



THE  
LADDER  
JULY  
1963

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## *Daughters of* **BILITIS**

A WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROMOTING  
THE INTEGRATION OF THE HOMOSEXUAL INTO SOCIETY BY:

- ① Education of the variant, with particular emphasis on the psychological, physiological and sociological aspects, to enable her to understand herself and make her adjustment to society in all its social, civic and economic implications--this to be accomplished by establishing and maintaining as complete a library as possible of both fiction and non-fiction literature on the sex deviant theme; by sponsoring public discussions on pertinent subjects to be conducted by leading members of the legal, psychiatric, religious and other professions; by advocating a mode of behavior and dress acceptable to society.
- ② Education of the public at large through acceptance first of the individual, leading to an eventual breakdown of erroneous taboos and prejudices; through public discussion meetings aforementioned; through dissemination of educational literature on the homosexual theme.
- ③ Participation in research projects by duly authorized and responsible psychologists, sociologists and other such experts directed towards further knowledge of the homosexual.
- ④ Investigation of the penal code as it pertains to the homosexual, proposal of changes to provide an equitable handling of cases involving this minority group, and promotion of these changes through due process of law in the state legislatures.

# the Ladder

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COVER BY ANNE B.

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# The Loneliness of Radclyffe Hall

by Donald Webster Cory

Whatever else may be said of her life and work, the name of Radclyffe Hall is linked inextricably in the minds of literally millions of people with one book: The Well of Loneliness. Overwritten though it indubitably was, descriptive of an atypical stereotype who was so butch she was almost transvestite, and based on a series of assumptions that have since been discarded as unsound, this novel nevertheless remains unique in the history of the literature of homosexuality. No wonder, then, that mystery and curiosity have surrounded the author--mystery that will be partially clarified, and partially compounded, by a new and unusual work: a biographical sketch of Radclyffe Hall, written by her companion of twenty-eight years and her lover, Una, Lady Troubridge.\*

Even if Radclyffe Hall were an unknown and minor writer, even if she had never had a single word to say on the subject of sexual inversion, The Life of Radclyffe Hall would be a unique work. It required courage to tell this story--and it is courage that is comparable to that required to have written The Well of Loneliness. And it is a story told with honesty and frankness, without shame and fear and guilt.

Before delving into the story of the life of the writer, a word about the special character of the book. The lives of homosexuals have been depicted before, sometimes even in sympathetic biographies, but seldom (except in the instance of Oscar Wilde) with such simple frankness so soon after the death of the subject. At a time when many of her friends and relatives are still alive, the

\* Una, Lady Troubridge: The Life of Radclyffe Hall, The Citadel Press, New York, 1963.

story of Radclyffe Hall is told, and told by one who participated in that life. One has the feeling that this is like the widow of Dylan Thomas, reminiscing of her life with the poet, and telling of the void that appears after his death.

But, unfortunately, the biographer's interest in her subject does not entirely coincide with the reader's. They lived together and traveled through Europe, they met friends and relatives, but one becomes impatient with the nostalgic anecdotes about a visitor who wanted cream in her tea during wartime, when she should have known how fortunate she was even to have had milk. One is impatient because this is not why a biography of Radclyffe Hall was worth writing or reading; we want to have richness of detail of the birth and development of The Well of Loneliness, the story of its prosecution and how the author reacted to it, and the effect of the book on the remainder of her life. Not that this is absent; it is here, and nowhere else can it be found; but it is here in little snatches sandwiched between trivia and more trivia.

To her friends, and throughout this book, Radclyffe Hall is known as John, and by this name I shall call her. In an early photograph, one of the many charming photos that are found in the book, she is shown at the age of five--with soft cheeks and lace and frills: a more feminine little beauty would be hard to imagine. But from that point on, the pictures are radically changed. One must look carefully to know whether the subject is man or woman; the 1931 and 1938 pictures can only be described as those of a transvestite, and the 1935 shot even more so. One wonders, in the last instance, whether this is a man wearing a little earring: perhaps an effeminate man, pretending to be a woman!

How different is the situation of the male and female homosexuals in our society. Imagine this work being written about a man. He is a successful writer, whom we will call, let us say, Harold Winston Petersberg. At least that was how he was baptized, but in his teens he started to call himself Jane, and then a few years later got tired of that name and for the rest of his life was known as Mary. Mary never hid the fact that he was male, and made no effort to deceive the public. But he just

did not like men's clothes and the entire male appearance, so he chose, in this free society, to make some changes. He wore his hair down to his shoulders, did not bleach it but touched it up lightly, had the ends curled with a permanent, and on the rare occasions when he wore pants, he enjoyed the delicate feel of the woman's apparel next to his skin. Mary wore a blouse, rather than a shirt, and in the place of a man's cravat he had a large flowing bow that served the same purpose. No one could say he did not wear a tie.

It is striking that John does not emerge from this book with the hilarious absurdity that Mary would. Just to get the record straight, John is the female writer who flaunts her masculinity, and her name was Radclyffe Hall; Mary is the male writer who--in a somewhat more restrained manner--shows his effeminacy. His name is Harold something or other.

Now, The Well of Loneliness was the story of John, who had been Peter, and who is named in the book Stephen (note the religious character of all of these names). And it tells the story of the life of Stephen, which parallels that of John--but not quite. And one must stop to wonder at the changes that were made in this extremely autobiographical novel.

Take the parents of Stephen and of John. In her own life, John's father and mother separated when she was very young, and she saw her father only on rare occasions until his death. He played no role in her upbringing or in her development, except the role of absentee father. But Stephen's father dominates her childhood and adolescence. He is deeply interested in her. On his deathbed following an accident, he has only one thought in his mind: his love for his daughter, and his desire to protect her against a harsh world when once she awakens to the fact that she is an invert. Father and daughter, daughter and father--how strong their love, how undying their devotion. And when, following his death, the daughter goes into his private study, she opens a bookcase, and there she sees books by authors hitherto unknown to her. She opens a volume by a man named Krafft-Ebing, and sees notes in the margin, in her father's handwriting, and to her astonishment she finds her name on these notes.

