

S E A S C A P E with H O U S E
by Ella Cline

Matilda Adams waited, tight-lipped, for her daughter-in-law, Sandra, to speak. Matilda sat, erect and tense, in a leather and metal arm chair in the living room of her son's apartment. A large unframed canvas leaned against a chair before her. She rose, moved the canvas a little so that its colors glowed more richly in the morning light, and sat down again, looking at it, waiting.

Sandra stood in the doorway of the kitchenette. One white hand held the carressing folds of a costly green negligee closely about her slender form. Her bare feet were thrust in matching green slippers.

Her trousseau was certainly ample, thought the older woman, to have that green outfit survive these seven lean years....

Sandra came a few steps into the living room and began sharply, her free hand with its shining red finger nails pointing at the canvas.

"He expects me to stay home every leisure hour, evenings, week ends, holidays, so he can waste his time on that." She stopped a moment as if to gather her forces, then continued with mounting disgust, "If he would ever manage to finish anything, it might make sense. There may be boobs somewhere who would even pay for that sort of thing. But inspiration always fails him a mile or a yard before the finish----"

"Boyden is an artist, my dear," Matilda said gently as Sandra paused, "to whom environment and sympathetic understanding mean so very much----"

"But by this time he should have learned to be practical," Sandra interrupted ~~sharply~~, "Those unfinished pictures give me the jimjams. Stacked behind every bureau, in every clothes press and on shelves.

This is only a three-room furnished apartment in Chicago, not a thirty-room house on a farm."

Matilda's shoulders lost their erect bearing. With a weary little smile she said, "Quite a number of them at home, in his studio, too. Each excellently composed, showing surpassing ability, yet each canvas unfinished----" She sighed, paused a moment and continued, "Nixon cares for them and guards them as if they were the treasures of a kingdom," and immediately was sorry she had mentioned John Nixon for that was no way to calm Sandra.

No matter, she thought, it will make little difference. She heard the same complaints on each of her yearly visits to her son and his wife. There were ever so many things that did not please Sandra, but three complaints Matilda had come to expect, and thought of them as the three major grievances.

Sandra, young and pretty, seemed part of the narrow, long living room. Matilda, middle-aged, fading, with graying hair, dressed in simple black, and the picture on the canvas, were incongruous, clashing.

Sandra said, her slow words sharpened by anger, "If he would only give as much thought to his work in the office as he does to that stuff, he might yet get some place. With his looks and fine manners, he could get business if he wanted to badly enough. But he has a sensitive conscience, if you please !"

Major grievance number two already, thought Matilda, One: He insists on doing what he has been trained to and can do very well, painting. Two: He is not a shrewd business man and never will be. We are going fast this visit. One more and we shall be free to plan his birthday party.

Sandra continued, "So the smart lads make the big real estate deals, get the fat commissions, buy their wives fine cars and mink coats, while

ne is lucky to keep his job. He has changed jobs often enough as it is."

Matilda shivered a little, but did not comment aloud. She waited, tense and tight-lipped for the inevitable third grievance, her eyes turned towards the canvas as if seeking sustaining strength in the sea and sands, rocks and foaming surf painted there.

Sandra sank gracefully into a rose colored divan, folded her hands behind her red gold head and spoke contemptuously. "It is to laugh that he still thinks we should have a family. What does he know what it takes to care for a child unless one has means? Unless the mother is willing to slave, which I certainly am not."

She has not changed in the least, thought Matilda, I had hoped, prayed, but it is hopeless. Even the good news I am keeping for his birthday gift will be useless.

Aloud she said, "A child would be a great source of happiness to you both. Might inspire Boyden to greater effort, bring out his final best. And for you--"

Sandra sat up, laughing, "And for the dear little one's sake we would live in the country all the year. By the sea, of course. Where its daddy could paint most of the time while I washed its diddies and helped with the housework." She rose, stretched luxuriously, and said,

"I assure you, mother-in-law, I have other plans for myself, if I could only raise a few hundred dollars, a grand would be perfect!" The wide blue eyes narrowed as she looked shrewdly at the pale, finely lined features of the older woman. "Times are supposed to be better. There was so much! Lands, bonds, the mill---Couldn't you raise that much for me?"

"A thousand dollars?" asked Matilda.

"About that much. For a three-four months trip with friends, to the coast, see the world, meet gay people, enjoy life as I thought I would. Get a great deal for the money, the way they are planning."

Matilda was silent for a moment, then said, "Could Boyden take so much time off for a trip?"

"Of course not. But he would not want to go anyway. He never liked my friends or anything we do, and likes them less every year. Does not say so in so many words, but just acts like an iceberg-- At times I wish he would forget himself and act human-- Gives me the creeps."

Matilda sat looking at the painting before her, pale and proud, slowly moving her head from side to side in negation, thinking how proud she had always been of her son's mannerly reserve.

Sandra spoke, quickly, angrily, "Of course there is nothing left. I was a fool to hope. Seven long years I have hoped. All is lost and he is a failure. I am wasting my youth, he will never amount to anything---"

"I would not be so certain---about Boyden being a failure, my dear. Boyden's grandfather, famous as a dealer in fine arts, began his career when he was past forty. Established his home and fortune by the time he was sixty and lived many years to enjoy it. Boyden will be but twenty-nine tomorrow---"

"As far as he is concerned," Sandra snapped back, "twenty-nine and fifty-nine are the same. "He can't put his mind on his work in the office because the north light makes him restless, and he can't complete a picture just because he can't! And if I am dying to take a trip with friends, I can't afford it."

Her voice became sneering and cold, looking at her red finger nails, she said, "Mrs. Boyden Hamilton Adams, of the wealthy and cultured New England Adamses, you know, will just stay at home, and rot."

Sandra trailed the rich green fabric of her negligee into the bedroom and closed the door after her with a little bang. Through the closed door came small, sudden noises as she discarded her slippers, lay down on the bed, found a magazine to her liking and lighted a cigaret.

What a mess, thought Matilda, every terrible word she said is like a sharp knife in my heart. Both so young, so many years before them---

She sat before the canvas, looking at it steadily, beseechingly, as if to invoke from the familiar scene painted there a solution for her many anxieties.

Of what use to take this canvas home with the few others he had worked on during the year if he was not coming to complete them? Where can this end if Sandra continued to crave with even greater zest excitement and pleasure at any cost? Suppose she did get her "grand", even two or three and had her gay months of travel, pleasure which her husband would not share, would she be content to live quietly in a village while her husband painted? Not very likely. Nor would she be content to wait the long years while Boyden's talents matured and gained recognition, and success crowned his work.

She looked about the sun filled room and its brightly colored modernistic furniture, its startlingly contrasting colors and strangely curving metal surfaces. The room affected Matilda's nerves like blaring noise. How could anyone in her right senses, thought Matilda, prefer this to the quiet and harmony and grace of the house on the cliff.

But Sandra did prefer this and she had as much right to her way of life as Boyden to his....

It was grotesque, fantastic, that Boy, her boy, should live in an

apartment like this, do some sort of superior clerical work for a living, and be criticised by Sandra. This apartment, or a similar one, had been his home for nearly seven long years.

Resolutely she turned her gaze on the picture before her, a large canvas with the sea painted on more than half of the surface. In the foreground the sea was dark and restless with the swell of the incoming tide. The waves becoming small and gentle as they reached the pale sands of a little cove to the left of the center, sheltered by rocks. Surf dashed above the jagged stone forming feathery spume that whitely curled high and foamed ^{between} the rocks, ^{then} spent itself on the sands.

How great must be his longing for home and the sea, sadly thought Matilda, to have painted so accurately in this wilderness of apartment houses.

Back of the sands of the curving beach of the cove stood the summer house as it was before it was enlarged into a studio. From it ran thinly the path up the green hill to the white house on the cliff. The cliff, a gradual grassy slope on one side, was a sheer, steep, gray wall of rock on the other side, at the base of which the sea was dark and deep, with an edge of white where it met the granite ~~of the cliff~~.

And on the hill, on a natural plateau, stood a rambling, many-roomed house, with its columned verandas, velvet lawns and gardens, home! Built by Matilda's grandfather, enlarged, relandscaped and elaborately furnished by her father, and whose exquisitely harmonious interiors few houses could equal; but which, to Sandra, was merely a farmhouse.....

Clouds, still lighted by the last glimmers of sunset, made the background for the familiar scene. A few hours work, and the painting might be completed. Although most of it was worked in with painstaking care, in several places the initial chalk drawing still showed. Thanks be that his skill has not diminished, gratefully thought Matilda.

As Matilda looked, remembering, she became oblivious to the cheaply bright room and began to search the years of the past two decades for the causes that had brought her only son so far from all he had worked for. At her heart an oppressive feeling of guilt that somewhere along the years she had failed her dead husband and their child, that the fault was unwittingly her own.

Twenty years ago Matilda was young and strong and utterly happy playing on the sands of the curving little beach with her boy one bright day in early summer. Her young husband near, laughingly teasing them, imploring them, to keep quiet long enough for him to outline a sketch of them he was making. That had been the last carefree happy day ^{of her} life. Only long afterward could she fully realize how happy she had been that day, and all the days of her life till that night.

For during that night her husband was suddenly stricken with an obscure blood malady that defied the skill and the wisdom of physicians to exactly diagnose or to cure. Bedridden and helpless and suffering he lingered on for nearly a year. When spring came, she was a grief stricken, disconsolate widow in black.

Grieving night and day, almost resentful that a little boy, bewildered and sad, clung to her, begging wordlessly that she live for his sake. Life became an unbearable burden, meaningless, standing relentlessly between her and her dear dead. The black hours dragged on leaden feet.

Suddenly she was forced out of her lathargy and indifference by a grave danger that threatened the boy. Possibly the child had been neglected while his father waged his long, losing battle for life; possibly a childish ailment had left a cardiac fault not realized before,

for he failed to recover from a severe cold.

The attending physician called in specialists ^{for} in consultation. Matilda was informed that the child's heart muscles were dangerously relaxed. That the most careful nursing was necessary; it was doubtful if he would ever recover completely.

Matilda forced her ever present sorrow into the background of her mind, and devoted every thought, every ounce of energy, to the care of her son. His room, with its wide veranda with the sea ever fretting below (above the steep cliff), became the heart and center of the home. Nurses were there in constant attendance; doctors and specialists in frequent consultation.

There had been periods of anxiety in the dead of night, times of breathless fear, never to be entirely obliterated from her memory, when doctors and nurses were equally helpless to relieve the child's suffering, when the thread of his precious life wore thinner with each labored breath until it seemed too frail to last another moment.

Slowly, so very slowly, with terrifying relapses, he began to gain strength. To keep him quiet, Matilda sat by his bed, hours at a time, reading to him, telling him stories. Sometimes in the twilight, when it grew too dark to read, or when he had tired of all the stories in the story books, she would make up stories for him, to the accompaniment of the soft booming of the sea against the base of the cliff.

One late afternoon when the sea was unusually restless, even the distant surf could be heard through the open windows, Matilda made up the story about a maiden the sea would cast up on a moonlight night and leave on a rock by the sea, asleep. A man might find her there, once in a lifetime. She would be dressed all in green and would have golden hair and blue eyes. If the man who found her was really, truly her predestined Prince Charming, when he spoke to her she would open wide her

eyes, shake the sea water from her garments, take his hand and go with him wherever he led.

This story became the story for the twilight hour. Hardly a day passed but Matilda had to repeat it and elaborate on it. Would the girl in green ever come again if one spoke to her and she vanished? Of course not, since she only came once in a lifetime. Would she be dressed all in green, even her shoes? Yes. Was ever such a one left near their home? Could one be found by the sea near? Matilda found the many questions hard to answer. All other stories waned in interest while this tale so carelessly invented continued to intrigue him increasingly.

As he continued to gain, he was allowed to sit up for a little while each day. As a treat for his tenth birthday, a warm day in late June, the doctor allowed him to be carried to the beach for a half hour of sun bathing.

John Nixon, butler, friend, who had been part of the household before Matilda was born, who, with his wife Maria, had in a measure filled the gap left by her parents, carried the slight lad down the path to a couch before the summer house. Matilda and the nurse hovering near, while the entire staff, from cook to gardener's assistant, watched the procession with anxious, yet smiling faces, and moist eyes.

Each warm clear day thereafter the little procession made its slow way to the curving little beach. Each day he was allowed a longer period of time in which to rest on the warm sands. His recovery bringing joy to neighbors and friends in nearby homes, in the village, in the artists' colony further down the coast. Gifts for the boy came in a steady stream. From the artists' colony came an easel, a varied assortment of drawing paper, some small canvases and all manner of crayons, water colors and brushes, all in a size to suit the small boy.

To keep his growing restlessness in check as he continued to gain

in health, Matilda, widow of an artist, daughter of a noted dealer in fine art, and granddaughter of the curator of America's foremost museum of fine arts of his time, began to instruct Boyden in the use of the materials so graciously given him.

The boy learned quickly, instinctively. Drawing, perspective, atmosphere, the value of light and shade, came to him as naturally as breathing. Each rough paper held by thumb tacks to the little easel soon showed a likeness--crude in many respects, yet extraordinarily well done for so young a child-- of the white house on the cliff, or of a sailing vessel drifting by near the horizon, or of the surf dashing high above the boulders than spreading whitely on the sands, or some favorite toy, or his dog, asleep, in the shade of the summer house.

Soon he began a picture of a maiden cast up by the sea on a moonlight night, ~~all~~ all other pictures lost in interest for him. The doctor limited "painting play" and ordered walks by the sea.

Reluctantly he would leave off work on this picture to go strolling with his mother. Soon reluctance vanished as the walks became a search for a possible place for the maiden to be found by the sea nearby.

"Not by the rocks," reasoned the boy, "Too rough there. The cove? No. Too calm there. The waves might bring in ~~some~~ weeds, nothing more. Then by the cliff! There the sea ran deep and strong. In a storm, could bring in a whole ship! There sometime in the moonlight---"

It amused Matilda that he should take so seriously the story she had so lightly invented. He will forget all about it, she reasoned, as soon as he begins on regular school work.

Till summer came to an end he worked on his favorite picture, correcting, adding, changing, always certain of the result he wanted to get. Visitors from the artists' colony came, admired, criticised, gave advice; often stood in silent wonder .

The very simplicity of the composition was amazing. A tall, sheer cliff, dark and forbidding, rose to a stormy, clouded sky, where the full moon shone through a narrow rift in the clouds. The sea, dark and white capped, broke foaming at the base of the cliff. On a ledge of rock, just out of reach of the black-green waves, lay a slender, girlish form wrapped in a green cloak, fast asleep, the face hidden in the curve of slender white arms, the head a tumbled mass of red gold curls. One little foot in a green slipper showing from beneath the cloak. A light mist drifted across the face of the cliff, slightly blurring all outlines, creating an effect of a not-quite remembered scene in a dream.

That picture, framed in flat green-gray wood, was awarded a prize at the State Fair that fall, members of the artists' colony insisting that it be exhibited, and yet hung in the music room of the white house on the cliff. A great future was predicted for the lad who had so richly inherited talent.

Then followed years of tutors and the best instructors obtainable in drawing and in colors. Matilda cultivated the friendship of artists and intellectuals so that the boy would have a stimulating, inspiring atmosphere in his home. With joy she watched him grow into a tall, slender youth with gray eyes and unruly black hair like her own, but greatly gifted like his father. Then came preparatory school and college. But for the never absent grief of her widowhood, Matilda would have been truly happy again.

During the slow years, several men had shown their admiration for the wealthy young widow, had asked for more than friendship, had been eager to help her in the pleasant task of guiding the development of her talented son. Matilda would not for a moment consider a second marriage; love for Boyden filled her life completely.

During school holidays Matilda and Boyden travelled leisurely to art centers and world famous museums. When he neared his twenty-first birthday, and Commencement, it was decided he should travel alone an entire year abroad to study the finest of old world art, to meet masters and pupils, a year of inner preparation. After this year of partial holiday, he was to take up his work in earnest and devote his entire time to a series of canvases for a one man's showing. His instructors, his critics and his friends predicted that his success was assured.

Could only eight years have elapsed, though Matilda, grown old and gray and weary, since the gay preparations for Boyden's twenty-first birthday?

His birthday and commencement festivities were celebrated with many gay gatherings in homes of friends, with the final party in their own dear home. Friends, young and old, filled the large, gracious rooms, decorated with flowers from the gardens that were in fragrant bloom. The young folk danced, the older people sat on the varendas, listening to the dance music that mingled joyously with the constant booming of the incoming tide. Edna, the daughter of their nearest neighbors and devoted friends, sang of love and parting and of youth's soaring hopes. Shy Edna, gifted in music as Boyden was in art.

Incredible, thought Matilda, that not one of my fond hopes was realized-- and glanced again with unbelieving eyes at the cheaply bright room.

Sandra came in from the bedroom dressed in light gray with hat, gloves, bag and shoes in green. She said,

"I have a luncheon and bridge engagement which I must keep. Would you like to go to the movies? There is a double bill---"

"Don't bother about me, my dear," said Matilda, her mind still immersed in recollections of those other years, "I'll just putter round---"

"But there is nothing you need do," dryly said Sandra, "the maid will come in later for an hour or two. I'll probably be home by the time Boyden gets here. You don't mind getting your own lunch?"

"Of course not. Have a good time."

"Not a chance in the world," was the bitter comment. "They will be discussing their trip all afternoon. That is all the good time I expect, just listening. Trying to hide how very much I want to go along--" and went out.

Matilda rose and shut the door of the bedroom where many things were in jumbled disorder, remarking to herself, Even when I still had a personal maid I never left my room like that---

She went into the kitchenette, cleared the little table in the breakfast nook, washed the coffee pot and started coffee, wondering wistfully where Boyden had his luncheon and what he might be eating. She covered the table with a white cloth, sat out china and silver, looked into the pantry and into the small iceless refrigerator for supplies. The coffee was perking merrily when she heard quick steps and a key turning in the door.

Boyden came in. His strong arms were about her, his warm lips kissed her tenderly. He spoke gaily,

"Glad to see your boy, Mother Matilda?"

"And how glad!" she said, holding him from her, thinking, How handsome, how strong, how fine he is--my son!

"I remembered Sandy had a party and you would be alone. I came,

even for a few minutes. Is it coffee I hear and smell? How grand the breakfast nook looks. You must have been expecting me---"

"I have been expecting you so long, it has become a habit," said Matilda setting a place for him, putting more food on the table, quickly opening a can of fruit.

"How good this is, mother, how gloriously good----" said Boyden, sitting opposite her across the narrow table. "Let us talk of home---"

"John and Maria send their love to you, Boy, and ask you to come home, to stay. That--and your happiness--is my heart's dearest wish," Matilda spoke seriously, looking at him.

His sensitive lips lost their smiling contours, pain showed in his fine gray eyes, his hand pushed back the unruly black hair from his forehead in an helpless gesture as he said,

"Home by the sea! I would gladly do the work there of a common laborer---for my board and keep--But Sandra prefers this---"

This, flashed through Matilda's mind, a vista of identical apartment houses where no one knew, or cared, who lived above, below or next door. No room for a child. For amusement dining and dancing in restaurants among ever changing strangers, the movies and cards. Seven years has he wandered in this jungle, helpless to leave.

Aloud she said, "What is this trip Sandra is so eager to take?"

Boyden assumed his gay mask again, "It takes real money to go on that kind of trip," he said with his ready laugh, "so why worry?"

"Seriously, darling, suppose there was the money, would you and Sandra really want to join your friends in a long trip? Tomorrow is your birthday---" Matilda spoke lightly, her eyes on her son's face.

"Those are not exactly my friends, Mother Matilda, Sandy takes great delight in their company, and they in hers, but I, somehow, still continue a rank outsider. Would not go along, even if I could. But

what has happened that such extravagant birthday gifts should even be considered? Has an oil well spouted on our land? Or, even more miraculous, has old Nixon sold all of my unfinished paintings?"

