeps warning me about him. She says he's an incurable pessimist."

"I thought he seemed very nice," Mim said.

"He not only seems nice," Jane said, "he is nice. And I know that he's basically a good person, a kind person. I think his bark is worse than his bite."

"Well, why didn't Dee see his good qualities?" Mim asked.

"You know, Mim, I don't think Dee has been looking for good qualities. Ever since Cameron, she's never liked the fellows who really liked her. She always falls for men who don't want to get serious. I think Chan liked her a lot, but he was too dependable. And then there were the shoes."

"The shoes?"

"Oh, Chan has a stinky, old pair of suede shoes with crêpe rubber soles that he seems fond of, and he ought to throw them in the trash can. He must have had them since the Revolutionary War. I suppose they are comfortable or expensive or something. Anyway, they're pretty awful. I told Dee once that she should tell him to get rid of them, but she didn't tell him."

"She just got rid of them?"

"Not exactly, but she began dating other fellows. They aren't much alike though; Chan and I are more alike. We like to make things, all kinds of things, and we like books and we like languages, and painting pictures. And we'd like a house in the country."

"Oh, Jane," Mim said, "I bet you and Chan will get married."

"I don't know, Mim. I'm worried about his grumpy moods."

"Perhaps he'll change," Mim said.

"Oh, no. He wouldn't change. People don't change. You should never plan on that when get married. You just have to gamble that it will all work out. It's risky, you know?"

"Well, at least, you might get him to change those dreadful shoes."

"They'd be sure to go," Jane said, and they both laughed, but then Jane asked, "Do you think it will be risky marrying Bill?"

"Well, what do you think? He's a genius and his mother's only boy."

"Sounds ominously like my father," Jane said, and on a laughing note they went to sleep.

DID I DO SOMETHING WRONG?

Josephine L. Chandler Porter had been living with her sister Edna Janousek Freebern for six years, and now in this early winter of 1938 she was especially weary of it. She had so many reasons to want her own home again. She found Edna's décor not at all to her liking with its darkly curtained windows and dim light-bulbs in rosy-shaded lamps. Josephine longed to have an opportunity to decorate a bright new apartment. How she longed to get her own furniture out of storage and, with a few new things, fix up a nice home where she could entertain her own friends. It was ridiculous that Harry L. Porter should keep on making payments to keep their furniture stored when the money could go toward rent on an apartment. But Harry apparently could not be pushed about taking that step at this time.

Josephine was restless and bored. She had a small cosmetic sales business, but it was not very successful. Harry sent her support money but it was never enough to enable her to dress the way she preferred. Josephine (whose friends liked to call her 'Jo') took a great delight in being turned out in the latest fashions. She loved 'ensembles' – a certain hat that went with a certain suit or dress, to which one might add the right shoes and handbag. She had a brown ensemble, and a grey tweed ensemble, and one in beige, for winter. For summer she had several pretty dresses with accessories to match. But these outfits weren't new and she longed for something up to date to wear during the Christmas season. Maybe something red, wine red, would be pretty. Jo was six years younger than Edna, but she looked even younger than that, for she took excellent care of her skin, nourishing it with creams and lotions and never permitting it to be sunburned or tanned. Edna, on the other hand, liked to fuss around in the garden in her back yard, puttering with rocks and a small goldfish pond, etc. She had a certain interest in fashion but couldn't be bothered thinking about her complexion all the time. Edna liked to make things – to paint china or pictures, to crochet, or make lampshades. Often, she went to bed without creaming her face. She had a rather weather-beaten skin, and Jo had warned her to stop smoking because, 'it ages a woman.' Jo often fussed at Edna about various things like that.

This year Jo had been doing much serious thinking. She was not going to just stay home and wish that she and Harry had an apartment. She was not going to just long for the old days with the old social crowd. She was going to make some kind of new life for herself, for the years were rushing along and life was passing her by. She must make new friends somehow – but how?

One day a woman friend phoned Jo to say that the stores were hiring extra help for the Christmas season. Why didn't Jo see if she could get a job? It might be fun and give her some spending money.

It sounded like a good idea. And so it was that Jo hired on at Strohmeyer's department store in the ladies lingerie section.

“I’m going to like it ever so much,” Jo reported at home at the end of the first day.

“Strohmeyer’s has such nice things. I’ll get 10% discount on anything I buy there. If I can get on as a regular employee I’ll get 20% off. They’re hiring stock-boys too, Clement. Why don’t you see if you can get on just for Christmas?”

“No,” said Chan.

“Why not?”

“Because today I signed up with the WPA.”

“Oh, Clement! You’ll be digging ditches!”

“Probably.”

“But that’s awful! You don’t want to do that kind of work.”

“No, not particularly, but I need money.”

“This depression won’t last forever.”

“Neither will I,” Chan said darkly.

“But your furniture work...”

“It’s getting me nowhere. I can’t get married on what I make that way.”

She was all attention then. “Are you going to get married?”

“One of these days I plan to,” he said.

She was tempted to ask him if he had someone in mind but he had been very cross lately so she kept quiet. And because her new job was so interesting, even exciting, she almost forgot about Chan for a few days.

Jo had made two new friends. She lunched with them every day. Flo was twenty-eight years old. Jo admired Flo because of her love for high fashion, a feeling that matched Jo’s own. Flo wore her glossy black hair in a towering pompadour and her long, polished fingernails were manicured to perfection. Her clothes expressed the very latest fashion trend. The other woman was nearer Jo’s own age, in fact a few years older. Marjorie was not pretty like Jo, but she had money and lived in Carrollton Heights, which was even classier than Cleveland Heights. Marjorie Townsend did not have to work, but she had no children, and she enjoyed working at Strohmeyer’s store because, she said, “I was dying of boredom.” Jo told Marjorie and Flo that she, too, worked because of boredom. “My sister and I have nothing in common. Of course, anyone can use extra spending money.” Flo had agreed with her.

But within a week Jo's attention came abruptly back to Chan. He informed her that he and Jane Roby planned to be married.

"When?" Did she get a divorce?"

"Not yet."

"But I thought you and she had broken up recently."

"Well, that's all fixed up now."

"Aren't you sure about her Clemmie?"

Chan frowned at the hated nickname. "More the other way 'round."

"She wasn't sure about you?!"

"For awhile, but we've talked everything out."

"Why wasn't she sure?" Jo persisted.

"Mother! For Christ's sake! So many questions."

"She's lucky you want to marry her."

Chan laughed.

But a few days later Chan spoke to Jo again of Jane. "She thinks you and she should meet and she'd like..."

Jo interrupted. "Clement, I've been meaning to talk to you about this."

Chan's face got a wary look as she spoke.

"Edna and Aunt Mary and I have been talking about your plans and we think it's too bad you've picked out a married woman with children."

"Why? Why is it too bad?"

"Well... Well, because you should have children of your own."

"I will have some of my own."

"How can you afford it, when you're supporting someone else's?"

"Mother, did you think you were going to talk me out of this?"

“I just think that you should think twice.”

“Twice! I’ve been thinking about it for nearly three years! Listen, Mother, when Harry Potter told his mother he was going to marry you with your little boy, did she try to stop him?”

“Well! Yes she did, but Harry always had a mind of his own.”

“And I admire that, don’t you?”

A date had been set for Jane and Jo Porter to meet. Jane had invited her future mother-in-law to dinner.

“Mother says that she should be entertaining you instead. She says the groom’s mother should do the formalities first.”

“It will be much easier this way. She may as well meet the babies, too. That way she’ll see the entire package you’re getting. I wouldn’t want to haul the babies over to her place.”

“Well, it isn’t her place; it’s Aunt Edna’s. And you may be sure that Mother will take the opportunity to point out once again to Harry that he should set her up again in an apartment, so that she can entertain people in her own home - with Harry of course.”

“Wouldn’t your Aunt Edna let her entertain me?”

“Of course she would. Aunt Edna’s fond of me. Mother sometimes does entertain, but she’ll tell Harry she can’t. She’s come to hate Cartwright Street. It’s mostly Jewish now, and colored are starting to move in. Aunt Edna doesn’t like that either, but she loves her house. It’s where she lived with Walter and she loved him.”

“Well, back to the dinner party. I’m nervous about it. Are there any foods she hates?”

“No. I don’t think so. Don’t worry about it though. One thing I should tell you I guess - she’ll be all dressed up.”

“Why? This isn’t going to be a formal dinner.”

“No, but Mother is always all dressed up. She loves high fashion.”

“I have no high fashion things.”

“Your clothes are pretty,” Chan said. “You’re clever to make them.”

“I make them because that way I can afford three or four times and many things as if I bought ready-made. I have dress-up things too, like suits, but I wouldn’t wear them to feed Mary Ellen her Pabulum.”

“Don’t worry about it, but be prepared for her to look you over from top to toe.”

Josephine L. Porter (Jo) came early to Jane’s dinner party in order to see the children before they were tucked in for the night. Even in the flurry of Chan’s introductions, Jane noticed that Jo did indeed look her over from top to toe. It was all done very quickly, but was unmistakably an inspection. In later years Jane would realize it was not deliberate; with Jo it was completely automatic. She did it with everyone, not merely other women; men and children came under the

same scrutiny. It was the way Jo saw a person; she was interested first in the wrapping, then the package. It was the way she remembered them. They were categorized as: ‘the girl in the brown suit that was too long,’ ‘the man with the odd, purplish-colored tie,’ ‘the woman with the grey suede oxfords’.

Jane had chosen to disabuse Mrs. Packer from the start of any idea that clothes were something in which she herself had more than normal interest. Tonight a perverse instinct prompted her to dress in a deliberately unconventional manner. She put on a white peasant blouse, a red skirt and Mexican huarache sandals that she had bought in the Tower Building Import Shop in the days when she and Skipper worked at the Winchester Room. She wore small gold loop earrings, and she wore no hose.

“I’m going to dress like a gypsy for the heck of it. Your Mom won’t like it, but she’ll be entertained perhaps.”

“Good, and I’ll warn you again. She’ll make some kind of comment. She’s very outspoken.”

“I predict she’ll say my outfit is interesting.”

“I won’t bet against you on that.”

Denis and Mary Ellen were all ready for bed, except for the bottom half of their sleepers. They were running around in their diapers and nightie-tops, with Mary Ellen taking many tumbles.

“Do you think it’s a good idea to let her walk so early?” Jo asked.

“How would I stop her?” Jane answered a question with a question.

Jo didn’t know. “It just seems such a pity for her to get bowlegged like her brother.”

Jane bristled inwardly, but kept outwardly calm. “Oh, Denis didn’t walk early. My pediatrician says his legs are fine. A great many babies’ legs look bowlegged at this age. They’ll straighten up.”

“Who did you say told you the little boy’s legs would straighten out?”

“My pediatrician – baby doctor.”

“Oh, I know what the word means – what was his name?”

“Dr. Helene Hanson.”

“A woman doctor – why don’t you get another opinion – just for your peace of mind about it.”

Jane felt nonplussed. She glanced at Chan for help but he was apparently going to let her cope with his mother alone. So she said, “Why, I’m not worried at all, Mrs. Porter. It checks with everything I’ve read about babies’ legs. They’ll straighten out.”

“Maybe,” Jo said.

The dinner conversation ran more smoothly, with Jo praising everything Jane served and asking her for a couple of recipes. Toward the end of the meal Jo asked Jane if her mother was enjoying her stay in New York City.

“She’s in Oberlin with my Aunt Merly.”

“How can she earn her living in Oberlin?” Jo asked, and seeing Jane’s surprised expression, she said hastily, “I don’t mean that like it sounds. I mean, isn’t she an artist? I thought she’d be in New York City. Clement said she wanted to work there.”

“She does want to, but things are bad. She does a lot of painting while she’s in the mountains. She sells the pictures.”

“Oh? Does anyone have any money for pictures these days?”

“Apparently – Mother paid her dentist’s bill that way.”

“Oh for goodness sakes! What about your sister?”

“My sister – what about her? In what way?”

Chan was scowling at his mother, but she didn’t see him.”

“What does she do? Is she engaged or anything?”

“She’s a stenographer, and as far as I know she isn’t engaged. Or anything.”

“Mother,” Chan said. “You’re asking Jane a steady stream of questions.”

“Oh? Sorry. I’m just trying to get acquainted. I’m interested in everything, you see.”

Jane said, “That’s alright. I don’t mind.”

“That’s a very interesting outfit you have on,” Jo told her.

Jane and Chan each could not help smiling.

Jo said, “What’s funny?”

“You,” Chan told his mother.

“Well, I was just wondering if Jane wouldn’t spoil her feet.”

“Spoil my feet! How?”

“Wearing those flat shoes – you’ll ruin your legs for high-heels.”

“Oh, I don’t think so. That’s the last of my worries.”

“It’s a bunch of nonsense,” Chan said. “Anyway, it works the other way around. High-heels shorten your calf muscles.”

Jo ignored this and persisted with her idea, “Don’t you ever wear high-heels Jane?”

“Oh, sure, for dress-up, but I don’t do housework in them. My obstetrician forbids it.”

“I never wear anything else,” Jo said proudly. She looked at Jane thoughtfully. “Those are pretty earrings you’re wearing Jane.”

“Thank you.”

“But you ought to set them in closer to your head. They’re out too far on your ears. Do you like them that way?”

“I never thought about it.”

On the way home Chan was silent and furious with his mother.

“Did I do something wrong?” she finally asked him.

“I don’t want to talk about it.”

“I didn’t do anything terrible.”

“You asked her a lot of stupid questions, and made a lot of stupid criticisms.”

“Well, I guess I must be stupid.”

He did not reply to that.

DID HE EVER STRIKE YOU ?

Jane had been quite disconcerted by Jo's questioning and suggestions. But she'd been grateful to Chan for his attempts to persuade his mother to ease up. If he had not, she might have been in a mood to once more call a halt to the marriage plans. Jane was ever mindful of the role her grandmother Rahming had played in her mother's family life. Jane now saw that she had missed out on the experience of having a mother-in-law in her marriage to Luther. Things would be different this time.

But she had other things to think about as well. She was going to have to tell Luther her plans. His year was not quite over, but it was only fair to tell him that she would file for a divorce sometime in the spring. He had not changed in any way and he very rarely telephoned. He had apparently given up and that was sad, but he had advised her to marry Clement Chandler. More than once in recent months he had said, "You oughta marry ol' Chan. He's your best bet. He'd be good for the kids. He's known them right from the start." So she knew that Luther would not be totally surprised by her decision. As sorry as she was for him, she felt that she had given him a full measure of her patience.

She had tried calling him at the foundry in the evenings where she had sometimes been able to reach him, but it was nearly Christmas before she found him in. She had called the number of his Uncle Frank's office in the Hillman Manufacturing Company. It was in this office that Luther 'lived' at night – sleeping on the leather couch. When Jane thought of this arrangement it made her ill. But Luther told her once that his father had told him to get a rented room somewhere and that he would pay for it. That way Luther could have slept in a proper bed with clean sheets. But so far Luther had done nothing about it. It seemed to Jane that he preferred to stay downtown where he could be near his favorite haunt, Jimmy Black's Tavern. No one could help him if he would not take the smallest step to better himself.

When she finally reached Luther, Jane found him reasonably sober. When she mentioned to him that she had tried for several evenings to reach him, he explained that he was usually in the foundry shop in the rear, cutting castings off the gates. He could not hear the phone with the band-saw running. That, of course, could be true.

She told him that she had finally decided to take his advice. She would plan to marry Chan after she was free. She said that there was no point in discussing the drinking as it had all been gone over many times and nothing had changed at all.

As Jane had anticipated, Luther was anything but astonished at her decision. He said that he hadn't expected things to work out any other way really. He said she was doing the best thing, and he would not worry about the children now. Nor would he worry about her. He said he had been worrying about her because he knew the allowance that she'd been getting was going to be stopped when the year ended. He knew that because his father told him so. Uncle Frank was

insisting on it. He had said that the sooner Jane was on her own, the sooner she would make a new life for herself. She would get married again and that would be best for all concerned.

“How does he know I’ll get married again?”

“He’s met you.”

“Doesn’t he think Roby grandchildren should be raised by Roby’s?”

“Only if they were his grandchildren.”

They said very little about the divorce except that Luther assured her he would not try to stand in the way.

“But you know I have no money,” he said.

“I know.”

“And I hope I can see the kids sometimes.”

“Why of course, and I won’t try to turn them against you as they grow up, because my mother did that and I don’t think she should have. Do you want to see the children on Christmas day? Mary Ellen is walking by the way.”

“No. I’d rather come when there aren’t a lot of people around like your mother or Dee or Chan.”

“Chan will only be there for dinner.”

“Well, you understand how I feel, don’t you? I’ll see if I can get some money from the old man for Christmas presents for the kids. I’ll send it to you and you can get something for them. But I’d rather not come till after Christmas. You understand, don’t you?”

“Of course I understand, Luther.”

Always, after talking to Luther, Jane felt sad and preoccupied for a few days. But she was young – only twenty-two. Her life was turning another corner. She could not spend her days brooding about Luther’s problem. It could no longer be her problem, since she was powerless to change it. So she made up her mind to look only to her future. Though she and Chan had agreed that they would marry, they were keeping it quiet and unofficial pending Jane’s divorce and that would have to wait until some money could be saved.

Just before Christmas Chan phoned Jane to report good news. His WPA employment had taken a turn for the better. After one month of wielding pick and shovel, he was being promoted to a

white-collar desk job. He supposed that his college education had been worth something after all, because it was going to spare him an aching back.

“What will you be doing at your desk?”

“I won’t be at the desk all the time,” he explained. “I’ll be running around hunting up City of Cleveland records and cataloguing them for historical purposes.”

“That’s a WPA project?”

“Yes, and I’ll be getting more money now – another \$10 a month.”

“Great! That’ll be about \$75, won’t it?”

“It’s not enough for us to live by ourselves, I’m afraid, but if we can pick up a little work doing upholstering and things like that we could get along.”

“Not yet. Dee and Mother can’t afford to live by themselves either. We’ll have to double up for a while longer, and try to save money. If the Depression ends we’ll build a dream house, won’t we?”

Christmas was good that year because of Denis. He was old enough at two and a half to be enchanted with the tree and its lights. Santa had brought him an automobile big enough to sit in and drive. When Denis first saw it, he rushed to the tree, got down on his hands and knees and spun himself round and round, laughing and squealing with delight.

“Luther helped Santa get you the car, Denis. Do you know who Luther is?”

“Man in the b’own hat.”

Aunt Adalyn Roby Irvin had sent Jane the last check for \$60 in December. It was the twelfth such check – one year as stipulated. There was no message and nothing extra for the children’s Christmas. During the year the Roby family had don’t nothing to help Luther, for all their talk at the start. Luther’s cousin May Quinby, on the other hand (she who had conveyed to him the thousand dollar legacy), had sent the children a small package from Florida where she wintered. There was nothing from any of the other relatives on Luther’s side of the family.

“I must say,” Grace said on Christmas day, “they are a strange group of people.”

Chan contributed his opinion on the Roby tribe. “they are no doubt embarrassed by the way their fine plan for Luther turned out. They sought to punish him and thought he would reform, and it

has worked out in a very sad way. Now they are trying to make it seem as though the whole scheme was none of their doing at all. They are just distancing themselves from all of it.”

Jane looked at Chan appreciatively. “You know, I think you’ve probably explained it right.”

“But,” Dee said, “wouldn’t you think they’d have some interest in the Roby who is going to carry on the family name?”

“Not when it’s carried on by way of the family drunk,” Jane said. “But, anyway, Denis isn’t going to carry on that name in any case.”

“What do you mean?” Grace asked.

“I mean that when I marry again I’ll have his named changed.”

“Why would you do that?” Dee asked.

“To save little Denis Roby a lot of explaining – so his name will be the same as his mother’s.”

“It might mean you’d cut them out of inheriting money,” Grace said.

Jane laughed. “The Roby’s who have money will leave it to their own children and Luther’s father is barely keeping his head above water.”

“Still,” Grace persisted, “they are a fine family.”

“They are no finer than anyone else,” Jane concluded. “We don’t need their name. What is it worth to us now?”

####

Jane found a woman lawyer who would take her divorce case and would charge a fee of fifty dollars.

The initial interview was disturbing to Jane though she knew it was necessary. Miss Burgess asked many questions. Jane had no trouble speaking of Luther's drinking and his failure to support his family, nor of the way he had wasted the thousand dollar legacy. But Miss Burgess was prodding for more.

"Did he ever strike you?"

"Well... Not in the sense that..."

"But, did he ever strike you? He did or he didn't. Now if he did, it will help your case. Some of our judges are more tolerant of drinking than others. You will have to tell the judge these things. If your husband was abusive when he drank, it will carry a lot of weight with any of the judges. Now, tell me whether he hit you or not."

"Sometimes when I was trying to get him up in the morning to go to work, and he had been drinking, he was swat at me."

"How many times did he hit you?"

"Oh, several, but I really can't call him abusive. When he hit me it wasn't a conscious thing, he just didn't want to be roused. It was the way you bat at a fly that keeps pestering you."

"The important thing is that he did hit you. When you're talking to the judge, don't volunteer all those good words and apologies for your husband."

"It's just that he's not a cruel person and I don't hate him. I just can't possibly go on with him, and since he's not going to contest..."

"Well, we'll see about that after he gets the papers. Sometimes these men get angry when they read the legal language."

"But Luther knows that not even his family would testify against me."

"Well, as I said, we'll see. This will go a lot faster if he doesn't care to fight it. Now, you will need a corroborating witness and that could be a relative. You'll need a character witness who is not a relative – someone who has known you a long time and who will speak in your behalf in general terms. I'll have the papers for you to sign in a few days. After that it will be six to eight weeks before your case comes up. It will be in the judge's chambers – just you, your witness and the judge – and I. I'll call you."

While Jane was waiting, her mother and Chan's mother had much to think about. Grace had come home from the East with great plans to forge ahead on her story about young cousins in the mountains. When she had first come back to the Walcott Street house, she had thought she would get right down to work, but she found that Jane's babies kept things lively all day long. She found herself spending much time with them. Denis was still full of baby conversation and such winning ways that Grace was fascinated with him. Little 'sisser', Mary Ellen, at eleven months was walking everywhere in the place and the dog 'Bonnie' was kept busy finding a quiet spot for sleeping.

After a week Grace had gone to spend a night with Bill and Trude to rest up. She complained a bit to Trude. "I certainly don't think I can write my book while I'm at Jane's. The children need so much care and I get too tired."

"We, Grace, just let Jane care for them. She's been doing it by herself and getting along fine."

"They looked pale to me."

"Looked fine to Bill and me when we were there, Grace. You must stop worrying about your girls, and just get at your typing. Just go in your room and shut the door and don't pay attention to the children."

"That's easier said than done, Trudie. Besides, I don't really have a room there. It's the sunroom and it's next to the living room. Too much going on all the time."

"Grace, you must get a place of your own."

"I certainly will do that, but I feel the children need me."

"No, Grace, you must not feel that way. Jane gets along fine and she should be the one to care for them. And you must write that book."

In early December, Grace took an apartment in the 70's just a half block from Grand Avenue. Jane and Chan helped her move her things and Chan hung her pictures and did other little services for her. But Grace was nervous; her being able to continue living in her own apartment was entirely dependent on her selling pictures or one of her literary projects. She was torn between work on the book for young people and the task of finishing up her African article, and now her desperate need for money made her turn back to her original talent, painting. In recent years she had been able several times to pay medical, dental or osteopathic bills with art work. And, at the moment she had an opportunity to sell an oil painting to one of the doctors to give as a Christmas present to his wife.

But Grace, in spite of living by herself, continued to have difficulty getting at her writing or artwork. She was seeing Carle Semon at least every other day and he phoned her on the days in

between. In addition, she had contacted several of her old friends and was seeing them again at their place or hers, or lunching with them downtown.

After Christmas the need for money became acute. Grace had virtually exhausted all the possibilities for borrowing. She did not want to ask her brother Bill for a loan, as she had not been able to repay him for a previous amount she had borrowed. Merly and Nelle both told her they couldn't possibly lend anything at the present and she owed them each substantial amounts.

When Jane told her she would be getting no further money from the Roby's, Grace was quite upset. What would Jane do? And worse, what would Dee do? Jane would perhaps marry Chan and she might be able to get along. But how would Dee manage if Jane and Chan were to live by themselves? It should be Dee getting married instead of Jane. Dee was in her twenty-ninth year, while Jane was only twenty-two and about to marry for a second time. The trouble was, Dee was in love with the wrong type.

Now that it was January, Grace's worries about her rent were turning grim. She realized that she had acted impulsively in taking an apartment before her book was published, or at least the article about Tunis. If she could sell a few watercolor or oil paintings, she might hang on. But everything went so slowly. The winter days were so short and gloomy. She could not get out of bed in the morning at an early hour. And there were so many distractions. Her contemporary women friends were taking so much of her time. She should never have got in touch with them again. A person who aspired to be an author could not afford to be disturbed by too much social life. It was partly Grace V. Kelly's fault that she had taken the apartment by herself. Grace V. had said, "You must be by yourself, Grace, and do your Art. And she and other friends had said, "I'm glad you were wise enough to leave your daughters to sink or swim. Three cheers for you!"

And now she had to tell them that she was going to go back to live with the girls again. It was embarrassing. She could not bring herself to say, "I'm broke and I can't afford my apartment," for she valued her old friends. Besides Grace V. Kelly, there was Denis Raper's wife Mary, Edna (Peter) Whiteman, Mary McGuire, and others from her art school class.

In late January, Jane had asked Grace to stay with the children while she went downtown to see a lawyer. A week later, Grace stayed again with Denis and Mary Ellen, while Jane went house-hunting. A larger place was needed.

Grace had lunch in the tearoom in Strohmeier's store with Grace V. Kelly and Mary McGuire. They were an unlikely combination, except that they were both Irish and both staunch Democrats – hoping for President Roosevelt's reelection to an unprecedented third term when the time came in 1940.

But it was not of politics that Grace spoke on this occasion. She needed to get out the word among her friends that she was about to give up her studio apartment. Grace V. and Mary could be counted on to spread the news to others.

“Well, old dears,” Grace said, “it seems that my period of freedom was short-lived. I’m having to go back to live with my girls.”

“Oh, Grace!” Grace V. said. “Don’t tell me that!”

“Yes, I must. The girls need me. Jane gets no more money from her unfortunate marriage, and she’s in the midst of getting a divorce.”

“Grace,” Mary McGuire asked, “didn’t you tell me Jane will be marrying again?”

“Oh, yes – she will be when she’s free.”

“They let them work out their problems, girl. You must live your own life.”

“I agree with Mary,” Grace V. said. “For heaven’s sake, stay by yourself. Don’t go live with them again. Why don’t you just send Jane a little money now and then when you can, and she’ll know your heart’s in the right place.”

“It isn’t only the money she needs, Grace V. She needs help with the babies. She’s not naturally domestic.”

“Oh, poo!” Mary said. “She’s young; she’ll learn. How’s she going to learn if she isn’t on her own?”

“That’s right,” Grace V. said. “That’s so right.”

“Well, you see,” Grace persisted. “the truth is that Jane isn’t very strong. Dee isn’t either, for that matter, and she’s so brave, going downtown to work every day.”

Grace V. Kelly looked at Grace for a moment, then said, “You know old dear, you tend to forget your ‘girls’ are women now.”

“But, Grace V.,” Grace said, “mothers are mothers, and our situation is different from what you perceive it to be.”

SHE'LL HAVE TO SINK OR SWIM

Jane had found a new house to rent by answering an ad in the newspaper. It caught her eye because it was on Courtney Shores Drive, the same street by the Lake where Edna “Peter” Whiteman lived. Peter had offered her house to Dee and Jane and Luther the summer that Jane and Luther were married. They had stayed in Peter’s house for several weeks, enjoying the beach at times, and playing the new game, Monopoly, with Dee and Chan, her new boyfriend.

Wouldn’t it be ironic to live on Courtney Shores Drive now that Chan was going to be her partner? But it would be such a wonderful place to live with the children. They could play in the sand at the beach.

She arranged to see the house, though she was certain the rent would be too high. However, it was fifty dollars a month, only five dollars more than the Walcott Street place. After seeing it, she went home filled with enthusiasm and described it to Dee, and later to Chan.

“It’s a single house; it’s big. I thought the rent would be more, but I can see why it isn’t. It needs painting outside and in. There’s room for all of us – four bedrooms upstairs. Two of them are real large, and the other two are quite small, but would do for the babies; they could each have a room.

“Is there room for Mother?” asked Dee.

“Is she planning to live with us again?” Jane asked.

“Temporarily,” Dee said. “She’s broke, but she says she’s going to New York City to live.”

“Again?” Chan suppressed a smile.

“She wants to find out about her book. She hasn’t heard from her publisher.”

“I don’t think publishers can be hurried,” Chan said.

They all went to see the house on Courtney Shores. It was very acceptable to both Dee and Chan. In addition to the four bedrooms, it had a living-room, an extra front room that might have once been called a ‘parlor’. It had a dining-room, and a huge sun porch beyond, and a lavatory off the sun porch.

“That will help me get the children toilet trained,” Jane said, “without having to run upstairs every time.”

Dee spoke up, “Mother and I think it’s a perfect disgrace that Denis isn’t toilet trained already. He’s nearly three.”

Jane bristled. “Not till June will he be three. This is January. He’s nearer to two and a half. And besides, I almost had him trained last summer and then Mother came home and started asking him every twenty minutes if he ‘wanted to go wee-wee’. So he got very exasperated with it and turned negative and began wetting his pants again.”

“That’s right. I noticed that,” Chan said, and Dee frowned.

“Mother has had a lot more experience with raising children than you,” Dee said, more automatically than factually.

“That is certainly not so!” Jane said hotly. “Aunt Nelle helped her with you and Aunt Ada raised me.”

“Well, I won’t argue,” Dee retreated. “What room will be Mother’s?”

“It will have to be the parlor.”

“That’s no bedroom Janie!”

“I guarantee that when she thinks about it she’ll see that it’s the best. She’ll be farther from the children’s noise.”

“She’ll also be farther from the bathroom”

“She can have the downstairs lavatory all to herself.”

“But there’s no door on the parlor!” Dee persisted.

“I can fix that,” Chan had the last word.

The next day they let the agent know they would rent the place. The agent said that the owner would have the house painted when good weather came. He was also willing to have the rooms wallpapered at any time convenient to the tenants.

Working out the finances was a bit complicated. Chan and Jane were budgeting as though they were already married. In addition to Chan’s monthly paycheck from the government, he and Jane were still doing furniture work, such as upholstery and refinishing, and whatever cash they earned that way went into their common fund. Dee, who was paid by the week, would contribute grocery money each week – phone, electric and gas bills would be divided proportionately.

There were other expenses. There was no cook-stove in the house. Jane went out searching for a used one while Grace stayed with the babies. Each time that such baby-tending services were offered to Jane, Grace would record in her diary that her art work suffered because of it.

Jane managed to find a stove for \$8. They would have to wait for an electric refrigerator till sometime in the future. Meanwhile they'd have to use the rather grubby old zinc-lined icebox. The stove was blue and quite small, with four burners and oven. It would do and its color made it special.

Jane and Dee moved into the new place by the end of January and Grace joined them a week later. She left her apartment owing the landlord money, but she felt it necessary to hang on to her small amount of cash.

Grace was pleased with the house on Courtney Shores Drive. She did not even put up an objection to using the parlor as her own room. Chan had very cleverly built a bookcase into the archway that led into the living-room and he had done it without driving a single nail into the woodwork. It gave Grace the privacy she needed, but it did not shut out sound very well. However, for the first week or two, at least, Grace was very grateful to be housed where she did not have to be in a panic about rent. She wrote a letter to Nelle and Roge explaining her new situation.

Well, old dears,

Here I am, back with the girls again. They need me – Jane especially. She is thin and pale. The babies are too much for her. Her divorce will be coming along soon; the date for the hearing is set. She plans to be married again after she is free. I have mixed feelings about that. It may solve some of her problems, of course, but Clement Chandler is an only child whose mother dotes on him. Need I say more? Perhaps, however, he will prove up and do a good job as a provider and stepfather. I do wish it were Dee getting married though. Funny brave little girl, she always shies away from the ones who like her seriously.

Jane and 'Chan' (as he prefers to be called) are both very busy doing things – too many things, in my opinion. The landlord is going to have the place wall-papered and Jane has been given permission to paint the dark brown woodwork a lighter color. I prefer light rooms myself, it makes rooms look larger. But Jane has plenty to do without getting into extra work like that. I want to see her give her attention to getting her babies housebroken. She shouldn't be willing to keep on washing diapers and baby bedding forever. Oh, well, Jane is Jane. And another thing that bothers me is that she is working on refinishing furniture and such things as that. This is work that Chan gives her to do. They make a little extra money that way, but it is too much for Jane. I would rather see her giving the babies more regular care. I feel that children need lots of baths and shampoos and tooth brushing, and they need to be taken for walks every day and Jane doesn't do these things on a regular basis. She and I don't see eye to eye on many matters, but I feel that since Jane chose to marry and have children, rather than go to college and prepare for a career, she should stick with her choice. I don't know how this second marriage will work out either. Chan is ten years older than Jane and these babies are not his. I cannot forget how Carle was unable to adjust to my girls. O, well, I hope for the best. I have met Chan's mother. She is

German and her background is very different from mine, but she is a pleasant little woman, and has overcome her original objection to Chan's marrying a girl with children. She is counting on their having a real wedding although Jane and Chan were just going to go downtown and be married quietly. I think Jane will not win out on that matter.

You two have inquired about my progress on the book. I sent three sample chapters to Milton and Sons five months ago, and I haven't heard from them at all. But I do have a hard time doing my own work when I am with Jane, for I cannot bear to see the children needing proper care, and so I find I must give them much of my time. Carle tells me I worry about them needlessly, but I don't agree with him. Jane gets baby-care books from the library, but since they don't all agree, she says the best a mother can do is use her own good common sense. Common sense, my eye! I think I am more modern than Jane. I like to keep to a very strict schedule with the babies and Jane argues with me. Today she is busy upholstering a chair and didn't think it necessary for me to give the babies a bath. Chan should not expect her to do this furniture work but Jane says they need the money. It's too bad that this time she did not find somebody who could support her. I am afraid that her intended has leaned on his mother too long. Poor Jane! Poor babies!

Well, I must get this in the mail. Tell me what your plans are for the summer. Will you be going to the hill?

Much love – Grace

Nelle's answer to Grace's letter was somewhat upsetting. No, they would not be going to the New Hampshire place, though Roger would "run up to check on everything." They were making a change, would be coming to Oberlin for a while. Roge was leaving the magazine at last – once and for all – for good! He was going to a new job in Cincinnati. He would be traveling, selling electrical equipment to power companies. They would probably locate in Oberlin, since Roge would be on the road all the time. Meanwhile they were worried about Babs. She wanted to stay in New York City. She was boy crazy and wanted to be a dancer. Roge was upset about that.

Additionally, Nelle advised Grace not to worry so much about Jane's children and her second husband-to-be.

"You didn't pick such wonderful husbands yourself," Nelle wrote. "And what's all this about strict schedules? Things were pretty hectic when your girls were young."

Grace was annoyed with Nelle's letter and sat right down to answer it. She wanted to remind Nell that it was Norris' fault that things had been hectic.

But, then, Grace's mind turned to other concerns. Gertrude called to report that Stan Martin, who now owned the 'Old Brick,' was starting to tear down the old barn.

"Bill feels sick about it," Gertrude reported.

####

Jane's divorce was granted in March. The lawyer told her that as soon as it was recorded she would be free.

"I'll notify you when the 'journal entry' has been made," the lawyer said.

Jane and Chan would pay the lawyer in monthly payments – the fee was \$50.

With Jane legally free to marry, Chan's mother allowed herself to begin plans for the wedding. Over Chan and Jane's protests, Jo (Josephine) prevailed. Regardless of conventional custom, she would be more than happy to pay for the wedding, she told them. She could get a beautiful two-tiered wedding cake from a Hungarian bakery for \$10, and for \$5, a girl would come and make little sandwiches and hors d'oeuvres, and serve them with coffee or punch or champagne. All you had to do was buy the foods on the list the girl gave you. And Jo wanted to know what Jane was going to do about her wedding dress.

"Well, of course, I can't wear white. I'll make myself a dress - some pastel color."

"But you can wear white. You're so young."

"White is for virginity, and my two children didn't come by Immaculate Conception."

Jo smiled, but she said "Well, anyway, you needn't make your dress. At Strohmeyer's, I can get a twenty per cent discount. I'll keep my eyes open for a good buy. I can get one for Dee, too. Is she doing to be your only bridesmaid?"

"Yes, but I really do want to make my own dress, Jo."

"I'd be glad to buy one for you – really," Jo insisted.

"No, it's alright," Jane said, but she had not heard the last of it.

The wedding was set for the third week in April. It was to be a Friday evening, so that Jane and Chan could have a two-day honeymoon. But they would take no trip. for one thing, they had no extra money, and for another, Chan and Jane did not want to ask Grace to care for the children. Chan would simply move into the Courtney Shores house.

Two weeks before the wedding, Jane and the children spent four days in Springfield with Norris and Mary. Norris took them down. It was the first time Jane had seen her baby half-brother. John Christopher Rahming III was two months older than his niece Mary Ellen.

Jane looked closely at her little brother to see if he resembled their father. She decided that perhaps he did, but he was so blond and blue-eyed that it was hard for her to realize he was her

father's child, for Norris' eyes were brown like his father's. Of course Grandma Rahming had been a blue-eyed blond, and Mary had been blond as a child.

In spite of being busy with the children, Jane finished making her wedding dress during her visit at Norris'. She had chosen a silk material, white with a pattern of small blue and rose flowers. It was floor length, and Mary and Norris said it was very pretty indeed. Chan drove down from Cleveland to take Jane and the children home.

"Have a jolly time at the nuptials," Norris told them. "I'd like to be there, but I guess 'Marty' would have a fit, wouldn't she."

"No doubt," Jane agreed. "Dad, can't something be done about Aunt Ethel's eyes?"

"Well, we're afraid it's cataract. When I get some money saved, I'll see about it."

When Jane got back to Courtney Shores, she found a small dilemma awaited her. During her absence, Chan's mother, and Grace and Dee had gone shopping to buy dresses for the wedding.

"We found some fine bargains," Grace said. "I got a pretty black chiffon velvet with a white lace collar, and Jo got a brown one almost the same with a cream lace collar."

"They sound a little dark for springtime," Jane said.

"Not for a Cleveland springtime," Grace said.

"No, I guess not, and I suppose they're appropriate for the mothers. Well, Dee, what did you buy? Dark velvet too? I hope not. Oh, heck, it doesn't matter."

Dee looked a bit uneasy.

"Well," she said. "Jo thinks you and I should wear similar dresses."

"Jo thinks!" Jane rolled her eyes. "Well, gee whiz! I told her what I was going to do about my dress."

"The dresses are really darling, Janie," Dee said. "Jo is bringing them over tonight. She has them on approval, but I think you ought to go along with the idea."

"I spent a week making my dress and it's pretty and I'm going to wear it!"

Grace spoke up. "Why don't you humor Jo in this matter? After all she is the one who is paying for things – mostly."

Jane was incensed. "Why doesn't she humor me in this matter? For God's sake! Whose wedding is it anyway!"

She eventually calmed down but when Jo arrived later with her two boxes, Jane had a hard time keeping the level of her irritation controlled.

Jo took out the dress in the top box. It was a pretty peach-colored formal in organza over taffeta. It had a black lace butterfly appliquéd on the skirt and a smaller one on the shoulder.

“This is Dee’s dress,” Jo said and then she opened the second box. She lifted out a dress that was identical to the first, except that it was white.

“I know when you try this on, you’ll love it. It’s a size twelve. Dee said that it would be right for you.”

Jane was nearly at a loss – but not quite.

“Twelve is my size, but I didn’t intend to wear white.”

“Oh, but with the black butterfly it’s alright. It isn’t a white dress with the butterfly.”

“It’s still a white dress,” Jane said, feeling wretchedly stubborn, “and I really want to wear the dress I made.”

“Are you making one for Dee too?”

“No. I’m not. She can wear the dress you picked for her. It’s very pretty.”

“But it would be so nice to have you two girls in matching dresses. You really should you know.” Jo made a strategic error then. She asked Chan what he thought. “What do you think, Clement?”

Chan had been scowling and now he said, “I think you shouldn’t try to pressure Jane into wearing something you decided to pick out for her. She told you she was making her dress. She told you that a couple of weeks ago. Jane and I should have done what we originally planned. We were just going downtown and have a J.P. marry us.”

“Listen, Clement,” his mother said, “I’m sorry. I’ll take the dress back to the store.”

“I’ll be glad to wear the peach one,” Dee said, and later she said to Jane, “You realize, don’t you, that you’ve really got off on the wrong foot with her?”

“It can’t be helped. If I had given in about my dress now, I’d have let myself in for years of the same thing.”

####

After their initial clash, Jane and Jo set about busily preparing for the wedding. They got along agreeably enough although each woman had made a guarded reappraisal of the other. Jane had decided that her future mother-in-law liked to be a stage director and boss the show. Jo's opinion of Jane was that she was brainy, quite pretty, but had no idea how to dress. Each woman decided that the other one needed to be set straight and it would take time. Jane told herself that Jo was no bossier than Grace, but each one had her own style.

Jane finished hemming her wedding her wedding dress, and made a stiff petticoat to go under it. That finished, she pressed it, and hung it away to await the fateful evening. She next turned her attention to the house. She decided that the dining room chairs and table were painfully shabby and she decided to repaint them. Predictably, Grace objected.

"Whenever you take on extra projects I can't do my own work. I can't write and I can't paint, because I have to do your work and care for your babies."

"You do not have to do any of it. When you're not here we all get along OK. You would think other mothers didn't paint chairs and such jobs. I don't understand you. You object every time I do anything that isn't bathing, feeding or toileting the children. You're obsessed!"

"Oh, Jane! Don't be so dramatic. I'm just concerned because you have no system."

"Mother, you're more like Aunt Nelle than you realize. You want everyone to have your idea of a system. Well, I'm running things according to my system. Don't keep fussing at me. You're too convinced that I never should have married."

"Well, you shouldn't have. You have too many interests."

"Mother, are you saying that married women shouldn't have any interests?"

"Jane, I'm not going to argue with you."

For her part, Jo was pleased with Jane's efforts to spruce up the house. She thought the new coat of paint on the dining room furniture was fine, and donated a pretty lace tablecloth so that the wedding cake would have a background worthy of its splendor. She also expressed approval of the newly redecorated rooms and said that Jane had done the right thing to paint the woodwork white. It looked lovely with the fresh wallpaper.

"I don't know why you don't like it, Grace," Jo said.

"I do like it," Grace said. "I just didn't think Jane had the time to do it."

"I did it, didn't I – and it looks nice."

“Yes it does,” Jo said. “I like rooms that are bright. I just wish that Edna Janousek Freebern would paint her woodwork. The place is very dark and gloomy. Yes, Jane, this really is pretty.”

It seemed to Grace that Jo was overdoing the praise.

“I just don’t like to see Jane work too hard. She had done all that furniture work, too. Upholstering a chair and then refinishing a table. Her babies need her attention.”

“They need food too,” Jo said. “It takes money to buy the groceries.”

“But it pays so little!” Grace argued.

“Mother, what’s wrong with work? I like doing these things.”

“You look very tired and pale,” Grace said. “And the babies came home from Springfield with colds.”

“I don’t see the connection,” Jo said.

“Jane doesn’t eat right.”

Jane sighed.

But in the end it was a very nice wedding indeed. Grace had expressed frequent doubts and worries in her diary entries. “Things will go well, I hope,” or “Chan and Jane are nearing their day. I shall soon flit from here. I hope they will be able to manage.”

But, after the wedding Grace wrote, “It was a very pretty wedding with Jane looking sweet – and Dee, too – especially so.”

Two days before the wedding, Jo gave a luncheon for Jane in the tearoom of Strohmeier’s store. The occasion was to present Chan’s intended to some of Jo and Edna’s family and oldest friends. Jo had debated for some time whether to give the party at all. There were things about Jane that made Jo half proud and half embarrassed. She was proud because Jane was pretty and animated and bright, but she was disapproving because of the way Jane liked to dress, which she privately considered to be ‘gypsyish’. It was true that around the house Jane liked to wear colorful skirts and white peasant blouses. And also she was fond of low-heeled shoes or even sandals and huaraches. So, how would she dress at the luncheon? It mattered very much to Jo, for among other invited women, were her two new friends, Flo and Marjorie, and Jo’s aunt Mary, an alert and almost regal octogenarian who dressed stylishly and kept up with the times. Flo and Marjorie were always dressed in the very latest whisper of fashion. The other guests were Jo’s sister, Edna, and three other women friends of recent years, and a Mrs. Nydecker and her daughter,

Mrs. Patterson, who seemed to have known Jo's family since Chan was a boy. They all wore suits, hats, and high-heeled shoes.

The more Jo worried about it, the more fearful she became that Jane would appear in an odd outfit. She decided to prepare the girls for something unusual.

"Jane is a little eccentric about her clothes," Jo said. "She likes to wear bright colors and flat-heeled shoes."

"Why?" Flo asked.

"I don't know," Jo said. "I warned her that it would ruin her feet for high heels, but she says it's the other way around."

"Yes," said Marjorie, "she's right. My doctor agrees. Heels can give you a backache too."

Jane arrived then. On her feet were high-heeled navy-blue shoes. She was stunning in a navy suit with a white blouse. She wore her shoulder-length hair up; a small navy-blue hat with a white bow.

Jo breathed a sigh of relief. After introductions, the luncheon went smoothly till Jane responded to a compliment by volunteering that she had made the suit herself. Jo thought little of 'homemade' clothes and for a moment the success of her luncheon seemed doubtful. The mother and daughter were first to respond to Jane's revelation – they praised her talent. Mrs. Nydecker said that Chan was fortunate to be getting a girl who could sew, and Peggy Sue (Mrs. Patterson), said she sewed too, but wouldn't dream of tackling a tailored suit.

Later, Jo reflected that her party could have been much worse. Then her musings moved to the future. Wouldn't it be fun if Clement and Jane were to have a little girl someday? What fun it would be to dress her.

The day of the wedding dawned grey and cool, but by afternoon the sky cleared and the sun shown warmly. By 7:30 p.m. all was in readiness and the guests began arriving. Denis and Mary Ellen had been fed and bedded down early. The girl who would prepare the refreshments was busy in the kitchen making little sandwiches. The table, presided over by The Cake, was resplendent with lace, silver and crystal, some of it borrowed.

While Jane and Dee waited upstairs, the guests seated themselves around the living room on borrowed folding chairs.

From Oberlin came Merly with Mim and Bill Tallmadge, and Trink and Sergei Guins. Aunt Gertrude and Uncle Bill were present and, of course, Carle Semon, who was now Grace's best friend. Chan's aunt Edna was there, as was his step-father Harry L. Porter. Additionally, Chan

and Jane had invited the Chisholm's, the couple who had introduced Chan to Dee four years earlier.

Chan had asked two former chums from Carrollton Heights High School and State University. They were two completely different types, but they had been good friends for a long time and were the logical candidates for best man. But which one – Tommy or Ernest? Tommy was the sophisticate one from a wealthy Cleveland family. Ernest was amiable, stolid, and not of a particularly nimble mind. But he was a loyal friend and a serious one. He might be hurt if Chan chose Tommy. So Chan chose Ernest, knowing that easy-going Tommy would understand.