How poignant and ironic a tragedy now unfolds before the reader of this life. Here is Radclyffe Hall writing her autobiographical novel of inversion, and depicting the father of the Lesbian as a man deeply involved with his beloved daughter: all written by a woman whose father never cared whether she was dead or alive, a woman who knew this and must have suffered terribly from it.

Nor is the portrait of the mother any less of a distortion except that, in reality as well as in fiction, there is deepgoing hostility between mother and daughter. But Mrs. Gordon, whom John created in her imaginative mind, was as frigid a woman as any that ever chilled the pages of a British novel; but Mrs. Hall, with whom John lived for so many years, was deeply interested in her lovers, paramours and husbands. In the translation from memory to fiction, the hostility is in no way diminished, but the woman is desexualized, puritanized. John was clearly rewriting her life in her novel, but it was the childhood that she wished had been.

The histories of British literature will probably pay little attention (or none at all) to John, but The Well of Loneliness will continue to be reprinted and to sell large numbers of copies, while it has little or no standing as a novel. As a work of art, it can hardly be compared with the writings of many other women: Colette, Rosamond Lehmann, Djuna Barnes, Gale Wilhelm, and many others, who have focused their attention on the female homosexual. But John's book should not be compared with these others; rather, it is a social document, it is a cry for justice. It is the Uncle Tom's Cabin of homosexuality, male as well as female. It is the voice of those who had for years been voiceless, and literary merit or lack of it notwithstanding, John will ever be their hero, even as she is mine.

What courage it required to write The Well of Loneliness! People will point to John's life and show that she was rich, she was independent, she was openly living with her lover, she was traveling in a world where her homosexuality was known and accepted. Where, then, was the courage?

It was one thing for the world in its silence and its gossip to know about John, as they knew about many of her contemporaries, men and women. It was quite another thing to make an official fact out of something that everyone just knew to be so. Andre Gide was facing the same problem in France, where he first published Corydon in an edition limited to only a handful of copies.

But the courage went beyond the use of the first person singular, which incidentally was never made quite explicit until this biography. It was that homosexuals were generally looked down upon, not only by the world at large, but even by themselves. And this book was going to show them not only as people, but as fine people: beautiful, self-sacrificing, loving and loved; in short, glorified. They would be portrayed, not as human beings, but as superhuman beings. And therein lies the strength and the weakness of The Well of Loneliness. For no one like Stephen ever existed, not man or woman, not heterosexual or homosexual. But millions of people felt that this was the portrait that the world required, to lessen the antipathy, to accept the invert into the family of humanity.

Yet, one cannot read the novel and the biography, the story of Stephen and of John, without wondering whether John was not a much less unhappy person than Stephen, and if this was the case, why did she choose to portray in fiction the Lesbian finding herself in "the loneliest place in the world"? For Stephen, in her adolescence and early maturity, searching for understanding of herself and for herself, had, in the words of Radclyffe Hall, "not yet learned her lesson. She had not learned that the loneliest place in the world is the no-man's-land of sex."

Here was a woman (that is, John, the writer), who had had one love affair that endured until the other woman died, and now was involved in a second that was to last twenty-eight years until her own death; a woman for whom many doors were open, including those of Colette and d'Annunzio; a woman surrounded by people who admired her and loved her, and for whom she required no false front of concealment. Why did she portray Stephen as lonely and

frustrated and unable to fulfill her need for love? Why did she show Stephen's friends as miserable and outcast and driven to suicide?

Was this in order to arouse sympathy from the hostile society? Partially, yes. For just as John made Stephen selfless and all-loving because this was the portrait that would be most acceptable, so she made her tragic and misunderstood in order that the world would cry over her fate. But there was an all-pervading loneliness in the life of Stephen, and it is implicit in John's novel as well as in her life. It was a loneliness that was only slightly affected by the success or failure of the search for love. It is a loneliness that is not diminished as one's circle of friends broadens, takes in more inverts, or even begins to take in others.

It is the loneliness that becomes greater because there are more people; the feeling of alienation, not of the recluse or hermit, but of the man or woman in a crowd. This is the message of Stephen's life. Even had her love been reciprocated, as was John's, and even if she could have surrounded herself with a hundred, nay, a thousand, men and women like herself who accepted her, she must still know that she is a queer to the world at large. She wakes and she walks in a society that despises her, and she internalizes this attitude; whether she rejects the society or accepts its judgement and looks upon herself as an aberration, no matter what course she chooses, she is a lonely human being.

Almost two thousand years ago, Stephen was stoned to death as he brought the message of Christ to the worshippers of God. John's Stephen felt herself stoned, but not quite to death. Give us, too, the right to live, she pleads. She is pleading, not for relief from unjust laws, but for release from public scorn. Only acceptance will alleviate the loneliness in which she is enshrouded.

Deeply influenced as I was by The Well of Loneliness, I am grateful to Una, Lady Troubridge, for shedding light on its author. I wish there had been more, but I am indebted for what there is.



# LESBIANA



BY GENE DAMON

225. THE TRIAL OF CALLISTA BLAKE BY EDGAR PANGBORN. ST. MARTIN'S PRESS, 1961; DELL, 1963.

CALLISTA IS ON TRIAL FOR THE MURDER OF HER LOVER'S WIFE. SHE IS INNOCENT BUT CONVICTED (MAINLY FOR ADULTERY). HER DEAREST FRIEND AND EMPLOYER, EDITH NOLAN, IS CLEARLY IN LOVE WITH HER. THIS IS HANDLED WITHOUT PROCLAMATIONS BUT IT IS MADE QUITE APPARENT IN MANY WAYS THROUGHOUT THE BOOK. MUCH OF THE EXCITING STORY IS TOLD BY INTERIOR MONOLOGUE BY THE JUDGE IN THE TRIAL. DURING THE TIME EDITH NOLAN IS ON THE WITNESS STAND, HE CAUTIONS HER IN HIS MIND: "BE CAREFUL, DEAR, NOT TO LET THEM SEE HOW MUCH YOU LOVE HER." THIS BOOK IS FOR THOSE WHO CAN READ A NOVEL NOT WHOLLY ABOUT HOMO-SEXUALS. THIS IS ONLY AN INCIDENTAL TITLE, BUT IT IS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED FOR THE WAY THE WOMAN IS TREATED. SHE IS A GOOD CITIZEN, A GOOD PERSON, NEITHER GLORIFIED NOR CONDEMNED.