"Neither, my dear. I was planning to tell you this evening, as your gift, but you shall have the good news now for coming to lunch with me, to give me one more sweet memory of you to take home with me, ~~for~~ ~~for an entire year.~~ A few days with you ^{each} year was all I had to cheer me these past worried years.

"I wrote you that the mill has some business and will not need more capital, we hope. There is really not much left to borrow on or to sell if it did. It might possibly struggle out of the red, eventually, and be a source of income--"

"And that does not sound like spare money for luxury trips---"

"No. But we don't have to worry about the mill which took a steady stream of capital these past seven years. Do you remember the marsh land your grandfather had so that he could fish undisturbed? Way down the coast and which was never thought to be of any value? Amusement parks and summer resorts have edged up to it, ~~and~~ I was offered quite a lot of money by a real estate development company who will drain it for cottages and still another amusement park. Surprise you? We were dickering for the past few weeks. I did not write to you about it because I did not believe it either. But before coming here, I deposited the first instalment for a half of the marsh, quite a sizable check---"

"Mother! What wonderful news!" exclaimed Boyden, his eyes shining, "I might come home again----"

"And take up your life where you left off seven years ago, my son, Those years can not be counted wasted. Your business experiences have not been exactly pleasant or congenial, but you had your married happiness. And now you must return to your chosen work, never to leave

it again."

"Never!" He spoke the word with strong emotional emphasis, paused for a moment and then spoke happily, "I shall not only paint, but do many things besides.

"Often, very often, while adding meaningless figures, making calculations for profits, while politely trying to sell a lot or house to people I sensed would probably not be able to carry through and would be better off as they were, I dreamt of returning home and made plans.

"Paint, of course, so many hours each day when the light was just right. The rest of the time I dreamt of doing menial work about our home, old Nixon directing me. To plough and dig, work in the orchard and weed the flower gardens, trim the hedges and mow the lawns, repair the breakwater by the cove---Work and strain in the sun, the wind and the rain until every muscle in me is joyously exhausted. Then---strip and swim in the sea and be washed forever clean of all this---"

"And you would find plenty to do. John works the vegetable garden since we must eat. Maria is not at all well, and I do even the cooking. The rest is going wild, but unbelievably lovely."

"I shall make sketches before I begin on my strenuous physical labor," he laughed.

"Before you sketch or work, my son, you must consider Sandra."

"Sandra, for the moment I had forgotten her. Yes, there might be difficulties---" a shadow obliterated the joy in his eyes, his young face paled and set in stern lines. "Yes, there is Sandra to be considered," he said.

They sat silent for a while, lost in thought. A woman came in by the back entrance, hung up her hat and coat, took cleaning cloths and other cleaning implements and went through the living room and into the bedroom where he began working noisily.

Boyden rose hastily, saying, "I came for a few minutes and remained over an hour." He kissed his mother and left.

Matilda remained sitting by the little table, trying to clear the confusion of her thoughts, to arrive at ^a ~~some~~ clear understanding, to for a plan. Boyden's happiness had always been of utmost importance to her. She had consoled herself that the privation of these cruel, harrassing years had been compensated for by his romantic marriage^β, by his constant married happiness. That belief, that he was extremely happy in his marriage, he as well as Sandra, had sustained her courage, had been as an unyielding rock beneath her feet; ~~A~~ rock no longer steady, but changing disastrously into shifting sands...

Neither of them seem happy or content, ran her thoughts. They have no child to keep them together, not even a circle of friends. The money from the sale may be used to get the home in shape, and there might be even a little for the pleasures Sandra craves. And on the other hand, the mill may suffer a relapse and need every dollar---The turn may come now at any time, and the mill has provided most of the income. The village folk have invested their savings in it and work there. The mill would come first. Miserably she considered the many angles of the situation. Thinking, It may be years before Boy gets any substantial financial returns from his work, and the silver has been mostly sold.

She sat in the narrow breakfast nook whose one tiny window looked out upon a steep shaft of many windowed walls of apartment houses until the cleaning woman, having completed her work in the other rooms, came into the kitchenette and began to stack dishes noisily in the sink. Matilda rose wearily and resumed her seat in the metal and leather chair before the unfinished canvas in the bright living room.

Only eight years ago she had motored to New York to see Boyden off on his year of travel-study. The Elliot/s had come along, Edna and her parents. Gentle, unassuming little Edna, dark haired and inconspicuous, yet with grace of bearing that only fine breeding could give and with an inner strength only her intimates knew. Boy and Edna had been children together, their families close friends, Matilda had allowed herself to dream... It had all been so very lovely, thought Matilda.

She had missed him the year he was away, although his frequent letters helped to bridge the distance and shorten the time. There was much to do in preparation for his coming. The summer house on the beach was enlarged into a studio with bedroom and bath. Every room in the entire house was carefully examined, and every item of furnishing that was the least shabby was replaced. Matilda spent with a lavish hand, for Boy must have a lovely home to return to, a home that had housed happily several generations of his forebears, made more lovely and gracious by each.

There had been no need to stint. The wooden utilities mill made extraordinary large profits. All her holdings gained miraculously in value. Money came in in increasingly larger amounts. Matilda took great delight in providing lovely as well as costly settings for the treasures in her home. A home that Boyden would enjoy and add to, eventually.

Again the spacious, low ceilinged rooms were gay with flowers, and music and the presence of many friends. Boy was gloriously glad to be home again, glad of his year of travel and adventure, delighted with the studio and eager to begin work there.

Then one moonlight night-----

That day had been warm, almost sultry for early summer. Towards evening the sea became rough and clouds gathered in the sky. Heat lightening played near the horizon and there came the intermittent rumble of thunder. But the skies cleared a little, the full moon shone between silvered clouds out of a deep blue heaven as the evening deepened towards night. The sea continued heaving restlessly and white capped.

The Elliotts strolling by, came in, praised the cool evening after the heat of the day. Boy and Edna went into the music room. Matilda and her friends sat on the vine draped veranda, chatting, watching the magic of moonlight on sea and land, the flash of heat lightening, heard Edna's clear contralto happily singing to her own accompaniment.

Nixon brought cooling drinks; Edna and Boyden joined their elders on the veranda. Then all of them, except Matilda, walked down the hill to the studio to look at the first canvas that was almost finished. From the veranda, Matilda saw lights gleam in the studio windows, then the windows grew dark again. The two couple continued to stroll in the moonlight the half mile to the Elliott home. Matilda built air castles of the years to come, fond dreams in which her talented son was the center, and the reason, and the joy.

She sat listening to the distant booming of the surf, the swish of the tide at the base of the cliff, the growl of thunder, growing louder, dying away in the distance. She may have dozed for awhile. She did not know how long she sat there, she did not see anyone come up the path. Suddenly she heard Boyden's voice, happy, vibrant with a strange excitement, calling,

"Mother, Mother Matilda, I have found her!"

In a shaft of moonlight that came from between heavy clouds stood

boyden, in summer white, his tanned skin dark by comparison, his face and bearing filled with a surprised, soul fulfilling joy. By his side, in the silver light, stood a slender girl, almost as tall as he, shining hair about and above a face of exquisite loveliness, white arms and limbs perfectly formed and barely hidden by a brief green bathing suit and a thin green robe. Long lashes curled away from blue eyes filled with sleep and wonderment.

Never would Matilda forget the picture of youth and beauty they made standing there hand in hand in the moonlight.

Boyden spoke, breathlessly eager, "The night was so lovely, I kept on walking towards the cliff, thinking I must paint another picture of the sea maiden. And suddenly, there she was, asleep on the ledge! Left there for me by the sea! I touched her hand. I spoke! She opened her eyes, smiled at me, took my hand and came wherever I led!" His happiness choked his utterance but the expression of bliss on his rapt countenance continued the tale.

The girl's full red lips parted in a gratified smile, with a gleam of white, even teeth. Her large blue eyes glanced curiously about the veranda and into the dimly lighted living room. She was silent, and at ease.

Fascinated and puzzled by a situation that might at any moment dissolve into moonlight and drifting mists of the sea, Matilda led the way into the living room, switching on more lights in shaded lamps. Boyden kept hold of the girl's hand and led her into the music room to the picture framed in green-gray wood.

"There!" he exclaimed, "When I was a child I painted you. Ever since I must have been waiting and longing for you. And now you are here!" A triumphant finality sounded in his exultant voice.

Matilda realized absurdity, danger. She said, "I am Matilda Adams, Mrs. Adams. This is my son Boyden. And you are----"

"I am Sandra----"

"What a lovely name," said Boyden.

Matilda spoke lightly, "If you rose from the sea, possibly you might need dry clothing----"

"I came in a boat," laughed the girl, "I am spending my vacation down the coast and was with friends in a motor boat. The sea was too rough, made me a little sick, I wanted to land. One said the white house up high was a fairy palace so I said I would stay on the ledge till a fairy prince came for me. We were just fooling. I must have fallen asleep----" she stopped, uncertain how to go on.

Matilda said, "Will your friends worry if you are not where they left you?"

She shrugged her shoulders indifferently, her eyes taking in the luxury of the room.

Through the doors leading to the veranda came a sudden gust of wind, followed by a blinding flash of lightening, ^{There was} and crackling, reverberating thunder accompanied by heavy rain. The fury of the storm had obliterated the gracious silver night in a moment. The clock in the hall slowly, musically intoned the hour of midnight.

It was impossible to tell how long the storm might last. Even if it should subside as quickly as it came, the sea would be too rough for safety. Matilda suggested that Sandra remain as her guest till morning.

In the blue and ivory guest room Matilda asked a few questions casually which were as casually answered, while the girl's observing eyes noted the dainty appointments of the room and the luxurious bathroom that lead from it.

Her surname was Jones and her first name Sandra only since she came to Chicago from a small town further west which she hoped never to see again, or any of her relatives there. She modelled and sold women's clothes in a large department store and wished she could do the same work in a small, exclusive shop.

"You had a better chance of meeting people, and to be seen," she said.

Sandra did not join her friends the next day; or, later, return to her work in the store. Boyden declared she was the ideal model for another, more ambitious painting of the sea maiden. He decided to begin work on this at once, putting all other work aside.

But the picture made little progress. There was so much preparatory study necessary of location, background and effect of light.... Trips to town for the exact shade of green to be used for the cloak.... Trips from which they returned in the early morning hours since shopping was followed by dinner and a show and dancing... Hours in the studio of sketching in trial effects of light and shade, but with little to show on the canvas... Days in which John Nixon, more erect than any butler, even as white haired as he, ever needed to be, wore a disapproving frown constantly on his face. Before Matilda could say anything to Boyden or Sandra, before she had really collected her thoughts, it was too late.

Within eight days from the time he had returned with Sandra from his walk round the cliff, Boyden announced to his mother that, at last, Sandra had consented to marry him, and that they planned to marry within three weeks.

"Ours has been no ordinary meeting and no usual courting. Our marriage shall be as unique," he said ecstatically, "On the beach in the moonlight! And we shall travel all around the world for our

honeymoon." His arm was about Sandra as he said this, his eyes on her smiling, approving face.

Matilda tried to talk to them about the responsibilities, the finality, of marriage; asked them to make sure of their feelings for each other; to wait yet awhile. Sandra's full red lips smiled slowly, scornfully, Her blue eyes looked into the infatuated gaze of the boy, Matilda realized it would be as easy to stop an avalanche that had got on his way, as this marriage. Whatever obstructed would be ruthlessly pushed aside, overwhelmed, by this sudden emotion that possessed Boyden so that nothing else in his life mattered, not even his work. And the girl was determined that nothing should...

The coming of Sandra created a great deal of banter and discussion in the neighborhood. Such a romantic meeting! An artist was indeed fortunate to find so inspiring a model--It should be his finest painting. And if they seemed devoted to one another--Well, naturally--But aren't they the handsomest couple you ever saw, my dear? And so it went, no one realizing exactly what was going on, and not caring much. The Elliot's were stunned at the sudden development, and Matilda sensed that old John Nixon discussed the affair often with his wife, Maria, and that both were deeply worried.

Boyden had means of his own left him by his father and grandfather. Desperately Matilda tried to discover compensating merits in the situation. The girl was young and physically lovely. True she had no cultural background or high code to guide herself by, but possibly that could be mended by advantages of wealth and position. It was decidedly galling to have her consider Boy's painting in the nature of a rich man's sport, like polo or yachting, but her opinion

in that too might change. Alas, there was so much about her that could stand change...and Matilda saw clearly that Sandra approved of herself just as she was....

She was unhappily considering the upheaval of all her long cherished hopes and plans by the romantic appearance of this unknown girl, trying to look at the whole affair philisophically, hopefully, since all mother; must relinquish the first claim on a son to a wife, even to an utter stranger from a background so dissimilar ~~to the one she knew~~---Nixon, coming in on his afternoon tour of inspection, heard her sigh and saw her wipe her eyes.

He came up to where she sat, and stood considering her for a moment, respectfully, with concern. His hair was nearly as white as the summer jacket he wore.

"Madam, you must not feel so badly. My Maria and I, we have no child, Master Boyden has been dear as a child and grandchild. He is so young---He is like bewitched. It will pass--"

"No, Nixon, it will not. They plan to marry within three weeks."

"But, Madam---" his face paled and he stared, "But, Madam---" words failed him, at last he stammered, "but our young master should have a wife who understands his work, to whom his work comes before herself. The young lady is very pretty, but---" Their eyes met, and mistress and servant were thinking the same thought, "But you must pardon me for speaking so freely, I went to school in the village with your father, served here since I was a boy, ~~The~~ home, every one in it has been so dear to me, to Maria---"

"I understand, John."

Matilda did not know how much of her talk with Nixon Sandra had heard, for she and Boyden were framed in the doorway, laughingly eager to come in and to show Matilda the ring Sandra was wearing. Her face was flushed with pride and happiness, her eyes glanced scornfully at Nixon as he humbly left the room.

Matilda looked long at the ring on the girl's finger. In an oval of brilliants set in platinum, an oblong emerald shone calm and mysterious as if in it were the dark green light of a deep under-sea grotto far from any known shore. As she looked into the green depths of the stone, she remembered her own engagement to the talented young artist, the joy and the splendor of the vista of glorious living that then had opened before her, an indulged and carefully guarded only child of a rich father who had married late in life. Her dear, delicate mother had almost exhausted herself entertaining and shopping for Matilda. "A young princess," her mother had said, "would not require a more elaborate trousseau, or be more royally entertained." The ring Sandra wore was beautiful and costly enough for any princess, but her clothes, brought up from the summer resort, were few and of the cheapest---- Impulsively Matilda took Sandra in her arms, kissed her tenderly, saying,

"A lovely ring for a lovely bride-to-be, my daughter. My gift shall be the trousseau for the bride!"

Shopping for Sandra was exceedingly easy. Garments fitted her to perfection and every shop where they made selection, in New York and in Boston, blessed the girl, for each costly gown or wrap seemed designed for her, and Matilda ordered lavishly. By buying more and still more for the girl, the most exquisite intimate things as well as all the gowns, coats, shoes, gloves, etecetera, that she might need for a round the world tour, Matilda tried to still that persistent

premonition of disaster that gnawed at her heart. Sandra accepted every thing with no show of surprise and very few words of thanks. She had modelled clothes, thought Matilda.

A maid was assigned to care for Sandra's room and her wardrobe, for she and Boyden were engrossed in each other and in the plans for their wedding. No work at all was done on the new picture of the sea maiden. Boyden was planning to do a great deal of sketching and planning for the pictures for his one man's show while travelling.

Everything but preparations for the wedding and shopping for the trousseau had to be neglected for the present. Mail accumulated on Matilda's desk unopened. She had no time to talk to her bankers or lawyers, and instructed Nixon to ask them to attend to her affairs as formerly until after the wedding, annoyed by their persistence. She could not spare the time to attend a hastily called board meeting of the mill, or to read the reports of the meeting sent to her by special messenger. Boyden was to be married the first night the moon was full and the skies clear, and nothing else mattered.

The wedding was surprisingly, unforgettably, lovely. An altar covered with flowers and banked in palms was erected before the studio and an organ installed inside. The altar, palely and mysteriously glowing in the moonlight, faced the sea and the path leading to the house on the cliff. Along the entire length of the path green lanterns had been strung in fantastic sea shapes, fishes and shells, and all manner of fairy like forms. On the cliff the house glowed brightly at each window, the columned verandas were outlined in lights. Some distance back of the studio and the altar, the surf rose, broke and foamed among the rocks with a continuous rumble and swish of waters. In clear skies the full moon rode in the warm night, glorifying sea and land with its silver radiance.

Many guests were seated in a great semicircle of seats on the little beach. The organ pealed and Edna's clear contralto rose high and sweet above the tones of the organ and the thunder of the surf singing of everlasting love, of youth and of duty, and of fond farewell. The moon seemed to shine clearer, brighter, when the bride slowly paced to the altar on the arm of the groom, both in white, the bride carrying a bouquet that was more green ferns than white flowers, wearing a tulle veil of delicate green, long and full, through which her hair glowed goldily. Slowly they came between girls dressed in white, wearing large pale green hats and carrying huge bouquets of silver and green. Theirs had been no ordinary meeting, and their nuptials seemed an enchantment wrought by the sea and the moon and the quiet night.

With the long train of her white dress, over which the shimmering green veil cascaded, held up by two young boys dressed as sea sprites, slowly Sandra walked up the path on the arm of her husband, the wedding march pealing from the organ in the studio and echoed by an orchestra in the ball room of the house. As the gay company neared the house, where Nixon and an augmented staff were ready to serve them, the organ tones grew faint and mingled with the rumble of the surf and tide while the orchestra music rose loud and clear in joyous welcome.

At midnight a yacht took the newly wedded pair on the first part of their round the world tour, seeming to sail away on a silver pathway to the moon. Guests lingered and made merry till the short summer night began to give way to dawn.

Matilda was having breakfast in bed the next day and had about decided to remain in bed for a day or two and rest when her maid told

her that the general manager of the mill was downstairs looking like his own ghost and would not go until madam heard what he had to say.

While she had been spending recklessly on gowns and furs and costly lingerie, as well as on the preparations for the wedding, and all manner of entertainments, as if money flowed from an inexhaustible source, that source had had something terrible and unexplainable happen to it. It simply suddenly was not there.

Values had fallen ruinously, irresistably. The great stock of raw materials bought for the mill at high prices had lost most of its value; orders were being canceled; bankruptcies ^{daily} an occurrence. There was a great and growing deficit that had to be met, and at once.

Matilda heard what the mill manager had to say, read her stack of accumulated mail, telephoned her banker, and was not greatly worried. The wooden utilities mill had weathered depressions before this one that had appeared so suddenly and will survive. She felt her fortune was as solidly rooted as the rock on which her home was built. Was relieved that Boyden was happily on his wedding trip and quite sure that all would be normal again by the time he and his bride came home.

~~The resources~~ ^{the other holdings} were utilized to tide the mill over this slump. But values continued to drop with alarming persistency. The mill was the main source of employment for the village and vicinity. Matilda owned most of the stock, the rest was mainly owned in very small blocks by the employees. That anything could happen to the mill was an unthinkable nightmare.

Yet in a few short weeks she was fighting that very contingency with every dollar she possessed or could borrow. The bills she had contracted so prodigally for Sandra's outfit now loomed impressively large. Gilt edged securities were sold at a sacrifice to avoid still greater loss. The days passed slowly, terrifyingly, but there was no relief.

Friends discussed their losses when they met and told of threatened calamities to come. Unemployment continued to grow and reached staggering numbers. All the civilized world seemed helpless in a business depression of unprecedented proportions.