And, in addition, a young couple named Patterson, who had long been friends of Jo's family, attended and brought their movie camera to record some of the festivities. Jo was delighted; she had suggested it to Peggy Sue Patterson, and had offered to pay for the film.

To Jo's further delight, her some-time husband, Harry L. Porter, was being ever so nice about his stepson's wedding. He not only had brought Jo, Edna, and their eighty-three year old aunt this evening, but he had done something truly fine and generous. He had bought Chan a new car; that is a used car, but a good one. Harry had said, "He can't be driving that little Ford roadster now that he has a family.

Ann Talbott Chandler, Chan's real father's widow, had sent the couple a check for \$100, and Jo felt that she could do no less. And there were nice gifts besides. The whole affair was quite pleasing to Jo which was well, because it was she who had insisted that there be a wedding and she who had underwritten part of the cost. Harry had brought two gallons of good wine that he declared as better than champagne.

For Jo, two or three things marred the evening. One happened just as the ceremony was about to begin. Denis who had been put to bed early, as had Mary Ellen, called down from his upstairs room that he wanted to come downstairs. He used his pet name for Jane, 'Mommy-anny'.

"Mommy-anny! Mommy-anny! I wanna come out!"

Grace hurried upstairs to quiet the child and missed the ceremony. Others had been amused, but Jo thought the children ought to have been taken elsewhere for the evening. She also felt that Grace and Dee should have arranged to spend the weekend somewhere else, as well, since the newlyweds had neither money nor time for a honeymoon. Jo had heard Grace's sister-in-law Gertrude Martin inviting Grace and Dee to her place to spend the night. Grace had declined, saying she had too many things to do, and besides "this is my home, you know." It really annoyed Jo when Grace said "my home" for she was certain that only Dee and Chan's earnings supported the home on Courtney Shores Drive, with perhaps an occasional small amount that could be counted when Jane helped Chan with work on furniture. It has been disturbing enough that Chan had chosen a girl with children but no money; he might have to support her mother too. But she mustn't think about that now that the ceremony was going on.

Jane looked very pretty, but her dress was too unusual. In Jo's opinion, unless a girl was married in a white or ivory wedding gown, she ought to wear something quite conservative, such as a suit or dress in a plain color. It could be chic, but it should also be appropriate. Jo didn't think a white dress with red and blue little flowers was suitable and when Grace asked her about it, Jo said, "Pretty, but a little flamboyant."

One other thing that didn't seem right to Jo was that Jane's cousins, Mim and Trink, felt that they should go into the kitchen and help the woman who'd been hired to prepare and serve refreshments. When it came time for Ben Patterson to take his colored movies, Mim came out of the kitchen with an apron on. Jo spoke to Jane about it.

"You'd better tell your cousin she shouldn't work in the kitchen."

"Oh, that's alright. She's just glad to help the girl and chat with her. Trink and Mim don't know most of these people."

"But I paid the girl to do that work."

"I know, but don't worry about it. This is an informal wedding."

"I wanted it to be nice."

"It is nice – and thanks."

But Jo was happy that night for one thing at least. She was actually at a social gathering with her husband, Harry. It had been years since anything like that had happened, and Ben Patterson was making movies of everyone. Maybe there was still hope they'd get back together. She saw Harry occasionally, for sometimes he forgot to mail her the monthly allowance check and then would stop by the house with it. She'd been doing him some favors lately. She'd bought him some shirts at Strohmeyer's store using her 20% discount. And she'd offered to turn the cuffs and collars on some of his older shirts. Harry should not be allowed to forget the many advantages of having a wife. Perhaps he realized that, for recently he had given her an increase in her support allowance. That was encouraging.

By the time Grace got back downstairs from getting Denis settled, the wedding ceremony was ending. A Presbyterian minister officiated. He stood in front of the fireplace faced by Dee and Jane, and Chan and Ernest. The girls looked pretty, the men handsome, including the young clergyman. All looked serious till suddenly, the service over, the groom kissed the bride and everyone was smiling.

but Grace was preoccupied and remained so throughout the evening. She wished she had never told anyone she was writing a book. The news had spread throughout the family and now they were all after her with their questions. "When is your book to be published?" her brother Bill had asked. And every time she was in Oberlin, they all inquired as to her progress. She was weary of

it and especially so, since she had still heard nothing from the editor at Milton and Sons. The woman had had the first chapters of "Cousins on the Trail" for seven months, and had not sent one word of comment, not even to a recent inquiry Grace had sent. But neither had she returned the material, so Grace was still hopeful.

But Grace was not only disturbed about the book and the nuisance of having people inquiring about it and about her work in general, she also was getting the distinct impression that Chan's family were afraid that she was planning to lean on him. Their inquiries about her work seemed to indicate as much. Well! The time had come for her to move on. She could always feel intuitively when it was time to flit and go back to the East. Her work here in Cleveland was finished. She had told Gertrude so and said, "I hope Jane will be able to manage. I expect she'll have to sink or swim."

"She'll swim. You must let go, Grace. Stop fussing about the girls. They'll shape their own lives."

"You don't understand."

"Yes I do, Grace. I really do." Gertrude had said.

WE AREN'T GOING TO ALWAYS AGREE

Grace had intended to flit immediately to New York City after the wedding but there were delays. She had written to Nelle about coming for a visit and sounded her out about the possibility of their going to Forest Camp for a few weeks in the summer. But by the middle of May there was still no reply from Nelle. Grace decided to write to Milton and Sons again, as she had no reply to an earlier letter about her children's story. Roger had told her not to write, but she chose to ignore his advice – she must know.

She now felt strongly the siren call of the New Hampshire hills. Grace was just like the children who had spent their summers there. Every time they went, they had told themselves they'd never come again because of the drudgery inflicted on them by their Aunt Nelle. But always the beauty of the place had called them back. The smell of wood-smoke and bacon in the morning, of new-cut hay on a sunny afternoon, and always, over all, the fragrance of the pine forests around them. And there were sunny days when cloud shadows crept across the blue mountain distances, and days when misty rain took the long vistas away, and all was closely shrouded, with the pine woods aroma even stronger. Oh, yes, the Hill would always draw one back.

But, before the end of May, Grace was to have a solid disappointment. The children's editor of Milton's wrote to her that she 'could not use the material this year.' But Grace was resilient and after a few days she resolved to polish her African story and send the children's story to another publisher. She would finish now and Forest Camp would be the ideal place. But – she had not heard a word from Nelle or Roger. She decided to write a letter to Anita Bump, the young wife of Ralph Bump, the local boy who had admired Jane during the year she stayed all year in Forest Camp. Anita and Ralph had done work for Nelle and Roge in later summers. Grace had befriended Anita and gained her confidence. Ralph, Anita said, was a good man. He had married her when she was in trouble. She had worked at a resort hotel in the White Mountains where the manager had got her pregnant. The man was married. Ralph Bump had come to Anita's rescue and his mother helped them both. Now Ralph had a job at the bobbin mill and he and Anita had a place of their own. Grace decided to write to Anita and see whether she might board with them. And so, in late May she was still in Cleveland. Next, a wisdom tooth acted up and was extracted. Poor Grace had further problems with the healing of her jaw.

But early in June, she went to New York City, riding with Sergei, Trink and Merly on the way to the World's Fair. She made her usual visits to Polly Patterson, Ted and Earl Hurst, and even went over to Brooklyn to spend a Sunday afternoon with Norris' Aunt Georgiana, who had always been her friend. Having touched all bases, she settled in with Nelle in Denisson Heights to wait to go to Forest Camp. Her tooth extraction was still bothering her and she felt no energy to follow her plan to go and see editors about her two manuscripts.

She was not sleeping well and at night in bed she would worry about Dee and Jane. She missed Jane's children terribly. She was homesick for the sound of their little voices. She had so dreaded

leaving them that she had practically left without saying goodbye. One day she was getting ready to go and then quite suddenly she was gone. She had quite literally not said goodbye to Carle, and even Dee had been at work and not had a real farewell from her mother.

Grace had been thinking about what Gertrude had said the night of the wedding. “You must let the girls go.”

Perhaps Gertrude was right. She must let go, but it was so hard to do. Still, the longer she stayed with them the more difficult it would be to break away. It was nearly as hard as learning not to love Norris. She had failed at that; she must not fail at this. If only she could be content with Jane’s role as a mother. If only Jane were stronger. If only she were not such a creative type. Routine housework was too much for Jane. Really it was too much for anyone. She decided to write the girls and urge them to eat well. And Jane must go to the dental clinic at the University and get her teeth seen to. She would tell the girls she was going to leave them to build their own world. But Dee must build her resistance. O, and they must see that the fur coats did not get moths; they must go into storage. O, and the wool coats must be put out in the sun frequently.

The letter she sent was full of all these concerns and like so many of Grace’s emotional letters it was quite incoherent. In a few more days she wrote an enthusiastic letter about the World’s Fair that was going on at Flushing Meadows not far from Denisson Heights. “You girls must see this fair before it closes.”

“Now, how can we see the Fair?” Jane asked Dee when they read the letter. “We haven’t the money to go jaunting down to New York on the spur of the moment the way Mother does.”

“I know,” Dee said. “Mother is never quite realistic about money.”

Later, Chan asked Jane, “Where does Grace get the money to travel?”

“Mother has been very mysterious about money. With me, anyway, but I don’t think Dee knows either. She used to make a lot of money. And when she and Carle were divorced there was a settlement, but she never said how much she got. Sometimes I think she may have some money in the bank. But I think she has borrowed from Aunt Merly and maybe from Aunt Nelle too. I’m not sure.”

“She’s owed me money for months,” Chan said.

“I know. She isn’t practical.”

“But she’s smart,” Chan said.

“Maybe she’s smart, or is she just intellectual?”

“I see what you mean; but she could get a job and make good at it. She shouldn’t count on writing books.”

“That’s what Uncle Bill told her.”

“Well, I hope she does make good in New York. I hate the way she fusses at you when she’s here. As soon as we can, we have to get a place by ourselves. I don’t know how we’ll do it, but we’ll just have to.”

Life was more relaxed in the Courtney Shores house after Grace went East. Even Dee, who was much more in tune with her mother than Jane, was enjoying a feeling of freedom in her social life. She was still very much involved with the married man she’d been dating for more than a year. And ever since she had moved into the big house near the Lake, Dee had entertained Bill in her room, but he preferred not to be there when Dee’s mother was there. Grace knew about Bill, but Dee did not choose to tell him that. Grace also knew that Bill had taken Dee to pick out furniture for her room. “He lent me the money,” Dee said, but Chan and Jane knew it to be a gift.

“I can’t understand,” Chan said, “why your mother criticizes you relentlessly, but yet she says nothing about Dee’s questionable doings. Personally, I don’t care what Dee does, but some of this gets a bit awkward at times, especially since I can tell that Bill finds it awkward, too. And I wish our room was not next door to Dee’s. I can’t wait till we have our own place.

Things had been smoother that summer, though not without some friction. One episode was rather amusing and it happened the very first morning after Grace left.

It had been agreed long ago that Jane was the cook and housekeeper, Dee and Chan the wage earners.

Jane fixed breakfast and she had served, along with juice, coffee, and toast, two soft-boiled eggs for the adults. Denis and Mary Ellen, in high chairs, were spooning in cereal with mashed banana.

“You didn’t open my eggs, Jane,” said Dee.

“I’m getting your toast. You can open your own eggs.”

“They’re too hot. I’ve never opened my own eggs.”

“Well, it’s time you started then, isn’t it?”

“But our agreement is that you will do the cooking.”

“I cooked the eggs and served them. I’m busy now.”

“Mother always opened them for me.”

“Yes, I know, and she hasn’t been opening them for me since I was little.”

“Well, that’s because you’re more like a boy, Jane.”

“Oh, rot! Besides, that could be a reason for her to have opened them for me. Women do things like that for men.”

“I open my own,” Chan put in.

“Well,” Dee said, with diminishing conviction, “Mother opened my eggs because I’m not mechanical like Jane is.”

This last remark amazed even Dee herself to such an extent that they all broke into laughter.

A not quite so funny skirmish took place between Jane and Chan that summer. Things had been going very smoothly up until their first real quarrel. The problem was a matter of work priorities. The agent in charge of renting the house had given the young Chandler’s permission to fence the backyard, or rather, to finish fencing it. It already had a sturdy picket fence across the back, and on both property lines on each side. But the rest was open, because a driveway led straight from the street to a small garage at the back of the yard. And that part was not fenced. Jane and Chan had agreed that all that was needed was a few yards to run from the house to a corner of the garage and they would thereby acquire an enclosed yard for the children and Bonnie, the Scottish terrier. Jane said that was of the utmost importance. Chan said, alright, but he couldn’t do it until he had prepared a workshop in the little building attached to the garage, and that would take a while. Jane said the yard for the kids must come ahead of everything else for the sake of everyone’s peace of mind. He said he couldn’t do it until he had build shelves for his tools.

“All you need,” said Jane, “is to set up your saw. You can use the other tools out of the baskets they’re in.”

“No, I can’t.”

“I suppose if there hadn’t been a place for a workshop you would say you couldn’t build a fence?”

“But there is a place for a shop. However, if you insist on having your way, I’ll do the fence, but I can’t do a decent job of it.”

“It will be beautiful,” she said lightly, but he stayed angry for the rest of the weekend, and during the following week he was glum. Finally, Jane spoke to him about it.

“Are you still upset about our set-to last week?”

He didn't respond so she went on. "Because if you are - you shouldn't be. Married people do quarrel, you know."

"They wouldn't have to," he declared.

"Yes, they do! They have to. It isn't a fatal thing. Just forget about it. It's not important. We aren't going to always agree. Don't be so hurt about it. It's no big thing. I grew up with people quarreling."

"I didn't"

"That's hard to believe. Anyway, it just isn't a thing to mourn over. You act as though paradise is lost forever. It just comes and goes. It isn't a guaranteed thing."

"Apparently," he said, with what seemed to Jane like uncalled for bitterness. She eventually resigned herself to the fact that Chan would never be quite as happy again. Where had he learned such unrealistic expectations?

But there were plenty of good times that summer. Living at the beach, they had lots of company on weekends. Most of the guests came to swim and brought their own towels. They were usually Dee's friends from the little theater group. Sometimes Gertrude and Bill came and invariably they brought a picnic supper and Gertrude always helped Jane clean up. Mona James came at times with her current boyfriend. And almost every Sunday Jo came, taxied by the man who was currently renting a room from Edna. Baird was a good-natured Irishman who, as Jo said, "is not really my kind of person." But Chan explained that his mother had never learned to drive a car, and always appreciated a man who was willing to take her places in his car.

"It's the main reason she misses Harry," Chan said.

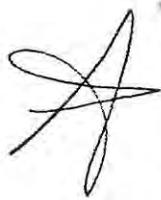
"Oh, surely not," Jane said.

"You'd be surprised," Chan said. "Harry got sick of hauling her here and there - to the hairdressers, to the sewing club, to the bakery. She loves to be trotting around."

She did indeed. But now that Jo had her job at Strohmeier's store she was more contented. She worked in a world of merchandise, which she loved, and during the summer she selected and bought clothes for Jane and Chan. Sometimes, when she passed through the Infant's Wear department, she caught herself thinking about what fun it would be if Jane were to have another child. It would be so exciting to be looking forward to a baby of Chan's. She had had so much fun dressing him when he was a little boy. She always liked to put him in little white sailor suits, and with his hair in a Dutch bob he had been an adorable child, but when he got into the second grade he'd insisted on having his hair cut short. Well, she'd better stop thinking about having a grandchild of her own any time soon. Chan couldn't afford it. He needed a real job first.

13 Mar 1939

letter from Carle to Grace (in the East)



The entire Oberlin branch of your family came down; others too, representing five different sides of your various relationships and alliances. Quite a houseful - but I had my camera intent on a trial with the youngsters. That Tracy Ellen!

If you think she is an undernourished creature you should have seen her running around in soft sands with Marion, and I after her for a full half hour, trying to catch her just for a second of photography. I needed you - for she tricked me all out, and only let up for a moment when she sat down with her sand ~~Bob~~. Then up-and-at-it again!

I hope I've got one picture, at least.

Speaking of pictures - the one of the boy on the sands enclosed received an award of \$1500 - "What is that about Great Minds"?

Did I tell you - on my way to Lakeside, between boats, I saw from a slight distance OUR little spot of breeze-blown beach grasses?

Well, it is not the same this summer.

And - oh yes, you take your Kodak, set the distance at about $\frac{8 \text{ to } 10}{10}$ feet and have little make a picture of you - and then you make one of her, honest!

All objections overruled - Sounds are fascinating - and what a big Autumn moon.



Carle

And in New Hampshire now, Grace was also thinking about the possibility of another grandchild. The thought was utterly alarming. It would simply deprive Denis and Mary Ellen of the love and care they deserved. She wondered what kind of birth control system Jane was using or whether she could be trusted to use any system at all.

But Grace was worried about the ominous news from Europe and that repulsive man Hitler. Would there be a war? Roger thought so.

But as August came on Grace and Nelle were more upset about the news from Oberlin than anything else. Merly had written: "Tommy says he is going ahead with his plan to tear down the Old Brick."

"Oh, that makes me just ill!" Grace said to Nelle.

"Me too, kid."

"But isn't there anything we can do about it, Nelle. How can we stop him?"

"We can't, kid. Tommy owns it. Pa sold the farm to Charlie and Charlie sold it to Tommy."

"Nelle did you know that Lawrence wanted to buy the place on time payments, and Pa went ahead and sold it to Charlie."

"Charlie paid cash," Nelle said "Pa always favored Charlie."

"Lawrence would have kept the place and preserved it. Oh, Nelle, everything good is slipping away"

####

The cousins were catching up to Jane. In July Trink and Sergei Guins, with Merly and Miriam as witnesses were married in nearby Hanley. Mim and Bill would have to wait a year for Bill to complete his music studies. Sergei, who was an engineer now, got a job in Cleveland, and he and Trink got a small apartment on the west side of the city.

At her earliest opportunity, Trink talked with Jane about birth control.

"I'd like to get pregnant right away," Trink said, "but I guess that would upset some people, including Sergei. Mom thinks we should wait awhile, too."

"I suppose you want to get started on those twelve children you plan to have?"

Trink laughed, "I might settle for ten. I was going to ask you what you do about birth control. That's if you don't mind my asking."

Jane laughed again. "Now I know you want to get pregnant. Because obviously I didn't take birth control over-seriously."

"What did you do?"

"I used a diaphragm, but rather casually. I didn't really know how easy it was to get pregnant."

"For some people," Trink said. "I wonder if I'll be like that. Mother had trouble."

"She only had trouble carrying them to term," Jane said.

"Well, do you use a diaphragm now?"

"No, we're trying the rhythm system. It seems to be working, too."

Trink did not volunteer what system they were using, so Jane did not ask. Privately, she doubted that Trink would wait long to embark on her first motherhood project. But the two girls talked for a bit about the rhythm system and how psychologically it was more appealing.

August was a busy month for Jane. Norris once more brought Ethel to spend a few weeks with Jane and Dee. Norris again declared that Pauline's nerves were "utterly frazzled".

Ethel's eyes had deteriorated further but she was able to help Jane with kitchen work and was reliable for watching the children while Jane went to buy groceries.

"I always like to visit you," Ethel told Jane. "You make me feel useful. Pauline won't let me do a thing."

"Why?" Jane asked.

"Doesn't think I'm capable of anything useful."

"Well you are. You just need to find out about your eyes."

"I do miss being able to read."

"Of course, Edie."

And a few days later Edie was very helpful when first Jane and then Dee were ill for several days with stomach flu. Edie cooked the meals and washed dishes, and Jane, with Chan's help in the evenings, managed to dress the children, and as she put it "keep them alive until I get better."

"If Mother were here," she told Edie, "she'd be all upset because the kids didn't get their baths yesterday."

"Mary Baker Eddy didn't think babies needed to be bathed all over every day."

"Ah ha!" said Jane. "That might explain Mother's obsession with frequent baths for children, and the more the better."

"Your Mother can be quite intense about certain things," Edie said, and Jane smiled.

"You might say so," she said.

Jane was soon over the flu, but by then it was the middle of August and she began to suffer from her hay-fever. She said to Chan, "When we moved here last winter I had forgotten what a bad time I had that summer when we stayed at Edna Whiteman's house down the street. There must be something about this place that's bad for me. And it's such a nice street near the beach and all."

"It can't be the place," Chan said. "You've been here since February and you've only just got hay fever now. No, it's something else. It's a mystery."

"I must tell you what happened today," Jane said. We'll have to fix the baby-gate on the front porch. Denis unhooked it and he and Mary Ellen were on their way to the beach without any clothes on. They had stepped out of their sun suits and training pants and off they went. Ethie knew she couldn't catch them, so she called me. They looked so funny running stark naked, I could hardly keep a straight face, but I put them both in their rooms."

When Dee heard the story she was amused, but after thinking it over she decided to write to Grace.

"Ethel is here again for a visit, and don't get concerned about that," Dee wrote. "She is a big help to Jane as she cooks and does dishes. Jane has been sick this month. (Well, we both had intestinal flu a couple of weeks ago.) But now Janie has hay-fever and it is hard on her. Sometimes she sneezes and sneezes and her eyes are irritated. I think she doesn't have enough energy. Today the babies took their clothes off and ran naked down the street toward the beach. Oh, Jane caught them and brought them back, of course, but I wish you were here, Mother. I miss you. It's time you came home, don't you think?"

Dee's letter brought back a worried letter from Grace, expressing the thought that Jane did not eat right, what with her hay-fever and all. Grace wrote: "Jane feels she hasn't enough money to get the right things, or whatever it is."

Jane and Chan were both angered by Grace's letter. Chan felt he was doing the best he could on his eighty-six dollar a month salary. And Dee was no doubt paying her fair share.

"What does your mother think you should eat to prevent hay-fever?" Chan asked Dee.

"I don't know," Dee said.

"Why does she always like to assign a reason for every physical problem?" Chan asked.

"Christian Science," said Jane. "It used to be if we were sick they said we weren't thinking the right thoughts. Now Mother likes to find a more material reason for illness."

"She still believes in Science," Dee said, "and so do I."

"Then why does she always think if I'm sick or the kids are that it's my fault?" Jane asked.

"Or mine," said Chan, "because we don't have more food money."

"It isn't that," Dee said. "It's that she loves you and she's so far away and worries."

"If she loves me she will stop always criticizing me," Jane said. "She'll put a little faith in me to do as well as anybody else."

But soon there were other things to think about. The news in Europe was extremely ominous. Adolph Hitler was threatening Poland, and throughout the United States voices were beginning to speak out on the question of neutrality. Jane's hero, Charles Lindbergh, seemed to feel that Hitler would inevitably take Europe and England as well.

During the last hot week of August Mim came to visit Jane. There was a two day period of violent stormy weather that was followed by sunny days. The Lake was rough, with high waves rolling toward the beach. Jane and Mim went to the beach one afternoon during the children's nap time. Ethel was there to be with them till after Labor Day.

Jane and Mim rolled and tumbled in the breakers for an hour and a half, laughing and talking about events of past years in Oberlin and most especially of their winter on the Hill in New Hampshire. That winter, they agreed, seemed long, long ago although it was only six years.

"Speaking of New Hampshire," Mim said, "did I tell you that Aunt Nelle has written to Mom asking if she can come and stay in Oberlin this year?"

"Why?" asked Jane.

"Several reasons. Number one. Uncle Roge is working for a company in Cincinnati where the home office is. Aunt Nelle isn't feeling very well, and he's always away. She wants to stay with us while she gets her teeth taken care of and get a thorough physical checkup."

"Can't she find a good dentist and doctor in all New York City?" Jane asked.

"It isn't that," Mim said. "It's that she's lost her gumption. Uncle Roge wants Mom to see that Aunt Nelle gets to the doctor. So far, she just talks about it and procrastinates."

"I wonder when Mother's coming back," Jane said.

"Aunt Nelle wants her to stay in the apartment this winter and keep an eye on Babs. Babs doesn't want to leave New York. She has a boy-friend she's crazy about and she still wants to be a dancer.

"When Mother went to New York she was going to be gone for two weeks. It's been three months."

"Her letter to Mom said she thought she ought to stay away from you and Dee so that you can learn to manage by yourselves."

"Oh, heck," Jane said. "We've managed by ourselves off and on for years. Mother comes and goes."

"They left the beach then, and went back to the house to get the children up from their naps, and to plan dinner.

That night they went to bed tired, and to their surprise, bruised from tumbling about in the rough waves at the beach.

The talk at the table that night was all about the war that most people felt was coming, and soon. The papers were full of Hitler's threats and demands. There were voices in America talking loudly now of neutrality, but many people found the new nonaggression pact between the Nazi's and the Soviets an extremely ominous development.

Mim returned to Oberlin the next day, and the day after that Norris came and took Ethel home to Springfield. The Labor Day weekend was approaching. A letter from Grace said that she planned

to stay on in New York, that she did not feel at all well, and that she was sure a war was surely coming in Europe.

Grace was right. That Friday, September 1, 1939, the forces of Adolph Hitler's Germany attacked Poland, and on September 3 in the evening, a submarine sank the British passenger liner S. S. Athenia. It was struck without warning and 112 persons lost their lives, including 28 Americans. The newspapers were full of reports of the outrage. The Nazis denied responsibility. No U-boat had been in the area. People who believed that were few.

Britain and France declared war on Germany. Within a fortnight, Russia under Stalin, trampled over what remained of Poland. Americans were incensed, but ostensibly, for the time being, the United States maintained a state of neutrality.

Jane stayed up late at night listening to foreign news reports coming intermittently over distorted short wave radio. The war alarmed her, but she had other concerns of a personal nature.

TROUBLE IS EASY TO GET INTO

In New York, Grace had problems also, and they were taking her mind off the War. She had decided to remain in Denisson Heights for the time being. Staying in Roger and Nelle's apartment during their absence was an opportunity she could not pass up. Because Babs would be living there too, Grace's rent was very cheap. And Nelle had said she might rent one of the rooms for extra income. So they had advertised and found a young French girl, who made hats for a Fifth Avenue millinery, and would rent a room by the month. Nelle and Roge had met the girl and approved of her before they left New York.

Grace had not given up the idea that she could market the children's book that Milton and Sons had encouraged her to write, but she needed money urgently and an opportunity had come along to do some illustrations. Don Trunk had arranged for her to do some drawings for his advertising firm. Grace was at the same time both relieved and nervous. The work must be done quickly and there were deadlines to meet. She had been able to take deadlines in her stride when she was younger, but now they upset her, frightened her.

And she had been frightened about something else. She had been feeling "lousy" for a long time. Back in Cleveland she had gone to a gynecologist to see why she was not finished with menopause. That had been two years ago when she was fifty years old. Now at age fifty-two, she was still having periods and bleeding in a way that worried her. Roger's sister Lucy had persuaded her to go to the New York Hospital and she was glad she had done so. They had told her she needed some minor surgery. She had a polyp that must be removed. It was causing the bleeding. It should be seen to fairly soon, for there was no point in her becoming anemic because of needless blood loss.

She wrote to Dee explaining her predicament. It was not a new one. She needed money. The surgery wasn't dangerous but she really needed \$75. However the hospital had been very nice. They understood she couldn't do her art work when she wasn't well. They said she could pay the rest later. But she would need \$25. Could Dee see whether Merly could help out? It was no use to write again to J.L. Edwards. She'd had a letter from Merly. "It seems that Charlie got \$600. Merly thinks it was for Charlie's wife, who has cancer. But Edwards won't lend me anything. If Merly and Nelle can send me \$10 each, maybe you girls can manage the \$5? When I get this bad condition cleared up I will feel ever so much better and then I can get down to my real work and I shall go around New York and hound the editors. The little money that I have on hand, I need for the rent and gas and electric."

That letter when received by Dee and Jane would make them cry. Between them they would make up the \$25 and send it. Grace had written to Carle expressing her concern about "her girls" and "her babies". Jane was not strong enough and she had no system. She was not "modern" enough. And Dee was working too hard what with her little theater, etc.

Carle had written back to reassure her.

“I have been out to see those youngsters. They are always so busy, but always they ask me to come oftener. They are really very well and alright- the children, the young man especially, healthy and sun-burned from the beach, which is most beneficial. — The house is being painted, has its first coat, the second to come the next day.

“The interior was orderly. Do not worry, Grace. I’d tell you truthfully if things were different.”

Carle’s letter reassured Grace briefly and then she began to worry about Mary Ellen. Carle had said that Denis “especially” looked ‘healthy and sunburned’. What about Mary Ellen? Did she look pale?

Grace had forgotten that it was Denis that Dee took to the beach on the weekends, and that Mary Ellen, who was not yet two years old, still took long afternoon naps.

Carle missed Grace. She had left so suddenly and only Jane’s explanation that Trink and Sergei had hustled her away briskly, had kept him from being deeply hurt that she had not said goodbye to him. He knew that the ride to New York had saved her money. But now he expected her back soon and he could not understand why she stayed in New York. If he had been a different sort of person, he would have let her worry about her girls and the children. In that case she might have hurried to Cleveland. He was not feeling very well but he had not mentioned it to Grace, except for a brief comment about back problems they had both had. Grace in turn had not mentioned the surgery she planned to have. A lingering Victorian instinct kept her reticent about speaking of female conditions.



Jane and Denis, Chan's Ford
Woodworth ave. Summer '38



Den and Dee Groveland Club
Summer 1939



Mary Ellen 7 1/2

On the beach at Groveland Club
"Courtney Shores"



← ↑ 1940
Mary
Ellen
←

Summer
← 1939



Denis 3 years

####

Jane had a female complaint also, and she, too, was being reticent about it. She was pregnant and only Chan knew. It was October and she was in the miserable stage of morning sickness. She had first realized her condition on the Labor Day weekend when the war in Europe began. In fact, she suspected it on that very September 1 when everyone was talking about Hitler and Poland. The day passed and her period did not appear. For Jane had a regular twenty-eight day cycle and when Saturday and Sunday came with no change she was positive she was pregnant. On Monday she told Chan about it.

“Are you sure?” he asked. “Maybe you’re just late.”

“Except for the year I first started, I’m never late unless I’m pregnant. Not in all these years since I was fourteen am I ever late. I take that back; once I swam in cold water, terribly cold water and I was late that month.”

“I guess the rhythm method is no good,” Chan said.

“Well, it worked fine for several months, and Chan, I just can’t figure it out. We’ve been very celibate this month. Remember? During the first ‘safe’ period I was sick with the flu, and during the risky time we didn’t take any chances without extra precautions, and then during the second safe period there was only the one time. Mim was here and you went to bed and she and I sat up late and talked and listened to the radio. Oh, God! Mother will just have a perfect fit.”

“Well, it’s none of her concern,” Mu said.

“She thinks it is. She was horrified both other times.”

“The circumstances were different. Johnny drank.”

“Even before she knew about that she decided I was too young.”

“Well, it’s our worry not hers,” Chan insisted.

“Are you very worried, Chan?”

“Only about money. It would have been better if it hadn’t happened so soon. Maybe a year or two would have been better.”

“Listen. Get me some quinine tablets from the drug store and I’ll take hot baths. Someone I know did that.”

“Did it work?” he asked.

“Something did. Anyway, if the quinine doesn’t do anything we’ll forget it. We could manage.”

“Sure we could,” he said.

Jane tried two quinine pills. They did nothing, and that was the end of that.

“Please,” Jane said, “Don’t let’s tell Dee about it. She’ll have a fit and write to Mother about it. I don’t want to have them know until they absolutely have to.”

“How long, can you get away with that?” Chan asked, “Till Thanksgiving at least, maybe till Christmas unless Mother comes home. She would spot it for sure, because she will be worrying about just exactly that.”

“She has plenty of her own worries. We’ll take care of ours. Besides, I’ve adjusted to the idea and I’m beginning to like it.”

“Really?”

“Yes,” Chan said. “It’s exciting.”

“To me it always is.”

And to Trink it was, too. Because Jane just had to tell Trink.

“Oh I envy you, Janie. Maybe I’ll join you sometime soon.”

As November came Jane felt better. She was through with morning sickness and through with hay fever. She and Trink put their heads together and planned a big family dinner. It was agreed that the house on Courtney Shores Drive was the logical place because it was larger than any other in the family. The big back sun porch would be large enough to set up a very long table. Aunt Gertrude was consulted about the party and she volunteered to make pies.

“How many should I make?” she asked.

The guest list grew and grew. There would be Aunts Merly and Addie, Trink and Sergei, Mim and Bill Tallmadge, Lawrence and Gertrude and their younger boy; Aunt Fancy and Uncle Tommy, and this year Roger and Nelle were in Oberlin and would be present, too. From Chan’s side, of course, would be his mother, and his Aunt Helen, and to Jo’s delight, Harry Harvey had accepted Jane’s invitation, too. It took a little bit off the edge of her pleasure though when Harry said he would have to leave “fairly early” as he had an evening invitation elsewhere. Of course, Jane also invited Carle, who expressed the hope that Grace would come home for the “turkey day gathering.”

“We’ve been urging her to come, Carle,” Jane said.

As the day drew near, Jane and Chan were in a flurry of preparations. Chan had discovered the answer to the problem of a table long enough for such a crowd. He had discovered at the rear of the garage, three large wooden sections about three feet by seven feet. It took a bit of study to

figure out their purpose. They were intended to be set up on the front porch as a wintertime storm vestibule against the bitter west winds. Chan took the two side sections and resting on four new sawhorses they made an ideal long table.

Jane hunted and hunted and finally found Grace's "mile long" linen damask table cloth that had been a wedding gift from Grace's school chum, Olive Willey, who had married a wealthy California doctor. Grace and Carle had been amused at the gift, Grace saying, "How often do I have two dozen people to dinner?"

Jane had to wash and iron the huge table cloth and two dozen napkins. She also polished the silverware and washed windows. On Thanksgiving morning Dee vacuumed the house and dusted and cleaned the bathroom. The evening before, Trink had come over to help Jane prepare the turkey, and peel vegetables. The meal was a big success and Uncle Roger collected a quarter from everyone to help with the cost of the bird.

There were some surprises on this Thanksgiving day. Jane had not seen her Aunt Nelle for more than six years, not since leaving Forest Camp in 1933 after the now famous "pioneer winter." Nelle had a rather frail look, somehow diminished. She greeted Jane warmly. Never in her life had Jane ever felt that Nelle liked her. Now it seemed that she did. Uncle Roger was warm and loving also, the anger that had possessed him six years ago had subsided. Perhaps, Jane thought, it is because Trink and I are married, and Mim is engaged and we did not end up in a home for wayward girls as he must have feared.

Ah, but if Roger's mind was at ease about his nieces' way of life, it was not at ease about his daughter Babs'. And Babs was here, quite unexpectedly arrived from New York with her current boy-friend, a chap named Franz Goetz, pronounced "gets". And later, Jane heard Nelle telling Merly, "Franz is well named, Goetz, because he 'gets' most of what Babs earns. He had a job in a shoe store but he lost it Babs says, and now when they go out to a movie or some such, she pays. I hate to see that sort of thing go on. Babs paid for their bus tickets to come here. I've never forgotten what a mistake Grace made working so hard when Matthew was so lazy. I hate to see a woman work while a man loaf around. I hope Mim isn't making a mistake. I gather she's putting Bill through college."

"She's just helping, Nelle," Merly said. "She wants to."

"Well, I hope it turns out alright," Nelle said. Mim and Jane had taken pains with the seating arrangement at the table. They had decided that all of the older generation, who hadn't seen each other recently, would enjoy being clustered at one end of the "groaning board", as Mim put it.

"Let's put all us cousins down at this end nearest the kitchen," Jane said, "and all the grown-ups down at the other end. Wait a minute; what am I saying? Aren't we grown-ups now?"

Mim laughed, "You wouldn't think so," she said. "They still think we are their babies."

“I gather Uncle Roge is going to forbid Babs to keep on dating Franz Goetz,” Jane said. “How can he? She’s twenty-one.”

“One thing that’s bothering him,” Mim said, “is that Franz is German. This is a bad year to be German. Uncle Roge hates Hitler.”

“Don’t we all?” said Jane. “I bet Uncle Roge doesn’t know that my husband is half German. And Carle’s mother was German, too. Uncle Roge thinks well of Carle. He shouldn’t be unfair to Franz. He isn’t necessarily a Nazi.”

Speaking of Carle, that gentleman enjoyed the party, but he was terribly disappointed that Grace had not come home. In his opinion she should have come on the bus with Babs and Franz and functioned as a chaperon.

Jane assured Carle, “Mother’s letter says that she definitely will be here for Christmas.”

“I certainly hope so,” Carle said.

Putting on a family reunion dinner had been tiring enough for Jane, but it was nothing compared with the weekend that followed. Babs and Franz, and Trink and Sergei stayed on as house guests until noon on Sunday. Babs and Franz were expert jitterbug dancers and they kept the rugs rolled up night and day. Jane told of it in a letter to Grace. “Dee had a wonderful time because Franz was teaching her jitterbug steps. We all had fun but I did get weary of having so much continued uproar all the time, Sergei and Franz and even Chan, spent way too much time throwing Denis and Mary Ellen up in the air and making faces at them. They kept them so excited they couldn’t settle down for their naps. Why on earth is it that men always feel they have to throw youngsters around in the air? I remember Uncle Raymond tossing Mim and Trink like that, and the result was that they tossed their cookies. You know our Bonnie dog doesn’t let anybody grab the kids and handle them that way but when she was out in the yard they got away with it.”

Jane had had another surprise on Thanksgiving Day. Before Uncle Roger left for Oberlin with the aunts, and Mim, and Bill Tallmadge, Nelle had drawn Jane aside.

“I wish you would do me a favor, Janie. Will you talk to Babs about Franz? Maybe you could talk to him too, though I don’t know about that. They are both so stubborn and resentful. Anything I say to Babs only makes her even more determined to have her own way. And her daddy doesn’t know how to handle it either. He’s so disgusted with them.”

“Why is that?” Jane had wanted to know.

“Because they stay out till all hours, and she’s always been boy crazy. She isn’t careful in choosing her friends. She spends all her money on Franz. Daddy thinks that’s awful. And, frankly, since they stay out so late, he’s afraid Franz will get her into trouble. You know what I mean.”

“Yes,” said Jane. “I know what you mean.” She managed to not smile. And, truly, she was amazed that her long dreaded Aunt Nelle had asked her to talk to Babs.

She had only a brief opportunity to talk with Babs and somehow she felt that Babs was making light of her relationship with the young man.

We mostly just love to dance,” she had insisted.

“Well, don’t marry anyone you haven’t known for quite a while. It’s hard to learn each other’s bad side in a short time. And we all have a bad side, of course. Be sure to try and find out if it’s something you can live with. Find out ahead of time.”

“I haven’t completely given up wanting to be a dancer,” Babs said, “even though Mother and Daddy think I have. They are so afraid I’ll marry someone terrible. I might not marry.”

“Well, all I know is that whether a person gets married or not, it’s always a surprise to find out how terribly easy it is to get pregnant.”

“I know,” Babs said, but Jane was sure that nobody knew until they had taken the risk.

Actually, it had been easier talking to Franz, because he had given her an opening. Everyone else was either in bed or on the way. It was Saturday night and Jane was putting the rugs back in place. Again.

Franz was still up and watching her tidying up the room. It occurred to Jane that if he was a nice person he might have been helping. Maybe Aunt Nelle was right about Franz. Nevertheless, she had told Aunt Nelle she would talk to both Babs and Franz. And Franz had started it.

“I expect you’ve learned Babs’ folks don’t like me.”

“She’s their daughter and they worry about her. Parents of girls are like that. They want her getting in early from a date.”

“But she’s twenty-one years old!” Franz said.

“I know, but she’ll always seem like their little girl. My mother is the same way. She’s always still telling me what to do. She doesn’t think I can manage without her advice.”

“Babs’ parents think they know everything,” Franz said.

“But you see, Franz, that’s the way it always is. Parents don’t think their kids have learned anything, and kids are sure the parents don’t know what it’s all about. And neither one is entirely right usually.”

“But Babs’ parents are terribly old-fashioned,” Franz protested.

“Kids always say that,” Jane said, “but I agree about Uncle Roger. Aunt Nelle’s different; she sometimes remembers what it was like to be young.”

“That’s hard to believe,” Franz said.

“Well, she goes along with Uncle Roge, of course. But our generation feels we know what we’re doing. And their generation ought to let us learn by experience. It’s hard to do that.”

“I’ll say it is,” Franz muttered.

“OK,” Jane said. “I know how you feel. I went through such things too. And even after I wasn’t dependent on my parents anymore. Even now, when I’ve been married twice my mother still treats me like a little school kid that doesn’t know anything.”

“That’s the way Babs’ folks are with her,” Franz said.

“What about yours?” Jane asked.

“Not as bad as hers,” he said.

“Yes, and do you know why?”

“Why?”

“Because she’s a girl. Parents have a lot more to worry about with a girl. And that’s because they get stuck with the consequences.” (Jane could remember how she and her mother, and Mim and Uncle Cal had read deMorgan’s Joseph Vance during the summer of ‘32. They’d read it aloud seated around the Rochester lamp on the kitchen table. There had been an observation about daughters in trouble. “And then you bundles ‘em out of the house, consequences and all.”

“Consequences” were the almost inevitable result of “followers.”

But Franz no doubt hadn’t read Joseph Vance.

He asked, “What do you mean by ‘consequences’?”

Jane concluded that Franz wasn’t any too bright.

“I mean babies,” Jane said. “That’s all. Babies.”

Franz seemed overcome with embarrassment. He blushed and said merely, “Oh.”

“The whole point is that if you can get along without asking your parents for money or help of any kind, then you may do as you please. And that includes ‘consequences’ like babies. But if you have to depend on them for money, they’ll make your life miserable if you get into trouble.”

“I don’t plan on getting into trouble,” Franz muttered.

“Swell,” Jane said. “That’s fine, then. But, believe me, trouble is easy to get into. Very easy.”

“Not if people know what it’s all about.”

“You’re so right,” Jane said.

WHERE IS YOUR MOTHER?

Although the Thanksgiving reunion had been hard work, Jane had enjoyed it and was proud that it had come off so well. All the aunties and uncles had seemed so happy to see each other again. The bad feelings between Babs and her parents was something that would work out in time and Jane stopped thinking about it. But one thing rankled in her mind after all the company had left. It brought home all of her ongoing conflict with her mother. She spoke of it to Chan.

“Do you know what Aunt Nelle said to me?”

“No, I don’t know what she said to you.”

“She told me that Denis and Mary Ellen looked just fine.”

“That’s nice,” Chan said.

“Wait. She said that Mother was worried about them because when she left they were thin and pale.”

“You’re surprised at that?”

“No, I’m not. But Aunt Nelle told me it must be good for the children to have another grandmother. She said Dee told her that your mother did all sorts of nice things for the children. She said she would write Mother and tell her what a change it seems to have made in those kiddies.”

“What change is that?” Mu asked.

“I don’t know. I have no idea. The kids are tan from the summer, they’ve grown bigger, they talk more, and Denis’s stooped wetting his bed. And he stopped wetting his pants last June right after Mother left.”

“And that’s because she annoyed him by always taking him into the bathroom to ‘try’.”

“I know,” Jane said. “But what I want to know is what Dee means about your mother being responsible. She comes over on Sunday afternoons and brings them new clothes. Has that made them healthier?”

“No,” said Chan, “and don’t let it worry you. I know who’s taking care of the children. You do a good job.”

“Both of us do,” Jane said. “I just feel bad that Mother doesn’t give me any credit for taking care of my kids. And Dee always agrees with Mother. I wish I knew why they’re that way.”

“I’ll tell you why,” Chan said. “It’s because you have a husband and Dee hasn’t. And your Mother hasn’t either.”

“You really think it’s that simple, Mu?”

“Sure.”

“I don’t. I think it’s the ‘boy’ business. About how I was supposed to be her son.”

“Well, that too, I s’pose, and the fact that your mother isn’t working. It makes her uneasy.”

“So she has to criticize me?”

“Probably that’s part of it,” he said.

“She did have some work a few weeks ago. Don Trunk got her some illustrations to do, but she gave it up. She said she wasn’t strong enough because she got up too soon after her surgery.”

“I thought it was minor surgery.”

“Yes” Jane said, “Aunt Gertrude said it shouldn’t have bothered her more than a few days. But you know, I think Mother was raised in such a way that she never expected to have to work for a living. I think she thought she’d be an artist for the pleasure of it, and some man would take care of her. Her life didn’t work out that way. But none of that is my fault. The best I can do for her is that I’m not dependent on her and haven’t been really since I was fourteen. And I made it easy for Dad too. So why does Mother keep picking on me?”

“You just explained it. It’s a lot more acceptable to her to have people think you need her, than to have them think she needs you.”

“Oh, dear. Sounds like fancy psychology.”

“No,” Chan said. “Actually it’s simple psychology and it isn’t likely to get any better.”

“I suppose not. Well I’ve got to stop thinking about it. Lord knows it’ll all get more complicated when the mothers learn about a new baby. I shudder to think of it.”

“My mother will be pleased,” Mu said.

“You think so?”

“Sure. Her first grandchild?”

“Well, don’t tell her just yet. Please. Wait till after Christmas.”

All during the month of December Chan and Jane had a good time making toys for the children. They made nearly a hundred wooden blocks in bright colors, and also, for Mary Ellen, they made various preschool stacking toys and pull-toys. Jane did all of the painting. Chan made a walnut box for Carle, a small table for Dee, and various other wooden boxes or trays for Chan’s mother

and Aunt Helen. Jane and Chan had a good time making the toys and as Christmas approached their spirits were high.

And if Thanksgiving festivities had been a gathering of Jane's side of the family, Christmas was not. Jo had asked a question as the great day approached.

"Are you inviting hordes of relatives again?" She had inquired of Jane.

Jane was a little irked by the way the question was expressed, but she said, merely, "No. Christmas will be wild and overwhelming enough for the children. I'm only going to ask Carle. And I assume you and Aunt Helen will join us for dinner?"

"How about Harry?" Jo wanted to know.

"Surely. We'll invite Harry."

"I need him to carry the packages in his car," Jo said.

Jane smiled at that and Jo asked, "What's funny?"

"Nothing. Shall we have turkey again?"

"Why don't you all have dinner at my house?"

"Oh, wait until the children are older. Mary Ellen needs to take a long nap in her crib. And they won't want to leave their Christmas tree and their new toys."

"We'll have a tree and toys, too," Jo said.

"Well..." Jane said, "Alright." and she would regret for the next quarter of a century that she had allowed a Christmas tradition to become established that first year.

Christmas was a happy day, however. Mary Ellen who was nearly two, reveled in her new wooden toys, which she loaded into a little red wagon, a present from her Aunt Helen. In addition her Grandma Harvey gave her a new winter coat and three new dresses, and Jane had made dresses for Mary Ellen, too.

Jo had bought clothes for everyone else, as well, and though she had not given Denis any toys he was not disappointed with his snowsuit, and other clothes, as his set of one hundred building blocks, and pre-school electric train kept him ecstatic all day long.

Harry Harvey gave everyone money, then left early to have Christmas dinner with friends.

"Aren't we friends?" Jo had asked him. "I guess so," Harry had said amiably, "but I've had the invitation for a year."