226. THIS SIDE OF LOVE BY PAULA CHRISTIAN. AVON, 1963.

THIS IS A SEQUEL TO PAULA CHRISTIAN'S FIRST BOOK, EDGE OF TWILIGHT, FAWCETT CREST, 1959 ET AL. UNLIKE ANN BANNON'S SERIES OF BOOKS, THIS TITLE CAN BE READ AND ENJOYED WITHOUT REFERENCE TO THE FIRST BOOK.

VAL AND TONI ARE NO LONGER AIRLINE HOSTESSES IN THE NOVEL AND, UNFORTUNATELY, NO LONGER LOVE BIRDS. THE WRITING IS SO TERSE ONE FINDS IT IMPOSSIBLE TO BELIEVE AS FICTION. IT IS REAL, SO MUCH SO THAT IT PROBABLY HAPPENED, GIVE OR TAKE A FEW LINES FOR DRAMATIC EFFECT. VAL IS BUILDING A PERSONAL TOWER OF LOVE AND STRENGTH IN THIS BOOK. THE MATURE LESBIAN WILL ENJOY THIS CHRONICLE OF HER CLOSE BRUSH WITH EMOTIONAL INSTABILITY AND HER RECOVERY, MAINLY BY SHEER WILL-POWER. THE ENDING LEAVES HOPE FOR A BETTER LIFE FOR VAL, AND THUS LEAVES THE WAY OPEN FOR ANOTHER WELCOME NOVEL FROM PAULA CHRISTIAN.

227. NIGHT IN THE HOTEL BY ELIOT CRAWSHAY-WILLIAMS. LONDON, GOLLANCZ, 1931 AND NEW YORK, HORACE LIVERIGHT, 1931.

THIS IS A QUITE DELIGHTFUL ENGLISH NOVEL BASED ON THE OLD TRIED AND TRUE PREMISE OF TAKING A GROUP OF PEOPLE IN AN ARTIFICIAL ISOLATION AND EXAMINING ALL OF THEIR LIVES. IN THIS CASE, WE ARE AT A SECOND-RATE RIVIERA HOTEL DURING THE LATE 1920'S. WE ARE INTRODUCED TO EACH CHARACTER OR PAIR OF CHARACTERS AFTER DINNER, AND THEN FOLLOW THEM IN A GROUP THROUGH THE EVENING AND SEPARATELY THROUGH THE NIGHT. THERE IS AN OVERT LESBIAN COUPLE, ON THE VERGE OF BREAKING UP BECAUSE THE YOUNGER IS A SPOILED BRAT; THERE IS A SEMI-PROFESSIONAL BITCH WITH A WARM LESBIAN INTERLUDE WITH A NUN IN HER PAST; AND OTHER BRIEF BITS OF REFERENCE. IT IS SLOW MOVING, BUT WAS WRITTEN BACK WHEN NOVELISTS HAD TO PRODUCE BOTH PLOT AND CHARACTERIZATION TO GET INTO PRINT. ENJOYABLE.

## RESEARCH PROJECT TO MOVE AHEAD IN SEPTEMBER

D. O. B.'S CO-OPERATION WITH NEW YORK PSYCHOLOGIST RALPH H. GUNDLACH IN A FULL-SCALE RESEARCH STUDY ON LESBIANS IS VERY MUCH ON THE MOVE. WE EXPECT TO HAVE LETTERS IN THE MAIL TO ALL LADDER SUBSCRIBERS IN SEPTEMBER, REQUESTING THE PARTICIPATION OF EACH ONE OF YOU. THE JUNE LADDER DESCRIBED IN SOME DETAIL THE MANNER IN WHICH THE STUDY WILL BE CARRIED OUT, IN ORDER TO INSURE ANONYMITY AND PRIVACY OF REPLIES TO ALL PARTICIPANTS. THE JUNE ISSUE ALSO LISTED THE PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS AND QUALIFICATIONS OF DRs. GUNDLACH AND RIESS, WHO WILL DIRECT THE PROJECT. WATCH FOR THE ANNOUNCEMENT IN SEPTEMBER!

# SECOND BEST SOCIETY

by Dorothy Lyle

Many sociologists and psychologists have pointed out the futile and sometimes dangerous aspects of group and subgroup mores in societies, both past and present. One special target has been the upper-middle-class suburban communities, the "bee hive" dwellers to be found on the edges of all large cities. Their overly integrated mode of life has been found to be mentally stultifying and seems to lead to promiscuity and other undesirable side effects. The endless round of bridge, golf, sailing, followed by the drunken backyard bar-be-que, a little dancing and who ends up kissing whom, could hardly be considered desirable as a way of life.

Unfortunately, a society exists in most cities today among middle-class Lesbians that closely parallels the "bee hive" heterosexual society. Undeniably thousands of Lesbians live constructive lives, both helpful to other homosexuals and of value to their community and society as a whole. In this article they will be referred to as "older kids," since they are commonly called this by members of the group I am discussing here.

There are three fairly distinct Lesbian societies in any fair-sized city. The first group is bar and ballfield oriented. They are very much the "fringe" society and could easily be the subject of several articles. Unfortunately, this group's mores are the ones responsible for the stereotype Lesbian.

The second group is the "ungrouped" class--frequently called "the older kids" by the third group. By this they refer to the women whose social and professional positions are such that they cannot afford to run shrieking through the streets about their sexual orientation. These women are occasionally seen at parties,

where they arrive early and leave early. They are withdrawn and to many of the others appear anti-social. Actually the main difference is a variation in interests. The description "older kids" is usually true in one sense. The women are over 35 for the most part and are monogamous.