Boyden cabled from Cape Town, Africa, if he should come home. Matilda cabled to keep on as planned. Thinking, Normalcy must be restored soon. This cannot last---

But conditions continued to grow worse. Daniel Elliott, Edna's father, whose competence had shrunk to almost vanishing point so that Edna had to abandon her planned year of European voice culture study, suffered an heart attack, lingered a while, and died; leaving his wife prostrated with grief, clinging to their only child.

Gloom lay like a funeral pall over the country side. Business failure continued; bonds defaulted their interest payments; banks would not lend on shrinking assets. Even to meet the monthly expenses of her home became a problem not lightly met. Matilda regretfully explained to her servants her predicament. Told them all were welcome to remain until each could better himself. But that she was not at all sure that she could pay their wages in full again. One by one they left for harder work and smaller pay. The lawns and gardens about the house grew wild with neglect, although lovely with glowing autumnal coloring. One by one rooms in the house were shut off to save care and heating as the New England winter drew near. The only ones left in the ominously quiet house were its harrassed mistress, John and Maria Nixon.

The three knew no other home, ^{They} and were desperately determined to save it from a destruction that had come on as suddenly and as violently as any unpredictable storm that raged during the winter about the cliff on which it stood.

It was winter, stormy, blustering, with the seas dark gray and forbidding and snow everywhere, even covering the sands by the cove, with short days and little sun, when Boyden and Sandra came home, months before they had planned to return, because Boyden was anxious about conditions at home. Boyden was eager to know how Matilda had managed to weather the storm so far, eager to be of help. Sandra displeased because her pleasure had been curtailed, avid for more and keened enjoyment.

Matilda tried her utmost to revive some gaiety, to organize some social gatherings for the young people. The Elliots were in mourning, most of the artists' colony had scattered, and the few who remained were either too shocked by disaster, or too apprehensive of pending misfortune, to be gay. Where there had been so much to spend on pleasure, now there was very little, every dollar had become vitally precious... Social and financial conditions had changed as drastically as the seasons...

Boyden, undaunted, took the shrinking of their fortune as just a new adventure in living. He offered to work on the estate indoors and out of doors under Nixon's orders and to paint when he could spare the time. Asking if he might begin by shovelling a path to the studio. He had returned from an heavenly honeymoon. Now the five of them would pull together and get themselves out of any depression that dared to depress so staunch a household as that of Mother Matilda.

His brave attitude and gay words sent a glow of joy to Matilda's heart. John and Maria Nixon straightened their weary forms and looked adoringly at the youth. But Sandra frowned while her eyes looked sidewise.

The change from opulence to a struggle for survival not only amazed her, it also disgusted and angered her. She dreaded poverty as if it were the black plague. As the eldest, she had nursed her mother through

many illnesses, seen her younger brothers and sisters, if not still born, die in early infancy. Her mother was buried with a new born child in her arms...Her father had remarried twice since...The very thought of housework, children, sent shivers along her spine. By some fortunate chance she was healthy and handsome, and she fully intended to enjoy life. Poverty and doing without was to be entirely unknown in the design for living of the young and lovely Mrs. Boyden Hamilton Adams.

While Boyden was shovelling a path from the house to the studio, Sandra took meticulous care of her person and insisted that Maria should wait on her and take care of her wardrobe. As Maria did the cooking, her work as a ladies' maid did not please Sandra, who demanded that she be dismissed and a younger woman hired.

Matilda explained patiently that one could not dismiss a servant who worked with no pay, nor hire one on these terms and offered to teach Sandra the elementary work of keeping her room neat and her clothes in order. Sandra pouted her full red lips and looked her distaste and suspicion.

Boyden found that it took too much time to keep the long path to the studio clear of snow, and began to arrange the music room that had good north light for a work room for the winter. Maria contracted a severe cold and was laid up with neuritis, Matilda taking over the cooking, directed and criticised by Maria who lay in a small room off the kitchen. John and Boyden helped and it might have been a lark but for the way housework in any form scared Sandra. And always there were the never ending perplexities of the mill and kindred financial trouble.

In the evening Matilda, Boyden and Nixon would sit about the white table in the shining kitchen--it was warmer there than in any

other part of the house---and figure ways and means of raising more money, of staving off creditors. Nixon developed quite a flair for borrowing on scant securities and of finding customers for a picture or a piece of tapestry. At a fraction of the real value, but in ~~those~~ desperate conditions, every sale helped towards the possible survival till times bettered. By working in the kitchen, Nixon could tend to his ailing wife. But Sandra was bored and resentful.

Boyden claimed it was just like being on a desert island with all those he loved best in the world, and painted happily when the light was right. But ingeniously he explained to Sandra one day that there was absolutely no sense in any show of pictures, or any possibility of selling, so long as business conditions continued utterly depressed, nevertheless his two great needs in life were his work and his darling...

^{Para:} His darling thereafter began to insist that he should get a regular job and support his wife as a man should. And enlarged on that subject continually, but charmingly, letting him see how very unhappy she was, deprived of pleasures of the city, and if he really loved her...etcetra, etcetera. ~~Para:~~ Boyden smiled less often. His painting did not progress much as Sandra began to show openly how very much she disapproved of such profitless work. She talked about taking up her former work in Chicago, and wrote to several department and specialty shops applying for a position. ^{Para:} When winter began to give way to spring, Sandra and Boyden went to Chicago where he, most surprisingly, found work ^{with} in a real estate firm while Sandra was still trying to reduce a few pounds to regain her former slenderness for modelling.

It was a relief in a way to have Sandra's petty complaints go far away, but Matilda missed Boyden terribly. She consoled herself by thinking how very completely he was in love, and that all else but his happy married life mattered little--for the present. A little later, when business conditions improved, he will continue with his

painting, she thought.

Boyden's letters were gay. He liked his work in the office-- had received praise for completing several difficult sales--wrote whimsically about the little furnished apartment--and was painting the view from the roof of the apartment house. "Nothing in sight but house tops and still more house tops as far as one can see," he wrote. He and Sandra were doing the housework together, and it was great to be alive.

Matilda longed to see him when his birthday drew near, managed somehow to get the money for the trip and for gifts for both of them. She found them enthusiastic and happy in their little queer home. Sandra had not yet secured any work, but Boyden was promised a promotion, and that was something to be proud of, considering the hard times. Soon they would afford ^a more spacious home and have part time help. Meanwhile, Matilda noticed, Boyden did most of the housework.

She came home almost contented, reasoning that a year or so of this sort of life could not possibly hurt Boyden. The painting of the sea of housetops was really good, although not quite finished. Soon, he will come home again and this will be but an interlude that need not be repeated. Sandra, too, was so young, her experiences had not been of the happiest---she, too, will realize that Boyden's work was not in an office, but in his studio. If conditions only improved----

But conditions did not improve, instead, grew steadily worse. Values fell to unheard of low levels, unemployment increased, ugly rumors raised their heads. People said this was no ordinary business depression, it was the beginning of a social revolution, of a new order; blamed the bad times on technocracy, overproduction, wrong distribution; and conditions continued to grow worse.

It was really an extravagance to travel all the way to Chicago for Boyden's birthday the following year, but Matilda managed somehow. Sandra and Boyden were living in a somewhat larger furnished apartment, furnished in shining modernistic furniture and seemed as happy as before. In celebration of the day, the four dined in a restaurant. Matilda watched them dance, the handsomest couple on the floor, Sandra admired by the men, envied by the women, glancing about, greeting friends and acquaintances; Boyden looking fondly at his wife, his dark head bent tenderly above her shining red-gold curls, aware of no one but Sandra. It had been worth the skimping and saving for the long trip to see them so happy, thought Matilda.

So one year followed another. Occasionally the business depression seemed about to lessen, only to grow worse again. Moratoriums decreed by the Federal Government staved off utter destruction, but left the mill financially helpless and sinking deeper into the red of accumulating liabilities. Grim faced, John Nixon neglected all but the vegetable garden in spring, for even money for necessities was becoming a problem. In many of the rooms there were sad gaps on walls and floors where pictures had been sold, or some treasured rug. But no more customers could be found for those that were left. Silver was the only possession that had not lost value, and found ready sale. One by one, out of the great silver chest, Nixon took a ^{tray} or tea service, candalabra, or loving cup, polished it to shining loveliness, packed it in its flannel cover, took it away; and returned with almost its full value in currency.

Every June Matilda managed somehow the trip for Boyden's birthday, hoping, praying all the way that Sandra would have had her fill of the gaiety she craved, would begin to realize the futility of trying to change Boyden, bred and trained to be an artist, into a shrewd business man.

But Sandra did not change nor had any intention of changing. On each visit Matilda came to a brightly furnished apartment and the birthday dinner was invariably in a restaurant among strangers. Sandra continued bright, glowing and attractive as ever, but Boyden ^{with the passing years,} lost his boyish enthusiasm, became somewhat stiffly dignified, with clear appraising eyes, and grim set chin. With a worrying realization that all was not quite well, Matilda watched them dance, Sandra admired and envied, but Boyden relinquishing her easily to any ^{man} friend that claimed her, coming to sit by his mother, his eyes on the table, indifferent to the dancers whirling by. Asking for news from home. Had the break-water by the cove been repaired? Was the orchard in fruit? Who helped Nixon with the gardens? Was Maria well enough to bake and cook as deliciously as she used to?

Every year several paintings were added to the collection at home, each not quite done. Street scenes by night and day, during rain or falling snow; scenes at the lake front and in parks where little children were at play; bright holiday scenes; gloomy views of factories and endless, identical city dwellings...^{Ray} This seascape was the first painting, in almost seven years, of a scene of his home. This is how it would look to one lying on top of the breakwater at the end of a day, the breakmen, damaged by recurring winter storms, whose conditions worried Boyden. Boyden had lain there often after ~~✓~~ swimming in the sea. The wall of stones had suffered from winter storms during the last years; unless it was repaired, a severe storm might flood the studio. How great must be his longing for home, thought Matilda, to have painted so accurately, not a detail omitted--- Yet unless he returns and takes up his work where he left off seven years ago, of what use is the studio, or anything she had worked so hard to save?

In the quiet of the bright sunny room, Matilda had an odd feeling of being in the midst of a raging storm. To pass the time, she busied herself preparing tea in the kitchenette in time to have it properly iced when Boyden and Sandra came home. Thinking with little joy of the dinner in a restaurant and the evening to follow. But she felt as helpless to stave off any occurrence now as she had felt that moonlight night when Boyden returned from a walk by the cliff with Sandra.

Boyden and Sandra came in together. Boyden's tall form stopped, he looked pale and tired. Sandra was flushed with vexation, her face ~~set in angry lines~~. She flung her hat and hand bag on the sofa, and with no greeting began,

"That is the way you celebrate your birthday, get rid of your job! Now what will you do?"

"Now, children, please explain---" Matilda interrupted.

Boyden looked up and began with a wry smile while Sandra stood by with flashing eyes, "I took more time off for luncheon than I am supposed to, and a customer was waiting for me. The chief called me into his office for final instructions about the sale I was to complete, giving me a pep talk at the same time, he seating in the grandest north light, and me thinking of the sea and the clear blue of the sky--and of a little chap braving the tiny wavelets of the outgoing tide to rescue his toy sailboat--trying to decide whether the picture should be painted from the studio with the broken breakwater as a background or the other way about--and not hearing a word said to me. He asked a keen question--~~S~~suddenly I thought of what a muddle my life had become, how futile, how utterly senseless---and I began to laugh and could not stop, or explain. I do not know whether I was fired or I resigned. No matter, I am jobless, and free!"

"You brave, foolish darling!" said Matilda under her breath. But no one heard for Sandra spoke rapidly.

"I have stood about as much as any woman can stand--and this is the final straw. You shall apologize and I shall use what influence I can to get you reinstated."

"I won't and you won't, Sandy. I already have another job. Possibly that is why I did not care much about the one I left or which left me. I am going home, to the farm, as you term it, and assist John Nixon and so earn my room and board. Yours too."

A little flash of happiness glowed in Matilda's heart, and as quickly expired. Boyden sat there, dispirited and spent, Sandra stood, her face paling, breathing deeply. They are husband and wife, thought Matilda, aghast at the situation. Aloud she said gently,

"We are all nerved up and say what we don't mean--let me serve you tea and talk this over sensibly, calmly." Sandra sat down on the divan while Matilda served the tea, taking as much time as she could.

"Now that we are all calm and serene," said Sandra putting down her glass, "Let me tell you that I have no intention of burying myself in a village by the sea or any other place. As I told you many times, I do not care anything about art and do not intend to waste my youth while my husband paints masterpieces that no one will look at for three hundred years, if then. I want to live now, while I am still young and can enjoy life. I want to travel, to dance, to laugh---" her voice died away in bitterness.

"And so you shall," said Boyden, his pale face set in weary lines, his eyes cold like gray steel, "and so you shall. Mother's gift for my birthday is in cash this time. Take it all and travel with your friends. I shall go to my village. You are welcome to come and share my lot, when you are through travelling---"

Sandra threw back her shining head and laughed, "What a charming prospect," then continued, her voice still hard and bitter, "I know what it means to work, work, work, and never be done, and to do without, in a village---I want to live, now, not in dreaming---hoping---waiting---until I am old, too old, to care---"

Boyden's tired face grew even more haggard, he shrugged his shoulders but did not comment. Matilda felt compassion for Sandra that was nearly pain. Strong and young and handsome, yet driven by desire for pleasure that never satisfied, never sufficed...and never would, no matter how far she travelled, or how often she danced...She had as much fallen in love with the handsome youth that had awakened her on the ledge of the cliff as with the wealth and ease she saw in his home. Matilda saw their love as an irresistible conflagration that had been burning steadily lower nearly seven years. Would it blaze up again, would it be entirely extinguished?

Gently, kindly, in a few words, Matilda told Sandra of the sale of the marsh, of the improved business condition of the mill, trying to raise no false hopes of returning splendor; mentioning that if the mill should require help again, it would have to be considered before all else, since most of the neighborhood was depending on it. The white house above the sea was not as luxuriously furnished as it had been, but it was far from being the dreadful place Sandra thought it. A comfortable home, pleasant surroundings and kindly people, if conditions continued to improve, Sandra, Boyden and Matilda could live very happily there.

The wretchedness in Boyden's posture and face seemed to lessen as Matilda pleaded with Sandra, but the girl was impressed.

38. insert. before page 39.

"It is no use, mother-in-law," she said. "Both of us will be better off apart. I'll take that trip, and let him go home with you. I'll manage, and so will he. It is that dark singing girl he should have married, the one who gave up everything to stay home and nurse her mother. She is his kind, not me. He is very polite as always, saying I should come home to him after my trip. but I'd want to live not just dream. Wasting one's life painting pictures for other peoples' walls who do not even want them---That dark girl, she would love it."

"Thanks , Sandy, for planning my life for me. You may be right at that. Now it is all settled, let us pack, Mother mine, and get the first train west."

Boyden went into the bedroom. He opened clothes closets and bureau drawers and began to pack his belongings. Matilda could not take her eyes off Sandra, who seemed not to care if both of them went and left her.

"What a clammy to talk so lightly of separation. You are both so young, possible if each got what you think you want, you may find your love for each other greater than your imagined need. This may be only a passing quarrel---"

"O, no," said Sandra firmly. "We have discussed this several times before. Just as I know that the girl back home will be best for him after a while, so I know what is best for me. He is waiting and ready, as soon as I am free.

Resigned and somehow less unhappy, Matilda said, "I shall give you all I have with me. I have my return ticket home. And so will Boyden, I am certain. He will keep just enough to take him home. We shall send you all you may need and we can spare. You shall have your fair share, if there is anything to share."

"I shall see to that," said Sandra. "Now I must telephone some friends to call for me this evening since we are not having our usual birthday dinner. You will hear from my lawyers soon." She began to dial a number.

Matilda took the unfinished painting of her home by the sea with her as she, too, began to pack her few belongings. She feared Sandra might destroy it if she left it leaning against the chair in the room still bright with the long June day.

her

"A PRAYER."

By Mary Carolyn Davies.

Make me too brave to lie or be un-
kind,
Make me too understanding, too, to
mind
The little hurts companions give
and friends,
The careless hurts that no one
quite intends.
Make me too thoughtful to hurt
others so.
Help me to know
The inmost hearts of those for
whom I care,
Their secret wishes, all the loads
they bear,
That I may add my courage to
their own.
May I make lonely folks feel less
alone
And happier ones a little happier,
yet
May I forget
What ought to be forgotten and re-
call
Unfailing all
That ought to be recalled, each
kindly thing,
Forgetting what might sting.
To all upon my way
Day after day
Let me be joy, be hope. Let my
life sing!

A Girl Should Be Sensible

By ELLA CLINE

(Reprinted from The Jewish Advocate)

Dorothy Golden sorted the heavy Monday morning mail in the office of Ascher and Kuntz, shoe jobbers, Essex street, Boston, with the smooth efficiency of seven years' practice. A sense of unmerited and hopeless frustration filled her mind. Resentment, very unusual to her mild and easily contented disposition, darkened her hazel eyes, and sent a deeper rose into her delicately rounded cheeks.

From the narrow street below came up dully the roar of the city, sharply accented with the impatient, raucous calls from motor horns, or the sharp clang from a gong of a passing trolley car. Within the building doors banged, freight elevators groaned up and down with their heavy loads, people came and went. The September sunlight, somewhat dimmed and dustladen, shone through the large bare windows of the office. It brought out the golden glow in Dorothy's honey-colored hair, the bright green of a small kid skin tacked above her desk between a large picture of stylish footwear for men, women and children, and a huge calendar showing the fall styles offered to the trade by Ascher and Kuntz.

Dorothy sorted the mail with mechanical precision, oblivious to her surroundings. Could it be possible that those years of aloof, intellectual detachment had been a mistake? Could it be possible that Selma—that little materialist—was right?

"Just imagine!" Selma had scolded her only a few days ago. "Your keeping company with Theodore Kramer for years and years—if anyone could call going to lectures and reading books keeping company—and then when there comes a chance for something practical. Why, Dot, I can't imagine what you are thinking of!"

Without giving Dorothy time for a reply, Selma had continued: I may be younger, Dot, but believe me, I

am wiser. That legacy, small as it is, should be enough for one handsome engagement ring, and enough over for a swell honeymoon—"

"But, Selma—" Dorothy began in consternation.

"Nothing to but about!" Selma's dark eyes flashed. "As your loving sister, I consider it a darn shame that your handsome, though high-brow, friend should use this money to travel all over Europe to study and to perfect his art! Blah!"

"Well, since you put it so emphatically, Selma, maybe I should propose to him before he sails?"

"And why not? Take my word for it, Dot, the girls in gay Paree and elsewhere will propose to him plenty—" Selma then pulled her little felt hat over her dark, short hair and went to keep an appointment with her Benny. No art, or any such nonsense, about Selma's Benny.

Goaded on by her sister's attitude, frequently and freely expressed, made unhappy by the thought that Teddy would be away two years—and so much may happen in two long, dreary years—Dorothy had nearly proposed to him, or as nearly as her shyness would permit.

Her face burned as she recalled the previous evening. There sat Theodore with the dark understanding eyes, tall and youthfully slender, at one end of the long sofa, Dorothy at the other end, talking.

(To Be Continued Tomorrow)

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"So you are actually sailing in about a month. Wonderful—a dream come true!" she had said, smoothing the pale green chiffon of her dress, nervously putting her hand up to touch the pearl beads about her throat.

"Yes, a dream come true! How many times have we discussed just such a trip! Two whole years, at least, of study and observation and notes—and still more notes. Then, some quiet place in Maine or New Hampshire and work on the book—until it is finished."

"Your novel describing the immigrant's adjustment to American conditions!" Her enthusiasm had matched his. "After seeing the places these folks come from that you are to write about—it will be well written!"