Carle had declined an invitation to join the rest of them for dinner at Helen and Jo's place. He explained that he was expected at his brother Paul's but hadn't decided on that. He said he'd had a cold and wasn't quite up to par.

But it's Christmas, Carle." Jane said. "Why don't you come over in the evening? We'll be bringing the children home early; they'll be exhausted by that time."

Carle decided to accept. He hadn't really wanted to go to the dinner at Helen's Cartwright Street house, but he began to think that maybe Grace had come home from New York, and that they were planning to surprise him. Jane had been so persuasive. That must be it!

When they returned home to Courtney Shores on Christmas day, Jane put the children straight to bed with some of their toys. Then she straightened up the living room a little, putting the Christmas mess in order. When the doorbell rang, she ran to open it, and cried, "Merry Christmas, Carle"

He stepped in after stamping snow from his feet, his face expectant. "Merry Christmas!" He looked around the room. "Where's your mother?" he asked.

"Oh, Carle," Dee said, "She's still in New York. She didn't come. We're so disappointed."

"Well, I certainly am, too." He sounded a bit petulant. "Now why on earth couldn't she get back here for Christmas? She was supposed to be there two weeks. It's been six months."

"I know," Dee said. "It's the limit."

They served Christmas cookies and other goodies and gave Carle his present, and thanked him for the box of chocolates he had brought.

"They're Grace's favorite kind," Carle said.

"Well," Dee said, "We'll put them in the refrigerator and save them for her. She should be back soon I think."

"Don't save them," Carle said. "Eat them. If she ever comes back I'll buy her another box."

After Carle left, Chan went upstairs to bed. Dee sat on the sofa looking at the Christmas tree.

"I always hate to have Christmas day end," she said. Jane moved to turn off the tree lights.

"No," Dee said. "Let them stay on. They're so pretty, I'll turn them off. Wait a minute. Turn around. Are you pregnant, Jane?"

Jane looked at Dee and said with mock solemnity, "Since you ask, I'll tell you. 'Unto us a child is born.' That is, next May."

“My God” Dee said.

“Damn it! Why ‘My God’?”

“Well because it’s not a good time to have babies.”

“Why?”

“Because of the Depression, that’s why.”

“Oh, piffle Life goes on. People want to raise their families.”

“Mother thinks you’re too young,” Dee said.

“I’m not too young anymore, certainly. I’ll be nearly twenty-four when this baby comes. Mother was twenty-three when you were born.”

“But you already have two children, Jane.”

“Yes, and Chan would like to participate in some fatherhood himself.”

“Mother will have a fit,” Dee said.

“She always does. I suppose you feel you have to write and tell her immediately?”

“Well, she has a right to know, Janie.”

“Why?”

“Because she’s your mother, of course.”

“She’s your mother, too, and therefore, she must also have a right to know a great many things I never told her about you.

I hope you and Mother will kindly tell me exactly what age I have to be before you decide that I am an adult.”

“Well, Janie...” Dee began, but Jane cut her off.

“Never mind. The answer is ‘never’. But let me tell you something. I quietly let Chan’s mother know the news and she is thrilled. ‘Tickled pink’ she said.”

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Dee was busy rehearsing a play after the holidays and it was not till the third week in January that she began typing a letter to Grace. She wrote her letters at work when she had a slack period, but these were not frequent. By the time Grace got the news it was February and she had so many other things to think about that she did not reply for another week.

Jane had begun to wonder why she had not received a letter of dismay from her mother. She expected a “blast”, she told Chan. When it came it was a muted blast.

“It certainly is a pity that you got into this condition again. You are not well enough to keep on having babies. However I suppose Jo is looking forward to it with great eagerness and Chan too, of course. I can only hope that you won’t forget about Denis and Mary Ellen. I fear they may be lost in the shuffle.”

“Oh, good grief!” Jane said when she read it and for all of a day she considered answering it, then she decided the wisest thing was just not to reply at all. Her mother was always writing letters when she was upset. Better not to write.

Jo was keeping Jane busy these days. She had persuaded her to go to a different doctor. Peggy Sue Patterson (whose husband had made movies of the wedding) was pregnant now too. She was having a Dr. Haylor, an obstetrician who was on the staff of Gates Maternity Hospital of University Hospitals. Jane had heard of William Haylor and was quite easily persuaded. And after meeting him she was favorably impressed. Dr. Haylor gave her a choice of hospitals. He did not deliver babies at home he said. ‘Sometimes we need special equipment.’ Jane could have her baby at University’s Maternity hospital, or at St. Lukes, or at Memorial Shelter Home. Dr. Haylor explained Memorial Shelter Home and Hospital.

“It is primarily a home for unwed mothers. The girls live there before, and for a while after, they have their babies. The top two floors of the building are for private patients. That’s the way the home supports its work. Some of the girls work in the hospital part, carrying trays, etc. Only professional nurses work in the nursery and delivery room. All the doctors on call are obstetricians and pediatricians. I’m on the staff there. I tell my patients about Memorial because it’s only about half as expensive. So if it doesn’t bother you to go there, I can recommend it highly. It’s fully equipped with everything modern.”

Jane saw no reason to pass up the opportunity to save money. She visited Memorial Home at Dr. Haylor’s suggestion. She found it nicely situated, bright, clean and modern. She made a reservation for approximately May 1.

It soon turned out that Trink was pregnant, too. She was ecstatic. She went to Dr. Haylor also and he confirmed her condition. She and Sergei agreed that Memorial Shelter Home would be

perfectly acceptable to them. Trink made a tentative reservation for the last of August. She and Jane had much to talk about.

Jo was a little dismayed when she learned that her first grandchild would be born at the well-known home for wayward girls, but Chan sat her straight about it. However she worried.

“I don’t know that Peggy Sue plans to go there,” Jo said.

“I don’t give a damn where Peggy Sue goes,” said Chan.

“Well, excuse me,” Jo said.

Dr. Haylor recommended that Jane purchase and wear a maternity support corset. She would tire less easily, he said.

Jo arranged for Jane to meet her downtown at Strohmeier’s store, so that the garment could be bought with Jo’s 20% discount. (Jo’s discount would affect Jane’s wardrobe for the next twenty years.)

“I can buy this corset for you as a gift,” Jo explained. “Let’s just say that I am buying a hammock for my granddaughter.”

“Granddaughter?” Jane said. “Do you have some ‘inside’ information? No pun intended, as they say.”

“I just have a feeling you’re carrying a girl. I’ve even been thinking of pretty names. Wouldn’t ‘Chelsey’ go nicely with ‘Chandler’?”

“Chelsey Chandler,” Jane said. “It’s alliterative, anyway.”

“It’s what?”

“I just mean that it repeats. Do you think when she got older she would be crazy about ‘Chellie Chandler’?”

“Well... I...”

“We could even name her Chelsey Cherise, then she could be Chelsey Cherise Chandler.”

“Oh, Jane! But I do so like the name ‘Chelsey’”

“Yes. Well, Chan and I will get around to deciding on some possible names. And thank you for the ‘hammock’ for little ‘whomever’.”

In New York, meanwhile, Grace had not had much time to think about Jane’s pregnancy. She had at least three other pressing problems, and several lesser ones. First, of course, as always was her need of more money. For ten years now, it seemed she could always earn a little, but never

enough money. And it was so hard for her to know where to concentrate her efforts. Should she write? Or paint? Or make another wall tapestry. She had sold two, and was working on another. But her work was superseded by another problem. She had to make the monthly upkeep payment on Nelle and Roge's apartment, and Nelle had said she could rent a room to help out with the finances. So the room had been let to the young French girl who was a milliner and worked on Fifth Avenue. What a mistake it had been to rent to that young lady! Brigitte Marcea had seemed very charming until the day she moved in. From then on, it was pure trouble. Grace had assigned her a place to put her dishes in the kitchen, and given her a shelf in the icebox for her food. Brigitte was always complaining about something, if not making indirect accusations. She pronounced Grace's name, Rahming, as though it were 'Wrong'.

"Oh, Mrs. Wrong, my watch is bwocken I wonder what happened to it." Or "Oh, Mrs. Wrong, I was sure I had six eggs in there."

After a week, Brigitte told Grace that her mother was coming for a short visit, "before she goes back to France." "I want to get the smell of her in my woom."

Brigitte's mother moved in and stayed. For days she was on the point of departure, and never left for France. The mother had all the daughter's accusing ways, only doubled. She sprinkled talcum powder on the floor of their room in order to determine whether Grace or Babs had been in there.

One day Brigitte left for work and returned in twenty minutes with a "spwained ankle" or "perhaps it is bwocken." This gave her mother an excuse to stay on longer to wait upon Brigitte. Grace was at her wit's end with the two of them. It finally came to an end with Brigitte and Babs in a terrible hair-pulling fight. Brigitte had accused Babs of lying about some telephone message and Babs, furious, had planted a resounding slap on Brigitte's cheek. Madame Marceau had then called the police. When the lawmen arrived they were treated to a performance of French hysterics. And the officers were mightily amused at the carrying-on. Brigitte was furious at Grace because she remained calm (as did Babs.) And Brigitte even bared her teeth and threatened to kill Grace and sue her. Finally the French ladies quieted and the policemen left. By the end of the week the Marceau women had moved out, but not before causing more uproar and worry for Grace and Babs. La Belle Fontaine even came to stay with Grace until Brigitte and her mother were gone, for Babs was out nearly every evening and Grace did not feel safe alone. After the roomers left for good, Grace changed the locks.

But while all this was going on, Grace had been concerned about Babs and her relationship with Franz. Babs and Franz stayed out at night until three or four a.m. several times a week. For a week or two in February Grace suspected Babs might be pregnant, as she had complained of an upset stomach and no appetite. Babs had mentioned it in a letter to her mother in Oberlin, and Nelle had assumed the trouble was intestinal flu. Grace still had her thoughts, but then decided that either she had been mistaken or that "the problem had been taken care of." One of the reasons Grace thought that Babs was, after all, not in trouble, is that she had stopped seeing

Franz rather abruptly, and was dating another young man, a Richard D'Arcy. Grace had met him and wrote to Nelle saying. "Babs has broken with Franz, and if there was a problem something was done about it. In any case Babs has become more independent and it all seems to have been a growth experience for her."

It indeed was a growth experience for Babs, but things were not at all as Grace supposed. Oh, she had been right to guess that Babs was pregnant. The thing that she'd been wrong about was to decide that if there'd ever been such a condition it had come to an end one way or another. It hadn't and now at the end of March the truth came out. Babs spoke of it to Grace and to Roger's sister Lucy. They were very understanding, but at first they were at a loss as to how to tell Nelle and Roger, Roger especially. But, they huddled together for a long evening and formulated a communication that would present Babs' predicament in the best possible light. And, in truth, things might have been a great deal worse than they were.

This was what they had to tell Nelle, and they would leave it to her to tell Roger. First the good part of it.

Yes, Babs had broken off with Franz. She wanted nothing to do with him, at all, ever. And she was going with quite a nice young chap who seemed to be a great improvement over Franz. In fact they were planning to be married very soon, as soon as it could be managed. His name was Richard D'Arcy, and his mother was a widow. That could be a problem, but one would hope not. Now here was the complication; the early suspicions were correct - Babs was going to have a baby and Franz was the father. Babs had indicated that Franz would have done the right thing, but she was through with him, did not want to live with him, and although Richard was being very fine about it and willing to do whatever Babs wanted, she did not plan to keep the baby. That was her decision and they were convinced that she was not going to be talked out of it. It was sad, but probably Babs knew what she was doing. If her feelings against Franz were that strong, it would very likely not be good for the child as it grew up. In such a circumstance one could imagine that when a child misbehaved a parent would say, "You get that from your father." Of course that sort of remark was often made anyway. Probably Babs wasn't thinking of all those possibilities. She most likely was obeying an instinct she had and perhaps it was best to do so.

In the meanwhile, Grace and Lucy would help Babs and arrange that there be a little wedding however simple it must be. But of course if Nelle wanted to come on and take care of it all herself, they would wait and leave it for her to do. However, Babs was right on being in a hurry. Oh, yes, and August would be the date for the "event".

IT'S ENOUGH TO BREAK A PERSON'S HEART

The news about Babs spread in the family but not very far. Many Hedges relatives never knew anything about it, for they were the ones that only appeared at "official" family reunions. These were Jim and Marie, Johnny and his third wife Ora (who was a Jehovah's Witness and who had nothing to do with any of the Hedges tribe). And Charles now lived in Indiana, and seldom came back to see his relatives. And there was perhaps no need to say anything particular about Babs and Richard to Thomas and Fancy Hedges unless it should happen to become necessary. So in the beginning, only Babs knew and then Franz, and then Richard D'Arcy. Grace and Lucy were next and they both wrote to Nelle. After Nelle had painfully digested the news, she had to talk to somebody and Roger was out of town 'on the road' downstate. So she confided in Merly. It was agreed that telling Roger was as difficult as anything else about the situation, because what had happened to Babs was precisely what he had, at least subconsciously, feared would happen to the other girls in his care during the winter at Forest Camp.

Merly's advice to Nelle was somewhat comforting.

"It's all in the way you tell him, Sis," Merly said. "You must start with the reassuring part. First you must say that Babs is getting married. Then you will have to let him know the reason it must be soon. And you'll have to tell him immediately that it isn't Franz she's going to marry. Then tell Roge about Richard and that Grace and Nelle both think he's a nice boy. Roge should be so relieved that it isn't Franz that the worst shock will be avoided. But then, of course, there's no way that you can escape telling Roge, sooner or later, (sooner is best, I guess) that the baby is Franz's. Because if Babs won't keep the child, I imagine that's the only explanation Roge would accept. I know I feel that way and even so - it's hard to see how a woman can give up a baby she's carried all those months. Still many girls have done that, and perhaps Babs has wisdom beyond her years."

Nelle found comfort in Merly's observation, and she warmed to it. "I think so too," she said, "because you have to think of Richard's feelings. I think I'd have to say that he's acting like a real prince, and he deserves to have a child of his own someday. No, I think Babs is right in her decision, but it is sad to have to let a baby go."

"Yes, it is," said Merly. "When I think of what some of us went through trying to have babies. But, yes, this case is different."

"Another thing I just thought of," Nelle said. "I don't know if Roge could warm up to a child of Franz's. He took such a strong dislike to that fellow. No, Babs is right."

Trink was the next person to know about Babs and she thought the whole thing was an outrage. Not because Babs had got in her present fix, not that she had decided she could not stand Franz Goetz, but that she could dream for one minute of giving up her baby was, for Trink, totally

beyond understanding. In the warmth and near-euphoria of her own expectancy, Trink could not imagine a mother putting a baby out for adoption when she didn't have to.

She relayed the whole story to Jane, when she returned to Cleveland after a weekend visit to Oberlin.

"After all, she'll be married," Trink protested, "so she'll have nothing to worry about in that respect."

"But," said Jane, "if she doesn't love Franz, and says she wants nothing to do with him..."

"Oh, what of it!" Trink said. "She doesn't have to marry Franz. But the baby is a baby. It's a person It's its own person, a new person. It isn't Franz; it is itself."

"Yes," Jane said. "I know. But if Babs feels that way..."

"Well, I wish she didn't," Trink said. "It's enough to break a person's heart."

"Does Mim know about this?"

"Oh sure - Aunt Nelle told her right away."

"Well, what does Mim think of it?"

"Oh, the same as the rest of you," Trink said, sighing. "And I wish I could talk Babs out of it."

"You could try, but I'd be kind of afraid to."

"Afraid to? Why?" Trink asked.

"Because it's such a serious matter in her life. I'd hate to feel later that I'd given the wrong advice."

"But in this case, how could keeping the baby be wrong?"

"I don't know. That's the trouble; I don't know. I was just thinking how the women in this family have always been handing out so much wisdom to each other and it hasn't always been right. Like great-grandma Whitefield telling Grandma Hedges to 'yield unto' her husband. And Grandma Hedges insisting that Addie marry Uncle Cal. And Mother keeps advising and advising. Johnny predicted that someday Mother will be embarrassed by some of the advice she gave us. I wouldn't have Mary Ellen today if I'd done what she wanted."

"But that was just the opposite," Trink said. They seemed to be getting slightly off the track.

"Well," Jane said, "I just feel sorry for Aunt Nelle. This will be hard on her. She's losing her grip as it is."

Nelle might not be the firm “rock” she had once been, but she still was not one to cave in during a crisis. She lay awake long, the night after getting the bad news from New York. But she did not spend much time on disparagement nor self-reproach in regard to Babs’ upbringing. A classic thought went through her head; one never can know how an adopted child will turn out. This was immediately followed by the classic reply; neither can one know about a natural child. No, “natural child” was the wrong word. Offspring was what she meant. They might just as likely go astray. And where did the expression “natural child” come from? What did natural really mean? Certainly Babs’ condition was as natural as a condition could be.

She left those futile questions behind and became practical. She did not want Babs to have the baby in Denisson Heights. She and Roger still had friends there. Most of the girls who had attended Lucy’s summer camp lived there and Roger had liked to think of himself as a benevolent uncle to those campers. He liked to go to their campfires, and to help them publish a newsletter and to write skits, and sing songs. No, Roge would want Babs out of Denisson Heights.

She fired off a letter to Grace full of questions. First of all, when was the baby due? Second, did Richard have a job? If so, what? And did his mother know about the baby? Was Richard her only child? What about the possibility of Babs and Richard going to Forest Camp till everything was over? Roger would not let even Nelle go up there this summer unless there was a man around and he couldn’t be there with his new job keeping him busy. So perhaps that would be the answer for Babs and Richard. A man was needed on the hill because of the great fire hazard since the ‘38 hurricane. Would Richard like the idea of life on the hill with wood cutting, making a garden, and mowing the grass? Unless he had a good job in New York it might be just the thing for them.

But before Nelle had finished her letter to Grace another letter came from Lucy with more information. The baby was expected in August and anyone who knew Babs was pregnant could see she was beginning to show. With her coat on it was still not noticeable, but soon would be and with warm weather coming so soon, Babs wanted to leave Denisson Heights.

Nelle had to devise new plans. She, too, wanted Babs out of Denisson Heights. She must be nearly five months along. There were so many friends of Nelle’s in that apartment who never need know anything about Babs’ present situation. Roger came home, and Nelle rallied her courage and told him the story. It was not as awful as she had feared.

Roge sighed, “Well, this doesn’t surprise me at all, the way they stayed out most of the night. She said they were visiting a friend in Jersey. You don’t think I believed that, do you? Well, fix us some tea and we’ll see what can be worked out. Obviously, they must leave New York and it’s too early for them to go up on the Hill, I’ve a feeling he wouldn’t like that hard life and that terrible climb. Many people were outraged at that road up. However fine a fellow Richard may

be, I doubt he'd like it, but they can try it for awhile this summer. You'd better write Babs and tell them they can come here for the time being."

"Merly hasn't room to shelter any more relatives," Nelle said.

"I know," Roge said. "They'll just have to rent a room for a couple of months, and I suppose we'll pay."

And so it was arranged, but there were some problems they had not yet thought out.

SHE'LL NEVER DO THAT AGAIN

But during this time Jane had other things to think about. Her pregnancy would soon be over and she felt more than ready. She was heavy and couldn't sleep at night. Arrangements were being made for her hospital stay. Jo was going to come and stay with Denis and Mary Ellen during the ten days while Jane was gone. It would take her from her job at Strohmeyer's, but she didn't mind that. Her first grandchild was arriving. Chan had arranged to take his vacation at the time the baby and Jane should be coming home. He would be on hand to help out, as Jane's doctor was very strict about his convalescing mamas.

Dee had written to Grace about the approaching event.

"Mother, I wish you would come home to be here when Jane is in the hospital. Denis and Mary Ellen are fond of you. Jo is good to them and buys them clothes, but you are different with them, and anyway, I wish you'd come home. You've been gone nearly a year. Carle will be glad to see you too. Since you say you plan to come back, please come now."

But Grace held off, saying she was not yet ready. She'd been busy helping Babs get married, and trying to sell her own wall tapestry, and she'd not been sleeping well what with the world conditions and that crazy man Hitler taking anything he wanted. Now, he had Denmark and Norway. It made her feel ill. And actually, she wasn't feeling up to par. She had got up on her feet too soon last fall after her surgery. She was paying for it now. She had decided to come to Cleveland after the baby was a few weeks old. That way it would leave the field clear for Jo to enjoy the arrival of her grandchild, without having another grandma to compete with.

Dee felt that her mother still could have come in time for the big event, but Jane said she didn't think that Grace liked being around at such times. She had avoided it the other times, and first Mim, and later Trink had been invited to do what Jane called "stork service".

The baby was due May first but did not arrive for another week. Chan was on vacation by then and his mother was already in residence, helping with the house duties. The day before the baby came Chan cut his hand badly on the circular saw in his workshop. He came into the house dripping blood and left a trail of drops behind him as he went upstairs in search of Jane. His own mother tended to be upset by accidents. Jane had him hold his hand under running water and then they could see that the saw had cut off part of the end of his left index finger, but that the root and much of the nail were still intact. It was a bad wound, but not as bad as it could have been.

Jo had come out of the kitchen, seen the trail of blood drops and first thought Jane was starting labor. When all was explained she rose to the occasion and went with Chan, in a taxi, to have the hand cared for. Jane had urged him to go to the same University hand surgeon who had repaired Johnny's similar injury two years earlier. The man was the best in Cleveland.

Chan lay awake most of the night in spite of the pain pills he had taken. He finally went to sleep just as dawn was beginning. Jane lay awake for an hour timing her early labor pains before deciding they were the real thing. Then she roused Chan.

“I hate to say it, but we must go to the hospital.”

Chan was asleep in the father’s waiting room later that morning when Dr. Baylor woke him to tell him he had a big healthy boy child, and the mother was fine, too, though groggy.

Mi]. said, “I’m groggy myself and I’m embarrassed to be caught napping. I took pain pills. I cut my hand.”

“It’s alright. I saw the bandage. Better to sleep than to pace the floor smoking cigarettes.”

Chan sat beside Jane till she roused enough to talk. She was happy but nauseated.

“I’m glad it’s a boy,” she said. “Men like boys,”

“I wouldn’t have sent a girl back,” he said.

“Perish forbid!” she said. “What a ghastly thought.”

“He’s a beautiful specimen. I saw him,” Chan said.

“That’s nice. I hope he’s smart. I hope he becomes a scientist who discovers an anesthetic to replace ether. It’s a real abomination!”

Chan laughed and Jane drowsed. Chan went home then to report the news and to sleep for hours himself.

It was May 8th. Five years later on that date Hitler’s war in Europe would end, and “VE day” would be celebrated throughout most of the world. But in this week in 1940, the so-called “phony war” in Europe came to a most definite and convincing end. Hitler’s land and air forces smashed into Holland on May 10th. The next day the Dutch opened flood gates vainly hoping to stop the Nazi war machine. In England, Neville Chamberlain resigned, and Winston Churchill became Prime Minister. Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands fled to England. The Germans pierced the northwestern end of France’s thought-to-be-mighty Maginot Line. Belgium fell and the British Expeditionary Force began a strategic retreat. The Germans broke through to the English Channel. As the merry month of May ended the British Navy and many small boats rescued 300,000 fighting men from the Germans in an anguished, but brilliant evacuation from the beaches at Dunkirk. It was a real war now.

The new baby looked like Chan. His grandmother Jo was thrilled, though she had thought a granddaughter was on the way. No matter now; the baby was perfect. She was in her element buying baby clothes. The baby had been named David S..

“Why not Clement?” Jo had asked.

“Because I hate it,” Chan had said. “At least I hate the nickname ‘Clemmie’ that you torment me with.”

“Your father didn’t hate it.”

“No one called him ‘Clemmie’.”

“Maybe,” Jo said.

Chan brought Jane home after ten days. The doctor gave them both last minute instructions, and four typewritten pages of rules.

“I’m very strict about some things,” he said. “When you get home you must go right to bed and stay there until the baby is two weeks old. You may get up each morning to watch the baby being bathed. During the third week you may be up a little more each day, but you must lie down an hour before, and two hours after each time you nurse the baby. During the fourth week you may gradually assume full care of the baby, but you may not go up and down the stairs until the baby is one month old. Burn every pair of bedroom slippers you own. When you are not in bed be sure to wear a pair of firmly laced oxfords. Bones lose calcium during pregnancy, so you must take care of your feet. No intercourse until you’ve had your six weeks exam. Now - do you have anyone at home to take care of you and the bay?”

“Yes,” said Jane, quite flabbergasted by the strict set of rules. “Yes, my husband’s mother, and tomorrow y mother will be here too.”

“Oh, my,” Dr. Haylor said, “two grandmothers. Well, don’t let them tell you what to do. Just follow the rules. Many grandmothers will want you to do things the way they were done thirty years ago.”

But this was not the case. Jo and Grace were quite agreed that the doctor’s instruction sheet should be the guide to mother and baby’s care. Grace especially was in favor of the strict rules. She read the four printed sheets thoroughly, and made mention of any deviation from the schedule. On the other hand Jo was bothered by one or two things. She did not like to see her son carrying Jane up and down the stairs each day for dinner with the family. He would hurt his back. Jane agreed; she thought there could be no possible harm in walking the stairs, especially when it was compared with the discomfort of being carried up and down.

And Jo was also worried when baby David cried before it was time to feed him.

“I don’t see how it can hurt to feed him a little bit early,” she said.

“Neither do I,” Jane said, “but Mother will say I have no system.”



JOSEPHINE PORTER
"MINNA HARVEY"

1939

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“He cries so hard,” Jo said.

“Well.” Grace said, “It’s just that modern methods have proved to be best.”

“How has it been proved?” Jane wanted to know. “Just what is the proof? Do babies fed a few minutes early turn out to be criminals when they grow up?”

“Jane is like her father,” Grace said. “She always argues.”

Grace had come home from New York the day after Jane and the baby came home from Memorial Hospital. She admired little David, told Jane she looked pale, and then devoted her attention to Denis and Mary Ellen. Denis was shy but he smiled and finally said, a bit tentatively, “Grammy?” Mary Ellen looked quite forbidding and not having seen Grace for more than eleven months, the two year old did not appear to remember her at all. What’s more she called Jo “Grammy.” Grace was a bit concerned.

“Don’t worry, Mother,” Dee said, “They’ll get to know you again as soon as you’ve been here awhile. You stayed away too long, you know. And, by the way, you must call Carle.”

Grace must call Carle she agreed, and she must call all her other friends in Cleveland, and she must run out to see Lawrence and Gertrude, and go down to Oberlin and see every one there, and find out how Babs and Richard were making out, and where they were living, and whether Richard had found a job, and whether Roge and Nelle were still planning to go to Forest Camp. Oh, and she must find out whether Mim and Bill Tallmadge were going to get married this summer or not. And she must call Trink and see how she and Sergei were getting along, and when the baby was due. And she must finish her wall tapestry and get it sold.

Dee asked her, “Mother, if they aren’t going to publish your book now, why don’t you see if you can get a job like Jo has? Things are improving, Mother, the Depression is easing up, my boss says.”

“Well, but I must do my own real kind of work,” Grace said.

The war in Europe, however, seemed to be the thing that, for the time being at least, upset Grace more than Jane and her children. It upset most Americans. Many isolationists now turned interventionist. If they had previously heeded Charles A. Lindbergh, their handsome flying idol, and his gentle, college-bred wife, they now wondered where his loyalty lay. They had agonized over the kidnapping of the young couple’s plump, curly-haired cherub. But now they questioned, “What’s the matter with them? Have they lost their minds?”

The numbers of isolationists dwindled away. The America First organization suffered mortal blows. Lindbergh now struck out at the Jews, who he perceived to have too much power in the press (He had long hated the press who had hounded him mercilessly). But Lindbergh had only a very few sympathetic listeners now. Most Americans were now jolted out of any complacency

that they may have had about “Der Feurher”. The thought of Paris, France actually being a German city had done the trick. Only twenty-two years ago that threat was supposed to have been settled. But Adolph Hitler was not Kaiser Bill. Americans had seen proud England desperately salvaging its army from the shores of Europe where they’d literally been pushed into the sea by the might of Hitler’s planes and tanks.

In that summer of 1940 Americans were finally frightened.

####

It was a strange summer. The covers of Life magazine reflected the War. There was one that would endure in peoples' minds and in the archives. It showed Parisians with their faces distorted by tears and the agony brought by Nazi occupation. Life magazine no longer came to Jane in the name of John B. Abbott jr. but now came in Clement Chandler's name since he paid for it. Jane rarely heard from Johnny. He had only been to the house on Courtney Shores Drive once.

It was a summer when pregnancy and motherhood ruled the scene. Little baby David was visited and admired by Jo and Helen and even Harry Harvey. Chan's great-aunt Mary was brought to view the heir. In fact, Jo was at the house every weekend, chauffeured by the man who rented Helen's front bedroom, if not by Harry Harvey himself. Jo always brought some item of clothing for the baby, and often something for Denis and Mary Ellen as well.

Grace privately felt that Jo and her family were making far too much fuss over Phillip. They hung on his every stage of baby development. They talked of his remarkable intelligence continually. Grace fussed about it.

"Don't worry about it, Mother. It's only natural," Jane said.

"But it slights Denis and Mary Ellen," Grace said.

"Chan and I don't slight them," Jane insisted.

"I don't know," Grace said. "Phillip looks so much like Chan."

"Doesn't matter. Chan loves the others, too."

Grace never accepted that fact.

Trink was now big in her pregnancy. She and Sergei visited Courtney Shores often on Sunday. Trink loved to talk about babies. She brought the news that Mim and Bill Tallmadge had gone to West Virginia to be married and Bill was applying for teaching jobs. That summer, of course, Babs was pregnant, too, but the family was, for the most part, quiet about it. Richard had found a little work in Oberlin and he and Babs had rented housekeeping rooms. They kept to themselves most of the time, though Merly, Gertrude, and Jane extended frequent invitations. But, they did drive Mim and Bill Tallmadge to Wheeling to be married, for Richard D'Arcy had a car, such as it was, with a leaky radiator that needed its thirst slaked too frequently.

Jane saw Trink frequently since Dr. Haylor's office was on the east side of Cleveland and as August approached Trink's doctor visits became weekly. They had the habit of walking down to the beach with Denis, while a neighbor girl stayed with the napping Mary Ellen and baby David.

Trink had only one more month to wait, her baby being due the last of August and during that last month she would see the doctor once a week. Jane had invited Trink and Sergei to stay at the Courtney Shores house during the last week, as Memorial Hospital was only fifteen minutes away, and the trip from their house would have taken an hour.

Babs' baby was due in the middle of August, and she would go to the hospital in Oberlin. Trink was full of information on the first August day she walked to the beach with Jane.

"Well, it's all arranged," she said sadly.

"What is?" asked Jane.

"About Babs' baby. It's all going to be very simple. It's much too simple. She's going to Dr. Seidel and he has simply said that he can place the child with a very nice couple and it will all be made entirely legal."

"Well, that's good," Jane said.

"To me, it's the saddest thing I know of, without a doubt."

"I know, Trink," Jane said, "but what can one do?"

"Nothing I guess," Trink said, "and what is even more terrible is that she is not even going to see the baby after it's born."

"Well, that's no doubt wise."

"Oh, I know but I just hate it." Trink said.

"Well, Trink, you know Babs has never been just like you. You've always loved babies so much. But Babs... well, she wanted to be a dancer."

"So did I" said Trink. "You could have a baby and be dancer, too."

"It'd be complicated, though. Listen; let's talk about your baby. How are you doing lately? Feeling a little crowded?"

"Yes. Tell me; at this stage, how does one sleep at night?"

"Poorly," Jane said. "The last month is the hardest, because your patience wears thin. It's not long now, though, is it."

"I'm planning on my birthday, the 29th."

"Goods I'll concentrate on it" Jane said. "And, hey! Can I change the subject?"

"Sure."

“Chan and I have something on our minds lately. We want to live by ourselves the way you and Sergei do. There are five of us now; we’re a real family.”

“You could never manage in an apartment like ours - \$25 a month and one bedroom. You have such a grand big house here.”

“Yes, but we couldn’t afford it by ourselves. Its \$50 a month and we have to have Dee and Mother with us. We need very much to live our own lives, and not to be “grandmothered’ so much. It’s beginning to make a lot of problems for both Chan and me. Mother’s critical of me and Dee agrees with her. Chan says I’m like Cinderella, but all I need is for Dee to get married and have children, so Mother can fuss over them part of the time.”

“Are you going to move out?” Trink asked.

“If we can find the right place. Here’s the thing - Chan has made friends with a man at work and they are living out on the southeast side of town in a little bitty house that they are buying for \$25 a month. And there’s another one near.”

“Buying?” Trink asked. “Really?”

“Yes. Really. Wouldn’t it be good to have the rent payments count for something and not just be ‘thrown-away’ money?”

“How big a house is it? Have you seen it?”

“No, but we’re invited out there for Sunday afternoon, and we’re going to see them, but don’t say anything about it to anyone. Mother’s upset enough already.”

“What about?”

“Wendell Wilkie, mostly, and the war in Europe, and she’s disappointed because Aunt Nelle didn’t feel up to going to Forest Camp this summer.”

“Aunt Nelle was much too worried about Babs. And also disappointed because Rick and Babs didn’t want to go up to New Hampshire. But I don’t blame them. Rick’s car isn’t in good shape, and you can imagine being up there and pregnant?”

“Good night!” Jane said. “I can’t imagine walking down that hill some night while having labor pains. Pioneer women wouldn’t have either. The doctor would have come up the hill and on a horse probably.”

A week later Trink called Jane with news. Mim had phoned from Oberlin. Babs had had her baby. It was a girl. No other facts known, but Mim was quite angry. She had been to the hospital to see Babs, and learned that the baby had been taken, by mistake, for Babs to nurse. Babs had

said, "She Seemed normal and nice," but the nurse was embarrassed and took the baby away. Babs would not see her again.

That summer, Mim was employed in the office of the Oberlin Children's home. The adoption of Babs' baby girl was processed and recorded in that office. Mim had an opportunity to learn where the child had been placed. But Mim carried the burden of confidentiality soberly and prudently. She revealed to no one the whereabouts, nor the name of the child's adoptive parents. She did, however, find an appropriate time to tell Babs that she had found out that the baby had gone to a wonderful couple who would give her the best of everything. Babs said she was pleased to know that much.

But Babs was not convalescing well from the birth. She had a complication that was not unusual in mothers recovering after delivery. By the time Trink's baby girl was born at the end of the month, Babs should have been up and around, but she was not. She had to sit with her painful swollen left leg elevated on a chair padded with a pillow.

Roger and Nelle felt sorry for her, and Nelle said, "I remember Mother telling about 'milk leg'. They call it phlebitis now. It's very painful. I've always heard that."

"Well," Roger said, "maybe now she will realize that life is not all fun."

"Oh, Daddy, she knew that before this. Being too fat was never much fun for Babs when the other girls were having fun going on dates with the boys. Sometimes I think you've forgotten what it was like to be young and foolish. Running away from home when you were fourteen made you grow up too fast."

"Well, I hope Babs will grow up now," Roger said.

"Don't worry," Nelle said. "She will. She'll never do this again. She'll learn from experience. I did."

####

During all the commotion that went on at the arrival and departure of Babs' baby, the subsequent complication of Babs' leg problem, and finally the joyous arrival of Trink's daughter Katie, there were many other matters to take Jane's attention. Life is always hectic where there is a new baby, more so when there are other small children and often things are not improved by an assortment of adults with many suggestions as to how the entire ménage should be conducted.

It had been a summer much too busy for a young mother. Weekdays were not so bad, for Chan and Dee went to work, Grace usually slept late, and during the afternoons there were naps for the children. Jane liked to nap in the afternoons too, though that seemed to be Grace's favorite time to communicate. She would walk around the upstairs talking, not always directly to Jane, but just making observations such as, "My, these windows need washing," or "My, I must write to Aunt Vicky." And though Grace's remarks did not require answers as a rule, Jane came to the conclusion they were definitely intended to get her up from her nap. Jane needed the daytime rest because nursing the baby at night disturbed her sleep.

When evening came and Chan and Dee were home from work, Grace did not claim as much of Jane's time, but occupied herself with Jack and Mary Ellen's bedtime baths and tooth brushing, which Chan thought was much too protracted a ceremony when adults were in need of a relaxing evening. But finally all three children were asleep and, except for radio, things were quiet until David woke for his 10 p.m. feeding. David's mealtimes were protracted too, because, as with the other two children, the pediatrician insisted that a breast-fed baby must be nursed, then weighed, and then offered a bottle of formula. And what with diapering and burping, it all took nearly an hour. At five feedings a day it was nearly a third of her waking hours. Jane was sure that was the wrong way to do things, but anyway it wouldn't go on forever. David would grow up one of these days.

Weekends were strenuous. Because they lived by the lake, they had lots of company, some welcome and some not. Carle often came on a Sunday, but he was quiet and friendly and usually took Grace out to dinner. Trink and Sergei came often and usually just walked down to the beach. If they were invited for a meal Trink always helped. But there were numbers of other people who came to swim and use the bathroom as a bathhouse. Most of these were Dee's friends from the little theater group, and many of them Jane liked, but there were a few who came, expected to swim, and did not bring their own towels. Mona James came frequently with a boy friend. After awhile Jane wearied of so many weekend guests.

But probably the most trying thing of all was that every Sunday afternoon Chan's mother visited, often with Aunt Helen and always chauffeured by Bryan, the man who currently rented the front bedroom in Helen's Cartwright Street house. Very frequently Jo and Bryan dropped in during the week. Always she brought gifts in the form of clothing from Strohmeyer's store. Although many of the things were for the new baby, in an effort to seem even-handed, Jo did bring things for

Denis and Mary Ellen, as well, and she had given Jane a number of dresses. They were not just what Jane would have chosen herself; but they were all useable and on her tight budget Jane did not find fault with them.

But both Jane and Chan began to long for a place where they had some time to be alone with the children. And Chan said that he could never feel that he was living in his own home until it really was his home. The business of sharing might work for some people, he said, but not for those whose mothers still considered them children.

Matters came to a head over the matter of a dentist. Jane had developed a very bad toothache, and she knew the tooth could not be saved. She had made an appointment with a conveniently located dentist and he had pulled the tooth, a back molar, and the one beyond it, a wisdom tooth. Jane felt sad having to lose teeth. She had always been proud of having even, white teeth. But if she felt bad, it was nothing to the way Jo felt. Her reaction surprised Jane.

“Why, that’s terrible! You’re only twenty-four years old! Why didn’t you tell me? I’d have taken you to my dentist. He wouldn’t have pulled your teeth”

“I’m sure he’d have pulled that one,” Jane said, “and the wisdom tooth was ‘chalky’ he said.”

“Do you have more bad teeth?” Jo wanted to know.

“I need some fillings is all,” Jane said.

“Well, I’ll take you to my dentist,” Jo said. “Grace, you’ll stay with the children while she goes, won’t you?”

Arid a week later Jane and Jo went to Jo’s Dr. Snyder, whose office was an hour away on the opposite side of Cleveland. Dr. Snyder was handsome in the manner of cinema villains, with a small black moustache. Jane was glad that Jo had come along to hear her dentist’s opinion after cleaning and inspecting Jane’s teeth.

“You have eleven porcelain fillings across the front. I will need to replace those. And more of your molars seem to be in trouble. I can pull those and make you nice partial plates.”

Jane looked at him in amazement. And Jo looked very distressed.

Jane said, “The other dentist tells me only that I need several fillings. He didn’t mention pulling any more teeth.”

“Well, it’s just a matter of time with those molars,” Dr. Snyder said.

“I’ll wait till that time comes then,” Jane said.

“Suit yourself,” Dr. Snyder said. “Talk to my assistant about some appointments to do those porcelain fillings.”

“I can’t afford all that work!” Jane said. “I don’t think they need replacing.”

“Porcelain always needs replacing. It doesn’t last long.”

“They have to do for awhile,” Jane said.

“Well, suit yourself, but don’t forget you do need fillings.”

On the way home Jo admitted that she thought Jane was right not to agree to have more teeth extracted.

“But he really is a nice man,” she said.

“I think he just wants to make money,” Jane said. “Maybe,” Jo said. But the next time she was at the Courtney Shores house, she asked Chan if his teeth were in good condition. He said they probably weren’t.

“Then why don’t you make an appointment with Dr. Snyder? Or should I make one for you?” Jo asked.

Chan turned suddenly very angry.

“I wouldn’t go to that crook dentist if you paid me!”

“I was going to pay the dentist,” his mother said.

“Let me worry about my own teeth,” Chan growled.

“Well!” Jo said. “Excuse me for breathing the air in here.”

Later Dee, who had been present, spoke almost fiercely to Jane.

“What makes Chan so disagreeable and ungrateful to his mother? After all the nice things she buys for all of you, I would think that Chan could show a little more appreciation.”

“Oh, you don’t understand at all Dee. We pay a price for all those nice things she gives us.”

“Ridiculous!” Dee said. “I’d like to beat Chan’s ears off.”

“It isn’t really your business to beat his ears off,” Jane said.

“I don’t see how you could have married a man with such a rotten disposition.”

“Because he’s a good man. I tried it living with a bad man with a good disposition. I prefer it the other way round.”

“Johnny wasn’t a bad man,” Dee argued.

“Oh, really? Then why did all you people persuade me he was?”

“He just drank, that’s all.”

“For all practical purposes that made him bad. But what a silly conversation this is. And besides, you won’t have to put up with Chan’s disposition much longer.”

“Why’s that?” Dee asked.

“We’re going to get our own place as soon as we can!”

“That didn’t work when you did it before.”

“I don’t have the same husband, I thought you’d noticed.”

“Look, Janie, you need Mother with you.”

“Not at this time of my life. Lots of times in past years I needed her and she wasn’t there. She came and went all the time.”

“It wasn’t her faults you know that,” Dee said.

“Whose fault was it then?”

“Well, I don’t know,” Dee said. “You must be more understanding of Mother.”

“If she were more understanding of me and Chan we wouldn’t need to get away. I never hear Mother say one critical word to you no matter what you do.”

“It’s just that you’re younger, Jane.”

“I’ll always be younger. Does this go on forever?”

The Old Brick

By Jane R. Chandler

1981

Part Twelve

WE RAVE TO START SMALL AND HUMBLE

Not much time would elapse before Jane and Chan would depart the big house at Courtney Shores Drive. Everything had happened much faster than anyone had expected.

In his job in downtown Cleveland, where Chan worked as a “white-collar” WPA employee, he had become acquainted with an interesting fellow worker on the City Records Survey project. The young man had an unimpressive appearance, and a name to match, Fred Perkins. He was thin with an untidy moustache. His wife cut his hair, but not very well, nor very often. But only by chance, one day, Chan discovered that Fred Perkins was a booklover, and more than that, he was a dealer in rare and wanted books. He told Chan that his wife did a very professional job of re-binding worn and dilapidated books. Chan and Fred struck up a friendship and ate their lunch together. They expanded their conversation to the subject of home life and family matters. Fred and his wife Edna (called “Ned”) had no children, but were expecting their first in January. They had lived with his folks until recently, but now were buying a small house. They paid only \$25 a month. Chan could scarcely believe that.

Fred had said, “When you see the house you’ll find it easier to believe. It’s very small and it isn’t much I assure you.”

In mid-September Chan and Jane drove out to the southeast side of Cleveland one Sunday afternoon to visit the Perkins couple and see their little house. They found it in a neighborhood of many similar places and they were unlike houses with which Chan and Jane were familiar. Fred Perkins presently explained the neighborhood to the Chandlers. But first he introduced his wife to them.

“This is ‘Ned’,” said Fred. “She puts up with that nickname because it goes well with mine.”

“It’s really Edna,” his wife said, “and I hate it.”

Ned was as blond and chubby as Fred was dark and slim. Ned was also a foot shorter than her husband. Fred had told Chan that they supposed Ned would have an easy time with her pregnancy and childbirth because she was “built like a peasant.”

But it was Perkins’ house that fascinated the Chandlers. The front door opened directly into a long living-room lined with bookcases. The furniture was cheap, but many of the books were not, and they were colorful. So were the red cotton curtains at the high windows, and the dark red-painted floorboards were brightened here and there with braided rag rugs. In all, the room was inviting and comfortable. The living-room, however, was most of the house; beyond it was a kitchen, none too large, a tiny bathroom still waiting for the tub, and beyond, one small bedroom. It wasn’t much house, but it was going to be theirs. They weren’t renting it.

Fred explained the neighborhood.

“This area is sometimes called ‘Marshall Heights’ but it’s part of the city of Cleveland. A developer in the twenties laid out the streets and sold lots and built a few houses. But after the ‘crash’ he took a beating when the people didn’t have money to buy the houses. Then he got an idea; he built these little places back on the 100 foot line. They are the dimension of three-car garages, and the idea was that people would fix them up and live in them till times got better, then they’d build real houses on the forty foot line up front. But, so far, on the three streets in the development, there aren’t more than half a dozen big houses altogether. People are still living in the little ‘garage cottages.’ I don’t think anybody has built a big house since the Depression started, but a lot of them have added on to these little places.”

“You’ll have to do that, won’t you?” Jane asked.

Fred’s expression showed that he hadn’t thought about that. Well,” he said, “I suppose that’s possible.”

But Chan, the born builder, was immediately intrigued. They were all four standing in the small bathroom. Chan was immediately studying the possibilities for enlarging the house to make room for the soon-to-be baby.

“You could build on all across the back,” he said.

Fred looked doubtful. “But that would leave this room without a window.”

“You could solve that with a skylight,” Chan said.

“That’d be an awful job, wouldn’t it?” Fred said.

Jane and Chan concluded that Fred had no appetite for such work.

Chan asked, “Are there any other places like this that are for sale?”

“I don’t know,” Fred said. “I’ll have to see if I can learn of any.”

Ned spoke up. “There’s an empty one east of us, but it’s in bad condition. It’s across the lot from here.”

“They wouldn’t want that, honey,” Fred said.

“Could we look at it?” Chan asked.

“Sure. We could look at the outside,” said Fred, “but I don’t think it has any plumbing. I think it has a privy in the back.”

“A privy!” Jane exclaimed.

“The city still has some of those, here and there,” Chan said, “but the Health Department is getting after it.”

They walked across three vacant lots to reach the cottage in question. After viewing it from all sides, the men agreed that the building was sound and the roof in good condition. They could not get into the place but could see from peering in the windows that the three rooms needed much scrubbing and painting. There was no bathroom at all, and the privy was actually attached to the back of the house.

To Fred Perkins the place was “impossible” for there was too much work to be done.

But Chan disagreed. “If the price was cheap enough it would pay to fix it up. Do you know what I’d do? The very first thing I’d do is put the basic plumbing in. That’s water to the kitchen and a john in the bathroom.”

“What bathroom?” asked Fred (for there were only the long living room, a kitchen and one bedroom).

“The bathroom would be in the addition I would build on all across the back. And that would include another bedroom.”

“Oh boy, you must really like to build stuff,” Fred said.

“He really does,” Jane assured Fred.

During the next few days Fred Perkins tracked down the owner of the place. He was an elderly farmerish gentleman who owned a tract of some thirty acres nearby, on which he kept a dozen or so milk goats. His name was Sharpe and he opened the cottage up so Chan and Jane could see it inside.