The third group is the largest, apparently, and is made up of the 20 to 30 year olds, with an occasional older member. Most of them have fairly steady jobs as white collar workers, minor professionals, nurses, technicians, athletic directors, teachers (gym, etc.), computer operators and programmers, and so forth. They appear to know each other well, having dozens of friends in their immediate city and group and many friends in every other large city in the U. S.

Love affairs are considered quite public property. They are conducted on a group therapy basis. Everyone is superficially wedded, and completely monogamous. Marriages may last from two to ten years, yet very few of them are really permanent unless the pair leaves the group. They graduate, in a manner of speaking, and become "older kids."

Problems, personal and other, are settled in groups. Within this happy beehive, parties are frequent and inside of a year or so everyone will see everyone else at least once. This is so much a pattern that if a couple, newly together, fail to be seen for a long period of time, much is made of their voluntary exile.

Marriages, supposedly permanent, are ended suddenly. A new girl becomes the light of love for a girl who has been married for three or five or seven years. Instead of a quarrel, or at least a touch of dislike, they all discuss this new development with the aid of three or four other couples. Many times they live (the three of them) together for a few months. Not promiscuously, just that the new couple takes "care" of the discarded mate. Sure enough, a few months (or weeks) later, the rejected one finds another girl.

If asked how the three of them can stand to live together, the standard reply is, "Oh, it takes a big person."

Friendships take up where love leaves off, and one finds groups of perhaps 50 couples where some of them have lived with perhaps three other people in the group at some past time.

Many times couples in this type of group live together on a more or less permanent basis, two or three couples in the same house. There is no true promiscuity allowed (this is very much taboo), but with the ease of no divorce proceedings and with the whole community lending a hand, changes are abrupt and frequent.

These are only a few of the dangers in this group life. Since socializing is a full-time job, reading and thinking on your own are out. If for no other reason, there is simply no time. While these women are not the ballfield group, they are quite sports-minded (for the most part) and weekends are spent in much the same silly fashion as in the counterpart heterosexual group. Weekends can be spent swimming, boating and drinking at the local lake, or, if the season is right, at softball and basketball tournaments (as spectators). Many of these partygoers, who are known to perhaps several thousand people as homosexuals, have seriously told me that they would not dare to subscribe to THE LADDER because they could not put their names on a list.

They will, however, happily tumble out of bed at midnight to put up a cot for "Joey from Los Angeles who knows Mickey from Dallas who said to look you up on my way through town."

This group contributes nothing to the bettering of the next generation of their kind. They do no public relations work at all. On the job they are strictly heterosexuals. No effort to educate by association is made.

As would inevitably be true in any closed group, power and gossip are important forces.

Gossip, in fact, is almost a full-time occupation. The nearly exclusive subject is "who loves whom now, why, and how long will it last." This is closely followed by "whom

did they previously love," etc., etc., ad nauseam. Secondary topics are movies with touches of homosexuality, "party records" with similar touches, and sometimes the latest Ann Bannon or Paula Christian paperback. Most of them believe serious Lesbian fiction began with Radclyffe Hall and ended with Claire Morgan, before the paperback days. They live in an intellectual vacuum. Several have seriously asked me what DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS means. This was excusable five years ago, but today it is a sign of waste.

Power and control - the exercise of a subtle form of sadistic ruling - is the last large evil in these groups. In each sub-group of perhaps 6 to 8 couples, one couple, or one-half of one couple, is the leader. This person exerts almost palpable control over the others. This is carried to the point of directing their love life, their job decisions, their choice of living quarters, etc. On a broader basis, there is often a pair of couples who control loosely a fairly large group of people, as many as 40 couples.

Now were these people very benevolent despots, I would be the first to applaud their existence. Since they are usually quite power mad and wish to control only for the personal glory, they do a great deal of harm to the weaker individuals in the group. Worse, they are more than willing subtly to destroy the life of an individual who "bucks" at being controlled.

In conclusion, and before you bring on the tar and feathers:

Of necessity, this is a short and highly generalized article. I do not pretend that this is "Things as They Are," but it is often this way in many cities and it is a bad and dangerous situation.

Hundreds of homosexual women in the U. S. today carry the load for thousands of others too lazy or too indifferent to help. This is an evil, a not insoluble one surely, but one which almost certainly is partly caused by the "bee hive" groups. They care for themselves, and to hell with tomorrow.



# The Ascent of Woman

BY ELIZABETH MANN BORGESE. GEORGE BRAZILLER, PUBLISHER.

IMAGINE A WORLD COMPOSED ENTIRELY OF STRONG, BEAUTIFUL WOMEN UNDER 45, ALL ACTIVELY WORKING AS THE NATION'S SCIENTISTS, DOCTORS, BUSINESS EXECUTIVES, SOCIAL WORKERS AND EDUCATORS!

IS THIS THE WILD IMAGINATION OF SOME DOB'ER GONE OFF THE DEEP END? NOT AT ALL. IT IS THE FANTASY OF A SERIOUS AUTHOR, ELIZABETH MANN BORGESE, IN HER NEW BOOK, "ASCENT OF WOMAN."

MRS. BORGESE, DAUGHTER OF THE LATE THOMAS MANN, VISUALIZES HER UTOPIA OF GOLDEN AMAZONS SOME DAY IN A FUTURE TOO FAR AHEAD TO ESTIMATE IN TERMS OF YEARS. SHE IS IN DEAD EARNEST ABOUT THE NEW SOCIETY AND HAS DEVOTED HER ENTIRE BOOK TO SHOWING HOW AND WHY THINGS WILL TURN OUT THIS WAY.