Suddenly Selma's mocking face had flashed before her mental vision. With heightened color and rapidly beating heart she had continued, "Will the legacy, perhaps, be ample for the employment of a fairly competent secretary with some knowledge of drawing?" From under lowered lashes she saw him start as if to draw nearer. "I might apply for the job—"

"That would be rather wonderful and decidedly convenient," he said happily, an eager look in his eyes, a smile on his lips. "We have talked so often of the contents of that book—you know as much about it as I. You could type and illustrate—" And he was silent, somewhat confused.

She went on recklessly. "It does not matter if your inheritance is not large, really. I am a capitalist, in a way. Mother made me put by a little from my earnings right along—in seven years it has grown to quite a sum. If one could only forget conventions—we could tramp the world together!"

But the eagerness faded from his eyes, the smile from his lips, as he said with a light, forced laugh: "I shall consider your application, Dorothy, and let you know before I sail."

He left soon after, would not remain for the usual refreshments, claiming he must pack as he was leaving for Ohio early in the morning to see about that inheritance.

Dorothy had experienced the painful sensation of having been thrust aside, rejected. She spent a sleepless, self-tormented night, recalling incidents of her friendship with Teddy, wondering whether she was mistaken in thinking that he cared for her, miserably wondering where she was at fault.

They had been children together; the Golden and the Kramer's neighbors in the West End, and later in Roxbury. Teddy a tall, lean boy but-trying to library or school or home with books under his arm; later, a freshman at Harvard, was seen less often, assumed a certain dignity.

Dorothy had attended a business school although she had been encouraged by her teachers in the Girls High to enter the Arts School since she had shown decided aptitude for drawing. But her parents were far from prosperous, there was Selma four years younger, and two still younger brothers. She considered herself fortunate indeed to secure the steady position with the substantial firm of shoe jobbers, Ascher and Kuntz.

Although nearly seven years had passed, she still remembered that scared feeling during the first days in the office—a childish feeling of losing all identity under a great avalanche of shoes—men's women's, children's.

(To Be Continued Tomorrow)

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The morning hours passed slowly. Mr. Ascher, the jovial, gray-haired senior partner stopped in the general office to tell her the latest bright remark made by his little granddaughter. The child's mother had been in the graduating class at high with Dorothy. Mr. Kuntz, the dignified, black-haired, slender junior partner had taken up some of her time in telling her about the remarkable hand dealt to him at bridge the previous evening and the very clever use of her cards made by Mrs. Kuntz. Mrs. Kuntz was very clever and fastidious; Dorothy always took care there should be no cigar ashes about on the rare occasions when she visited the office. Dorothy went out for luncheon and returned. She began to dread her homecoming in the evening, of Selma's caustic remarks, the emptiness of the evening—and of every evening before her.

At two-thirty she made the deposit ready for the bank, slipped on her coat and went out. This daily short walk to the bank had held an element of adventure—guarding the little black bag that contained the endorsed checks and other collateral had been a task showing the firm's confidence in her and ended in a thrill of relief when she walked back with the bag empty, to the office. But this Monday afternoon she was just a hired girl doing an errand . . .

Both partners were in the outer office talking to a customer when she returned. Dorothy's heart skipped a beat as she sat down by her desk and a grating voice reached her ear. Without looking up she could feel Mr. Stark's bright little eyes fixed upon her, could see the shining white diamond set in yellow gold on the little finger of his right hand. More than once in the past had he placed that lean, acquisitive hand on her desk and asked what setting she would prefer.

"Any way you like, little girl. Platinum and sapphires, if you say the word. I go with the ring. Midville is a fine little place to live in, let me tell you, if you get in with the right crowd and have the ready cash."

Her annoyed silence had never dampened his ardor.

She heard Mr. Ascher say, "Sure I would like to have dinner, with you, Harry, and the dinner would be my treat this time. But I promised to take the wife to Newton to our granddaughter's birthday party. Five years old! Birthday parties can't be postponed, you know. How about you, Kuntz?"

"Mrs. Kuntz and I have a dinner and bridge engagement, otherwise I would be delighted—" There was a note of anxiety in his voice.

The three men were about to enter the private office, only Mr. Stark's eyes met Dorothy's for a fleeting moment. He went no farther.

"Did you hear that, Miss Golden? You know as well as I the large orders I give Ascher and Kuntz, and they don't have to send the sheriff after their money either. But do I get any friendly consideration when I come into town? I have a good mind to take my business elsewhere—"

"That would be too bad, Mr. Stark," Dorothy said, smiling. "You must forget your own pleasure in order to give your customers the best shoes on the market."

"Absolutely right, Miss Golden," laughed Mr. Ascher, linking his arm through the arm of Mr. Stark. "Come on, Harry, and I will show you the finest line of suedes in the country. You will want to order the entire output."

"Not so fast!" Mr. Stark disengaged his arm and stepped to Dorothy's desk. "A starving man has no need of suedes! Suppose you have dinner with me, Miss Golden, and make up for the birthday parties and bridge that is always occupying this firm."

(To Be Continued Tomorrow)

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Instead of a curt refusal as on former occasions, Dorothy bit her lip, was thoughtful for a moment, then said, "Why not come up to my home and take pot luck with the family? We could go somewhere afterwards, if you wish, Mr. Stark."

"Fine! That suits me even better. Now don't forget or change your mind, Miss Golden." He went with Mr. Ascher and Mr. Kuntz to look at shoes.

Dorothy turned to the telephone on her desk and called her home. "An important customer is in town, mother. He wanted me to have dinner with him—Mr. Ascher and Mr. Kuntz have engagements this evening. Will it be all right to bring him home for dinner? Yes, from Midville, the one Selma is always talking about—used to call on a friend of hers. Don't fuss or make anything extra. Oh, don't bother ironing it—I'll wear anything. All right, mother, only don't fire yourself. Goodbye!"

Mr. Stark spent ten days in Boston instead of the two or three that his business required. He saw Dorothy in her home and in the office as often

as he could, bringing her candy, sending her flowers, taking her to the theatre—eagerly doing everything in his power to please her, urging her sometimes in fun, but often in earnest, to tell him how to reset the ring. Or would she like it old-fashioned as it was? Too big for the dainty, slender finger? Or if she liked a stone in any other shape—or bigger—just say the word!

Harry Stark had begun his business career by sweeping, and similar tasks in a shoe store at the age of fourteen. He had risen, working hard, planning fiercely in order to get a start in business, helped by a certain inborn shrewdness, to the sole ownership of three profitable shoe stores at the age of thirty-five. Until quite recently he had not thought of marriage; at no time had he tried to acquire that subtle grace associated with culture; and nature had not created him handsome. Though exactly the same height as Dorothy, he seemed much shorter. If she could only stop thinking about Teddy's clear, fine skin and sensitive mouth. But a girl must be sensible! Yet she laughingly postponed any decision about the ring.

Dorothy's parents were uncertain whether to be pleased or not with the turn affairs had taken. Mr. Stark was so different from the tall and boyish Theodore whose family they had known for many years. But the years pass, youth and beauty fade; a girl can't keep on working in an office six days every week forever.

Selma approved of Mr. Stark entirely. She became unusually helpful about the house so that Dorothy could have her evenings free. Selma preferred a substantial rating in Dun and Bradstreet to any doubtful pot of gold at the end of a vanishing rainbow. Blondes were probably just naturally dumb. She was glad that Dot was showing some sense at last. She planned to have a grand party when she announced her engagement to Benny. Since she already had the ring, he could give her a diamond and emerald bracelet—Dorothy would look stunning as the matron or honor at the wedding.

Ascher and Kuntz noticed how Harry Stark lingered in the city, and decidedly in the vicinity of their Miss Golden, and were of two minds about the matter.

"Looks very much as if we shall have to get a new girl in the office, Kuntz," said Mr. Ascher one day while Dorothy was out for luncheon—with Mr. Stark.

"We'll miss her, Ascher. She has been with us about seven years—"

"Well, I wish her luck! Having daughters of my own, I realize girls are better off married. Stark is quite able financially—she will be well provided for—"

"Of course! But why Stark? What has become of that good-looking young Kramer she was friendly with? They made a well-matched couple."

"Those intellectuals!" sighed Mr. Ascher. "Old man Kramer told me his boy wants to travel to the moon or round the world or some other place, I forgot where. Well, partner, we shall give Mr. Stark and Miss Golden a nice wedding gift."

Kuntz frowned. "Not so soon. She is a little too dainty for that kind of fish. I'll tell you what—I'll bet you the finest pair of shoes for that granddaughter of yours that she does not marry him."

Mr. Ascher grinned, stroked his gray head with a plump hand, and said, "Against a deck of gilt-edged bridge cards? You lose!" They gravely shook hands.

(To be continued Monday)

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One evening, soon after she had become a wage earner, she heard her mother say, her hands busy with mending, "I had a talk with Mrs. Kramer this afternoon. I met her while shopping. She is terribly worried about her boy, Theodore. He is the oldest, the most promising of her children. They want him to be a doctor or a lawyer after he gets through college—and he wants to write. Can a man make a living from writing?"

Her father had glanced up from the book he was reading and replied genially, "The Kramers are well off. He could make a living working in his father's clothing store, and write for amusement!"

"He could but he won't," mother had sighed. "He detests all business. Poor Mrs. Kramer almost cried when she told me about it."

And immediately Teddy ceased to be merely one of a number of boys whom one greeted on the street or sometimes saw in one's home or in that of a neighbor's, he became a youthful crusader, to be admired, to be helped.

As their friendship developed, Dorothy encouraged Teddy in his ambitions to study and to write, until his plans for the future ceased to be vague, troubled dreams and became formed, taking shape with the glowing colors of possible attainment. There were enough people in business without Theodore. He should be spared to write the epic of their inarticulate lives. And Dorothy, encouraged by Theodore, attended evening art classes. Together, they visioned an existence far removed from the clothing or shoe industry.

Meanwhile Teddy got his B. A. degree at Harvard. To deepen his knowledge of variety of human contact, he taught school one term in a small New England town; was employed by a Boston newspaper in a minor journalistic capacity; worked for a short time in New York. He wrote stories and poems for practice. These Dorothy illustrated with whimsical drawings, wondering how it might feel to read: by Theodore Kramer, illustrated by Dorothy Golden.

There had been letters and long serious talks; books and lectures and plays; gatherings with other young folk planning seriously and loftily for the future. There had been a shared outlook on life as from a serene height

Both deplored the impossibility of European travel. Father Kramer would finance no such trip, although he had become reconciled, even a little proud of his son's ambitions. Recently an aunt in Ohio had died, leaving Teddy a share in her estate—not much, but enough to assure his

freedom from financial worries for several years. Now Teddy could sail to distant shores; see with his own eyes the quaint towns, the narrow streets, the little houses huddled so close together . . . enrich his experience, making consummation more certain.

Dorothy, delighted with the sudden brightening of his opportunities, enthusiastically told Selma about it, who, carefully applying lipstick and rouge to enhance her brunette prettiness, standing before the mirror in the room at home they shared, remarked:

"I think you are a dumbbell for sure, Dot. What have you to be happy about? That handsome Ted seems a bit selfish to me. Plenty of girls where he is going who are not so dumb But don't fret, darling, you will always have a home with me and my Benny." Selma then applied a drop of perfume behind each ear and above her full upper lip, and departed to join her Benny.

(To Be Continued Tomorrow)

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Dorothy did not admire Benny and thought her sister unwise in engaging herself to him. After completing a business course in high school, Selma had changed positions every few months for no better reason often than the cryptic "A girl must give herself a chance!" Her last position was comparatively permanent, having lasted nearly a year. The still youthful proprietor of the store became infatuated with his fun-and-life loving young secretary-book-keeper and gladly became her Benny. She had graciously permitted him to give her a diamond solitaire ring as a token of his affection, but had to wear it on a ribbon around her neck so that it dangled somewhere inside her dress where no one could see it, instead of being proudly displayed on the proper finger, for her mother had insisted.

"When there is an older sister in the house, it is not proper for a girl not yet twenty to announce her engagement. Besides, this is the first time you are engaged—maybe you will change your mind like about your jobs."

"My mind is made up! I do not intend to slave forever in an office. I am no slender blond like your haughty older daughter. And believe me, there are plenty of girls ready to snap up a rich man like my Benny if I only gave them the chance. I will probably grow fat and fade in no time; Benny will jilt me, and you will have two old m—"

"Now that will do!" mother had interrupted. "Enough time to announce your engagement when you are twenty-one, and not before!"

"If Selma and Ben are sure they are suited to one another, let them have their way, mother," father said in his gentle manner. "It will be much quieter at home. Now if it were Dorothy—"

And Selma flared back, "Dorothy craves art, an dthe perfect Harvard accent! All the chances she has had! There is that rich Mr. Stark . . . if I did not really love Benny. All she does is send him bills for shoes—

when he should be buying her diamonds and furs and a few other things I could mention. I'll end in an old ladies' home if I wait till she does anything sensible!"

Harry Stark, Shoes, Dorothy read on the upper left hand corner of a thick envelope that she placed on the pile of letters for Mr. Ascher. How could any one even for a moment compare, not to say prefer, that shrewd, nearly middle-aged dealer in shoes to the gifted Theodore? Yet, this morning, disillusion made uncertain Dorothy's former evaluations—possibly it was silly to believe that marriage should include romance, glamorous joys, not computable in terms of economical security, a home, a shining new motor car. Foolish to have given Teddy so much of her time and thought and to have kept all other men at a distance, thinking them coarse-voiced, badly-groomed, almost hopelessly vulgar when compared to him. Stupid not to have foreseen this tragic ending.

Why, in two years she would be twenty-seven! A clerk working for a mere pittance. A few years more, Theodore will be sought after, courted, lionized. They will no longer be neighbors even. The Kramers were already planning to build in Newton, a section financially impossible for the Goldens. Dorothy saw herself aging and fading, as Selma frequently predicted, her unhappy parents worrying about her future.

(To Be Continued Tomorrow)

NDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1931

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After ten days in Boston, Harry Stark could remain away from his stores no longer. Shrewdly he decided to have Dorothy spend a week or so with his married sister in Midville. Let her see for herself how well people respected him for his business ability; and if she still continued to joke about the ring—it wouldn't be the first or the last time he would have to bear disappointment. He had never met a girl as sweetly charming as Dorothy. Adorned with jewels and in costly furs, she would outshine any woman he ever saw. He spoke to his sister in Midville by long distance.

And Dorothy felt a driving need to get away from Boston, from daily, hourly reminders that her life must be planned in ways she had never before considered.

Teddy was somewhere in Ohio trying to liquidate his inheritance. He might be in Boston before he sailed, or he might not. Anyway, she could not bear to see him again knowing he was deliberately choosing to stifle whatever love he had for her so that his future might not suffer from whatever impediment declaring it might bring. It seemed so cruel—so unfair. Deep in her heart she was convinced that she understood his needs and moods better than anyone else could—was almost certain he could not get along without her.

Yet since he had so chosen, let their last meeting be their final one. Let pride and consideration for her family steady her trembling will and harden her heart into forgetfulness. Possibly there might be something in Midville to compensate her for a practical marriage.

A substitute did her work in the office of Ascher and Kuntz while she went for a week's visit to Midville, most cordially invited by Mrs. Milton Fenberg.

* * *

The Fenberg home in Midville was one of those square wooden structures supposed to duplicate the houses of the Colonial period. A broken flag walk set in grass led up to it; shrubbery, mostly evergreen, grew close to it. Its long living-room had

an open fireplace, a baby grand piano many small oriental rugs scattered over a plain dull colored one that covered the entire hardwood floor, and was otherwise amply and comfortably furnished in the modern, rather expensive manner.

Mrs. Fenberg strongly resembled her brother in appearance and, though several years older, spoke of him in awed tones of admiration and respect.

"I hope you will like this room, Dorothy. I am sure you don't want me to call you Miss Golden—do you, dearie? Midville is nothing like Boston—a few of us—just like a big family. And how everybody likes Harry! Such business ability—and public-minded, too. With three stores, and planning another, he yet has time to help with a drive for a new recreation field and to see that a new heating plant is put in the "Y." He will be mayor here some day, you'll see. Now make yourself at home, dear, and if you want anything, just let me know."

(To be continued tomorrow)

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Amiably chatting, Mrs. Fenberg showed Dorothy to her guest chamber on the second floor, a spacious room furnished in walnut with draperies and rugs in orchid and rose, gleaming with mirrors, with an inviting bathroom in Nile green opening from it. Dorothy thoughtfully unpacking her bag, decided that Mrs. Fenberg was as competent in housekeeping as her brother was in business.

At a luncheon-bridge given by her hostess the following day, Dorothy met about a dozen women who came gowned and jeweled more elaborately than Dorothy was accustomed to in the little gatherings she had attended at home. She felt somewhat out of place in her simple frock of twilight blue—a color that made her fair skin more deeply rose and made more vivid the gleams of gold in her light brown hair. But all the guests, from the most recent matron, slenderly elegant in her new dignity, to the gray-haired grandmother, thrice her age—and size, were most friendly to the stranger.

By the time the elaborate luncheon had been eaten, four tables of bridge played, prizes awarded and exclaimed over—all to a continuous talk about servants, recipes, recent and yet-to-be social activities—Dorothy and Mrs. Fenberg had received and accepted luncheon engagements, and dinner engagements that included Mr. Fenberg and Mrs. Stark, for every day of her visit.

Then followed a series of entertainments in home very similar to the Fenberg home, in comfort, in furnishing, in thoroughly competent housekeeping. Dorothy could hardly see any difference between the living-rooms she entered. In each one there was a softly upholstered sofa before

a dark open fire-place. There was no fire-place in the Golden apartment in Roxbury, but Dorothy had always imagined one as filled with burning logs that cast grotesque shadows into a dimly lighted room. One sat before it reading poetry and stories that possessed unperishable beauty—or manuscripts that were yet to receive the accolade of print. As soon as her eyes fell on the dark fire-place in a Midville living-room, the rest of the house, and the people in it, lost interest for her.

Luncheon was invariably followed by bridge, a game Dorothy knew only from having played it once or twice with Selma and Selma's friends. In the evening, after dinner, cards were again in evidence. The women played bridge, the men bridge or poker in an adjoining room—usually a sun room leading off the living-room. There was always a jovial settling of accounts at the end of the evening among the men, prizes awarded the women.

A contented, almost complacent group; the men enjoying their evenings after busy days in factories or stores; the women free to do as they pleased after housekeeping duties had been attended to during the morning. Most of them had risen to comparative affluence and ease after years of poverty and bitter struggle. They considered Dorothy a very lucky girl indeed to be courted by Harry Stark and to have this gay social little set ready to receive her as soon as she married him.

(To Be Continued Tomorrow)

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Harry Stark sent her roses and corsage bouquets and took her about in his car. During the mornings he showed her his store in Midville, the branch store in East Midville, another in West Medville. They motored to neighboring towns where he planned to open yet more stores, talking rents, upkeep, gross sales, net profits, thousands of pairs of shoes likely to sell, until Dorothy felt again the frightening, childish sensation of being smothered under an avalanche of shoes.

He began to teach her to drive his sport model roadster. "Better learn on this one, girlie, and spare the gears of the handsome town car we are going to get!"

He took her to see the double lot in the restricted residential section he had bought when prices had been right. "That's where I am going to build." "And watch the girls when they play bridge, Dolly, look at their rings. When I reset this ring, or get you a new one, it must be one you'll be proud to wear!"

And common sense counseled in his favor. A girl almost twenty-five years old, even if she appeared to be younger, with no means of her own, with parents and younger brothers who may need her assistance—Why, an opportunity to marry as well as this may never happen again! She would be crazy to wreck her future because of a few sentimental notions! Yet the last luncheon-bridge had been given, the last dinner engagement kept, and Dorothy still avoided committing herself. She had bidden Mr. Stark a lingering, but evasive, good night and was in the dainty guest bed, thinking.