The living room was most unusual. It was eight feet wide and twenty-four feet long which represented the entire width of the building. Since the depth of the cottage overall was sixteen feet, the kitchen and bedroom were each approximately eight by twelve feet, and there were no closets. The partitions between the rooms were made of a type of tongue and grooved board called “Philadelphia fence”. They were ugly and Chan said, “Sooner or later that would have to be replaced.

As they walked through the little house Chan and Jane found their minds running in high gear with all of the possibilities of the place. First of all, of course, the problem of the water and sewer lines. Everything else hung on being able to install those. Then the building of the addition would be next. It all would mean borrowing money from Josephine L. Porter (Jo).

Chan asked Mr. Sharpe, “What is your asking price?”

“Come to my house and I can do some figuring,” Mr. Sharpe said.

His office was a model of disorder. The chairs and a couch were covered with goat skins. A huge roll top desk was crammed with papers, several coffee cups, and three ears of dried corn.

Mr. Sharpe shuffled papers around, humming faintly under his breath, and then he spoke.

“Well, now,” he said. “Probably we can work something out on that place. You see, the city of Cleveland wants all these places to have the sewers put in, storm sewers and of course the sanitary sewers. And it has to be done according to the city code. Has to be down so deep and certain size sewer crock and so on. Now, I can have it put in, but if you want to do it yourself or have it done, I would take \$300 off the price.”

“And what is the price?” Chan asked.

“If you buy it on a land-contract I’ll let you have it for \$1450 if I put the sewer in, and \$1150 if you do.”

“What is a land contract?” Jane asked.

“Well,” said Mr. Sharpe leaning back in his goatskin-draped swivel chair, “it’s an agreement, a signed agreement, a binding agreement, on both buyer and seller. The way it works the buyer agrees to make the payments on schedule and when a certain amount of the money owing is paid in, the seller will provide the buyer with a mortgage deed. And at that point the buyer has a better position than he did before. When I sell on land contract I consider when half the loan is paid it’s safe to change over to a mortgage deed. The risk to the buyer is that if he quits paying on the loan he can lose what he’s paid in and he’ll have to give up the property.”

“I see,” Chan said.

“But if you buy this property this way, you won’t have to make a down payment. I’ll charge 6% interest on the loan and the payments will be, let’s see, well, \$15 a month if you decide to put the sewer and water in yourself.”

“What about the taxes?” Chan asked.

“I’d pay them,” Mr. Sharpe said, “until you had a mortgage deed. After that you would pay them.”

Chan stood silent for a moment, then he spoke.

“We’ll have to go home and figure out whether we can do this. It’s very small and it’ll be a tight squeeze, and we can’t move in till we get the water. I’ll have to borrow some money from my mother. Can I let you know tomorrow or the next day?”

“Oh sure, and by the way, there is a well back of that house. It’s on the property line. It’s good water, though it’s hard. Everyone around there used that water till they got the city water in.

You'll want to put a gas line in, too, I guess. Has to go in its own ditch. Some of the folks around here have dug basements under their cottages, too."

"Well, we have a lot to decide," Chan said. "We'll let you know after we have a chance to talk it over."

On the way home Jane said, "You know the thought of paying only \$15 a month is really marvelous, but there is one thing about that place that is horrible."

"I know," Chan said. "That privy."

"It's not like Uncle Roge's tidy little accommodation back of the barn at Forest Camp. This one attached to the house is an atrocity!"

"Well, we'll tear it off and burn all the pieces of it."

"We'll have to dig a deep hole in a far corner," she said.

"We talk as if we're going to buy the place," he said.

"My guess is, we are, if we can raise some money."

Jo had had very mixed feelings about lending Chan money toward his home-buying venture. She was truly in sympathy with his wanting to get away from his in-laws. She felt that Grace and Dee Rahming were overly fond of Jane's two older children, and that little David was slighted. If Jane and Chan lived by themselves perhaps things would be more equal. Jane seemed fond of the baby, and after all he was hers just as much as the older two were. Jo was forgetting that Grace and Dee were no more closely related to Den and Mary Ellen than they were to David. The trouble with Chan's plan to buy a house was that he would be living so far away. She liked to visit him at least once a week, usually on a Sunday afternoon, and often, on a weekday evening she had some reason to stop over. If Chan lived way out in Marshall Heights, the mid-week visits would be out of the question, and even the Sunday ones would be a long ride on the street cars and a bus when Bryan, Edna's "roomer", couldn't give her a lift. And would she even be able to ask Bryan to drive her that far? She had recently had to discourage his romantic ideas.

She really hated the idea of having Chan so far away, but he was so persuasive and seemed to have his heart set on it. If she lent him some money for building materials it couldn't be too big a risk. A monthly payment of \$15 a month was so reasonable that it could be no worse than paying rent, even if they didn't stay there. And no down payment to lose. But the trouble was she hadn't seen the place. Chan and Jane had asked her to wait until they cleaned it up. So it must be pretty terrible. She was quite frightened about it actually, but she would lend Chan some money for materials. Meanwhile she wondered what Grace thought about all this.

Grace knew even less about the place where Jane was planning to move. Jane had simply announced that she and Chan were buying a house out in the southeast suburbs.

“Buying a house!” Grace had said. “How can you do that?”

“Well, by making monthly payments the way everyone does.”

“Where is it?” Grace asked.

“It’s in Marshall Heights and that sounds classy but it isn’t.”

“Is it as big as this house?”

“Oh no,” Jane said. “It isn’t big at all. In fact, it’s tiny.”

“Well, then,” Grace said. “Well then, I don’t know why you’d leave this big place. You and Chan and the children have three bedrooms here.”

“We need our own home, and we want to start buying.”

“I suppose Jo is lending you the down payment?”

“No, but she is lending us some money for building materials. We have to build on another bedroom.”

“How many bedrooms does it have?”

“One “

“One! My God!”

And Grace had still to learn that the little building known as 16404 Pennington Avenue had no basement, no sewers, no water line, no furnace, no toilet, and, of course, horror of horrors, no bathtub!

But 16404 have electricity, and could have a phone. The first step was to have the power turned on. Then on the first possible Sunday after taking possession Jane and Chan set forth with broom, mop, vacuum cleaner, soap, disinfectant, scrub pails, and cleaning rags. Chan brought a wrecking bar, rake, shovel and other tools. While Jane started her inside vacuuming of dust everywhere, Chan dug a large hole in a far back corner of the yard. A “honey-dipper’s” job, he called it. The privy was a “one-holer” with a five gallon paint drum beneath. The situation could have been worse, but it was bad enough. Fortunately, the paint bucket had a bail handle, so Chan was able to pick the odorous object up, using a garden-hoe to lift it. He buried the entire thing deep in the hole he had dug. After that he tore off the entire structure and burned the boards.

Meanwhile Jane scrubbed the floors with hard water drawn from the hand pump at the rear of the property. She used high powered soaps and water softeners and wore rubber gloves as her Aunt Nelle had taught her years before. When the floors were done she began washing every part of the wall surfaces that appeared to have been touched by human hands. While she was doing this, Chan began to mark the place where he would dig the ditch for the sewer and water lines. He stretched a line from the front of the house 100 feet to the street. The task of installing the plumbing began to appear far more formidable, now that the specifications requires by the city were known. The sanitary sewer must be 8 feet deep at the street and, since they might want to dig a basement sooner or later, they would put both sanitary and storm sewers down at least six feet at the house. And since the future bathroom would be in the addition at the rear of the house, the digging would have to be extended an additional fourteen feet at least. It was a bit sobering, but Chan felt that he could get it done.

But cold weather would soon be upon them; it was October now. Jane was grateful that there had already been a frost. Her annual hay-fever had ended and she felt much better. She had had a bad time this year and had been so miserable that she had been forced to wean the baby. She had come to the conclusion that in spite of the fine location near the Lake, Courtney Shores was a bad area for her allergies - another reason to move.

When they got home that first Sunday, both grandmothers were caring for the three children. Chan and Jane were tired and not disposed to answer many questions, except to say that they had made progress, but were not yet ready to have the rest of the family see the place. They wanted to get some paint on the walls first.

Grace announced, "I won't be able to spend next Sunday taking care of the children."

"I guess I could come again," Jo said, "although three babies are a handful for one grandma."

"Never mind," Jane said, "Next Sunday we'll take them all with us. The floors are clean now."

"But what will you do when they have to go to the toilet?" Jo wanted to know.

"We'll take the potty-chair along," Jane said.

"But what about David?" Jo asked. "Where'll he be?"

"Mother," Chan said, "please leave it to us, won't you?"

But Grace was just catching up with what had been said.

"Do I understand there's no bathroom?"

"Nope," Jane said, "there isn't. Not yet."

"My God" Grace said.

“Don’t worry about it,” Jane said. “We’ll have one.”

“But what a terrible lot of work to do it. Why on earth would you choose a house without a bathroom?”

“Because it’s a house we can afford. We don’t like renting.”

“You’ll ruin your health,” Grace warned.

But Jo worried about Chan’s health. He would ruin his back digging the sewer ditch. And, in fact, Chan found the digging very hard and therefore very slow. He had only weekends to dig, that is, Saturday afternoons and Sundays, and being October, the days were growing short. So Jane and Chan had to make a decision. If they were living in the little house, Chan could dig in the ditch an hour or so after each work day. They decided to face the practical problems of life at 16404 Pennington. No toilet was only one bad problem. Laundry was another - baby laundry and a lot of it. Another problem was a stove, since there was no fuel gas. They found answers to their problems, though not necessarily acceptable to Grace and Jo.

The toilet problem would be solved in the good old fashioned country way, just as it had been solved during the winter at Forest Camp - with bedroom crockery. There was still the deep hole in the corner of the back yard for disposal.

The washing problem would be taken care of by sending out the baby things to a diaper laundry, which offered “Crib Service” a complete wash, taking diapers, shirties, training panties and crib sheets. This took care of most of the three children’s clothes, and it was a blessing.

Fred and Ned Perkins lent the Chandler’s a “stinky” kerosene stove for their cooking needs. So that solved three important problems. But there remained two more. The house had to be heated, and so they had to spend money on a “three-room” circulating heater, and a ton of coal which had to be dumped in a pile on the ground beside the one-car garage. The garage, incidentally, would have to serve as a workshop for Chan, but first he would have to prop up the garage itself.

The final problem was the one of space. They would all have to fit into the 24 x 16 foot dimensions of their little home. The little bedroom would have to serve for all three youngsters. Three cribs fortunately fit quite nicely. Though Denis was four and would soon be too tall, he could use his crib a few months longer.

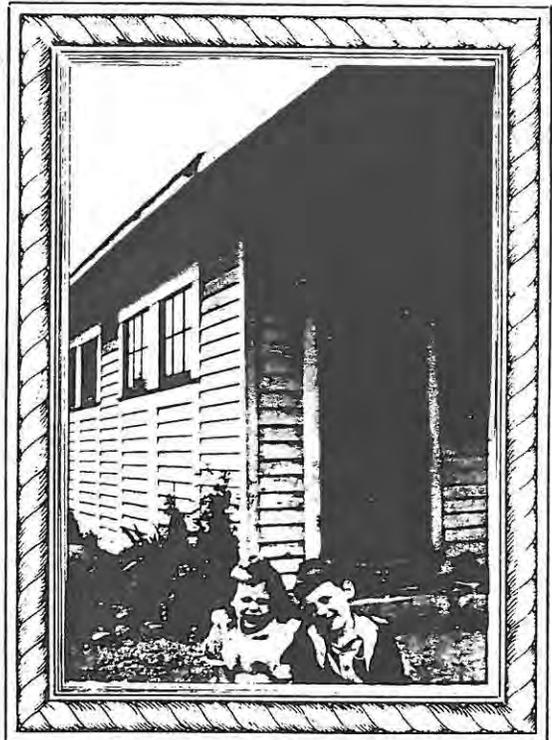
Until such time as the addition to the house could be built, there was no solution but that Jane and Chan set up their bedroom furniture in the living room, the strange long living room that was more like a corridor than a room. In a space that was only eight feet wide by twenty-four feet long it would be impossible to arrange furniture in any acceptable fashion. But Chan and Jane hit upon a clever plan. In order to have a semblance of privacy in their bedroom area, they would divide the long space. They had put a removable bookcase wall at the Courtney Shores house. It had created privacy by filling a wide archway between the living room and a wide parlor, thus

The Jarkington house when purchased Sept. 1940 for \$1100.00



view
of rear
← 1940

view
of front
→
1942



Mary Ellen + Denis at front door

All rear additions were soon removed.



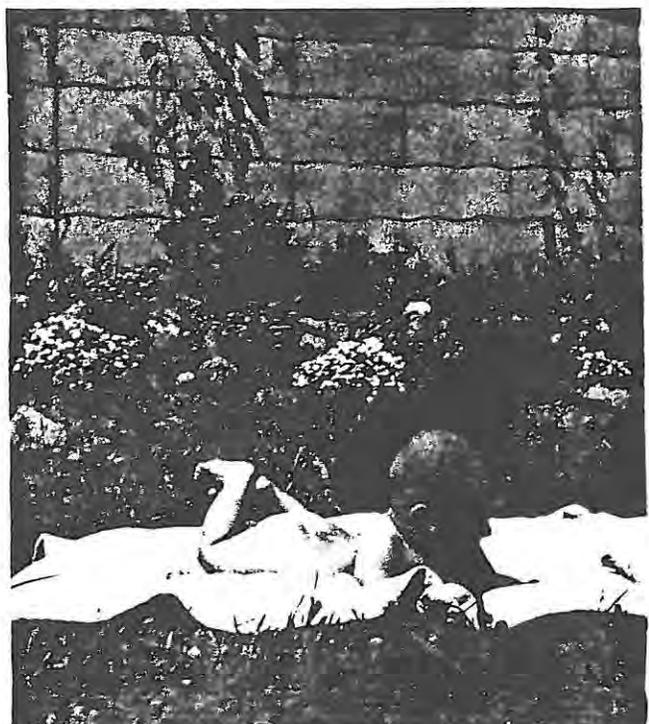
4 Chandler
Children July '42



Mary Ellen 1942



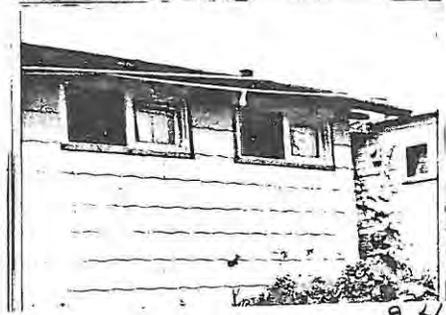
M. E., David and Denis '42



June 1942 with Bonnie
3 months

Jerry
←
"rear
view"

rear view
1942
← →



converting the parlor into a room for Grace. Chan said he could adapt the bookshelves into a similar divider in their new house. He would only need two more boards.

Grace was dismayed when the divider came down, but Jane offered her Mary Ellen's room temporarily, and reminded her that in a few more days she and Dee could have the entire house, if they intended to go on living there.

We have to be out before the November rent is due," she said.

"Well, obviously, we can't swing this place alone," Grace said, "and we've decided to get an apartment downtown. But it's a shame we all have to leave this nice location. Won't you miss the beach?"

"Of course, but we're looking for a way to get ahead, Mom, and we have to start small and humble. I assure you that you aren't going to like our house at all. In fact you won't even consider it a house no doubt."

"I'm just worried about your health, Andy," Grace slid.

"No reason to worry more than you usually do. I'll do just as well there as I do here."

"It's your hay fever I'm thinking of."

"Well it's over for this year anyway. Maybe I won't get it in the new place."

"I certainly hope you won't. You look thin and pale."

NOTHING WOULD SUIT ME BETTER

There were so many matters on Grace's mind at that time, that she could not spend all her time fretting over Jane. The upcoming presidential election had her so nervous that she spoke of little else. Wendell Wilkie seemed to her to be totally unqualified, and she was terribly afraid that he might be elected. With a war certain to be in America's future, and soon, how disastrous it would be to have an inexperienced leader at the helm.

Money, of course, as always, was Grace's greatest problem. The worry had been with her round the clock for ten years, but at the moment it was relieved considerably by the prospect of an illustrating job for the Cleveland public schools. There would be a half a dozen pamphlets on conservation, with both color and black and white drawings.

And Grace was worried about Dee who would be thirty in a few weeks, and still didn't seem to be able to find a man who'd make her happy. Thankfully, at least, she didn't seem to be going with the married chap anymore. Dee had only explained that his father had died and Ed was upset.

Grace and Dee had found an apartment downtown and it wasn't bad and it would be ever so much easier for Dee to get to work in the morning and she'd be home earlier at night and she'd be much nearer to her little theatre rehearsals. And maybe she'd get more rest and not look so thin and pale.

But with all the other things she had on her mind, she could not help being depressed that the Courtney Shores establishment was breaking up. She knew that she would miss Jane's children dreadfully, and she'd worry over them, but everyone was telling her that it was "only normal" for young marrieds to want their own place, and Chan wasn't so young any way; he was thirty-four. But there was a long-standing emotional habit working on Grace. Whenever events in Cleveland became troublous, her first instinct was to flee to New York, or to New Hampshire, to see her eastern friends and family. But that wasn't possible this year. Roge and Nelle's Denson Heights apartment had long been her home base in New York, and they weren't there. Carol and her husband, Richard, were leaving Oberlin and would be living in the New York apartment. And now that Carol no longer needed a chaperone in Nelle's opinion, Grace could not plan on staying there. She might visit a night or two, but there was nowhere she could spend much time. She might visit the Trunks overnight, but not more than that, because they had never urged her to stay longer. She had spent a couple of weeks at their place in Maine and Louise had told her that she should not keep on thinking and talking about Norris all the time.

Whenever she was in New York, Grace could spend a few weeks with Polly Patterson, but two weeks was that most Grace could possibly bear in Polly's company. Anyone who seriously felt that opera was immoral, was simply too prissy for Grace. And Norr's Aunt Georgie was old and ill and she certainly couldn't have company. She had a practical nurse living with her. Roge's sister Lucy still lived in Denson Heights, but her first husband had died a couple of years ago,

and she had remarried and wasn't lonely anymore. Of course, Grace could see any of those people if she went East, but without Nelle and Roge there, things would not be feasible. She would have to stay in Cleveland.

Chan, Jane, and the children moved into the little house in the last week of October. They were still holding the rest of the family off in the matter of coming to inspect the place. They kept the address secret.

“Wait until we are settled in,” Jane said. “We want you to see that we will be comfortable and warm this winter.”

During the following week the final days of the election campaign took up most of Grace's attention. Wilkie's voice had gone bad, and some people around both candidates were guilty of throwing low blows. The race went down to the wire and the outcome was not clear until late at night. Grace went to bed in a jubilant mood. In the morning she was on the phone to Jane.

“Isn't it marvelous?” she exulted. “I'm so relieved.”

“This time I was able to help” Jane said. It was her first time to be old enough to vote for president.

At last, Jane and Chan decided to reveal the location of their new house. They were as fixed up as they could be until the addition was finished. However, it had been smart to hold the grandmothers and Dee off for more than seven weeks. It had been smart for two reasons. One, because they used the time to work on the place, and two, because the longer they made Jo and Grace wait to see the little cottage, the more they began to imagine it as a ramshackle hovel. So, as it turned out, when they finally got to see the place, they could only experience relief.

They had been warned that the house could benefit by two coats of paint, that it was very small, and that the front yard of uncut high grass, was bisected by a ditch and long “dike” of excavated soil and clay.

1908 MILWAUKEE - PRITZLAFF - WISCONSIN

CIRCULATING HEATERS

ROCKGOLD

A simple and attractively designed heater in a compact range of sizes. Constructed with combination details of cast iron having polished top and cast nickel combination standard. Grated and fitted with door and shut, cast iron with 215. Designed with decorative, triple pipes for heat or vent. These models with cast iron front and top. Front door opens traps and equipped with easy access through which the electrical plug of the fan is visible at all times. The design of the cabinet will harmonize with the most attractive furniture in modern homes.

Beautiful Steel Walnut Finishes Fitted with Black Legs

Size	Price	Weight
Four feet high	\$127.00	60 lbs.
Four feet six inches high	145.00	65 lbs.
Five feet high	165.00	70 lbs.
Five feet six inches high	185.00	75 lbs.
Six feet high	205.00	80 lbs.
Six feet six inches high	225.00	85 lbs.
Seven feet high	245.00	90 lbs.
Seven feet six inches high	265.00	95 lbs.
Eight feet high	285.00	100 lbs.
Each	22.50	47.00

ROCKGOLD QUANT

A large heavy duty combination electric heater, built with cast iron and nickel. The top work in modern design and construction. Heavy cast construction entirely of cast iron with a large 215. Grated and fitted with door and shut. Cast iron with 215. Designed with decorative, triple pipes for heat or vent. These models with cast iron front and top. Front door opens traps and equipped with easy access through which the electrical plug of the fan is visible at all times. The design of the cabinet will harmonize with the most attractive furniture in modern homes.

Beautiful Steel Walnut Finishes Fitted with Black Legs and Cast Iron

Size	Price	Weight
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Each	22.50	47.00

They entered the front door (which was not on the front, but actually on the side, by the driveway.) As they came into the little 11 X 8 foot living-room, they faced the sofa (built by Chan the previous winter.) Behind it, and going almost as high as the ceiling, stood the bookcase wall, which partitioned the long room and created a bedroom beyond. The principal other object in the living-room was the large coal (or wood) - burning “circulating heater”. It resembled a huge cabinet radio or phonograph and it was finished in brown to resemble wood. From the back of it extended a stove pipe that rose vertically a few feet, then turned horizontally and vanished into the

kitchen area where it crossed the room and then entered a hole in a chimney. Jo did not notice this arrangement at first, but later would worry about it.

They had carpeted both parts of the divided living-room with an eight foot strip that they had cut from carpeting that Harry Porter had given them several months ago, after his mother died and her house was put up for sale. The unattractive piece of patterned broadloom had not looked well in the Courtney Shores house, but it would be invaluable in the little house, where the wooden floors had no warm basement beneath. All in all the tiny living- room was quite attractive. Cozy, was the word.

The kitchen was the best they could make it for the time being. Jane had painted the floor grey and spattered it with bright colors. They had bought a white enameled sink, and though there was no running water in the house, Chan had installed it in a frame and arranged a drain to the outdoors. They kept a copper wash-boiler filled with well-water for cooking and washing up. The Perkinses had lent them a two-burner kerosene cook-stove. Their table was Jane's old "work bench".

In the children's room, the three cribs and a small dresser lined the walls, with a tot's potty chair in one corner. They too, would manage.

In the little "compartment" that was Jane and Chan's bedroom, the bed and two dressers filled almost all the space. Their "clothes closet" was a wooden dowel in one corner.

Jo spotted the long, long stove pipe and worried about fire. Grace who knew more about such things, having lived at the "Old Brick" and at Forest Camp, said that the stove pipe would be no problem. She, however, was worried about how the children would get their baths and shampoos, and how they would brush their teeth.

"Mother, there wasn't a bathroom at the Old Brick, and there wasn't one at New Hampshire either."

"Oh," said Grace, "but that's different. That was all a temporary thing."

"So's this, Mother, for goodness sake It won't hurt us."

"I'm just thinking of these babies," Grace said.

"I know you are. But stop to remember; you and Dad lived at the Old Brick when I was born. Didn't Dee and I get baths and shampoos and tooth brushing?"

Jo spoke up. "A few weeks of pioneering won't do any harm to any of them, I'm sure."

"No, I suppose not," Grace admitted, "but that big house was so lovely with all those nice rooms."

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Once the hurdle of the family inspection tour was past Jane and Chan could apply themselves to more basic and less cosmetic matters. They had created the simple appearance of comfort, now they must work toward the fact. The running water and the toilet must come very soon. The Perkinses had been most kind in extending “rest room hospitality” but Chan and Jane did not really want to inconvenience Ned and Fred, and the distance across the three vacant lots was an inconvenience in itself. But digging the long, deep ditch was progressing very slowly because of the hardness of the local clay soil. Chan had to use a heavy mattock to loosen the earth before he could use his long-handled shovel to throw the dirt out of the ditch. It was back-ache work. And he came to a point where he needed to work on something else. He explained to Jane.

“I’m going to have to stop this long enough to frame up that addition before the weather gets really bad. It’s Indian Summer now and I’d better get right at it. I’ll have to dig footers and make a foundation and don’t want to be doing that when things start freezing.”

But there could be no running water until the ditch was finished. Fred Perkins knew of a man who would dig for three dollars a day, so Chan hired him. The man made very slow progress and after several days he tired of the work and quit. “I’ll have to do it myself,” Chan concluded.

But working all day for two Sundays, Saturday afternoons, and evenings (by electric light) Chan got the rough framed addition built and a roof of sorts on. Rough flooring was in as well. Then he had to return to the digging. It was nearly Thanksgiving and the weather was chilly. There had been autumnal rains. The sewer ditch turned muddy. The digging was a nightmare. Chan told about it at his mother’s house on Thanksgiving Day. Jo had invited a motley crowd. In addition to her son and his family, present were Grace, Dee, and also Carle. And Bryan might have been present, as well, but he was spending the holiday with relatives in Henley, a town downstate. Harry Porter was not there, but instead, Jo introduced a stranger, a Mr. Madison. Later, Grace asked Edna privately, “Who is Mr. Madison?” She was surprised but not enlightened by Edna’s answer. “He’s Jo’s newest boy friend.”

During the meal, Carle, always gentlemanly and a bit formal, inquired of Chan, “How does the excavation progress?”

“Terrible!” Chan said. “It’s downright disgusting. These cold nights the sides of my ditch are freezing and there’s so much water in the clay from the rain we’ve been having. In the daytime the sun shines into the ditch and the dirt thaws and the sides have been caving in. Then I have to shovel it all out before I’m back to the point where I was the day before.”

“Oh, Chan!” his mother said. “That’s just awful!”

Jane spoke up. “And he had such nice straight sides on the ditch.”

“That’s the least of the problem,” Chan said. “It’s this problem of the kind of sticky soil it is. I’d have had it done if we’d been in the place two months earlier. The way it is now, when I try to throw out a shovelful of dirt, half of it sticks to the shovel, because it’s heavy damp mud. It makes the shovel heavy even when I’ve tried to empty it.”

“He’s down fairly deep at the street end,” Jane said, “and all I can see of him is his stocking cap, and then that shovel full of clay comes up in the air.”

“Oh, Chan!” his mother said again.

“That’s not the worst part of it,” Chan said. “The dirt on the top that’s been thrown out before has a way of liking to fall back into the ditch. It’s drier and it’s loose. So usually, when I throw out a shovelful, some clods will roll down the pile and fall into the ditch again. I’ve learned to wait till they’ve stopped rolling down, before I bend over to take another shovelful, but most times as soon as I do lean over, one last chunk of dirt rolls down and hits me on the head.”

Everyone at the table laughed except Jo who looked stricken and said, “Oh, Chan That’s just terrible!”

Later, when they were at home in their apartment downtown, Grace said to Dee, “Chan certainly knows how to play on his mama’s sympathies.”

“What do you mean?”

“Oh, that about digging the ditch.”

“Well, of course it is a lousy job,” Dee said.

“I’m sure it is, but the way she dotes on him is so obvious.”

“Well, Mother, I suppose that’s natural. He’s her only child.”

“Yes, and your father was, too. That is, he was the only boy, and Mother Rahming spoiled him. I certainly pray that sort of thing doesn’t ruin Jane’s marriage, the way it ruined mine.”

“I don’t see that Chan is much like Dad. I don’t see that it’s the same kind of thing.”

“Well, you may be right, but she dotes on Chan, and she dotes on David, and that’s a pity. She’ll help them out with all their little problems.”

“Mother, Jo’s bought some very nice things for Denis and Mary Ellen.”

“Yes,” Grace said, “but things are only things.”

It was true enough that Jo worried over Chan and little David, but in all fairness, she was very worried about all of them with winter coming on. Jo had always been a city girl. She could not

imagine living in a house without running water and an inside toilet. Even though Jane had the benefit of the diaper service, she had to haul that horrible funny-tasting well-water for cooking and bathing and anything else. Jo could not let them go on without the water line and sewer. She called Chan before the Thanksgiving weekend was over and told him to have a plumber finish the digging and pipe lines. She would give him the money even if it had to be considered a Christmas present.

Chan and Jane were extremely relieved with this improvement in the situation, for it freed Chan to return to his building. He set about putting windows in the rear addition. There would be three rooms, he and Jane had decided. A small room that would eventually be the laundry room, next the bathroom, and last the largest, which would be their own bedroom. The whole area was only roughed in, but Chan soon had it closed against the weather, though of course it was unheated.

Chan paid a plumbing contractor named Henry Palmer to see that the work was finished to the extent that there was running cold water to the kitchen sink and the sink properly connected to the sewer line. "Henry Plumber, the Palmer" (as Chan called him) and his helpers dug the ditch all the way through under the house to the rear bathroom area where they completed the water and sewer pipelines and installed, finally, and in time for Christmas, the wonderful, beautiful item, the "johnny", which was a holiday present from Harry Porter. Life in the little house improved marvelously.

While the Chandlers were occupied so strenuously that autumn, Mim was embarking on a new life as well. She had married Bill Tallmadge in June and they'd been in Oberlin throughout the summer, staying with Merly and Emmie. But Bill had found himself a teaching job in a Texas town on the Red river, and Mim was given a party before following her man to the largest state. Merly invited most of the family and Mim's best friend to a combination belated wedding reception and goodbye party.

Chan at that time was still "desperately digging the deep ditch" as Jane put it. He dared not take a Sunday off, but Gertrude and Bill gave Grace and Jane a ride to Oberlin. Jane took her oldest and her youngest along, explaining that Mary Ellen had stayed home because she had the sniffles. Jane herself had a little nagging, cough that she said was allergy.

Grace said, "I don't think Jane eats right. She shouldn't have that cough, and the children shouldn't have colds."

Gertrude laughed and said, "Grace, you have such a strange viewpoint about illness."

"I don't know what you mean, Trudy," Grace said.

"Oh, you and Merly are so funny about anyone's ailments. You always think they are caused by some oversight or misconduct on the sufferer's part."

“Oh, Trudy” Grace protested, “No, I don’t do that.”

“Well, you know,” Gertrude said, in her characteristic good natured drawl, “when you and Merly and Nelle used to be Christian Scientists, you fell into the habit of blaming everybody’s ills on ‘mortal mind’ thoughts. Now you look for some other human mistake.”

“Oh, Trudy” Grace said. “But, don’t you agree that illness has a cause?”

“What Trudy means,” said Bill, “is that illness doesn’t have to indicate culpability.”

“Thank you, Bill,” Gertrude said, “for being my interpreter. I always knew I should have kept on being a teacher.” They had both graduated from Oberlin College in the same year, and each had taught for six years after. Then they had married and Gertrude had devoted herself to being a mother and a housewife. But there was no edge to her voice as she kidded both Grace and Bill.

“Now your mother,” Gertrude went on, “may have felt that illness was caused by a failure to read Scripture daily.”

“That’s right,” Bill said. “She did indeed.”

“Whereas,” said Gertrude, “Grace thinks Jane is coughing because her diet is wrong.”

Jane had been listening and now added her opinion.

“When my children are sick, Mother thinks it’s because they don’t always get a bath every day.”

“Well, I do think...” Grace began, but Jane went on.

“And Mother thinks that when Dee is sick it’s because she stays out too late on her dates, and when Mother gets a cold she’s been working too hard.”

Grace steered the conversation along other lines and soon they were at Merly’s house, where Grace occupied herself entirely with Denis. Baby David had gone to sleep, and Jane did not know where to put him.

“We borrowed a playpen,” Mim said. “Come upstairs. Trink’s nursing Katie up here.”

Soon both babies were settled.

“Did you tell Andy your news?” Trink asked.

“Not yet,” Mim said.

“I can guess,” Jane said. “A baby? Is that right?”

“Yes,” Mim said a bit shyly, “I think so.”

“When?”

“Late May, I think, but I’ll go to a doctor when I get to Texas.”

“Texas,” Jane said. “Oh, Mim! That’s so far away.”

“Well, not so far because we’ll be on the north border of it, you know.”

“Yes, but I don’t know when we’ll ever see you again,” Jane said. “Oberlin won’t be the same without you.”

“Oh, heck,” Mim said. “I’ll be back. I’ll at least be back with my offspring next summer. I’ll want Mom to see him or her as the case may be.”

“Tell me something, Mim; what did Aunt Merly say when you told her you were pregnant? Or did you tell her yet?”

“Oh, sure. She knows,” Mim said.

“She wasn’t horrified?” Jane asked.

“Oh, no. She just said ‘You didn’t lose any time, did you?’”

“Well,” Jane said, “my mother is always horrified, and it makes me so peeved.”

Trink said, “It’s because of Dee. She wants Dee to be married and have children.”

“Nothing,” Jane said, “would suit me better. It would take Mother’s attention away from me.”

Jane really felt sad to see Mim move to Texas, but it was a busy autumn and there was much to occupy her thoughts and energy. The work on the house, and the primitive conditions for housekeeping, the anxiety over the election, her mother’s continued fretting over the children, all these made demands. But there was another change in their lives. In early December Chan left his WPA work in Historical Records where he had been classified as a Research Editor. He now entered the National Defense Training program.

When he got word that he was to be in the program Chan explained it to Jane.

The idea is to prepare us for a real job in an industry that’s going to be vital if we get into the war. People are divided about helping glarid, but you can’t find anyone against defense.”

“What are you going to be doing?” Jane asked.

“I’ll be learning how to be a patternmaker,” he said, and when Jane looked a bit puzzled, he said, “Not tissue paper dress patterns, but wooden patterns. They use them to make castings.”

“I know what they are,” Jane reminded him. “I learned at the Abbott Bronze Foundry what a pattern is, and what a core is, and a parting line, and flasks, end gates, and burrs, and green sand, and... and that’s all I can think of.”

“It’s OK, I’m convinced,” Chan said. “So now I go from being a white-collar WPA worker, to being a blue-collar scholar. Though folks learning a trade aren’t scholars, I dare say, but ‘student’ or ‘apprentice’ doesn’t rhyme.”

“I hope we can afford this. Can we?”

“It’s the same pay,” Chan said, “but if it leads to a real job then I suppose we’re making some kind of progress.”

“Of course we are!” Jane said. “Because you love working with wood.”

And a week later he came home to report that while he might not be a white collar worker, at least he was learning to be a “white-apron” worker.

“What’s that about?” Jane asked.

“Oh, it seems patternmakers consider themselves very high up in the hierarchy of skilled trades. Other tradesmen wear blue aprons, or grey aprons, but patternmakers wear white.”

“Well, good!” Jane said, “maybe that will make your mother feel better about the loss of the white collar. She feels you’ve been demoted.”

YOU'LL FORGET THE PAIN, NED

Suddenly Christmas was at hand. Dee was busy rehearsing a play and Grace was occupied with the conservation drawings. Those drawings had been a great relief to Dee when the house at Courtney Shores broke up, because she would not have felt that they could afford the downtown apartment on her small salary alone. So far Grace had not been paid anything for the work, but she had offered a water color as payment for her gynecologist's bill, and the doctor had been so pleased with it that he had insisted on her taking some money as well. And Polly Patterson had written Grace urging her to come to New York to market the new wall hanging (Polly liked the ten per cent commission). Dee had long had faith in her mother's literary efforts, but that work was temporarily shelved. For all these reasons, Christmas, like so many in the past ten years would be rather slim.

Jo Porter, however, had been preparing for Christmas for months and because of her job at Strohmeier's she saw bargains and laid things away for the big day.

In the little house on Pennington Avenue Christmas was on a small scale. In the tiny living room, a tiny tree, but since the children were all small, as well, they had no complaints about any of it. Their little toys made them supremely happy, and Den and Mary Ellen were especially delighted to have red Christmas stockings filled with mysterious, bulky lumps inside and jingly bells on the toes and heels.

Christmas dinner was to be at Edna's house on Cartwright Street. Jane and Grace and Dee were continually referring to it as "your mother's place", or "Jo's house", or using her common nickname "Jo' house". Chan reminded them at times, "Don't forget. It's my Aunt Edna's house." Be that as it may, it always seemed like Jo's house to other people, and this was odd, in a way, because the atmosphere and the decor of the place were totally Edna's.

On Christmas morning Grace and Dee came by bus to be with "their nippers" to see "what Santa brought us." In the afternoon they all went to have dinner with Jo and Edna, and to partake in more gift-giving, which Jo and Edna, and even Harry Porter, referred to using the German term "bêschung". Jo's gifts to the family were clothing, for the most part, while Harry and Edna each gave money. Jane and Chan had made their gifts, and Grace had given Jo and Edna each a watercolor. Dee gave a box of special chocolates, and told everyone about the "chocolate Christmas" several years before.

A few days before Christmas, a package had arrived from Springfield. It contained little presents for Jane, Chan and the children, and for Dee, of course. Much to her surprise, there was one for Grace. The tags on the gifts did not have a giver's name, but they were all made out in Norris's writing. Just a small tag saying simply "For Grace."

Grace had been a bit flustered. She said, "What a queer idea!"

Dee looked at her. "Why?"

"Well," Grace said, "Norris Rahming doesn't have to be sending me gifts."

"You'd probably have been hurt if he'd sent to all of us except you. That would have been more queer if you ask me."

"He hasn't been in the habit of sending me Christmas presents."

"Well, Mother, it's been several years since he sent to any of us."

"After what he did to me, I wonder he does now."

"Oh, Mother, you mustn't hold on to those grudges. It's bad for you."

"But I still don't know why he sent it," Grace said.

"Can't you see that it was simply being nice?"

That night Grace wrote in her diary: "I can remember when it would have thrilled me to have had any word from Norris Rahming. And so it would have continued under different conditions."

And thus, year after year, Grace fought to persuade herself that her love for Norris was at last totally dead. Always it was a losing battle.

Between Christmas and New Year's, Norris phoned Dee at the office to ask if he might bring Ethel for a two week visit. Ethel, he said, was driving Frederica out of her mind.

"I know what you mean, Daddy. She gets on my nerves, too." "Well, ask Jane if she'd mind having Ethel for a while." "Oh," Dee said, "Jane couldn't possibly. They have no room at all for anyone. And, Daddy, they don't have hot water or a bathtub."

"Well, what's she living in? A cave?" Norris asked.

"It's not much better," Dee said. "It's sort of a shack."

"How come? What happened?"

"They want to buy this place. They don't like renting."

"Well, they're not wrong about that, of course. I'd like to buy a house, too. But, tell me, can have you have Ethel for a couple of weeks?"

"I guess so, Daddy."

“We’d be ever so grateful. We have to do some obligatory entertaining of some of the faculty. Ethie’s no asset at a party. And it’s a strain on Frederica, who’s not at all well, I might add.”

“You go ahead and bring Ethie, Dad.”

Grace was thrown off balance somewhat by the plan; she did not want to see Norris and stayed in the bathroom until he had left, even though he called to her to come and say hello.

She was shocked by Ethel’s appearance. The best word to describe it was “faded”. Her hair was not yet grey, but neither was it golden blond as it had been. Now it was mousey drab. Her face wasn’t very wrinkled, but it was crêpe-like and dry. Ethel’s voice was the most disturbing; it was slightly hoarse, and at times it tapered off to a breathy wisp. And Ethel, who had always seemed tentative, now was even more so. She had little to say beyond her soft nervous laugh. Jane had once said of Ethel, “She is the most gentle person I know, even more so than Aunt Emmie who sometimes has a tiny tantrum.”

Grace spoke of Ethel to Dee.

“Poor Ethel! She is a mere shadow of what she used to be.”

“She was always mousey, Mother,” Dee said.

“Not like this. She’s mentally and physically in very sad shape. Norris is very bad for her. Very bad indeed.”

“Now why on earth do you say that?” Dee was annoyed.

“Well, perhaps it’s Frederica then,” Grace said.

“Mother, don’t always blame people for things. Ethie’s in menopause. That’s not Daddy’s fault or Frederica’s either. Besides, I like them.”

“Well, if you like them why don’t you live with them?”

Dee looked amazed. “Mother, don’t you know how ridiculous that sounds?”

“You don’t usually talk to me this way.” Grace said.

“Well, but you do have a very bad habit of blaming someone for things you’re concerned about.”

“What I do know is that there’s more than menopause the matter with Ethel.”

“Well, she’s enjoying being here in Cleveland and even downtown like this. Why don’t we take her over to Strohmeyer’s and the other stores while the Christmas trimmings are still up?”

Jane was able to come downtown that Saturday before Norris took Ethel back to Springfield. Jane, too, noticed the change in Ethel and particularly that her vision was so poor. They had all

gone over to Strohmeyer's store to meet Dee who worked half a day on Saturday. Ethel was not blind, but she asked Jane to take her arm and guide her through the post-holiday crowds, so that she did not stumble on the curbs or the streetcar tracks. Ethel said she did not want to jostle anyone.

Once inside Strohmeyer's Ethel said, "I can't see the Christmas decorations very well, but it smells like Strohmeyer's. It always had a certain smell as soon as you come in the revolving door from the street. Mama and I always liked that smell in here."

"That's because the perfumes and cosmetics are on this floor," Jane said.

"And you know," Ethel went on, "I noticed, outdoors in the street, that Cleveland still smells like Cleveland. Springfield doesn't smell the same. I wish I still lived here."

"It's the trains and steel mills and paint factories," Jane said.

"Not a good smell really," Grace said. "New York smells better to me. It's all fish and tide-water smell."

"Well," said Ethel, "this Cleveland smell is making me homesick. I worked downtown here so many years."

"Ethie," Grace said, "nothing stays the same in this world. Nothing permanent but change, Ethie."

"I know," Ethel said, "and it's very sad."

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Before Jane said goodbye to Ethel she implored her, “Get Daddy to take you to an eye doctor. Maybe new glasses are what you need.”

“Norris can’t afford it, dear. Frederica needs an operation. She has an ‘inflamed tube’, whatever that is.”

“Probably a fallopian tube,” Jane guessed.

“I don’t know about those things,” Ethel said.

No, I’m sure you don’t, Jane thought. How could Ethie know about fallopian tubes? A Christian Scientist virgin?

But Jane had many other things to think about. It was deep winter now, and the little house on Pennington Avenue had icy cold floors. The rooms themselves were cozy warm, but the floors were frigid, especially so, because when Henry Palmer the plumber completed the work he had been contracted to do, the open sewer ditch still ran in under the front foundation leaving a large opening for cold air to enter. Chan had hung a piece of canvas over the place but it did not keep out cold winds.

He and Jane had decided they must dig a partial basement under the little house in order to eventually install a furnace down below. It was their plan to put their coal-burning heater down there temporarily. They also must provide for a hot-water heater to come in the course of time.

But days were not long enough. The plumber had not agreed to fill the long sewer ditch and it needed to be back-filled at least to keep the water line from freezing. It was also a hazard while it remained open and deep.

Chan’s pattern-making classes were held at an East Cleveland high school, in the afternoon and evening, after the regular school day was over. Chan left for work at 2:30 p.m. and got home at 10 p.m. In the mornings, he worked at filling the sewer ditch. He was eager to continue work on the addition at the rear of the house.

Jane, meanwhile, wanted to begin work on digging the basement, for the evenings were lonely and the chilly floor was a problem. It was tempting to just go to bed and read, but there was no progress to be made that way. Therefore, after the three children were in bed, Jane went under the house to work on the digging. The clay was hard, and she was not strong enough to swing a mattock, even had there been room to do so. She discovered that she could chip away the clay with a large claw hammer and let the dirt fall into a half bushel basket below. When the basket was filled to the limit of what Jane could lift, she dumped the dirt outside. The next day Chan would shovel it away, and when evening came Jane would go below again. As January progressed, the days grew colder. Jane quoted one of Aunt Ida’s favorite sayings, “As the days

begin to lengthen, the cold begins to strengthen.” Below in the “basement” which was still only a wide ditch it was very cold, and a quiet damp cold at that, a dead cold. The tarpaulin that hung over the opening kept out the wind, but not the nighttime winter air. Jane took to wearing a pair of Howd’s old long underwear that he had worn when he worked in the factory the first winter of their marriage, the winter she was pregnant with Denis. That was the year Howd had bought her the Scottish terrier, Bonnie, for Christmas. She still had Bonnie who was five years old now and who loved and was loved by the children. Bonnie worried when Jane went down under the house to dig. With Chan away, the children asleep, and Jane gone down so mysteriously under the floor, the little dog was upset and puzzled. After Chan made a trap door in the floor and Bonnie could see Jane go down a ladder, the worrying eased.

Jane and “Ned” Perkins had become good friends and since Ned had no children, she usually came across the vacant lots to chat with Jane. Ned’s baby had been due in the first week of January, but by the fifteenth she was still waiting uncomfortably for labor to start. The Perkins’ had no phone, but Jane and Chan had told them to feel free to come over any time of day or night to call Ned’s doctor if labor began. Late at night, a few days later, Fred came to call the doctor.

“I guess the time has come,” he told Jane, who came to the door in her robe.

“Oh, wonderful!” Jane said, “How far apart are her pains?”

Fred said, “She hasn’t had pains, but the water broke.”

A few minutes later, Fred was telling the doctor the same thing - that Ned hadn’t had any pains, and Fred nearly forgot to mention about the water till Jane reminded him. When Fred told the doctor that, he was told to get Ned to the hospital.

Jane and Chan went back to bed, Fred having assured them that he’d call them as soon as the baby arrived.

“It could be quite a long while,” Jane told Chan, “because her pains haven’t started yet and it will be a dry birth. Dee was a dry birth and it was difficult. I hope Ned will have better luck. Oh, of course, that was thirty years ago. They didn’t know as much then as they do now.”

But labor was indeed slow. By the next morning they had heard nothing from Fred Perkins. The day passed and when Chan came home Jane reported that Fred still had not called and she was puzzled. It had been twenty hours.

“Oh,” Chan said, “the baby’s probably here and they’re so excited about it that they forgot to call us. Doesn’t Fred have a family? He’s likely with them.”

“I’d still think he’d call us,” Jane said. Her feelings were hurt.

“Oh, he’ll call us soon I’m sure,” Chan said.

But Fred didn't call and the evening passed. About eleven p.m. he tapped on the Chandler's front door. Jane was in bed reading and Chan answered the knock. She could hear Fred's voice speaking in low tones. It did not sound like a happy new father. Jane put on her robe and joined the men at the door.

"What is it, Fred? Won't you come in?"

"No, I'm dead tired. There's no news yet, and Ned is exhausted. And I just told Chan - the doctor thinks the baby's dead."

"Oh, no!" Jane cried. "Really?"

"Well, he doesn't hear a heartbeat, but we haven't told Ned, of course."

"Of course," Jane said in a hushed voice, "but why is it so slow?"

"The doctor doesn't know. She's having pains, but she isn't dilating much."

"Maybe the doctor's wrong," Chan said, for lack of anything else positive to say.

"I hope so," Fred said. "Is it alright if I gave the hospital your number? They told me to go home and get some sleep."

After Fred had left, Jane said, "If the doctor can't hear a heartbeat, it's because there isn't any heartbeat."

"Seems likely."

"Well, maybe it's not her doctor's fault, but he didn't sound very good. Ned told me that he never once took her blood pressure and he never weighed her."

"Why did she go to someone like that?"

"Because Fred's mother recommended him. She said that he was known all over the south side as a "baby doctor". He's delivered several thousand babies."

"Alive?"