MRS. BORGESE ADVANCES THE IDEA THAT WOMEN BECOME MORE "IMPORTANT" AS SOCIETY MOVES AWAY FROM EMPHASIS UPON THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE DIRECTION OF EMPHASIS ON THE COLLECTIVE. THE MASS CULTURE OF TODAY, THE COLLECTIVE SOCIETY TOWARDS WHICH WE ARE HEADING, CALL FOR TRAITS COMMONLY ASSOCIATED WITH FEMININITY - CONFORMITY, SUBMISSIVENESS, CO-OPERATION. (MET ANY SUBMISSIVE, CO-OPERATIVE FEMALES LATELY?)

IN SUPPORT OF HER IDEA, MRS. BORGESE ADVANCES AN IMPRESSIVE BODY OF INFORMATION FROM THE FIELDS OF SCIENCE, PSYCHOLOGY, ART, PHILOSOPHY, MYTHOLOGY AND THE HISTORY OF LANGUAGE. SHE FIRMLY BELIEVES THAT THE EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS IS TAKING US IN THE DIRECTION OF A WORLD IN WHICH WOMEN WILL BE FREED OF THE BURDEN OF CHILD-BEARING AND CHILD-REARING AND WILL THUS BE ABLE TO REALIZE THEIR FULLEST PERSONAL POTENTIAL. AND WHERE DO BABIES COME FROM? TEST TUBES, OF COURSE. (IF THIS SEEMS TOO FAR OUT, NOTE HER ITEM ABOUT THE ITALIAN PROFESSOR WHO REPORTED HE HAD SUCCESSFULLY FERTILIZED A HUMAN OVUM IN A TEST TUBE AND RAISED THE EMBRYO FOR 29

DAYS. HE DISCONTINUED THE EXPERIMENT WHEN THE CHURCH FROWNEED, ACCORDING TO MRS. BORGESE.)

A FANTASTIC UTOPIA INDEED! BUT YOU HAVEN'T HEARD ALL. AT THE AGE OF 45 THE HAPPY GIRLS IN MRS. BORGESE'S UTOPIA ALL SUDDENLY DECIDE TO BE BOYS. WHY THINGS SHOULD TAKE THIS TURN IS NOT EXPLAINED. BETWEEN THE AGES OF 45 AND 75, EVERYONE IS A MAN. AFTER THAT, THEY FINISH AS MEN OR BECOME "SEXLESS SUPERINDIVIDUALS."

THE PHYSIOLOGICAL DETAILS OF HOW THIS IS ACCOMPLISHED ARE NEITHER INTERESTING NOR IMPORTANT. MRS. BORGESE ASSURES US THAT "THE TRANSITION WILL BE SMOOTH AND SPONTANEOUS." WHAT IS INTERESTING IS THE AUTHOR'S PSYCHOLOGICAL ORIENTATION. SHE HAS WOVEN THIS ELABORATE FANTASY, BUTTRESSED ON CONSIDERABLE RESEARCH, IN ORDER TO GIVE WOMAN A TRULY EQUAL PLACE WITH MAN, AND THEN SHE HAS PLACED MAN ON TOP OF THE HEAP. THE "MEN" IN HER UTOPIAN SOCIETY WILL BE "THE MASTERS, THE TEACHERS, THE INSPIRERS OF WOMEN. THEY WILL BE THE GREAT INVENTORS AND EXPLORERS. THEY WILL BE THE GREAT ARTISTS AND ARCHITECTS. IN PUBLIC LIFE THEY WILL FILL ALL THE POSITIONS IN THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH OF GOVERNMENTS AS WELL AS THE LOWER JUDICIARY." THE SEXLESS SUPERINDIVIDUALS WILL BE HIGH PRIESTS AND PROPHETS AND GREAT HISTORIANS.

MRS. BORGESE IS FRANK ABOUT HER MOTIVE IN WRITING THIS BOOK. SHE CITES TWO IMPORTANT INCIDENTS IN HER LIFE. ONE TOOK PLACE WHEN SHE WAS THREE YEARS OLD. SHE AND HER YOUNGER BROTHER WERE DRESSED ALIKE AND LOOKED LIKE IDENTICAL TWINS. YET A VISITOR WAS ABLE TO GUESS WHICH OF THE TWO WAS A BOY. THE VISITOR SAID "THIS ONE IS THE BOY - HE LOOKS MORE SERIOUS." AFTER THAT THE LITTLE GIRL ALWAYS TRIED DESPERATELY TO LOOK SERIOUS. LATER IN LIFE, THE YOUNG GIRL LONGED TO BE A MUSICIAN. SHE ALSO FELL IN LOVE. A PSYCHIATRIST TOLD HER SHE WAS AN ARTIST, BUT SHE MUST CHOOSE BETWEEN "ART AND YOUR MAN, BETWEEN YOURSELF AND JUST ORDINARY HOUSEWIFERY."

AT THAT TIME THE DESPERATE, REBELLIOUS YOUNG WOMAN ASKED, "DID ANYONE EVER TELL TOSCANINI OR BACH THAT HE HAD TO CHOOSE BETWEEN MUSIC AND FAMILY, BETWEEN ART AND A NORMAL LIFE?" MRS. BORGESE MADE HER CHOICE. THERE WAS A MARRIAGE, AN END OF THE MARRIAGE, CHILDREN. ALL OF THIS, WE ARE GIVEN TO UNDERSTAND, MUST HAVE BEEN A FAR FROM HAPPY PHASE OF LIFE, FOR MRS. BORGESE SAYS, "IT TOOK ME ABOUT 20 YEARS...BUT I AM AT PEACE NOW, WITH MYSELF, WITH

WOMEN IN GENERAL, AND WITH THIS WORLD, OF WHICH WE ARE A PHASE." WHAT HAS GIVEN HER PEACE IS THE IDEA THAT EVOLUTION IS WORKING FOR WOMEN. SOME DAY THEY WON'T HAVE TO BEAR OR NURSE CHILDREN. SOME DAY THEY WILL WORK AND FIGHT LIKE MEN. SOME DAY THEY WILL BE IMPORTANT. THEY WILL BE MEN!