The sameness of the days of her visit appalled her. She had met the same women at every luncheon, the same couples at every dinner. Whatever talk there had been had exclusively dealt with local or domestic affairs. The excellent food served had varied somewhat; the linen, silver, and

other table appointments were almost standardized. Was it possible that the same waitress had inquired at every luncheon whether she would like a little more chicken salad, or another roll at every dinner? Probably an extra woman helping the regular maid. Every one seemed so supremely satisfied. Any place outside of Midville was mentioned only to illustrate the advantage of living conditions in Midville.

There was none of the intellectual unrest, the stimulating discontent, the altruistic plans for bettering the conditions of humanity that so strongly characterized the small group she and Theodore had found congenial. And irrelevantly she was depressed that although every home she had visited in Midville had a fireplace, yet not one had had a fire in it . . .

She seemed to hear Selma saying, a mocking smile on her lips, "If you are so keen on the intellectual life, why not give Midville a chance—show them how! Suppose you set the style for blazing logs and highbrow talk? Be reasonable! That rosy skin of yours and that dimple you happen to have, Dot, will get you more in this world than all the intellect in a couple of encyclopedias!"

Tomorrow, then, she will tell him to have the ring reset in any way he or Mrs. Fenberg thought best. Her mind made up, Dorothy snuggled down in the soft curve of her arm, drew the silk coverlet over her shoulders and closed her eyes. But before she slept, the orchid-colored, embroidered pillow slip in Mrs. Fenberg's guest room was wet with tears.

(To Be Continued Tomorrow)

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Mr. Stark, in a reddish tan suit and a glowing tie to match, faintly recollect of the best the best the barber shop had to offer, came in the morning to take her to the train. They sat on the large overstuffed sofa before the dark fireplace.

"Well, what do you think of us now, baby? Could you find anywhere a nicer little town to live in or a more jolly crowd to play about with? Let's advise Ascher and Kuntz to keep the substitute—and plan a little love nest of our own." He moved nearer to her, his hand covered hers.

Unreasonably repelled by the touch of his strong, warm hand, Dorothy said, "Every one has been so wonderfully nice to me—just as if I were being included in a family circle. Yet it is such a big thing to decide—" Confused and unhappy, she tried to draw her hand away.

A wry smile curved Mr. Stark's thin lips. "We are both old enough to know our minds, I believe. Don't let me spoil your visit—but—" Quickly his arms were about her, his eager lips touched her cheek lightly; then, his arms suddenly grown wiry strong, his hot kisses pressed upon her mouth and eyes and throat.

She drew away at last, weak, almost fainting with distaste. She consequently thought of Mr. Ascher, jovial and proud of his granddaughter, of Mr. Kuntz and his ritual of

manners, of the busy office as a place of sanctuary . . .

Mr. Stark was saying, "I am sorry. I did not mean to frighten you. You are so different from any girl I have ever met, from any of the girls here. I only want you to let me love you, give you things, make a home for you. I'll do anything you want me to—for you or your folks. But don't decide now! I shall be in Boston in ten days—we shall talk about this again."

Dorothy's mind was in turmoil all the way home. If he only had not grabbed her so! If he had acted differently, she probably would have given her promise and gone through with it. But that sudden roughness of his cheek against hers, the strength of his arms not too gently about her, the kisses that left defiled places on her cool skin, left her shaken and uncertain.

She shrunk together miserably in her seat in the train as she thought of Theodore, felt utterly unworthy of him. To think that a man smelling like a barber shop had thought he had the right to kiss her with his wet, horrid mouth. If self-contempt had the power to annihilate a physically healthy young woman, Dorothy would never have reached home alive.

At home she found her mother greatly upset! Selma and Benny had motored to Providence and had married. They were in New York on their honeymoon, combining it with a shopping tour for belated finery for the bride.

"She has bought herself a fur coat and enough dresses for a year," mother told Dorothy, "and she wrote she planned to have her home complete from a frigidaire in the kitchen to a car for her to drive, but she was too selfish to give her parents the joy of planning a wedding, or to be present to see her marry!"

Dorothy's heart ached. Poor mother! How selfish both her daughters were. Thinking only of themselves, their own happiness, or lack of it. Lost in thought, Dorothy paid scant attention until a familiar name reached her ear.

(To Be Continued Tomorrow)

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"I was waiting for the Blue Hill Avenue car at Dudley Street when Teddy came along, driving his father's car, and offered to take me home. I would never believe that such a quiet, gentle boy as Theodore could get so angry about anything. His face was pale and he did not say a word until he got out to open the door for me here. Then he said, in that soft pleasing voice of his, but with an edge to it like a razor,

"Is it true, Mrs. Golden, that Dorothy is engaged to be married to an elderly widower from some small town up state?"

"Whoever has been telling you has been generous," I told him. "Why not present Mr. Stark with a few children at the same time?"

"But, please, Mrs. Golden is she?"

"Well, I was so upset about Selma that I didn't feel like being careful of anybody's feelings, so I told him that Mr. Stark was a wealthy bachelor who could make any girl happy and give her everything her heart could wish—that you were coming home today—and to come and talk to you about it himself!"

"Oh, mother, you should not have hurt Teddy so!"

"No?—Well, I told him right there and then that Selma had eloped and was married, that most of your friends were settling down in homes of their own, that if you had been sensible, you would have married some time ago, and that I was glad that you got some sense at last!"

"Ah, well, I shall probably never see Teddy again—" Not much left to live for. Marrying Harry Stark would to a certain extent equal suicide—those imaginative, infinitely precious, immaterial values, would have to go; yet how hard, how very hard to be sensible . . .

Early that same evening she heard her young brother's welcoming voice, "Sure, she came back today. She is helping mother with the supper dishes. I'll tell her you are in the living-room, Tel."

She almost dropped a dish in startled surprise. Why had he come? There was a book belonging to him—seeing him again will make it so much harder—but to see him, to speak to him! If all those dreams, those dear hopes were forevermore to be locked into a far corner of her heart as glimpses of a heaven she was not permitted to enter, then, why not add yet another memory to that precious store?

With softly shining eyes and flushed face, having the look of a very little girl in her short, sleeveless housedress, Dorothy entered the living-room. Theodore rose to greet her.

"I wish to be among the first to offer congratulations, Dorothy," he said gravely. "That I am surprised goes without saying."

"Thank you, Theodore. Your congratulations are a bit previous, but may be in order soon."

"Am I to understand, then, Dorie, that you are deliberately planning to marry a man twice your age—one with whom you probably can have

nothing in common? Why should you?"

Dorothy walked about the room, pulling the cords of the shaded lamps a rosy glow deepened the shadows, she drew the curtains and sat down, motioning to Teddy to do likewise. The length of the sofa was between them.

Sadly and with lowered eyes she said, "It seems to be expected of me, Teddy, my parents would be happier—one can't be selfish."

"Don't joke, Dorie! You know very well that neither your parents nor anybody else will gain any happiness if you will be miserable. Why this sudden self-sacrifice on the matrimonial altar?"

Her head went up. "What makes you be sure I shall be miserable? They entertained me royally in Midville, dined and wined me, and played my hands at bridge when I was not the dummy anyway. That's one thing I shall have to study seriously—bridge! Mr. Stark will be in town in less than two weeks."

(To Be Continued Tomorrow)

A Girl Should Be Sensible

By ELLA CLINE

(Reprinted from The Jewish Advocate)

You mean to tell me that you feel gaged to marry this Snark or K, or whatever the name is, only because you have been entered for a short time by the peasantry of his native village? While years of our friendship mean hing to you?" He pushed his

hands deep down into his pockets and sat as far away from Dorothy as the sofa would permit.

"Peasantry indeed!" laughed Dorothy. "Gentlefolk de luxe, you should say." Little thrills of joy raced through Dorothy. The years of our frinedship* reverberated through the room—music from an angels' chorus! "Let's talk about your affairs. What has been the result of your trip?"

"I managed quite well. I shall have practically no financial worries for some time—for several years if I live in Europe. It is a terrible shock to find you nearly married, Dorothy. Didn't I practically propose to you before I left for Ohio?"

"No, I hardy think you did, Teddy." She was grateful that the dim light somewhat hid her embarrassment.

"No? Are you certain? Weren't certain statements made about working together, tramping the world together—and was not the question put on the table until I should return when it could be discussed more fully?"

Dorothy was too astonished to say anything.

Theodore took his hands out of his pockets and lessened the distance between them on the sofa by half.

"Couldn't you see, dear, that I could not trust myself, had to get away as quickly as possible—feared I might say too much before I knew what I had to offer you? Little enough at best. Three or four years may not be enough for me—for us—to accomplish much. It may be the clothing store for me and few luxuries for you—"

"But you will succeed, of course you will! And you must keep on trying until you do!"

"Without you I have no desire even to try. Whom would I work for, who cares or understands? Dorie, darling, look at me! For the sake of your parents—for any reason—could you have married that shoe plutocrat?"

She shook her head without looking at him, put out her hand to touch his gently, "I tried to make myself—"

"You darling girl!" His arms held her close to him—good to be held so—safe!

A dark-haired young woman sorted the Monday morning mail in the office of Ascher and Kuntz, the first week in October. Mr. Ascher entered, smiling over the latest brilliancy achieved by his five-year-old granddaughter, looked toward the desk, shrugged his shoulders, and refrained from telling it. The new girl was not aware he had a granddaughter. Mr. Kuntz came in a little later, glanced about, but kept the outstanding events of his latest bridge game to himself.

"Well, Kuntz," remarked Mr. Ascher in their private office, "that was the nicest little wedding we ever attended. Clever of Mrs. Golden to do it so well with only a week's notice. The happiest bride and groom and the handsomest! They sail from New York this morning."

He reached down into his coat pocket, pulled out a narrow deck of cards of quality and placed it on his partner's desk. "You won the bet, I am happy to say, Kuntz. Good luck!"

(The End)

Weekly Short Story

BLOND SHEIGETZ

By ELLA CLINE

The Feingolds were our nearest Jewish neighbors when we moved into Wilmot from Dragna Dam. For two years we had lived in a small settlement in the Adirondack wilderness, the only ones there of our faith. Since both Elliott, who is a mechanical engineer, and I have seldom been away from the immediate environs of New York, we eventually became heart-hungry for companionship with our own people. Mrs. Feingold, even before I knew who she was, fascinated me.

I saw her frequently on the streets of Wilmot, in the stores, driven by in her car while I was giving Junior his daily airing. She was middle-aged, brunette, not tall, and so motherly! She invariably dressed in costly black with the gleam of diamonds on her fingers and near her throat. Young enough to be her daughter, my heart was set on her friendship. Even the becoming curve to her nose endeared her to me. I was several months in town before we met formally.

Dr. McMillan was also a near neighbor. He took care of Junior and had introduced me to Mrs. McMillan. At a charity bridge in the McMillan home I met Mrs. Feingold.

"Mrs. Feingold, this is Mrs. Dagan, a newcomer in town. Mr. Dagan is helping build that many-million dollar dam," Mrs. McMillan said kindly.

"How do you do, Mrs. Dagan? I believe I have seen you on the street." Mrs. Feingold was most cordial, "and how do you like Wilmot after living in the forest?"

Instead of confining my remarks to the wonders of the dam across the upper Hudson, the marvels of the giant steam shovels tearing at the earth, the incessant whirr of the cement mixers in the trackless forest, the peaceful valley soon to be hidden under the waters of a slowly forming lake, I spoke about myself, about my loneliness . . .

Mrs. Feingold became a shade less cordial.

"I thought you were Irish, auburn hair and all—I have lived twenty-odd years here and would not go back to New York. My daughter, Louise, is popular here and very happy socially. We make no distinction—"

Wishing to bring back her initial warmth, I plunged in deeper. "I suppose it is well enough for married people—we got along splendidly at the dam—but your daughter, a young girl, she might fall in love—"

Mrs. Feingold's very handsome head went up proudly, "It would make no difference to us whether she married a Jew or a Gentile."

I was too young, too inexperienced, to take this calmly. I, fortunately, said nothing, but my facial expression must have shrieked, "How can you say anything so terrible, you, so obviously Jewish!"

Mrs. Feingold moved away from me; for me the party was utterly spoiled.

Soon afterwards I met Louise Feingold. Elliott had taken me along to the dam, for the drive through the woods, glowing in autumnal glory, was a joyous experience. Louise drove up with a carload of friends and stopped at the engineers' office for a guide to show them through the forbidden places of generators and turbines. While Elliott got ready to go with them, we talked.

A tall, slender girl, faultlessly dressed and with pleasing manners, but not good looking. Resembling her mother only in the curve of her rather too large nose. Her eyes were gray, her skin sallow and freckled.

She asked politely if I did not find Wilmot too civilized after living in the wilderness. I told her it had been a memorable experience to witness the scientific control of natural forces and the production of tremendous power for use in distant cities. I pointed out to her the giant trestles on cleared paths on the hills that would carry great cables for transmission of electricity to mills and factories. But, rankling from my talk with her mother, I added, that I missed the fellowship of my co-religionists. She was amused.

"I never associated with Jews," she said, almost laughing, "and don't want to." Elliott was ready and the party went sightseeing.

Nevertheless every time Mrs. Feingold passed me with a cool greeting, or Louise flashed by in her car with no greeting at all, I felt deprived, as if I had a right to their friendship.

Only after one dreadful, sleepless night, when the shadow of death drew near the Feingold home, did that intangible barrier between us begin to disintegrate.

A change was taking place in Louise during the winter. I must have been mistaken in thinking her ordinary looking. Her eyes were luminous with happiness; soft color suffused her cheeks; her lips curved in a delighted smile; every movement of her slender form had become graceful, charming.

The reason for this remarkable change was almost always beside her, escorting her wherever she was going, on the street, in her car. He was a tall, blond young man, with laughing blue eyes and very handsome. No youth was ever more gay or carefree in appearance. I wondered sadly every time I saw them, with eyes only for each other, if the blond sheiget had Mrs. Feingold's entire approval.

Alas, love's path was far from smooth and of wedding bells there was not even the faintest echo.

My kindly, gossiping neighbors told me all about it. Since the Feingolds and I belonged to the same "church" they took for granted that we were intimate socially and that I, doubtless, knew all about the affair, and discussed it with me freely. I felt no compunction in listening, after all the Feingolds were my people . . .

One neighbor told me, while strolling along behind Junior's perambulator, "I am really surprised, Mrs. Dagan, that Louise Feingold should take up with such an ordinary fellow as Ray Simpkin. Of course he is handsome, got the notion he will make a hit in the movies. If he had the railway fare he might start for Hollywood at once. His father does odd jobs, and his mother took in washings, but to look at Ray you would think he was the prince of England! I have seen him trail by with girls since he was in knee pants. And Louise belonging to the country club and associating with the people there—I think she would know better."

And another neighbor might inform me, "Louise is simply crazy about him. Such a nice, quiet girl and so well brought up, talks back to her parents—their housekeeper is sister to my cook—"You cannot dictate to me—I shall do as I please! Your Ghetto notions! I shall marry, or not marry, anyone I please. What if they are poor? Can't you think of anything but money?" I reckon they would not mind if it were Judge Jackson's son or Dr. McMillan's but Ray's grandfather died in jail and his grandmother is still on the county farm. I say it is a shame and I am sorry for Louise when she comes to her senses."

Weekly Short Story

BLOND SHEIGETZ

By ELLA CLINE

Louise was selling bonds that had been given to her by her grandfather and declining to tell her parents what she did with the money. Ray no longer made any pretense at clerking in the basement of a department store. He was seriously training to become an actor. He not only photographed well, but discovered he had a good voice, and was taking vocal lessons. Large photographs in various poses and varieties of expression and vocal lessons cost money; but he apparently did not lack funds.

Elliott had to be a few days at the dam and an odd job man came in to take care of our furnace. When I learned that his name was Simpkin I asked him if the good looking Ray was his son, the one that kept company with Miss Feingold.

Mr. Simpkin, Sr., wiped his soot-tingrained hands on his overalls, expectorated exactly into the entrance of an ash barrel, before he replied.

"So the whole town is talking, is it? I knows my boy, I knows—Ray won't break his mother's heart for any girl, he won't—"

"But, Mr. Simpkin, I think you would be glad. Louise is an only child, the Feingolds could do so much—"

"Money ain't everything, ma'm, it ain't," he shifted his quid of tobacco to his other cheek and prepared to go. "His mother's back has ached plenty working for him. She will not have it unless the priest bless their weddin'. Not that our boy is invitin' us to any weddin' yet," he finished, hopefully.

No. Mrs. Feingold was not worrying which expensively engraved invitation to order or what guests to invite. She was being informed that these were modern times when young folk were not hampered by obsolete traditions. One was gay and one enjoyed life. Marriage was a dim and disregarded possibility in a dim and disregarded future. No one tolerated chaperonage or felt obligated to be at home at certain hours. Youth was free to go its own way, to the devil, if it so pleased. And there, it seemed to the harrassed parents, their only child was going.

(To Be Continued)

(Continued from last week.)
At last they wrote to Mrs. Feingold's father in New York, asking him to come, to try to influence Louise, since she had always shown great affection for him. The old man came, groaning with sciatica and very anxious.

"What were you thinking of," he scolded, "to let this affair drift so far? Let me talk to her. Where is she? Let me talk to him, I'll tell him something!"

But no one knew where the young people were, probably dancing somewhere, may not be home till long after daybreak. Maybe this time she will not come home at all.

The housekeeper brought an electric pad to ease the old man's pain. "Do they intend to marry soon? Your clothing store could use a good looking young man. Let him become a Jew—may not be as bad as you think."

"Father, you do not realize how bad the situation is," Mrs. Feingold tried to explain. "This man is training to become an actor. He thinks he will be successful—perhaps he will. He would not consider business and has no idea of marriage. He has been borrowing money from Louise—they call it borrowing!—She is not the first girl he has charmed—there has been talk some time ago—"

At about eleven rain began to fall and soon after Louise drove up. "Why, Granddad, what a surprise to find you here!" Louise kissed him and then introduced Ray, who registered doubtful pleasure at meeting the old man. Looked as if he had been trapped into a family gathering—would never have believed it of Lulu—

"How pretty you look, Louise, what a nice dress, blue, like a fairy—" the old man was trying to gain time, but saw they were eager to go and came to the point. "Sit down, sit down, I want to talk to you two. Louise is my favorite grandchild and I am old—don't believe in intermarriage—but it has happened—you love one another. I should like to see the affair arranged before the angel with a thousand eyes comes for my soul. You, young man, could accept our religion—it has been done—it has been done—it has been done many times—and let there be peace."

"I don't get what you are talking about, sir," said Ray, glancing towards the door.

"O, please, Granddad, Ray and I just stepped in to get my rain things—we are late as it is—don't let's get into a big discussion," Louise protested, standing by Ray, ready to go.

"Before you leave," the old man insisted, "this affair is going to be settled. I am willing to do the right thing by both of you, and so are the girl's parents, but it must be a right thing. Now, tell me, what are your plans?"

"I am sorry, sir, but what is there to discuss?" Ray's voice sounded tired and conveyed annoyance. "I am leaving for the coast soon—"

"Ray, dear, don't mind what they say—they don't understand—"

"I think I'd better be going, honey," in tones vibrant with sorrowful resignation, "I shall write to you—"

"And am I not going with you?" Amazement, horror were in her wide, staring eyes.

Erect and proud, Ray was heroically determined. "How can you, with your family hanging to your skirts? My career—" He took a step towards the hall. "I'll write you and return as soon as possible what you lent me." With sneering contempt towards the older people, "also six per cent. additional."

As Ray turned to go, Louise began to laugh in a choking, horrible way. Mrs. Feingold suddenly put her hands over her heart, sighed deeply, and dropped in a heap to the floor.