Twenty-four hours later, Ned's doctor decided to take the baby with forceps after manually dilating the cervix. So after more than forty-eight hours of futile labor, Ned was delivered of a stillborn boy child. Jane visited Ned in the hospital and they said what little there was to be said.

"Fred saw him, Jane. He said he looked perfect."

"It probably wasn't the doctor's fault, Ned, but next time, go to an obstetrician."

“Oh, Andy, there isn’t going to be any next time. It was terrible. I don’t know what Dr. Chambers did, but he put his hand inside to get things started and he hurt me so bad, And all that was for nothing.”

“Didn’t you have any anesthetic at all?” Jane asked. “Oh, yes. When he took the baby, but it was so terrible before. I’d never want to go through that again.”

“Ned, it usually doesn’t happen like that. It wouldn’t happen that way again to you.”

“Well, but it might.”

“You’ll forget the pain, Ned. Really. People always do.”

After the loss of the baby, Fred Perkins entered a period of restlessness. He had been a fellow worker with Chan on the WPA Historical Records project, but he had not gone into the defense training program when the Records project ended. Instead he did something he had long been dreaming about. He opened a bookshop near the Cleveland University campus. But after two months in business he knew the venture was not going to work out. He decided the location was not right, but Jane and Chan felt that the appearance of the shop was against it. Fred and Ned’s collection of books had seemed to be large when seen in their little home, but spread out on a line of secondhand card tables; the inventory was neither impressive nor inviting. But Fred did have a number of interesting books and some rare ones and he made a few sales. Sometimes after selling a book he regretted parting with it, and he even removed a few from the tables. In any case, the volume of business did not warrant paying rent for the little below-street-level shop, so Fred and Ned decided to return to conducting their book trade through the mails.

But Fred’s problems seemed to overwhelm him one gray morning in early March, and he went downtown and enlisted in the Army.

After Fred left for his basic training, Ned and Jane’s friendship became much stronger. If Ned’s baby had lived she would have been occupied with his care, but her house was empty, so she turned to Jane for company and unconsciously for comfort. She would come across the field every weekday morning and call out to Jane wherever she might be in the house, “Hi, Andy! Shall I start the coffee?” and they would chat for an hour. Ned had told Jane that Fred’s parents wanted her to come and live with them.

“But I don’t want to, Andy. I see them every weekend. Mom Perkins is good to me, she likes me. But I haven’t much in common with them. Fred’s sister’s OK, too, but I’d rather stay here in our little house till Fred gets back. I don’t care how long that takes. I have my book binding to do, and I can fix up our house. Paint and wallpaper and so on Andy, do you and Chan think we’re going to get into the War?”

“We hope not, but everyone seems sure we will,” Jane said. “My mother reads a lot and she has a friend in Rome who writes her and says it’s inevitable that the U.S. will get in. That woman’s

husband is in our embassy in Rome and that's why Mother can write to her. They're hearing things everyday about the War. Her letters to Mother sound sort of funny as though she suspected someone might read them, but they are supposed to be safe when they go in the embassy pouch."

"I suppose then it's true what Fred said - that he'd have been drafted anyway, since we have no children."

"If we get in the War, I expect that's true."

"You're lucky, Jane, with your three kids. If I would have got pregnant now, it wouldn't have kept Fred out of the draft."

I'D BE HAPPY IF YOU WERE MARRIED

But Jane, even with three children, was not entirely free from worries about the draft. The Selective Service had called for all men between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-five to register. Chan was thirty-four. He told Jane that it was highly unlikely he would ever be called.

“In the first place I’ll be thirty-five in June, so I would only be eligible one more year, and when they have to call men with families, things will be very bad indeed.”

But they had no crystal ball to tell them just how bad things were going to get. Meanwhile the draft law provided that as many as 900,000 men were to serve and be trained for a period of twelve months, and provided that this term could be extended by Congress in an emergency.

But in this spring of 1941 Chan and Jane had many other concerns. They had to press ahead with improving the little house. They wanted a hot water heater but since gas was cheaper than electricity for this purpose, they would have to dig another ditch from the house to the street to hook up with the gas main. It need only be a small ditch eighteen inches deep, but the ground was frozen hard, so they deferred that work until spring after thawing weather arrived. But the floors were so cold that they now attacked that problem. They still had the large opening at the front of the house where they must throw out the dirt they were removing to make a small basement for the future gas furnace. Chan now dug on weekends and at least two hours every morning. In the evenings when the children were all asleep, Jane continued with her own chipping away at the clay walls of the ever-widening space. The tarpaulin over the opening did not keep the cold wind from blowing in under the floor. And so they hurried. It took the month of February to make the space they needed to install a gas furnace. But for the time being, they had another plan to make the floors warm. They would put the coal-burning circulating heater down in what they now called “the Hole”. It would need a very long run of chimney pipe to carry the smoke up from the heater, through a hole in the floor, upward to a suitable height overhead, thence across the width of the kitchen to a hole in the chimney. The blued-steel pipe already traveled from the tiny living room, through a hole in the wall and across the kitchen to the chimney, but it would need a much greater vertical section with the new plan.

They scheduled the change for a Sunday, and since they would have to let the fire go out in the heater, they knew the house would grow cold, too cold for the children. The grandmothers were alarmed.

Jane said, “Don’t worry Ned has offered to take them over to her place.”

But Grace and Dee came and collected Denis on Saturday and took him to their place in the downtown hotel. And Jo came, chauffeured by her “boyfriend” (whom Grace privately called “the ubiquitous Mr. Madison, a man unpredictable and wholly without charm.”) They took the baby, David, with them to them to spend Sunday at the Cartwright Avenue house. So that left only little, three-year-old Mary Ellen for Ned to care for, and Trink had offered to take her,

herself, saying, "If David is Jo's pet, and Denis is Aunt Grace's and Dee's, I shall lay claim to Mary Ellen as 'my baby'." But Trink lived so far away on the west side of Cleveland, that Jane said it would be simpler to let Ned take her, and since Trink knew that Ned had lost a baby, she decided that Ned would "no doubt benefit greatly" by borrowing Mary Ellen. Jane wasn't certain about that, but gladly let Ned take her.

That Sunday was a busy day. They had let the fire go out the evening before so the heater was cold and ready to be dismantled and lowered into the Hole.

Chan had already bought the extra 2-foot lengths of stove pipe, and a floor register to set into a hole cut in the living floor directly over the circulating heater. He would also cut a square hole in the corner of the kitchen where the stove pipe would rise from below.

He had explained it all to the fearful grandmothers.

"The heat from the stove will rise through the register and heat the front room. The heat will also spread out all over under the floor and make all the rooms warmer."

"Even the addition?" Grace asked.

"No, not the addition," Chan said. "That will still be cold this winter. But the stove pipe will give out a lot of warmth where it comes up through the kitchen."

Both grandmothers suddenly thought of something.

"Holy Toledo!" said Jo.

And "Goodnight nurse!" said Grace.

Then in a duet, "The babies will burn themselves on it!"

"Have a bit of faith in us," Jane said. "Chan has already taken care of that. He's made a guard of hardware cloth to keep the kids from touching the pipe. Or us and Bonnie for that matter."

Chan first unbolted the shell of the heater and took the metal sections down below. He had to have help from the man who lived next door, in lowering the heavy fire pot down the ladder through the trap door. They used a heavy length of strong hemp rope with Chan below easing the burden down while the neighbor, Steven Magyar, lowered away. That was the only part of the project that had worried Chan as he had hurt his back at the Courtney Shores place, while moving the small potbellied stove that had heated his workshop. But this time he had, as he said, used his head to save his back.

It did not take long to reassemble the heating stove, and then the next step was to saw the hole in the floor for the warm air register, and the other hole in the kitchen corner for the stove pipe. He

had already marked the lines on the floor and done part of the sawing. When that part was done he put the stove pipe together and in place and suspended the long horizontal part in two places with wires. The last step was putting the wire guard around the pipe where it came up from below.

By evening when the children were to return, the house was cozy; its floors warm for the first time. Jane called the grandmothers to tell them all was ready. Jo and Mr. Madison brought David back, and Ned had already returned Mary Ellen. Grace, however, said she'd like to keep Denis a day or two longer.

"But, Mother, we're having a house warming - literally. And I made a cake."

"Oh, don't worry," Grace said, "I'll feed him something he likes."

"That's not the point, Mother. We're having a celebration. Denis ought to be here. We'll come get him."

"Jane," Grace said, "What makes you so jealous?"

"Jealous" said Jane. "Mom, I don't know what you mean."

"Well, I know what I mean," Grace said.

Grace was upset. There were so many things on her mind that kept her awake at night. It was convenient living downtown, but she missed the Courtney Shores house, where she had a large room all to herself, and where there were two bathrooms, or almost two bathrooms, and where it was a short walk to the beach. But most of all she missed the children and worried about them. She could no longer keep an eye on them. She was convinced that the arrival of Chan's son, David, had been very bad for Denis. She had spoken of this to Trink.

"The whole household revolves around that baby," Grace had said.

"Oh, but, Aunt Grace, a household always revolves around a young baby. It has to."

"But," Grace said, "not to the detriment of the older children."

"I was at Jane's a lot last summer, before Kathy was born. I never saw that Denis and Mary Ellen were slighted."

"Oh, Trink," Grace said, "You don't see things as I do. Chan's mother is just maudlin over David."

"But Jane and Chan aren't partial," Trink insisted.

“But David is the very picture of Chan. He’s bound to dote on him,” Grace said.

“Well,” Trink had said, “I didn’t observe that. He’s always been good to the others if I’m any judge.”

But Grace decided that Trink was not any judge, for she was convinced that Denis was subdued since the birth of David. Of course Jane did not agree.

“Mother, Denis’ growing up, and he is a serious child, but David has nothing to do with it. Denis’ very fond of David; he’s always afraid he’ll hurt himself or swallow something he might choke on, or get into poison.”

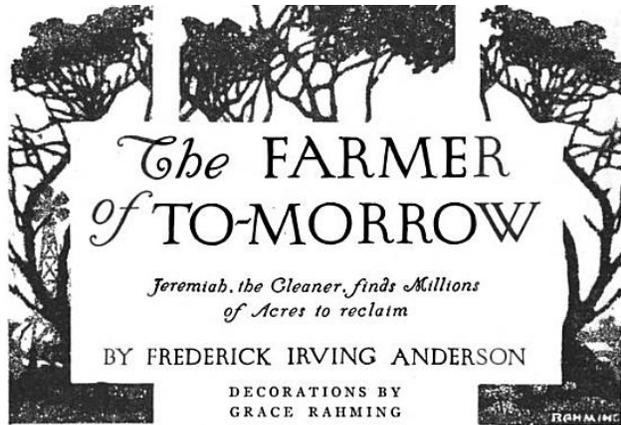
But Grace dismissed Jane’s arguments because she perceived Jane to be an arguer like her father. And she continued to worry over Denis. Dee was crazy about Denis; too bad that he wasn’t Dee’s little boy. Dee should have children and a husband. Why was it she never liked the young men who admired her? Just now, there was a fine young chap named Einer Svensen whom Dee had met in her little theater group, the Campbell Players. Einer was handsome in a classic Scandinavian way, but Dee did not seem to be especially interested in him. It was always that way. A nice chap came around showing signs of being interested seriously in Dee and she didn’t like him. The affair with the married man was over. Grace did not know just how it had ended, but his father had died and it had upset him. Probably he felt remorse. And now, with that relationship over, Dee seemed, for the moment, to be in love with no one. Her family always knew when Dee was in love; she went about with a moonstruck look on her face. She did not look that way of late. She seemed restless and Grace concluded that Dee was very unhappy. That made two of them. Grace herself was troubled with her two perpetual preoccupations, Norris and the lack of money.

Grace had been working hard for weeks on the illustrations for the School Board’s conservation booklets. They were done now, and they had turned out very well. Everyone who had seen them liked them, including the Board of Education. But Grace had not seen a cent of money for the work. A Miss Melville, who had contracted with Grace for the drawings, told her that she would be paid on completion of the entire group of pictures. Three times Grace had thought she was finished and three times Miss Melville had asked for “one more small drawing”. Grace came to believe it was a stall to keep from paying for the job. Miss Melville explained it in a way that was very unsatisfactory to Grace.

“It has to be approved by the entire board,” Miss Melville said, “before the funds are released.”

“Why, I never heard of such a thing. I’ve been working on this for weeks, with more drawings asked for several times. If it wasn’t to be approved, how could they keep me working so long?”

“Oh, don’t worry. It will be approved I’m certain. And just sit tight and be patient and by next October or November there will be more drawings for you to do. They like your work.”



“More drawings” Grace said, amazed. “But surely they don’t expect everyone to work for them without paying them till months later?”

“I think you’ll get paid quite soon,” Miss Melville soothed.

Grace spoke of it to her brother Bill, since as a teacher in the Cleveland schools, he should know something about the Board of Education. She was sputtering with outrage.

“Did you ever hear of such a way of doing business, Billy?”



“Well,” Bill said, “I don’t know a great deal about the way artists are paid, but I’d think some kind of contract or agreement would be drawn up at the start. I’d want it that way myself, though Gertrude doesn’t think the Martin clan are the most practical people she’s ever known.”

“But Bill,” Grace said, “I was so grateful to get this work that it wouldn’t have seemed wise for me to be too fussy at the start. After all with the Depression one is lucky to have work.”

“Of course it isn’t being fussy to want to be paid, Gracie. Well, I guess you’ll have to trust in them to do what’s right. Say Gracie, how would you like to go out to North Royalton and take a look at the Old Brick? Stan’s still threatening to tear it down this summer.”

“Oh, no!” Grace cried, “How can we stop him? That’s terrible”

“We can’t stop him, Gracie. He owns the place.”

“But the Old Brick should be an Historic Site, Bill.”

“I know but they’ve already got some of those, you know. How about it? Shall we ride out there next Sunday and see it before he gets busy with the wrecking bar.”

“I guess so,” Grace said, “but for me that place will be full of ghosts. Not just from when we were little, but the years when Norris and I lived there when the girls were tiny.”

Yes, and don’t forget that when Gertrude and I lived there our boys were tiny.”

“I know, Billy.”

Bill went on. “And Howd and Lottie lived, there when Averill was tiny. And Charlie lived there with... which one was it now?”

“Eleanor,” Grace supplied.

“That’s right. Eleanor and their boys, and the baby that died that summer.”

“Oh, but not everyone loved it, Bill, the way some of us did, and Father loved it the most.”

“Well, Father doesn’t know about Stan’s plan, Gracie.”

“I suppose we don’t really know that, do we?”

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Grace found other ways of keeping busy while she waited to be paid for the School Board illustrations. She did two water colors of the New Hampshire place from sketches made the summer of the great New England hurricane. And she worked on her appliqué wall tapestry of Jesus seated in a pastoral scene surrounded by children.

Dee was worried about money. They were just barely managing to pay their expenses in the Warrington Apartments.



“Mother, Dee said, “I think maybe you should try to get a regular job. There are jobs to be had now. Everything is getting better because of the defense effort.”

“I don’t know what you mean by a ‘regular’ job,” Grace said.

“Well, I mean one where you get a regular paycheck like I get.”

“What sort of work?”

“Anything you can do,” Dee, said, “Well, I have to do my own work. Art work is my work and you know that. Why are you talking about this now?”

“Because I’m worried about money, Mother. We can’t afford this place on what I make. I have hardly a spare penny to buy clothes I need, and your artwork hasn’t paid you anything. Not lately, I mean.”

“I’m going to speak to Miss Melville again.” Grace said.

“Oh, she’ll just put you off again.”

“She can’t do that forever.”

“Obviously, Mother, she’s going to try.”



A week later, Grace had an opportunity to have a regular job and art work at that. She was lunching at Strohmeier’s store with Grace V. Kelly, when an old friend passed by and recognized Grace. Virginia Strong was just leaving the tearoom and she sat down for a few minutes to chat. She had been a good friend of Ethie Rahming and Betty Long, and in the years before Betty died, Grace had seen Virginia occasionally at Betty’s studio. For many years Virginia had worked at the Cleveland



Greeting Card Company. She told Grace she had seen the conservation drawings and felt they were excellent.

“I didn’t know you did that sort of drawing, Grace, I thought you just did fashions.”

“Oh my, no,” Grace said. “I’ve done quite a bit of illustration.”

“Well, would you like to work for my company? We can use another artist for the type of work you’ve been doing lately.”

“I don’t like drawing roses and violets and cherubs,” Grace said.

“Oh, goodness,” Virginia said. “Our cards aren’t all flowers. We have a lot of sentimental cards with scenes.”

“Scenes?” Grace said.

“Oh, you know. Snowy scenes, autumn hillside scenes, apple trees in bloom down the lane, little old church in the wildwood. That sort of thing. They’re popular with many people.”

Grace V. Kelly spoke up. “It isn’t Grace’s sort of thing.”

“Well,” Virginia said, “it pays quite well, and from all I hear it’s been a bad year for the artists. I thought you’d be interested, Grace.”

“I am, Virginia,” Grace said. “I am interested. Would it be work I could do at home?”

“We have a nice big studio for the artists right at the plant. It’s well lighted and there are nice drawing boards, and the designers and planners work closely with our artists.”

“Let me phone you, Virginia, and we can talk about it.”

But after she had thought about it at home Grace came to the conclusion that she would not like working for the greeting card company. And the more she argued against the idea, the more Dee tried to persuade her to try it.

“If you didn’t like it, you could always quit. You say it would be too much pressure. How do you know until you try it? I should think you’d want some work that was dependable, Mother. And, Geewhiz! Its artwork!”

“It’s not my kind of art work,” Grace said.

“I can’t understand you, Mother. Greeting cards are just as respectable as fashion art.”

But the more Dee and Jane urged Grace to give the job a try, the more firmly she set her mind against it.

“I wouldn’t want to work in a big studio with a lot of others,” she said.

“But I’d feel a whole lot better about you,” Dee said, “if you had regular dependable work, Mother.”

“Dee, why are you pushing me about this?”

“Just because I worry about you. It’s been so long that you’ve had money worries.”

“I know, but this is definitely not the answer for me.”

“But, Mother, what is?”

“Now don’t you worry about me. I will have three watercolors to enter in the May Show, and my wall-hanging will be finished soon. Then I mean to get back to my writing.”

“But, Mother, those things aren’t a certain income,” Dee said.

“Well, let’s worry about you now,” Grace said.

“Why? I’m alright.”

“You’re working too hard on your rehearsals. You look pale and tired.”

“Oh, Mother, I love being in the plays. And I’m not pale.”

“Well, I’d be happy if you were married,” Grace said.

“I’m not at all sure I would.”

“That Einar Svensen is such a nice chap.”

“Mother he’s not in my plans at all.”

While Dee and Grace were occupied worrying about each other, Jane and Chan were much too busy to be worrying. They had been working hard all during the spring making steady progress on the little house on Pennington Avenue. There was more digging to be done underneath the house in order to install a gas hot water heater. But for a time after Christmas, when they had acquired running water, they deferred that work in favor of making the house above more

comfortable. Chan worked on the addition to the rear, concentrating on the bedroom for Jane and himself. He had closed it in before Christmas, but it was far too cold at night for sleeping, although on a sunny day since it was on the south side it warmed up nicely. Chan lined the outside walls and ceiling with insulation and plaster board. He built two small clothes closets, but for lack of money left them without doors. Since the addition had been built hurriedly as winter approached, one side was the old outside wall of the little house, complete with a double hung window. By opening that window, some warmth flowed in from the house. The next step was to move into the new bedroom, and by doing so they would acquire a much larger living room. They dismantled the bookcase which divided the long narrow space and moved it to the end wall opposite the door. The room was no longer cramped, but neither was it cozy. Then Jane hit upon an idea.

“What was our bedroom can now be our dining area and we can move the table out of the kitchen and put the washing machine in there instead. It will be much easier for me to handle the water.”



“But I’m going to be fixing a laundry space for you out back,” Chan said.

“That’s months away, though. This way I can drop the diaper service and do the washing myself.”

Their washing machine was an antique model, bought second hand at the time of Mary Ellen’s birth. It was wonderful and awful, consisting mainly of a roughly apple-shaped copper tub, which tipped vigorously one way and the other. In this action the clothes were slapped and sloshed until they were clean and, in case of apron strings and stockings, braided. But it did its work.

By the time, they had put the washing machine where Jane wanted it, she had another idea. Why not make an opening in the kitchen wall so that the children could have a breakfast bar? They could sit on Chan’s upholstery “horses”.

Grace, however, was not especially impressed with all that, she wanted to know why there was still no hot water and no bathtub.

“There will be, Mother,” Jane said. “There will be. It all takes time. The ground has been frozen.”

“What’s that have to do with the bathroom?”

“Everything,” Jane said. “We have to dig a ditch from the house to the street for the gas line so we can have the water heater. The ground is thawing now, and I’ve started the ditch. I’ve got it about ten inches deep all the way.”

“You mean you are digging a ditch?”

“Mother, it’s just a little narrow, shallow ditch, only eighteen inches deep.”

“Why isn’t Chan digging it?” Grace asked. “It’s man’s work.”

“I’d rather have Chan do other things. I can’t do carpentry.”

“You should be taking care of your babies.”

“Mother, I do take care of them. And you better not call Denis a baby, because he feels like a big boy now. He’s going to school this fall. Yes. And he’s helping me dig the ditch.”

Jo had different worries. Chan had told her that his training period would finish at the end of April. After that he would have to find a “real” job. She worried particularly since he had come out of college at the start of the Depression and in all the more than ten years since, he had never held a job which she herself considered worthy of his education, intellect and potential. She had long held a strong feeling that Chan was not aggressive enough. And she had told him so more than once, but it had only made him angry at her. Now he was trained to work with his hands, and that in itself distressed her. Although her own father had been a skilled craftsman, a wood carver, who had himself sometimes made patterns for decorative metal work, she would have much preferred to have Chan working behind a desk, rather than standing at a work-bench, wearing an apron. The fact that the apron was white was not a great comfort, nor was Chan’s statement that pattern-making was an important and specialized work.

At the end of the first three days in May, Jo telephoned Jane.

“Has he found a job yet?”

“No,” Jane said, “but it’s only been a couple of days.”

“Three,” said Jo. “Is he looking for work?”

“Of course he is,” Jane said. “He went down to the employment office. Why don’t you call this evening. He can tell you more about it.”

“I don’t want him to think I’m prodding him,” Jo said.

“Call him,” Jane urged. “He’ll be home by dinnertime at least.”

But Jo did not call that day. She decided that it was too soon. Chan would certainly think she was being pushy and impatient. He did need more time. But she talked it over fretfully with her sister Edna.

“I don’t know what they will do if he doesn’t get work. He doesn’t have just himself to worry about now. He’s got that great big family.”

“Well, don’t just hold that against him, Jo, it’s a nice little family, not a great big one.”

“I know, but it worries me. You remember Clement always has hated looking for employment. He admits that freely.”

“Naturally he hates it,” Edna said. “Anybody hates it. But he’s got a family. If I were you I wouldn’t worry about his not looking for work. He’ll look. Of course, he’ll look.”

Jo waited two more days and then called Jane again. “Chan doesn’t have job yet if that’s what you’re asking.”

“What do they tell him? Do they say they’ll call him?”

“No, they either say they have no opening, or they want a man with several years experience.”

“I was afraid of that,” Jo said. “Is Chan discouraged?”

“Not very,” Jane said. “Not yet.”

That night Jo agonized about it again to Edna.

“I wish I knew someone that could help out. Who do we know?”

“Well I don’t know anyone who needs a pattern-maker,” Edna said, “but why don’t you ask Harry?”

“Oh, that’s a good idea,” Jo said, “I’m surprised I didn’t think of that right away.”

Her conversation with Harry was rather brief. She told him Chan was now unemployed and that she was frightened about it, particularly because of the children.

“Is he frightened?” Harry asked.

“If he isn’t he will be soon; he’s been looking for a week. He’s been told he needs more experience.”

“That’s what they usually say, and in times like these they’ve had little trouble getting experienced skilled people, though of course, everything is improving somewhat now.”

“Then why can’t Clement get a job somewhere?”

“Well, give him time, Jo. A week isn’t long.”

“Don’t we know anyone who could give him a job?”

“A pattern-maker? I don’t know. Did you call Billy?”

“Billy?”

“Billy Meister, your cousin.”

“No,” Jo said. “You think Billy could help?”

“Well, you might give him a call. You know what they make over there, don’t you?”

“No, not really,” Jo confessed.

“Well,” Harry said, “Hercules Car Company makes some kind of industrial cars, special railroad cars, and such, like ones that tilt on end and so forth. They’d have castings made somewhere. Probably have a lot of use for patterns over there.”

“I’ll call Billy tonight,” Jo said.

“Well, don’t get your hopes too high,” Harry cautioned. “And Jo, discuss it with Clement first. He could be a little touchy if he thought you were butting in.”

“I’m only trying to help him, Harry.”

“I know. Well, good luck.”

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The remainder of the month of May was eventful and Grace recorded the happenings in her sporadic journal.

“May 10 - I am home from my wandering (two weeks in Ontario with my old friend Mary McClellan). Couldn't resist the chance to go. When I am through wandering I shall know that I am really old. Dee seemed very glad to see me. I had been hoping my cheque for my illustrations would be here; instead when I called Miss Melville she had another drawing for me to do all in a hurry and I'm coming down with a cold, too. My cheque better come soon. I must have dental work.

May 13— Roge stopped in for a chat today and his beloved tea and crackers. He's much upset about everything. Says Carol's husband Rick and also that “scoundrel”, Franz., have both been drafted into the Army. But Roge says Carol has a job.

Carle, poor dear, so faithful, has a cold too. Caught it from me, I 'spect.

May 15, - Jane was here yesterday. Her youngsters are all pretty and they looked well. For that I'm glad. I talked with Miss Melville about my money. I shall take her a bill. They may think I'm too high. If not I shall have more work later. I must finish my hanging now.

May 17, - I saw Fantasia- Remarkable! But I do not like Beethoven as humorous little figures - not as a comedy. No!

May 18, - Dee has a new beau. So goodbye, I suppose to that nice Einar. I'm sorry. He'd have been good for her.

May 19, - Routine housework. Still hoping for my cheque. I need the money badly.

May 20, - Jane reports that Chan has a job and. they are pleased. Apparently, he is working for some company where cousin of Jo's is, as Nelle would say, “a high monkey-monk”. I would feel much better in my mind about Jane and her little family if Chan did not lean on his mother. Well, anyway, Jane reports that, now they have their gas line in, they have connected up their gas stove and have, Thank God, got rid of that smelly coal-oil stove. But, I am waiting for the day when they will have the hot water heater and their bathtub. Those children have been having their baths in an old-fashion washtub. That may be alright in New Hampshire, but ye Gods! I don't know how Jane puts up with that situation. She claims that she enjoys working on it. She even dug much of that ditch for the gas pipe. Mon dieu!

May 27, - My goodness! I have not recorded anything for days. I've been seeing Carle often lately. He is old faithful. There are many things we have in common. Oh! And I did not mention that I got two watercolors in the May show. So that is great and it seems that Norris can not exhibit in Cleveland anymore as he is no longer a resident. Jane phoned me to say she has heard

from Trink who has news that Mim has a baby girl. That is nice. My goodness, our little girls are growing up I'm afraid.

May 28, - Well! Things have happened! Dee has an appointment at Wright Air Corps in Dayton. It has all come as a surprise to me and is happening so fast. She must be there Tuesday morning, so we have but five days to break up here. I will have to see about moving and finding a place - where?

May 29, - A farewell for Dee at her office with much weeping, but we are very busy, and she is looking ahead now. Poor Carle came and packed up all his things that he had been keeping here. He is disappointed at the breaking up but I have become accustomed to change. Jane wants us to come and spend a day with them. I have decided to go with Dee and get her started. She seems to want me to and I must do it for her.

Tues. June 3, - Jane's birthday. She is twenty-five! And here I am in Dayton very tired from riding on a coach train to save money. Dee went straight to her new job and I got rooms at the Y.W.C.A. for us for \$1.00 per night each. Dayton is clean. I like it, but it is more expensive here. But Dee will have an annual salary of \$1440. She is very pleased about that. I shall stay here a few more days till we can find her a room.

Thurs. June 5, - We got Dee a room for \$5.00 a week and it is quite nice, and she seems quite satisfied with it. I do so want her to be happy and to find herself at last. I go back to Cleveland tomorrow, Deo Volente!

Grace returned 'home' quite without a home. Since Dee's orders had come at the end of the month, they had moved out in great haste to save owing rent for June. Their belongings were dispersed; some to Merly's garage in Oberlin, other things to Jane and Mil's pending a time when Grace would know what her next move would be.

She had come back to Cleveland in a bewildered state of mind. Everything had happened so fast that she had really only begun to realize it on the train trip home. She would have liked to stay in Dayton with Dee, but for many reasons she could not do that. She mused about her girls. Why was Jane the married one, and Dee, thirty and single, launching on some kind of career? Jane had seemed so like a boy when she was little, so adventurous and mechanical, especially the year she was ten years old. It was 1926 and the girls had all had their hair cut in "boyish bobs. On Jane that severe haircut had made her look like Norris particularly when she scowled. But then she had begun to change. After spending three months at Sunshine Camp when she was eleven years old, Jane had become conscious of her hair. She shampooed it almost every day and when Grace told her that was too often Jane said that she did it because at Sunshine Camp they had combed kerosene through everyone's hair and she had hated it. And she said when you have straight hair it only looks good when it's squeaky clean. Then, when they lived in High Rock, Connecticut,

Jane and Carol were popular with lots of boys, and Jane began curling her hair. After that there had been a series of boys to worry about, well, mainly two - the Irish boy who had been in reform school, and, of course, Narze. Jane's explanation for getting married so young had been simple, if not logical. She said, "I'm not trained for any kind of decent job, so if a girl can't go to college, the thing to do is to marry a college man." And she had— twice.

So now Jane was the married one, and what would Dee's future be? And where would she herself live now? If only Jane and Chan still lived at Courtney Shores. Or if only Nelle and Roger were not staying with Merly she could spend some time in Oberlin. If only Nelle's health were better she and Roge might open up Forest Camp for a few weeks. Roge had no such plans for this summer. He'd said that Nelle needed to have her teeth out; they were poisoning her and making her feel terrible, tired all the time. So no Forest Camp this year.

But when Grace got off the train, Denis' birthday was on her mind and that would solve the problem of where to go for the next few days. She phoned Jane and said she would come and visit for a few days till she found "the right place."

Denis' birthday was on June 7th, and Chan's on the 8th, a Saturday and Sunday. Grace and Jane made Denis a splendid birthday cake.

Grace said to Jane, "I'm sorry I missed your birthday."

"Well, you usually do, Mom. More often than not you're away."

"I was here last year. I know" Grace said.

"I guess so," Jane said. "I forget."

The birthday was a happy occasion, Jo. and Edna came to the party, chauffeured by Brian, who was in town. Late in the day Harry Porter came with candy for the children and a check for \$30 for Chan.

"Put it toward a water heater," he suggested.

"Or a bathtub?" Grace said.

"Water heater comes first," said Chan.

But it was Denis' day and he was supremely happy with his principal gift, a tent.

Grace, however, could not stay long at the little house, for there was no comfortable place for her to sleep. There was only the living room couch, and it was far too narrow and covered with a slippery leatherette material. After two more days Grace left to spend two days with her Christian Scientist friend Edna Whiteman. However, the next time she called Jane she was at Edna and Jo's home on Cartwright Street.

“Jo asked me to come for a visit, and we’ve been having nice chats. She and Edna seem to enjoy having me here.”

“Are you going to get room somewhere?” Jane asked.

“Well, I’m waiting to hear from Miss Melville, you know. I’m supposed to get the cheque for the work I did. She was quick enough to load me up with lots of illustrations to do. Now she’s being very slow about the money.”

“Why don’t you raise hell about it?” Jane asked.

“I should, but you see, there may be more work later.”

“Well, it’s the limit, Mother, really it is.” Jane did not spend much more time thinking about her mother visiting at Edna’s home until a few weeks later. There were other things on her mind. She was busy with a vegetable garden and six chickens that they had bought for the children at Easter, with the definite plan of raising the hens to produce eggs. Chan had built them a special coop according to a plan in a farm magazine. Now he was working on the plumbing for the new water heater. Once that was installed, they could set their sights on the long-anticipated bathtub but that might be weeks or months in the offing.

In early July, Trink called Jane to announce the arrival of Mim from Texas. She was coming on the train with her baby girl, Elizabeth, called Libby. Along with Trink and Sergei, Jane met the train. It was wonderful and exciting to see Mim again and with her very own baby for a change, not Jane’s nor Trink’s. She said she would be in Oberlin most of the summer, while Bill would go to Michigan for a few weeks, attending a session of summer school working toward his master’s degree. Before Sergei and Trink took Mim and her baby to Oberlin that evening, Mim said to Jane, “Find a way to come down to Oberlin for a few days, so we can have some fun, and maybe even make some fudge for old times’ sake. Can you do it?”

“I’ll try,” Jane said. “Maybe Mother would stay with the kids, but she really hates our little house.”

Mim laughed. “Mom wrote me that Aunt Grace described it as little more than a hovel.”

“Well, it was, the day we bought it, but we changed it a lot. It had electricity from the start, and we got a telephone, of course. And now we have water and sewer and gas. All we need is a bathtub and a furnace. So it may be a hovel, but it’s our hovel.”

“Before I go back to Texas I intend to see it,” Mim said.

“I hope so,” Jane said. “It’s always changing.”

“I guess your mother feels you’re working too hard.”

“Oh, yes,” Jane said, “and I’m thin and pale, too. Right?”

IT'S ALL SO LONG AGO

Grace was still staying on Cartwright Street with Jo and Edna. It distressed Jane not a little bit, and this was because of remarks that Jo made from time to time when she talked to Jane on the phone. It was Jo's habit to call almost daily to inquire how things were. How was Chan? Was he getting too tired? How was little David? And so on.

Lately, however, Jo had been talking about Grace.

"She's gone out this evening to have dinner with Carle. Tell me, Jane, do you think she's going to be paid for that art work she did? She keeps on looking for that cheque every day. I don't think she's going to be paid, do you?"

"Well, I can't imagine the Cleveland Board of Education commissioning someone to do work for them, and then refusing to pay for it. Can you?"

"No, I guess not." Jo said, "but I don't think art work pays very well, do you?"

Jane laughed. "Not when it doesn't pay at all."

"Well, I was going to mention to your mother that they are hiring a few people at Strohmeyer's."

"Did you mention it?" Jane asked.

"Oh, no. I wouldn't want to do that," Jo said. "But maybe you might tell her about it."

"Yes, I will," Jane said.

"Don't tell her I talked to you about it," Jo said.

"But, Jo, I'm sure she will figure that out by herself."

And, of course, Jane was right about that, but not about other concerns. She wished her mother would find another place to stay. Somehow it was linked to family pride. If Grace had visited for only two or three days, it would not have worried Jane, but Grace had been at Edna's house since early June and it was now past the middle of July. When Jane thought about the matter, she realized that for more than ten years her mother had not had a place all her own except for two short periods, neither one longer than three months. The rest of the time she had spent wandering in a nomadic way from one relative or friend to another. It was true that often Nelle urged Grace to come to Forest Camp to keep her company in recent summers. But what of the others? Jane didn't know. Grace always was sure to say, for instance, "Polly was so glad to see me." Or, "Alice said she hated to see me go." But those were friends, and Grace never spent more than two weeks with them. With relatives she stayed longer, however, and didn't she sometimes wear out her welcome? Of course, except for Aunt Nelle and Uncle Roger, all the people Grace "visited" were single women who were perhaps lonely, and Aunt Nelle was lonely too, when

Uncle Roge was on the road. So it was hard to say how welcome Grace was or wasn't. But one thing was certain, Jane was uncomfortable about having her stay such a long time with Jo and Edna, and she felt sure that Jo felt Grace should be out looking for conventional employment.

When Jane spoke of this to her mother, Grace simply said, "Oh, Jo just assumes everyone should enjoy working at Strohmeyer's as much as she does. I certainly wouldn't."

"Well, but Mother, how much longer are you going to be staying at Aunt Edna's house?"

"When I get my cheque I'll get a place somewhere."

"But, Mother..."

"Jo and I have lots of fun together. Edna, too."

"I know, but..."

"Well, I'm going to Oberlin in about a week," Grace said.

"I didn't think Aunt Merly had room this summer with Aunt Nelle there, and Mim and the baby, too."

"No, Mim isn't going to be there. She's staying elsewhere."

Roger was usually traveling, but in mid-July he returned to Oberlin to spend a few days resting, typing on one of his literary efforts, and visiting family. His hope was to get Nelle to a doctor and a dentist, for she had not been feeling well for some time. In earlier years she had had a dentist in New York, but not a doctor, for at that time she had been a Christian Scientist. But she, like Grace and Merly, had lost faith in much of Mrs. Eddy's teaching. Nelle had felt "rotten" for a long time, she told Merly, and she felt perhaps it might be her teeth. She said that she might have had them seen to in New York, but she no longer felt like riding around on the subway. Her old dentist had been way downtown in Lower Manhattan and it was too far for her to go. She would have to change trains at Queensbury Plaza and again at Times Square, and ride nearly as far down as City Hall. She didn't feel up to it, she said.

"Why Nelle," Grace had said, "you always have sashayed all over New York with no qualms. You must be run down."

"I am," Nelle said. "I just can't fight against the city anymore. It's too much for me."

"Maybe you've just listened to Roge too long," Merly suggested. "He seems to hate the city, New York especially."

"I think you may need your tonsils out," Grace had suggested.

“No,” Nelle said, “there’s nothing wrong with my tonsils. Never has been. And I don’t hate New York. I’ve always loved the stores, Macy’s, Wanamaker’s and the rest. I just don’t feel good. I know I’ve got some bad teeth, and I’m going to get them out, and then I’m going back to New York and really clean that apartment. I’ll get the bull by the tail. I shouldn’t have waited so long. I was going to have those teeth taken care of last year, but then Carol’s problems came along and prevented.”

Merly was not particularly keen on having Nelle and Bert there for several weeks more. She had planned a very different summer. Mim was there from Texas with her new baby daughter, for a two month visit, and what’s more Trink had decided it would be appropriate for her to come out from Cleveland with her daughter, Katie. That way it would be quite like old times for just the summer. Just Emmie and herself, with Mim and Trink, and their little girls. It would be a happy time. Sergei would be commuting to his job in Cleveland, but during the day it would be a family of girls.

So it was a little disconcerting when Roge asked if he and Nelle might stay on for a while longer. Merly told him that the girls had already planned to come with the babies, and she didn’t know how they could possibly all fit in. Roge wrote back that all he needed to do was get Nelle to the dentist, and after that, he’d be back on the road again and when he was in town he’d get a room at the hotel. Surely they could all manage for a short while? Merly agreed they no doubt could.

The girls arrived in early July, and things were immediately more than a little hectic. With Mim’s two month old, Libby, still waking during the night, and ten month old Kathy, a lively creeper just learning to pull herself up on her feet, all the women in the house found little time for rest. Merly was tired and just a bit short on sister-in-law patience when Roge arrived.

“I don’t see how this will work,” Merly said,

Well, I’ll go to the inn,” Roge said, a bit stiffly.

“No,” Mim said. “The problem is solved. Trink and I have the offer of Professor Roger house for the rest of the summer. Free. All we do is take care of the garden.”

“But, honey,” Merly said, “I thought you were going to be here.”

“We will be, Mom,” Trink said. “We’ll be here all the time. But we’ll all be more comfortable at night. The babies won’t wake you up at the crack of dawn and all hours.”

“Honey,” Merly said, “I didn’t mind.”

“No,” Mim said, “I promised T.J. we’d take care of the place and, Mom, they have a marvelous garden. We can use anything in it we need. And now you’ll have plenty of room for Aunt Nelle and Uncle Roge, too.”

“I’d rather not have,” Merly said, “for several good reasons. I’ll explain some other time. It’s a strain having Roge here. As Nelle herself once said, ‘When Roge is at home, he fills all space.’”

But the girls prevailed and moved their things and their daughters into the spacious red brick house on East College Street. There were wide porches shaded by many tall trees, sunshiny lawns, and the huge garden already furnishing lettuce, carrots, green onions etc. with much more coming on fast.

True to their word the girls came often and Merly’s place was more orderly without the cribs, high chair and play pen, for Merly had rented one floor of her house to an elderly woman, and she and Emmie lived on the second floor, and now Nelle, and sometimes Roge occupied a room on the third floor.

Mim and Trink were there on the day Roge and Merly took Nelle to the dentist for her extractions. Poor Nelle was nervous and frightened and ready to back out of the whole thing. They exhorted her and called her by her pet names.

“Come on, Tooky,” Roge said. “This will make you feel like your old self again. Full of vim and vinegar.”

And Merly reminded Nelle, “Remember how you told Emmie to be brave about the dentist and get rid of her bad old teeth.”

Mim patted Nelle and said, “Come on, Nezzar, you’ve always set the style for the rest of us. You won’t mind this. Dentists are very skilled these days.”

But after Roge and Merly left with Nelle (still talking as she went,) it was Mim who nearly wept.

“Oh, Trink I can’t bear to see her that way. Our ‘solid rock’ has crumbled.”

“I know.” Trink said, “and it’s so sad. I would have thought Nelle would grow old fighting every step of the way.”

“Let’s leave,” Mim said. “I don’t want to be here when they bring her back with her mouth all caved in.”

Nelle’s session at the dentist had been upsetting but went without any major complications; the girls learned when they phoned that afternoon. The next day Trink stayed with the baby girls while Mim went over to visit. “You go,” Trink had said. “You’ve always been a favorite of hers. You’ll cheer her up.”

Mim found Nelle at the dining room table, looking wide-eyed, and bruised and swollen about the face, but otherwise alright and sipping warm cream soup through a straw. She was glad it was over and as the days went by her mouth healed and soon she would have her dentures. As soon as she felt better she enjoyed having the girls come over with the babies and she was especially

fascinated with Trink's little Katie. Mim's Libby was still so young that she slept much of the time, but Katie was a livewire at eleven months. She was on her feet, making her way round and round her play pen, laughing and smiling at everyone all day long. She had eyes of a singular blue shade, wide and sparkling like stars.

"She has little curls just like your mother had at that age," Nelle said, "but I've never seen such eyes before. I was eight when Merly was born. I helped Ma with all the younger ones."

That summer, Nelle thought and talked a great deal about the days when she was young. Somehow, being in Oberlin, and especially around Emmie, her mind kept being turned back to those years toward the end of the nineteenth century. Emmie was always mentioning in her vague abstract manner this person and that whom they had known when they were girls.

"Remember what good fudge Metta used to make? Why don't we make us a mess of fudge?" Emmie might say.

In the mood of all this remembering, a strange thing happened one day when Trink was at the house with Katie. Trink and Nelle were out in the side yard near Merly's rose arbor. Katie had fallen asleep in her playpen in the shade of a maple tree. It was a perfect summer day. It made Nelle think of the Queen Anne tree at the Old Brick farm where they had all loved to sit and idle away vacation hours. It moved Nelle to speak of a subject which had been taboo for years. It was a subject she had refused to discuss even with her sisters.

Watching Katie sleeping, Nelle remarked, "You know Katie's eyes are the same kind of blue as Mother's must have been when she was small. When you get old, blue eyes fade. Did you know that? They always used to tell me that I had eyes like my mother's. Father used to say that. If I had had a daughter she'd have had blue eyes, too."

"I expect so," Trink said. "Uncle Roge's eyes are as blue as yours."

"Yes, but so were my first husband's eyes blue. You knew I was married before Uncle Roge, didn't you?"

"Yes, I've heard that," Trink said, "but you were very young, weren't you?"

"I was only a kid, only a kid. The first time I saw him I wasn't much past sixteen. And oh, my! He was so good looking. He had wavy dark hair and mustache and such blue, blue eyes. There's something about that combination that's remarkable, you know. And then he came to our farm with his stallion and we talked about horses, I think, and when I was seventeen I married him. From the start he was so jealous of Father. In fact I guess, nowadays, people would say he had an inferiority complex. He thought that I felt like I was better than he was. And I guess he was right. I did feel that way and I was right, too. He turned out to be a real scoundrel. He was determined to bring me down to size. He wanted to see me cry, and I was determined I'd never let him see that. I had got pregnant right away, and he had forbidden me to ride horse-back. But I

rode anyway and when I got home he was there. As soon as I got down off the horse he slapped me real hard and he asked was I trying to lose his baby. And I told him that hitting me like that it looked like he wanted me to lose it. That's the way things went.

“And then one day I fell on the cellar stairs and broke two front teeth. One was just chipped, but the other was half broken off. He was so sure I'd cry about that, but I didn't. And we quarreled over the dentist. Lee wanted me to have it fixed in North Royalton, but the dentist recommended someone in Cleveland, a sort of specialist. I told Lee that Pa would pay and that sort of thing always made him furious. I think he never forgave me. He told me I loved my family more than I loved him. And I guess by that time I did.”

“You were so young,” said Trink.

“Yes, but I was wild about Lee when I married him. When I was seventeen nobody could tell me anything. I guess we're all like that, aren't we?”

“And then what happened?” Trink asked.

“What happened?” Nelle asked.

“Yes, I mean how long did you stay married to him?”

“Only about half a year. I never wanted to talk about him or what happened. I just wanted to blot it out of my mind and everybody's mind. But it's all so long ago. They say, ‘Long ago and far away’. Only it wasn't far away. It was really very near here, isn't that something? We lived out on the road between Oberlin and North Royalton not far from the Old Brick. We had a lot of land but had it all to pasture for horses and one cow. I was crazy about horses and I thought I'd like a life with Lee and all those horses. I guess that's how it was, anyway. Well, he got it in his head that he wanted to subdue me, like the way you break a horse. He was determined to make me cry and I suppose that's because I told him he couldn't do it. He thought I ought to be tame. And he thought it was funny that married life didn't shock me. He said he bet he could shock me. Well, in the end it turned out he was right. He did shock me, but he never got another chance. That's when I left him. I lit out then and there.”

“But what happened?”

“Well, you see Lee had a sister. Her name was Pearle. She was just his half-sister. Lee had asked her to come and stay with us until after the baby came. I was about five and half months pregnant at the time. Pearla was supposed to help me with the house work. That was silly. I didn't need Pearla. But she was crazy about Lee and not the way a sister ought to like her brother. She didn't look much like him, but in a way she did. But she had kinky hair like darkies have and I thought she must be part colored. I never did find out about that. She and Lee had the same Father. But how would I know where she got that hair? I hoped it was on her mother's side.”

“But what happened?” Trink asked. “Is that what shocked you?”

“Oh, no. I’ll tell you what happened. Pearla came to stay with us as I said. And she’d been there a few weeks when it happened. Now you see I was over six months pregnant by that time and getting to the point where performing my wifely duty wasn’t comfortable anymore. So one night I had gone to bed and to sleep, and Lee came up and got in bed beside me and I was aware of that, but I went back to sleep. Well, after awhile, and I don’t know how long it was, I woke up. Pearls was in bed with us and... and she and Lee were... they were having intercourse.”

“My gosh!” said Trink. “With you right there!”

“Yes, indeed.”

“Well... well, did he think you wouldn’t wake up?”

“Oh, he knew I’d wake up. He wanted me to wake up. They both did. She didn’t like me at all. She was always shining up to Lee, putting her hands on him if she got a chance, and he let her do it, figuring it would get my goat. But I remember that I pretended not to even notice them and I know that got his goat. And probably Pearla’s too. You see they both were sure that I thought I was superior to them.”