WHAT A TRULY SAD BOOK! THIS AMBITIOUS, GIFTED, CULTIVATED WOMAN HAS HAD TO RANGE THE WILDEST REACHES OF HER IMAGINATION TO FIND "PEACE" WITH HER FEMININE SELF - AND HAS STILL EMERGED WITH HER NOTION OF MALE SUPREMACY INTACT.

IN SPITE OF HER UNFORTUNATE ORIENTATION, MRS. BORGESE IS AN INTERESTING, PROVOCATIVE THINKER AND OFFERS FASCINATING MATERIAL AND ORIGINAL INSIGHT IN SUPPORT OF HER ARGUMENT. ESSENTIALLY, HOWEVER, SHE IS AN ESCAPIST WHO HAS FOUND REFUGE IN THE FUTURE. SOME OF US MIGHT FEEL SHE COULD HAVE WRITTEN A BETTER BOOK AND FOUND A BETTER SOLUTION TO HER PROBLEMS IF SHE HAD MADE A MORE STRENUOUS EFFORT TO DEAL WITH THE PRESENT. AS THINGS STAND, SHE HAS PRODUCED A TASTY POT-POURRI OF SCIENCE FICTION AND ARRESTING TID-BITS OF INFORMATION. THE BOOK MAY INTEREST HOMOPHILES MAINLY AS A CURIOSITY.

- REVIEWED BY NOLA

My hunger is not of the spirit  
is not of the mind  
but molded of these and inherent  
within the warm flesh

My hunger is born of the eyes  
It is grown in the hands  
Brought to a bloom in the fingers  
and moist on the mouth

My hunger is thinking  
is feeling  
is knowing  
is love.

- Blanche Small

# ECHO News

WITH THE RESERVATION OF A SPACIOUS AND ATTRACTIVE ROOF GARDEN ROOM AND CONVENTION BANQUET FACILITIES AT THE HOTEL ADELPHIA, IN THE HEART OF DOWNTOWN PHILADELPHIA, PLANS FOR THE LABOR DAY WEEKEND CONFERENCE OF EAST COAST HOMOPHILE ORGANIZATIONS (ECHO) ARE BEING TRANSLATED INTO FACT.

DOB PRESIDENT JAYE BELL WILL BE ON HAND TO WELCOME GUESTS AND TO REPRESENT THE DAUGHTERS. THE CO-OPERATING GROUPS - MATTACHINE SOCIETY, INC., OF NEW YORK; THE JANUS SOCIETY OF DELAWARE VALLEY; MATTACHINE SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON, D.C; AND THE NEW YORK CHAPTER OF THE DAUGHTERS OF BILITIS, INC. - HOPE TO PRESENT AN OUTSTANDING PROGRAM OF SPEAKERS AND PANEL DISCUSSIONS WHICH WILL BRING THE PROBLEMS RELATED TO THE HOMOSEXUAL TO PROMINENT PUBLIC ATTENTION, ESPECIALLY TIMED TO ATTRACT VISITORS AND PARTICIPANTS OF THE AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION MEETING A FEW BLOCKS AWAY.

THE TENTATIVE TOPIC CHOSEN, "SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE OF THE HOMOSEXUAL," FORMS THE FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH SPEAKERS IN THE FIELDS OF LAW, RELIGION, AND THE ARTS WILL PRESENT THEIR INSIGHT AND OBSERVATION BASED ON THE VARIED APPROACHES OF THEIR PROFESSIONAL DISCIPLINES. ADVERTISING PLANS, FOCUSING ON PHILADELPHIA AND MAJOR EAST COAST CITIES, WILL INCLUDE PRESS RELEASES, POSTERS AND COMMERCIAL ADVERTISEMENTS IN MAJOR NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES.

RESERVATIONS ARE TENTATIVELY SET AT \$15 FOR THE FULL TWO-DAY PROGRAM, INCLUDING LUNCHEON AND BANQUET SESSIONS, AND MAY BE OBTAINED THROUGH ANY OF THE CO-OPERATING ORGANIZATIONS, INCLUDING DOB.

SINCE THE MAJOR PURPOSE OF THIS CONFERENCE IS TO FOCUS COMMUNITY ATTENTION ON THE PROBLEMS OF SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE OF THE HOMOSEXUAL, THE PUBLIC IS INVITED. YOU CAN ASSIST IN INSURING THE SUCCESS OF THIS SIGNIFICANT ENDEAVOR BY ATTENDING AND BY EXTENDING AN INVITATION TO YOUR PERSONAL FRIENDS AND PROFESSIONAL ACQUAINTANCES.

- MEREDITH GREY, NATIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS DIRECTOR, DOB

# ENTOMBED

by Renee Saltzmann

"I can't stand it," thought Edna, as she fixed her eyes upon the orange footstool. "Why do I have to be alone? ....Oh, I must get away!" Solitude was her worst enemy: being alone with herself had always given her a most uneasy feeling. She had an urgent need to escape her own thoughts.

The events of the evening had been extremely painful, and her frantic efforts to forget them had not been successful. She could not erase the stinging images and words: Mark's angular face blotted out the footstool, as his voice rang in her ears: Do you think Rachel will to out with me? You must tell me all about her. She is so wonderful, so gentle, so sensitive.

Edna arose from her chair, as she uttered the words which she had failed to speak three hours earlier. "No, she won't be gentle with your heart, Mark. She will be gentle with her patients, but never with you, nor with any other man. No, Mark, Rachel is tied to her studies, her career. She is in love with the abstract."

Will you call her for me?

Edna again responded to the masculine voice which, by time and space, was separated from its owner: "Mark, darling, can't you see? I love you. I am alive, and she is but a ghost."

Give me her telephone number. I'll call.

The girl could bear the taunting voice no longer, and ran into the bedroom. A few minutes later she emerged, clothed in her favorite outfit: a black sweater, gray woolen Bermuda shorts, black leotards and a pair of black loafers. For a few moments, she contemplated her image

in the full-length mirror which graced the otherwise barren hallway. She hated the round, plain face, the straight dark brown hair, the heavy figure which made her appear somewhat older than her twenty-one years.