In the alarm the old man forgot his sciatica and the young people, and helped his son-in-law raise his unconscious wife to a sofa. Dr. McMillan came and pronounced the patient in a grave condition, heart attack, possibly paralytic stroke. She must not be moved at present.

Louise was huddled in a chair, her fists crushed against her mouth, shaking with alternate sobs and laughter, probably unaware that anything had happened to her mother. Dr. McMillan told the housekeeper to get another woman to help. The housekeeper telephoned me to come at once.

Our bungalow is only a few minutes walk from the Feingold home; Elliott and I came with no delay.

The Feingold home, even during that frightful midnight, impressed me with its luxury. I felt the soft, thick piles of rugs underfoot, was aware of the mellow glow of mahogany, as I stepped to where Mrs. Feingold lay, her face and hands almost gray, her eyes dim and sunken, her breathing coming in faint, audible gasps.

The rain stopped and the first gray of dawn came ghost like through the windows before the doctor declared her out of immediate danger and turned his attention to Louise.

She was moaning miserably, her hair in disorder, her tears had streaked her make-up grotesquely.

"You have driven him away, you have ruined my life—I cannot live without him," grieved Louise, rocking to and fro in her abandonment to despair.

"What a night, what a night," sighed Mr. Feingold, giving Elliott a cigar.

Dr. McMillan, tired lines showing

on his strong, lean face, asked, "Now, as your friend of many years and your physician, tell me what has brought about this emotional eruption—what happened?"

"They have ruined everything—spoiled my only chance for happiness—wanting Ray to become a Jew. Why they never taught me anything about their religion—yet wanting Ray—I shall die, I want to die—"

"If it is Ray Simpkin you are talking about," the doctor spoke with compelling authority so that she had to look up and listen, "I saw him run towards the railroad station as I came here. Besides, he is married already, and the girl he tricked will not divorce him—"

"I know all about that, he told me. He was so young then; it is just a matter of money. He was to arrange about the divorce and we would have married right afterwards. And now—and now—" she began to moan and sob.

Her father and grandfather looked long and earnestly into each other's eyes; then Mr. Feingold took the doctor apart and spoke with him for a few minutes. Finally he took his daughter's hands into his while she turned her tear-dimmed, hopeless eyes up to him.

"Listen, my child. You almost lost your mother and she is still a very sick woman. She must be spared all excitement. Tomorrow you will take your grandfather to New York and remain with him. He will need nursing. You will forget about this unhappy affair with Ray Simpkin—you must! Now Dr. McMillan will give you something so you can sleep."

"But mother, if she is so sick—" she asked faintly, too spent to resist.

"A nurse will take care of her. Mrs. Dagan will come in often. You will be kept informed."

Dr. McMillan urged Louise to do as her father wished, for her mother's sake as well as for her own.

The next day I saw her, pale but composed again, help her grandfather into the car that was to take them to their train. She pressed my hand, suddenly threw her arms about my neck and kissed me, returned to the old man and was driven away.

I began to spend some time daily with Mrs. Feingold, who recovered slowly, but never completely. Timidly at first, not quite certain of my welcome, but drawn by her motherliness, which had attracted me the first time I saw her. I gained assurance as I realized her need of someone she could talk freely with about Louise, discuss the letters that came.

At first these letters were mere notes, chaotic in composition and unhappy in content. She hated New York, she hated the people there, their indifference as well as their occasional intruding friendliness. She had to nurse Grandad a great deal. As soon as he was better, she will travel—anywhere.

"To Hollywood, probably," sighed Mrs. Feingold, "my poor child."

But pride must have asserted itself eventually. Her letters became more cheerful. She was buying clothes, going to the theatre, attending an occasional lecture, discovering the possibilities of the great city, making a place for herself there. As month followed month, she found a group of young people congenial; began attending the Sunday morning services of a world-famous rabbi, was learning about her race and religion.

"My hope is," Mrs. Feingold said to me one day as we were strolling together on the main street, Junior pushing his go-cart ahead of us, "that Louise become seriously interested in a young man of our own people. My terrible experience has convinced me how mistaken I had been, and has shown me the danger of drifting away from one's own people and religion."

(The End)

THE JEWISH ADVOCATE

Weekly Short Story

By ELLA CLINE

God Gets Even

In the basement of one of our largest department stores I met my neighbor, Mrs. Bernard Krupnik. She was selecting a set of dishes for Passover. Somewhat embarrassed, as if I had come upon her committing a crude social error, she said:

"It is to please my Sylvia. If I were at all superstitious, I would declare that her grandmother Soshie, may she rest in peace, is in that child."

I remained to help select the prettiest set, even if it would be used only one week each year. That Mrs. Krupnik should buy anything for ritual purposes only was a remarkable event in consideration of the part religious observance had played in her past. My neighbor is talkative and self-revealing; I know a great deal about her life-story.

She had lost respect for custom and tradition and all religious observance shortly after she came, a bride, into her husband's home in a village in faraway Lithuania and her mother-in-law discovered that her outfit did not contain the velvet dolman she had expressly stipulated it must contain.

The bride's parents admitted that the dolman was to have been included, but the wedding had cost more than they had anticipated. Nevertheless a dolman would be provided just as soon as they paid some of the debts incurred in marrying off their Yente. It would be that much newer and last longer.

Yente's mother-in-law declared she never would have permitted her son Berelle to marry a girl whose parents could not supply her with a velvet dolman. But since the wedding had already taken place and the young couple were happy in their married state, she could do nothing about it, except find fault with the bride.

She watched Yente closely for any lapse of strict observance of all dietary laws and the many observances obligatory to a pious Jewish woman, and was quick with criticism. Mrs. Krupnik once told me:

"I could not move a step, but 'schwiger would be at my side to see if I had not sinned. If I walked out on Saturday carrying a handkerchief and she caught me at it, you would think from the row she made that I had been baptized and was eating a whole side of pig. . . . May her soul rest in peace, but she always thought the worst of every one."

To come to the point, whereas before her wedding Yente had taken her religion as a matter of course, did as her mother told her to, and gave it little thought, in her husband's home she began to question every rite and custom. For instance: she saw no reason why she should bless two candles every Friday when her mother-in-law had already blessed seven. She questioned the difference in eating meat right after a milk dish and not in the reverse order. And eventually there came the time, after many wordy battles with her husband's mother, when she even dared to question the advisability of fasting on Yom Kippur. And right here is where the Almighty lost out, according to Mrs. Krupnik.

Not that Yente really believed that one could break so stern a law with impunity, but made irritable by repeated quarrels, egged on by members of her own family, who advised her to obey the Jewish laws and yet not give in to her mother-in-law—regardless of the fact that to do so was a human impossibility—she became desperately unhappy. Coming in with a few other young married women into Schul on Yom Kippur, her mother-in-law scrutinized her sharply and suspiciously as if she was certain that she, and she only, had partaken of forbidden nourishment, she marched right home and ate.

Having committed the terrible sin of eating on the most holy of fast days, Yente waited for dire consequences which she believed inevitable, for regardless of the many debates on the subject with her mother-in-law, she had a deep, inborn respect for that dread day, Yom Kippur. She was tired of everything, anyway, quarreling all the time as if a man married a velvet dolman. She did not care if God killed her for her sin.

But God did nothing about it. It was middle afternoon and she ate heartily, having been without food or water for over twenty hours. The food did not choke her nor the water strangle her. The heavens did not open and consume her with fire. The hills near the village did not tremble and fall apart; the river nearby did not boil and storm; the sun calmly continued in its course and began to descend in the west. In the synagogue the evening prayers were begun. The wholesome food agreed with her strong, young body and instead of instantly and miserably perishing, Yente felt all the stronger for the row that evening.

For when Soshie came home from Schul and discovered that Yente had eaten before evening and had not even taken the trouble to hide the evidence of her sin, her rage was terrible to behold.

She began by giving Berelle two resounding slaps for having that kind of a wife. The young man pleaded bitterly that he was not at fault since the match had been arranged for him by his parents. Thereupon Soshie turned, with strong hands ready, to Yente, who eluded her and ran through the village to the home of her parents, yelling all the way that she was being murdered.

Relatives began to take sides, friends left their evening meal and rallied to the support of either faction; the cause for combat was lost sight of in the heat of the fray which was growing in number and in sound every minute when someone shouted, "Es komt the Polizei!" and the yelling and vituperations at once subsided.

Yente would not return to her husband's home, claiming that her mother-in-law would stick a knife into her while she slept; and Soshie declared that she would choke her with her bare hands if ever she dared to cross her threshold again. So on the next day the young couple and their nearest relatives met before the Rav for a just settlement of the affair.

The Rav stroked his gray beard while listening to the terrific din of accusations, all talking at once, and through which the phrase, "Let there be a divorce!" penetrated most frequently. But he noticed that the young couple were quiet and that their eyes clung together in mute misery. He told his "Shammos" to order quiet. The Rav asked a few questions and soon declared that divorce was not indicated because a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law failed to agree. Another such row, he warned, might bring disaster on all the Jews of the village. They must live in peace! And ordered them all home. But Berelle and Yente could find no peace, so they emigrated to America.

"Sometimes, when I hear your brothers discussing their careers, see your sister so busy with social affairs and beaux; yourself, Irma, a student in Wellesley, and so wise in social welfare work, I wonder what that boy might have accomplished with like opportunities. I have little time to dream of what never has been, but with tea before me, memories crowd in, not very gay ones either—"Mr. Seligman sighed lightly and slowly sipped his cooling tea.

"But, dad darling," Irma asked, "couldn't this account be somewhat brightened by romance? Did not a lovely lady appear upon the scene and make the young man happy?"

"Yes; the lovely lady did appear and was very kind, but it did not make him happy. He was a slave, tied with chains of responsibility, ate and dressed cheaply, fearful of spending a penny more than he had to, while she was the indulged daughter of his wealthy employer. The distance between the shipping clerk, who sometimes helped in the office, and the dainty girl was too great.

"And in Poland there were expenses that neither the boy nor his mother had foreseen. He was twenty; and already certain petty officials, aware of his absence, had to be bribed. He was barely eating enough in order to save, and to send.

"And at this crucial time Miss Ralchen Traube, the only child of his boss, came into the office, sweet as a bouquet of spring flowers, and invited him graciously to a party; she was celebrating her eighteenth birthday, and he must come!"

"Of course you should have gone, your poor darling. Did a gift worry you? Mother would not have minded, even at eighteen," Irma ventured sympathetically.

"To attend he should have had new shoes, a white shirt, a new tie—but could not spend that much on luxuries. He had only work clothes, and decided not to go. But his desire to see his dream girl, to obey her slightest wish, overcame his sense of values. He brushed his one suit and pressed it—O, yes, one can if one must!—Polished his shoes until he fancied the black gloss hid the patch and the somewhat crooked heels, and decided it warm enough to go without an overcoat.

"But when he reached the Traube home, his heart beating high with expectation, and saw the couples entering, the young men in full dress with gleaming white linen, he realized, overwhelmingly, that he was but a shipping clerk, fit to tend the furnace in that home. Ralchen was an angel to ask him, but her guests were just ordinary people, and would laugh.

"He kept out of sight till after the last guest came. Then, holding his coat collar tight about his throat—to keep out the evening chill, or to hide that hated blue shirt—he walked up and down before that house, listening to the gay tumult of music and laughter, wondering which dancing shadow on the window shades was made by Ralchen; trying to distinguish her voice among that happy chorus.

"At last he tore himself away, went to his old little room and spent the most miserable night since he lost his father. It took courage to rise in the morning; to go to work. He was packing cases when Mr. Traube came in and said to him:

"I was not aware my daughter asked you to her party. But since

she did, why didn't you come?" and looked displeased. To the boy's misery was added the probable disaster of losing his job.

"In a flood of words he told Mr. Traube about his mother, his young sister, the menace of the military draft, unexpected expenses, working clothes, his humiliation at seeing the fine garments of the arriving guests. Mr. Traube listened, still frowning. But when he glanced at the boy's shoes, shining with polish, at his trousers so carefully pressed, his frown changed to a smile of understanding, and he said:

"Well—too bad. My Ralchen was hurt that you did not come. This evening we expect no guests and you must come home with me for the evening meal so you can explain matters to her yourself."

"After that the boy's perplexing worries seemed to melt away, for Mr. Traube's advice proved very helpful. Mr. Traube advanced him enough so that he no longer delayed in bringing his mother and sister to America. Mrs. Traube also was most friendly in helping the strangers establish their little home—"

"O, yes," Irma took up the tale, "and in a few years the boy became such an elegant and well dressed gentleman, and held such an important position in the Traube Importing Company, that dear Ralchen had to propose marriage to him lest some other girl grab him away from her."

"No, no, Irma. Your mamma is just joking when she says that. I loved her so much I did not dare say so for I was not good enough—such a lovely girl and with such fine parents, so she helped me a little, as she has been doing right along ever since.

"Now you know why I prefer tea in a glass, and why I become thoughtful every time the home is gay with young folk. It's that boy with the unhappy eyes hiding his blue shirt. Maybe talking about him—when he does come again his eyes will not be so gloomy—maybe that way I can reach him—reassure him—Anyway, some more tea, please, hot!"

Mrs. Seligman came into the dining room, minus the apron, as Irma brought in fresh tea.

"How many times must I tell you, Irma, to serve papa tea in a cup when we have company? It seems outlandish in glass, and I don't like it."

"Your tough luck, darling," her youngest answered lightly. "From now on I too shall imbibe my tea, if ever I take any, from a glass, and see visions."

Just then the door bell rang and there was the hilarious commotion of incoming guests. Irma went to greet them.

Mrs. Seligman sat down near her husband. He put his hand over hers and said:

"I've been telling Irma about your birthday party, when you were eighteen, do you remember?"

And she answered, "Can I ever forget it? I cried all night because my father's shipping clerk did not come! It was my first great sorrow. Every time the children have company I think of that party."

(The End)

Weekly Short Story

His Grandfather's Blessing

By ELLA CLINE

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Sanders bade their departing guests farewell in the hall of their new and very handsome colonial home. The evening had been spent in a way agreeable to all: the women had played bridge, the men, poker; delicious and ample regreshments had been served, Mr. Sanders bringing from his den something very "special" for the men to drink, which a few of the women insisted on sharing. Now the guests were leaving, warmly dressed against the cold of the December night, the women's elaborate gowns and shining jewels hidden by fur coats of quality.

David Fishbein said, pulling on his overcoat, "the building committee will call on you soon, Joe, make up your mind to sign on the dotted line."

Another man chimed in cheerfully, "no more delays, Sanders, the plans for the drive are ready. I'll even let you use my fountain pen—the day after tomorrow at the store. Good night!"

Gayly, with many animated farewells and thanks for a delightful evening, the guests walked down the irregularly shaped flags of the walk, between expanses of snow-covered lawns, to their waiting cars.

As Mr. Sanders shut his door on the last jovial guest, a frown gathered on his face, causing Mrs. Sanders to say, "what will your attitude be towards this drive for funds to build a Temple in Forest City, Joseph?"

"My mind is not quite made up on that subject, Marjorie. You go to your rest, dear, I will turn out the light and lock up."

He kissed her rosy cheek and watched her as she slowly went up the straight white stairway, her delicate hand trailing on the narrow mahogany railing. He was touched by her graceful slenderness, by her gracious comeliness, and a proud little smile replaced the frown on his face. Still smiling, he stepped into the large living room, glanced appreciatively at the luxurious disorder there, turned out the lights; and, walking across rugs whose soft depths glowed with the matchless colors of the Orient, entered the sun-room.

The silk curtains had been pulled back from the many windows in the sunroom. Gay with many lights, decorated with much tinsel, placed so that every chance passer-by on the street might admire, stood a Christmas tree. On tables and on chairs, on the floor near the tree, were piled gifts for every member of the household: for Joseph Sanders and for Marjorie, for their eight-year-old Ralph and six-year-old Eddy; for baby Lisbeth; for the cook and the maid and the useful man. The gifts had been unwrapped and admired and most of them left to be shown to the visiting neighbors tomorrow.

Mr. Sanders cleared a wicker arm chair, pulled the switch that turned off the ceiling light, and sat down. The frown returned to his rather good-looking face. The demands of the building committee did bother him. Tomorrow being Christmas, the store would be closed. The day after, then, he will have to decide—impossible to put them off any longer. What on earth did they suddenly want to build a Temple for? For more than 17 years he had lived in Forest City and got along very well without a Temple—and now, suddenly, out of the clear sky, a Temple.

Mr. Sanders looked at the many colored lights on the tree, the only illumination in the sunroom, adjoined his well-built figure, kept fairly lean by frequent golf, more comfortably in his chair, and reflected:

Well, to be fair, not exactly suddenly. David Fishbein, and a few others following his lead, had been talking community interests, growing children needing religious training, the need of an organization to represent the better class of Jews in town, for several years past. Now it all came to a head in—Let's build a Temple!

And Mr. Sanders had not the least inclination to ally himself with the movement. He had attempted in his manner of living, in all his public activities, to obliterate all differences between himself and his fellow citizens. To be one of the first ten to donate substantially towards building a Temple and towards its support later, he felt would cancel much of the adjustment that he had

worked for, and mark him alien and peculiar—prevent him from melting completely into the American sense.

And not only Fishbein and his crowd expected him to stand forth as a leader in Israel—there were others. At the country club recently McClare had said to him, "Glad to hear you folks are planning to build a house for worship—very glad! With all you folks putting in oil heaters, my coal business is going to the dogs. Just the same, come around, Sanders, my boy, and I will do something for the good cause." And on the street a friendly clergyman, "Splendid, Mr. Sanders, splendid! It is marvelous how you Jews stick together. If I can help in any way, let me know. Your people have my deepest respect."

You folks—you Jews—your people—being separated, made to feel peculiar, alien.

Disturbed and irritated by the

thoughts that passed through his mind, Mr. Sanders rose and walked up and down the length of the sunroom. Through the windows he could see the moonlight lying clear and cold on the snow, the houses dark. The street had been spectacular during the evening: every house almost had had its lighted Christmas tree, every window, almost, a twinkling light. Now there was only the light of the moon. Mr. Sanders pushed a switch and the lights on his tree were extinguished. The sunroom became dark, then glowed softly with moonlight and light reflected from the snow outside. It occurred to Mr. Sanders that on such a moonlit night as this he had been taken to his grandfather to be blessed before leaving Poland for America.

He sat down again and meditated. His parents had died when he was 12 years old and he had been sent to an uncle in New York. A short time he attended day school, then work in his uncle's store and irregular attendance at night school; progressing very slowly towards his ideal of becoming an American. His opportunity came when he was about 20 years old and he was given a chance to manage a small store in Forest City. In an inland town, removed from the welter of peoples in New York, he felt himself nearer the America he was seeking. Assiduously he modeled his clothes, his speech, his manners, his amusement, after the American-born young men whose acquaintance he sought and cultivated. Soon there was little left, or so he believed, to differentiate him from the sons of the Fosters or the Shermans or the Chadwicks, names familiar in Forest City for generations. A slight accent in his speech, however, he never could quite eliminate. He became partner in a department store; and finally senior partner in a chain of several department stores, had some luck in real estate—and married Marjorie.

Marjorie had been born in Forest City, had been brought up in a non-observing Jewish home where the "melting pot" was the standard; had no religious convictions, except that one should do good. Marjorie had trained their children to recognize no differences between themselves and their neighbors — had even trimmed a Christmas tree for them yearly so that they should not be aware of any distinction. And now came this demand for a Temple, and pressure brought to bear on him from every side that he take a prominent part in a drive for funds with which to erect it.

Mr. Sanders, as a prosperous merchant, had taken active interest in many public activities. He was a member of the Chamber of Commerce, a Kiwanis, an Elk, a Mason; had helped with drives of every kind, from one for building a home for the Knights of Columbus to buying land for an airport. Yet he was reluctant to come forward prominently in this latest drive.