“Well, you certainly were” Trink said. “The way they acted.”

“Yes, and you know he must have had an incestuous streak in him, or something even worse, because once he bothered Grace when she was just a little girl. Lee didn’t just raise horses; he ran a delivery service in Oberlin. And once while I was still married to him, he gave her a ride home in his hack, and he kept putting his hand on her leg. She told me about it later.”

“So what happened - I mean what happened that night?”

“Well, of course, I got right out of that bed like a shot. He grabbed my arm and said, ‘Where are you going?’ So I said, ‘Let Pearla stay here where she likes it. I’ll sleep in the other room’. I think I knew by instinct that he would try to stop me if I said, ‘I’m leaving you’. I know he would have. Anyway, I stayed in the other bedroom for a couple of hours till I figured they had probably gone to sleep. I came out of that room very slowly. Turned the door knob and waited, took a step and waited. I had taken a cape of Pearla’s and put it over my nightgown. Most of my clothes were in my closet, and I couldn’t borrow any of her dresses because I had got pretty big by then. But I borrowed a pair of her stockings and shoes. I went to the barn and saddled a mare that I liked and I tied some burlap bags on her hooves and I led her out of the yard and down the road ways before I took the burlap off. Then I mounted her and set off for Ma and Pa’s house in Oberlin. It was some distance but not too bad and I didn’t want to push the mare too much and I didn’t want to attract attention. But the mare was used to being in her stall at night and she was a little nervous. A breeze had come up, it was April and the weather wasn’t settled at all. I was almost home to Pa’s place when a big piece of paper or something came blowing across the road

and the mare shied and she threw me. The next thing I knew, I was in the front parlor in Pa's house. I'd been stunned by the fall and I guess I might have lain there on the ground a long time but a neighbor across the street heard the mare neigh when she reared and Ma told me later that the lady looked out and saw me lying in the street. She told her husband, 'There's a body in the street in front of Martin's house'."

"My goodness:" said Trink. "What a story"

"Ma told me later that when I came to, the first thing I asked about was my horse. I think that Ma thought that was kind of funny, but I don't think that I thought immediately that I might lose the baby. Ma did though, because she had lost several. She worried about it, but she kept it to herself. About five days later I did lose the baby. It had been dead for some time and that had caused some kind of infection. After I married your Uncle Roge I went to doctors for years trying to find out why I couldn't have children. They told me this, and they told me that, and it didn't help. It wasn't until later when I was past change of life that some doctor told me that it was the infection that caused the problem."

"Did you tell the other doctors about that?" Trink asked.

"Maybe not. I was hoping to forget all that. But it's all so long ago now, Trink, I really don't remember."

"That night that you came home on the mare and the neighbors thought you were 'a body' in the road, didn't that start a lot of gossip around town?"

"Yes, but Pa handled it very well. He spread the word around himself and he did it right away. He simply said that I had left Lee in the middle of the night because he was very cruel and that was that. A couple of nosy neighbor women came over to call, and of course they were just curious. I had bruises on my face from the fall off the horse, but the women may have assumed that Lee hit me. So the story about Lee being cruel was easy to believe."

"Well he certainly was," said Trink.

"He was beneath contempt," Nelle said. "It's just as well his baby didn't live."

"But it's sad," Trink said.

"Well," Nelle said, "it's all so long ago. I don't know what got me started on that. It's a sign I'm getting old."

"No, no. It was Katie's blue eyes."

Nelle laughed, "Blue eyes. That's right."

SHE COULD HAVE AT LEAST TRIED

While Mim and Trink were keeping house in Professor Rogers' house, Jane came from Cleveland and spent four days with them. Chan brought her and baby David and then returned to Cleveland and his job. Sergei was commuting that summer.

Grace had left Jo's. She had "borrowed" Denis and Mary Ellen and taken them to Merly's for a "nice vacation" as she put it. And they did enjoy it for they were entertained by all four Martin sisters and Grace devoted all her time to them. She made pancakes for their breakfasts, and fixed all their favorite foods and took them downtown to the stores, pulling them in an old coaster wagon. Roge catered to them as well, using the ventriloquist talents with which he entertained all young children. And they took walks with Emmie and Nelle, and Nelle's beloved Samoyed, Keeto.

But, by the time Jane and David had been gone four days from the little house, and Den and Mary Ellen over a week, Chan called and said he missed them and wasn't she ready to come home? She said she was, and so, on Saturday, Chan came and collected his family and took them home. He took them, however, over strong protests from Grace, who said she wanted them to stay over the weekend.

"Chan couldn't come until next Saturday, Mother. That's a whole week. He's lonesome for us."

"It's too hot for them in your little house. They'd be more comfortable here in Oberlin."

"But Mother, it's Aunt Merly's house. You can't just decide to keep your grandchildren here."

"When you and Dee were little I always tried to make you as comfortable as possible."

"Much of the time we weren't with you at all."

"Oh, how you love to argue, Jane. You're just taking them home because you're so jealous because they're fond of me."

"Mother," Jane said, "I wish to God that Dee was married and had some children so that you would stop concentrating on mine. I never make a fuss when you want to borrow them, but when you don't want to give them back when we're ready to take them home, I don't like it."

"Oh, Jane, don't be so dramatic," Grace said.

"Well, don't criticize our little house, and bear in mind that Chan and I and the kids are a family and after all we like to be together."

"You left a nice house at Courtney Shores where it was nice and cool and bought that run-down little cottage."

"Mother, I'm not going to explain that again."

Before she left Jane spoke to Mim and Trink.

“Mother is peeved at me for taking the children home.”

“She certainly dotes on them,” Mim said.

“It will all be fine as soon as Dee has some,” Trink said.

“I can’t wait,” Jane said.

“I’ll bet she’ll be married in a year,” Mim said, “Now that she’s away from Aunt Grace. Mothers scare men away.”

“It’s funny,” Jane said, “Mother is so fond of my children after they are born. But she’s always horrified when they’re on the way. And I’ll let you in on a secret; she’s going to be horrified again in a few months.”

“Oh?” chorused Trink and Mim.

“Yep,” Jane said. “I’m pregnant again, and we can’t figure out how it happened. I’ve used a diaphragm faithfully.”

“They aren’t a hundred percent, I’ve heard,” Mim said.

“So I see,” Jane said.

“Are you really upset?” Trink asked. “Didn’t you say you wanted four?”

“We had a name picked out for David if he’d been a girl, and then when he wasn’t, we figured sometime, after the Depression ends, we’d try for a girl. It would be nice to have two boys and two girls. But we weren’t going to do it yet, not with all the work we still have to do on our house.”

“I thought you had it pretty well fixed up,” Mim said.

“Golly, no! We’ve got most of the plumbing in now, but that’s the least of what we plan. We’ve got to make it bigger and after that I hope I can make it pretty. But now we’ve got to figure out the best way to make another bedroom. Chan says that there is a way that we can raise the roof, and I told him that Mother would personally do that when she learned I was pregnant.”

Mim and Trink laughed, and Trink asked when the baby was expected.

“The Ides of March,” said Jane. “Easy to remember but not the best day, is it? What I don’t like is that just as I’m starting into morning sickness, I’m also starting hay-fever and that will last until a hard frost comes. I’ll be alright if only Mother doesn’t come to visit in the next two months. If she does, every time I sneeze or throw up, she’ll be tearing her hair.”

But Grace was preoccupied soon with her own concerns and would not learn of Jane's pregnancy for several weeks. Her brother Stan invited her to come and see the Old Brick homestead before he tore it down.

"The word is going around that I'm doing terrible thing to take down the old place." Stan said.

"Stan, it is terrible: It's a landmark in this part of the country. It could be a historic site. But more than that, it's your birthplace. Don't you care about that?"

"Well, it isn't your birthplace, Gracie-Wacie. You were born in Oberlin."

"What of it? Our grandfather built it and Father brought Mother there as a bride. And all you older ones were born there, and little Maily and Jenny, too, and they died there. And I love it also because Norris and I farmed it, and our Jane was born while we were there. Bill and Trudy feel the same way I do. So do Nelle and Merly and Emmie."

"Well," Stan said, "I guess women are usually sentimental."

"Oh, Stan," Grace sighed, "that place is a treasure."

"Not anymore, Gracie. It's about to fall down. That brick wasn't fired long enough. It's soft and it's crumbling. And Gracie, I want you to see what I'm talking about, I'll drive you out there and show you what I mean."

Grace went reluctantly on a late August afternoon. She was torn between a desire to never see the place again, and a feeling that she must bid it farewell. Bill had offered to take her out there a few weeks earlier but she hadn't gone, for she dreaded it.

Stan had not mowed the yard. It was high in hay and Queen Anne's Lace. But the dooryard still had blooming hollyhocks, though the stalks were tall and scraggly, with dry seed pods splitting open.

"These might be from the ones Norr and I planted. They self-sow every year." Grace sounded bemused. She walked here and there around the yard, but she said little or nothing.

"Why did you tear the barn down?" she asked Stan.

"I didn't need a barn, and I can use a lot of the wood. I'm going to build a garage with some of that lumber.

He took her to the west side of the house and showed her the northwest corner. There was an area below the rain gutter under the eaves on that corner, where the bricks were worn and eroded and where in some cases the mortar joints projected as much as an inch. In other places there were gaps where the mortar had fallen out from between the bricks.

"You see what I mean?" Stan asked Grace.

“I see this corner,” Grace said. “The rest of the house looks pretty sound to me.”

“Oh,” Stan said, “but it’s starting to go now, don’t you see? It’s just a matter of time, Gracie. It’s a hundred years old this year, you know.”

“Well, I don’t like the way you’re observing its 100th birthday. It could be restored to good condition and last another hundred years. What did Bill think about it?”

“When he was here,” Stan said, “he didn’t say what he thought. He just walked around here looking at everything and not saying anything. Of course, Bill was always a little peeved because Pa sold the place to Charlie instead of letting him buy it. But Charlie had cash and with Pa that always counted. But it’s not my fault Charlie sold it to me.”

“Stan, I’m sure Bill didn’t object when you bought this place and I didn’t either, but we certainly didn’t know what you had in mind. Tearing it down is something we never, ever contemplated.”

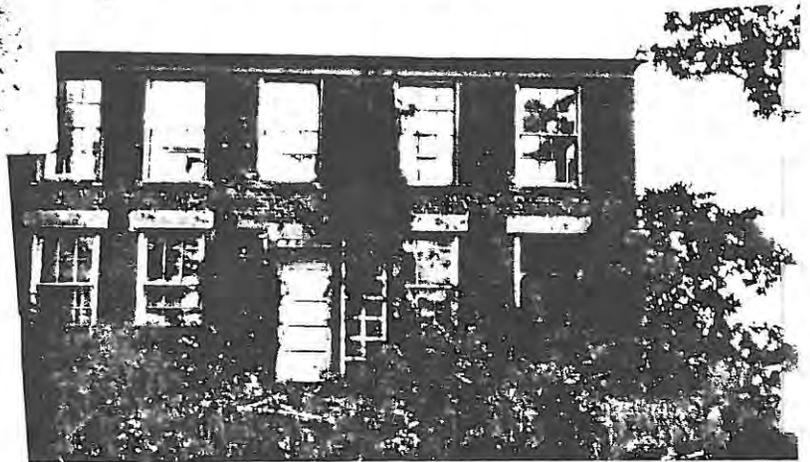
Stan looked thoughtful a moment, then he said, Gracie, there’s something I guess you and the rest haven’t thought about. And that’s how you’d have liked it if someone else had bought this property. Anything might have happened. They might have cleared the land all off, big pine trees and all, and built most anything here. But you know what I plan to do, don’t you? I’m going to build a nice frame house right on this same foundation. I’ll leave the old pine trees. You’ll still see them when you come here.”

“I don’t know as I could bear to come, Stan, with the Old Brick gone. I see the Queen Anne tree’s gone. Usually I can adjust to change but I hate this. I want to just go away and keep it in mind the way it was when we were young. Today will be my ‘goodbye’.”

“Oh, Gracie-Wacie, you’ll come see my new house.”

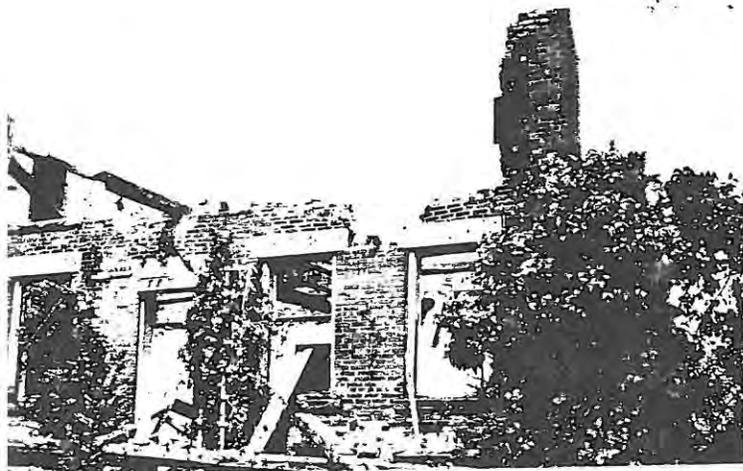
FAREWELL TO
"THE OLD BRICK"
SUMMER 1940

↓ THE ROOF GONE



↑ 1939

SECOND STORY GONE



THE PINES REMAIN ↓



↑
THE WRECKER
AT WORK

"THE HOUSE THAT
TOMMY BUILT"

1943



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Grace was so disturbed by her visit to the old farm that her old restlessness came on strong. She decided to go back to Cleveland and put thoughts of the Old Brick behind her. Emmie, as always, begged her to stay.

“We’ve got plenty of room right now, Gracie,” Emmie said.

“But, Emmie, I can’t stay. I have to get back to my work.”

Grace went again to Edna and Jo’s on her return. She explained, in response to Jo’s question, that she was still waiting for her cheque from Miss Melville.

“Unless it came here,” Grace said. “She was supposed to send it to me in Oberlin.”

“It didn’t come here,” Jo said. She was about to say more but decided not to at the moment.

And Grace went on, “I am really going to get after Miss Melville now, because this is getting ridiculous.”

“Yes it really is,” Jo agreed.

Later, in the evening, Grace called her brother Bill. Though she had intended not to brood about the Old Brick she could not forget it so easily.

“Billy, you went out to the farm lately. Did you believe that house is falling apart?”

“No,” said Bill, “not really.”

“Did Stan show you that bad corner on the west side?”

“Yes he did. That eroded spot comes from water pouring down there from the rusted out rain gutter. Probably been that way for quite some years. Charlie never repaired anything while he owned the place. Did you notice the rain gutter?”

“No, I guess not. Did you point that out to Stan?”

“Oh, sure. But he thinks what he wants to think. He has the itch to build a house, a new house, and you’ll have to admit it’s bound to be more comfortable. Stan and Bertha wouldn’t want to live without a modern bathroom.”

“Couldn’t a bathroom be put in that house?”

“If plumbing that place had been an easy job, Gracie, I’d have done it when Gertrude and I lived there. The best I could do was a chemical toilet.”

“Oh dear, well I guess we’ve exhausted our arguments to save the place. Mother always called it ‘the old homestead’.”

“The trouble is, Gracie, that you and the girls and I are more like Mother - sentimental. And the older boys and Charlie are like Dad - practical, money-minded.”

“But Father loved the farms” Grace protested.

“If he’d loved it a little more he wouldn’t have sold it to Charlie. He might have known that Charlie would have let it go downhill. I wouldn’t have, Grace,”

“I believe you, Billy. But Father never could say ‘no’ to Charlie when Charlie wanted something.”

“Our parents were never as even-handed as they believed themselves to be, Gracie.”

“As well - I know,” she said. “And Charlie and Howd, too.”

“If you mean the Will,” Bill said. “Our parents didn’t have very much to do with that. Nelle and Merly huddled with Edwards on that matter and brought it to Mother and Dad to sign and they were in ‘sound mind’, but they were old and tired. Knowing Nelle, I’d say the Will was mostly her doing.”

“Edwards never liked me,” Grace said.

“Because you went to him to borrow money, Gracie. I know you’ve had a rough time in recent years. You need steady work of the right type. Listen, Gracie, I was going to call you. I’ve learned about something you might be just right for. A teacher I know has a wife who is blind. She had eye surgery that hasn’t been successful. They’ want a companion for her - someone who will read to her during the day at times and do little helpful things she needs.”

“Do they expect housework and cooking?” Grace asked.

“Not really. They have a cleaning woman once a week. And my friend, Curtis, says he gets breakfast and their dinner, too.” All you would have to of that sort is serve her some lunch and be a companion. Curt is afraid to have her home alone. He’s with her on Saturdays and Sundays, of course, and nights.”

“Well, I don’t know... I really ought to get at..”

“Listen, Grace, the Fenton’s are really very nice people. They are what you would call ‘your kind’ of people. Curt is a history teacher at Southwestern High School. And his brother is principal of East High where Jane went.”

“And so did you,” Grace said.

“Yes. Well anyway, I know you would really like these people. Curt’s wife strikes me as quite an intellectual.”

“But art work is what I do, Bill. It’s what I should do.”

“I’m sure you could probably do some art work while you were there. Some of that needlework you do. Gertrude thought you could do that while you were with Mrs. Fenton. She wouldn’t expect you to read all the time.”

“Billy, I don’t know,” Grace said.

“Well,” Bill said. “OK. I just thought I’d tell you about it. I think it would be a very nice job for you, but Gertrude predicted you wouldn’t be interested.”

“She did?” Grace looked thoughtful. “Well, Billy, I am willing to talk to these people.”

“Alright. I’ll call Curtis.”

Jo waited three days before asking Grace again what Miss Melville had said about the promised cheque. When she finally did ask her, Grace had something new to talk about. She told Jo that she was going to interview for a job as a companion for a blind woman.

“That’s just great,” Jo said. “I really hope you get it.”

“Well,” Grace said, “We’ll see.”

Two days later Grace had her interview with Mr. and Mrs. Curtis Fenton. When she got back to Cartwright Street Jo was eagerly awaiting the outcome.

“How did it go?” she asked.

“Well, it takes a bit of telling,” Grace said. “And I’m tired. I shall have to sleep on it”

“Didn’t you like the people?” Jo asked.

“Oh, yes. They are nice enough people, both are educated, and he is really quite charming.”

“Isn’t she charming?”

Grace had to smile at Jo’s curiosity.

“I suppose she might be under other circumstances,” Grace said. “She was full of a thousand questions.”

“Well, of course,” Jo said. “It was a job interview. What else would you expect?”

“I don’t usually do job interviews,” Grace said.

“I guess not.”

“Well, I’m a free lance artist. That’s what I’ve always been.”

“I know,” Jo said.

Grace went on. “I assumed from the way my brother spoke that Mr. Fenton would do the interview. Instead he was quiet the whole time, and she did all the questioning.”

“Well, you’re supposed to be her companion after all, not his.”

Grace smiled in such a way that Jo asked, “That’s so funny?”

“I think that’s what she was worried about actually.”

“What?” Jo asked.

“That I might be his companion. You see she asked me to come over to her where she was sitting, and she kept calling me ‘My dear’. ‘Come here, my dear’, she said. When I was standing in front of her she stood up, and she’s very tall, taller than her husband. She put out her hand and of course, I took it. But then she groped, I guess that would be the word. She followed from my hand, up my arm, to my shoulder and neck, to the top of my head. And then, with her hand on my head, she said, ‘My dear, you’re a little thing aren’t you? And she put her hands on my face. She felt my face!”

“Well, Grace, blind people do that, you know,” Jo said.

“So I’ve heard, but I can’t say I care for it.”

“I expect it is awkward,” Jo agreed, “but it isn’t something she’d ever need to do again. Was salary discussed?”

“Yes, but it would vary according to what I did. If I stayed later and prepared their dinner it would pay more.”

Jo wanted to ask what kind of salary was being discussed, but she did not have quite that much nerve. So she asked, “Do you think you’ll do it?”

“Well,” said Grace. “As I said, I’m going to sleep on it. Before I left Mrs. Fenton said, ‘Well, shall we try it?’ And I told her I would like to give some thought as to whether I’d be able to work the longer or shorter day, but that isn’t what’s really bothering me.”

“What is?”

“Something about her manner. Just before I left she called me to her again. ‘Come here, my dear,’ she said. And she put her hand on my arm again and she said, ‘My dear, you have a strong art.’”

“She said what?”

“‘My dear, you have a strong art.’”

“What does that mean?”

“I don’t know. I’ve been thinking about it.”

“Did she say ‘strong arm’? I thought you said ‘strong art’.”

“I did say ‘art’ and I don’t know what she meant, but I have an idea. And now I am going to bed.”

Two days later Jo was on her lunch hour at Strohmeier’s and talking to her two best friends, Flo Thomas and Marjorie Townsend. She entertained them by telling them all about Grace and her job interview.

“I really wanted her to take that job,” Jo said. “She ought to be working. She’s only a few months older than I.”

Flo would have liked to know just how old Jo was, for Jo had never said. But Flo did know that Jo’s son was thirty-five years old, so if you concluded that Jo had been, say, twenty when he was born, she’d be about fifty-five. Her face looked younger, Flo thought, though her neck was a clue to her real age. But Flo admired Jo who was stylish and lighthearted and did well at her work. Flo hoped that at fifty-five she herself would seem so young. Actually, Jo was fifty-three, having become a mother at seventeen.

Jo was continuing to talk about Grace Rahming.

“I think she could have at least tried the job for a few weeks. It might have turned out nicely. It sounded so easy.”

Marjorie Townsend asked, “That made her think she wouldn’t like it?”

“She decided the woman was jealous of her,” Jo said.

“Just from that one funny statement?” Marjorie asked.

“That and the fact that the woman is very tall and Grace is small. That Mrs. Fenton is blind and Grace isn’t, and that Mr. Fenton is quite a charming man. Oh, and Grace didn’t like the way the woman kept calling her ‘my dear’.”

“Well, of course,” Flo said, “Grace might have been right. I suppose a blind woman with a charming husband might have something to worry about.”

“Yes, Flo,” Jo said, “but you’re forgetting Grace is the one that nixed the job, not Mrs. Fenton.”

“That’s right,” Flo said. “Well, Grace should have given it a try.”

I MUST DEVELOP A SENSE OF HUMOR

At the Old Brick, the yard full of Queen Anne's Lace and uncut grasses and weeds had awakened in Grace memories of her childhood in the country and the fields around Forest Camp in summers past.

Pennington Avenue, for all its fancy name, was very much out in the country, even though the area, which had been Marshall Heights, was now annexed to the city of Cleveland. Between the houses and in surrounding properties, there was much vacant land. There were three empty lots separating Chan and Jane's place from "Ned" and Fred Perkins' place to the west. All summer long the field had been a delightful place for the Chandler children to play in the tall grass. It was a boon for Jane, because Denis and Mary Ellen seemed completely happy in the field. They were not allowed to venture elsewhere that summer, but they seemed content within the allowed limits. They had Denis' birthday tent and it was full of pillows, dollies, teddy-bears, and Denis' vast collection of tiny automobiles. The Scotty dog, Bonnie liked to be in the tent with the children when it was not too hot in the afternoon sunshine.

In mid-August the field began to turn hostile, in Jane's opinion. Amid the hay and Queen Anne's lace, the green spikes of ragweed now grew tall and began to loose their pollen on the wind. Jane had learned that the autumn cough she'd had for years and the itchy eyes were caused by the miserable spiky weed with its nondescript green blooms.

As the days went by, Jane became more and more miserable. She was just emerging from a month of morning sickness. By early September her hay-fever was turning into the chronic autumn cough and wheezy chest, but this year it was worse than it had ever been. She had found a good doctor, one recommended by the obstetrician who had delivered her youngest, little David. This doctor was an internist, a new word for Jane who, in her Christian Scientist upbringing, knew very little of medical terminology. But she was learning; an internist was a far cry from an intern. Her new doctor had two main interests; he was an allergist and a cardiologist. He was giving Jane a course of injections to build her resistance to ragweed, dust, etc. He had also prescribed some capsules for Jane to take when the wheezes disturbed her breathing at night. She had also been for her first visit to the obstetrician who confirmed the pregnancy.

Through all this time, Grace had learned nothing of the pregnancy nor of Jane's other problems, for she had been away in Oberlin for some time, or staying on Cartwright Street with Jo. Jane was thankful that her mother had not come to visit even once during the period when her morning nausea would have betrayed her condition.

The medication that Jane took at night helped her breathing somewhat, but it disturbed her sleep in the form of vivid dreams. She began dreaming about Lassie again, that Lassie was not dead after all, but that she came to the door looking for her baby. Also, Jane dreamed about Ned Perkins and her baby and again it was a contradiction of truth. In the dream, Ned was still

pregnant, in labor in fact, but she was huge, and a medical curiosity, the baby being six months overdue.

Jane would wake with great relief to realize that these recurring dreams were just that and not real. She told Trink about her dreaming and Trink told her about the disturbing dreams she had had before Katie was born.

“I couldn’t stop worrying about Carol’s baby. I had a dream that I was trying to take that baby somewhere and prevent it from being adopted. I was down in the basement of a building somewhere. I was crawling back into some cramped space where there were heating pipes and I had that little baby, and I was trying to get away from someone. Of course it was like all dreams; it never got anywhere. I just woke up.”

“I know,” Jane said, “I just can’t ever remember a dream where I finished what I was trying to do, or got where I was supposed to be going. I couldn’t even finish getting dressed. But I’ve been having such upsetting dreams. I’ve got this medicine I take so I don’t get so wheezy at night. It’s got something in it that makes you nervous, so they also put in something else that makes you groggy. I wake up in the night and I can’t sleep, and I can’t breathe, so I sit up in bed and read, but I can’t focus my eyes, so I read with one eye shut. It’s ridiculous.”

“The medicine does that to you?” Trink asked. “Isn’t that hard on you?”

“That isn’t all it does; it makes my heart pound, too. I asked my doctor if that wasn’t hard on my heart, and he said, ‘not as hard on it as the asthma is’.”

“What about the baby?” Trink wanted to know.

“Doctor says it won’t hurt the baby,” Jane said.

“Hmm,” Trink said.

“It’s funny we’ve both been dreaming about babies.”

“Oh,” Trink said, “I always do. Now here you are expecting your fourth, and I’ve only got one.”

“Honest, Trink, I didn’t do it on purpose, nor Mary Ellen Ann and David either.”

“Well, but you love them,” Trink said.

“Love them? Of course I love them! It’s Mother that worries me. She always has a fit when I’m pregnant. She doesn’t just express an opinion once. She keeps on talking about it and she hates our little house because it’s small. I’m putting off telling her about it till the last possible moment. I won’t show much till Thanksgiving. She’ll find out then.”

In the second week of September there were rains and for a few days Jane felt better. The ragweed pollen was all washed down and Jane could breathe more comfortably at night. Then the field dried up again and her night time coughing returned, and was aggravated by the dust that she and Chan had stirred up while they were fixing storage space in the attic. Chan had built a ladder to reach the area through a trap door in the kitchen ceiling, and Jane had spent the better part of two days vacuuming the dust that covered everything. She had to abandon that work however, because it was followed by the worst night of coughing she'd ever had.

The daytime was better, but she still coughed, and by mid-morning she had abdominal cramps. She decided she must be coming down with intestinal flu. But by noon she had walked to school to register Denis in kindergarten. On her return she was still having cramps, but until she suddenly started bleeding it had not occurred to her that she might be going to have a miscarriage. A wave of dismay swept over her when she saw the blood on the floor.

"Oh, damn!" she said aloud. "I don't want to lose this baby."

She called her doctor who ordered her to bed with an ice bag on her abdomen, and he phoned a prescription for codeine.

"You'll have to stay in bed a few days. Call me in the morning."

She sent Denis across the field to get Ned, who came and phoned Chan at work. Chan picked up the prescription and the ice bag and arrived home early.

"I think I ought to call your Mother," he said, "if you have to stay in bed maybe she can come."

"Oh, God!" Jane said, "I wasn't going to tell her yet, but I can't impose on Ned. I don't even know where Mom is. The last I knew she had gone to Oberlin. Your mother may know where she is."

When Chan called his mother he talked at some length and then reported back to Jane.

"Mother was all upset. She was pleased to hear that you are pregnant and..."

"She was pleased? Really?"

"Yes, and she's really hoping you don't lose the baby. She wants you to be very quiet and careful. And she's mad at your mother. It seems she got her a job as a chaperone for a teenage girl whose mother has died. The father's work keeps him busy and he wants someone to be at home with his daughter. Your mother quit the job after one week. It sounded like an easy job, too."

"I wonder why she quit then," Jane said.

"It doesn't look to me as though she wants a job," Chan said. "Nothing suits her."

“I wondered why I haven’t heard from her lately.”

“Mother told me that she’ll come tomorrow if your mother doesn’t. But she says she shouldn’t take off work tomorrow because there’s a sale going on. Your mother was out to dinner with Carle so she doesn’t know yet about your problem.”

“Oh, Lord,” Jane said. “She’ll have plenty to say.”

“I hope she calls to let us know whether she’ll come.” But at bedtime, when the phone rang, it was Jo on the line. She told Chan that Grace would be there in the morning.

“She must be so disgusted she won’t even talk to us,” Jane said, “but probably she realized you’d answer the phone. She’ll sputter at me tomorrow when she gets here.”

Grace did not exactly sputter. When she arrived at ten o’clock the following morning she appeared in the doorway of the bedroom where Jane lay still keeping quiet. Grace’s eyes were big and round.

“Well!” she said and again, “Well!” Jane couldn’t help laughing.

But Grace said, “You’re in a fine predicament.”

“Well, I think everything is going to be alright,” Jane said.

“You mean you are going to lose it? To miscarry?”

“No, I mean I think I’m not going to miscarry.”

“It would be better if you did lose this baby.”

“Chan and I don’t feel that way,” Jane said.

“You didn’t plan this child, did you?”

“No, but we’ve warmed to the idea. Four children will be a very nice family spaced two years apart.” “How did you get pregnant?” Grace asked.

“The usual way.”

“You know what I mean.”

“The diaphragm failed. I’m giving up on that method.”

“I should think so. You’d better get up out of that bed and see if nature won’t solve the problem. There’s plenty of housework to do around here. Dirty dishes in the sink, toys all over the place.”

“Naturally,” Jane said. “Don’t worry about that. Chan said he’d tidy up when he got home. All I’m hoping you’ll do is look after the kids and give them lunch. Denis is at kindergarten. Ned Perkins took him and she’ll go get him at noon. Mom, why did you quit that new job that Jo got you?”

Grace looked a bit off balance, but she said, “Why because that man wanted to marry me.”

“Are you sure? Why didn’t you just say ‘no’?”

“I couldn’t stay there with him feeling that way.”

“But you can’t keep on ‘visiting’ Edna and Jo, Mother.”

“They like having me there,” Grace said.

“Mom,” Jane said, “Edna doesn’t even like having Jo there. She’d rather live alone. Chan knows that.”

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But Grace returned to Edna's house the following day, when Jane announced that her cramps were gone and the bleeding had completely stopped. The doctor had told Jane she could feed the children, but otherwise it would be best if she spent another day or two resting as much as possible.

So Grace left, with the parting question for Jane, "Why on earth do you feel that you must go to such pains to preserve this pregnancy?"

When Jane did not answer, Grace went on.

"A house such as this is no place to raise children."

"This house is getting better all the time, Mother."

"You have no bathtub," Grace said.

"We'll have one by Christmas time."

"And this place is too small."

"Well," Jane said, "the children are small, too. By the time they are big we'll be in a big house."

"You could rent a big house now."

"We're through with renting. We never intend to rent ever again. We'll own our big house. Chan is going to build it."

"Build it" Grace exclaimed. "My God"

But for all Jane's brave words, events that month worked against her. In mid-September the rains stopped, and the weeds in the field flourished and shed their pollen on the wind. But the nights were chilly and Chan had to go down into the tiny basement with baskets of coal and get the heater going. Jane's allergies laid her low. One evening Chan had to call the doctor recommended by their obstetrician. He came and gave Jane an injection of adrenalin which in a very short time eased her breathing, though she complained that it made her heart pound in a very frightening way. She slept, however, for a few hours, propped up on three pillows. But toward dawn she was sitting up straight, coughing and gasping.

Chan was alarmed by her appearance, her eyes were wide arid frightened, with every attempt to take a breath, the cords on her neck stood out. Chan decided to wait no longer. After talking with the allergist, Dr, Seabrook, Chan crossed the field to get Ned Perkins to stay with the children. Then he rushed Jane to University Hospital. He stayed until she was breathing easier, then he had

no choice but to ask Grace to come and care for the children. He would much rather have not had to ask her, but he had to go to work and so did Jo. Jo had said to him, "There's no reason at all why Grace can't come." And Ned Perkins had offered to care for the children each day until Jane came home from the hospital. "No, we can't let you do that," Chan had told Ned, "for we don't know how long she'll be in the hospital. But Jane was home again in three days. She seemed to do very well in the hospital away from the pollen and other irritants. Grace stayed a week during which time she advanced many theories about Jane's troubles. It was the house that caused the allergy, or very likely it was the dog, Bonnie.

"But, Mother," Jane said, "we've had the house and the dog all year. I only get this trouble in the autumn, and Dr. Seabrook thinks that this year it's aggravated by the pregnancy."

Jane should not have mentioned the pregnancy for Grace more than warmed to the subject.'

"Well, as for that," she said, "I'm sure he's correct. And I must tell you that your obstetrician says that you don't have to be getting pregnant. He said, 'We can do something about that these days. The tubes can be tied.'"

Jane was amazed, "When did he say that? We've never even discussed it."

"I called him yesterday," Grace said.

"You called him!"

"Yes, I certainly did. You can't be getting pregnant all the time. You certainly should get that done. The tubes tied, I mean."

"I know what you mean, and it's not your business."

"If I have to come and take care of your babies when you're sick it's my business."

"I'll not ask you again," Jane said. "I'm appalled that you called my doctor."

"Because if you and Chan don't act sensibly, someone has to take some action. You should never have moved here."

"Oh, Mother!"

Two weeks later Jane had to be rushed to the hospital again. Jo volunteered to take David, and Grace cared for Denis and Mary Ellen. But this time the injections of adrenalin did not help Jane. She had to be given a drug directly into a vein. It eased her breathing but she was put into a private room for she coughed all night. On her second day she was taken for chest X-rays. The resident doctor talked to Chan about the results.

“She has a spot on one lung that we are concerned about, but we’ll take her down to X-ray tomorrow and get some better pictures, and have one of our lung specialists look at them.”

Grace would never learn what an anxious several days Chan and Jane went through before they heard the verdict on the condition of Jane’s lungs. She spent two more days in the hospital before being dismissed to go home. They still had not heard more about the questionable spot on the X-ray, But Chan had been told by the resident to call Dr. Seabrook in a day or two. And the resident had urged that if at all possible Jane should stay in the city and not return to the house in the suburbs where all the ragweed flourished in the surrounding fields. So Chan took her home to his Aunt Edna’s house on Cartwright Street, where she was installed in Aunt Edna’s own bedroom. Jo was delighted for it meant that she’d have young David with her a little longer.

“You just rest and I’ll take care of him,” she assured Jane.

“It’s been so entertaining having him here with us. He’s such a smart child, I’ll hate to have you take him home.”

“What about your job at Strohmeyer’s?” Jane asked. “That’s not a problem at all. I’m entitled to some time off.”

“But I must get home again. The city isn’t free from pollen.”

“Oh,” said Jo, “but there’s so much more in the country.”

“Well, but I can’t live here, I must go home. I miss Denis and Mary Ellen and Bonnie, and besides I don’t think the dust here is good for me either.”

“Dust?”

“Don’t say anything to Aunt Edna, because I appreciate her giving up her room for me, but dust is bad for me too. Anyway, I think there’ll be a frost tonight. That will finish the ragweed.”

Aunt Edna’s room was indeed dusty. The windows were hidden behind lace curtains and red-velvet drapes. The dust on them was clearly visible. It was in truth an allergy sufferer’s nightmare and the following day, which was Sunday, Chan took Jane and David home to the little cottage on Pennington Avenue. The decision to return home, over her mother-in-laws protests, was strengthened by the fact that there had indeed been a killing frost overnight.

“For the first time ever,” Jane said, “I’ll be happy to see my zinnia garden blackened and dead. The farther we get from the Lake, the more damage I see. I feel better already knowing the ragweed is finished. Hooray It’ll be dead, dead, DEAD”

Grace met them at their door with only one thing on her mind. Her eyes were wide with solemn indignation. It was an expression Jane had frequently seen but not for a long time.

“Well!” Grace said. “Who do you suppose turned up here this morning? Your father of all people!”

“I might have known,” said Jane.

“Why?” her mother asked.

“Oh, just the way you looked when we came in,” Jane said.

“I suppose you think your father is perfectly delightful.”

Jane smiled. “Not dependably so. What was he doing here this morning?”

“He wants to bring Ethel up here for a couple of weeks.”

“Good!” said Jane.

“I suppose that Frederica wants to get rid of her for awhile. Poor Ethel! Your father, I think is able now to look back and regret. Wisdom is creeping up on him a bit late. But he ought not to ask you to take Ethel. Frederica knew what she was getting into, I’m sure.”

“Mother, I’ll be glad to have Ethel here. She’ll get all the meals. I’ll love it and Ethel loves it too.”

“The children love my cooking,” Grace said.

“I know, but you always say you’re exhausted. Ethel never says she’s exhausted. You always do more things than I want you to do; Ethel just asks me what I’d like her to do. That’s a big help to me.”

“You must be like your father,” Grace said. “He always maintained that gratitude is an unpleasant emotion.”

“Mother, I am grateful to you for coming in an emergency like this. Still - I know what Dad was talking about. I think he referred to ‘extracted’ gratitude.”

“Well, your father liked to talk through his hat,” Grace said. “Anyway, now that you are home, I’m going down to Oberlin. I have to get at my work.”

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It was true that with the ragweed killed by the frost, Jane felt much better, though she coughed for a few more days. And at night in bed she was filled with worries over the state of her health. On Monday and Tuesday when Chan came home from work he had asked, “Did Dr. Seabrook call?”

“What about?” Jane had asked.

“About your chest X-rays. The resident told me to call Dr. Seabrook about the results. I called, but he was going to call back.”

“Is there something wrong?” Jane asked.

“Well...” Chan hesitated. “They wanted the specialist to take a look at those last X—rays.”

“Why?”

“Well, there was a little spot they wondered about.”

So all through Monday and Tuesday nights Jane lay awake, some of the time her pillow wet with tears. She surely must have tuberculosis. It would not kill her before the new baby came and maybe not for a year or two, but she would die and leave poor Chan with four little children. Maybe he would marry again and some other woman would raise her babies. But Chan was shy and somewhat melancholy of nature. He might very well just remain a widower and have his mother care for the children. That would be terrible because Jo only loved David really. If the new baby should be a girl Jo might be fond of her, but Den and Mary Ellen would not be truly loved. Then again if Jane’s own mother were to raise the babies, David would be slighted, for Grace was fiercely determined to counteract Jo’s doting preference for David. No, it would be better if Chan were to marry again. A step-mother would do no more damage. On Wednesday morning Jane told Chan as much.

“Look,” he said. “They can cure TB.”

That day Dr, Seabrook called.

“Nothing to worry about,” he said. “Just an old calcified spot. There seems to be nothing active. And your other tests were fine.”

Suddenly the world was fine again and the pregnancy no longer in danger.

Jane and Ted renewed their habit of morning coffee klatches. Denis was now walking to kindergarten with a group.

“I don’t want Mother to know about the X-ray business,” Jane said . “She wouldn’t believe that everything’s OK.”

“I hope you’re never sick again, Jane,” Ted said. “I was happy to walk with Denis to school, but the other part I really didn’t care for.”

“That’s that?” Jane asked.

“Your mother came over and asked me if I’d help her clean house and...”

“She had her nerve!” Jane said hotly.

“Nerve! Wait a minute. I didn’t mind vacuuming, the floors and going some laundry for the kiddies. What I didn’t want to do was help her go through your dresser drawers.”

“I noticed she had,” Jane said. “Mother’s like that. Treats me like a child always. She wasn’t supposed to ask you to help.”

“Look, that part was OK, but I thought she was being snoopy. She found your diaphragm in your top drawer. She came to me with this box and opened it and said, ‘Do you know what this thing is?’ So I told her what it was.”

“What did she say?”

“She said, ‘Ah ha’”

Jane laughed, “Didn’t she ask why I hadn’t used it?”

“No,” said Ned, “but I wondered about that myself.”

“Well,” Jane said, “I did use it. Now I have no more faith in that system.”

“Well, if Fred comes home on leave I won’t use any system. I’d love to be pregnant. I envy you.”

“Ned, I’m glad someone approves of my condition.”

“Your mother did have a few words to say on the subject,” Ned said. “She thinks it would have been best if you had lost the baby.”

“I know, and maybe it would have been best, but with me, once a baby is on the way, I don’t want to lose it.”

“Jane, why doesn’t your mother like Chan? She seemed to be furious at him for bringing you to this little house.”

“Chan didn’t bring me anymore than I brought him. I was desperate for us to live by ourselves. When Mom gets an idea in her head she doesn’t let go of it. Mother thought Chan was wonderful when he was going with my sister, but when he married me then he wasn’t so wonderful. One by one things went contrary to Mother’s plans for all of us. She worries all the time because Dee

isn't married. Somehow it makes her peeved at me. I have what she wants Dee to have. A husband and children."

"Is that what Dee wants?" Ned asked.

"Who knows? She could have been married by now. She never goes for serious types, the ones that Mother approves of. Dee says she's in no hurry to get married. She wants to have a good time first."

"How old is she?"

"Thirty-one."

"Well..."

"Anyway, I can't worry about what Mother approves of. Chan and I have lots of work to do before the baby comes. We want to have the bathtub in by Christmas. Mother will at least approve of that."

"I'm sure glad you're feeling better," Ned said.

"I'll be OK now. I guess I was meant to have this baby. Mother will like it well enough after it gets here."

But Jane went home quite upset and angry at her Mother because of the harsh criticism of Chan. It was so unfair for he had been working so hard to get the little place comfortable. Other people had praised their efforts and admired their pioneering spirit, Uncle Bill and Aunt Gertrude had been downright enthusiastic in their comments on everything from the flower and vegetable garden to Chan's ideas for expanding the little cottage.

Chan had seemed to be in a cross and uncommunicative mood for several days after Jane's return from the hospital and it was not until after the good news about Jane's chest X-ray that Chan spoke up.

"Well, it may be that your mother is wrong after all," he said.

"In what way?"

"She told me that you would surely die if you continue to live here."

"More likely that she will die if I continue to live here. She likes to have a comfortable place to visit and this doesn't qualify."

"She gave me a piece of her mind about a lot of things. She says I lack the courage to take hold of the situation."

“Whatever that means.”

“I gather it means I must get you and the children into a large comfortable house, get rid of the dog, see that the children never have colds, see that you overcome your allergies, see that the children stop wetting their beds, and I should stop being penny-wise and pound-foolish.”

“Penny-wise and pound-foolish! Mother accused you of that? She is notoriously foolish with money.”

“Oh, and one more thing; I must develop a sense of humor.”

At this point Jane laughed. “Well we surely are going to need it I guess. Pound foolish! We can’t even afford to be penny foolish. We should tell Mother that when she buys us the large comfortable house we’ll move right in.”

THEY ATTACKED THE UNITED STATES)

As November passed Jane's persistent cough finally disappeared. Thanksgiving dinner was at Edna and Jo's and everyone commented that Jane looked much better. Present were Chan and his family, Grace had come from Oberlin, and Dee from Dayton. And Jo had also invited Carle Semon. Jo privately felt that it would be a very fine thing if Carle and Grace were to remarry. It would solve Grace's financial problems and also be the answer to Carle's loneliness. If Carle and Grace had a home of their own they could take care of each other's little illnesses and entertain each other generally. Jo felt that Grace was too preoccupied with her girls. Grace needed a job to keep her busy and if she wouldn't try to get a job, then she ought to marry Carle, or that other fellow that liked her. Grace needed something!

Harry Porter also came for Thanksgiving, but to Jo's great disappointment he said he would have to leave early as he had another invitation to a turkey dinner.

"Where are you going?" Jo asked him flatly.

"The Hartman's invited me," Harry said.

"Who are they'?" she wanted to know.

"Friends of mine. They live in Winey Creek. They invited me first, by the way."

"You know you don't need an invitation here, Harry." "Well I like it out at Winey Creek. Gets me away from the city"

"Are the Hartman's friends of Beryl Simpson's? Jo asked. Harry looked annoyed but answered agreeably enough, "As a matter of fact they happen to be Beryl's friends too, yes."

"I thought so," Jo said, but could think of nothing more to say.

"I'm thinking of buying a farm in Winey Creek myself."

"A farm!" Jo exclaimed.

"Well, only for a place to relax away from the city. I'm not planning on taking up farming as a career."

"A career! Harry why would you buy a farm in the country?"

"Never mind. It's just an idea I'm toying with. I've got to run along now. Chan, you let me know when you're ready for that bathtub and I'll have Central Fixtures send it out. Five foot, is that right? Left hander?"

"That's right," Chan said.

“OK,” said Harry. “It’ll be your Christmas present.”

“Marvelous,” said Chan.

“You’re a real Santa,” Jane said. “Part of the fun of our little place is getting these improvements step by step.”

“I’d have thought you’d have wanted the bathtub sooner,” Grace said.

“Mother, we couldn’t have it sooner. Chan is still working on the pipes down below, getting things ready. We had to remove gore dirt from the crawl space.”

“I hope you weren’t doing more digging, Jane,” Jo said.

“No, I wasn’t.”

“But she did fall through the trap door,” Chan said.

“My God!” said Harry, Jo, Dee, and Grace together.

“Are you alright?” Jo asked Jane.

“Oh, yes. I have a bruise on my ribs is all.”

“But is the baby alright?” Jo persisted.

“Far as I know. I sat still for half hour afterwards waiting for the baby to move.”

“And did it move?” asked Grace.

“Of course. And it’s moving now, too.” Jane sounded faintly defiant.

“How far did you fall?” Harry Porter asked.

“Well only about four feet, but I hit my ribs against the side of the opening. It was dumb, I just forgot the trap door was open and I went out in that back hall and stepped into it.”

“Well,” said Jo, “it’s clear to me that you were meant to have this baby.”

“It’s also clear,” Grace said, “that it’s a pretty treacherous house.”

There were in fact three trap doors in the house on Pennington Avenue, but they were a temporary expedient. When the remodeling was complete they would no longer be needed. Jane’s accident had been a fluke. The trap doors were usually closed. There was the one in the living room which gave access to the coal heater below. When Chan or Jane went down they closed it. The second trap door was the one in the rear addition and it opened to the space

beneath the new bathroom. Chan had expanded the area which had been excavated by the plumber who had put in the sewer line a year earlier. The hot water heater was down there and by the end of the first week of December, Chan was just finishing the piping which would put the new bathtub in use. The children could hardly wait. It was a Sunday afternoon. The radio was not on, as Denis had been playing his fairy tale records on the phonograph.