So gentle, so sensitive, the voice echoed again.

"How cruel, Mark," she cried, as she pounded on the mirror. And she picked up her purse and ran outside. Her Morris Minor was parked in front of the building, and she got inside and started the engine. Mark's voice was her only companion, for the streets were deserted.

Indeed, the streets were deserted. After having traveled countless miles, she slowly took cognizance of the fact that she had passed few headlights. The passing countryside was strange to her, and the few houses she saw were dark. She glanced at the luminous clock on the dashboard: three o'clock!

"Three o'clock. Who cares?" Nocturnal rides were not at all uncommon to her. Her little car, which had miraculously survived three accidents, was her best friend and most valued possession: it would transport her nearly anywhere, and at any hour; even more important, unlike human companionship, it was never inaccessible. She had more than once driven all night. The open road, the cool fresh breeze, the sense of control usually lifted her moods.

But tonight was different: the momentary pleasantness provided by the external world was soon dissipated by the weight of her mood; time and space lost their significance, as her thoughts narrowed into a feeling of numbness.

Then the haunting voice again made itself heard, piercing the numbness like a dagger. So gentle, so sensitive. But the pain which it generated was not entirely unpleasant; at least she felt alive. The numbness, on the other hand, had made her feel as if she were floating in a limbo of half-life and half-death. The sharp pain transported her into the realm of undiluted emotion, where life is most intense, where one is truly aware of his being.

Edna was now driving alongside a skinny guard rail which separated the narrow, winding road from the Columbia River, several hundred feet below. This, too, exhilarated her: "Just think," she thought, "I have control over life and death--with one turn of the wheel, I can go over the edge. Eternal sleep will be mine."

The image of Mark danced before her, but was soon replaced by Rachel. Rachel, the witch, masquerading in a smooth, beautiful exterior of serenity, gentleness. "You fool everyone, until they get to know you better. Most people never get to know you better, though--but I did."

Edna recalled the early months of their friendship, when Rachel had seemed to be the ideal friend. Edna was constantly surrounded by other people, but she did not really have anyone in whom she could confide. Rachel had seemed to be that kind of person, for she listened with interest, and seemed to be extremely wise for her twenty-two years. Even Edna's mother thought her a good influence. But Edna knew that Rachel's was a clinically detached interest; she did not really want to get involved with other people. Edna had not immediately sensed this, for she was usually too busy talking. Only much later had she noticed how casually Rachel treated others when they tried to get too close to her. This was particularly true with me: she went out with them occasionally, but as soon as they began to get serious, she dropped them. She intended never to marry. This fact alarmed Edna, but also held a strange fascination for her.

"You make them love you, Rachel, and then you throw them away. Oh, how I hate you! But," and Edna smiled, "I don't have to live to see you take Mark."

Edna had now outwitted the serene image in the white coat. The canyon looked so inviting, so eternal. But as Rachel's presence bore more deeply into her consciousness, she got the impression that this was just what Rachel would want her to do. Indeed, the beautiful green eyes appeared to be smiling, egging her on. Either way, Rachel would win.

She was transfixed by both images--the hypnotic, inviting deepness of the canyon, and the trace of sadism in

Rachel's smile--but Rachel proved to be the more overpowering of the two: guided by a determination that Rachel would not kill her, Edna did not turn left, into the canyon; she instead stopped at a clearing on the right side of the road.

After sitting there for some time, she turned the car around and drove toward town. The numbness had returned, but was gradually giving way to intense hatred, a hatred as sharp as the pain which she had experienced earlier. She had to do something. But what? She was compelled to hurt Rachel, but in what way? She could think of nothing that would put a dent in the calm, detached exterior.

As she reached town, it was just beginning to get light, but she cared little. Instead of going home, she drove past Rachel's apartment house. Seeing lights shining brightly through the upstairs windows, she decided to pay Rachel a visit. But she must be calm. She could not reveal her hatred, not yet anyway.

It required a great deal of effort, but Edna appeared to be casual when she knocked upon the door. When it was opened, she cheerfully exclaimed, "Greetings, fellow night owl! I was just driving around, so I thought I'd stop in. What keeps you up so late?"

A note of puzzlement graced Rachel's smooth, oval face. "Why, Edna, I've been working on my thesis. Come in," she invited, straightening her slightly disarrayed hair, "and have some coffee with me. I've been drinking the stuff all night--and taking NoDoz tablets."

As Edna walked into the book-lined room, she could not take her eyes off the other girl: Rachel's slender form, dressed in a white silk shirt-blouse, gray Bermuda shorts, and large forest-green sweater with silver buttons, moved gaily across the room; and her green eyes shone, though she must have been tired.

As Edna sat opposite the calm brunette, Mark's words again echoed in her ears. "Oh, what a witch you are," she thought, "behind that exquisite face and gentle manner lies only cold, hard granite." Somehow, she



managed to suppress her feelings of hatred, while telling Rachel of Mark's interest.

"But he's your boy friend," replied Rachel in a soft voice.

"Don't be silly. He's just a friend--he is like a big brother," answered Edna, as she bit her lip.

"You love him."

"No!" Edna had not expected this.

"And you hate me," Rachel continued, "you think me a heartless creature. Perhaps I am. It is true that I have hurt many people--some very deeply. I won't take Mark away from you." At that, Rachel began to cry.

The tears were quite disconcerting to Edna, for she had believed Rachel incapable of so human an emotion.

Rachel went on: "Perhaps you will understand. Love is a very elusive thing. Some find it and cherish it; others never find it; then there are those who find it, but, because society has entombed them, must deny it. If you do hate me, I don't blame you."

Edna was confused. She now knew that she did have the power to hurt Rachel; she could say everything which had been bottled up within her all these months, things which had begun to accumulate long before the advent of Mark. The whole situation seemed unreal to her, as unreal as the contrast between the trees and the bright red sky. Mark faded from her mind and she was conscious only of the other girl. All of a sudden, Edna did understand, and the remaining fragments of hatred succumbed to a feeling of tenderness.