His guests this evening had been prosperous Jews who had settled in Forest City comparatively recently. It had amused Mr. Sanders to notice how calmly they had taken for granted that he preferred their society, that he should be keenly interested in everything that interested them. . . . Every one of them had politely admired the tree, except perhaps Fishbein. His hand had suddenly covered his mouth as if to smother a laugh, but his eyes spoke plainly enough. He might just as well have said out loud, "What's the big idea? Why a Christmas tree—and all "unscre Leute" here?" On leaving he had intentionally reminded Mr. Sanders that he was expected to help build a Jewish house of worship.

Moodily Mr. Sanders looked about the sunroom; his eyes opened wider and he caught his breathe as his glance fell upon the tree, dimly outlined in the soft light. It had assumed the shape of an old man with hands extended in blessing unto the head of a small boy. In his ears sounded words he had not had in mind since he was 12 years old, solemn Hebrew words: "May you be as a light unto Israel. May you bring your people peace."

In the shimmering light and midnight quiet one could imagine anything. Mr. Sanders walked up and down the room several times and sat down. The tinsel did give the illusion of a white beard, the branches were like outstretched arms. It suggested his grandfather as he last saw him. A wise and saintly man was grandfather, thought Mr. Sanders, how terrible had been the conditions under which he lived in far-off Poland. He never had questioned where his duty lay. With understanding wisdom and kindly acts he had sustained the courage and strengthened the endurance of his harassed people. Yet how tolerant he had been of faults and backsliding in others. What would he counsel his grandson in this emergency?

Mr. Sanders could imagine the old man saying, while he meditatively stroked his white beard, a humorous twinkle in his eyes, "Well, well, what a handsome Christmas tree! Might it not be advisable, my son, to celebrate, occasionally, the Feast of Lights instead? The children and the neighbors might enjoy the novelty."

Why are you so perplexed? You are, after all, not required to wear a yellow badge, nor are you or your family threatened with physical injury. Possibly you had been somewhat mistaken right along. It is possible that the differences you had tried so painstakingly to obliterate really constituted a unique personality that your neighbors were beginning to appreciate. As it is, you are neither Christian nor Jew. Decide, my son, and be one or the other wholeheartedly. Peace!" And again he thought he heard the pious intonation of the Hebrew blessing.

Mr. Sanders sighed wearily and rose. With lagging steps as one who had assumed a burden unwillingly, he picked his way slowly through the dark living room and came into the lighted hall. He looked at the closed door through which his guests had left a short time ago and nodded his head in assent, saying softly to himself, "When the Temple is completed, the Eternal Light shall be in memory of grandfather." He turned off the light in the hall and walked up the straight, softly-carpeted stairway, his hand caressing the polished railing.

Weekly Short Story

By ELLA CLINE

NO LONGER KILPATRICK

Flora Kilpatrick knew that her life was nearing its untimely end. The famous heart specialist, called to Wilton from New York by telephone who came without delay by airplane, had smiled gently after a short examination and left the room with the two attending local physicians. Dennis had lingered a while by her bedside, tenderly kissed her forehead and followed them. No one had said there was no hope. But she knew, and was not afraid. Her only concern was for Dennis, left alone in his middle years. Dennis, alone, and grieving . . .

She lay motionless under the silken coverlet, her mind extraordinarily clear. She had seldom been ill in all her forty-odd years. She had been recovering from influenza when she suddenly collapsed with double pneumonia. The fever that lasted for days—or was it weeks—or years?—had tortured her body, draining it of strength. Her heart had not been equal to the struggle.

But her mind was clear, with a buoyant, sparkling clarity as of light. As if her entire being was concentrated in her consciousness, gathered there for a final stand in the failing body. Recently escaped from the fearsome jungle of the fever, her mind felt complete in itself, held to her body tenuously, as by a gossamer thread.

The nurse moved about the room, putting it in order, moving chairs into place, smoothing the bed, always composing her face into cheerful lines when she faced the woman on the carved bed. Muted, the words undistinguishable, a murmur of voices came up from the hall where the doctors were in consultation.

The uniformed maid would be there, unnoticed, ready to hand out hats and coats. Finally the voices ceased. There was the sound of the closing of the hall door, of a motor car starting and driving away, outside. Dennis left in the hall, trying to keep his face from showing what he felt before the maid who was probably crying—Dennis going quickly into the living room to compose himself before coming up. Throwing himself into the nearest chair. Her dear, dear Denny.

Flora closed her eyes and sighed. Imagined herself going down the wide stairs into the spacious hall with its beamed ceiling and open fire place, walking into the long living room and placing her arms about Denny's heaving shoulders. All the rooms downstairs would be shadowy in the lengthening January twilight. All the rooms would be filled with the fragrance and the brilliance of flowers sent to her, but not permitted in the sick room. The only flowers in her room were a few rose buds brought her daily by Denny. And near the roses, a stack of cards of flowers sent by friends.

Her thoughts turned to her many friends in Wilton. For more than two decades she had assiduously cultivated friendship and good will, for Denny's sake, always in the carefully studied manner of a true Kilpatrick. Soon, very soon, many would know how critically ill she was. Laughter would be stilled in many homes. Men and women would talk about her, praise her as one does when another is about to embark on the final adventure. Those who had been in the small town some twenty years ago would tell about the love that flamed, that neither material circumstances nor paternal opposition could quench, between Dennis Kilpatrick and Flora Grossman.

She felt sympathy reach out to her from all over the small town. From the fine home on the hill where the Presbyterian minister and his wife might say a prayer for her sake, who had been a devoted member of his flock these many years, while at the other end of town, in one of the tenements by the river, a humble Jew, perhaps, who had known her parents, hearing her case discussed, might shrug his shoulders, sigh and say, Blessed be the True Judge.

Even now she felt no guilt or wished it otherwise about herself and Denny. Their love had been a force stronger than themselves, there was nothing either could do about it. Public opinion, their parents' wishes, racial tendencies: chaff in the way of the tornado of their emotions.

The sunshine that filled the room turned deeper in color with the beginning of sunset. On one side Denny's dressing room was in shadow, on the other her own little room was filled with light, bringing out the sparkle in crystal and silver and the delicate colors in silks and lace. Denny would be coming up soon.

She could not remember when she had not known him. As a child at a distance, then thrown together in the one high school in Wilton. He was two years older, but she was only one year behind him in classes. They would come to school a little ahead of time. He from the exclusive residential section on the hill, she from the flats by the river, and talk for a while. After school he would walk home with her, but never all the way.

When her parents teased her about her good looking sheigetz, she gave some excuse about her studies. When she told them she was going with him to the dance, in his senior year, they began to show alarm.

Her father sneered, "Is there not a Jewish boy good enough for you, my great lady, or don't they dance graceful enough?"

She had answered, "But there are only two Jewish boys in the entire

senior class and I hardly ever spoke to either of them. And if they can dance, they probably have no dress clothes. And besides, they have not asked me—"

"What decent young man would look at you, always hanging about with a sheigetz?"

"Nu, let there be an end," her mother interrupted. "This boy is going away to college. It won't take long, he will forget the Jew peddler's daughter. A rich boy like him—let her go this time, and let it be the end. You understand?" Her mother's angry gesture was not necessary. Flora understood.

She understood full well that there might be even more forceful objections in the fine home on the hill to the only son making the significant gesture of taking the Jew peddler's girl to the senior prom. Probably there, too, hopes arose that the wider contact of college life might show him the error of his choice. Opposition everywhere; girls, charming, rich girls of his own religion, waiting, preparing to lure Denny away from her. The iron hand of circumstance closing about her, coldly, inexorable, separating them forever. She had only this evening. Flora understood.

Denny brought her pink rosebuds for her dark hair when he called for her. And always during their married life he would bring pink roses for any affair unless she asked for other flowers. Pink roses were by her death bed now—

Then—she put the rosebuds in her hair and pinned some on her white dress and danced with no other boy that evening. This dance, as of mutual sacrifice, no other should share. He held her close and begged her to promise to marry him.

"You don't know what you are saying, darling," she chided, "your life is just beginning. Consider your proposal unsaid—"

"Flora, you and I—all those years—I can't bear to think that you might begin to care for someone else—"

She nestled still closer in his arms as they danced, and said with precocious bitter wisdom, "Little fear, Denny, for that. You have set a standard for me few men can equal, men likely to want to marry me. Yet a couple of thousand years of racial tendencies cannot be altogether ignored. I don't know what to do."

He said tenderly, "Love is all that should matter—"

"Did your father say that?" She laughed without merriment.

"No!" he exploded. "But I shall do as I please. I am independent. Mother left—"

"Calm yourself, darling. You have no idea what wonderful women you may meet during college and travel. I am only a Jew peddler's child. Be fair to yourself."

Unhappy anger flamed in him. "You are just saying this because your people are so stubborn and think no one can be good enough. O, Flora, I love you so—" he ended miserably.

It took all her strength to speak lightly, not to lose her head. "All right, then. Four years from now we shall discuss this matter again, if you remember about it that long."

"You are inhuman, Flora. I shall not forget."

"Both our families think we are crazy—"

"Damn our families."

(To Be Continued)

Weekly Short Story

By ELLA CLINE

NO LONGER KILPATRICK

(Continued from last Tuesday)

Four years later Dennis was graduated from an eastern university, and Flora completed her studies at the state college for teachers. Her parents had objected:

"Is it not enough for you to finish high school with high honors? Don't you know enough already? Teaching is not for a pretty girl like you. What has got into you? It is that sheigetz that makes her so frotz," they moaned.

They were right. Flora could not bear to be less than the girls Dennis was meeting. She would give him up, since she must, but if ever they met again, he must not hold his boyhood fancies in contempt. She worked vacations, she worked week-ends, supporting herself the best she could, but continued with her studies.

Dennis took his place in his father's coal and lumber business, established by a Kilpatrick nearly a hundred years before; took his place among the younger social set whose gaiety centered about the country club. Flora taught a kindergarten class in Wilton, and found no pleasure in whatever little social life came her way. If a young man ventured to please her, the image of Denny, never absent from her mind, made any other suitor intolerable. Her Denny, whose name was prominent in every social function reported in the Wilton press, who seemed to have become the leader in every gay affair.

Nevertheless he had time to wait for Flora as she left school one afternoon and to remind her that they had a subject to discuss.

"We have a rendezvous to talk, young woman—"

"Why, Denny, so we have! Surprising that you should remember. What shall we talk about?" They strolled along the tree-lined street, under arching branches whose foliage was beginning to glow with autumnal color.

"Ourselves. Our present engagement, our impending marriage, where to spend our honeymoon. There are a great many vital things we must discuss. We are getting along in years, dear. We must not tarry—"

She laughed gaily, "Unkind to remind me of my years—twenty-one to your twenty-three. Is it old age that makes you forget your high station? Or is it but another version of King So-and-So and the beggar maid?"

"They must have taught you a lot in state college, Florie, to know so much—I have learned only to love you more—"

"And all the maidens you have met and are meeting have not prevailed—"

"No. I am still asking you to marry me."

"My dear, my own, my dearest dear—"

"Then you will?"

"More than anything else in the world, Denny. But our families—We must wait, we are still young."

So they waited, meeting on the street, taking long walks, living for those stolen hours, thrilled and glorified by their emotions, hidden from the world as in mysterious clouds of glory, believing their love unique and incomparable to any other love.

As the months formed into years, her parents in their anxiety for her future, for the future of their younger daughters, decided to move away from Wilton to some town nearer New York. She discussed this with Denny, and he told her that his father had taken the matter up seriously.

The older Kilpatrick had said, "In an affair of this sort, I more than ever miss your mother, her womanly knowledge and wisdom, my son. She would have known how to convince you, would doubtless have preferred that you marry a daughter of one of her dear friends, a daughter of a family like ourselves—" the old gentleman had pleaded gently. "Is it fair to this young woman, to waste her youth; you should consider her."

"I am considering her all right, sir. I am begging her to marry me, but she won't."

"What?—What reasons could she have to refuse, since she seems to like you."

"Plenty. Religious grounds, racial. Her people object like hell—One Gentile is like any other to them, they see no difference."

"What!" thundered the older Kilpatrick, "my son not good enough for a mere—Why, I thought I ought to talk to you out of kindness to them, possibly help the young woman marry one of her own people. And you say they object—" His face purpled and he became speechless.

"And how they object!" But don't worry, dad. Neither of us will probably ever marry each other or anybody else. So get used to the situation."

Weekly Short Story

By ELLA CLINE

NO LONGER KILPATRICK

(Conclusion)

But now, as she lay motionless on her death bed, she was Flora Grossman; had never, really, been anyone else. Her mind in its detached shining clarity, evaluating her life, came to the unalterable conclusion that she had been a wilful, parent-defying Jewish woman who had taken a stranger for her husband, who had been held all these years in the magic thrall of a man's love, of her love for that man. Now, as death loomed imminent, the compelling enchantment that had welded them into one during that spring sunset by the pond, withdrew, and in its place was left an aching friendship and sorrow for Denny who would be left to loneliness.

Through the silence of the house, she heard Denny's lagging steps as he left the living room and began mounting slowly the stairway. Flora made a sudden decision: a request she must make and he must grant.

For a moment her mind clouded with memories of the terrors she had encountered in the jungle of her fever. Whatever had occurred, then, had been frightening beyond human understanding. Pale Jewish faces with tangled white beards staring horribly; alternating with faces, ruddy, strong, cruel, holding aloft, in unseen hands, fiery crosses. Endless vistas of evergreen trees under darkening skies, every tree decorated as for Christmas, but with twin rolls of the Sefer Torah perched precariously on each tree top; bands of Santa Clauses with joined hands encircling every tree, screaming in terror, Shmah Israel! And horror upon horror crowding into her memory. . . . It was this unspeakable conflict, as well as the fever, that had drained her vital powers. . . .

Dennis was coming through the door. Dear Denny! Into oblivion vanished the horrid throng that darkened her mind and again her thoughts were crystal clear. Dennis came to her with shadowed eyes, but with lips smiling cheerfully.

He sat down near her bed and took her slender white hand between his two warm strong palms. The nurse mixed a few drops in a little water and Flora drank this. The twilight deepened in the room.

Flora spoke in a whisper, "We can do nothing about this parting, Denny. It will not be for long—"

"My darling, my wife, I can't bear to let you go—" Gone was his composure, his face muscles worked in his effort not to break down.

"All those years, Denny, we have been happy—very happy. We must be brave now. We shall be together again—somewhere, sometime—a love like ours—"

He kissed the frail hand he held between his own, "My dear, my dear! What can I do? What can I do?"

Quiet in the room. Menacing shadows rising in the far reaches of her mind. Not much time now. She must ask, and he must promise. Her weak hands clung to his; she made a futile effort to rise. The nurse came quickly to the bed. Dennis anxiously asked if there was anything she wanted.

"Much, Denny, please! Do not let them put me under that heavy stone—too heavy. My soul will stay with my body there—the terrors will come back. Help me, Denny darling, do not let them put me there when I die—" Her voice gained strength, imploring piteously.

Dennis hastened to calm her, "Tell me, dear, your wishes—Anything you wish shall be done—"

"Maybe they won't have me there. Give alms, Denny, my jewels, anything. I am an apostate, I know, but I shall not rest under that heavy granite in your cemetery. Put me in the Jewish graveyard, next to the last Jew buried there, the next to die after me—Then I shall rest. Promise!"

The fine lines in Dennis Kilpatrick's face deepened. The sombre shadow that filled his gray eyes darkened his countenance. For fully a minute he stared, unseeing, in thought. He understood her need. Softly, with infinite kindness, he assured her.

"Everything shall be done as you wish. Nurse is witness to my promise."

"Denny, you have always been so good to me. I have tried to be a good wife to you—a true Kilpatrick. Now—I am no longer Kilpatrick. Merely a Jewish woman, very sick. Men should come to pray for me—prayers in Hebrew—psalms. I want to see the women sewing, two on a seam, on the white garment—" Her voice trailed away into nothingness.

Dennis wrote names on a slip of paper, gave it to the nurse and said, "Telephone till you get one of these. Explain—promise anything for charity—There must be no delay. Let the men to pray and the women to sew come at once." Then, turning to Flora, "Now, my sweet, just you and I and the setting sun."

(To be concluded)

Weekly Short Story

By ELLA CLINE

World War Joe

A newcomer in Wilmot, if he goes about socially at all, soon meets Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Lombard, who go about a great deal, for Wilmot is a small town. Mr. Lombard is a little above the medium in height, has the assurance of success, a bit portly at the beginning of middle age, a cordial man and facile in conversation. His wife, on the contrary, seldom speaks at all. Except for expressive eyes and a kindly smile, she appears to be quite ordinary. Nevertheless, it is Mrs. Lombard who invariably arouses the curiosity of the stranger so that he asks for information, and he is told a great deal . . . But this is the true story.

Some twenty-odd years ago Joseph Lombard was a traveling salesman for a dry goods commission house. He met Celia in one of the stores on his route, was attracted by the pretty, auburn-haired salesgirl, admired her vivacious loquacity, and married her. Celia did not want him to continue on the road, so they came to Wilmot and opened a tiny dry goods store. Almost immediately each developed a great failing: Celia insisted that her judgment was invariably right, and Joe developed a mania for auctions.

Whenever he heard of an auction, especially of merchandise he knew about, he attended and almost always bought heavily. Auctioneers hundreds of miles from Wilmot took advantage of his failing and sent him advance notice of the bargains they had to offer. There was no market in Wilmot for a tenth of what he purchased. Celia tried to reason with him, she tried scolding, their small capital could not stand such profitless investments! But the lure of the auction was too strong for Joe, then a slender, eager-eyed, ambitious young man who would not take advice.

Soon every foot of available space in the store, in the basement beneath the store, was crammed full with crates packed with dry goods, shoes, clothing—with all sorts of odds and ends of merchandise. An occasional sale merely meant an orgy of buying many times the amount of goods sold. Bills had to be met and were met with increasing difficulty.

Celia and Joe began to quarrel bitterly and openly. They lived in a few rooms back of the store, and with customers coming and going, it might have been hard to keep their wrangling to themselves in any case, but they did not care very much who overheard, so certain was each that the other was wrong.

Joe was away a great deal at auctions and in trying to dispose of some of his steadily increasing stock on hand. A girl had to be hired to help Celia with the accounts and with other work in the store. They had a hard time trying to get anyone to work for the little they could afford to pay at that time, but finally Clara was hired. She had taken a business course in high school, was capable, and realized that on account of a defect from which she suffered, would have difficulty in getting more remunerative employment.

By the time Joe began to hire lofts in which to keep his auction room bargains, bankruptcy loomed like a storm cloud on his horizon. Celia complained to her relatives, to the other members of her bridge club, to the customers in the store, to anyone who would listen, that he had brought ruin on himself and on her by his crazy buying. When they were alone she told Joe freely, and at great length, how little she valued his business ability.

The troubles of the Lombards were discussed in social circles when other topics grew dull. Merchants, during an hour when business was slow, would discuss Joe's latest purchase, or sale, and jocularly make small bets on the length of time he could last financially. Of course every one was sorry for Joe and Celia, but she was so bitterly sarcastic and talked so much that their troubles took on the semblance of a public entertainment. Public sympathy, somehow, favored Joe.

Then Joe perpetrated his crowning idiocy: he signed a long lease for the largest store in town that had been empty for some time and which no other merchant would have taken as a gift, almost. At a low rental to be sure, but the men that had placed their money against Joe prepared to collect . . . Celia almost had a stroke from ag-

Instead of punishing her for her sin, God caused her and her husband to come to America, while God-fearing Jews remained in Lithuania to suffer the horrors of the World War!