Jane decided to go to the store, a nearby small grocery which was always open, and where she traded almost exclusively because she had no car. And now that Denis was old enough to walk to kindergarten, he sometimes went to the store to buy a loaf of bread or a gallon of milk for Jane. Today they would go together.

She lifted the trap door to speak to Chan.

“How’s it going?” she asked.

“Good. I’m about to turn on the water and see if I’ve got any leaks.”

“Wonderful! I’m going up to Butch’s store and get some round steak, so we can celebrate the occasion. I’ll be right back, but Mary Ellen and David are still sleeping, so listen for them.”

Jane and Denis took the diagonal path through the vacant lot to Butch McClellan’s little store. Denis was pulling Mary Ellen’s little red wagon to haul the groceries home. It was December and it was quite cold, but no snow.

Butch’s store was usually quiet on Sunday afternoon. As they entered Denis asked his mother, “Can I have the first bath in the tub?” but Jane didn’t hear him, as there were several people in the store and they all seemed to be talking at once. A group of four men were in excited conversation in the front of the place, and at the rear Butch McClellan was waiting on a middle aged fat woman, who kept saying, “Really? Really?” and “Oh, my goodness”

Jane began to listen to what Butch was saying.

“We didn’t hear it till about half an hour ago. My wife had just turned the radio on. There wasn’t no warning at all. No warning.”

“What happened?” Jane asked.

“The Japs attacked Pearl Harbor,” Butch said.

“Where’s that?” Jane wanted to know.

“Hawaii,” Butch McClellan and the fat lady said in one breath, and they both sounded as though they had always known about Pearl Harbor when in fact they had not.

“Hawaii’s ours,” Jane said. “They attacked us?”

“That’s right,” Butch said. “Japs attacked the United States of America.”

Jane began to pay attention to what the men up front were saying. She heard one say, “They’ll hit Los Angeles tomorrow morning I bet.” “Glad I don’t live in California,” another said. And, “Aw, those little yellow apes can’t take on the U.S.” another man said. But there was a man who had just entered the store who seemed to know more than the others.

“This is a very bad thing. The Fleet is based at Pearl. The U.S. Pacific fleet. Lord knows what all they got.”

“This means war then,” a man said. “We’re in it now.”

“Sure it means war,” the newcomer agreed. “And Hitler’ll take advantage. War! Hell, it’ll be two wars, won’t it?”

Jane changed her mind about buying steak and bought ground beef instead. The children preferred meat patties anyway. And who could celebrate now?

Butch McClellan was still talking.

“Probably married men and fathers will have to go,” he said and then when he saw Jane’s stricken face and the little boy beside her, he said, “Well, of course, it all depends.”

“Yes,” Jane said, “I guess it all depends.”

When she reached home Chan had the radio on.

“I heard the news at the store,” Jane said.

“Your mother called or I wouldn’t have heard yet. She said she was listening to the symphony when they broke in. She’s in a terrible tizzy.”

“Well, I am too. Up at the store a lot of people think this means real war now. D’you think so?”

“I imagine so,” Chan said. “it’s no little thing they did.”

“Is Japan very strong?”

“I sure don’t know. I hope Roosevelt knows.”

Denis pulled at Jane’s sleeve.

“Mommie, who gets the first bath in the big tub? You said we’d celebrate the new tub.”

“Alright. We will. After dinner.”

“I want a baf in tub, too,” Mary Ellen said.

“Who gets the first bath, Mommie’?” Denis asked again.

“No one,” Jane said. “I’m going to put all three of you in together.”

“Can we have toys in, too? Can Bonnie have a bath too?”

“Toys - yes. Bonnie can wait. Sh. Quiet. We want to listen to the radio.”

They would be listening to the radio for the next four years.

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That very Sunday Stan Martin had phoned his sisters in Oberlin. He wanted to ask a favor and he was a little nervous about it. Ever since he had bought the old homestead property in North Royalton Township he had been conscious of the disfavor of the rest of the family. Not all of them. Jim and Howd and Charlie didn't mind too much, but the girls and Bill had been real upset when he told them he was going to pull down the Old Brick. They didn't agree that it wasn't worth trying to save. Nelle was back in New York, so he was spared her reaction to seeing a different house on the site of the old home. She'd written her thoughts on the subject right after he bought the property and he'd heard no more about it from her. Nelle and he had always' been close, perhaps because she'd been the next in line after he was born. But Stan had been fond of all his sisters, though Emmie had always been a little bit different, even before her misfortune. Because Nelle had moved around so much he hadn't seen her as often as the ones who'd been in Oberlin and Cleveland. Merly and Grace were good sisters, in fact now that his mother was gone Grace was the best letter-writer in the family and she never forgot birthday cards.

The new house was essentially finished now, but there was a lot of finishing to do. All the inside painting and papering and varnishing were still to be done, but he and Bertha had sold their other house and moved in. They needed the money from the sale. For years now he and Bertha had made a living that way. Stan would build a house and they'd live in it a while, then when it was all fixed up he'd sell it for a profit. They always had a huge vegetable garden, and Bertha sold ladies' silk stockings and corsets among the women in North Royalton. They got by fairly well and Stan always had some money in the bank. But they had a problem now. Bertha's old mother had come to live with them and she was sick and "out of her head". She wandered around the house at night and Bertha got no rest. She was always afraid her mother would fall down stairs or start a fire or something awful. And now old Mrs. Alberta was really sick and Bertha had a lot of extra laundry to do, for her mother wet the bed and had to be fed and washed. Poor Bertha was worn out with nursing the old woman and also worried about her sales business because she had many Christmas orders to see to. Stan was afraid Bertha would make herself sick. He decided to call Merly in Oberlin to see if she might come and stay a week or so, to give Bertha a chance to get some sleep at night and get her Christmas orders delivered.

Merly found she could not help out at this time, but Grace volunteered to come "for a few days". Stan had called in the morning on December 7th and after she heard the news about the Pearl Harbor attack, Grace thought of calling him to say she was too upset but she thought better of it. Stan needed her and she would go.

He came for her the next morning. She had not been out along Schoolhouse Road since before Stan started his wrecking. She was afraid of what she would see. She knew that the house that Stan had built was a simple white frame erected on the foundation of the Old Brick. Bill had seen it and pronounced it "not a bad little house". Still, Grace decided, she would just have to pretend

she was somewhere else and not at the old farm at all. She would try to think of it as a completely different site.

But, she had forgotten briefly about the trees. As they drove in the familiar sight of those two beautiful pines hit her with the full impact of an aching nostalgia for her childhood summers and for the three eventful years when she and Norris had struggled to make a go of the farm and their marriage. The combined memories flooded her mind. Jane's birth and severe illness with whooping cough, the run-away team and Dee's fright, the bellowing bull and Norris's courage, Norris's brief dalliance with Howd and Lottie's amazingly pretty daughter Averill. And there were the various triumphs and delights. Raising the twelve little pigs on a bottle, making maple sugar in the spring thaws, her chickens that laid so well in zero weather, and oh! the wonderful flowers and vegetables that she and Norr had grown with such success and such joy - yes, joy! For Norr had been at his very best when gardening. The earth in his hands seemed to soothe him and to suppress the devils within him. He should have never left the farm. Why had it all turned so sour? But oh she knew why. It was Marcella. Waves of bitterness swept over her at the thought of her cloying, fawning, weak mother-in-law, now dead five years. How fortunate Norris's present wife was not to have Marcella to ruin things (or help ruin things).

Now Grace saw the house. It was, as Bill had said, "not a bad house really". But it was odd to see through the trees, the gleaming white siding of the frame building, rather than the mellow, soft orange-pink of the faded walls of the Old Brick.

Stan took her on a tour around the building. There was only a light snow on the ground, so Grace could clearly see that the house sat on the original foundation, though there was much new cement between the sills and the old stones. But the old slanted cellar door was still in its place, and Stan lifted it to show Grace that he had retained the old stair steps made of sandstone blocks.

"See, Gracie? The old stones are still here. You can be glad about that, don't you think?"

She spoke musingly. "Yes, I guess I can be glad about that. And the trees, too. The pines, I mean. Stan - don't ever take down those trees."

"Oh, I like the trees, Gracie. Pa. liked them, too. He and Bill used to argue about whether they were white pines or Austrian Pines. I've forgotten which they are."

"I can tell you how you can find out," Grace said.

"How's that, Sis?"

"If it's white pine the needles will be in groups of five."

"You always were a smart little girl, Sis. Ma was always very proud of you."

"Oh, I learned about that in New Hampshire, Stan."



2531 1/2

THE HOUSE THAT STAN BUILT ON THE SITE OF THE OLD BRICK



“Well, let’s go in the house. Bertha’s at the window wondering why we don’t come in.”

Having got by the emotional hurdle of viewing the Old Brick’s replacement, Grace progressed to the hurdle which was always in place when she first encountered Bertha Martin after a lapse of time. Bertha and Grace were about as different in background, taste, and personality as two women could be. Although Grace was born a small town girl, it was a college town, and she was a cosmopolitan by nature. On the other hand, Bertha, though born in the city, was countrified in her ways and in her speech. Her double negatives had always given Grace “fits”. And poor Bertha had a voice that was harsh and shrill, but everyone in the family agreed that Bertha had a loving heart. It was her custom to greet her friends and relatives with a loud and hearty reproach following a strong hug and kiss. She spoke thus now.

“Why, Grace, how come you don’t hardly never come to see us no more?” Bertha outdid herself on that one.

Grace kept a straight face and said, ‘Well, Bertha, you know I don’t drive a car, so it’s hard for me to...’

But Bertha would rather go on talking than hear Grace’s reasons.

“Well, you’re better than the rest of them, Grace. We see Howd often because he’s nearby. But, Charlie, don’t never come like he did when his dad was alive.”

“Charlie don’t live close, Bertha,” Stan reminded.

“Whenever you want to visit, Grace, Stanley’ll come get you,” Bertha volunteered. She never called him Stan. She went on to amuse Grace further by saying, “Mama’s been in bed with the doctor for five weeks.”

Grace ached to ask Bertha how the doctor was feeling, but she was afraid that if Bertha realized she was joking she would not take it kindly.

“You was so good to come, Grace. Before Christmas and all. If you could just be in the room with Mama at night for a while. I’ll do my orders in this afternoon and take care of Mama in the morning. You can sleep in the morning then and the evening too, if you want to. Thomas will do the cooking. He always does; he likes it. Grace, what do you think of this war? Ain’t that awful what happened yesterday? What do you think?”

“What can anyone think, Bertha? I expect we will be in a long and terrible struggle. But we must win out. We must”

“Gracie,” Stan said, “I think it’s going to be Armageddon.”

“Oh, Stan.” Grace said. “Don’t talk that way.”

“Don’t you believe in Armageddon?”

“No!” she said.

“It’s in the bible,” her brother said.

“So I’ve heard, but I don’t subscribe to everything in the Bible. Mostly I just believe in the Commandments. Jesus’ and Moses’ Commandments.”

“Pa believed in Armageddon, Gracie. He used to read his Bible.”

“Only when he was old, to please Mother, and after she was gone he still did because she’d have approved.”

“But Pa did believe in Armageddon, Gracie,” Stan insisted.

“Well, I don’t. And Pa did because you got him into that Watchtower business. And Howd got you into it, and Ara got Howd into it.”

“You ought to read Judge Rutherford,” Stan said. “The Witnesses are really...”

“No, Stan,” Grace said. “It just isn’t for me. I like to figure things out for myself. Stan could we put the radio on? I want to keep up with what’s going on in Washington today.”

In Washington President Roosevelt was speaking to the Congress in fateful tones: “Yesterday, Decembuh, seventh, nineteen-fawty-one, a date which will live in infamy, the United States of America...”

Grace always thrilled to the sound of F.D.R.’s voice. Stan and Bertha (being solid Republicans) were not equally stirred, but the import and emotion of the speech stirred them all.

Bertha took Grace upstairs to the room where her mother lay in one of the twin beds. Grace was to occupy the other.

Mrs. Alberta was much thinner than Grace remembered her, but she had never claimed to enjoy good health. Grace recalled that whenever anyone said to Bertha’s mother, “Hello, Mrs. Alberta, you’re looking well,” that lady would complain, “I’m not thought I’m not well at all.”

Now it was true. She was not unconscious, but neither was she alert. She smiled vaguely at Grace and Bertha and said nothing, just turned her head and went to sleep.

“She sleeps more in the daytime,” Bertha explained. “The doctor thinks she’s had little strokes. She’s restless at night, but doc has prescribed some medicine for her to calm her. Sometimes she wants water during the night. Sometimes she throws her covers off.”

Mrs. Alberta was wearing white flannel mittens and Grace asked about them. They were loose and came as far as the elbow where they were fastened to the nightgown with safety pins. They reminded Grace of those she had tied on her baby Dee to prevent thumb-sucking.

“Why does she have those mittens?” She asked Bertha.

“So’s she won’t scratch herself. She has a rash. She as just raking her skin with her fingernails.”

“Can’t you cut her nails short?” Grace asked.

“Mama won’t let me. She swats me if I try.”

“My word!” said Grace, hoping Mrs. Alberta wouldn’t swat her.

That evening they listened to the radio for a long time. It was all war news, for War it was. A long list of countries by now had declared war on Japan. Britain, Australia and Canada had done so immediately. Central American countries were coming on line with the U.S. - Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Honduras, Salvador etc. Even the governments in exile were declaring war on Japan.

Grace went to bed too excited to sleep and frustrated because Stan and Bertha would not discuss the entire situation on an informed level. They simply did not read enough. They spent too much time on their religious literature.

Although Mrs. Alberta spent a quiet night. Grace did not sleep till morning.

The second night Grace hoped to read during the evening but she had forgotten to bring a book with her. When she searched for something like a newspaper or a magazine she found nothing interesting.

“Stan,” she said. “About Armageddon. Where in the Bible does it tell about that?”

“In Revelation,” Stan said promptly. “Chapter 16, verses 14 through 16.”

“I think I’d like to see just what it does say. I’ve heard it referred to all my life, but never looked it up.”

“You should read the Bible every day, Gracie.”

“Oh, Stan, I’m familiar with many things in the Bible that are very fine indeed to point us the way but it’s mostly dreadfully wordy. I tell you, Stan, more people would read it if it were cut down to no more than one-tenth its size.”

“You can’t cut down the Word of God, Sis,” Stan said.

“Well, men just say it’s the word of God. But anyway let me take it up to bed with me and I’ll see what Armageddon is all about.”

That night Mrs. Alberta was restless though she never really woke up. Her flannel mittens were bothering her and from time to time in, the dim-lit room Grace could see a white-shrouded arm rise up slowly in a ghostly manner, then after several futile attempts to shake off the mitts the arm would drop back to the bed.

In the morning at breakfast Stan asked Grace if she had read about Armageddon.

“Yes indeed I did,” she told him, “and I went on from there and finished the Bible.”

Stan laughed, “That’s only about six pages.”

“Yes, but I read them. I was kind of surprised. I was always of the impression that Armageddon Was the end of everything.”

“The end of evil,” explained Stan.

“Well, I don’t think evil can be vanquished in that manner. The battle of Armageddon is a fairy story of the type that men like to tell. It’s a story of violence and it speaks of harlots and the great whore and all that. As a woman I don’t appreciate the allegory. As far as evil goes it is a continuing struggle to cure the world’s ills. I don’t expect it to be solved that way.”

“Well, you’re a Christian Scientist,” Stan said.

“No, I’m not,” Grace said. “Not really. But I’m not a ‘Witness’ certainly.”

Grace was beginning to be bored with her visit with Stan and Bertha but she stayed out the week. However, on Saturday something upset her. After dinner Bertha got out a large scrapbook.

“Grace,” Bertha said, “would you like to see my pictures of the Old Brick?”

“Oh, yes” Grace said in her innocence.

It turned out to be a day by day, in fact, almost an hour by hour, account of the wrecking of the old homestead. Stan appeared in most of them. Bertha had taken scores of snapshots. To Grace they were sickening. Pictures of the barn with the roof gone, its hipped gables standing alone. Pictures of the frame with the siding gone. Then the leveled site. And, horror of horrors the dear Old Brick without its roof, and step by step more of its brick walls broken down, first to the level of the upstairs windows, then picture after picture till it was all pulled down. Grace said to Bertha, I can’t look anymore. It’s making me sad.”

“I thought you’d think they were interesting,” Bertha said.

“Well, if they were pictures of the building of it, I would,”



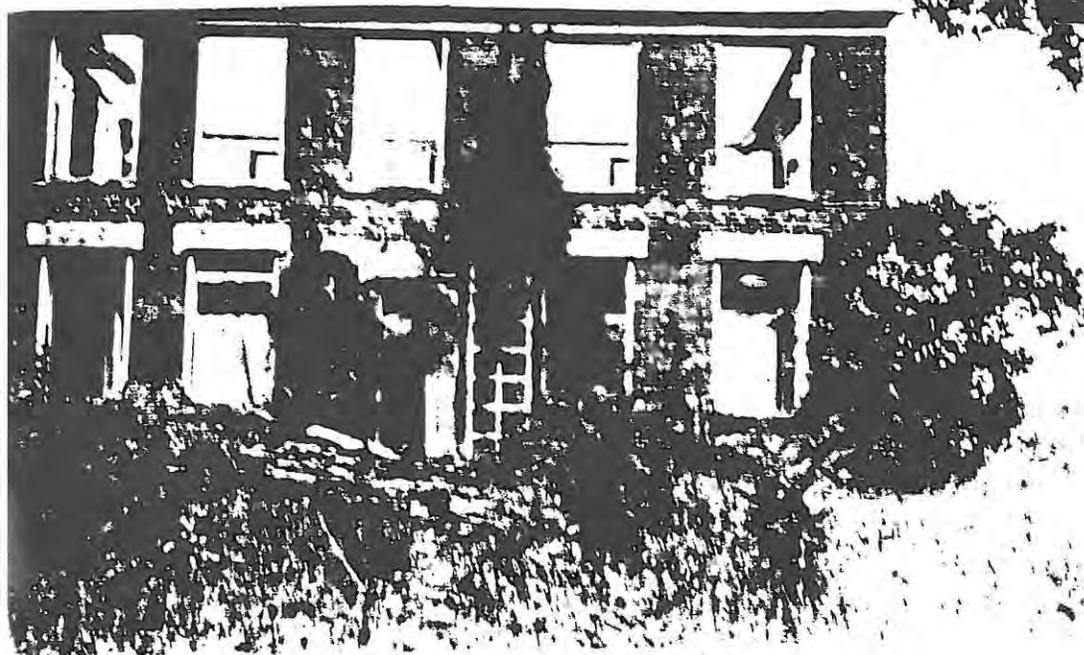
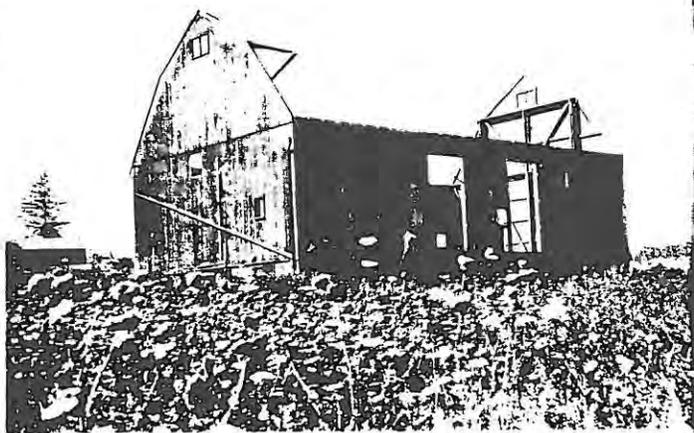
Summer at the Old Brick



The Old Brick's last Christmas 1939

"barn lowering" →

1941



↑ These bricks do not look "rotten" as the "wrecker" claimed

← Summer 1941

"TOMMY'S" HANDIWORK

2538 $\frac{1}{2}$

Grace said. "I wish we had pictures of that."

"I wasn't here a hundred years ago," Bertha said.

The next day Grace said to Stan, "I must get back to Cleveland. Jane needs me. She's pregnant."

DON'T COUNT ON ME

Jane's problem-ridden pregnancy continued with more events. In preparation for the new arrival, sleeping arrangements were being reshuffled. Denis and Mary Ellen were moved out of the original bedroom that they had shared along with David. The new baby would probably join David in that room. Chan built a pair of bunk beds in the area that would later be a laundry room. Denis slept in the upper bunk, Mary Ellen in the lower. It was a makeshift expedient, but Chan had plans for the following summer. If possible he was going to make the boys a bedroom by raising a dormer in the attic roof. Then Mary Ellen could have a bedroom by herself. If the new baby was a girl they could share the room. But all that would be later. Now that only little David's crib occupied the original bedroom, Chan and Jane borrowed a cot to provide for an overnight visitor, be it Grace, Dee, Ethie, or whoever. For someone would have to come and take care of the three children while Jane was in the hospital. Jo had volunteered, but said she would rather take time off in the summer time and not in March, and she really felt Grace should do it as she wasn't employed. Ned Perkins had also told Jane she would take care of the children while Chan was at work, with one condition. If Fred came home on leave at that time the offer was off, and now that the United States was really at war, Ned had no idea when Fred would be home. He expected to be sent overseas and he had no idea where he would go, and if he did know he couldn't tell anyone.

But Jane felt that her mother really ought to come instead of either Jo or Ned Perkins. Jo had a good excuse and Ned wasn't family. Didn't grandmothers usually do this sort of duty? Didn't they usually want to? But Grace had never wanted to be on hand at such a time. Mim, Trink, and Jo had all taken a turn at helping Jane during her confinements. It was quite a puzzle to Jane to understand her mother in this matter, for Grace was fond of the children, and at any other time she liked catering to them. The final conclusion Jane came to was that, at least subconsciously, Grace was protesting and punishing Jane for the pregnancy.

So as of mid-December no definite plan was made and Grace had warned Jane, "Don't count on me to come. I'm not strong enough to care for three babies." It did no good for Jane to point out that Denis was no longer a baby and Mary Ellen could dress herself.

A week before Christmas Jane had an upsetting experience and one she would not relate to either grandmother. It was her custom, before going to sleep for the night, to look at all three children to see that they were alright and warmly covered. She looked in first on David who was cozy in a sleep garment called a "Snuggle-Ducky". Then she went to the little alcove where Denis and Mary Ellen's bunk beds were. She first tucked the covers in warmly around Denis on the top bunk, then she crouched down by the lower bunk to tuck in the sleeping Mary Ellen. Neither Jane nor Chan wore nightgown or pajamas to bed, so Jane was in the nude. Suddenly a scrambling, scratching noise was heard and a furry form appeared from back of Mary Ellen's

little bunk. It dashed over the bed at lightning speed and scurried over Jane's bare stomach. She felt its claws and had time to see that it was a rat:

As she told it later, "I swear I took only two or three leaps to get all the way down to our room. I landed right in the middle of the bed. I just kept on shuddering." She was telling Ned Perkins all about it the next day when Ned came across the field for their morning cup of coffee together.

"Good grief: What did you do next?" Ned asked.

"Chan and I went right back and got Mary Ellen out of that lower bunk and put her to bed in the cot in David's room. I put some little pieces of yellow cheese beneath the bunk. We figured Denis would be alright in the top bunk. Tonight when that varmint comes back, there'll be a trap waiting for him under there. We think he just came in to be warm. It's Magyars' chicken feed that calls the rats."

"Fred's mother says you can catch mice with traps but not rats. She says that rats are too smart."

"Well, I'll do it my Aunt Nelle's way. You have to keep the human smell off the trap. Aunt Nelle boiled the trap and used clean cloth gloves to bait and set it. She trapped the rats in High Rock, and I trapped a rat at Forest Camp. And then I cried; can you believe that?"

"No!" Ned said. "Ugh: Why did you cry?"

"Because it's a creature, living its life its way."

"How horrible to have it run across your bare belly?"

"Yes. There were a couple of scratches, too. It's a good thing I'm not superstitious."

"Why?" Ned asked.

"Oh, there's an old wives' tale that if a pregnant woman has some kind of a shock it can "mark" the baby in some way."

"How do you mean?"

"Well, for instance we knew these boys in New Hampshire by the name of Button and they knew a man who was very hairy on his arms and body. His mother was supposed to have been frightened by a bear. So as the Button's used to say it in their New Hampshire accent, the baby was 'macked' after a 'beah'."

"'Macked'?"

"That's the way they pronounce 'marked'."

"Downstate where I come from," Ned said, "people believe in that kind of thing. Do you?"

“No!” said Jane vehemently. “I do not, and besides, I’m six months pregnant and the baby is all formed now and just getting bigger. Things that affect babies happen mostly in the early weeks and months. And that isn’t looking at a bear or anything like that.”

“But maybe she was terrified by the bear,” Ned argued.

“Maybe,” Jane said, “but the baby wasn’t. And anyway that’s not what they mean by ‘marked’. Being scared wouldn’t put hair all over your baby, would it?”

Ned laughed, “No, I guess not. Jane, do you know what? I’ve decided I do want to try again to have a baby. And when Fred comes home on leave we’re going to spend all our time in bad trying.”

“I hope he comes home at the right time,” Jane said.

“Oh, lord, so do I. You see now that we’re really at war and Fred is going overseas I want to have his baby just in case.”

“I would feel that way, too,” Jane said.

“I’ve been hoping Fred would be home for Christmas but it isn’t going to happen he says. We think it will be January. And by the time you go to the hospital he’ll probably have gone overseas. So I’ll probably be able to help you out if you can’t get a grandmother to come.”

“If Fred comes home in January maybe you’ll be having morning sickness by March.”

“I hope so, but that wouldn’t stop me,” Ned said.



Jane and Chan were making preparations for Christmas but fixing the house had top priority and they had less time to spend making gifts. Jane had done her best to make the little house attractive and colorful. There was so little money to spend on improvements, but she had used paint to good advantage, and had brightened the kitchen with Pennsylvania Dutch designs and *distelfinks*. She painted the kitchen floorboards a light blue-grey and using a stiff brush she spattered the surface in bright drops of yellow, red, blue, and green.

The living room floor was cozy with strips of the carpet that had been in Harry Potter’s mother’s house. The room was again long and narrow, for only in the first months had Jane and Chan had to use one end of it for a bedroom. Chan had big plans for expansion, hoping to carry them out during their second summer in the little place. He would build on an additional ten feet in the front. This would provide a large living room and the old bedroom off the kitchen would become a dining area. But that was not the extent of it above the new large living room would be an

upstairs bedroom for the boys. Its roof would tie into the original hip roof. And one end of the old living room would be a bedroom for Mary Ellen and her possible sister. There would be a proper stairway leading to the boys bedroom, and below it would be a stairway leading to the small basement where the coal-heater was. That would put an end to the trapdoors and ladders.

Chan was at his best when building or planning building. He was at his worst when Jane's mother or his own mother was visiting. Grace was so obviously opposed to the home on Pennington Avenue and all the work that improving it entailed, not to mention the crowded conditions, that Chan found the atmosphere thick with her disapproval. And, what is more, during Jane's second stay in the hospital, Grace had given him so large and tough a piece of her mind that he still was smarting from her choice of words. She had accused him of being totally "uncaring for the babies' comfort and welfare."

Chan had not forgiven her for that. He had been working long and hard for his family. He considered himself a good father and a good step-father, but he was convinced that Grace felt that Denis and Mary Ellen were children enough for Jane, and that there had been no need for him to do any procreating of his own.

When Grace came to spend a few days with them, Chan went into a virtual retreat. He was silent and bearish, wearing a preoccupied frown, and having mostly monosyllabic answers for anyone. This, of course, only gave Grace reason to be more critical and to record in her diary her conviction that Chan had "leaned all over his mother and Aunt Edna for so long that he was sunk before he began".

Jo also made Chan unhappy and Jane as well because she worried over his efforts to remodel the house. She kept saying he was working too hard.

"She never thinks I know what I'm doing," he complained to Jane.

"She's proud of you," Jane said. "She knows you're smart."

"But she acts as though I'm a smart child," he said.

"Oh, well, Mother's that way with me too."

"They make me sick, both of them," he said.

Jane sighed, "I know."

####

On Christmas Eve both Dee and Grace were at the house on Pennington Avenue. Dee would have to sleep on the narrow sofa, Grace in the cot in David's room.

"Why do Denis and Mary Ellen have to sleep in those little bunks out back?" Grace asked.

"Because they're older, and besides they like it," Jane said. (The rat had been caught in a trap and no one but Jane, Chan and Ned Perkins were the wiser.)

When Dee came home to Cleveland, Grace made her usual comment, "You look thin and pale, dear."

"I've just lost my summer tan is all," Dee said.

But when Jane saw Dee she too thought Dee looked thin and tired.

"Don't tell Mother, but I've been having digestive trouble," Dee said. "We've been working seven days a week and everything is stepped up since we're at war. And, of course, I've been dating a lot."

"Of course," Jane said laughing.

"What's funny?" asked Dee, but she was grinning.

"I can't imagine you not dating a lot," Jane said.

"Well, what's wrong with it?"

"Nothing. But just take care of your health. It's bad enough to have Mother tearing her hair over mine."

Later on, Grace took Jane aside and asked, "Do you think Dee has been drinking?"

Jane looked puzzled and asked, "Today?"

"No, no," Grace said. "I mean down in Dayton."

"Mother, how could I possibly know?"

Grace had a problem herself. She and Dee had been downtown the day before Christmas. They had hurried to catch a street car and Grace's foot had struck a stone and she went down on her knees. Because of the snowy slippery conditions there were cinders on the street and Grace's right knee was bleeding and black with cinders, her silk stockings were both torn. She and Dee were in front of Strohmeyer's store, where they went in for first aid. She had her knee washed, treated and bandaged, and Dee got her a new pair of silk stockings.

“If it isn’t one thing it’s another,” Grace said when she and Dee were at last on the street car en route to Jane’s.

And that evening there was still another thing.

The children were nestled all snug in their beds and Dee, Jane, and Chan were trimming the Christmas tree. Grace was putting the last stitches in a blue comforter for Mary Ellen’s bunk bed. She had already finished a red one for Denis.

“Did you make one for David too?” Jane asked.

“No.” Grace said, ‘because Jo always showers him with gifts.’

“Mom,” Jane said, “this is only David’s second Christmas,”

“I know, but she gives him things all the time, all year ‘round.’”

“You know that’s true, Andy,” Dee said.

Just then the Scotty dog, Bonnie, gave a sharp bark and ran into the kitchen. Jane followed to see what had alarmed her. She feared another rat.

But there was nothing amiss on her first glance around. Then she saw that the kitchen window had been raised a few inches and a Christmas package had been placed on the sill. Jane carried it into the living room.

“We just got a present and I know who its from. Mrs. Magyar must have put it there.”

“Who is she?” Dee asked.

“The Hungarian lady next door. She uses our phone sometimes.” She unwrapped the package. It was five pounds of chocolates, not of the highest quality, but lots of them.

“Good,” Jane said, “What’s a Christmas without chocolate?”

“I don’t think it’s a good idea to eat chocolate,” Grace said. “I eat very little of it myself.”

But during the evening they all dipped into the candies as they trimmed the tree and put the children’s toys and the other presents under the tree. They listened to Christmas carols and midnight mass from Rome and they ate more chocolates. And Jane, being six months pregnant ate more than anyone.

She woke at two a.m. gasping for breath.

“What’s the matter?” Chan asked.

“I can hardly breathe!” she managed to say.

“Is it asthma?” he asked. “I heard you coughing.”

“I guess. Get pills... top drawer.”

He brought a prescription bottle to her. “Some water, too,” she said.

When she had swallowed a capsule, she said, “Open a window. I- gotta- have- fresh air.”

“But it’s cold air.” Chan said.

“S’alright. Oxygen.”

She got up and stood at the window breathing the good outside air taking it in as best she could. Presently she said, “That’s better,” and then she said, “It’s snowing.”

But it was two hours before she could push the extra pillows out of the bed, and go to sleep on only two. And meanwhile Grace had appeared in the bedroom doorway.

Her eyes were wide, but her mouth looked grim.

“You have asthma haven’t you?” she said.

“I’ll be alright now,” Jane said. “I took a pill.”

“Chan,” Grace said, “you’ve got to get your family out of this house, if you expect to have a family at all.”

“Mother,” Jane said, “it’s not the house. I’ve had no trouble since early October and I’m always here in this house. No, it’s something else, something new. I’ll have to think what it could be.”

“The Christmas tree,” suggested Chan.

“No,” Grace said. “Not that. Because Jane’s never had a Christmas without a tree. They never bothered her before.”

“This might be a different kind though,” Jane said.

Or maybe it has something sprayed on,” Chan said.

“It has to be something I’m allergic to.”

“I’m inclined to wonder,” Grace said, “whether her tonsils may have grown back.”

Christmas morning was like all Christmas mornings with little children, adults wanting to sleep and youngsters eager ‘to get at it.’ Following a family tradition they were pacified with red stockings at the foot of their little beds. The sound of jingling bells told their parents that the

children were discovering oranges, apples, tangerines, dried apricots and small toys. Later came the Tree with what Santa brought.

“Christmases are improving,” Jane observed. “We sure had some puny ones the last few years.”

They all went to Cartwright Street that afternoon for Christmas dinner with Jo and Aunt Edna. Harry Porter was there too, but just as he had done on Thanksgiving day, he said that he would not stay as he had another invitation to dinner in the country, And so, for Jo, it was another disappointment and a discouragement in her persistent hope to live once more with Harry as a married couple.

But Harry was being affable and dispensing largess. He gave a stuffed bear to David, a fat roll of quarters to both Denis and Mary Ellen. Previously he had given Jane and Chan each a crisp ten dollar bill, and this year had planned to give them each a twenty for Christmas, but then the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor and everything was changed.

Harry Porter addressed himself to Chan.

“Clement, are you still heating your house with that coal-burning stove?”

“Yes, we are,” said Chan.

“What are your plans for the future?” Harry asked.

“Well, ultimately I’ll put in a gas furnace,” Chan said, “but it couldn’t be before next year. I’ve got to expand the house.”

“If you don’t put one in now, Chan, you’ll have to wait till the War is over. There’ll be no more for the duration.”

How many times they would all hear those words, “No more for the duration.”

Jo said, “Harry do you mean Clement can’t get a furnace?”

Harry asked Chan another question. “Do you have room down there for a furnace, Clement?”

“Yes,” Chan said, “but I have to pour a floor. I’ve built some walls in the area. It’s about five feet by twelve,”

“Good,” said Harry, “because I’ve put a furnace in layaway for you. It’s the last one Sears had. It’ll be your Christmas present, but you’ll have to get everything else that goes with it, duct work and registers. But you’d better not wait long. Everything metal is going to War. They want to deliver that furnace right away, too, and get it off their floor, because people are trying to buy it.”

Jane and Chan tried to thank Harry adequately, but soon he was on his way, and then there was another gift exchange which Jo and Edna referred to as “bêscherung” a German word that Carle Semon recalled his mother sometimes used.

All the Christmas gifts were very nice, but Grace privately decided that Jo had definitely showered little David with more and better gifts than she’d given to Den and Mary Ellen.

Carle Semon had presented little interesting and unusual gifts to all and he’d expressed his gratitude to Edna and Jo for including him in the festivities.

But Carle was preoccupied because of Grace’s hurt knee. She had told him all about her fall the day before.

“There were quite a lot of cinders in it, but the nurse said she thought she’d got them all cleaned out. It is painful quite a lot tonight, though.”

Jane said, “Let me see it.”

“Well, it’s all bandaged up,” Grace said.

“Let me see anyway,” Jane repeated. “Is it swollen?”

“Somewhat,” Grace admitted.

Carle said, “You better let my doctor see it.”

“I’m going down to Oberlin tomorrow. I’ll have Merly’s downstairs tenant look at it. She’s a registered nurse.”

“Aren’t you going to stay in town for the holiday weekend?” Carle asked. “There are several good films showing.”

“I might have stayed,” Grace said, “if Dee had been able to stay. But she heads back to Dayton tomorrow.”

“Really?” Carle said. “You just got here, Dee.”

“Well, there’s a war on,” Dee said.

“I’m already tired of that phrase,” Chan said. “It’s all I hear at work.”

“It’s all I hear at the store,” Jane said. “We’re going to have to get used to it.”

####

January was eventful in several ways. Grace went to Oberlin the day after Christmas with a very sore knee. When the nurse who lived in Merly's downstairs apartment took a look at it she lost no time in alerting Grace to seek a doctor's care.

"Oh, my dear!" Miss Bishop said. "See those red streaks radiating from the injury? That's a strep infection, dear. You get yourself over to Dr. Seidel's this afternoon."

The doctor put Grace on the drug sulfanilamide and the infection in her knee cleared up. The ugly red streaks went away and the healing wound itched. From the start, Grace was leery of the medicine. She recalled reading bad things about sulfa drugs. The nurse assured her that it was only the very first such drugs that had killed a number of people. They didn't make sulfa in that form anymore. But Grace was unconvinced. She was quite certain that she had suffered ill effects from the treatment. It was true that since coming to Merly's the day after Christmas, she had been unable to sleep well at night. At first she attributed it to the pain in her knee, and too many holiday sweets. But the knee healed and she stayed away from candy and desserts and still she suffered from an unusual insomnia in which her thoughts churned round and round. She finally, decided that it was the sulfanilamide that was to blame.

Bill and Gertrude went to Oberlin for New Years Day dinner at Merly's. The conversation quite naturally turned to Grace's knee and the treatment thereof. Merly guessed that Grace had been neglecting to take all the right vitamins. Emmie said, in her gentle voice, that Grace should have put a flaxseed poultice on her knee as soon as she hurt it, "to draw the poison out". Grace said that her knee was healing fine, but that she herself was experiencing "very bad effects."

"I'm not able to sleep at night. I've been so depressed."

"I'm not surprised," Gertrude said. "The way things are lately, who can sleep at night? But I forget that you Martin girls are always looking for some positive explanation for all ailments. Something you can lay the blame on."

"But, Trudy," Grace said, "don't you think illnesses have causes?"

Gertrude smiled amiably. "I do believe in germs," she said.

"Don't you believe in vitamins?" Grace persisted.

Gertrude could never be ruffled. "I hear a lot about them."

Bill had to tease a little, too. "Maybe you need your tonsils out, Gracie."

"Well, you can kid me, Billy," Grace said, "but drugs do strange things to people."

“Yes, that’s true enough,” her brother said, “but I guess Gertrude just feels that it’s not too useful to spend time going on about things that happened. We should figure out what’s to be done. We’re all depressed about the War, Grace. Probably that’s the main part of your trouble.”

“That adds to it certainly,” Grace said. “When I think of those British battleships they’ve been sinking, it just makes me ill.”

“Yes, that’s pretty grim,” agreed Bill. “And our boys are both going into the Service.”

“Oh no!” Grace Said. “How soon?”

“As soon as they graduate,” he said. “Young Bill finishes college, and Steve will be out of high school.”

“But surely Steve is going to college!” Grace said.

“He wants to go straight into the Navy.” Bill said. “He wants to get it over with anyway.”

“Oh, dear:” Grace said, thinking of the H.M.S. Repulse and H.M.S. Prince of Wales now at the bottom of the Pacific off Malaya.

But the indomitable Gertrude said, “Steve will go to college. He’ll go when this business is over.”

“And what about young Bill?” Grace asked. “Where’s he going?”

“Right into the Army,” Bill said. “He had his deferments so he could graduate. Now he’ll go.”

Gertrude spoke again. “When he comes back he’ll go to graduate school, I imagine.”

Grace sighed. “Well, nothing is the way it was supposed to be. The First World War was the war to end wars. So we were told. Now we are getting a worse war.”

“Yes, I’m afraid so,” Bill agreed.

Grace moved on to another gloomy topic. “Did Bertha show you her scrapbook? When I was out at the new place Stan’s built, Bertha got out this dreadful scrapbook.”

“We haven’t seen either house or scrapbook,” Gertrude said. “Is the house dreadful too?”

“No,” said Grace. “It’s alright. It’s just a house. But that Bertha took dozens of pictures of the wrecking of the Old Brick. It broke my heart to see it - made me quite ill.”

“Bertha doesn’t understand some things,” Bill said.

“I’ve been dreaming about the Old Brick almost every night,” Grace said. “I dreamed last night about Jane nearly dying of whooping cough. She nearly did you know.”

“Grace,” Bill said, “you are in a bad frame of mind. You need to be busier. Why don’t you get a job? They are easier to get now.”

“I have my work, Bill. I have the things I’ve been working on, my wall hanging, and my New Hampshire story, and the article about Tunis.”

“But I’ll bet you don’t work on them every day, Gracie. You wouldn’t be able to worry and brood so much if you had a job to occupy your mind.”

“Well, Bill,” Grace said, “If I were younger...”

“Shucks, Gracie! You’re two years older than I am and that makes you fifty-four. That isn’t old. We’ve got plenty of teachers at our school a lot older than you and they hate to retire when they’re seventy.”

“Well, I’m sure they do, Bill, and it must be very nice to be a teacher. I probably should have trained to be one. But, I didn’t, so I must do the kind of thing I trained to do. It’s my true and real work.”

“Alright,” Bill said, “but before this war is over a great many people are going to be doing things they hadn’t been trained to do.”

On the way home to Cleveland, Bill and Gertrude continued to discuss Grace.

“I suppose maybe that drug might be making Grace feel low,” Bill said. “She certainly was gloomy, wasn’t she?”

“Yes, but I think mainly it’s just that she’s lonely for Dee. She seemed to me to be quite content when they had their little apartment. Grace is not a type who does well alone. And she worries too much about the girls’ health. She ought to realize that she must let them go. She’s lucky she doesn’t have boys and have them going off to War.”

“Well, I still say she’d be better off if she had a job,” he said.

“Bill,” Gertrude said, “Your sisters weren’t raised that way. They were pretty much sheltered in their trials and tribulations over the years.”

“But remember Grace was quite successful in her art work for about twenty years. It’s the Depression that has her stymied.”

“Well,” Gertrude sighed, “she’d be wise to adjust to a changing world. She could do a number of different things and I hope she will. She’s certainly smart enough.”

DO BABIES HAVE HEART ATTACKS?

On Pennington Avenue the mood was reproductive. They say that mother rabbits prepare a nest for their young by lining it with some of their own soft fur. Bird parents work arduously fashioning a wide variety of cleverly designed nests. Now the same instincts were working on Jane, and she and Chan were working hard to be ready for the March 15th arrival of the new baby.

The new furnace had been delivered and was waiting in the garage until Chan could prepare its place in the basement. That must wait until warm weather when the coal-heater could be dismantled and removed. Now there were other things more pressing. Jane was still hoping that her mother would come take care of the children in March. Since Grace enjoyed cooking for the youngsters, Jane concentrated on the kitchen. Chan put down plywood over the rough floor boards and laid linoleum. He also made improvements such as new counter shelves.

“It’s beginning now to resemble a conventional kitchen” Jane said.

She also refurbished the little bedroom which was occupied by 20 month old David, for Grace would have to share that room. However, Jane told herself, its more comfort and privacy than she usually had at Forest Camp. It would certainly be better than sharing a tent with someone.

Jane was occupied hanging wallpaper in David’s room one morning when Ned Perkins burst in, exclaiming and hurraing.

“He’s coming! He’s coming, Andy: He’ll be there Friday evening: Oh, think of it. It’s been so long. Don’t expect to see much of us while he’s here. I can’t stay for coffee, I’m going to the store to lay in supplies so that we can spend a week in bed.”

Jane laughed. “Will his mother stand for that?” she asked. Ned calmed down a bit. “Well, we’ll have to give Mrs. P. some of Fred’s time, I know, but Andy, actually she’s anxious for me to get pregnant, too. She really is because, oh God! Andy, what if he doesn’t come back?”

“Is he going overseas now, then?”

“Soon. Very soon but he can’t say when. Doesn’t know I guess. So I do hope I get pregnant. I had no trouble the other time. Getting ‘caught’ I mean.”

“I know what you mean. Is it the right time of the month?”

“It should be perfect, Andy,” Ned said.

“Then good luck! And in any case, it’ll be fun.”

“Fun!” said Ned. “‘Fun’ does not express it.”

“I expect not.” said Jane.

“But don’t worry. I’ll still be able to help out when your baby comes.”

“That’s good to know, Ned. I’m not too confident that Mother will come. She’s got a new problem.”

“What’s that?”

“Sulfanilamide has made her depressed.”

“Really? But everybody’s depressed these days, don’t you think? Except me, that is. Today I’m not one bit depressed.

Grace came in to Cleveland toward the end of February. She decided not to visit Bill and Gertrude because she was afraid they’d begin again to urge her to forget about her art work, at least temporarily, and hunt for an ordinary job. She thought about Betty Long. How nice it would be if Betty were still alive and living in her old studio in the Fine Arts building on Grand Avenue. It was always a place she could visit for a few days when she came back to Cleveland. She and Betty had had so many good talks together. Betty usually knew the news about the rest of their artist friends and what they’d been doing. But Betty was gone and there was no one in the Fine Arts building these days that Grace knew. Grace wondered what Louisa was doing. She had once lived in that building, too. That was where Norris had met her. But she must stop thinking about all that. She should get in touch with some of her good friends. She decided to try a call to Grace V. Kelly and see if they might lunch together. But when she called Veronica in her office at the Cleveland Herald she was told that Veronica was on a leave of absence following surgery. After some thought, she decided to call Veronica at her apartment. There was no answer, so Grace called Carle Semon to see what he might know about Veronica. Carle did know.

“Veronica is in University Hospital. She’s very ill I hear. Haven’t you noticed that her column hasn’t been in the paper for some time?”

“Well, no,” Grace said, “but I haven’t looked for it; I heard that she had gone to Ireland on a Sabbatical or something.”

“Apparently she never did go,” Carle said. “She had some kind of surgery, but didn’t want it generally known. So nobody does know what the trouble is. Veronica is an unusual person.”

“Is she getting better?”

“No, I hear she isn’t,” Carle said. “The hospital says she’s ‘fair’.”

“Poor Veronica!”

“She’s too sick for visitors,” Carle added.

After arranging to have dinner with Carle in a few days Grace tried to call her old friend, Mary McGuire, but there was no answer. This, of course, was not strange since Mary was very active in the Cleveland Democratic organization. Next Grace called Jack Raper's wife, Mary, but that lady was in bed with a bad cold and obviously not in a condition for receiving guests. What's more, Mary said that her husband was in New York "to write a couple of books". How odd, Grace thought. Why must he write them in New York? But then, New York was the place. She must take her own self down to New York soon too, just as soon as she got her wall-hanging ready. She could probably get more money for this last one, because the Depression was finally really ending. Polly Patterson was anxious to try to sell it. It had been finished on Pearl Harbor day and all that remained was to sew it to a backing and put a border around it. She must get at it. It was amazing how that sulfanilamide had pulled her down.

Grace finally decided to go out to Cartwright Street and stay a few days with Jo and Edna. It was so much more convenient for going out to dinner or the movies with Carle. After that she would go to Jane's for the weekend and see that the babies were alright. Probably it would be best to go to New York right after Jane's baby was safely born. The problem as always was money. She had been getting along all winter on the check she'd finally received for the illustrations she'd made for the Cleveland Board of Education. They hadn't paid her nearly enough; she'd put weeks of work into doing a good job and everyone who had seen her pictures had said they were "top-notch." It was really an outrage the very low value some people put on professional artwork. And it was also an outrage the way her brother Art still owed her twelve-hundred dollars fourteen years after she had decorated his theater and tea-room. He'd never even fully reimbursed her for her out-of-pocket expenses. Well, enough of weeping over that.