She crossed the room and kissed Rachel's soft hair.

"Don't do that, please," Rachel cried.

"Why?"

"You would never understand, not in a million years,"

Rachel replied, a note of panic in her voice. Then she added, slowly and clearly, "Because I love you."

Edna stood, transfixed, and gave voice to alien words, "I love you, too." But when she looked into Rachel's deep eyes, the words no longer seemed alien: Their meaning flooded her consciousness, and she knew that they reflected her feelings. Rachel put her arms around her, saying nothing.

## READERS RESPOND

I AM A SUBSCRIBER TO THE LADDER AND FIND IT INTERESTING TO READ, EXCEPT THAT I WOULD ENJOY A BETTER AND MORE REFINED TYPE OF STORY THAN IS USUALLY PUBLISHED IN YOUR MAGAZINE.

"THERE IS A BIG QUESTION IN MY MIND AS TO WHY MOST WRITERS OF LESBIAN FICTION PORTRAY WOMEN WHO LOVE ONE ANOTHER AS BEING SEXUALLY PROMISCUOUS, UNREFINED, AND PROFANE. I ALSO RESENT THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN WHO ENJOY CLOSE FRIENDSHIPS WITH OTHER WOMEN AND WHO SHARE THEIR LIFE WITH ANOTHER WOMAN AS BEING EMOTIONALLY UNSTABLE AND WAYWARD, GOING FROM ONE COMPANION TO ANOTHER. I KNOW SEVERAL PAIRS OF CLOSE FRIENDS WHO ENJOY A STABLE, DEEP-ROOTED COMPANIONSHIP THAT HAS LASTED MANY YEARS. SO MANY WRITERS OF LESBIAN FICTION PORTRAY THIS KIND OF LIFE AT ITS WORST WITH THE MOST DEBASED KIND OF CHARACTERS. WHY SHOULD A CLOSE ATTACHMENT TO A WOMAN FRIEND CARRY THE STIGMA THAT IT SO OFTEN DOES? IT IS MY OPINION THAT IT DOES BECAUSE WRITERS PICTURE IT AS A CORRUPT, DEMORALIZING, DEGRADED RELATIONSHIP.

"I BELIEVE THERE ARE MANY WOMEN WHO ARE HIGHLY EDUCATED, WELL-ROOTED IN RESPONSIBLE AND LUCRATIVE POSITIONS; WHO ARE REFINED--NOT PROFANE; WHO DRINK ONLY TEA, COFFEE, AND SOFT DRINKS--NOT ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES; AND WHO ARE ACTIVE IN THE CHURCH AND SOCIAL CLUBS--NOT ROAMING THE STREETS TO FIND A PARTNER WITH WHOM TO SHARE A FEW MINUTES OF PHYSICAL PLEASURE. I BELIEVE ALSO THAT A GREAT MANY WOMEN OF THE KIND I HAVE DESCRIBED ARE ENJOYING A HAPPY, PLEASURABLE LIFE WITH A CLOSE WOMAN FRIEND. PROBABLY MANY

OTHER WOMEN - PERHAPS SOME EVEN WHO ARE MARRIED - WOULD, IF THEY COULD MEET A PLEASING PERSON WITH SIMILAR INTERESTS WHO ATTRACTED THEM, BE DELIGHTED TO SHARE THEIR LIFE WITH SUCH A PERSON. A SOLITARY LIFE SURELY ISN'T CHOSEN BY MANY. SOMEONE TO LOVE, PLAN WITH, AND SHARE WITH MAKES LIFE MORE WORTHWHILE AND MORE PLEASURABLE. SOME LEGITIMATE MEANS SHOULD BE FOUND WHEREBY WOMEN OF REFINEMENT AND GOOD CHARACTER COULD MEET THOSE WITH LIKE INTERESTS AND FIND THAT SOMEONE WITH WHOM THEY CAN SHARE THEIR LIFE.

"I HOPE YOUR ORGANIZATION WILL WORK ON IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF LESBIAN FICTION, AND WILL DEVISE A WAY OF GETTING WOMEN INTRODUCED WHO ARE LONELY AND HUNGRY FOR LOVE AND COMPANIONSHIP."

- E. W., INDIANA

\* \* \* \* \*

"IN THIS HATE-FILLED WORLD, HOW ANYONE CAN CRITICIZE ANYONE ELSE FOR LOVING IS SIMPLY BEYOND MY UNDERSTANDING. YOURS FOR MORE LOVE - WHOMEVER AND WHEREVER,

A READER

\* \* \* \* \*

"I MUST CONFESS TO WHAT IS PROBABLY A TOO-FREQUENT SYNDROME - THE 'LET SOMEBODY ELSE RISK HER NECK' DISEASE. SINCE I FIRST HEARD OF DOB AND THE LADDER, I HAVE BEEN TORN BETWEEN WANTING TO PITCH IN AND BEING AFRAID TO. AND OF COURSE THE FEAR HAS BEEN A REAL CHAMELEON, SOMETIMES LOOKING LIKE 'WHAT'S THE USE - IT'S TOO SOON - SOCIETY ISN'T READY' AND OTHER TIMES LIKE 'I WORE MY SIGN YEARS AGO ON THE WEST COAST - THAT WAS LONG AGO AND ADOLESCENT AND NOW I'M OUT OF IT - STAY OUT,' ETC., ETC.

"I'M SURE YOU'VE HEARD ALL THIS AND MORE ALL TOO OFTEN. AND PERHAPS FROM THE VERY PEOPLE WHO COULD CONTRIBUTE QUITE A BIT???

"THE POINT IS THAT I OWE YOU THANKS FOR FORCING ME TO FACE UP TO WHETHER I WAS EVER GOING TO DO ANYTHING EXCEPT CAREFULLY HIDE EACH ISSUE OF THE LADDER."

- D. K., ILLINOIS



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