In Boston Yente became Jennie and Berelle Bernard. Bernard became a presser in a pants factory and Jennie an ardent Socialist. She consistently disobeyed all the dietary laws and was proud of it. She told me that once having made a milk soup and having nothing at hand to make it "treif," she actually put in a piece of tallow candle. The soup tasted a bit queer, but it was no longer kosher.

She soon learned about free love, too. She once confided in me, "I seriously thought then of divorcing my Benny and then living with him in freedom, only if I did not believe in marriage, it seemed silly to believe in divorce . . ."

Nevertheless, in the face of their manifold transgressions, the Krupniks prospered. They worked hard and saved carefully until Bernard had a tiny factory of his own. The World War made them comparatively rich. They moved their home several times, each time into a better and more expensive neighborhood. When Mrs. Krupnik became my neighbor, a velvet dolman meant nothing to her. She already possessed several fur coats and kept a broadtail trimmed with sable for best wear. She had forsaken Socialism long ago.

As she put it, "If those 'schlempiels' worked as hard and saved as we did, instead of talking all the time, there would be no need for a general division." She ignored free love altogether; with growing girls. But religion still meant nothing to her and God seemed weak and indifferent until her Sylvia began to display disturbing traits.

Jennie had gone her way, fearless of God or man. She had four daughters and when the last one came, she admitted she made her first great mistake.

Bernard was terribly disappointed in again not having a son, the baby was born weak and sickly, so to console him she let him name the child for his mother, may her soul rest in peace, and that was her mistake.

The fourth was a lovely child, but always ailing and delicate, one that had to be catered to continually. Changing Shosie into Sylvia had not helped any; at a surprisingly early age Sylvia developed an alarming religious complex.

The first day she attended a private kindergarten she returned with shining eyes and a little prayer she had learned which the teacher had included in a fairy story. She lisped her prayer morning and night. Explain to a child of five!

At six Sylvia asked permission to attend a Sunday religious school with a little Jewish girl who lived next door and would not be denied. After that, the deluge!

The religious school was of the conservative type and the instructors carefully explained every holy day as it came along and put emphasis on every Jewish law and custom. Sylvia learned eagerly and demanded to know why none of the holy days were kept, nor the laws honored in her home.

Once, when she was about eight, when butter and meat were served at the same meal, she refused to eat, had a long crying spell, and kept the household up most of the night with her suffering caused by a severe attack of indigestion. The doctor explained that she was high strung and must be humored until she was mature, at least. There was nothing much the matter with her physically, but if such spells occurred frequently, she might become a chronic invalid. He suggested that the advice of a psychoanalyst might be of advantage. Mrs. Krupnik became frightened; did that mean that the child might become crazy?

Nothing would persuade the child to discontinue to attend the religious school. Her father had to join the synagogue so that she should not attend at a disadvantage and men should not point their fingers

at him in scorn, since he could easily afford to become a member. During the year Sylvia would announce every holy day in advance and supervise its observance.

She realized that her parents had a hard struggle to get a foothold in their adopted country and did not blame them too much for their lack of religious zeal, but turned her attention mainly to her older sisters, who, poor things, had not had the advantage of a school for religion.

Her sisters were not at all averse to candles and presents on Chanukah; a masquerade party on Purim; picnics on Shavuoth and on Succoth; and Passover was hailed with joy—a feast! Why not join in the fun with all the neighbors? With the frail and lovely Sylvia as instigator, the older girls began to frown on the mixing of food in the kitchen, and demanded that a set of dishes be purchased for Passover use.

So here she was, after twenty years in America, she who had dared so bravely in that village of the old world, who had disowned all ties of religion for the sake of a mysterious freedom in the new world, buying special dishes, and rather liking it. It reminded her of her home before she married, of helping her mother scour and clean and change all the dishes and pots. Such fun!

If her mother-in-law, may she rest, had not made such a fuss about a dolman, a rag, Mrs. Krupnik might never have strayed, she told me, sighing, while the clerk took her address and assured her that the dishes would be carefully packed and promptly sent. But she thought it was clever of God to wait patiently all these years to make her retract. He knew she was stubborn and would have resisted. But what can one do with a delicate child who might get a brain sickness? For Sylvia's sake, Mrs. Krupnik could forgive even her mother-in-law, may her soul find peace.

gravation; her outspoken contempt for Joe became colossal, but there was nothing she could do about it. Joe grew inarticulate and incoherent with anger that he should be so unjustly misunderstood and could only blurt out, "You know what you can do—I have told you before—any time you say!"

Then came the war.

Daily Joe's piles and crates of merchandise increased in value; he could have sold out within a month, if he had wanted to. His knowledge of markets became a valuable asset. The banks financed his department store. His luck lasted so that when he came before the examining board for military service the slight defect of flat feet excused him from participating actively in the war. By the time the armistice was declared, Joe owned the block that contained his store. The store itself he had remodeled so that it was the most attractive in Wilmot. He was a rich man, admired for his pluck and business daring. But not by his Celia.

She claimed that his success was just a case of blind luck. That his difficulties had been so great and his entanglements so many, that

nothing short of a world war could have saved him. She had not grown reticent with the years and exercised her wit at home and in company she did not spare him.

They lived in a pleasant house in the better residential section of the town, had servants, a good car, fine clothes, and enjoyed many luxuries unknown to them before the war. Except for the exercise of her wit, Celia took little interest in Joe's business. She cultivated a set of friends, intellectuals, who met to discuss the drama, having adopted Eugene's O'Neill for their favorite dramatist, and to enjoy her hospitality. Joe could not understand what O'Neill was driving at, and her wit gave him no peace.

If Joe happened to be engrossed in a card game with a few men, she might remark, glancing casually at his cards, "No need for another world war to make game with that hand, Joe." The ripple of laughter probably gave her satisfaction of some sort, but it spoiled the evening for Joe.

If he happened to mention an investment he had made or planned to make she was sure to offer, with a sneering smile, "Listen, Joe, the late war was fought to end all war. You better be careful!"

No social affair would pass, if the Lombards were present, without Celia's reference to the war's timely rescue and Joe's lips tightening. He became morosely silent, seldom spoke unless he had to. There were men and women, envious of Joe's success, of Celia's fine clothes and establishment, who enlarged upon her wit. Before long admiration turned to scorn and he was nicknamed, behind cupped hands at first then openly, World War Joe, with no flattering impli-

cations. He made, at first, a few attempts to explain that he might have had a fair measure of success with a bargain department store anyway, but it is almost impossible to combat ridicule.

Having no children to take his interest, he became engrossed in his business, often coming back after dinner, to work and to plan, possibly to keep away from Celia's wit and O'Neill's plays.

He usually asked Clara to come back too whenever he required clerical assistance. She never had social engagements to fill her spare time and knew the business thoroughly, having been the first clerk the Lombards had employed. She was as reliable and unobtrusive as any piece of good office furniture.

Nearly thirty, dressed in garments purchased for durability rather than style, wasting none of her wages in beauty parlors, saving towards the realization of her one great ambition: a tea room in a little pine grove near a much-traveled road where the tired traveler would find welcoming hospitality and refreshments at nominal cost.

Clara was modestly proud of having been associated with Mr. Lombard, even in a humble capacity, during his spectacular rise to affluence, believed him to be a clever man of business and a generous employer. She was afraid of Mrs. Lombard who, coming into the office, elegant in rich garments and after hours of beauty treatment, invariably looked with disdain upon Clara's drab work dress, and might, if she were in a gay mood, imitate Clara's halting words for the amusement of the office force—as if it were a contagion she could not resist.

One evening, having helped Joe with the advertising program for the week, Clara was putting on her serviceable coat and nondescript hat preparatory to going to the room in a boarding house she called home, Joe detained her and said, a look of determination on his face.

"Would you like to open that tea room in the spring—in about three months—Clara?"

"Im-m-possible M-m-r. L-l-lombard—"she began, a patient smile and the expression in her fine eyes completed her meaning.

"If you wait till you have saved enough for those orange and green tables and other dudads there will not be a good location left for a tea room anywhere—"

"Blue t-t-ables and g-g-ray t-t-timings—"

"What's the difference, any color! By the time you are ready to begin, tea rooms may be utterly out of style," Joe insisted while Clara's face paled with apprehension. "Folk will be traveling in airplanes and who will bother to stop for tea? You can have your tea room this spring if you will help me. Listen!"

Joe outlined his scheme. Clara, in amazement and consternation, frequently asserted that she could not do it—M-m-rs. L-l-ombard would kill her—w-w-what w-w-could people th-th-ink of her?

"Now, Clara, be sensible! It will teach her a lesson and the joke will be on her. Just a masquerade for a while—it can all be easily explained afterwards—people know you so well! It will puzzle them for a while, nothing more. You will have your tea room and it will be worth it to me. You must help me; I am desperate."

The vision of a tea room all her own, blue and gray with touches of orange; the cool fragrance of pines, geraniums in pots at the windows; service of blue glass with a bud vase holding a few nasturtiums on each table—the promised land! Joe's earnest and eloquent plea for her help—Clara agreed.

The following morning Joe told the manager of his woman's wear section to outfit Clara, indicating the best the store carried. Also suggesting that she be given all the attention a specialist in beauty cul-

ture may think necessary; and gave not one word of explanation to his astonished manager as he ordered the expenses charged to his personal account.

A few days later Joe Lombard was seen dining in a popular restaurant in the company of a very attractively dressed young woman who, after long and puzzled scrutiny, was identified as his secretary, Clara. But so wonderfully changed that people who had known her for years thought at first she must be her own younger and prettier sister—a rich sister. For the silver fox she carelessly wore over one shoulder was worth more than Clara was known to earn in months. When she was definitely identified, the news sped to Celia with the speed of light.

In an incredibly short time Celia was seated at a table near Joe and Clara and was studying them with undisguised amusement.

After a few minutes' scrutiny and thought she strolled over to them and said, taking no pains to lower her voice, which had good carrying power, "I congratulate you, Joe! Not a bad advertising stunt, that. I'll try on that fur piece—may like it—"

Not too gently she took the fur from Clara's shoulder, looked at it and said with withering contempt, "Not good enough!" Actually threw it in the girl's face and left the restaurant.

What she told Joe when he came home late that night must have surpassed all her former efforts, for in the morning he moved into the Milmot Hotel.

(To be concluded).

Weekly Short Story

By ELLA CLINE

World War Joe

(Continued from last Tuesday)

The extraordinary affair between Clara and Joe Lombard grew daily more bewildering to the people of Wilmot who, in the inevitable proximity of a small town, were kept fully aware of its progress. An employer-secretary infatuation was not altogether new in Wilmot, but Joe was not the philandering sort; those who knew Clara declared that she had never had the mildest affair with any man before. Possibly because of her halting speech, or natural inclination, she had given the impression of settled, unalterable spinsterhood. And now this!

With incredulous amazement their fellow townsmen saw Clara and Joe dining together, attend the theatre, often deep in conversation—Clara listening with rapt attention while Joe did the talking. Saw them starting out for rides in Joe's car, met them driving, no one knew where to, or from.

Clara's brown hair was no longer straight and almost invisible, but curled becomingly; her cheeks were delicately flushed that had been pale and unnoticed before. She dressed well and with conservative restraint. A measure of good looks had always distinguished Joe; he began to affect light spats and a cane, and there was a merry twinkle in his eyes. His glance was direct that had been morosely evasive. Joe certainly did not give the impression of a man engaged in a doubtful episode; Clara with all her embellishments was, nevertheless, just—Clara. The situation gained in perplexity by its very oddity.

Near relatives of Celia spoke to Joe seriously and mentioned the majesty of the law. Joe answered them curtly that Celia knew very well what she could do . . . And named handsome settlements if she would divorce him.

Celia laughed grimly when this was reported to her and said, "Not for that stuttering clothes dummy! I suppose his vanity is hurt because I told him the truth once in a while and he is trying to get even, the idiot. He'll be glad to come back. I can wait."

As the weeks passed and the scandal continued, several elderly women felt it was their duty to call upon Clara and to reason with her. They explained to her, in a speech thoroughly rehearsed, the enormity of her conduct; accused her of breaking up a home, assuring her that no good would come of it. She was not only disrupting a household, leading a man astray from his sacred duties, breaking an innocent woman's heart, but she was destroying herself as well. What would become of her when Mr. Lombard came to his senses? She would be a despised and wretched outcast.

But Clara put her hands over her ears before the speech was half delivered and ran out of the room.

There was not a social gathering in Wilmot that winter but the strange triangle was discussed and speculated upon. Some held that it was some sort of joke or advertising stunt. That was obviously false since he did not live at home. A few claimed that Celia had nagged and scolded so long and so thoroughly that World War Joe had succumbed to a species of shell shock and was not responsible. If he was in his right mind, why Clara? True she was amiable, and almost pretty since she began dressing well, but not nearly as attractive as Celia, and certainly not as clever. Yet in all his business dealings Joe was as keen as ever. It was all decidedly queer.

Every one regretted the whole mess of course, but during a quiet morning merchants would slyly place bets on how long the Lombards would continue in their marital infelicity, and what Joe might do in case . . . The situation was most diverting and filled with all manner of possibilities.

When Clara was given to understand that she was no longer welcome in the boarding house, she moved to a much better place some distance from the store and drove to and from work in a handsome roadster that was registered in Joe's name.

And still Celia did nothing about it. Tossed her red head and said she could wait till he snapped out of it. Men had gone crazy before—this was not the first time with her Joe, remember those auctions?—Even two world wars would not help him, this time. Her circle of friends applauded her courage and splendid poise in so difficult a position and quoted from their favorite dramatist.

And yet no one could sincerely believe that Clara was bad, and Joe appeared happier than he had seemed in years. Towards the end of winter the affair began somehow to lose its sinister aspect and was about to become genuinely amusing: Celia leading the intellectual life surrounded by a number of friends whom she entertained liberally, Joe living in the Wilmot Hotel, going about with Clara, strangely transformed into a worldly woman. Suddenly new developments gave the case a desperate look.

Clara began to wear magnificent jewels while Joe was known to be withdrawing large sums from the bank and to be using his credit to the utmost. Clara was seen wearing a marquise ring nearly half an inch in length held invisibly in platinum, or an emerald and diamond bar pin handsomer than any in Wilmot, or a costly bracelet. It was rumored that her pearls were real. The sums Joe disposed of every time he went to New York apparently tallied with the appearance of a costly jewel. In a small town like Wilmot, about ten years ago, he was considered well

to do, but he was hardly rich enough to indulge in such extravagance.

In consternation, Celia's advisers counselled divorce while he still could provide for her handsomely, if it were not too late already. She was told that the whole affair was ridiculous, crazy, but she must think of herself, of her future. This affair had gone altogether too far. She was still young enough and clever enough to build her life anew and might just as well give him his divorce before he dissipated his fortune, which might go as quickly as it came.

It was really surprising that Joe was still able to make the generous settlements on Celia that he had suggested in the first place. Joe and Celia permanently and legally ceased hostilities, were free from each other and their irritating marital bonds, about the same time that Clara found the ideal place for her tea rooms.

Celia immediately prepared to sail to Europe with a party of friends for an extended tour to recuperate from her harrowing experiences of the winter. Wilmot was really too small and provincial for any one at all ambitious . . .

Joe felt as if he had awakened from a hideous dream into reality. He felt a great surging of energy and began to make numerous plans for his store so that it should be recognized as the finest in that part of the state. But after a few weeks of activity, he had the feeling of running round in a circle, of getting nowhere. Whom was he working for? The years stretched ahead of him, empty.

He did not miss Celia; they had not had one happy month in all the years of their marriage. She will no doubt marry one of her clever friends and live abroad; he had settled enough on her for that! A few thousand miles from the incessant rasp of her wit, he wished her joy.

He wondered how Clara was getting along with her tea room. Remarkable how good clothes and a little fixing will improve a girl. Would be a pity if she did not keep it up. A good listener and stimulating! Thinking about her somehow lessened the heavy burden on his spirit. He had no great faith in women in business, and Clara seemed especially gullible . . . Might just as well go out there some evening soon and see how she was getting along. Just then the telephone rang and Clara's voice was saying:

"I have b-b-been waiting to hear f-f-from you, M-m-mr. L-lombard. To return th-th-the th-things—"

"To return what things? Suppose we have dinner together tomorrow, just a farewell party. I want to know how you are getting along with the plans for building the tea room. It must be a success, you know."

"Th-th-thank you, M-mr. L-lombard. I'll b-b-bring them—"

His hearty laugh answered her, and he said, "I don't know what you are talking about, but bring anything you please. I shall call for you at seven."

Clara dressed carefully for this evening of farewell. After this evening there will be no more need for pretty clothes, for the becoming wave in her hair, for nails manicured to a rosy glow. But this last time she will look as well as it was possible for her, put a proper end to this amazing episode.

Amazing, truly, had been these months of masquerade in order to get a man his freedom from his vixen wife. A joke indeed! It had ended in deadly earnest. People will doubtless think the worst of her until they realize that she had been only a tool for hire. If they knew that those long talks were either about the Lombard department store or the tea room; those long rides merely in quest of a proper location; they would laugh and forgive, and forget. Let others do as they pleased. Clara would remember.

There were five acres of pine woods and sunny meadows, near a crystal clear lake, waiting for the ideal tea room. There was much work ahead, it might be years before it became a paying venture. She could at least treasure the memories of those gay few months, attempt to forget the ugly reason for it all and make believe that there had been a trace of reality in the fantastic make-believe. It surely could not be wicked to imagine a little happiness . . .

They dined in a sheltered nook of a gay roadhouse they had frequented before. With the dessert Clara took a package from her bag, which she had been keeping within sight all through the dinner, and handed it to Joe. He looked at her blankly.

"The i-jewels—" she explained.

A comprehending smile spread over his countenance. So that was it! He slowly untied the parcel, exposed the glittering collection, and placed the box on the table between them. Then looked earnestly at Clara, as if he had never really seen her before.

"I f-f- feared something w-w-would happen to them—The r-r-respons- s-ibility—"

Joe's face grew grave. He had not considered the responsibility. This young woman had helped him, for a price it is true, out of a tight place—but did she realize the position she was in now? Suppose she did open this tea room, who the devil would patronize it? Except perhaps those she was utterly unfit to handle? World War Joe indeed! The least he deserved now was an iron cross for chivalry in conduct . . .

He put his hand over Clara's. She was startled, this was not in

the contract, but did not withdraw her fingers from under his warm touch.

"This is a farewell party indeed, farewell to pretense and the beginning of reality. I am asking you to marry me—I assure you, my dear, that I have just decided to do so, but I must have been actuated by a hidden love for you—hidden even from myself—all these months. You certainly could not have done so much, so very much, for the sake of any tea room. You like me a little, do you not?"

Slowly Clara nodded in assent, although that could not possibly have answered both his questions, still Joe seemed content. He glanced hastily about, and seeing no one observing them, stepped to her and kissed her tenderly on her tremulous mouth, on her tear-filled eyes. This being the first time he had kissed her in all their nefarious partnership.

The jewels glowed between them, forgotten. Before leaving, Joe retied the package and gave it to Clara, saying cheerily:

"Keep them, my dear. They may come in useful for some other masquerade, but don't wear them. I shall replace them with smaller pieces—but real ones."

A newcomer to Wilmot, is impressed by World War Joe, who is public-spirited and helpful in all communal affairs and soon understands that although his nickname has nothing to do with any participation in the great war, yet it is a title affectionately bestowed of which Joe is proud. The stranger may wonder why the Lombards' very handsome country home is called The Tea Room, and why a progressive man like Mr. Lombard has done nothing about correcting his wife's embarrassing handicap so that she might express herself freely. If he happens to inquire of one who knows the facts of this peculiar case, every inquiry is satisfactorily explained. It is well known that Joe had entreated Clara never to do anything about her manner of speech, as that is, to him, her most charming trait.

(The end).