That evening at Cartwright Street, however, Grace could not muster up a cheerful mood. She had told Jo and Edna about the sulfanilamide,

"It's had a very bad effect on me," she said.

"But it cured your knee," Jo said, "besides, Grace, that was at Christmas time."

"But I took that drug for almost a week," Grace said. "He should have given me sulfadiazine; I hear it's better."

"I wouldn't know," Jo said. "I would think though, that the doctor does. Anyway, here it is nearly the end of February. You'd be over any ill effects by now, I'm sure."

"Well, it's pulled me down and I've been very slow getting over it. And too, I've had one thing after another to upset me. I just learned today that one of my dear friends is dying."

"Oh? Who's that?" Jo asked.

“Grace V. Kelly. She was a teacher of mine when I was in Art School. She taught perspective.”

“Is she the one that writes for the morning paper?” Edna asked.

“She did. She did for years, but I guess she hasn’t for months. She must have cancer. Nobody knows. It makes me feel so old to be losing my contemporaries. First Betty Long and now Grace V.”

“Wait a minute,” Jo said. “Didn’t you say Grace V. Kelly was your teacher?”

“Yes,” Grace said, “and we’ve been good friends.”

“Alright,” Jo said, “but how old was she when she was your teacher?”

“I suppose thirty-five or forty,” Grace said.

“Then she’s not your contemporary. I certainly don’t consider my teachers my contemporaries. Grace, don’t be so much in a hurry to grow old. We’re the same age; we’re still young. Why don’t you come down to Strohmeyer’s tomorrow? They’re hiring people. We have openings in my own department. You’d be very good at telephone sales. You’re very articulate.”

But Grace said, “I would have to feel a great deal better than I do now. I’m starting to take a very fine tonic Dr. Seidel prescribed for me. But tell me, have you talked to Jane? Are the children alright?”

“Well, you knew they had chicken pox?” Jo said.

“No!” Grace said with such amazement that Jo laughed.

“Oh, they’re alright. David and Mary Ellen have just blossomed out with them, but Denis’ are going away.”

“Well, how did they happen to get chicken pox, I wonder?” Grace asked. “I hope Jane remembers to give them their vitamins.”

“All kids get chicken pox,” Jo said. “Denis brought them home from kindergarten. I just hope they don’t get badly scarred. But I guess they have a light case. Jane figures they will be through with them by the time she goes to the hospital. I hope you’re planning on being there when she’s gone. Edna and I can take David here, and I’ll just work half days.”

“Jo, I don’t know if I’ll be feeling well enough by then or not. The children are too heavy for me”

“You won’t have to lift anyone because I’ll have David here with me,” Jo said.

“Well, Jane’s neighbor, the one she calls ‘Ned’, is planning to help out. She’ll be there during the day until Chan gets home from work.”

“But, Grace, he’ll come home tired from work and then he’ll have to get dinner. If you were there you could have it all ready for him when he gets there. He works so hard on that house.”

“Well, Jo, we all work hard.”

But, after Grace had gone upstairs to get ready for bed, Jo made some comments to Edna.

“I don’t believe she works very hard. She likes to sleep late in the morning. That’s her main problem and why she doesn’t want a regular job. She likes to read in bed till two or three in the morning.”

Edna said, “I guess she has night turned into day.”

Jo went on. “That hanging she’s been working on so, long. Why, she was working on that before Clement got married. That’s three years. How much can she sell it for?”

“Don’t ask me,” Edna said, “I wouldn’t have the faintest.”

“Well, she sold the first one for \$100. She said that one was smaller. Well, if she gets five times as much, it still isn’t much to show for three years work.”

“She did some illustrations last year.”

“Yes,” Jo said “but she hasn’t been paid yet.”

“She hasn’t?”

“So she says. She borrowed some money from me. I wish to heaven she’d get a job. If I can work at an honest, job, she can too. If I get to thinking about it, I don’t always like to get out of bed in the morning either. And sometimes I feel depressed. Then when I get to work I’m too busy to brood. Holy Toledo! Edna, some of our contemporaries have died too. What has that to do with it?”

“I’m sure I don’t know,” Edna said.

####

At the Pennington Avenue place, Jane was shoveling slag. The weather had turned rather mild and the snow and ice that covered the pile all winter had thawed off so it could be spread around in the doorway area. The slag had been an early Christmas present from Grace to help with the deplorably dusty condition around the doors. Grace had ordered it after Jane's two severe bouts of asthma. When the slag was delivered in early November Grace had been annoyed because Chan did not immediately spread it Chan became angry and said, "I can't install that God damn bathtub and be shoveling slag at the same time. When I'm busy cutting and threading pipe I'm not going to leave it and forget my measurements just to jump when someone says 'jump'."

He wore a long face the rest of that weekend and Grace recorded in her diary that Chan had had "a very wrong upbringing."

The snow had covered the pile soon after that and Grace finally had stopped talking about it, and confined herself to frowning at it when she arrived for a visit. She had once taken a hoe to it herself, but soon discovered it too hard and icy to work with.

But on this late February day, Jane was energetically spreading some of it around by the front door. She was at it when Ned Perkins came across the field. She was grinning all the way and Jane knew why. Fred had come home on leave the evening before.

Ned came and leaned against the garage door.

"Andy," she said, "you are lookin' at a pregnated woman."

Jane laughed. "How can you know for sure?"

"Oh, I know. How could I not be? Five times, Andy, five times since he got here. I'm sure I'm pregnant."

"Well, it sounds very probable," Jane said.

"Yeah," Ned said. "Hey, what do you think you're doing?"

"Moving slag."

"Why should do it in your condition?"

"For exercise, and because it's a nice day. And I want an easy labor this time. The first was quite easy, but the second one was difficult; the third was easy. So now if it's time for another bad one I want to circumvent it."

"How long is it now till you're due?"

"Three weeks," said Jane.

“Well, don’t do anything to have that baby early, because if it’s in the next eight days I can’t come and be a grandmother to your kids. Fred and I are going to spend every possible minute together.”

“Will you two be able to take time out long enough to come over and have dinner with us some night?”

“Oh, I think so,” Ned said.

“Where’s Fred now?”

“He went to see his mother and I must run along so I’ll be there when he comes home,”

“And then it’s back to bed?”

“Wouldn’t be surprised,” Ned said.

“At this stage,” Jane said. “I’ve almost forgotten how.”

That evening at dinner, Jane told Chan, “There’s only one more thing I have to do to get ready for the baby and that’s the baby clothes. I’m superstitious about doing it too soon especially after what happened to Ned’s first baby.”

“Her first baby? Is their second on the way?”

“She says so.”

“Then’s it due?”

“I don’t know. They only started it last night.”

“Oh, well. They don’t really know. How much do you need?”

“How much what?” she asked.

“How much money for baby clothes?”

“Oh, I don’t need any money for baby clothes. Your mother sent two dozen new diapers, and I’ve got everything else left over from David. Tiny babies grow so fast that they don’t wear out their first clothes. Things last for two or more babies. I’ve got a big box of stuff up in the attic. Your mother bought David loads of things. I want to get them down and get them all washed up.”

“OK, tell me what box it is and I’ll get it,” he said.

“I’ll just have to go up myself and look in boxes. I have no idea which box or boxes the stuff is in. If you’ll just get the ladder down for me, I’ll go up and look.”

“Don’t you break my nice ladder now.”

“Come on. Baby and all, I don’t weigh any more than you do.”

The attic space was reached through a trap door in the kitchen ceiling. When the Chandlers moved in there was nothing up there but rafters, dust, and spiders. Ml had vacuumed away most of the dust and laid down a partial floor of plywood, thus providing a place to store such things as Christmas-tree trimmings, keepsakes, old school textbooks, and other items they couldn’t discard.

The house was constructed with a hip roof with a short gable and four sloping sides and ends. Only at the gable was the attic space high enough for a person to stand erect. But Chan had studied the entire construction and planned the way he would add to the house a two-story wing and tie it into the existing roof - all that to be done in the summertime.

Chan had constructed a ladder for getting into the attic and the ladder itself was stowed up there by pushing it forward out of the way. In order to get up into the attic one took a chair and climbed upon the kitchen shelf, then one would just be able to raise the trapdoor and lay it aside. Then the ladder could be pulled down so that its lower end was on the kitchen floor, the upper end extending almost a foot into the attic. Jane and Chan had been up and down that ladder many times, but that was when the kitchen floor was rough boards painted battleship grey and spattered with drops of colored paint. Now it was covered with brand new red linoleum which Jane had that very day polished to a high shine with liquid wax.

For a short while the summer before, Denis had slept up in the attic for about a week and Chan had installed a guard rail along the two sides of the opening. It was a very fortunate thing that he had left the rails in place. For when the foot of the ladder began to slip on the polished floor, Jane grabbed one of the rails with both hands. She hung on tight as the ladder dropped away from her feet. So the ladder was down, and she was up, near the ceiling, and hanging there.

It seemed longer than it was, for when Chan heard the ladder drop, he rushed to the kitchen, and was there before she called him a second time. Her feet were only a couple of inches above the fallen ladder. Chan carefully eased her down and away from the ladder, till they were both standing on the kitchen counter shelf.

“Are you alright?” he asked.

“I think so. I hope so. But my shoulder hurts.”

“What is it about you and trap doors?”

“I don’t know, but you’ll admit this house has more than an average number of them. Mother has a point when she says it’s treacherous.”

Denis came into the kitchen then and saw them on the counter shelf.

“Why are you up there?” he said,

They were tempted to say something funny, but since Denis was only a little more than five and a half years old, Jane gave him a straight answer.

“We were going up into the attic and the ladder just slipped down. Daddy will have to put rubber on the bottom of it or something.”

“You haffa be careful of the little baby in your tummy,” Denis said, and Jane decided he was pretty smart for such a little boy. Chan helped her down to the floor again and she went to lie down on the couch to wait until the baby moved.

“Though I don’t think there’s any reason to believe that I did any harm. Still it’s a good thing I’m not worried about the old wives’ tale about the cord.”

“What’s that?” Chan asked.

“The beliefs that if a pregnant woman puts her arm over her head it will warp the cord around the baby’s neck.”

“What if it did?”

“I would think it rarely causes a problem. Mary Ellen was born that way; only trouble was, her arm was entangled too. But I can’t see how raising your arms could in any way change the baby’s situation.”

“Of course not; it’s ridiculous,” he said.

“Well, anyway, the baby is moving right now. So it’s alive and I don’t have to worry.”

“Why would you have worried? It’s not as though you really fell. You just hung there.”

“No, but I was frightened and my heart was pounding from all the adrenalin it got. In our family there’ve been a number of full-term stillborn babies. Aunt Merly says she never felt her last baby move after she heard the news that my Grandfather Rahming had dropped dead. And then there’s Ned’s baby that was born dead, nobody knows why. I don’t know what happens. Do babies have heart attacks?”

The telephone rang then and Chan answered it.

It was Grace, and Jane went to talk to her. Hearing one side of the conversation Chan was totally puzzled as to what had happened and to whom. He heard only Jane's remarks and curiosity kept him listening.

"No, I haven't talked to her lately," Jane said.

"My God! Really? Oh, what a shame!"

"Why?"

"But wasn't that many years ago? Yes, I did know about that, but I wouldn't think it would do that."

"Well, Mom, remember though, people get along with just one. Well, but they do, Mother."

Then the subject was changed apparently.

"They're all OK. Well, David and Mary Ellen still have some, but Denis' back in school again. I'm alright. No, really, I'm alright. No more asthma at all. Oh, you know what caused that attack on Christmas? It was those candies that Mrs. Magyar gave us. But, Mother, I often eat chocolate and it doesn't do that. It was those particular candies; there was some ingredient in them. I found it out the next two times I ate some. I got into trouble both times. No, Mom, I really proved that was it. You worry about things too much."

The subject changed again.

"Is that the woman in Rome? The one you sent the burnoose to? Where is she now? I didn't realize she was an American. Well, I think maybe that's near San Francisco. Too bad they stayed there so long and didn't see it coming, but I suppose it would have been hard to know the right time to go. I suppose the embassy seemed like a safe place to work. We know better now I guess. That's a terrible thing, and a terrible way it happened. Well, now I'll have to tell Chan because he is sitting here wondering what in hell we are talking about that's so terrible. Oh, Mother, I've heard you say 'what in hell' yourself. No, I don't get it from him or anyone else especially. Everyone says it. OK, well, anyway if your knee is still bothering you take a late street car and Chan will meet you at the drugstore. Take one that gets there no earlier than 6:0'clock, Alright? We'll see you then."

She turned from the phone and looked at him and laughed.

"What on earth happened and why are you laughing?" Chan asked.

"Well, nothing funny has happened, but you looked so funny."

"Sorry it's the only face I have. You kept on saying wasn't this terrible and wasn't that terrible."

"Well, it is terrible. Aunt Trudy has to have an eye removed."

“Oh! That is bad. How come?”

“I guess it has to do with X-ray treatments she had years

“Why?” he asked.

“I think for acne and that’s why her face always looks as though she had a peeling sunburn.”

“And that’s why she’s losing her eye?”

“I don’t know. I guess Aunt Trudy didn’t say. She’s that way. She doesn’t go on about things. Mother just assumes that it has to do with the X-ray, but I think probably she’s right about that. Eyes are funny; they take one to save the other.”

“Well, I guess I’ve heard that, but as you said many people get along with one eye. But you were talking about Rome. Who’s in Rome?”

“Mussolini. No, you’ve heard Mom speak of her friend Marta Fulloni? She and Mother never met, but they’ve been writing ever since Mother was in Tunis. Marta was an acquaintance of Elma’s, and after Elma left Tunis so abruptly, Mother had to mail a package to Marta who lived in Rome. So from then on they’ve been writing, but when the war started, there were no more letters from Marta, and Mother’s been worrying about her. Her husband worked at the American Embassy and their correspondence went in the diplomatic pouch. Well, Mother has finally heard from Marta and she’s in Palo Alto, California and that’s where her parents live.”

“Well, why is that terrible?” Chan asked.

“Wait a minute; I’m getting there. Marta’s husband went into a hospital in Rome to have some minor surgery, and he never came home. He vanished and nobody could tell her anything about it. Marta said his illness was nothing serious but that he knew too much about the Fascists there and they did away with him. She was lucky to get out of there before Italy and the U.S. were at war. She’s with her parents and she assumes she’s a widow, but she can never know how he died. A nurse said it can be done by injecting an air bubble.”

“Sounds very sinister,” Chan said.

“That’s what it’s like over there. Marta told Mother many people have vanished in some such way. I used to want to visit those places. I wonder now if I’ll ever want to. If we win this war perhaps places like the Coliseum will still be there. Mother says that Rome will be declared an ‘open city’ so that the Allies should not bomb it. But look what the Nazis have done to British cities. Mother says that Rome’s historic treasures are no more sacred than St. Paul’s and Westminster Abbey. But how sad it is! When there are men climbing to power, how is it they aren’t stopped sooner? Mother is so depressed. I’ve never known her that low. Well, not since the year she sent us home from High Rock. She said to me ‘I long to hear just one morsel of good news.’ But she’s planning to go see the priest at St. Henry’s Cathedral.”

Chan looked so astonished at that last bit of information that Jane laughed heartily.

“Oh, not for spiritual comfort. She wants to see if they’ll buy her wall hanging.”

“Well, I wish they would,” Chan said.

“After all it’s got Jesus in it, and she did sell her Nativity hanging to a Catholic church in New York, Actually it’s the bishop she’s going to see. He’s nice; I used to check his hat. Bishop McFarland. Grey curly hair and a very red face. They have an archbishop too, but he’s old and he’s ill and he’s unapproachable. Bishop McFarland will see her I’m sure. Grandma Martin would have a fit if she knew.”

“You mean if she were alive today she’d be whirling in her grave.”

“Precisely. She was certain Catholics were out to take over the world. Wonder what she’d have said about Hitler.”

THIS WILL BE MY SPECIAL ONE

Grace arrived on Friday prepared to spend the weekend. She brought with her the wall-hanging carefully wrapped to protect it from the wet snow that had been coming down. Grace had the work rolled on a four foot dowel to keep it free of wrinkles. When unfurled it was a fabric picture four feet by five feet. Made up entirely of colored pieces of cloth appliquéd on a background using threads of many colors, it depicted the mature Christ seated beneath a green tree and surrounded by children. Beneath it, and translated into Latin was the bible-saying, "Suffer little children to come unto me for of such is the kingdom of Heaven."

Jane had seen her mother's Nativity hanging, but had never seen the first one of Harry Washington at Valley Forge. The first had been very simple with the kneeling general in dark cape surrounded by expanses of snow. With touches of red it was very dramatic. It was much smaller than the present new work. Grace's friend had easily sold it in New York in 1932, Washington's bicentennial year. The Nativity had been smaller and simpler too, and went to a Catholic Church and school in Queens, New York.

This new work was something else again. It was elaborate in the extreme. The green tree had scores of individual leaves; the children's' clothing was embroidered in detail and the faces, particularly that of the benign, bearded Christ, were exquisitely defined portraits in thread.

Jane and Chan were impressed. Grace's talent was very evident here, but since Jane had seen it last Grace had put many more hours of work into it. How would she ever be able to sell it for the value of those hours?

"It's terrific, Mother," Jane said, and Chan said he thought so, too.

"Well, I have to put a border on it," Grace said. "And I'll have to go back to Oberlin to do that. I can't work on it at Jo and Edna's. It's too dark in that house."

That was true enough, but suddenly Jane realized that her mother's main problem in getting her projects done was that as she moved about from one place to another, conditions for working seldom suited her.

"You can work on the border this weekend, Mom," Jane said. "We have plenty of light here."

"Yes, but your nippers take too much of my time."

"They don't need to. They don't need baths today and they don't need shampoos either, And I'll cook."

"I promised them pancakes," Grace said.

And, of course, the border did not get any attention. The next day was Saturday and the snow continued to fall. Chan was able to clear the driveway enough to go to work. With the war effort, workers were putting in six and sometimes even seven full days on the job.

At home, Denis and Mary Ellen went in and out all day with much putting on and taking off of boots, snow-suits, mittens, scarves, and caps. For Jane, in the last weeks of pregnancy, dressing the children for winter weather seemed nearly impossible. Denis could get into most of his outfit, but Mary Ellen and David needed much help. They all needed their boots pulled on. They all went out to play twice in the morning and Den and Mary Ellen went out again in the afternoon, but Jane protested at that last outing.

“Twice a day is enough, they can play in this afternoon. It won’t hurt them.”

“The fresh air is so fine for them,” Grace said. “I’m more modern than you are about children. I believe in regular care.”

“Well, I’m more pregnant than you are; you’ll have to dress them up.. Their mittens are still wet anyway. And I’m going to lie down a little while. I don’t feel too great.”

“It isn’t the baby, is it?” asked Grace, her eyes wide.

“Well, sure it’s the baby. I mean I’m not very comfortable, that’s all.”

“But you aren’t starting labor, are you?”

“No,” Jane said, “I don’t think so. I’m not due for a couple of weeks.”

“But have you got any pains?” Grace asked.

“No, just a contraction once in a while. That’s been going on for weeks.”

“Well, I hope you’ve arranged for Ned to be here when the time does come.”

“She says she’ll come, but I’m puzzled why you don’t want to do it. You’re fond of the children and last summer you borrowed them for more than a week and wanted to keep them longer.”

“But that was only Denis and Mary Ellen. I couldn’t manage three.”

“Jo will take David. Edna will watch him in the daytime.”

“No, I think you’d better arrange for Ned. That sulfanilamide really played hob with me, and I’m not up to par yet at all. And I’ve got to take my hanging down to New York and sell it.”

“Alright,” Jane said.

But later, in bed, she said to Chan, “There must be some other reason why she doesn’t want to come and help on these occasions. She’s been here when I’ve been sick, but never around when I’m having a baby, I wonder why that is.”

The next day was the first of March and it seemed to be coming like a lamb. The snow had stopped the night before and a warm breeze had come through. Grace had the children in and out of doors during the day, but Jane was quietly packing her suitcase. She had mild pains during the afternoon and when dinnertime came she knew she must break the news to her mother.

“I’m not going to eat any dinner,” she said, “but I’ll fix bacon and eggs for the rest of you, unless you want to cook something fancier.”

“What’s the matter? Are you sick?” Grace asked.

“No, but the baby has decided to arrive early,” Jane said, “and I’ll be going to the hospital this evening.”

“Are the pains bad?” her mother asked.

“No, not bad, and not close together, but there are other signs too.”

“Well, you’d better alert Ned, because I must get back to Oberlin. I’ll spend the night here though.”

“Ned won’t be able to come,” Jane said.

“You said she would come.”

“That’s if I had the baby on the 15th,” Andres said. “You see Ned’s husband is home on leave before going overseas. That was the one condition under which she couldn’t come.”

“You should have told me about that, Jane,” Grace said. “I never had a baby come early before, Mother. I’m as surprised as you are.”

After talking with her obstetrician on the phone Jane and Chan left for the hospital shortly before midnight. Grace was up and pacing around.

“I do hope you’ll make some other arrangements,” she said.

“My only alternative was Jo,” Jane said. “She told us that if all else failed she’d take time off from her job and come and take care of the kids. I guess ‘all else’ has failed. But you can call Jo

in the morning and explain it all to her why you can't do it. You understand your reasons better than I do."

The house on Pennington Avenue was a great deal farther from the hospital than the Courtney Shores place had been, but the roads were bare of snow and they made good time. Jane assured Chan that he did not need to break the speed limit.

"This one isn't going to come as abruptly as David did."

"How do you know?" he asked.

"I just know. I can tell when my gears have shifted."

Memorial Hospital was small, but that may have been only one reason Jane spent such a miserable night. It was a three story building, with private maternity patients housed on the upper floor. Unwed mothers occupied the rooms on the second floor, and expectant unwed mothers and staff were on the ground floor. There were two labor rooms and one delivery room at one end of the third floor.

On March 1st when Jane came in at midnight the little hospital was busier than usual. Not counting Jane there were three women already in labor. The nurse who prepared Jane for delivery commented on it.

"It's a busy night. One of our staff doctors says it's a low barometric pressure that causes the busy times in maternity hospitals. What's it like outside?"

"Mild," said Jane. "Cloudy."

"How are your pains?"

"So-so. About what you'd call moderate."

"Having one now?"

"Yes," Jane said, and the nurse looked at her watch.

"Tell me when you have the next one," she said.

After six minutes, Jane said, "Now."

"Well," the nurse said, "that's good."

"They haven't been regular at all," Jane said. "The next one could be fifteen minutes or more."

The nurse examined Jane to see how far along she was. “Well,” she said, “I’m guessing you’ll deliver before any of the other ladies. They’re all having their first babies, and you’re having your fourth. Those ladies are just poking along so far, but I’ve got two of them in our labor rooms so I’ll just set you up in the delivery room. I think you will surely be the first one across the finish line.”

In spite of the nurses good-humored predictions. Jane did not feel as though the birth was that imminent. She would rather have stayed in her relatively comfortable bed than be installed on the delivery table so soon.

“Where’s the other one?”

“The what?”

“The other woman in labor,” Jane said.

“Oh, she’s in her room. She’s barely started. She doesn’t seem to be serious about this business. I wouldn’t be surprised if she’d go home for a day or two.”

“Wouldn’t I be OK in this room for awhile?” Jane asked.

“You’ll be better off in the delivery room because the nurses’ desk is down that end and we can keep tabs on you better.”

But as near as Jane could tell there was very little keeping of tabs that night. She lay on her back on the narrow white-padded table. Most of the time she longed to turn on her side and pull up her knees and cater to the pains when they came, but she could not draw her knees up because of the two vertical chrome bars on each side of the table. As the night dragged on, her back ached more and more and the labor pains slowly grew stronger. She began to think of it as the “Inquisition.” She could see the delivery room clock on the wall behind her. Its hands seemed frozen. Reading it upside down, she began to play games, such as trying to look at it no more often than every fifteen minutes, and she became very good at it by counting.

Jane could hear the nurses talking at their desk in the hall. She had no call-button to bring them to her side, but once when their chattering seemed to stop, she called out “Nurse” and a nurse did come, though not immediately.

“Well, how is it going?” the nurse asked.

“I’m tired,” Jane said, “and I’m thirsty. Could I have some water?”

“Sure, I’ll get you some.”

The nurse came back with a glass of water and a blood pressure cuff. After taking the reading she asked Jane about the pains.

“They’re stronger,” Jane said, “about five minutes apart, but my back is killing me.”

“Back aches are usual in labor.”

“I wonder if I could have a fatter pillow,” Jane asked. “That would help some. I’m tired of this flat position.”

“Sure, I’ll get you a pillow, but first let’s see how things are progressing.”

After examining Jane the nurse said, “You’re getting there.”

She forgot to bring the promised pillow and Jane did not see her again. Things got more uncomfortable from that point on and Jane stopped playing games with clock watching. She shifted her weight from one hip to another, and wished she were in a bed where she could thrash around a little. She remembered asking for someone to please help her, and then a different nurse came in and said that she would call the doctor now. From then on it was like the other births. Jane could see the clock; it was 6:30 in the morning. The nurse said, “Don’t hold your breath; just pant.” Then the ether and its sick-making odor. “Just blow it away,” the nurse said. What treachery Then the humming, the whining, the revolving.

Chan was sitting in a chair by the window and it was snowing out there, piling up on the same tree branches she’d seen when she woke up after David was born. But that had been May and those maple trees were leafing out in spring green. Now they were black and bare.

Her eyes closed again and presently she opened them and looked at Chan.

“It’s a boy,” he said.

“Your mother will be disappointed.”

“No, she’s OK. She said, ‘as long as it’s healthy’.”

“And what did my mother say?”

“She said it’s a good thing it’s a boy; girls have a harder time.”

“After last night, I agree,” Jane said, and she told him about her long night alone in the delivery room on the high narrow table.

“How did that happen?”

“They seemed to think they had no better place for me.” “Why didn’t they let you stay in this bed?” Chan asked.

“I suppose because of the other patient.”

“Then they should have put you in a private room.”

“I think so, too. How much does the baby weigh?”

“Six-twelve.”

“Oh, that’s small!”

“He’s OK. Dr. Haylor says he’s fine.”

“Who does he look like?”

“A baby.” Chan said. “Don’t they all look the same?”

“No! They do not all look the same.”

“Well, actually, maybe he looks like you. His hair is black, what there is of it. He’s pretty red. He was frowning when I saw him.”

“When do I see him?” Jane asked.

“This evening.”

“I think that’s awful. I want to see him”

“They’re short of nurses because of the war.”

“But it isn’t natural. Some day they’ll see the light on these matters. Oh God, I hope they get something better than ether. As usual, I feel sick, but if I just don’t move my head I’ll be alright.”

#

They named the baby Garrett John Milward after two great-grandfathers. Andrea would have been happy to name him Alan after his father, or Allen after Mil's father, but Mil didn't like it either way, because it had been turned into "Allie" when he was little. He wouldn't "inflict" Alan on a boy, he said.

Andrea had fewer visitors in the hospital this time. Faye was away in Dayton, Treeny and Yuri had moved to Connecticut where Yuri had a new job in an aircraft company. And Murry and her husband Ed were still living in Texas. Minna came once to see Andrea and the baby. After Fred Perkins' leave was over, Ned came to visit one afternoon.

"I'll know for sure tomorrow or the next day if I'm pregnant or not, but I'm sure I am. I can't wait. Well, I'll have to wait."

Ned went to look at Andrea's baby and came back to report that he looked like his mother.

"Was he scowling?" Andrea asked.

"No, he was very much asleep."

"Good! When he's about to cry, he scowls and looks like my baby pictures. Looks like my dad's pictures, too."

"Mil told your mother that the baby looked like you, but

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They named the baby John Henry Chandler after two great-grandfathers. Jane would have been happy to name him Clement after his father, or Allen after Chan's father, but Chan didn't like it either way, because it had been turned into "Allie" when he was little. He wouldn't "inflict" Clement on a boy, he said.

Jane had fewer visitors in the hospital this time. Dee was away in Dayton, Trink and Sergei had moved to Connecticut where Sergei had a new job in an aircraft company. And Mim and her husband Bill were still living in Texas. Jo came once to see Jane and the baby. After Fred Perkins' leave was over, Ned came to visit one afternoon.

"I'll know for sure tomorrow or the next day if I'm pregnant or not, but I'm sure I am. I can't wait. Well, I'll have to wait."

Ned went to look at Jane's baby and came back to report that he looked like his mother.

"Was he scowling?" Jane asked.

"No, he was very much asleep."

"Good! When he's about to cry, he scowls and looks like my baby pictures. Looks like my dad's pictures, too."

"Chan told your mother that the baby looked like you, but she says you can't tell when they're that new."

"Yes, she said that in the note she wrote me, too."

"But he does look like you," Ned said.

"He's not blond anyway," Jane said.

Then Ned asked Jane, "What is it that your mother has against Chan?"

"His bad disposition," Jane said.

"He doesn't have a bad disposition," Ned said.

"Sometimes he does, but especially when Mother is here. His mother too. He thinks they interfere too much. And he's right, but they interfere in different ways. Mother and Chan got along fine in the beginning. They admired each other. He went with my sister, remember? After Chan and I married Mother began to criticize him."

“Well, yesterday I brought Denis home from kindergarten because it was stormy. I stopped in and your mother and I had lunch and she talked a long time. She said some things about Chan that puzzled me. I didn’t even know what she meant.”

“Well,” Jane said, “I don’t understand my mother at all. I don’t understand her view of things. What did she say about Chan?”

“She said that he is not brave enough ‘to take hold’. Now what does that mean? I told her Fred and I thought that Chan works very hard.”

“What did she say to that?”

“She said, ‘That’s not what I mean’. What does she mean?”

Jane looked thoughtful. “I can only make a guess. You see, I don’t do things the way she thinks I should, and she hasn’t been able to get me to change my ways, so she thinks Chan should ‘take hold’, as she says, and make me do things right.”

“What things?”

“She thinks I should fuss with the children more and not help Chan build the house.”

“What do you mean ‘fuss’ with the children?”

Jane smiled. “Oh, that’s my word not Mother’s. She means baths, shampoos, tooth brushing, bundling up to play outdoors, and making them pancakes,. She likes to think that these things only go on when. She is here. I’m not sure why she feels as she does, but it may be partly because she wasn’t with my sister and me much when we were little. She’s doing her mothering now. I’ll be better off when my sister gets married and has kids. Mom can mother them.”

“Your mother’s worried about a lot of other things, too,” Ned said. “Especially the War.”

“Yes, that, and bad news from a pen-pal of hers, and one of my aunts is having an eye removed, the old homestead has been torn down, and one thing and another, and she doesn’t know what he should do next.”

“Jane, I think you just named it right there. She kept talking about maybe she ought to go to New York, or shouldn’t she. She’s undecided.”

“Well, Ned, my mother is in a permanent state of wondering whether to go to New York. Unless she’s there, in which case she’s thinking about returning to Cleveland.”

“Why?”

“I think the real reason is because New York is where she and my dad lived when they were young and in love and everything was very romantic even though they were often out of money.

Of course, Mother says she likes New York because there's more sunshine, and because everything happens there, and there are museums and concerts and all that."

"Why doesn't she stay there if she likes it that well?"

"Because my father isn't there, he's back here. Well, he doesn't live in Cleveland anymore, he's downstate in Springfield, but he comes back here at times. Oh, of course, Mother is mad at him because he's married again and he has a son now. And all that upsets her and she has no peace of mind. She just keeps jumping back and forth between Cleveland and New York. When she's angry at my father she goes back East. It's as though she felt she'd find my father there the way he used to be when they were young. But after she's been there a while, back she comes again. She isn't happy either place. She wants him back and of course she can't have him so she's miserable and she fusses at me and worries about my sister. She was a little bit more contented before Dee left Cleveland. Now she concentrates on me. She needs something else in her life. She isn't like my mother-in-law. Jo has 'man' problems too. She wants my father-in-law back. They aren't divorced, just separated. But he won't come back and live with Jo. So she keeps herself busy with her job and her boyfriend. But she's unhappy too. She knows Harry has a girlfriend. But Jo's different from Mother."

"Your mother ought to have a job and a boyfriend, too," Ned said.

"She has a boyfriend," Jane said. "My former, step-father, Carle. They were only married a couple years before Mother divorced him, but now they're friends again. Only Mom just goes on eating her heart out for Dad. But Carle takes her to dinner and the movies when she's in town."

"That's better than most widows have it," Ned said. "Nobody takes Fred's mother out to dinner."

"How is she doing, by the way, since Dad P. died?"

"Pretty good. Nothing whips Mrs. P. She's works in the school library now. She used to be a librarian."

"Mother would have been very good at that sort of work. But you know when you spoke about widows, it's got me thinking about Mother. I think she'd be better off if she were a widow. Then she could make a new start. If Dad had died, she wouldn't be forever thinking about him living downstate where he's a college professor now, with a younger wife and the son he's so wild about, Mother assumes he's wild about Win, and I'm sure she's right. And she has the idea that if I had been a boy my father would have been a much better husband."

Ned asked then, "Does she tell you that?"

"Yes," Jane said, "but not in those precise words. I guess I have 'after-the-baby blues' today. Don't mind me."

On the snowy day that Jane and Chan brought the baby, John, home from the hospital, a conversation took place that Grace would not forget. She had a long memory and an often unfortunate sensitivity to other people's careless and ill-chosen words.

Jo phoned in the early evening. There had been an all-day snowfall and as she had done for as many years as Chan had been driving, she worried about his safety when the roads were slippery. Grace answered the telephone when Jo called.

"Did Clement get home alright?" Jo asked.

"Oh, yes, they're here, safe and sound," Grace assured.

"You mean he brought Jane and the baby? I thought it would be tomorrow."

"No, they let Chan bring her home this evening because he couldn't take time off work tomorrow."

"I hope Chan isn't coming here tonight to get David, is he? The weather's too nasty."

"He's not planning it tonight, Jo, I'm sure. Probably tomorrow."

"I wish he'd let David stay over till Sunday. He's such fun to have around."

"They'll be calling you I'm sure," Grace said.

Jo should have let the conversation end at that point but she went on.

"It's kind of a shame that this new baby wasn't a girl, don't you think?"

"No," said Grace, "I think it's always just as well when boys are born."

"But it would have been so nice to have evened things up and had two boys and two girls. I can't get it through my head that there's another little boy. Sort of like a little afterthought."

"'Afterthought'!" Grace said, amazed.

"Well, I guess that's not the right way to put it. All I meant was... well, you know I really had been thinking that the baby was a little girl. I was hoping they'd name her 'Chanelle', but Jane said she didn't like it. She said they'd call her 'Chanie Chandler'. I thought that would be real cute."

"Mm," Grace said, "Instead its John Henry Chandler."

"Did you think he looks like Jane?" Jo asked.

“I don’t know. I haven’t had a good look at that young man. He was brought in out of the snow all swaddled in his blankets, and I have yet to make his acquaintance. I’ve only peeked at him, asleep in his basket on his tummy.”

“I’m afraid,” Jo said, “that David is going to find he has a broken nose now.”

Grace laughed, “Oh, Jo, you and I know that David’s nose is not one bit at risk.”

“I can’t help it. David does tug at my heart strings.”

“Yes,” said Grace, “I know.”

During the night, whenever Grace roused from sleep, her indignation grew. Jo had certainly revealed her true feelings about the new baby when she called him a “little afterthought.” It was obvious that Jo feared for David’s position as a “special baby”. It was not simply that Jo herself doted on David. Oh, no, it went beyond that. Harry Porter had seemed to be quite charmed by him, as well. One day, when Grace had had lunch with Jo in the tearoom at Strohmeyer’s store, Jo had confessed, “You know, Grace, I think little David may possibly help bring Harry and me back together again.” And now with another little boy, did Jo fear that Harry’s interest might be diluted?

During the night Grace heard the baby crying once or twice. He was soon quieted by being changed and fed, but Grace would lie awake another hour or more. How totally helpless tiny babies were! How could anyone feel other than loving toward them? How could one harbor a malevolent thought? In Grace’s mind the dimensions of Jo’s remarks increased during the night. How could Jo not welcome a grandson who was as much her own flesh and blood as the other? Toward morning Grace fell into a sound sleep. She did not wake at five when the baby cried and Jane fed him. Nor did she wake when Chan left for work, nor when Ned Perkins took Denis to kindergarten.

By the time Grace got up late in the morning, Jane had fed the baby again and Mary Ellen and Jane were both asleep in the big double bed. Baby John was asleep in his bassinet. Grace tiptoed over to see him.

This time the baby was on his back, his arms lying elbows bent, beside his head, tiny pink fingers curled. She could see what they meant when they said he looked like Jane. Same black hair in a downy fuzz, and same rosy color. But this baby was smaller, less than seven pounds. Jane had weighed eight and a half pounds. “A wash woman’s baby”, Norr had said. And she’d stayed healthy till she got whooping cough.

This baby must be small because Jane’d been so sick. And she’d been sick because of this miserable little house. The best you could say for this house was that it was warm. It was no place to raise these poor little children. Owning your own home wasn’t worth much if it wasn’t comfortable. This place would be the death of Jane yet. They should have stayed at Courtney

Shores, where there was plenty of room for everyone. Probably Dee would not have left Cleveland if they'd all stayed there, because Dee loved the beach. Chan and Jane were obsessed by the notion that they had to own their home. There was no disgrace in renting a house. Father Rahming had never owned his home. Dear Father Rahming; it was nice that Jane had given the baby his name.

While Grace was musing thus and standing beside the bassinet, the baby began to stir. He made a funny little squeaky sound and hunched his shoulders up and stretched. Then he made small grunting sounds and pushed his lower lip out and prepared to cry. He changed his mind about that, but opened his eyes and made a face. He put his lip out again and scowled. Grace watched him fascinated. It was such a familiar look. Suddenly she knew why. It was Norris that the baby looked like. For all the world he was a dead ringer for Norris, and that comical little scowl had revealed it. Now she could see that his features were like his grandfather's. Like Jane certainly, but because Jane somewhat resembled Norr. This baby, Grace decided, is in all possibility the way our son would have looked if Norris and I had had a boy. He has the same kind of hairline that I have, Grace thought, but he has Norris's face. He does not look at all like Chan. David is the image of Chan. Well, Jo can have David, but this one will be my special one. This will be my baby.

The baby started his preliminary crying then, and on the bed, Jane stirred and rolled over.

"Jane," Grace said. "Jane."

"Yes," Said Jane. "I hear him."

"Jane, the baby needs attention."

Jane opened her eyes and laughed.

"What's funny?" Grace asked.

"Nothing," Jane said. "Nothing's funny."

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In the afternoon Ned Perkins stopped in. Her spirits were high.

“I’m really and truly pregnant. I’ve got a new doctor and I know he’s a good one.”

“Is he an obstetrician?” Jane asked.

“No,” Ned said. “But he does a lot of baby cases. And I know he’s good. He asked me dozens of questions, and he did all those things you said should be done. Blood-pressure and measurements and all and he told me I was too fat, and he gave me a diet, and told me to take vitamins and calcium.”

Grace spoke up at that point.

“You aren’t planning to have a big family like Jane’s, are you. Ned?”

“Well,” Ned said, “I’ll be happy to have just one live baby.”

“Oh, my,” Grace said, “I think you are very wise. The way this world is today, it’s no place for children.”

“Only adults,” Jane said. “Mother, don’t forget that Ned lost her first baby. It was stillborn. That’s why she said she’d be glad to have one baby, one live one.”

“Oh” Grace said. “I believe I did hear about that. Well, this time I’m sure everything will be just fine.”

“We hope so,” Ned said.

“Well, I must get busy,” Grace said. “Jane has her hands full now. I’m going to take the waste paper outside to burn.”

“It’s pretty breezy, Mrs. Rahming,” said Ned.

“Oh, I’ll use the wire burning basket, don’t worry.”

“Burn the papers tomorrow, Mother, they’ll keep,” Jane said.

“I’d like to get it done,” Grace said.

When they were alone, Ned said, “I probably will have only one baby. If Fred goes overseas, God knows if he’ll get back. In fact, we don’t even know if he’ll go before the baby is born.”

“Surely he’ll get home on leave again, won’t he?”

“He says he will,” Ned said, “but I don’t know. Andy, maybe he won’t. It’s scary.”

“All of it is scary, Ned. I’ve been hearing that married men with families could very well be drafted soon.”

“Oh, I don’t think so, Andy. Not men Mil’s age with four children. How old is Chan?”

“Thirty-six in June,” Jane said.

“Oh, they’ll never draft him,” Ned insisted.

“I don’t feel certain of that. Japan and Germany are so strong. Who would have thought they could have the whole world so frightened?”

But as Jane spoke those words, her mother came rushing in from the back yard.

“Andy! Come help me. The grass is burning. Bring a broom!”

“Oh, Mom!” Jane cried, jumping up.

“Well, you see the wind has come up!” Grace said.

Jane snatched her kitchen broom. “Go to the garage, Mom. There’s another broom there.”

“I’ll go home and get my broom, too,” Ned said, but when they got out doors and Jane saw how the wind was spreading the flames, she told Ned, “Call the fire department first. This could get to the garage in a hurry.”

Ned hurried home across the field, calling back over her shoulder. “I’ll come back with my broom.”

Jane swatted at the line of flames that would spread toward the garage. Grace joined her with the other broom, both of them working furiously in the smoke that stung their eyes and made them cough. Grace’s eyes were wide with worry.

Little Denis stood on the beck lawn calling out, “Oh, Mommie, Mommie! Your little baby! Your poor little tiny baby”

“Honey, don’t you worry,” Jane called to him. “We’ll put it out.”

And then she spotted the garden hose lying nearly hidden in the dead, matted lawn grass. She saw that it was still fastened to the faucet at the rear wall.

Picking up the nozzle end of the hose, Jane called to Denis, “Quick, honey, run turn the water on for me. Turn it on hard! Turn it on all the way!”

Denis ran and did as he was told and Jane began wetting down the advancing line of flame and smoke. Ned returned with her broom and she and Grace now worked with wet brooms at the far end of the fire line, which Jane could not reach with the stream from the hose. Jane had Denis

carry water in a scrub bucket to a place where Grace and Ned could use it to keep their brooms wet.

Mrs. Magyar, (Jane's Hungarian neighbor) had a married daughter, Betty, who came running out of her mother's house exclaiming.

"Oh, Mrs. Chandler, you'll burn all the little houses down I'm going to call the fire department"

Jane could now hear the sirens far away on Queensbury road.

"We've already called them, Betty," she said. "Don't you hear them?"

She continued to wet down the line of fire until not a trace of smoke showed anywhere. And Ned Perkins and Grace had beaten the fire completely out at the farther end. When the firemen arrived they made their own determination that the fire was out, then after delivering a short lecture on the dangers of burning refuse outdoors, they left, Jane had expected the lecture, but when Mary Magyar's daughter Betty, who was seven years younger than Jane, began a lecture of her own, Jane had had enough.

"Oh, Mrs. Chandler," Betty began, "You should never burn your trash on a windy day. The people in this neighborhood have worked too hard on these little homes to have them all burned up in a fire."

Jane was hot, sweaty, tired, and out of patience.

"Listen," she said to Betty, "nobody needs to talk to me about how much hard work goes into these little houses. I know all about it. And furthermore, I didn't start this fire, and it's out now."

Grace spoke up then. "I started the fire, my dear," she said to Betty. "The wind sprang up quite suddenly."

"We'll use the hose to wet the surrounding ground in the future," Jane said. "Right now, I want a big drink of milk, and then a bath, I'm going in now."

When they had all washed the soot and smoky smell away, Grace lay down on the couch and fell sound asleep. Philip and Mary Ellen were still napping in their cribs, but the new baby woke up and was hungry. Jane went to her bedroom to care for him, and Ned and Denis followed. They were both fascinated by little John. Jane put a dry diaper on him and sat down to nurse him.

"I hope fighting the fire didn't do you any harm," Ned said.

"Oh, I'm fine," Jane said. "But I hope you are alright."

"I didn't do much fire fighting," Ned said. "I'm OK."

"Just want you to have that baby."

“I don’t think I’m delicate,” Ned said. “I won’t lose this one.”

“I’m sure you won’t. I’m not delicate either. I think it’s ridiculous to stay in bed ten days after having a baby. That’s what makes one delicate.”

“I bet you’re right,” Ned said.

Denis, who was not yet six years old, spoke up.

“Mommie, I’m glad your new little baby didn’t get burned.”

“Oh, my goodness, yes,” Jane said. “We’re glad none of us got burned.”

“But your baby is so little,” Denis slid. “He couldn’t run from the fire like we could.”

“No, honey, but if the fire had come close to our house I’d have carried him. We’d have taken him over to Ned’s house.”

“That’s right,” Ned said. “And I’d have carried David because he’s pretty small.”

“Yes,” Jane said, “and, Denis, you would have taken Mary Ellen’s hand and we would have all run across to Ned’s very quickly.”

“What about Grammy?”

“Well, you would take her hand, too, I think. Anyway the fire didn’t come near the house, so we’re all fine.”

“But Grammy’s done in,” Denis said.

Ned laughed. “Did he say ‘done in’?”

“Yes. Get’s that expression from Chan, I guess. Mom did work pretty hard, didn’t she?”

“I’d say so,” Ned said, “considering she doesn’t approve of this house exactly.”

“Oh, she was fighting the fire because of the children,” Jane said “not to save the house.”

“But she must not have thought only of the children,” Ned said, “Because if she had she’d just have gotten them right out of the house first of all. She surely knows how hard you and Chan have worked on your house.”

“I guess so” Jane said. “And she did speak up in my defense when Betty Magyar started to scold me about the fire.”

“That’s right.”

Jane was quiet a moment, then she said, "You know, you can't understand parents. I remember a time when I was in high school I was very sick. I lived with my father and he was hard for anyone to live with. I was never sure whether he loved me or not. But this time I was so sick that he was worried. He thought I had pneumonia; maybe I did. Or maybe it was asthma or bronchitis. Who knows now? But anyway, he got up many times in the night to rub my back and fix my covers. They telephoned my mother in New York. Well, anyway, I recovered. But did he fuss over me because he loved me or was it that he didn't want anyone to say that I had died because I was living with him? I'll never know, will I?"

"He probably loves you, Jane," Ned said.

"Well, I suppose. I hardly ever see him. He has a new life. He only sees me when he comes to bring Aunt Ethel. But I suppose, when he thinks about it, he loves me. He has so many things on his mind. And so does Mother, goodness knows. She worries about everything - money, health, by sister, her sisters, my kids' bed-wetting, my dog's allergies, and of course, the War. Oh, and she specially worries about the Russians. But more than anything she thinks about my father. Even when she's thinking about other things, in back of those thoughts, there's always my dad. She still loves him. It's such an enormous love there isn't a lot of room for loving other people a whole lot. Except Dee, that is. And my kids."

Denis had been sitting on the foot of the bed counting a handful of pennies. He spoke up now.

"Mommie?" he said. "Mommie, know what?"

"What, honey?"

"Grammie loves you too."

Ned said, "Such ears on little pitchers."

But Jane after a moment said, "Yes, Denis, Grammy loves me as much as she possibly can. And we know we all love everybody and we aren't going to have worries about such things."

"And we're going to win the War," Denis said.

"Amen," said Ned Perkins. "Bless your heart."